

THE INDEPENDENT MAGAZINE FOR WARHAMMER FANTASY ROLEPLAY

ARTSTONE

ISSUE 19

AUTUMN 2002

UK £3.50 US \$5.95

**REALMS OF SORCERY REVIEWED
THE SEA OF CLAWS
TALABHEIM PART FOUR
& LOADS MORE...**



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ISSN 1465-6604

EDITORIAL

By John Foody

After our promised break in service we return once more, ready to take on the world. The Old World anyway. We haven't been idle however, sailing around the world on money embezzled from Warpstone Incorporated. We were hard at work getting *Corrupting Influence: The Best of Warpstone* finished. We are very pleased with the results and the feedback we have received suggests that you are too. We hope it will help attract some new readers to Warpstone, and maybe even WFRP.

We have had a number of comments recently calling for more background. So, alongside our continuing Talabheim series, we bring comprehensive coverage on the Sea of Claws. This is in addition to the usual mix of articles. Again, we do feel we have been squeezing articles in. From next issue we are looking at increasing our page count – but we shall see. As always, the feedback we do receive, and there is never enough, is always useful. For this reason we have decided to undertake another readers survey. We hope you'll take the time to complete it.

After much water under the magic bridge, we are happy to say that we can finally bring you a review of *Realms of Sorcery*. As you'll see my thoughts on this long awaited book are mixed. Have a read of the review, and then let us know what you think. If we get enough, we'll publish next issue. The next release from Hogshead is due to be the Dwarf sourcebook by regular Warpstone contributor Alfred Nuñez Jr. Over the next couple of issues we'll be bringing you some additional background on the dwarfs, some by Alfred himself. We'll also be doing the same for *Realms of Sorcery*, filling in some of the gaps left by the book.

Our second review, is of the unofficial supplement *A Private War*, self published by our regular columnist Tim Eccles. Although I usually review all new WFRP products for Warpstone, I have refrained from doing so here. Our reviews have to be, and be seen to be, completely fair. Thus we asked someone independent to do this one. The same will go for all other products where we have had some input.





With the Lord of the Rings and Harry Potter movies doing big business, it seems fantasy is everywhere at the moment. Games Workshop have had huge success with their Lord of the Rings game. However, so far it seems as if RPGs are gaining little from this raising of the genre's profile. There seems to be no way to attract new blood to the RPG hobby in any large numbers. Wizards of the Coast's D20 revolution already seems to have largely died. So although there are enough players to keep roleplaying going for some time, it seems there is no way to pry the coffin lid off.





So, on that sombre note, I'll leave you to get on with the rest of the issue.

INFO

All correspondence to :
Warpstone
c/o John Keane
11 Eridge Green
Kents Hill
Milton Keynes
MK7 6JE
UK

E mail: warpstone@bigfoot.com
Website: www.warpstone.darcare.net

Editors: John Foody & John Keane
Associate Editors: Martin Oliver & Mel Tudno Jones
Additional Proofing: Steve Gerke
Website Editor: Konrad Schubert
Cover: Olivier Bergerat
Our man in the USA: Spencer Wallace
Illustrations: John Keane  Ralph Horsley  Richard Martin  David Bezzina 
**All uncredited art by John Keane.*

Steven Punter  Olivier Bergerat  Oliver Bancroft  Pawel K. Klopotoski 
Talabheim District Maps by Alfred Nunez

Thanks to: Tim Eccles, Roderic Oswald, Alfred Nunez, N. Arne Dam, Anthony Ragan, Andrew Hind, Ryan Wileman, Luke Twigger, Tom McGreney, Mark Bell, Zeno Collins, Konrad Schubert, Richard Leon, Jody MacGregor, Anthony, Adam & Peter.

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SUBMISSIONS

Version 1.5 – July 1999

Warpstone is happy to receive submissions of both written work and art. We will *always* respond to submissions, even if they are not suitable for publication in Warpstone. If you send a submission and don't hear back from us in good time, please drop us a line to remind us. Failure to reply is simply a symptom of the chaotic nature of the Warpstone organisation. If you take the time with a submission, we will take the time to respond.

Payment

A published contribution earns a you a free copy of Warpstone.

How?

We are happy to receive submissions by post or e-mail. Articles should be in RTF (Rich Text Format) or MS Word format. Disks should be 3.5", formatted for PC and marked with your name and article names.

Art Submissions

We are always looking for artists. You must have an understanding of the "Warhammer style" (which covers a broad range of styles, as our current artists will testify!), but we are happy to look at all kinds of work, whether your speciality is maps, caricatures, portraits or anything else. Just send us a picture you think should be included in Warpstone, and some examples of any other work you have done. Please remember not to send originals, but only copies.

Article Submissions

Warpstone tries not to include articles that rewrite game rules or are in themselves rules-heavy. In the same vein we are not looking for new monsters, careers, skills, gods etc. (That said, if you have something good send it in.) We are looking for articles that expand of the world of Warhammer, filling in the gaps that are present. We also look at how the game is played, discussing issues relevant to all gamers.

If you have an article but you're not sure whether it's suitable, send us an outline. We will tell you if we are interested in seeing it developed. If you could include a sample of some other work you've completed at the same time, this would be useful (but is not essential).

Regular Articles

Reviews: We will review WFRP material. If you wish to write a review on any other release (WFB etc.) then please check with us first to make sure no-one else is writing it. Should be 600+ words.

Comment Articles: We are always looking for articles where you put across your point of view on a particular subject. *Cameos:* Brief encounters and adventure outlines. Don't include character profiles, only descriptions. *Scenarios:* Full length, detailed adventures. We are especially interested in scenarios that do not include hosts of creatures, lots of magic or loads of Chaos cultists. When these are included, they should be an integral part of the story. A tribe of goblins with +1 swords all round will prove the adage that 'the editor's red pen is mightier than the sword...' *Short stories:* Set firmly in the Warhammer World. Same guidelines as Scenarios.

The Article List

If you want to see any WFRP related article then let us know. We will add it to the article list. Only the following on the list at the moment;

Careers: As mentioned in issue 10. Not new ones, but fleshed out cultures and backgrounds for the current ones.

ETC.

What was to become of him, barely nineteen, hiding in the icy coasts of the sea of Claws. The ship had left him behind, deliberately it now seemed, after five long years abroad. Why, he did not know. He had kept his silence for six long months. But then what more could he say. The light had long dimmed and the dwarfs were nearing their prey. What fools they were, blind and fighting amongst themselves. Nevertheless, the gods said they would have him and so perhaps he should just give in. As the sun rose above the snowy peaks, he offered a prayer to whichever god would listen. And truly, he did not care which god answered... He would be their servant for life.

REPORTS FROM THE HEART OF CORRUPTION

Reviews

2

It's been over fifteen years, but we finally get to review *Realms of Sorcery*. Also, the unofficial supplement *A Private War*. "There is just one question that needs to be answered: Was it worth the wait?"



The Order of the Ram

29

The St. Bernards of the Dwarf realms. The kind of dwarf you are happy to meet when you are lost highway up a mountain. Um... unless your an orc that is. "Cold, bleak mountainsides stared back at them."



Fragments

7

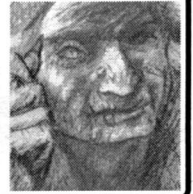
News of the Best of Warpstone, a review of *Lord of the Rings* and loads more. "There has been much demand for the early issues, most being long sold out, and now only available at inflated prices."



Talabheim

36

A look at the main criminal group in the city and a couple more districts. "The Kisleivites of Talabheim have, to a great extent, hung on to their belief in the Old Way, despite censorship and occasional persecution by the Imperial clergy."



The Correspondent

9

Tim Eccles regular column takes a look at the use of language in *WFRP*. "it is something that was neither initially consistently explained, nor has clarification been forthcoming."



Making the Cut

38

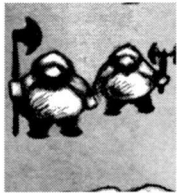
A look at the organisation of physicians and others. The first of our guild articles. "I will assume that the clergy is limited and overworked, that chaos has led to a deep suspicion of magical healing."



Fire in the Hole

12

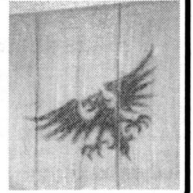
From the author of the Dwarf sourcebook comes background on the Dawikoni, humans who live with the dwarfs. "Some argued that it would be folly to admit the Manlings into the Dwarf realms."



The Profit of War

41

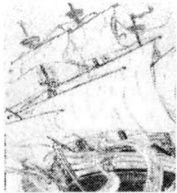
Just how far will someone go for profit? Find out in this Talabheim scenario. "As is the way, there are those willing to risk their, and others, lives for money."



The Sea of Claws

17

There be monsters! Background on the Sea of Claws, its coasts full of strange ruins and people, its waters dangerous and unpredictable. "Ulric saw the great glaciers crack and shatter."



The Charge

48

A prisoner of Chaos, forced to fight in this short story. "They stood silhouetted against the skyline on horseback, their horned helmets and lances jutting out from the horizon."



ABBREVIATIONS

A	Number of Attacks	Fel	Fellowship	M	Movement	SL	Secret Language
AP	Armour Points	GC	Gold Crown	MP	Magic Points	SS	Secret Signs
BS	Ballistic Skill	GM	Gamesmaster	NPC	Non-player character	SW	Specialist Weapons
CI	Cool	Gu	Guilder (Marienburg Coinage)	P	Parry	T	Toughness
CR	Complexity Rating	GW	Games Workshop	PC	Player Character	W	Wounds
DB	Dodge Blow	I	Initiative	R	Range	WFB	Warhammer Fantasy Battle
Dex	Dexterity	IC	Imperial Calendar	RoS	Realms of Sorcery	WFRP	Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay
EPs	Experience Points	Int	Intelligence	S	Strength	WP	Will Power
ES	Effective Strength	Ld	Leadership	SDiR	Marienburg: Sold Down the River	WS	Weapon Skill

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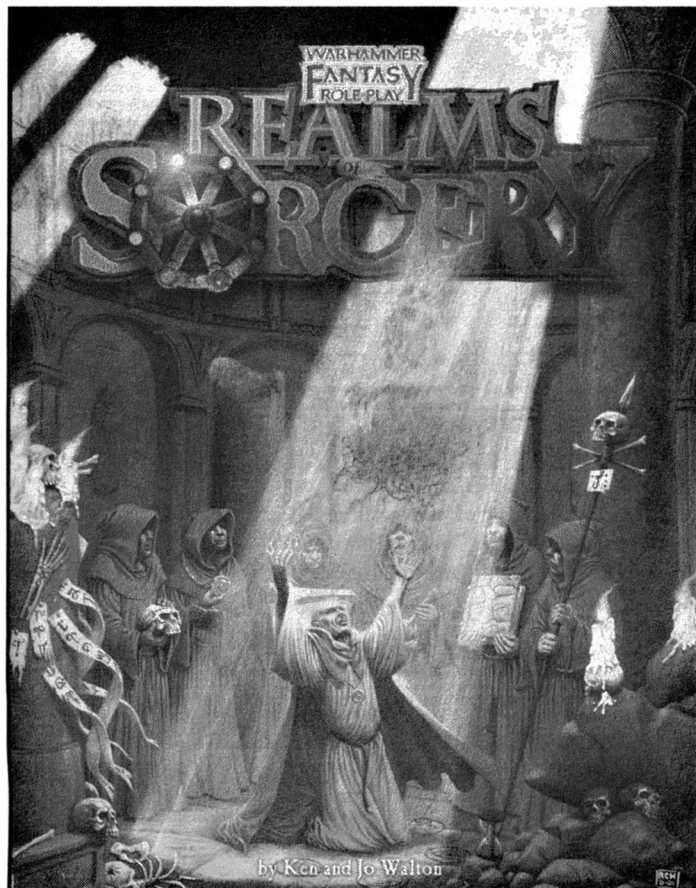
REVIEWS

REALMS OF SORCERY

By Ken & Jo Walton

Published by Hogshead Publishing

Reviewed by John Foody



Finally, after sixteen years in the making, *Realms of Sorcery* has arrived. Famously promised as “coming soon” in the original rulebook, an earlier attempt by *Something Rotten in Kislev* author Ken Rolsten was rejected by Games Workshop for not being “Warhammer” enough. With the game in limbo, it awaited Hogshead to take up the baton again. Although they commissioned the book some seven years ago it was held up again and again. Nevertheless, it is with us now and there is just one question that needs to be answered: was it worth the wait?

WFRP’s magic system has been much derided over the years, with many players saying that they would like it changed. I have never really had this problem. Although not perfect, it suited my style of game (one with little magic) fine. It was simple and easy to play. I had two major doubts approaching *Realms of Sorcery*. The first was that it would be little more than a list of new spells and secondly that Warhammer Fantasy Battle would adversely influence it. This was a problem with the original magic rules, and since then Games Workshop have released numerous supplements detailing how magic works, most controversially with the introduction of the colours of magic. Using the background and ideas from the Battle game is not a problem, for it is an obvious benefit to link the games to some degree. The real test would be how *Realms of Sorcery* chose to modify it to fit WFRP’s unique style.

I was hoping to see *Realms of Sorcery* concentrating on the background of magic and those that wielded its power. I would be happy to see new spells and careers, as long as they were firmly placed in the context of the world and didn’t unbalance the game. It is cliché to say that you can pick and choose parts of any supplement you wish to use but it holds true, especially in a book of this size. However, *Realms of Sorcery* does have a responsibility to ensure that WFRP’s Old World remains interesting and balanced. In time, a book like this will affect

many other supplements and cannot but change WFRP.

One of the problems that I don’t feel Warhammer, among most other games, has yet to get to grips with is the existence of magic. In a world where magic is real, systems and laws have to be made to counter and use it, while beliefs will spring up around those who practice it. Again, *Realms of Sorcery* would be judged on how well it could follow through on this.

Available in hard and soft back, the book itself is an impressive two hundred and fifty six pages. Using full-page art instead of smaller pieces, the layout looks good. The art (some by *Warpstone* artists) is mixed but generally of a high standard, although one or two pieces are reprints.

The first chapter looks at the very origins of magic in the Old World, particularly as seen by the Elves. Human wizardry was dominated by Elementalism until two hundred years ago when the face of Magic in the Empire really changed. With the coming of Chaos, Magnus the Pious dispatched an envoy to the Elves for help, and they sent the wizard Teclis. It was he who taught the humans how to use Battle Magic. Afterwards he helped set up colleges of magic so that humans could learn how to wield it. He also taught them about colour magic – that the power of Chaos could be seen as a rainbow of colours. Each of these could be wielded in a different way. This colour magic is the most potent that humans can use, although in a limited way – unlike the Elves.

The next chapter details the nature of each of these Colours as well as the other disciplines available to humanity, Battle Magic and Elementalism among them. It then gives an overview of Dark magic and the different forms wielded by Non Humans.

Introducing the system of Colour Magic was always going to be problematic, as it changes the way that magic is perceived in WFRP. Having Elementalism as the native human magic is an interesting twist, one that I like. I am less keen on the introduction of colour and battle magic, but only in the execution as opposed to the theory. With these changes, the emphasis of magic remains firmly rooted in warfare. This is a mistake as it is a direct transfer of emphasis from the Battle game rather than a desire to look at how it could be used in the wider Old World. However, this leaning has now been given a solid context to place it within, one that suits the background itself. However, while this works at a broad level, it falls down once you look at the detail. While it is important to the background of Magic in the Empire, *Realms of Sorcery* shouldn’t have been so heavily focused here.

As part of Teclis’ setting up of the colleges, systems of control were introduced, looking to stop wizards turning to the dark arts. As part of this, licences were implemented. These are detailed as part of the background on “A Wizard’s Life”, and is the only part to really stand out. Licences are an excellent idea, firmly within the Old World milieu. Wizards who do not carry a valid licence are open to accusations of, among other things, necromancy or chaos worship. Even though most people cannot read, it doesn’t take away from the concept as it gives ideas for forgeries, theft or ignoring them for political or personal reasons. It reminds me of the fact that Pedlars and others were required to carry Licences in Elizabethan times to stop them being arrested. Another snippet I like is that Wizards are responsible for the crimes of their apprentices, in an effort to stamp out the darker side of magic.

Such controls on Wizards and their movements and actions is welcome. It answers to my earlier thought that society would have to deal with them in some way. They may be feared and distrusted but they are still useful in many situations. Such beliefs apply to the village wise woman as well as the most powerful Colour wizard.

There are problems in this chapter, however. The main one is the recommended number of wizards in The Empire. Its recommendations for a low magic game mean that there will be at least two hundred and forty fourth and fifth level magic users in The Empire. This is a huge amount and should be considered by GMs when introducing various aspects from this book. Although it is open for GMs to change, this does unbalance the whole concept of magic in the Empire, especially where the head of the Wizards & Alchemists Guild is only 3rd Level (see *Middenheim: City of Chaos*). Later it states that wizards renew their licences yearly at the nearest college, with Imperial Wizards returning to Altdorf to swear allegiance to the Empire. This means that all these powerful Colour wizards live within a short distance of Altdorf. I have to say that I did get confused here with the terminology. Colour Wizards are also called Imperial wizards, but Battle Wizards are not, even though they also swear allegiance to the Empire.

One of the best chapters is that on Hedge Wizardry. The result of all the controls placed on wizards means there will be those who fall outside the law, even though they are not involved in forbidden magic. This encompasses a wide range of

magic users from healers to wise-women. It is harder for Hedge Wizards to gain power outside the structured college approach but they can use a variety of spells from different disciplines. With this comes some solid reasoning for why there are spell lists in the first place. The idea of Hedge-Wizardry is an interesting and welcome addition to the background. More could have been made of them, but nevertheless it still makes a perfect PC career in many ways.

The most common form of magic in the Old World is Battle Magic, detailed in the next chapter. It begins with the story of a group of Druids choosing to become Battle Wizards at the time of Teclis. On one side this introduces an interesting Schism, but on the other it looks like an attempt to fit everything into ideas of Colour Magic. Colleges in Nuln, Talabheim and Altdorf are described, most offering an "official" Imperial curriculum. This makes it very difficult for PCs to attend these colleges. On reaching fourth level a wizard may attempt to join one of the eight colour colleges to learn colour magic up to fifth level.

All located in Altdorf, there is a description of each Colour College including the buildings and principal wizard. Where to begin? The descriptions of the colleges are possibly the worst thing written for WFRP. We have fourth level wizards cleaning pigeon shit off ledges and occasionally falling to their deaths. There is a pyramid that extends hundreds of feet underground, wizards walking around with scythes and generally ideas far too close to Terry Pratchett.

The authors do succeed in making each college different, but mostly because they are so simplified. It is extremely unlikely that PCs could join the colleges as there is around a year's training and various commitments to be upheld. I do like a few ideas, such as Jade magic being related to the seasonal changes, but in the end these are just snippets. Sadly, terrible.

Overall the Battle Magic chapter does not convince. Not enough space is spent looking at what a Battle Wizard is and does or how he does it. Instead this is, and I use the phrase in the worst possible way, too high fantasy. Colour magic itself is not necessarily bad, but the way it is handled here unbalances the background, misses much of the spirit of the game, and is unatmospheric in its outlook. It feels tagged on when it should have been merged into the system at every level. The introduction of fifth level wizards is a pointless addition, when spell lists and careers could have been incorporated more closely. Some of the functions of the Colour Wizards impinge on aspects of the Old World Gods (such as Jade wizards and the cult of Mörri) and more could have been made of this.

Next follows the "older" forms of magic. First is Illusionism, with its link to the Theatre and the underworld. There is good background here with a few interesting twists. The chapter on Alchemists begins with some background on what they do, followed by details of what they make and how. Simple rules are given for this - making solvents and acids among others. The whole chapter suffers from a real lack of atmosphere. There are good ideas but it is dry and undeveloped.

As the human magic that predates colour and Battle magic, Elementalism is given a far more prominent place in the Old World background. It could fairly be called humanity's natural magic. However Elementalists are now seen as second rate wizards - despite being powerful manipulators of nature. A fifth level advance is also introduced - the Elementalists becoming specialised in one of the elements. There is some interesting material here but it is hampered by a lack of imagination. Elementalists are shoehorned into a college system (and their main college located in a city) when there should have been something more suited to their own character.

Firmly linked to Kislev is the new career of Ice Shaman. Inspired by Warhammer Fantasy Battle, they are also similar in many ways to Hedge wizards, although there are more respected and tolerated. You could also see them as specialised Elementalists. Mostly female, they are descended from the Gospodars, harnessing the power of ice and cold. As with colour wizards they gather together yearly which I can't help but think would cause all kind of problems. It isn't a problem with them meeting but every year seems far too often. Some will spend months getting there. If they are only one month away, then they are away from their

lands for two months plus the meeting itself. All their enemies can just wait for them to head off as expected to get on with their evil deeds (and there is mileage in that idea too). Why not have them summoned when there is something to talk about - summonses sent out on the wind, messengers dashing through the snow to try and find them hidden away? This is heavily an NPC career. Overall not a bad addition, but in part, this is because it is brand new to the game.

A number of the more minor and interesting magic colleges in the Empire are also looked at. These range from one specialising in Zone spells to a college for nobles, taking in a secret society or two. This is good chapter, with some nice ideas which immediately made me think of a few scenario plots. Nothing here is too overpowered and it slots easily into the background.

Necromancers, Daemonologists and Chaos wizards are all covered in a single chapter. All are given some background with the origins of Necromancy linked to Nagash, the strengthening of Daemonology to Chaos, and the magic granted by the Chaos gods to their followers. Descriptions are given for three Chaos gods that follow the form in the main rulebook and generally don't add anything unexpected. There is also the introduction of Dark Magic, a form of pure Chaos that pools in areas causing a large chance of mutation. This is an extremely disappointing chapter. It should have been far more detailed in scope, with more details on how these wizards operate and how they can be incorporated in the background. For example we are told that worshippers of the Chaos Gods receive Marks of Chaos but little guidance is given on how to use these.

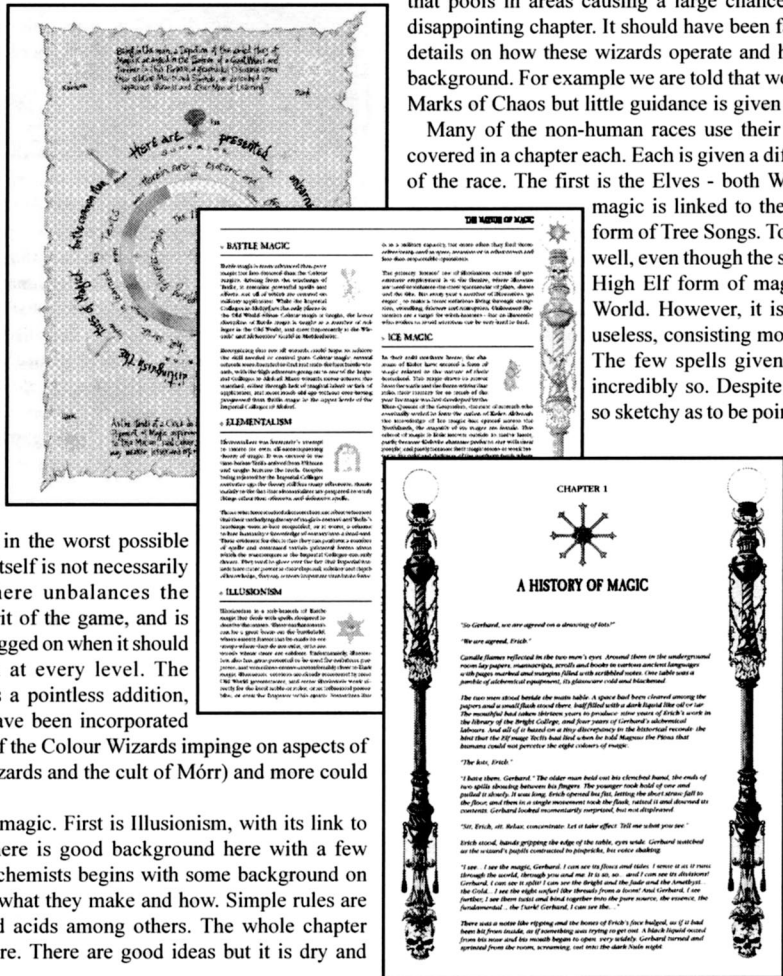
Many of the non-human races use their own forms of magic and these are covered in a chapter each. Each is given a different style, linked to the personality of the race. The first is the Elves - both Wood and High Elf magic. Wood Elf magic is linked to the Treemen and the forest, taking the form of Tree Songs. Together with the spell lists, this works well, even though the spells are powerful at a low level. The High Elf form of magic is the purest in the Warhammer World. However, it is so briefly covered as to be almost useless, consisting mostly of a profile of a High Elf mage. The few spells given for High Elves are powerful, one incredibly so. Despite the signs of interesting ideas this is so sketchy as to be pointless, something that holds for many of the other non-human chapters.

The Dwarfs' version of Magic is the most unique. They use Runes, each with a different power, which are inscribed upon items - often weapons or armour. For example a *Rune of Protection* would give a bonus of extra Armour Points. These runes were said to have been discovered by the Ancestor god Thungni and are cast by Runesmiths. This is as much about smithing as magic, and its secrets are jealousy guarded by the Dwarfs. This is another career largely unsuitable for PCs although there is some useful background here. However, it is again sketchy. Casting runes is also highly dangerous - inscribing even a second level rune has a one in fifty chance of doing a minimum of

twelve damage to the Smith. However, no where is this constant danger discussed.

Directly related to the Dwarfs' Rune magic is the inferior human copy. A wizard named Klausner obtained the knowledge from the Dwarfs in dubious circumstances and became the first Rune Master. Highly illegal in the Empire, these Rune Masters are hated by the Dwarfs and are forced to live double lives. This is a solid background idea. I like the idea that the Dwarfs couldn't contain their secrets and that the humans' knowledge now acts as a point of conflict between the two races. There are some immediate ideas for background and plots, making this a very useful part of the Sourcebook.

Heavily reliant on the power of Warpstone, Skaven wizards are extremely powerful in their society. The background for the wizards is thus an introduction to the Skaven as a whole - especially Clans Skyre and Pestilens. Background is given on the Horned Rat, and rules for various Skaven weapons. Rules are detailed for Warpstone infection, and while simple, the chance of mutation seems far too high. An example is also given of a Skaven Sorcerer. Again, this chapter suffers from a too brief background and lack of development on the ideas, and feels too rooted to the Battle background.



Lastly for the races comes Goblin magic in the form of Waaagh! Needing lots of greenskins to work, the Shaman draws energy directly from them, something dangerous for them to attempt. The Shaman are messengers of the Goblin gods, Mork and Gork, and shaman of the different goblinoid races are looked at. There is also a look at the slightly different Snotling magic, as well as a brief description of Ogre Shamans who use human style magic. Sadly, this chapter is just depressing. The goblinoids are those from Warhammer Fantasy Battle, a mix of infantilism and thuggery. Their magic is plain comedy and completely unsuited to WFRP. It seems to have been transferred from one game to another without any idea or intention of how it should be modified to fit.

A surprising but welcome addition is that of Witch-Hunters. Surprising because they are non magic-users but welcome because they are an essential part of the new background. Here they are recast in a mould different to the often-perceived Warhammer Witch-Hunters, indeed in a similar way to their treatment in *Warstone* (see *Corrupting Influence*). As part of their duty, there are required to hunt down and police wizards, especially those with no licence. Up until Magnus they were judge, jury and executioner but now they can only bring to trial. A nice touch is that anyone found guilty of Chaos Worship has all their property taken by the cult that prosecuted them with only four having such powers. The new career of Exorcist is also described and they make for good, interesting characters with many possibilities.

The next chapter looks at the casting and creation of spells. This is the nuts-and-bolts of the system, and there is a discussion on ingredients, gestures, targeting etc. Rules for spell creation are detailed, although the book recommends avoiding this unless you are sure it won't unbalance the game. Finally comes thoughts on ingredients and buying magic items. Overall, this is a very good chapter, expanding on the system usefully – adding real depth to a previously dry set of rules.

Slightly less successful is the chapter on Magic Items. Simple rules are given for the creation of Magic Items although it is made clear that they are difficult to make. There are some excellent ideas here on how a wizard creates an item. If a GM allows a PC wizard to create items, they will need to be careful as it is not hard in pure number terms, it is the roleplaying side that makes it difficult. More fun (for GMs) is that holding a magic item is basically illegal, a restriction that can be put to all sorts of uses. After the rules for creation come some very powerful magic items. These are unique, with a description of their history, and could make an interesting focus for a campaign. Finally there is a long list of potions, which reveals how easy it is to make a healing potion and just how useful the corpse of a Dragon really is. There is even the truly terrible Potion of Truth! Again, there are some interesting ideas here, even for those who wouldn't allow PCs to make their own items.

Taking a full quarter of the book, the Spell lists begin by saying that those in the rulebook are the most commonly available, while these are rarer. Beginning with Petty Magic, there is a good selection of minor spells, some especially useful for thieves. Indeed, these spells are among the more interesting, having as a whole, a more WFRP feel. The Battle Magic spells are, as you'd expect, in the same vein as those in the rulebook – heavily influenced by Warhammer Fantasy Battle. The Colour Magic spells are an extension of these and very powerful, some absurdly so. However, many are atmospheric and interesting, but do boil down to different ways of doing damage. For use by NPCs they will be spectacular and fearsome but for PCs they will probably be unbalanced.

The Ice Magic, Alchemist and Elemental spells seem pretty well balanced and suited to their careers. One Elemental spell is that most un-WFRP of ideas – the raise dead spell. However, it is a limited version and does succeed in being useful and suited. The Chaotic spells, one per level for each Chaos God, are interesting in themselves. However they did reinforce for me that these spells would prove interesting if used in a scenario but if overused would soon become tedious.

The chapter on wizard familiars approaches them in a different way to Druidic familiars. There are four kinds of familiar, each created to perform different functions. The authors succeeds in making them interesting, with many opportunities for fun roleplaying moments. An extremely useful chapter to help flesh out the various *Create Familiar* spells.

The final chapter gives guidance for GMs on how to use *Realms of Sorcery*. This is an excellent chapter with ideas and discussions on how to place magic into the WFRP setting. It looks to draw in the various elements from the book and examine how they should be played. The only downside is that it should have been so much longer.

To finish off the book, there are listing of spells in alphabetic order and by discipline. It takes in the spells scattered around the various supplements and is a useful resource.

After reading *Realms of Sorcery* I find myself in two minds to its worth. On one hand it contains a host of fine ideas but on the other it is deeply flawed. The background on human wizards (outside Colour Colleges) is the highlight, as is the advice given to GMs on how to use the material. I found inspiration for a host

of scenarios, background and NPCs here, instead of ways of simply making characters more powerful. Obviously, every group will take something different from these pages, but the full value is going to be gained by Roleplaying what is here. A good example is that of the Necromancer spell that creates a Liche. The long process of moral and physical decay and desire for immortality is, in a basic way, thrown away in a fourth level spell. However, it is for the GM to ensure that the spell becomes part of the storytelling and not just a use of Magic Points. Yes, the physical and mental corruption inherent in reaching fourth level captures this quest for immortality, but more guidance on roleplaying such a fall should have been given.

For all the good ideas, *Realms of Sorcery* fails as a whole and in some places is simply not WFRP. Magic remains too rooted to *Warhammer Fantasy Battle*, with Colour magic tacked on instead of incorporated. The attempt to mould it to WFRP has been unsuccessful and potentially wounding to the game. Yes, parts can be ignored but this is now the fabric of the game that many will work from. Using the Battle background is not a problem but it has to be changed to fit WFRP. Just one element of this is the lack of religion in the book. Yes, this isn't *Realms of Divine Magic* but religion pervades the WFRP world and that just isn't reflected here. Yes, *Realms of Divine Magic* will cover the religious side of magic, but wizards worship too. This is even more true, now that Colour Magic's scope overlaps with that of certain gods.

For a book two hundred and fifty six pages long, it seems odd to accuse *Realms of Sorcery* of lack of detail. However it is too thinly spread. I appreciate there was a difficult balance Hogshead had to walk. Not including everything means that people would complain about that, but covering everything doesn't work either. More advice and background was needed to flesh out the ideas given – especially concerning "evil" magic and race magic. Race magic should perhaps have been dealt with under the various forthcoming sourcebooks, instead of the sketchy outlines given here. Hogshead's remit may have been to cover everything, but it seems too much to have placed into one book. We now need to buy *Realms of Chaos*, the race books etc, to get the full background. However, these should do their respective subjects far more justice.

With all its flaws and drawbacks, *Realms of Sorcery* still remains a useful purchase. However, they are going to have to work with it – GMs firmly controlling what is and isn't permissible in their game. There is a much better book hidden behind what it is here, and it is sad we never got to see it.

REALMS OF SORCERY ERRATA

This erratum applies to the first edition of *Realms of Sorcery*. It has been amended in the second printing.

Page 1: Additional text: Jonathan Green / Additional material by Graeme Davis, Phil Masters, Andrew Morris, Alfred Nunez, Martin Oliver / For inspiration, discussion and outright help the authors would like to offer thanks to: Nina Baur, Graeme Davis, Rob Fey, Sebastian Graubner, Peter Huebner, Chris Jackson, Phil Masters, Andrew Morris, Alfred Nunez, Martin Oliver, Oliver Rosenkranz, Graydon Saunders and James Wallis. Finally, special thanks to the Blades Street Tribe; Erik Engnok, Artemis Fortune, Jed, Kai Gildhorn, Smoky Hargreaves, Siegfried Sassoon, and special guest star, Diem Manstroek.

Page 103: The example for the Rule of Combination should be regarded as incorrect.

Page 104: Under Learning Runes, third paragraph: It should read 'Therefore a runesmith can only learn runes of level 1, A Master Runesmith of levels 1 or 2, and a Rune Lord of levels 1, 2 or 3.'

Page 105: Under Learning Master Runes, fourth paragraph: "... The seventeen described on pp224-226 are the only ones that are 'living runes'; Rune Lords exist who know how to make them." There are actually twenty three Master Runes listed. The six new ones were added after the release of the WFB6 Dwarf book.

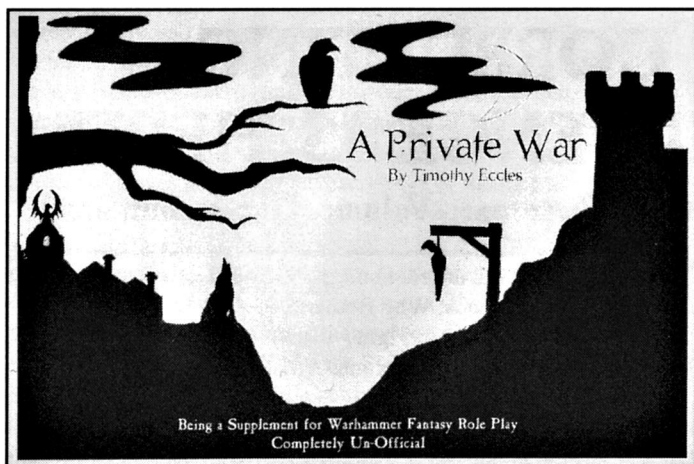
Page 141: Exorcists at Level 1 are given advances of +2 W (instead of +2 T as printed).

Page 148: In the 'Spell Creation Table', the last entry under 'Degree': It should read 'Physical laws can be flouted, and people's thoughts and actions directly manipulated.'

A PRIVATE WAR

By Tim Eccles

Reviewed by Luke Twigger



Self-publishing does not sound like something for the faint-hearted. It's also not for those without a sizeable wad of cash to pay all the up-front costs. So let's start the review by congratulating Tim Eccles on having the bravery and conviction to literally put his money where his mouth is. Even more so when we realise that the purchase price of this tome, £10, is merely sufficient to cover the costs, not to generate a profit for the author. However, the punter in the street, who wants to know whether they should spend their hard-earned cash on *A Private War*, probably doesn't much care about the principles involved. They most likely want to know if they'd be getting value for money, which is where this review comes in.

Let's start with the appearance. Counting the cover, it's 100 pages and perfect bound (i.e. no staples). The printing costs are higher per copy for a small private print run than for a commercial release, but even so, £10 is broadly comparable with other WFRP supplements and better than many of the new d20 modules I've seen. This includes the stark but effective cover, done in a silhouette style. Having read the book I'm hard pressed to link the cover directly to the adventure, but then a common criticism of roleplay books is for the story to be spoiled by a player glimpsing the cover, so this isn't necessarily a bad thing.

Inside, the text is clean and straightforward, clearly the work of a word processor rather than an art package. There's little space wasted on margins or blank space, the apparent emphasis being on content rather than presentation. From the perspective of self-publication, without the resources and professional artists and designers, I would say this was definitely the correct approach to take. There are a few places where the main text disappears behind a boxed sidebar but I generally found less typos and spelling mistakes than in many commercial releases.

The town maps, drawn by Ryan Wileman, are brilliant, very intricate in their presentation. The area map on the other hand looks very amateurish, a scanned-in copy of one of The Enemy Within maps with hand-drawn labels annotating the extra features.

So what's the actual adventure like? It's described in the introduction as a chase but I'd describe it more like a road movie as I didn't get much sense of urgency, but you certainly visit a lot of places, in a part of the Empire barely featured in official WFRP material. The adventure begins in Middenheim where the PCs are employed by the Temple of Shallya to track down a doctor who has mysteriously fled the city. The PCs then progress north and east to Ferlangen before heading south to Wolfenburg. Also pursuing the doctor are representatives of various other religious and political factions, each with their own agenda.

Middenheim acts as the starting point for the adventure and Tim has thoughtfully provided references (including page numbers) for any locations that are described in the Middenheim sourcebook. Middenheim is a good place for the action to start - it's a big city so there's many reasons for the PCs to be present and it's described in detail in published WFRP supplements so it doesn't take up too much space in the book to explain and describe it.

The time in Middenheim is spent setting up the adventure, introducing NPCs and organisations and giving the PCs opportunity to find out useful extra clues. Details are provided of who might say what at many obvious destinations such

as various temples, guilds, etc. After the introduction in Middenheim, the PCs become associated with the Temple of Shallya and are sent out to track down the errant doctor, who was last seen boarding a coach for Beeckerhoven, a small town to the north of Middenheim.

It wasn't immediately obvious to me - in fact you need to read as far as the Appendices before it gets clearer - but joining the PCs in their journey are a large number of NPCs, and not just any old NPCs either. They include templars, witch hunters and other Important People! As a GM I wasn't looking forward to juggling so many strong personalities who would probably vastly overshadow the PCs. Thankfully the very first village outside Middenheim features an encounter designed to slow down the PCs and give the NPCs a head start. Reference is made throughout the rest of the adventure to where these NPCs are likely to be, based on their speed and probable decisions, including calendar dates, which is a very useful way for keeping track of where the different groups have got to.

