Pathfinder Chronicles™



Campaign Setting

Pathfinder Chronicles™ Campaign Setting

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An Old New World



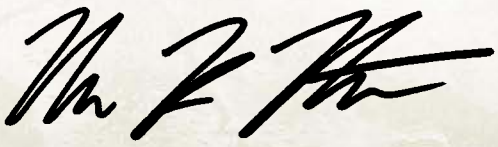
Golarion is a new world. We hope, however, that in many ways it feels like an old world—comfortable, familiar, understood. Not only did we find inspiration for Golarion from such classic authors of fantasy as Robert E. Howard, Jack Vance, and—yes—Professor Tolkien, we also continue to find inspiration in the ancient tales and legends of our own planet Earth.

The campaign setting is a new old world in other ways as well. Many of us here at Paizo who laid out the foundations of Golarion drew from material we created many years ago. More than a little of Golarion (like almost all the gods, for example) is imported directly from the homebrew campaign setting James Jacobs has been working on since 1984. A few chunks (like Shelyn and the Odeber family) come from an epic fantasy novel I've tried (and failed) to write five times in the past 15 years. Erik Mona invented Cheliax nearly two decades ago on a family vacation. All of these ideas and more have bubbled up from the past and are given new lives in Golarion, the home world of the *Pathfinder Chronicles Campaign Setting*.

So what can you expect to find? Immediately after this introduction, Chapter 1 launches into creating characters for Golarion and gives detailed looks at all the races and human ethnicities, as well as the 11 standard classes. Chapter 2 gives an overview of the entire world and in-depth looks at more than three dozen nations of the Inner Sea region (including three never seen before!). Following that, Chapter 3 looks at the 20 major gods of Golarion, plus a number of lesser deities and philosophies. It ends with an overview of the Great Beyond—Golarion's planar cosmology. Some of the most important organizations in the Inner Sea region get detailed descriptions in Chapter 4. The topics that do not fit well within those chapters end up in Chapter 5, which presents its many subjects in alphabetical order, after an overview of Golarion's history, with topics ranging from the Darklands to Weather and Climate. Following all that are several appendices of information that might prove useful to GMs and players.

Because of the importance of the project, I was allowed to pull out all the stops when it came to finding writers to work on this grand tome. A quick peek at the all-star cast should give you an indication of the quality you'll find in the following pages. Working on this book gave me the opportunity to contact many of my favorite designers, some of whose works I grew up reading and who helped to build the gaming infrastructure we all rely upon today. In addition, I had the privilege of providing the first RPG-industry assignments for a few of 2007's inaugural RPG Superstar Top 4 finishers. Finally, I drew upon Paizo's stable of excellent writers built up over the last 6 years, including some names you'll likely recognize from other Paizo products as well as a couple whose potential we're only beginning to tap. As if that weren't enough, check out who I got to write guest forewords on the facing page.

All of the hard work involved in this project, all the long hours and occasional weekends spent in the office—all of it—was worth every moment of stress and anxiety in order to bring you this book, this magnum opus of my career. I hope you enjoy it.



Mike McArtor
Editor
Project Lead



What you have in your eager hands is a World. Think about that for a minute. A whole world. Its authors have created this for you to use and, not only that, to expand upon. But this is no ordinary world. It is one like no other. It is a fantasy world. Aha! We already knew that, so this is old news, but aside from that, this fantasy world is new. And it's all yours to do with as you wish, for unlike our own Earthly realm we can have only limited experiences within, this new world has no fathomable limits.

World design is a fascinating subject. It's no easy task for designers to present all the information and backdrop needed for gamers to depart upon, the many kernels and slices of fantasy-world-life that inspires its participants to reach into these for direction as well as to reach beyond them for additional substance. Worlds require participating in them in order to be fully appreciated and realized. They need you as much as you need them. While designing parts of the World of Greyhawk and my World of Kalibruhn one thing was always apparent: I was the one "True God" in charge of it all. I chose those areas to make come to life; I created supplementary information that went above and beyond what was presented; I brought continents, cities and villages to life; I placed many dungeons upon (or under) their surfaces; and I animated beings, including gods, which in turn took their stabs at moving about and influencing world affairs. In short, I was always in creative control, a world master if you will. Through that process I became intimate with each setting and in doing so came to understand their needs. I fed them even as they were feeding me. It is a bond like no other in fantasy RPGs; and it is one that every participant in this new world presented by Paizo's authors can in turn emulate, and even in some cases, exceed.

Every adventure starts with but a single step. You have taken the first step by purchasing a book like no other. The exciting path to exploration is now before you. May enchantment guide you in your travels!

Robert J. Kuntz
Author of Maure Castle, *Co-DM of the Original Lake Geneva Campaign*

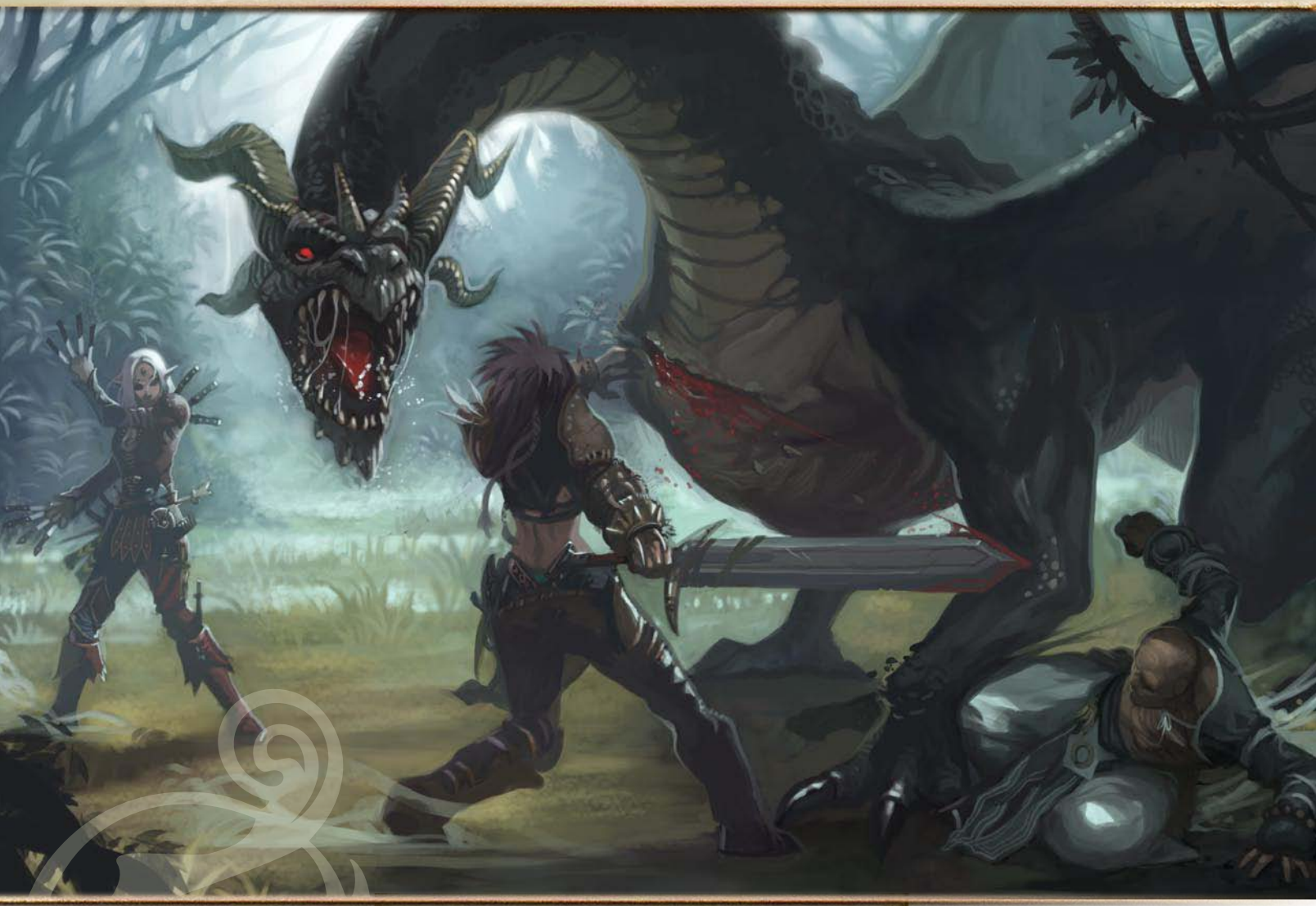
The simplest tip I can give anyone who wishes to do some world-building is to watch the History and Discovery channels every Saturday. Building a world that makes sense to a reader means building in the logical constructs of society in ways that are familiar. Human history is varied, or is it? The truth is, when you get below the names and the rituals, there is an underlying commonality from ancient Egypt to the Romans to the Turks to the Brits to America.

When I sat down to create the world of Corona for the Demon War Saga, I started with the idea that I would be in the Middle Ages of these societies, pre-Renaissance. As I wanted the Abellican Church to dominate, I preferred to stay away from Corona's "enlightenment." And since there was magic in use, the technological advancements could be slowed considerably. Necessity is the mother of invention, and if magic sources mitigate that necessity, invention will be a slower process. So here's my "truism" in the world of Corona, here's what makes it different: the gemstones really do have magic in them, which can be accessed. That was the keystone of the world-building. Now, go from there: what societal structure would then seek to control the gemstones? It would either be the ruling lords or the religious class, logically, and if the only group who understood how to make permanent and how to best access the magic within the stones was the church, we now have a powerful societal force on our hands, one that will no doubt rub the wrong way the churches that were in place before the stones were found, and one that would no doubt use this magic as soft blackmail to the political powers that be to increase its own influence. And with this absolute power comes, as history teaches us, corruption.

So that's how Corona was built. From the gemstones to the church to the lords to the countries, and underlying every step of the construction were the lessons I learned from watching the History Channel. Because those themes of human folly—greed, power, coveting thy neighbor's goods—are the eternal paradigm of our own familiar history.

So how did I build the society of Menzoberranzan and the drow in the Forgotten Realms? From the work of Gary Gygax and Ed Greenwood for some details, to be sure, but the real secret can be found in the pages of Mario Puzo's The Godfather. *Hey, I'm an Italian kid from Massachusetts! What can I say?*

R.A. Salvatore
New York Times Best-Selling Author



Characters

In the distant north, where the endless cold of the Crown of the World meets the furthest frigid reaches of Avistan, hardened and fair-skinned barbarian tribes rely on their own strength of body and will to survive. Far to the south, many thousands of miles away in the blasted lands of southeastern Garund, dark-complexioned sophisticates pore through thick eldritch tomes, ever seeking more advanced magics. In between these two extremes of culture and climate lie many dangers and mysteries, as well as countless varieties of people, human and otherwise.

From semi-nomadic Varisians to bloody revolutionaries in Galt, the grim peasants of Ustalav to the genie-wrestling monks of Jalmeray, the broad range of peoples who inhabit the Inner Sea region of Golarion represent a wide swath of human cultures and individualism. And all of these many and varied folk share their lands with a half-dozen other common races: industrious dwarves, beautiful elves, curious gnomes, eager half-elves, burly half-orcs, and friendly halflings.

Yet despite all these residents of the lands, most of the regions remain dangerous wilderness, deadly to the unprepared and frightening to the helpless. Fortunately for the many civilizations of the region, though, brave and hardy individuals constantly answer the calls to exploration, conquest, and adventure.

Here, then, is your chance to step up and make a name for yourself in the world of Golarion—or, at least, to die a noble death in the quest for fortune and glory. If you seek to seal your place among the heroes of this dangerous land, to rise above the masses and achieve immortality in name and deed, then welcome, friend, to your destiny!

Golarion Characters

This book provides all the information you need to create new characters fully integrated with the Pathfinder Chronicles Campaign Setting—to make them true residents of Golarion. Characters made for Golarion look like characters from any other campaign setting, although many have Golarion-specific feats, equipment, or prestige classes, as presented in the following pages and summarized here.

The easiest way to weave characters into a campaign setting is for them to gain feats or take levels in prestige classes specific to their races, homelands, or creeds. This book provides more than 40 feats, numerous alternative class features, and five prestige classes to help you personalize your character for the Pathfinder Chronicles Campaign Setting.

The following overview explains where to find certain aspects of the rules within this book, and acts as a summary of what to expect. Although some of the entries in the following pages present information players most likely never need, most of this book presents details necessary for creating characters as unique residents of Golarion.

Races

The following pages provide detailed looks at the common races of Golarion (dwarf, elf, gnome, half-elf, half-orc, halfling, and human), as well as the most prevalent human ethnicities. All of the entries describe how the races fit into the Inner Sea region and aspects that set them apart from one another. The races of Golarion are identical in their game statistics to those presented in the PH.

Classes

After races, the rest of this chapter takes a look at the 11 common 20-level standard classes and how they fit into Golarion. Each description details the most common places where members of the class come from or can be found, and who among the teeming masses most often takes up that particular profession. Every one also provides a variant class feature unique to Golarion.

Feats

Most of the feats presented in this book tie in with a particular nation. Some of the feats are available only at the time of character creation, as they represent some aspect of your character's past, while others require a character experienced with the ways of the world.

All of the nations in Chapter 2 present local feats. A local feat can only be selected for a nation in which the character grew up or for which he otherwise possesses local affinity. To gain local affinity, a character must live in a nation for at least a year and gain at least 2 ranks in Knowledge (local) while there. After that time, he is considered to have affinity for that nation for the purpose of qualifying for certain feats (although, of course, he must meet the feat's other prerequisites as well).

In addition, a number of general feats appear in Chapter 5. Some of these appear here as updated reprints from earlier products, while others are brand new. Several of the NPCs presented in the Rogue's Gallery appendix employ these new feats, to showcase their usefulness.

Religion

In addition to the detailed presentations of the 20 major gods popular throughout the Inner Sea region, Chapter 3 also discusses numerous lesser deities, as well as demon lords, devil princes, and the empyreal lords. For those characters who believe in a slightly different reality, the chapter also details a number of philosophies, such as the necromantic Whispering Way. Finally, in order to prepare your character for the afterlife, the chapter provides a detailed overview of the Great Beyond

Equipment

Characters frequently define themselves by their gear, and many cultures do as well. To that end, a sizeable section in Chapter 5 presents new and reprinted weapons, armor, and gear from various nations and cultures of Golarion.

Domains and Spells

The gods of Golarion grant a number of domains not available in the PH. Chapter 3 contains a list of these domains, while chapter 5 presents unique domain spells.

Organizations

Numerous groups of varying size and importance struggle for power across the nations of Golarion. These organizations, cults, companies, and families are beholden to neither land nor god, spreading their influence across territories and cultures. Chapter 4 details the largest and most influential organizations on Golarion, from the sinister Aspis Consortium to the wide-ranging Pathfinder Society, and touches on a number of lesser groups that nonetheless might aid or hinder your character.

Prestige Classes

Finally, Chapter 5 presents five new prestige classes unique to Golarion and inexorably tied to one of its regions, religions, or organizations. The low templar fights for honor—or gold—against the hordes of the Worldwound. A veritable font of knowledge, the Pathfinder chronicler records her own exploits as well as those of her colleagues. The Red Mantis assassin makes an art of murder—for the right price. The Sodden Lands pirate knows his way around the treacherous hurricane of the Eye of Abendego better than anyone else. Utilizing ancient Varisian magic, the Harrower can alter reality by the whim of a randomly drawn card.



Dwarves

Language: Dwarven

Favored Regions:
Five Kings Mountains, Lands of the Linnorm Kings, Mindspin Mountains

Favored Deities:
Torag, Gorum, Abadar, Droskar

Names:
The dwarven language is full of hard consonants, and few dwarven names include soft sounds like "f," "h," or "th" (as in "with" or "mouth"). The letters Q and X do not appear in the dwarven alphabet. Honorifics like "-gun" ("-son"), "-dam" ("-daughter"), and "-hild" ("-wife") are common.

Dwarven family names sometimes seem to contain Common words, such as "hammer" or "gold," but these originated in Dwarven and are borrowed by Taldane.

Male Names:
Alk, Dolgrin, Edrukk, Grunyar, Harsk, Igmar, Kazmuk, Losk, Morgrym, Nils, Odol, Padrym, Rogar, Stigur, Truddig

Female Names:
Agna, Bodill, Dalbra, Erigga, Gonild, Ingra, Kotri, Lupp, Morstra, Paldna, Rusilka, Stinna, Torra, Ulrikka, Yangrit

The dwarves of Golarion are best known for their skill at mining and crafting; their fierce determination in combat; and their stoic, almost mirthless demeanors. Dwarves made their mark on the world with their magnificent castles and fortresses, but they fought and died endlessly over every last one—particularly in wars with their ancient enemy, the orcs—ever since the day they first emerged from the Darklands.

From the frozen holdings of the Linnorm Kings to the sun-baked Shattered Range, dwarves are Golarion's most diligent workers and steadfast defenders—a people devoted to toil and monotonous craftwork, but equally driven by a potent urge to explore and discover.

Dwarven history begins deep below the earth, where the first dwarves mined and smithed under the watchful eye of Torag, the Father of Creation. In the late centuries of the Age of Darkness, following the dictum of a series of ancient mandates handed down from a prophet of Torag, a relentless subterranean migration of dwarves called the Quest for Sky scattered hordes of orcs and goblins in a series of genocidal wars. After several unsuccessful centuries of toiling ever upward to reach the surface in an era marked by increasing war, the dwarves lost sight of their goals and splintered into numerous factions. These factions expended much of their energy battling one another and their orcish foes and spent little effort on the Quest for Sky.

> I met my first dwarf today, while seeking companions to investigate a ruined city northwest of the World's Edge Mountains. Grymwudd claims his ancestors came from the very hold I seek to enter. By way of verifying his claim, he holds up his hammer, marked with a rune that, I admit, means nothing to me, though he bears it with pride and promises I will understand when we delve into the ruins.
> —Ioan Grell, Pathfinder

After nearly 2 decades of these civil wars, the great general Taargick reunited the dwarves with the skilled combination of diplomacy, plain speaking, and judicious use of military subjugation. Taargick declared himself king of the dwarves and named his kingdom Tar Taargadth. Under Taargick's leadership, the dwarves completed their push to the surface and established themselves as custodians of civilization across Golarion with the founding of the Sky Citadels.

The 10 glorious Sky Citadels of the ancient dwarves still stand today, some in ruins, others inhabited all too briefly by their tragic architects. When the dwarves emerged upon Golarion they encountered numerous horrors of the Darklands they had driven before them.

Tar Taargadth battled its ancient foes for millennia, waxing and waning in power and influence as the centuries passed. Even as dwarven power fluctuated, so too did the relative strength of the orcs and goblinoids. Unfortunately for the dwarves, at a point of ebb in their strength, orcish power surged, leading to a vicious assault on dwarven holdings. Under the overwhelming attack, the centralized government of Tar Taargadth collapsed, isolating the individual Sky Citadels and lesser cities across the world.

Most strongholds survived the savage onslaught, notably Janderhoff in isolated Varisia and Highhelm along the southern coast of Lake Encarthan. The lairds of defeated citadels fled to Highhelm in their shame, establishing the region around the mountains as the seat of the Gathering Council, the governing body of far-flung dwarfkind that convenes every 2 centuries. Over the millennia these conferences have grown more contentious and distrustful, with dwarves aligned to the ancient kingdoms both living and dead feeling increasingly ill at ease with one another.

The deposed monarchs of the fallen Sky Citadels established their rag-tag clans in the craggy fastness of what became known as the Five Kings Mountains. War, both among themselves and against the still-extant orcs hounding their borders, edged the dwarves toward decadence and defeat. After nearly 800 years of infighting, though, the Kalistocracy of Druma negotiated a hard-bargained peace among the dwarves with the Kerse Accord.

Despite the constant warring, dwarves look back on the era of the Five Kingdoms as the high point of dwarven civilization. In the millennium the Five Kingdoms flourished, dwarven engineering, art, and mining advanced or evolved more than in any other era of equal time. In the lifetimes of the original five kings, the dwarves carved into five peaks the images of their founders, the least of which stands more than 250 feet tall.

Dwarven perspective tends to change with the climate. The rosy-cheeked warrior-skalds of Kalsgard in the Lands of the Linnorm Kings and the squat, hairless contemplatives of Osirion's Ouat caste might share a common ancestral blood, but their cultures are strikingly different. In this era of human and gnome and even elven cultural influence, what it means to be a dwarf remains more fluid than ever before, and the whitebeards of the oldest dwarven halls fear this disparity as a sign for what it is—the impending extinction of dwarf society.

Yet some aspects of dwarven culture show little sign of changing. Smithing, fighting, and stronghold-building have always been major parts of dwarven society, ever since Torag first breathed life into the earliest dwarves. The Creator God's influence on dwarven culture guides and drives all of dwarf society, and most dwarves believe that, should they ever slacken their efforts, Torag will abandon them.

Gladdringgar

Dwarves have a certain obsession with being remembered for their accomplishments, and a peculiar method of establishing their reputations across the world. While younger dwarves refer to it as kangreddin ("wall-marking"), it is an ancient tradition, known to dwarves across Golarion as the Gladdringgar: the ritual of toil.

The Gladdringgar involves a dwarf using a hammer and chisel to carve his name-rune in the rock at the deepest point in whatever subterranean tunnels he is exploring. The deeper and lower the rune, the more prestige the dwarf gains among his fellows. Other dwarves may carve their runes on the same wall, a mere inch above another rune, but the deepest respect goes to the dwarf who marked the wall first. Some dwarves risk their lives to leave their marks.

On average, dwarves stand about a foot shorter than humans, and tend to be stockier than even the burliest half-orcs. They weigh about 100 pounds more than they appear (due to their strong skeletons and tightly packed musculature). Most dwarves wear their hair long, and male dwarves pride themselves on the length and condition of their beards. Traditionalists festoon their beards with elaborate braids, small battle trophies, or beads commemorating important events in their lives. Shaving a dwarf's beard is a terrible insult to the dwarf, his ancestors, and their gods.

Dwarven dress, as with all physical objects dwarves craft, favors function over form, but is never plain. Decorations serve practical purposes, such as fasteners, padding, reinforcements of seams, or the integration of pockets and tool-holding loops. The clothing of wealthy dwarves and those whose toils require a minimum of demanding physical labors (such as gemcutters and jewelry crafters) stretch the definition of functionality with some of their clothing, but even their fanciest outfits bear numerous pockets, loops, and attachment points—frequently made of gold, silver, or other soft but beautiful metals.

While adventuring dwarves usually seem reserved and conservative to members of other races, they are seen at home as impetuous youths or shirking wastrels. Dwarves tend to view other races as soft, weak, or even degenerate. Elves, for example, are weaklings who abandoned the world and allowed orcish dominion during the Age of Darkness, and half-orcs—the progeny of a race dwarves warred with for millennia before humans started counting years—are savage curs who need seeing to. No one holds a grudge like a dwarf.

Even the most obstinate dwarf is capable of overcoming ancient prejudices to make exceptions for his battle-tested friends, though, and dwarves value friends higher even than the gems and gold that notoriously fuel their lust for adventure.



Elves

Language: Elven

Favored Regions:
Celwynvian, Kyonin, Mordant Spire, Varisia

Favored Deities:
Calistria, Desna, Nethys

Names:

Most elves have four names: a personal or given name; a hidden or intimate name, usually known only to parents, siblings, lovers or wedded partners, and children; an everyday name (a nickname most elves firmly choose for themselves, lest they are saddled with one they dislike); and a family name.

In general, "-el" and "-dlon" are masculine endings, and "-al" and "-dlara" are feminine endings. Exceptions exist: elves can also be named after ancestors of different genders or for famous elves whose character the parents want their offspring to emulate.

Male Names:
Aerel, Amarandlon, Caladrel, Duardlon, Erevel, Felaelrel, Heldalel, Izkrael, Jaraerdrel, Lanliss, Meirdrarel, Narnel, Seldlon, Talathel, Variel, Zordlon

Female Names:
Amrunelara, Cathlessra, Dardlara, Emraeal, Faunra, Imdlara, Jathal, Maraedlara, Merisiel, Nordlara, Oparal, Praeldral, Soumral, Tessara, Varaera, Yalandlara

Elves once dominated Golarion much as humans now do. Humans see elves as beautiful, carefree (sometimes ruthless), graceful, and always stylish creatures with large eyes and pointed ears, who dwell in close harmony with nature. Elves—proud, tall, slender, long-lived, but fragile—possess an ancient, sophisticated culture and mastery over the arts and magic at least equaling the foremost humans.

Elven society peaked thousands of years before the rise of humankind, and elves clashed constantly with humans as the latter clawed their way toward civilization. Despite superior skill at arms and in magic, the elves could not prevail against the endless tides of savage human warriors.

Never a fecund race, the outnumbered elves knew they must ultimately surrender the world to their barbaric cousins. As their numbers dwindled, the wisest elves turned their attention to a series of interplanetary gates created in antiquity to explore the many worlds of Golarion's star. On the eve of the Earthfall, most elves abandoned Golarion to its sad fate, departing through the gates to the mysterious haven of Sovyrian, the legendary homeland of the elves.

> Elves are the Fair Ones, the Dancing Ones—some say the Laughing Ones or the Mocking Ones. They're all of these, and more. As beautiful creatures as ever you'll see, betimes so fair as to steal your breath away, not just your heart. Yet they're carefree—capricious, malicious, uncaring of what befalls any creature who isn't an elf. Save those they fall in love with, or whom they see as loving them. Honor guides them.
>
> —Ioan Grell, Pathfinder

Thousands of elves returned to Golarion from Sovyrian in the middle of the Age of Enthronement, causing great tumult throughout Avistan. These elves resettled many of their old holdings, taking up arms against human warlords who refused their ancient claims of sovereignty. Beneath the great elven city of Celwynvian, in Varisia's Meiriani Forest, the elves came upon the descendants of those who had stayed behind.

Unsure of the true nature and powers of these vicious drow and facing mounting losses in battle against them, the harried elves collapsed the tunnels below Celwynvian and abandoned the haunted capital. The elves crossed Avistan in a great procession to the ancient elven kingdom of Kyonin, on the far shore of Lake Encarthan. A few elves journeyed elsewhere, traveling west along the island chains of Varisia to raise the Mordant Spire on the edge of the known world.

The elves then became an ephemeral presence in Golarion, dwelling in secluded forest kingdoms or isolated island

homes. Families of elves tentatively emerged from these strongholds to dwell more openly. Elves now thrive in many places they once lived, whether or not the current rulers of those lands accept their timelost sovereignty.

Elves are slighter and taller than humans. They have long, pointed ears and eyes dominated by pupils so large as to fill most of the eye. Most elves keep to wild natural places, where over time they take on aspects of their environment. They live in harmony with local life cycles; knowing and using local plants as food, medicine, dyes, and aids in magic; and typically wear garments that blend with local flora.

In cultured lands, elves bedeck themselves in the finest clothing, always aware of the latest fashions. Elven style values aesthetics from the simple to the bewilderingly complex, favoring free-flowing hair and unencumbered movement. Elven garments tend to be soft to the touch and of a single hue or subtly blended colors. Elves tend to avoid bright red, orange, and yellow shades in their clothing, hair dyes, and furnishings. The seldom-seen (by races other than elves) high elven nobility of Sovyrian are known for their unearthly grace of movement, and their raiment of otherworldly beauty.

Elves who grow up outside sheltered elf society do so among people who grow old and die in the time it takes a long-lived elf to simply reach maturity. This experience warps such elves, grounding them in the world in a melancholy way many "proper" elves cannot understand. Elves reared among elves, who have known only elf society, call such melancholy elves the Forlorn, and tend to look down upon them or mistrust them. The Forlorn make up a disproportionately large number of elves who consider themselves adventurers.

Most elves become intensely uncomfortable when in close contact with stone and lifeless things, and feel more at ease when surrounded by the growing world. Many dwell in tree homes, in "bowers" walled and roofed in interwoven living plants (often on the banks of tiny brooks or around the rising of a trickling spring). Many city-dwelling elves introduce strong-scented living plants (notably those useful as herbs and medicines) and bowls of rainwater into their living quarters. Many elf beds—and almost all places where injured or sick elves go to sleep—are of moss-covered earth.

Except for the drow, elves disdain sculpting, digging, or working with stone (except for those gemstones that naturally form as crystals), and rarely work metals except silver. As a result, they must trade with other races (particularly the skilled dwarves) to obtain metal tools and weapons or armor. Most prefer to pay well in order to have such things crafted to their specifications. Elves prefer slender, curved bladed weapons and curved, "fluted" armor (glossy-smooth armor of overlapping sliding plates that allow agile body movement, and where necessary project out from the elf body into smooth points that deflect the weapons of foes). Elves also generally purchase ceramics and earthenware for daily use, and the finest, softest silks and fabrics. Many elves are superb artists, cartographers, scribes, herbalists, spice-traders, seamstresses, perfumers, and cosmeticians. Elven artisans make their livelihoods with such skills when dwelling among other races.

Elves might appear carefree to others, and they do love to laugh, play pranks, try things on a whim, and upon occasion recklessly disregard dangers or consequences. It is a mistake, however, to view elves as thoughtless or uncaring. Most elves make friends easily, value them highly (but see it as wrong to try to lecture, guide, or steer their lives, decisions, and deeds), and both love and indulge in lust (tenderly, but apart from love) with elves and non-elves.

Elves consider themselves failures if they do wrong to friends (although their non-guiding natures might well be seen as "fair weather" friendship or even disloyal by non-elves) or if they act without honor. Honor, to elves, is keeping one's word (which is why many elves speak glibly but avoid clear, specific promises), providing for the best outcomes for family and kin, keeping all bargains, and—after all of these paramount bindings—following guidance from the gods.

Elves honor almost any god of Golarion, but the majority of elves worship Calistria or Desna, with smaller numbers venerating Nethys and lesser cultural heroes. Elves see gods as their guides and inspirations in life, with swift and simple daily devotions being part of life but thought mattering more than petty details. Oaths sworn by a deity are binding, and not to be broken. Even if achieving the oaths takes a lifetime, they are never to be forgotten or twisted.

The Brightness

Elves seek signs throughout their lives, both from the gods (and natural phenomena such as shooting stars, floods, avalanches, lightning strikes, and encounters with rare or strangely behaved animals) and from themselves (revealed likes, dislikes, skills, and "instinctive" decisions or preferences) of what they should do to "find the Brightness."

All elves believe they will be reborn as some sort of natural creature, but that if they fail to find the Brightness (a vivid, recognizable semi-divine enlightenment that is different for each elf) before they die they are doomed to live out several lifetimes as various creatures—perhaps horrific monsters—before returning as an elf, rather than living as a wild forest thing once, then being reborn as an elf.

This is one reason elves often abruptly make long journeys to explore lands new to them or take up adventuring or new livelihoods—they aren't restless, but rather following some personal sign "closer to the Brightness."

Elves strong in their thirst for the Brightness, or who have progressed far in seeking it, are often aided by good fortune, and sometimes even regenerate when thought dead because of an intense inner will to survive to find and know the Brightness.



Gnomes

Language: Gnome

Favored Regions:
Avistan, Cheliax, Katapesh, Mwangi Expanse, Nex, Osirion, River Kingdoms

Favored Deities:
Cayden Cailean, Desna, Shelyn, Nethys, Torag, Erastil

Names:
Male gnome names are unnecessarily long, multi-syllabic, and intentionally difficult to pronounce. Female names reverse the male conventions, being simple and short, although many females claim their names are actually short for something. Gnome family names, which change every few generations, typically contain some Common words, as well as several syllables of gibberish. Examples include Frothelthimble, Garishgnawing, Mommanpopple, Palepartlinger, and Thicketbotter.

Male Names:
Abroshtor, Bastarger, Halungalom, Krolmnite, Kremernesh, Lumrolur, Nulrakgrult, Poshment, Quokgol, Sarzuket, Tenzekil, Tongtokl, Varknarnost, Xurshuklo, Zatqualmie

Female Names:
Abe, Besh, Bagi, Dei, Fijit, Gant, Hip, Lini, Lim, Neji, Majet, Pai, Queck, Trig, Zheit

The gnomes of Golarion are a wounded race. Traumatized by their exodus from the realm of fey, they suffer from an affliction they call the Bleaching. Every gnome needs new and exciting experiences on a regular basis or else she starts to lose color, substance, and awareness, while slowly passing into the afterlife. This need, paired with their unconventional ethics, has caused the race to be recognized as fickle and chaotic, but also as innovative, daring, and radically progressive.

Once an ancient and immortal race of fey, the wily gnomes of present Golarion are transmuted and displaced. They still cling to the era of agelessness they left behind as they emerged from Golarion's progenitor, the First World, and stepped into the alien and hostile reality of the Material Plane. The first records of otherworldly gnome trailblazers scouting the land date back to the Age of Anguish, but to this day, the reason for the race's exodus remains a mystery. While the stocky, wrinkled talespinners of the oldest gnome enclaves claim that their unmatched curiosity drove them to exploration, the eldest dragons and reclusive aboleths speak of a devastating catastrophe wrecking the gnome's fey realm in a reflection of the destruction brought upon Golarion by the *Starstone*. Some sages even suspect that the race fled its homeland solely to wash suspicion from its mischievous hands.

> It is said that innocent joy can only be found in the beaming eyes of a child. I wonder if there is a hidden and grim meaning to this saying. Yesterday, my companion—a brawny gnome and savage warrior with purplish hair—strangled a highway robber with his knobby hands. Like most of his race, he is always a little skittish, but after the battle he was extremely excited and cheerful. In great detail he described the snapping sound, the last breath's smell, and in his newly colorful eyes I saw a joy no grown or sane man can ever experience.
> —Delwih Oakes, Pathfinder

The shadowy First World was a place of wonders for the gnomes. Ageless life and never-ending pranks were sources of continuous delight. Uprooted from this ancestral home, the race never cured the spiritual wound the separation caused, resulting in an affliction known as the Bleaching. When born, a young gnome's skin, hair, and eyes are vibrant in color and remain that way during his first years. From adulthood on, these features are subject to radical change depending on the individual's experiences. Gnomes who exist in an unchanging environment see their colors pale and their sanity wither, while those with a knack for the new remain lively and vibrant.

During the gnomes' first, mad dash into the new world, the strain of the Bleaching and the loss of their once innate ability to manipulate shadows and space allowed Golarion's

dangerous denizens to take countless gnomish lives. Had it not been for the retention of their cleverness and nonlinear genius throughout this attempt at frenetic exploration, the gnomes would have been destroyed in the era of their diaspora. Most who survived did so by forming enclaves, where gnomes uncharacteristically banded together for mutual protection. Sages tell that some embraced the maddening touch of the Bleaching and used it to warp their minds and bodies into dangerous forms capable of defending themselves. The descendents of these curmudgeonly misanthropes are called Lonely Ones by the gnomes, while humanity refers to them as spriggans.

Today, gnomes are most common in the hills and forests of Avistan, where they built their first enclaves and managed to find some measure of peaceful coexistence with the natives. The largest of the gnome cities is Brastlewark, the legendary capital of the Gnome King within the borders of Cheliax, most lawful and stable of all gnomish settlements. Other important settlements include the elusive Shay Citadels of Irrere near Holgrim, the welcoming and boisterous community of Thom in the River Kingdoms, as well as Katapesh in Katapesh and Quantium in Nex. Additionally, gnomes occupied important positions in the courts of Ancient Osirian pharaohs, and earlier editions of the *Pathfinder Chronicles* contain hints of a debased spriggan society inhabiting a monolithic stone city in the Mwangi Expanse. Beyond the enclaves, many gnomes constantly roam the land in search for new borders, physical and mental, to explore.

At about 3 feet in height, gnomes are slighter and taller than halflings. Their ears are humanlike, but their highly mutable facial muscles allow for disturbing grins and their oversized eyes emphasize their often disproportionate expressions of emotion. With skin, hair, and eyes of varying, often vibrant colors, gnomes look the most alien and out of place of all of Golarion's common races.

Furthermore, gnomes tend toward eccentric pursuits and are attracted to objects that help to "anchor" them to Golarion and delay the Bleaching. Besides collecting stories and friends, they favor mechanical gadgets, riddles, flamboyant outfits, nicknames, perfumes, and other complex and distinct items and mannerisms. Sometimes these affectations turn into an obsession with weird and useless items like rusty blades, spoons, knots, and other hodgepodge.

Throughout their lives, most gnomes have many intimate relationships, but they rarely engage in long-lasting ties. Lifetime bonding or marriage is extremely rare. Usually, a gnome family is loosely organized (if organized at all) and the vigorous children are taught the ways of life by the community until they are grown enough to learn from their own experiences.

Unsurprisingly, the gnome language is a motley conglomeration of words from other languages. Conveying their ideas through voice was a novel concept the race started to pick up upon their arrival. Immediately, they took sounds and words they fancied and assigned random meaning to them to forge a language of their own. The result might be the most irritating language to learn, and someone overhearing a conversation in Gnome is likely addled by the strange use of familiar words.

Since the Bleaching remains the only natural cause of death among gnomes, religion and the worship of deities is explored in great detail under its aspect. If it had not been for the affliction, the descendants of fey might not have taken up the mantle of worship at all, but as it stands, gnomes maintain an exuberant interest in faith often bordering on zealotry. As with almost everything else, pious gnomes do not quite know when to quit.

The Bleaching

Despite generations of visionary gnomish research, the exact nature of the dire affliction known as the Bleaching remains a mystery. The race's scholars believe it is tied to the events of the exodus and insist that the mortal world lacks the animus to nourish a gnome's sophisticated spirit.

The Bleaching manifests itself as a blanching of skin, hair, and eye color during early adulthood. From there on, the complexion of the gnomish body is tied to the experiences she alights upon. The more shocking and vivid a gnome's life, the more vivid she herself becomes and the longer she lives. In contrast, a lack of excitement causes a fading of color and is accompanied by depression and the dulling of curiosity, heralding the beginning of a vicious spiral that leads to insanity and death.

Due to the effects of the Bleaching, a gnome's age is not tied to the passing of time. Instead, every year a gnome lives without experiencing new wonders takes a toll on her physiology, advancing her one age category. The exact nature of the experiences the individual gnome needs is left to the GM, but gaining a level should be sufficient to prevent the affliction's progress.

While many gnomes succumb to the horrific effects of the Bleaching in a long and drawn out process after they cease to excite their senses, some are able to exist in its emotional void. Often fuelled by a dramatic trauma, these individuals, called "bleachlings," remain in a distorted state of consciousness, immune to the final touches of the affliction. Their skin, hair, and eyes seem either colorless or in moderate earthly tones, and their demeanors are calm and dreamy. A bleachling's connection to the First World is incredibly strong, granting her elderly wisdom and renewed powers of her fey heritage as well as an ageless existence. A bleachling can use her *speak with animals* spell-like ability without restriction to burrowing mammals and her favored class changes to druid. In addition, a bleachling is at least middle age and is immune to further effects of the Bleaching—and therefore aging in general.



Half-Elves

Language: Common or Elven

Favored Regions:

Truly, half-elves can be found anywhere, in any land, although they are most common in and near the former elf-holds in Varisia and the elf-kingdom of Kyonin. Many have also settled in the great city of Absalom.

Favored Deities:

Shelyn, Calistria, Cayden Cailean, Desna, Sarenrae, Nethys, Irori, Lamashtu, Zon-Kuthon

Names:

Half-elven names can be drawn from the entire breadth of their human or elven cultural history and background, or half-elves may choose names for themselves. Sometimes these names are simple, almost as if meant to fade from memory, but many half-elves choose more embellished, musical names with an elvish inflection.

Male Names:

Calathes, Carangal, Dorsainvil, Encinal, Gouard, Irakli, Kyras, Narciso, Nassauer, Otoniel, Quiray, Satinder, Troxell, Turenne, Zirul

Female Names:

Cathran, Eandi, Elsbeth, Iandoli, Ilyin, Kieyanna, Lialda, Lorceli, Maddela, Mihalyi, Nahmias, Reda, Saroeun, Tamarie, Urriola

Half-elves are something of an enigma as a race. Unable to truly fit into the societies of humans or elves, they spend their lives somewhat uncomfortably "in between" and "not quite." They adopt and adapt and are excellent survivors, able to assimilate into whatever role is needed and find a way to make themselves indispensable as they seek acceptance from without and wholeness within. Outwardly beautiful but inwardly fragile, half-elves strive to master themselves and find within their hearts the strength to command their destiny.

> I tell you, those half-elves—what's not to like? Svelte, supple, clever, and always so friendly and eager to please. Seems like they're good at almost everything. Yeah, it's true that if you scratch the shiny a little bit they always seem to have issues, but who can blame them for feeling a little mixed-up?
> —Delwik Oakes, Pathfinder

Of all the common races, elves and humans have the longest bond. In ancient times, the elves warred against their feral human cousins, eventually abandoning the world to human brutality on the eve of Earthfall. Many elves remained in the isolated parts of the world, and as humans developed society, art, and magic, the elves watched from the shadows. In time, they reached out in friendship to the developed humans, and old enemies became friends—even lovers.

It is not difficult to imagine why elves and humans breed together. To a human, an elf represents an unattainable beauty. Elves—with their height, slim figures, wisdom, and grace—are often seen as perfect humans, creating an attraction many humans find impossible to resist. Elves appreciate humans' vivacity, their lust for life, and their willingness to act at a moment's notice. To elves, humans represent freedom, brashness, and excitement. While the most staid isolationist elves decry these as weaknesses of the human spirit, other elves find the traits irresistible. When elves and humans breed, half-elves are the inevitable result.

The term half-elf is deceptive, for only a fraction of creatures so labeled come from the offspring of a human and elf parent. Others are many generations removed from the original coupling, yet exhibit traits of one race or the other that ensure they never quite fit in either.

Half-elves generally look like attractive humans with slightly pointed ears. They stand about a half-head taller than humans and rarely put on unseemly weight no matter what they feed themselves. Those with stronger elven traits are more likely to be viewed as outsiders by humans, who nonetheless remain strangely fascinated by them. Half-elves whose looks favor their human side tend to have a difficult time in elven society, with conservative elder elves subtly pushing them to discover their human heritage by

exploring the world at large (and thus abandoning the pure elf community). Half-elven skin tones usually take on the hue of the human parent.

The physical beauty of half-elves, however, masks a complex and conflicted internal psychology, as the human and elven elements of their psyche do not combine harmoniously. The dilated temporal perspective of their elven lineage leads to languorous predilections at war with their humanistic verve, adaptability, and precocious impulsivity. This combination of the closed mind of the elves and the open mind of humans places half-elves in a delicate and often brittle mental dynamic. This leads many unfortunate half-elves into depression and even madness, but their unique psychic structure also enables them to manifest psionic powers far more commonly than any other race (especially those whose elvish ancestors sojourned on the Green World of Castrovel). Most common are psionic wilders, whose psychic capabilities awaken naturally and spontaneously, but half-elves have also been leaders in creating psionic research enclaves and even training academies for other psionic classes, especially in the far-off lands of Vudra.

Half-elves have no ancestral homeland and seldom gather in groups composed explicitly of their race. Instead, they usually try to fit within either human or elf society. They generally thrive in human communities, where they frequently become artists, bards, or entertainers. Despite this warm welcome, many half-elves avoid mixing with their human cousins, for foremost among the racial gifts granted to them by their elven progenitors is a long natural life. Half-elves often survive 150 years or more, and must watch as three or more generations of their human friends wither and die before their eyes. The older a half-elf grows, the more likely he is to be overcome by melancholy and nostalgia, speaking wistfully of lost friends from simpler times. Many half-elves avoid this sad fate by seeking succor in full-elven communities, where they are the short-lived ones. Elves look upon their half-human spawn with an equal measure of pride and pity, and the elves' natural haughtiness and self-centered natures ensure that half-elves are truly outsiders no matter where they dwell.

Half-elves, however, struggle not just with seeking acceptance from others, whether of human or elven blood (or from other races), but also with understanding themselves. Half-elves are often social chameleons, adapting their habits of mind and behavior to the most dominant influences around them, either the prevalent culture or even a single charismatic individual. While they are masterful at ingratiating themselves with others on a superficial level, they are able to quiet their inner turmoil merely by aping the styles of others. It is difficult for half-elves to transcend this identity confusion and establish complete and fulfilling identities and destinies all their own, but those rare ones who do can become extraordinary leaders indeed, able to command loyalty and unify disparate groups under their banners.

Lacking a culture of their own, half-elves adopt the dress, affectations, and mannerisms of the societies in which they find themselves. They generally fall into one of two groups: those who wish to fit in and those who wish to stand out. Those of the former group stay within the mainstream fashion trends of their adopted culture, attempting to blend in with their peers by donning the kinds of clothes most other people of their social standing wear. These half-elves sometimes obsess over what others around them wear, say, and do to such an unhealthy level that they nearly drive themselves mad in an attempt to fit in. Despite all their best efforts, though, they rarely do.

Their opposites care little for current trends and fads, and in some cases those who wish to stand out and be seen create the trends their more herd-following brethren later adopt. Indeed, in many decadent societies that concern themselves with high fashion, such as Cheliax, Qadira, or Taldor, half-elves are often among the most admired (or reviled) creators of new trends, fads, and memes. Half-elves also lead innovation in functional textile industries, constantly developing new techniques in tailoring and seamstressing. They also work to create better textile blends to serve a variety of purposes both functional and fashionable.

Adventuring half-elves tend to be well traveled, with extensive networks of contacts picked up during their long lives among both humans and elves. Rather than tending toward a particular class or role within a party, half-elves are most often jacks-of-all-trades, with wide varieties of skills and abilities. They make for trustworthy, dependable companions, and while they don't quite fit into the societies of either parent race, they feel at home on the road and are well-suited for lives of exploration and excitement.

Crystals

Half-elves have always had an affinity for crystals and faceted gemstones, seeing in them a beautiful and poetic reflection of their own multifaceted character and identity, one that is easily obscured or missed until careful work reveals it. A common exhortation half-elves use with one another is to "polish your diamond," meaning to refine, sharpen, and polish their best qualities that lie within. Beyond simply their aesthetic appreciation for crystals, some half-elves seem to show an almost supernatural connection, being able to induce minor *prestidigitation*-like effects in crystals they touch, causing the crystals to glow or change color or even dance about in the air. It was while researching this strange resonance that a pair of psionically endowed half-elves, Samelu Sonshima of Vudra and Alysande Morinel of Taldor, awakened the first psicrystals.



Half-Orcs

Language: Common or Orc

Favored Regions:
Absalom, Belkzen, Cheliax, Hold of the Mammoth Lords, Isger, Katapesh, Nex, Nidal, Realm of the Mammoth Lords, River Kingdoms, the Shackles, Ustalav, Varisia

Favored Deities:
Gorum, Rovagug, Lamashtu, Calistria, Norgorber, Pharasma, Cayden Cailean

Names:
Half-orcs are only rarely named by and cared for by their human parent with the same love and attention as they would any other child. More often, their names are harsh and unlovely, echoing the orcish tongue of their forebears. Nicknames, often insulting, are common among half-orcs.

Male Names:
Aoukar, Ausk, Bouzaglu, Davor, Gorumax, Hakak, Kizziar, Krajasik, Makoa, Nesteruk, Passang, Shukuris, Tsadok, Unglert, Woiak

Female Names:
Anjaz, Butoi, Canan, Drogheda, Goruza, Kifah, Mazon, Nadkarni, Pantoja, Rzonca, Shirish, Sucheta, Suzhen, Tevaga, Zeljka

Half-orcs have long been despised by other races. While many orc tribes value the weaker half-breeds for their natural cunning, and in fact conduct raids into human lands specifically to breed more intelligent leaders, humans and most other races see half-orcs as unfortunate and unwanted progeny born of violence or perversion, a repulsive mix of two lines that should not cross. Their inner conflicts make half-orcs prone to violence and loneliness, with ferocious tempers and burning desires to survive—traits which serve them well as guards, gladiators, or adventurers.

Half-orcs have existed in Golarion since the first battles between orcs and humans in the dying days of the Age of Darkness, when the Quest for Sky of the ancient dwarves pushed the brutal orcs from their subterranean homes to the surface world. In that moment, defeat erupted into victory as the orcs easily subjugated the fearful, sickly humans of the benighted world. Orcs ravaged central and northern Avistan for centuries before the rebellious humans and their dwarven and halfling allies, emboldened by the sun's return, cast their new masters from their gruesome thrones, shattered their kingdoms, and drove them into the desolate wilderlands. The orcs still claim their "ancestral" lands, vowing to return "with the rising of the dark."

> Half-orcs are living proof of the old adage that "ugly is as ugly does." Hideous, bestial, disgusting... and that just describes their odor. I only wish that was a jest. Still, there is no denying their usefulness in a fight. All those muscles, including the ones between their notched, pointed ears, certainly have their uses. But this one is a puzzle, and no mistake. Is he quoting philosophy? Interesting.
> —Alaren Kalepopolis, Chelaxian explorer

The deep interior of the Kodar Mountains hides ramshackle cities teeming with orcs, while the Menador range—cleared of orcs in the early days of the Age of Enthronement—once more echoes with savage wardrums. The Hold of Belkzen takes its name from the greatest of orcish heroes, and its oft-squabbling warbands and tribal armies represent the largest open gathering of orcs and half-orcs on Avistan, locked in endless raiding with Lastwall and Varisia. From Cheliax in the south to the Hold of the Mammoth Lords in the north, the bloody promise of orcish vengeance and slaughter is ever-present, and wherever orcs march hand-in-hand with conflict, half-orcs can be found.

Farther from these strongholds, in the cosmopolitan cities of the Inner Sea and Garund, such orcish terror is of little concern, and half-orcs often enjoy lives relatively free from bigotry and suspicion. Many have settled in Absalom, forming a powerful faction within the church of Norgorber, as well as in the open-minded cities of Nex, where they seek peace and asylum. Others, however, have brought

the fell reputation of their orcish heritage to Garund and the southern reaches as pirates, press gangs, and slavers in Katapesh and nearby lands. The most notorious is the Pirate Queen Imesah, who emblazons the yellow sails of her half-dozen galleys with her black ensign of elephant tusks crossed beneath a crowned skull.

Half-orcs often find it difficult to shed their savage natures and adapt to the world of humans. Impatient, impulsive, greedy, prone to violence when frustrated, and often none too bright, half-orcs nevertheless embody the full range of human emotion and imagination. They tend to feel (or at least express) their emotions far more severely than their human half cousins, crying loudly when sad or lonely and laughing boisterously when happy or amused. Those half-orcs who dwell in human societies often voice their moods at the top of their lungs, making it easy to tell just how a half-orc feels at any given moment.

Across the many nations in which they dwell, half-orcs venerate all the common chaotic deities, but most who practice even intermittent worship of a god tend to bend knees to Gorum, Our Lord in Iron. Gorum exemplifies battle, the half-orc's lot in life, and strength, what many consider to be the half-orc's greatest blessing. Many half-orcs assume he is one of them and that he remains ever hidden in iron to keep that truth from the weak humans who worship him. This belief continues to spread thanks to the teachings of the orcish warlord-turned-proselytizer named Naellk.

A decade ago, Naellk beheld an icon of the Lord in Iron carried into battle by war-priests of Gorum. Naellk saw himself reflected in the spike-armored warrior with burning red eyes, and in that moment had an epiphany. Born in the cosmic instance when primal orc and ancient human first mingled their blood in the dust of the battlefield, Gorum was no human god at all. Gorum, the Lord in Iron, was the first and perfect half-orc, no dull-witted slave or hideous outcast, but a devious, fierce, and proud warrior from birth. Enraptured, Naellk called upon Gorum for victory and his army shattered the enemy forces arrayed against him. Taking the captured icon as a trophy and a sign of Gorum's favor, Naellk declared himself the Proclaimer of Gorum. Denounced as a blasphemer and heretic by both human Gorumites and traditional orcish shamans, Naellk's ideas nonetheless spread throughout Belkzen and across western Avistan.

Since the spread of Naellk's teachings and subsequent surge in the already widespread worship of Gorum among half-orcs, the ways in which half-orcs interact with one another, with orcs, and with humans continue to subtly shift. While those who chose to embrace the savage side of their heritage and live among the orcs were already more predisposed toward leadership than their full-blood relations, given their greater ability to plan ahead and utilize advanced tactics in battle, their perceived value has continued to grow, giving rise to new organizations and increasing the value of female human slaves. In the savage Hold of Belkzen, for example, half-orcs have flocked to the banner of the most famous of their kind, Hundux Half-Man of the Murdered Child. As Hundux's reputation has grown and spread, half-orcs eager to serve under one of their own have traveled from all over Avistan to join his ranks, giving the Murdered Child Clan the highest percentage of half-orcs of any tribe in Belkzen. Despite its members' relative lack of physical strength, the Murdered Child's greater organization allowed it to easily take and hold the valuable Belkzen stronghold of Wyvernsting. With his comparatively well-trained core of warriors, Hundux has little to fear from other tribes in the area, and many whisper that he's now set his sights on the one chieftain in Belkzen whose power rivals his own: Grask Uldeth of the Empty Hand, ruler of the fallen dwarven Sky Citadel called Urgir. Though half-orcs are still grudgingly welcomed in Urgir for the time being, the tempers of orcs are quick to ignite, and before long Belkzen may find itself embroiled in a full-scale race war.

Of the other chaotic deities, Rovagug remains popular among half-orcs who wish to bring down human civilization and create an anarchic equality for all races—or those who simply revel in destruction. Female half-orcs frequently venerate Lamashtu, and the Mother of Monsters gains many converts from pregnant half-orcs. Half-orcs who feel themselves unfairly wronged sometimes pray to Calistria, goddess of revenge, in the hopes of finding succor in her blessings. Undoubtedly, the Savored Sting would prove more popular among half-orcs if their limited intelligence did not tend to negate her aspect as the trickster goddess. Nonevil half-orcs tend to venerate Cayden Cailean, embracing his aspects of bravery and freedom. Among the nonchaotic deities, Norgorber (for his aspects of greed and murder) and Pharasma (in her death goddess role) occasionally attract half-orcs.

Markings

Throughout a long history of enslavement and abuse at the hands of other races, half-orcs have been branded, tattooed, and otherwise disfigured by their masters to mark their outcast status. In some areas, half-orcs have taken what were once their marks of shame and turned them into fantastic works of art of incredible detail and intricacy. Half-orcs often "collect" a variety of slave brands or embed pierced shackles or fetishes in their flesh as a reminder of their painful past. These are embellished with elaborate tattoos featuring exotic creatures fierce and cunning, proverbs or names in ancient Orc runes, or the flanged sword and spiked helm of Gorum. Many tattoos are infused with gamal, a rare fungal essence that allows the tattoos to be seen in vivid color even with darkvision. Half-orc tattoo artists are some of the most skilled and creative in Golarion and are much sought after, especially in Absalom and the Shackles.



Halfling

Language: Common or Halfling

Favored Regions:
Andoran, Cheliax, Galt, Isger, Molthune, Nidal, Taldor, Varisia

Favored Deities:
Desna, Sarenrae, Erastil, Norgorber

Names:
Most halflings have two names: one adhering to the naming conventions of the community they support and one of halfling origin.

Male Names:
Antal, Boram, Chimon, Etun, Evan, Guile, Hakon, Jamir, Kaleb, Karum, Lem, Liek, Miro, Neg, Rocur, Sumak

Female Names:
Anafa, Bellis, Chandira, Eireen, Etune, Filiu, Giana, Lissa, Marra, Onaga, Piria, Rillka, Sistra, Sophone, Vaga, Yamyra

With their short statures and tendency to blend into the background, halflings don't receive much notice from the other folk of Golarion. Their origins date back to the beginning of humanity. From the very start, they seem to have always walked alongside mankind, living in human cities, adopting human customs, seeing to the common needs of humans as cooks, entertainers, and menials. It's easy to take them for granted.

Halflings themselves take nothing for granted, and always keep their eyes open for the next opportunity to survive and even thrive. This impulse often casts them as servants, with halflings attaching themselves to human families or institutions as a matter of symbiotic survival. In devil-tainted Cheliax, such servitude often comes in the form of slavery. Here, halflings are known as "slips," and Chelaxians treat them with scorn and contempt.

> I was surprised to meet Illis Stoutholm on my way back from Highhelm, where my own entry had been denied. With a smirk on her face, she told me that she had been living with the dwarves for nearly a decade. After asking me to call her Illis, she added that she was looking forward to returning to her people back home in Vellumis. That was nearly a year ago, and it might be a coincidence, but aren't the soldiers of Lastwall resorting to dwarven rank-and-file tactics nowadays?
> —Findell Hearthstone, Highhelm merchant

Halfling slaves are less effective than humans but last longer, maintaining an unparalleled optimism and willingness to endure. They rarely revolt, seldom struggle overmuch, and get along with the master's children. Only their physical weakness keeps halfling slave costs reasonable, but even then they exceed nearly every other race in value.

Despite their close involvement in many facets of human society, halflings have a tendency to be ignored and underestimated. Their ability to blend into the background, be it at a social gathering or into the comforting shadows of a dark alley, is unparalleled. They know when to bend with the wind, but when they have the chance to seize a grand pile of gold or fame they never let the opportunity pass by. Often blamed for putting themselves into danger, the small folk simply cannot resist the temptation of a new adventure, a daring heist, or the lure of the unknown.

Fortunately, their superior sense for danger allows them to survive these hazards and has granted them the reputation of being exceptionally lucky. It is no surprise that superstitions revolving around luck and fate have become common among halfling-harboring lands, and some cultures even assign mystical value to the small folk. Rich Katapeshi traders hire halfling servants almost

exclusively in an attempt to benefit from their luck (and their aptness at illicit trade), and many children's tales feature exceptionally lucky halfling heroes.

Being lucky is second nature to nearly all halflings, and while many demystify their successes with tales of superior reflexes, unmatched skill, or inscrutable cunning, a few halflings stand out by an unmistakable lack of luck. Instead, these individuals seem to bring mischief and bad luck to adversaries, and as a result they are avoided or even feared, especially among cultures heartily embracing superstitions. Halflings themselves believe this occurrence to be a rare blessing of Desna, and children bearing this gift are often ushered into the study of magical arts.

Due to these attributes, and in contrast to their stable and altruistic communities, halfling society has a hidden, darker side as meaningful, developed, and important as the face maintained for the unassuming public. Almost all halflings possess a strong opportunistic streak that is most prominent during their younger years. During this time, many stray from the rules of the community and involve themselves in the disdained affairs of thievery, subterfuge, adventuring, and vagabond life. They often join guilds and try their hands at various professions or seek out other halfling settlements so as to mingle with different cultures.

While humans are considered to be the building blocks of Golarion's society, halflings are the mortar that reinforces these communities by sustaining a common sense of purpose that supercedes the individual's need.

In most human communities, a small percentage of halflings forms a subpopulation with various interests that seems to be immersed and absorbed, merely dabbling in the community's affairs. In truth, the halflings benefit from the techniques, approaches, and protection their symbiotic society offers them. In return, they use their positions, interspecies knowledge, and constantly growing influence to stabilize society, avert conflict, and maintain a prosperous balance of power.

Despite their curiosity-driven wanderlust, halflings possess a strong sense of house and home that develops over the years. A halfling takes great pride in his domicile, often spending above his means to add to the common comforts of home life.

Halflings usually adopt the religious beliefs of the societies with which they merge. Unsurprisingly, many halflings worship the gods of humankind, such as Abadar, Iomedae, and Shelyn. Despite their practical commitment to faith, it is very rare for halflings to become clerics, paladins, or similar devout servants of these deities. More often, these rare, enlightened, individuals choose Desna, Erastil, or Sarenrae as their patrons. Rumors also tell of a disturbingly large cult venerating the treacherous aspect of Norgorber. These apparitional preachers usually remain in the background and, being halflings, have perfected the art of blending in and avoiding attention. Nonetheless, the growing number of bloody deeds and assassinations that oddly benefit halfling communities make the cult's emergence difficult to deny.

Due to their homogenous communities, many halflings refine and differentiate their social lives by joining groups and societies of interest that often serve as open and legal fronts to the infamous shadowguilds. Most of these organizations are intercultural and geared toward older participants, revolving around trade, art, or diplomacy. Despite these economic and peaceful trades, however, a newly founded elitist duelist league continues to quickly expand. The league teaches fast, dexterous fighting styles with undeniable roots in the back alleys. Its techniques possess a certain panache that turns even the most unassuming halfling into a bladewhirling dervish. This approach appeals to the younger generations, who desperately long for a flirt with danger.

Halflings stand just shorter than gnomes but make up for what they lack in stature and strength with bravery, optimism, and skill. The bottoms of their feet are naturally covered in tough calluses and the tops often sport tufts of warming hair, allowing for barefoot travel. Most have almond skin and brown hair with hues that tend to darken closer to the Inner Sea.

Forever living in the shadows of their taller kith and kin, halflings dress in whatever styles suit the human culture in which they dwell. Halfling slaves tend to dress slightly better than their free cousins, especially in Cheliax, as their owners tend to use the halflings as status symbols.

Emotionally, halflings embrace nonexclusive extremes. They are easygoing but excitable, prone to laziness but frenetic when roused. Ironically, their greatest strength is their perceived weakness—halflings can count on the advantage that they are continually underestimated, an edge they exploit mercilessly.

Coming of Age

Halflings reach adulthood after a little more than 2 decades, and most halfling communities have a habit of celebrating a halfling's coming of age ritualistically. The exact time of the festival is usually determined by a certain task the fledgling must perform. Its nature is generally specified years before the child has any hope of completing it, and might range from acquiring a certain amount of wealth to the preparation of a feast for the entire family. Many apprentices try repeatedly before they are able to match the challenge through skill or adept cheating.

After succeeding, the halfling is given a token to remember the accomplishment. This item often carries the additional promise of freedom from the community but usually bears little actual value. An ancient gold coin to start a collection, an ornamental dagger to sever the chains of comfort, a pair of boots to travel the world, or a dubious treasure map help to toss the curious youngling out into the world.



Azlanti

Language: Ancient Azlant

Favored Regions:

Absalom, Azlant, Cheliax, Taldor, Andoran, Varisia, Nidal

Favored Deities:

Humans claiming Azlanti blood often favor Aroden, last scion of Old Azlant. Since his death a century ago, some have turned to Iomedae or other common gods, but these are devotions of convenience rather than cultural choices. The death of the Last Azlanti renewed interest in the forgotten ancient deities of the original Azlanti culture, but only a few fragments (of an often disturbing nature) have thus far come to light.

Names:

Today, Taldan.s and Chelaxians with Azlanti blood tend to favor the naming conventions of their current culture, but those wishing to strengthen their connection to past glories often adopt names discovered in ancient Azlanti manuscripts, wall inscriptions, or the few scant bits of history and art that survive to the modern day. Azlanti names usually begin with vowels, and neither males nor females adopt surnames. An Azlanti must make his one name important enough to last in memory and history.

Male Names:

Alamander, Akorian, Arioch, Erodel, Ellismus, Iogorian, Illsmus, Ixiolander, Olhas, Othollo, Ostarian, Ureste, Udhomar

Female Names:

Aswaithe, Amesducias, Aliandara, Estrude, Emalliandra, Iomestria, Iaome, Ommarra, Oviento, Udarrin, Ulionestria

Azlant, the first great empire of man, sank beneath the sea 10,000 years ago. The shattered remnants of its once-graceful architecture perch precariously atop the slivers of land that still remain of the island continent, vast mazes of crumbling rock that form a wall across the treacherous Arcadian Ocean. Here and there along the Inner Sea, and infrequently inland far from modern cities, a ruin of some forgotten Azlanti outpost lies at the heart of a trackless forest or the edge of a forlorn coastal cliff. Today, there is no more Azlant. The god Aroden was the very last pure-blooded scion of that once-proud race, and with his recent demise the line is now extinct.

And yet the Azlanti live on in culture, spirit, and song, a lost race whose influence has not yet faded. Taldans and Chelaxians both proudly proclaim Azlanti blood as the foundation of their stock, with some (falsely) claiming to be pure descendants of the ancient empire. These folk view their Azlanti origins as the source of traits like intelligence, grace, magical aptitude, and beauty, using the connection as a major point of distinction that sets them above other races.