The main bulk of the adventure then essentially consists of the PCs travelling along, stopping at various coaching inns and villages, picking up information about where the doctor was headed next and following his trail as best they can. There are red herrings and side events at almost every location en route. It was these that made the adventure lose its urgency, as it seemed very easy to sidetrack the PCs for a few days here and a few days there and before you know it it'd be winter. The side events are generally entertaining; some are totally unrelated to the main plot but some diversions are deliberate acts of allies of the doctor. Without the chase to worry about, many of the side events could be expanded into much longer episodes. With a little work it should be possible to run some of them in such a way that the PCs can return to fully resolve them later.

One thing I like is the way that the author drops extra details into much of the text, from details of the nomenclature of an Imperial Knights entourage to a discussion on slavery. I got the impression that many of these are based on historical facts, but are presented in such a way that they provide verisimilitude rather than boring you with the academic niceties.

As mentioned, one problem I had was the large number of NPCs and remembering who was who, where the PCs had met them, etc. Too often I'd read an NPC name and then find myself flipping randomly through the book trying to figure out who they were. People were not always well introduced, which confused me, as I read the book from front-to-back. In hindsight, the appendices are fairly useful at sorting out who's who. While the author obviously knew who all the NPCs were, where the locations were and what the overall story was, it wasn't obvious to the reader just how it all fitted together, certainly not on first reading. So if you intend to GM it, I'd recommend reading it thoroughly a few times, make notes and using the calendar.

Finally the ending, or lack thereof. The book ends at the Kislev border, with the doctor still well out of reach. Let's hope we find out how the campaign continues in a future book!

In addition to information about many of the NPCs and organisations featured in the adventure, the appendices also contain lots of useful background. Much of this is applicable to the rest of the Empire, such as details on religious aspects of life, witch hunters, laws, coinage and a Guide to the Empire (very useful for new players and good for reminding experienced players of the difference between player knowledge and PC knowledge).

Tim also supplies background for Ostland and Nordland, areas of the Empire traditionally neglected by official WFRP material. These could be used to assist any further adventures in the region and provide details of topics touched on in the adventure but not otherwise described, such as the hospice at Seuchensdorf.

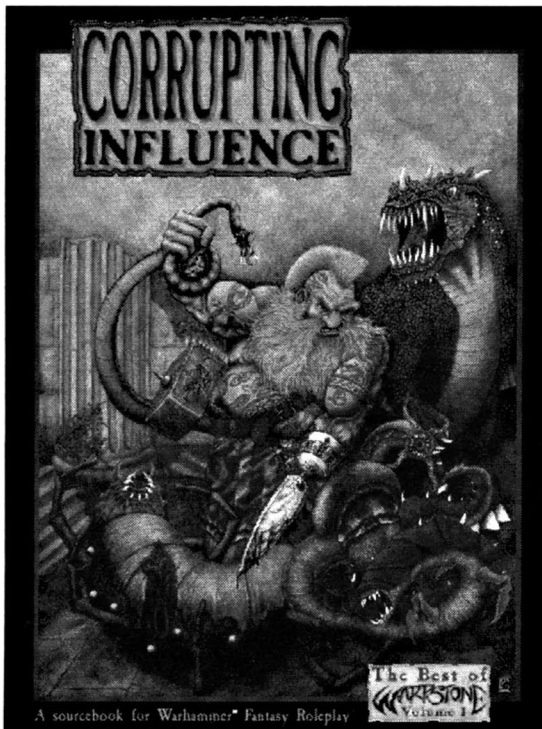
Overall then, this is a very impressive effort. The presentation is more than adequate and value for money comparable or better than most commercial roleplay books. The organisation of the text could be better though, as it can get confusing with so many NPCs and locations. There's much opportunity for heroic adventure, many side events to distract the PCs and extra appendices of background material you can refer to even after the adventure is long-finished.

ORDERING DETAILS

A Private War is available for £10 in the UK (cheque payable to Timothy Eccles) or UK£15/E20/US\$17 in the EU or US\$18 elsewhere (all in notes; for safety the purchaser should send insured). I am using the following address: Tim Eccles, Nuln University, Knights Park, Kingston, Surrey, KT12QJ, UK. Any queries can be emailed to timothyeccles@hotmail.com and full details are at www.shadow-warriors.co.uk

WARPSTONE FRAGMENT'S

BRIEF REVIEWS AND NEWS FROM THE WORLD OF WARHAMMER



CORRUPTING INFLUENCE IS HERE!!

The Best of Warpstone: Volume One is out now!

We are pleased to announce that *Corrupting Influence: The Best of Warpstone Volume One* is now available. There has been much demand for the early issues, most being long sold out, and now only available at inflated prices. After all we only

printed around one hundred and fifty of issue one, and four hundred of issue nine. Since issue ten, when Hogshead began to distribute *Warpstone*, the circulation has increased hugely.

With a colour cover by John Keane, *Corrupting Influence* contains the best articles from issues one to nine. There is no new material, so if you have issues one to nine then you can spend your money elsewhere. However, we have taken the opportunity to revise some of the articles as well as commissioning some new art. As with the magazine itself, Hogshead Publishing are distributing the book, so it is widely available in all good game shops. However, it isn't available directly from Warpstone.

Corrupting Influence (ISBN: 1-899749-34-9 PRODUCT CODE: HOG 220) 128 page softback. Cost is £12.95/\$18.95.

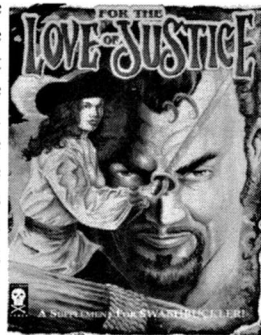
Here is the full article listing;

- ◆ Fighting Chaos: Why Bother?
- ◆ To Fight or Not to Fight?
- ◆ Secrets of the Warhammer Artists
- ◆ Volatile Magick
- ◆ The entire Templars' series (voted readers favourite article in our last questionnaire. It does also include Templar orders for the smaller cults and non-humans. These were never published in Warpstone but in Legion issue One, which can be downloaded free from our website)
- ◆ Low Life on the Highway
- ◆ Disease in the Warhammer World (For reasons of space some disease descriptions were cut, but these are available from our website)
- ◆ A Gentlemen's Guide to Marienburg
- ◆ Prosthetics in WFRP
- ◆ Witch-hunters
- ◆ The Final Adventure of Ursula Urjingrad
- ◆ A Hundred Years of Trade
- ◆ The Greys
- ◆ Cameos (Flea Circus, AWOL, Rough Justice, Save the Village and You Make Your Own Luck)
- ◆ The Eternal Guard
- ◆ One Hour (to) Mórr
- ◆ The Cannon Ball Run
- ◆ The Missing Children of Regensdorf
- ◆ A Buried Past
- ◆ Full index of issues one to nine

**For the Love of Justice
For Swashbuckler by Jolly Roger Games
Reviewed by Tim Eccles**

Daring to risk my head above the parapet again, I came across this supplement in an Orc's Nest bargain bin. I am left wondering what on earth it was doing there. This is an excellent little book. For your money you get two adventures, one set in the Prussian marches and the other in Sicily. Both are wonderfully devious and multi-layered and would transfer easily into WFRP. You will struggle to get a better thought-out adventure for your money. Sure, there are some gripes but they are more about the production than the basic ideas. For \$12, there is not much mass for your money, there being only 32 pages in large print and with spacing padding. The author(s) also do not seem to have had the strength of their own convictions, as there are some truly tedious 'random' encounters thrown in and the denouement is a little simplistic. However, none of this undermines the basics of what is an excellent pair of adventures that a WFRP GM can build upon and fix to their own playing style. Having been taken in by a number of truly awful D20 products, I can fully recommend this and assure you that the resulting games will be definitely value for the money.

REVIEW!



RIP

Josh Kirby, famous for his illustrations on the covers of Terry Pratchett's Discworld books, died on the 26th October 2001. He also did some work for Games Workshop and one of his pieces appears on the cover of *Apocrypha Now!*

Dying Earth RPG

Pelgrane Press, makers of the Dying Earth RPG, have announced that the first issue of their online journal, XPS Online is now available free from their website. It includes background material, adventures and articles for free perusal at www.dyingearth.com/xpsonline.htm We will have a review of The Dying Earth RPG next issue.

Competition Winners

Congratulations to last issues competition winners Nigel Rich and Marco Crosa. Nigel is the winner of a leather-bound Realms of Sorcery and Macro wins a complete set of signed Gotrek and Felix novels. Thanks to all those who entered.

Warfare in the Age of Sigmar

Tim Eccles and Ryan Wileman have told Warpstone that they are creating Battle Rules based around their Tribes of Sigmar article in Warpstone issue 17. More as we get it...

Ever since it was announced that Tolkein's seminal work was going to be adapted in to a film, I had conflicting thoughts. On one hand director Peter Jackson had a great record and he seemed to be intent on retaining the spirit of the books. On the other, no-one had yet made a good sword-and-sorcery film. No where near. As the release approached, the pictures, rumours and trailers I saw gave me confidence that it was going to be good. But still, at the back of my mind gnawed the doubt that it was going to be *Deathstalker II* or the like.

In the end I am happy to say that my hard won cynicism was wrong. The prologue made an excellent job of setting the story and giving a tantalising taste of how the battle scenes in the next two films will look. There were so many areas where the film could fall, the first being the hobbits themselves. But they looked natural and the Shire looked, well like the Shire. There were lots of excellent scenes, the wizard's battle, the Nazgul, the escape over the bridge of Khazad-Dûm and many more. The performances, particularly Ian McKellan as Gandalf were convincing, although some of the main characters were pushed to the periphery and thus remained undeveloped.

Of course, you can't avoid the question of whether it was loyal to the book. There were lots of parts that weren't, including changes of character that didn't seem really necessary. Nevertheless most, to my mind, were positive. Tom Bombadil and Glorfindel may be important Middle Earth characters but the film doesn't suffer for losing them.

On the downside there are lots of niggles. But really, in a film of this scale that's all they remain. I feel as a reviewer I should be doing a better job of balancing the books by telling you the rubbish parts. Maybe I should have my critic's licence revoked but really most things are "just not the way I expected".

In the end it's by far the best fantasy film yet made. It wasn't the best film of 2001, but it was damn near. To my mind it was the best version of *Lord of the Rings*, we could have hoped for. And in the end, that's all we can ask.



Hoghead News

Hoghead is busy celebrating the success of *Realms of Sorcery*, already into its second printing. The next WFRP release will be *Dwarfs: Stone and Steel* by Alfred Nuñez Jr. Due in July 2002, it is currently being edited by Graeme

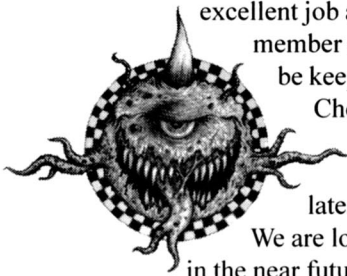
Davis. After this, The Skaven sourcebook and *Empire in Chaos* are promised for next year. The RPG *Nobilis* should be in shops by the time you read this. You can download free chapters from Hoghead's website if you want to get an idea what it's all about.

WARPSTONE WEBSITE REVAMP

The Warpstone Website at www.warpstone.darcove.net has undergone a dramatic change. Konrad Schubert has done an excellent job at revamping the site. As the newest member of the Warpstone team, Konrad will be keeping the site regularly updated.

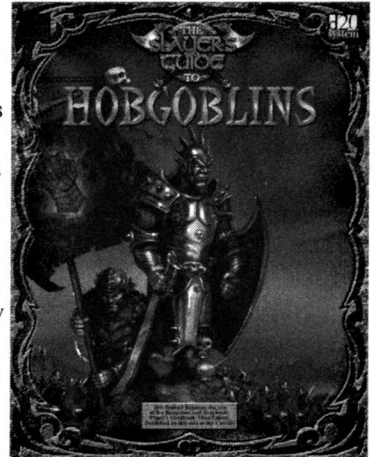
Check out the site for downloads of player handouts, free issues of *Legion*, out of print articles, the latest Warpstone news and loads more.

We are looking forward to expanding the site in the near future. Let us know what you think.



Slayers Guides by Mongoose Publishing Penumbra: Touched by the Gods by Atlas Games Review by Tim Eccles

I have recently bought a variety of D20 products that I thought might be useful for my WFRP campaign. I was generally disappointed, but some are worthy of mention. My primary problem is that D20 (like AD&D and D&D before it) seems to rely solely upon new gods/monsters/items to develop the ideas rather than story line or social context. There is also a tendency to ignore world setting in products, presumably with the intention of achieving a larger audience. Value for money is limited also, given the propensity to pad the books with margins, spacing and weak art. The Slayers Guide to Hobgoblins (Mongoose Publishing, £4.99) offers ideas on hobgoblin physiology, habitat, society, warfare and role-playing. I applaud the move towards "monster cultures" and at under a fiver the book has promise. To my mind, one could do better with *Something Rotten in Kislev* and a basic reader on nomad cultures such as the Scythians, Pechnevs, Mongols or Huns. That said, it is by no means a "slayers guide" and it's a move to be applauded within D20. If you are in need of ideas for the Hegemony and cannot face reading about historic templates for the hobgoblins, then this is definitely worth consideration for its "monsters are people too" message.



Spurred on by their half-price clearance at the end of Dragonmeet 2001 and my optimism in the premise of the series, I invested in a number of additional Slayers Guides. As a whole they are unambitious, but I would prefer to dwell on the positive, which is essentially that they continue their attempt to portray monsters as 'people'. The Troglodytes (for Lizardmen) and Centaurs (for Kislev) are clearly of some interest to WFRP, and Gnolls (for beastmen) is far from useless. As before, I am left wishing more about what could have been, than what actually is - but these are a genuine effort at producing alien cultures. Priced as magazines, I found them much better value than the magazines that I reviewed in *Warpstone 17*. Overall, I think the series deserves a guarded welcome. One definitely to miss though, is *Ships of the Goblinoids*. A river-based goblin culture is, to my mind, a definite omission from the Old World but this book provides details of orc ships of which the Royal Navy would be proud. Charitably, one might describe the product as high fantasy; in any event, WFRPers should avoid.

More promising, and ultimately more disappointing, is the *Penumbra: Touched by the Gods* sourcebook. At £15.99 (\$23.95) this is very expensive and most definitely not worth the money. The cults and cabals presented (fifteen of them) are not bad per se, they just lack imagination and originality - and at that price, I expect much more for my money. I'm not familiar with *Penumbra*, though it claims to be a modular bolt-on system for any campaign. As a WFRP supplement, I would suggest that you give it a miss unless you are very wealthy and desperately short of ideas. There are some good themes and a couple of convertible cults, but nothing that cannot be had elsewhere far cheaper. At about £1 per cult, it is tempting to say that one cannot go far wrong. Sadly that is not the case, but if you are desperate for an off-the-shelf cult, here is a product with ideas that can be utilised for WFRP by the desperate or the lazy.

Corrupting Influence Errata: The picture on page 93 is by Olivier Bergerat not John Keane as stated.

THE WARPSTONE QUESTIONNAIRE II

Welcome to the second Warpstone Questionnaire, the first being printed in issue 7 with the results turning up in issue 9. We hope as many of you will take the time to complete and return it. We are looking for feedback on *Warpstone* (and *Corrupting Influence*) to help us see what we're doing right and wrong. All those returned by 1st November 2002 will be entered into a prize draw. Prizes to be decided but it will include a Warpstone subscription somewhere. We are happy to accept comments by e-mail. The survey is also available on the Warpstone Website. Feel free to add additional comments on a separate piece of paper.

What the first issue of Warpstone you purchased

How many people read your copy of Warpstone

How many years have you played Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay

Where do you normally get your issue.....

Where did you first hear about Warpstone.....

Are you a GM, player or both.....

What to you think of the following (from 1 (poor) to 5 (Excellent));

Warpstone	<input type="checkbox"/>	Scenarios & Cameos	<input type="checkbox"/>
Layout	<input type="checkbox"/>	The Forum	<input type="checkbox"/>
Art	<input type="checkbox"/>	Interviews	<input type="checkbox"/>
Editorial	<input type="checkbox"/>	Covers	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reviews	<input type="checkbox"/>	The Correspondent	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fragments	<input type="checkbox"/>	Talabheim	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fiction	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Articles	<input type="checkbox"/>	Legion	<input type="checkbox"/>

Answer Yes (Y) or No (N) to the following;

Is Fragments useful for news

Do you think our reviews are fair

Is Warpstone too expensive

Do you play any Games Workshop games

Do you buy WFB Army Books for WFRP

Are you currently playing WFRP

Have you used articles in Warpstone for any other game

Have you ever played in or run a Warpstone scenario

Should we have more or less of;

Themed Issues	More	Same	Less
Careers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rules Articles	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Art	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Background Articles	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Areas outside the Empire	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Scenarios	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Anything else	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fantasy (magic, monsters etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

What have been our best scenarios or cameos

1

2

What have been our worst scenarios or cameos

1

2

What have been our best articles or fiction

1

2

What have been our worst articles or fiction

1

2

One thing that would improve Warpstone

One article we should write in Warpstone

One thing we should stop

WFRP on the Web

Do you belong to the WFRP E-mail list (Y/N)

Do you visit any WFRP Forums (Critical Hit etc.) If Yes, which ones:

1

2

Have you visited the Warpstone website site (Y/N)

If so, what do you think (1-5)

What would you like to see on the Warpstone website

What is the best (non Warpstone) WFRP website

Roleplaying

What are you favourite RPGs (including WFRP)

1

2

What other RPG magazines do you buy

Your favourite WFRP supplement

One supplement you would like to see

Corrupting Influence

Have you bought Corrupting Influence

What did you think (1-5)

Personal

Your name.....

Your address.....

THE CORRESPONDENT

Parlez Vous Warhammer?

Language: The Spoken and Written Word By Tim Eccles¹

In this article I will consider language in all its forms, both as a medium of communication between players, and between their PCs. This continues the Correspondent themes of culture (and the world environment), (softer) WFRP rules and the implications of each upon the other. In addition, this is also a wider gaming issue. I have many concerns about the rules of WFRP, most of which the background makes up for. However, language remains a major concern of mine, since it is fundamentally important to any society. It is something that was not consistently explained at the outset, nor has clarification been forthcoming. The principle questions I want to consider revolve around exactly what Old Worlder is, and whether a speaker of Reikspiel automatically speaks Old Worlder as well, or whether an Estalian speaker of Old Worlder can be understood within the Reikspiel dialect. In addition, where language is written rather than spoken, is the language simply Old Worlder or do dialects also have written forms?

Language and the GM

An interesting issue is whether a GM should utilise Reikspiel in their game descriptions, and adopt accents in their NPC-PC interaction. My feeling is that this should be a 'no'. Frequently when I name a district, street, house or region I do so with a view to aiding description. For example (and if I may be excused a little self-advertising) in my description of Wolfenburg in *A Private War* I have named the districts in English - Market, Docks, Estates etc. This is because I think naming an area as (say) the "Docks" immediately informs the players what is there, and prevents me having to repeat and spell the ('German') name, and then answer the question "what's that?". It immediately conveys a basic understanding. Of course, I am, as ever, inconsistent, because I do use Reikspiel names for purposes of atmosphere. However, I think the balance of use has to reside with 'getting on with game' over simply adding detail for the sake of it; I tend to use Reikspiel only for NPC names and the like, where the description is not part of the title. Personally I find that the duality works, and that the Old World theme is maintained without slowing the game down too much with repetition or spelling tests. We can simply get on with the game and imagine what those docks actually look, sound and smell like.

I am similarly opposed to the use of accents, though this might be because of my complete inability to successfully carry one. I know some GMs do 'French', 'Italian' and 'Spanish' for Bretonnian, Tilean and Estalian NPCs, and this is advised in some of the adventures. I have two concerns with this. Firstly, this would also suggest that we do 'German' for Imperial NPCs, and that PCs join in. Since I make a great deal of use of regional accents, this would necessitate me learning regional German accents and also making clear to my players which of these was linked to which Imperial province. This is not very feasible.

My second concern is the 'Manuel problem'. Fawltly Towers might be allowed Manuel, and Monty Python and the Holy Grail some very idiosyncratic Frenchmen, but, in this day and age both are very close to being offensive. Cartoon accenting is in my view highly problematic and has no part in my games. One certainly would not perform such versions of an African, Asian or Arab accent, so why a European one? On the other hand, when done well, I am certainly prepared to accept that languages can help the humorous side of WFRP - an issue that has sadly been neglected. Now that WFRP is an essentially Trans-Atlantic affair, much of the Ealing Comedy humour seems to have seeped out of the system. That said, humour is always very difficult to achieve, and I remain unconvinced that simplistic lampooning can ever be humorous.

The concept of names also puzzles me. Why do we take a place or person from history, change a letter around and think we have created a completely original idea? For example, Marienburg's Arkat Fooger is clearly the real life Jacob Fugger of Augsburg. If players are unaware of Fugger, then why bother changing his name, since they would still be unaware either way? On the other hand, if players are familiar with the person who financed the Habsburg Empire then why pretend that the source is not him, since players are hardly not

going to realise? In the case of people currently alive, I can understand the legal implications (though I am unsure that a letter changed would offer realistic legal protection), but someone dead over 500 years? I find the RPG 7th Sea terribly derivative in this vein but WFRP also has a tendency to take something from history, change some letters around and then pretend to have produced something new. I am guilty of this too! I wonder why we do it?

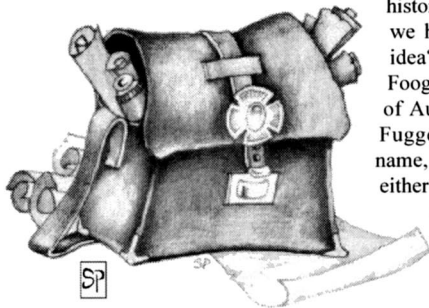
Common Tongues - Old Worlder and Classical

It is pretty self-evident that the idea of a universal language like Old Worlder is an illogical construct introduced to aid gameplay. Similarly, the idea of a universal Classical tongue provides the same function as Latin in Medieval Europe as the language of the intelligentsia and priesthood. The fact that the Old World has no equivalent to the pan-European Roman Empire to provide such a language can also be excused in the name of playability. Plausible explanations might be contrived for the language's existence. Early Tilean trading and colonisation (in the manner of the Phoenicians) might be able to explain the tongue, since we know from *Dogs of War* that the city of Tylos existed whilst Elves were still looking to expand in the Old World. Utilising WFB, Khemri might be a suitable origin. The roots of the Classical language can perhaps be seen as a trade language developed by the early human tribal groupings in their dealings with High Elf and Dwarf civilisations. It might, therefore have developed as a hybrid of the two. Alternatively, perhaps linked to the most sophisticated human tribe, it might be seen as simply the regional tongue of a local group that became a developed language due to that tribe's status.

The link between Classical and Old Worlder remains unclear, as does the universality of the earlier tongue. Any universal tongue would most immediately seem to have some genetic imprint of the Slann, who needed their human prototypes to be able to converse with each other. Over time this common single tongue becomes divided into regional dialects. This also perhaps explains the 'common' tongues in other regions of the world - the Slann having perhaps developed different laboratory workshops for the Old World, the New World and the East. One interesting possibility is that the Slann might have engineered a very restrictive brain architecture into their experimental subjects, providing language centres that are less plastic than those in real life human brains, with more than just basic grammatical rules or deep structure 'fixed'. This would ensure that human languages (of at least those used by humans originating from the Old World research centre) could never diverge too far from each other. For those interested in grand story lines, the reasons for this might be the basis for a campaign and linked to the World Plan in some way.

Alternatively, and implicit in the Dwarf understanding of language, it might be linked with human interaction with the Dwarfs, since Old Worlder is a common tongue for them as well. It might be assumed that they learnt the tongue out of necessity, but it might be at root a Dwarf-structured language. This plausibly leads to a comparison between the two, whereby Classical is Elf-related and Old Worlder is Dwarf-related. I am unconvinced at grandiose claims of Dwarf supremacy in general, and personally prefer either a mixture of non-human influences upon them, or a more indigenous development. We know from *Dogs of War* that humans in Tilea traded with both. Dwarf superiority might play well as part of the racist culture of Dwarfs, but it less convincing as a plausible reality. Just as the British Empire might have claimed itself superior to African cultures, today we would recognise the values of indigenous cultures without assuming the superiority of the Empire. It is right to portray some Dwarfs as having a superiority complex; the reality is different as WFRP tells us (pg. 267). I would tend to regard the history of language as also being less Dwarf-sponsored.

Aside from this speculation, there are few gleanings to be had from official material. The languages of The Empire and Norsca are stated as being heavily influenced by Khazalid. This is a peculiar state of affairs, since it implies that Reikspiel and Norscan are not derivative of Old Worlder, since if they were, the other dialect languages would also be rooted in Khazalid. It also seems to overlook the idea of the Old Worlder - Dwarf dialect. The only option that I can conceive to explain this is that Old Worlder post-dates the various dialects, and is actually a common language built upon interaction between humans, and thus takes words from each of the dialects and creates a single language from them. This would not then be really a language with dialects, but as discussed below it is difficult



to actually see these national tongues as dialects in any event. It also clearly contradicts WFRP, which has the dialects as “accents and idioms” of the common tongue. Personally, I think that this is simply another contradiction. It appears to be assumed as given that Elves had little to do with human development and thus it is to Dwarfs that humans looked for trade, ideas and civilisation. In this context, the need for language and literacy would develop from dealings with Dwarfs.

However, I do retain the idea that Elves, a theoretically ‘good’ race, might maintain missions within the Old World to trade with and aid humans. Indeed, aside from their good alignment, it might be good politics to keep humans from becoming too close to the Dwarfs, in addition to being a way of winding up the Dwarfs a little. This idea conforms to the impression given in *Dogs of War*. As I stated above, I am also wary of any portrayal of Dwarfs as a completely superior race who bestow upon humanity various gifts of civilisation, including language. Even more interesting is that both Orc (though I assume it means all goblinoids and the mother language Goblin Tongue) and Dark Tongue have been influenced by Khazalid, which opens up many questions indeed as to the reasons for this. Did Orcs and beastmen learn language from dwarfs? (And if so, how?)

Dialects

Dialects as presented in WFRP are effectively national tongues, and not simply regional dialects of a common national tongue as we might take them to mean in real life. I find the idea of a national tongue within very diverse regions unlikely. After all, in modern Britain can be found the likes of Welsh, Cornish (technically western Welsh) and Scottish Gaelic, whilst Germany has High German and Low German. If even modern countries can retain regional tongues, I suspect The Empire, with poor transport and communication and strong regional identity, would have local languages, dialects, or accents. As things stand, someone in Ostland is better able to understand someone across the country in Wissenland than a minute across the border in Kislev. Again, we might be willing to accept a national language for reasons of simplicity and gameplay but I personally find this universality all rather at odds with the decentralised nature of the Old World, and the Empire in particular – an image which has been carefully built up by much of the source material.

Arcane Languages

The fact that Khazalid is described as the root language for so many modern languages implies strongly that all the arcane languages are separated from the current root by some break, since otherwise they would be the ancient source of modern languages. We know that Arcane Dwarf is a runic language, implying separation from the other languages. However, only wizards know arcane languages in modern times, which implies a strong relationship between the languages and magic, but not communication. However, the very fact that the ancient Dwarf and Elf tongues are not related to their modern tongues is an interesting and suggestive area in itself.

Real Languages and WFRP

It is possible to follow real world language derivation to develop a highly evocative (albeit complex) alternative system for WFRP languages. A dialect can be regarded as a variety of a language, although this is a subject of some debate amongst linguists. A spoken language is a collection of mutually intelligible dialects. The hierarchy of mutual intelligibility is taken to be as follows: Language, Dialect, Accent, & Idiolect.

The distinction between dialect and language is further confused by dialect chains (or continua). For example, the West Germanic dialect continuum covers both Netherlands and Germany. The varieties spoken along the border are very similar, yet those on the Dutch side of the border are considered by their speakers to be dialects of Dutch, whilst those on the German side of the border are considered to be dialects of German - even though they may be more similar to one another than each is to either standard language. Norwegian, Danish and Swedish are mutually intelligible but are often thought of as separate languages. Similarly, Swiss German is not intelligible to Standard German speakers. Socio-political factors influence this definition in many cases - such as Serbian and Croatian clearly being dialects that both nations refuse to acknowledge as anything but separate languages. This is all perfect material for the Old World.

The simplest method of determining when a dialect become a language is to define a language as a dialect supported by an army and a navy - that it is suitably universal to be the ‘official’ language of a state. Clearly the transition from dialect to language is a factor of three processes:

1. Evolution from the root language through geographical isolation
2. Ossification through literature, grammar and dictionaries
3. Ossification through political unity

Classical, ignoring its possible origins, certainly seems to occupy the second category outlined above. To this end, it seems most plausible that Old Worlder is

derived directly from Classical (which was originally a spoken language) and was then dispersed throughout the Old World alongside it, as it was reduced to becoming a scholarly language. Classical is the language of scholarship, literature and law - which is why the regional variations of Old Worlder are still technically dialects and not yet full ‘languages’. Written forms of these dialects have only begun to emerge in the last few centuries, as literacy expands slightly beyond the religious and clerical classes. Therefore, Reikspiel and the other dialects are well on their way to becoming languages in their own right, but are not quite there. Of course, much of this does not tie up with official material either. Under this system, Imperial and Norscan dialects are heavily influenced by Dwarfs, whereas the western and southern cultures retained more of the ‘Classical’ elements of Old Worlder. Classical ossified a long time ago, as it is rarely spoken outside of ceremony.

From this, there are several dialect chains that might be recognised across the Old World. For example:

*Southern Slavic - Ostlander Reikspiel - Eastern Reikspiel - Western Reikspiel - Highland Reikspiel - Eastern Bretonian
Norscan - Nordland Reikspiel - Western Reikspiel - Southern Reikspiel
- Sudenlander Reikspiel - Border Reikspiel - Miragliano Tilean*

Other interconnections can equally be developed, allowing mutual (and plausible) intelligibility between geographically proximal populations and almost total incomprehension between distant dialects of Old Worlder.

Nations (particularly those with state religions such as the Empire or Bretonnia) will also have an interest in maintaining the ‘national’ dialect as a discrete language and patriotic movements would probably try to enforce it. They would (inevitably) be fighting a losing battle in the long run, but this might lead to some interesting developments by NPCs. Equally, amusing languages can be added in the form of ‘court languages’ (such as Norscan in Kislev), pidgins (Cathayans in Marienburg) and minority dialects (Kislevite descendants in Talabheim).

Linguistics

Learning a language in game terms is explained in the rules, but I suggest that difficulty should vary depending upon the original roots of the language or dialect. For example, all dialects of Old Worlder might be equally difficult to learn if they all share the same linguistic basis in Old Worlder. Provided that Old Worlder is indeed the master language, one can assume the rules of creation, verb use, pronunciation and the like are essentially the same as they are based upon the universal premise of Old Worlder. New World languages and non-human languages will be alien to this mode of logic and involve considerably more difficulty in learning the language.

Literacy: Read/Write Skill

One of the primary examples of how WFRP develops an idea, only to ignore it, is with the concept of an illiterate society. It is likely that most PCs are illiterate. It is certain that most NPCs are illiterate. Yet, there are posters, scrolls, letters and other forms of written information provided in practically all the published adventures. Even Orcs read and write! This would not happen. From the background, and the allocation of skills, it is clear that literacy is rare, and so scenarios need to reflect this. GMs need to stop relying on the written word in their adventures, and consider the alternatives. Even more importantly, we are told in WFRP that humans did not develop a written language until 1000IC. This is very important, and should not be ignored, because it offers one concrete characteristic that clearly separates the ‘now’ from the past. Prior to 1000IC, knowledge must have been remembered as tales and folklore, songs, epic poems, drawings and even dances. Our knowledge of these times in the written forms must have been transcribed much later, and so be open to error. This offers two possible ideas for development - old nursery rhymes or other cultural ephemera as clues, and the possibility of errors in written material that causes mistakes to be made by organisers, wizards, clerics or other powerful NPCs making plans.

It is possible to develop a counter argument here, of course, and embrace the use in scenarios of written word, and downplay the levels of literacy that are generated when creating a player character. This enables the GM to utilise the many books, pamphlets and even the printing press that we know are to be found. One possible compromise might be to have readings of pamphlets and books in inns, taverns and the like. Scribes and other ‘worded folk’ might earn a few coppers by moonlighting in an evening as storytellers or newsreaders. Interesting NPCs parodying television personalities are probably begging to be developed here. My own preference as at 2512IC is simply to make the read/write skill more valuable. There is no need to penalise your players with this, however. I am proposing to make the game more colourful, not harder. Illiterate characters would have developed better memories to overcome their problem of being unable to maintain permanent records, so there is no need to prevent players from keeping notes. It is simply that the world would not be cluttered by paper. By making it

necessary to obtain a scribe to read the written materials, extra colour can easily be added. Even better, of course, is to avoid the use of the written word and utilise criers.

Criers

The most obvious means to use illiteracy in your game is the use of criers. All towns would have a town crier for proclamations. In addition, most organisations would have their own crier, and there would be a number of private criers who could be hired. Public spaces would have a number of these plying their trade, calling notices and briefing citizens on new laws, special offers and anything else that needed to be disseminated. Rather than have notice boards and trees to pin notices to, make public spaces more central to adventures as the location of criers, and so the source of information. There might even be attempts to silence a crier, by the appalled masses, by a competitor to the crier, or by a competitor to the message they are reading.

The Written Word: Bureaucracy

The primary question here is whether Old Worlde is a written language, whether the dialects are, or whether both are. WFRP [page 55] is quite clear that Old Worlde is the only written form, and dialects are not. However, this is not consistently followed. As is its wont, *Something Rotten in Kislev* [p79] ignores the rules and refers to something written in Reikspiel. Doomstones continues this trend by using the Orrakh dialect as the written form rather than the Goblin Tongue master language. The more reliable Marienburg: Sold Down the River offers no clue as to the language of its Lustrian Bubble letter. One might deduce from this that there is no need since for it to do so, since it follows the default of WFRP and assumes it is in Old Worlde; a more cynical view might presume that the issue was overlooked. The issue is important, inasmuch as just as accents, slang or actual dialect can be utilised to mislead or confuse, so equally might written words be misunderstood by non-dialect speakers.

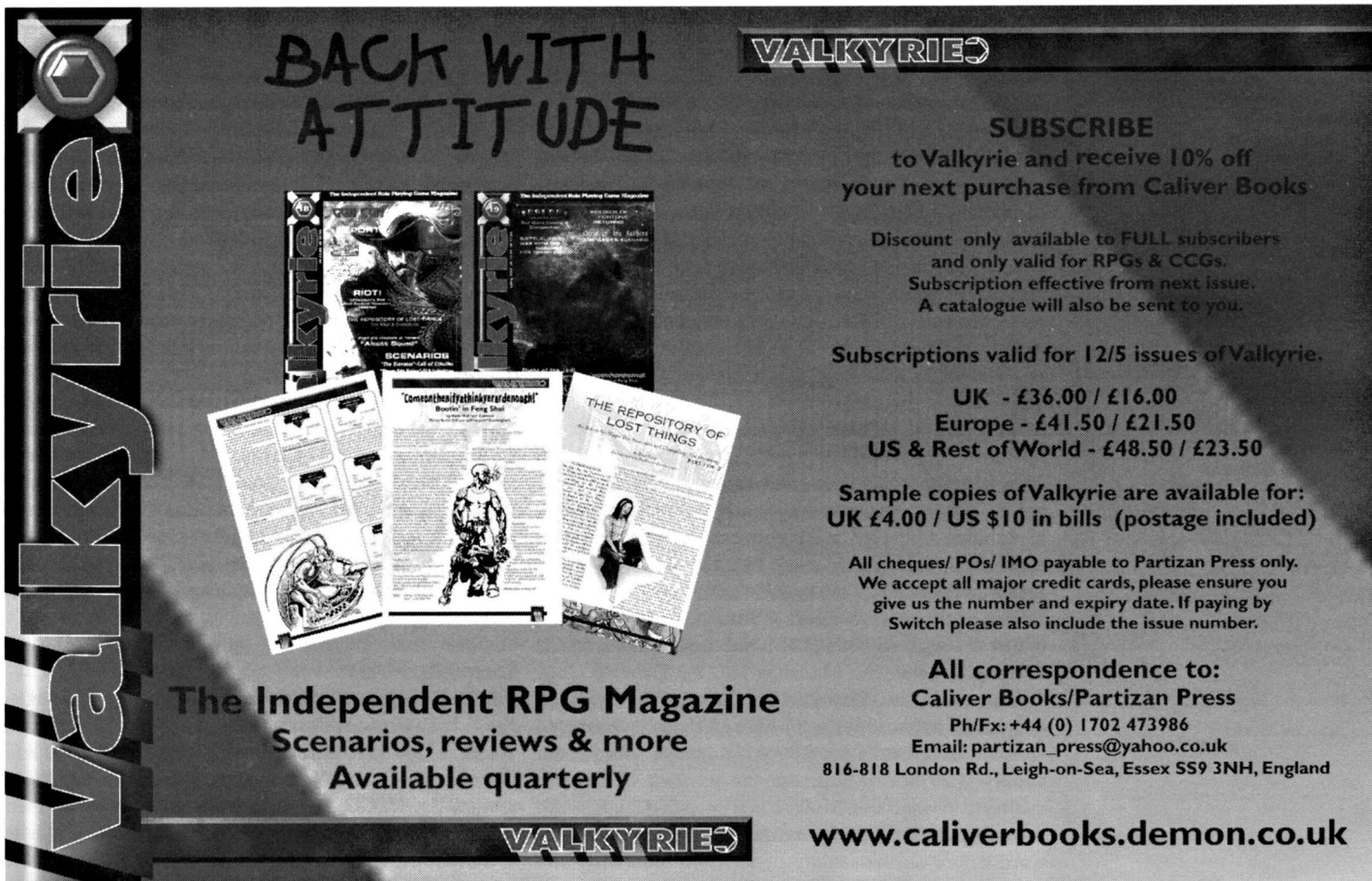
There is also an equally important second point, which concerns the place of the written word within the world. This has an impact on its ability to support a bureaucracy with which to plague PCs and/or written records which can be utilised as clues or proofs. It is probably true to say that Warpstone adventures have tended to utilise the written word quite strongly, and the likes of the Talabheim articles also appear to rely upon it. If a bureaucratic society is preferred, this would tend to suggest that the 1000IC dating for the written word is ignored in

order to allow the development of a more literate culture. It should also ensure that GMs ensure the creation of local records. These would include the Old World equivalent of parish registers and muster rolls amongst others, offering details of births and deaths, taxation and poor law awards as well as a plethora of minor details; boring maybe - but possibly essential in tracing wrongdoers.

For added colour, a number of non-paper media for the written word are also available. Parchment is available on sheepskin, whilst vellum is young lambskin. Both should be utilised. Dwarfs might use stone or metal pages to ensure that the written word continues down the centuries in a permanent form, preventing (in theory) later misinterpretations or errors of understanding. Of direct interest to an adventure idea is the palimpsest, which is something that has been written over by scraping off the previous words. Clearly old messages or information can be hidden for centuries under the most modest of later writings. GMs should feel free to utilise such non-paper alternatives for the messages they introduce.

Conclusion

It was never my aim to create a definitive statement on either the origins of language or the more pragmatic issues of whether dialects are written. Without a definitive statement from the rules, I think that this is primarily a choice-call. The precise origins are probably irrelevant to most players, although the various choices can form papers or books to spice up a library or an academic NPC's area of specialism. In any event, I think that it is self-evident that the common tongues are simply a device to aid playing, and there is nothing inherently wrong with this. What remains important is to develop the mechanics of language in use. Given my earlier columns, it will come as no surprise that I favour the move towards regionalising language in some form. However, I think that to stay within the rules as currently written, simply adopting accents and a few idioms as regional differences within a dialect should provide the optimal balance between playability and regionalism. This allows GMs to have NPCs talk in apparent gibberish, should it be necessary, without having to formalise PC and NPC languages beyond that given in the rules. Whatever the plausible arguments over linguistics in the real world might be, we are clearly left with the situation at present where everyone in The Empire speaks Old Worlde, perhaps with a collection of idioms and accents called Reikspiel, wherever they might be located. The rest is best left to individual judgement in what fits best into playing style, and a rationalisation of that choice within the background - simple enough given the vague and contradictory material that we have been given over the years.



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FIRE IN THE HOLE

A Look at Human Settlements in the Dwarfen Realms by Alfred Nuñez Jr.

The scope of the soon to be released WFRP Dwarf sourcebook, *Of Stone and Steel*, was the Dwarf race, its history, society, realms, and so on. One could very well be left with the impression that only Dwarfs live in the mountains surrounding The Empire. However, there are Humans who live in these same mountain ranges, many of whom are technically the subjects of the local Dwarfking.

BACKGROUND

The First Migration

The Dwarfholds outside the Worlds Edge Mountains were founded during the first millennium of the Goblin Wars (-1500 to -500 I.C.). Many of the Dwarfs that came to the Black and Grey Mountains, as well as the Vaults, migrated from the fallen Dwarfholds and mines of Karaz Ankor. During this time in their history, Humanity settled in the lowland areas, chiefly around the rivers of the Old World.

Despite their tribal affiliations and the dangers posed by roaming bands of Orcs and Goblins – as well as rival tribes – whole peoples migrated from one region to another. The largest such, the Bretonnis, were forced to cross the Grey Mountains and settle in the land to the west (circa -1000 I.C.) due to pressure from the growing Unberogen tribe (according to the information that the Loremasters of Karak Hirn provided to the Temple of Verena in Nuln).

A loose confederation of smaller tribes, collectively known as the Schwebens, were later forced from their homes along the lower River Söll region into the mountains by an alliance of Avermanni tribes after years of warfare (circa -900 to -700 I.C.). The majority of Schwebens settled in the Vaults, with a number moving into the Grey and Black Mountains. Even if they were not weary from battle, the Schwebens would have been no match for the Dwarfs had their migration angered the bearded folk. Realising this, concern for their people and the need for protection compelled the Schweben chieftains to negotiate terms of settlement with the local Dwarfking.

The Oath of Binding

At first, the Dwarfs weren't sure how to deal with the humans trying to settle in their realm; the issue of human settlement in the mountains had never been contemplated before, not least because the Dwarfs were relatively few in number and were more concerned with their own defences in the unlikely event that the remaining Karaz Ankor holds fell.

King Muleric Furrowbrow of Karak Izor discussed the matter at length with his clan. Some argued that it would be folly to admit the Manlings into the Dwarf realms. Others took the view that the humans had proven themselves as tenacious as the Orcs and had demonstrated their worth in battle. Moreover, the human tribes could supply warriors to augment the number of Dwarfs available to wage war. Muleric had enough dealings with human chieftains to know that they put great stock in their word (more so than many present-day humans), and

decided that he would attempt to bind them to his cause in return for granting them limited rights in his lands.

In meeting with the petitioning Schweben chieftains, Muleric laid forth the following stipulations (collectively known as the Oath of Binding):

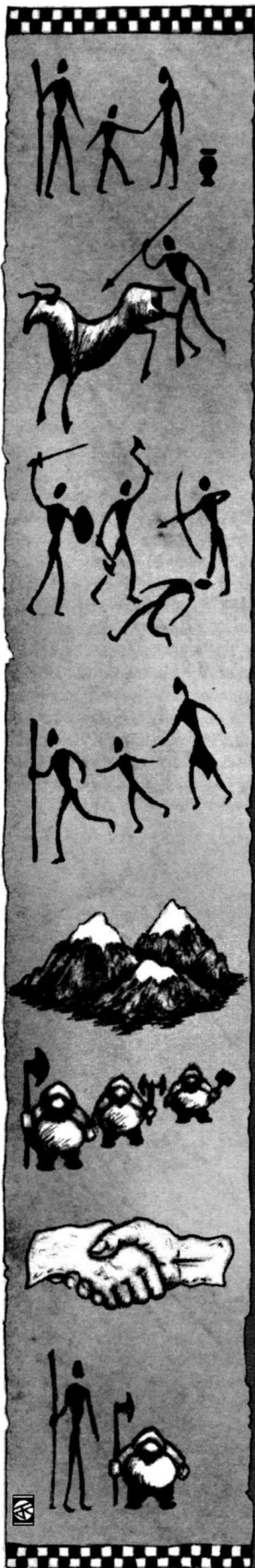
- The chieftains will swear an oath of fealty to the Dwarfking who rules the land.
- In turn, Human chieftains will become part of the Dwarfking's council.
- Resident human clans will be subject to Dwarf law.
- Resident human clans will not allow Orcs, Goblins, or other fell greenskins to pass through the lands they hold in the name of the Dwarfking.
- Dwarf and resident human clans would provide support, military or otherwise, to one another when faced with a common enemy.
- Resident human clans will ensure that their menfolk are trained in the use of spear and bow.
- In the event of war, the women, children, and old folk of the resident human clans will be granted protection within specific areas of the Dwarfhold.
- Dwarf and resident human clans in specified demesnes will provide one another with preferential trading terms.
- Resident human clans will concentrate their livelihood on farming and herding activities, freeing the Dwarf clans to focus on specific crafts and mining.
- Resident human clans will be allowed to worship whatever gods they choose so long as the religion is not considered to be an enemy of the Dwarfs.

The Schweben chieftains found the conditions more than reasonable. A large feast was held cementing the exchange of oaths between the two peoples. Soon, other Schweben clans reached the same agreements with other Dwarfking. In time, the Dwarfs gave the Schweben people the name "Dawikoni" ("Almost Dwarf"). This name was later expanded to cover any Humans whose lineage has involved their ancestors living among Dwarfs for generations.

During the war against the greenskins, a number of Schweben warriors were among the contingents of Black Mountains Dwarfs that joined the tribal armies united under the leadership of Sigmar. These troops encountered a flanking force of Orcs and Goblins in the mountains south of Black Fire Pass. In the Battle of Dracherückgrat Kamm, the allied Dwarf forces prevailed in the bloody and decisive engagement, which secured Sigmar's right flank for the upcoming battle.

Later Migrations

Although the first, the Schweben people were by no means the only humans to migrate to the mountains. Others have found refuge there during times of strife in The Empire. For many of these latecomers, giving an oath to a Dwarfking was no longer considered enough by their hosts. Petitioners had to prove themselves honourable to Dwarfen standards over a period of five to ten years before



they were accorded anywhere near the level of trust granted to the human families who had resided in the Dwarfrealms for generations.

The carnage of the Age of Wars displaced many from the Empire. Refugees fled from their homelands in the hope of finding some peace so that they could continue to eke out a living. A number of Averlanders and Stirlanders fled eastward to escape the battles that dominated their land. With the threat of Ores and Goblins reduced to the occasional marauding band, the ruggedness of the Worlds Edge Mountains looked inviting and (comparatively) safe.

The Dwarfs of Karak Kadrin and Zhufbar were surprised by the human migration and somewhat suspicious. They did, however, know of the pacts that had already been sealed elsewhere. Using the same oaths and requirements as those developed by King Muleric Furrowbrow, the Imperial Dwarfs of these two Dwarfholds accepted these Humans into their realms and even created a ghetto in the surface portion of their respective holds for human and Expatriate Dwarf visitors. Imperials refer to these humans as "eastern" Dawikoni.

The situation in Karaz-a-Karak and Karak Azul was far different. To the west of these more isolated Dwarfholds were the Border Princes (in the case of Karaz-a-Karak) and the Badlands (near Karak Azul). To the east were the Orc-infested Dark Lands. Human migration to the two Dwarfholds developed much later than any of the others, around the time of the Wizards' War (late 20th century I.C.) and the subsequent Vampire Wars in The Empire (early 21st century). The general Imperial Dwarf mistrust of outsiders initially made co-existence with these humans ("southern" Dawikoni) more difficult.

In contrast, the (relatively) cosmopolitan Barak Varr welcomed human traders and some settlers very early on. Some humans trace their family roots as far back as three millennia in the Dwarf seaport.

Life in the Mountains

The majority of humans settled in the mountains generally live in small farming settlements and villages within the boundaries of the Dwarfen realms. Many work the terraced farmlands and herd their livestock from one alpine pasture to another alongside the Dwarfs of the small Farmers' and Herders' craftguild. Strife between the two peoples is relatively uncommon; they are more co-operative than competitive.

Some of the human hamlets that lie outside the patrolled borders of the Dwarf realms can be found in the so-called "hidden valleys" which lie deep within the mountain ranges. Like their Dwarf counterparts, many of the human residents go to some length to protect the paths leading to their homes from undesirables. Pitfalls, rock slides, and other defensive measures are used to discourage outsiders from trespassing. Many of these traps were learnt from Dwarfs who had already developed a similar lifestyle.

Dawikoni dress in simple, utilitarian clothing made from wool. Except for their colourful festive attire, most of their clothing tends to be of brownish hue with red or green trim. Boots are made from hide and are often lined with fur. Headware is generally fur-lined leather skull caps only worn during the winter or when engaged in battle. When far from the village, Dawikoni wear thick, hooded travelling cloaks, generally dark green or brown in colour.

Markets for their produce and livestock are held within the Dwarfholds, with the exceptions of Karaz-a-Karak and Karak Azul. Some Dwarfholds, such as Karak Hirn, have set aside an underground portion of their hold for these

markets and for general trading with travelling merchants and pedlars. Other holds, such as Karak Kadrin, have established ghettos in their surface portion for visitors and traders. These same market areas are used as a place of refuge for their human populations.

The situation in Karaz-a-Karak and Karak Azul is grimmer than any other Dwarfhold. The proximity of the Dark Lands combined with their distance from any powerful allies has made the Imperial Dwarfs in these holds far more cautious. Resident humans are given shelter in specific locations within the walls of the hold in times of war, but most interactions (such as markets) occur outside the hold's gates.

Traders and others who do not reside within the boundaries of these two Dwarf realms are usually housed in the nearby villages the Dwarfs have built for them. Those who prove themselves honourable gain a measure of the stout folks' trust. Other relatively "unproven" humans are never allowed within any portion of Karaz-a-Karak or Karak Azul. Should there be danger whilst they are near these Dwarfholds, these visitors are escorted to a nearby defensive position where Dwarf (or human) guards protect them.

Even though they share the same heritage, Expatriate Dwarfs do not automatically gain the trust of their mountain-dwelling brethren. They are expected to meet the same standards in proving their trustworthiness as those expected of humans.

A Call to Arms

Humans who fight for their Dwarfhold are generally deployed in two ways. The first is as scouts for the mercenary bands hired by a number of Dwarfings to engage any enemy well before they reach the Dwarfhold. The second manner is as infantry troops manning a portion of the curtain wall, or in a similar role in the field. The use of human troops allows the Dwarfking to keep additional Dwarf troops in reserve.

Expatriate Dwarfs are used in the same manner as human troops. In some instances, the Dwarfking may create units comprising of both races to deploy along the battlements or for use as infantry.

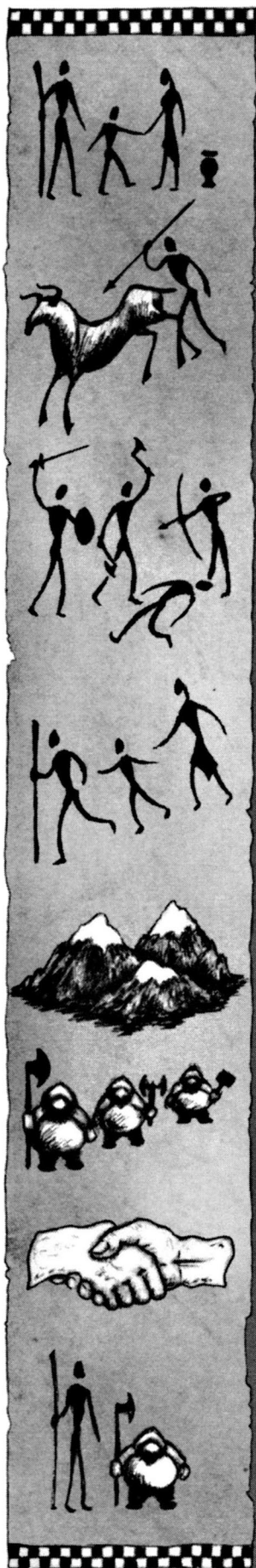
Mercenary bands are usually soldiers-for-hire that do not reside in the Dwarf realms. Their accommodation is the same as that provided for other visitors to the Dwarfhold. In Karaz-a-Karak and Karak Azul, this means that they are provisioned outside the hold. Such troops are generally deployed outside the walls as their loyalty doesn't inspire much confidence in the Dwarfs. To this end, Dwarfs tend to hire the type of mercenary bands that are good at hit-and-run tactics and destroying an enemy's baggage trains and supplies. Mercenary bands are permitted to keep whatever they salvage from such operations as part of their compensation.

Social Structure

Those humans living in the Dwarf realms hold a curious mix of Dwarf and human values. Dawikoni are nearly as bound by their word as the Dwarfs and just as unlikely to give their word or swear an oath. Still, Dawikoni will do their utmost to respond to whatever reasonable request is put to them. Consistent with this behaviour is the importance the Dawikoni places on their reputation and on that of their kin. Generally, however, they are not quite as obsessed with their reputations as the Dwarfs.

Human settlements in the mountains are much like village settlements in the Empire. Their leaders (called





“Elders,” much like the leaders of Dwarf clans) tend to be selected from the more influential members of the community. Since chieftains no longer exist among the resident humans, the Elders from the various settlements within a Dwarf realm select several of their number (usually three) as their representatives in the Dwarfking’s council.

Dwarfs also reside in the Dawikoni villages, though not in great numbers. Some of these may be neighbouring Dwarfs expanding their business opportunities. Most, however, are Expatriates who have learned that it is easier to live among the humans than with their own brethren. This viewpoint is especially prevalent in the Worlds Edge Mountains where the Imperial Dwarfs’ contempt for their flatlander relatives is barely concealed. (“*They are just not proper Dwarfs. No respect for tradition, and far too much like the Manlings.*”)

While most humans still concentrate their labours on farming and herding, a number have taken to metalcraft, woodworking and the like. Since they do so on a local level, the Dwarfs do not perceive such activity as a violation of the Oath of Binding. In fact, these human artisans fill a great need to the Dawikoni settlements as much of their handiwork (such as ploughs) is specifically made for their community.

When dealing with humans, including Dawikoni, Dwarfs prefer to use their dialect of Old Worlder. As a result, many of the Dawikoni speak an interesting blend of that and Reikspiel. In the area of the Black Mountains, Vaults, and Grey Mountains, the “original” or “western” Dawikoni use a dialect known as Gebirgspiel, which bears more resemblance to an arcane form of Reikspiel than it does to the modern version. In contrast, the Dawikoni near Karak Kadrin and Zhufbar, as well as those living in the realms of Karaz-a-Karak and Karak Azul, speak the modern form of Reikspiel. Historians believe that this difference is because the Schweben isolated themselves from their Imperial brethren until the Goblin Wars of Sigmar.

As a group, however, the Dawikoni are a sturdy and stubborn mountain folk. They tend to view flatlanders (in much the same way mountain Dwarfs view their Expatriate brethren) as a relatively weak people used to soft living. To demonstrate this “toughness”, Dawikoni are less likely to complain when faced with uncomfortable situations.

The western Dawikoni worship Rhya and Taal in the form of their respective aspects of Dyrath (goddess of fertility) and Beornyraed (god of mountains). The rituals they observe are different than those practised by the eastern and southern Dawikoni. While these people respect Sigmar as patron of the Empire, Sigmarite missions to convert them have met with repeated failure.

In contrast, the cult of Sigmar has had mixed success with the eastern and southern Dawikoni. This is largely due to the immigration of these people being a relatively recent phenomena. Still success is less than the cult prefers. The Dawikoni settlements in the southern Worlds Edge Mountains fall under the church in Akendorf (*Warpstone* #15, page 21), which causes the hierarchy in Altdorf some concerns. Those in the north come under the purview of the Lector in Wurtbad. In both areas, however, Rhya and Taal retain a substantial following.

Relationship with Dwarfs

The relationship between the Dawikoni and Dwarfs has been remarkable in its solidarity over the centuries. Many

Dwarfs of Karaz-a-Karak still drink to the memory of Toumas Ecclesheim, a Dawikoni who held the pass through Redcrag Gorge with a handful of his companions against the forces of Chaos in 2302 I.C. His bravery allowed the Dwarf rearguard to re-establish a line of defence on the other side of the canyon, which further delayed the attack on the Dwarf capital. Likewise, the Dwarfs of Karak Hirn remember Osbern the Bold in the Battle of Dracherückgrat Kamm. He led a ferocious counterattack against a large warband of Orcs who threatened to collapse the Dwarfs’ left flank.

Still, there have been examples where the relationship between the two races was severely tested. Sometime in the 12th century I.C., an ambitious Dawikoni elder named Eadric wanted more power and prestige for himself and his family. Feeling that he was unfairly treated by the Dwarfs, and without leave of the Dwarfking of Karak Norn, Eadric approached a Reiklander noble, Baron Liudolf von Gandersheim, whose lands abutted the eastern foothills of the Grey Mountains southwest of Ubersreik. Eadric offered to switch his allegiance. The Dawikoni dangled the possibility of soon-to-be-uncovered mineral wealth and revenue if Baron von Gandersheim would elevate Eadric to the peerage in return for his fealty. The additional wealth would allow the Baron to rebel against his liege in an attempt to wrestle further concessions, building upon the spoils he received during an earlier confrontation.

Upon hearing word of this treachery, the Dwarfking sent an armed force of Dawikoni from other villages to bring the elder to judgment. Eadric fled from the mountains and found refuge in a chapel of Sigmar near Auerswald. Eadric’s disloyalty was repaid by fate when the chapel mysteriously burned down around him.

Another incident that caused consternation involved the Elder Theodwine and his kin during the war against the Goblin warlord Grom the Paunch. The massive greenskin horde quickly traversed Peak Pass, and arrived at Karak Kadrin sooner than expected. The Dawikoni from the immediate area barely made it into the Dwarfhold before the great gates where shut. Theodwine and his kin were returning from the higher mountain pastures with a herd of goats when the massive greenskin vanguard appeared. Theodwine knew that they could not safely flee the greenskins, so he led his kin in a mad dash for the Dwarfhold, hoping that the Dwarfs would open the gates enough to let them in. From his vantage point, the Dwarfking knew that to do so would greatly jeopardise the hold’s defences. Though the Dwarfking had his crossbowmen and cannons fire as the enemy closed, he could not risk opening the gates, nor could he allow Theodwine to be taken alive by the greenskins to suffer horrific tortures and possibly reveal secrets that would jeopardise the security of the hold. With a heavy heart, the Dwarfking ordered the Dawikoni shot before they could be captured. Dawikoni and Dwarf crossbowmen grimly carried out their task. For years after the greenskins had gone, the memory of the deaths of Theodwine and his companions strained the confidence that the Dawikoni of Karak Kadrin had in the Dwarfking. In fact, a number returned to human lands after this incident.

Imperial Perceptions

Most Imperials have never heard of the Dawikoni, nor ever met one. The few who do know of their existence tend to live along the foothills bordering the mountain ranges, and have learnt of them whilst trading with the

Aethelbald the Grim
Dawikoni Scout

Careers: Scout, ex-Hunter

Height: 5 ft 8 in

Weight: 165 lbs.

Hair: Black

Eyes: Medium Brown

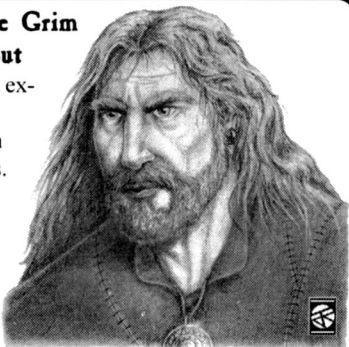
Age: 32

Distinguished

Traits:

Missing left ear and scar on right arm

Alignment: Neutral (Taal)



M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
4	53	55	4	5	13	50	2	41	44	46	44	45	31

Skills: Acute Hearing, Animal Care, Concealment Rural, Follow Trail, Game Hunting, Orientation, Scale Sheer Surface, Secret Language-Ranger, Secret Signs-Scout's, Secret Signs-Woodsman's, Set Traps, Silent Move Rural

Possessions: Sword, Leather Jack, Crossbow and ammunition, 10 yards of Rope, and one week's worth of rations.

Aethelbald is a Dawikoni scout who patrols the northern Black Mountains eastward from the Winters Teeth Pass, protecting the paths that lead to several nearby Dawikoni settlements (including his own home village of Rhedaingas) and Dwarf mines. He is not alone in this duty, but is one of the more capable individuals who undertake this role.

Aethelbald is rarely encountered on the road. At the first hint of noise, he quickly retreats to one of the many blinds in the area where he can observe any intruder without being seen. Should the intruders be hostile (bandits, Goblins, and other unsavoury beings), Aethelbald will quietly slip away to raise an alarm. If the intruders are merchants or a bumbling group of individuals (a typical "adventuring" party), then he will discreetly follow them until he can determine whether they are disguised hostiles. (His battle scars have taught the Dawikoni well.)

Should Aethelbald determine the intruders are friendly, he will approach them cautiously. He speaks Reikspiel haltingly, which may give PCs the false impression that Aethelbald is a simple and backward mountain man. Aethelbald does nothing to belay this viewpoint as this incorrect assumption is to his advantage. Nonetheless, Aethelbald is helpful and will do what he can to steer any group (other than merchants with valuable wares) away from Dawikoni settlements. Outsiders are generally bad news and one should not tempt ill fortune.

Aethelbald carries a finely crafted Dwarf weapon (sorry, no runes) which was given by King Ragnar of Karak Hirn to his great, great-grandfather, Wulfstan, for his heroics in the battles against the Bloodaxe Alliance nearly a century ago. As the sword is a family heirloom, Aethelbald will fight to the death rather than lose such a priceless gift.

Dwarfs. Still, many of these Imperials actually think that these communities are independent villages and hamlets, free from the oppressive policies of lecherous lords. The

Dawikoni do nothing to dissuade this view, though they do try to discourage outsiders from doing more than passing through. (In some cases, the Dawikoni are less trusting than Dwarfs.)

The hierarchy of the cult of Sigmar consider them to be fewer in number than they actually are. Some Sigmarites believe that the Dawikoni should be brought into the Imperial fold, but they are unsure how to do so without offending the Dwarfkings. Thus, they tread this issue carefully.

Over the course of history, a number of the local Imperial nobles (and a few Bretonnians near the Montdidier Pass as well) have tried to expand their domains into the adjacent mountainous regions in order to collect taxes from the Dawikoni. No matter what the measures taken to ensure secrecy, word seems to quickly reach the ears of the Dwarfking. A contingent of troops, led by a Dwarflord, inevitably ventures to the demesne of the human noble to correct any "misunderstandings". Conflict has broken out on rare occasions, but these tend to be rather short, bloody affairs.

Roleplaying a Dawikoni Character

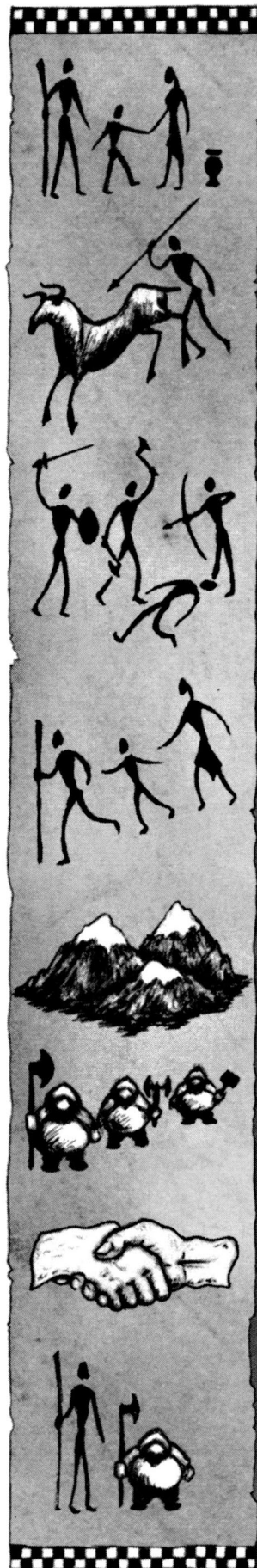
Though rare, individual Dawikoni may decide to seek their fame or fortune outside the small world of their village. More likely, they are either outcasts from society (which may happen for a variety of reasons like thievery or being just plain weird) or they may be the only survivor of a disaster that has befallen their village. Dawikoni are much like Expatriate Dwarfs in that they are a group of people who live among another race and are influenced by a different culture. The only difference between these groups is that the Expatriates are still Dwarfs in their core beliefs and predisposition, whilst the Dawikoni are human with respect to their views and tendencies.

Should a player wish to try their hand at playing a Dawikoni character then starter profiles are the same as for other human characters. The starting careers available to a Dawikoni players should be those consistent with village life in the mountains. Thus, a career like Bawd should not be available as a starting point for a Dawikoni. In addition, a starting Dawikoni character understands two dialects of Old Worlde. If the character is a western Dawikoni, the dialects are Dwarf and Gebirgspiel. The latter makes conversing in Reikspiel rather difficult. Other Dawikoni know the Dwarf and Reikspiel dialects.

The following roleplaying tips might come in handy:

Dawikoni tend to blend some Dwarfen traits into their human psyche. They find some balance between their individualism and clannishness. Like Dwarfs, players of Dawikoni characters should generally be attentive to the fact that their actions reflect upon their reputation and that of their clan. Still, Dawikoni characters should not be played as caricatures. They are as idiosyncratic as individuals of any other race. The oddity of such a character can be attributed to the varying degree of Dwarfen influence on the clan of the individual Dawikoni character. These eccentricities should be few in number so the character is not viewed as a complete oddball.

Dawikoni characters tend to share the Dwarf definition of loyalty and grudge, albeit to a lesser degree. The only saving grace is that the humanity of the Dawikoni tempers their memory of - and obsession with - such matters. Dawikoni are very loyal to those who have performed a great service on their behalf and will remain so unless betrayed in some fashion. Any who betray them, or





otherwise cause them harm, earn their rancour. If the Dawikoni has the *Read/Write* skill, they might want to keep a journal of the deeds that were performed by others on their behalf and those who did them ill.

In addition, Dawikonis maintain a strong sense of obligation whenever they give their word. Since they also find oath-breakers vile, a Dawikoni will give considerable thought before committing to anything by way of a promise or oath. Like Dwarfs, these human clans tend to come across as non-committal. The character will still do what they can to meet the initial request, but the withholding of their oath allows the Dawikoni the freedom to determine their course of action in any given situation. Therefore, a PC should avoid "giving their word" to any request or demand unless it involves something important to themselves or their clan. Once they pledge their word, the Dawikoni PC should try to fulfil their oath to the best of their abilities.

Reputation is another typical characteristic. Ask a Dawikoni what they have accomplished and they will

detail their deeds in a matter-of-fact way, without any obvious boasting. That is left to those with little to recount.

The importance of the clan to a Dawikoni should never be understated. When things go wrong, the clan members close rank to help one another out. The downside for a Dawikoni character is that it may obligate them to a task that they (and their companions) would normally avoid. GMs could use clan ties to create new and tailor-made adventuring plots. Players of these characters should be encouraged to develop their family members and a few prominent members of the clan in concert with the GM. Such an effort would provide further depth to the character. When Dawikoni travel far from their homelands, and thus are distant from their clan, they tend to feel a deep sense of loss and even disorientation. In an attempt to cope with this, many come to view trusted travelling companions as a proxy for their true kin. In other words, whether they realise it or not, characters travelling with a Dawikoni may find themselves 'adopted' and expected to behave as if they were members of the character's clan.

Dawikoni Adventure Ideas

Heretics

The PCs have been hired by Sigmarite officials to locate a renegade priest who bilked poor parishioners of their meagre wealth in an eastern Stirland village. They are asked to bring him to Wurtbad for judgement. Indications are that the priest headed for the eastern mountains to avoid answering for his crimes. The truth of the matter is that Father Hultz Schneider follows the heretical belief that Sigmar was a reincarnated Dwarf hero (Warpstone 15) and preached this nonsense to his flock. The priest learnt that his heresy has come to the attention of the Inquisition in Wurtbad and departed quickly and quietly from his chapel. He had no intention of becoming a martyr for his beliefs.

Using the warrant given to them by Sigmarite officials, the PCs can gain access to the priest's boarded-up home and the chapel in order to conduct their investigations. The PCs should learn that the priest has decided to spread the word of Sigmar to the human population living near Zhufbar. In the outlying Dawikoni of Zhufbar, Father Schneider finds a receptive audience for his heresy. PCs looking to arrest the renegade priest will have to tread carefully. The Dawikoni see any such attempt as dishonourable (especially in light of their guarantee of safety for the priest) and will likely make it difficult for the PCs to succeed. Since the Dawikoni are under the protection of the king of Zhufbar, any violence directed towards the resident human clans might result in the intervention of the Imperial Dwarfs. Players will have to finesse their way through this tangle in order to resolve this predicament.

Whose Land is this?

Being enterprising sorts, a group of adventuring PCs roams the Black Mountains avoiding the occasional Dwarf patrol as they seek an abandoned mining settlement in their search of treasure. As they enter its depths, they are spotted by a Dawikoni hunter who reports the intrusion to his clan in a nearby village. By the time the PCs return to the surface, they find whatever supplies and equipment they left on the surface are missing and that they are surrounded by a group of angry mountain people. PCs will have some difficulty understanding the dialect of the mountain people and should take *Intelligence* tests (+10 for *Linguistics*) to comprehend

what is being said to them. Generally, the PCs are told that they're being held until the local lord arrives to dispense his justice.

The PCs are held captive until the local Dwarf Lord and his retinue arrive. Looting a Dwarf site is considered a serious crime in the eyes of Dwarfs and Dawikoni, and the pleas of the PCs go unheeded. Should they manage to escape before judgement is rendered, they will be hunted by Dawikoni hunters and Dwarf scouts. As the Dwarfs expected no less from Manlings, they are not terribly upset with the escape. The Dawikoni are more unforgiving as the escape will be perceived as a slight to their ability, and thus to their honour. GMs might use this encounter as a means to show how humans can be more Dwarflike than the Dwarfs.

Treachery

On a mission for a local Averlander Baron, the PCs are required to cross a mountainous pass to the County of Vidvodan in the Border Princes. The PCs arrive at a small village in the foothills where they seek a guide to lead them through the Black Mountains. The funds given to the PCs are insufficient to hire a Dwarf, so they instead hire a Dawikoni trapper who arrived to trade his wares a day or so before the PCs arrived. The Dawikoni is in dire straits, though he does not tell his new employers. His family has been captured by local bandits who prey on travellers on the Imperial side of the mountains. The Dawikoni had little choice but to agree to lure unwary victims to them.

The Dawikoni is guilt-ridden so keeps to himself throughout the trip. In two days, the trap will be sprung, the adventurers slain, and his family returned. What if the bandits renege on their bargain? Can the Dawikoni ask these flatlanders to help him? The players should have some opportunity to demonstrate their character to the Dawikoni guide. If they prove themselves trustworthy and honourable, the guide will approach the PCs' leader for help in rescuing his family. (The Dawikoni has no idea how this could be accomplished and needs to rely on the players' ingenuity.) If the players prove themselves to be selfish and bothersome fools, then the guide will leave them to their fate and use the ambush as a diversion to get past the rather busy bandits (so he can rescue his own family).

THE SEA OF CLAWS

BY RYAN WILEMAN

The winter winds howled around the inn's windows, rattling the shutters and blowing salt into the stonework. The old man's voice could barely be heard over the thrashing of waves and the popping of the driftwood in the hearth. He spoke in an urgent whisper, drawing the listeners in with his intensity.

'It was in the spring of '76 that the Sun In Splendour went down with all hands. She had been caught in a squall the like of which even the skipper, old Gunther Teller, had never seen. She was tacking furiously back to port afore Manaan threw the waves at 'em proper. But it was not to be... it is said that old Gunther lashed himself to the mast and cried out to dark gods for salvation from the waters. The ship sunk without trace some two miles north of the Emhügel, only a short sail from home.'

The patrons of the inn, stirred in their seats, eager to hear how the yarn developed. The old man slurped a mouthful of ale and continued. 'All thought that they'd seen the last of Gunther and his crew, and none were too sad about it. The men were a rough bunch, and the skipper the worst of the lot - many a sailor had refused to sail with him on account of his cruelty and lack of compassion. But the Sea of Claws don't always hold its victims tight... A year to the day that the Sun went down, there was another storm. Morrslieb was full, and any sailor can tell thee that it's an ill wind that blows on a night like that. There are folks who can tell you what happened that night, but 'cept for me they won't give up the tale easily. For that was the moonlit night that we saw the return of the crew of the Sun In Splendour. They was walking straight out of the surf up onto the beach, past the estuary head. The fish had stripped the flesh from their bones, yet barnacles and weeds clung to their skulls and dripped from their ribs. And leading them was old Gunther himself, still howling his silent prayers to the gods that brought him home...'

The Sea of Claws is the storm-tossed expanse of water that extends northwards from The Empire's coast to the shores of Norsca, and stretches from the east, from the frozen lands of Kislev and the Troll Country, to the west, where it joins the Middle Sea off the coast of Bretonnia. In the north, the sea laps against chaos-tainted lands, and few sailors will brave the northern waters except the Norse, who are hardened boatmen lusting for battle and danger.

The Sea of Claws is an important body of water, both historically and economically, with trade routes crossing the treacherous waves, and sea battles and raids impacting on the coastal peoples who eke out a living from the sea. Marienburg lies at the delta of the Reik in the Manaansport Sea, which opens out into the Sea of Claws, and the lands of Norsca have their major settlements located on the fjords of the coast.

There are many reasons for a GM to take their players to the coast of the Sea of Claws, and for characters to sail its turbulent waters. The shores are largely barren, but are home to many ancient secrets and unique communities. Imperial players may be sent to one of the few struggling ports to be found on the coasts of Nordland and Ostland for a number of reasons, such as tax collection or to get the individual out of the way after some delicate political situation. Most obviously, adventurers in Marienburg have many incentives to venture beyond the Manaansportsee and explore the greater ocean – including trade, press-ganging, naval action or even piracy. Finally, any GM with interests in Norsca is almost forced to get characters to cross the Sea of Claws in order to reach there.





PHYSICAL FEATURES

'It's the realm of Manaan, I grant you... but he's not the only one who has dominion over its waves. Aye, the bed of the Claw Sea is littered with the bones of those who relied solely on prayers to the Lord of the Oceans. At night, as the waves crash against the timbers, you can hear them crying out... Strikes a man rigid with fear, it does.'

Otto Ketzterbad, retired fisherman, now living in Middenheim

When the ice sheets that covered much of the planet melted as a consequence of the machinations of the Old Slann, they gouged great trenches in the ground where the Sea is now located. The melt water poured into the deep fissures and spilled over, submerging the vast depression. Consequently, much of the Sea of Claws is relatively shallow, although in places the sea bed drops away into deep marine trenches.

The water is brackish, having a low salt content – the direct result of this being that it freezes more easily than the adjoining waters of the Middle Sea. Indeed the northern reaches of the sea remain frozen over for much of the year.

The tides of the Sea of Claws are highly unpredictable in the further northern waters. The priests of Manaan in the Old World know well the ebb and flow of the waters along the southern coastline of the sea, but towards Norsca, the tides are more erratic and inconsistent. Some sailors claim that the tides are under the direct control of Morrslieb, who pulls the waters according to the whims of the Chaos Gods, whilst others insist that Manaan battles with the moon to restore order and rhythm.

Climate

Weather conditions on the Sea of Claws are harsh all year round, with storms and ice adding to the hazards braved by sailors and fishermen alike. However, there is a marked seasonality to the climate of the Sea of Claws, with sailing restricted by the conditions that are brought by the harsh winter months.

Winter is long and cold, and very few humans will brave the freezing gales and ferocious storms that whip the sea into a frenzy. An icy wind known as the Klaueschrei blows from the Northern Wastes, churning and freezing the sea into ice sheets. Some years, these have reached as far south as the Gulf of Erengard, but usually they go no further than the Kislevan Taiga, blocking off great swathes of the craggy Norscan coastline as they do so. Elves have access to mysterious knowledge and magicks that enable them to brave the storms, but even they will avoid sailing the Sea of Claws during the winter. Sailors say that during the winter months Manaan and Ulric freeze the waters to keep the Daemons of the north away from the lands of men.

In spring, the sea is at its most navigable, with

the choppy surface of the water lashed only by rain. It is a mistake to think of the sea as perfectly safe during the spring, as the thaw can release icebergs from the northern waters, which may drift as far south as Kislev. Fogs are common, being undispersed by the light breezes which make spring sailing viable. The Kronsegen is a trade wind that blows from the distant Southlands, helping sailors on their way. Occasional pockets of mild weather can drift north from the Old World and the Great Western Ocean, but the sea is still largely overcast and cloudy. Most trading voyages and fishing occurs between the months of Jahrdrung and Sigmarzeit, with trading boats from Marienburg, The Empire, Kislev and Bretonnia sailing from port to port.