> I once saw an Azlanti wizard at a carnival in Daggermark. I lost three sailors to a rug merchant in Okeno whose Azlanti patterns beguiled the simple-minded into snares of ancient origin. Even the ship's cook calls himself Azlanti on account of his pale skin and dark hair. The true Azlanti died out millennia ago, yet these men I have known keep their culture and tradition alive through the ages. And in this sense, the Azlanti will live forever.
>
> –Justin Tolbar, Pathfinder

The exact nature of Old Azlant's culture eludes historians, but certain elements of the empire's art continue to thrive in the modern day. Genuine Azlanti jewelry commands high prices in the markets of the Inner Sea, and each new discovery can trigger new trends among the high society. The intertwined patternwork of Old Azlanti artisans lives on among weavers, stonecarvers, and tattooists, and the Azlanti high copula architectural style inspires most of the monumental structures of Andoran's visionary masonic orders.

The ancient Azlanti were a regal, beautiful folk with handsome features and an aloof demeanor. Their skin ranged from olive to pale white, with uniformly dark hair approaching black. Azlantis were known for expressive brows and slightly receded hairlines resulting in a sort of widow's peak. Today, humans still identify these traits as Azlanti, whether or not the connection is genuine. Only one physical characteristic—a deep purple color in the eyes—is seen today as absolute proof of strong Azlanti heritage.

The blood of Old Azlant lives on not just in the sunlit kingdoms of regal Taldans and Chelaxians who cling to it in

memory of past glories, but also in the darkened depths of the world, where the inbred survivors of lost Azlanti colonies chart new histories unrelated to the high ideals of lost centuries. These forgotten degenerates fled below Golarion's surface in the dark days of the Earthfall, and while their extreme xenophobia and isolation have kept their stock undiluted over the millennia, relentless incest has reduced them to mutated, cannibal savages.

The subterranean remnants of timelost Azlanti colonies on Avistan and Garund retain only the base physical trappings of humanity, having long ago descended into animalistic cannibalism. They remember only the barest scraps of their past glories, and many of their widespread, isolated communities have lost even the art of language. In certain cases, inbreeding resulted in terrible mutation. Such creatures are, essentially, monsters, and make for poor player characters.

Perhaps the truest claimants to the glories of Old Azlant are the reclusive aquatic humans known in civilized society as gillmen, the so-called Low Azlanti who have manipulated the politics of Absalom since the city's foundation and who are rumored to have the ear of the ruling council of Andoran. When the ancient Azlanti rebelled against the aboleth masters that raised them from barbarism and doomed their continent-kingdom to extinction, countless thousands plunged into the turbid waters of the Arcadian Ocean. Most drowned, but some few found succor with their undersea aboleth enemies. For reasons that remain occluded to this day (but which surely have nothing to do with compassion), the aboleths rescued a small fraction of the drowning humans, warping their flesh to help them survive in the aboleths' uncontested undersea realm. Caught somewhere between merfolk and the humans from whom they descended, the Low Azlanti emerge from the depths occasionally to serve the mysterious agenda of the aboleths, dwelling in a permanent fashion only in a pool-laden embassy in the town of Escadar, off the Isle of Kortos.

The Ancient Azlanti tongue has been lost for centuries, known to modern scholars only in its fragmentary written form. Certain Azlanti terms and elements of grammar survive as the foundation of the Taldane language, known across Avistan and Garund as Common. Only the mysterious seafaring elves of the Mordant Spire speak Ancient Azlanti fluently, barking aristocratic orders to explorers investigating the ancient ruins they claim as their own.

Much of what is known about the culture of Ancient Azlant is conjecture based upon artifacts or fragmentary historical records rescued from ruins more than 10,000 years old. Modern humans claiming Azlanti descent often attempt to cloak themselves in the trappings of the fallen empire, thus attaining some measure of its greatness. Because the remnants of Old Azlanti art discovered to date often depict regal robes of crimson or deep green, modern Azlanti tend to garb themselves in finery of those hues. Likewise, slavery is known to have existed in the lost empire, so modern Azlantis see the ownership of a servant class as part of their ancient birthright. Such attitudes are not popular in abolitionist Andoran, which fashions itself after Old Azlant in architecture and many elements of philosophy. Here, as elsewhere, those with the strongest claims of Azlanti blood are often members of the old guard, more interested in tradition and honor than in blazing new trails or embracing modern ideas.

Elves tend to distrust humans of Azlanti heritage, remembering the battles of ancient days before the fall of the *Starstone*, when the aboleth-backed scions of Azlant toppled the great cities of the elvenfolk and forced the race to abandon Golarion through interplanetary gates. Despite the passage of 10 millennia, the elves have not forgotten the transgressions of the past. Many, especially among the mysterious seafaring elves of the Mordant Spire, still hold a potent grudge. For their part, Azlanti humans tend to look down on nonhumans even more than they do their less genetically gifted human cousins.

The Legacy of Old Azlant

The enigmatic gillmen are close enough to humans that they can pass as such (for a time) without fear of detection. Physically, they resemble their ancient cousins, with the characteristic expressive brow, pale skin, and dark hair. They almost always have bright purple eyes, and three slim gills mark each side of their necks, near the shoulder. The gills allow the Low Azlanti to breathe underwater as well as on land, and instantly mark them as outsiders among those who know where to look.

To date, all known gillmen serve the unfathomable schemes of the reclusive aboleths, but the control seems more akin to the effects of a *geas* or *dominate person* spell. Unless the gillmen go against the orders of their aboleth masters (which are often unknown to them, masked in the form of hidden memories triggered by key events), they are free to act as they wish. In a campaign, these orders are wholly up to the GM, meaning the player of a gillman character cedes some elements of self-control when it best serves the story of the campaign.

A gillman PC is a human character in all ways save that he loses the normal bonus feat entitled to a human at 1st level as well as the normal bonus skill points at all levels. Instead, the PC gains the following abilities:

Amphibious (Ex): Gillmen can breathe both air and water.

Sleek Swimmer (Ex): Gillmen gain a Swim speed of 30.

Water Dependent (Ex): A gillman's body requires constant submersion in fresh or salt water. Any gillman who spends more than a full day without fully submerging himself in water risks internal organ failure, painful cracking of the skin, and death within 4d6 hours.

Skills: A gillman has a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check to perform some special action or avoid a hazard. He can always chose to take 10 on a Swim check, even if distracted or endangered. He can use the run action while swimming, provided he swims in a straight line.



Chelaxians

Language: Common

Favored Regions:

Chelaxians are most commonly found in the former holdings of Imperial Cheliax, which includes Andoran, Galt, Molthune, Nirmathas, and the southern reaches of Varisa, including such urban centers as Korvosa and Magnimar.

Favored Deities:

For many centuries, Chelaxians were almost exclusively worshipers of Aroden, the Last Azlanti. With that god's death, they have turned to a variety of gods and beliefs, including Erastil, Iomedae, Zon-Kuthon, and the practice of diabolism, venerating the vile devil-court of Asmodeus.

Names:

Chelaxians have a common first name and family or surname. Those of particular power or legendary ability might gain a sobriquet as well (such as "the wise," "the open-handed," or "the rat-biter"). Chelaxian names tend to sound grandiose and learned, and are used in full when officially addressing them.

Family Names:

Alazario, Albus, Ambusta, Baradin, Charthagnion, Crispin, Fullonna, Galonnica, Jeggare, Krupt, Leroung, Pindleloric, Ratarion, Rugatonn, Tauranor, Thrune, Voralius, Wardroxan, Wintrish

Male Names:

Aerodus, Alexite, Gellius, Grachius, Gruckalus, Lurconarr, Manius, Marcellano, Morvius, Pavo, Pellius, Petronicus, Rutilus, Solangus, Ursion

Female Names:

Asmodia, Aspexia, Aula, Boudra, Drulia, Imperia, Korva, Noravia, Novennia, Pavanna, Pontia, Quinta, Rulla, Valeria, Vibia

Chelaxian humans thrive on the northern coasts of the Inner Sea, and the exploits of their once-mighty empire spread Chelish seed throughout Avistan and Garund. Haughty, cultured, intelligent, ambitious, organized, and ruthless, Chelaxians have become a dynamic force in the world, and not always to the world's benefit.

Chelaxians are the descendents of Azlanti refugees, their blood mixed with that of pale-skinned Ulfen raider-merchants from the northern climes. As a result, they tend as a people toward dark hair, dark eyes, and pale skin—skin lighter than their duskier Taldan cousins. They have sharp features, in particular prominent, narrow jaws; strong noses; and thin, arched eyebrows.

Chelaxians are by and large an industrious, aggressive, self-confident people, combining the best and worst traits of the Taldan and Ulfen peoples. They have a flair for organization and refined cultural taste, and as a result soon came to dominate their region of Avistan. They undercut the power of, and later successfully rebelled against, their elder Taldan neighbors, and soon dominated the surrounding regions either directly or indirectly, forming the Empire of Cheliax. They even successfully removed the center of worship of the god Aroden from Taldor to their empire, and spread both north into Varisia and south into Garund in a series of conflicts known as the Everwar.

> For centuries, these peoples lorded over Avistan as the heirs of the Azlanti and the chosen people of the god Aroden. Now that god is dead, but Chelarian pride lives on. This pride gives them great power and self-assurance, yet also blinds them as to the dangers that they face.
> —Kial Tellen,
> Almas University scholar

As a result of this continual expansion, Chelaxians soon dominated and subsumed native peoples and cultures, so that often a region would have a ruling elite or caste of Chelish origin or with a strong Chelaxian heritage and blood ties running back to the empire. The empire continued to expand, and with the expected return of Aroden (under the empire's guidance), none of the Chelaxian people had any doubt that it would eventually regain the power (and riches) of ancient Azlant.

Aroden's death a century ago killed the empire, as vassal states quickly rebelled and Cheliax fell into civil war quelled only by the kingdom's current diabolical aristocracy. Diabolism speaks to the legendary Chelish pride and wrath, as well as to the need for order and control bred into the citizens of an imperial heartland over centuries of privilege.

The inherent self-confidence of the Chelaxians, instilled from birth, has served them well through the death of a god and the fall of an empire. They believe they are inherently more capable of handling any situation than are other human groups—this might take the form of either helpful, positive advice or arrogant dismissal of rival viewpoints. This aggressive attitude causes them to persevere even in desperate straits. When faced with an insurmountable challenge, where a Varisian might seek easier paths or a Kellid might grumble about the will of the world and move on to other matters, a Chelaxian re-evaluates a situation and seeks not only the most expedient answer, but also the most advantageous one.

This self-confidence is bolstered by a great heritage and a love for learning, which manifests in theology, arcane studies, and mechanical invention. Chelaxian specialists are particularly capable in discovering, developing, and adapting new techniques revealed by their own research or learned from other cultures.

Chelaxians favor rich trappings both in their homes and on their persons, and even the meanest of them dresses to the best of his ability. Popular outfits include velvet doublets and silk leggings with rich brocades and lace trim, often covered with a cloak of rare and valuable color or made from the hide of some uncommon creature. In more hostile climes, they prefer inscribed armor (often of dwarven manufacture) and filigreed weapons with rich and detailed provenances. This is not to say that, when money is tight or circumstances dictate, they are not above traveling in mufti or mixing with the hoi polloi in order to avoid difficult circumstances. They never sacrifice their bearing, however, and cannot hide their confidence.

Chelaxians venerate those heroes who embody their values: strength, nobility, ambition, and—most of all—success. Chelaxian heroes tend to be accepted into the larger community with titles, grants of land, and marriage into the more respectable houses. By the same token, those heroes deemed a threat to the local ruling class are watched and, if necessary, removed, either by sending them on quests to other areas or—if necessary—in the dead of night.

As a people, Chelaxians are serious about oaths, contracts, and promises, and they believe in playing by the rules, all the while checking for loopholes to best subvert those rules. In urban centers, numerous lawyers, justices, and bureaucrats have Chelaxian blood in their veins. As a result of this inherent lawful tendency, they often have difficulty with other races and ethnicities with more flexible attitudes to property and socially acceptable behavior

Chelaxian Opera

The advanced, urbane nature of the Chelaxians is seen in their love of theater in general and opera in particular. Even the smallest and most remote of Chelaxian communities boasts a local theater company, and those with trading connections with the larger cities often import noted actors, actresses, musicians, and playwrights to their stages.

High Chelaxian Opera is the most advanced form of this art, found mostly in the cities of the south, and performed in ancient Azlanti (librettos are provided for the literate patrons, translators for those less fortunate). More common are the tragic and comedic operas performed in most major cities.

Tragic operas are usually about legendary stories, such as *The Hand of Aroden*, *The Lay of Gundra and Her Defender*, and *Aspex the Even-Tongued*. In recent years, the current government of Cheliax commissioned new works more fitting to the current political situation within the former empire. These new works bear titles such as *The Feast of Asmodeus* and *Victory of the Hellknights*, and feature stirring, dark, militaristic music and the inevitability of the triumph of Cheliax. It is of little surprise that these productions seldom play outside Cheliax itself.

Comedic opera is more open and relaxed, and as a result is much more popular among the lower classes, Chelaxian and otherwise. Comedic performances rely on stock characters and traditional plots with a broad addition of physical humor and bad puns. The plots of traditional comedic operas often deal with separated twins, princes and princesses unaware of their birthright, promises made and then twisted, misunderstandings, and last-minute rescues by a wise authority figure. Stock characters include the wise authority (by tradition a priest of Aroden), an oafish Ulfen, young lovers, squabbling parents, tricky gnomes, and one or more crafty Varisans who either are punished for their deceptions or swear themselves to honesty as a result of the lessons learned. Other components include mock fights with padded batons, wordplay, and a chase scene.

A recent variant of the comedic opera has appeared in Andoran and has gained a great deal of popularity and notoriety. While at first blush it seems similar to the traditional forms, it includes characters like a fumbling diabolist and a befuddled evil ruler. While popular throughout the Inner Sea and the Arcadian Coast (*The Incomplete Devil* is packing them in in Almas), this type of piece is banned within Cheliax itself, where it is referred to—in polite circles there—as "that Andoren Heresy."

Chelaxians also tend to organize themselves and to work together toward a common goal, taking direction from an established and recognized leader. Such a talent for organization has served well among the empire's legions in its conquests, but since that time it revealed that other leaders and goals can arise and easily split the population. A common joke is that while Varisians might form an angry mob, Chelaxians instead create a well-ordered, disapproving queue.



Garundi

Language: Osiriani

Favored Regions:
Absalom, Geb, Katapesh, Nex, Osirion, Rahadoum, Thuvia

Favored Deities:
Nethys, Sarenrae, Pharasma, Gozreh

Names:

Garundi names are used to define both the territory claimed by the clan and the individual's place in the local hierarchy. Those at the top of the hierarchy have names that span the entirety of the territory—the name of the city, geographic region, or a nearby major river or mountain. Mid-ranking Garundi are named after sites, geographic features, or buildings known to most locals—waterfalls, neighborhoods, or important local industry. Low-standing clan members have names of local sites (often from near where they were born)—streets, statues, trees.

Male Names:
Akin, Amare, Dahrehn, Daudi, Jaali, Jawara, Jirani, Jiri, Kito, Melaku, Omari, Rafiki, Rani, Rubani, Sefu, Zahur, Zuri

Female Names:
Akina, Amara, Ashia, Deka, Eshe, Hasina, Jini, Jwahir, Kahina, Kamaria, Leyli, Malkia, Ofrah, Pendah, Rana, Raziya, Zalika

Garundi communities can be found throughout Garund's civilized nations (and even through many of the uncivilized ones). They generally make for kind and caring neighbors, happy to pitch in to build a stronger community for everyone to enjoy. The interactions between individuals and families within their own community is not well understood by outsiders.

There is no certain knowledge regarding the origins of the great and noble Garundi race, with their proud cheekbones, broad shoulders, dark skin, and often prematurely white hair. While scholars agree that they originally came from the southern reaches of Garund, few can agree on exactly when this migration occurred or what prompted it. Despite some superficial similarities, there is no reliable evidence that the Garundi had any direct ties whatever to the Azlanti culture of the Inner Sea, although a great deal of evidence shows they were contemporaries.

> As I entered the Garundi town I was met immediately by an angry mob. "Begone, outsider!" they yelled, while waving sticks and torches in the air. It was with no small amount of surprise that I discovered they were shouting not at me, but rather at one of their own, and chasing him from their midst. When it was clear he would not return, the crowd turned to me. "Welcome, stranger!" the headman called out. "Please come in and taste the fullness of Garundi hospitality!"
>
> —Dr. Levanston Jeggare, Pathfinder

Garundi culture tends to divide itself into relatively small clans (usually 15–20 families that travel together). These clans form the basic unit of Garundi society, unlike the nuclear-family-based cultures of the Taldans and Chelaxians. In their hearts, it seems Garundi are expansionists, as a newly founded clan tends to travel until it discovers an area suitable for development not already claimed by a Garundi clan. That others might claim the territory seems to matter little to the Garundi. Once the clan finds a suitable location, it immediately begins building a permanent settlement if one does not exist and establishing a strictly hierarchical community. This hierarchy is only applied to Garundi families. Any families or clans from other cultures have no part within this organization—neither above nor below the Garundi hierarchy, but outside it completely. So while one Garundi family might rank higher or lower than another, all non-Garundi families are considered equal.

Any other Garundi clans that pass through the territory are welcomed as honored guests but are not allowed to settle permanently. After a full month has passed, the visiting clan is obligated to leave or to pay a hefty tribute to the dominant families of the existing community. If this tribute is paid every month for a full year, the clan is allowed to join the permanent community, but must take up the lowest rung on the social ladder.

Even the earliest records of Garundi arrivals in the northern countries indicate this behavioral pattern—a clan would arrive and immediately settle in the port city. The next arriving clan would stay in the port city for a month or two at most, then move on to the next town inland and establish a community there. This trend continued until, in present times, thriving Garundi communities exist throughout the civilized nations.

Often it is possible to estimate how long the Garundi community has been part of a town by how thoroughly its members have established themselves in the greater community through marriage. Children of mixed Garundi marriages rarely have the deep black skin tone of their southern forefathers. In coastal nations, such as Osirion, Rahadoum, and Thuvia, Garundi skin tone ranges from light brown to the deep red of Osirion's ruling caste.

While the wave of immigration from the southern continent ended centuries ago, there yet remain new clans of Garundi wandering the land searching for a town, fertile valley, or river delta to claim as their own. These clans come from existing Garundi communities and are generally composed of individuals whose ancestry placed them on the lower social strata. With little or no hope of bettering their or their progeny's positions in the established community, they opted to band together, leave the community, and search for greener pastures elsewhere. In many cases, individual Garundi strike out on their own, hoping to achieve such acclaim and personal success that upon their return they are invited to marry into upper-class families.

Garundi communities can be found in nearly every corner of the map. Since these communities generally work hard to blend in and become integral parts of their surroundings, it is sometimes easy to miss them. Particularly large Garundi populations are found across northern and eastern Garund, of course, but many are also found in southern parts of that continent, as well as in southwestern Cheliax, Qadira, Taldor, southern Andoran, and increasingly in Isger and Galt.

The Garundi people seem to be among the very oldest in the Inner Sea region, as some truly ancient ruins made by lost Garundi civilizations predate the Earthfall and the collapse of Azlant. The notable ancient empires of Osirion, Jistka, and the Tekritanin League all brought civilization to northern Garund after the end of the Age of Darkness. These Garundi kingdoms were among the first to rise after a millennium of worldwide savagery, and they helped to drive civilization north into Avistan.

On the other hand, in between (and sometimes during) epochs of powerful civilizations and sprawling empires, the Garundi people seem to take to wandering. Garundi influences are felt across the entirety of the continent with which they share their ethnic name, and many scholars believe the Mwangi descend from very ancient Garundi wanderers. Individual clans of Garundi, if not entire communities within communities, exist in cities across southern Avistan and are reported even to occasionally turn up on the wide steppes of Casmaron.

Regardless of the climate in which they live, Garundi dress in colorful clothing equally practical and beautiful. They usually attempt to incorporate parts of traditional garb into whatever outfits they don. This frequently means that men wear sashes, kilts, long robes, or flat-topped hats, while women cover themselves in billowing blouses, wraps, and shawls. As they originated on a continent known for its temperature extremes, their clothing usually consists of loosely fitting layers. In the northern sections of Garund, traditional Garundi dress adopted aspects of Keleshite garb, while heavy Vudran influences are recognizable in Nex.

Garundi worship gods with song, food, and dance. They tend to see little use in somber ritual, although they do frequently adopt the slow chanting that seems so popular among the Chelaxians and Taldans. Even when praying to Pharasma in her role as goddess of the dead, Garundi sing and dance (frequently slower and more exactingly than more celebratory dancing, though). The birth of a child, also an aspect of life controlled by Pharasma, brings out the brightest, most gaily colored outfits and loudest, fastest songs and dances. In ceremonies celebrating the worship of Nethys, god of magic, Garundi dance with bright streamers (to represent magic, even when spellcasters are present) and black and white flowing robes (made in such a way as to lift at the waist when the wearer spins about). Garundi in the northern deserts of Garund tend to worship Sarenrae, while those in the south of that continent frequently bend knees to Gozreh.

Collecting Locations

Among other peoples, the Garundi have the reputation of being packrats—amassing collections of stones, leaves, twigs, and even clumps of earth as they travel. This is not an urge for material possessions, however, but an expression of the significance that physical location holds for this culture.

A Garundi clan does not consider itself successful until it has a particular place on a map to which it belongs and can claim as its own. Since it sometimes takes years or even generations to find the right location, though, the clan gathers mementos of the places it has been—physical records of a spiritual journey.

Throughout the year, each member of the clan creates a personal collection. During the annual week-long midsummer Kianidi festival, they present their collections to the clan elders, who select the most appropriate items to be added to the official clan history. It is considered a great honor to have one's keepsake selected, and individual status within the clan is measured in part by the number of items selected from the Garundi's collection.



Keleshite

Language: Kelish

Favored Regions:
Katapesh, Osirion, Nex, Qadira, Taldor

Favored Deities:
Abadar, Rovagug, Irori, Sarenrae

Names:
Keleshite names derive from the cultures of interior Casmaron. Members of high culture tend to adopt names from imperial Kelesh, while the lower classes and certain distinguished warrior castes have names that express their cultural ties to the horse cultures of the unaligned nations of the north-central steppelands. The latter often include surnames associated with clan and family, while the former often go by a single name. Names denoted with an asterisk are emblematic of the northern clan cultures.

Male Names:
Aakif*, Akkuya, Arasmes, Bahram, Fayyaadh*, Ik-Teshup, Irizati, Khair*, Kobad, Ormizd, Parumartish, Quzman*, Rusmanya, Warezana, Xoshak

Female Names:
Amestri, Artazostra, Barezata, Dhabba*, Iuni, Izora*, Khismia, Kyra*, Naadhira*, Sahba*, Shirin, Utana, Waajida*, Xemestra, Zarishu

The Keleshites are a difficult folk. Their tremendous sense of superiority grates on those unfortunate enough not to be born among their number, and the existence of the Keleshite Empire means the Keleshites' sense of entitlement is not based purely on fancy airs or past glory. Their power, learning, and skill are all quite real. Yet they are also cruel slavers, jaded mystics, zealous warriors, and hot-blooded lovers—a race bred from the heat and fire of the desert.

A Keleshite, it is said, will never bore you. As a whole, they value boldness, wit, and sly tactics over caution, brute strength, and proven but unfashionable pursuits. They can be quite aggressive—quick to anger and quick to forgive. Non-Keleshites never forget the sting of their insults or the warmth of their smiles. Keleshites dare you to find someone more interesting than them.

> It's a special form of Hell to serve a Qadiri princess. Each and every one of them is spoiled, coddled, and—most of all—indulged by their fathers and all around them from a young age. Worse yet, a Keleshite princess generally knows her way around a blade, a spell, or an invocation to Sarenrae.
> —Alaxey Kalepopolis, Chelaxian explorer

Keleshites are great lovers of luxuries. Their various cities and settlements include populations in Absalom, Katapesh, Osirion, Nex, and (most of all) Qadira and its capital, Katheer. Further east, the great Diamond Sultanates of interior Casmaron stretch for vast distances, and Keleshites rule in almost all of them. In all these places, the love of music, learning, and horsemanship is great. Horse racing is an obsession with many wealthy Keleshites, who think nothing of spending chests of gold coin on a valuable racehorse for use as a sire. Likewise, the jockeys who do the racing (many of them young women, halflings, or gnomes) are treated as heroes if they can bring the best from a horse.

Keleshites have uniformly black hair and almond or even slightly yellowish eyes. The men tend to grow long beards. Clothing ranges from gauzy silks to practical linen and cotton robes, with headdresses, veils, and turbans common to keep sun and sand out of the hair and eyes. Gold and silver decorations are popular not just for Keleshite women, but also among the men, who encrust their weaponry and top their turbans with lavish displays of wealth.

Below their necks, Keleshites favor loose-fitting clothing ideal for the hot desert days (but long enough that they can wrap themselves in their robes through cold desert nights or long sandstorms). Their caftans, tunics, and other clothing are typically made of a light and airy gaussy silk and adorned in embroidery (the wealthier the Keleshite, the more elaborate the decoration).

They speak Kelish first and foremost—a sonorous, phlegmatic language rich in poetry, scholarly treatises, and lore best left deep within books, unseen by human eyes. Indeed, the language is so old and has served so many

generations that its twisting curling characters hold many ancient secrets of magic, betrayals, and prophecies. The language is also widely known among the genies, who have close ties to the Keleshite schools of sorcery. "Scratch a Keleshite, find an aeromancer, pyromancer, slaver, or thief" is a saying among their enemies in Taldor, who consider all Keleshite folk tainted by association with djinn and less savory desert spirits.

The Keleshite connections to the djinn and other creatures of the desert go beyond simply borrowing words. Many Keleshites claim their people were among the first humans to learn agriculture and other aspects of civilization, gaining this knowledge from the deserts' powerful djinn or (in some cases) as a result of deals made with powerful blue dragons. Neither djinns nor blue dragons deny these claims, and are more than pleased to take the credit. Today, relations between the Keleshite people and the djinn remain peaceful and profitable to both sides. In exchange for wondrous arcane secrets, the Keleshites pay their djinni mentors fabulous fees in material goods. Although Keleshites deal with blue dragons living in the deserts around Qadira, neither side savors their interactions. Many of the dragons see the encroachment of humans as a threat to their rule.

Much is made of the divide among men and women in Keleshite lands, but the facts are simple: Young women are treated as jewels beyond price, because they give rise to the next generation in noble and merchant families. By contrast, young men must fight to earn a place for themselves. The Keleshites consider inheritance in the male line an invitation to infighting among the menfolk for status and position, and point to the success of their Diamond Empire as proof that female noble lineages are more stable. While probably true, behind the scenes, the raging competition between women and the outrageous deeds of men eager to make a good match are, perhaps, no less ridiculous than what happens throughout most of Golarion.

Far from inured to the decadent wonders of the East, Keleshites favor exoticism in all things. For the nobles, that might mean mammoths and frost drakes, and for a thief of Katheer it might mean someone who carries armor as heavy as a crab's casing, but Keleshite curiosity is a powerful thing. Their love for novelty drives traders and slavers to seek new markets and new products, and it drives their wizards to new investigations of elemental forces.

Some Keleshite nomads tattoo the space below their eyes dark blue or black as a measure against the sun's glare in the desert, although this gives them a haunted, ghoulish appearance. Slaves and sailors among the Keleshites wear only scanty shirts and loincloths for men, long pantaloons and veiled wraps for women. Keleshite sailors are common throughout the Inner Sea, even as far north as the Lands of the Linnorm Kings in summer, and they are both loved as the bringers of luxuries and hated as slavers. Keleshite slavers use barbed nets, poisoned cups, and bolas to capture their victims. Once they catch a victim, they use magic or heavy manacles until their merchandise can be brought to the Great Market in Katheer or to one of the slave galleys that ply the Obari Ocean.

Other common professions among Keleshites include camel drovers, traders, weavers, scribes, architects, and hard-bitten mercenaries—especially superior light cavalry and light infantry. Among adventurers, they are commonly fighters, clerics of Sarenrae, and rangers specialized in mounted archery.

While Keleshite curiosity is powerful, their personal style and martial style are more wavering. Others believe that Keleshites are cowardly, which is only half true. A Keleshite would rather kill you from ship or horseback at a distance, not because he is a coward, but because it is a smart way to fight a foe on the sea or in the desert. Running around in heavy armor in either place is a fool's game, and most Keleshites would laugh to see you try.

Despite their proclivities for attacking from range, Keleshites are not lost in melee combat. Indeed, the proud Keleshite dervishes—twirling swordsmen equal parts warriors and dancers—represent the most iconic image of Keleshite military tradition. Dervishes—men and women—wear long kilts or skirts that twirl and spin with them, creating breathtaking splashes of color and fabric even as the dervishes themselves set about their grim work of blood and steel. Wherever Keleshite people live, dervishes live among them. Dervishes receive preferential treatment in all lands controlled by Keleshites, and in many satrapies and other satellite states of the Padishah Empire of Kelesh they operate above the law (if not completely outside it).

Keleshite Religion

Keleshite faith is dark and dangerous. Most worship Sarenrae, the goddess of the sun, in a harsh form appropriate to their desert lands, and follow her with great zeal. All oaths among the Keleshites are sworn in Sarenrae's name.

Lesser gods of the Keleshites include corrupted, scheming forms of Abadar and his peer, Irori. Travel and learning seem to come naturally to Keleshites—they are instilled in childhood as great virtues, and every Kelishite aims to own a fast horse and a rich stock of traveler's tales.

At the same time, some Kelishites follow Rovagug, the god of wrath and destruction in many forms, in whirling cult ceremonies and in the fatalism that afflicts those who struggle against the ocean or the desert all their lives. Much of Qadira lies in ruins. Much of the Keleshite Empire is not what it was, although it still shines very bright. Things collapse, and Keleshites fear and respect that collapse.



Kellid

Language: Hallit

Favored Regions:
Numeria, Realm of the Mammoth Lords, the Worldwound

Favored Deities:
Desna, Gorum, Minderhal, Rovagug, scattered beast cults

Names:
First names are curt affairs, favoring harsh consonants and guttural sounds. Second names are seldom necessary in small Kellid tribes, but are sometimes adopted or given when necessary or noteworthy. When used, last names typically refer to lineage or significant, memorable achievements or occurrences.

Male Names:
Barek, Dolok, Dorn, Gannok, Ganef, Gurog, Holg, Jokum, Karth, Kod, Kronug, Nonek, Roga, Takek, Zoresk

Female Names:
Annik, Belka, Dagur, Fasha, Inkit, Jalket, Kala, Lesit, Luka, Nalket, Selka, Sheleg, Varka, Valki, Yala

Clad in animal furs and bearing fetishes of feather and bone, hordes of brawny, dark-haired Kellids wander the cruel, cold mountains and tundra of northern Avistan, from the Tusk Mountains in the west to the plains of Numeria in the east. Although clearly of common descent, Kellids in different nations live in significantly different cultures, with varied religions and mores. Still, Kellids share a predilection for violence and a well-earned distrust of magic.

More than any other ethnicity, the Kellids are a people shaped by threats. The harsh, cold flatlands of the Mammoth Lords and Numeria force Kellid tribes to stay moving, to live lean and primitively. Threatened by savage beasts, ice trolls, wicked fey, mechanical monstrosities, orcs, demons, and more, Kellids learned to fight constantly—if not monsters, then each other. These threats would kill a lesser people, but the Kellids endured and thrived.

Trapped between the treacherous Witch Queen of Irrisen to the west and the disastrous Worldwound to the east, Kellids tend to distrust magic. Even those who abandon their superstitious homelands for the civilized south (and there are more than a few) tend to hold arcane matters in low regard. Many Kellids cannot differentiate between divine and arcane magic, and so most visitors find it wise simply to refrain from magic use as much as possible.

> Kellids are belligerent and barbaric, but not inhospitable. True, two warriors knocked out some of my teeth because my everburning torch wouldn't extinguish in the snow. But once our cleric proved that we were merely effete southerners, and not agents of the Witch Queen, they took pity on our frostbitten frames, fed us raw bear meat, and told their pet giant not to step on us. Practically an invitation to join the tribe!
> –Seldeen Finch, Pathfinder

Kellids are common throughout Avistan, especially on the northern fringes of Cheliax and its former holdings in the east. Most speak Hallit and have little time for the fancy written languages of weaker peoples. Tribes make up the main cooperative unit for Kellids, and their tribes hold their main allegiance. Tribes clash over hunting rights, campgrounds, or anything else they can find to disagree on. While most disagreements and clashes resolve over the course of a few years, some tribes are ancestral enemies and continue to feud and war for reasons neither side can recall.

Despite this, Kellids have a tradition of rough hospitality. Although they would kill an armed warrior shouting and charging, that same warrior, half-frozen and near death, would be taken in and cared for. Dying of exposure and starvation out on the killing tundra is considered a death too grim for anyone, even if it means giving succor to a sworn enemy.

Kellids in different regions differ in customs and quirks. Mammoth Lord Kellids revere giants. Young warriors frequently raid into the hills to slaughter as many giants as possible, leaving a single youth alive for abduction and adoption into the tribe. Certain mystics revere these foundling giants with a near-religious fervor, but most of the giants grow to rely upon the tribe and protect it like family. Most tribes larger than 100 nomads contain at least one giant, and larger tribes can support many more.

Tribes in the Worldwound territory band together more readily, as common foes there are numerous and relentless. Scars and malformations are common aftereffects of living next to a demon waste, and some Kellids are transformed into evil-looking creatures themselves. A number of them become as evil as the things they fight, and mystics conduct regular cleansing rituals to cast off the evil effects. The Kellid barbarians are said to kill as many demons as all the crusaders in Mendev, but with less fanfare.

The wildmen in Numeria are largely a dissolute, cruel people. The sorcerers of the Black Sovereign and his metal soldiers hunt the nomads for sport, while the decadent barbaric court is addled with their drugs. The mutations and disfigurements here are even greater than in the Worldwound, and some drive the Kellids living in the region to madness.

In all regions, strength, bravery, and guile are winning traits. Mammoth Lord Kellids hold yearly contests to test each of these virtues, with prizes plucked from a hidden treasure stash somewhere in the Tusk Mountains. The prizes are said to be much more valuable and powerful than the wildmen understand, and well-informed outsiders are beginning to compete.

Some Kellids practice an ancient animistic religion, seeing spirits and lesser gods in most visible creatures, places, and objects. Most Kellids, though, bow to Gorum, their imposing Lord in Iron. Those Kellids who know of the recent claims by some half-orcs that Gorum is one of them find such preposterous suggestions utterly offensive, leading to a recent growth of warfare. Tribes in the northernmost reaches of the Realm of the Mammoth Lords worship Minderhal, the god of giants. In the Worldwound and Numeria, some greatly feared tribes pay feasance to Rovagug, the Rough Beast, by committing terrible atrocities. Most tribes also venerate Desna, goddess of travelers. Although depicted as a light, graceful elven woman in the south, the Kellids see her as a stately human woman astride a powerful elk, leading them to successful hunts as they follow herd animals on their yearly treks. Every tribe also has its own set of superstitions to preserve life and bring harm to its enemies.

Despite their lack of sophistication and occasional confusion in understanding magic, technology, and other cerebral concepts, Kellids are not inherently stupid. They simply lack the good fortune of living in places that can afford the luxury of education not tied directly to survival. Indeed, Kellids make some of the most talented and skilled barbarians, druids, and rangers in Avistan, and many citizens of the more southerly nations pay handsomely to keep Kellid guides and plainsmen on retainer.

Kellids tend to dress in simple clothing appropriate to the climate of their homelands. They favor durability and ruggedness, and therefore tend to wear hides, leather, and furs made into loose clothing. In the coldest areas they claim, Kellids line their leather and hides with furs and wear layers of linens or silks underneath. Where the climate turns warmer, Kellids favor the lightest, most supple leathers they can acquire.

Pragmatism is not a character trait for Kellids, it is a survival mechanism. Indirect behavior is for soft people who have time to waste. Although suspicious and violent toward most magic, Kellids are more respectful toward druids. They still don't necessarily like druidic magic, but they sometimes see it wielded usefully.

As an oral culture, some Kellids have exceptionally well-developed memories. These people can memorize long ledger sheets read aloud, convoluted riddles, and extensive oratories. All Kellids typically remember everything they say, and much of what they hear. Practiced Kellids can repeat conversations word-for-word—sometimes years-old conversations. Reciting meaningful conversations with the dead is part of the ritual of Sending Beyond, commonly practiced by Kellid shamans. Because of their memories, Kellids living in more civilized environs infrequently make livings as secure messengers.

Zoic Fetishes

Kellids, particularly those known as the Mammoth Lords, move easily among the great prehistoric beasts that inhabit their lands, taking the ones they need for meat, fur, and beasts of burden. Part of their success is due their deep belief that they are the chosen natives of their lands, but they are also aided by magical talismans created by their druids.

These zoic fetishes are collections of hair, stone, and fibrous twine bundled together in loose approximations of the creatures they are supposed to affect. The zoic fetishes have the power of extremely powerful *dominate animal* spells that last for as long as the users wish to employ them. Otherwise, they function as the spell of the same name.

Kellids use the zoic fetishes both for protection from predators and in training creatures destined as beasts of burden. Zoic fetishes only function on mammalian creatures, so the deathbirds of the Tusk Mountains and the megaraptors that prowl the outer walls of Tolguth—on the wide steppes near the eastern borders of the Mammoth Lords' influence—are unaffected by these creations.



Mwangi

Language: Polyglot

Favored Regions:

Bekyar—Bloodcove, Desolation Cape, Sargava, the Shackles, Sodden Lands; Bonuwat—Bloodcove, Mwangi Coast, Rahadoum, Sargava, the Shackles, Sodden Lands; Mauxi—Rahadoum, Thuvia; Zenj—Mwangi Expanse, Bandu Hills, the Screaming Jungle, Bloodcove, Sargava

Favored Deities:

Bekyar—demon lords; Bonuwat—Shimye-Magalla; Mauxi—Abadar; Zenj—totemism.

Names:

Names among the Mwangi are quite varied, often adopting the forms of the races that surround them. Mauxi names follow Thuvian naming conventions with only minor variations. The Bonuwat likewise use names borrowed from the many trading peoples they come into contact with through intermarriage, although many keep a traditional Mwangi surname. Only the Zenj and Bekyar truly keep their own naming conventions. Zenj names are usually short and clipped, with hard consonants and many glottal stops and clicks that cannot be easily transcribed in written languages (! equals a velaric clicking noise in the back of the throat or velum and ‘ is used to denote a glottal stop). The Bekyar have their own, seemingly unrelated, forms that use many sibilants followed by hard consonants.

Male Names:

Bekyar—Harisko, Kamishah, Seckor, Suuktidi, Yekskya; Bonuwat—Baobo, Banibani, Mitabu, Pateba, Teruawa; Zenj—Ba’utan, Had!zong, Ku’unda, Ter!utu, !Tun’ada

Female Names:

Bekyar—Babashk, Kamashi, Shivkah, Sinkitah, Soki; Bonuwat—Butana, Karibati, Marisama, Shimshem, Simbala—Zenj: Ha!ba’la, K’ntisi, Me’mesa, Shikaba, !Xaba

The use of the name “Mwangi” doesn’t do justice to the folk who inhabit the Mwangi Expanse—from the primitive Zenj of the deep jungles to the Bonuwat boatsmen of the western coasts, from the sophisticated Mauxi of Thuvia to the Bekyar fleshmerchants of Desolation Cape, all of these peoples are lumped by ethnographers into a single group.

The disparate Mwangi peoples are comprised of several different—although related—ethnic groups that stretch from the northern land of Thuvia to the western Mwangi Coast, through the central jungles of the Expanse to the tip of Garund’s farthest southern reaches. The Mwangi were mostly unknown to the rest of Golarion until recent colonization and trade began. This exploration resulted in a general lack of distinction between different Mwangi tribes among the northern peoples, although there are hints that they were once much more prevalent throughout Garund.

Various little-understood Mwangi groups dominate the population of much of central Garund. Four major subgroups comprise the Mwangi: the Bekyars, the Bonuwat, the Mauxi, and the Zenj. While sharing some blood ties, these groups are in many ways different enough from each other to qualify as their own distinct ethnicities. That they are lumped together stems as much from the relative ignorance of the more “civilized” northern peoples who have conducted most of Golarion’s ethnographies as that they share a common tongue called Polyglot—a pidgin formed from hundreds of tribal languages and dialects.

The most common Mwangi are the Zenj people who inhabit the jungle- and savannah-covered interior of the Mwangi Expanse. The Zenj are comprised of hundreds of tribes that exist in small permanent villages along the rivers, subsisting on fishing and hunting or as nomadic encampments of herders that follow their grazing beasts across the grasslands and rolling hills of the Expanse. Many of these tribes are interrelated and form trade and marital alliances. Most as a rule require their chieftains to take a spouse from another tribe in order to cement such alliances. They are

shorter than average humans, with slender, muscular frames and wiry black hair. They favor simple animal hides or garments made from plant fibers.

The jungle-dwelling Zenj tend to be patriarchal, with village headmen presiding in council over the fishermen, craftsmen, and hunter-warriors of the village, while the women spend most of their time caring for the young, tending home and hearth, and gathering edible plants and materials for craftwork from the surrounding jungles. The headman is often assisted by a spiritual advisor who is either a shaman of the native totem spirits or a witchdoctor propitiating the spiritworld and the walking dead thought to inhabit it. Only rarely does a village have both a shaman and a witchdoctor, although powerful alliances between villages have often led to short-lived paramountcies where a single charismatic chieftain could forge several villages into one. In such cases, both shamans and witchdoctors might be present, although they inevitably participate in heated rivalries that can lead to bullying, character assassination, and even murder.

The Zenj of the rolling savannahs differ from their jungle-dwelling cousins in that they are typically ruled by a matriarch who oversees and distributes the tribe's food and resources while the women maintain the encampment with the children and elderly and the men alternately hunt or tend to the tribe's herds of cattle or goats. The herdsmen tribes almost always have a shaman—often female—supporting the chieftain. Only rarely are witchdoctors found among their number, as such figures find the concealment of the jungle more conducive to their dark practices and hidden ways. Although often on friendly terms, the jungle-dwelling and herdsmen tribes of the Zenj generally never form marital alliances, finding the ways and traditions of the other too strange and discomfiting to adopt.

The Bonuwat are a seafaring boatpeople who dwell along the Mwangi Coast and comprise the majority of the Mwangi encountered by the outside world frequenting such ports as Bloodcove as well the Shackles and the Sodden Lands. The Bonuwat are of average human height with more swarthy or dusky skin tones and a propensity for straight hair, although equally dark in coloration to their Zenj cousins. The Bonuwat have wide mouths and generous smiles and favor colorful and exotic garb featuring vests and baggy pantaloons such as is often found among far-ranging mariners. They are excellent fishermen and sailors and have possessed an extensive trading network along the Mwangi Coast since long before the first northerners began to arrive. They are thought to have crossed bloodlines with some foreign seafaring people in the distant past, although who these people were is unknown.

The Mauxi are a mysterious strain of the Mwangi seemingly more distantly related than the other subgroups. These tall, patrician folk have grayer skin tones—prone to an ashen appearance—and straight hair like the Bonuwat. They are generally withdrawn and taciturn, having embraced the ways of decadent Thuvia, and some even found their way into the controlling caste of that land. They deny any connection to the other Mwangi peoples and speak the Osiriani tongue but keep Polyglot in practice as a sort of private cant among themselves. Some of the younger Mauxi hearken back to their tribal ancestry and emulate the dress of the other Mwangi groups in a sort of effete style. They are prone to using Polyglot much more frequently to accent their perceived exotic air.

Least known of the Mwangi are the Bekyar, who inhabit Desolation Cape of southern Garund all the way up the coast to Sargava. The Bekyar are exceedingly tall—many topping 7 feet—with skin tones ranging from dark brown to coal black. They wear their wiry hair long but often straighten it into elaborate coifs. This group consists largely of slavetakers and fleshmerchants who prey upon their fellow Mwangi and just about anyone else they can catch.

The Mwangi who dwell among folk from other lands typically conform to the religions predominantly held by the people there, such as Nethys in Thuvia. Exceptions to this include the Bonuwat—who predominantly venerate both Gozreh and Desna in a unique janiform incarnation they call Shimye-Magalla—and the barbaric Bekyar, who generally follow the tenets of demon lords such as Angazhan, Dagon, or Zura. In addition, the Mwangi who live exclusive of the influence of other races (primarily the Zenj) still venerate their ancient traditions of totemism.

The Mwangi Legacy

The disparate Mwangi peoples are the heirs of an ancient civilization that thrived in central Garund countless generations ago, of which little is known and even less is understood. Signs of this civilization are found in the few still-extant ruins of elaborate temples and fortress complexes that lie beneath concealing layers of clinging ivy, vines, and other jungle growth found principally in the forested interior of the Mwangi Expanse as well as in the forlorn mountaintops of the Shattered Range. What caused the abandonment of these ancient communities is a mystery even to the Mwangi themselves, but they all recognize some inner pull that resonates within them whenever they stumble across such remains.

The Mwangi respond in different ways to these ancient ruins but nearly all Mwangi avoid them, save for a few witchdoctors and the insane, who seek to draw power or inspiration from them. The remaining Mwangi are actively discomfited by them, and typically consider the places taboo, so much so that it is rumored that escaping these ruins is what caused the Mauxi to first migrate north across the Barrier Wall. The Bekyar are known to actively fear the ruins, speaking of the "dark wings" that sometimes descend from them on moonless nights. The oldest of these ruined cities is Mzali, south of the Screaming Jungle, where a mummified boy-prince called Wakena rules a vast cult dedicated to reclaiming the lost glories of the past.



Taldan

Language: Common

Favored Regions:
Absalom, Andoran, Brevoy, Cheliax, Druma, Galt, Isger, Lastwall, Molthune, Nirmathas, Qadira, Taldor

Favored Deities:
Abadar, Aroden, Cayden Cailean, Shelyn, Sarenrae, Norgorber, Calistria

Names:
Taldan names are often as ornate and ostentatious as the people who bear them. Polysyllabic constructions predominate, with sounds that evoke thoughts of high-minded nobility. Surnames often allude to a family's holdings or past glories, evoking place names, victorious battles, or even valuable treasures. Examples include Merrion (after the famous battle), Albercroft (after the border county of the same name), Neverion (after the legendary castle near Yanmass), and so on.

Male Names:
Domitian, Eudoxius, Galadon, Iacobus, Ioseph, Marcian, Menas, Narses, Olybrius, Origen, Stilicho, Theodric, Vors, Xanthan

Female Names:
Adula, Charito, Eudocia, Euphemi, Ionnia, Kale, Komana, Pasara, Salvianella, Semne, Viviana, Xene

The Taldan people are known the world over for being among the most accomplished scholars, artisans, and practitioners of exotic martial skills. They are also known to be perhaps the most arrogant, self-important, and dismissive culture in history. Both these reputations are well deserved.

On the shores of the Inner Sea sits the kingdom of Taldor, the oldest of the surviving Avistani nations in the region. From its humble beginnings as a trading post where Azlanti fleeing the devastation of their homeland could exchange goods with Keleshites living on the frontier of ancient desert empires, Taldor grew to become a world power in its own right. At one time, the Empire of Taldor spanned most of southern Avistan, north to the River Kingdoms, and west through most of modern Cheliax. Today, however, the kingdom of Taldor is a mere fraction of its former size.

> After the seventeenth and final course was served, my Taldan hosts invited me to join them in the drawing room for brandy and polite conversation about the state of the world. Being fresh from an extensive tour of the western nations, I prepared to tell them of the political and military imbroglios I had witnessed. However, nothing could have held less interest to these gentlemen. Instead they proceeded to spend the next four hours describing to me every social faux pas of the season, and waxing rhapsodic about the global importance of an upcoming royal fete.
> –Alaren Kalepopolis, Chelaxian explorer

Historians say that the Empire of Taldor, like so many before it, fell due to its own decadence and excesses. The Taldan people became haughty and so sure of their supremacy in the world that they did not even conceive of the possibility their colonies might revolt, and so were completely unprepared when said colonies slipped away in the Even-Tongued Conquest. With Qadiri armies amassing on its borders and beset by centuries of decadence, Taldor soon lost control of Andoran, Galt, and Isger, and saw the kingdom of Cheliax grow into a mighty empire.

Despite the loss of their empire, Taldans retain an arrogance and aloof spirit befitting a people at the height of their power and influence. Blessed to be a beautiful people with long, flowing brown hair and naturally bronze skin (gifts from their Keleshite ancestors), Taldans frequently adorn themselves in fashionable clothing. Wealthy merchants, royals, and land owners across the Inner Sea do their best to cultivate the style, air, and sophistication of Taldor, but observers can always tell the difference between a poseur and the genuine article. The way a Taldan man wears his neatly trimmed beard is as much a birthright as a matter of grooming. And the elaborate, ribbon-festooned wigs worn by the women are heirlooms passed down from generation to generation.

With millennia of cultural development and decadence, Taldor and the people it birthed have achieved the highest

levels of education and artistry, allowing both to reach their fullest expression. Scholars and craftspeople from across Avistan and northern Garund claim at least partial Taldan heritage, and many seek to study in Taldor in order to have a connection with the ancient and learned culture spawned there. A year of training in Taldor, they say, is worth five anywhere else.

Outsiders sometimes find it difficult to fit into Taldan society. The local populace considers anyone who does not have the advantage of Taldan birth and training to be hopelessly provincial, an opinion Taldans express loudly and often. They generally seem to be of the opinion that anything of importance must happen in Taldor and, conversely, anything that happens outside the kingdom is trivial and banal.

Although both they and their Keleshite enemies try to deny it, the traditional language of the Taldans, Taldane, shares some common ancestry with Kelesh. Both languages map Azlanti words onto the grammatical structure (and lexicon) of a lost ancestor tongue, but they differ in that Kelesh also adopted words from the languages of genies while Taldane borrowed from Varisian.

Taldans justifiably take pride in the strong influence their native gods have exerted across not just the Inner Sea region, but across most of Golarion. Of the 20 most widely worshiped deities, four hail originally from Taldan traditions or were themselves Taldan in their mortal lives: Abadar, Cayden Cailean, Norgorber, and Shelyn. They gladly point out to anyone around how two of the three mortals who ascended to godhood thanks to the power of the *Starstone* are of Taldan descent. By the same token, they become petulant whenever someone has the bad manners to point out that the third and most widely worshiped of the ascendant gods—Iomedae the Inheritor—is of Chelaxian stock. Within Taldor and other nations with sizeable Taldan populations, temples dedicated to Abadar and Shelyn sometimes grow to ridiculous proportions. Taldans like to point out, both verbally and in their often grandiose art, that the most beautiful of all deities originated among their people.

Taldan arrogant pride manifests differently for the two sexes. Regardless of the specific details of their ethnic elitism, Taldan haughtiness tends to wallow in shallowness. Obviously, not every Taldan exhibits the most extreme arrogant personality traits described here, but enough do to make the pride of Taldans an unfavorable stereotype known throughout the Inner Sea region.

Male Taldans exhibit an arrogant machismo that usually falls just shy of outright misogyny. They speak of conquests and territorial disputes when they discuss Taldan women, and of "bringing civilization to the barbarians" to brag of their exploits with women of other ethnicities or races. This insular fraternity leads to extremely close relationships between men, such that observers from other ethnicities often mistake these bonds as more than just friendship—an assumption that occasionally holds more than a shred of truth.

Women express their ethnic superiority complex via biting commentary of the dress, hairstyle, body shape, or facial features of other females they see. Although they tend to focus their overly critical judgments on women from other ethnicities or races, when bored or among only close friends they sometimes casually insult one another (albeit with considerably less bile than when their attentions are drawn outside their close circles). Taldan women take great pride in Shelyn's Taldan origins, and frequently do everything in their power (including spending more than they can truly afford) to attain a nebulous level of beauty that differs by individual. In general, Taldan women tend to treat men as attractive playthings meant to entertain, buy perfumes and beauty aids, and then leave when they become boring.

On the other hand, when moved to better emotions, Taldans express their concerns with nigh-unparalleled charity of time and wealth. In fact, the success with which hard-luck tales and wide-eyed impoverished children (especially those of obviously Taldan descent) can convince a Taldan to donate hard-earned coins further leads to the view of others that Taldans throw about their wealth with little concern for the future. This hedonism, critics observe, frequently is the reason why many adults fall on hard times and must turn to their fellows for additional aid.

Taldan Snobbery

Taldans are considered by many to be the most aloof and arrogant of the human cultures, and there is no denying that the people in the kingdom of Taldor can be self-important and pompous. Oddly enough, though, the most snobbish of all Taldans are those whose families chose to remain in the former provinces and are now citizens of other countries.

It is one thing for a person living in Taldor to claim that the kingdom is home to the most intelligent, talented, and refined people on the continent—that sort of hubris is expected, given the number of people who flock to Taldor annually. Families of Taldan descent living abroad, rather than gaining some measure of appreciation for their chosen nations, instead place Taldor on an even higher pedestal. They proclaim their ancestral homeland to be the apex of all culture and artistry in the history of the civilized world.

Interestingly, those living in Taldor have nothing but contempt for families of Taldan descent who chose not to return to the kingdom. They consider those "provincials" just as simple as others living in those areas and, if anything, even more wearisome.



Tian

Language: Tien

Favored Regions:
Absalom, Katapesh, Lands of the Linnorm Kings, Realm of the Mammoth Lords, Tian Xia, Varisia

Favored Deities:
Irori, ancestor worship, animistic nature worship, *kami*

Names:
Names vary greatly across the many people of Tian Xia, although the Tian people universally offer their family names first. Most family and given names derive from words of the language the family speaks. Family names represent some aspect of the family's history, while given names usually reflect the aspirations or traits the parents wish for their child.

Male Names:
Tian-Dan—Dac Kien, Giap, Huynh, Nam, Sihn, Ton; Tian-La—Batsaikhan, Batukhan, Chuluun, Gansukh, Naranbaatar, Tomorbaatar; Tian-Min—Gendo, Heihachi, Ichiro, Juro, Kyo, Toshiro; Tian-Sing—Budi, Hamengku, Kusuma, Purnoma, Setiawan, Suryo; Tian-Shu—Bao, Hu, Jianguo, Syaoran, Tao, Zhuang

Female Names:
Tian-Dan—Binh, Dao, Huhn, Ly, Nai, Thien; Tian-La— Altantsetseg, Bayarmaa, Khongordzol, Narantuyaa, Odval, Sarangerel; Tian-Min—Hidari, Hitomi, Kyoko, Reika, Sae, Yumi; Tian-Sing—Bethari, Lestari, Megawati, Nirmala, Sangati, Wulan; Tian-Shu—Chao, Hua, Meilin, Qiao, Xue, Ziyi

Although the people of Avistan and Garund see the distant Tian as a single ethnicity (a misconception the Tian reciprocate with Avistani), the people collectively known as the Tian encompass a number of different distinct ethnicities. Most of the Tian who come to the Inner Sea region originate from Qin or Minkai, so the Avistani are most familiar with these two cultures (which they mistakenly assume represent the full depth of variety on the continent).

The most common Tian race, the Tian-Shu, possess dusky skin, almond-shaped brown eyes, and straight black or dark brown hair. Almost all other Tian races descend from the Tian-Shu, and share at least some features with them. In the north and west of Tian live the Tian-La, a semi-nomadic people with coarse, curly hair and lighter skin. Far to the south, the Tian-Sing have reddish tints to their hair and produce more green-eyed folk. The Tian-Min of the Minkai archipelago possess the widest variety of eye color, encompassing various shades of blue, green, violet, orange-red, and (of course) black and brown.

> The people of Tian Xia keep to themselves, for the most part. They are quiet and polite, and become increasingly so the angrier they get. A Tian who lapses into complete silence is probably very angry, and it's best to appease him quickly. An apology goes a long way toward reconciliation. Sit down a Tian and put a little alcohol in him, though, and you quickly learn that just because he's reserved doesn't mean he doesn't know how to have fun.
>
> –Jah Merrihander, Magnimarian merchant

Across all of Tian Xia, children very rarely are born with shock-white or silvery-white hair, which the Tian consider an omen of greatness. Such children frequently become influential leaders and poets of the highest caliber, and families into which they are born receive great honor and frequently an increase in rank and wealth. The Ruby Emperor Shing La Po of Wan possessed white hair, as did the Perfect Swordswoman, Setsuna Kuga.

Tian Xia owes the greatest of its cultural influences to the Tian-Shu people, whose culture predates Aroden's raising of the *Starstone* and the founding of Absalom. Over the past 7 millennia, the Tian-Shu have lived in hundreds of different nations and city-states, as well as three empires. The last empire to rule over the Tian-Shu, Imperial Lung Wa, collapsed a century ago and was replaced by the current battling nation-states. With the fall of a strong empire, the cultures of other Tian people have flourished in the past century. In Xa Hoi, for example, the

Tian-Dan people's native culture has proliferated, resulting in a rise of beautifully decorated pagoda temples, colorful outfits, spice-laden cuisine, and a variety of alcohols made from rice and native fruits.

Religion varies across Tian Xia as much its people. Since its introduction by Vudrani missionaries in 2187, the church of Irori (called Iro-Shu) has spread across Tian Xia, becoming an official state religion in most nations. Several gods from Avistan have also found their way over the Crown of the World, and the worship of Desna and Erastil is not uncommon to the north. Most Tian, however, retain their traditional religions, all of which involve some degree of animistic nature worship, ancestor worship, or the supplication of *kami* (visible manifestations of spirits and gods). In addition, all Tian people also have their own major deities, some of whom are gods worshiped in Avistan under different names and some of whom are unique to the people who venerate them.

Most Tian speak Tien, the traditional language of the Tian-Shu and the official language of kingdoms and empires across the continent. Most other languages spoken by the Tian at least partially descend from this ancient tongue, and most have some other cultural influences as well. Minkan, the language of the powerful Minkai Empire, borrows only some of its words and half its alphabet from Tien, and therefore sounds unrelated to Tien and the other continental languages.

Generally speaking, Tian consider the family of great importance. They learned the art of genealogy from dragons and in some cases can trace their bloodlines back to a time before the Earthfall and the collapse of Azlant. The king of the Tian-Shu nation-state of Qin, for example, possesses a 93-foot-long scroll showing his descent from the first Tian emperor, Mu Lung, some 11,000 years ago. Emperor Shigure of Minkai can trace his family line back 296 generations to the Minkan goddess Shizuru. Less extreme examples also exist, of course, but many nobles and most Tian royalty can trace their lines back at least a few dozen generations. Family names tend to have meanings in their native tongues, and usually these meanings identify where the family originated or who founded it.

Tian dress favors loose clothing, regardless of the wearer's wealth or social standing. Wealthy Tian wear robe-like garments they call kimono or hanfu, while peasants and laborers wear simple kilts or trousers with linen wraps, leather jackets, or nothing at all on their upper bodies. Most clothing worn by Tian is colorful, and only the poorest peasants wear undyed cloth. Those who can afford it decorate their clothing with elaborate embroidery, often of scenes from nature or of powerful creatures like dragons and phoenixes. For those who don't labor, silk is the most popular choice of material, but most clothing is made from cotton or flax. The desperately poor wear canvas and the truly destitute make simple smocks from discarded canvas rice bags.

The Tea Culture

The Tian take their tea very seriously. Numerous legends of its introduction exist, although most scholars agree that famed imperial advisor Luyu, the Father of Tea, introduced the concoction to the Imperial Court. According to the official imperial histories, Luyu first discovered the tea plant while on a journey to Nanang Province, near the border with the small kingdoms of Xa Hoi and Dtang Ma.

All true teas contain leaves from the tea plant, known in Tian Xia as *cha*. Wild *cha* trees still grow high on the slopes of the imposing Kao Shan mountains, even after nearly 10,000 years of domestic cultivation throughout Tian Xia. Roughly 4 millennia ago, imperial traders crossed the Vudran Sea bearing, among other things, bricks of tea and a sack of tea plant seeds. Tea became popular among Vudrani shortly thereafter, and over time they cultivated their own subspecies of the tea plant, which they then exported back to Tian Xia. The small, mountainous island nation of Onshing grows 64 strains of *cha* plants, many of which are known as monkey-picked teas (as the plants grow so tall that "only monkeys could pick the leaves").

Tian of all social classes drink copious amounts of tea, and it is by far the most popular drink on the continent (exceeding even alcohol). Some 2,000 years ago, the courtiers of the ancient Empire of Yixing sought to create an art of the preparation and consumption of tea, and from their endeavors came the *chadao*, or tea ceremony. A few decades later, visitors from Teikoku (the ancient precursor of the Minkai Empire) visited the Yixing court and were so impressed by the *chadao* that they sought to emulate it in Teikoku. As a result, two similar but different tea ceremonies exist throughout Tian Xia: the *chadao*, practiced in the remnants of Imperial Lung Wa, Xa Hoi, and Dtang Ma, and the similar but different *chanoyu*, practiced in the Minkai Empire, Cho-zen, and Onshing.

Collectively, the Tian attempt to live in ways that minimize the disruption of the natural order. Parks and gardens fill their cities and cause their urban areas to sprawl across spaces far greater than similarly sized Avastani settlements. Despite their larger footprints, though, Tian cities tend to incorporate the natural world in their design and layout better than those of the distant West.

As a people, Tian tend to be smaller and slighter than those of Avistan and Garund. Men only infrequently grow as tall as 5-1/2 feet, while women often barely break 5 feet in height. Even among the generally thin and narrow-bodied Tian, the Tian-Dan and Tian-Sing frequently appear particularly skinny, often looking emaciated even when well-fed. In contrast, the northwestern Tian-La generally possess moon-shaped faces and squat, muscular bodies. The Tian-Shu and Tian-Min, as with most other comparisons of Tian extremes, comprise a middle ground. While Tian themselves can frequently discern these subtle differences, Avistani generally cannot.



Ulfen

Language: Skald

Favored Regions:
Irrisen, Lands of the Linnorm Kings, Varisia

Favored Deities:
Deities: Desna, Erastil, Gorum, Torag

Names:
Ulfen tend to possess two names: a given name and a patronymic. Men generally receive names of powerful ancestors and hero-kings, although some bear names that are actual words in Skald that their parents hope they embody or emulate in life. Women often receive descriptive names that define their parents hope for their futures.

Male Names:
Asbjorn, Birger, Eilif, Herger, Hyglak, Jens, Kjell, Kriger, Niklas, Olaf, Ragnar, Sterk, Storhoi, Tallak, Varg

Female Names:
Asta, Birgit, Dagny, Eva, Gerda, Gunda, Hege, Ingegerd, Ingrid, Jorun, Magda, Nanna, Runa, Signe, Tine

The days of raw pillage from the north are mostly over, as the Ulfen can no longer pass through the Arch of Aroden into the Inner Sea unaccosted. At the same time, the Ulfen are hired as sailors, marines, and bodyguards widely throughout Avistan, perhaps because they combine great seamanship, ruthlessness, and exotic looks. It has become quite fashionable in Qadira and elsewhere near the Isle of Kortos to hire an Ulfen bodyguard for his towering height, his pale skin and hair, and his vile stench, which is considered a mark of distinction among bodyguards in southern lands.

> Furs and amber and strong drink, that's what gets you through the dark winter days when the ice cracks at the end of the bay and you hear the linnorm scales scrape along the surface. Warm furs and someone worth tumbling between them.
> –Ulfen winter wisdom

The Ulfen themselves scratch a living in the north. They have a reputation abroad for being strong, dumb, and quiet, as well as having strange accents and smelly furs. Most Ulfen are quite tall, with men starting at 6 feet and the women just a few inches shorter. Their skin is pale and their hair blond, straw brown, or red. Both men and women wear it long and braided, with the women prone to more elaborate braids. Men usually wear beards.

Ulfen men and women set great store by personal appearance, valuing their flowing locks, tight braids, and well-kept furs of ermine, mink, and fox. They wear necklaces of amber, carved narwhal horn, and mammoth ivory, as well as finely-worked bronze and silver in a braided style. They consider themselves the handsomest men and women in all Avistan, and the damnable thing about it, to other peoples, is that they are often right.

Ulfen men from the Land of the Linnorm Kings fulfill the stereotype of sailors and traders; Ulfen from the Irrisen lands ruled by Baba Yaga are more raiders and riders than seamen, although they share cultural ties. Both speak a variety of Skald, the tongue of the distant north, and write their language using a runic alphabet taken from the dwarves. Skald speakers and dwarven speakers can understand one another with quite a bit of difficulty.

Ulfen traditionally keep thralls—slaves whose period of service ends in a set amount of time. Children born to thralls are always born free, and thralls can file a complaint against a harsh or unfair master (which shames the master, certainly, but also runs the risk of a master's fury). Thralls are either captured in battle or condemned to service by a *thingmar,* a court of justice of the Ulfen by their peers, overseen by an elder jarl or chief. Even a chief or jarl can be condemned as a thrall if he has foresworn an oath, killed a child, or betrayed his shield-brothers.

Ulfen men are fond of competitions both athletic and alcoholic. Their athletic contests often occur at the approach of winter or the start of spring and include climbing ice walls, hurling timbers of various sizes, ax throwing, sled pulls, and races on foot and on snowshoes. Swimming is not a skill that the Ulfen value, although sailing and rowing

are. The drinking competitions happen during great feasts, when the Ulfen men boast of their ability to down kegs or even barrels of mead, ale, and cider. Outsiders tend to take away from this a view that Ulfen are boors and louts, which is not entirely true. Their boorish loutishness tends to be confined to special occasions—Ulfen men who try this approach on other than feast days find that Ulfen women mock them mercilessly. Few repeat the experience.

The women are often powerful druids and priestesses of Desna or Torag. A few maidens each year also go on the Mountain Ride, a week-long hunt to tame hippogriffs and pegasi on the high peaks of the Kodar Mountains east of Jol or the Tusk Mountains in the Realm of the Mammoth Lords. Most maidens see this as a chance to escape their parents and wander alpine meadows in the early summer before they settle down, but each year a few of them actually succeed in bringing back a tame mount. These Ulfen women are called the "wind sisters," or sometimes simply "sky maidens," and they are messengers, couriers, and heralds between the various kings, princelings, and jarls of the North. With their great speed, they hop even from the mainland to the many islands to the west, from Halgrim to Jol and sometimes risking the bitter skies over Irrisen to reach the few Ulfen there not enslaved by evil. Without them, the remote settlements of Ulfen lands would be even more isolated. These wind sisters also form an important defense against the arrival of dragons and linnorms, providing crucial warning time to secure livestock, prepare defenses, and take refuge against these marauders.

The men are most often rangers and barbarians and worshipers of Erastil, Gorum, or Torag, although they have druids and priests of Desna among their numbers as well. As a group, they are more adventurous than most—the wilderness of the Linnorm Kings and Irrisen is too thinly settled for anyone to live long who cannot prosper in the wild and find food and shelter when bad weather sets in.

Most Ulfen are not heroes, of course, but rather trappers, hunters, farmers, and fisherfolk, according to the season and their own family heritage. A few in each generation become skalds—half-wise, half-drunken singers and jesters to the great men and women of the tribes. These skalds tell the sagas that record Ulfen history, and they are often the most literate in a village or town. Unlike the wind sisters, they have no immunity from reprisals, although most consider it unlucky to lower oneself to answer a skald with personal combat. Defeating a skald in a drinking contest, on the other hand, is considered quite a coup.

In general, dueling and feuding are popular pastimes among the Ulfen, with great emphasis on personal honor and the value of a sworn oath. Insults are usually answered with ax and shield pushes, and while dueling is always considered purely a temporary argument, fought to the first blood and forgotten as soon as it is over, feuding is a more serious thing. In a feud among the Ulfen, entire families and clans can go to war over a conflict as simple as the proper way to mend nets or the rights to a particular salmon spawning ground. Sheep and cattle raiding are also popular pastimes.

Finally, no discussion of the Ulfen would be complete without mention of the high incidence of lycanthropy among them. Werewolves, werebears, and wereravens are most common, but selkies (wereseals), werewolverines, and even werefoxes are not unknown among them. The curse of lycanthropy is not considered an especially dishonorable state among the Ulfen, but simply a mark of favor from nature spirits. Those who suffer from it and who cannot control their violent urges are required to stay in a long-house or spirit house during the full moon, which is barred with silver and stocked with enough food to satiate even the largest appetite.

The loudmouth Ulfen king Ingimundr the Unruly of Bildt is currently gathering Ulfen adventurers and younger sons for a foray into the "rich southern lands." Most older men oppose this, as trade and bodyguard work are making many of the Ulfen quite wealthy by northern standards, although Ingrimundr is clearly calling to something in the Ulfen blood. The tales that the Ulfen tell about themselves might make them sail south and go a-reaving again, although the Norns and the Fates advise against it. More likely, perhaps, is a great gambit to the east, to take back land from Irrisen stolen long ago by Baba Yaga and her trollish minions. Ingimundr believes he can convince the Ulfen under her sway to turn against the Witch Queen, although others believe her rule is as absolute as the relentless grip of the northern ice.

Ulfen Singing

In the traveler's tales of visitors to the Lands of the Linnorm Kings and Irrisen, at some point the storyteller always mentions the singing. It's true that the Ulfen love to sing while they work, a trait that comes from their sailing and rowing culture, but they also sing while weaving, cooking, tanning leather, smoking fish, walking between villages, or herding home a flock of sheep.

And they sing when they fight. The Ulfen warrior's distinctive song is always completely his own. The wind sisters might sing to urge their pegasi to fly faster and guide the lance, while the berserk greataxe-wielding raider might sing of blood and a widow's tears, but each warrior knows the song that carries him through battle. Some foes find it unsettling, while dwarves seem to consider it fairly normal. If you hear songs of blood, archery, feathered death, and glory, you know the Ulfen are ambushing you. All these songs can make it quite difficult to organize against the Ulfen (requiring a DC 10 Concentration check for spellcasting and a DC 10 Listen check to hear shouted orders over the din).



Varisians

Language: Varisian

Favored Regions:
Everywhere, but most common in Varisia, Ustalav, and Lake Encarthan and surrounding areas

Favored Deities:
Calistria, Cayden Cailean, Desna, Erastil, Norgorber, Shelyn, Urgathoa, Zon-Kuthon

Names:
Varisians possess a given name and a family name. They favor long, elaborate names with many syllables, names beginning and ending with vowels, and the letter Z.

Male Names:
Alezandaru, Andrezi, Dorin, Eugeni, Katallin, Grigore, Henric, Ionacu, Iozif, Marduzi, Silviu, Skender, Tiberiu, Viorel, Zandu, Zstelian

Female Names:
Alika, Alinza, Anca, Bogdana, Carmelizzia, Esmerelda, Ilinica, Iolana, Luminita, Mirela, Narcizia, Nicinniana, Piousa, Violetta, Zeldana, Zriorica

Varisians consider themselves the native race of the realm that shares their name. Wanderers and nomads, Varisians travel the land in caravans, stopping only to put on their shows. Some Varisians use their gregarious natures and dark good looks to swindle unfortunate marks; it is these few scalawags who give the Varisian people a bad name. Most other people respect the Varisians for their ancient traditions and vast knowledge but mistrust their motives.

Tales about Varisians circulate endlessly. To ordinary folk, the colorful travelers who never settle but flit about like butterflies over the land seem fascinating, but also just a little frightening.

A traveler can sit down in any tavern in Golarion and overhear a story about the Varisians—how they never build towns or sow crops, how they live in the wagons that carry them over the land, how they sing and dance for money, how they dress in bright colors and cover their bodies with jewelry and intricate tattoos, and how a Varisian once robbed someone's uncle's wife's brother's best friend in an elaborate scam. Conventional wisdom holds that observers should view the beautiful, exotic Varisians from a distance, as if admiring a tiger prowling through the jungle.

> It's been a time since someone's been able to get the better of me, but I didn't suspect a thing. When I fought off that greasy brigand, she told me I was her hero and put her arms right around me, fluttering those black lashes! I offered to escort her to town, but just then her brother arrived, shook my hand, and told me he owed me his life. I left thinking that no matter what tales I'd heard, Varisians were a decent folk. Kept thinking that until I reached the tavern and found my coin purse gone.
>
> –Seldeen Finch, Pathfinder

Tales of Varisian treachery and deceit usually come from interactions with the Sczarni, a clan of Varisians dedicated to larceny and confidence games. The Sczarni travel less frequently than their kin, setting up shop in cities for months—even years—at a time. So long as their criminal activities go undetected, Sczarni continue to bleed their victims until their pockets are full and neighbors grow suspicious. They then move on to the next town and start over.

Varisians call the world their home. Artwork on the walls of ruins, fragments of ancient writing, and stories passed down from Varisian wise women suggest that the Varisians had a homeland once, but they fled in the wake of a terrible cataclysm. Where that cursed land was, and what cataclysm prompted their exodus, remains to be seen. A handful of prophecies suggest that the Varisians wait for a sign that the time has come to return to their home—suggest as well that the sign will come in the form of a hero, possibly an angel, sent by Desna herself.

Popular opinion holds that most Varisians are singers, storytellers, and thieves—rogues and bards, in other words.

In truth, Varisians of all classes exist, although some appear more commonly than others. Many Varisians walk the path of the fighter, ranger, or sorcerer. Varisian clerics typically worship Desna, but many also pay homage to the host of angels Varisians believe serve Desna. The latter usually cover their bodies with colorful tattoos of powerful humans and animals with great feathered wings.

Varisians favor scarves of all sizes and colors, but some hold special significance. Most notable is the family scarf, or *kapenia*. Children receive their *kapenia* upon maturity; to own one is to be an adult. These long, heavy scarves display elegant and complicated embroidery that is incomprehensible to most outsiders. To Varisians, though, the scarves show their family trees. By tracing the loops and whorls of a scarf, a Varisian can trace a person's history back through her mother and father, her siblings, grandparents and great-grandparents, as far back as the family possesses knowledge.

Varisians wear their *kapenia* only on special occasions, such as weddings or funerals. Most choose to be buried with their *kapenia*, though some bequeath them to loved ones. It is extraordinarily rare for a Varisian to bequeath her *kapenia* to a non-Varisian, or even a Varisian not of her clan. Varisians wear sensible but colorful clothes during the workday. When performing, they dress in fancy gowns and heavily embroidered vests and trousers and wear excessive amounts of jewelry.

Varisians believe that certain colors carry specific powers and choose their outfits to attract the right type of energy. Pink is the color of love, kindness, and courage. Red represents lust, long life, and inner strength. Orange is the color of happiness and resourcefulness, and adventuring Varisians often wear a touch of orange on their travels. Green enhances wisdom and self-control. Turquoise represents physical strength and nonverbal communication, and most dancing costumes feature it. Blue is the color of health, youth, and beauty. Violet enhances intuition and divine inspiration, so most fortunetellers and seers wear violet scarves.

Varisians love jewelry and favor gems over coins. Most Varisians pragmatically believe that worn wealth is harder to steal than wealth hidden out of sight in a tent or locked up in a box.

Strangely enough, most Varisian druids are not true Varisians, but adopted members of the clans. Many druids come from outside Varisia to protect what they see as unspoiled wild land. These druids, nomads and wanderers with a fierce love of nature, empathize with the Varisian way of life and often travel with caravans. Over time, some find homes with their new families and use their wandering life to learn about and protect the wild areas of Varisia.

Varisian wizards often serve as historians and record the legends of their families. Instead of studying in dusty libraries, they glean lore from old books and bits of knowledge traded for a song or a Harrow reading along the road. Varisian wizards often speak a handful of commonly used languages and know phrases from a dozen dead ones. Their spellbooks are collections of mismatched pages sewn into thick tomes and covered with runic scribblings.

Barbarians, monks, and paladins are rare among Varisians, while rogues and sorcerers are relatively common.

Varisians have a saying: "First the seed, then the trunk, then the leaf in the breeze." The seed refers to a bloodline or family history. The trunk refers to the elders in a clan who helped raise the current generation. The leaf in the breeze refers to the wandering Varisians, free to go where they please thanks to the strength of their elders and their families. Varisians never brook insults to their ancestors or their clan leaders, and they appreciate this loyalty in others. Varisian adventurers are most likely to respond to pleas for assistance when a family's unity is threatened, such as when a child is kidnapped or a poisoned grandfather requires a rare herbal cure.

Although their dedication to their families remains unswerving, Varisians do leave their caravans to adventure for many reasons. Some receive strange dreams or visions which lead them to wander apart from their clans. Others pursue the answer to a mysterious and disturbing Harrowing. A Varisian might fall out of favor with the clan and seek redemption, or she might feel betrayed by her family and leave in search of a new one.

Although found everywhere, Varisians are most common in Varisia, Ustalav, and the areas surrounding Lake Encarthan and its numerous river systems. They speak Varisian.

Birth Tattoos

Varisians love their brightly colored, intricate, and personally significant tattoos. Rarely, a Varisian might enter the world already tattooed in the form of a birthmark.

These "birth tattoos" bear little resemblance to conventional birthmarks. Most are extremely elaborate and multicolored. Some represent physical objects, such as a sword or a unicorn, while others spell out phrases in some long-dead runic language or outline a map. The tattoos might appear as tiny, blurred marks during infancy and childhood but grow with the child until they reach a clear and detailed full size.

Varisians believe that birth tattoos indicate a profound destiny awaiting the marked child. At some point in a marked one's life, her tattoo will show its significance. She might claim the magic sword, befriend the unicorn, decipher the runes, or navigate the maze. Birth tattoos do not always signify a grand destiny, however—the Varisian must beware lest her fate is not to claim the sword, but die on it.



Vudrani

Language: Vudrani

Favored Regions:
Absalom, Jalmeray, Katapesh, Nex, Osirion

Favored Deities:
Gruhastha, Irori, Suyuddha, hundreds of others

Names:
Most Vudrani have three names: a given name, a middle name (usually the father's given name), and a family name. Both given and family names vary greatly by region, religion, and caste, and the examples provided here only touch upon the most common given names for either sex.

Male Names:
Bala, Barid, Dakshi, Darpan, Hava, Krama, Mahasi, Manujyestha, Nitha, Pratapa, Sajan, Sumna, Viraj, Yantur

Female Names:
Abha, Anahita, Harita, Hema, Isa, Jayazi, Lalitya, Nagina, Navya, Padma, Parvati, Rati, Sajni, Viraji, Zaci

The Vudrani strive for enlightenment and personal betterment, but they do not often reach beyond their station. Theirs is a culture steeped in ancient traditions that define roles, and many do not see it as proper to work above or below what the fate of their birth dictates. This mindset stays with the Vudrani, even when they travel thousands of miles west to visit Jalmeray and the Inner Sea, and it is only after several generations of life among the Avastani and Garundi that they begin to relax these beliefs.

> A warrior's life is to war. A leader's life is to lead. A farmer's life is to farm. To know your life is to know contentment. To rise above your life is to know uncertainty. To sink beneath your life is to know despair.
> –Vigrahin Patitraha, Chapter 6.23

The Vudrani come from distant Vudra, an immense and powerful empire made up of several nations collectively known as the Impossible Kingdoms. The affluence and stability of the Impossible Kingdoms support a large population. Despite its affluence, though, the Vudrani people do not content themselves with sitting idly by. Exploration—for the purposes of trade, conquest, or pure curiosity—has put the people of Vudra on nearly every continent of the world. Vudrani merchants are known as trustworthy and fair business partners and purveyors of exotic wares.

Vudrani culture remains stable thanks to the people's strong belief in the role of birth, which in turn draws itself from religious texts that define human existence in a series of castes. According to Vudrani beliefs, a person's caste depends on the actions of her previous lives. Someone of a low caste only recently earned the right to be born as a human, while those of the highest castes are celebrated as examples of what good deeds over multiple lives can do for a soul. The ultimate goal of all this rebirthing is to serve the gods as an *Anucara* ("follower") in Nirvana.

Hierarchies exist within the castes as well. Although Vudrani are among the most accepting of all humans in regards to skin-tone variations, they do prefer those with a natural coloration the fair-skinned Avastani might call "tanned." In general, people closer to the Vudrani ideal (light, but not too light) tend to be of a higher standing in a caste. The farther from that ideal, the lower the person's standing, although those whose skin is "too dark" are generally seen as more attractive than those who are "too light."

Throughout Vudrani society, such heavy emphasis is placed on the creation and care of male offspring that female infanticide remains a constant problem. Baladata ("Girl Schools") offer an alternative to leaving an unwanted daughter out in the elements. These state-supported orphanages only house girls abandoned by their parents. Many girls who grow up in Baladata often learn useful (though rarely pleasant) trades that allow them to later contribute meaningfully to society. A large minority, though, learn how to fight, navigate at sea, survive in the wilds, and otherwise prove themselves

as able explorers. These atanapratta become valued members of ships' crews, adventuring bands, and expeditions into unknown territories.

Within the Inner Sea region, Vudrani tend to keep to themselves on their island colony of Jalmeray, although brisk trade with Katapesh, Quantium, and Absalom sees them frequently visiting those important ports. Agents of the Isle of Jalmeray often go on diplomatic missions throughout the region, but they are trusted in few courts outside Absalom. Most Vudrani encountered in the Inner Sea region belong to the padaprajna, kezavazresthin, or atanapratta castes, giving the people of Avistan the impression that all Vudrani are warriors, merchants, or explorers.

The Vudrani worship a bewildering array of thousands of unusual gods. As a former mortal human (as the stories go), Irori is hailed as the epitome of enlightened perfection—the ideal human. Even with his hundreds of aspects, though, Irori is but a small part of an ancient religious system little understood outside Vudra itself.

Various religious texts help guide the Vudrani in understanding their complex faith. Chief among these collections of wisdom is the *Azvadeva Pujila*. Along with the *Azvadeva Pujila*, the *Mizravrtta Brahmodya* recounts the history of the world as told to the sage Balazastrin by an avatar of the goddess Likha, the Teller. Finally, the *Vigrahin Patitraka* provides a set of instructions, told in a series of questions and answers, on how to properly live life in order to move one step closer to Nirvana in your next rebirth.

Whenever possible, Vudrani don luxurious garments of the finest cloth, favoring loose-fitting garb appropriate to the warm clime of their homeland. Many of these fancy clothes come to Vudra via trade from Tian Xia, while those fineries produced in the Impossible Kingdoms themselves are traded in Katapesh and Absalom. Vudrani women tend to wear brightly colored saris and wrap their heads in beautiful scarves. Gold jewelry, including piercings of the ears, nose, and eyebrows, are common. Married women of all castes adorn the center of their foreheads with dots of colorful pigments (usually red), and unmarried women of wealthy families frequently attach small jewels or other decorations to the same location using gum resins. Vudrani men adorn themselves with knee-length kilts or loose pants tied with silk at the waist and ankles, as well as simple shirts tied closed in the front. Men not of the powerful bhuridhana or rajah castes rarely wear any decorative jewelry, while men of those high castes festoon themselves with golden baubles and massive jewels.

Vudrani culture places great value on beautiful, deliberate movements and the ability to spin a good story. Graceful veiled dancers catch the eyes of Vudrani men as easily as velvet-voiced storytellers set aflutter the hearts of Vudrani women. Even when not attempting to woo members of the opposite sex, the Vudrani value precise movements and eloquent speech.

As an outgrowth of the Vudrani love of beautiful movements, study of martial arts (often first created in Tian Xia but perfected in Vudra) grows more popular with each passing year. So skilled are Vudrani martial artists that, on occasion, even masters from Tian Xia cross the treacherous sea separating their lands to study the precise motions of the Vudrani. Although the Vudrani are not known for their innovation in creating new or derivative styles, in the eastern half of the world their exacting mastery of existing schools brings them great accord.

Vudrani cuisine relies heavily on strong spices, green vegetables, and dairy proteins. Many Vudrani, particularly those who strongly venerate Irori, do not eat any kind of meat at all, but most do not share this taboo and gladly eat any kind of sea creature (nearly all Vudrani eschew the flesh of mammals and birds). Despite these limitations, Vudrani cuisine provides one of the most diverse selections of food among human ethnicities.

Almost every Vudrani speaks the language Vudrani, as it is considered the language of the gods, although tribal and regional languages continue to flourish across Vudra.

Vudrani Gods

The number of gods recognized and venerated by the Vudrani is truly staggering. A very slow consolidation of deific identities over the past several millennia has cut the number of gods down into the high hundreds (although every god also has several dozen aspects, each of which was once a god in his own right). Among all these many gods, though, several stand out.

Gruhastha, the Keeper: Gruhastha is said to be the watchful nephew of Irori, as well as an honored advisor. According to the *Azvadeva Pujila*, Gruhastha is assigned the task of keeping watch over Golarion until enough beings reach enlightenment that the world itself becomes a part of Nirvana. Gruhastha appears in more stories than any other god (Irori included).

Irori, the Perfect Human: Stories told in the *Azvadeva Pujila* tell of how Irori reached true enlightenment and transcended his mortal limitations to become a god in Nirvana. This transcendence led to the creation of the Iro-Shu philosophy, which has become one of the prominent religions in Tian Xia.

Raumya, the Evil Prince: Followed by numerous hidden cults, the foul Raumya appears as the antagonist throughout the *Azvadeva Pujila* and other collections of myths and stories.

Suyuddha, the Warrior Queen: Patron goddess of the elite padaprajna caste, Suyuddha delights in calculated, coordinated war. She is not a battler, but rather a tactician of great skill. Several stories of her cunning appear in the *Mizravrtta Brahmodya*.

Other Races

In addition to the common races of Golarion, several other relatively civilized peoples exist. Most of these other races are extremely rare in the Inner Sea region. None of these races are particularly appropriate as player characters, as they seldom fit in well within human society. That said, adventuring PCs are always exceptional examples of their races, and for that reason alone these races receive mention—the most extraordinary among them do indeed occasionally enter human society in a productive manner.

Aasimar: The aasimar—children of humans and angels—have increased in number every year since the rise of Infernal Cheliax and the ballooning population of tieflings.

Boggards: Ranging widely in appearance, the squat, batrachian boggards of Avistan and their leaner Garundi cousins inhabit dense swamplands, obeying the whims of corpulent priest-kings and foul, croaking deities.

Centaurs: The tribes of centaurs who run free across the vast steppes of Arcadia have more subdued and exceedingly rare cousins living on the veldt of Garund and on the plains of Avistan.

Derro: Mysterious denizens of the upper reaches of the Darklands, the derro dwell in blue-litten caverns where they perform sadistic experiments on victims abducted from the surface world.

Drow: Those few elves who stayed on Golarion to face the Earthfall fled underground and became the drow—"accursed" in Elven—tainted exemplars of the worst traits of elvenkind: capriciousness, cruelty, arrogance, and disloyalty.

Giants: Countless tribes and varieties of these lumbering behemoths rule the rugged reaches of the world, from volcanic mountain ranges to stinking marshlands, trackless badlands to steaming jungles.

Gnolls: Hyena-headed gnolls, ever seeking new slaves to perform those tasks they abhor, make for unreliable mercenaries but excel at hunting intelligent prey.

Goblinoids: The most common goblinoids on Golarion are the sinister and murderous bugbears, the militaristic hobgoblins, and the sadistic and craven goblins.

Kobolds: Cunning and devious, the fecund kobolds are tenacious trapsmiths. Each tribe's bravery directly results from their numbers and the cruelty of their capricious kings.

Lizardfolk: Once widespread in Avistan and Garund, the primitive tribes of isolationist lizardfolk have been forced farther and farther into their swamps by climate change and the rapid expansion of other humanoids.

Orcs: These tribes of rough and savage humanoids were driven to the surface by the dwarves during the Age of Darkness, and have since been relegated to the harsh and barren corners of the world, surviving primarily by raiding other races.

Sahuagin: Akin to the shark, the sahuagin are the scourge of many seas, their relentless drive to harvest flesh from coastal settlements making them one of Golarion's most hated races.

Tieflings: In Infernal Cheliax, the fiend-blooded tieflings act as interlocutors between the ruling para-castes and the infernal courts of Hell, making them tolerated but not entirely trusted.

Troglodytes: These brutal reptilians dwell in tangled warrens where they worship vile demon gods and draw their war-plans against hated foes who lurk in the lighted world above.

Beyond all these, whispered rumors speak of even more obscure races of intelligent beings that sometimes join or emulate human society, such as dragons, duergar, harpies, intellect devourers, kitsune, minotaurs, ogre magi, rakshasas, tritons, and more.



Barbarian

Cold Resistance (Ex): At 3rd level, a barbarian gains cold resistance 2. This resistance increases by 2 for every 3 additional levels the barbarian attains, for a total of cold resistance 12 at 18th level.

From the savages of demon-claimed kingdom of Sarkoris to the tribesmen of the Lands of the Linnorm Kings, those primitive people who dwell apart from the so-called civilized lands are collectively known as barbarians. Although others see them as backward or vulgar, barbarians are products of rich cultures steeped in tradition, with fierce spirits born of surviving at the very frontiers of humanoid society.



Although considered primitives, barbarians merely follow a different, more basic form of civilization: a combination of ritual tests of worthiness, trial by ordeal, and survival of the fittest. Their ways and traditions are every bit as complex as those of city-dwellers, although usually more brutal. Like more "civilized" folk, though, there are rationales for every tradition—those of the barbarians are usually a matter of life or death, not just for the individual, but for entire tribes.

Of course, the barbarians of the Lands of the Linnorm Kings have traditions far removed from those of the Mwangi Expanse, and each would no doubt consider the other "primitives" or "savages." The practice of cannibalism might be perfectly acceptable to the nomads of the Sarkoris wastes, who might, in turn, find the harsh manhood rituals of the Shoanti a sign of degeneracy. Of course, most any man's culture is another man's barbarism.

Barbarians are a varied people, for the term describes countless separate societies scattered across the world. There is no single "barbarian tongue," for example: Savage tribesmen of the far north speak a combination of Dwarven slang and the rolling Giant language. Cinderlanders' speech is sprinkled with Ignan verbs, and Numerians speak Hallit with a sort of deep gurgling tone. With the exception of the Linnorm King language of Skald, which takes its alphabet from Dwarven (but also employs a handful of letters from another language in order to give its speakers more letters than the "weaklings" of southern Avistan), few barbarian tongues have a written form. At best, they employ pictograms to express a few very basic concepts.

Barbarian garb is similarly disparate, though it shares common traits: plain dress made of fur, leather, or sometimes scales and often adorned with beads, disks, or bones to mark their allegiances—or bring good luck. Tattoos are common, especially in the sweltering jungles of Garund, where body decorations often replace clothing.

Favored Regions: Barbarians occupy those places where civilization surrenders to the savagery of marauders and the unyielding rigors of climate—places like the Realm of the Mammoth Lords, where the bear clans battle mammoth-riding giants, and the Storval Plateau, where the Shoanti have become as savage as the native ogres. While the noble Ulfen clans battle dragons in the Lands of the Linnorm Kings, the barbarian kings of Numeria fight for their very souls on the fringes of the Worldwound.

Southward, the deserts of northern Garund are home to nomads astride hardy horses and plodding dromedaries. The Sodden Lands are home to insular tribes of raft-dwelling savages rumored to feast on the living hearts of any who dare venture into their grasp. In the jungles of the Mwangi Expanse, entire kingdoms of fierce barbarians are said to dwell in vast ruined cities.

Class Abilities: Barbarians in the cold climates of the Lands of the Linnorm Kings, the Realm of the Mammoth Lords, and the Worldwound sometimes have the above ability, which replaces the trap sense ability.

Bard

Specialized Training (Ex): At 1st level, a bard must choose a single category of the Perform skill. Whenever the bard performs bardic music using the chosen category of the Perform skill, he is treated as being 2 levels higher when determining the effect and save DC. In addition, a bard with specialized training can make use of his bardic music one additional time per day, assuming that the additional usage uses his chosen category of the Perform skill.

From the tribal dancers of the Mwangi Expanse to the warrior skalds of the Linnorm Kings, bards perform across the face of Golarion. While the common folk welcome them in almost any taproom, their reputations as rapscallions and thieves are hardly misbegotten. Handy in a pinch, bards do a little bit of everything, befitting their hodgepodge training and vagabond lifestyles. Still, all are good at one thing: performing. Not just for supper, but frequently for their very lives.

In the major cities of the Inner Sea, bards tend to wear colorful clothing to attract attention. As they say, perception is half of the show. In wilder regions, performers tend to dress as the common folk, both out of practicality and as a way to stop standing out when necessary. Trained performers often wear badges or other signets to mark their tutelage, assuming their schools bear some renown. Some place this mark on their instruments instead.

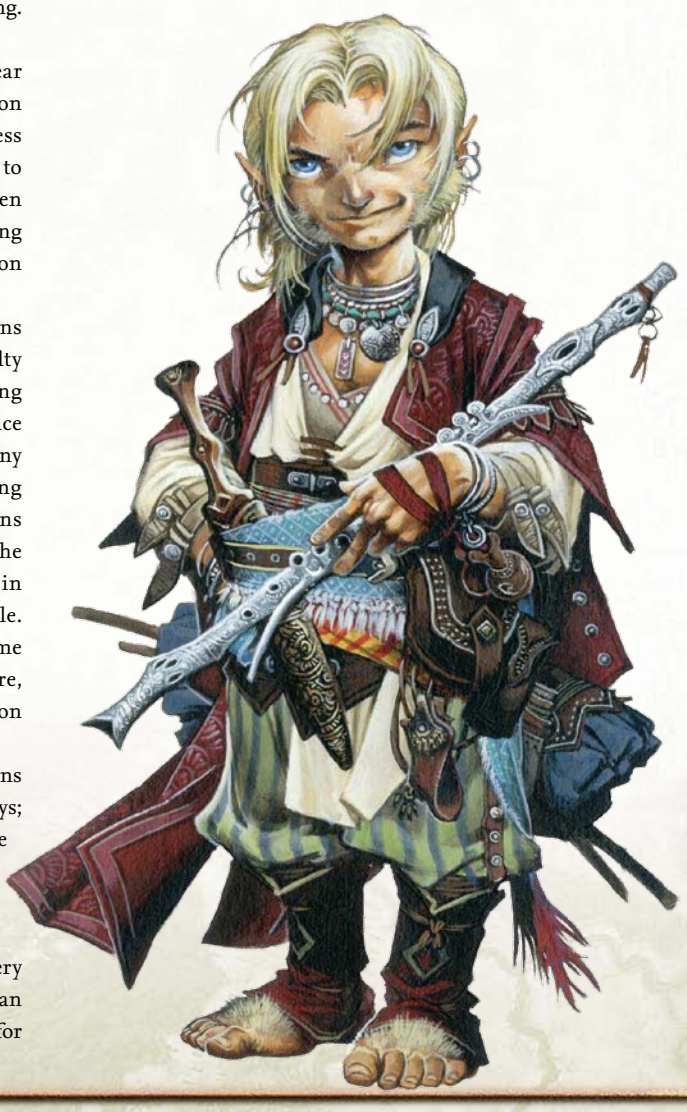
Despite his wanderlust, a bard always reveals telltale signs of origin in his style of performance, a cultural specialty from childhood. Northern skalds chant and lead rousing songs of victory. Varisian dancers spin to the boisterous pace of their peoples' traditional songs. Chelaxians accompany vocals with simple instruments, while Taldans favor stirring oratory and layered songs from days past. Garundi use horns and wind instruments with their leaping dances, and the lore keepers of the distant south play drums and stomp in complex rhythms, tracking the histories of their people. Razmiran officially outlaws performers—a waste of time better spent worshiping the Living God. Yet even there, those who worship Razmir most artfully receive recognition and preference for their talents.

Among the nonhuman races, the elves weave rich traditions of dance, music, and song into hypnotic, beautiful displays; dwarven forge-ringers craft wondrous works of art with the songs of their hammers; gnome storytellers fascinate with elaborate tales; and halfling whistlers are said to speak in a hidden language amid their airy tunes.

Favored Regions: Bards hail from every region of every nation on Golarion, but one thing draws them together: an audience. You find bards where you find crowds. Absalom, for example, is so thick with bards that city law requires them to join the Performer's Guild if they want to make money.

Bard schools in Absalom, Oppara, and Westcrown teach the craft of performance, a task every bit as grueling as swinging a sword at practice dummies all day. All bard schools teach music, dance, and theater. In addition, the Absalom Hothouse teaches popular or "low" arts, including tumbling, puppetry, and mimicry, and welcomes frequent guest instructors to teach regional specialties. The Oppara Conservatory teaches older, formal styles such as operatic singing and strictly stylized theater forms developed during Taldoran ascendancy. The Westcrown Academy is a frayed around the edges, but still functions as a beacon of chaotic freethinking under fiendish rule. The new Chelaxian capital of Egorian houses the impressive Imperial Hall, which trains and performs only High Chelaxian Opera, a form of performance popular across Cheliax and its holdings.

Class Abilities: Bards trained at one of the great schools of the Inner Sea tend to favor one performance type above all others, focusing their training. Such bards have the above ability, which replaces bardic knowledge



Cleric

Holy Warrior (Ex): A cleric with this ability is proficient with her deity's favored weapon. In addition, her base attack bonus as a cleric equals her cleric level, and her cleric Hit Die becomes a d10.

While piety is common among all strata of society, only a few are called to join the priestly ranks. Clerics are those individuals for whom religion isn't restricted to holy days and times of trouble, but is instead a way of life. The piety of a cleric allows her to channel divine essence into blessings and abjurations. It's not enough merely to contemplate the divine; a cleric must bring holiness to the world, often through evangelism, but sometimes by the sword.

Clerics are a ubiquitous element of life in Golarion (save a few notable exceptions). Any settlement worth noting has a shrine to the gods; a city likely hosts half a dozen or more temples. Although a score of major gods and countless minor deities enjoy popularity throughout the Inner Sea region, they are not worshiped equally across all borders. The popular gods of a region are often those with influence over the people's livelihood and those whose philosophies match the common sentiment. Certain religions also gained popularity through cultural exchange, aggressive missionaries, and government mandates. Clerics of any good or neutral god are afforded respect, on account of their wisdom and magic, even in regions where their patron is not generally revered.

Most clerics serve a single community—often the one they grew up in—providing divine counsel to the faithful, blessing public endeavors, and dispensing healing and divination when necessary. Although these pastoral priests rarely hold positions of temporal authority, their sermons have the power to sway public opinion.

A few clerics become adventurers. These clerics are proactive in their religion: experiencing all their gods have to offer, retrieving forgotten relics, and promoting their religions by battling villainy on its home turf.

In non-evil countries, worship of evil gods and fiends is banned. Yet this does not stop some from accepting the Faustian gifts of dark powers. From vengeful peasants to decadent nobles, dark cultists lurk under the surface of even the most rigid society. In countries where evil gods are openly worshiped, as well as on the edges of civilization, evil clerics are especially dangerous.

Favored Regions: Although their titles and doctrines vary, clerics are found almost everywhere sentient creatures dwell. It might be more useful to delineate where clerics aren't. The country of Rahadoum bans all religion and religious trappings. Practically no clerics reside there—the rare native who finds religion leaves quickly lest he face persecution. In the theocracy of Razmiran, only the worship of Razmir is allowed. The false god has no power to grant spells: his priests are sorcerers and other spellcasters.

Perhaps the holiest site in Golarion is the Ascendant Court in Absalom, a place of reverence for all religions, but especially worshipers of the Ascended—the living gods Iomedae, Norgorber, and Cayden Cailean—for at the center of the court is enshrined the *Starstone*, an artifact that represents a doorway from the mortal to the divine.

Class Abilities: Some clerics think of themselves more as holy warriors than proselytizers or shepherds. For these clerics, the ability to fight trumps all other concerns. Taking the above ability requires a cleric to give up both of her domains, including her domain powers.



Druid

Mountain Stride (Ex): A druid with this ability can move through rocky terrain at her normal speed and without taking damage or suffering any other impairment. Magically manipulated terrain, such as *spike stones*, affects her normally.

Wherever there are wild places in Golarion, there are druids—those who can call upon the magic of nature itself and use it to make the world a safe place for all creatures, not just those who build cities and dam rivers. Frequently dismissed as nature-loving pacifists, druids run the gamut of philosophies, from the gentle envoys of the Wildwood Lodge to the violent shapeshifters of Tanglebriar who reflect nature's most brutal aspects.

Although it might be rumored otherwise, druids are scarce in Golarion. Those who exist feel little compulsion to interfere in the ways of civilized beings—or even in the affairs of their own order. Every druid believes that nature has a way of sorting itself out, and to interfere is to question the Will of the World—wisdom that was ancient long before humanoids came to the faith.

The most notable exception are the druids of the Wildwood Lodge, who hold court on the Isle of Arenway for the benefit of those who seek the counsel of nature or who merely wish to travel the Sellen River in peace and safety. Here also meets the Moot of Ages, when druids from across Avistan and Garund—and some say points beyond—gather during the summer solstice to bring their discoveries and concerns before the entire druidic community. Their findings are not so much decisions of logic and dogma to be enforced, but rather interpretation, of the Will of the World,and how they can best serve it.

Most druids prefer clothing and weapons made by their own hands: rough-spun tunics of wool and plant fibers, leather pants and boots, and wooden weapons. When their specific missions require it, they might carry some few metal weapons and gear, but they keep to the natural ways whenever possible.

Favored Regions: Unlike many occupations, druids are not limited to specific locations, but rather are found wherever there is nature. Sandstriders guard the deserts of Thuvia and the dwarven Snowbeard Clans wander the brutally cold wastes of the Crown of the World. Druids even watch over cities, and where they dwell often defines their outlook. The Streetlings of Magnimar most often seek an equilibrium between humanoids and nature, while the shamans of the Mwangi Expanse believe that killing an animal for sport is a capital crime—and the Stonewardens of the Barrier Wall actively drive off miners and destroy their camps. Woodland druids—possibly the most common type—serve the Green Faith and protect their plant-filled homes from despoilers and the lumberjack's axe whenever possible.

Where druids are rarest, though perhaps most needed, are places where nature has become twisted: the Worldwound, the Mana Wastes between Geb and Nex, Tanglebriar, and the Sodden Lands. It is only the most powerful druids—or most foolish—who venture into such places in attempts to set matters aright.

Class Abilities: Due to the constant spread of civilization during the Age of Enthronement, many druids took to the mountains for solace. These druids adapted to the rocky terrain and have gained the above ability. This ability replaces woodland stride.



Fighter

Class Skills: A fighter trained at a famous war college or fighting school gains the following class skills (in addition to the normal fighter class skills): Diplomacy (Cha), Gather Information (Cha), Knowledge (architecture and engineering) (Int), Knowledge (geography) (Int), Knowledge (nobility and royalty) (Int), Sense Motive (Wis).

Skill Points at 1st Level: (4 + Int modifier) × 4.

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 4 + Int modifier.

Fighters are arguably the most common adventuring class on Golarion. One does not need piety, nor esoteric knowledge, nor birthright to become a fighter. It requires only a weapon and a need to fight, and while some seek out battle, many more find the fight comes to them. A fighter is more than a mindless combatant, though, and constantly strives to improves his abilities.

Martial training is common throughout Golarion. While warriors are more numerous, it is fighters who form the backbone of most skilled armies, militias, and mercenary companies. Fighters often hold positions of command, inspiring their troops by leading from the front lines. Against particularly dangerous foes, fighters are called upon to act as champions.

Every nation and city-state trains an army for defense and sometimes conquest. Military service is considered an honorable profession for all social classes. Indeed, in many stratified cultures it is one of the few ways someone of low birth can advance in society. This is not to say that inequality does not exist, as military rank is not always relative to skill-at-arms. Military training typically emphasizes the group over the individual—a corps of soldiers is greater than the sum of its parts.

Not all fighters belong to a standing army. Numerous mercenary companies operate across Golarion, offering their martial skills to the highest bidder. Some mercenary groups are organized like private armies, with ranks, uniforms, and codes of conduct. Others are little more than roving gangs likely to attack a potential employer if not paid to fight someone else. Many mercenary companies contain a mixture of races and cultures. Mercenaries are, for the most part, tolerant of differences. A fighter who doesn't wish to join the military can gain training at a private fighting school. These schools appear all over Golarion and teach the styles of their founders.

Fighters become adventurers to test their mettle. Many are ex-soldiers who, in absence of war, seek out new ways to use their training. Others learn swordplay in order to become monster slayers, following the footsteps of legendary heroes.

Favored Regions: Every nation needs soldiers and constabulary, so fighters can hail from any part of Golarion. On the edges of civilization, this role is often shared with barbarians and rangers, yet even the "savage" cultures produce elite fighters, wielding unconventional weapons and armor.

In addition to the various national armies and local militias, a number of paramilitary groups exist. The Hellknights are an extremely lawful order that operates out of Cheliax and southern Varisia. In Rahadoum, the Pure Legion keeps the Kingdom of Man free of religious speech and paraphernalia.

Arguably the most famous fighting schools are found in southern Brevoy, birthplace of the Aldori swordpact.

Class Abilities: Numerous martial academies around the Inner Sea region teach weapon skill, tactics, diplomacy, and other tools useful for war. Fighters who attend these schools may choose the above option, which replaces the bonus feat gained upon taking the first level of fighter.



Monk

Bonus Feats: 1st level—Improved Grapple or Point Blank Shot.
2nd level—Stunning Fist or Deflect Arrows.
6th level—Improved Trip or Rapid Fire.

Most monasteries in Avistan and Garund focus on religion and self-sufficiency. They grow their own food, fell their own lumber, and craft their own clothing and tools. Few of them produce warriors of any kind, except for the occasional cleric or paladin. It was not until the Vudrani came to Avistan that the western nations encountered monastic orders dedicated to self-perfection and quiet meditation (and, frequently, self defense). Monks remain uncommon among the nations of the Inner Sea, although with the continued influx of both Vudrani and Tian, more of them appear every year.

While many seek purity of mind or body, few have the devotion to walk the path of a monk, making them a rarity in Golarion. Even forthright paladins outnumber these skilled martial artists. Most monks pay homage to Irori, who promises to show them the path to self-perfection. In addition to the martial arts for which they are famous, monks practice constant self-improvement through contemplative meditation, fasting, and other forms of voluntary denial.

Few monastic orders that train monks exist in Avistan and Garund, and all of them are small. Each order trains its students in a particular school of battle, and while many schools derive from the same source or have many similar skills, each is wholly unique. Students train not only in their own school, but also in recognizing other schools and in learning those other schools' strengths and weaknesses.

Some particularly gifted or wishful worshipers of Irori attempt to teach themselves martial arts and contemplative meditation. Nearly all fail. Most independent monks learn from masters who studied at true monastic schools and who later developed their own styles. These apprentices can be found nearly anywhere, performing a host of chores designed to strengthen their bodies while learning all their masters can teach them about self defense, discipline, and contemplation.

Most monks own very little because they need very little. A few own and carry weapons, but many rely on their own bodies instead. Because they use their bodies as weapons, monks prefer to wear loose-fitting clothing that allows a full range of motion. Such clothing is usually plainly adorned, although some orders demand their members wear more extravagant uniforms. In either case, cleanliness and order play a strong role in the garb of every monk.

Favored Regions: The few orders of monks in Avistan and Garund mostly exist on Hermea and the Isle of Jalmeray. The Golden House, in Hermea, offers a home to nearly 100 monks and meditation experts. Jalmeray hosts the famed Houses of Perfection, where a few dozen students graduate every year and venture out into the world beyond its walls. In the north, merchants and exiles from faraway Tian Xia bring their own styles and traditions to the region. Enough Tian who cross the Crown of the World are trained in the ways of unarmed combat that many Avastani stereotype the entire race as one filled with martial artists and dedicated monks. An increasing number of temples devoted to Irori also train monks, and it is through those places that the martial arts spread across the region.

Class Abilities: The monks on the Isle of Jalmeray are of mostly Vudrani descent and hold to different traditions than the monks of the west. These monks have the above choices when selecting bonus feats.



Paladin

Light of Purity (Su): Starting at 6th level, a paladin with this ability can emit a radiance of blinding light once per week. This light acts like a *daylight* spell, save that it only lasts for 1 round per level of the paladin. In addition, any undead within 30 feet of the paladin emitting this light takes 1d6 points of damage per round for every two levels the paladin has attained. A Fortitude save (DC 10 + 1/2 the paladin's level + the paladin's Cha modifier) halves this damage. A paladin may use the light of purity one additional time per week for every three additional levels he has attained, to a maximum of five times at 18th level.

Paladins devote themselves to three ideals: purity, honor, and strength. A paladin's primary duty is to her deity, and she seeks to bring others to her way of thinking by example—through strength of faith, strength of mind, or, if all else fails, strength of arms. Not that paladins believe in a "convert or die" philosophy—only that those who seek to do evil must be taught the error of their ways.

Paragons of devotion, decency, and diplomacy, paladins are seen as inspirations to the young—shining examples of what anyone can become with enough hard work, sacrifice, and faith.

Paladins worship many different deities. The most common is Iomedae, the ascended goddess of valor and justice. Erastil commands the obedience of a great many holy warriors, particularly those who uphold justice for the common folk. Paladins of Torag are highly sought as military commanders. Adventuring paladins often spread the word of Sarenrae, the goddess of the sun, honesty, healing, and redemption—for paladins often seek adventure as a form of penance. Some paladins serve Abadar, Irori, or Shelyn, but paladins who serve no specific god are actually more common.

Unlike noble knights, paladins are not always armed with the keenest weapons and clad in the finest armor, although they are always clean and orderly. Slovenly behavior is a sign of poor discipline and lack of conviction. Most proudly display emblems of their faith and carry their holy symbols in plain sight. Even those who serve mortal authorities work their holy symbols into their badges of office. Scions of evil who hunt paladins often make trophies of their victims' gear.

Favored Regions: Paladins are a rare breed, as few people volunteer for a life of hardship and peril in the service of their religion. Paladins dwell in enclaves here and there, separate from the temptations of society. There they train, pray, and sometimes simply fight for their lives against the forces of evil, as in the Star Keep in Mendev, where fewer than a hundred paladins stand against the Worldwound's demonic hordes.

Vigil, in Lastwall, hosts perhaps the largest concentration of paladins, due to the massive training facilities in the Holy Citadel of Light, where the young knights practice the arts of war battling hordes of orcs from Belkzen. Andoran also provides training grounds for holy warriors, many using their faith to underscore political ideology as members of that nation's famous (or infamous) Eagle Knights. More formal schools exist in Absalom, Brevoy, Osirion, and Taldor, and countless mentors train apprentices all over Golarion.

Class Abilities: Paladins trained in the Holy Citadel of Light focus specifically on the destruction of undead and are often charged with cleansing the land around Gallowspire of its necrotic taint. These paladins gain the above special ability, which replaces the remove disease ability gained at 6th level and all increases in that ability.



Ranger

Enhanced Companion (Ex): Upon gaining an animal companion at 4th level, the ranger must choose a single type of animal. The ranger cannot call a different animal companion. The ranger's effective druid level is equal to the ranger's level –2 (instead of the normal 1/2) for that type of animal. This animal must be on the basic list of companions that can be chosen at 4th level and cannot be changed.

Golarion is home to towering city-states and untamed wilderness—sometimes side-by-side. Rangers are those brave individuals who seek to straddle that divide, making the hinterlands safe for settlers and traders and bringing the bounty of nature (and perhaps a bit of its animalism) back to civilization. While many folks make their livelihoods on the borderlands, not all of them are rangers.

Rangers are a common sight in rural communities, although some find work in even the most cosmopolitan cities. Many rangers prefer solitude to social responsibility. Some are hermits who survive on what they can gather or make themselves, while others are trappers and hunters who spend seasons in the wilderness, returning to town only to trade and resupply. These woodsmen are often a source of geographical information for would-be explorers and settlers.

Rangers are integral members of borderland communities, leading hunts and gathering wild plants to supplement the food supply. Diligent rangers also protect roads and villages from natural dangers and unnatural menaces. Some rangers use their talents to subdue nature in the face of civilization's inexorable advance.

Yet not all rangers are rural. Their sharp senses prove useful even in a metropolis; some rangers track humanoid prey for bounty in the urban jungle of the great cities. Even then, urbanites tend to look down upon rangers, mistaking their often-ragged and unkempt appearance for a lack of sophistication.

Rangers make up the bulk of many rural militias, and even large national armies employ rangers as scouts and spies, outriders and guerrillas. In many cases, these rangers do not wear uniforms. Instead, they carry documentation of their affiliation.

It's not unusual for a ranger to be struck with wanderlust and take up the life of an adventurer. Some transient rangers have lost the wilds they love to fierce monsters or encroaching civilization. Many travel in search of their favored enemies.

Favored Regions: Wherever civilization borders on wilderness, rangers are found. They are particularly common in Avistan since the fall of Imperial Cheliax, as many of its former holdings have been reclaimed by the wild. It is only the work of rangers that keeps many trade routes from disappearing.

Most armies employ a handful of rangers to act as scouts. The armies of Andoran, Kyonin, Molthune, Nirmathas, and the River Kingdoms, however, rely heavily on rangers. Although these soldiers lack the discipline and martial training of a traditional army, they make up for it with mobility and camouflage. The rangers of Nirmathas—trained in the wilds of the Fangwood—raised guerrilla warfare to new levels, securing Nirmathas from the machinations of Molthune and the druids of the Wildwood Lodge (who also employ rangers to act as their intermediaries). The marines of Korvosa's Sable Company are all rangers.

Class Abilities: Rangers who join a military unit sometimes focus their training on a single animal, to the exclusion of all others, forming a tight bond. This ability replaces the wild empathy ability.



Rogue

Poison Master (Ex): At 3rd level, the rogue can use poison without any chance of poisoning himself. For every three levels of rogue beyond 3rd, the DC for any poison coated on the rogue's weapons increases by +1 if the target is poisoned as part of a sneak attack.

Best summed up as "professional troublemakers," rogues come in every stripe, from the lowly bandit to the alluring grifter to the canny thief-catcher. Anyone can start down the roguish path, but skills make them successful. More than any other class, the rogue relies on a wide spread of trained abilities to overcome challenges. Stealth, opening locks, disarming traps, and dealing telling sneak attacks on enemies are all the purview of the rogue.

Rogues are not equivalent to thieves, but the distinction is lost in many people's minds. The mindset to be a successful rogue requires a certain mental flexibility—it's less about committing illegal acts than a matter of appreciating unorthodox problem-solving. In either case, common folk appreciate neither, and would rather the local thief swing from a gibbet and be done with the matter.

Most rogues start their careers as independent agents, self-taught and self-motivated. The best advance in skill and move naturally toward larger, more demanding goals. This puts civilized rogues in touch with guilds, where more formal training awaits.

In the distant past, thieves' guilds (as they are called) were likely rarer or stranger. Across Avistan and Garund today, thieves' guilds are a matter of course in any city and most towns. No matter how repressive or permissive the government, no matter how rich or poor the local marks, rogues band together for protection and training, like any group of like-minded people. Larger communities have multiple guilds that seldom get along. Competing guilds often fight running shadow wars, skulking beneath visible city operations but occasionally exploding into the open, spilling their illicit activities into public view.

Iconoclasts that they are, a few freelance rogues try to operate outside guilds. Guild members tend to frown (violently) on independent operators, putting them out of business or out of town. Fortunately, a marked rogue has numerous options outside of professional theft. Investigators, scouts, spies, militia, bounty hunters, and soldiers are all legally acceptable, socially permissible paths for someone with a little gumption. Ironically, smooth-tongued rogues who choose to go legit—or seem to—often find it an easy matter to take public office, becoming part of the same establishment that one persecuted them. (After all, the loose morals and diplomatic skills that mark a good con man translate remarkably well to politics.) And of course, no adventuring party gets far without a rogue around to circumvent traps and locks.



Rogues with legitimate careers tend to dress in the garb of their professions, while those who work freelance dress like everyone else in order to blend in. Sometimes this might require the finest silks, while other occasions call for muddy wool—it all depends on the job.

Favored Regions: Among the most ecumenical of roles, rogues operate all across Avistan and Garund. Larger-than-average concentrations of the class operate in the Shackles, Varisia, and Katapesh, where law is less stringent (or nonexistent), and in Nidal, where assassins are formally trained in silent death-dealing, especially with poisons and other debilitating toxins.

Absalom, Manaket, Oppara, Sedeq, and Westcrown all host large, influential guilds. The guilds in Absalom and Sedeq are relatively open, while guilds in other cities attempt to hide their identities and activities. There is no true accounting of the number of thieves' guilds in Absalom, but knowledgeable reports place the number in the dozens. Most prominent are the Sewer Rats (cutpurses and cutthroats) in the Puddles, the Silkenhand (narcotics and prostitution criminals) in the Ivy District, the Family Dogs (tight-knit racketeers) in the Coins, and Dod's Filchers (child thieves), who operate throughout the city.

Class Abilities: Rogues trained in shadow-shrouded Nidal are renowned for their use of poison and other vile toxins to weaken and kill their foes. This ability replaces the trap sense ability.

Sorcerer

Hidden Reserve (Su): Starting at 1st level, a sorcerer with this ability can call upon a hidden reserve of magical energy to cast additional spells. This reserve can be used to cast any spell the sorcerer could normally cast, but the sorcerer is fatigued after the spell is completed. If this spell if of the highest level that the sorcerer could normally cast, the sorcerer is exhausted instead. This ability cannot be used while fatigued or exhausted. It can be used a number of times per day equal to the sorcerer's Charisma bonus.

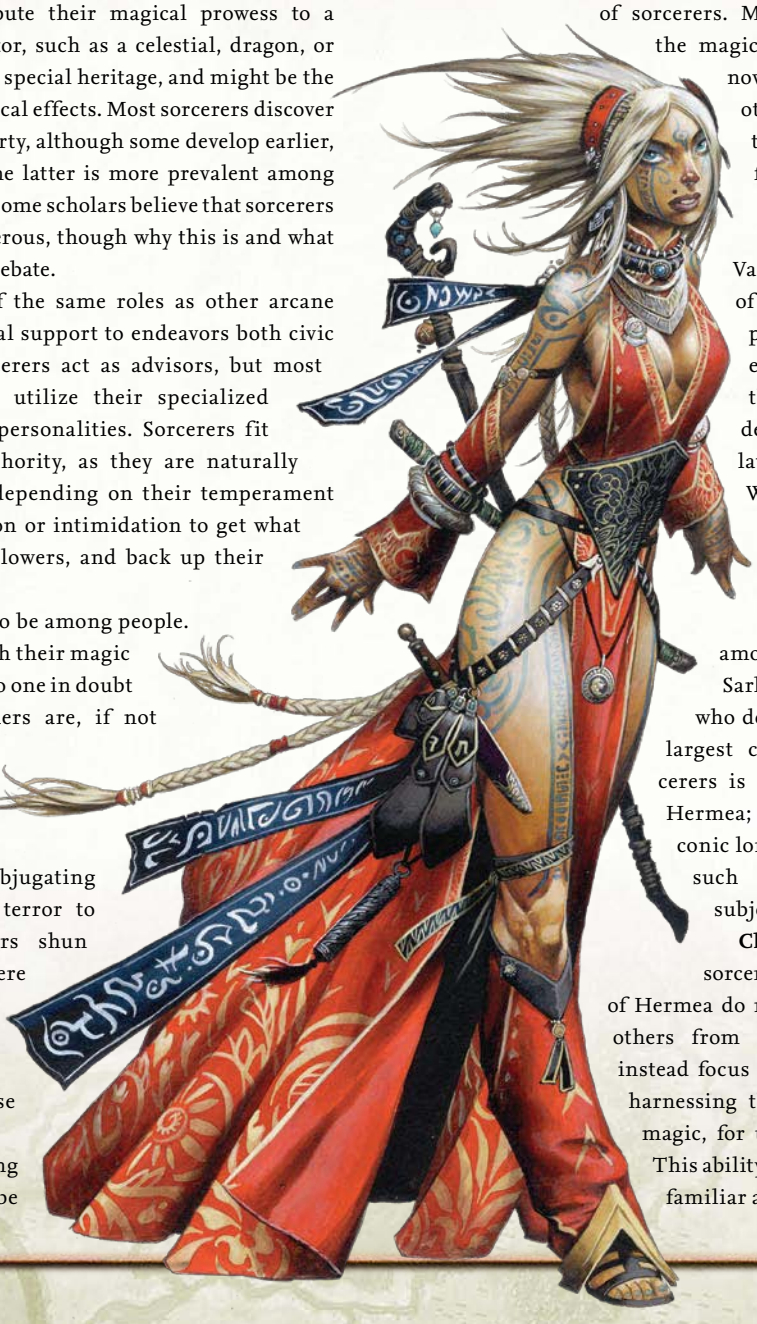
Most sorcerers attribute their magical prowess to a supernatural ancestor, such as a celestial, dragon, or fiend. A few have no special heritage, and might be the result of exposure to magical effects. Most sorcerers discover their powers during puberty, although some develop earlier, and a few later in life (the latter is more prevalent among those of common blood). Some scholars believe that sorcerers are becoming more numerous, though why this is and what it foretells is a matter of debate.

Sorcerers fill many of the same roles as other arcane casters, providing magical support to endeavors both civic and military. Some sorcerers act as advisors, but most prefer occupations that utilize their specialized magic or their forceful personalities. Sorcerers fit well in positions of authority, as they are naturally talented at persuasion: depending on their temperament they might use motivation or intimidation to get what they need from their followers, and back up their words with magic.

Most sorcerers prefer to be among people. Many are flamboyant with their magic and their dress, leaving no one in doubt of their puissance. Others are, if not humble, at least affable and convivial. A sorcerer who turns her powerful ego to intimidating and subjugating those around her is a terror to behold. A few sorcerers shun attention. In regions where sorcery is mistrusted, their natural glibness allows them to deflect suspicion through disguise and deception.

Sorcerous ability among humanoids can usually be traced back to a supernatural ancestor. Legends are filled with dalliances between outsiders and mortals: from angels who fall in love with mortals to devils who trade in favors of all kinds. Osirian elementalists trace their lineage back to genies both fair and foul. Dragons—the embodiment of strength and magic—are frequently known to consort with humanoids, and many sorcerers believe they have draconic blood. A few sorcerers exhibit traits reminiscent of aberrations or undead, although how such miscegenation could occur is a matter best left to the scholars.

Favored Regions: Areas that have seen a great deal of magic over the years tend to produce more sorcerers than their neighbors. Many sorcerers from Geb allege descent from undead bloodlines, a claim rejected by many traditional scholars. Neighboring Nex also has a large number of sorcerers. Many scholars believe the magic that decimated Nex now infects its people; others whisper that the lords of Nex have found a way to create sorcerers by means of the fleshforges. Varisia, once the center of a magical empire, produces many sorcerers—especially among the native Varisians—despite its sparse population. To the north, the Worldwound births more than just monsters, as sorcerous ability occurs with greater frequency among the refugees of Sarkoris, as well as those who defend its borders. The largest concentration of sorcerers is found on the Isle of Hermea; it is said that the draconic lord of the isle nurtures such abilities among his subjects.



Class Abilities: Some sorcerers raised on the Isle of Hermea do not call familiars like others from the mainland. They instead focus their development on harnessing their inner reserve of magic, for use in times of need. This ability replaces the summon familiar ability.

Wizard

Arcane Duelist (Su): Wizards with this ability are specially trained to push their spells when needed to gain the upper hand. When pushing a spell, the wizard can choose one of the three following effects: increase a spell's DC by +1, add +2 to the level check to overcome spell resistance, or add a +2 morale bonus on attack rolls made with the spell. A wizard can use this ability a number of times per day equal to his Intelligence bonus. Using this ability is a swift action.

Wizards are feared for their power but respected for their knowledge. Where others draw magic from spirits or the blood of their ancestors, a wizard's magic comes from the sweat of his own brow. By spending long hours poring over old tomes and performing dangerous experiments, a wizard unlocks universal secrets unimagined by the common man. Limited only by his own intellect, a wizard gains power over reality itself.

Although they tend to congregate only in the colleges of large cities, individual wizards are not uncommon. It's no surprise to find a rural village supporting a hedge mage (and perhaps his apprentice). Merchants hire wizards to ease travel and defend them from bandits, and few armies march without the support of an evoker.

A wizard's dedication to esoterica often isolates him from his peers, and yet the power to be gained is a constant lure, both for would-be wizards and those who employ them. Wizards are necessarily intelligent (if not always wise), and many people look to them for guidance. Some wizards serve as advisers to legislators and generals, while others apply their intelligence and magic to solving practical problems. Many, however, are content to accumulate knowledge for its own sake. The focus required means wizards are by nature single-minded in the pursuit of their objectives. Used to thinking in abstract terms, wizards tend to have grand goals: knowledge, power, and fame.



Most major cities house at least one school of wizardry. Those aspiring wizards who live far from cities or lack the funds to pay for tuition must find other means to acquire arcane knowledge. Often, a particularly bright child is apprenticed to a local wizard. In exchange for the knowledge imparted by his master, the apprentice wizard serves as an assistant and usually a drudge. A rare few wizards are self-taught, learning from magical tomes they find or steal. While private students have fewer resources, they are free of the political and philosophical entanglements of wizarding schools.

Many wizards travel widely in search of new spells and knowledge. Wizards are drawn to adventure as a means to rediscover lost lore, encounter strange creatures, and perform their magic in practical situations.

Favored Regions: Many magical institutes operate throughout Avistan and Garund. Necromancers can learn much at the schools of Geb, while the factories of rival Nex produce some of the finest transmuters (and their chimerical creations). Chelaxian schools, as well as the Acadamae in Korvosa, concentrate on conjuration (notably diabolism). On the other side of Varisia, the Stone of Seers in Magnimar teaches methods of divination and abjuration, while the Twilight Academy in Galduria researches experimental and unconventional methods. The wizards of Nidal specialize in shadow magic in honor of their dark patron. The colleges of Rahadoum teach a pragmatic form of magic devoid of overt spirituality. The thaumaturgical colleges of Kyonin teach magic in the elven tradition, and almost exclusively to those of elven blood. Absalom is home to a variety of prestigious magic institutes including the Arcanamirium (founded by the Arclords of Nex), the exclusive College of Mysteries, and the Clockwork Cathedral.

Class Abilities: Wizards who train at the Arcanamirum spend much of their time studying the practical applications of their spells, often in the school's dueling fields. As such, some of them have learned the above special ability, which replaces the Scribe Scroll feat gained at 1st level.



The Inner Sea

The intrigues and adventures of a Pathfinder Chronicles campaign take place in a diverse and dangerous region centered on the Inner Sea, the trading and cultural hub of two continents.

At the heart of the Inner Sea's warm waters stands Absalom, the City at the Center of the World. This ancient island city-state has survived nearly 5 millennia of toppled kingdoms to thrive as a haven of merchants and scoundrels.

In the west, the Inner Sea passes through the narrow Arch of Aroden, a tenaciously contested strait named for the monolithic ruined stone bridge connecting two continents at their closest point of approach. To the east, the Inner Sea opens into the vast Obari Ocean.

Two very different continents frame the Inner Sea.

Avistan, to the north, is the seat of once-mighty empires like Cheliax and Taldor, and site of the ruins of Lost Thassilon in Varisia. South, across the wide waterway of the Inner Sea, lie the secrets of Garund, a sprawling continent of arid deserts and fecund jungles, where the mighty pharaohs of Osirion emerged from the Age of Darkness to chart a new destiny for humanity.

Generally speaking, civilization centers on the Inner Sea, with barbarism and savagery taking hold where the sea's refining influence wanes. Exceptions exist, of course, and the scattered lights of civilization stand out in the dark wildernesses and savage frontiers far to the north at the top of Avistan and well to the south in eastern Garund. Likewise, dark, wild areas exist within otherwise civilized lands close to the Inner Sea. Mercenaries and would-be heroes seek fortune and glory throughout the Inner Sea region, uncovering lost treasures, pacifying terrible dangers, and finding ignoble deaths in every

unclaimed wilderness, kingdom, and empire of Avistan and Garund.

North of Avistan stretches the Crown of the World, a massive sheet of ice and snow that links the continent with others in the northern hemisphere. Where the two meet, hardy barbarism tends to dominate. Even in northern kingdoms that strive for advancements in civilization, the use and knowledge of arcane magic remains relatively unknown and certainly mistrusted in places such as the Lands of the Linnorm Kings and Realm of the Mammoth Lords. Even Mendev, a relatively advanced nation filled with pious (and not-so-pious) crusaders, tends to shy away from arcane magic.

Magic becomes more common in the southern nations of Avistan, particularly the devil-binding empire of Cheliax and its former colonies and vassal states. The ruling caste of shadow-haunted Nidal is suffused with forbidden magical forces, while the elves of Kyonin practice fey rites that date back millennia. On Avistan's rocky northwest shore, the Varisian frontier boasts the mostly intact ruins and lost magics of ancient Thassilon—as well as the famed Acadamae wizarding school.