Around the summer solstice, the clouds begin to darken, and storms once again whip the sea into a fury. The temperature remains relatively warm, and ships can navigate the sea, albeit with some difficulty. The storms of summer, while dangerous, are seen as less of a threat than those of winter. The coast of the Northern Old World is buffeted by warm sea breezes. Most nations' sailors will brave the sea during the summer months, nevertheless the priests of Manaan still pray for the souls of the living and guard the souls of those who lose their lives. The summer is relatively short, with the cold of autumn setting in suddenly at some point during the first week of Nachgeheim.

For a month before winter sets in, the sea remains navigable, although only barely. The storms of summer are dispersed by the rising winds of the coming winter, and the sea becomes rough and treacherous. Historically this was the time of year when coastal settlements lived in fear of Norse raids, sweeping across the sea bringing mayhem and plunder. Within a few short weeks the claws of winter set in, at which point the sea returns to its wild and untamed state.



WILDLIFE

'The flora and fauna of the great Sea of Claws is as diverse as it is dangerous... we rely on it for its bounteous supplies of food and durable goods, while marvelling at the more... predatory life to be found there. Let us consider the gigantic crabs that give the sea it's name...'

Dokter Jan Peermarkt, Lecturing Fellow of Baron Henryk's College in Marienburg

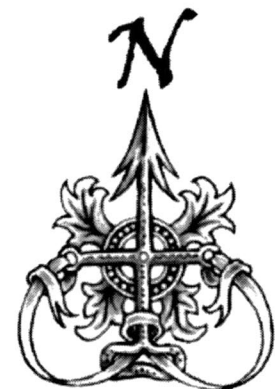
The Sea of Claws is not exactly teeming with life – the cold and inhospitable conditions do not favour animal life. However, there are a number of species that dwell in the depths and along the coastline. Along the coasts of Bretonnia, the Wasteland and The Empire live colonies of seals, some hunted for their pelts, but mainly living relatively undisturbed below the sparsely populated cliffs. In the far north of the sea live great walruses, huge steaming brutes with long curving tusks - these can fetch a considerable price in the ports of Norsca and Marienburg. Consequently the walruses are hunted for their ivory and for food, although there are certain superstitious humans who consider them to be sacred to Manaan, and who thus only take small numbers of them.

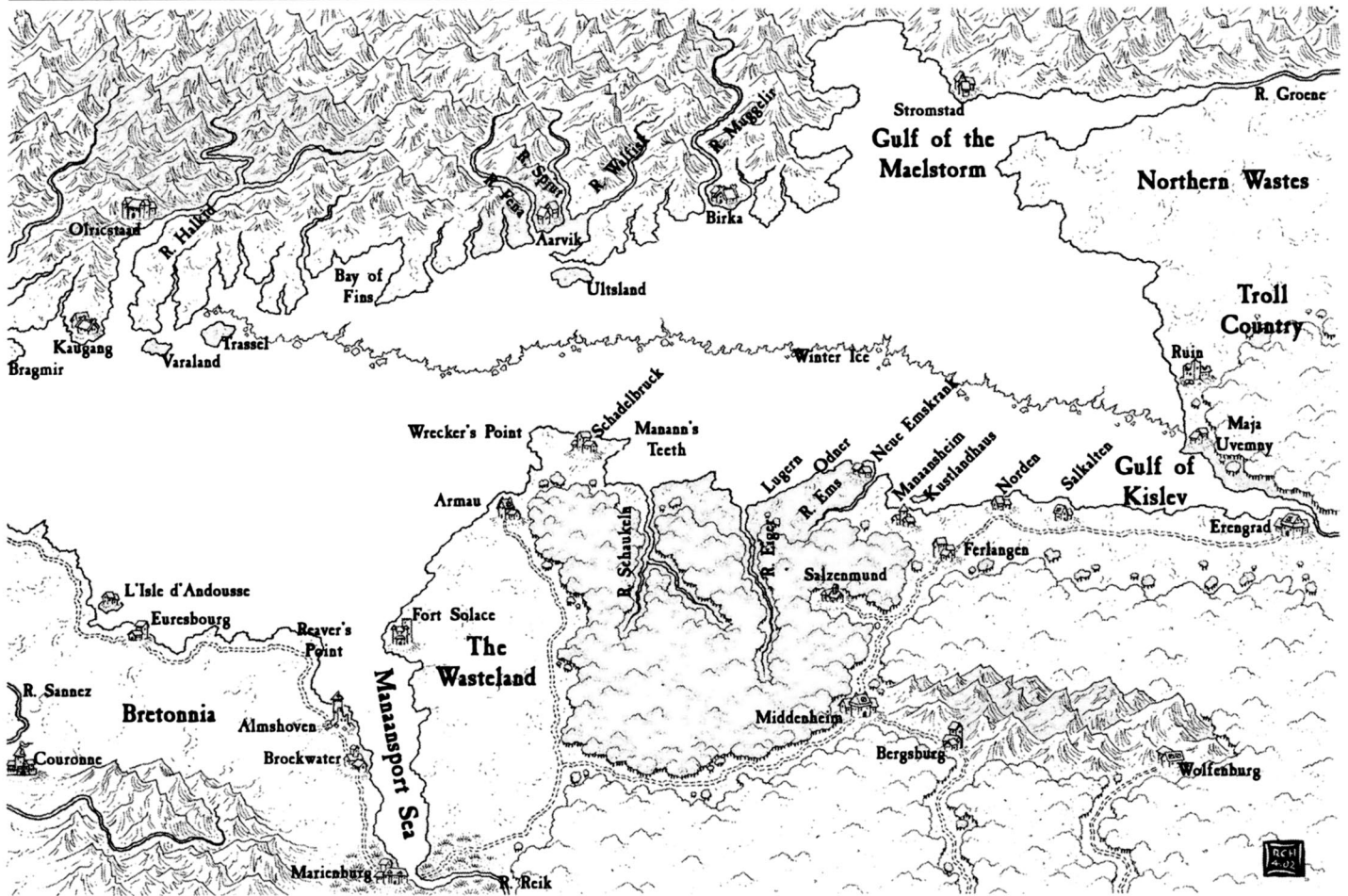
The cliffs of the coastlines are homes to colonies of gulls and razorbills, which act as a nuisance to the men who eke out an existence fishing for a living. Gulls will steal fish from the decks of boats,

SAILING THE SEA

This is not the place to discuss the ins and outs of sailing the oceans of the world, but there are a few points worth noting about traversing the Sea of Claws. Firstly it can be incredibly dangerous - many Sail tests should be taken to undertake any voyage in safety. In addition to this, it is imperative that the ship has some crew who are experienced at sailing on the Sea of Claws, and have some degree of familiarity with its ways. Although sailing times will vary greatly with the conditions, type of ship, time of year and route, this should give an idea of how long it will take a sailing ship of average size and speed to cross the sea:

Erengard - Marienburg	18 - 23 days
Erengard - Stromstaad	8- 12 days
Erengard - L'Anguille	20 - 30 days
Erengard - Olricstaad	19 - 28 days
Erengard - Nordern	3 - 5 days
Marienburg - Stromstaad	20 - 27 days
Marienburg - L'Anguille	10- 15 days
Marienburg - Olricstaad	8 - 12 days
Marienburg - Nordern	10 - 13 days
Stromstaad - Olricstaad	15 - 20 days
Stromstaad - L'Anguille	20 - 30 days
Stromstaad - Nordern	5 - 8 days
Olricstaad - L'Anguille	6 - 9 days
Olricstaad - Nordern	12 - 14 days
Nordern - L'Anguille	13 - 15 days





and occasionally attack lone individuals during the spring when the chicks are hatching. Razorbills are far more dangerous, and have accounted for the lives of many a lone fisherman or beachcomber. Certain parts of the Imperial and Bretonnian coastlines are home to vast colonies of these dangerous birds. When threatened they will swoop down in their hundreds, the cliffs echoing with their eerie cries.

The sea is home to many species of fish, and this is the main source of economic benefit for those who dwell on its shores. Large shoals of herring dominate, although cod and halibut are also to be found in abundance. All human nations bordering the Sea of Claws fish for these, although the methods vary from nation to nation. Most employ large nets - and although fishing trips are fraught with peril, the men of the coasts know that without setting out before the sun is up and bringing home the days catch, they and their families will starve.

Although they are not as common as in the Great Western Ocean, several species of whales swim beneath the surface of the waves of the Sea of Claws, and certain stretches of water are known to be breeding grounds for them. During the autumn months the waters south of Stromstaad teem with Three Point Baleen whales, calling to each other beneath the ice floes. The waters of the Sea of Claws are the hunting grounds of whaling ships from Norsca, Kislev and Marienburg, and many a whaler has lost his life in this most dangerous of professions. The rewards are great, however, as a cargo of whale oil and sea ivory can fetch an extremely high price.

Sharks, while not common, have made their homes in the cold waters of the sea. Amongst the species which hunt in the deeps are the Grey Barbed Shark, the ferocious Beserker Shark and the large plankton-eating Basking Shark. There are also a number of gigantic shark-like creatures that have survived almost unchanged since deep into prehistory. These huge beasts are known as megalons, and although no trustworthy sighting has been recorded, the remains of ships have been washed up on the shores of the sea, apparently bitten in two. In 2497, the wreck of *Le Demoiselle Du Baston* was recovered from the coast of Kislev with an enormous tooth lodged in the forecastle. It was said to be the height of a man.

Other than the megalons, there are said to be other legendary creatures living deep beneath the rolling surface of the waves. The first human sailors to ever brave the perils of the sea are said to have encountered great crabs known as Prometheans, both on distant isolated shores and in the open sea itself. Legend has it that these were once quite common, and scholars assume that this is where the sea got its name. The wharf taverns are witness to a great many yarns relating tales of the dwellers beneath the sea - stories of great serpentine monstrosities abound, as do accounts of fantastic sea battles between undead sea dragons and gigantic squid. Some of the sea monsters have been given names, on account of their fearsome reputations, and sea travellers will become familiar with the history of such beasts as Cetacius and the great tentacled mass known as Old Dagonar.

In the far northern waters there are believed to be a number of mutated creatures, twisted by the waters which pour from the melting ices of the Northern Wastes. Whether these were once natural beasts, changed by the corrupting influence of chaos, or aquatic daemons from the Realms of Chaos, nobody can or will say. Those human and Elven sailors who are forced for whatever reason to brave the northernmost shores are especially eager to pray for the help of the gods of the sea.



HISTORY

Ever since men came to the coasts of the Sea of Claws they have learned to respect it for the bounty it provides, and to fear it for the lives it takes. Prior to the ascendance of the human kingdoms in the Old World, little is known about the history of the sea. Certain legends are recounted by the Norse and Northern Imperials regarding the origins of the sea, which give a divine origin to the waters: *'In the time before time, when the Gods walked upon the earth and the fiends of Chaos were yet to*



descend, the land which is now the Sea of Claws belonged to the Earth Mother. The land lay not beneath fathoms of water, but under great glaciers and sheets of ice. This was the domain of Ulric, where he hunted the great beasts with his pack, and all was well with the world.

But this was not to last, as all things must change and be made new. Other ones came from beyond the mountains at the top of world, and using their magicks melted the ice. Ulric saw the great glaciers crack and shatter with the new warmth, and the land began to show beneath the ice. In his wisdom he knew that this was the end of his hunting grounds - but he was at war with the ones who had taken his lands away from him. He pleaded with the Earth Mother not to cede the lands that had appeared to her enemies, the ones who came from beyond the top of the world. The Earth Mother listened patiently to Ulric's request, and was moved by it. But providence dictated that she could not give this land back to the Lord of the Wolves, as this was not in the way of things. Instead she made it a gift to his brother's son, Manaen, who had dominion over the oceans and waters of the world. Ulric was satisfied, and ever since that day, the Sea of Claws has covered the lands between the Old World and Norsca.'

At some point in the far past, the coasts were colonised by the Elves. They founded the great sea port of Sith Rionnasc'namishathir, the ruins of which were later to be colonised by humans as

Marienburg. They also founded several other ports including one on the site of Erengard. This was the golden age of Elven civilisation in the area.

However, once the Elf-Dwarf war broke out, the whole coastline became the scene of battles, as the dwarfs attacked Elf settlements on and around the coasts of Norsca.

Sith Rionnasc'namishathir was sacked, and many of the settlements of both races were lost. Finally the war was over, the Elves claiming victory while the Dwarfs retreated back to their holds in the World's Edge Mountains and the freezing fastness' of Norsca. But the victory came at a great cost - their presence on the coasts of the Sea of Claws was considerably diminished. Their numbers were

insufficient and too widely spread to check the growing threat of the chaos and with troubles in Ulthuan they left the Old World, abandoning the few remaining ports to the ravages of time.

Early human tribes began to move north, and to inhabit the lands of The Empire and Bretonnia. Very early on they built small settlements on the coasts of the sea, some on the ruins of former Elven sites. Those who crossed to Norsca learned to harvest the plentiful supplies of fish and whales from the waters, even if they lived in fear of the erratic weather conditions. But the ascendance of humans within the area was also accompanied by the spread of goblinoid tribes around the coasts - primitive barges bearing ferocious goblins would compete with humans for fishing grounds. Although the goblinoids never mastered the art of sailing, the human tribes learned to live in fear of attack.

As human kingdoms began to develop and flourish, the coastlines became more densely populated. The harsh weather and poor agriculture of most of the coastline prevented heavy development, but as early rulers such as Sigmar and Gilles Le Breton began to carve up the Old World with their allies, the Sea of Claws was recognised as both an asset and a threat. The Norse had rapidly advanced in the art of sailing, and were exploring the sea and coastlines. One petty kingdom that flourished for a brief period during the first few centuries was located on the peninsula now known as Wrecker's Point. Very little is known of this bronze age Kingdom other than the name of its

ruler, Pallidus, although certain folk tales and ancient songs of the Norse tell a little of its customs.

With the expansion of human interests around the sea, small trading centres became established - most notably Erengard and Marienburg, both founded on the sites of former Elven ports. Early trade was in furs, metals and amber, and it was through the pioneering voyages of Kisleveite, Norse and Imperial traders that relations between the nations bordering the sea became more intense. This, however, was not to the benefit of all - as the Norscans came to see the wealth and resources concentrated in some of these places, they commenced raiding; preferring to take by force what they did not wish to trade for. The remote nature of many of the coastal towns meant that aid from central Imperial and Bretonnian authorities was almost non-existent, and many places were sacked with all inhabitants being killed or taken as thralls. Control of Erengard and Marienburg passed back and forth from Norse Kings to native rulers as the centuries rolled by.

Not all Norse voyages to the Old World involved conquest or commerce - this was a period of exploration for the hardy men of the North, and they also established settlements, not only along the northern coastline of the Old World, but also further afield. Norden and Euresbourg were originally founded by Norse settlers, who took advantage of the sparse population to establish places where the goods which they normally traded for were close at hand. Of course, it was only a matter of generations before the settlers became assimilated with the nation in which they found themselves, with the ports subsequently becoming targets for Norse raids. Norse contact with the southern nations was also achieved, although Longships were still an uncommon sight within the Southern Sea.

With the rise of the Old World nations, trade increased vastly and the ports grew - Marienburg becoming an essential stopping point for many trading voyages within and beyond the Sea of Claws, and Erengard becoming the gateway to Kislev and the eastern Empire. In 1423, Norden was sacked by Sven Raefensson and was subsequently rebuilt by the Prince of Ostland to provide him with sea trade. It was around this period that the importance of the Sea of Claws for trade was at its height - subsequent centuries would see a slow decline, as trade routes to the Southern Sea and later contact with the Sea Elves shifted the emphasis westwards. But around the 16th and 17th centuries, the ports of the Sea of Claws were bustling with activity, and all manner of exotic goods passed through the wharves and seafront.

As trade was at its height, so inevitably were sea battles between nations and against pirates. This was a period when the Imperial and Bretonnian Navies were established in earnest, and many good men were lost to the Sea of Claws. Some notable battles include the Battle of Amhelgan, when Bretonnian squadrons of swift Corsairs clashed with a large fleet of Imperial Wolfships over fishing grounds, and the Battle of the Clawsea, when an allied force of Bretonnians, Imperials out of Marienburg and a few mercenary Norscans battled with Dark Elf ships 200 miles north of Reaver's

Point. Other smaller skirmishes between pirates and merchant ships are too innumerable to mention, although tales of the vast wealth which went down with the ships still reverberate around seafront taverns.

The years between 1750 and 2300 were immensely disruptive for the Old World nations, especially The Empire. Kislev seceded from Imperial rule, making Erengard a point of contention between the two nations. The Sea Elves returned to the Old World, opening up trade with the West, and reducing the importance of the Sea of Claws for trade. The few Imperial ports were hardest hit by this, and Erengard was the only trading centre that could be said to have survived unscathed. Norse raids intensified for a few hundred years, but this may have been a final flurry - as the subsequent two hundred years have seen relatively few raids. Relationships between the Kings of Norsca and successive Emperors and Kings of Bretonnia improved considerably, especially after the Incursions of Chaos in 2300.

The Incursions of Chaos saw vast hordes of twisted creatures pour from the Realms of Chaos in the north. Although many attacked by land, there was a considerable force that came by sea to attack the settlements of the Norse and the ports of the Old World. This was compounded by the fact that the northern waters remained frozen solid, providing additional opportunities for the forces of Chaos to launch their assaults. The human nations set aside most of their differences, and allied with each other and the Dwarfs and Elves to fight their common adversary. There were many battles on the Sea of Claws, with vast allied fleets clashing with the corrupted floating vessels which the followers of Chaos had captured or built to their own dark designs. Chaos creatures also emerged from the water itself - with sea monsters shaped to suit the whims of the Chaos Gods. Small fishing settlements would disappear overnight, apparently wiped out by some sort of aquatic chaotic creatures. Many of these were Norse, and their sagas tell of the great loss suffered by the people of the fjords. Erengard was under siege, and the brave defence by the Kislevites and Norse was augmented substantially by a company of sailors, merchants and adventurers from many nations, known as the Sabrossa Brigade. A monument and a small society remain in the city to commemorate their efforts. Eventually, the fight was won against Chaos, and the human nations set about rebuilding the ports and fleets to their former glory.

However, with the exception of Marienburg, this dream was not to be. Marienburg seceded from The Empire with the assistance of the Sea Elves, and the other nations began to turn away from the Sea of Claws. The Imperial population on the coast had always been sparse, and despite the failed attempts to set up rival ports to Marienburg at Neues Emskrank and Salkalten. The Empire all but gave up on northern sea trade. With the obvious exception of Marienburg, only Erengard thrives in the current climate, trading chiefly with Marienburg, L'Anguille and Olricstaad. But the monopoly of the former makes trade further afield uneconomical, and most of the goods from Kislev and the eastern Empire pass through the greatest port in the world.

TIMELINE

Year	Event	Year	Event
		500	Erengard established as trading centre
-6500IC	Ice retreats from the region as the Old Ones alter the planet's orbit; meltwaters pool in the shallow depression left behind	625	First Norscan raids on the Northern Old World. They continue on and off for 1500 years, despite numerous treaties and temporary alliances
-4650	Dwarf migration reaches terminus of the Worlds Edge Mountains. Some clans turn westward (into Norsca) while others settle in the Mountains of Mourn. Most clans return to the Dwarfholds	675	'Wrecker's Point' devastated
		765	Imperial treaty with Norscans halts raids
-4550	The Elven sea fortress of Sith Rionnasc'namishathir is founded at the location now occupied by Marienburg	810	Explorers from Nordland find remnants of 'Wrecker's Point' settlements. Norse occupy Erengard
		1109	Marienburg occupied by Snorri Half-hand. The Norse establish colonies in Northern Old World, including Euresbourg and Nordern.
-4500	The Gates collapse and the Old Ones are destroyed. The Sea of Claws seethes and freezes as the climate of the planet is disrupted. Ancient creatures stir in the waters; some are changed by the coming of Chaos	1280	Wrecker's Point settlements devastated by Norscan reavers. Raids on north coast of Empire and Bretonnia
		1423	Nordern sacked by Sven Raefensson
-3500	The Elves explore the sea and found a number of colonies on the coasts, including one at the present location of Erengard.	1500	Importance of Sea of Claws for trade at its height
		1750	Ungols invaded the northeastern marches (then eastern Ostland and Talabecland) of the Empire and established their own dominion. Erengard becomes a contested port
-2000	Elf/Dwarf War begins - the coast of the sea is the location of a number of battles between Dwarfs and Elf settlers	1850	Spate of Norscan raids on Northern Old World
-1850	Elves control the Sea of Claws	2150	The Sea Elves return to the Old World, stopping at Marienburg, as well as Erengard and Olricstaad
-1600	The Elves abandon their settlements on the coast	2300	Incursions of Chaos. Hordes of chaos creatures pour down from the north, crossing the frozen sea as far south as the Kislevite Taiga. Ships claimed by Chaos and twisted to suit the whims of its gods attack the coasts. Many naval battles are fought between the Imperial, Norscan and Kislevite alliance and the fleets of the Dark gods. Erengard defended by Norscans, Kislevites and a small brigade of sailors from other nations
-1500	Volcanic activity widens great fissures in the sea bed, providing refuge for gigantic deep sea creatures. Human tribes begin to settle around the coasts of the Sea of Claws		
-900	Goblinoids attempt to sail the sea on crude barges. Some succeed in reaching Norsca, whilst others are dispersed along the coastlines		
-500	Human tribes in the Northern Old World and Norsca begin to fish in the sea in earnest. Former site of Elven settlement at Erengard occupied by humans		
-10	Marius of the Jutones founds Marienburg at the mouth of the Reik	2350	Decline in importance of Sea of Claws for trade is apparent with opening up of Western Oceans
0	Human-Dwarf alliance pushes many goblinoids north into the forests of the Northern Old World. Some are chased into the sea itself, drowning in their hundreds	2378	Marienburg funds war on piracy. Sea battles fought along the coast of Nordland and Wasteland
		2429	Marienburg secedes from Empire
200	Norse sailors explore the Sea of Claws	2448	Harsh winter freezes sea as far south as the Lynsk estuary. Severe effects on trade with Erengard and Norsca
250	Petty kingdom founded on 'Wrecker's Point'. Survives for several hundred years	2462	Imperial trading ports of Neues Emskrank and Salkalten founded

Trade

'Yeerss come here, with yer... ways. You thinksch yer sooo shhpECIAL. Jsshttt because yers got ffffffancy clothessh! Yer not Washtelandersh are ye? Yerr are! It'ssh your fault that thiss place is dead and... an' an' childrens are... shtarvin'! HOY!! LADSHH! WASHTELANDERSH!!!'

Dirk 'Barnacle' Netzhaut, out-of-work stevedore from Salkalten

The lands around the Sea of Claws are not rich in natural resources, although they are the source of a number of unique goods:

Amber - found along the shore of Ostland and also in smaller quantities around the mouths of Norscan fjords. Amber is in great demand for jewellery, and for this reason most of it ends up passing through Marienburg, where most of the profit is to be made.

Timber - the hardy pines of Norsca and Kislev are valuable for construction and shipbuilding, especially in the windswept and treeless expanses of the Wasteland.

Grain - the vast Wheatlands of Kislev are a source of huge quantities of high quality grain, which passes out of Erengard to Norsca and Marienburg. The poor standards of the roads and the large cargoes that must be carried mean that grain almost always travels by sea to its destination.

Honey - odd though it may seem, the cold, dry conditions of Kislev and parts of Norsca are ideal for apiculture. The finest honey is shipped from Olricstaad and Erengard in heavy, sealed barrels, along with beeswax.

Flax - this crop is grown in the Northern Empire and Kislev, where is it farmed and woven into cloth. This is used for sails, and exported via Marienburg.

Hemp - Although less important than flax, the hemp crops of Ostland are an important commodity, especially for the manufacture of rope.

Tar - pinewood tar is made extensively in the forests of Norsca, Kislev and Ostland - it is widely used for preserving ropes and wood and caulking barrels. It can also yield chemicals with medicinal purposes and alchemical applications.

Fish - without refrigeration, the period for which fish are edible is short. To get around this, fish caught in the Sea of Claws are either dried, or packed in barrels of ice taken from the northern waters for transportation to the inland towns and cities of the Old World. Salted or pickled herring are a particularly common commodity.

Whaling - almost the whole of the carcass of a whale can be profitably used by humans, and the large numbers of whales in the Sea of Claws make it prime whaling territory. (For more details on whaling see *Warpstone 9*).

Walrus ivory - the tusks of the walrus are valued as decorative trophies, and for ornamentation. They are also said to have certain warding powers when fixed to the prow of a boat. Bretonnian high fashion occasionally requires walrus tusks, although this fluctuates as much as wig height and tastes in panstick.

Furs and Hides - these include the skins of inland creatures from Kislev and Norsca, such as bears, and also the coats of seals, walruses and even large sea creatures. Kislevite furs are prized throughout

the Old World for their quality and warmth.

Ice - the very rich classes of the Old World can afford to pay for shipments of ice, carved from the ice floes of the northern Sea of Claws. Although this is very expensive, it is far more practical than creating ice by magical means - it is also viewed with less suspicion.

Although trade on the Sea of Claws has diminished since its height a thousand years ago, piracy is still a serious problem, not least because the ports no longer sustain a healthy turnover of legal employment. Maritime rogues exist in all nations, and in most strands of society - the captain of many a pirate ship is a noble or a naval officer turned bad. The lure of piracy is strong, and is not always motivated by greed. The pirates of the Wasteland are said to be in the pay of various rival merchant families involved in anti-competitive activity. The pirates of other nations may also have some 'official' backing, as both The Empire and Bretonnia have motives to disrupt the trade of their rivals - which includes each other and especially Marienburg. Norscan reavers tend to be less organised, descending on vessels partially for the thrill of battle, and also to lay their hands on whatever cargo is aboard. Small-scale piracy can result from hardship in coastal towns, with the locals supplementing their meagre income by extracting a 'tax' from smaller ships that pass close to their fishing waters. There are also pirates who worship the god Stromfels, whose motivations lay beyond profit - they consider the lives that they consign to the deep to be sacrifices to their lord.

Other pirate ships have crews drawn from all nations, and in some cases several races. The notorious pirate captain Black Dan was in fact a halfling, something which amazed the people of Erengard when he was finally captured in the Lynsk Estuary. There are also a number of ramshackle boats put together or captured by goblinoids which raid any vessel they spy - although they are not difficult to outrun, relying as they do on the lacklustre sailing skills of the orcs and their kin.

The other 'threat' to trade is smuggling, both of contraband (such as Bretonnian brandy to The Empire) and less harmless items. Much of this passes through Marienburg, although the quiet parts of the coasts are dotted with smuggler's coves where cargoes are taken ashore at the dead of night.



THE COAST

Bretonnian Coast

'The sea, he is a harsh master. But the Comte is good to us... he charges the farmers very little to till the land which belongs to them, and he kindly demands a mere two thirds of the day's catch from us, and we only sell our lives as militia in times of

war or when brigands steal his wine. I would gut him like a fish should he ever show his powdered face on the docks.'

René Caussion, peasant fisherman from Andousse

In between the Bretonnian headland (known as La Tête du Nord) and Norsca, the Middle Sea meets the Sea of Claws. A strong countercurrent deep beneath the surface keeps the waters where the two seas meet relatively flat, but as one progresses along the coast, the typically stormy conditions of the Sea of Claws become apparent.

In common with much of the northern coast of the Old World, the Bretonnian coast is sparsely populated. A few fishing villages can be found eking out an existence from the sea, and there are a handful of settlements of reasonable size. However, much of the Bretonnian sea trade passes through L'Anguille, and to a lesser extent Marienburg. Fish caught at the coast are preserved in salt and transported to northern cities of the country, but this is an imperfect way to keep them 'edible' and there are few markets at which fish can be purchased.

East of La Tête du Nord, the Bretonnian coast is fairly uniform in character. Low and marshy plains rise gently from the desolate beaches, broken occasionally by stretches of high chalk cliffs. The climate of the coast is mild, but a little damp. The local peasants take advantage of the weather, and the low-lying lands of the coast are cultivated for crops. The flat grasslands and farmlands are divided by hedges, some of which come right to the edges of the cliffs. The lack of raids in the past two centuries has made the local liege lords complacent, and the peasants have grown lazy in their watches. Although a line of beacons exists between L'Anguille and The Wasteland, they are rarely maintained by the locals. Should a hostile force make a beachhead on the northern coast of Bretonnia, it is unlikely that they would encounter a prepared defence.

The coastline has no major rivers, but numerous rivulets and streams drain the hills and agricultural land. Where many of these meet the sea, expanses of tidal flats stretch for miles along the coast - these offer rich pickings for the local peasantry, who collect shellfish and seaweed from the exposed sands.

To the east of La Tête du Nord is L'Isle D'Andousse - an island which rises from the green depths of the bay. This is the location of the castle of Comte D'Andousse, the liege lord and chivalric defender of the local peasantry. In reality the Comte has the characteristic contempt for his vassals found in most of the Bretonnian nobility, and divides his time between drunken revelry in his castle and hypocritical espousal of his knightly virtues. The castle is an impressive sight - built upwards from the island, which is little more than a great hill - it is extremely well fortified. When the mood takes him, the Comte will bedeck the battlements with pennants and banners, and when seen from the sea, many sailors proclaim that this is the true Bretonnia - a nation of beauty and pageantry.

The Comte D'Andousse rarely leaves his island home, with supplies sent the short distance from

the mainland. Once a year he visits a Grand Tournament to demonstrate his prowess with the lance, and while he is away the servants of the castle spend the time drinking to excess and generally making merry. Upon his return everything will be returned to normal.

Running along the coastline from L'Anguille to Marienburg is the Old Coast Road. This is a remnant of the Elven dominance of the Sea of Claws, dating back over six thousand years ago. The road is in poor repair along the Bretonnian coast, and is only just usable. It is raised above the ground and constructed from white stones, the origin of which is as mysterious as the builders to the locals.

Located along the Old Coast Road is the seaside town of Euresbourg. This stands around thirty seven miles from the border between Bretonnia and the Wasteland, and is a town of reasonable size. The fishermen of Euresbourg are well known for their adventurousness, being willing to sail far into the Sea of Claws to fill their nets. Many crews are lost, but not as many as would be expected, and it is

believed by the townsfolk that the fishing industry of Euresbourg is blessed by both Manaen and The Lady herself. Maybe it is the effect of the sea winds that blow powerfully onto the harbour, but for a Bretonnian town, Euresbourg is a surprisingly clean and pleasant place. The wharves on the seafront are built from local stone; the buildings too – giving the town a uniform dark grey colour. At night, sailors can see the many lights of the town taverns creeping up the hillside – a welcoming sight indeed. The local nobility are relatively good governors, and the economy, while not exactly thriving, is sufficient to maintain a reasonable standard of living. The reason for this is the trade in grain that the town conducts with Marienburg – visiting sailors from the great city are treated well here. This has not gone unnoticed by King Charles however, and he is concerned that the town may secede to Wasteland rule. Consequently, he has had a number of agents of the 'La Chambre Noire' posted in the town's guilds and temples, to alert him to any suspicious activity. It is particularly important that

Euresbourg remains a part of Bretonnia since it stands in such a tactically important location. Should Bretonnia ever decide to invade the Wasteland, troops would be billeted here, and would have little difficulty passing down the Old Coast Road to the city itself.

At the border between the two nations is a small post, manned by both Bretonnians and Tilean mercenaries, who do well from being paid handsomely by both Marienburg and Bretonnia alike. Consequently the two groups get along well together, bar the constant complaints from the Tileans about the climate.

Wasteland Coast

'Look. Look at the state! Now if that road had been built by Dwarves, instead of those airy-headed Elves, it'd still be as good as the day it was built. See that bit there? The bit where half the road's crumbling into the sea? Any young Dwarf fresh from his mother's hearth could tell you that it needed cross-arching with a splice joist! The bilateral stress loads are all over the place!'

Jodrin Gunderfels, foreman of crew assigned to repair a section of the Old Coast Road

The Wasteland and the Manaansport Sea are covered in detail on pages 6-12 of *Marienburg: Sold Down The River*.

Briefly, the west coast of the Manaansport Sea stretches from Reaver's Point, the former home of the most notorious pirate bands to sail the Sea of Claws, to the largest city on the Old World: Marienburg. There are few places of note on the coast, the exceptions being the village of Broekwater and the ruins of Almshoven.

Marienburg sits on the mouth of the mighty river Reik, surrounded by the desolate swamplands of the Grootscher Marsh. The east coast of the Manaansport Sea is almost devoid of human life, although it is here that Fort Solace can be found – a small village with a lighthouse. At the foot of the headland known as Wrecker's Point is the border between The Empire and the Wasteland, and here stands the town of Aarnau.

Imperial Coast

'If the Imperial Chancellery weren't so obsessed with the School of Gunnery and the Reiksguard, we might see some funding for the blasted Navy. "Of little consequence" - that's what I heard some jumped-up bureaucrat saying about the coastal defences. He won't be saying that when the Bretonnian fleet sweep down and start plundering Ostland! We sorely need to improve the fleet at Norden... and even that won't be enough.'

Admiral Klaus von Nesselzelt, high commander of the third fleet of the Imperial Navy

Dark legends surround the headland known as Wrecker's Point. In the early years of The Empire, the land was a sparsely populated 'Kingdom' ruled by a benevolent figure known as Pallidus, whose details seem to elude both history and folklore. The influence of Sigmar's people had yet to reach this remote headland, and the kingdom could be said to have flourished, seeming to be strangely safe from Norse raids and piracy. Pallidus is said to have



extracted no tribute from his subjects but the bodies of their dead, a tax that they happily paid while he kept them in relative safety from attack. It is not known when or how the kingdom fell, but the first representatives of the Barony of Nordland to visit the region in the 9th century found only two inhabited villages (who were continually harassed by Norse raiders) and a number of ruined settlements. Despite nominal rule by the Barony of Nordland, the people of Wrecker's Point were devastated by a series of raids in the 13th and 14th centuries – the Baron of the day being both unable and disinterested in protecting such a remote and unprofitable part of his lands. All that remains now are a handful of fishermen's shacks and one inhabited village, Schadelbruck, which survives by subsistence. In the 23rd century the Baron Adolphus Nikse launched a punitive expedition to destroy the gangs of wreckers who had taken to using the treacherous rocks known as Manaans Teeth to lure men to their deaths. The name of Wrecker's Point was coined by sailors who had grown used to avoiding it during this period - and it has stuck. There is little reason for anyone to visit the communities of Wrecker's Point, although the recent disappearance of one of Baron Werner's tax collectors is a cause for concern. Added to this are the stories of fishermen sailing the waters near the headland bringing up nets full of fish – but when hauled aboard each and every one of them is found to be dead.

The coast of Nordland is barren and almost completely uninhabited. The sea laps gently over the miles of sandbanks, which climb slowly towards the strip of sandy heathland that lies between the Laurelorn Forest and the coast. The sea hides treacherous sandbanks that lie just below the water, only rarely being exposed at low tide. Over the centuries a number of ships have run aground on these sandbars, and a traveller can occasionally spot the skeleton of a wrecked vessel projecting from the acres of wet sand. Attempts to chart the sandbanks of the Nordland coast have so far met with failure, as they are constantly shifting.

The windswept heaths of the coast are dotted with a number of notable edifices known colloquially as the Grabenriese, or the 'Graves of Giants'. These are large megalithic structures made from great slabs of extremely hard, dark granite. It is not known where these great cromlechs and piled slabs originated from – they were said to have been discovered by the Elves when they first came to these lands over six thousand years ago.

The River Schaukeln rushes into the sea from the Laurelorn Forest, and is said to have its source high in the Enchanted Hills, before passing through the Wood Elf communities. Its waters are fabulously clear and pure, and are believed by some to have properties which stave off mutation when drunk. These are almost certainly folktales, influenced by the river's association with the Wood Elves. Further along the coast is the River Eiger, a broad, shallow tributary that drains much of Nordland. Around its mouth are fertile marshes, which are employed as pasture by some small villages around its estuary. In the Eiger Bay there are two islands, separated from the mainland by a strip of water only a few hundred yards wide. Lugern is almost entirely

covered with forest, and has no human inhabitants. It is said that in the distant past the island was a sacred site to the Old Faith. The legends are borne out by the presence of a stone circle, which can be found in the centre of the isle. It has clearly been abandoned for many centuries, and the trees of the forest have grown up within the stones themselves.

By contrast, Odner is almost featureless – a barren and low-lying piece of land with very little topsoil in which vegetation can take root. The elevation of the land increases towards the northern side, where the land falls away into the sea as precipitous cliffs. These are pitted with sea caves, which seem to continue deep underneath the island.

The next major feature of the coast is the headland known as the Emhügel Peninsula, a hilly outcropping into the Sea of Claws. The steep slopes rise from the relatively flat plain of northern Nordland to form high grassy ridges, completely uninhabited by humans. At the water's edge these form high cliffs, which are fringed with narrow strips of beach. The River Ems cuts between the steep hills, carving its path towards the sea, where, located on the mouth of the river is the failed trading port of Neues Emskrank.

Neues Emskrank is the only settlement of any consequence on the coast of Nordland. It is a depressed remnant of an attempt by the electors of Nordland, Middenheim, Ostland and Hochland to usurp Marienburg's stranglehold on trade in the Northern Old World. 70 years on, the town still conducts a little trade with Erengard and Norsca (mainly timber), but the lack of a road link with the major population centres of The Empire means that the town is slowly dying. Now it functions as a convenient stopping point for trade ships hopping along the coast. Since the failure of the port, it has been assigned to the von Allingen family, who have been out of favour with Middenheim for three centuries. The current Baron is Bertolt von Allingen, a young man who has tried his best to make Neues Emskrank a viable port. However, indifference amongst the Electors and harsh reality have combined to make him realise that nothing can be done to improve the situation. The few visitors to the town are struck by the incongruity of the architecture with the mood of the town. The Northern Mercantile Society commissioned a grand dock to cater for the anticipated rush of trade that never came, and the wide paved road now leads only to rotting wharves and a few fishing boats. The inhabitants of Neues Emskrank are relatively few, but those that live there are resigned to the town's fate, content to eke out a living from fishing for herring and collecting scallops. There is a poorly maintained coastal track that joins the town to the main Middenheim-Erengard road at Ferlangen. A traveller can still see the remains of the abandoned roadworks that were to link the town with the rest of The Empire.