Use of magic and the appearance of the fantastic and bizarre are much more commonplace on the southern continent of Garund. In the deserts of Osirion stand countless monuments to near-forgotten pharaohs, godlike beings who raised their people from barbarism to the heights of ancient empire. Along the eastern coast stand the remnants of Nex and Geb, two kingdoms formed to serve opposing wizard-kings in the distant past. Today, Geb relies on animated corpses to harvest food for its living inhabitants. The courts of Nex boast the most advanced and least-understood schools of arcane learning on the planet. Between these former enemies lies a magic-dead stretch of desert known as the Mana Wastes, within which exists a city-state reliant on technology and advanced engineering in a world dependant on the supernatural. Deep in the heart of Garund, across the Shattered Range mountains, ancient ruins of unknown origin rise out of wild, wholly uncivilized jungles. Scattered throughout the mountains surrounding the vast jungles of the Mwangi Expanse lie the ruins of once-miraculous flying cities of the Shory, long-since crashed into the rocky slopes where they now rest.

Each of these fantastic locales makes a fitting backdrop for the thrilling adventures of a Pathfinder Chronicles campaign. The world of Golarion and its myriad secrets stand ready for you and your players to explore.

The Age of Lost Omens

The crumbling remnants of countless lost civilizations abound upon Avistan and Garund, drawing explorers and adventurers from all corners of Golarion. Some of these nations fell in the cloudy days of prehistory, like the lost continent of Azlant and the mysterious terraced pyramids of the Mwangi Expanse. Others collapsed in recent memory, as occurred in the so-called Sodden Lands along the edge of the Eye of Abendego, a permanent and immense hurricane off Garund's western coast.

The Eye appeared a century ago, at the birth of the current era of mankind's history, the Age of Lost Omens. Until a century ago, the destiny of humanity was guided by an ascended mortal known as Aroden, the last survivor of Old Azlant, first of the great human kingdoms of antiquity.

In the early days of recorded history, Aroden walked Golarion among his people. When Azlant sunk beneath the sea, a victim of its own pride and arrogance, Aroden ventured to Avistan. There he raised the *Starstone* from the depths of the Inner Sea, helped to found both Taldor and Absalom, and protected his people from the depredations of horrific villains such as the wizard-king Tar-Baphon and the nigh-unstoppable Spawn of Rovagug. Then, thousands of years ago, Aroden departed Golarion, vowing to return on the eve of mankind's greatest triumph.

The Last Azlanti's powerful church in the empire of Cheliax traced this prophecy to a specific day a little more than a century ago. With great ceremony and circumstance, thousands of clerics of Aroden, the emperor, and the Chelaxian nobility who supported them gathered in a vast ceremony at the Chelish capital of Westcrown, eager to see their deific master manifest in the flesh to usher in a new age of triumph.

Instead, terrible storms darkened Golarion's skies, and the assembled clerics lost all connection to their god. For 3 weeks, winds and waves ravaged the world, drowning coastal nations and casting governments into ruin. In the north, Golarion shifted slightly in the direction of the infernal Abyss, granting terrible demonic forces control over a widening region of the world. The Eye of Abendego remains as the greatest physical aftershock of Aroden's apparent death, but the psychological scars upon humanity will take centuries to fully heal.

Perhaps worse, Aroden's disappearance shattered one of the most reliable prophecies humans had ever known, shaking their faith in the solidity of the future. Since this tragic event, no significant prophecy has come true in any way, leading scholars to name the current era the Age of Lost Omens.

This uncertain world serves as the backdrop for the Pathfinder Chronicles campaign setting and the tales of adventure and courage you tell there. It is a world 100 years from catastrophe, a place of overwhelming danger with an unknown future.

It is a place in need of adventurers willing to make that future their own. So polish your swords and armor and ready your most potent spells.

Your new campaign world awaits!

Absalom

City at the Center of the World

Absalom is the most famous of all cities, and takes pride in being one of the largest and wealthiest cities in the known world. According to myth, Absalom was founded by Aroden himself when the Last of the First Humans raised the *Starstone* from the ocean depths and left it in its current resting place at the heart of the city. It is thus a living part of mythology. Besides its noble past, Absalom sits in the largest natural harbor on the Isle of Kortos, in the eye of the Inner Sea. This allows it to control dozens of major shipping lanes, and makes it a critical stop on any voyage across that sea. The confluence of mercantile, strategic, and religious influence in Absalom earns its title as the City at the Center of the World. Of course, it also attracts would-be conquerors, who have unsuccessfully assaulted the city throughout history. The ruins of dozens of siege castles litter the grounds outside Absalom's walls, and its harbor is so choked with the masts and moldering hulls of sunken warships that safely reaching the city's docks requires the steady eye of a paid pilot. Yet Absalom has never fallen.



Alignment: N
Capital: Absalom (303,900)
Notable Settlements: Diobel (4,850), Escadar (11,700)
Ruler: Lord Gyr of House Gixx, Primarch of Absalom, Protector of Kortos
Government: Grand Council composed of representatives from several major noble houses and religious groups. The greatest of this council, called the primarch, enjoys a wide range of powers.
Languages: Common, Osiriani, Kelish
Religion: Abadar, Iomedae, Aroden, Norgorber, Cayden Cailean, Nethys, Sarenrae, Calistria, Shelyn, Irori

When Aroden rose the Isle of Kortos from the depths of the Inner Sea and founded Absalom, he called the wise and brave from nearby lands to inhabit the new land and charged them to guard the *Starstone* from all who would relocate it. Nobles, merchants, and adventurers came, and have continued to come, especially from Osirion, Thuvia, Cheliax, Andoran, Taldor, and Qadira. As a result, the culture of the city draws heavily from all these lands, and many of its noble houses identify themselves closely with elements from those nations. The common folk represent an even wider array of cultural influences, from Mordant Spire elves to Tian traders to travelers from other planes. As a result, food, song, and clothing from nearly every corner of Golarion can be found here if the visitor knows where to look. It is said with some seriousness that it is impossible to look out of place in the streets of Absalom.

Absalom is comprised of several bustling districts, each with its unique character. The following represent some of the larger, more powerful neighborhoods of the city.

Ascendant Court: Most of Absalom's temples are found in the Ascendant Court, the hub at the center of the city's great thoroughfares. The *Starstone* itself rests in a massive cathedral perched atop a pillar of rock surrounded by a seemingly bottomless pit. Three bridges cross this expanse, one for each of the Ascendant's faithful. A fourth bridge, corresponding to Aroden and maintained by his aging clergy, crumbled when an earthquake rocked the city a decade ago and has not been repaired. Although hundreds enter the massive structure every year, and only four are known to have ever won the ultimate prize of divinity, a few brave explorers have escaped the cathedral with their lives—and sometimes vast treasures. Their descriptions make it clear that within the rock and walls of the cathedral, magic doesn't always work properly, extra-dimensional movement is impossible, and the Cathedral itself regularly changes its configuration, challenges, and guardians.

The promise of the *Starstone* attracts legions of would-be deities, zealous cultists, and desperate followers eager for something to believe in. Every day, pilgrims visit the great chasm at the center of the district. Some write their wishes and dreams onto pieces of paper they drop into the pit, hoping to send a message directly to the gods. Others hope to catch a vainglorious fool or righteous hero in an attempt to snatch divinity in the Test of the *Starstone*. Agents of Absalom's thieves

guilds prey upon the visitors by picking pockets, running cons, and demanding protection money from various "deities in training."

Notable churches in the district include the Temple of the Shining Star, where clerics of Sarenrae honor the sun; the Seventh Church, site of one of Iomedae's 11 miraculous Acts; and Cayden's Hall, a grand tavern devoted to the Accidental God, where his faithful honor their master with upturned tankards and eager fists. Not far from the heart of the district lies the enormous Cathedral of Failure, where silent caretakers erect small shrines to unsuccessful seekers of divinity. The oft-empty chambers of this dour edifice echo with the memories of conquered aspirations and forgotten dreams.

Azlanti Keep: A district all to itself, this massive stone fortress sits near the northern edge of Absalom to protect the city from invaders from the land. The keep houses the city watch and the First Guard, an elite group of warriors, wizards, and scouts whose sole purpose is to root out and eliminate threats to the city. The citadel's architecture is among the oldest in Absalom and reflects influences of the city's Azlanti origins by way of Aroden. Wide balconies offer a commanding view of the city in all directions, and the immense flat roof of the structure forms a useful battle platform in times of siege.

The Coins: Situated just north of the docks, this district hosts most of the foreign traders and seamen who come to the city. The transient nature of the Coins' residents attracts illicit trade in the form of drugs, slaves, and contraband. The most respectable sections of the district are the Monger's Mart and the Grand Bazaar, where the need for trade enforces some civility. Even so, disagreements often escalate into bloodied blades, and more murders take place in the Coins than in any other district save the treacherous Puddles.

Ivy District: Overlooking the harbor and the seedier sections of town from atop a short bluff, the verdant Ivy District is home to numerous theaters, bawdy houses, and galleries that attract some of Absalom's most influential artists and craftsmen, as well as minor nobles, gifted actors, and popular bards. While certain "soft" crimes such as narcotics and prostitution thrive here, the residents of the district have little tolerance for hardened criminals or indigent street-dwellers. As members of different social classes can mingle here without arousing suspicion, the district is often used as a meeting place for cross-class intrigues.

The Petal District: Perched atop Aroden's Hill with the whole city at its feet, the Petal District is home to the wealthiest merchants and most powerful nobles in the wealthiest and most powerful city in the world. Decadent palaces, elaborate gardens, and glittering promenades characterize the district, which gets its name from the well-tended rows of flowers that run down the center of nearly every street. The overwhelming beauty forms a strange backdrop for the treacherous politics of Absalom's ruthless upper class, which resorts to poison and murder as often as negotiation and armistice.

Harrowing Politics

The political maneuvers of Absalom are far-reaching and complex, often drawing in elements of foreign powers; pacts with extra-planar entities; and promises of marriage, servitude, torture, and base pleasures. This complex dance of bargains, obligations, and vendettas is seen by many of the inhabitants of Absalom as being a vast game of cards, played with the ultimate Harrow deck—reality. As a result, a great deal of card-playing terminology, and some divination terms, have become common when discussing the politics of the city. Plots may be referred to as "hands," individual conspirators named after specific Harrow cards, desired outcomes referred to as "prophecies," and messages or trigger signals as "omens."

This also makes Harrow decks and readings very common among the upper class. Actually dealing a round of cards can be used as a cover for discussing the details of a political plot, and messages can be passed with fake Harrow readings. Anyone familiar with this system of codes gains a +2 circumstance bonus on Bluff checks made to pass a secret message when using a Harrow deck.

Precipice Quarter: This was once Beldrin's Bluff, a quiet and well-tended section of town filled with tea shops, pleasure houses, and a few of the city's government buildings. When an earthquake hit 10 years ago, however, much of the area fell into the sea, and the rest sits along a slice of cliffside that seems dangerously close to collapsing again. Now law-abiding citizens avoid the Precipice District and rumors whisper at strange hauntings in the abandoned ruins.

The Puddles: The same terrible earthquake sank the Puddles just below sea level at high tide, resulting in persistent minor flooding and erosion of building foundations and society. Most honest citizens fled the district years ago, ceding it to addicts, criminals, and those too poor to have any other choice. Thieves and cutthroats abound here in great numbers, and more than one guild of dubious character operates from the slouching, unsteady buildings of the Puddles.

Wise Quarter: Within the city itself, the Wise Quarter stands just north of the Ivy District, separating the affluence of that neighborhood from the immense Azlanti Keep. Absalom's public government buildings stand in Wise Quarter, including the Grand Council's hall and the residence of the Primarch. In addition, the Wise Quarter houses the Arcanamirium, one of Golarion's most adept institutions of magic (founded by the Arclords of Nex). Numerous independent sages, scholars, and scribes also work within the Wise Quarter, blending their philosophies and skills brought from a dozen home countries. Anything known to mortal minds is taught, considered, and debated within the Wise Quarter.

Government: Absalom is ruled by a Grand Council, which is chaired by Lord Gyr of House Gixx, who enjoys the titles of



Primarch and Defender of Kortos. The Council has 12 high seats (including the Primarch's) and a varying number of low seats. A high seat is kept as long as the holder can produce the seal of office once a year (see Cornucopias, below), while low seats are voted on by the High Council once a year. Influential religious figures, heads of major households, and powerful merchants fill the high seats. Anyone able to get elected can claim a low seat, although keeping it often involves undertaking arduous administrative tasks, such as the sanitation commission, office of prisons, and the rat-takers. The most powerful, profitable and respectable positions, including the Exchequer of Taxation, Trade Minister, Sea Lord, and the Justice of the Courts, fall to the high seats.

All matters of state are settled by a vote of the Grand Council. The entire council votes on common matters (such as when to hold festivals and what to do about a poor fishing season), while Matters of Note are voted on solely by the high seats. Whether a given issue is a Matter of Note is, itself, a Matter of Note, allowing the high seats to take control of any issue a majority of them wish to rule on.

Additionally, the Primarch has a number of unique privileges that give him considerable additional power. He can veto any political appointment, be it a high seat being given control of the harbormasters, or the creation of a new low seat. He also has the sole power to call a Grand Council meeting, allowing him to hold the council hostage by refusing to allow them to meet unless they agree to settle issues to his satisfaction. Since the Primarch holds his position for life (but cannot name a successor—his replacement is voted on as a Matter of Note), most Primarchs simply try to ensure they don't become such tyrants that someone decides to end their reign at the point of a sword. The Primarch is also traditionally the Sea Lord of Absalom's navy, giving him considerable military might, but Lord Gyr has instead named himself First Spell Lord, giving himself authority over the magical institutions of Absalom.

Cairnlands: The vast plain of broken weapons, stone barrows, and shallow graves surrounding Absalom is known as the Cairnlands. It is here that the thousands of soldiers who come to invade Absalom are laid to rest, often without the proper religious rituals to keep their spirits quiet. Also

found here are numerous siege castles—huge fortresses used in the many wars of conquest that have failed to take the great city. Notable siege castles include the treacherous El Raja Key and the Red Redoubt of Karamoss. The immense and weirdly beautiful Spire of Nex is located 10 miles north of Absalom, and remains a popular adventuring spot thousands of years after it was abandoned.

Diobel: Although most people think of Absalom as an independent city, it is in fact the capital of a nation (also named Absalom) that controls the entire Isle of Kortos (much of which is still wilds), as well as the settlements of Diobel and Escadar. Diobel is the smaller of these two settlements, and found on the western shores of Kortos. It is a bustling port town doing business mostly with fishermen (the shallows around Diobel allow for excellent fishing), traders exporting furs and lumber off Kortos, and smugglers looking to bring illicit goods in and out of Absalom itself overland, thus avoiding the watchful gaze of the larger port's harbormasters. While people in Absalom tend to think of Diobel as their poorer cousin, much of the food and common goods brought into Absalom actually arrive first in Diobel, as the lack of port fees often make it cheaper to land a ship in Diobel and take a caravan by land into Absalom, rather than land goods in the City at the Center of the World directly. Control of Diobel can give political forces increased influence in Absalom, making it a common first target for a growing faction. Currently, Diobel is ruled by Lord Avid of House Arnsen, a bitter rival (and old childhood friend) of Lord Gyr.

Escadar: Larger than Diobel—but still tiny compared to Absalom proper—the city of Escadar sits on the Isle of Erran, north of Kortos. Escadar is a military town, designed to support and maintain the naval might of Absalom. While the city of Absalom itself has never fallen to invaders, the port has been blockaded more than once, often leading to conditions of near starvation within the city. After such a siege a few centuries ago, the Grand Council voted to establish a shipyard and warehouse on Erran, to serve as a base for running through any future blockades. The town of Escadar has since grown into a fair-sized military base, with regular operations taken against pirates throughout the Inner Sea and as far south as the Obari Ocean. Escadar is ruled by a Lesser Council, comprised mostly of retired ship's captains and younger relatives of members of the Absalom Grand Council. In addition to maintaining ships of its own, the Lesser Council offers letters of marque to ships willing to fight pirates, giving independent ships some legal authority in the seas around Kortos.

Kortos Mounts: The Kortos Mounts dominate the center of the Isle of Kortos. Still wild despite their proximity to Absalom, these mountains are home to several tribes of minotaurs, centaurs, and harpies that engage in constant warfare among each other and against those who dare enter their lands. Many of these tribes also worship demons, and some throw sacrifices into vast crevices in the mountains.

Secret Signs [Local]

You can communicate with your allies using a secret set of hand signs forged in the fierce political battles of Absalom.

Prerequisite: Int 13, Absalom affinity.

Benefit: You teach your allies your own set of secret signs, allowing you to communicate concepts to them quickly, quietly, and at range. You gain a +5 bonus on Bluff checks made to pass secret messages as long as your allies can see you. In addition, you can use the signs to give advice and warnings, allowing you to use the aid another combat option even if you are not in a position to attack the opponent attacking your ally. Also, if you choose to aid another with a skill check, you grant a +4 bonus with a successful check, rather than the normal +2.

Sea Hulk: Not far off the southern coast of Kortos, midway between Absalom and Diobel, is the Sea Hulk. This mass of wreckage is formed from an ever-shifting collection of kraken-weed, crystal coral, and the remains of hundreds of sailing ships. These lost ships range from warships leftover from one of the failed ancient invasions to merchant vessels caught in unfortunate storms to pirates who used the area to hide from patrol ships. Sharks and sand demons stalk the Sea Hulk for victims, and treasure hunters dare its uneven decks and tangles of netting to seek valuables left in the churning mass. And, of course, occasionally a rescue effort must be made when the ship of someone important fails to avoid this navigational hazard.

Cornucopias

As its walls are high and strong, and its populations large enough to fight off any assault that could reasonably be brought to the island by ship, most invading armies expect to take Absalom by siege—specifically by cutting off any supplies going to the city by land, sea, or air. Given the massive size of Absalom, many military generals thought they could starve the local population into submission. Such efforts all failed, officially, because of the high number of clerics within the city, who magically summoned food, water, or transportation that bypassed such blockades.

While the clerics' efforts were always a help for the people of Absalom, they are not the whole reason the city has never fallen to famine. At Absalom's founding, 12 great horns were created, one for each High Seat on the Grand council. These horns, known as cornucopias, are capable of creating food for thousands of people every day when the posts and roads into Absalom are closed (although the items do nothing when trade flows freely). Each is carved from a single great piece of stone, and many believe they were shaped from the *Starstone* by Aroden himself.

The horns are closely guarded, as possessing one is the only absolute requirement for membership on the Grand Council. Should a cornucopia change hands, the council seat changes with it, even if the horn is taken through trickery, deceit, or force.

Alkenstar, Grand Duchy of

Magic-Dead Scientific Microstate



Alignment: LN
Capital: Alkenstar City (53,600)
Notable Settlements: Dongun Hold (1,900), Mortel (10,300)
Ruler: Grand Duchess Trietta Ricia
Government: Constitutional monarchy
Languages: Osiriani, Kelish
Religion: Torag, Abadar, Erastil, Irori

Tucked into a steep, narrow canyon of the Ustradi River within the eastern edges of the Shattered Range, on the edge of the reality-warping Mana Wastes, hides the magic-dead but resource-rich Grand Duchy of Alkenstar. Once a haven for refugees fleeing the worst of the wars between Geb and Nex, Alkenstar and its holdings have evolved into a neutral meeting ground for the leaders and merchants of those nations. The Grand Duchy also acts as a sanctuary from the many horrors of the Mana Wastes, including the feared sandkrakens.

Without magic to aid them, the people of Alkenstar turned to alchemy, engineering, and metallurgy to survive. Alkenstar engineers design intricate clockwork machines and breathtaking structures, its alchemists search for the secrets of the *Philosopher's Stone,* and its metallurgists continue to refine the world's strongest alloys. All three groups work together in Alkenstar City's impressive Gunworks, a massive factory that churns out most of Golarion's gunpowder weapons (from simple bombards to advanced small arms). Thanks to the scarcity of gunpowder in the world, the expense of the weapons, and the relative fragility of firearms, the Grand Duchy keeps most of the guns it produces. Alkenstar gunmarshals wield their firearms in defense of the nation—making Alkenstar one of the most heavily defended countries in Garund—and in mercenary groups who frequently augment the armies of Nex. Alkenstar also exports its engineers and alchemists across the Inner Sea region, where they either emigrate or work long and lucrative contracts.

The entire Grand Duchy stands on mountain slopes and is heavily terraced and braced. The dwarves of the Sky Citadel of Dongun Hold provide the engineers, alchemists, and metallurgists of Alkenstar with metals and minerals, receiving food and ice wine in exchange. There are no forests and precious few trees (thanks to the destruction that caused the Mana Wastes), and grasses, fig trees, and grape vines struggle to survive here. Terraced vineyards produce rare grapes made into a delectable ice wine particularly enjoyed by the ruling caste of Geb. In return, the moribund aristocrats of that nation provide most of Alkenstar's food, as the produce of Alkenstar's twisted plantlife cannot hope to sustain its people.

Where the river canyon opens onto the Mana Wastes, Alkenstar has erected a massive line of defenses composed of two walls, a series of ditches, and various other static defenses. Thanks to these barriers and the hundreds of gunmarshals who guard them, the Grand Duchy manages to keep at bay even the worst of the Mana Wastes's many threats.

Most firearms manufactured in Alkenstar come out of the Gunworks in a process resembling mass production. None of these firearms are masterwork. Throughout the Grand Duchy, however, numerous gunsmiths repair, modify, and build a variety of guns. Weapons made by one of these skilled gunsmiths are always masterwork in quality. In addition, these masters of their craft can alter a normal firearm manufactured in the Gunworks into a masterwork weapon, although this usually costs double the normal masterwork price.

The dusky-skinned people of Alkenstar, like their neighbors north and south, are almost all ethnic Garundi and Keleshites.

Government: In a strictly legal sense, the Grand Duchy of Alkenstar belongs to Nex, and in theory the Grand Duchess answers to the leaders of that nation. In practice, though, Alkenstar acts independently of its northern neighbor, and retains a careful balance of neutrality between Nex and Geb. A High Parliament of 73 ministers represents the numerous

factions within the three cities and the small rural sections of the duchy.

Alkenstar City: The Grand Duchy and its capital are generally considered one and the same (and on most maps the "City" part of the name is dropped), despite the additional presence of Dongun Hold, Martel, and the entire river canyon in which the city stands. Alkenstar City stands atop the Hellfallen Cliffs overlooking a narrow valley, where the massive Alken Falls causes the Ustradi River to drop nearly 700 feet on its way into Nex. Many people consider Alkenstar City, Dongun Hold, and Martel to all be different districts of the same city. The high steel and stone buildings of Martel, two of which reach above the top of the Hellfallen Cliffs and connect via skybridges to structures within the city proper, certainly contribute to this theory. Alkenstar City is forever shrouded in plumes of white steam and black smoke. Low buildings scarcely cover massive gears and machines of unknown industry that churn throughout the day. Visitors to the city frequently note the preponderance of soot covering the frequently shined brass decorations and brick-and-iron buildings. The oldest surviving bridge in Alkenstar City, known as New Bridge, was built several millennia ago and marks an astounding difference between it and Martel's Old Bridge (only a century older).

Cloudreaver Keep: Standing opposite Dongun Hold and connected to the Sky Citadel as well as Alkenstar City via the impressive Bridge of the Gods, Cloudreaver Keep guards the duchy's eastern border. In truth, though, since its completion the keep has been under attack—ghosts and other haunts torment it from within, while yetis frequently besiege it from without.

Dongun Hold: The nearly 2,000 dwarves who live in Dongun Hold work several veins of high-quality magnetite, as they have for nearly a millennium. A thin vein of gold runs through the mountain as well, but it is the vast rivers of quartz and other crystals grown up around the gold that makes the dwarves most of their wealth—thanks to lucrative trade agreements with Nex, the dwarves export their crystals east to Vudra. The Bridge of the Gods, certainly one of Golarion's premier engineering marvels, stretches more than a mile 500 feet above the Hellfallen Cliffs in a gentle arc to link Dongun Hold with three spires of Alkenstar City before connecting on the far side of the canyon at the immense Cloudreaver Keep.

The Great Maw of Rovagug: This huge bombard, the second-largest ever crafted, is built into the face of the Hellfallen Cliffs. The immense weapon has an 81-inch bore, a maximum range of 19 miles, and a minimum range of 8 miles. Its shells weigh 3 tons and require 14 men 1 hour to load. Since its completion 200 years ago, the Great Maw has only been fired twice: once as a demonstration and once to imperil a trio of sandkrakens (although the bombard did not score a direct hit, its immense shell created a 60-foot crater that caused the immense creatures to scatter).

Gunslinger

You are so skilled with firearms that you can fire one without letting down your guard.

Prerequisites: Base attack bonus +4, Weapon Focus (any firearm), proficiency with any firearm.

Benefit: When you attack with a firearm, you do not provoke attacks of opportunity.

Normal: Attacking with any kind of ranged weapon in a threatened square provokes attacks of opportunity.



Gunworks: Despite its size and 12 hours of operation per day, Alkenstar's massive Gunworks (which looks more like a small castle than anything else) produces only one completed small-arms weapon per day and five siege weapons per year. Capacity of the Gunworks far exceeds this amount, but the public representative of the Gunworks explains away its slow output as a desire to keep the prices artificially high to maximize profits. Cynics speculate that the Gunworks fears that a glut of firearms in the world might jeopardize Alkenstar's long-term safety, as close to 90% of all weapons manufactured in the Gunworks remain in the hands of Alkenstar and its people. The Gunworks readily admits it can increase its production by an exponential amount—and it has done so in the past whenever Alkenstar faced war.

Martel: At the foot of the Hellfallen Cliffs, at the base of Alken Falls, stands the small town of Martel. Composed mostly of two immense buildings secured via skybridges to the Hellfallen Cliffs as well as a number of shorter but still impressive towers, Martel houses both the financial district of Alkenstar, known for its advanced banking practices little trusted outside of the Grand Duchy, as well as the headquarters of the Grand Duchy's gunmarshals. Old Bridge, the oldest surviving structure within Alkenstar, reflects the oldest and most reliable engineering techniques in practice throughout Garund.

Andoran

Birthplace of Freedom

In the opening years of the Age of Lost Omens, the death of the demigod Aroden threw empires into chaos. Mighty Cheliax, greatest of the human kingdoms, fell to savage wars of assassination and plunder. When peace came to Cheliax, it came at a terrible price. The meticulous and evil House Thrune held the empire in its grasp, and with the help of diabolical servitors bound by magic and fell contracts, this new aristocracy demanded obedience from the old.

The farthest dependencies of Cheliax remained isolated from the madness pouring from the new imperial capital at Egorian and slowly slipped from Thrune's talons. In Andoran, the greatest and most cosmopolitan of Cheliax's holdings, the nobles reluctantly submitted to the rule and whims of the scheming devil-masters, betraying their nation and igniting a political fire that burns brighter now with each passing year.



Alignment: NG
Capital: Almas (76,600)
Notable Settlements: Augustana (54,200), Bellis (4,800), Carpenden (10,600), Falcon's Hollow (1,400), Oregent (22,700)
Ruler: His Excellency Codwin I of Augustana, Supreme Elect of the Free Peoples of Andoran
Government: Fledgling democracy
Languages: Common
Religion: Abadar, Erastil, Iomedae, Aroden, Shelyn, Cayden Cailean

Andoran got its start 3,000 years ago as the westernmost marchland of Old Taldor, a vast wooded plain populated by a curious, peaceful folk in awe of their more civilized eastern neighbors. The seemingly endless timber from the Arthfell Forest fed a growing shipyard at Augustana, and soon Andoran became critical to Taldor's navy and exploration of the seas beyond the Arch of Aroden. Andorens settled the disastrous Sun Temple Colony on Azlant, and their ships were among the first to reach the shores of central Arcadia, establishing strongholds that serve the nation to this day.

At the behest of the influential Chelish King Aspex the Even-Tongued, Andoran abandoned its ties with Taldor in 4081. The move came just as the armies of Qadira—traditional enemies of the empire—crossed Taldor's southern border in a brazen invasion. Vastly weakened and beset by decadence, Taldor could not fight on two fronts. It ceded Andoran to Cheliax without a fight.

Trade thrived under the kings and emperors of Cheliax, and the merchants of the nation's towns and cities grew more and more powerful, rivaling the hereditary nobles. Orc raids from the Five Kings Mountains, trouble with druids and fey in the country's noticeably dwindling forests, harassment by pirates on the open sea, and native uprisings disrupting colonial operations in Arcadia were constant threats, but life in Andoran remained mostly peaceful and free from upheaval.

The trouble in Cheliax in the wake of Aroden's death threatened that peace. The nation's margrave and his relatives in the ruling class capitulated to the demands of Cheliax's new diabolical queen in the interest of keeping things peaceful. They judged correctly that most of their citizens preferred to avoid the bloodshed that drowned the heartlands, but they incorrectly assumed the citizens would trade safety for servitude to the pawns of the Nine Hells.

By 4669, the outrage grew too great for the proud merchants of Andoran. Citing the anti-nobility screeds of Galtan philosophers like Jubannich and Hosetter, the merchants rallied the common man to demand greater rights and cast down the old order. Unlike in Galt, whose own revolution went astray, the merchants of Andoran did not seek to kill their former lords. Instead, they offered their nobles citizenship in the new kingdom without a king, where all men were equal and leaders ruled only at the mandate of the people. Those who agreed were welcomed into the new order. Those who refused faced exile or the noose. Either way, the nobles' holdings became the property of the state and were often immediately sold off or given to supporters of the People's Revolt.

Today, Andoran owes its power to a consortium of political radicals, wealthy merchant lords, and sympathetic aristocrats that seeks to spread the political philosophy of Common Rule and open new markets throughout the world. Much of the nation's impressive wealth comes from precious



antiquities raided from distant lands, such as Arcadia and the Mwangi Expanse. Competition for these resources grows fiercer by the year, and exotic locales like the ruin-laden deserts of interior Osirion or slivers of ancient Azlant host proxy wars between agents of Andoran and enemy powers like Cheliax and Taldor.

Andorens seek not just to transform their homeland, but to export their cultural, philosophical, and mercantile beliefs to the world. Years ago, the heroes of Andoran emptied the nation's prisons and freed all its slaves in an attempt to bolster the strength of the Revolt, and its people thereafter subscribed to a militant abolitionism. Agents provocateurs dispatched from the capital city of Almas actively seek to undermine the Inner Sea slave trade and those nations who actively support it: Absalom, Cheliax, Katapesh, Osirion, and Thuvia being among the worst offenders. The world thus views Andorens as trouble-makers and unwanted ideological imperialists.

Government: The Supreme Elect of Andoran, currently Codwin I of Augustana, manages the Executive Office, a huge bureaucracy that handles most governmental affairs in the nation. The 350 citizen-representatives sit on the marble benches of the People's Council in the monument-laden capital of Almas. Many once held noble titles, while others rose from slavery or serfdom to speak for their home shires in the assembly. From the highest government official of Andoran to its lowliest servant, nearly everyone believes in the tenets of the People's Revolt that transformed the nation some 40 years ago. They are the children of the second and third generations of liberty, and their faith in the Andoren way is resolute.

Andoran has a republican, centralized government. The source of power resides in the People's Council, which is subject to public approval and control. At the origin of the nation's code of laws is the so-called Associative Act of 4469, which was written by the 350 first councilors as a "private, sworn and voluntary" pact to safeguard the interests of every single citizen of Andoran, effectively opening the way to advanced forms of economical emancipation, administrative development, and affirmation of civil rights.

Every 5 years, all Andorens vote a candidate to the People's Council, which in turn names a Supreme Elect and appoints ministers, officials, and mayors to the different municipalities. Citizens also nominate a vicar to the mayors, choosing among two local candidates from the clergy of Abadar and Erastil. The Supreme Elect and the chosen bishop of Almas are respectively the mayor and vicar of the capital for the term of government.

In addition to the 30 Ministers who take care of the nation's finance and foreign affairs the People's Council includes 20 Consuls, who exercise executive power over the nation's



internal security and command Andoran's army and navy. The most powerful of the Consuls is the commander of the Eagle Knights of Andoran, General Reginald Cormoth. The commander resides in the Golden Aerie's Guardian Tower, an immense column from some monumental ruin. The column, brought in pieces from a distant land, was restored and fitted on a pedestal in the middle of the Field of Concord. The tower is topped with a 15-foot-tall gold-plated statue of Talmandor, the avoral patron of the nation and the protagonist of several ancient local legends.

An efficient, prosperous trade system; an egalitarian, transparent government; and a benevolent tolerance of all goodly religions are the three pilasters of Andoran's stability as a liberal republic. To maintain this stability, Andoran sustains enormous expenses in welfare and security, which are administered by a cabinet of 30 Ministers chosen by the people from among the nation's most efficient and competent bankers. Andoran's banking system operates with widespread credit accessibility and interest rates convenient enough to thwart tax evasion and usury. Almas is also the seat of several big banks that support foreign merchant enterprises. The Andoren code of law equates corruption and extortion by bankers and state officials to high treason, and those found guilty of such crimes are invariably exiled after the confiscation of all their property.

Almas: The palace of the People's Council dominates the west end of the Field of Concord, a sprawling open space that cleaves the densely-urbanized center of Almas west of the Andossan River. Once the arms square of a Chelaxian fortress, the Field of Concord contains a central avenue sided by gardened areas and cobbled squares functioning as multiple, interconnected marketplaces. At the east end of the field is the Golden Cathedral, formerly a grand temple of Aroden now used as a gathering place for secular sermons on the value of Common Rule. The cathedral's twin spires, are the tallest buildings in Andoran, rivaling in height and audacity the famed towers of Ancient Thassilon. During the summer season, each morning in which the People's Council gathers to discuss public business, Codwin I and representatives of Andoran's political parties perform a ritual salutation before the Golden Cathedral.

The first Toilday of every month, a duty-free market is held in the Field of Concord, and every year, during the entire month of Sarenith, the Great Andoran Fair attracts merchants from across Golarion. During the 27 days of the fair, the cosmopolitan aspect of Almas blossoms in a marvelous kaleidoscope of races and cultures, as the city welcomes tens of thousands of visitors from every part of the world. The business volume of the fair is one of the greatest in Avistan, and the tax revenue collected by the local government on that occasion is equally amazing. During

the Great Andoran Fair, goods from Oregent, Carpenden, Falcon's Hollow, and the multitude of villages that lie along the Andossan River are shipped to the capital for purchase at convenient prices.

Augustana: Andoran's second city, Augustana, owes its name and importance to the prolonged presence of a large Chelaxian port and military camp during the long campaign undertaken by General Khastalus of Corentyn to subjugate the barbarian tribes of Arthfell 3,000 years ago. As the "city of the emperor," Augustana was surpassed in importance by Almas only a century ago. Its shipyards and dock facilities are still among the largest and most important of the Inner Sea, and include the arsenal of the Andoren navy and the coastal fortress commanded by the Consul Admiral in charge. The first bank of Andoran, the Forester's Endowerments, has its historical headquarters in the center of the town.

Bellis: The frontier town of Bellis stands on the west bank of the Sellen River in the Andoren part of the Verduran Forest. The settlement was founded only half a century ago to consolidate Andoran's presence in the region and to intensify the use of the Verduran Forest as a new source of timber in place of the Arthfell Forest and Darkmoon Wood, now reduced and thinned after centuries of exploitation and fires. Due to its remote location and the tense relationships between Andoran and Taldor, Bellis has little to offer in terms of trade and good life, although its traditional apiculture provides the citizens with excellent honey, beeswax, and mead.

Carpenden: Set in a fertile and densely-populated range of rolling hills, Carpenden's vast plantations of grapes and olive trees make it an important agricultural center. The town houses a rich and growing woodworking industry aimed at the production of furniture, art objects, and other trade goods. About a third of Andoran's standing army is stationed in Carpenden, which is also the residence of the Consul Marshal, commander of the nation's land forces.

Falcon's Hollow: The oldest standing logging community in the nation, Falcon's Hollow lies in the heart of the mysterious Darkmoon Vale, which borders the cradle of the Five Kings civilization. Falcon's Hollow is a truly backwater place, although its skilled lumberjacks are always a distinct presence at the Great Andoran Fair in Almas. Adventurers are drawn to Falcon's Hollow by rumors of fabulous dwarven treasures hidden in the wilderness north of the town. Some of these adventurers actually manage to return to civilization with remarkable prizes, while many others are never seen again.

Oregent: The bustling town of Oregent owes its fame as a production center of fine glassware and silverware, as well as acting as the headquarters of the reviled Lumber Consortium. A nearby mine and the fine sand of several streams provide excellent raw materials for the local industry.

East of Orgent lies a large subterranean complex known as the Candlestone Caves. Partially exposed by an earthquake two centuries ago, the Candlestone Caves are a live limestone labyrinth extending for several miles beneath the foot of the Aspodell Mountains.

Necropolis of Nogortha: This sprawling necropolis is the last graveyard of the barbarians who inhabited the Arthfell Forest before their defeat at the hand of General Khastalus. A multitude of barrow mounds, some plundered by grave robbers and some excavated by Pathfinders, can be found in a sparsely wooded valley between the two mountainous ranges southwest of Oregent's silver mine.

Andoren Falconry [Local]

You know the secret Andoren arts of falconry developed by the Novotnian family of Darkmoon Vale.

Prerequisites: Cha 13, Animal Affinity, animal companion class feature, Andoran affinity.

Benefit: You improve your affinity with birds of prey of normal size (Small or smaller), such as eagles, falcons, hawks, and owls. You gain a +4 bonus on Animal Handling checks made to train or control birds of prey. In addition, if you have class levels only in classes that grant an animal companion (druid and ranger) treat your effective druid level as 1 higher for the purpose of determining its bonus HD, natural armor adjustment, Strength and Dexterity adjustment, bonus tricks, and special abilities.

Special: In order to gain this feat, you must spend at least 1 month in Andoran learning its techniques from someone who already possesses it. An illustrated tome that explains the theory and practice of Andoren Falconry is rumored to exist in the library of the University of Egorian, in Cheliax.

The River Bird Catcher

Mothers of Andoran tell their children this tale, set shortly after Cheliax convinced Andoran to break away from Taldor. At that time, barbarian rebels forced Cheliax to set up encampments up and down the Andossan River.

Duke Lapist, commander of a Chelaxian encampment, one day noticed his men allowing a harmless river man with a cargo of poultry and small birds to cross the river without harassment. Eager to show his men proper behavior, Duke Lapist confronted the river man, a bizarre-looking old man with a cloak of feathers and a beak-shaped headpiece. When the duke demanded the river man to kneel, the river man replied, "Men are born to walk. Birds are born to fly. Neither is born to kneel." When the duke threatened to free the river man's cargo, the river man answered, "Woe to a tyrant, like thee, if he lets a rebel free." Duke Lapist followed through on his threat and released the collected songbirds. A moment later, the songbirds turned into celestial falcons and attacked the dumbfounded nobleman. The river man, actually an avoral in disguise, revealed his true form. Duke Lapist was torn to pieces in a matter of seconds, but his kind-hearted guards were spared the celestial's wrath.

Modern Andoran remembers the old bird catcher of the Andossan River as the precursor of Andoren freedom.

Belkzen, Hold of

Savage Humanoid Homeland



Alignment: NE
Capital: Urgir (28,700)
Notable Settlements: Wyvernsting (11,320)
Ruler: Prominent orc champions and their respective clans include Grask Uldeth of the Empty Hand, Tulluk Clovenface of the Haskodars, and Hundux Half-man of Murdered Child
Government: Numerous tribal hordes constantly vying for dominance
Languages: Orc
Religion: Rovagug, Lamashtu, Zon-Kuthon

During the Age of Darkness, the ancient dwarves finally fulfilled their Quest for Sky, and the stoutfolk peered forth from their tunnels and gazed upon a surface world that was theirs to claim. Yet in pressing ever upward, they had driven before them their ancient enemies. The orcs, too, were eager to claim this world, and for generations northern Avistan ran red with the signs of their coming. In time, the dwarves pushed the hordes back into the dark corners of the world—particularly one large, isolated mountain valley, but there they met their match: an ambitious orc warlord named Belkzen. Belkzen met the civilized races head-on, and in doing so he managed to take Koldukar, one of the 10 dwarven fortress-cities known as Sky Citadels. He renamed this ransacked metropolis Urgir, meaning "first home," and made it the center of his new nation. Unwilling to risk further loss, the dwarves pulled back and dug in, and although Belkzen's fledgling empire long ago collapsed into dozens of squabbling tribes, the region still bears his name.

Geographically, Belkzen is a harsh land filled with badlands, thorny scrub, and dangerous peaks. Water is scarce and concentrated primarily in the seasonal Flood Road, which serves as a caravan route during the dry season, or else in the vast, salty lake of quicksand known as the Dirt Sea. Yet there is history here as well, and of more than just the orcs who constantly churn the soil with their conflicts. There are monuments like Seraph's Ladder, where those who wish to turn back the effects of years can gamble with their lives, or the hidden Hanging Monastery of the Peacock Spirit. Defiant human compounds like Trunau and Freedom Town cling to survival, ready to fight at a moment's notice.

Government: The orcs of Belkzen are a teeming, brawling multitude of semi-nomadic tribes, from warbands of just a few families to massive armies holding one of the region's most valuable fortifications. Although capable of forming alliances and living in peace during the rainy seasons, the orcs' natural pugnacious tendencies and the region's meager resources keep any larger-scale organization from lasting long. Notable tribes include the Black Sun, Blood Trail, Broken Spine, Cleft Head, Empty Hand, Gutspear, Haskodar, Murdered Child, Twisted Nail, and Wingripper.

Urgir: Although Belkzen has no true capital, Urgir is the largest city in the region. A vast, mountainous hodgepodge of dwarven monuments and warrens layered on top of each other, the former Sky Citadel has fallen into disrepair under the orcs. Its current ruler, Grask Uldeth of the Empty Hand, rules the city with cunning and savagery, and in recent years he began looking to the human rulers of neighboring nations and exploring the benefits of trade. As a result, although hardly safe, Urgir is one of the few places in Belkzen where the "pinkskin" races can do business, provided they procure protection from one of the tribal chiefs. Merchants, scholars, and adventurers come from far and wide to purchase slaves and mercenaries in Urgir or explore the fallen dwarf city's many undiscovered secrets.

Wyvernsting: After Urgir, Wyvernsting is the most populous settlement. This palisaded orc town was constructed to exert control over one of the region's few miniscule mountain forests. Due to the town's easy access to valuable lumber and relative proximity to the Flood Road and the megafauna of the north,

Wyvernsting's leader, Hundux Half-man, is second in influence only to Grask Uldeth himself.

Other Settlements: Other smaller but equally prominent settlements in Belkzen include the mine-fortress of Blisterwell; the complex at Deepgate covering the region's largest entrance to the Darklands; and the Foundry, where crazed orc engineers known as Steeleaters remain neutral in order to sell their bizarre siege weaponry to all sides.

Brimstone Haruspex: In the north, the Brimstone Haruspex perches high in the caldera of a smoking volcano, where a group of highly educated (for orcs) clerics offer guidance in exchange for massive tributes. In addition to maintaining the only complete record of orcish history—a lengthy series of cave paintings stretching all the way back to their initial emergence—the ascetic clerics are also oracles, breathing in vapors from the active fumaroles in order to form their prophecies. Unfortunately, the fumes that give them their insights are highly caustic, permanently scarring their face and lungs. It is for this reason that most leaders prefer to send their seconds-in-command with questions rather than attend themselves, as the prudent priests frequently choose to dangle petitioners in the sulfurous pits to gain their revelations firsthand.



The Cenotaph: At the southernmost tip of the Tusk Mountains, a windowless pillar of black stone rises menacingly from a narrow cliff on a mountainside, its only adornment a massive pair of 50-foot-high metal gates wrought with strange and unnerving murals. This is the Cenotaph. During the reign of Tar Baphon, the Whispering Tyrant, the doors in this ancient obelisk stood open to accept the hordes of elite warriors and terrible war beasts that entered upon the tyrant's orders and were rarely seen again. With the lich's defeat by the Shining Crusade, the great doors swung shut and have remained sealed ever since. Legend holds, however, that when Tar Baphon returns the doors will fall open and unleash his dark armies upon the land.

Scarwall: Although Belkzen is scattered with ruins, one in particular bears a legacy that still haunts most of northern Avistan. Nearly 700 years ago, a desperate Ustalavian border conte, his defenses thoroughly exhausted by the building orc hordes, prayed to Zon-Kuthon for salvation. The Midnight Lord's blessing came in the form of a man named Kazavon, a great general who used the conte's meager army to press the orcs back into the north, cleansing much of lower Belkzen with sword and flame. In the crags of the Kodar Mountains he built a great gothic fortress called Scarwall and the civilized nations rejoiced.

Flagbearer [Local]

When holding your clan's tribal flag, you inspire members of your clan.

Prerequisites: Cha 13, orc, member of a Belkzen clan.

Benefit: As long as you hold your clan's standard (requiring one hand), members of your clan within 60 feet who can see the banner (including yourself) gain a +1 morale bonus on attack and damage rolls and Will saves.

If the standard is taken by the enemy or destroyed, all orcs of your clan (including yourself) within 120 feet of you who can see you take a –1 penalty on attack and damage and Will saves until the flag is recovered.

Yet Kazavon didn't stop there. He pushed south and east, slaughtering wantonly, his lust for carnage leading him to ever-greater acts of depravity. Although he was eventually defeated—and revealed in death to be a disguised blue dragon—his great castle of Scarwall remains, haunted by the shades of history and avoided by superstitious orcs.

Tribal Flags

Each tribe, no matter how small, has a single battle standard that depicts the clan's namesake (such as an empty hand, a broken spine, an eclipsed sun, and so on). Such flags normally hang crosswise from a long spear, decorated with grim trophies and fetishes. A chief always keeps it with him in battle, although he usually assigns a lieutenant to do the actual carrying. Clans generally immediately divert their attention to the recovery of their flags if taken.

While not necessarily magical, many of the tribal battle standards are very old and hold almost religious significance for the orcs. Creating a new one if the original is destroyed costs the tribe several hundred gp and the tribe's shaman several weeks.

Orcish Mothers

The concept of family in the Hold of Belkzen is a strange thing. On the whole, male orcs view their women as little more than slaves. Female children are seen as particularly worthless, since many are eventually stolen away by different clans anyway.

To this end, orc females focus all their efforts on bearing as many male children as possible. These they coddle and pamper, offering a pleasant contrast to the males' attempts to toughen up the children (although the mothers, too, want to make sure each child is a natural warrior). By forming this strong bond early, mothers can influence their sons well into old age, providing advice and receiving gifts and attention from dutiful sons who would never think of bestowing such favor on their own mates.

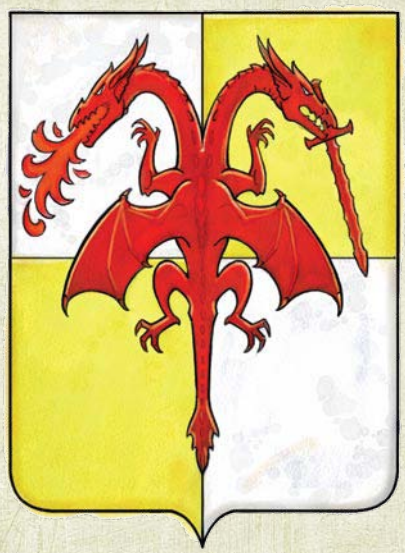
Brevoy

Power Struggle Between Feuding Noble Houses

From the towering spires of the Ruby Fortress, King Noleski Surtova looks out across a nation divided. For most of the last 200 years, the descendants of Choral the Conquer led the various people of two formally separate (and vastly different) nations, welding them together to forge the nation of Brevoy. Now Choral's descendants are gone, and cracks are appearing that threaten to tear apart the nation and plunge its people into a sea of fire and blood.

Brevoy was formed when a mysterious Iobarian warlord named Choral the Conquerer forged a new nation, with the help of his red dragon allies, out of two neighboring rivals. Despite the efforts of Choral's descendents in House Rogarvia, these two regions retain much of the character and national identity they had as independent nations.

All of that changed 9 years ago, when every member of House Rogarvia vanished without a trace or explanation. Stripped of its rulers and its only uniting force, Brevoy is on the brink of plunging into civil war.



Alignment: CN
Capital: New Stetven (32,850)
Notable Settlements: Port Ice (13,260), Restov (18,670), Skywatch (6,590)
Ruler: King Noleski Surtova
Government: Hereditary monarchy
Languages: Common, Hallit, Skald, Varisian, Draconic
Religion: Abadar, Pharasma, Gorum

Issia: The northern half of Brevoy was once the independent nation of Issia. A twisted landscape of rugged hills covered only with scrub and scree, the uniformly poor quality of the soil makes it nearly impossible to grow anything here. The people live mostly on the fish they can catch, a diet supplemented only by food shipped up from Rostland or areas further south. In centuries past, the people of Issia were infamous raiders, and their river-raiding craft were feared along the whole length of the Sellen, all the way to the Verduran forest.

For more than a thousand years, the Surtovas have ruled Issia. The family of pirates and scoundrels has retained an iron grip on Issia ever since it beat all the other pirates and scoundrels into submission. Collectively, Surtovas are known as crafty schemers. Lacking both natural resources and a large population, Issia has never possessed anything like a mighty military force, but it usually survives by outsmarting its enemies. When Choral and his dragons arrived, the Surtovas surrendered immediately and were therefore spared the retribution that nearly destroyed their southern neighbors in Rostland. Since that day, the family worked, slowly and carefully, to advance its position in the royal hierarchy of Brevoy—a diligence that paid off when the Rogarvias disappeared. Many suspect the Surtovas are somehow behind the mysterious disappearance, as no sooner had the Rogarvias vanished than the Surtovas began consolidating their grip on the throne.

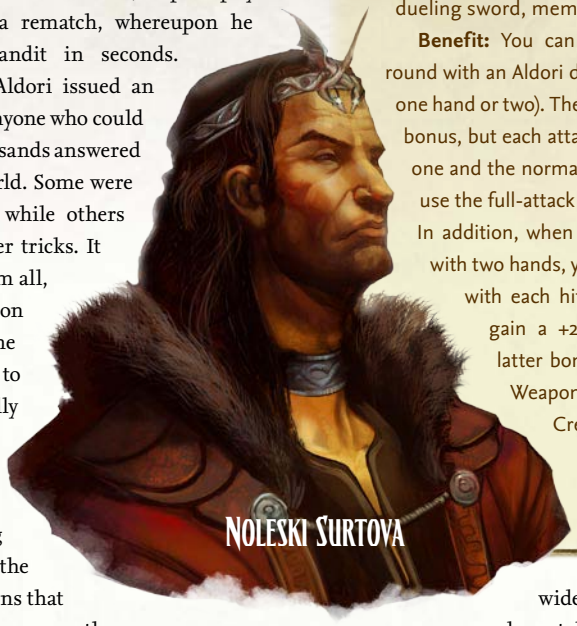
On the whole, Issians remain a reclusive and enigmatic bunch. Each village has its own traditions dating back hundreds of years. Outsiders find themselves distrusted and shunned. Rumors of bloody rituals and human sacrifice remain unsubstantiated, but in the far-away cities of Restov and New Stetven, people whisper that the true masters of Issia remain hidden beneath the waters of the Lake of Mists and Veils, emerging in the dead of night to strike terrible bargains with the villagers.

Rostland: South of the Gronzi Forest lies a vast rolling plain of fertile grasslands, dotted with farms and small villages. This is Rostland, breadbasket of the north and homeland of the Aldori swordpact.

Centuries ago, the Taldan colonists who founded Rostland arrived in the north under the leadership of Baron Sirian First, a fiery, impulsive noble forced to emigrate from Taldor after losing one too many duels. In the early days of the colony, bandits struck from hidden camps in the river kingdoms, nearly destroying the budding colony before it had a chance to get started. The bandit leader was himself a master swordsman and challenged the baron to a wager: half the baron's fortune

against the bandit's head. Unable to pass up the challenge, Baron First took the wager and was broadly humiliated by an ignoble defeat. After he paid the bandit, he disappeared for several years. Most assumed he had fled somewhere, too ashamed to show his face after such a defeat.

The people were surprised when the baron returned several years later a changed man, a swordsman like the world had never before seen. Calling himself Sirian Aldori, he promptly challenged the bandit lord to a rematch, whereupon he disarmed and defeated the bandit in seconds. Reestablishing his rule, Baron Aldori issued an open challenge of 100,000 gp to anyone who could beat him in a duel of swords. Thousands answered the challenge from across the world. Some were earnest and honorable duelists, while others tried to cheat with magic or other tricks. It didn't matter. Sirian defeated them all, forever cementing his reputation as the greatest swordsman in the world. At first, Sirian refused to teach his techniques, but eventually he selected a small group to train. He made them change their names to Aldori and to swear an oath not to reveal anything they learned to someone not of the swordpact. Through the generations that followed, Sirien's pupils became known as the Aldori swordlords, a force feared throughout the continent. Until Choral arrived, the swordlords ruled Rostland and were every bit as impulsive and prickly as Sirien. The Aldori uniformly distrust the Surtovas, and their patience with the new king wears thin.



Noleski Surtova

The people of Rostland are mainly farmers, craftsmen, and tradesmen. Most are outgoing, happy, and welcoming of strangers—as long as the strangers are willing to conform to the local customs, of which there are many. This welcome is somewhat misgiving, however, as the people of Rostland are obsessed with honor and personal standing, and take offense at the slightest provocation. One wrong word is likely to find the offender in front of the local magistrate or facing a prospective duel. If an outsider takes the trouble to learn their customs, the Rostlandi prove to be fast friends and staunch allies.

New Stetven: Choral's rough-and-tumble capital at New Stetven is a bustling trade city despite the recent collapse of its aristocrats. Grain, fish, timber, and ore flow from Brevoy through New Stetven and out to the rest of the north. The food from Brevoy sustains much of the River Kingdoms, Numeria, and Mendev, where constant bandit raids and invading demonic armies make farming difficult, and most of that food passes through New Stetven. In return, exotic goods from all corners of Avistan (and beyond) flow back up the Sellen River to New Stetven. Although bandits and robbers in the River Kingdoms are still a serious obstacle, the market nevertheless offers a wide variety of goods, from Numarian skymetal to Osiriani relics.

Aldori Dueling Mastery [Local]

Your mastery of the Aldori dueling style sets you apart from even the other swordlords.

Prerequisites: Dex 17, Greater Weapon Focus (Aldori dueling sword), Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (Aldori dueling sword), Weapon Specialization (Aldori dueling sword), base attack bonus +12, proficient with Aldori dueling sword, member of Aldori school.

Benefit: You can make one additional attack each round with an Aldori dueling sword (whether wielded with one hand or two). The attack is at your highest base attack bonus, but each attack you make in the round (the extra one and the normal ones) takes a –2 penalty. You must use the full-attack action to use this aspect of the feat. In addition, when you wield an Aldori dueling sword with two hands, you deal +1d4 points of extra damage with each hit (even attacks of opportunity) and gain a +2 shield bonus to your AC. These latter bonuses stack with those gained from Weapon Focus and Weapon Specialization. Creatures immune to critical hits and sneak attacks are also immune to the extra damage your Aldori dueling style deals.

Skywatch: High in the mountains along the eastern border of Brevoy is the city of Skywatch. This city is built around a massive observatory that predates any known settlement in the region. Despite its age, the observatory is perfectly preserved and maintained by powerful magic. Exactly who built the observatory, and why, is unknown, although the building is clearly meant to accommodate beings much larger than humans.

In the early days of Issia, the Surtovas established a small outpost adjacent to the observatory to study it. The Aldori captured and fortified this outpost during one of the long wars between Issia and Rostland. After Choral conquered the rest of Rostland, Skywatch remained the seat of independent Aldori power for a few years, before the conqueror and his dragons burned the fortress to the ground. After razing the fortress, Choral took a great deal of interest in the observatory and began a massive project to unearth and restore it. House Rogarvia continued his work, and the current city of Skywatch was built to serve this project. Despite the scale of the project, its exact goals and much of the work remain shrouded in secrecy.

On the day the Rogarvias disappeared, Skywatch sealed itself off completely from the outside world, refusing to allow anyone—even supply caravans—into or out of the settlement. So far, no message sent to Skywatch has received a reply, and divination magic cannot penetrate its ancient walls.

Cheliax

Diabolical Empire in Decline



Alignment: LE
Capital: Egorian (82,100)
Notable Settlements: Brastlewark (3,500 gnomes), Kintargo (11,900), Ostenso (14,200), Pezzack (4,800), Senara (5,200), Westcrown (114,700)
Ruler: Her Infernal Majestrix, Queen Abrogail II of the Thrice-Damned House of Thrune
Government: Imperial bureaucracy headed by influential noble families (such as Thrune and Elliendo)
Languages: Common, Infernal
Religion: Diabolism, Erastil, Iomedae, Aroden, Zon-Kuthon

Imperial Cheliax dominated the northern continent for more than 500 years. Guided by the Starfall Doctrine—a series of prophecies that predicted the return of Aroden to Cheliax and a millennium of unprecedented success—the clergy of Aroden and secular government agents readied the empire for glory. According to the Starfall Doctrine, Imperial Cheliax would welcome its divine ruler in 4606. King Gaspodar, Emperor of Cheliax, raised from youth knowing the year his reign would end, prepared to abdicate and place the Nine-Starred Crown upon Aroden's head.

Then the inexplicable occurred. Instead of returning, Aroden died, and a part of Cheliax died with him. With the emperor stripped of his divine mandate, certain powerful noble houses rose up, plunging the imperial heartland into civil war.

Anarchy and war plagued Cheliax for more than 30 years, until House Thrune and its allies took and held the throne. Queen Abrogail I, Infernal Majestrix of Cheliax, placed among her armies bound devils from the depths of the Nine Hells, who quelled dissent in the empire's heartland, gaining the new regime a measure of respect and legitimacy. Few among the gods-fearing citizens of Cheliax approved of their fearsome methods, but wherever the diabolists installed themselves the opportunistic savagery of the last generation soon ceased, and a dark peace embraced the kingdom.

Shortly after taking control of the nation, the new government moved the center of the government to the inland port city of Egorian and wasted little time in demanding subservience from Imperial Cheliax's many holdings. House Thrune backed its threats with the pitiless Hellknights.

Cowed by the threats coming out of Egorian, most nations quickly subjugated themselves to the new empire. Rebellion in Molthune cut off the imperial heartland from its frontier colony in Varisia, which subsequently became the independent city-state of Korvosa. Shadowy Nidal, long a thrall of Cheliax, enthusiastically supported the empire's evil turn, dispatching shadowcasters and shadewrights to bolster Egorian's efforts to bring the other vassal states into line.

For several months, the new regime not only maintained the borders of Imperial Cheliax but also stood poised to expand beyond them. Unfortunately for the Egorian government, though, the infernal blasphemies of House Thrune turned public opinion against Cheliax. The people of Galt and Andoran rose up and threw off Cheliax's imperial shackles. Reluctantly, House Thrune allowed Cheliax's vassals to secede, focusing its attentions on the lucrative colonies of Sargava in Garund and Anchor's End in distant Arcadia.

Despite losing almost half its holdings, Cheliax remains one of the largest nations on Golarion, as well as arguably the most powerful in the Inner Sea region. The far-reaching influence of Cheliax stretches north to the Lands of the Linnorm kings, south to the Napsune Mountains of Garund, and east into Taldor and Qadira. Elements of Chelaxian culture appear in all those places and more, mostly in the ports and trading cities of dozens of nations. Despite the popularity of traditional Chelaxian culture, though, most other nations attempt at every opportunity to suppress the nation's influence, particularly in the realm of religion and philosophy.

The diabolists currently in charge of Cheliax serve the empire as its new aristocracy. Many of the ruling houses claim titles such as paracount or paraduke, with the loftiest titles frequently going to those families who only gained nobility with the rise of House Thrune. Noble Houses that existed before the death of Aroden for the most part retained their power and influence over the past century, although those in favor with the



ruling House of Thrune saw the greatest increase of prestige and wealth. Despite their pretension, questionable morality, and recent rise to power, the noble houses who currently rule Cheliax do so more effectively than their imperial counterparts prior to the civil war. Under the red and black standard of Asmodeus, Cheliax once more claims its former glory, if not the righteousness of years past.

The House of Thrune and much of Cheliax's nobility work with devils and other infernal agents. Aristocrats from noble families old and new enter into arrangements with citizens of Hell, gaining from these deals incredible power for a sometimes unclear price. Not every noble house so eagerly welcomes the influences of Hell, but those that do not wisely remain neutral on the subject or quickly find themselves eradicated.

The government in Egorian relies both on its infernal allies and servitors and its all-too-human subordinates to retain and exert power. Among its most powerful mortal tools are the unsubtle skull-breaking Hellknights. The Hellknights and their infernal allies root out rebellion and dissent in the imperial heartland, and make for the most iconic representation of Infernal Cheliax's absolute dedication to law and order. In addition, Cheliax maintains a massive regular army and navy, and is militarily one of the most powerful nations on Golarion.

Despite the government's promotion of devil worship and other infernal influences, the common folk continue living their lives much as they have for centuries. Unlike in the past, though, they also mainly live in fear. Most of the major gods remain popular, although every Chelaxian at least pretends to primarily worship Asmodeus, and every house, cottage, and rented room contains a small shrine or holy symbol of the devil-god.

The official, state-sanctioned worship of Asmodeus and the constant appearance of devils across Cheliax barely concern most citizens outside of the cities, many of whom live their entire lives without seeing a devil of any kind. As the years pass, the sentimental longing of Cheliax's citizens for the way things were before the rise of the infernal order ever decreases. Most citizens alive today know only Cheliax as a willing thrall of Hell, and while many do not care for the infernal regime, very few ever openly complain about it, much less act against it.

The government's many dissent-quelling policies make the people untrusting and insular. Even citizens with no investment in the diabolic order turn in suspected traitors to achieve wealth and social advancement. Those who work within the cruel new system—and even those who merely pay it lip service—continue to gain power and prestige within the nation, while those unable or unwilling to play along continue to suffer constant torment and indignities.

Cheliax is a nation without hope—a decadent empire weakened by losses in glory and colonial wealth but deluded



with pretensions of greatness spurred on by the infernal court and its fell adherents. It is a stain on the face of Golarion and a mockery of what was once the greatest kingdom of mankind.

Government: Queen Abrogail II, great-granddaughter of her namesake and the sixth person to wear the crown since the House of Thrune gained control of Cheliax, is a petulant child ruler with an infernal regent. Her reign marks the second-longest rule in Infernal Cheliax's 68 years of existence. She serves under the watchful and protective gaze of her regent, General Gorthoklek, the same pit fiend who aided her great-grandmother and who returned to Golarion when Abrogail II took the throne. Queen Abrogail II also counts in her court the Contessa Lrilatha, an erinyes sent by Asmodeus to instruct the spoiled young monarch.

Egorian: Known also as the City of Thorns, Egorian bristles with towers and minarets, many of which are barbed or capped with sharply pointed conical roofs. The predominantly gothic architecture of the city's public works is mainly covered in a layer of red-veined black marble imported at great cost from distant Arcadia. Old Egorian, one of the few parts of the city not rebuilt to reflect the new diabolic order, caters to foreign merchants and traders and houses all of the temples not dedicated to Asmodeus or one of the other leaders of Hell.

Arch of Aroden: This monolithic ruined bridge spans the Straits of Aroden separating Avistan from Garund. The arch rises several hundred feet above the straits and stretches more than 15 miles to connect Corentyn in Cheliax with Chalshotur Qasr in Kharijite. Roughly a third of the immense and ancient structure has collapsed, making it useless as a bridge.

Brastlewark: Home to a disproportionately large number of alchemists and artists, bards and wizards, the appearance of Brastlewark constantly shifts, and the amount of public art and fantastic architecture gives the town a busy, chaotic look. This city, the largest concentration of gnomes in Avistan—and possibly the world—is home to the self-proclaimed

Gnome King, theoretical ruler of all gnomes (and shameless vassal of Queen Abrogail II).

Corentyn: Prior to the Everwar, when Imperial Cheliax finally established a foothold on Garund, the Nine Forts of Corentyn successfully repelled all attempts by Garundi nations from pushing onto Avistan via the Arch of Aroden.

Kharijite: During the Everwar, while a dozen Chelish armies pushed hard into the interior of Avistan, the empire also sent an expeditionary force into northern Garund. The expeditionary force established a foothold in Rahadoum. In the past 3 centuries, neither Cheliax or Rahadoum has substantially altered the border, and the people living in the province of Kharijite consider themselves more Chelaxian than Rahadoumi.

Kintargo: Standing at the mouth of the mighty Katharevousa River, the town of Kintargo acts as the launching point of most Chelaxian ships sailing north to Varisia or west to Anchor's End. As a result, next to Westcrown, Kintargo is the most cosmopolitan and welcoming of Cheliax's settlements.

Ostenso: The sprawling docks and piers of Ostenso place nearly a quarter of the city over the water, with another quarter standing upon a line of stone known as Custodisce Break, that extends a half mile out into the ocean to forms the city's famed natural harbor. Home to the largest naval works in Avistan, Ostenso hosts the impressive Chelish Navy, the dominant military force on the waters of the Inner Sea. Soldiers and sailors gather in Ostenso to protect Cheliax from its rebellious neighbor to the east, although keen observers note that the military forces assembled look ready more for invasion than defense.

Pezzack: Within the sharp-peaked hills of the Devil's Perch stands the large town of Pezzack, a hotbed of sedition and plotting against the new aristocracy of Cheliax. Strict naval blockades and a years-long siege cut off Pezzack from the rest of the world, but city's the winged folk always manage to escape the periodic destruction of their town.

Senara: Deep within the Hell-spawn-infested Whisperwood stands wretched Senara, the "shining" example of infernal influence gone too far. Nearly a quarter of the town's inhabitants are half-devil tieflings, and more than half of the rest bear infernal bloodlines.

Westcrown: Once the center of Chelaxian civilization and capital of the empire, the golden facade of Westcrown crumbles under lethargy and disrepair. The remnants of once-powerful and now-ostracized ancient houses of nobility struggle with one another and the current leadership holding sway in Egorian. Shadowbeasts imported from Nidal to harry would-be rebels in the ancient city stalk Westcrown's streets at night, devouring traitors and supporters alike.

Notable Noble Houses

Of the several hundreds of noble houses officially recognized in Cheliax, the following are the most powerful.

Noble Scion

You are a member of a proud Chelaxian noble family.

Prerequisites: Cheliax affinity, member of Chelish noble house.

Benefit: You gain benefits based on the noble house to which you belong.

Charthagnion: Whenever you take 10 on a Wisdom-based skill, treat the result as if you rolled a 13 instead of a 10.

Henderthane: Whenever you purchase a weapon anywhere in Avistan—melee or ranged, mundane or magical—you pay 10% less than the normal cost.

Jeggare: You begin play with an additional 200 gp. In addition, at 10th level you gain a one-time 10,000 gp stipend.

Leroung: You gain a +1 bonus on every Knowledge skill in which you have at least 5 ranks.

Narikopolus: Whenever you use a composite Strength bow of your Strength bonus or lower, you deal +2 points of damage with it.

Sarini: Perform (comedy) is always a class skill for you. You gain a +2 bonus on Bluff and Perform (comedy) skill checks.

Thrune: You gain Infernal as a bonus language. In addition, at 9th level you may bind to yourself an imp servitor in a ritual that takes 7 days. Your imp servitor grants and possesses all the benefits and abilities of a 1st-level sorcerer's familiar.

Special: You may only gain this feat at 1st level.

House Charthagnion: Serving under an infernal pact that grants its members superhuman wisdom, House Charthagnion faces centuries of servitude as payment.

House Henderthane: Weapons dealers for the last thousand years, House Henderthane supplies the House of Thrune with all the weapons it and its allies needs.

House Jeggare: House Jeggare is one of Avistan's (not just Cheliax's) wealthiest families, and its philanthropic endeavors are felt across the continent.

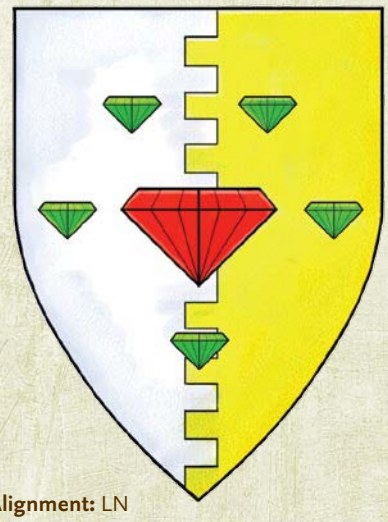
House Leroung: Members of House Leroung act as the headmasters of several universities and wizarding schools. Even in nations hostile to Cheliax, House Leroung is respected and accepted, thanks to its academic neutrality.

House Narikopolus: The archers of House Narikopolus are renowned across Avistan for their powerful bows and extensive training that begins as young as 6 years.

House Sarini: Sometimes called the "Fools of Thrune" or the "Lapdogs of Hell," House Sarini jesters incorporate cruel humor and infrequent hate-based comedy.

House of Thrune: Long before Aroden died, the House of Thrune actively worked with the forces of Hell. Even in the time of Imperial Cheliax, its members acted strangely, dressing at all times in laced black and gothic colors. Few actually suspected the family of devil worship. Since its rise to power, Thrune generously rewards its allies and viciously punishes its foes.

Druma, Kalistocracy of Merchant's Religious Paradise



Alignment: LN
Capital: Kerse (18,300)
Notable Settlements: Detmer (8,200), Highhelm (5,600 dwarves), Macridi (3,200)
Ruler: High Prophet Kelldor
Government: Mercantile Oligarchy
Languages: Common, Dwarf
Religion: *Prophecies of Kalistrade*, Torag

The isolated hill country of Druma hosts the most productive gem and precious metal mines in Avistan, granting its doctrinaire leaders—adherants to the *Prophecies of Kalistrade*—overwhelming influence over the politics and affairs of the entire Inner Sea region. The *Prophecies*—dream-records of an eccentric mystic from the early days of the Age of Enthronement—dictate a personal routine involving sexual and dietary prohibitions, exclusive adornment in the color white, and the wearing of full-length gloves to prohibit physical contact with those outside the cult.

Traveling "prophets" of Druma make constant targets for overzealous thieves and confidence men. Knowledgeable denizens of the underworld give them wide clearance, knowing that their untold wealth all too often buys a host of magical contingencies, powerful divinations, and vengeful assassins. The jewel-bedecked traders thus comport themselves with an assiduous arrogance and casual fearlessness that frequently grants them the upper hand in negotiations.

Such negotiations played a critical role in the rise of the prophets more than 2,000 years ago, when their calm mediation at long last united the squabbling dwarf nations of the Five Kings Mountains. The Kerse Accord of 2332—facilitated by white-gloved adherents of the Prophesied Path—also granted the humans autonomy and significant control over the vast mineral resources of the upcountry south of Lake Encarthan.

As the region's historical dwarven lieges turn increasingly inward to their ancient mountain vaults, the prophets of Druma consolidate their domestic power by ensuring widespread dedication to the *Prophecies of Kalistrade*. Other religions and non-believers meet with grudging tolerance in Druma. Nonbelievers almost never achieve positions of rank and influence in the official bureaucracy, and adherents always favor each other in financial dealings.

Those who swear by Kalistrade's writings do not flinch at the disruption to prophecy triggered by the death of Aroden and the advent of the Age of Lost Omens. The most potent prediction of the *Prophecies* concerns an imminent hour of victory, in which adherents leverage their financial power to, in effect, "own" the world, becoming its masters and achieving a sort of metaphysical immortality. That other prophecies have proven false in recent years gives little pause to believers, who cannily contend that theirs is a secular prophecy immune to the dictates of magic and is wholly up to the faithful to see through to completion. Aroden does not control whether or not the *Prophecies* come true, they contend. Adherents to the *Prophecies* do. Their constant expansion and ever-growing financial holdings inch them toward the ultimate goal of their philosophy.

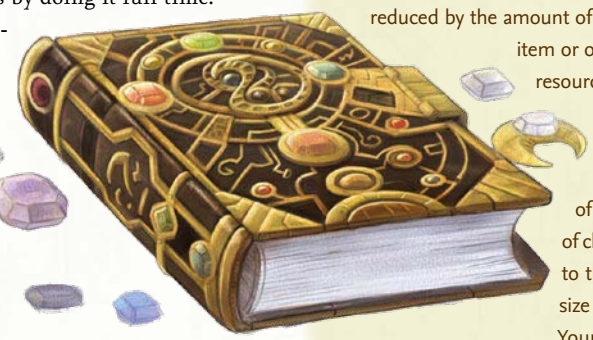
Although many Drumish dwarves support the self-denying rhetoric of Kalistrade's prophets, official doctrine recognizes only humans as worthy of the universe's ultimate reward. Social status and cultural upbringing do not matter to a Drumish merchant, so long as the adherent is capable of generating wealth, and thus proving his value to the world. Even former slaves are welcome to live by the dictates of the *Prophecies*, meaning many refugees from Cheliax, Isger, and Taldor seek the fields and mines of Druma as the first step to greater success. While some few escape poverty to become members of the ruling elite, most find their meager accumulations cement them into lowly positions as menials or indentured servants. Many join Druma's justly infamous Mercenary League, while others abandon the dour nation for the "freer" freedom of the River Kingdoms.

The Mercenary League is ruthless, highly trained, and lavishly well equipped in its protection of the Kallistocrats and their most valued possessions. The league's black uniforms mark its members in stark contrast to the white-

clad merchants, but they are loyal as golems—and some say more deadly. Although not wantonly violent, Mercenary League members are remorselessly amoral in executing orders. In addition to domestic guard duty, the "Blackjackets" escort Drumish caravans and barges, and traverse the Inner Sea on missions for their masters. Wherever these squads go, the prospect of wealth hovers nearby.

The Drumish think little of their neighbors. The Governors of Molthune display charmingly naïve economic prowess and their military might is easily bought off. High Prophet Kelldor and his contemporaries secretly own large tracts of Isger as investment, and in fulfillment of prophecy, the merchant lords plan to buy more. Although a valuable trade partner, Andoran's egalitarian hooligans vex the Macridi merchant houses. Meanwhile, Kyonin represents the greatest untapped market in Avistan. Merchant lords sail boatloads of goods to Greengold every week, offering the elves anything that might entice them into steady trade.

Government: The highest merchant-lords in Druma control the Resplendent Bureaucracy of Druma, but they do not dream of cutting their incomes by doing it full time. That job falls to aggressive middle-earners who use the bureaucracy as a path to greater wealth. Most bureaucrats cycle through every 8 to 10 years, as they find more (or less) lucrative ventures elsewhere. A few career bureaucrats begrudgingly settle for plateaued earning, and the occasional apostate enjoys public service more than commerce. High Prophet Kelldor falls into neither camp, atop his unique pyramid of merchants and politicians. Kelldor's wealth and connections make him one of the most powerful men in the Inner Sea region.



Kerse: An opulent city of manor houses and municipal buildings that look like manor houses, Kerse is perched on a pleasant bay of Lake Encarthan. Ostentatious displays of wealth are standard: bricks flecked with gemstones, stories-tall statues made of precious metal alloys, and rare wood in every timber. Theft is unheard of here. The Mercenary League is inescapable, magical wards guard nearly everything, and the entire city is watched by full-time scryers.

Detmer: On the hilly outcrop into Lake Encarthan, Detmer is the shipyard where the merchants' flat-bottom barges and sprightly caravels are launched. Its famed Sapphire Harbor is more literal than most people know.

Highhelm: The river at Highhelm sparkles with gold dust, and the dwarves there pan it fervently. Everything here has a light gold glitter to it, including the food. Highhelm maintains facilities to host representatives of all dwarfkind when the Gathering Council meets every 200 years.

Profits of Kalistrade

Your careful investments provide you with liquid assets with which you may gain the use of various items on a temporary basis.

Prerequisites: Diplomacy 1 rank, Druma affinity.

Benefit: By utilizing your mercantile connections, when you gain this feat you acquire a resource pool worth 100 gp. You may add to this resource pool with gold you acquire through adventuring, but once you put it in, it remains a part of your resource pool thereafter. Your resource pool increases by 100 gp at levels 2–5, 500 gp at levels 6–10, 1,000 gp at levels 11–15, and 5,000 gp at levels 16 and up.

You may utilize this resource pool in any community of village size or larger by requesting an item (mundane or magical). If the item you request is worth less than the community's gp limit, you gain it within 1d4 hours. If the item exceeds the community's gp limit but is less than double the limit, you gain the item within 1d4 days. An item more than twice as expensive as a community's gp limit is unavailable. For as long as you have the item in your possession, your resource pool is reduced by the amount of the item's value. If you lose the item or otherwise cannot return it to the resource pool, the pool permanently decreases by the value of the item. A charged item acquired in this way loses a percentage of its value based on the number of charges used, and when returned to the resource pool it reduces the size of the pool an equal amount.

Your resource pool is available to you even outside of Druma, but in that case gaining a requested item takes 1 hour longer if below a community's gp limit or 1 day longer if above.

Macridi: This cool, calm, wooded town sits at a river junction and is affluent, but remarkably less gilded than other major Drumish communities. Loggers carefully harvest manicured groves of darkwood, salamanderbark, keenoak, and rarer woods.

Prophecies of Kalistrade

At its heart, the *Prophecies of Kalistrade* encourages adherents to justify their worth in the celestial order through attaining personal wealth. High-ranking merchant-lords and the quasi-religious bureaucracy that supports the official philosophy adorn themselves with gold and platinum chains and glistening gemstones. Pious citizens of Druma know their net worth like their own names. It's easy to tell how wealthy one of the faithful truly is—the more they have, the more they show.

Everything is an opportunity to make money: war, peace, famine, plenty, day, night, spring, autumn. No one is ever happy with what he has, so you can always offer someone something else.

Galt

Eternal Revolution



Alignment: CN
Capital: Isarn (42,700)
Notable Settlements: Edme (13,600), Litran (4,900), Woodsedge (14,200)
Ruler: Citizen Goss, Chairman of the Revolutionary Council
Government: Revolutionary anarchy
Languages: Common, Hallit
Religion: Calistria, Cayden Cailean, Erastil, Shelyn, Norgorber, Iomedae

Galt has a long and colorful history filled with brilliant artists, romantic brigands, and philosophers whose unorthodox ideas have changed modern political thought. Even after falling to Cheliax in the Even-Tongued Conquest, the people of Galt retained their passion and lust for life. Throughout six centuries of Chelaxian rule, Galt drew free-thinkers and idealists to its universities and clever rogues and scoundrels to its woods.

Today, only one color comes to mind when people think of Galt: the bitter crimson of blood. The Red Revolution has gripped the land for more than 40 years, and it shows no signs of ending.

The seeds of the Revolution were sown when House Thrune rose to power in Cheliax. The poet Darl Jubannich issued the broadsheet series *On Government,* which used Thrune practices as the foundation to undermine the basic principle of the divine right of kings. The half-elf philosopher Hosetter took things even further. His *Imperial Betrayal* urged the common folk to take arms to defend their shared ideals. These fiery words spread swiftly across the land, and the tales of Abrogail's cruelty added fuel to the flames. Rebellion and dissent soon burst into full revolt. Tens of thousands answered Hosetter's call, coming together in rowdy mobs to shatter any remnant of Chelaxian rule and drag the decadent nobles from their manors. Together with other heroes of the people, Hosetter and Jubannich formed the Revolutionary Council. One of their first acts was the creation of the *final blades.* Citizen Margaery San Trayne was the architect of these mystical guillotines; she called for a tool that would bring "a swift and humane end, offering no escape through the magics of resurrection—and furthermore, keep even the vilest Galtan soul from falling into the clutches of a Chelaxian devil."

Hosetter and Jubannich acted with the best of intentions, but the child they brought into the world was a monster. The love of life that once characterized Galt became an endless thirst for blood. Those who criticized the Revolutionary Council found themselves branded as Chelaxian sympathizers and set upon the tumbrel to face the *final blade.* The united front of the revolutionary leaders soon shattered into paranoia and infighting, with new demagogues rising to challenge the established leaders. Collapse of social order exacerbated these problems, and mobs turned to new leaders in the hopes of miraculous change. Just 5 years after chairing the first session of the Revolutionary Council, Hosetter was executed in his home town of Edme. Darl Jubannich fled to Andoran, and with his departure the last voice of reason was drowned out by the hungry mob.

Galt has seen more than a dozen governments rise and fall since Hosetter's death, and all they have shared is bloodshed, chaos, and eventual collapse. The beautiful galleries and lofty universities of Galt have been destroyed, and its people are driven by paranoia, fury, and a bitter refusal to recognize the cause of their troubles. The collapse of any organized army has allowed brigands and savage beasts to thrive in the wilds. At the same time, Galt's neighbors fear that the rhetoric of Korran Goss might send the bloodthirsty Galtan mobs spilling out across the borders. In the early days of the revolution, neighboring Andoran offered shelter to refugees from all walks of life; today it fears the growing darkness, and soldiers spread throughout the Verduran Wood and the Five Kings Valley turn back any Galtan who seeks passage into their land. A handful of Galtan nobles have taken refuge in the River Kingdoms. There, the "Revenant Princes" amass mercenary armies and dream of reclaiming their homeland. Lord Halidan Tarne regularly leads raiding parties into Galt, while his cousin Casal and the Lady Dela Morgayn prefer to bide their time and build their forces, waiting for the day when they can overthrow the Revolutionary Council once and for all.

Galt is a dangerous place for strangers. The mobs are always search for new victims for the *final blades.* There are many reasons an adventurer might risk his neck, though. When the revolution began, people from all walks of life—from nobles

and merchants to wizards and clerics—were forced to flee in great haste. Some left behind priceless treasures, irreplaceable heirlooms, or half-finished research; others have been separated from friends or relatives; and a few seek to reclaim the souls of loved ones from the *final blades*. Adventurers might offer their aid in exchange for gold or to simply see justice done. Or perhaps they seek to claim these lost treasures as their own. Many opportunities wait in the chaos of the endless revolution—and just as many dangers.

Government: Citizen Korran Goss is the current chairmen of the Revolutionary Council. Goss rose to power by revealing the activities of the Cabinet of Skulls, a previous revolutionary government. He is a gifted demagogue talented at redirecting the rage of the mob, making the masses blame their neighbors for their hunger and poverty: "Why should Andoran prosper when Galt lies fallow?" Nonetheless, the government of Galt is anything but predictable, and a new leader could rise to power in the space of a single day.

Previous incarnations of the Revolutionary Council give a sense of just how odd things can get in Galt. The Cailean Council believed that absolute change was the key to prosperity; it changed everything from the alphabet of the Common language to the names of the days of the week. Chairman Durgan Rane enforced martial law and mandatory conscription, only to be slaughtered by the newly disciplined soldiers. The Common Council asserted that no one with any political background was qualified to lead and elevated farmhands and beggars to the council. This was followed by the disastrous Eye of Law, when a hag coven led by the annis witch Traxyla became the leader of the Revolution.

While the Revolutionary Council is wildly unstable, Galt has a reliable force in the Gray Gardeners. The members of this order conceal their identities behind hoods and veils of gray silk. The Gardeners serve as justices and executioners, and they maintain the *final blades*. As the anonymous face of bloody justice, the Gray Gardeners are wildly popular among the mobs. The leaders of the order have repeatedly refused to unveil and join the Revolutionary Council, however, recognizing that anonymous security is the best one can hope for in blood-soaked Galt.

Isarn: As much a work of art as a city, in the golden age of Galt, the greatest architects competed for the right to design buildings in the city, and each structure has its own unique style. The streets are paved with engraved cobblestones and colorful mosaics. Murals, statues, and parks are spread throughout the city. At least, they used to be. The 40 years of revolution have devastated this city of wonders. Statues are shattered and parks ruined by the homeless mobs who have come to the city in search of food. The colorful mosaics are blotted out by dried blood, and the stench of blood and filth is strong in the air. The *final blade* known as Madame Margaery stands outside an imposing slab of black stone known as the Monolith—a solid keep that serves as both a prison and the seat of the Revolutionary Council.



Edme: Edme was home to Hosetter, who served as the dean of the Torvin Academy. Now the Torvin Academy acts as a prison. Hosetter's soul resides in Razor Jenni, the *final blade* that stands in the old university quadrangle.

Litran: Litran holds the monastery of the Gray Gardeners, the veiled order whose members serve as executioners and maintain the *final blades*. Whether from respect or fear, the hungry mobs avoid Litran and leave the Gardeners to their work. As a result, it is one of the most stable cities in Galt—but outsiders are not welcome here.

Woodsedge: Woodsedge was the birthplace of Darl Jubannich. Whatever government is in power, Woodsedge invariably gives birth to its opposition. Visitors can almost always find some sort of dissident movement afoot in Woodsdge.

Careful Speaker

The paranoid terror from living in Galt has made you hyper aware of attempts to watch you.

Prerequisites: Wis 13, Galt affinity.

Benefit: You are automatically aware of scrying attempts targeting you and you gain a +2 bonus on Spot checks made to locate a scrying sensor (if any) or to notice someone watching you. In addition, you gain a +2 bonus on Will saves made to resist spells and effects from the school of divination. Finally, you gain a +2 bonus on level checks made to resist opposed Intimidate checks.

The Guillotines of Galt

The *final blade* has become a symbol of Galt and the bloody excesses of the Red Revolution, but it was built to serve the cause of justice. The blades are designed to provide a swift and painless death, but beyond this, they prevent the resurrection of the victim by trapping the soul upon execution. It is possible to release a soul from a *final blade*, but the ritual involved is a closely guarded secret known only to the Gray Gardeners.

The *final blades* are both revered and infamous among the people of Galt. Every blade has a unique appearance and citizens speak of them as if they are people. In speaking of a condemned prisoner, a man might say "He'll lie with Bloody Jaine before the sun falls."

Geb

Domain of the Dead



Alignment: LE
Capital: Mechitar (42,000)
Notable Settlements: Graydirge (9,400), Yled (119,200)
Ruler: Geb (ghost locked to Golarion until convinced of Nex's death)
Government: Undead dictatorship
Languages: Osiriani, Kelish
Religion: Nethys, Urgathoa, Zon-Kuthon

The waning years of the Age of Destiny played host to the arcane struggle of the immortal wizard-kings Nex and Geb, plunging Garund's eastern coast into centuries of devastating magical war. In the south, the exiled Osiriani necromancer Geb vowed to live until he had finally defeated his rival.

Nex and Geb continued their battle during the early centuries of the Age of Enthronement, trading brutal magical attacks with each other. At the climax of the conflict, Geb used powerful *wish*-magics to suck the very life out of the land of Nex, leaving the landscape outside the magically warded cities a barren wasteland. In return, Nex called down a devastating series of cataclysms upon Geb, killing tens of thousands. Rather than admit defeat, Geb responded by animating the bodies of his slain people into a vast legion of the walking dead.

In 576, Geb attempted to assassinate Nex and his court by besieging the Nexian capital of Quantium with banks of poisonous yellow fog. Although it killed thousands, Nex himself mysteriously disappeared and has not been seen since. Geb spent the next five decades in bitter anguish and uncertainty over the fate of his rival. Finally, in 632, robbed of the victory he had so greatly desired, Geb committed ritual suicide in a fit of despair.

Death offered no respite for the immortal necromancer. Convinced that Nex had somehow escaped his vengeance, Geb returned as a ghost, chained to Golarion until his triumph over his hated adversary is certain. Upon his return, he ushered in a grim new age of necromancy. In 3890, Geb took as his Harlot Queen the former warrior-goddess Arazni, Herald of Aroden, who was slain by the Whispering Tyrant Tar-Baphon during the Shining Crusade. Geb stole her corpse from the Knights of Ozem in Lastwall, reanimated her as a lich, and enthroned her in Mechitar, where she has reigned alongside Geb for the last 8 centuries.

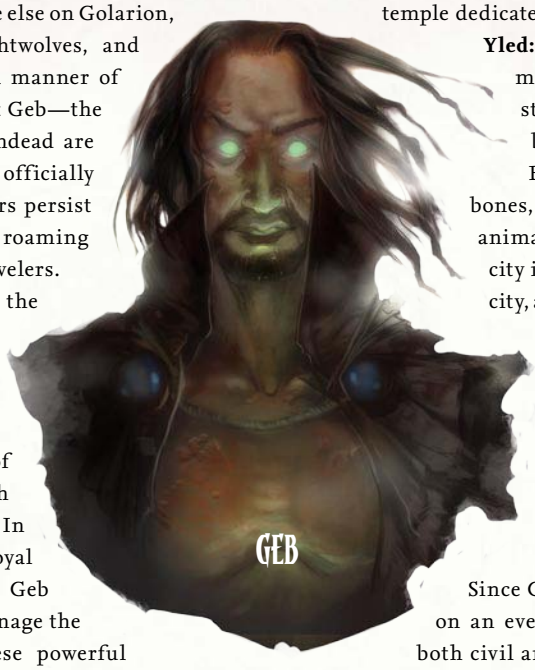
Since the archmage Nex's disappearance more than 4,000 year ago, the nations of Geb and Nex have achieved a relative peace. Geb even trades zombie-harvested food to Nex in exchange for rare components and luxury goods. The hallmarks of the nigh-eternal war with Nex can be seen everywhere in Geb, and nearly all of its cities bear some scars from the ancient struggle, even today. Nowhere is this more evident than in the north, where the blighted no-man's-land called the Mana Wastes separates Geb from Nex.

Other nations, however, have not responded as well as Nex to the decay rooting itself in Geb's cities. For millennia, they have sought to stop the spread of undeath at its source, assaulting the undying ruling order of Geb with raids, naval blockades, and even invasions. For example, in 4329, the rogue pirate queen Mastrien Slash led an army of warrior women across Geb's southern frontier, vowing to end the undead kingdom once and for all. With but a few words of power, Geb turned the entire advancing army to stone, creating what is known today as the Field of Maidens. Such is the fate of those enemies who attempt to play an active hand in Geb's affairs. That doesn't stop the conspirators and plotters in the courts of foreign lords, many of whom would seek fame by finally destroying Golarion's longest-reigning monarch and his undead dominion.

Yet Geb makes no war upon its neighbors, seeking to influence the outside world in extraordinarily subtle ways. It has good relations with the neighboring lands of Jalmeray, Katapesh, and Qadira, and the Shattered Range provide, an effective barrier against anything coming

from the Mwangi Expanse or the Screaming Jungle. Only Lastwall still holds real enmity for Geb, as the Knights of Ozem are unable to forgive or forget the theft of Arazni's body from their vaults.

The greatest threat to the people of Geb are the bizarre aberrations and otherworldly creatures that skulk and burst from the Mana Wastes to prey upon the inhabitants of northern Geb. Rogue elementals, barghests, sandkrakens, and will-o'-wisps all occasionally wander across the border, as do the mana-twisted undead personifications of the warped magics found in the Mana Wastes. The southern Axan Wood—a twisted "forest" of magic-blasted trees both dead and undead—is home to strange creatures of negative energy and shadow found nowhere else on Golarion, such as deadwood dryads, nightwolves, and twilight unicorns. Of course, all manner of undead may be found throughout Geb—the difference being that sentient undead are considered full citizens. Although officially denied by the government, rumors persist of uncontrolled mindless undead roaming the countryside and attacking travelers.



Government: The ghost of the immortal necromancer Geb rules the undead dictatorship that bears his name. He rarely manifests before his people these days, trusting the governance of his kingdom to the debased lich Arazni, the Harlot Queen of Geb. In truth, it is the Blood Lords—royal necromancers sworn to serve Geb until death and beyond—who manage the nation's day-to-day affairs. These powerful specialists are trained in dark blood magics at the Ebon Mausoleum in Mechitar, and many of them have become undead themselves. The influential vampire lord Kemnebi (LE male vampire necromancer 12) leads the Blood Lords and serves as chancellor of the realm.

Mechitar: Geb's capital is a city of pyramids built in ancient Osiriani style, each home to one of the Blood Lords or other powerful aristocratic families. The largest of these pyramids, the Cinerarium, is the palace of Geb and his Harlot Queen. Faced with polished jet and obsidian, it towers more than 450 feet high and dominates the city's center. The largest temple in Mechitar is Urgathoa's Cathedral of Epiphenomena, which is staffed by priests both living and undead. Mechitar's harbor hosts ships from many nations and serves as the primary outlet for Geb's food exports.

Graydirge: The somber city of Graydirge lies in the foothills of the Shattered Range in western Geb. The city itself is an ossuary, built of the bones of fallen Gebbites unable or unwilling to be reanimated as undead after their deaths. Graydirge is also home to the Empty Threshold, a temple dedicated to Zon-Kuthon.

Yled: The bulk of Geb's undead legions, mostly zombies and skeletons, are stationed in the city of Yled, near the border with the Mana Wastes. The Bonewall, a vast barrier of bleached bones, encircles the city, and can be animated by the Blood Lords to defend the city in case of siege. Yled is Geb's largest city, and home to a variety of necromantic colleges and research laboratories. The most famous of these is the Mortuarium, a twisted tower that sticks up above the city's skyline like a withered, clawed arm.

Necromantic Resistance

Your long exposure to necromantic energies has granted you a small measure of resistance against them.

Prerequisites: Con 13, Geb affinity.

Benefit: You gain a +2 bonus on saving throws made to resist spells and effects from the school of necromancy. In addition, you gain a +2 bonus on Fort saves made to prevent negative levels from becoming permanent. Finally, if you take ability score damage (but not drain) from an undead creature, you take 1 point less damage (minimum 0).

The Quick and the (Un)Dead

Since Geb's return, necromancy has taken on an ever-more prominent role in Geb, in both civil and military affairs. Gebbite society is divided into three castes: the living (called the quick in common parlance), the dead, and chattel. Intelligent undead are afforded equal citizenship to that enjoyed by the quick and enjoy equal protection under Geb's Dead Laws. Indeed, Geb counts numerous ghouls, vampires, shades, and liches among its aristocracy, and in many circles they are afforded higher social precedence than their living counterparts.

The majority of both the quick and the dead reside primarily in Geb's cities, studying necromancy and religion, or practicing other sciences and crafts. This urban society is supported by a vast slave class of mindless undead and living thralls, both of whom are considered property and have no rights. Zombie field hands and colossal bone harvesters till the fields of Geb's great plantations, and skeletal warriors fill the ranks of its undead legions. Living chattel are bred specifically to sate the hunger of those undead nobles who require live sustenance, and to power the hematic magic of the Blood Lords.

Hermea

The Grand Experiment



Alignment: N
Capital: Promise (6,300)
Notable Settlements: none
Ruler: Mengkare, Shepherd of Light (old male gold dragon and ruler of Hermea), and the Council of Enlightenment (13 elected representatives that assist Mengkare)
Government: Contractual Dictatorship
Languages: Common, Draconic
Religion: Secular ideology (Mengkare and the Glorious Endeavor)

More than 150 years ago, the gold dragon Mengkare grew fed up with humanity. For generations, he watched squabbling nations and religions swarming over each other like ants, fighting and loving and dying in an endless series of poor decisions, always refusing to realize their natural potential. Yet even as he deplored their lack of foresight, he grew fascinated by their dogged resilience—he saw how easily, with a little guidance, they could be prodded and shaped into something worthwhile. A magnanimous, high-minded creature by nature, he decided to make the perfection of the human race his personal mission.

Flying to an uninhabited jungle island in the middle of the Arcadian Ocean, where his experiment could go forward without fear of contamination, Mengkare solicited volunteers from among humanity's best and brightest to participate in what he dubbed "the Glorious Endeavor," a utopian dream that began immediately with the founding of the island's only city, Promise. Here, safe from warfare and ideological struggle, these paragons of the human race could perfect their arts and bodies, making each successive generation healthier, smarter, and more talented than the one before it. Under the dragon's careful (and unchallenged) guidance, the small population has grown and thrived, and life is easy and fulfilling in Hermea.

The shores of the island are heavily defended, and outsiders are only rarely allowed access beyond the carefully regulated trading docks. Immigration is strictly controlled by Mengkare himself, and the only way for an outsider to become a citizen is to be recruited by one of the nation's traveling undercover scouts, who follow the exploits of every nation's heroes and report back to the Council of Enlightenment, delivering invitations to those notables deemed worthy. These invitees are granted a one-time offer to join the nation's slow march toward perfection and live a life of comfort and security. All that's required in return is for the applicant to cede all personal authority to Mengkare, agreeing to abide by the dragon's considerable wisdom in all matters.

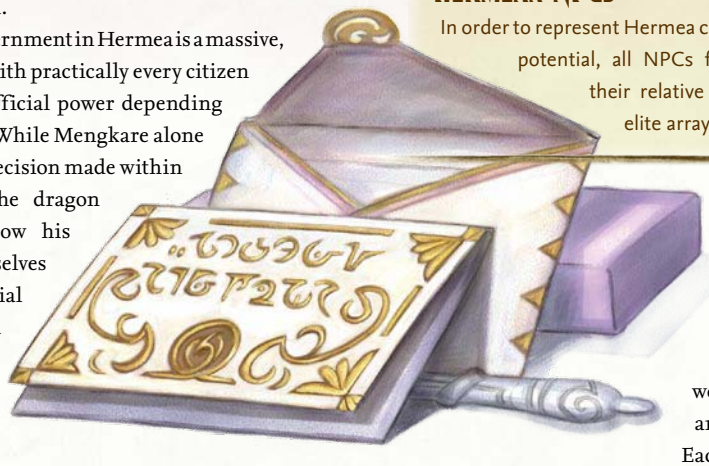
Children born in Hermea are given every advantage—educated in magic, art, science, and the martial disciplines according to their interests—until they are 16 years of age. At that point, they are tested by the Council and frequently offered the chance to become a citizen. Children who refuse or are deemed unworthy are sent away and never permitted to make contact with Hermea again. Mating and partnering among citizens is encouraged, but the courtship process is long and frequently guided by those government officials in charge of helping to naturally breed beneficial traits. While the island is primarily populated by humans, Mengkare occasionally allows in members of the demihuman races if they distinguish themselves adequately in a given field, or if he feels they could be an asset to the community's genetic pool. Adding the occasional elf, for instance, tends to ensure a long-lived and physically attractive population.

While Hermea's few dealings with the outside world are always fair and polite, if standoffish, not everyone agrees with the country's goals. To many, the idea of breeding humans like horses or dogs is inherently distasteful, and several major religions have condemned the nation's mission (their ire possibly influenced by Mengkare's staunch refusal to allow any form of organized religion on the island). Yet for Hermea's residents, the nation remains a shining bastion of virtue, humanity's best hope of transcending its petty conflicts and achieving lasting greatness. Every decision in the country is made for the greater good, as determined by Mengkare, who genuinely believes in his goal and therefore remains righteous and pure, even when forced to order distasteful actions such as the termination of citizens who prove disappointing or threaten to disrupt the system. The dragon strives to give his subjects as much free will as he feels they can handle—after all, he's picked the best and brightest, and believes they ought to be allowed to follow

their passions toward greatness—but he has no problem enforcing absolute law when the need arises. What's more, since anyone who accepts an invitation to join Hermea is required to sign a contract ceding all free will to him before they're allowed to enter, Mengkare knows his authority is just and legal, and any subject unwilling to lay down his life for the cause should have read the invitation more closely.

Life in Hermea, whether in Promise proper or on one of the farms that support it (for agriculture has its innovators as well), is just as wonderful as the stories tell. And if those few sailors allowed to trade there whisper of an undercurrent of fear, of rebels hiding in the jungles on the far side of the island or infiltrating the Council of Enlightenment itself, then they must surely be mistaken.

Government: The government in Hermea is a massive, sprawling meritocracy, with practically every citizen wielding some sort of official power depending on her area of expertise. While Mengkare alone has final say over every decision made within his nation's borders, the dragon is wise enough to allow his subjects to govern themselves in all but the most crucial matters, and to this end he formed the Council of Enlightenment. The 13 elected members of the Council handle most of the day-to-day duties of governance, gathering information and advising the dragon on important matters. The Council is also responsible for issuing invitations to those potential immigrants deemed worthy.



Promise: The only settlement of note on Hermea is surrounded by red sandstone walls so high as to make its buildings invisible from the sea, with only the extensive docks in its harbor offering sanctuary to brave blue-water sailors. Inside, its spires and domes are marvels of modern architecture, and its streets and arching skybridges are kept meticulously clean. Commerce is virtually nonexistent, as citizens are encouraged to take whatever they need and give freely to others, with those who abuse the system regulated by their neighbors and the Council. Atop a low hill rests the palatial capitol building, its walls gleaming with gold, which houses the Council of Enlightenment and Mengkare himself.

Citizenship

With its lofty goals and comfortable, progressive society, Hermean citizenship is coveted the world over, and many are the disappointed applicants who sail far across the ocean only to be politely but firmly turned away at Promise's sandstone walls. (Occasionally, the disenfranchised try to land elsewhere on the island and infiltrate the community via stealth, but these hopeful souls are rarely heard from again.)

Invitations to join the community are not issued lightly, and each year only a few men and women from across Golarion are welcomed to its shores. Each of these is the result of careful study by agents of the Council of Enlightenment, who sometimes follow a prospective citizen for years before finally revealing themselves, often posing as cohorts, advisors, or bards seeking to chronicle a hero's deeds. Once an invitation is issued, the recipient has as long as he or she desires to respond, but all decisions are final—Mengkare has no time for indecisive subjects. Once an invitation is accepted, the new citizen is showered with gifts and transported at the nation's expense to his new home, where he signs the infamous Contract of Citizenship in the presence of Mengkare himself, and is then set up in the city with everything he needs to begin his new life of enlightenment.

Occasionally, for whatever reason, a citizen falls from grace or a child born on Hermea fails to pass the tests required to prove his exemplary status. When this happens, the Council does its best to work with him to resolve any problems that might be leading to disenfranchisement or sub-par performance. If its efforts are not successful, the offending party is quietly sent away in disgrace, and the community does its best to move forward. Hermean society's understanding in these cases is that the undesirables are returned to mainland Avistan with enough supplies to make their way in the world, and any charred corpses which wash up on the island's shores are generally believe to be the work of pirates.

Hermean Blood

You are the descendant of someone recruited to Hermea or the bastard result of a Hermean's illicit pairing with a foreigner.

Prerequisites: Hermea affinity.

Benefit: Though you may not know it, the blood of greatness flows in your veins. Pick an attribute. You get a +1 bonus on all skills tied to that attribute. In addition, it's possible that Hermean agents may come looking for you, either to evaluate you for an invitation or to cover up an embarrassing dalliance.

Special: You may only gain this feat at 1st level.

Hermean NPCs

In order to represent Hermea citizens as the height of human potential, all NPCs from Hermea (regardless of their relative importance) should use the elite array for their ability scores.

Irrisen

Witch Queen Enclave



Alignment: NE
Capital: Whitethrone (24,900)
Notable Settlements: Algidheart (6,720), Hoarwood (8,970)
Ruler: Queen Elvanna, Fourteenth Daughter of Baba Yaga
Government: Monarchy
Languages: Skald, Hallit
Religion: Lamasthu, Zon-Kuthon

Almost every youth in Avistan fears the White Witches of the North, who dwell in palaces of ice and steal wicked children in the dark of winter and imprison their souls in eerie porcelain dolls. More terrifying still is the legend of the queen of all Witches, Baba Yaga, who came to Golarion, conquered a nation, and then suddenly left. Some say she will one day return to seek larger spoils—perhaps slaves and souls instead of land.

Nearly 1,400 years ago, the territory that comprises present day Irrisen belonged to the mighty Linnorm Kings. During one particularly harsh winter, an innumerable host of blue-skinned trolls and cold fey marched down from the Crown of the World, led by the ghastly crone Baba Yaga, an incredibly powerful sorceress from a distant world of the Great Beyond. The self-proclaimed Queen of Witches quickly subjugated the region, killing any who resisted and enslaving the rest. The fighting ended just 23 days after it began, and the nation of Irrisen was born. The nation has been locked in the heart of winter ever since.

Strangely enough, after carving out her kingdom, Baba Yaga seemed uninterested in ruling it and instead installed one of her cruel daughters to govern in her place. Every 100 years, though, the Queen of Witches returns to reclaim her child and install a new daughter to rule for the next century. The previous daughter, along with her children, then leaves with Baba Yaga to explore strange worlds, times, and alternative dimensions. The new daughter quickly goes about installing her own children into positions of power throughout the kingdom. Males assume the leadership of the queen's fighting forces, marshalling squads of ice trolls and packs of winter wolves to protect the realm, while females see to the government and administration of the land, often regardless of age. These granddaughters of Baba Yaga, collectively known as the White Witches, command a level of respect and obeisance from their subjects that borders on worship, either from fear or as genuine adoration.

Irrisen has few friends beyond its borders. The Linnorm Kings to the west have not forgotten the Winter War that birthed their neighbor, an insult aggravated by the frequent raids into Trollheim and nearby fiefs by fey and trolls who steal supplies, weapons, and—occasionally—children. Few of the superstitious Ulfend warriors are brave enough to venture far into Irrisen. Small huts dot the borders of Irrisen. Resting atop closely grouped trunks of trees, which closely resemble the queen of Witch's chicken-legged hut, these huts sit atop their perches with a single open doorway facing the lands of Irrisen's neighbors. Those who approach the huts tell of an unnatural stillness that pervades the area and a feeling of dread. Within the small single room of each hut, a porcelain doll depicting a gray-haired crone stares unblinking out the door from its perch atop a small chair—the hut's only furniture—as if watching for trespassers into Baba Yaga's lands. Popular belief is that the dolls contain the corrupted souls of stolen children and that they leave their huts during the night to hunt and murder travelers foolish enough to trespass into their mistress's kingdom and doubly foolish to be caught near the dreaded huts after dark. Worse than these tales, told over campfires and to unruly children, is that every bit of it is true.

The Mammoth Lords to the east have an uneasy truce with Queen Elvanna at present, but with her time as Irrisen's ruler nearing an end and the inclinations of her replacement unknown, the future might bring new conflict on this front. Growing numbers of the queen's monstrous soldiers and conscripts have been seen patrolling the border between the two nations.

Perhaps the most notable distinction of Irrisen that sets it so drastically apart from all other nations is the palpable feeling of dreaded expectation that pervades every aspect of society. Baba Yaga's reputation; indomitable, godlike mastery of witchcraft; and supreme force of will have left a lasting mark upon the memories and folklore of her people. This dread goes even further than simple folktales and superstition, though. Visitors who brave the dangers of Irrisen return haunted by the memory of the Witch Queen's supernatural patina covering her lands like an unseen fog that reaches into a man's very soul and freezes it with her horrid touch.

To herald their mistress's return every century, the Three Riders appear throughout Irrisen to remind her subjects who their true ruler is. The White Rider, a ghostly, gaunt humanoid figure in white robes riding a sleek white destrier is only seen in the early morning hours. The Red Rider, dressed in crimson robes with a golden sunburst on his breast, rides a reddish-gold stallion and is only seen during the day. The Black Rider wears coal black robes and rides a black warhorse. He is only seen during the night. It is rumored that the riders each represent a different aspect of Baba Yaga's sorcerous mastery and can sense her subject's loyalty or lack thereof, providing boons to those that remain true and a curse or destruction upon those with traitorous hearts. Baba Yaga's children refer to the riders as Day, Sun, and Night. Of them, very little is known.

Symbols play an important role in Irrisen in warding away bad luck and the ire of Baba Yaga and her children. Cat, dog, gate, and tree motifs can be found throughout all of Irrisen adorning its peoples' doors, lintels, tools, clothing, weapons and armor, and hearths. Cats and dogs are common pets and living symbols of good luck in nearly every settlement and no home is ever lacking a gate through which one enters. On the other hand, crows are seen as bad luck and are hunted and killed on sight.



Queen Elvannia

Government: With the backing of her powerful mother, Queen Elvanna rules Irrisen with an iron fist uncontested by any. She rarely, if ever, leaves her palace in Whitethrone, but with her numerous sons and daughters acting on her behalf in each of the settled areas of Irrisen, nothing transpires in her kingdom without her knowing of it sooner or later. With her rule coming to an end soon, she and her offspring work furiously to leave their mark on Golarion long after they leave—erecting massive statues of themselves, siring and birthing hordes of children to carry on their names, and imposing the harshest taxes ever known in the history of Irrisen.

Whitethrone: Whitethrone rises from the frozen cliffs along the eastern shores of Glacier Lake. Spires of white marble and domed buildings sculpted of ice that never melts surround a palace perched precariously at cliff's edge over the frigid, turbulent waters of Glacier Lake. The main street running from the city gates to the queen's palace is aptly named the Bone Road, paved with the skulls of the Linnorm King warriors slain by the queen of Witches and her minions during the Winter War. It is occasionally widened with the skulls of traitors, failed invaders, and citizens who incur the wrath of the White Witches.

The city is populated by descendants of Baba Yaga's sons and daughters from previous queens, the ruling family, enslaved descendants of the Linnorm Kings who survived the Winter War, and clans of ice trolls. Although relatively few in number, snow goblins, ogres, frost giants, and tamed beasts also reside in Whitethrone serving the masters of the capital city in various ways.

Algidheart: The city of Algidheart is composed of buildings built one atop the other atop a confusing jumble of bridges spanning a narrow portion of the river, soaring to staggering, vertigo-inducing heights. A maze of stairs, ladders, ramps, flyway bridges, and wooden platforms connect the buildings to each other.

Hoarwood: Sitting at the center of the snow-covered Hoarwood forest, Hoarwood is carved from the trunk of an immense dead tree now petrified after centuries of lifelessness. The White Witch Anelisha and her brother and incestuous lover, Ghrathis, while away their waning rule in one *fête champêtre* after the other, with each party exceeding the previous in the magnitude of debauchery, bloodiness, and savagery.

Baba Yaga's Dancing Hut: Rumors have spread far and wide throughout Golarion about *Baba Yaga's Dancing Hut*. Stories claim the strange hut is filled with treasure and collections of vast knowledge plundered from hundreds of different worlds and times. Citizens claim to spot the hut throughout Irrisen. Brave souls who dare to enter the Witch Queen's extradimensional demesne are advised to observe strict forms of polite behavior and respect to the old crone—those who do might gain some kind of reward from her: boons, magical trinkets, the answers to life's greatest mysteries, or simply making it out alive! A slip up or failure to observe all of the forms she demands of visitors ensures the visitor never leaves her hut.

Fey Foundling

You were found in the wilds bearing a mark of the fey.

Prerequisites: Irrisen affinity.

Benefit: Your time among the fey grants you DR 1/cold iron and a +2 bonus on wild empathy checks. Cold iron weapons deal +1 point of damage to you.

Special: You may only gain this feat at 1st level.

Supernatural Cold

Irrisen is subject to a supernatural cold that only epic-level magic can dispel or alter, and even then the spellcaster must succeed on a DC 40 caster level check to succeed. Spells that manage to change the weather in any way only last for a number of minutes equal to the caster's level or half the spell's normal duration, whichever is shorter. The conditions revert back thereafter.

Spells that aid in resisting the effects of cold weather function normally. Cold-based spells gain no special bonuses or benefit from the supernatural cold.

Isger

Thrall of Cheliax



Alignment: LN
Capital: Elidir (11,900)
Notable Settlements: Logas (4,300)
Ruler: Hedvend VI, Steward of Isger
Government: Vassal State of Cheliax
Languages: Common
Religion: Diabolism, Erastil

They say in Isger's capital city, Elidir, that "Every devil has its servitors." Regrettably for Isger, its devil is Cheliax, and as such its servitude is often dark and unwelcome.

Thralldom is not a new concept for Isger. Indeed, even the very name Isger was bestowed upon it by its first conqueror, the empire of Taldor's Seventh Army of Exploration, as early as 2133. Taldor chose the name Isger for its newest conquest in recognition of the Isgeri tribe that briefly fought with remarkable tenacity before being overrun and pacified. Taldor's rule over Isger persisted for almost 2,000 years, until the Even-Tongued conquest 700 years ago, in 4081, when Cheliax broke from Taldor and acquired Isger by force as the first holding in its new and expansive empire. While several lands freed themselves from Cheliax's now-diabolic empire, Isger is not among them.

Many argue that Isger's fate as an acquisition is not a coincidence—rather, it is a geographical imperative. The trade routes of Isger provide access to Druma and the invaluable markets of Lake Encarthan. Many speculate that more gold flows through Isger than anywhere else in Avistan. Today, Isger's famed Conerica Straits provide a web of roadways slashing across the state, leading from Cheliax in the southwest all the way to Druma to the northeast. First Taldor, and then Cheliax, stripped away the few natural resources Isger possessed. Indeed, modern Isger provides little to its patron-state apart from its value as part of an essential trade route. Thanks to the importance of that trade route, Cheliax requires Isger to maintain a small standing army to protect the empire's interests and keep the roads open. Despite the vital task placed upon it, Isger's army receives little material support and no training from Cheliax. Undermanned and underarmed, Isger's brave army nonetheless has proven its resolve against external threats again and again.

Unfortunately for Isger's army, for the first time in the nation's history, the most recent threat to it came not from abroad, but from within. The savage humanoids of the forest caves of Chitterwood organized and attacked. Amassed by hobgoblin commanders, the likes of which were never before seen in Isger, hundreds of goblin tribes exploded from the forest like a great green geyser. The goblins murdered an untold number of travelers and merchants along the Conerica Straits before their momentum carried them to the Isgeri towns eking out existences at the feet of the Five Kings Mountains. The immediacy of the threat posed by the slaughter gave rise to what might otherwise have been an impossible three-part alliance. A small order of Hellknights from Cheliax, a contingent of Druma's Mercenary League, and a regiment of Eagle Knights of Andoran all coordinated their efforts to strike back at the goblin hordes. Each group sought to stem the goblin tide before it could flow into its home nation. As such, the Goblinblood Wars became a campaign best remembered for the sheer number of dead on all sides. In the end, much of the Chitterwood was put to the torch, forcing the goblinoids that survived to seek refuge deep in the twisted caverns below.

Today, what little of Isger's army survived the Goblinblood Wars remains depleted. As such, Isger's Steward Hedvend VI elected to allocate the remnants of his forces entirely to the defense of the Conerica Straits and the surrounding roadways, guarding the precious flow of trade. As a consequence, he surrendered the surrounding hinterland to banditry. As a stop-gap solution, the steward's agents posted bounties on brigand leaders, hoping to solve his problems on the cheap by luring in warriors of the desperate variety to save the burnt-out villages scattered around the countryside. The verdict is still out as to whether Isger's attempt to contract out its security can improve its desperate situation, but as long as the Conerica Straits continue to run, the Steward does not seem overly concerned.

Government: Hedvend VI rules the Isgeri court in Elidir under the title of Steward, but the court's status as a sham aristocracy beholden to Cheliax's ruling house, Thrune, is well known. Like his fathers before him, Hedvend VI makes

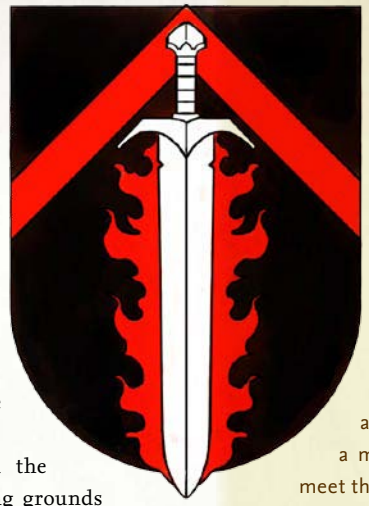
regular trips to Egorian in Cheliax, summonsed like a page boy. It is fitting that the Steward's symbol of office is a finely jeweled but expended *rod of rulership* set to crumble to dust if called upon once more.

Elidir: The capital city rests in the center of the Conerica Straits, providing a common stopover for the merchant caravans that amass within the city to re-supply. Those looking to press on, however, can simply proceed through Elidir's famed Rampways.

Logas: Nestled dangerously close to the Chitterwood, the city of Logas keeps a fresh supply of dead goblins mounted on pikes along its walls at all times. The corpses act as a constant warning to the goblin hordes that quietly multiply in the caves beneath the woods. For good measure, trebuchets hurl giant rocks into the forest nearby at random times, just to remind the goblins that Logas's vigilance has not relaxed. With the city within spitting distance from the Chelaxian border, Logas's aristocracy quietly maneuvers for the day it can restore Logas to its former glory as the Isgeri capital.

The Caverns of Chitterwood: Beneath the burnt tangles of this forest lie the breeding grounds of an intricate web of goblinoid tribes, most notably the True Hoard, the Spine Threshers, and the People of the Stirge. Slowly breeding their way back from the brink of extermination during the Goblinblood Wars, these goblins are unusually crafty and organized.

Isger Army Insignia



Hamatulatsu

You have mastered a deadly fighting form inspired by the varying attacks of the barbed devil. You seek not just to defeat or kill your opponent but to first cripple him with memorable, scarring pain.

Prerequisites: Intimidate 5 ranks, Improved Unarmed Attack, female, raised by the Sisters of the Golden Erinyes.

Benefit: Each round, your unarmed attacks may be treated as bludgeoning, piercing, or slashing damage. You decide which type of damage you deal, but you may only choose one type at a time. In addition, for each consecutive round that you change the type of damage selected from the previous round, the threat range of your unarmed attack increases by 1, to a maximum of 16–20/x2 after 5 rounds. If you succeed in confirming a critical hit, the threat range of your attacks resets to normal and you may further make an opposed Intimidate check as an immediate action to attempt to demoralize your opponent and render him shaken.

Special: Hamatulatsu may be selected as a substitute bonus feat at 2nd level by a monk even if the monk does not otherwise meet the prerequisites.

Hamatulatsu does not stack with Improved Critical.

Isgeri Orphans

The Goblinblood wars left swathes of Isgeri orphans. The ensuing years of unchecked bandit raids only further swelled the number of unwanted homeless. Tragically, the only institution to respond to the growing crisis was the church of Asmodeus. Cheliax's House of Thrune installed a number of monasteries across the Isgeri countryside which collect, feed, and clothe orphaned children, all the while co-opting them into their dark fold.

The most prominent of these monasteries is the Sisters of the Golden Erinyes, colloquially referred to as the Devil Nuns. The sisterhood baptizes the rescued youths with unholy water and drills them from an early age in the basics of Hamatulatsu, an exotic martial art pattered on the study of barbed devils. Upon reaching adulthood, young female orphans often aspire to join the ranks of the sisterhood themselves, while males often seek admission to an order of Hellknights or find their calling in the priesthood of Asmodeus.

Wanted: Dead in Six Parts

The following is but a small excerpt of the steward's current list (as of 4708) of wanted highwaymen and bandit kings.

Wanted	Name	Crimes	Last Seen	Reward
Alive for torture	Asmelia Hellwick	Harboring fugitives	Saringallow	335 gp
Dead in six parts	The Cowl Men	Assault on the Conerica Straits	Haugin's Ear	Full pardon, 50 gp per head
Dead in six parts	Eliadas Demos and Her Steward	Blasphemy against Her Majestrix	Western Five Kings Dustpawn village	500 gp
Dead in six parts	Vargar, the Carcass-Maker	Serial murder, goblinoid	East Chitterwood	475 gp, God Claw induction
Alive for torture	Deacon Jugular	Banditry, profiteering	Logas, knife quarter	Citizenship, trade license

Jalmeray

Kingdom of the Impossible



Alignment: CN
Capital: Niswan (10,300)
Notable Settlements: Padiskar (8,200)
Ruler: Kharswan, Thakur of Jalmeray
Government: Colonial Princely State
Languages: Vudrani
Religion: Irori, elementalism, mysterious eastern religions

For nearly 2,000 years, the Vudrani have controlled this large island nation off the coast of Nex. A gift to the mighty Maharaja Khiben-Sald from the archmage Nex four millennia ago, Jalmeray is the westernmost of Vudra's so-called Impossible Kingdoms. Here, genies serve humans who live in massive gold and marble palaces, indoor fountains circulate wine instead of water, and sprawling but perfectly symmetrical monasteries of Irori instruct hundreds of skilled monks. Everything in Jalmeray seems, at least to those few visitors from other Inner Sea nations, much larger and far grander.

Roughly 4 millennia ago, Khiben-Sald, greatest Maharaja of the eastern empire of Vudra, arrived at Quantium in a fleet of 101 exotic ships. The bizarre foreigners—at this time wholly unknown in the Inner Sea region—became fixtures in the court of Nex, and Vudrani culture influenced the art and dress of the nation. Nex granted Khiben-Sald's traveling court dominion over the Isle of Jalmeray, where they erected dozens of temples to their strange gods, attracting a wide variety of heretofore-undiscovered elemental creatures to the isle in an effort to increase its considerable natural beauty and charms.

Distant Vudra became part of the regional sphere, with ships of merchants, prophets, and explorers regularly appearing over the horizon of the Obari Ocean. When Khiben-Sald finally returned to his homeland he left behind only a handful of glorious monuments and bound genies as a sign that he had ever been on Jalmeray at all. A few centuries later, Nex himself abandoned Golarion, and several centuries after that the ruling Arclords of Nex fell from grace and were exiled. The shamed Arclords put in at Jalmeray, using the nearby island as a remote outpost from which to subtly influence the affairs of their homeland.

Then, in 2822, alien ships once more appeared on the high Obari and set anchor in the wave-ravaged harbor of Niswan. Hundreds of Vudrani rajahs embarked upon Jalmeray, curiously wondering at the audacity of the Arclords and their perversions of the changes Khiben-Sald had brought to the island. Was he not the greatest maharaja of Vudra, they asked? Did he not dwell upon Jalmeray at the bequest of Nex himself? The Vudrani nobles produced improbable but nonetheless apparently accurate genealogical information proving their familial ties to Khiben-Sald, calmly inviting the Arclords to abandon their ancestral island home. When the stodgy wizards refused, the rajahs summoned an army of marids from the depths of the sea, who battered the island with relentless storms that sank all but one of the Arclords' ships. More than a millennium after the departure of Maharajah Khiben-Sald, the Isle of Jalmeray once more belonged to Vudra. The Vudrani nobles immediately unsealed their ancient monuments and stirred their otherworldly guardians to life.

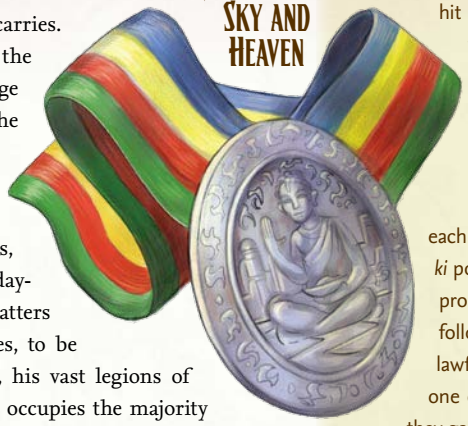
The many impossible splendors of Jalmeray, while certainly spoken of by those who see them, are less well-known across Avistan and Garund than the island nation's monastic orders, of which there are dozens. The three greatest monasteries on the island—collectively known as the Houses of Perfection—constantly spread word throughout the Inner Sea region of a new form of physical and mental discipline from the distant East. All who can survive the journey are welcomed to venture to Jalmeray and endure a series of seemingly impossible challenges. Those who pass all the challenges are accepted in one of the Houses of Perfection, where they develop physical mastery, spiritual balance, and an unusual magic of the opened mind.

The challenge has stood for centuries, and those willing to brave a race against a djinn, wrestle a dao, and outwit an efreet are accepted into the monastic orders of wondrous Jalmeray to learn the secret arts of a distant people. Few residents of the Inner Sea understand these strange disciplines or the even stranger folk who teach them, but the adherents of the Impossible Kingdom command respect—if not trust—throughout the nations of the Inner Sea. Wealthy merchants, powerful aristocrats and cunning

war-leaders occasionally send their youngest sons and daughters to Jalmeray to be trained in the legendary fighting techniques of the Monastery of Untwisting Iron, the Monastery of Unfolding Wind, or the Monastery of Unblinking Flame. These children often form bonds upon the Isle that transcend the mortal concerns of their earthly parents.

Even those who fail Jalmeray's legendary challenge might find a lesser monastery or willing instructor to instruct them in one of the disciplined fighting styles known to monks, assuming they prove themselves worthy of such attentions during their trials. Those who prove themselves unworthy are respectfully asked to leave the island—once—after which they are forced off.

Government: Kharswan, the smiling Thakur of Jalmeray, understands all too well that his rule extends no further than his voice carries. In truth, it is the ancient mystics, the noble Vudrani families, the strange masters of the monasteries, and the complex ties of duty to the powerful spirits of the Impossible Kingdom itself that command the obedience of the people. Thus, the Thakur graciously allows the day-to-day execution of rule, such as matters of shipping and collection of taxes, to be carried out by the Maurya-Rahm, his vast legions of advisors. Kharswan himself gently occupies the majority of his days tending to his garden and his many wives, reading poetry, and setting his advisors against one another.



Niswan: The colorful, many-tiered pagoda city of Niswan is breath-taking when seen from the great seas that surround her harbor. The silk banners that furl in the cold wind are all the more beautiful when beheld from the winding, red-stone streets that crisscross the forbidding landscape. A city of quiet majesty, Niswan is home to travelers and scholars from across Golarion—and beyond. In the High-Holy District, gold-draped eunuchs sweep fallen snow into vast drifts while dark-skinned princes, trains of virgins in tow, make offerings of wine and poetry to great marble idols of unknown gods. Along the streets of the Grand Chronicler's Circle, scrolls and parchments in dozens of tongues are drafted, bought, and sold by perhaps the wisest and most learned minds in the world.

Padiskar: Once called the Shimmering Jewel of Jalmeray, Padiskar is now little more than a ring-shaped community of fisherman and farmers. Teeming orchards and unpaved roads linking the widespread farms surround an abandoned pleasure-city and center of arcane learning that dates back to the time of Nex himself. It was here, within the high-domed halls that line the empty streets of Old Padiskar, that the Arclords of Nex turned back in terror. What they discovered in the vaults beneath could not be named—nor unseen. Something howls in the winding darkness beneath the ruins at the center of Padiskar. Frightened locals whisper that it is a spirit or a god, brought in secret from the eastern empire by the Maharaja Khiben-Sald to the holdings of Nex in ancient days.

Secret of Steel-Shattering Spirit

As a student trained in the Impossible Techniques of Jalmeray, you can rend wood, burst brick, or even shatter steel with the perfect focus and application of your *ki*.

Prerequisites: Improved Unarmed Strike, base attack bonus +6, must be lawful.

Benefit: You gain a pool of *ki* points equal to 1 + your Wisdom modifier (minimum of 1). As a swift action, you may focus your *ki* into strikes that can overcome the hardness of any substance. Each unarmed strike attack you make while in this focus expends 1 *ki* from your pool, whether or not it hit. You lose your focus automatically when you run out of *ki*, when the encounter ends, if you are reduced to fewer than 0 hit points or killed, or as a free action any time you wish.

While focused in this way, your unarmed strikes are treated as adamantine weapons for the purpose of overcoming damage reduction or bypassing hardness.

Special: You may gain this feat multiple times. For each additional time you gain the feat you add 1 to your *ki* pool and your unarmed strikes gain an additional property for overcoming damage reduction, in the following order: adamantine, cold iron, silver, magic, lawful, epic. If your unarmed strikes already count as one or more of those properties (from any source), they gain the next property in line.

A monk trained at one of the Houses of Perfection may select Secret of Steel-Shattering Spirit as his 6th-level monk bonus feat.

Challenge of Sky and Heaven

Once a decade, the three Houses of Perfection of Jalmeray meet in friendly competition. Their best apprentices, students, and masters test against one another in a grand tournament that measures knowledge of history, sword-play, unarmed fighting technique, archery, mastery of the self, arcane ability, and more esoteric strengths.

Events are hosted across the island. The three monasteries each give tests of cunning, speed, and skill at all tasks, while the Thakur and his Maurya-Rahm advisors sponsor many more, including the Solemn Sky Duel of Masters. Those who dwell within the Monastery of Untwisting Iron are the reigning champions of the Challenge of Sky and Heaven, having proven victorious now the past two challenges.

All who venerate Irori, Master of Masters, are welcome to attend the competition and to compete. Those able to overcome any of the many challenges are forever marked as Champions of Sky and Heaven by the steel medallions presented to them.