Travelling along the coast, the hills of the Emhügel Peninsula give way to the shallow cliffs of the Drosselspule Bay (literally 'choked bay'), so called because of the large amounts of kelp that grow on the sea bed. The bay is relatively shallow, and the seaweed clogs up much of the water. Although many marine animals feed amongst the kelp, it is considered bad luck to fish here. Many

believe that beneath the weed lies the remains of a village cursed by Manaans and reclaimed by the sea as a punishment for the unknown sins of its inhabitants. The fish that teem in the bay are said to be the souls of the villagers that perished on the night when the Sea of Claws took them. Anyone who falls into the waters of the bay is almost certain to become tangled in the weeds and drown trying to get himself free.

Located on a cliff overlooking the bay is a small schloss known as the Kustlandhaus. This is the occasional summer home of the Baron of Nordland. During the warmer months, Baron Werner will sometimes stay in the castle, usually issuing invitations to other noblemen of note. Traditionally the Baron likes to throw a ball for the summer equinox here, inviting the majority of the Ulrican electors. Unfortunately the relative inaccessibility of the Kustlandhaus, combined with Baron Werner's relatively unimportant status in Imperial politics, results in a very poor attendance. The guests usually consist of little more than members of the Nordland nobility who are keen to curry Baron Werner's favour.

There is a solitary island within the Drosselspule Bay, which shares its name with the only building upon it – Manaansheim. This is a small monastery devoted to the Lord of the Seas – the home of a company of the Order of the Triton. Unlike the monasteries in the Wasteland, the brethren found within are mostly retired seamen with no skills of diplomacy or usefulness elsewhere within the cult. The High Priests in Marienburg are happy for the elderly monks to maintain a small library and pursue the few academic issues of interest to Manaans's followers. However there are rarely many brethren here and they are not taken too seriously. The abbot, Luther Bruggeman, is a retired navigator and in recent years he has become concerned about the future of the monastery. The sea is gradually eroding the island and the buildings are becoming more unstable with each passing year. He is not sure that the monastery will survive another winter, and has begun to wonder whether Manaans is punishing the monks for some blasphemy of which he is unaware.

As the Drosselspule Bay spans west, it crosses the Nordland - Ostland border, and the geography of the coastline begins to change. The Middenheim-Erengard road joins the coastline here, but there is little sign of human habitation along the water's edge. The road is notorious for being poorly maintained and unsafe, with beastmen and bandits making the land around it their home. Consequently, most traffic between Kislev and The Empire is by river. The western Ostland coastline is one of shallow fjords and bays, although there are no major rivers, as there is little relief between the coast and the Forest of Shadows. The land is bleak and low-lying, and over the centuries the sea has built up acres of sand dunes. In some places these cut off shallow lagoons from the open sea, where sea fowl flock to catch the fish washed into them by the tides.

Located at the eastern extreme of the Drosselspule Bay is the port of Norden – the largest coastal settlement of The Empire. This is historically a naval dock and a number of squadrons of wargalleys from the Imperial Navy are berthed here. However, in recent centuries ships have developed deeper

berths, and only the relatively flat-bottomed boats can be moored here. The Imperial Great Ship Scarlet Griffon can usually be seen at anchor almost a mile out of port. (This is far from an ideal arrangement, and the Emperor is seeking to find a better location.) Nevertheless, the warships of Nordern are The Empire's only true defence against invasion by sea, and are taken seriously by Altdorf. The town itself is not a particularly welcoming place – the men of the navy are notorious for picking fights with the locals, and many of the inns on the waterfront erupt into brawling before the night is over. The people of the town naturally resent this, and there is a permanent hostility between 'them and us' – both sides blaming each other for any crime or misfortune that occurs in the town. The only locals pleased by the Navy's presence are the more roguish elements. Prostitution and smuggling are commonplace within the town. The contraband that passes through Nordern is not of much value – Marienburg has control over the slave trade and large scale smuggling operations. Still, the odd case of Bretonnian brandy has been known to pass from a recently arrived naval vessel to those willing to pay.

The people of Norden make their living from fishing and a little trade with the rest of The Empire. Some goods from Norsca and Erengard make their way from here to Middenheim and a number of small merchant families maintain offices

here. Recent years have seen an increased trade in amber, as new deposits have been found further east on the coast. The people are known for their irritatingly nasal accent and halting speech patterns, and this is a favourite subject of mockery for drunken sailors looking to pick fights.

Forty miles along the coast from Nordern is Salkalten, the second port to be opened in 2462 as part of Jens-Peter Riemann's plans to usurp Marienburg's dominance of the Sea of Claws trade. The fate of Salkalten was as poor as that of Neues Emskrank, with trade floundering within a few years of the port's construction. The town still limps on, trading on a very small scale with Erengard, although like Neues Emskrank, it is more of a stopping-off point for boats heading to larger ports. The town falls under the jurisdiction of Baron Gustav von Wolder, an absentee noble who has made it quite clear how little he cares about the fate of the town. The townfolk know that there is little reason to stay there, and the population is steadily decreasing. Those who remain scrape a living from fishing, and collecting salt from the pans cut into the shallow cliffs. Unfortunately the low salt content of the water means that this is a poorly rewarded endeavour. Some individuals have turned to piracy, attacking ships on their way between Marienburg and Erengard. Alcoholism and unemployment are severe problems in Salkalten, even more so than in Neues Emskrank, and the locals are a bitter, resentful and insular lot. Visitors should be on

their guard, especially if they are noble, as the people of the town could well take out their frustrations on an 'outsider'. Anyone heard speaking with a Wasteland accent is likely to be lynched – Salkaltener have long memories.

Between Salkalten and the Kislev border there are no more settlements of note. The coastline climbs steadily towards the River Lynsk, with stretches of chalk cliffs as high as 400 feet. These cliffs are being slowly eaten away by the Sea of Claws, leaving great towers of stone thrusting up from the water. There are a number of sea arches and deep caves, which are said to be the lairs of pirates – and worse.

At the border of The Empire with Kislev there is a small fortress called Castle Gausch. This was built after the Incursions of Chaos to act as a strongpoint for Imperial troops involved in the fighting in Kislev. However, it has been of little use during the last two hundred years, and is rarely occupied by a garrison. A small village has grown up around the fort, called Gauschdorf.

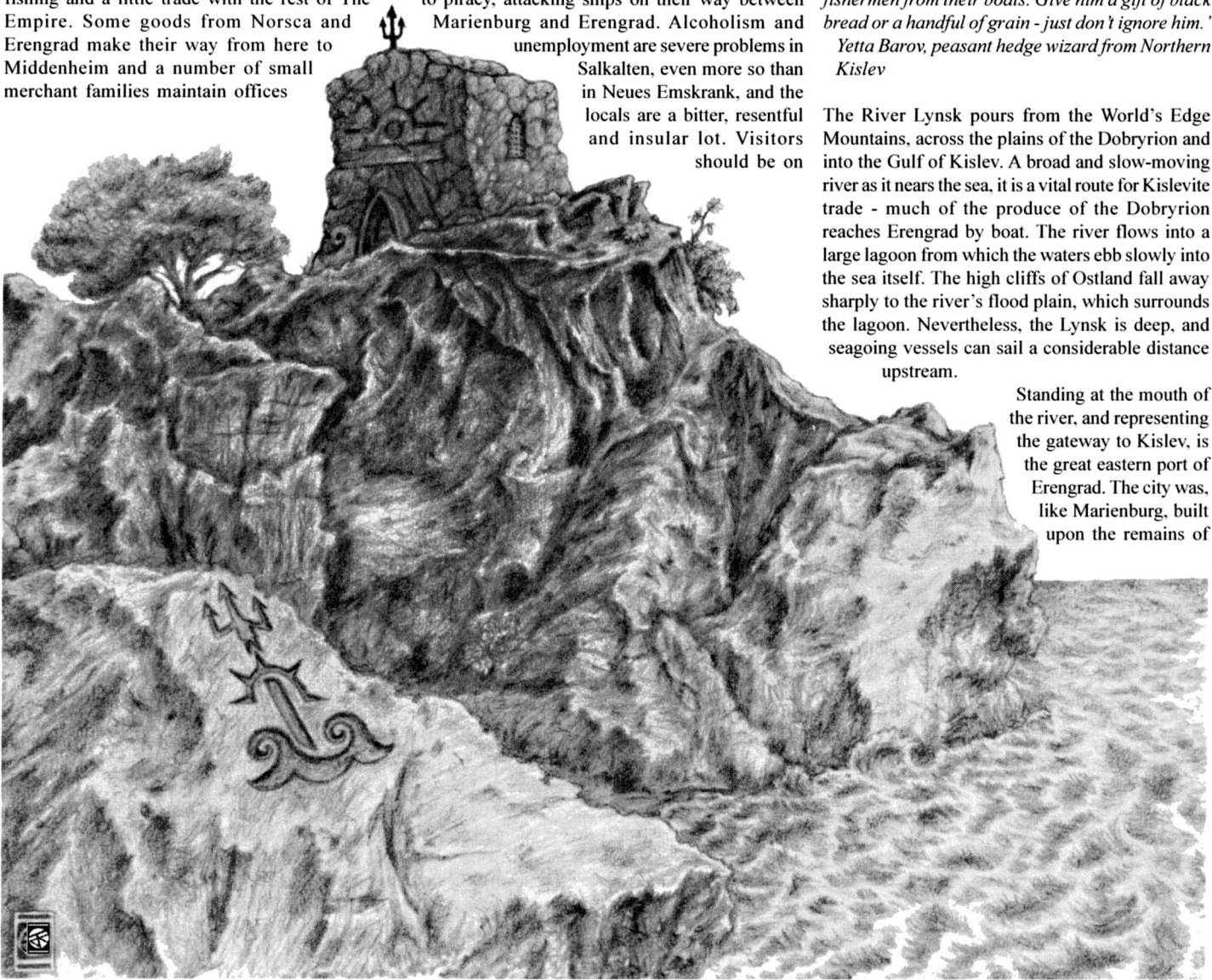
Kislev Coast

'You good people need to beware of the Kivinnik. He's a jealous fellow, always pushing unwary fishermen from their boats. Give him a gift of black bread or a handful of grain - just don't ignore him.'

Yetta Barov, peasant hedge wizard from Northern Kislev

The River Lynsk pours from the World's Edge Mountains, across the plains of the Dobryrion and into the Gulf of Kislev. A broad and slow-moving river as it nears the sea, it is a vital route for Kislevite trade - much of the produce of the Dobryrion reaches Erengard by boat. The river flows into a large lagoon from which the waters ebb slowly into the sea itself. The high cliffs of Ostland fall away sharply to the river's flood plain, which surrounds the lagoon. Nevertheless, the Lynsk is deep, and seagoing vessels can sail a considerable distance upstream.

Standing at the mouth of the river, and representing the gateway to Kislev, is the great eastern port of Erengard. The city was, like Marienburg, built upon the remains of



an ancient Elven port, and parts of the sea walls are possibly a remainder from that time - they are made from some pale coloured granite that was not quarried from any local source. The skyline of Erengard is a magnificent sight, especially for the weary traveller coming into port - cupolas, bell-towers and spires shine brightly in the cold sunlight, towering over the low buildings, while ocean-going vessels from many of the human nations occupy the harbours. The city is surrounded by a high wooden wall - this proved invaluable during the Incursions of Chaos in repelling the mutated hordes. Since then the defences have been improved further still, and those sailing into the city will be watched and boarded for inspection. Whilst the city itself is situated on the shore, the main wharfs are located on an island in the lagoon - known as Bogatyr Isle. This is reached by means of a large and sturdy wooden bridge.

North of the Lynsk, the coast rises again to high granite cliffs, which drop sharply to the sea. The Kislevite coast is almost totally uninhabited - small settlements this far north are too much at risk, and most of the sea-faring is based in Erengard itself. The cliffs only very rarely dip towards the waterline, where they have collapsed into the sea, leaving a dangerous and rubble-strewn scar. West of Erengard stretches the Translynsk country, with dense forest lining the tops of the cliffs. The peasants say that these cliffs are the domain of spirits such as Kivinnik, who is said to push unwary sailors from their boats. On the coast itself there are no colonies of any note. The only habitation of any consequence is the estate of the reclusive boyar, Yalta Malinov. Malinov's estates are located about a hundred miles from Erengard, almost on the border of the wild Taiga. A large and imposing fortified Kislevite mansion house stands atop a high section of cliff, at least two hundred yards above the crashing waters of the sea - this is Maja Uvemny, the ancestral home of the Malinovs. The stone seems to be an almost black granite, quarried from within the forest - but despite its hardness, the building is not in good condition. A great crack runs up the west wall, and ivy chokes the east wing to the extent that it obliterates the windows. Running inland away from the house is a road that leads to the small village of Poltovo.

The Malinovs are an old aristocratic family able to trace back their origins to the Gospodars who founded Kislev. For the last three hundred years, there has been a dark cloud over the dynasty and successive boyars have been depressive and unsociable, spending much of their time at Maja Uvemny. The current boyar, Yalta Malinov, is no exception, remaining apart from the intrigues, alliances and plots of the Tsar's other boyarin. The geographical location of the estates means that Malinov is largely forgotten by his peers, and this is exactly how he prefers it - because Yalta is a vampire. Three hundred years ago, the young aristocrat was returning from a visit to Marienburg, where he had been visiting the family's interests in the city. On his last day he decided to have a night on the tiles - and ventured beyond the Kislevite quarter with some of his compatriots for an evening of carousing. The next thing that he knew he was on a boat, sailing back to Kislev - he had been in a

coma since that night. Upon his return to his family estates, he began to experience a thirst which he could not explain. Once he surrendered to his urges he became a fully-fledged vampire. The isolation of Maja Uvemny has allowed him to pretend to be successive heirs to the family estate down the centuries, and he has treated the peasants of Poltovo effectively as livestock, taking blood from them as he sees fit. Yalta is prone to deep depression and introspective moods and he spends much of his time looking out of a darkened room at the thrashing sea. Any visitors to the estate will be treated civilly, as their company will be enjoyed for its novelty value. However, it will only be a few hours before Yalta tires, and sinks once again into his existential angst. He may then inform his guests that unfortunately he must retire, although he may return later to eat...

As the coast runs north into the Taiga, the land is unexplored by humans. The occasional passing ship has seen the line of thick pine forests that top the cliffs, but there is no sign of habitation. Several Kislevite and Norse sailors have reported a ruin seen from afar, somewhere close to the thinning trees on the edge of the tundra. There are said to be several crumbling towers and a half-collapsed sea wall, but no ship can get close. Treacherous rocks lie below the surface of the waves, and no human pilot can navigate a safe path between them. The ruins may be the remains of a small Elven port, abandoned after the Elf-Dwarf war.

Troll Country/The Northern Wastes

'Enough, manling. Leave me. I shall row to the shore and take my leave of your company. You need not wait for my return.'

Odric Hamnir, Giant Slayer, aboard the whaling ship, The Magartha

Beyond Kislev, the lands of the north are uninhabited by humans, forming a barren, freezing wasteland. The pine forests of the Taiga thin out as the land slopes gradually to the tundra. From there the land is low-lying and nearly featureless. Those sailing close to the shore will see icy sands and sparse vegetation; this is an unwelcoming land with little to entice a ship to drop anchor nearby. But it is not just the lack of landmarks that deter humans and even Elves from landing, it is the knowledge that the Troll Country is home to dangerous creatures, from wild beasts and twisted creatures to tribes of goblinoids and chaos warbands. The ground is broken, and mosses and lichens patch the stony earth, with very few trees or scrub visible from the coast. The patches of grass are matted and in strange shades of green. Most of the year the coast of the Northern Wastes are hidden in fog, with poor visibility, making sea travel especially hazardous due to the sharp rocks which lie beneath the waves.

Few human explorers have been here, and fewer still have returned. Dwarf lore tells of goblin tribes that live a nomadic existence near to the coast, living near starvation with only fish and each other for food. In the Book of Voyages, Loremaster Ugric Svalthelm recounts the time when his Norse crew sailed close to the coast of the Northern Wastes. He describes seeing goblins that entered the water

and swarmed towards the boat with their cruel swords clutched between their sharp teeth. The viking crew fought them off, but it was a difficult battle as the goblins were desperate and frantic.

At the northern extremes of the Sea of Claws, the waters are permanently choked with ice floes. In the winter the ice freezes together to form sheets. There are also icebergs, which loom menacingly out of the green depths. Sailing is very difficult, and only truly feasible during the summer months. It is into these icy waters that the River Groene flows, sluggish and clogged with ice and debris from the far north. It is the green melt-water from the northern mountains that gives the river its name.

The river flows into the Gulf of the Maelstrom, a frozen and hazardous body of water at the northern extremes of the sea. The waters are named for the occasional whirlpools that arise when the sea is thawed - peculiarities in the water temperature cause the churning of the surface. The Norse sailors who brave the whirlpools tell of the cacophony and horror that accompany them - some recount being swept to the very bottom of the sea by the spiralling waters, seeing the wrecks of men and the corpses of sea beasts dragged round and round by the maelstrom.

Norse Coast

'Come aboard! Come aboard, my friends! No, we are not all murdering barbarians, ha ha ha! We are hunting the Ridge Whale; have you seen him? He comes here to breed every spring, and the mothers should be calving at this time. Come aboard!'

Hrölf Gerdassen, Norscan captain

The Norse port of Stromstad is located at the mouth of the River Groene, a remote and inhospitable outpost of the northmen. The main reason for Stromstad's existence is its proximity to the breeding grounds of whales within the Gulf of the Maelstrom. The port itself is little more than a small town, fortified with high wooden walls and populated with Norsemen and Norse Dwarfs who are harder than even their fellow countrymen. There is a frontier town atmosphere, and the main pursuits for the whalers who live here are drinking, fighting and madness. There are few families within Stromstad, and most of the inhabitants are transient - travelling much of the year with their whaling ships. The proximity to the Northern Wastes means that Stromstad has the feel of being under a permanent siege from some intangible menace. Although there are numerous attacks from bands of beastmen and the like, which are repelled by the townsfolk without too much difficulty, they always feel like a prelude to something far worse.

The Norscan shore is as distinctive as it is uniform. Huge glacial valleys break the coastline into inlets and fjords, forming an irregular and jagged shoreline. These valleys are deeply carved from the highlands of the country and are lined with pine trees. The rivers are too numerous to detail here, and only the major ones have been mentioned in the text. Norse settlements are located primarily on the banks of these fjords, and the expertise of the Norse at sailing is a consequence of their dependence on the sea. Of all the nations that border

the Sea of Claws, the only men who can truly be said to have learned to respect it are the Norse.

The port of Birka is situated adjacent to the River Muggelir, a cursed and feared tributary that has its source somewhere in the far north. The sagas tell of the corrupting influence of the waters, and at certain times there are reports of strange things being washed up on its banks. Birka has not escaped the influence of the Muggelir, and other Norsemen shun the natives of the town, saying that they are corrupt and in league with evil spirits. This is not the case, but there certainly is an oppressive and unwelcoming atmosphere, and the locals have a strange, almost bestial, look to them. Foreigners are not likely to be treated well, and fellow Norsemen are made to feel uncomfortable. Although the main trade is in excellent quality timber, tar and fish, the prices paid in Marienburg are less than one would expect, entirely due to the malign aura pervading the town.

West of the River Muggelir is a stretch of rugged coastline which terminates in the island of Ulfsland. This is the largest island within the Sea of Claws, with two small settlements on its south coast. The shore is host to large colonies of seals, hunted by the locals for their pelts and flesh. The land is low-lying and the soil is of fairly high quality - Ulflanders grow wheat in excess for trade. The island is named after the hero Ulf Donneresson, a semi-legendary figure from the Norse sagas, said to have found the fertile island and to have settled there with his people. To claim the land he had to undergo a series of contests with a very old man, who seemed to possess prodigious strength and endurance. When the hero finally managed to best the elder, he revealed himself to be Ulric himself. Ulric declared the island as belonging to Ulf and his people forever.

Ulfsland lies south of a promontory that encloses a bay created by the waters of two rivers, the Valfisk and the Spjut. Both have strong currents, and are said to belong to warring giants, who battle in the far north. To the west is the estuary of another river, the Fena. It is here that the Norse city of Aarvik can be found. In comparison to Birka, Aarvik is a veritable paradise: the streets are clean and the citizens friendly and good-humoured. Aarvik is part of the only region in Norsca with plentiful arable land and the city thrives on its trade in wheat, honey and furs. A peculiarity of the local climate means that the air is marginally warmer here than in the other parts of the country. Although austere and chilly by Imperial standards, the city is a pleasant surprise for those who sail from the Old World expecting to find fur-clad barbarians fighting each other. You have to go to Stromstad for that.

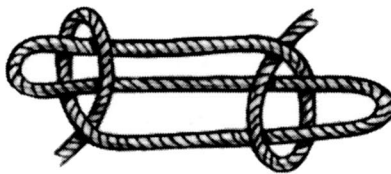
Along the coast is the Bay of Fins - so called because of the large shoals of herring to be found here - many Norse fishermen brave the waters to haul up nets writhing with many thousands of fish. Beyond this are two more large islands, Varaland and Trassel. The former is dominated by a high mountain at the centre, known as Sigismund's Mount after the Norse hero who was supposed to have been buried here when his life came to an end. Trassel is an island with dark myths surrounding it, the land consisting of little more than a vast swamp shrouded in fog and mystery. This is an

uninhabited land, as little vegetation can be found here save for the rotting carcasses of trees. There are said to be daemons dwelling within the caves that lie in the marshes.

The largest river in Norsca is the River Halkild, a wide fjord fed by the melt-waters and streams of the Jotunheimen Mountains. On the shores of the fjord is the city of Olricstaad, the largest trading port in Norsca, and the main point of contact with the rest of the world. It is from here that the majority of the trading ships of other nations, and the knarrs of the Norse trade in goods from the country and beyond. The city is built from stone, and the walls are stout and formidable. Buildings are low, helping them to withstand the harsh winds that blow down from the mountains in winter. The wharves teem with people of many nations, and adventurers often make their first contact with Norse culture here in the capital city. The throne of High King Svein is found in the city, as is the Royal Trading Hall - almost all ships from Marienburg to Norsca sail here.

Travelling still further west, the town of Kaugang can be found at the mouth of the great Halkild estuary. Very much in the shadow of Halkild, Kaugang specialises in trading in fish, caught in the waters between Norsca and Bretonnia. There have been many disputes over fishing territories and the townsfolk of Kaugang have a strong dislike of Bretonnians. However, they have historical links with the people of The Empire, as it was local chiefs who founded Norden in Ostland. Although such links are buried deep in the past, there are certain local folk tales that suggest that the northern Imperials are Norscan at heart. It was the Jarls of this area that first made offers to help the Imperial Fleet against the Dark Elf fleet in the Battle of the Clawsea.

At the western extreme of the Sea of Claws is the island of Bagnir. This lies between the Middle Sea and the Sea of Claws, the point at which Norsca comes closest to Bretonnia. The climate is mild and the soil fertile, and crops grown here are sold in the markets of Kaugang and Olricstaad. The island is rather hilly, and amongst these natural mounds are a large number of barrows, the burial sites of Norse chieftains going back for many centuries. At one time this was where Kings were buried, along with their ships and treasured possessions, and tomb robbers often attempt to excavate the resting-place of long-dead rulers. The islanders do not take lightly to this, and many a would-be amateur archaeologist has found himself facing the business end of a very sharp axe.



CAMPAIGNS ON THE SEA OF CLAWS

The Sea of Claws and its coastline are ripe for campaign play. Exploration and interaction with the people who dwell on the shores and make a living

from the sea should feature heavily, as can espionage and combat on the waves. The party could be forced to join a whaling vessel hunting illegally, or despatched by the Imperial Navy to spy on the naval capabilities of Bretonnia or the coast of the Wasteland. The PCs may decide to take up a career as pirates, plundering the vessels of a particular nation on behalf of a suitably shadowy patron. There is also the potential for a campaign in which the Norse mount raids upon their previous allies in the south, perhaps under the influence of some sinister new ruler.

It is hoped that this article sparks off ideas for campaigns in the GM's mind, but I have provided a brief outline for a potential campaign to encourage PCs to explore the sea and its many hazards.

ODRALL'S LEGACY

This campaign begins in Marienburg, with the PCs already having established themselves in the city in some way, either as trustworthy adventurer-types, or as a nuisance that powerful people want out of the city in some way.

Background

Odrall 'the Devout' was a senior cleric of Manaan during the C^{10th} I.C. He was renowned for his piety and his genuine love of exploration and the sea. He made a number of advances in the primitive cartography of the day, many of which have not been superseded since. Although a member of the main temple in Marienburg, much of his adult life was spent at sea, mapping the treacherous sandbanks of the northern Imperial coast and travelling from port to port preaching to those whose livelihoods came from Manaan's realm. During this time he also made a number of longer journeys of exploration, which have provided the scholars of the Temple with much speculation and theological debate ever since.

Odrall's first two journeys are recounted in a manuscript found in the Temple library. A C^{17th} I.C. copy of an older ship's log, the *Acta Nautica Ex Odrallus* is written in the Classical language. It recalls Odrall's first voyage of discovery - a journey beyond the Middle Sea to what is now believed to have been Albion. The charts, which are supposedly faithful copies of the actual maps drawn up by Odrall himself, bear an uncanny resemblance to the modern renderings of the Albion coastline. After a number of misadventures, many of which are presently believed to be more allegorical than factual, Odrall and his crew made landfall on the southern coast of the mist-shrouded isle and celebrated the festival of the spring equinox on the shore.

The second half of the *Acta Nautica Ex Odrallus* is far longer and much more controversial than the earlier journey. Odrall set out from Marienburg at the beginning of spring, for reasons not made clear in the manuscript. He sailed east along the northern coastline of the Old World, a route already familiar to him from the inscriptions found on the sketch maps of other travellers, which have been duplicated in the copy. The ship, the *Iron Crown*, stopped at many of the small settlements found on the coast,

some of which are no longer to be found. At many of these places Odrall founded small chapels or blessed the local initiates - the majority of coastal settlements of The Empire make a claim to have been visited by Odrall during one of his voyages.

From here, Odrall sailed north into the Sea of Claws, meeting with many incidents on the way. There are sections of the tale that describe the crew's hardships, an encounter with Norse raiders, dealings with whales and an attack by the beast Cetacius. The Iron Crown made landfall on the coast of what is now known as the Troll Country, where the crew were set upon by savage amphibious creatures of unknown origin. It is here that the men implored Odrall to turn back, and he made a famous proclamation of his faith in Manaana. The log states that the men were rallied, and inscribed the words 'Manaana shall not fail us' onto an outcropping of basalt on the shore.

The account continues in a similar vein as the ship journeys into the Gulf of the Maelstrom, where the souls of the dead cried from the bottom of the sea as the whirlpool sucked the Iron Crown into the depths. Once again Odrall's piety saves the ship, as the storm clouds open and the sea is becalmed. The journey continued off the coast of Norsca, where Odrall charted the uninhabited islands and small primitive shrines were constructed. Eventually, the Iron Crown passed the island of Bragnir and headed out into the Middle Sea. Here they discovered a small, almost circular island in the middle of the sea. The crew climbed the island's only hill, and spend the night. During his sleep, Odrall had a vision sent by Manaana to tell him that the island is most sacred to him and that Odrall must build a chapel here, made from stones pulled from the sea. Furthermore, he must take the silver trident from the ship's main mast and place it in the temple. This is in direct contravention of Manaana's law - a small silver trident can be found nailed to the mast of every Old World ship, providing the Lord of the Sea's protection at all times. Nevertheless, Odrall and his crew build the chapel and reluctantly they placed the trident inside. They then returned to Marienburg via L'Anguille.

The tale of the second journey is a popular folktale amongst seafaring humans, but amongst Manaana's priests it has sparked a great deal of controversy. In the many intervening centuries there has been an almost continuous debate over Odrall's beatification - the pro-Odrall faction believe that his vision and contributions to navigation and cartography mean that he was singled out by the Lord of the Sea. They have lobbied for him to take a place as the patron saint of the above disciplines. Those who oppose this point to the removal of the trident as a sure sign that Odrall was not being guided by Manaana, but rather by some deceiving daemon of the oceans. The Lord of the Sea would never have counselled his follower to remove the trident from the main mast, as this contravenes church dogma. Furthermore, there are a number of elements of the second journey which seem to describe non-existent islands - and the wilful neglect of accuracy in navigational records is also a sin in the eyes of Manaana. The theological branch of the Church of Manaana is not a dynamic entity, and as such until the controversy over Odrall's second

journey is cleared up, he will not become a saint.

Until recently the debate has remained an obscure part of doctrinal disagreement, but there have been a number of events in the last year that have brought Odrall's legacy back into focus. A Remean trading vessel, the Donna Fiero, was caught in a storm on a trade voyage to Marienburg, and was swept off-course in the Middle Sea. The captain claimed that his men sighted a small, circular island with a solitary peak before being buffeted by the storms back towards the Bretonnian coast. Furthermore, Father Bruggeman, the abbot of Manaansheim, has reported the discovery of a 'Temple Log' from the old chapel to Manaana at Nordern, which contains a first-hand account of Odrall's visit during his second voyage. The priest who records the event tells (albeit without eloquence) of how Manaana appeared to him before Odrall arrived, and that he could see Odrall's holiness in the form of 'an holy nimbus' around his head. Whatever this implies, the renewed interest in the second journey has been encouraged by the Navigator's Guild of Marienburg, who are offering the Temple a substantial donation towards a journey to settle the Odrall controversy once and for all - they are keen to adopt him as their patron saint.

The Campaign

The players are recruited by a senior cleric at the Temple of Manaana to take a copy of the Acta Nautica Ex Odrallus and trace the journey of the Iron Crown as far as possible. They will be given a crew, a ship and the blessing of some of the priests, but the rest is up to them. The document contains numerous maps and descriptions, which the PCs will need in order to locate the crucial historical evidence that is to be used to prove whether or not Odrall's journey occurred as reported. Of most relevance is the rediscovery of the isle in the Middle Sea, and finding the trident from the Iron Crown. In addition to this, the PCs will need to call at the ports mentioned in the manuscript to ascertain whether or not Odrall really did land there. They will also be advised to visit Manaansheim to speak to the abbot, and to try to find the basalt outcropping on which the crew of the Iron Crown supposedly inscribed Odrall's pious words.

Complications, complications...

The campaign can involve all manner of additional factors, including encounters with pirates, wreckers and sea creatures. There is a powerful faction within the Temple who do not wish to see Odrall beatified, considering this to be a plot by some foul daemon intent on corrupting the cult, and some of the less scrupulous clerics may go to extreme measures to prevent any evidence returning. A cult of Stromfels could dog the PCs' progress - and they are not the only ones the PCs might encounter who do not revere the Lord of the Seas. Roleplaying aboard the vessel itself will provide interesting opportunities, with mutinous crews and suspicion of the party all potentially part of the 'fun'.

The PCs will also have to visit the ports of the Sea of Claws - which leaves potential for a great deal of roleplaying. Sailing a Wasteland vessel (on a mission from Manaana or not!) into Salkalten or Neues Emskrank may not be a wise idea, and few

Norscans are as civilised as the merchants who visit the great trading city.

And then there's the sea itself to contend with...

The Outcome

It is for the GM to decide whether Odrall completed his journey as he reported in the Acta Nautica Ex Odrallus. Was his construction of the Temple on the sacred island a fabrication? Or did it really occur, but has the Temple been consecrated to some evil entity by the removal of the trident? How will this be resolved? And whatever the outcome, when (or if) the PCs return to Marienburg, they will have made both enemies and friends within the Temple.

Furthermore, will the PCs be asked to investigate the ultimate fate of Odrall? His last voyage set a course to the west, and is believed to have passed beyond Albion and out into the Great Ocean. Odrall was never heard of again. Some claim that he reached Ulthuan, where he was received by the High Elves with uncharacteristic warmth, while others say that the ship was swallowed up by a Black Ark of the Dark Elves. There are also several scholars and clerics who maintain that his final destination was the continent of Lustria itself...



The Sea of Claws has potential as an exciting setting for unique adventures, both on the coast and upon the waves themselves. GMs can take players into a nautical setting such as the Sea of Claws and at the same time enhance their experience of the WFRP background. It also has the potential to lead onto further seafaring adventures - out into the Middle Sea and beyond. The coastlines provide an evocative setting for more traditional adventures, from the decaying depression of the Imperial ports, to the dramatic setting of the Norscan fjords.

The most important element to maintain when running adventures on the Sea of Claws is the atmosphere - paint a picture of the cold, grey waves rolling endlessly against the stony beaches. At night the surface of the water is a myriad of twinkling reflections of the moons, disturbed occasionally by the splashing of something astern of the ship. The timbers of the boat protest and creak in the teeth of a storm, as the torrential rain lashes at the deck, washing overboard anything that is not lashed down. The Sea of Claws is not picture postcard material - it is cold, harsh and unforgiving. Play it that way. It is also surrounded with thousands of years of history and myth - the perfect combination for adventure and intrigue.

References

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The Old World Map - White Dwarf #173



THE ORDER OF THE RAM



A Dwarfen Society by Richard Leon

The forested valley offered the two weary priests of Shallya little protection from the elements. Cold, bleak mountainsides stared back at them. Hunger gnawed at them from within, while raw winter wind and snow whipped at them from without, stinging the flesh. With no shelter in sight, they travelled on, to Everpeak or in the Dwarfen tongue, Karaz-A-Karak.

Three days ago they had been travelling in a wagon loaded with supplies for the victims of the plague outbreak. Outlaws ambushed the party, killing the Coachman and two guards. The two priests managed to escape in a snowstorm with most of the healing herbs on their backs. Faith alone kept them going, staggering on into new peril.

Near twilight of the third day Claudia, the young priestess, collapsed from pure exhaustion.

"Get up Claudia, Please!" begged the elder priest Johan. "We will freeze to death out here!" She lay there motionless.

HOWWWWL!!!

Chills ran down Johan's spine.

Three beastmen sprang from the shadows of the pine trees.. The trio had scarlet red fur, faces like rabid dogs, and yellow, hate-filled eyes - each carried wicked blades of jagged onyx.

With a look of desperation Johan readied his staff. Shaking in the sub zero weather he prepared to defend himself, pulling up the staff into a weak parry stance.

With a deafening roar the lead monstrosity leaped, lunging for Johan's jugular. The priest braced for the impact.

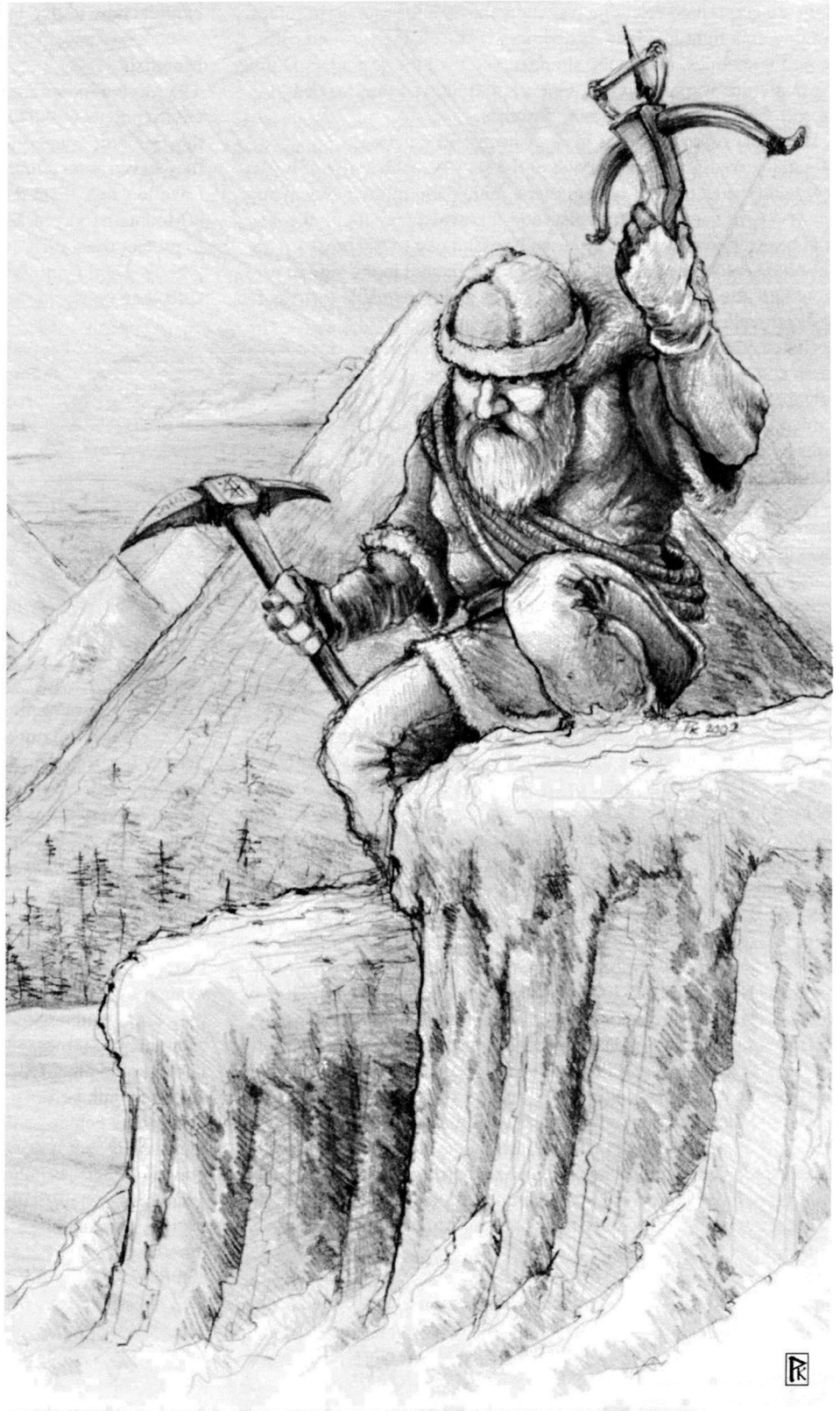
He barely registered the three thumps. A few seconds later he realised the beast was dead, crossbow bolts sunk deep into the Hellhound's skin. Whirling about quickly Johan eyed three Dwarfen skiers armed with crossbows coming down the slope. The remaining beastmen stood still clearly bewildered.

The dwarfs and the beastmen charged toward Johan. One beastman struck with a backhand swing, but Johan parried him as best he could. The other lunged forward with a thrust, getting Johan in the ribs. Pain shot into his chest as he staggered back but they never finished him. A Dwarfen battle cry was screamed out by the three skiers, "Death to the enemies of the Ram!"

Two pickaxes connected, one in the temple, a crushing blow, the other hitting the thigh. The last standing chaos-thing lashed out, missing the priest entirely, and then turned to run. The skiers reloaded their crossbows, taking deadly aim and again there was the sound of three thumps and it fell into the snowdrifts.