Katapesh

Bazaar of the Bizarre



Alignment: N
Capital: Katapesh (212,300)
Notable Settlements: Okeno (13,700), Solku (4,900)
Ruler: The Pactmasters of Katapesh
Government: Anarchic plutocracy led by faceless, inhuman merchant league
Languages: Kelish, Osiriani, Common, Tien, Vudrani
Religion: Abadar, Sarenrae, Nethys, Irori

There is only one law in Katapesh: Do as you will, but do not interfere with trade. Business is Katapesh's lifeblood, as it has been since the Age of Destiny. It was then that the country's inhuman rulers arrived out of nowhere and established an enclave for unusual and illicit trade on a stretch of eastern Garund's desert coast. Over the centuries, the lawless outpost grew into a town, then into a city, and finally into the mighty trade nation it is today.

Bards say Absalom boasts the finest markets in the world, but those markets pale in comparison with the weird bazaars of Katapesh. The city's busy markets sell all manner of goods, ranging from the mundane, prosaic, and familiar to the illicit, dangerous, and outright bizarre. Buyers from all over Golarion come to Katapesh's great bazaars, which attract traders from as far away as Vudra, Tian Xia, and even other planes. On any given street, one might meet a Katapeshi gnoll slaver, a dwarven gemner from Druma, an oni from Minkai, or an erinyes whipmistress from Hell.

Katapesh's lax trade policies allow it to offer delights and wares unavailable anywhere else on Golarion , including its most iniquitous export: pesh, a powerful narcotic distilled from the spoiled milk of a rare cactus found in the country's southern desert. Addicts from across the world flock to the lurid pesh parlors of the capital to wallow in their degenerate indulgences. Even life is for sale here, and Katapesh is a cornerstone of the lucrative Inner Sea slave trade. Its bustling slave markets host a bewildering variety of chattel from all corners of Golarion: tattooed Varisian ecdysiasts, elven rhapsodists from Kyonin, Qadiran eunuchs, Tian acrobats, fierce Arcadian barbarians, and even intelligent apes from the jungles of the Mwangi Expanse.

Power in Katapesh rests firmly in the hands of a mysterious inhuman merchant council known as the Pactmasters, an elite ruling caste who never leave Katapesh. While they actively participate in Katapesh's diverse bazaars, the Pactmasters rely on hired human agents and friendly merchant princes in their dealings with outside nations. These bizarre beings wrap themselves in flowing veils and robes that completely cloak their spindly, 7-foot-tall frames from head to toe. Ornate masks conceal their featureless faces and muffle their deep, alien voices. Conventional wisdom holds that to look upon the face of a Pactmaster is to court madness.

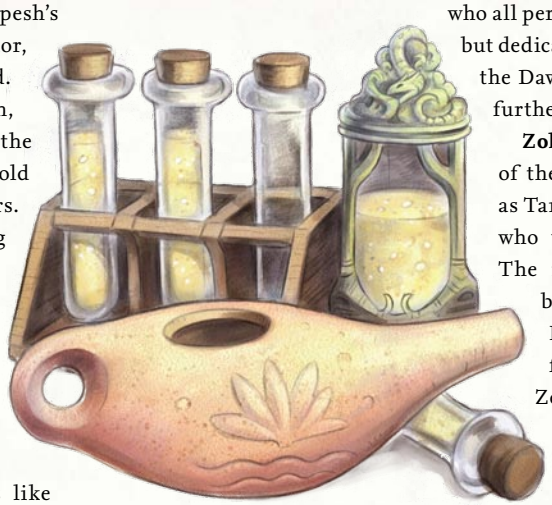
As a free port, Katapesh has good relations with its closest neighbors, Osirion and Nex, and with Qadira and the Isle of Jalmeray across the Obari Ocean. Katapesh has economic ties throughout the Inner Sea kingdoms as well. The one notable exception is abolitionist Andoran, which seeks to curtail the slave trade in which Katapesh plays a substantial role, and whose Gray Corsairs most recently sank three Katapeshi slave galleys in the Inner Sea in 4705.

Ankhegs, blink dogs, and predatory dhabbas roam Katapesh's interior plains alongside troops of baboons and herds of gazelle, zebra, and Nexian buffalo. The western Uwaga highlands are home to savage gargoyle clans, behirs, dragonnes, and frilled razorscales.

The biggest threat in Katapesh's hinterlands, though, are the barbaric gnoll tribes. Accompanied by packs of trained hyenas, scattered bands of gnolls range across the plains in search of slaves. No longer content to raid the southern deserts of Osirion, the gnolls frequently attack isolated villages, travelers, and Katapeshi caravans. In true pragmatic indifference, the Pactmasters welcome both the gnolls and their captured slaves in the thriving markets of the capital, but in the backcountry, gnolls are despised and distrusted.

Despite the fear and hatred they engender, the gnolls have not been an organized threat since the Siege of Solku 7 years ago. Persistent rumors out of the west speak of Noor, the Red Sultana, who gathers a horde of warriors under her blood-soaked banner to retake Solku before sweeping eastward across the plains.

Government: Katapesh's plutocratic merchant council has a strict laissez-faire, almost anarchic, attitude. The Pactmasters of Katapesh impose few laws on their subjects, but they effectively have absolute power should they choose to wield it. Although it has no standing army, Katapesh is protected and its laws enforced by the inexorable Aluum, metal-shod golems powered by the bound souls of elderly slaves. The Pactmasters devote much of their attention to business and other more inscrutable pursuits, leaving the day-to-day management of Katapesh's affairs in the hands of their factor, Pactbroker Hashim ibn Sayyid. While he has ambitions of his own, ibn Sayyid is content to serve the Pactmasters as long as their gold continues to fill his personal coffers.



Katapesh: The teeming metropolis of Katapesh, second in size only to Absalom, consists of closely packed stone tenements interspersed with wide stone plazas. These plazas provide space for the city's ever-changing temporary bazaars and fairs, as well as more permanent markets like the Peculiar Emporium and the infamous Nightstalls. A cluster of twisting marble minarets capped with shining iridium onion-shaped domes towers over the city center. These are the homes of the mysterious Pactmasters themselves, the entrances guarded night and day by faithful and vigilant Aluum. The most influential temple in Katapesh is the Immaculate Repository, where the clergy of Abadar—under the leadership of Master of the Vault Jalal Abdul-Abadar—offer banking, storage, and surety services to the city's merchants.

Lightning Stones: The Lightning Stones are a line of 20-foot tall pointed menhirs in the southern reaches of the Barrier Walls mountains, near the border with Nex. Lightning strikes these menhirs with unnatural regularity, causing otherwise invisible runes and glyphs within the stones to briefly glow after every strike. Garundi legend says this is where earth and air elementals square off in combat. Dwarven legend says the stones funnel lightning deep into the earth for aberrant purposes.

Okeno: The city of Okeno boasts the most profitable and varied slave markets in the hemisphere, known as the Fleshfairs. Okeno's notorious yellow-sailed slave galleys regularly ply the sealanes, carrying living cargo from Avistan, Garund, and beyond.

Solku: The walled town of Solku lies in Katapesh's western reaches. Gnoll tribes from White Canyon besieged the city in 4701, but their attempts to enslave the population were rebuffed at the Battle of Red Hail by paladins of Iomedae, who all perished in the battle. Today, a small but dedicated band of paladins of Sarenrae, the Dawn Vigil, remain vigilant against further gnoll incursions.

Zolurket: When the platinum mines of the small dwarven outpost known as Tar Urkatka played out, the dwarves who worked there vacated the area. The mines and dwarven ruins left behind gained the name Zolurket, Keleshite for "Dark Death." The few brave explorers to venture to Zolurket and return report that most of the mines remain intact and are haunted. Stories differ, though, as to the nature of the haunting. Some claim ghosts of dead miners, others a burial ground uncovered by mining, and at least a couple report a lich infestation. Other rumors also whisper that the mine isn't played out at all, and that the dwarves left for some other reason.

Cosmopolitan

Living in Katapesh has put you in touch with numerous different civilizations, cultures, and races.

Prerequisites: Katapesh affinity.

Benefit: You gain two languages of your choice. In addition, choose two Intelligence-, Wisdom-, or Charisma-based skills. Those skills always count as class skills for you.

The Nightstalls

The Nightstalls is Katapesh's most infamous market. Anywhere else in the world, such a place would be an underground black market, forever at risk of discovery and closure. In Katapesh, though, the Nightstalls can display its wares openly and proudly. While commonplace contraband like information, drugs, poisons, and smuggled relics can be found in the Nightstalls, most of its patrons come seeking more exotic and vile wares: diseases, diabolic contracts, cursed and corrupt magics, and even such rare magical components as the tears of a new moon, a madman's dreams, or the screams of a thrice-slain virgin. It is said that even souls can be bought and sold in the Nightstalls. All trade in the Nightstalls takes place under the watchful eyes of the Osiriani tiefling Khafira Blacktongue and her Duskwalker guild, who take a cut of every transaction.

Kyonin

Kingdom of the Elves



Alignment: CG
Capital: Iadara (56,340)
Notable Settlements: Greengold (10,400)
Ruler: Queen Telandia Edasseril, the Viridian Crown
Government: Monarchy
Languages: Elven
Religion: Calistria, Desna, Nethys, several obscure elven deities

During the long centuries of elven abandonment, many of the elves left behind gradually grew away from their traditions, becoming erratic hermits or assimilating into the barbaric human societies as the long-lived Forlorn. Others delved deep beneath the earth, seeking a refuge to wait out the coming destruction from above, and in the process became forever twisted and darkened by what they found there. Those loyalists who remained in Kyonin kept primarily to Iadara, their illusion-shrouded capital, and carefully hoarded their racial lore. Locked up behind their graceful walls, the residents of Iadara could only watch in frustration as their abandoned communities were looted by vandals and bandits, their former homes annexed by tribes of squatters. Artifacts and treasures lifted from these fallow communities flooded the markets of Avistan, and to this day many elves of Kyonin consider their sale a slight against elvenkind.

Yet sprawling human nations were hardly the largest threat to beset Kyonin during the dark years of the elves' absence. In 2497, the great demon Cyth-V'gug, Lord of Filth and Pollution, grew dissatisfied with the work of one of his spawn. As punishment, the enraged demon exiled his minion Treerazer, the self-styled Lord of Blasted Tarn, to the Material Plane, where he would stay until such time as he could prove his worth. Suddenly finding himself among the lush, carefully tended trees of the southern Fierani Forest, Treerazer quickly realized that his prison could also be his playground, and he immediately set about sucking the life from the forest, poisoning the very earth with his fecund filth. In his wake, the wilderness grew twisted and dark, and men and elves feared to tread within its borders. As the demon pressed north and encountered Iadara, however, he discovered the true scope of its opportunity. With whispered feelers probing the minds of the remaining elves, he learned of the *Sovyrian Stone*, and set about trying to corrupt it, attempting to break its connection to the elves' strange refuge and use its power to bring Golarion in line with the Abyss, opening its gates to the demonic hordes.

In far away Sovyrian, the elves felt the shift and took action. In a great procession that took weeks to complete, the elves marched back through the gate and into Golarion, the sun shining on their armor and flowing pennants. With sword and spell they descended on the corrupted woods, cleansing the land and driving Treerazer back into a far corner of the forest. There, however, the demon entrenched himself, and despite their best efforts, the elves were unable to truly slay the Lord of Blasted Tarn. Instead, they wrote off the tainted groves as lost, naming the dark section of woods the Tanglebriar and setting guards to watch it, lest the demon ever attempt to stray beyond the polluted vale's borders once more.

The demon dealt with, the elves looked around for the next threat, expecting at any moment to be descended upon by teeming hordes of humans. Instead, they found the land recovered from the darkness following the Earthfall far quicker than they had projected, with their former human adversaries now deep in the Age of Enthronement—an era of relative civilization and refinement. Believing these new human nations capable of reason, the elves elected not to use the *Sovyrian Stone* to leave once more, but instead proceeded forth into the world, intent on retaking former holdings and resuming their residence among Golarion's green places, starting with the abandoned communities in Kyonin. While in many places the elves met armed resistance from humans to whom the idea of elven society was but a half-remembered fairy tale, the suddenness of the elven return was its greatest strength, and before the rulers of Avistan and Garund could react, fires burned once more in forgotten hearths, and strange new banners flew over the crumbled remnants of ancient cities.

Filled with pastoral beauty and picturesque landscapes, Kyonin is the largest enclave of elves on Golarion. Although even their own scholars are hard-pressed to say when and where the elves first arose, all agree that the rolling fields and deep, vibrant forests of Kyonin are where their hearts lie. For thousands of years, the elves lived in harmony with the land, building elegant settlements that seemingly grew from the landscape itself, or else festooning the land with monuments and fountains, orreries and sculptures of unknown meaning and function. The ancient, abandoned ruins of these structures still dot the Fireani Forest north of the Five Kings Mountains, their scars eloquent of a time when the elves fought tooth and nail with the humans of Old Azlant. These conflicts came to an abrupt end just before the Earthfall, when elves from across the world gathered in Kyonin to step through the gate created by the sacred *Sovyrian Stone* and abandoned Golarion to the coming cataclysm, traveling across unknown distances to their mysterious community of Sovyrian—the unknown country or world from which they are whispered to have originated. What transpired in this far-off land is unknown to outsiders, but for thousands of years the elves remained missing, leaving behind only a few stragglers and stewards to watch over their former homes.



Queen Telandia

Kyonin is a standoffish realm, a serene place where the elves can seek refuge from a human-focused world paced far too quickly for their tastes. While gnomes, being closely tied to nature and the fey of the First World, are largely tolerated by the elves, the few visitors from other races allowed within Kyonin's borders are pointed toward the human-run community of Greengold.

Government: Kyonin is ruled by Queen Telandia Edasseril, the current bearer of the Viridian Crown. Although her serene beauty and calm authority cannot be questioned, there are many within her elaborate councils and courts in Iadara who grow dissatisfied with the current state of affairs, urging the queen to reopen more of the ancestral holdings across Avistan and Garund, or else pushing for a final solution to the problems of Treerazer and their dark cousins below the surface.

Iadara: A glorious affair of wood and crystal spires, Iadara's buildings are built in perfect harmony with the trees and streams of the forest. Its beauty, however, is deceptive—the walls and structures of Kyonin's capital are shrouded in layer upon layer of artistic illusion, their constantly shifting edifices making it hard to tell where the magic ends and reality begins. In ages past, these illusions transformed the entire city into a canvas, but of late the illusions reflect the citizen's isolationist tendencies, and magical fog and vines frequently shroud the glimmering towers. Indeed, many enemies have trouble locating the city at all, so perfectly can it blend with the surrounding landscape.

Greengold: While small hamlets and farming communities lie scattered across Kyonin, it remains a nation too small for its borders, and many ancient settlements sit uninhabited due to its people's slow population growth. As a result, the largest city save Iadara is, ironically, the human-run trading town of Greengold. Here, the elves are content to allow human traders and politicians their own carefully governed community within elven lands—an ongoing experiment to determine if the elves can trust other civilized races to help rebuild their fallen empire.

Focused Shot

Your knowledge of simple anatomy allows you to place your shots more effectively.

Prerequisites: Int 13, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Kyonin affinity.

Benefit: As a standard action, you may make an attack with a bow or crossbow and add your Intelligence modifier on the damage dealt. You must be within 30 feet of your target to deal this extra damage. Creatures immune to critical hits and sneak attacks are immune to this extra damage.

Sniper Shot

You are skilled at making deadly attacks from an extreme distance.

Prerequisites: Int 13, Wis 13, Far Shot, Focused Shot, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Kyonin affinity.

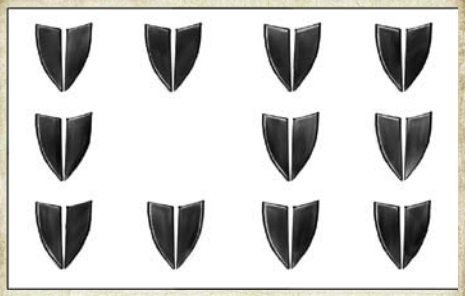
Benefit: As a full-round action, you may make an attack that allows you to deal precision-based extra damage to a distance equal to your weapon's range increment. You may only make this attack with bows and crossbows. Precision-based damage includes sneak attacks, a ranger's favored weapon bonus, and the damage bonus from the Focused Shot feat. Creatures immune to critical hits and sneak attacks are immune to this extra damage.

Elf Gates

The exodus of an entire race is a difficult thing to organize. In order to better facilitate the elves' original departure, many communities built the *aiudara,* magical portals those races that came behind them vulgarly termed "elf gates." Through these elaborately sculpted stone arches, elves were able to step easily between settlements on opposite sides of the globe, although only the gate deep in Kyonin was capable of reaching fabled Sovyrian. Powered by the same artifact, the *Sovyrian Stone,* these gates represented a huge part of the elves' power, as resources could be called instantly from across continents.

Lastwall

Watchful Border Kingdom



Alignment: LG
Capital: Vigil (9,780)
Notable Settlements: Castle Firrine (540), Vellumis (12,340)
Ruler: Watcher-Lord Ulthun II, Bearer of the Shattered Shield of Arnisant
Government: Military Dictatorship
Languages: Common, Varisian
Religion: Gorum, Iomedae

Nearly a thousand years ago, Taldor launched the Shining Crusade against Tar-Baphon, the Whispering Tyrant, who unified the savage tribes of Belkzen and ruled central Avistan for five centuries from his doom-shrouded, haunted domain of Ustalav. From all provinces of the empire the crusaders assembled, dedicated to destroying the witch-king and his minions. Commandeering the Ustalavan town of Vellumis, the forces of Taldor, aided by the dwarven kingdom of Kraggodan and the Knights of Ozem, spent 26 brutal years hacking their way to the lich's capitol of Gallowspire. Just outside the rotting city, the Shining Crusade met the forces of the Whispering Tyrant in a final titanic battle, achieving victory when the Taldoran General Arnisant sacrificed himself to imprison Tar-Baphon beneath his own tower at the evil city's heart.

With the Shining Crusade victorious at last, Taldor decided in 3828 to create a permanent presence to watch over the lich's prison in Gallowspire's haunted ruins. This province it named Lastwall, bulwark against the greatest evil mankind had ever known. When Cheliax later broke away from Taldor, Lastwall declared its neutrality, citing the need to maintain its sacred duty free from political concerns. Cheliax quickly agreed while Taldor protested, but the crippled empire lacked the power to prevent its distant province from severing official ties and becoming an independent nation.

Over the last 700 years, Lastwall has stood guard against Belkzen's savage hordes and the deathless horrors lurking in Ustalav. The fiercest action faced by Lastwall's defenders is typically found in the battle-plains on the Belkzen frontier, but patrols venture monthly beyond the Hungry Mountains to inspect the ruins of Gallowspire. Dismissed by some younger crusaders as merely ceremonial, this mission resonates with veterans as the heart of Lastwall's very reason to exist. Crusader doctrine is that the troubles with Belkzen are simply the residue of the malice and menace of the Whispering Tyrant, and to ensure the seals on his prison remain inviolate is the uppermost duty of every crusader.

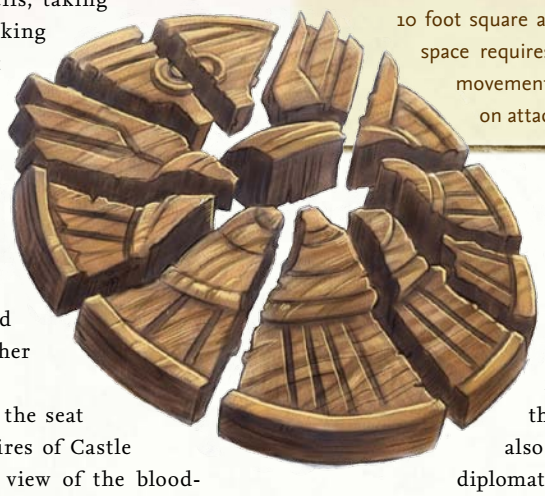
Lastwall enjoys good relations with Nirmathas, its newly formed southern neighbor, although it has found the Nirmathi unreliable, undisciplined allies, easily distracted and apt to disobey orders. Some in Lastwall would prefer to recruit Molthuni allies, but they cannot afford to arouse the ire of Nirmathi partisans along their otherwise secure southern border. Relations are cordial with the other nations around Lake Encarthan. Lastwall keeps a cautious eye upon the mad theocrat of Razmiran, not wanting the seditious priests of the so-called "Living God" meddling in Lastwall's hinterlands while its defenders' eyes are focused on the battlefront. Relations with Kyonin are civil but cool, as the elves have refused annual entreaties to aid in what Lastwall views as its defense of the entire region.

Lastwall's people are a hardy folk. Although they live in the shadow of great evils, they are warm and friendly to outsiders, especially those who have come to help hold the line. In recent years, the number of knights-errant and glory seekers visiting Lastwall has greatly diminished, due in large part to the call to arms in Mendev against the teeming hordes of demons that infest the Worldwound. Many in Vigil grow concerned that they might not have the strength to hold off the orcs of Belkzen for too much longer if this trend continues. Nevertheless, the newly anointed Watcher-Lord Ulthun II has great ambitions toward securing or even expanding the borders. Having already demonstrated valor on the battlefield and vision and drive in leadership at just 19 years of age, the line of suitors for his hand often stretches well outside Castle Overwatch in Vigil.

The onslaught of Lastwall's heavy cavalry is legendary. Its impact has broken many an enemy line with the

combination of its splendidly trained mounts and riders' skill in maneuvering horses in very close formation, like an onrushing tide of hooves and steel. Oftentimes, a contingent of heavy cavalry need only appear at a battlefield in order to turn a battle in Lastwall's favor. The last major heavy cavalry charge conducted by Lastwall occurred against the orcish Warlord Graukrad in 4695, when 173 knights rode down and routed an orcish force estimated at more than 2,000 infantry.

Government: The Watcher-Lord is appointed by the Precentors Martial of the War College. Age and experience are less important in selection than proven skill at arms, purity of heart, clarity of mind, and the embodiment of the crusader ideal. The Watcher-Lord stands first among equals in command councils, taking advice but with final decision-making authority. Since nearly every aspect of life in Lastwall pertains to the prosecution and upkeep of the Crusade, the Watcher-Lord's authority is theoretically absolute, but tyranny has never been an issue. Watcher-Lords are chosen carefully and are never so arrogant that they fail to understand the need to delegate and work together for the greater good.



Vigil: The aptly named Vigil is the seat of the Watcher-Lord. The high spires of Castle Overwatch afford a commanding view of the blood-soaked westward plains on the Belkzen frontier, as well as the mist-shrouded highlands of Ustalav to the north. The horsemasters of Vigil breed and train the mighty destriers and swift coursers that bear Lastwall's finest into battle, and the pastures around Vigil are known for the quality of their bloodlines. Vigil also hosts the Crusader War College, where crusader tacticians have worked to best marshal magical and military resources to defeat their numerically superior enemies.

Castle Firrine: Not so much a town as a heavily fortified mustering station and supply depot, Castle Firrine stands sentinel in the midst of the battle zone. Here, the Hospitalers of Iomedae tend the wounds of recovering soldiers as well as mounts and beasts of burden, while expert artisans and engineers repair equipment and materiel of all kinds. The Battlemasters of Gorum rouse the fighting ardor of the crusaders, although they have felt considerable consternation at the recent appearance of large numbers of Gorumite warpriests among the half-orc legions across the battlefield.

Vellumis: The oldest and largest city in Lastwall, Vellumis is a scenic port, with many buildings marble-clad, domed, and colonnaded in the once-popular Chelaxian Old White style (characterized by whitewashed walls, ornately decorated eaves, and massive arched windows). It serves both as the point of entry for goods and soldiers making their way to the front lines and also hosts all foreign embassies and diplomats, in an effort by Lastwall to keep potential spies far from the front.

Massed Charge

You are trained in the legendary methods of Lastwall's heavy cavalry and can steer your mount with great accuracy, even in tight confines.

Prerequisites: Mounted Combat, Handle Animal 4 ranks, Ride 9 ranks, Lastwall affinity.

Benefit: When mounted on a horse, you and your mount suffer no penalties for squeezing when you share a 10-foot space with another mount and rider with this feat. In addition, you and your mount gain a +2 bonus on opposed bull rush, overrun, and trip checks.

Special: A fighter may gain Massed Charge as one of his fighter bonus feats.

Normal: Horses and other Large mounts occupy a 10 foot square area. For two horses to share that space requires them to squeeze, halving their movement rate and imposing a –4 penalty on attack rolls and to AC.

The Shattered Shield of Arnisant

During the battle between the Whispering Tyrant and General Arnisant, the lich unleashed terrible magic at the outnumbered mortal army. Despite the lich's power, Arnisant was protected from the onslaught by his magical shield, an artifact known as the *Shield of Aroden*. When the general and lich finally faced off, the Whispering Tyrant attempted to use a *wish* to summon Arnisant's heart to his waiting claws. The *Shield of Aroden* prevented this dire fate and instead shattered into a dozen fragments, one of which appeared in Tar Baphon's hand, fusing with the undead flesh and burning the lich with holy fire. When the flames subsided, the crippled lich was soon locked away in the dungeons beneath Gallowspire, there to rot for all eternity. The *Shield of Aroden* lost all of its power. Its broken remnants have been passed down from watcher-lord to watcher-lord without fail. Some say that should the Whispering Tyrant ever become free, the missing piece of the shield would have to be recovered from his bony claw for the fiend to truly be defeated.

Linnorm Kings, Lands of the

Frigid Viking Homeland



Alignment: CN
Capital: Kalsgard (72,080)
Notable Settlements: Bildt (6,730), Halgrim (26,340), Jol (9,500), Trollheim (12,120)
Rulers: Svienn Blood-Eagle, White Estrid, Ingimundr the Unruly, Opir Eightfingers
Government: Loose confederation of barbaric tribal monarchies
Languages: Skald
Religion: Erastil, Torag, Desna, Gorum

During the Age of Enthronement, the dragon-headed longships of the Linnorm Kings appeared out of the Steaming Sea, and no coastal kingdom was safe from their depredations. Since then, the Ulfen people of this northern realm have settled and grown more civilized, but the spirit of adventure and the lust for plunder still burns strong in their hearts

The Linnorm Kings rule, in name at least, Avistan's extreme northwest—a frigid, rugged land of rich taiga, treacherous marshes, and great boulder-strewn moraines left by departed glaciers. The coastline is bracing and cool, and it rains year-round, with deep winter snows. Further to the east, the land grows increasingly colder, up to the frozen borders of the Witch Queen of Irrisen, who seized the eastern reaches of this domain 1,400 years ago and shows no intention of returning them.

The Linnorm Kings themselves are a collection of petty rulers who dominate the few large settlements in the region. They take their names from the tradition that only a king can carry the head of a linnorm through the city's gates. That head is usually then displayed above the king's throne as a sign of prowess and power. Given the difficulties of hunting the linnorm, the number of active kings at any time varies, from as few as two to as many as seven at any one time.

Life is hard for the natives of this realm. What land is not frozen marsh is heavily seasoned with stones and boulders, and starvation is often a grim specter in the depths of winter. As a result, many able-bodied adults engage in trade in the summer months, bringing from the south salted fish, pelts, warm woolen clothing, and various oddities of the Inner Sea. Such travelers also pack their axes and small, circular shields, in case an opportunity to plunder presents itself. Every citizen is a Viking at heart, and distant lands are less dangerous than his cold homeland.

The land itself is dotted with small, fortified steadings and a few large stone-walled cities. Even just a few miles from the major cities does the land become wilderness. The beasts come up to the city walls themselves at night, pawing even at the gates of Kalsgard. The lands are a hunter's paradise, with herds of rich game and predators.

It is not, however, the creatures of the wild that make this land so perilous. The wilderness between the steadings is also dominated by the fey, for a rift between Golarion and the First World runs over the hills claimed by the Linnorm Kings. The faerie peoples are common here, along with gnomes, eladrin, trolls, and nature spirits. There are enchanted animals that can both plead for their lives and utter dire curses against their attackers, and there are more deadly creatures as well. All but the most adventurous keep close to well-known trails and do not tempt either fate or the whimsy of the fey.

Government: The number of Linnorm Kings varies over the centuries, and only Kalsgard has an unbroken line of heroes stretching back before the Winter War. Each king is considered the ultimate law within his domain, and conflicts between the petty kingdoms are solved either by arbitration, the paying of weregild, or tests of adventure by the various kings' champions.

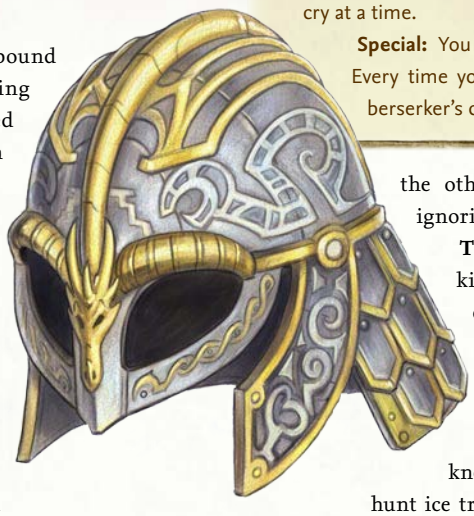
Svienn Blood-Eagle is the oldest and most powerful of the current kings, and the skalds whisper that soon he will step down and make the journey to Valenhall in far-off Arcadia. He is only waiting for a suitable candidate to come through his gates, bearing the traditional head of a

linnorm. Jockeying has already begun among the younger warrior princes, seeking both allies in court and hunting the wilderness for the elusive beasts.

Kalsgard: Kalsgard, on the northern bank of the Rimeflow River, is the largest settlement among the Linnorm Kings, and the seat of government of Svienn Blood-Eagle. It is the most cosmopolitan of the Linnorm holdings, and hosts a diverse population of native Ulfen, dwarves, gnomes, and a variety of traders from Varisa and points south.

Bildt: Bildt is ruled by Ingrimundr the Unruly, a brawling, argumentative leader who publicly condemns the soft living of his southern brothers. Bildt is second only to Kalsgard in the quality of its shipyards, and many independent captains and second sons of old families still make raids out of the city as Ingrimundr turns a blind eye to their activities and takes a share of their profits.

Halgrim: Situated on the Ironbound Archipelago, Halgrim is led by a female king (the term is used for both genders) named White Estrid, an albino warrioress with snow-white hair and pale blue eyes. Estrid does not possess the traditional linnorm head hanging over her throne, but instead has a live linnorm coiled up behind it. The linnorm does not speak, save to confirm that yes, it had been defeated fairly by Estrid, and has traded its service for its life. The creature is rarely referred to, but when mentioned, it is called simply "Estrid's Pet." Estrid herself led a fleet of 15 longships in a raid against the Nidalese port at Nisroch 4 years ago, slipped through a Chelaxian blockade at the Arch of Aroden, and put in triumphantly at Absolom with her plunder.



Ice Spire: For centuries, the Linnorm Kings, as well as their neighbors in Irrisen, have obsessed over an ancient ruin called Ice Spire. Rising from the frozen plains between Algidheart and Trollheim, Ice Spire was once the lair of an ancient Linnorm named Vyalldehun. While the spire rises jaggedly to a mere 30–40 feet, frozen steps lead down into level after level of monster-infested dungeons and ice caves still redolent of its former draconic occupant. No one has ever delved far enough below Ice Spire to find its bottom, although explorers who lived to tell of their experience say the deeper halls and chambers take on a vastly different, alien appearance.

Jol: Jol is one of the inland kingdoms, nestled in the rugged uplands south of the Grungir Forest. Its master is Opir Eightfingers, who as a young man stumbled into the city from a snowstorm with the head of a linnorm lashed to his back. The rotted state of the head might have been due to his travails, but certain unwise individuals whisper that Eightfingers is more scavenger than hero. As a result, his rule is more tenuous than the others, with local steadings regularly ignoring his pronouncements.

Trollheim: Trollheim has no current king, and the space above its throne is empty. Its castellan, Freyr Darkwine, is the ruler and commander of a large military force, which patrols the frigid territories along the haunted border with Irrisen. The patrols, known collectively as the Blackravens, hunt ice trolls in particular, but any natives of the Witch Queen's lands are fair game.

Berserker's Cry

Your cry of bloodthirsty fury inspires those around you to greater acts of violence.

Prerequisites: Cha 13, Linnorm Kings affinity.

Benefit: Once per day, as a move action, you may unleash a powerful, bloodthirsty scream of battle lust and fury. Allies within 60 feet who can hear your berserker's cry (including yourself) are heartened and gain a +1 morale bonus on damage rolls made with melee attacks for a number of rounds equal to half your character level + your Charisma bonus. If you have the ability to rage, you may unleash a berserker's cry as part of the free action to enter a rage (instead of as a separate move action).

A creature may be under the effect of only one berserker's cry at a time.

Special: You may gain this feat multiple times. Every time you take this feat, you may unleash a berserker's cry one additional time per day.

Linnorms

Linnorms are the original dragons of Golarion, their positions supplanted by the arrival of the "true" dragons millennia ago. These original dragons are immense, scaled serpents, with two forward legs and rudimentary wings located directly behind the head. They are capable of magical flight and glide effortlessly among tangled pines and over twisted boulder-strewn terrain. While dangerous, linnorms lack the ultimate power of their younger cousins.

Linnorms make their homes in the wilderness of the kingdoms and apparently move easily across the rift between this plane and the First World of the fey. In addition, although black-hearted and treacherous beasts, they benefit from good relationships with fey creatures, such that a hunter might find unexpected obstacles when questing after a linnorm.

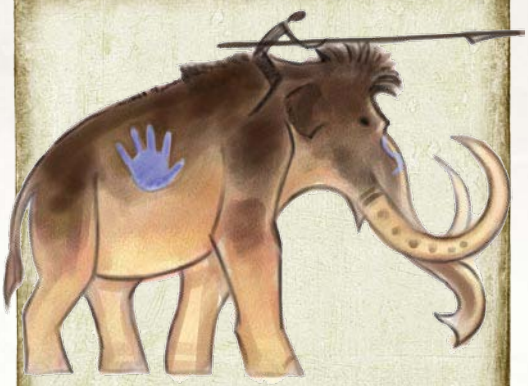
The variety of linnorms is as yet undetermined, as the Ulfen people choose to identify them chiefly by where they were slain. Old sages speak of snow, slate, mire, and tagia linnorms, but whether these are separate species or merely the same type of creature in different habitats remains unknown.

Mammoth Lords, Realm of the

Lost Land of the Distant North

On the far northern side of the Kodar Mountains stretches an ancient land where prehistoric beasts still roam. It is a savage no-man's-land, a wilderness as yet unclaimed by would-be conquerors. The hostile nature of the realm and its natives has so far kept those who would seek to do so at bay.

As befits its name, the Realm of the Mammoth Lords is best known for its great beasts—creatures that have died out in other, warmer realms to the south. Here, explorers can find several varieties of mammoth and mastodon, and herds of aurochs, bison, and short-horned deer graze on the windswept prairies. Armored glyptodons and giant ground sloths browse on the tough, woody brush, stalked by saber-toothed lions and smilodons. Even dinosaurs occasionally range the Tusk lowlands and the freakishly warm canyons at the base of the great ice shelf that forms both a glacial wall and the region's northern border.



Alignment: N
Capital: None
Notable Settlements: Hillscross (8,400), Icestair (11,300), Tulguth (3,900)
Rulers: Mighty Kuldor, Herdsman of the Bearpelt Following
Government: Loose alliance of primitive, mostly human, tribes
Languages: Hallit, Giant
Religion: Gorum, Minderhal, Rovagug

Incredible rumors suggest that the beasts that make the realm famous somehow emerged from an impossible underworld with its own false sun, a savage microcosm in which the dinosaurs never died and humans never emerged from their primitive origins. The Pathfinder Society has mounted five expeditions to this rumored inner world, but none have ever returned from the country alive.

The Tusk Mountains divide the land, and this snow-topped range is notable for its myriad passes and passages. To the west, the land is cold and snowy year-round, all the more so since the arrival of the Witch Queen of Irrisen. The lands to the east of the mountains are free of snow most of the year, but they are dry plateaus rising from endless grasslands, broken by deep canyons and arroyos carved by the melting snow and ice to the west and north.

Despite its remote location, the Realm of the Mammoth Lords sees a great deal of travel from other lands. From the south come the orcs of Belkzen, seeking to capture mammoths and other great beasts for sale to the decadent kingdoms of the south. From the west come ice trolls, servants of the hated Witch Queen, who form a living, regenerating barrier against the Mammoth Lords. The greatest danger lies to the east, where the Worldwound pulses and slowly expands the borders of its Abyssal taint. The exact border between the two realms is inexact, but is known in the native Hallit tongue as *hrungara*—the point beyond which the mammoths do not go willingly.

Yet it is from the north that the realm sees its most traffic, for the Icestair forms a passage to the Crown of the World. Strange travelers from Tian Xia, exhausted from the travel across the polar wilderness, arrive here to find tribesmen—some of them venerable old men and women no longer able to hunt—who act as guides. These elder guides bring the Tian visitors south to warmer lands. Oddly, the safest route out of the Realm is to make the pass at Hillcross, then skirt the eastern side of the Tusk range through the no-mans-land of the eastern Worldwound, and from there into Ustalav.

Government: The Mammoth Lords do not possess a central organization. Their tribes gather along family lines, combining with other tribes to form "followings" of powerful warriors and leaders. Upon the leader's death, a following choses a new leader, breaks into smaller tribes, or seeks to join another charismatic leader. Leadership is determined by great and risky deeds, guile, and acts of heroism, so the turnover is high.

The most powerful of the Mammoth Lords is Mighty Kuldor of the Beltpelt Following—which boasts several thousand tribesmen. Kuldor makes his winter home in the ranges west of Hillcross, and his followers profit greatly

from the trade that comes down over the Crown of the World. Mighty Kuldor is a muscular giant of a Kellid, even in a land that requires brawn to survive. It is said that no human can match the heroic strength of Mighty Kuldor, who lords over his savage followers from atop his woolly rhino mount.

Other important groups are the Greattusk, Ice Chasm, Raptorscale, and Slothjaw followings, and tribes like the Night Hunt and now-deceased Six Bears. There are anywhere from 10 to 30 major followings at any time, with about 200 smaller followings that range from outcast family clans to bandit groups. Tribes and followings travel on foot, although they do haul their fur tents and possessions on travails pulled by mammoths and other domesticated beasts. When dealing with such groups, wise travelers best remember that a Mammoth Lord's word is both bond and law, and the Lords are particularly suspicious of magic that outstrips their traditional shamanic ways.



Capital: The Mammoth Lords have no capital city, nor even a cultural gathering-place. Instead, the natives of the land follow the various herds of great beasts and return to what passes for civilization only when they must. The Realm of the Mammoth Lords has few towns, and most of those exist as a concession to travelers. For the Kellid tribesman of this land, home is only a temporary camp, to be abandoned when prey moves on.

Hillcross: Situated at the center of the country, Hillcross is as close as the Mammoth Lords have to a common meeting ground. It is situated in the largest of the passes that cross the Tusk Mountains—a deep ravine that is ice free even in the coldest winters. It is more of a permanent camp than a city of any reasonable expectation, but its location is used by a number of southern traders seeking to deal with the Lords and with other travelers throughout the region.

Icestair: The largest of the towns, Icestair exists at the base of the glacial wall that dominates the Crown of the World. The wall is marked here by a wide set of human-sized steps, carved into the ice and overlaid with heavy blocks of volcanic stone, winding up the face of the sheer ice sheet. In addition, at the top, great winches are mounted at the glacier's edge, which lower wagons and sledges that survived the perilous crossing.

Icestair is run by Po La the Bureaucrat. Po La is a Tian who claims to have been a civil officer in the service of the Fire Empress Zai Ming, until he ran afoul of that ruler's daughter and was forced to flee for his life. Whether or not this tale is true, he and his assistants arrange for guides to Hillscross or Wyvernsting, as well as oversee the upkeep of the Icestair, carving new steps when the old ones erode, and replacing those winches that collapse. In the perennial cold of the region, strengthened by the cryomantic enchantments of the Witch Queen, such collapses are not as common as they might otherwise be.

Tolguth: Tolguth, like Icestair, is situated at the foot of the Crown of the World, but it is a surprisingly warmer place, and great tropical ferns, rhododendrons, and cycads grow in the deep delving valleys carved by the glacial moraine. The land is warmed by hot springs and volcanic vents that run through this part of the realm, and the valleys are filled with great sauropods, ceratopsians, and duck-billed dinosaurs. The area is also overrun with predatory creatures, ranging from flightless terror birds and hot-blooded raptors to titanic tyrannosaurs. As a result, Tolguth is a walled settlement, although creatures commonly breach those walls.

The greatest danger to Tolguth is not the native creatures, but the strange and twisted creations that spill out the Worldwound. Just as the western reaches grow colder under the enchantment of the Witch Queen, the eastern border comes closer with each passing winter, and someday Tolguth itself might fall under its spell.

Rugged

You live a hard nomadic life in a cold climate and gain some benefit from it.

Prerequisites: Endurance, member of a Mammoth Lord's following.

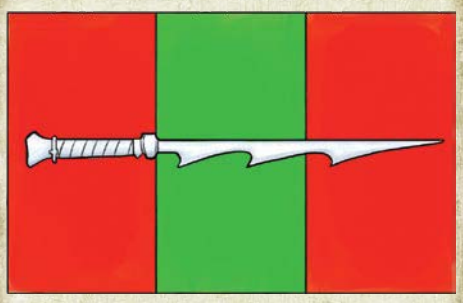
Benefit: You gain a +2 bonus on saving throws made against magical and natural effects that deal cold damage. In addition, you may move across ice without a movement penalty.

Foundlings

A sign of the power among the Mammoth Lords is the possession of enslaved giants. Heroes among the Mammoth Lords raid south into the Kodar Mountains, seeking glory through destroying the giant tribes found there. They do not kill all they encounter, but rather take the young giants they meet and enslave them, teaching them the ways of the great open plains and treating them as revered brothers. In time, these giant foundlings come to see their captors as their family, and fight to the death to protect them and their leaders. The more giants placed into a lord's service, the greater the lord's power. Mighty Kuldor has nearly a dozen such beings in his thrall.

Mediogalti Island

Lair of the Red Mantis



Alignment: LE
Capital: Ilizmagorti
Notable Settlements: Crimson Citadel
Ruler: Blood Mistress Jakalyn
Government: Red Mantis
Languages: Common
Religion: Red Mantis God

Mediogalti is one of the hundreds of islands off the coast of Garund. It cannot be found on every map or nautical chart. Indeed, many charts disagree on its exact location. This is a purposeful bit of deception wrought by the members of the cabal of assassins known only as the Red Mantis. It is well known, if rumor and innuendo can be believed, that the Red Mantis use the island as their base of operations. Their Crimson Citadel is supposedly hidden deep in the island's jungles.

For most ordinary folk, and even the brave members of most nations' navies, that information is enough to keep them from searching for Mediogalti, let alone approaching its shores once found. But there are others who not only aren't put off by the dangerous and evil nature of the place, but who find those qualities to be quite alluring. Pirates from all over the world's oceans visit the port of Ilizmagorti when their ships sail into those waters. It is purported to be a haven for anyone brave enough to sail in, and clever or canny enough to survive the stay.

The rest of the island is covered in lush tropical jungles home to an unusually large number of reptilian creatures. Anyone brave enough to explore the jungles finds thriving tribes of kobolds and lizardfolk, not to mention an abundant population of various breeds of dinosaur, none of whom are well disposed toward mammalian trespassers.

Still, over the years, many pirates chose sites in the Mediogalti jungles to bury their treasure and their honored dead. They were, it appears, willing to trade the possible interference of the native creatures for the near assurance that other pirates, authorities, and treasure seekers are not foolish enough to search blindly through this part of the world. Harbor taverns around the Inner Sea are abuzz with rumors of the gold, jewels, and other bounty stashed on Mediogalti—and the ghosts of those who died placing it there.

Government: Everything and everyone on Mediogalti fall under the jurisdiction of the Red Mantis and so are ultimately ruled by the decisions of the Vernai (a ruling council of senior assassins) and the Blood Mistress. Only members of that elite organization can even hope for the chance of contacting them directly. The only other figure of authority on the island is the mysterious Mayor of Ilizmagorti. No one knows the mayor's name, nor even if the mayor is a man or woman—or even human. Every citizen of Ilizmagorti knows where to find the mayor, though: in a lonely room atop the never-used lighthouse that stands overlooking the port.

Anyone with a complaint, question, or request for the mayor need simply go to the lighthouse and wait in whatever line is there. Every person in line is eventually admitted to an audience, regardless of time. All audiences are one-on-one, with no exceptions, and no audience lasts for more than 30 minutes.

Rumors circulate that those who gained multiple audiences report that the mayor wears a different visage every time. One visit might be with a wizened old man, the next with a fiery and alluring woman, and a third with a boy not old enough to grow a full beard. The rumors also state that, whatever the mayor looks like, the mayor always has full recall of any previous conversations, promises, and commitments.

Ilizmagorti: The only real settlement on Mediogalti is the port town of Ilizmagorti. Known as the Scum Tide City, Ilizmagorti is a wild, unpredictable place that is more a pirate stronghold than a true city. The town was originally founded as a place for members of the Red Mantis cult of assassins to meet with potential clients and from which to launch their missions. Thanks to the fact that it brooks no interference from the authorities of any sovereign country, Ilizmagorti's deep-water lagoon soon drew the attention of pirate crews from across the Inland Sea. They now flock there to restock their supplies, effect repairs to their ships, and enjoy the hospitality to be found in the city's taverns, inns, and bordellos.

Despite Ilizmagorti's popularity among pirates, no captain can claim control of the city, as all of the local businesses and citizens belong to the Red Mantis. No known way exists of telling which of the barkeeps and serving wenches are, in

truth, low-ranking members of the organization and which are highly skilled assassins. Thus, buccaneers and cutthroats who swarm the city are careful to only mistreat one another, never the citizens, property, or other visitors to Ilizmagorti.

Crimson Citadel: Although there are no other cities or towns on the island, there is one other enclave on Mediogalti—the Crimson Citadel, headquarters of the Red Mantis. Only members of the sect know exactly where the fortress is, although foolish explorers of the island occasionally catch glimpses of it atop a jungle hill a few miles inland from the city of Ilizmagorti. Stories about the site constantly flow from the island's heart, like the waterfall of fresh blood supposedly found in the heart of the Crimson Citadel.

If the most common rumors are to be believed, the Crimson Citadel has dozens of floors whose halls and rooms are filled with deadly traps. The lower levels, training grounds for Red Mantis assassins—filled with lethal snares, venomous beasts, and fiends from the Outer Planes—are often called Ruvari (or the Ruby Halls) because their walls and floors are purportedly stained red with the blood spilled there. The central levels, called Sivlamlik (the Honeyed Gardens), are supposedly a series of pleasure gardens filled with a near-endless variety of foods, narcotics, and pleasures of the flesh for the cult's assassins to use to refresh their bodies and spirits after successful assignments. The citadel's spires, called Odalis (the Lavish Heart), serve as homes for the elite members of the Red Mantis, including the Blood Mistress and all members of the Vernai.



Hidden somewhere on the grounds is Faynas (the Iron Heart), a sanctum available only to the Blood Mistress, that houses the Sarzari Library, said to be among the largest and most complete collection of ancient knowledge anywhere.

Crypt of Angus Amberleg: There are an unknown number of crypts and caverns dotting the jungles of Mediogalti. The bravest (or vilest) pirate captains use this unforgiving land to safeguard their bounty, but many of them never return to collect their treasures. The most notable of these hidden structures is the Crypt of Angus Amberleg.

Angus Amberleg was a dwarf pirate who sailed the Inner Sea 300 years ago. His marauding is still legendary among sailors, having sunk and plundered no fewer than a hundred ships, including a pair of Taldoran corvettes. His treasure is said to contain artifacts from ages past, as well as jewels the size of an ogre's fist. Rumor says the treasure lies in a stone crypt beneath the Mediogaltian jungle, built by slaves from the pirate's own galley who were then buried alive on the site upon its completion. Those few explorers who survived the foolhardy search for the crypt report the site is guarded by the ghosts of those slaves, not to mention the undead pirate captain himself.

Shrewd Liason

Your dealings with both pirates and the Red Mantis have taught you to be exceedingly careful.

Prerequisites: Mediogalti affinity.

Benefit: Opponents do not gain a +2 bonus on attack rolls for flanking you, although they can still sneak attack you. You also gain a +2 bonus on Sense Motive checks made to resist a foe's feinting in combat Bluff checks.

Duels

In a city like Ilizmagorti, one that sees so many violent and short-tempered visitors, it is a fairly common occurrence that insults are traded and offense taken by either or both parties involved. These disagreements cannot be settled in the usual way, since violence in the city is greatly discouraged, so duelers developed alternative forms of competition. People with arguments, personal quarrels, or even who merely want to prove for ego's sake which one is the "better man" generally use one of the following methods.

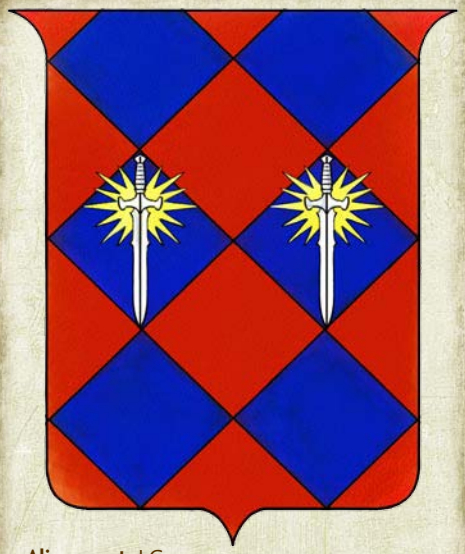
Horrible Haze: For questions of pure bravery, rivals often participate in a deadly game of endurance. They sit with their faces directly over a censer that contains burning itch weed (a plant native to the island that, as its name implies, causes severe itching). The one who remains in the hazy smoke longest wins, although it might take days or even weeks before that person recovers enough to celebrate the victory.

King of the Bay: This contest is favored by rivals attempting to settle a matter relating to strength or toughness. On the main pier there is an anchor fitted with seven hand clasps. Contestants each grab a clasp and then the anchor is pushed off the pier into the deep water of the bay. The contestants vie to see who can hold their breath longest and still make it back to the surface alive and conscious.

Ring the Town Bell: On the edge of town, where the jungle constantly threatens to reclaim the ramshackle buildings, stands a tall palm tree with a bell strapped among the fronds. This bell used to be used to warn of approaching navy ships, back before the navies of the world came to fear these waters. Now it is used as a contest of speed and nimbleness. The two contestants begin at the port and race through the streets to the tree. The first one who climbs the tree and rings the bell is declared the victor.

Mendev

Crusader Theocracy



Alignment: LG
Capital: Nerosyan (64,700)
Notable Settlements: Egede (39,410), Kenabres (12,330)
Ruler: The Crusader Queen Galfrey, Sword of Iomedae
Government: Monarchy
Languages: Common, Hallit
Religion: Iomedae, Aroden

Churches shaken by Aroden's death seized upon the folk tales featuring the rise of the Worldwound, using them to whip their followers into a frenzy of religious fervor. The clergy of Iomedae led the way, stepping from the shadows of their bewildered masters in the faltering church of Aroden. Nobles in Cheliax, Isger, and Andoran, fearing growing domestic discontent fueled by dispossessed nobles and idle mercenaries roaming their countrysides, joined with the Iomedaean church to sponsor the first Mendevian Crusade in 4622. Thousands of pilgrims soon made their way up the River Road from Cassomir to Chesed and across the Lake of Mists and Veils to Mendev, where they joined battle and the demonic hordes were checked and even pushed back. The crusaders fortified their gains and for almost a generation the frontier was quiet. The crusade was deemed a rousing success.

Talk of an easy victory was silenced, however, when the demons, having assembled a massive force, renewed their onslaught. The crusaders suffered horrifying defeats as the land itself seemed to shift and change beneath them, and the demons rode a wave of chaos into and through their lines. This disastrous invasion, including the total loss of the northern fortress-city of Drezen in 4638, triggered a Second Crusade. The crusaders once more threw back the demonic onslaught, and with the demons pushed back the crusaders devised a new stratagem. A string of rune-encrusted menhirs known as *Wardstones* was constructed to keep the worst of the demonic land's inhabitants and influence from spreading. The stones must be maintained with careful prayer and ritual, and remain constant points of attack by demons and their servants. This effort was not without cost, however, as scholars believe this crusade drew so many righteous men and women from Cheliax to face the demoniac threat that the diabolical House of Thrune and its allies finally wrested control of the empire, ending 30 years of civil war.

Their armies temporarily contained, the clever demons changed tactics yet again, and through a campaign of careful infiltration, seduction, and betrayal they began to undermine the fragile alliances that held together the crusade. This more subtle campaign produced several crusader defeats, but more importantly it succeeded in inflaming suspicion and paranoia in Mendev. The uneasiness is worst in the border town of Kenabres, where the aging prophet Hulmun leads a zealous pogrom against demon-worshipers, and his passion for inquisition remains undimmed by the passing years. In truth, much of the Third Crusade seemed nearly as concerned with purifying the citizenry and the hinterlands of Mendev as with matters on the front lines. As far back as the First Crusade, many immigrating crusaders suspected the native Iobarian culture and its druidic faith of being demon-tainted. Hundreds of indigenous Mendevians and pilgrims have burned at the stake in Kenabres alone since these trials began. Crusader leaders in the past turned a blind eye to this cruelty, preferring to focus on military matters, but the Order of Heralds instituted with the Fourth Crusade has made considerable strides in curbing the inquisition. Even in Kenabres, the ardor of the inquisition has dimmed somewhat, and many hope it is utterly extinguished with the death of the aged prelate—but quietly here and there throughout Mendev the screaming flames still echo the passion of her most fervent zealots.

Mendev is a land of duality, a shining bastion of law and goodness hard up against the Worldwound, a burgeoning sinkhole of evil that threatens all of creation. It is a land of pilgrims, crusaders, opportunistic rogues, and a simmering clash of cultures from south and north. Descended from

Iobarian exiles and ne'er-do-wells, Mendev of old was home to more than a few Issian pirates. Friend and ally to lost Sarkoris, it was otherwise seen as a small and inconsequential kingdom. Everything changed with the death of Aroden, when tales of demonic monstrosities spewing from the distant north spread throughout Avistan in the beginning of the last century. The "Song of Sarkoris" related the fall of a wicked barbarian kingdom to cosmic horrors from the Great Beyond. "The Ballad of Prince Zhakar" told of the brave march into a chaos-warped land by a band of Mendevian heroes who died one by one fighting their way to the center of the blight, which they called a "wound in the world."

A string of fortresses named for generals and heroes lost in the Worldwound house battalions of devoted warriors who both shield Mendev from rapacious abominations and launch raids into the heart of the chaos, seeking to stem it at its source. With the Fourth Crusade capping almost a century of war, however, the hope of victory seems increasingly remote and heroic crusaders become harder to find. The Mendevian Crusades have long been used as a pretext for southern kingdoms to rid themselves of undesirable elements, many of whom swear the Crusader's Oath without a shred of sincerity, either running from trouble at home or looking to make trouble abroad. As the crusades progressed, the proportion of idealistic and devout crusaders has fallen compared to those who prefer to shirk active duty and spend their time in dissolute thuggery and pillage under the thinnest veneer of righteousness.

Foreigners engaged in the holy wars against the blight of the Worldwound now outnumber the native people of Mendev, who have been pushed aside and treated as an underclass by the nation's new inhabitants. In theory, these crusaders follow the righteous Queen Galfrey, Sword of Iomedae, a Mendev-born Chelaxian duchess trained in Brevoy's Aldorian battle-arts. In practice, mercenaries and professional soldiers now outnumber the pilgrims, and even many crusaders remain focused on rooting out demonic influence in the Iobarian underclass or taking their liberties at the point of the sword.

Nevertheless, Queen Galfrey inspires hope that the Fourth Crusade will return attention to the true enemy and the ideals of the crusade—rid the north of the taint of otherworldly evil. Throughout Avistan and beyond, men and women of strong character and boundless ambition still look to the north with purpose and determination, and in their mouths the Acts of Iomedae are no mere words or stories, but a holy calling. Still, stability is fragile in Mendev, and a real brutality and lawlessness lurks just below the surface. All the while, slowly but surely, the reality-bending chaos of the Worldwound consumes more of the world, spreading its malign influence ever southward. Sooner or later, the *Wardstones* will fail. Unless something changes soon, the Worldwound will eventually encompass all of Avistan.

Government: The noble Queen Galfrey wields considerable power in Nerosyan, but further from the capital her influence dwindles. Individual crusader commanders vary in their loyalty and how many liberties they take on their own authority, and there is often tension between the religious and military leaders of the crusade over priorities. Looming over all are the overzealous inquisitors—Hulrun of Kenabres is the most influential but he has many sympathizers across Mendev. Meanwhile, the Crusade Heralds attempt to mediate and satisfy all groups in the best interests of the crusade.

The queen and her councilors know the quality of the crusaders flocking to Mendev has become highly questionable, and yet they are desperate for troops and loath to turn away anyone. Still, they hear the cries of persecuted native Mendevians at the hands of inquisitors and thuggish "low templars" alike. With resources stretched to the breaking point and division within the crusade even in the face of the dire threat of the Worldwound, there are few to spare to quell these internal problems.

Nerosyan: Nerosyan is a fortress city, constantly being built and rebuilt. It guards the confluence of the Egelsee River, arising in the Estrovian Forest, and the chill western fork of the Sellen River, flowing south from the high tundra and the eternal northern icefields beyond. The city is laid out in a diamond pattern in the angle between the rivers, with perpendicular bastions partitioning it to slow the progress of invaders. Dozens of towers surmount the walls, capped

Demon Hunter

You are a practiced demon hunter and know many of their weaknesses.

Prerequisites: Base attack bonus +6, Mendev affinity.

Benefit: You gain a +2 bonus on Knowledge (the planes) checks to know the powers and abilities of demons. In addition, whenever you deal damage to a demon with a melee weapon, you deal +1 point of damage.

Special: You may gain this feat more than once. Its effects stack.

Teleport Sense

Like many Mendevians, you have faced so many demons teleporting that you have developed a sort of sixth sense for it.

Prerequisites: Wis 13, Mendev affinity.

Benefit: Whenever a creature uses a spell or effect from the conjuration (teleportation) school to appear within 60 feet of you, you may make a Sense Motive check to detect the teleportation. The DC equals 10 + caster level of the effect. If you succeed on this check, you are automatically not surprised and can act in the surprise round if combat begins immediately. If combat against the creature that teleported near you begins within 1 minute of the teleportation you gain a +4 bonus on the initiative check in that battle. If the creature teleporting in is a demon, you gain a +5 bonus on the Sense Motive check to detect it.



with slit-pierced screens sloped at high angles to shed heavy snowfall and to guard its defenders against flying horrors. The fourfold gates of the Cruciform Cathedral at the city's heart allow the crusaders to respond quickly to threats from any quarter. For those who know where to look, Nerosyan retains a subtle residue of its piratical past, but in general it is a city with clarity of purpose, indomitable strength, cool beauty, and a sharp edge poised against the corruption just across the river, well-earning its nickname of "the Diamond of the North."

Egede: The port city of Egede in the southeast, on the Lake of Mists and Veils, is Mendev's gateway to the rest of the world. Most crusaders, pilgrims, and traders arrive by way of the River Kingdoms and nearby Chesed in Numeria. Trade with Brevoy has also blossomed with the recent fall of House Rogarvia. Many new arrivals, bankrupted by their long journey to Mendev and unscrupulous merchants along the way, settle in Egede and spend their time in support industries to aid in the war, or in constant prayer and fasting in support of the soldiers. Exhausted units are often rotated from the front to Egede for rest and relaxation, and many covert brothels and bawdy houses have sprung up, much to the consternation of the more puritanical crusader factions.

Kenabres: The small city of Kenabres in the north is the epicenter of the radical zealot and witch-hunting faction under the leadership of the aged prelate Hulrun. Kenabres is also responsible for managing the defenses along the northern frontier, and the crusader generals Dyre and Marcovina constantly struggle with Hulrun's demands for crusaders to deal with internal enemies.

Aurora Iobara: Mendev is primarily a wide-open land, with cold winds whipping across the tundra along with vast herds of caribou, broken up here and there by wide marshes and rolling hills of scrub and prairie grass. Southern crusaders often complain about the harsh climate, but all marvel at the dazzling multicolored Aurora Iobara that crackle in the heavens above the Crown of the World in the spring and summer months. Native Mendevians claim that the auroras have become more frequent, more intense, and more vibrant and varied in color since the eruption of raw chaos from the Worldwound over the last century.

Egelsee River: Flowing out of the eastern forest, the Egelsee River marks most of Mendev's southern border with Numeria, although the frequent raids across the river in Mendev's past have ebbed since the crusaders' arrival. For a relatively short river, its strategic importance to Mendev

is immense, and not solely as a source of pure water and fisheries for the capital at Nerosyan. More importantly, the Egelsee flows through hills infused with nexavar, and this unique mineral actually helps to purify the Sellen River as their waters commingle. In fact, it was through observing this strange phenomenon that the Magisterium of the Second Crusade discovered the existence of nexavar and its uniquely salubrious effects, incorporating it into the *Wardstones* that help to contain the spread of the Worldwound. Because of the constantly corrupting presence of the taint, the Sellen as far as Storasta remains an unhealthy flow prowled by aquatic horrors. The nexavar-laden silt carried along by the river mediates the taint somewhat, and more importantly actually eradicates unnatural residents once the river veers south, beyond the reach of the taint—a fact for which southern nations should be eternally grateful.

Estrovian Forest: Southern Mendev is dominated by the Estrovian Forest. Long a source of timber and game, the forest acquired a fell reputation during the First Crusade. A great huntsman from Andoran named Herne Vilhaur was mortally injured while hunting a sacred white stag in the druid groves of the Estrovian Forest and was abandoned by his companions, who named him a deserter and a turncoat to cover their own absence. The druids of the forest, their people being steadily dispossessed by the influx of well-armed foreigners, found in Herne the tool of their vengeance. They hanged him from an ancient oak in the northern reaches of the forest and laid upon him the "curse of the winterthorn," transforming him into a stag-horned avenger. Warped by the druids' magic and his own undying hatred for them and for his faithless companions, Herne made his creators his first victims and soon forgot all but his own name, his burning malice, and the urge to hunt. In the years that followed, Herne's predations gave native Mendevians and southern interlopers alike a new name for fear in the chill winter night, passing down his awful curse to create a race of stag-crowned dark hunters with their own "winterthorns," who live astride winter wolves or great snowy owls. At his passing, these "hernes," who bore his name, buried him at the foot of the very oak where he had his unholy rebirth. This ground is sacred to the hernes, and while their progenitor's barrow is said to be rich in funerary treasures, travelers in the Estrovian Forest venture near Herne's Oak only at grave peril.

Icerift Castle: Mendev has relatively few traditional dungeons that have not already been plundered, thanks to a century of crusaders motivated both by piety and by greed. One little-touched location, however, dates from the First Crusade, when crusaders began construction on a fortress on the high ice of the Crown of the World to command the extreme northern frontier. Icerift Castle was abandoned when only partially complete, as it was decided it would be too difficult to resupply and reinforce. When the workers and garrison were to return home, crusaders sent to escort them discovered all had been slaughtered and their hearts torn out, without evidence of demonic taint. The native Mendevians blamed the slaughter on the legendary wendigo and the site was placed under anathema and stricken from crusader records. Fell rumors persist of what lurks within.

Jutland Wrecks: Another unusual dungeon is the Jutland Wrecks, the detritus of a massive battle between Issian pirate lords for supremacy over the Lake of Mists and Veils. While the battle itself was inconclusive, a massive storm in the night wrecked nearly every ship on the lake, driving them into Jellicoe Bay northeast of Egede. The tangled flotsam of those ruined fleets remains to this day, now overgrown and almost a living reef choked with the waterlogged corpses of the lost, but also the plunder of a half-dozen pirate lords as well as maps to other caches. Few who venture to the frost-rimed Jutland Wrecks return, however, reporting unfriendly fey lurking amid the wrack and ruin—both feral nixies and the hateful ice sprites known as koloiaq.

The Crusader's Oath

"I do so swear under the Light, by the Sword and Scales of Truth and all the fires of heaven, to undertake this holy Crusade. I pledge to guard heart, spirit, body, and mind from the corruption of this Wound upon the World. I furthermore promise and declare that I shall wage relentless war against the Spawn of the Pit and their manifold legions, as directed by those with charge of this Crusade and whenever opportunity presents, to extirpate and annihilate their execrable race and any who serve them."

Each crusader is supposed to swear this oath, his left hand on a copy of the Acts of Iomedae, every year on 7 Arodus, the day the First Crusade was declared. In practice, this rarely occurs except among the very devout. Most commonly, a single officer in each unit takes the oath on behalf of all crusaders under his or her command.

Crusading Banners

All crusaders nominally fight under the white and gold banner of Iomedae and the adopted coat of arms of the Mendevian Crusade. Because crusaders are drawn from so many nations and noble houses, every fortification and field of battle in Mendev is a riot of color, as pennons, streamers, gonfanons, ensigns, and standards of all shapes, sizes, and colors snap in the ever-present northern winds. Some represent entirely invented titles, as unknowns from the south seek to create status and privilege for themselves in the north, as it is impossible for the Iomedaean Heralds to check every claim to nobility or knighthood as they mediate precedence and pride of place. The most honored banners, however, are those awarded for service on the field of battle—blazoned with sword, shield, or sunburst—which can be earned by a soldier of any rank, from the lowest to the highest.

Molthune

Territorial Expansionists



Alignment: LN
Capital: Canorate (27,450)
Notable Settlements: Eranmas (11,970), Fort Ramgate (2,200)
Ruler: Imperial Governor Markwin Teldas
Government: Military Oligarchy
Languages: Common, Varisian
Religion: Iomedae, Abadar, Erastil

Shortly after Aroden's death, regions and ethnic groups in Cheliax quickly splintered. Chief among them was the frontier colony of Molthune, which declared independence in 4632. Its success emboldened Galt and Andoran to follow suit. Using ancient maps of the territory to define new boundaries, Governor Kellon attempted to restore order and safety to his beleaguered people. Independence, however, does not equal stability.

Less than a generation later, the independent folk of the Fangwood Forest further splintered, breaking away from the old traditions that treated them as little more than indentured servants. Acts of sabotage at the various lumber camps throughout the region eventually led to open rebellion, and in 4655, the Fangwood rangers announced their own secession, creating the new nation of Nirmathas. The intervening years have seen six new governors, each drawn from the Molthuni Army, and various levels of open warfare with Nirmathas.

Despite the loss of nearly half its landmass, Molthune is still a vast swath of land with a variety of terrain and resources, including mining, lumber, and agriculture.

Most residents of Molthune fall into one of two distinct groups: city dwellers and laborers. The city dwellers, almost all of whom live in Eranmas or Canorate, are considered "Imperial Citizens." Citizens may participate in local governance and foreign trade and move freely about the country. Most of the rest of the populace are laborers—indentured servants who till the great fields of the central plains and perform the common work that powers the Molthuni economy. While many laborers resent their position, most take pride in their work, seeing it as one part of a greater whole that allows Molthune to maintain its proud traditions while forging a new, independent future.

Imperial Governor Markwin Teldas recently proclaimed that any laborer can become a Citizen by serving in the armies of Molthune for a 5-year period. While this decision enjoys strong popularity with the working masses, the elite consider it an abomination. Teldas, however, has bigger plans. For while Molthune has extensive resources, it has relatively few people to effectively tap them.

Under Teldas's direction, territorial governors began offering monetary bonuses for extra children in families. Immigrants are promised land in exchange for military or laborer service, and slavery is not only permitted, but encouraged—within strictly-defined, lawful boundaries. (Slaves have a relatively good lot in Molthune. A careful slave with an understanding of the law can advance to citizenship in time—a road completely blocked to slaves of most other nations.)

Although pragmatic, this population drive was born of avarice. Molthune Citizens need more people to increase their riches. More laborers, more soldiers, and even more Citizens ramp up every aspect of the Molthune economy. Teldas's plan to swell the army's numbers could allow him to retake Nirmathas, deter potential Chelaxian and Drumish predation, and increase the nation's wealth within 5 years, thus quieting his critics (or, at least, some of them).

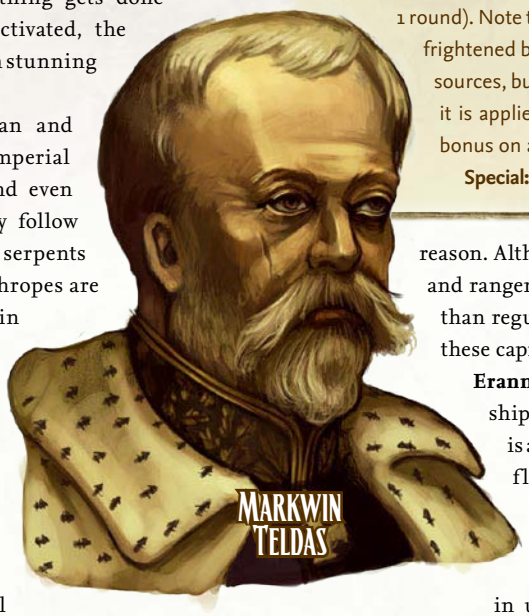
Surrounded by strong neighbors, the General Lords of Molthune champ at the bit to expand. The devils and shadows to the south and west are hornet's nests Imperial Governor Teldas longs to knock down, but mountains ringing the southern half of the nation are both defensive boons and offensive hindrances. A flurry of treaties maintains peace among the three strong military powers, but Molthuni diplomacy is always secondary to Molthuni conquest. To the east, Druma handily outpaces Moluthune's coarse economic manipulations and remains too strong a trade partner to invade. Annexing Isger would draw ire from both Cheliax and Druma, so the generals instead quietly fund a number of bandit gangs there, keeping the region suitably unstable.

This leaves Nirmathas. Geographically and politically insecure, and a sore spot in living memory, the General Lords are bent on reclaiming the Fangwood, even if they must burn

every tree to do it. Teldas ordered the construction of a new fortress along the northern border from which to launch ever-greater assaults. Fort Ramgate (so named because of the repeated attempts by raiders to destroy its main gate) nears completion, an event surely to precede even greater conflict between the two struggling nations.

Ancient law and tradition, tempered by military pragmatism, define most aspects of life and conduct in Molthune. Some wonder that anything gets done under such a system, but once activated, the Molthune Imperial Army moves with stunning agility, speed, and force.

Although overwhelmingly human and primarily of Chelaxian descent, the Imperial Army easily absorbs foreigners, and even monstrous troops, so long as they follow orders. Hobgoblins, centaurs, gollix serpents (a breed of nagas), and lawful lycanthropes are all proud, valued Molthune soldiers in their specialized units.



Government: The military oligarchy understands maneuvers and discipline better than civilian governance. However blunt their statesmanship, the nine General Lords run effective, capable offices. Promotion to the rank of Imperial Governor is bestowed by the General Lords, and the position is held for life or until abdication. The current governor, Markwin Teldas, is intelligent, educated, and aggressive—loved by few, but respected by all. He adds an economist's flair to his strategy—many of his tactics appear obtuse, even counter-intuitive, but more often than not, they increase Molthuni sovereignty and financial liquidity.

Canorate: A city of impressive architecture and public works, even the poor in Canorate live among splendor. Broad avenues, pointed spires, frequent fortifications, and a circular layout combine architectural beauty and canny defensibility. Citizens allow select laborers to live in fine (but wholly separate) accommodations as enticement to live and work in the city. Riffraff may not enter the walled Sweet Orchard section of town (where the wealthiest Citizens live) without work or travel permits, and imperial enforcers are exceptionally strict on this point. In the Imperial Castle at the center of town, Teldas has an immense war room with a scale model of the inner sea region built on a yards-wide table. The General Lords meet here quarterly to plot their movements and tactics across the region.

Backar Forest: The Imperial Army finds the fey of the Backar Forest impenetrable. The sprites, satyrs, twigjacks, horrorwisps, and odder fey refuse to take orders, and frequently steal, trade, or vandalize imperial property for no discernible reason. Although the local army contains druid and ranger units, they have little more success than regular troops in enlisting or subduing these capricious creatures.

Molthuni Discipline

The strict military culture of Molthune inspires uncommon valor in you.

Prerequisites: Molthune affinity.

Benefit: Any effect that would normally make you panicked instead makes you frightened. Any effect that would make you frightened instead makes you shaken. Any effect that would make you shaken only lasts half as long (minimum 1 round). Note that you can still become increasingly frightened by multiple fear effects from different sources, but that each source is modified before it is applied to you. In addition, you gain a +2 bonus on any saving throw versus fear effects.

Special: You may only gain this feat at 1st level.

Eranmas: The location of Molthune's shipyard, impressively walled Eranmas is also home port of the largest military fleet on Lake Encarthan. Other lake nations are understandably wary, but Governor Lord Resket is vocally and materially interested in using his fleet only as a blockade around Tamran.

Fort Ramgate: The settlement of Fort Ramgate grows visibly by the week. Commanded by General Hakar, a Kellid-born barbarian in uniform, Ramgate's defenses are magically and militarily state of the art. This serves the fort well, as Ramgate comes under daily attack from Nirmathi skirmishers. When the invasion of Nirmathas begins, it will begin here.

The Plains of Molthune: The great Plains of Molthune are home to flat miles of crops. With a labor shortage, farmers cannot allow their scarecrows to just idly stand by. Scarecrows are magically pressed into service, animated as harvest constructs by imperial wizards who make monthly circuits. Until more laborers arrive to fill gaps, spindly wooden constructs bearing scythes and baskets roam the fields, tilling, sowing, harvesting, and driving off pests.

Trilmsgitt Towers: The Trilmsgitt Towers stand separate but united, and all potentially abandoned. Some time ago, three specialist wizard brothers—Nyl, Fedge, and Ciuq Trilmsgitt—built their towers within a few miles of one another. The towers had similar construction, and each brother connected his with those of brothers using various teleports and planar portals. None of them have been heard from in quite some time, and the local governor would like to know why—and who inherits their estates if they're dead.

Mwangi Expanse

Unexplored Jungle Wilderness



Alignment: N
Capital: None
Notable Settlements: Bloodcove (5,281), Jaha (5,600), Kibwe (3,800), Mzali (36,900), Nantambu (14,500), Osibu (9,800), Ruins of Kho (unknown), Senghor (26,430), Usaro (8,790)
Ruler: None
Government: Countless tribal strongmen, isolated utopian enclaves, lost kingdoms, bizarre cults, unorganized nomad bands, and one enraged gorilla king
Languages: Polyglot, regional dialects
Religion: Shamanism, ancestor worship, Angazhan (demon lord of beasts), Gozreh

Some of the oldest human ruins in the world lay scattered throughout the interior jungles of Garund, cracked through with powerful roots and rubbed smooth by the passing of millennia. The reclusive tribal inhabitants from whom the forests and wildlands take their name trace their heritage to forgotten kingdoms of no little advancement, but they have fallen far since the days of their zenith, and their glorious past remains a mystery not just to the outside world, but also to themselves.

No accurate maps of Garund's interior exist, and the Mwangi human, elf, lizardfolk, and less-recognizable tribes of the expanse seldom declare formal borders. Some nomadic groups wander the jungles and valleys without ever settling anywhere for long. Several locales within the trackless wild attract potent malevolent spirits, sentient plant colonies, juju zombie cults, or similar hazards, making them shunned by right-thinking natives and explorers alike.

Chelaxian explorers first penetrated the Mwangi Expanse during the reign of the expansionist Prince Haliad I, establishing a colony at Sargava that still exists (if precariously) to this day. Centuries earlier, the insidious Aspis Consortium established a beachhead at a scurvy port known as Bloodcove at the mouth of the powerful Vanji River, from whence its meticulous agents penetrated and exploited the near-limitless exotic resources of the vast Mwangi interior.

The so-called Fever Sea west of Garund was quieter in those days. Outcast Mwangi and exiled pirate lords managed a mostly bloodless coexistence in the Shackle Isles, but had not yet developed into a serious naval threat. The vast wealth suddenly traveling north from Bloodcove, Senghor, and Eleder, however, attracted more and more pirates, and the coming of the Eye of Abendego in the first weeks of the Age of Lost Omens largely cut off the colonization effort from the rest of the world.

Stories of those early explorers and colonists filter north to the ears of opportunistic merchants, excitement-starved treasure-seekers, and wily Pathfinders. The tales speak of lost cities and gorilla kings, of religions grown ancient by the time the *Starstone* fell, and of riches undreamed of by the most fecund minds of the civilized north.

Many miles south of Jaha spreads the treacherous Lake Ocota, home to swift, reptilian-toothed flightless birds and mysterious aquatic beasts from antediluvian times. These long-necked predators occasionally range the numerous rivers of the Expanse, stretching a head full of needle teeth upon muscular serpentine necks to snatch prey from raft, dock, and riverbank. A monolithic ruined city called Usaro, on the southern coast of the lake, is the seat of the mighty Silverback King, the feral monarch of a society of coldly intelligent, bloodthirsty apes known as the Spawn of Angazhan. King Ruthazek, himself the latest in a long line of awakened gorilla-gods, is the most honored earthbound servant of the demon lord of beasts and a major threat to all humans in the Expanse.

The Silverback King's treasure vaults contain priceless riches plundered from defeated tribes and enemies, but surely the greatest riches hidden in the Expanse are found in the fabled Ruins of Kho, a crashed flying city of the Shory civilization that ranged Golarion in the Age of Destiny. Nearly all expeditions to the ruins—mentioned in several ancient Osiriani texts and visited by at least one early Gebbite adventuring hero—end in tragic failure, and only a few expeditions have returned to tell



a tale of vast stretching ramps spanning impossible towers, shattered amphitheaters of green glass, and enormous engines the size of granaries still thrumming with ancient energy. Without exception, even the most successful plunderers of Kho meet with unforeseen bad luck. Most of them manage to die from it after a few years of treading carefully. Such is the legend of Shory artifice, however, that not even certain death deters the desperate from trying to uncover it.

South of Lake Ocota, across the spirit-haunted Bandu Hills, the Screaming Jungle looms like a wave of verdant terror on the horizon. The confounding tangle of towering trees and sentient man-killing plants gets its name for the constant screeching of millions of monkeys that inhabit the canopy. The cacophony can be heard several miles in all directions of the forest, and most travelers notice the screaming before the woodland itself comes into view. The most significant community within the Screaming Jungle is Osibu, site of the world-spanning Nemesis Well—into which the Pathfinder Durvin Gest famously thrust the *Lens of Galundari* in 4332.

At the southwest edge of the jungle lies Mzali, oldest of the ruined cities of the Mwangi Expanse and the most heavily populated by far. About a century ago, the population of the great overgrown city exploded when pilgrims from all over the Expanse came to see for themselves a bizarre phenomenon. The shamans of a strange religion both enticingly new and unthinkably old produced the mummified remains of Walkena, a boy prince of the near-mythical original Mwangi society. Within the last 30 years, the manikin mummy sprung to cruel life, issuing orders to his prosperous cult that whipped his followers into rage against the colonists of Sargava and all outside influences in the Expanse, and open warfare has been the rule ever since.

Government: While the mighty Ruthazek, Silverback King of Usaro, might claim the fall of his own footsteps the center of all power in Mwangi, the territory called the Mwangi Expanse has no traditional "capital." The Mwangi Expanse has no unifying government, states, or even borders—it is a wild, uncharted, shifting place composed of wandering tribal bands, lone mystics, and despots who rule collapsing cities with sword in hand.

Bloodcove: Combining the worst aspects of Mwangi's brutal, kill-or-be-killed wilds with the cruel depredations of frontier pirate law and the dog-eat-dog philosophies of the Aspis Consortium, this scattered city growing amid the roots of an immense mangrove tree churns out great wealth stolen from across the Mwangi Expanse. Agents of the Aspis Consortium, who range up and down the Vanji River, ever search for fresh plunder even as they continue to deliver an unending supply of treasures from throughout the Expanse.

Doorway to the Red Star: This mysterious ring of magnetic crimson stone hangs, humming, in the empty space of a



collapsed courtyard, and lends its name to the twisted, long-overgrown cathedrals that surround it. Once the seat of power to an ancient cult called the Throat-of-Nothingness, the vanished lords of that nihilistic religion abandoned the winding buildings to rot. In later centuries, the Doorway to the Red Star was the stronghold of the King of Biting Ants, a sorcerer not living, nor dead, nor undead, but somehow composed entirely of innumerable poisonous insects. The white-masked arcanist used this strange place as a stronghold from which he sought to devour the sun and rule the world, but it is said that even he did not truly comprehend the power of the Doorway. Although the legendary Ten Magic Warriors laid his red-cloaked armies low and undid the sorcerer's fell schemes, the Doorway itself and whatever treasures and horrors lie below the cathedrals were left untouched, by command of Old-Mage Jatembe himself.

Jaha: Stories speak of Jaha, the great crumbling city at the heart of the northern jungles—a bewildering array of terraced fortresses and irregular courtyards. This vine-covered, many-terraced wonder-city is said to have been raised from the black earth in an age before humans, or even elves, by unknown beings of great height and singular proportions now long since dead or departed. The crumbling city, which teems with life above silent tombs that predate the Earthfall, is ruled by the paranoid, wild-eyed astrologer-remnants of the Lergeni, a people wiped from the face of Golarion by disaster, madness and suicide.

The star-seeking mystics of Lirgen had spoken of Jaha in prophecy and dogma, recognizing the ruin's importance to the past and the future. After the Eye of Abendego destroyed Lirgen and most of its orthodox theocrats, a rogue faction of Lergeni astrologers led a splinter group of refugees to Jaha. By sword and axe the Lergeni pacified the degenerate, primitive lizardfolk inhabiting the city, before reclaiming the ruined structure from the jungle. The xenophobic, erratic ruling caste of Jaha has of late erected dozens of enormous marker stones throughout the city for an unknown purpose. Sleep is fitful for the people of Jaha, and sights of bizarrely folding, star-cracked vistas hung with sharp-edged spheres haunt the dreams of all who visit here.

Kibwe: The rune-walled oasis-city of Kibwe breathes ever in and out with tribes of humans, elves, giants, kobolds, scorpionfolk, and stranger beings who journey here to trade in food, clothing, and odd treasures from across the Expanse and beyond—including darkwood from the Screaming Jungle, sunken gold from Lake Ocota, magical glass from the Ruins of Kho, and iron guns from Alkenstar. The lone power-center in a nightmarish wilderness of jungle, mountains, scrubland, deserts, and arid hills larger than Isger and Druma put together,

Kibwe is the default meeting point for tens of thousands of scattered peoples. The city's center is the petal-draped, tapestry-hung Adayeniki, a sweeping pavilion where courtship dances, multi-tribal weddings, and fertility rituals are held with every moon. The city has served as a redoubt for refugees fleeing the assaults of Usaro for centuries, and its deep wells and stout walls have never failed to wait out a siege.

Mzali: In the steaming-hot ruins of Mzali, the word of the Child-God Walkena is law—and it is the all-knowing shamans of his faith that bring the word of Walkena to the people. If the measure of a god's might can be judged by the swiftness with which he answers prayers or with which he metes out punishment to those who disobey him, then surely Walkena must be counted as the most potent of deities—the rocks themselves cry out, and the waters boil, and the skies tremble in the hallowed presence of the Child-God and his advisors. Those favored of these shamans prosper in all regards, from skill on the battlefield to trade in the marketplace, while those who displease Walkena are staked out in the deserts for the Punishment of Seven Angry Suns. This sprawling metropolis has few permanent structures without some religious significance.

Nantambu: The colorful agricultural river-town of Nantambu, called the Song-Wind-City, where the men laugh and tell stories as they catch fish and the women weave sparkling glass beads into their curling hair, is home to Golarion's oldest academy of arcane learning, the Magaambya. Wizards trained here in the arts of spellcraft trace the lineage of their lessons back to the Age of Anguish, when Old-Mage Jatembe and his Ten Magic Warriors first brought the light of learning back to a world overcome with fear and despair. Wary of the flying Tempest-Sun mages of Magaambya, warriors bearing the crimson marks of Angazhan hesitate before crossing the Buunta Flow into Nantambu's lands—likewise, raiders of the Aspis Consortium do not dock here, and they keep their weapons well sheathed while in sight of Nantambu's many shining, mosaic-laid towers.

Osibu: Within the gold-laid streets of Osibu, surrounded by the glittering ring of statues called the Circle of Twice-Honored Women, the calls of the Screaming Jungle are briefly abated, and the carnivorous plants that roam here turn back in confusion. The people of Osibu know neither thirst nor hunger—the rains bring fresh water with each morning and the fruits of the jungle are plucked easily from the trees. The great Dimari-Diji, Final Tree of the Elder World and perhaps the oldest living thing on the planet, watches over the ancient, democratically ruled city of Osibu. Here, the great hunched treant guards over the Nemesis Well and recounts to all who listen to the Echoes of the World-Name, beginning with his first memory: the Day the Sun Shone for One Thousand Years, the coming of the *Starstone*. In Osibu, the wise-women practice a form of medicine unknown in the outer world, a rare art of mingling sweet herbs that seem to elongate a life for centuries and stave off the most virulent of disease.

Ruincaster

You possess a deep, mystical connection to the various ruins scattered around the Mwangi Expanse.

Prerequisites: Wis 15, ability to cast spells, Mwangi Expanse affinity.

Benefit: When you are standing upon or within a Mwangi ruin that covers at least 500 square feet, you may tap into the latent spiritual energies still held by the stones of that place to grant improve your own spellcasting abilities.

Mwangi ruins possess varying degrees of power described by a power level, typically 1 to 5. As a move action, you may tap into a ruin's spiritual energies for 1 round with a DC 10 Concentration check. Failure leaves you fatigued (or exhausted, if already fatigued; or unconscious, if already exhausted). The DC increases by 5 for each power level beyond 1. You may tap the spiritual energies of a ruin in one of three ways.

Harm: Whenever you cast a spell that deals hit point damage, the spell deals additional damage equal to the ruin's power level.

Increase: The DC to resist a spell you cast increases by the ruin's power level.

Penetrate: A spell you cast that must penetrate spell resistance gains a bonus on your caster level check equal to the ruin's power level.

Special: Most Mwangi ruins are power level 1, with only a handful being power level 2. Holy Xatramba is the only power level 3 ruin, Doorway to the Red Star is the only power level 4 ruin, and Ruins of Kho is the only power level 5 ruin.

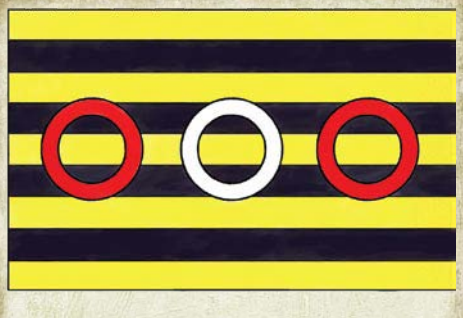
It is up to your GM as to whether ruins outside of the Mwangi Expanse possess power levels and what levels they are.

Ruins of Kho: It is known that there are some who dwell within a day's easy walk of the echoing Ruins of Kho, but to what end or purpose cannot be easily said—it is a strange and fractured place that yet still howls with the dying sputters of ill-tempered magics. If any beings make a home inside the alien slopes of the city proper, little can be said of them except that they are no longer truly a part of Mwangi, or even the world of Golarion.

Usaro: The tattered standards and human-skin drums of dread, benighted Usaro, ruled since time out of mind by the line of the Silverback King, are feared across the Expanse, and the grim terraces that hunch over the banks of Lake Ocota are a sight that inspires weeping and gnashing of teeth in all who are dragged to see them. The great gorilla god-king Ruthazek, self-proclaimed Master of Mwangi and Favored Son of Angazhan, considers mercy the most valuable of treasures, the rarest and sweetest of gifts, and he does not share it lightly—only the strongest may show mercy, while the weak are reduced to dancing in cages and performing tricks for the amusement of the Court of Hateful Smiles.

Nex

Monument to a Lost Wizard-King



Alignment: N
Capital: Quantium (60,000)
Notable Settlements: Ecanus (23,400), Oenopion (8,900)
Ruler: The Council of Three and Nine
Government: Bureaucracy led by a council of representatives from various political factions and arcane traditions
Languages: Osiriani, Kelish, Common, Vudrani
Religion: Nethys, Abadar, Pharasma, Lamashtu, Irori, Norgorber

The Age of Destiny spawned countless heroes who left an indelible mark on history. Aroden himself walked Avistan as a mortal in those distant days, when each new century seemed to spawn a legend of its own. One of the greatest of these legends emerged on the east coast of Garund in the ancient city-state of Quantium, a wizard-king of peerless arcane skill possessed of unheralded creativity and eldritch genius: the archmage Nex. That hero's arcane legacy survives to the modern day in the form of a nation that shares his name.

Nex boasts the most cosmopolitan and refined cities of Garund's east coast, with the capital at Quantium rivaling the extravagance of Oppara in Taldor or Sothis in the era of the legendary God-Kings of Osirion. Monumental palaces and impossible spires crowd the city's chaotic streets, which wind past hanging gardens, open-air mazes, and bustling souks. The crumbling statues of Nex and the ancient heroes who traveled with him and forged his kingdom look out upon the city's roofs and balconies, a constant reminder of the man who made Quantium and the surrounding land his own.

In his time, Nex traveled the world and the Great Beyond, established important tenets of magical theory that remain influential today, and vastly enriched his private nation through his adventures and the judicious application of *wish*-level magics. Territorial ambitions in the south eventually brought Nex into conflict with another arcane warlord, the calculating necromancer Geb, inheritor of a rich magic tradition tied to a lost colony of ancient Osirion.

Nex's conflict with Geb spanned centuries, with each wizard-king extending his life through the application of certain poultices and the imbibing of certain arcane elixirs. During these struggles, a series of foul workings by Geb blighted the land of Nex beyond the cities, which benefited from impervious magical protection. In response to the disastrous touch of Geb, plants refused to thrive in the wildlands of Nex. The wastelands have lain barren ever since, inhabited by outlaws and the descendents of great magical beasts summoned during the years of conflict with the south.

As their war dragged on, Nex finally achieved true immortality when he created a personal demiplane at a fluxpoint of multiversal energy, a domain the wizard-king dubbed the Crux of Nex. The immortal archmage carved a shard of the Crux to erect the impossible spire from which he launched an unsuccessful siege of Absalom, and again at his palace in Quantium to form the mysterious Refuge of Nex, a last-resort bunker to shelter himself from his enemies.

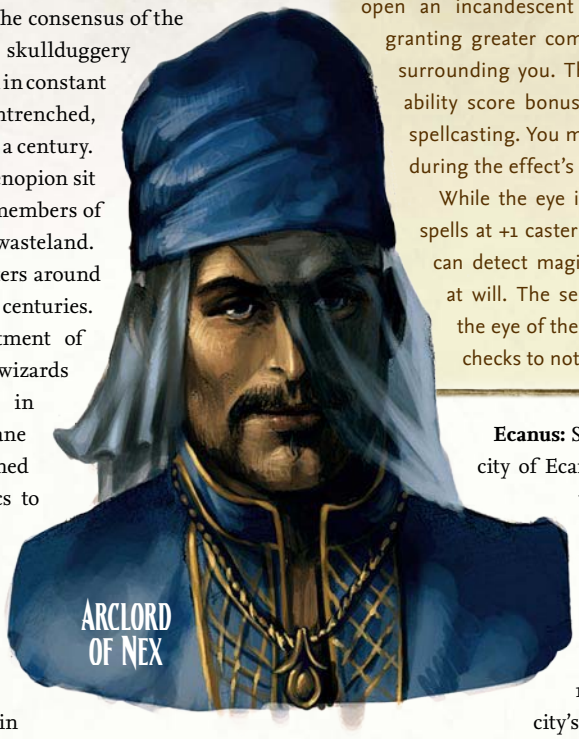
Nex vanished after a disastrous Gebbite attack bathed his capital in a cloying, poisonous fog more than 4 millennia ago. Somehow, the confused remnants of his authority managed to keep Geb at bay, and in the centuries since the nation of Nex has fallen into the hands of a succession of arcane fraternities and cults of personality who purport to represent the departed archmage's plan for the subjects he left behind. The contentious Council of Three and Nine is an attempt to build consensus within Nex's infamous factions, and while the nation remains characteristically crippled with bureaucracy it nonetheless has never been conquered, despite the best efforts of Geb and political forces from within and without.

The ancient war with Geb left an eternal stain upon Nex and its culture, but open warfare with the necromancers of the south faded into reluctant trade centuries ago, and these days Nex imports most of its foodstuffs from Gebbite plantations worked by zombie slaves. Obstinate factions in the capital, notably the star-crossed Arclords of Nex, argue that the current state of détente would enrage the wizard who gave his name to the kingdom, but Nex last appeared in the world of Golarion centuries ago, and history marches ever forward without him.

Government: Immediately following Nex's disappearance, the scheming political factions only he could balance fell into a succession of assassination and opportunism that threatened

the nation's existence. After centuries of disastrous infighting, the ever-present threat of Geb's undead hordes unified Nex's sects into the squabbling Council of Three and Nine. Holding court in the Bandeshar, Nex's opulent abandoned palace, the 12 administrators decide the fate of the nation, regulate trade and the forbidden arts, adjudicate treaties and legal appeals, and manage military affairs.

The Three dominate the council, and any agreement by two of them is sufficient to veto the consensus of the Nine. While assassination and skullduggery keep the lower ranks of the council in constant flux, the Three remain firmly entrenched, having not changed in more than a century. Representatives of Ecanus and Oenopion sit in the council, as do prominent members of two of the strongest tribes of the wasteland.



Quantium: Society in Nex centers around Quantium, as it has for countless centuries. The city attracts a wide assortment of inhabitants, from ambitious wizards seeking to perfect their craft in one of Quantium's vaunted arcane universities to outsiders summoned to Golarion by long-dead mystics to merchants from Druma, Jalmeray, Vudra, and even Tian Xia. The city thrives upon its diversity of thought, trade, and influence and shows little tolerance for xenophobes. A creature considered a monster or worse in the ports of the Inner Sea is merely a citizen in Nex, where legend holds almost anything is possible.

Notable marvels of the capital include the Bandeshar, an architectural masterpiece that retains its glory despite millennia of magical disasters and political intrigue. The lower dungeons of the Bandeshar contain an entrance to the fabled Refuge of Nex, an unpredictable demiplane that offers escape without the opportunity of return. Thousands of explorers, refugees, and thieves have become trapped in the Refuge over the centuries, not the least of whom being Nex himself.

The central parade ground known as the Warlock's Walk features numerous impressive sights. A massive, multi-sculptured marble fountain dominates the center of the vast public space, its living waters dancing to the delight of onlookers. Two immense iron golems, one of greenish hue and the other crimson, silently circle the perimeter as they have since Nex's time. The stoic warriors, armed with sword and clad in archaic armor, halt for nothing as they march at opposite sides of their great circuit. Legend suggests they will animate to fight in the city's defense in a time of great struggle, but since prophecies no longer hold the power they once did, expectations regarding the golems of Quantium are no longer certain.

Eye Of The Arclord

Your understanding of the esoteric teachings of the Arclords of Nex allows you to open an eldritch eye that grants you superior perception of the magical world.

Prerequisites: Concentration 4 ranks, ability to cast arcane spells, Nex affinity.

Benefit: You may, once per day as a standard action, open an incandescent third eye upon your forehead, granting greater comprehension of the magical world surrounding you. The eye functions for 1 minute per ability score bonus of the ability score tied to your spellcasting. You may close and reopen the eye at will during the effect's duration.

While the eye is engaged, you cast all divination spells at +1 caster level, gain darkvision 60 feet, and can detect magic (as the spell of the same name) at will. The sensory perception enhancement of the eye of the arclord grants a +8 bonus on Spot checks to notice invisible creatures.

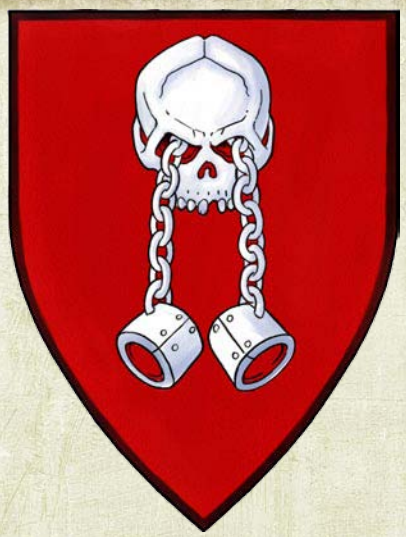
Ecanus: South of Oenopion lies the sprawling city of Ecanus, a fortress town created to fuel the war effort against Geb and the hub of Nex's awe-inspiring military. Battlemages trained in warfare and tactical evocation form the backbone of the mobile force, backed up by nightmare monstrous beasts churned out by the city's monumental fleshforges. Building-sized artifacts created by Nex himself, the fleshforges are responsible for many of the murderous creatures that haunt the wastelands between Nex's cities, the Barrier Wall mountains, and even the eastern jungles of the Mwangi Expanse.

Oenopion: Deep in the barren interior of Nex, the alchemists of Oenopion toil at the creation of the eldritch elixirs and potions so important to the nation's economy. The craftiest, most reliable homunculi come from Oenopion, which also boasts an impressive golemworks and an immense ooze colony. The latter dominates the town's miasmatic central lake, forming a sentient hivemind useful for potent divinations and the utter disposal of faulty artifice, renegade constructs, and enemies of the state.

The Mana Wastes: Farther south, the barrens give way to an ever-shifting nightmare of magic-blasted desert forever twisted by the ancient spellduels of the wizard-kings and their potent servants. This forbidding landscape—the Mana Wastes—marks the fluctuating, unclaimed border between the two nations. Its unpredictable danger and otherworldly inhabitants promise a swift death for most explorers, but some few political exiles, escaped slaves, and dissident thinkers find their way through the Wastes to Alkenstar, an independent city-state in the western foothills where magic refuses to function.

Nidal

Shadowy Servitor State



Alignment: LE
Capital: Pangolais (18,900)
Notable Settlements: Nisroch (24,320), Ridwan (11,400)
Rulers: The Umbral Court
Government: Militaristic theocracy
Languages: Shadowtongue, Common, Varisian
Religion: Zon-Kuthon, Diabolism, Desna

A hundred centuries ago, when the strike of the *Starstone* cast Golarion into a thousand years of darkness, the great warrior clans of ancient Nidal cried out for the protection of their long-forgotten gods. Their pleas instead reached the ears of a malignant entity imprisoned in a distant corner of the Great Beyond who uniquely appreciated their predicament and delighted in their fear of the dark. Freed by the vanishing of the light, the immortal being—a powerful entity from the Plane of Shadow known as Zon-Kuthon—offered the terrified humans succor from the darkness in exchange for their unquestioned obedience for eternity. Facing extinction with the blotting out of the Sun, the proud horse-lords of Nidal relented, ensuring the nation's survival forever—while enshackling its freedom for the same duration.

Thus did the rulers of Nidal become shadowbound to the Midnight Lord, an eternal bondage revealed by the dull black eyes of Nidal's Umbral Court. The balance of power within the court remains impenetrable to outsiders—how much sway the creeping voice of shadow has over the affairs of state is unknown. Lesser citizens of Nidal know only that opposition to the Umbral Court means death and swiftly defer to the orders of even the most minor of their lords. Some members of the aristocracy are more powerful and influential than others, of course, and the most powerful include the Black Triune of Pangolais; the dark druid Eloiander of Ridwan; and the persuasive sorcerer Kholas, adviser to Queen Abrogail in Egorian.

Shadowcasters trained in Ridwan and Pangolais support the diabolical legions of Cheliax's transformed government. For centuries after their humiliation in the Everwar, the folk of Nidal bristled at Chelaxian occupation and influence, but that all changed 50 years ago. During the struggle for the throne following Aroden's death, the Umbral Court threw its support behind the House of Thrune, which rewarded the act by withdrawing Chelish agents from Nidal once its own power was assured. Now Nidal stands once again as its own sovereign entity, yet remains intimately entwined with the darkness at Egorian.

Among the gray-clad intelligentsia of Pangolais, it is widely assumed that their own subjugation to Cheliax was merely a clever gambit by the Midnight Lord, for does not the pale and tiny spider invite the great and glistening dragonfly into his home, the better to make a meal? As the diabolical majestrix relies more heavily upon the grim power of Nidal to maintain her rule, those who whisper in the shadows of the Uskwood quietly prepare to make slaves of their one-time masters.

In the north, roving wild among the unnamed foothills near Conqueror's Bay, hidden agents of the goddess Desna toil ceaselessly to undo the black works of Zon-Kuthon's faithful. Here, worship of the Song of the Spheres is a hushed and illegal practice, carried out in extended familial rites beneath the open stars. If the humble, longhaired priests and priestesses of Luck and Dream can somehow break the stranglehold of the Umbral Court, it is hoped that the Midnight Lord himself will be swept back into his prison in the Great Beyond, as shadows retreat before the dawn.

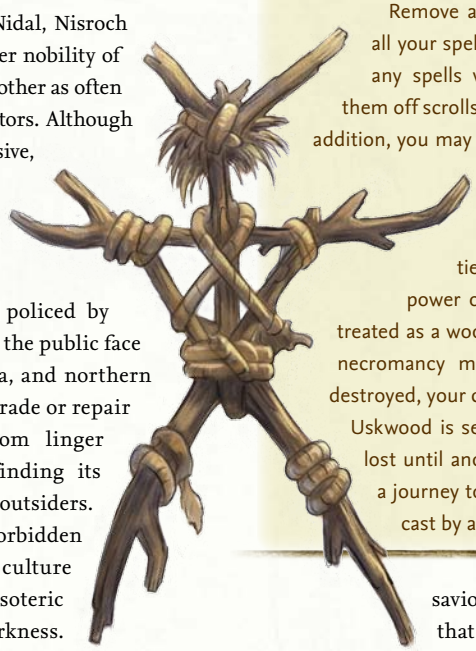
Government: Ruled by divine decree enforced with lethal powers of darkness and horror, Nidal is almost perfectly controlled by the Umbral Court—but "almost" is never enough. Eternally fearful of losing its mandate from the Midnight Lord, the court tightens its grip ever more firmly around the blasphemers who sing praises to Desna, who trade in diabolical secrets, or who would dare usurp the supremacy of Zon-Kuthon.

Pangolais: The softly-glittering, rarely-glimpsed shade city of Pangolais is the personal demesne of the mysterious Black Triune, a legendary three-in-one council whose membership

has remained unchallenged and unchanged since the onset of the Age of Darkness. Their grim enforcer, the soft-spoken vampire general Mykos Roarik, veteran of the Everwar and Right Hand of the Triune, ranges with his Adamant Company far from the shadow-cloaked Uskwood to set the Triune's will in blood. Those who enter the city without the permission of the Triune must seek out hidden worshippers of Desna or the rare diabolists who make their homes in the haze-shrouded halls of Pangolais.

Senior members of the Umbral Court convene thrice annually in Nidal's secluded capital, which sprawls below the eternal shadow of the Uskwood. So little light reaches the white-cobbled streets of Pangolais that it is nearly impossible to distinguish day from night, and strangers to the city soon find themselves lost without a guide. Such a service demands outlandish fees, for outsiders are forbidden from walking the winding ways of Pangolais. Here, in quiet cafes and pale gardens, a sinister aristocracy plays dark games of strategy and sacrifice with beings of an unnameable void.

Nisroch: The most populous city in Nidal, Nisroch is also the least controlled. Here, the lesser nobility of the Umbral Court contend against one another as often as they hunt out apostates and other traitors. Although Nisroch's ports are inspected with obsessive, military regularity, agents of Desna slip through the cracks to establish safe houses and underground cults that work quietly against the powers that be.



This immaculate port city, silently policed by soldiers who carry no weapons, serves as the public face of Nidal. Traders from Cheliax, Korvosa, and northern Varisia sometimes put in to Nisroch to trade or repair damaged vessels, but strangers seldom linger long in the shadowlands of Nidal, finding its people inhospitable and suspicious of outsiders. Art, revelry, and music are all but forbidden in Nidal, and much of the nation's culture involves military theory, poetry, and esoteric mysticism related to shadows and darkness. Recent reports from spies amid Andoran's Gray Corsairs suggest that pirates from the Shackles dock in Nisroch with increasing frequency, but little is known of the reasons behind their visits and the implications they might have for Nidal's relationship with Cheliax, which constantly wars with the pirates along Garund's western coast.

Ridwan: Along Nidal's eastern border, in the foothills of the Menador Mountains, the small fortress city of Ridwan serves as the center of worship for the faithful of Zon-Kuthon. The walled military city of Ridwan is ill suited, in many ways, to support life, surrounded as it is by blasted volcanic fields of blackish, crumbling powder and jutting rock-falls—only the power of the divine can bring forth food or water to this terrible place. It was here that the people of Nidal beheld the emergence of their savior, the Midnight Lord. And it was here that the blessed of that faceless god nourish more than 10,000 devoted souls. In the wastes, the mighty soldiers of Zon-Kuthon train on shattered soil to defend his lands and to extend with guile and steel his power into the rest of the world.

Adherents believe that the twisting rift limned with black flame and cloying smoke in the city's central square is the spot where the Midnight Lord first emerged upon Golarion. The site is a powerful gate to the Deeping Darkness, a particularly vile chasm at the heart of the Plane of Shadow, from which Zon-Kuthon's clerics pluck legendary nightmare beasts. Once sufficiently dominated and broken to the will of the Umbral Lords, the otherworldly shadow-spirits serve Nidal at home and abroad. Since the fall of Nidal 370 years ago in the Everwar, "abroad" has most often meant Cheliax.

Shade of the Uskwood

Ordained as one of the sinister albino druids who dwell within the heart of the Uskwood, you carry with you into the wider world a powerful effigy of hair, twigs, and blood that crawls with the deepening cold of the Midnight Lord's hallowed hunting grounds.

Prerequisite: Druid level 1st, neutral evil, Zon-Kuthon worshiper.

Benefit: Add the following spells to your druid spell list.

0—*disrupt undead, ray of frost*
1st—*ghost sound, touch of fatigue*
2nd—*chill touch, spectral hand*
3rd—*ghoul touch, invisibility*
4th—*displacement, ray of exhaustion*
5th—*animate dead, phantasmal killer*
6th—*nightmare, waves of fatigue*
7th—*circle of death, shadow walk*
8th—*mass invisibility, waves of exhaustion*
9th—*horrid wilting, weird*

Remove all spells with the fire descriptor from all your spell lists (not just druid). You cannot cast any spells with the fire descriptor, nor activate them off scrolls, wands, or any other magic devices. In addition, you may not use wild shape to take the form of any creature with the fire subtype.

Special: As part of this feat, you create a personal Umbrae-Token that ties your soul and your doings to the fell power of the Uskwood. This potent object is treated as a wooden unholy symbol that radiates faint necromancy magic. If your Umbrae-Token is ever destroyed, your connection to the shadowy heart of the Uskwood is severed and all benefits of this feat are lost until another is created. This process requires a journey to the Uskwood and an *atonement* spell cast by a fellow worshiper of Zon-Kuthon.

Nirmathas

War-Torn Wilderness



Alignment: CG
Capital: Tamran (9,730)
Notable Settlements: Skelt (5,400)
Ruler: Forest Marshal Gavirk
Government: Meritocracy
Languages: Common, Varisian, Hallit
Religion: Erastil, Gorum, Iomedae

During the years of turmoil following the collapse of Cheliax, the Governor of Molthune claimed all the Fangwood as far as Lastwall as part of his newly independent nation. Soldiers from the regional capital at Canorate ensured political stability, but the woodsmen, rangers, trappers, artisans, and fisherfolk who lived between the Tourondel and Marideth Rivers and depended on the bounty of the forest realm soon realized that, just as Cheliax before had pillaged the region of resources while providing little in return, the new mandates from Canorate were simply changing the flow of exploitation from one city to another. Resentment flared as the promise of a new era collapsed, and what started as a few minor acts of sabotage soon blossomed into a guerilla war for independence.

The early years of the conflict were bloody and disorganized, with bands of woodsmen and other irregular troops acting independently. This changed when Irgal Nirmath, a half-elf trapper, united a handful of groups into one sizable force. As his victory-count mounted, his legend spread, and Nirmath drew more rebels to the banner of Irgal's Axe—as his force came to be known—and even Molthuni commanders began to respect his cunning. After 7 years of war, an uneasy border solidified and the rebels declared victory and independence in 4655. On the very night of his triumph, however, Irgal was taken by an assassin's blade. His followers clamored to name the newborn nation Nirmathas in honor of their fallen hero. In the years since, Molthune repeatedly invaded its wayward province, and every time, its armies retreated across the Marideth River after pyrrhic campaigns against foes who refuse to stand still or to stay down.

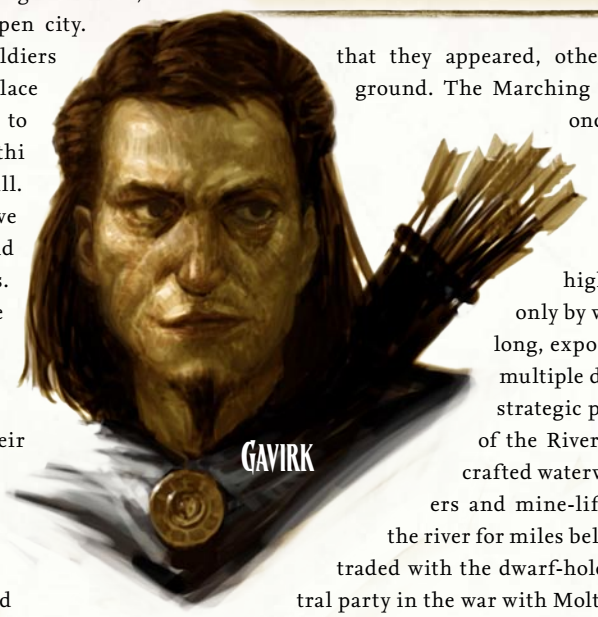
Prominent Nirmathi gather every 4 years to elect a Forest Marshal to lead their military forces. The current marshal, Weslen Gavirk, is a compassionate and determined man well-acquainted with the jack-booted oppression enacted by Molthune in its repeated conquests of his home city, Tamran. He hopes to organize an assault on the nearly completed Fort Ramgate before the Molthuni can use it to launch an invasion. He hopes to duplicate Irgal's feat of uniting the Nirmathi, but his is a difficult task, as every Nirmathi considers himself an army of one, with every household and village an independent company. While they usually respond to the Forest Marshal's call to battle, disparate groups of Nirmathi often ignore battle plans in favor of their own ideas. The Fangwood is filled with such merry bands, each considering itself the embodiment of the true Nirmathi spirit. These bands fight injustice (real or perceived) as they encounter it, although they often spend as much time feuding with rivals as stymieing Molthuni incursions. Their efforts are like hacking at limbs without touching the root of the problem—amid these individual acts of heroism, the Nirmathi as a whole struggle to do more than survive.

In war and in everyday life, Nirmathi are fiercely independent. They are a people who define themselves largely by opposition to their regimented and bureaucratic former masters in Cheliax and Molthune. There is great generosity and charity of spirit in Nirmathas, but everything is mediated by the ideals of freedom, self-sufficiency, and liberty above all else. Even the best ideas are ignored or rejected if there is even the faintest hint of compulsion. To infringe upon individual rights and freedoms is to invite blood feud. The partisans of Nirmathas have learned well how to survive. Whether they can succeed in forming a nation remains to be seen.

Government: The Forest Marshal is primarily a military position, selected for skill in battle and tactical acumen. As a civil ruler, the Forest Marshal is no more than a symbol, a figurehead. Governance is entirely local, from village elders or exiled nobility to the oldest, wisest, wealthiest, or most eloquent speakers—there is no organized system of rule. Some Nirmathi advocate for a leader skilled in diplomacy, trade, and negotiation, but in an unstable land where freedom, liberty, and the individual are paramount, centralized leadership and the common good are elusive

concepts. Alliances and coalitions are ephemeral and often deeply personal, and Nirmathi are quick to recoil when they perceive someone overreaching his authority.

Tamran: The ramshackle wooden city of Tamran sits perched at the mouth of the River Marideth, with much of the city built on piers and pilings over the broad marshlands of the estuary, connected by causeways, bridges, and a flotilla of coracles and skiffs. The fortifications that once guarded the approaches to Tamran were torn down by the Nirmathi themselves during the Freedom War when they recognized how the fortifications played into Molthune's advantage in traditional warfare. The walls could not withstand a Molthuni siege, and they made it harder to mount a counter-attack. By demolishing the walls, Tamran became a nigh-indefensible open city. When Molthune threatened, Nirmathi soldiers could melt into the wild and the populace surrender, but Tamran's proximity to the river and marshes allowed Nirmathi guerillas to infiltrate the city at will. Molthune has "captured" Tamran on five separate occasions, but each time it found holding the city too costly and fruitless. Even when the Molthuni burned the city in frustration at the end of their last occupation, the Nirmathi rebuilt it within a year. Nirmathi proudly look to their humble city as a symbol of their tenacity, cleverness, and resiliency.



Fangwood: The relatively large forest known as Fangwood consists of a mixture of deciduous and evergreen trees, mostly various maples, firs, and spruces. In areas where the firs grow, close and tall, the Fangwood takes on a shadowy primeval feel that chokes the air and sends many skittish creatures into noise-induced panics. As the fir groves give way to sparser mixes of spruces and relatively rare pines, the underbrush thickens even as the feeling of oppressive dread slackens. Most Nirmathi who live in the forest dwell in these moderate belts between the firs and maples. These spruce and fir belts give way to uncommon alders, and from those to copses of maples, often surrounding clearings or lining streams. Underbrush chokes the ground beneath the maples, but the maple groves feel safe and welcoming.

The Marching Springs: The narrow plain and foothills between the Fangwood and the eastern slopes of the Mindspin Mountains are home to an unusual water feature of unknown origin or cause. Sprays of water not unlike miniature geysers about 5 feet high leap up one after another in a slow-moving progression that winds its way throughout a region of roughly 30 square miles. The springs never erupt from exactly the same spot twice, and they leave no evidence that they appeared, other than a spot of wet ground. The Marching Springs spray roughly once every 3 minutes, with each advancing about 6 feet beyond the previous one.

Skelt: Built into a high bluff and accessible only by water-powered lifts and long, exposed ramps broken with multiple drawbridges, Skelt has a strategic position at the falls line of the River Tourondel. Its dwarf-crafted waterworks power ore-grinders and mine-lifts, while sawmills dot the river for miles below the town. Skelt long traded with the dwarf-hold of Kraggodan (a neutral party in the war with Molthune), but the opening of Bloodsworn Vale unveiled a new vista for commerce, replacing rustic muleskinner trails with full-fledged trade routes to Korvosa and Varisia beyond.

Parting Shot

You are an expert skirmisher, able to rain missiles upon your enemies whether advancing or retreating.

Prerequisite: Dex 13, Dodge, Mobility, Point Blank Shot, Shot on the Run, base attack bonus +6, Nirmathas affinity.

Benefit: Once per encounter, when using the withdraw action, you can make a single ranged attack at any point during your movement.

Special: A 6th-level Nirmathi ranger who has chosen the archery combat style is treated as having Parting Shot (rather than Manyshot) even if he does not have the prerequisites for it, but only when he is wearing light or no armor.

Normal: You cannot attack when using the withdraw action.

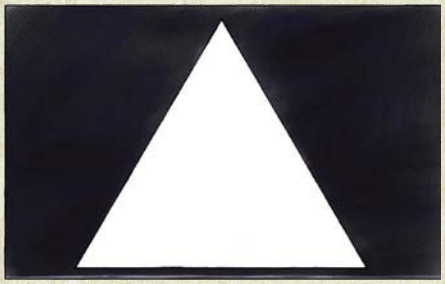
The Darkblight

For a land utterly dependent upon the forest for its livelihood, its economy, its safety (as the retreat for its soldiers), and even its very identity, a threat to the forest itself strikes at the very soul of Nirmathas. In the depths of the Fangwood, a strange blight has begun to grow and spread, the trees blackening, rotting, and spreading seeds of death. The deadly arbor mortis are the spirit-homes of blightspawned fey, the accursed offspring of the corrupted dryad Arlantia. The blightspawned fey in turn spread through capturing unwary humans and binding them in the moldering vines of the arbor mortis, turning those unfortunate victims into shambling heaps of moldering rot. Whether the curse upon the trees produces these thorn-crowned naiads or whether the trees are blighted by their touch, these symbiotes represent an insidious and deadly threat to the Fangwood.

Numeria

Savage Land of Super-Science

Abutting the northernmost banks of the Sellen River system, the harsh plains of Numeria possess a stark, majestic beauty. The greatest of the River Kingdoms, Numeria was a rising power in Avistan, a warlike nation poised to unite several of its neighbors under its rough banner. With the fall of Sarkoris and the coming of the demonic Worldwound, however, Numeria's momentum was broken, and today it is a land of grim barbarians and dark magic, its fierce people ruled over by a cabal of tainted magicians devoted to artifacts they do not understand and secrets not of this world.



Alignment: CN
Capital: Starfall (32,400)
Notable Settlements: Castle Urion (1,240), Chesed (59,690), Hajoth Hakados (6,780)
Ruler: Kevoth-Kul, the Black Sovereign of Numeria
Government: Barbaric monarchy
Languages: Hallit
Religion: Desna, Gorum, Nethys

Long before Numeria's recorded history, perhaps even before the Age of Darkness, the local Kellid tribes witnessed one of the strangest events in Golarion's history: a metal mountain falling from the sky in a great fireball. This strange mass, a colossal vessel from the darkest reaches of outer space, broke up in Golarion's upper atmosphere and cascaded down to earth in what the tribes call the Rain of Stars. All across the plains, chunks of strange materials as small as fists or as large as cities slammed down and buried themselves in the rocky earth, bathing the landscape in unknown energies that continue to cause weird mutations to this day. The largest of these fragments, known as the Silver Mount, looms over Numeria's capital city of Starfall, and the bizarre knowledge and technology gained from its honeycomb of intact chambers is the basis for the Black Sovereign's firm control of the region.

While its barren landscape leaves little for trade, Numeria is famous in the more civilized southern lands as the primary source of skymetals, seven rare metallic alloys sheared from the hull of the crashing starship, all useful in the creation of unique weapons and artifacts and each with its own distinct properties. Of these, adamantine is the most common, and word of the wonders of "Numerian steel" has long since spread to the farthest corners of Avistan and Garund.

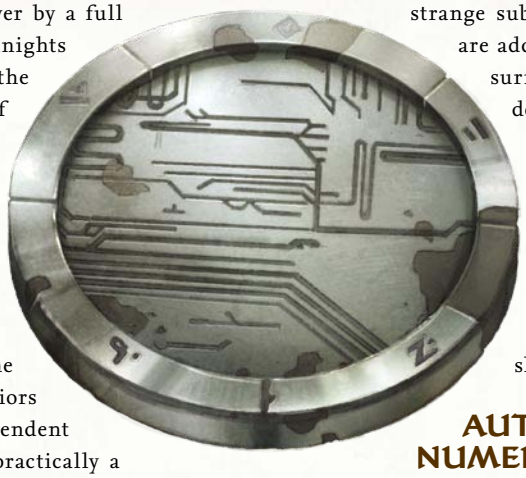
Since the sudden emergence of the demonic hosts in the region now known as the Worldwound, Numeria has found its ranks swelled by large numbers of holy warriors from southern lands bound for Mendev to join the crusades. These travelers often make their way up the River Road—the route up the Sellen from the Inner Sea to Chesed—and thence on into Mendev, to join their brothers and sisters on the front lines. Although their influence is somewhat disruptive, bringing strange faces and even stranger ideas to the barbaric Kellids of the region, the Black Sovereign and the Technic League happily welcome the pilgrims for the coin they bring, making sure to relieve them of as much of it as possible before sending them north to their inevitable glorious deaths.

Government: Decades ago, Kevoth-Kul was a great warlord, a warrior many Kellids pointed to as the finest example of their kind. With his massive greatsword he forced alliances between tribes, and although his methods were bloody, his followers believed that he might expand the borders of Numeria farther than ever before. Yet when Kevoth-Kul sought to make the city of Starfall his capital, he found himself listening to the whispers of the Technic League, a band of powerful and debased arcanists who sought to unlock the secrets of the Silver Mount. Although the arcanists possessed only the barest understanding of most of the items they uncovered, it was enough, and with their alliance Kevoth-Kul's power in Starfall became absolute. Something shifted within the warlord, then, and rather than continue his conquest the barbarian king grew dark and brooding, naming himself the Black Sovereign and devoting his time to pleasures of the flesh.

Although the Black Sovereign's tyranny stands unopposed throughout Numeria, the nomadic tribes also realize that the king's fearsome legions are not everywhere at once, and hence most avoid their ruler's jealous notice whenever possible and quietly go about living as they always have.

Starfall: Numeria's capital of Starfall is a grim and brutal place, a decadent mockery of the royal courts of the south. Here the barbarian king known as the Black Sovereign reigns unchallenged, supported by the perverse sorcerers of the Technic League and their Gearsman servants. In its filthy streets, strange metal men from the Silver Mount enforce the dictator's decrees, while those who revel (or pretend to) in the king's carnal celebrations grow fat on the toil of others or become addicted to the vile intoxicating liquids seeping from the wreckage of the Silver Mount.

Castle Urion: Castle Urion is the first Numerian holding that most pilgrims traveling the River Road encounter, yet it is hardly a typical barbarian settlement—although technically under the control of the Black Sovereign, this relatively new castle is watched over by a full detachment of griffon-mounted Knights of Iomadae in order to ensure the protection and spiritual guidance of hopeful demon-slayers.



Hajoth Hakados: While crusaders from the first two Mendevian crusades followed the Sellen northwest through Ustalav and up to the border holding of Storasta, that town's fall and subsequent absorption by the Worldwound left most holy warriors flowing west to the near-independent trading city of Hajoth Hakados (practically a River Kingdom in its own right). From there, pilgrims can once more follow the east fork of the Sellen until they reach the fog-shrouded port city of Chesed on the Lake of Mists and Veils. The Technic League knows that Chesed is Numeria's last chance to milk zealots for their coins, whether via swindling merchants or bandits on the river, and many are the crusaders who pass over the border into Mendev with only their weapons and their faith.

Silver Mount: Numerian skalds have an epic tale for every night of the year, and indeed, their country is uniquely suited to reward brash adventurers. The landscape is dotted with segments of fallen starship, and while many of these are burned-out husks, others contain intact chambers, sealed and guarded by unknown forces. What's more, there are whispers that some of these yet contain life—strange beasts from beyond the stars that devour men whole or, weirder still, lurk in hidden lairs and counsel select barbarian leaders for their own mysterious ends.

Of these half-ruined hulks, the massive scarred edifice of Silver Mount is by far the largest. Heavily guarded by the servants of the Technic League, the jagged metal peak is riddled with intact cabins and passages, its secrets the source of the dark sorcerers' power (as well as the strange substances to which many of them are addicted). Despite the high security surrounding the mount and certain death for any who dare challenge the Black Sovereign and his minions, demand for knowledge from the stars is high among sages from across Golarion, and adventurers willing to brave the mount's perils can undoubtedly make a fortune—should they survive.

Arcane Vendetta

The mistreatment of your people by the Technic League has made you distrustful of all those who actively pursue arcane knowledge.

Prerequisites: Spellcraft 1 rank, Numeria affinity.

Benefit: You deal +2 damage with weapon attacks made against anyone who you've seen cast an arcane spell in the last 5 rounds. Because your extra damage is based on precision, you must be within 30 feet of your target to gain this bonus with ranged attacks. Creatures immune to critical hits and sneak attacks are immune to the extra damage granted by this feat.

Automatons of Numeria

Of all the strange artifacts to come from the wreckage of the crashed cosmic vessel, from the oddly etched silverdisks that tribesmen trade like currency to the hallucinogenic ichors seeping from the broken walls of Silver Mount, the most famous are the Black Sovereign's steel soldiers. Brought forth a generation ago from a previously undiscovered chamber, the strange automatons are man-shaped constructs of steel and other unknown materials that seem unnervingly disproportionate in minor ways, as if sculpted by someone seeing a humanoid for the first time. This fact lends credence to rumors that the metal men wore entirely different shapes when first discovered and quickly contorted themselves to match their discoverers.

While the automatons are capable of speech, few outside the Technic League have ever heard their strange voices. For reasons of their own, the constructs serve the League as shock troops and guards, conducting their business with ruthless and mechanical efficiency. This efficiency makes it all the more unnerving to the League when one of the automatons willfully disobeys a seemingly random order—letting a convict go free or failing to protect its master—and meeting the League's furious questions with inscrutable, alien silence.

Osirion

Land of the Pharaohs



Alignment: LN
Capital: Sothis (111,989)
Notable Settlements: Ipeq (12,730), Totra (52,360), Shiman-Sekh (6,680)
Ruler: The Ruby Prince Khemet III
Government: Celestial Monarchy
Languages: Osiriani
Religion: Abadar, Irori, Lamashtu, Nethys, Norgorber, Pharasma, Rovagug, Sarenrae

History remembers the pharaohs, the God-Kings of Osirion, as tyrannical heralds of progress, ushering in the Age of Destiny. With vast slave armies at their disposal, the pharaohs delivered staggering advances in warfare, technology, and architecture. As Osirion ascended to supremacy, so too did its need to expand. Osirion once controlled much of what are now the nations of Thuvia, Rahadoum, and Katapesh. Indeed, the kingdom of Geb was once an Osirian colony answering to ancient Sothis. The phenomena of Osirion's dramatic rise from barbarism is intensely studied by specialist sages known as Osiriontologists, who postulate several different theories to account for the empire's sudden and otherwise inexplicable spike in cultural and military success. Although dismissed by more responsible academia, some treatises hypothesize that Osirion's advancement was accelerated by a visitation from outsiders—possibly from unknown entities from beyond the vast gulf of space.

Regardless of the disagreements pertaining to its founding, Osiriontologists more widely agree that complacency ultimately *ended* Osirion's reign of cultural and martial supremacy. After 5,000 years of pharaonic rule, Qadiri agents from across the Obari Ocean infiltrated the corrupt bureaucracy underpinning Pharaoh Menedes XXVI's regime and quietly neutralized it, creating a state of paralysis. Unable to respond effectively, Osirion soon experienced a series of empire-wide—but ultimately leaderless—slave revolts, each clandestinely engineered by the Padishah Empire of Kelesh. The revolts forced Menedes into hiding while Kelesh staged a mock rescue and subsumed Osirion as a satrapy. Expanding into their newest colony, Keleshite migrants set about transforming Osirion, destroying any monuments of the pharaohs they could find which might otherwise blasphemously betray the truth of Osirion's history.

The Keleshite migration brought with it the seeds of the satrapy's own destruction, for it was the Kelesh who first introduced Osirion to the faith of Sarenrae, a sun goddess who integrated seamlessly with Osirion's otherwise repressed traditions. Over the next 700 years, the rays of Sarenrae flourished among both the Osirians as well as the lower classes of the Keleshites, ultimately establishing the Cult of the Dawnflower. In response to the dangerous growth of the colony's newest faith, the satrap was forced to banish the cult's leadership to the neighboring deserts of Thuvia. The exile was short lived, however, and in 2253 the satrap's body was discovered in his courtyard fountain, sunflowers blooming from his mouth. The Dawnflower had returned to Osirion and the ensuing power vacuum gave rise to a series of independent Keleshite sultans in succession to the throne.

Regardless of whether the sultans exercised leniency or brutality, however, they still held no answer to the facts that the Osiriani people still maintained an ethnic majority as well as a fiery nationalist pride—a pride still not suppressed even after more than two millennia of foreign rule. As such, when the powerful thaumaturgist Khemet I, the Forthbringer, emerged and purported to offer proof that he could trace his direct lineage to the Azghaadi Dynasty of Osirion's First Age, he was quickly instated in a tidal wave of populist enthusiasm. Khemet's brief demonstrations of his divine ability to recruit the elder elementals of Osirion's desert to his banner persuaded the remaining sultans to evacuate and return to their homeland, paving the way for a near-bloodless coup.