"Praise Shallya!" said Johan panting " Praise Shallya you came! I thought we had failed!"

The lead Dwarf spoke up. "Ha! Not as long as the mountaineers patrol this area. Now let us see to your wounds."



The mountains of the Old World hold many perils for travellers. Many situations arise where a champion, ranger or healer is direly needed in order to survive the harsh wilderness. Many years ago, the Order of the Ram, a Dwarfen society dispersed throughout the many mountain ranges, was founded to aid the wandering traveller survive their journey...

Over the years, the Dwarfen Empire established a series of communities dedicated to the preservation of Dwarfs and their allies. Among these, Mountaineers and Lodgemasters of the Order of the Ram are committed to aiding travellers through the mountain routes, holding up a light in a land of darkness. They clear roads and paths, scout for enemies, rescue the stranded and tend the wounded. During the numerous wars with Orcs, Goblins and Skaven they vowed to protect their Empire's remaining fortunes.

The Order of the Ram has many aspects and functions. Mountaineers form the backbone of the society, each a mix of healer, scout and warrior. The Lodgemasters guide them in their endeavours by serving as surgeons, strategists and renowned rangers. In the icy cold peaks, one may be lucky enough to find one of the most important resources available to the Order planted in the side of a mountain: the Ram Lodge. This serves as an impregnable fortress for weary travellers. Very few lodges have been directly assaulted, since they are positioned so that only a lift or harsh climbing makes them accessible. Another valuable asset of the Order is the Mountain Ram, trained to help the Lodgemaster carry out his tasks by carrying heavy equipment and fighting alongside his master. (Not everyone will be happy with the idea of using Rams; an alternative is just that they are only story and legend, part of the folklore rather than the reality of the Order.) Members of the Order are well equipped to handle the constant dangers of the cold crags and cliffs.

History

In the Dwarf year 3113, during the Silver Road Wars, King Dorn Granitefall created the first Dwarfen Mountain Lodge, thereby chartering the Order of the Ram. The first member was Garaz Dragonbane, later to be known as the hero Garaz Ramfist. He built his first lodge, Kanar Brynurban, or the Silver Trade Lodge, two hundred and ten miles east of Karaz-a-Karak (Everpeak) along the Silver Road. Silver Trade Lodge later became a noteworthy fortress, for this was where the Goblins were held during the battle of Silver Road.

The battle of Silver Road is famous to all Dwarfs, for it was a grim time in which Mt. Silverspear fell to an Orc Warlord. The dwarf army was retreating back to Everpeak when Garaz learned of an ambush. He sent word asking them to join him in his lodge but they scoffed at his words. So Garaz went with his ram and Dwarfs to foil the surprise and he buried the ambushers in an avalanche. But a massive Orc force was waiting with another trap. He went personally to the retreating Dwarfen army, warning of the impending doom. One third of them followed Garaz to his lodge; the rest were brutally slaughtered. The king proclaimed Garaz a hero and instructed him to build more lodges, ordering that an annual stipend be set aside from the Imperial coffers to pay for their upkeep. And so the Order was founded.

The legend of Garaz Ramfist himself has been told and retold through the centuries. Although he became famous for his deeds on the Silver Road, he started his life as a failed prospector who had inherited his uncle's land near Skull River. This barren area offered little gold or precious ore. One day, as he panned for gold, a

monstrous mountain ram attacked him. Legend has it that he fought with the ram over the land barefisted for three days, neither giving ground. On the third day a true legend was born.

A Goblin tribe came wandering to his land, looking for loot and slaughter. A silent pact arose between both ram and Dwarf, and they worked together thrashing several scores of goblins. The duo was seen everywhere in the mountains, bringing a scourge down upon all enemies. Garaz and the Ram, who was later named Shiner, then built the first lodge, and began training other Dwarfs who had heard of his exploits how to live in the mountain wilderness.

Mountaineers

The Mountaineers are rugged individuals who thrive in the harshest environments in the Old World. They guard the passes and roads of this domain. Trained in the arts of healing and cold weather survival, they have rescued many in danger of losing life and limb and many travellers owe them their lives.

Mountaineers practise several skills in the highlands to survive and to protect their allies from danger. Formed into scouting groups, they practised and learn their craft, constantly striving either to fulfil their oath or to better themselves. (The Lodgemaster would wallop any lazy ones!)

On patrol, their skiing and climbing skills enable them to go anywhere to clear blocked paths or on reconnaissance. Acolytes of the Order are said to be able to track a man for days on a week-old trail. Versed in plant lore and trapping skills, they can live off the land for weeks. Extreme risk lies in the occasional scouting of an Orc army or rescuing a traveller who has fallen through the ice or into a crevasse. Yet these highly trained individuals do not balk at such challenges. Mountaineers also serve as guides to the wilderness of the high peaks for Dwarfen forces who need to venture there, or to scholars who occasionally have to travel in search of rare herbs or other dwarfen runes.

When not out on patrol, scouting groups form several work-details to perform menial tasks, honing their healing skills and keeping boredom from setting in. Different groups perform tasks set by the Lodgemaster, like working in the kitchen and keeping the furnace fed. A Halfling Mountaineer is always a blessing in the Kitchen and so often will be unable to escape kitchen detail. They also prepare herbs for potions and salves, gather firewood and forage for food.

New recruits are hard to come by, for few Dwarfs are willing to leave their cavernous homes to expose themselves to the harsh, outer elements. Usually each clan sends a Dwarf to train, often because they did not adhere to "proper Dwarf" standards. Other races (such as humans, gnomes, and halflings) sometimes enlist to escape the law or some other type of disgrace in their homeland. All members swear an oath before joining, stating that the member and all of his belongings belong to the Order for four years. This does not help in recruitment, but it does ensure loyalty. After all, who wants to cross a bunch of angry, capable Dwarfs?

Training is a difficult process, one that taxes the nerves of everyone in the lodge, including the Lodgemaster. During the first month, recruits spent time learning outdoor survival skills and rescue techniques. Many fall victim to the harsh conditions. Some wander off, others die from frostbite, avalanches, wild beasts or sudden falls. The second month is dedicated to the healing arts, including plant and herb lore. The final consists of trials, such as clearing an old path or seeking out rare herbs. Success means the recruit becomes a



member of the Order, with all the privileges and responsibility that brings. The Order holds few of the former but a lot of the latter.

In Dwarf society, Mountaineers are viewed as madmen or outcasts. They are often the butt of jokes and curses (“Hey have you heard the one about the three sheep and a mountaineer?”). Only in times of need do they get any respect - and many use this opportunity as a time to dispense justice to their detractors (“You said what about my clan?!”). Dwarf mountaineers have a hard time returning to society after their service ends. Most stay at the lodge or move on to human realms to make their fortune.

Every day is a challenge for a Mountaineer. Their skills are constantly tested, even when resting. Patrolling is a relentless task that keeps them constantly on their toes. Occasionally, different missions arise from a Dwarfen Keep and are allocated by the Lodgemaster. All enemy strongholds and dwellings must be carefully watched for signs of activity by the nearest lodge. The pace of life is strenuous and danger ridden, but some just like it that way.

Lodgemaster

Without the Lodgemasters’ skills and expertise there would be no Order of the Ram. This upper order operates to maintain the lodges and the Order. These Dwarfs are held in high regard throughout the Dwarfen Empire, and anyone who begs to differ would have their teeth knocked out! Legends have built up around the Lodgemasters’ expertise, and these have inspired many. Few Dwarf mountaineers actually make it to this level. Only gifted Dwarfs earn the rank, through tireless heroics and reckoning with dangerous situations and foes.

Fighting for survival is a way of life in the mountains. Nobody knows that better than the Lodgemasters. Their lifestyle creates extreme challenges daily. Year round, they deal with foes and situations no normal Dwarf could handle. If a large beast or band of goblins is causing problems for travellers, the Lodgemaster handles them. In the winter, during snowstorms, they practise in the lodge with wrestling matches. Real threats are taken head on, no matter what!

Lodgemasters are excellent rangers who can survive a blizzard and pick up a month old trail afterwards. Years of living in the wild peaks have honed their skills to a razor-edge state of perfection. They learn a great deal of respect for nature and some worship a Dwarfen aspect of Taal. Hunting and tracking are their speciality. This knowledge is passed on to each successive Lodgemaster, and is used to help them obtain valuable parts of different beast for speciality markets (such as the various wizardly colleges of the Empire). It is a source of income for the Order as a whole.

Every Lodgemaster knows the healing arts and other medicinal lore well. They often perform surgery using the kinds of herbal potions and surgical tools human physicians only dream about. Storerooms are well stocked with all sorts of hard to come by curatives.

Lodgemasters are seldom alone in their endeavours. A trained giant mountain ram serves as a constant companion. They fight, eat and live together. There are many instances where rams belonging to the Order have saved the lives of their masters, and even the lodge itself.

The Ram Lodge

The Dwarfen Ram Lodge is a self-sustained dwelling prepared for any occasion or emergency. Ram lodges vary in build and location, with most situated on the side of sheer cliffs. The lodge is a safe

haven for members of the Order. It functions as a hospice for the seriously injured and as a sanctuary from attackers.

When a Ram Lodge is built, much goes into the process. Location is important: it is often placed near a main trade route, and engineers plan access only by rope-pulley “lifts”, or by a very good climber. A natural spring is also essential for the site.

Lodges are considered by all to be fine examples of architecture. They usually consist of a half cabin structure, half fort, with many ram and other mountain creature motifs. The layout of the rooms varies in different lodges, but all have common features. Rooms tend to have a Dwarfen feel, with low ceilings and furniture carved out of the mountainside.

Inside, the largest room is the Main Hall, where mountaineers and guests sleep, eat, fight and play. This room has a high vaulted ceiling to accommodate guests. A long table and benches carved out of stone are placed here for meals, meetings and other events. A steam-pit, built for baths and for use by the victims of the cold, is located in a wooden, enclosed part of the hall.

Next to the main hall is the Kitchen with a large furnace, fuelled by wood, charcoal, and sheep dung. The furnace pipes heat to all the rooms, especially the main hall and the steam-pit. A water boiler is sometimes attached to the furnace for hot water and steam.

The kitchen holds many pots, stoves and other cooking equipment for food or medicine preparation.

Sometimes the Kitchen is set up to make a home brew called Krog from fermented ewe’s milk. It has an acquired taste; most newcomers

(including Dwarfs) cannot stand it. A small Dwarfen forge is sometimes located adjacent to the kitchen furnace in a separate room.

Many weapons and armour are repaired and sometimes even made here. These are stored nearby, along with different ores and metals.

The Lodgemasters have their own room.

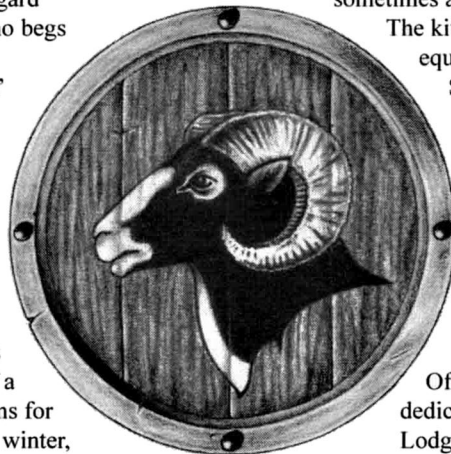
Often there will be a tiny library and a small shrine dedicated to a favoured god inside.

Lodges have tunnels that lead to stables for livestock animals and additional storage rooms. Ewes and the young are kept in the stables during the winter months. In the spring they are usually sheared for wool and set to graze outdoors. They are a primary source of food for the lodge. Many sheep and other game are stored in nearby cold storage rooms. No parts of animals killed are ever wasted. (Pickled sheep eyes. Yum!)

The most important room in the lodge is the Lift Room; a wooden building attached to the outside of the lodge. In this room is a large lift attached to a pulley system. Only those inside the lodge can control the lift.

Conclusion

Adventurers wandering off into the mountains, on a campaign or a single adventure, may come to find a member of the Order essential, especially when their lives are at stake. Being up in the high peaks is a dangerous undertaking and the Order is a valuable resource to help out should the PCs get themselves into trouble. The Ram Lodge is a hospice one can always count on for shelter, food and medicine. The gruff and hard Mountaineers make memorable and excellent guides, either hired, as a player character or just as an encounter. Meanwhile, Lodgemasters are local heroes who provoke fear and respect; they can act as mentors or patrons for PCs to learn or seek help from.



Further Information on Order of the Ram, including Careers, can be found on Richard Leon's website at:
www.travelvan.net/~ram/index.html

TALABHEIM

Part Four: A Small Piece of Kislev

Eldenstadt



"Inhabited by individuals of Kislevian descent, it is an ethnic slum given a wide latitude by most Talabheimers"

Inhabited almost exclusively by individuals of Kislevite descent, the Eldenstadt district is an ethnic slum given a wide latitude by most Talabheimers. It is, in fact, in many ways a stark contrast to the rest of Talabheim.

Run down and impoverished, there are few signs of prosperity. A much larger percentage of the buildings are constructed from wood, most of which are in varying stages of decay. Each has a small fenced-in yard in which vegetables and herbs are grown. Often, what one sees from the street is actually the rear of the house, the entrance being accessed by a narrow walkway. Most people keep livestock (rabbit hutches and chicken pens are a common sight), and it is not uncommon to see goats wandering the streets. Talabheimers consider the inhabitants to be somewhat backwards and uncivilized. They exit public bathhouses completed naked, wear unfashionably long and unmanaged beards, and their clothes are, putting it politely, rustic. This is to say nothing of

their character; they have a reputation for being loud, profane, hard drinkers and prolific womanisers, ill mannered ("Did that barbarian just spit...?"), bad tempered, and brutish. Most Talabheimers are glad the Kislevites keep to themselves in Eldenstadt, which in its cultural isolation is little better than a ghetto. For their part, the inhabitants mistrust their Imperial brethren and consider them to be ignorant and weak, though they do not show the same thinly veiled disdain that is displayed towards them. While many cling tenaciously to tradition, an equal number want nothing more than to be greeted into Imperial society.

During the day Eldenstadt is a hive of activity, with pedlars selling their wares, buskers on every street corner (including puppeteers, diviners, and dancing bear acts), as well as labourers off to contract employment in the other Talabheim districts. At night it is still fairly busy (and definitely rowdy), with numerous taverns staying open until the wee hours and "ladies of vice" making their rounds. Of course, the main criminal group here (The Vory, as they are widely known) conducts much of its shady business under cover of darkness.

The city watch is very reluctant to enter the Eldenstadt district, except in large numbers and with sufficiently good cause. When they do mount a patrol, it is always at least a dozen strong, with a pair of Watch Sergeants. In practice, the law of Eldenstadt rests in the hands of the Vory.

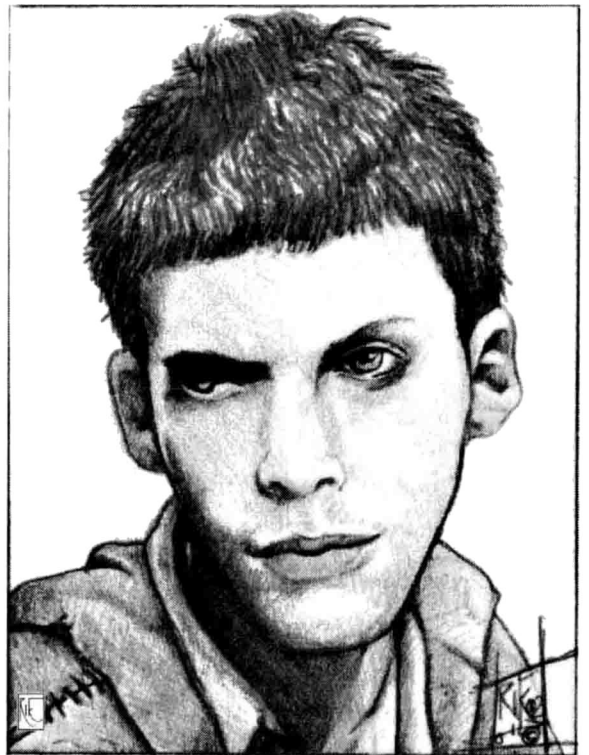
Kragloj Rynock ("Round Market")

A circular building, housing numerous stalls facing outwards, surrounded by piazzas in which pedlars set up temporary tables and tents. Dealers of similar items are placed side by side, creating a healthy competition and spirited sales pitches. All manner of goods are available here, generally of inferior quality. Since the watch rarely comes here, black-market items are easier to obtain here than elsewhere. Nicknamed *Tolkoutchoi*, or "the shoving market", it is a haven for pickpockets and cut-purses.

Perhaps the most successful pickpocket is "Fingers" Hoth (pictured, right), who works in tandem with several of the less successful pedlars. While the retailer distracts the customer with his sales pitch, "Fingers" makes his move. He is a gifted pickpocket, and a former archer in the

Imperial Army. His cruel nickname was given to him because he lacks any digits on his right hand, having lost them when captured in a border skirmish with Bretonnian troops. The power of the bow is so respected by the Bretonnian knights that they commonly cut off the fingers of captured archers to ensure they can be of no further threat if released.

Recently, Ivan Knifinbak, a Round Market shopkeeper, was found dead in his stall. The watch appear uninterested in solving the murder and many aren't sure if they even know about it. However, the family wants answers (and is willing to pay for the apprehension of the killer). Rumours amongst the traders and locals are rife. Was it the neighbouring pedlar, whose business has suffered in recent months? The patron who believes the grain he bought was contaminated and resulted in the death of his family? Perhaps it was the local Vory enforcer showing the shopkeepers the dangers of not paying your protection fees? (Dangerous ground for PCs to tread.) Or even the up-and-coming pedlar who is already in negotiations to purchase the newly vacated stall?



The Liebig Vodka Factory

Spreading a pall of smoke and stench for miles, the Vodka factory is perhaps the best known landmark in Eldenstadt, personifying the Imperial citizen's image of its inhabitants as drunken louts. A large, plain, stone building weathered by years, it is in a degree of neglect. The Liebig family, headed by the fearsome Nikolai, runs the business. While in Kislev the manufacture of vodka is largely a enterprise controlled by the monasteries, the Liebig clan has acquired (they swear through legal means) the knowledge. The Liebig's are in fact a significant trading company, with extensive local landholdings that supply the factory with the potatoes and rye required to distil vodka. The vodka they produce is cheap and nasty; the better sort still comes from Kislev.

Nikolai and the family have come under severe criticism of late. A common street cry in Talabheim is "drunk for a penny, dead drunk for tuppence". Vodka is inexpensive to manufacture, due to the availability of cheap grain, and the government encourages its manufacture as it raises revenue from the taxation of distillers. As a result, the scale of consumption and the rate of addiction, especially amongst the Kislevite population, has become a major concern. An anti-vodka league, made up primarily of the ruling classes, aims to shut down the factory and regulate the manufacture of vodka. As one prominent aristocrat has said, "if not put to a stop, vodka will destroy a great part of the inferior people, and if that comes to pass, who will clean one's shoes?" The irony of the fact that meetings are often made tolerable by the drinking of much wine has passed most of the members by. The league is organised by Lady Zhanna Zubkov, who is sincerely fighting to save the "poor of

Custom & Law Petty Treason

A servant caught stealing from his master is guilty of petty treason. A servant who lives under his master's roof, is to be punished with a dozen strokes from a leather belt between a quarter and half inch thick. Otherwise they should be handed to a magistrate for sentence.

In all cases the master may make suitable recompense from the servants own belongings, or else register the amount as a debt at the Hall of Records.

Talabheim: Credits

Project co-ordinators

John Foody & Noel Welsh

Project Team

N. Arne Dam, Alfred Nunez, Anthony Ragan with Andrew Hind, Ryan Wileman, Luke Twigger, Tom McGrenery, Mark Bell & Zeno Collins

Part Four

Eldenstadt: *Andrew Hind / Federdorf & Ostenfeld: John Foody / Custom & Law: John Foody & Ryan Wileman*

Vasilia

Secr

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
5	35	29	2	2	6	44	1	39	39	42	48	47	49

Alignment: Neutral (Spirit Worship)

Skills: Animal Care, Animal Training, Charm Animal, Consume Alcohol, Flee!, Hypnotise, Luck, Mimic, Palm Object, Public Speaking, Read/Write, Speak Additional Languages: Classical and Demonic/Dark Tongue, Theology, Ventriloquism

Possessions: Rags and staff. She carries no money and her food is always bought for her.

Quotes: "I see more things with one eye than I ever did with two."

"They want to keep you here, poor and helpless.

Did not Vasla, not two streets from here, die

because she could not afford the Kratot? Would

that have happened to a high-born lord in his

carriage? No!"

"Things must change, the current order will be overthrown."

Vasilia is a diviner who uses animals and spiritual possession to sway crowds and to take their money. She is hated by local clergy, who fear her powerful influence amongst the poor Kislevites. They also hate her heretical faith, a hodgepodge of beliefs, borrowed from organised religion, Kislevite spiritualism, mysticism, the Old Faith, non-human cultures, and even Chaos. She makes up her doctrine on the fly to suit her immediate needs and whims, but so strong is her oration and so believable her performances, no one seems to notice. Vasilia is an old woman, with a patch over one eye; the other is milky white. Yet her gaze seems to penetrate into one's soul...

Born in Kislev to a peasant family, she was the only member to survive a harrowing winter. She found that the local lord had stolen his peasant's stock to stay alive. Risking death she left for the city of Kislev, travelling the country trying to stay alive. Over time she found she had a gift to speak to people. This was cultivated with and changed over time, taking the best bits, as she saw it, from different doctrines. Eventually, she arrived in Talabheim and came across the Old Peerhaus. She saw the beggars that lived there amongst the grand architecture and the old seat of power, and saw it as a sign. She now lives amongst her "own people" in Eldenstadt.

If one were to sift through Vasilia's oration, one would find a firm set of revolutionary beliefs. She conceives of a society without governments, as she believes mankind would wilfully co-operate with one another without having to obey a central government. She realises that her beliefs would be associated with Chaos by the establishment and by many educated elements of society. She is a pacifist, but there are those who believe in her message who are more than willing to resort to bomb-throwing to spark the revolution.

the city from their own uncontrolled urges".

In fact, word on the street has it that members of the nobility would pay handsomely to have the factory shut down and the family driven from the city. Many would profit from a re-emergence of the Vodka import trade with Kislev. However, the Liebig family is too powerful to be directly attacked. Nikolai has already thwarted attempts to destroy the distillery and taint the vodka with poison. He is concerned enough to have bought protection from the Vory, whom he normally has no dealings with. However, he realises his enemies could hijack shipments of grain and potatoes or steal shipments going to market.

Heimer's Folly

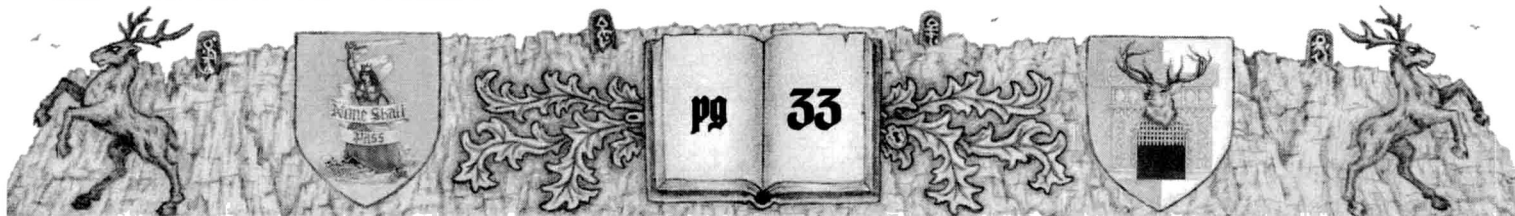
While rustic, this tavern is renowned for its fine food. Indeed, many people "risk" Eldenstadt just to get a taste of these great dishes. Specialities include Borscht (mildly tart vegetable soup), herring, jellied veal rolls, and cabbage dumplings. A former officials building, it sports a tower with a working clock. The clock is of interest in that it shows sixty-one minutes to the hour (the clock-maker's apprentice - a boy named Heimer-



O
Ban

added six marks in the last five minutes). Thus, claims the patron, a day in Talabheim lasts 24 minutes longer than anywhere else in The Empire. The clock makes Heimer's Folly something of a curious attraction. While most people come here in search of a meal or to view the abnormal clock, the proprietor, Yekaterina Svyatoslav, is infinitely more interesting.

When Lord Darok Savkovkov, whose family had built a fortune on caviar, was widowed, he sent envoys all over the Old World in search of a new bride. The portrait of Lady Yekaterina Svyatoslav won his heart, and a marriage contract was signed. Unfortunately, the portrait had embellished her looks to a great extent. As a result, he felt resentful and cheated. It was to be a short, unhappy marriage, but Yekaterina's co-operation in annulling the contract and the dignity with which she conducted herself during these hard times won his respect and admiration. He therefore granted her a very generous annual allowance. Yekaterina liked The Empire and did not wish to return home, so she settled in Talabheim and opened Heimer's Folly. Why she chose to do so in Eldenstadt is something of a mystery.



Jakob Lang

Fence

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
4	36	26	3	4	7	30	1	29	38	41	36	26	39

Careers: Entrepreneur (Fence), ex-bawd, ex-Student

Skills: Bribery, Cartography, Consume Alcohol, Evaluate, Flee!, Magical Sense, Numismatics, Palm Object, Read/Write, Secret Language-Classical, Secret Language-Thieves Tongue, Street Fighting, Supernumerate

Quotes: "Sure you can try and find it on your own, but don't blame me if you find yourself wandering Eldenstadt on your own after dark."

"Fur from a Rislov stoat. A female one? You do realise they're poisonous don't you? Six months it will take. Fifty percent upfront."



Jakob was born into a middle class family, that of an artisan who saved enough money to send him to some fine academic schools. Jakob soon learned he was but an average student, but discovered a life outside of the academic world when some of his colleagues immersed him in the seedier districts of Talabheim. Here he found himself at home. His studies were soon neglected as he became interested in gambling, drinking, and carousing in the watering holes of Eldenstadt. Jakob soon found a way to put his new skills to use for personal gain; individuals entering Eldenstadt found themselves in an alien environment, and often needed help in various ways. Whether he is escorting someone or finding an item of interest he is always trying to make a copper. If you need anything, an item or a service, or need to get somewhere, Jakob is your man.

Despite, or perhaps because of, his streetwise knowledge, Jakob has had a few brushes with the Vory. He is too well connected to be completely ignored, and actually occasionally valuable to the Zyuganov. Nevertheless, he is seen as a potential threat and has in fact been worked over a few times for getting too close to things best left undiscovered. How much he really knows is open to debate, but the Vory do not take chances...

Jakob is extremely tall and solidly built, and while not extremely charismatic in the "slick" sort of way, he projects an air of leadership and amiability. He is an intelligent and educated man, equally at home on the streets and in a refined environment. Most of all, he is resourceful and an opportunist. He has a thing for tomatoes (widely considered to be an aphrodisiac in the Old World), which he eats covered in sugar.

Yekaterina is a woman of twenty-four (though she looks to be about thirty), of middling beauty and a resolute bearing. Her nose is somewhat large, her skin is ruddy but lacking in blemishes, and she is full-figured. She is an independent and strong woman, and is in no hurry to enter into another relationship with a man. Her ex-husband still cares for her well-being, and often has agents keeping a watch out for her safety. She loves, and is loved by, the local people. If a contact is needed in the district, Lady Yekaterina is a good place to start. If she can be convinced of the worth of a request she will do what she can to help.

Games Field

A rubble-strewn patch of weeds, the games field was once a residential block. Burnt down in a fire decades ago and never rebuilt, it is now a centre of activity for the district, hosting fairs and athletic competitions. Some of the more popular activities are distinctly Kislevite, including:

Swaika: Contestants pitch an iron bolt, the head of which might weigh several pounds, within the centre of an iron ring fixed to the ground. A player who misses the centre passes the bolt on to the next contestant, his score being the number of successes he achieved.

Boxing: Known as kulatchnoi boy by Kislevites. It

differs from Imperial boxing in that the fighters often wear gloves, blood is rarely drawn (the aim is to stun, not batter into unconsciousness), and matches often feature "teams" of individuals.

Board Game: Kislevites are fond of this contest, in which a long board is balanced over a log. Two people stand on opposite ends of the board, taking turns jumping in the air and attempting to throw the other off as a result of the impact. The loser is the individual who falls off first.

Geese Fighting: Kislevites train geese to fight to the death, and wager large sums on the outcome.

Custom & Law
Arms Length

The misappropriation of the arms of a noble house is a treasonous crime, punishable by quartering.

Pecherska Lavra ("Monastery of the Caves")

The Kislevites of Talabheim have, to a great extent, hung on to their belief in the Old Way, despite censorship and occasional persecution by the Imperial clergy. Worship of Taal and Rhya, in conjunction with a superstitious reverence of the Ancient Spirits, has

gone underground... literally. The Monastery of Caves is exactly as the name implies: a fully functioning monastery located within the cave network underneath Talabheim.

There are several entrances to the cave network, all concealed from the prying eyes of non-Kislevites. One is located in a well shaft, accessed through a rung ladder. Another looks like any other tenement building entrance, yet the locked door opens to staircase descending into darkness. Finding an entrance, however, is only half the challenge. Finding the monastery within the network of caves is even more difficult, as the location is a carefully guarded secret. There is no map, nor written instructions, to mark the way; it is knowledge passed on from generation to generation, entrenched in memory.

The monastery itself is a small complex of natural caves (rare in Talabheim), consisting of several meditation chambers and monks' quarters, as well as a library of rare (and to Imperial eyes, heretical) scholarship, in addition to the shrine itself. An underground grotto, waters from the pools reflecting eerily from off the high ceiling, the shrine little resembles a formal place of worship. Smoke from numerous torches and incense burners cloud the vision, while numerous stalagmites and stalactites cast eerie shadows across the room. Only on important occasions do the monks hold formal ceremonies; in most cases they leave the worshippers to speak with their gods on an individual basis. Kislevite PCs who wish to commune may be led here (blindfolded) if they have befriended someone who knows the location.

The Eldenstadt Public Baths

Kislevites bathe more regularly than most Old Worlders, and do so publicly in large communal bathhouses. This practice offends many Old World observers, who find it uncivilized (and perhaps the sign of Slaaneshi influence...). When the city was young, a trip to the Spring was undertaken by many as it was associated with healing and well-being, something that has now been lost. Years later, a forgotten noble built a building around it. Eventually, the city surrounded it.

The Public Bath is a large, stone building housing a waist deep pool, large enough to accommodate two dozen bathers with ease. There is also a small sauna room, a favourite spot in which to conduct business. Attendants are available to give massages or to cover the bather with oils. Males and females bath together, shamelessly. Tired characters will feel refreshed after a short time here.

The Nag's Head

The entrance to this "speakeasy" is located in the back room of a labourer's tavern. A bouncer is located in this room, and unless an invitation or password is given without hesitation, he pretends to know nothing. If he is satisfied the patrons are legit, he raps a code on the secret door, and a doorman will usher them in. The door itself is extremely well hidden, and reinforced within (T4, W15). The characters will be led down a staircase into a coatroom, where they are searched for weapons. Once all weapons are confiscated they be allowed to enter.

The tavern itself is dark, smoky, and filthy. Broken mugs, empty bottles, and stupefied patrons litter the



floor. The tavern sells drinks at a lower price than legal establishments, as they are smuggled past tax collectors or stolen. The back room is slightly less run-down, and is a favourite haunt for those in the middle rungs of the Vory hierarchy. All manners of vice (gambling, drugs, companionship, etc) can be located here as well. Illegal business transactions are performed here all the time, due to the security and privacy.

Moles on the watch will often warn the owner in advance if the authorities are planning a raid, and bought off magistrates can easily be convinced to return any confiscated goods. Still, two secret doors have been built to allow for quick escapes for those in the know.

This tavern boasts a host of interesting, and completely unsavoury, patrons. A few regulars, however, stand out from amongst the crowd of scum and villainy. Isabella Badajoz, a singer from Estalia whose star is fading, performs here on many nights. Her voice is no longer noteworthy, but her exotic beauty makes her a crowd favourite. She travels extensively, performing at inns, taverns, and any function that may increase her exposure and lead to a career revival. She always returns to the regular work at The Nag's Head when these attempts fail. Her "relationships" with the clientele make her a good source of information on the Talabheim underworld.

Tilutan, the mighty pit-fighter from the Southlands, spends a great deal of time here awaiting new contracts. Yurii Zyuganov, the local co-ordinator, has tried many times to hire him permanently, but having spent much of his adult life as a slave, Tilutan has no wish to exchange one form of servitude for another. He is a violent and moody individual. His appearance is made still more striking by the horrific ritual tattoos which cover his body and the mighty two-handed scimitar (Ul' Khomo Ra) he wields.

In charge of The Nag's Head is Martia Zyuganov. This spoilt daughter of the crime-boss attends to much of the day-to-day correspondence between her father and his clients. She has received the finest education available (having attended the Collegium Theologica), and is thus much more refined and worldly than her father. She is also very attractive (obviously inheriting this from her mother), but her beauty is an alluring trap for she is even more cold and ruthless than her father. She is an expert with poisons, a tool her father frowns upon because, he feels, it lacks the impact of a physical beating.

Custom & Law East Shect

The playing of the sackbut and tabor is banned for commoners, unless specifically granted permission by a member of a recognised noble house of Talabheim or Talabecland, but this can be vetoed by the sitting Duke. Emperor Talgris XII notoriously loathed the sound of the sackbut, and had a deep-seated aversion to the repetitive beats of the tabor - this is notable as one of the few laws that he forced through the Peerhaus through bribery and coercion of peers. It should be noted that illegal sackbut and tabor parties are not unknown in the wilder parts of Eldenstadt.

FOR YOUR OWN PROTECTION The Vory: Kislev's & Talabheim's Main Criminal Group

When discussing organised crime in Kislev, the Vory are inevitably mentioned, as they are by far the most powerful and cohesive criminal institution at work in this state. Due to the heavy Kislevite influence on Talabheim, inevitably their influence has spread here. They act as a provider of protection to various segments of Kislevite society, as well as providing other essential services to its criminal elements. This article analyses the nature of the Vory (or the Kislevian Mafiya as they could be fairly called) and its place within society. At the moment their influence is generally confined to the Kislevite ghetto, but this is only seen as a short-term situation.

The Vory are a unique brand of organised crime group, known as "Co-ordinators" or "Thieves-in-law" (Vory-v-Zakone). "Co-ordinators" are the elite of the criminal world, ensuring the stability of the criminal system by co-ordinating the various elements of the criminal world. While heading criminal groups in their own right, co-ordinators also provide services to other elements of the criminal world. These elements can broadly be categorised as Gangs, Pseudo-Businesses, Corrupt Government Officials, and State Embezzlers.

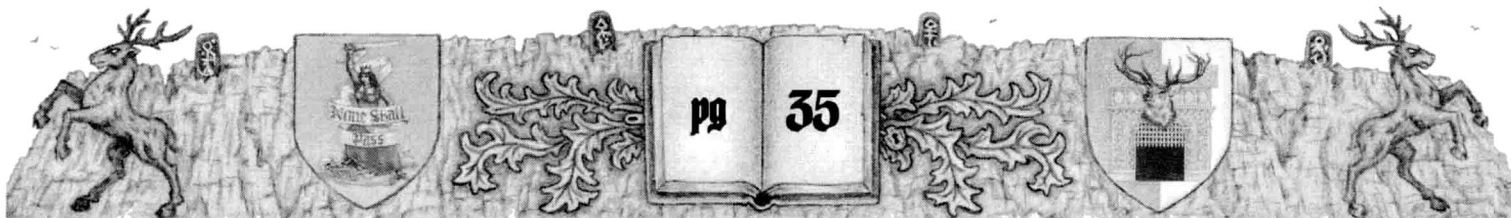
Gangs: The Vory help gangs to divide spheres of influence amongst themselves, find new targets and markets, and provide protection from the law through their contacts with corrupt officials

Pseudo-Businesses: They provide a 'service' ensuring protection from gangs and from the bureaucracy (again, through their corrupt government contacts).

Corrupt Officials: The Vory supply them with criminals who have disobeyed them for arrest, thus maintaining the illusion that they are in fact doing their job.

State Embezzlers: Provide protection from the law through their corrupt officials, and a means of disposing of their loot through the gangs.

While they may dabble in many enterprises, supplying protection is their core business. Organised crime also seeks to monopolise the traffic of illegal commodities, be it drugs, slaves, or whatever. The Kislev Mafiya is no different, except the commodity it seeks to monopolise is protection services. Even the most



Yurii Zyaganov
"Co-ordinator", Eldenstadt

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
4	52	49	5	5	8	50	2	29	45	34	45	32	29

Careers: Racketeer, ex-Soldier, ex-Footpad
Alignment: Neutral
Skills: Disarm, Disguise, Silent Move Urban, Dodge Blow, Secret Language-Thieves Tongue, Excellent Vision, Strike to Stun, Luck, Specialist Weapon-Fist, Read/Write, Silent Move Rural, Scale Sheer Surface, Bribery, Secret Language-Battle Tongue, Street Fighting, Strike Mighty Blow

Possessions: Mail Shirt, sword, 2-12 bodyguards (ex-soldiers)

Quotes: "No, we wait. Sure they're encroaching on our smuggling into Talagraad, but we can afford a few losses. Give it a month and Robol will make his move as well. Then we will clear up the mess."

"Look at me when I speak to you Ivan, and stop blubbing. I'll get my men to make it quick. You have brought it upon yourself when you betrayed me. When we took your miserable gambling den over, didn't we let you keep half of the profits and carry on running it? But you got greedy, and you know what happens to those with that particular vice. Don't we, Ivan."

On the cusp of his fiftieth year, Yurii always looks slovenly and dishevelled, always in search of the next woman and drink. He is completely incapable of despair and can be read like a book - everything shows on his face. His soldier's physique is starting to sag as age creeps up on him.

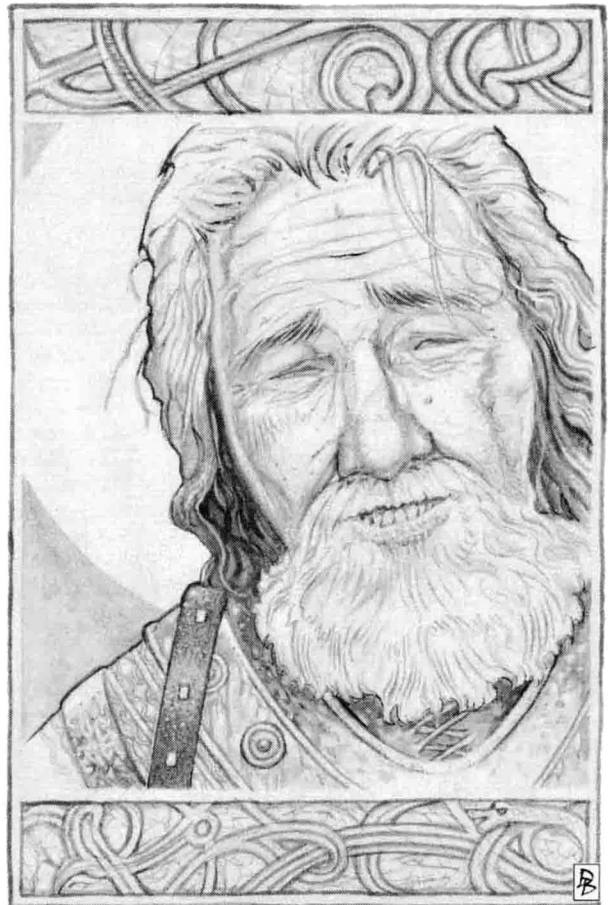
Yurii was born into a hard life of brutality and poverty. He responded by fighting his way out of it, and fighting hard! Joining a street gang he fought and brawled his way to the top, soon moving into other areas of crime. However, he made enemies and was brought down. The judge gave him a choice: years in prison (serving time alongside paid killers, none of whom would respect his desire for power and control) or service in the army, solving some beastmen problems on the border. He chose the latter, survived the

campaign, and honed his skills and leadership. He also developed an abiding hatred of Chaos. When his time was done he returned home under the blessing of the Kislevite Vory.

That a man such as Yurii Zyaganov can rise from peasant stock to become one of the most powerful individuals in all of Talabheim is proof enough that humans are limited in what they can achieve not by their social class but merely by their ambitions. Unfortunately, this is about the only positive thing that can be said of the man known as "the little hood". He is a cool, professional criminal; ruthless and vindictive when needs be, patient and forgiving when he sees advantage in it, but always planning several steps in advance.

He sees himself as a criminal with a code of honour, a type of Robin Hood. Zyaganov feels he brings order to the criminal world, replacing lawlessness and promoting stability in these difficult times. He thus feels the state should recognise his authority. At the very least they should recognise his contributions to rooting out servants of chaos, a task at which he has proven more successful in than many of the Imperial security forces.

Yurii would be just another Vory if it were not for one thing - vision. Whereas cities have traditionally been divided into areas of influence by the Vory, Zyaganov saw no reason why this must be so. After a gangland coup put him in charge of one of the smaller Eldenstadt gangs, there was no turning back. Employing former army comrades as an elite unit to support his footpads, he easily coerced, intimidated, threatened, or subdued his rivals into accepted subservient positions within his empire. As



he explained to his rivals, often when they were bloodied and with their heads being ground under his boot heels, "Everyone profits in this new relationship. Da?"

PCs are unlikely to ever meet Yurii face to face. At least to begin with. However, should they get involved with the criminal underworld or the Kislevite population, then they will certainly get to hear of him. Whether he becomes an enemy, a friend (and that is using the word flexibly) or perhaps a patron is another matter entirely.

powerful slaver's guild has to deal with negligent business partners and the Vory is the apparatus that ensures that both parties conduct their business 'fairly'. Their role as judge and intermediary of the criminal world is a valued service in the Kislevite underworld. No mechanism exists in other parts of the Old World where a pickpocket gang could go for judgement if one of its members was kidnapped by a ring of slavers, or where rival smugglers can turn to resolve issues without resorting to violence.

The ability to make credible threats is crucial. The Vory must be able to inflict punishment on individuals (from footpads to corrupt boyars) and upon groups (from a counterfeiting operation to a slave guild), and therefore the violent resources available to them must be greater than the combined violent resources of the parties it protects. Therefore, the five co-ordinators in Kislev (keep in mind there are dozens of other criminal

groups) can muster a large group of enforcers.

Of course none of this comes cheap. The Vory-v-Zakone leech off of criminals, just as other criminals, such as pickpockets and burglars, leech off common citizens. The racketeers work their way into positions of trust or dependency, and then charge a fee for their services. The pickpockets of Kislev would rather keep that extra ten percent, but this is the price you pay for certain benefits, and besides, they enjoy keeping all ten fingers intact...

Co-ordinator style criminal groups are confined to Kislev for two main reasons. First, there must be a ready supply of enforcers in large quantities (underpaid militiamen, unemployed soldiers, cashiered army officers, bandits, etc). Most states don't have this resource, except perhaps after a major war. Perhaps more importantly, the co-ordinator group banks on the inefficiency of the state in supplying sufficient

protection to legal and illegal transactions: the more confused the legal framework of a country, the more incompetent the law, the more inefficient the courts, the more the Vory will thrive. Only in Kislev, currently, can all these required elements be found.

The Vory differ from most racketeer groups in their relations with their clients. Most racketeers are by definition predatory, meaning that they care not for the well-being of their "client". The tax they impose is often crippling, the rate is ever changing, as is the frequency of payments. The Vory provides real protection, not only from itself (as no-one is allowed to turn down an offer for protection), but from hooligans, competitors, tax collectors, etc. In addition, the Vory acts as a recovery apparatus against unpaid debts to their clients, charging 50% of the money recovered.

Without the moderating touch of the co-ordinators,



criminals would probably have bled Kislev dry and headed to greener pastures - such as The Empire, where it is not so cold, dangerous, and poor. The enforcers have been able to moderate criminal activity such that a permanent resource exists; so long as people survive and trade continues there will always be enough wealth for all criminals to take their cut.

Increasing integration between the Vory-v-Zakone and legitimate businesses is occurring, as the crime bosses buy into firms. As they have a stake in a business remaining healthy, this is not at all surprising. This also allows the crime boss to improve the costs and profits of the protected business. Finally, these investments provide another source of income for the Vory.

The Vory-v-Zakone believe they are upholding order and morality. They believe the order they bring to the criminal world prevents a slide into anarchy and chaos. Indeed, most Vory-v-Zakone are vehemently anti-Chaos, and they believe the state should recognize them as a legitimate power. In order for this to occur, however, the state would have to give up its protective powers, in effect dissolving the watch and handing over this role to the co-ordinators. This is because both the state and the Vory are by definition protective agencies, and naturally each conflict with the other's jurisdiction. Unlikely as a hand-over of responsibility may be, it is even more unlikely that the state will declare "war" on the Vory. The strength of the Vory-v-Zakone is such that, even though in direct confrontation the state must surely win, they would suffer a costly retaliation in the process.

A political player of note to this study is Prince Andros, nephew of the current Tsar. The Prince and his power base have hardly been penetrated by the Vory, and he shows a great concern for law and order. He is currently working on a decree that would increase the number of watch and secret police on the streets of Kislev, as well as introducing some form of protection plan for witnesses. What the general public does not know is that The Prince and his supporters are pawns of Chaos.

The Vory in Talabheim

Because of the sizeable Kislevite population in Talabheim, and its proximity to Kislev, the Vory has had some success expanding into this new territory. However, the conditions that allows for the prosperity of the Vory in Kislev are not entirely mirrored in The Empire, and the move has not been made without resistance from Imperial gangs. However, the Vory is resourceful and enterprising. Despite initial successes, it remains to be seen whether the Vory can thrive in what amounts to an alien environment.

Their grip on the Eldenstadt criminal world is undisputed, but they have only a tentative toehold in the rest of Talabheim. Negotiations are underway with some smaller Imperial gangs to form alliances, whereby the resources of the Vory would be exchanged for local knowledge and a share of the profits. Make no mistake, the Vory fully intend to push out all competition in time, but they must be a bit more discrete in The Empire.

At the same time, they are attempting to demonstrate their role in upholding morality and order, in direct contrast to the predatory behaviour of Imperial gangs. This is something of a public relations campaign - a

necessary endeavour if they hope to legitimise themselves in the minds of Imperial citizens.

PC interaction with the Vory

In many ways, characters will interact with the Vory without even knowing it - so many aspects of Eldenstadt life are affected by organised crime that it is actually almost impossible not to do so. Perhaps the courts give the PC a harsher sentence because of some slight against the Vory; the alcohol they purchase could have been smuggled in, or maybe the tavern itself belongs to Zyuganov; and so it goes.

Any rogue character operating in the district will inevitably come to the attention of the Vory, and will firmly be informed that they are infringing upon protected territory. A second warning would not be pretty. Player characters may work directly against the Vory, either as vigilantes or on behalf of The Empire. This could be the focus of an entire campaign.

Alternatively, characters of many different careers may slowly ingratiate themselves to the Vory and become a part of the organisation. This opens up a unique campaign of particular interest due to contradictions of the Vory: on the one hand amoral and criminal, on the other protective and heroic in their struggle against Chaos. Imperial characters may be tasked with acting as front men in their dealings with non-Kislevite associates, essential to the Vory plans for expansion.

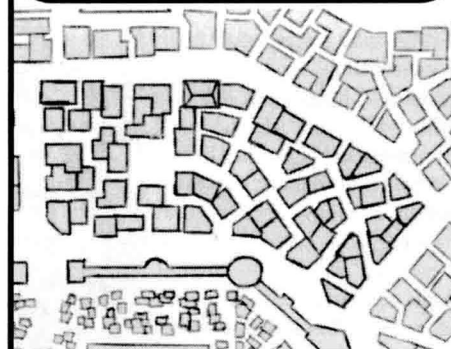
In the course of their adventures, characters may simply stumble across the Vory and their operatives. Perhaps the PCs form a temporary and uneasy alliance with the Vory to combat a Chaos threat. Maybe the business they have just started up is shaken down for protection money, or it may be that they are in competition with Vory operatives to collect an important contract. The possibilities are limitless.

cannot afford to live in Federdorf, or who want to be nearer the greenery at the edge of the city. Other residents include servants of those in Barrer and Nordengatter. The area's only claim to fame is its bakeries. The number of bakers of Ostenfeld grown with the residents' increasing desire for fresh bread. No-one is sure why they are so keen but they are. Walking the streets in the early hours is heaven for the nose (and hell for the stomach, some would say).

Custom & Law Halfitzen Plate

It is illegal for a peer to enter the Peerhaus while wearing a full suit of armour, unless he be a member of the Halfitzen noble house, who have special dispensation for their deeds in defending the city during battle with Tsar Ivan 'the Lunatic'.

Federhdorf



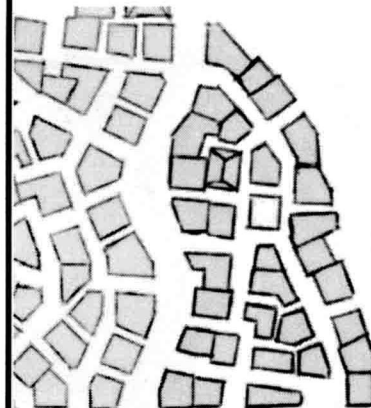
"Many nobles from Talabecland and beyond have townhouses here"

Built in the shadows of the finery of Nordengatter and Barrer, Federdorf is home to much of the middle class outside of the Artisan's trade. Many nobles from Talabecland and beyond have townhouses here, which stand empty for much of the year. It is said that many Civil Servants working in Blutberg aspire to live here, and that certainly seems to be true. A constant worry of the residents is the proximity of The Old City, from which they seem to believe a hungry horde of beggars and thieves will one day rise. On occasion they have called for gates to be built across the opening in the North Wall, but this has gone unheeded.

Custom & Law No Hoarding

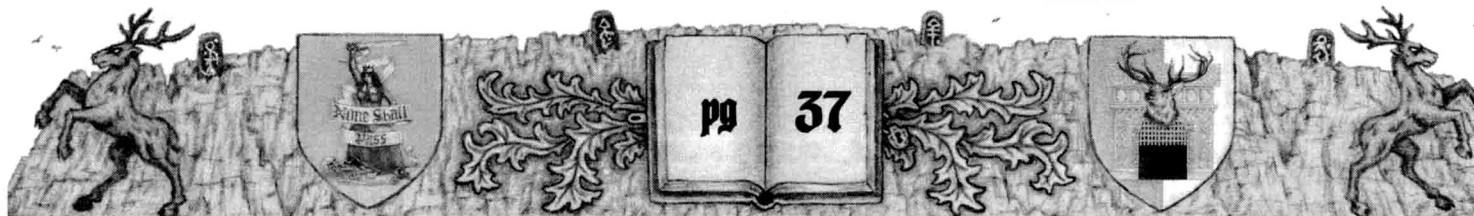
Any item of value, including coins of the realm, that do not belong to any person in a lawful capacity and discovered within the realm of Talabecland is property of the city of Talabheim and should be surrendered immediately. Hoarding such a find is punishable by a fine exceeding 2 GCs or a sentence of up to ten years at the Grand Duke's pleasure.

Ostenfeld



"The area's only claim to fame is its bakeries"

A small district, Ostenfeld was once a small village on the outskirts of the City. However, the city grew towards it and it has now just another part of the city. All that remains is a small green and shrine to Taal that once formed the centre of the village. Many of the residents here are low ranking Civil Servants who





MAKING THE CUT



The Medical Guilds by Tim Eccles

There are two points to bear in mind about physicians within WFRP before examining their guild. Firstly, it is necessary to be extremely careful with terminology when analysing the medical profession within The Empire. WFRP contains a number of careers with healing expertise: clerics (particularly of Shallya), druidic priests, herbalists, pharmacists and physicians. However, terms such as 'doctor' and 'surgeon' are barely mentioned, and are not offered as specific careers.

What we do have are magical practitioners and physiological practitioners. Like many FRPGs, WFRP never really manages to solve the problems of a backward, dark, gothic world with the reality of magic and proven gods with divine (healing) powers. This is not an issue I propose to address in this article, but it does need to be recognised. For the time being, I will assume that the clergy is limited and overworked, that chaos has led to a deep suspicion of magical healing, and that simple greed and self-interest has led to mundane and divine/magical healing methods being divorced.

Secondly, there is the nature of disease and the history of treatment. Michael Anderson has covered this territory previously¹, but the following description of the Physicians' Guild takes a different position from that generally excellent article. Whilst the history of Europe can be extremely useful to the development of The Empire and the Old World, it is important to recognise the two are different. In this case, Michael's use of Remas as an equivalent of Rome is unfeasible in my view. The Old World has never been united under a single empire, unlike Europe under the Romans. Therefore, I do not think that there can be a classical Old Reman medical history, which Old Worlders are currently re-discovering and improving. Personally I prefer, if one must (I think one probably has to accept the existence of Remas or - better - Tylos/Kavzar (destroyed by the skaven) as the originators of the Classical language. To this extent, I accept that some form of

universal culture is necessary in the early history of the Old World, although a Dwarf or Elf origin is not implausible. My own preference is for Classical to develop from the tribal origins of The Empire, from the trade language developed as humans interacted with the more complex Dwarf and Elf languages), to use Remas as an early trading city that set



up a number of outposts and colonies to act as trading posts. It would seem unlikely that they had any great store of medical knowledge that was later lost. Far more likely is that most of the Old World's formal understanding of medicine was obtained, like their magic, from the High Elves. It is also quite plausible that, as engineers, the Dwarfs would have had a well-developed understanding of the body as a mechanical system and have traded that information to the humans.

Despite the point about the separation of divine and mundane healers, I would suggest that one retains the idea that the basis of medical philosophy is in myth and theology, developed by empirical research. Whilst the guild has much power, it is still under the watchful eye of the varied religious authorities for any whiff of heresy or taint of chaos. Since the Old World has also been within its current political framework for some 2,500 years, and has not suffered the withdrawal of some lost golden age, it is also difficult to say why the Cathayans should be so far ahead in their own practice. Again, the real world Chinese had to face social upheavals and invasions of little practical difference to those of The Empire, and yet there is such an apparent chasm between the two in their level of advancement.

Within the world of formal medicine, I content that there are two basic professions, the physician and the surgeon. What follows is a discussion of their cultural and philosophical characteristics. However, the most numerous healers within the Old World would be the wise old women found in every peasant community, who offer traditional lore on everything from delivering babies to curing lovesickness. There is no career within the WFRP rule mechanics for such individuals – something that obviously needs attention.

Physicians

There is an important cultural distinction throughout the Old World between the 'physician' and the 'surgeon-barber', and it is one that physicians are extremely meticulous in maintaining. Physicians practice medicine, a theoretical body of knowledge involving an understanding of the body, its humours and its ailments, based upon classical theories of the body and health. They deal with ailments, disease, maladies and the like. Physicians attend university or are priests.

The existing model of physiology within the Old World is shown below, right.

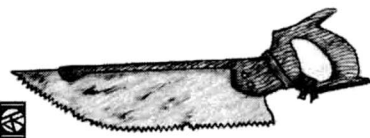
It should be noted that medicine is particularly conservative. Physicians are safe if they remain loyal to traditional methods. Empirical fact is considered inferior to philosophical reasoning.

Barber-Surgeons

By contrast, barber-surgeons practice surgery, a practical 'hands-on' activity - a craft or trade rather than an intellectual field like medicine. This distinction is an old one and is rooted in the etymology of the very word, *chirurgion*, which is derived from the Classical "cheirourgos", or 'work done with the hand'. Executioners and torturers often act as surgeons as they have a better understanding of the body than doctors of medicine do.

When one goes to the barber, one has a shave, a haircut, may be bled, and have boils lanced. His tools are knives, razors, scissors, and the like. The surgeon is often also called the butcher for he is most commonly found on the battlefield doing quick and dirty surgery. He amputates what he cannot save, and is interested only in saving lives in the short term. He is less concerned with the longer-term effects or rehabilitation. His work is suited to most of the serious injuries of combat, such as critical hits involving smashing or shattering parts of the skeleton. In a pinch, a butcher or huntsman can fill in when there is no surgeon available.

Essentially the surgeon knows enough of the circulatory system to tie off an artery and remove the crushed part – a regular occurrence with bladed weapons about, and familiar sight in the Critical Effects table!



Arrows leave a shaft with which the surgeon can push the head through, or pull it cleanly out. Shot wounds are much nastier, since firearms are still relatively new, and surgeons are unused to treating such wounds. Internal injuries to organs are almost always fatal without divine or magical intervention.

Surgeons may also be physicians, but more likely the surgeon would not be part of the Physicians' Guild. He is a man with knowledge of animal butchery, and a few years experience on or near battlefields. This knowledge – his distinctive area of expertise – is practical. Midwives, witches, Shallyan priests/priestesses and physicians can all manage the lancing of boils, and minor surgery. Occasionally a physician will stand in attendance to oversee the work as the surgeons gets their hands bloody.

It is also possible that within the cities and large towns of the Old World, there are also businesses where barbers simply cut customer's hair for a fee, and offer a number of varied styles. This barber might offer a haircut and/or shave, and might be located variously in a specific shop, in bath-houses, or in the marketplace. They would survive as a luxury service to those who can afford to engage in styling their hair to a particular fashion.

Nurses

Nurses are either sisters in holy orders (it often forms part of the training of the Cult of Shallya) or poor women who need the work and hence provide simple labour for whoever employs them. Nursing is hard, physical drudgery with little credit for the good work done. Nurses have no formal recognition, qualifications or affiliated organisation, and are employed directly rather than through a guild or agency. To all intents, apprentices (see below) can also be viewed as being nurses, although they have the hope of gaining a qualification.

Unlicensed Healers

There are a number of sources from which healing can be obtained outside urban centres and their guild organisations. However, these are outside the scope of an article on the medical guilds. It is worthwhile noting, however, that whilst guilds are still relatively weak outside of the wealthier towns, they still technically control those practising the healing arts. To offer physicians' or surgeons' services without a guild licence is an offence that the guilds are keen to pursue. The primary protection from such action is distance, community silence and the generally fractured nature of The Empire as a whole, and guild organisation in particular.

Religious Healing

The guilds obviously have limited control over the healing offered by religious cults. They do monitor the various cults and will be keen to take up any infraction of cult theology by a cleric, where healing is involved. This is heavily mitigated by the fact that the guilds do not wish

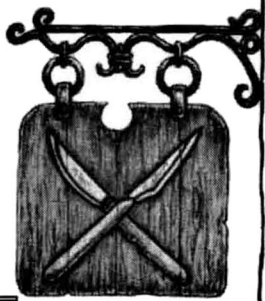
The Existing Model of Physiology Within The Old World.

Element	Humour	Organs	Disposition(s)
Fire	blood	heart	passionate, excitable, hot-tempered
Air	tears/sweat ¹	eyes/ears	flighty, unpredictable, moody
Water	bile	liver	gloomy, lethargic, bitter
Earth	urine	bowels	constant, persistent, steadfast
Metal ²	lymph	bones	practical, serious, rigid
Ether	auris ³	soul	thoughtful, creative, cerebral

¹ Old World physicians and natural philosophers often conceive of these humours as being greater than just a single bodily fluid: tears and sweat are considered to be the same 'humour' as saliva; 'urine' is understood more broadly to refer also to digestive fluids and semen.

² The idea of metal as an element has arrived only relatively recently from Cathay, and whilst it has apparently had little affect on magic, it has caused some re-appraisal of medical theories.

³ Auris is the humour found in the body associated with the mind and the soul. It is the medium whereby the soul interacts with the body. The element of ether is not widely acknowledged, and certain religious philosophers have equated the element to the chaotic warp. For this reason, few in the medical profession will openly admit to accepting the idea, but certain practitioners are known to have had success. The best known to WFRP players will be Luigi Pavarotti.



to become the target of religious investigation themselves. In reality an uneasy truce exists between the two. Technically, the guilds will be on friendly terms with the Cult of Shallya, although different sections of the cult treat the guilds in different manners. Guild members offer some services to the cult, and worship Shallya (*Warpstone 10*). The existence of such a cordial relationship is to some extent because they serve different customers, in that the Shallyan poor cannot afford the

services of the guild. However, the reality of the relationship is often much less amicable than appears.

Game Mechanics

As outlined in the introduction, WFRP does not reflect its own background particularly well in its use of surgery as a physician's skill, and the lack of the development of the doctor career. As a result, the following is an attempt to describe the above background in game terms.

The physician career is served by the Physicians' Guild, and people following other careers are routinely rejected by the guild as members. Pharmacists, however, can become members although they are not normally expected to practice medicine. They are regarded as junior members of the medical profession with useful ancillary skills.

The Barbers' Guild is open to anyone with the relevant skills (Surgery and Heal Wounds), regardless of their nominal career. However, the guild is restricted in the medical services its members are allowed to offer, since the practice of medicine is a monopoly of the Physicians' Guild. Therefore, only where guilds are relatively weak will the Barbers' Guild be able to offer surgical services. Such areas will include military garrisons and any other locations where surgeons have military contacts within the civil authority. Members are also frequently found travelling from village to village, ensuring that they never outstay a welcome or arouse a formal complaint.

Cults have their own internal organisation for the advancement and practice of medicine. The Cult of Shallya has sects that follow distinctive approaches, as outlined in *Warpstone 10*. The Church of Sigmar, on the other hand, is closely linked to the Physicians' Guild as part of its doctrine of unifying The Empire at all levels. A number of specialist clerical healers are thus found within the guild. From an equal - though opposite - perspective, a number of Ulrican priests are members of the Barbers' Guild, since they understand the necessity of field surgery. Indeed, both the cults of Ulric and Myrmdia allow branches of the Barbers' guild to operate within their precincts, even in locations where the Physicians' Guild are extremely powerful.

If all else fails, a visit to the Wizards' and Alchemists' Guild might yield a pharmacist, herbalist or alchemist who can offer some assistance. However, the guild is keenly aware of the need to avoid the wrath of the medical profession and the religious cults by dabbling in the physicians' arts, which might so easily be interpreted as necromantic or other heretical dabbling.

Joining the Guilds

Physicians must have studied at university and gained a degree in order to apply, and so many healers seek to become barber-surgeons who need no formal qualifications.

In order to join either guild, an application has to be supported by two existing members. In reality, since a new member might be additional competition for these members, gaining support for an application is far from

simple. There is an obvious tendency to only support family and friends. It should prove particularly difficult for a travelling adventurer to gain such support, given their clear lack of respect and participation in the local community. Of course, gaining support might be the payment for, or result of, an adventure. Any application is subject to a fee, set at 10 GCs, although in certain cases this might be waived where the applicant is a priest or a member of the military. The guilds will allow a testimonial from another region to stand as supporting testimony in lieu of two local proposers, but it must be supported by the guildmaster, and an additional Transfer Testimonial fee of 25GCs is payable.

In the case of the Barbers' Guild a practical test and supporting testimony will confirm membership, subject to an examination fee of a further 20 GCs and confirmation of employment with an existing member. A member must work under such a person for a year and a day, before they may set up in practice on their own. In the case of surgeons transferring from other areas or from approved military (or religious) service, this period may be waived subject to an Inspection of Approvals confirming the previous experience and a fee of 10 GCs. The guild charges an annual fee of 10GCs.

In the case of the Physicians' Guild, the applicant must sit a written examination, complete an oral interview with a panel of three existing members and pay an Indemnity Fee of 50GCs. This allows them to serve an apprenticeship under a current member for a minimum of five years. Those wishing to form their own practice must first pass a Test of Professional Competence (fee 10GCs) and then complete a Private Practice Warrant and Indemnity interview. The guild charges an annual fee of 50GCs.

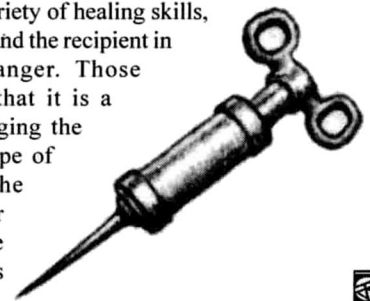
Membership Classes

As can be seen from the above, there is no real distinction between different classes of membership on the basis of simple ability. For example, there is no approved apprenticeship scheme. In order to be a member of either guild, one has to have the appropriate skills, and the class of membership is purely an internal bureaucratic affair.

The purpose of this is simple. Physicians wish to maintain personal control over who is allowed into their profession. This is forced upon the surgeon-barbers who seek to gain recognition of their work by the more powerful physicians. Apprentices are simply those individuals who assist physicians and surgeon-barbers in their work. They are not formally recognised. In addition, they may be people who attend university and then gain (or buy) a patron. Patronage and/or money are necessary to serve an apprenticeship in either guild, given this lack of uniform qualification or training process.

Conclusion

Healing within The Empire is controlled theologically by various cult authorities and in its practice by the Physicians' Guild. Those desiring healing must normally apply to one of these two sources. Both are likely to be available only at a price or to those who are deemed worthy of divine assistance. The Barbers' Guild offers certain 'rough and ready' treatments, although it is limited in geographical reach and power. Whilst it might be possible to obtain certain treatments from the Wizards' Guild or even through pharmacists trading as members of the Merchants Guild, these will be strictly limited. Of course, many other individuals have access to a variety of healing skills, but these place both the healer and the recipient in theological and secular danger. Those controlling healing realise that it is a powerful monopoly, encouraging the faithful to devotion in the hope of receiving divine aid, and the middle classes to thrift in order to afford help. Those who ignore such powerful monopolists should beware.



THE PROFIT OF WAR

A Scenario by John Foody

"Our strength is that, as one, we stand against the horde"
Franz Kafka, *Sigmarite Scholar*

This scenario is set in Talabheim and uses locations taken from our background to the city. It helps serve as an introduction to the city, taking the PCs to a number of districts in and out of the crater. It can be relocated elsewhere with a little work. Much of the scenario is investigative although there is some combat.

The backdrop to the scenario is rooted in my own campaign. In this, Orcs are gathering in the forests of The Empire under a charismatic leader. He is biding his time for his own reasons, but there remains the need to gather supplies, chiefly large amounts of quality weapons and armour. All this is such unorcish behaviour that few believe the rumours that abound. After all there have been fewer attacks than ever and orcs are just an unorganised bunch of animals, are they not? If you would rather not use orcs then you could replace them with a force from the neighbouring province of Ostland. Have it known that border skirmishes have taken place between them and Talabecland. As Talabheim is allied to Talabecland, supplying weapons to the enemy is considered treason.

In this scenario the orcs are buying weapons and some of them are being made and shipped from Talabheim. Should actions such as these be uncovered all those involved would suffer a quick, brutal death at the hands of the law. Still, as is the way, there are those willing to risk their (and others') lives for money. Again, as is the way, the roots of this illegal conspiracy go high into the political structure of Talabheim. Should the PCs become involved their investigations will lead them into conflict with powerful factions in the city.

A Summary

The Chokin family, one of the most powerful in the city, were approached three years ago by an agent with a deal to sell arms to the Orc Warlord Gronrug. They have been selling the orcs illegal arms for three years now and won't give it up unless they have to. They have placed the process in the hands of a number of middlemen. They know that if the matter is uncovered then these will take the fall.

Vadim Chokin, the head of the family, personally delegated the matter into the hands of his Private Secretary Darak Grinko. However, Grinko wasn't willing to take the fall either if it all went wrong and so approached Lucius Lavrov, a lawyer working for the Chokin family. Lavrov was to arrange for the weapons to be made and shipped to the orc's contact (a human named Hockschwarser) in the east. To this end he approached Marius Seinfeld, a merchant he knew to be both in need of money and friends. He also contacted Otto Blancher, who ran a warehouse owned by a Chokin front company, The Beule Mercantile Company, to expect

delivery. He told him that goods would be dropped off regularly and then collected later. To arrange this Lavrov spoke to an army Sergeant he trusted to supply some men. They would take the goods into Talagraad and deliver them to Emil Etberg, a captain in The Royal Department of Excise and Port – a man recommended by Seinfeld. The goods would then be collected and taken upstream to a destination supplied by Grinko. In each assignment was placed a coded message from the Chokins. Lavrov arranged for this to be placed in a crate while they were stored at Blancher's warehouse. Lavrov was confident that in the unlikely event that the operation was investigated, Blancher and Seinfeld would take the fall.



However, Lavrov became suspicious about the eventual destination of the cargo and confronted Grinko with his fears. Grinko said he would take the operation over and learnt everything that Lavrov had done to date. A few nights later he had Lavrov killed. He then continued to ensure that everything went smoothly. However, he didn't trust Blancher and decided instead to have the coded message delivered by hand to the docks.

Things began to go wrong a few weeks ago when the City Guards who took the goods to Talagraad were unexpectedly sent away. With the arms piling up at the warehouse, Grinko told Blancher to get a shipment delivered to Etberg and to find someone that could take the arms a month upstream. Knowing what was in the crates, Blancher foolishly panicked and approached Seinfeld for help. Seinfeld recommended two men: Rolf Heiner and Ulrich Hintz. Since then, in the city, things have reverted to normal. However, Heiner and Hintz were uncovered and killed. The killer, a ranger named Jurgen, has the coded message and hopes to find the cipher. He hopes the PCs will be the ones that will do this.

The scenario begins on a dark night in Talabheim. It is a somewhat conventional start for a scenario but there is a reason for this at the end of the scenario. Still it will be easy enough for this introduction to be changed should it suit your purposes.

Attack

It is a cold, wet and windy night in the streets of the city. Most citizens are at home or gathered around a fire in the warmth of an inn. Only the watch seem to be out on a night like this. The PCs are heading back to their own inn in the early evening when, as they pass an alleyway, they see a robed man being attacked by four men in hoods. All the men are armed with swords and the victim is pressed against the wall. Almost as soon as they are spotted the attackers immediately run whether PCs intervene or not. Before they flee one the men stabs the robed man in the stomach and he collapses to the ground. Should the PCs give chase, the men will swiftly disappear down a maze of alleyways. This is just an ordinary street robbery, although the PCs may think otherwise.

The wounded man is middle-aged, sporting a large white beard and wearing a chainmail shirt under his heavy cloak. He has been badly wounded from a number of blows, the stomach wound bleeding freely. Hopefully, the PCs will give him aid. This will involve getting him to a physician, or at the very least inside. As they pick him up he speaks: "The case", waving vaguely to a pile of rubbish. Under the rubbish can be found a scroll case (which rattles when shook) and half a finger, a little rotted. Both have been nibbled by something. The finger is just a red herring but it may worry players with overactive imaginations.

Wherever they take him there will be a need to remove the chainmail. If they have taken him to a physician then he will ask for their help. His body is a mass of scars and it seems likely that he is a warrior of some experience. However, now he is out of shape and old. Stripped down, the stomach wound is obviously a bad one. However they also see he wears a chain with a hexagonal amulet embossed with a two-tailed comet around his neck. PCs will certainly have seen similar on Clerics of Sigmar (some lay worshippers also wear these).

The man, Chaplain Julheim, is indeed a Cleric of Sigmar and has served the Temple faithfully for over fifty years. He has come to suspect that weapons are being smuggled to orcs from the city and has resolved to stop it. He was on his way to meet an old friend with information when he was attacked.

As they tend to his wounds he comes round and says, "Thank you for your help my friends. Sigmar be blessed, he has sent you to aid me. This is clear to me. Where is my case?" He becomes agitated if it is not produced. Once it is, he continues. "You must take this case to The East Arms in Ostenfeld and give it to a man named Jurgen. He will be dressed in black and wearing an amulet with the sign of a hammer. He will ask you to prove I sent you by asking his mother's name. The answer is Anette. Please, you must be quick! Listens to what he says and act on it. Please! Do this, and the Temple will reward you. I cannot trust anyone at the moment. I know you will do this. I have met a few of your kind before, those blessed by the gods for great things, even if they do not know it. You have yet to fulfil your promise. There are greater things in store for you than bickering and grabbing for every shilling. Please do this task for me, in Sigmar's name. It is important." He then passes out.

Yes, this is a blatant attempt to flatter the PCs' heroic side. Of course if they choose to ignore this then they can do so. It is a free world after all. You can just attack them with orcs carrying well made weapons some time in the future. If they look in the sealed case they will find twenty-one small gems that have spilled out of the cloth they were wrapped in. PCs will be able to sell them for 10GCs each.

The East Arms

Ostenfeld is quiet at this time of the evening and The East Arms is easy to find by asking a passer-by. Rundown and dirty, it is half-empty, populated by old men sitting alone in silence or talking quietly in small groups. A thick fog of pipeweed smoke hangs in the air. The PCs are stared at when they enter the inn but the patrons and staff are not unfriendly. Looking around the inn they see a weathered man, quite obviously out of place here. Rough looking and in is his forties, he is dressed in black clothes in the style of a woodsman, an amulet bearing the device of a hammer on a chain clearly visible. His sword is unsheathed on the table on front of him. He suspiciously eyes the characters and although he won't turn down an offered drink, he will not drink it either.

He is expecting Julheim and is Suspicious of the PCs. He grunts in answer to the name Jurgen and asks where Julheim is. Once they say he has sent them he asks if they know his mother's name. Assuming they answer correctly then he asks what else they have for him. Opening the scroll case he tips out and a pile of small gems into his hand. If the seal on the scroll case has been broken then he will count the gems. If the PCs have somehow replaced them with good fakes he will not spot this. When he is satisfied who they are he explains why he is here.

"It seems that others know of why I have come here. My friend, Chaplain Julheim, is the victim of that. I considered leaving, as Julheim was a day late, but it seems I was right to wait. Have you heard of Gronrug?" Assuming the PCs shake their heads, he carries on. "I am not surprised, as few are willing to listen to talk of him. Gronrug is an orc chieftain here in the Empire. Over the last few years he has gathered the various small orc and goblin tribes together. Unlike other of his brethren he has done so quietly and efficiently. He has been hoarding supplies and equipment. This is the reason I am here. I have been aware of a trade in arms to the Orcs for some time, suspecting it was coming through Talabheim. Two weeks ago I discovered an exchange was to take place. I spoke to the two drivers, Rolf Heiner & Ulrich something –or-other, and learnt they were from Talabheim. However, I was forced to kill them before the exchange took place. Their wagon contained many newly cast swords and arrows, which I have hidden away. I found this on Rolf's body." He throws forward a brooch; a whip wrapped around a wheel: The Teamsters Guild. If the PCs ask he describes Heiner as dark, bearded with recently earned scar on his forehead while Ulrich was fat, with a large drooping moustache and a slight stutter.

"I hoped the Chaplain would look into this but it looks like you have been sent in his stead. He has always had good judgement, the ability to see into men's hearts. Of course, he has been wrong before. I would help myself but I am not good in cities so I hope you are worthy of the task. Also in the boxes was a coded message, something I have seen in every shipment that I have managed to investigate. We need to discover who is placing it there, and then find the cipher. The only other thing I have heard, and this a couple of times, is the name Hockschwarser. There are few clues there for you to go on but I hope it is enough." Hockschwarser is the name of the contact the two teamsters were due to meet; he won't be encountered in this scenario.

Jurgen's story is true but he has no proof to back it up. It leaves the PCs with only the most meagre of clues. Hopefully, they will rise to the challenge and investigate. If asked, Jurgen says the gems are for "expenses", which indeed they are. If the PCs ask if they are going to be paid, Jurgen says it is likely that Julheim will reward them well should they succeed.

Teamsters

The most solid clue that the players have is that at least one of the men smuggling weapons was a member of The Teamsters and Stevedores guild. Members are given such brooches when they join and they serve to show they are members. Using one falsely is illegal can be a dangerous business, as the Teamsters are very protective of their members and their privileges. The Guild House is located outside the crater in the town of Talagraad, as

this is close to the docks. However, they also have an office in Steinhaus, which handles the shipping to and from the area's warehouses.

Guild members at either location will have heard of Rolf Heiner and indeed also of his partner Ulrich Hintz. The PCs will either have to be members or pay a small bribe to a member to learn this. Going in heavy-handed will just annoy them. Both men were Teamsters but they have not been seen around for a few weeks. They are rumours that Rolf was in trouble with some crook over gambling debts and has done a runner. Nobody is sure if he has gone with Ulrich but it seems too much of a coincidence to think otherwise. Many of the Teamsters know both men lived in Sudan Eldenstadt, but they are not sure where – only that “it was somewhere around Kruger Platz”.

The other Teamsters are right about Heiner: he had serious gambling debts. He had long ago reached the limit of his colleagues' patience after often borrowing money from them. Just before he disappeared he turned up for work having been beaten up. Nobody wanted to ask by who. In fact, Heiner had reached such desperation that when he was offered a way out he took it. His debt is to a gambler, Ruy Sauber, with many underworld connections. If any PC is a member of the Teamsters guild, they will be given the name of Sauber.

The pair were paid by the merchant Marius Steinfield to take the weapons from Talagraad eastwards. There was only any real risk in the city's boundaries. Even here, as Teamsters they would draw little suspicion in driving a wagon. They then took the wagon north along the Talabec River on their way to meet a human agent of the orcs. However, the woodsman Jurgen met them first.

Bawd

At some stage it is likely that the PCs will head in to Eldenstadt looking for Kruger Platz in an attempt to locate the homes of the two Teamsters. However, Eldenstadt is not a pleasant area for strangers to venture into. The PCs will stand out as strangers and the locals will stare sullenly at them. If you so choose, they also become a target for children throwing rotten fruit or else a skilful pickpocket. However, they won't be threatened with any real violence or hostility.

Asking questions here will be a difficult, especially if none of the PCs are local. It will cost them a few pennies each time and half the time, they will be sent in the wrong direction. If you prefer you could have them make some Fellowship roles at -20 to earn the information. Should they fail too many tests then they will end up in the area after dark. Unless they leave, they should feel very threatened. In the end, however, they will find their way to the Platz.

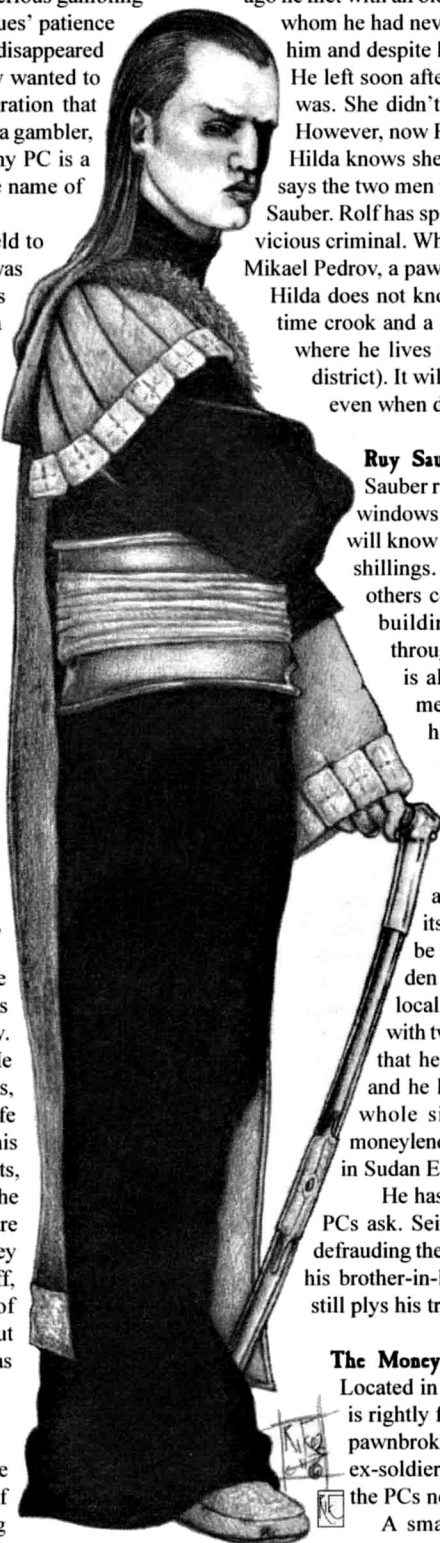
One alternative to all this trudging is for the PCs to be approached by a young Bawd named Oskar. Ten years old, he is dressed in rags and looks underfed and dirty. However, it is obvious he is bright and streetwise. He offers to show them around Eldenstadt for five shillings, and promises them “On the Spirits” that they will be safe while they are with him. Oskar will be as good as his word – brought up on his father's tales of heroic knights, he has taken it upon himself to be honourable. Should the PCs be obviously warriors, then he will believe they are knights and become loyal to them. However, should they act in a blatantly dishonourable way, he will run off, disappointed. Oskar knows the streets and people of Eldenstadt. He has been an orphan for two years, but manages to get by on what he earns as a Bawd. He has not heard of Heiner or Hintz.

Kruger Platz

A dingy and depressive locale, the centre of the square consists of four newly (and badly) build houses. Rolf Heiner's family live in a rotting, patched up hovel facing

onto these. As they are almost at the door, two burly men exit and walk down the street away from the PCs, without even noticing them. Three screaming, snot-nosed children and a heavily pregnant young woman answer the door. There are tears streaming down her face, her nose is bleeding and her cheek is red, both suffered from a punch in the face by one of the recently departed men. She is so hysterical, having just been told that her husband is dead, that she collapses immediately once the PCs mention her husband's name. However, any sort of kindness will eventually lead her to talk freely.

Through her tears, Rolf's wife Hilda says that it seems he had gambling debts of over 70GCs. He had hinted at this but never let on how bad it really was, although she was aware that he had been depressed about it. A month ago he met with an old employer of his – someone named Marius Seinfeld, whom he had never trusted. He said that he had been recommended to him and despite his personal misgivings had obviously been relieved. He left soon afterwards after on a job, although he didn't say what it was. She didn't think it unusual, guessing that it was for Seinfeld. However, now Rolf is dead, and he cannot pay back the money – and Hilda knows she will never be able to earn such a large amount. She says the two men who just visited came on behalf of a man named Ruy Sauber. Rolf has spoken of him in the past; he is a notorious gambler and vicious criminal. What Hilda does not know is that that the thugs work for Mikael Pedrov, a pawnbroker who has bought Heiner's debt from Sauber. Hilda does not know where Ulrich Hintz lives. Rolf called him a small time crook and a drunk, but they were friends. Indeed, no one is sure where he lives (in fact, it was in a small room on the edge of the district). It will take the PCs some days to find it if they search, and even when discovered, it offers no clues.



Ruy Sauber

Sauber runs a dingy gambling den in an abandoned house – its windows covered with blankets. If the PCs are with Oskar he will know where it is, otherwise it will again cost the PCs some shillings. Asking directions to the den is nothing unusual, as others come here from all over the city. During the day the building is quiet, but it's busy throughout the night – throughout which there are three bouncers on duty. Sauber is always here, sleeping in a room in the loft. A senior member of the Vory, powerful local criminals, collects his takings at the end of each night. Although he isn't happy at the cut they take, he trusts them to keep him and his money safe. Nobody local would be foolish enough to rob him.

An excellent gambler, Sauber is slowly becoming addicted to Ranald's Delight. If the PCs approach during the day he talks to them freely under its influence, although the information they want will be contained within long rambling speeches. When the den is full, he won't dare talk to outsiders in front of the locals. Should the PCs push him then they will be faced with two dozen angry gamblers. Heiner owed Sauber money that he initially borrowed for gambling some months ago, and he had been avoiding him ever since. Fed-up with the whole situation, he sold the debt to a pawnbroker and moneylender named Mikael Pedrov who lives across Ostenstrabe in Sudan Eldenstadt.

He has heard of the merchant Marius Seinfeld, should the PCs ask. Seinfeld was thrown out of the Merchants' Guild for defrauding them, but got away with “only” two broken legs because his brother-in-law is an important merchant within the Guild. He still plys his trade somewhere in the Steinhaus area.

The Money-Lender

Located in a squat, windowless, stone building, Mikael Pedrov is rightly feared in Sudan Eldenstadt. He is a moneylender and pawnbroker, and is backed up by the Vory. As the PCs enter an ex-soldier with one-leg exits, hopping and swearing, warning the PCs not to do deals with such “an evil spirit”.

A small, squat and balding man, Mikael is calculating,

intelligent and lecherous. Female PCs will feel their skin crawl as he continually stares at them. He sometimes accepts sex in lieu of payment but knows not to do so too often. Two burly bodyguards always escort him; four others take turns to guard the shop, day and night. Inside, there are two rooms. The first is a waiting room, and here PCs will be asked to remove any weapons larger than a sword. Once they have done so, the guard knocks on the adjoining door (T5 W8) and they are allowed in. The main room is dank and smelly with stale sweat. Long shelves are filled with nik-naks and other worthless items. Pedrov sits at a desk counting money, while his guards stare sullenly at the PCs from their chairs. On Pedrov's table is a peg-leg, taken from the old soldier.

Making a fortune though lending money, Pedrov never gives leeway to late-payers. They are given a warning by his thugs who will return the next day to beat them up or take whatever they can find (which is usually very little). His men kill a dozen or so people every year and this encourages everyone to pay. However, from time to time Pedrov puts on his most (insincerely) commiserating face, as he says that he can see the problems they are having paying and can even help them out. In this way, he forces women and children in prostitution, and men into criminal activities or a host of other unsavoury tasks. He is also well known in the Kislevite community for buying out debts. This is what he did with Rolf Heiner's debt to Ruy Sauber – buying it off of him for a fraction of the value, with Sauber accepting the loss in order to avoid the hassle of trying to recover the debt. However, instead of collecting the debt, Mikael had other plans: he knew Heiner perfectly fitted a task that he had been asked to help out with.

Pedrov had been approached by an old acquaintance of his, Marius Seinfeld, who asked if he knew any Teamsters who would like to earn some extra money. Rolf Heiner was the obvious choice, and Pedrov called him in to offer him the job – one that would clear a large part of his debt. He was also to be paid a certain amount of expenses, and with this he was to hire a partner. Seinfeld hadn't returned to complain so he assumed that the men had picked up the goods as planned.

Mikael also knows that Rolf Heiner had done another job for Seinfeld a few months back. He heard that the Teamsters were required to find a cart and visit the Blacksmith Yuri Popov in Silbertor, taking a delivery of goods to Otto Blancher's warehouse in Steinhaus. If asked how he knows this, he claims not to remember. He will give this information about Popov freely if it thinks it will get the PCs off his back.

Attacking Pedrov is a very bad idea. He is well protected by the Vory and they don't appreciate their sources of income being killed off. However, should the PCs do so, they will please hundreds of people who have dealt with him before – though any help they can offer will be limited and secretive.

The Blacksmith

Six foot tall, muscled and covered in soot, Yuri Popov is the archetypal blacksmith. He won't talk to the PCs unless they threaten to bring in the law. He was hired a year ago to make a gross of swords, and two gross of shields. They were simple, no frills items – the kind an army might use. He has no idea for what they were going to be used for - he was just glad of the work. Popov has no idea as to their real use and would be horrified if he found out. Marius Seinfeld hired him personally, and Popov knows others in the city have been contracted for similar work too over the past two years.

Seinfeld

An odious and dishonest man, Marius Seinfeld (picture on page 43) is disliked by most that come in contact with him. However, he represents wealthy business interests and thus commands some power. He runs the Talabheim end of his brother-in-law's merchant company, which is based in Altdorf. However, since he was expelled from the Merchants' Guild he has been forced to take a back seat. This wasn't too much of a problem, as he has long been involved in smuggling and other criminal activities. He is known not to ask too many questions, and is well connected to many people from across the social spectrum. These contacts helped him escape jail when his smuggling was discovered by the Guild – but it means he has used up his favours. The goods he currently deals in are collected regularly, to minimise the risk that he will be found with them.

Fifty years old, Seinfeld is thin and frail and needs a cane to get around. His gammy leg and general ill health are the result of a beating he took five

years ago. However, it hasn't dampened his greed. He has been recently threatened by Black Nic, a local criminal, to keep out of the *Slannesh's Pleasure* trade. This is a popular drug amongst the wealthy and aristocratic young. Hence he is never without a couple of bodyguards by his side. These are strong but none too bright. He owns two warehouses in the Steinhaus area but does not allow them to be used for illegitimate purposes. They are noticeably half empty and quiet compared to others nearby.

Getting information out of Seinfeld is not easy. Threats of violence are the most effective, although he will be brave while his bodyguards are with him. Ever since he was beaten up he is terrified of it happening again, and if he is left alone with the PCs he will be visibly afraid. Threatening to reveal his illegal business interests is also effective, but PCs will need to be able to convince him they know enough to do so. This will be more difficult.

If they do get him to talk he will say that a man named Lucius Lavrov hired him. He was commissioned to arrange for various quantities of weapons and armour to be made. He was to find blacksmiths to make them and then he was to ship them to the warehouse of Otto Blancher. Lavrov was not interested in the details and he doesn't know where the goods go. He once saw the crates being loaded onto a wagon driven by two city guards. Asking around, he discovered Lavrov worked for the Chokin family, operating from his offices in Blutberg.

A few weeks ago Blancher summoned him to the Warehouse and said he had a problem. He needed someone to get a Wagon out to Taalgraad and beyond at short notice. Someone who wouldn't be searched. Someone such as a Teamster, for example. Seinfeld was furious for being called in on such a minor matter, and certainly didn't want to get personally involved. Blancher complained so much that he agreed to send two men along, but only this once. The men who went were Hintz and Heinz.

Lucius Lavrov

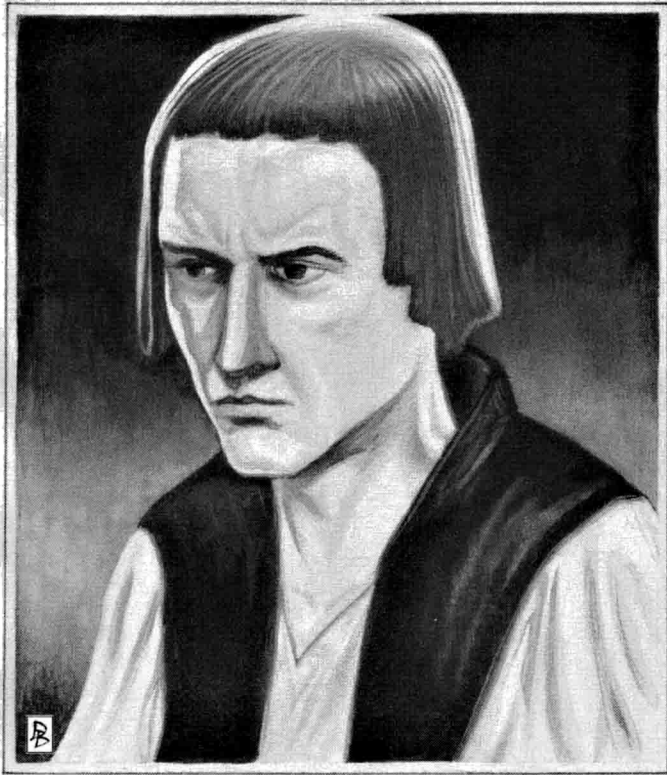
Well known in the Blutberg district, Lavrov was a respected lawyer until his recent untimely death. He was killed in a street robbery six months ago – a current enough piece of news for locals still to remember. In his fifties, Lavrov worked exclusively for the Chokin family, representing their merchant interests. He was well regarded but feared for his brilliant legal mind. His office is occupied by his partners, a group of lawyers all working for the Chokin family. The Chokin family crest is clearly displayed above the door.

The PCs will gain no answers from his legal colleagues. However, a number of them frequent the nearby Wig & Pen tavern. Here their tongues are looser, especially when lubricated with free alcohol. If the players don't think about this, you could have a young runner let them know about the lawyer's habits for a penny or two. It is obvious that the workers liked the dead lawyer; they speak of him with affection. There are two strong theories about Lavrov's death. They either blame his mistress for killing him in a jealous rage after he had stopped seeing her (a confrontation over this took place in the office) or it was done by a band of thugs hired by Otto Blancher. Blancher had stormed into the office a couple of months before, demanding to see Lavrov. He was recognised by one of the clerks as the owner of a warehouse in Steinhaus, one that had never been used by the Chokins. However, Lavrov was not there, so Blancher stormed out again. Blancher had come to see Lavrov, having recognised him from his visits to the warehouse. When he wasn't there, he realised this was foolish and instead approached Seinfeld.

The PCs will not be able to gain Lavrov's home address here. However, asking around for a couple of hours will get results. The family home is located near the site of the office in an expensive part of the district. Watch patrols here are frequent, although PCs won't be stopped during the day unless they are obviously out for trouble. Lavrov's widow won't see the PCs, but her son, Pitor, will. He believes that footpads killed his father, and will slowly become angry should the PCs try to say that it the incident was related to his work – especially if they implicate the Chokin family themselves. The whole family have been well looked after by the Chokins, and none of the family will talk to the PCs about them in any way. Indeed, should the PCs try to push this angle too far, Pitor Lavrov will visit Chokin family secretary, Darok Grinko, the next day and tell him about the PCs' interest.

Angeline Holt

A merchant's widow in her late thirties, Angeline Holt has taken over her late husband's business with some success – despite the prejudice she faces.



She met Lavrov when dealing with the Chokin family and they became lovers. She did feel betrayed by Lavrov, but is mainly angry at herself for being taken for a ride in the relationship. She isn't angry enough to have him killed and was sorry to hear of his death. She is certain that business partners of the Chokin family had him killed. Lavrov had worked for the family, now headed by Graf Vadim Chokin, for thirty years. He was a trusted employee but had become uncomfortable with something he had been asked to look after. He had hinted it wasn't connected with his work as a lawyer – rather, he was acting as a middleman. Holt feels that although he didn't want to admit it to himself, he secretly knew that he would have been sacrificed as a scapegoat should the business be uncovered. He refused to discuss what this business was at all.

The Chokin Family

The Chokins, as a peer family, are one of the most powerful in the city. They have made a fortune from various merchant interests, the family wealth first really being made at the time of Talabheim's secession from Talabecland. They have rarely undertaken illegal trading but few would describe them as scrupulous in their dealings. They have used their position to crush rivals and are loud opponents of the Merchants' Guild. Before the secession they had nearly lost all their land and money after helping to finance the Empire's attack on Marienburg in 2429. The then-head of the family feared the direction of Marienburg politics, even at Talabheim's distance. Consequently the Chokin name does not hold much sway in the port city.

Ruled with an iron hand by Graf Vadim Chokin, the family is currently a powerful force in Talabheim politics. The Graf spends ever more time at the Peerhaus, or with its members. He looks to influence opinion and gain as many commissions as possible, but also enjoys politics for politics' sake. His two eldest sons, Vadim and Dieter, run the day-to-day mercantile business, and both have inherited the family talent for making money. Anna, the eldest child and daughter, was married to a merchant's son in Nuln a decade ago. This was a successful attempt to gain a stake in exporting Wine from the Southern Empire. The second son of this union, now seven years old, has been sent to live with his uncle in Talabheim. Vadim's youngest son, Tobias, was killed in a tavern brawl six years ago. Apart from Chokin's offspring, over thirty family members work for the company in a variety of roles. Disagreements are common, but any that get out of hand are firmly dealt with firmly by Vadim Chokin. The most public and messy was a feud he had

with his brother Leopold, which ended with Leopold's expulsion from the family. Since then he has become a drunk and troublemaker. He knows enough of the business to remain a worry to the Graf.

An agent of the Orc Gronrug approached the Chokin family three years ago, although they didn't know that at the time. The price they were offered was too good to be refused. Although they have developed suspicions about where their merchandise is heading, only the Graf and a handful of carefully chosen others are fully aware. They have been selling the illegal arms for three years now and won't give it up unless they have to. To protect themselves, they placed the process in the hands of a number of middlemen. They know that if the matter is uncovered, others will take the fall. Lavrov began to suspect where the weapons were going and was killed. However, he had no intention of betraying the Chokins – he was simply trying to save them from harm.

When the PCs arrive at the offices of the Chokins, located on the Western edge of the Blutberg district, they find a room full of bustling clerks. Any questions find the PCs pointed towards Darok Grinko (pictured left), the Chokin family Private Secretary. They will have to wait outside his office, as he is haggling with a buyer over shipment of turnips. After some lively negotiations the two men shake hands. The PCs will be invited into his office, which is decorated simply and plainly. Grinko refuses to discuss any of the Chokin's business and will coolly deny any wrongdoing. He is calm, collected and intelligent and won't fall for any of the PCs' tricks. However, Grinko will speak about Lucius Lavrov if asked. He says that Lavrov had betrayed the Chokin family, but that this only came to light after his death. He had been doing deals with The Vory, the criminals in Suden Eldenstadt. They believe this activity was connected to smuggling, and that Lavrov was working alone.

If the PCs give Grinko the impression that they are going to continue to investigate the Chokin's business, he will arrange for them to be followed. Four men are assigned to follow the PCs and report to Grinko. They are told to make efforts neither to be spotted nor to encounter the PCs. It is up to the GM to decide what happens after this. If the PCs are getting to close to the Chokin's dirty secrets, then they may well be targeted for violence. If this fails, as is likely, then Grinko will warn Blancher not to talk to the PCs.

Blancher's Warehouse

A battered building near the centre of Steinhaus, the warehouse is packed with boxes of cabbages grown in the crater. The sign over the door is that of the Merchant Guild. Wagons go to-and-fro all day, delivering more boxes or taking them to buyers. Hidden amongst these are boxes of shortbows, arrows and swords. These have been delivered from blacksmiths and await collection.

The warehouse foreman is a vicious bully named Blancher. Six foot tall, balding, fat and sweaty he is a deeply unpleasant man. When the PCs arrive they see him whipping one of his men for dropping a crate. However, unless he has been warned off, he is insincerely polite to the PCs. He won't allow them to look round and should they insist he will call his men over. There is a dozen or so men here during the day and four at night, although they have little real loyalty to Blancher. Unsurprisingly Blancher always has vacancies, and should the PCs try and infiltrate the warehouse as workers they will be able to do so. If one is a member of the Teamsters and Stevedores Guild, this will be even easier.

Every now and then, there is a delivery to the warehouse that Blancher makes sure he takes personal supervision of. He uses those workers he trusts the most to carry the locked crates into a locked side room. It is obvious to observers that these are heavy. Only Blancher has the key to this room and the workers know to stay out of it and not ask too many questions. This much information can be gained by talking to an off-duty worker over a drink (with the PC paying, of course).

Once a week two members of the City Guard come and collect the boxes. Although they are in uniform, they keep themselves wrapped in large cloaks. They drive a covered wagon and give no help to those loading the boxes. They talk to no one but nod to Blancher as they leave. Although the workers don't know this, they then deliver the arms to a warehouse on the East Side of Talagraad.

Blancher knows what is in the boxes, having sneaked a look. They arrive and leave on a regular basis and he is happy with that. The Beule Mercantile Company owns the warehouse itself, and they have their offices in

Scaffenhorst. Every two weeks a member of the company comes to collect the money he owes. This used to be Lavrov himself, who would also check the goods. Now it is a clerk from the bank who knows nothing. Although he skims a little off the top, he knows he is on to a good thing here and doesn't want to rock the boat.

The City Guards

Lavrov decided that the best way to bring illegal items in and out of the crater was by using members of the city guard. They would know those on the gate and would stand little chance of being stopped. Going through an old acquaintance, a sergeant at the barracks, he hired has employed four men. They pick up the crates from Blancher and take them to a warehouse in Talagraad. There, Captain Etberg of the Royal Department of Excise and Port pays them. The four have no idea what is in the crates and don't really want to know. They pay a small percentage to the sergeant who recommended them.

Beule Mercantile Company

The Beule Mercantile Company is a front company, set up by Lavrov to cover the weapons smuggling. The office address is actually a tannery in the Scaffenhorst district. The workers there know nothing about the company. The Bank does most of the transactions on behalf of the company. They know that it is owned by the Chokins, but the PCs will not be able to learn this.

Talagraad

The wagon carrying the weapons travels from the warehouse into Talagraad where it is met by a group of six men in uniforms. These are officers from The Royal Department of Excise and Port. They are lead by Captain Etberg, a haggard veteran, who comes and talks to the two guards as the wagon is unloaded and placed in the warehouse. The guards then head back to an inn for the night and head back to the city in the morning.

Excisemen

The warehouse remains guarded by a half-dozen Excisemen. PCs should be wary about taking them on as the area is busy and they are near Fort Lackey, with its garrison. Once the boxes are unloaded Etberg retreats back inside the Fort to work. He was paid good money by Lavrov to ensure the boxes were delivered on time to Raldheim Quay and into the hands of the Captain of the *Snowbound*. The paperwork refers to the crates as holding cabbages for export upstream. Its not a particularly realistic cover cargo but they don't expect anyone to come looking.

Etberg is one of the main players in the smuggling of the weapons. For many years he has been paid to allow contraband goods through the docks. Although he doesn't know it for sure, he suspects that his ultimate paymasters are the Chokin family. However, he knows not to ask questions nor get too nosy about the goods. Deaf in one ear, Etberg served for fifteen years in various Talabec infantry forces. After being decommissioned, the life of a mercenary didn't appeal. Instead, his rank got him a good post in the Department. However, Talagraad soon ground him down and any honour he had was eaten away by the money he could make on bribes. He safely stores this away for the day he retires, but has no idea what he will do. He has gathered a small group of men around him, their loyalty gained by a share of his dirty money. However, life isn't so simple. The head of the Excise department suspects he is involved in smuggling and wants to get rid of him. Even the smallest proof will allow this to happen, and should this come from the PCs they will gain a useful ally in the Department (and an enemy in Etberg).

An hour before dark, a nervous looking young rider comes to meet Etberg at the gates of Fort Lackey and hands him a scroll case and a bag containing forty gold coins. This is Alexis Bodrov, a clerk to Darok Grinko. He was ordered by Grinko to deliver the message and money as normal. However, this time he was delayed and has left it too late to get back through the wizard's tunnel. He asks Etberg to recommend an inn, and is pointed to The Long Barge.

As night falls, Etberg returns to the warehouse. There, a couple of large Stevedores load a wagon with two dozen heavy crates (containing various arms) under the gaze of two excisemen. When they are finished, Etberg pays

them. Escorted by a couple of his men, Etberg then takes the wagon to a private dock on the edge of the town. Rain lashes down, and there are even fewer people of the street than normal.



Raldheim Quay

Surrounded by a sturdy wooden fence, the coat of arms of the Beule Mercantile Company is clearly visible above the door to the Quay. Inside, lanterns illuminate the area and pick out a moored barge, the *Snowbound*. A half dozen or so men stand around in waterproof cloaks, awaiting the delivery. Crates are stacked on the edge of the Quay, filled with cabbages. The Captain of the *Snowbound* is known only as Boris (pictured above). Three years Etberg was asked by Lavrov to find a reliable captain who owned his own boat, knew the river east of Talabheim well and knew not to ask questions. Boris was just the person. He is a fourth generation smuggler and knows the Talabec as well as anyone. The people of his village were reduced to smuggling to feed their families in hard times. Although life is not so harsh now, the village still sends men out to smuggle – sharing the profits equally. Boris is a first among equals and won't hesitate to protect his men by using violence.

As soon as the wagon passes through the gates, these are barred. Boris and Etberg talk for a minute or two, then Boris orders his men to begin the unloading. The crates containing the arms are loaded into a secret compartment on the boat. Once this has been done, Boris and Etberg inspect it and the Exciseman places the coded message in a crate. After this, the crates containing the cabbages are loaded to cover the compartment. When the loading is finished, no amount of casual inspection will find the contraband. With the cargo loaded Etberg and his men leave. With dawn, the *Snowbound* leaves to head upstream.

Should the PCs attack the smugglers and Excisemen they will likely have the element of surprise, although they may have to get over the high fence quietly. The smugglers will fight, but only as a means to escape as quickly as possible. For profiles, you can use Smugglers (pg. 145) and Excisemen (pg.144) from *Marienbourg: Sold Down the River*, with Boris and Etberg having two attacks. Attacking Etberg is not a good idea as he is still a Talabheim official and will summon aid if given the chance. Should aid arrive, he will say he was about to arrest the smugglers. Both leaders will be willing to give up the message, and even the boat, if it means they are allowed to get away with as many of their men as possible. They will also give up Alexis Bodrov as a bargaining chip for their freedom.

If the PCs have got this far and kill or capture the smugglers then they will have severely damaged the whole smuggling operation. It will take a long time for it to get back to where it was before, if it ever recovers – the Chokins will think carefully before taking such a risk again. If the smugglers are all

killed the scenario ends here. The PCs may have the coded message but it is unlikely they will know where to discover the cipher.

Back to Talabheim

If the PCs do manage to get hold of Alexis Bodrov he will tell all he knows without hesitation. He is innocent in the matter, and just delivers the messages. It is not a job he is happy doing, as he is a clerk and Talagraad is a scary place. Every few weeks, he is handed a sealed message by Darak Grinko and told to deliver it to Captain Etberg. He has done this nine or ten times now. He has seen Grinko write the message, seemingly copying it from another sheet (actually using the cipher) and sealing it (wax only, no seal).

Should the PCs learn that Darak Grinko is directly involved then he will be their next port of call. However, by getting that far the PCs will now be threatening the whole Chokin family; the Chokins will not allow that to happen. With the smuggling operation revealed and perhaps largely destroyed, they will pull back rather than risk themselves. They are also extremely unhappy that they have been put at risk at all. Thus they will take steps to ensure that a stop is put to any investigation.

If the PCs arrive at Grinko's office in Blutberg outside office hours, it will be extremely quiet. If they arrive in the morning then they find the other staff outside waiting to be let in. Should they arrive later in the day, then they hear the news second hand: Grinko has been found dead at his desk. It looks like suicide; there is even a note. It is short and simple, "My Lord Chokin, The taking of my own life was the only honourable path left to me. I have abused the power invested in me to line my own pocket. Without the Chokin family's knowledge I have taken part in illegal activities that would have brought shame to you. May you and the gods forgive me."

If the PCs talk to his staff outside of work and show them the note (should they somehow manage to get hold of it), then most will know it is not his writing. At this, realising the implications, the staff will become scared and refuse to talk further to their PCs. They will have realised the truth: that agents in the pay of the Chokin family killed Grinko.

If the PCs' arrival means that they amongst the first in the office, they may well try and search for the cipher or for other clues. They will find nothing incriminating here. However, one of Grinko's desk drawers has been violently forced open. It was here that the cipher was kept.

Aftermath

Players may well feel let down by this ending, and GMs should feel free to change the details as they see fit. Instead of a dead end with Grinko they could take on the Chokin family, with the merchants sending thugs and assassins after them in retaliation. However, the ending is there to highlight the ruthlessness and power of Talabheim's Peers and remind players that they can't win them all. Should you so desire the Chokins may extract their revenge anyway – but they are happy to take their time over this. As long as any threat to them has been removed then they will not worry. Should the PCs make a nuisance of themselves then they may find that they are in danger of arrest or attack. If the PCs do somehow get hold of the cipher then you will need to decide what it reveals in the messages.

There are a number of other loose ends to the scenario, not least of which are the orcs. The only solid lead the PCs have is the name Hockschwarser, the orc contact. What they can do with this is another matter. If you wanted to extend this scenario with the PCs tracking him down, Etberg or Boris could well have further information.

Should the PCs wish they could try and have Seinfeld, Blancher, Etberg and others arrested. Success will depend on what evidence they can get and who they show it to. If the PCs can convince someone that they were involved in smuggling weapons outside of the city, then they will be arrested. If the PCs can show that these were intended for enemies of Talabheim, then they will be executed.

The Sixth Sense

Assuming the PCs have damaged the smuggling operation to some degree, they may rightly expect some sort of reward. The successful prosecution of any of the players may well bring official recognition. Trying to implicate the Chokin family will mean alienating everyone, except perhaps a few revolutionary types.

Should they go to find Father Julheim to either get a reward from him and

the Temple or to tell him what happened, then they will be in for a shock. They are told that the Father was killed by a gang of footpads in a robbery and found dead in an alleyway. This apparently took place the night before the PCs saw it happen. They will not be able to convince the clerics of their story, although the church will help take any evidence to the authorities. If you want Julheim's suspicions to have been correct, then there may be a traitor here, too.

If you don't like this twist, or your players are just plain beaten down with grimness, then they find him alive and recovering. He arranges for them to be paid a small reward from Temple funds and thanks them. They will have made a firm friend here and amongst the Temple hierarchy.

Talabheim Street Life

The following encounters can be inserted into this, or any other scenario. They will break up the clue following, help bring the city to life, make players worry about whether they are connected to the main plot or not, and generally get in the way.

Rudd's Shop of Cures

A dingy shop in a side street of the poorer parts of town, Rudd is illegally showing the Physician's guild sign. Outside a young crier stands on a wooden box, shouting claims as to the efficiency of Rudd's wares in curing illnesses of the mind and other ailments. Rudd himself is a small balding man, with a reassuring manner and a pair of pince-nez glasses. Closer examination reveals they have no lenses. Dusty bottles surround the walls of the shop and a smell of cloves pervades. Rudd says that a one-month course (of a foul smelling ointment) costs 5GCs and is guaranteed to cure any illness of the mind. The ointment must be rubbed on every morning and causes a -10 Fellowship modifier. Any player with an insanity who is tempted by Rudd's cure has a 1% chance of being cured.

Bunko Artist

Setting up stall in any of the poorer parts of town, Hans Movfast challenges passers-by to a game of card guessing. In his twenties, he still manages to look around twelve, and he plays on this, acting as an eager but naïve player. His enthusiasm is infectious and he only plays for a few pennies. Those looking at the game will not be able to detect any underhand dealings, although those with *Gamble* will be able to detect a flaw in Hans' methods that will enable them to beat him. However, the real aim of the game is to allow Hans' partner to pickpocket those watching the game. They try and wait until they have a good target, then make their hit and leave at the first opportunity. They are experienced at getting away by getting any crowd on their side by playing the "innocent" card.

Pilgrims

Dressed in simple clothes and waterproof cloaks, the PCs come across a group of seven pilgrims newly arrived in the city. They have travelled from a remote village in Ostland to visit the Temple of Taal. They are relieved to have arrived safely, having heard many tales of rampaging orcs. They are therefore high in their praise for the Grand Duke for making their journey on his roads safe. However, they are also slightly nervous, being unused to cities and believing the pro-Ulric people of Talabheim may attack them for coming from pro-Sigmarite Ostland. Devious PCs may want to try and con them of the little money they have by playing on their trust. Such callous actions will, sadly, be successful.

Escapologist

Near a market, a large crowd is gathered around The Great Soundini, an Escapologist. A young man, he was forced to cut short his apprentice as an Escapologist to the original Great Soundini who died in Aلدorf some months back. Dressed in tattered blue trousers, he is covered in chains and padlocks placed there by the audience. When the PCs arrive he seems to be in real trouble, his face turning a sickly shade of blue. Whether this is part of the act or not is for the GM to decide. However, helping him will earn his ire, not to mention that of the crowd that would have been happy to see him escape or die trying.

THE CHARGE

A Short Story by Jody MacGregor



They stood silhouetted against the skyline on horseback, their horned helms and lances jutting out from the horizon. They had ridden across the snowfields of Kislev, through the forests of the Empire, camped for a time in a pass of the World's Edge Mountains, and finally crossed the Black Mountains to make it here. They had been busy along the way - the proof of that was gathered in front of them, shuddering in the early morning cold.

Posed less dramatically further down the hillside, wreathed in fog, were the prisoners of several dozen conquests. Once, they had been dressed in a wide variety of clothes, from different regions and strata of society, but adversity had brought them all to rags. From where the prisoners stood, the keep was an imposing shape on the horizon, surrounded by high walls, patrolled by dark figures.



Lorenz watched as the horseriders began to move behind them. He reached down to his wife, Mikaela, but she shook her head.

"I can go no further."

The armoured horsemen were attempting to stir the prisoners, and their intentions were clear. They meant to charge the keep using the captives as a screen. Either the doors would be opened to both friend and foe, or they would be dashed against the walls, or perhaps if they were lucky, impaled by stray arrows. Lorenz desperately tried again to stir Mikaela. She indicated her feet, both of which were bruised and one of which was bleeding. He nodded.

Lorenz approached the nearest warrior, who was wheeling his horse around in a threatening manner. His armour was black as pitch, and blasphemous sigils covered it. In the early morning light, they almost glowed. Lorenz had heard of such things, warriors and knights of the forbidden Gods whose names were not spoken by everyday folk. Sometimes they would ride mysteriously down from the north, but at other times, more frighteningly, normal people would take up the banner of Chaos and march with them.

The weight of the knight would surely have broken the back of a lesser horse, but the steed underneath him was far from normal. Its colour matched the rider's armour a little too closely, its eyes were red with pupils that looked disturbingly human and Lorenz swore that when it whinnied he saw fangs at the back of its mouth. The man appeared to understand none of Lorenz' Reikspiel. Instead, Lorenz resorted to sign language, indicating his wife's feet, and then limping around the horse. The man on horseback made a sound like laughter, then dismounted. Lorenz stood back quickly, afraid he would be struck for daring to speak to his captor. But the horseman instead walked towards Mikaela, and pointed at his horse. She stood up, he took her arm, and led her to the horse.

And then she fell.

Lorenz rushed over to her, but she had no last words for him, no explanation. Just a bleeding wound in her side. He looked up at the horseman, but he was already back atop his mount. His expression was hidden behind the helm. As Lorenz watched, the beast turned its head, and a tongue that was far too long reached out and licked its master's hand. Lorenz took two steps towards him, but then the horse reared up, its hooves came down in front of him and he ran.



From then on it was a blur. They ran as one towards the keep. (It stood prepared for the constant goblin raids, but little more.) Lorenz's feet ached, his heart pounded and his vision was obscured by tears of grief. He did not falter. The dark horsemen rode amongst them, shouting out

unintelligible commands. All those who fell were trampled underfoot or underhoof, or run through by lances. Strangely, no arrows from the castle walls blackened the sky; in fact the castle walls were now bare. Then, through a sudden gap in the crowd in front of him, kindly provided by one of his captors' lances, Lorenz saw why. The gates were wide open.



The first knight approached the gate, surrounded by the ragged captives. He saw the thin rope tied across the gates at neck-level for a rider, and drew his sword triumphantly. He would cut through their trap with ease.

At the last moment, the portcullis dropped. The captives underneath the spikes of the grate flinched, but a block of wood wedged in the cog caught it at the height marked by the rope.

The horseman's sword connected with the metal grate, followed by his surprised face.



Lorenz ran under the portcullis, into the wide courtyard surrounding the bastion. There were no soldiers, no salvation. There was something else entirely.

When the next two riders ducked underneath the grate, they saw their prisoners plucking weapons out of the ground where they had been wedged. The light caught the blade of the sword in Lorenz's hand.

The slaughter began.



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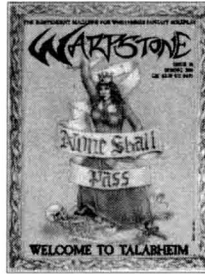
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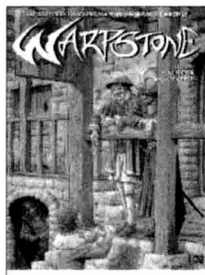
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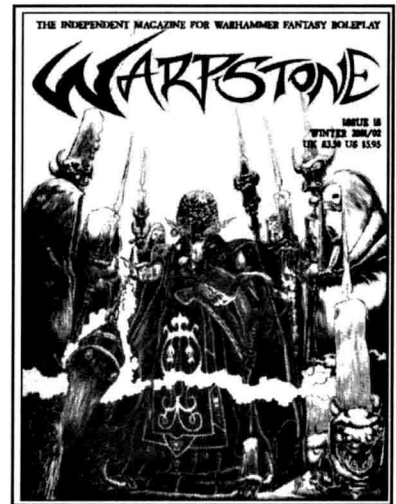
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