Shortly after the Forthbringer secured control of Osirion, he reinstated Sothis as the nation's capital and



constructed the city's now-famous white-walled palace. Thereafter, he became notably withdrawn and his public appearances became fewer and farther between. This was a product, some whispered, of Khemet's devotion to maintaining the secretive contracts he had made with the elementals that catapulted his family to power. True or not, the Forthbringer's power remained unquestioned, and after his death ended his 40-year reign of uncontested power, the throne passed to his eldest son, Khemet II, the Crocodile King. While Khemet II shared his father's considerable magical talent, he demonstrated a weakness for governing, preferring to spend his days with harems sourced with slave-girls from around the globe. Indeed, it was almost with a sense of relief when, three decades later, following a summoning accident for which few details were released, Khemet II was superseded by his son, the Ruby Prince, Khemet III. The full character of the Ruby Prince's rule has yet to be established. He is as withdrawn as his grandfather, and like the first Forthbringer, he is already widely feared. He rarely takes advice from his court of advisors, preferring instead to consult with Janhelia, his ever-present fire elemental companion, whose agenda is still unknown.

Osirion is the home of one of Golarion's most expansive deserts punctuated by a dynamic source of freshwater: the famed River Sphinx. Fed by two tributaries from the Brazen Peaks, the Crook and the Asp, the River Sphinx is a lifeline for huge swathes of Osirion's population. The river, however, brings many trials to test the people who live along its banks, including black dire crocodiles (hetkoshu) and seasonal flooding. Beyond the River Sphinx are endless dunes of harsh granular sand, constantly re-shaped by the powerful storms that wrack the region. Despite the weight of these physical hardships, it is here that the cradle of Golarion's civilization at last began to form again after the cataclysmic setback caused by fall of the *Starstone* in the Age of Darkness.

Government: The youthful Ruby Prince Khemet III, the Forthbringer, is unquestionably a powerful thaumaturgist. Although he speaks little, his public appearances are punctuated with visible demonstrations of his power. While Khemet III slowly swells Osirion's military, observers of the Forthbringer dynasty have little insight into what the Ruby Prince intends to actually use his army for.

Although it has never actually been seen—due to his natural invisibility—no one ever questions whether the reigning Forthbringer's fire elemental companion, Janhelia, actually



exists: the heat from the elder elemental's body makes the creature's presence known whenever it is near. Indeed, many who venture inside the Palace of the Forthbringer first pay for an *endure elements* spell to ensure they can tolerate Janhelia's presence rather than risk slighting the Ruby Prince should he be joined by his favored elemental. The prince's enemies often whisper, however, that Janhelia's heat is the least of what makes them uncomfortable about the creature. They theorize that the tight bond between Janhelia and the Ruby Prince signals that Khemet III is poised to make the tragic mistake of involving Osirion in the complex and timeless politics of the elemental clans that savage the desert. Fire elementals are exceedingly rare in Osirion, and as such, no one knows which clan Janhelia might belong to or what the elemental's agenda might be.

In addition to the undoubtedly formidable Janhelia, the Ruby Prince is protected by an elite Sothan military unit called the Risen Guard. Each member of the Risen Guard has died at least once and was raised by order of Khemet III—if not by the casting of the Ruby Prince's hand, personally. As such, the fanatic vigilance with which the Risen Guard protects their Forthbringer (as well as his treasury, which funds their continued ability to return to life) is unquestioned. The leader of the Risen Guard, the otherwise nameless Khopeshman of Sothis, has also assumed the dual role of managing the capital's city watch. The Risen Guard also protects the Ruby Prince's family, and as such, the Risen Guard is frequently tasked with the dubious honor of hunting down and ensuring the safe return of Ojan and Jasilia Khemet, the throne's young twin heirs, who frequently disappear to explore the hidden corners of Osirion's desert.

The Council of Sun and Sky governs Osirion's domestic policy and runs the nation on a day-to-day basis. While the council maintains the appearance of independence, it is well understood that it is always subject to the whims of the Forthbringer. The council, at present, is a divided battleground of politics between corrupt bureaucrats and idealistic crusaders. First Speaker Dahnakrist Phi, a former slave, rides a tidal wave of popularity. His tendency to publicly criticize the judiciary, however, suggests that his term as First Speaker—if not his life span—might be short.

Sothis: Osirion's capital, the metropolis of Sothis, has grown around the molted shell of a titanic beetle, the earthly remains of Ulunat, spawn of Rovagug. As the nation's political and military center, Sothis overshadows the trio of smaller sister-cities to the south that line the banks of the River Sphinx as it meets the Crook and the Asp: Un, the City of Triangles; Tephu, City of the Reed People; and Wati, the Half-City.

Ipeq: Legend states that Ipeq was created by the legendary Pharaoh of Blades in a single day as the culmination of multiple *wish* spells provided by a conscripted army of noble djinni and efreeti. It is said that one day the pharaoh's web of binding pacts will simultaneously expire and the genie will suddenly return to *wish* Ipeq away into nothingness. Ipeq's army is equipped with more than 100 scorpion *boat tokens (swan boats),* which are used in emergencies to suddenly sail down the River Sphinx and swell the Sothan garrison should reinforcements ever be needed in the capital.

Shiman-Sekh: Shiman-Sekh was founded by the Song Pharaoh after the self-proclaimed goddess overthrew the Pharaoh of Forgotten Plagues in the early centuries of the Age of Destiny. Built on the western edge of the Golden Oasis, the city represents the last bastion of civilization before reaching the seemingly endless desert of northwest Osirion.

Totra: Osirion's largest port outside of Sothis, Totra was first established during the An dynasty and served as the launch point for the Great Atoqua, the slave fleets that rapidly conquered much of what is now Thuvia and Rahadoum. Today, Totra loyally accepts the rule of the Ruby Prince, although its nobles quietly bemoan the heavy state of taxation.

The Ruins of Tumen: Although Sothis was both Osirion's first and now current capital, it was not always so. During the second age of the Black Sphinx, the slave armies of the Four Pharaohs of Ascension ruled from Tumen. Despite being buried by countless tons of sand, Tumen is still a frequent destination for treasure hunters and Osiriontologists alike.

The Sphinx Head: Osirion's largest sphinx carving is found between Shiman-Sekh and the Junaria, staring straight toward the heart of Sothis. Although Keleshites completely chiseled off the gigantic creature's facial features during the 700 years that marked Osirion's tenure as a satrapy, the face has since been accurately restored using a combination of *stone tell* and *stone shape* spells. Osiriontologists speculate the face is actually the likeness of the Sky Pharaoh, Menedes I. A hidden door atop the head's center leads inside a hollow cavity and possibly into the rest of the Sphinx's body, which is thought to be buried beneath the sands. Prior expeditions into the Sphinx Head yielded no survivors, and it is widely assumed that the air inside is too foul to breathe. Now that Khemet III has opened parts of Osirion to foreign treasure hunters to raise additional funds and rediscover lost pharonic lore, the Sphinx Head has once again drawn the interest of outsiders who can afford both the permit fees and the imminent risk of death.

The Underdunes: Osirion's most unique geographic feature is perhaps its Underdunes: gigantic trenches of sand created by the passage of air and sand elementals. While the risk of sandslides makes traveling within the Underdunes perilous to the inexperienced, skilled travelers can take advantage of the dune's shade to increase their rate of travel.

Blade Binder

Not only are you skilled at binding your opponent's weapon, you can seize the advantage while he struggles to retrieve his blade.

Prerequisites: Base attack bonus +4, proficiency with khopesh or temple sword.

Benefit: You receive a +2 bonus on opposed attack rolls made to bind an opponent's weapon, as well as any opposed rolls to maintain the bind. This bonus stacks with the +2 bonus from wielding a khopesh or temple sword. If you succeed in blade binding your opponent, your opponent becomes flat-footed until he either wrestles his blade free or drops his weapon.

Special: A fighter may gain Blade Binder as his fighter bonus feat. A monk may select Blade Binder as his 6th-level monk bonus feat.

Osiriani Blade Binding

When blade binding, an attacker first catches his opponent's weapon in the crook of his khopesh. He then twists his khopesh, locking the two blades together, forcing both blades from their guard positions. The attacker then strikes with an off-hand weapon or surprises his opponent with a sudden unarmed attack.

New Attack Option: Bind

As a melee attack, you may attempt to gain control of your opponent's weapon. Make an opposed attack roll against your opponent, including all appropriate modifiers. If you succeed, you bind your opponent's weapon.

A bound weapon cannot be used to make attacks, nor does it allow its wielder to threaten any space. A bound weapon can be wrenched free with a successful opposed attack roll, or can be dropped as a free action. If your opponent does not free or drop his weapon he cannot move beyond your reach.

While binding your opponent, you suffer the same limitations, except you may end the bind as a free action. If you attempt to disarm your opponent or sunder the bound weapon, you do not provoke an attack of opportunity, and you get a +4 bonus on the opposed roll and the damage roll of the sunder attempt.

Qadira

Desert Frontier Kingdom



Alignment: N
Capital: Katheer (132,450)
Notable Settlements: Gurat (8,490), Sedeq (89,760)
Ruler: Xerbystes II, Satrap of Qadira
Government: Satrapy of the Keleshite Empire of the East
Languages: Kelish
Religion: Sarenrae, Rovagug, Irori

An ancient kingdom of arid deserts and exotic cities, Qadira is the westernmost satrap state of the Padishah Empire of Kelesh. It thrives on trade but longs for war. As the saying goes, "All caravans come to Katheer."

All along the seacoasts, the ships of Qadira ply their trade, carrying the goods brought by camel and flying carpet from lands further east: silks, spices, and salt, as well as the exotic magical luxuries for which Qadira is known—silversheen blades, healy myrrh, and heatstones forged along the volcanic mountain chain of the Northern Zho. Qadira is not the wealthiest of lands in the Keleshite empire, but even its relatively enormous frontier cities possess wonders that much of Avistan can only wonder at, from its peacocks and flowering trees to its animated siege engines and well-disciplined ogre mercenaries.

In Katheer's canyon-like harbor, the nation's vast navy of white-sailed dhows rests at anchor. The Qadiran fleets are well-manned and well-maintained—as the satrap knows, no frontier kingdom can neglect its defenses, and its wooden wall of ships is the first line of defense in the west. Its ogre raiders, flying carpet scouts, and camel cavalry are defenses in the north and east against Taldor and various desert giants, bandits, and night-prowling ghuls. Dozens of abandoned towers, fortresses, and even entire cities litter the northern border of Qadira and are swept beneath the sands to the east, each the breeding ground of monsters and bandits. Within its living cities, the honorable knowledge of the cult of Irori is often turned to corrupt purposes, and everything beneath the sun of Sarenrae is a threat.

The servants of Kelesh keep their blades sharp.

Government: The government is concerned with its rivalry with Taldor. Most recently, Qadira invaded Taldor in 4079 and shattered Taldor's imperial ambitions. Although this lies 600 years in the past, the border is still tense and it is clear that Taldor's nobles hope to someday attempt to exact revenge on Qadira's northern borders. Piracy of the two nations upon one another's fleets is more than common, and is a routine cost of shipping in the region.

Taldor and other nations on the Inner Sea and Obari Ocean fear the ambitions of Xerbystes II, the young satrap of Qadira, who wants to prove himself through a regional war and needs wealth to pay for it. He works as the hand of Kelesh's emperor, given free rein over local affairs in exchange for an annual tribute of 13 golden bulls and 300 concubines for the vast pleasure palaces of the imperial heartland. Because of Qadira's strategic importance, however, Xerbystes bows to the imperial will in matters outside his borders, such as piracy, trade, and war with Taldor. In those matters, his vizier Hebizid Vraj serves as the emperor's hand. Since Qadira's generals also follow orders from Kelesh, Xerbystes cannot have the war with Taldor he craves. He makes do by giving his heroes—a group of nobles and advisers called the Peerless—ever more difficult tasks in his service.

Katheer: Glorious Golden Katheer, the city of 10 million smells and a thousand, thousand caravans, is a place like no other, full of every spice, every race, and every magic, and home to the largest population of camels beyond the Kelesh homelands to the east. The palace of Xerbystes II stands here, as do dozens of academies of mathematics, philosophy, and learning. In the schools and bazaars, the activity is great and many foreign scholars frequent Katheer's libraries. The busiest places of all, though, are the port and the camel pens. Ships sail to Quantium, Katapesh, and Absalom daily. These include dhows across the ocean and a small number of enchanted sandships—able to sail above the dunes and powered by elemental winds—across the desert sands.

Dozens of schools contend in Katheer for students. The greatest of Katheer's colleges is the Venicaan College of Medicaments and Chiurgery. Founded in ages past, the healers from Venicaan's halls are one of the hidden advantages that Qadira holds over Taldor, where the healing arts are much less advanced. Both magic and herbalism are combined here in vast halls to save the lives of soldiers, where they rest only so long as needed until they can fight once more. The more recent accomplishments in this

line are related to the healing of camels and horses, a specialty always in demand, either by caravan-masters or by cavalrymen.

Within the palace, a hundred princes and princesses contend for the favor of the satrap, for he alone grants the commissions for the most valuable caravans back to the imperial heartland: salt, spice, silk, heatstones, and a dozen more goods besides. The wealth and strangeness of the place sometimes overwhelm visitors, but the Keleshites laugh: "This city is a pigsty compared to the Empire's heart!" Perhaps mere modesty, but the empire has many Satrapies, and Qadira is by no means the largest.

Gurat: The city of Gurat is home to scholarly colleges and a strange prophet. The prophet is the Mouthpiece of Gurat, an ancient cyclops who serves the emperors of Kelesh as an oracle—perhaps the only one left after the death of Aroden. Visitors are not allowed anywhere near the Mouthpiece, who is guarded by a thousand deafened eunuchs. The city of Gurat is also known for its weavings, many of which are enchanted as *flying carpets* of various sizes.

Omash: The other city of note in Qadira is Omash, along the northern border with Taldor. It is primarily a fortress city, and marks the eastern end of the Satrapy's patrols. It is from among the dozen schools of war here that the satrap personally chooses the guards for his palaces, the elite soldiers of his armies, and a few of his famed Peerless.

Sedeq: The settlement of Sedeq, south of the Zho Mountains, is a place of warm breezes, lush gardens, and frequent desperate pleas and screams, for it is a settlement of the Qadiran slave trade. There, captured slaves are broken, shorn, and made ready for sale. Few escape.

Al-Bashir: The greatest ruins in Qadira lie deep in the desert and are often inaccessible when dunes cover them. The one exception is the oasis of Al-Bashir, which lies at the center of many stone walls beneath a towering cliff at the feet of a Zho escarpment where the River Pashman touches those heights. This city is avoided by caravans heading to Katheer from all points east, for it is home to a roosting colony of hundreds of harpies, whose songs bring herds of antelopes and entire camel trains to ruin. The treasure piled up at its heart is also rumored to be immense, although no one has found a way to slay enough harpies to make it possible to carry it home. The satrap has tried to clear the ruins several times with small armies, but he accomplished only the creation of new generations of widows. For now, he saves his strength.

Shadun: The other famous ruin is the city of Shadun, somewhat east of Gurat, from whence are derived the people who bear its name. They abandoned their terrace farms along the hundred green trails and riverbeds of the Pashman watershed long ago, when the Zhonar and Zhobl volcanoes first stirred and threw great wastelands of ash and dust over their once-fertile farmland. The fate of the Shadun people themselves is unknown.

Katheer Scholar

You have graduated from one of the many colleges, universities, and specialty schools of higher learning scattered throughout Katheer.

Prerequisites: Int 15, Qadira affinity.

Benefit: Whenever you succeed on a Knowledge check to identify a kind of creature you face, you can spend a standard action to provide detailed information to your allies. Doing so grants every ally who can hear you within 30 feet a +1 circumstance bonus on weapon damage rolls made against the identified kind of creature for a number of rounds equal to your Intelligence bonus. You may only use this ability once per encounter. Creatures immune to critical hits and sneak attacks are not immune to the extra damage from this ability.



Dervish

Religion

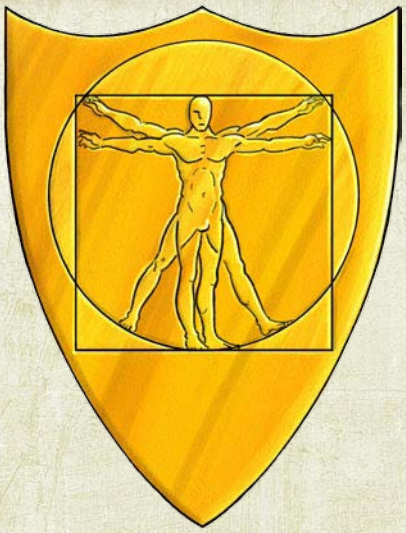
The Cult of the Dawnflower is very popular among the Qadiran dervishes and military, and its leaders have long had powerful voices in the satrapy. Indeed, their call for an invasion of Osirion led to Keleshite dominance of that region and their meddling in northern Garund long ago also reshaped the region. Sarenae's followers are much less eager to turn their goddess's wrath against anyone but Taldor these days.

Gorum and Abadar are also popular in Qadira. They are seen as twins here—when one ascends, the other declines. Thus, the two priesthoods despise one another. In the current, long lull in hostilities with Taldor, the once-favored war god, Gorum, is in a period of decline, despite the satrap's wishes. Meanwhile, Abadar continues to be popular among the people and seems every year to increase his dominance.

The arrival of new ideas and new cults from the East is almost as common as the arrival of camel fleets and silks. A small group calling itself the White Feather Monks recently arrived with such a caravan, teaching peace and serenity to those who listen. Their meditations and prayers are closely watched by the satrap, who fears any new faith or idea as potentially dangerous until his people can investigate its leaders and find them worthy. As pacifists, the WhiteFeather Monks face a long struggle to win the satrap's good graces, for he has little use for those who cannot feed his war machine as he prepares the next offensive against Taldor. Some believe these monks are simply another cult of Irori, but others believe their origins are much older and more dangerous, perhaps related to the lost cult of the Peacock Spirit or to Roidira, a figure called the Dark Sister of Knowledge.

Rahadoum

The Kingdom of Man



Alignment: LN
Capital: Azir (72,370)
Notable Settlements: Botosani (23,540), Manaket (26,780)
Ruler: Malduoni, Keeper of the First Law
Government: Council of Elders led by the Keeper of the First Law
Languages: Common, Osiriani
Religion: None (see below)

More than 2,000 years ago, the faithful of Sarenrae, spreading their religion like rising sunrays across northern Garund, met sudden resistance from the independent city states of the northwest coast, who favored Nethys and Norgorber. The Oath Wars—more than six ruinous decades of religious war between rival followers of the three gods—followed, devastating the region.

In 2555, the weary militia of Azir put all of the great city's temples to the torch and exiled members of their clergies. Led by the philosopher Kalim Onaku, the militia stabilized the warring city and set down a list of new laws, the first of which was, "Let no man be beholden to a god." Over the next 5 years, the laws of Azir spread across the region, ending the Oath Wars and expelling all forms of religion from the land. Communities willing to swear by the new Laws of Man were welcomed into Onaku's growing nation of Rahadoum.

Since then, Rahadoum has charted a resolutely secular path. No one denies the existence or power of the gods, but their aegis comes at too high a price for the people of Rahadoum.

While a lack of religion brought the region the peace it so desperately desired, it also brought its own costs. Plague ravaged Azir and Botosani three times in the past 500 years, and the prospect of famine hovers over the fragile land like a shroud. A century ago, Manaket was among the most lush ports of the Inner Sea. Today, it is choked by encroaching desert sands, its famous gardens a memory of the distant past. While few dare speak it aloud, nervous whispers abound that the gods have finally decided to punish the people of Rahadoum for their insolence. Still, they resolutely hold to their ancient laws and avoid any contact with religion.

Visitors to Rahadoum often arrive via ship at Azir (known by many as "Port Godless") to trade for the country's fine cloth, exotic produce, and priceless gemstones. Foreigners must submit to a thorough search by the Pure Legion, a group of trained soldiers who watch for signs of religion. Possession of such contraband carries heavy fines and potential exile, while preaching religious doctrine garners imprisonment or worse.

Despite the strictly enforced First Law, the nation draws missionaries of all faiths. Apart from any inborn piety people might possess, the sheer power of the gods acts as a call to proselytization. Underground churches of nearly every organized religion exist within Rahadoum's borders, and some lifelong Rahadoumi hear the call to worship some god or other. No church has the strength to openly flout the First Law, but all of them see, in some form or another, a vacuum that eventually needs filling.

Rejecting religion makes Rahadoum few allies. Nonetheless, the libertine ports draw their share of merchants from around the Inner Sea. Money talks louder than most preachers, although the most superstitious sailors don't even set foot on Rahadoum docks for fear of divine disfavor. A lively appreciation of philosophy also draws scholars to the nation's universities and observatories.

Relations are chilly with neighboring Thuvia, where cults of Sarenrae still hold power. The long-ago sting of the cults' castigation has faded, but Rahadoum's stern denials keep the grudge alive. Prince Khemet III of Osirion has a pragmatist's appreciation for the stable government and safe ports of Rahadoum. Individual Osiriani might distrust the Godless Traders, but Osirion's government and military find them excellent neighbors.

To the south, the pirates of the Shackles are a continual burden to Rahadoum's ports. The Rahadoumi navy lost many good ships chasing pirates into the Eye of Abendego, and as a result it is willing to pay well for a navigator who can provide good charts or, better yet, lead Rahadoum ships on a raid around

the murderous hurricane. The Mwangi Expanse, across the desert and over the mountains, is too far and too decentralized for city dwellers. Nomads, however, cross the borders frequently, bringing treasures to market at great expense. The Sodden Lands to the south and devil-governed Cheliax to the north are stark reminders of why Onaku banned religion in the first place.

Civic participation is a major preoccupation in Rahadoum. Most citizens are well-educated, and philosophy and politics are common pursuits. Speeches delivered by government figures are hashed out over drinks in tents and cafes around the country.

Self-disciplined behavior is the rule, but within those bounds, morality is largely at an individual's or a family's discretion. Narcotics, enthusiastically imported from Katapesh, are common in cities, although sloppy addicts are not tolerated. Slavery is commonplace.

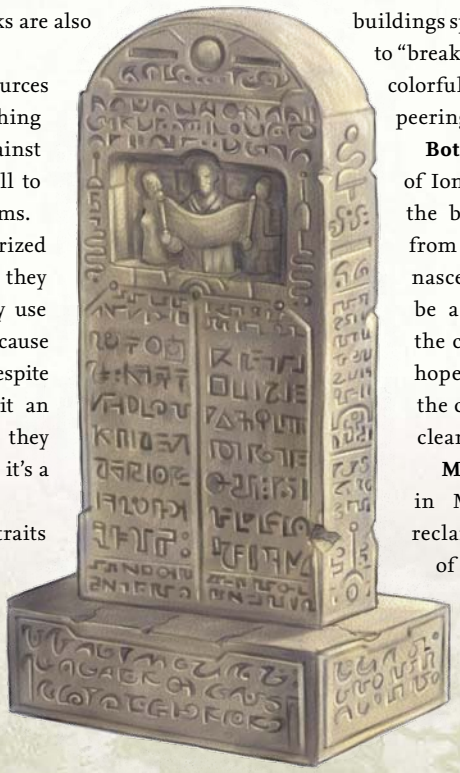
Rahadoum's enduring athiestic nature has had another, invisible side effect. Outsider servitors of gods use Azir as a neutral ground. The gods certainly watch their dealings there, but without open followers on the ground, the gods lack agents to enact their agendas, leaving room for plain negotiations. Many unexplained supernatural effects that occur within the cities of Rahadoum are due to invisible conflicts among celestials and fiends.

The famine that threatens the nation is not entirely due to weather and climate. Stalk beetles, big as ponies, strip entire crop fields in hours. This is not surprising by itself, as Rahadoum possesses a well-deserved reputation for monstrously large beetles known all the way down to Mwangi Expanse. What is unusual, though, is that stalk beetles normally only leave hibernation every 27 years, yet have appeared twice in the last decade. Bulette and whirlmaw attacks are also increasingly common in civilized areas.

Meanwhile, a great deal of arcane resources are invested in pushing back the encroaching desert. Walls of stone are raised against the sands, and spellcasters are paid well to magically redirect the winds of sandstorms.

Rahadoumi are sometimes characterized as grim optimists. Although serious, they maintain a back-handed positivity they use to pull through any hardship, simply because they don't have anyone else to rely on. Despite this self-reliance, they typically exhibit an ironic, black wit so finely tuned that they say, "A Rahadoumi laughs at death—but it's a shared laugh, not a defiant one."

Philosophy and rhetoric are valued traits in Rahadoumi culture, as well as self-discipline and family loyalty, especially among the nomads. With no external powers to provide spiritual guidance, the Rahadoumi are quite serious about their responsibilities to themselves and each other. They expect no mercy from Pharasma after death, so they work very hard to make mortal life worthwhile, collectively and individually.



Godless Healing

With no magical healing available to the populace, you have learned a specialized technique to ignore pain.

Prerequisite: Rahadoum affinity.

Benefit: When you have half your total hit points or fewer, you may attempt a DC 10 Concentration check to heal yourself of 1d4+1 point of damage per level as a move action. You may only use this ability once per day.

Special: You can take this feat more than once. Each time you do, you may heal yourself one additional time per day.

Government: Rahadoum is ruled by a council of elders comprised of representatives from every major settlement and nomadic group. The council in turn elects one of its members to be the Keeper of the First Law for a period of 5 years. Council members elect Keepers as representative of their interests, but ambitious Keepers use the position to sway public opinion toward their own agendas. This tension means Keepers rarely get re-elected, and the resultant lack of continuity leads other political powers to wait out Rahadoum when it becomes difficult to work with, as they rely on the government's relatively frequent change. Malduoni, a genuinely likable man, has bucked the trend, now serving his second term as Keeper and forcing other nations to deal with him.

Azir: Azir is a somber city in many respects, but recently, art and architecture have exploded with creativity. New buildings sport improbable angles, as builders strive to "break geometry," while older buildings receive colorful new facades and unexpected gargoyles peering down from their eaves.

Botosani: Rumors that a powerful cult of Iomedae has taken root in Botosani with the blessing of the locals recently evolved from "rumor" to "open secret." Routing the nascent cult amid the current famine would be a rough task for any government, but the council intends to try. The Pure Legion hopes to secure outside help to either damage the cult or to create a public spectacle it can clean up—and look like heroes in the end.

Manaket: The prestigious wizard college in Manaket, the Occularium, plans to reclaim desert land through a shifting series of trenches and dikes carefully designed to hold back the sand. The city is devoting significant resources to study the feasibility of this project and even imported mechanical engineers from Alkenstar.

Razmiran

Theocracy of the Living God



Alignment: LE
Capital: Thronestep (17,340)
Notable Settlements: Xer (9,200)
Ruler: Razmir, The Living God, Lord of the 31 Steps
Government: Theocratic Dictatorship with Razmir at its head, supported by a council of Visions
Languages: Common, Hallit
Religion: Razmir (false god)

The northeastern shores of Lake Encarthan have always been a turbulent place. For centuries, this land was part of the unruly River Kingdoms, changing hands dozens of times from one burgeoning prince to the next. All of that changed 47 years ago, when the living god Razmir came to the shores and claimed his dominion. He appeared first the people of Xer, then part of the Arch-Duchy of Melcat, and told them of his power. Razmir claimed to have taken the Test of the *Starstone* in far-away Absalom, and through this test he claimed to attain divinity. Using his arcane powers, Razmir set about gathering a flock by ousting the local magistrate and the Trades Guild—a front for thieves and extortionists. Those who came to worship him, however, knew nothing of the truth: Razmir expelled the magistrate by murdering him and disbanded the Trades Guild by incorporating all of its members into his faith. Razmir's biggest lie, however, is hidden from even his most trusted followers: Razmir is not a god. Although powerful, he is little more than a man and his mortality grows closer every day.

In the months following his takeover of Xer, Razmir's faith began to spread across the Arch-Duchy, until eventually it led to the capital of Aerduin, on the border of the Vergan Forest. The forces of Melcat refused to bend a knee to Razmir's faith, and on 17 Erastus, Razmir himself came to the city. He made three requests of fealty to Duke Melcat, and each one was refused. That night, a terrible cloud of fire and smoke descended upon the city, and screams echoed through the night. In the morning, the entire city was reduced to ash and Razmir's takeover was complete. In the years since, Razmiran, as the theocracy came to be called, has expanded its borders five times at the expense of various River Kingdoms and Ustalav.

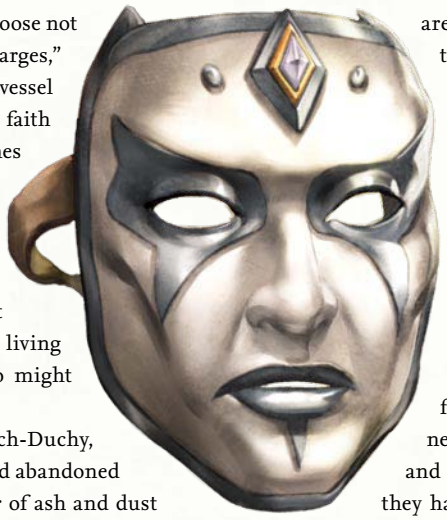
Today, Razmiran is a society governed by force and intimidation. The faith's ruthless priests control every facet of the state and economy from behind iron masks (an imitation of their god). While the common-folk toil at their fields or trade, the faithful take a portion of their work known as the Tithing Step. The clergy, meanwhile, enjoys a life of comfort, with their station in the faith granting them a great deal of power and wealth. Those who dare to defy the faith face severe punishment—imprisonment, exile, or even execution. This leads many to join the faith as a path of prosperity, regardless of their belief. Such acolytes are sent to the Exalted Wood for training and come back changed, acting in league with the faith despite any previous misgivings.

Government: A council of high-ranking priests known as the Visions handles the actual governance of Razmiran. The gold-masked priests carry out Razmir's erratic mandates, each in a unique way. While some Visions are gifted sorcerers, others are skilled at martial combat and others still use honeyed words and bribes to accomplish their goals. Since they are all identically attired, most obey Visions without question, for fear of angering one of the more cruel members. Razmir himself holds council with his Visions from atop a 31-stepped throne, in reference to the steps he supposedly took to achieve divinity. From there, he hides his mortality behind an ornate ivory mask. As age has begun to enervate him, his greed and lust for power has only increased. He has secretly made contact with the alchemists of Thuvia, in hopes of staving off his mortality. Should this information come to light, his entire kingdom might crumble around him.

Thronestep: Founded in 4672, the city of Thronestep was built to be Razmir's capital. Sitting on the shores of Lake

Encarthan, the city was meant to be a paradise for his faithful. Built at a frenzied pace using rich woods and imported stone, the buildings of Razmir's capital feature leering images of his masked visage. Thronestep attracts thousands of the poor, who flock to Razmir hoping for his blessing. Most never leave the city, taking up residence in its growing slums, hoping one day to see the god to petition him for aid. As a result, the city can be easily divided into two districts. The first is the Steps district, where Razmir and his faithful enjoy all the delights the world has to offer. The Steps is a place of absolute decadence and debauchery. The second, and growing district, is the Stones, where the poor live in squalor and filth. Many hope that they will be part of the Choosing, a weekly ceremony where five people are chosen to speak with Razmir. Little do the poor know that those chosen are planted by the faithful and the entire ceremony is a fraud.

Xer: Xer is still an important port for Razmir's economy. Those traveling to and from Lake Encarthan must pass by its harbor. Those who choose not to stop are often accosted by "faith barges," where Razmir's clergy move from vessel to vessel, spreading the word of the faith (bullying captains) and collecting tithes (by demanding tribute). There are some in Xer who still remember the early days of Razmir's faith who know a great deal more than they should. Some even whisper that Razmir might have a few bastards living on the streets of Xer—children who might damage his reputation immensely.



Aerduin: The old capital of the Arch-Duchy, now known as Aerduin's Folly, has laid abandoned for nearly 50 years, covered in a layer of ash and dust generated by its destruction at the hands of Razmir. In the years since, not a thing has grown here, with the earth itself turning into a coarse gray ash. Worse still, it has become a haven for undead. While many are the spirits of the people of Aerduin, there are rumors that a powerful skeleton lord moved to the ruins a few years ago, and that he has been creating other undead from the ashes. Some say it is actually the vengeful bones of Duke Melcat, returned to claim his throne. Despite all of this, adventurers still occasionally explore the ruins. While many are never heard from again, some return with tales of fabulous wealth that lays completely unguarded in crumbling vaults under layers of ash.

Exalted Wood: The Exalted Wood is a vast and untamed forest home to a wide variety of beasts, from the blood boar to the large emerald owl. None of these predators, however, is as dangerous as Razmir's faithful, who dwell in a secret fortress at the forest's heart. This dour, black-stone fortress known as First Step extends twice as far below ground as it does above. Here, newly recruited acolytes are broken and trained in the faith. While most emerge as loyal priests, newly anointed with a number of scars and burns, others are never heard from again. There are those who speculate that far more goes on in First Step than simple training and that acolytes are reprogrammed through powerful magic that warps their mind and soul.

Enforcer

You are skilled at causing fear in those you brutalize.

Prerequisite: Intimidate 1 rank, Razmiran affinity.

Benefit: Whenever you deal nonlethal damage, you can make a Intimidate check to demoralize your target as a free action. If you are successful, the target is shaken for a number of rounds equal to the damage dealt. If your attack was a critical hit, your target is frightened for 1 round with a successful Intimidate check, as well as being shaken for a number of rounds equal to the damage dealt.

Special: A fighter may select Enforcer as one of his fighter bonus feats.

Razmir's Temples

Temples dedicated to Razmir appear throughout the River Kingdoms, but some also stand in Molthune, Nirmathas, and Ustalav, while the governments of Druma, Kyonin, and Lastwall have outlawed them. A temple houses a large worship chamber arranged around a great set of stone steps that lead up to a gold or silver mask. At first, these temples set up in the poorest neighborhoods, and their priests gave alms and tended to the sick as best they could (since they have no divine magic). They use their flocks to influence local governments, extort money from businesses as "protection" from their mobs, and place their faithful in positions of power.

Steps of the Living God

Those who follow the teachings of Razmir are organized by their loyalty to the faith and accomplishments in the name of the Living God. These orders are referred to as "Steps," in accordance with the number of steps the cleric is allowed to ascend when in the presence of the Living God. Each follower is assigned a simple robe and a mask to denote his station in the faith. The orders are as follows.

Title	Robe	Mask
Acolyte of the First Step	White	Iron
Priest of the Third Step	Gray	Iron
Herald of the Eighth Step	Black	Iron
Mask of the Twelfth Step	Blue	Silver
Vision of the Fifteenth Step	Red	Gold

River Kingdoms, The

Independent Realms of Low Character



Alignment: CN
Capital: None
Notable Settlements: Daggermark (27,460), Gralton (9,200), Mivon (10,870), Pitax (8,790), Sevenarches (4,340)
Rulers: Various warlords, megalomaniacs, bandit kings, retired adventurers, and exiled princes
Government: Too numerous to mention, including regions of absolute anarchy
Languages: Common, Hallit
Religion: Calistria, Cayden Cailean, Erastil, Norgorber, Desna, Gorum, Lamashtu, Hanspur, Gyronna

The massive Sellen River basin drains all the eastern lands, carrying waters from the Lake of Mists and Veils north of Brevoy; from the massive Lake Encarthan; and from Galt, Numeria, and Ustalav. The mighty Sellen finally flows into the Inner Sea on the border of Taldor and Andoran. As the rivers pass through the hundred marshes and forests of the River Kingdoms, they seem to carry an especially heavy freight of sin, treachery, and thievery. The River Kingdoms are where desperate men go to escape their pasts and carve out new lives.

The bandits, fortunately, have never unified. Although doing so would threaten all their neighbors and give them the ability to deal with other kingdoms as equals, the river lords constantly fight among themselves. Robbery and murder are common on every road and river in the River Kingdoms, and small mercenary companies fight in the spring and summer for ownership of each hamlet and bridge. One result of the frequent infighting is that food in the River Kingdoms is quite valuable. Rather few souls dare to farm or raise livestock, for fear of banditry. What little food is grown is kept secure in castle granaries or well-guarded cattle pens.

War is the constant here—anything that cannot be defended is seized by the strong. Those who hide here and bide their time to grow strong include hardened criminals, slavers, necromancers, vicious princelings who lost a succession struggle, exiled nobles, firebrands, and religious zealots—anyone most people would rather not have as neighbors. These hardy but treacherous folk possess very little trust, but they tend to follow the strong code of River Freedoms. Those who rule are strong, wily, and willing to do anything to keep their hold on power.

In practice, the strongest of the River Kingdoms sometimes dissolve themselves for good reason: their troops and leaders are hired away to fight in distant wars. The bloodiest wars among the kingdoms occur when these troops return and seek to seize their former territories.

The only thing that can unite the River Kingdoms for even a brief period is a threat from Galt, Numeria, or Razmiran, and even then, each princeling vies with his fellows to lead the resistance. Larger realms find the River Kingdoms useful sources of mercenaries and a convenient place to exile undesirables who might make trouble at home. Attempts to seize and hold River Kingdoms territory generally prove expensive, thanks to skills honed by years of infighting being turned against the less-experienced and less daring soldiers of the wider world.

Government: Each of the tiny River Kingdoms follows its own ruler or council, and each possesses its own idiosyncrasies. Most are city-states of a few thousand souls at most, ruled by a despot and his shieldmen. The River Kingdoms are bound together by the River Freedoms and by the Outlaw Council that gathers each year in the wretched Daggermark, a town known for its effective assassin's guild (and thus rarely a target of conquest) and also for the quality of its poisoners. At the Outlaw Council, the freemen and women who call the River Kingdoms home gather, argue, fight, and plan how to keep their freedom for another year against the larger forces arrayed against them, and which neighbors to tap for tribute and which to leave alone.

The Riverfolk would be offended at the very idea that their lands have a prime city or ruling principality, although if pressed they might confess that Daggermark is close. Others might argue that Gralton is the most central city, or Sevenarches the oldest, but Daggermark is the largest and the seat of the Outlaw Council each year. The capital is whatever settlement

one swears fealty to, and these settlements are scattered and always in flux. The collapse of one heralds the rise of another, and one year's metropolis might be next year's goat pasture. Nevertheless, a few towns have held long enough to establish reputations that extend beyond their borders.

Daggermark: With almost 30,000 inhabitants and an assassin's guild that keeps bandits and troublemakers at arm's length, Daggermark is large enough to have a substantial amount of crops and livestock, forges turning out arms and armor, and even its own coinage (the gold piece is called simply the "mark"). The city proper has both an inner and outer wall; the inner section is called the Dagger Keep, and is home to the wealthiest and most powerful of the city's captains. The ruler is Martro Livondar, although the dwarven Lord Captain Jallor Clovesh commands half the army and no one dares ignore the sister guilds of assassination and poisoners either. Daggermark fields by far the largest army of the kingdoms, with more than 1,500 veteran foot and cavalry.

Most of all, though, Daggermark attracts applicants to its schools for poisoners and assassins. Those who learn these trades in Daggermark are feared throughout Golarion. The sign of the Daggermark assassin's guild is typically death by untraceable poison, unmarked strangulation, or a simple fall—the guild considers it the mark of an amateur to kill a chosen target in an obviously murderous fashion with blades or other weapons. The current head of the guild is Lady Smilos, whose assassinations included the use of magical poisons, curses, and fatal misadventure through monstrous encounters. Her equal partner in the poisoner's guild is the elven druid and herbalist Tragshi, a golden-skinned maiden from the east with a lilting voice and strange notions of what constitutes the worship of nature. She is always accompanied by a dozen venomous snakes, which slither beneath her robes disconcertingly.

Gralton: The poor inhabitants of Gralton are mostly the old aristocracy of Galt, all exiled or fled from the Red Revolution in that land. Many of these ruined nobles cannot accept their exile, and scheme and plot to regain their lands and wealth from the ruins of Galt. Every so often, a powerful noble gathers an expedition or finds the funds to pay adventurers. The nobles grow increasingly desperate, which brings both swindlers and false prophets calling, peddling hope or quick fixes. Many of the citizens in town behave quite strangely—some believe that a spirit of vengeance or an avatar of Calistria controls them. Certainly, the priests of Calistria are always present, preaching revenge, even on the steps of the temple of Cayden Cailean.

Lambreth: Among the River Kingdoms, some realms hold together through magic or through threats. Lambreth is held together by the sheer physical power of Lord Arnefax, an Andoren knight banished for his excesses and crimes against nature. Leading a company of 50 heavy cavalry (unusual in the River Kingdoms, where bandits rarely use heavy armor or heavy horse), he rules from the city's small citadel and makes frequent nocturnal visits to his borders riding a powerful nightmare. His people are both terrified of his night riders and their shadowy dogs, and perversely proud that Arnefax is powerful enough to keep their lands free and unmolested by cattle raids. The few occasions when Lambreth lost cattle, the ensuing retaliation usually involved the death of two people for every cow or sheep stolen—often by lynching and burning. Few dare challenge the Andoren's ruthless rule.

Mivon: Mivon is the home of Aldori swordlords who fled Rostland in the era of Choral the Conqueror. Candidates from Riddleport to Kortos come to become swordlords, but they must prove themselves in duels against increasingly difficult odds. Beyond this, Mivon is home to a thriving

Forbidden Gods

The River Kingdoms's lesser gods are presented here.

Hanspur

Hanspur is a creature of place; he rules the waters, the currents, the rats, and the ships that travel on the many marshy roads that unite the territories of the Sellen River watershed. As a traveler's god, his shrine stands always just outside each city's gates. He is always pictured as bearded, with spiky hair resembling reeds and clothes that shift and sway like willow branches. When angered, he sinks boats and brings floods, so most denizens of the River Kingdoms pay at least lip service to his power.

Hanspur is numbered among the Forbidden Gods because his adherents also take involuntary sacrifices by traveling with unsuspecting strangers until, one night, they drown their victims in the god's waters.

Alignment: CN
Domains: Chaos, Death, Travel, Water
Favored Weapon: trident

Gyronna

Gyronna is a far different deity than Hanspur, with no friendly face at all—only drooling rage and madness. Her permanent sneer is the look of a woman scorned and half-mad, bent on vengeance, destruction, and spite.

A few whisper that Gyronna is a daughter of Lamashtu. Her prayers are curses and her blessings are dubious at best, and merely ward off the malicious prayers of others. In this fashion, the goddess receives tribute from anyone who wishes to avoid her wrath. Small companies of her priestesses are found everywhere in the River Kingdoms, but they are slain on sight outside those realms. None of the River Kingdoms overlords dare banish the Black Sisters this way, for fear that a rival might use the goddess against them. And so the cult persists.

Alignment: CE
Domains: Chaos, Destruction, Evil, Madness
Favored Weapon: dagger



industry in eels and fish harvested from the marshy ponds all around the city.

It is said that the eels of Mivon often feed on the flesh of men. Certainly, the swordlord Raston Selline, who rules the city under a guise of gentility but with a network of informers second to none, is sometimes seen walking out into the marshes with some petty miscreant or annoying adventurer and returning accompanied only by his faithful guards. "A walk to the fishponds" has a very particular meaning in Mivon.

Pitax: Ruled by the megalomaniacal Numerian lord Irovetti, Pitax is a place of garish, trashy art created by sculptors and poets enslaved by the city's despot. As long as Irovetti's massively bloated ego remains fed, all is well, but those who oppose him in the most trivial details soon learn that he sees himself as an all-conquering god. Underneath his mania, the small town struggles to survive in the face of indifference and hostility from Numeria and Brevoy. Stories claim that Irovetti is little more than a bastard son of a minor Numerian lord, hounded from the kingdom by ancestral enemies. He leaves the hard fighting to others, and prefers to use bards and insults to tear down his enemies.

Sevenarches: This area of ancient elven settlement is named for the elegant stone gateways scattered in and around the forest town. Sevenarches is now a human habitation, and has been for thousands of years, since the sect of Oakstewards took over the land from the elves who failed it. Indeed, the Oakstewards especially forbid elves and other outsiders from visiting, and are quite strict in who and what they allow to approach Sevenarches. The stones still thin the walls of the First World here, leading to a preponderance of druidic worship and many fey creatures and treants visiting the region. Stories claim that the arches each once led to another world, and the elven council of Kyonin hopes to reclaim them and complete or restore the work begun on them long ago. So far, the elves remain unwilling to exterminate the human presence there, but at some point the idea of genocide might carry the day, especially as the Oakstewards grow increasingly rigid and intolerant with each passing century.

Tymon: The half-orc champion Ullorth Ungin, one of the most influential members of the Outlaw Council, controls the shopworn city-state of Tymon, a short distance from the intrigues of Daggermark. Founded by a Taldoran gladiator and hero of the Fifth Army of Exploration that mapped the riverways of the unsettled territory dozens of centuries ago, Tymon's gladiator colleges and fabled arena enjoy a reputation that stretches into all lands that thrill to the dance of bloodsport. The insane "living god" Razmir hatches

plots against Tymon from his expanding homeland to the southwest, forcing Ullorth Ungin to consider turning his trained warriors loose not on the arena floor, but upon the field of battle. Fortunately, a large cadre of priests of Gorum assists him in this endeavor, and each year, Ullorth Ungin pleads for "true champions of the Riverfolk" to step forward at the Outlaw Council to help him. For a wonder, each year, some lordling or another pledges his support against Razmir, and the independence of the kingdoms is preserved.

Uringen: Standing near the Embeth Forest, this strange settlement seems to appear and disappear with the mists. Its travelers are distinctive, with black-and-white garments and unsmiling faces, and the alchemical goods sold are always welcome for their healing and strengthening properties. The people speak a dialect of Skald, and the city itself seems somehow suspended half in and half out of time, perhaps entangled in fey magic or trapped by horological arcanism.

Nystra: There are many abandoned villages, towns, and even cities in the River Kingdoms—the homes of petty lords who were burnt out of their holdings and put to flight. Some of these are little more than a clearing in the forest, while others, such as Heibarr and Cordelon, have entire walls and heaps of cracked stone to show where a fortification once stood. The largest of these is Nystra, a city of humans who learned the trick of growing silkworms, either by stealing it from the Zho or mastering the art themselves. It is said that one night, a thousand black-clad demons descended on the city howling for blood and slaying all within it. That might be a bardic tale told once too often and inflated in the telling, but silk no longer comes from Nystra, and its hilltop citadel is a jumbled ruin slowly collapsing down the slope.

Religion

The freemen and women of the River Kingdoms rarely seek to impose their strange beliefs and weird cults on outsiders, but most are fatalists and cynics to start with. It is hardly fertile ground for the faithful, and those who do follow the gods here typically turn to Gorum and Calistria, although Desna remains present for the optimists and Cayden Cailean's love of freedom, wine, and bravery finds a ready audience as well. Notable churches include the temples of Desna and Norgorber in Daggermark, the temple of Calistria in Pitax, the temple of Cayden Cailean in Gralton, and the wildly popular temple of Gorum in Tymon, where *potions of bull's strength* and weapon blessings are common before each of the gladiatorial bouts.

Two gods not found elsewhere are also common here: the river god Hanspur and the mad goddess Gyronna, she of curses and demonic couplings. Even Riverfolk tend to pay Gyronna's followers a few coins, just to be quickly rid of them. The great shrine of Hanspur stands at the joining of the waters northeast of the Kyonin border, but the followers of Gyronna have no great temple, only small shrines throughout the land where offerings are left for her.

Free Spirit

Your strong belief in the value of freedom protects you from mental and physical shackles.

Prerequisites: Chaotic alignment, River Kingdoms affinity.

Benefit: You gain a +2 bonus on saving throws made against enchantment spells and effects and against mind-affecting effects. In addition, you gain a +2 bonus on Escape Artist and grapple checks made to break free of a grapple or to escape bindings.

Survivor

Only the strong thrive in the River Kingdoms, and you are no weakling.

Prerequisites: Con 13, Diehard, Endurance, River Kingdoms affinity.

Benefit: Whenever you are struck for more than 20 points of damage with a single physical melee or ranged attack, reduce the damage you take by 1 point. Once per day, if you have at least 1 hit point and a critical hit would otherwise kill you (even with the reduced damage) you are instead reduced to –1 hit points (but you are stable).

The Six River Freedoms

The River Kingdoms share a rough code of justice and freedoms called the Six River Freedoms. Not all honor the code, but enough do that it serves as a sort of shorthand for the independence that all people of the River Kingdoms hold dear.

Say What You Will, I Live Free: Talk is cheap, and everyone is entitled to speak their own words. You can say anything, but sometimes the best freedom is the freedom to run like hell.

Oathbreakers Die: Liars are often severely punished. Those who swear an oath of fealty to a River Lord and break it can expect any number of painful and lethal possibilities. This freedom to kill oathbreakers is why River Kingdom gangs rarely require a sworn oath for an initiation. Tattoos or brands are more common signs of commitment to membership.

Walk on Any Road, Float on Any River: The freedom to travel is fundamental. No River Kingdom is allowed to bar traffic on a river or a road, save in time of active warfare. Even then, neutral parties are supposed to have freedom of movement.

Courts Are For Kings: This saying is simply a way of reminding visitors that the law here is malleable. Who you know and who your friends are are more important than what the law says.

Slavery is An Abomination: While the River Kingdoms frequently house criminals, none keep slaves. Slavers may visit freely, but taking or holding slaves in the River Kingdoms upsets those many people who were once slaves themselves.

You Have What You Hold: Property laws are weak in the River Kingdoms. If someone claims to own something, he can enforce that claim with his sword.

Sargava

Colony on the Verge



Alignment: N
Capital: Eleder (8,900)
Notable Settlements: Kalabuto (11,340)
Ruler: Baron Utilinus, Grand Custodian of Sargava
Government: Colonial barony ruled as independent kingdom
Languages: Common, Polyglot
Religion: Aroden, Abadar, Iomedae, Gozreh, Shelyn

Sargava is a land being pulled at its seams by multiple agendas. As Sargava's ruler, the Baron Utilinus has come to discover that not one of them is his own.

The lush plains of Sargava carves a swath of civilization out of the western coast of the dense jungles of the Mwangi Expanse. Once dominated by Mwangi tribesmen, Sargava was first settled by Chelish colonials in 4138, under the ambitious whims of the mad prince Haliad I. A jewel of the empire, distant Sargava stood as a symbol of Cheliax's sheer might at the height of its power.

With the sudden death of the god Aroden, Cheliax collapsed into civil war and Sargava was isolated from the empire, no longer cut-off by just its distance, but also by the addition of the newly formed perpetual hurricane, the Eye of Abendego. Desperate to remain in the empire's favor rather than be left adrift, Sargava's appointed ruler, Baron Grallus, gathered much of the colony's taxation treasury. He then sent it in several shipments wide around the Eye and then north to Cheliax to finance House Davian, a leading contender in the war, hoping to secure Davian's bid for the fallen throne. Grallus, however, backed the wrong horse: as the war progressed, the House of Thrune and its allies ripped apart House Davian with its armies reinforced by bound devils in the Battle of a Hundred Kings near Corentyn. Once Thrune firmly secured its hold over Cheliax and the throne, Her Majestrix turned her attention to her more distant colonies.

Soon, a flotilla of Chelaxian galleons set sail for Sargava, loaded with devil missionaries and governors, all loyal to the House of Thrune's new regime. For the second time in its history, Sargava faced resettlement. In what would become Sargava's defining moment, Baron Grallus, with the support of his lesser earls, grit his teeth and turned to the notorious Free Captains of the Shackle Isles for help. As soon as Thrune's imperial fleet sailed into Desperation Bay with Sargava's shores in sight, the Free Captains struck. Flying their infamous black flags, the Free Captains ambushed the Chelaxian fleet and demonstrated their mariner supremacy. Cheliax's defeat was total, their galleons left resting on the ocean floor, but the price for the Free Captain's cooperation was far from cheap. Baron Grallus promised Port Peril not only Sargava's remaining coffers, but a significant portion of its future bounty as well. As such, in exchange for the continuing protection of the Free Captains, Sargava pays a continual if not exhaustive flow of tribute to the pirates. Rarely a day goes by that the steep price of Sargava's autonomy is not called into question, yet the prevailing view remains that no cost was too high.

In the meantime, Sargava rots from within. With an empty coffer and no support from the Motherland, the colonists' ability to control the native population continues to degrade. In particular, with the death of Aroden and the loss of the powers he granted the colonial clerics, the Mwangi tribesmen have stepped up their efforts to reclaim their ancient lands. Several times now, Sargava managed to suppress the native revolts, but each time the threat grows a little greater.

The tribes surrounding the nation have devised a terrifying way to harass Sargavan colonials along the border: a strongly scented paste known to the local settlers as "the goop". The emerald-colored adhesive is a concoction of dozens of animal glands, pheromones and glues. Once released from its clay pot or animal skin bag, the goop immediately does what it is designed to do: attract monsters. The Mwangi frequently spring-load the goop into traps and snares so the sealed jar smashes or the bag tears, splashing its contents upon unwelcome trespassers. Some of the more daring tribesmen take great pleasure in sneaking up on a hapless Sargavan and then suddenly smearing the goop on their victims with a goop stick—a

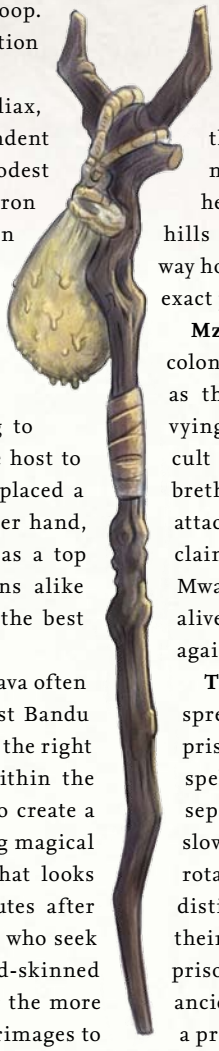
long staff with a bag of the goop dangling from its tip. The tribesman then hides to watch from a safe distance as predators inevitably arrive. Settlers warn that anyone who comes into contact with the goop should immerse themselves in a river immediately, or, if available, douse themselves in perfume. The city of Kalabuto refuses to allow anyone struck with the goop to enter—leopards, ahuizotl, and even jungle basilisks have been known to walk right into town following the scent of the goop. For more about the goop, see the Equipment section of Chapter 5.

Government: Having broken ties with Cheliax, the baron now rules Sargava as an independent kingdom by default, employing the faux-modest title of Custodian. The current Custodian is Baron Utilinus. Unfortunately for the baron, between the demands of the Free Captains and the uprisings in Kalabuto, he finds his barony cracking at the edges. Despite his able efforts, it is unclear how long he can continue to hold Sargava together.

Eleder: Sargava's capital, Eleder, is starting to show the brunt of its tribute obligations. Once host to the opulent Grallus Ball, a lack of funds has placed a stranglehold on the city's excesses. On the other hand, Eleder's extensive dockworks are maintained as a top priority, as both merchants and Free Captains alike dock their vessels here for repair by some of the best shipwrights in Garund.

Barkskin Lake: Adventurers traveling to Sargava often purchase extra canteens and head into the west Bandu Hills searching for the fabled Barkskin Lake. At the right time each year, the run-off from minerals within the streams feeding the lake are said to combine to create a massive, churning body of a naturally occurring magical liquid that grants those who drink it flesh that looks and feels like thick tree bark for a few minutes after consumption (treat as *potions of barkskin*). Those who seek the lake navigate by following sightings of wood-skinned monkeys and parrots, but they soon encounter the more dangerous predators that also make yearly pilgrimages to the lake.

Kalabuto: A crumbling ancient city built in the pre-colonial era, Kalabuto is populated by a huge community of Mwangi tribesmen governed by a small contingent of Sargavan colonialists. These are troubled times for Kalabuto. The city is under an invisible siege by its eastern neighbor Mzali, which sacked Kalabuto three times within the span of the last few years alone. Observers agree it is only a matter of time before Kalabuto's lower classes join with their Mwangi brethren and support Mzali's attacks, instead of dying from them in defense of the city for their colonial masters.



Desperate Battler

Your settlement is outnumbered and surrounded by enemies, so you must be able to fight on your own.

Prerequisites: Sargava affinity.

Benefit: Whenever no ally is within 10 feet of you in combat, you gain a +1 bonus on melee attack and damage rolls.

Mines of Deeptreasure: The Deeptreasure Mining Company consistently mines the largest, most beautiful gems sold in the Eleder markets. Their secret is a platoon of xorns who glide through the Bandu Hills searching out the tastiest morsels, then spitting them back up at Deeptreasure headquarters in a hidden compound just inside the hills themselves. The mine bosses promise the xorns a way home if they bring back more gems than they eat. The exact price, however, always remains tantalizingly vague.

Mzali: While not within Sargava's borders as the colonials would recognize, this Mwangi city-state serves as the opposite pole to Eleder's civilizing influence, vying for control of Sargava Mwangi natives. Ruled by a cult from the Screaming Jungles, Mzali lobbies for its brethren within Kalabuto to join with it as it steps up its attacks on Kalabuto's colonials. Reports from the jungle claim that the Mzali honor the mummified remains of a Mwangi child—a child that some whisper is impossibly alive and somehow directing the Mzali campaign against Kalabuto.

The Stasis Fields: Deep beneath the Bandu Hills spreads a frozen penal colony populated by ancient prisoners of war, eternally bound within imprisoning spells. Each prisoner floats within the center of a separate cavern of the massive subterranean complex, slowly turning in space to match Golarion's field of rotation. It is said that the frozen prisoners still wear the distinctive turquoise scale armor and shining blades of their now-forgotten military units. Those who brave the prison's deadly wards can attempt to steal the soldiers' ancient equipment or ponder what might happen should a prisoner reawaken.

The Sargava Chalice

With a tradition of 27 years, the Sargava Chalice is already one of Garund's longest-running and prestigious sporting events outside of Osirion. A marathon-like competition, the running race spans multiple days, in which competitors traverse dense jungles and scramble over mountain passes. Indeed, death is not unheard of, but many see having their names engraved on the prestigious chalice as a victor as a form of immortality. Past competitors include adventurers from across the globe, from vainglorious Pathfinders to—in one noteworthy case—a deposed monarch.

Shackles, The

Treacherous Pirate Isles



Alignment: CN
Capital: Port Peril (43,270)
Notable Settlements: Drenchport (9,690), Quent (12,560), Ollo (7,340)
Ruler: Captain Kerdak Bonefist, the Hurricane King
Government: A council of pirate lords dominated by the self-styled Hurricane King
Languages: Common, Polyglot
Religion: Calistria, Cayden Cailean, Gozreh, Norgorber, Pharasma, Besmara

The pirate lords of the Shackles sail from an assortment of outlaw ports, hiding their illicit activities behind the cover of the ravenous Eye of Abendego. Forgotten ruins of an ancient civilization dot the island chain and treacherous coastline, their crumbling stone walls carved with horrible depictions of cannibalism and blood sacrifice. So disturbing are these images that when Chelish explorers discovered these ruins 600 years ago, they marked the region cursed and haunted on their maps and continued south to found the colony of Sargava.

Before long, raiders began to prey upon the lucrative trade between Sargava and Cheliax, using the ancient harbors to hide from Chelaxian warships. These pirate havens soon grew into small communities that even accepted legitimate merchants and businesses.

Aroden's death prompted storms across Golarion, including the Eye of Abendego, which formed just north of the Shackles. This gigantic, permanent hurricane forever changed the shipping lanes in the region, and most nations abandoned the hope of continuing trade with Sargava. The buccaneers of the Shackles soon fell to infighting over quickly dwindling resources. Rather than succumb to complete dissolution, however, the pirate lords eventually banded together to form one pirate fleet. In the spring of 4674, the Free Captains of the Shackles, under the banner of their newly elected Hurricane King, began to ravage merchant shipping far to the north, near the Arch of Aroden.

Over the past 30 years, the corsairs of the Shackles have enjoyed unprecedented success. All of the Free Captains are skilled at skirting the dangerous fringes of the Eye of Abendego, giving them an easy escape route from less experienced pilots. Foreign powers continue to launch attempts to suppress the pirates of the Shackles, but few meet with any success. The Shackles themselves have been assaulted twice, by Cheliax and Rahadoum, but in both cases the invaders met with disaster, losing most of their fleets to the merciless winds and treacherous currents of the Eye.

The Shackles today consist of a motley collection of bandit and slave ports, where freebooters find safe harbor and trade their ill-gotten plunder with unscrupulous merchants. Their populace is mostly runaway criminals, escaped slaves, and buyers seeking proscribed goods such as drugs, poisons, and other disreputable wares. A powerful Free Captain rules each port, divvying the loot from recent raids and dispensing pirate justice as needed.

Besides civilized races, feral goblins inhabit the scattered ruins of the Shackles, as do the race of savage cannibalistic degenerates called kuru, believed to be possessed by the spirits of the ruins' original inhabitants. Lizardfolk raiders also make occasional sorties from the swamps of the Sodden Lands to the north.

The waters of the Shackles are home to sharks, sea cats, and scattered communities of locathah. Sahuagin villages are present in the western isles, particularly around Ollo, while water nagas dwell on the mainland's southern coast. Farther west, feared dragon turtles prey upon ships making the dangerous passage around the Eye of Abendego.

The Shackles have only one true ally—the former Chelaxian colony of Sargava. In exchange for defending the colony from Cheliax, the Free Captains now receive regular tribute of lumber and slaves from the baron of Sargava. Elsewhere, the marauders of the Shackles are feared and hated, particularly by Cheliax and Rahadoum, who bear the brunt of the Free Captains' depredations, as do the wealth-laden ships of the Aspis Consortium out of Bloodcove.

A rumor currently making its rounds suggests that one of the Free Captains has offered to safely pilot a Chelaxian fleet to the Shackles in exchange for immunity for past

crimes. Whether this is true or just a ruse to discredit one of the lords of the council, it's a well-known fact that Cheliax would like nothing more than to see the pirate confederacy eradicated.

Government: The overlord of the Shackles is the Hurricane King Kerdak Bonefist, captain of the man-o'-war *Filthy Lucre,* flagship of the Shackles fleet. He heads a council of pirate lords, each of whom commands his own fleet of ships and rules one of the Shackles's numerous islands, ports, or anchorages. While Bonefist is king by virtue of his possession of Port Peril and command of the strongest fleet in the Shackles, in reality he reigns at the sufferance of the council's most powerful lords. Tessa Fairwind, Mistress of Quent and captain of the sloop-of-war *Luck of the Draw,* is a popular figure throughout the Shackles. Rumor has it that Lady Tessa is next in line for the Hurricane Crown, either by acclaim or by force. The mysterious druid-captain known as the Master of the Gales rules Drenchport and commands the xebec *Kraken,* accompanied by his giant squid companion. Avimar Sorrinash, cruel captain of the brig *Blood Moon,* is lord of Ollo. When the Blood Moon returns fresh from a successful foray on the high seas, Sorrinash and his werewolf crew often roam Shark Island in orgiastic hunts of celebratory destruction. The disgraced Chelish admiral Arronax Endymion is of lesser importance, but still a force to be reckoned with on the council. He leads a squadron of Chelish mutineers called the Devils' Own from his flagship, the imperial frigate *Tyrannous*.



Port Peril: The Shackles's largest port, Port Peril is located on the mainland overlooking Jeopardy Bay. Fort Hazard, the fortress retreat of the Hurricane King, dominates the walled city and its deep-water harbor from the bluffs above the city. The twisting streets of Port Peril are lined with taverns, brothels, gambling halls, and other vice dens. Its teeming market squares do a brisk trade in all manner of stolen goods and contraband, such as Tian silks, Qadiran spices, Nidalese poisons, and Mwangi relics. Untold riches from years of plunder and tribute are said to be hidden away in the sea caves beneath the city.

Drenchport: The dour city of Drenchport huddles on Tempest Cay. Its storm-lashed buildings are built of waterlogged driftwood and flotsam from wrecked ships. The infamous tavern Drowned Dwarf stands at the edge Drenchport and is known as much for its remarkably high murder rate as for its cheap but delicious homemade beer.

Ollo: The people of the wretched port of Ollo are sullen and fearful, for the sahuagin that live just off Shark Island regularly raid the town for food and plunder with the permission of the community's unscrupulous lord.

Quent: The lively city of Quent is perhaps the most open port of the Pirate Isles, and the sacred prostitutes of Calistria at the House of Stolen Kisses are known as the best information brokers in the Shackles for those seeking gossip, blackmail, or revenge.

Storm-Lashed

Standing watch on deck in gales and storms has hardened your body to the elements.

Prerequisites: Profession (sailor) 1 rank, Shackles affinity.

Benefit: You can ignore many of the effects of severe weather (DMG 94–95).

Rain: Your visibility is only reduced by one-quarter and you only take a –2 penalty on Spot and Search checks.

Fog: You can ignore the concealment granted to creatures by fog (but you are still limited to 5 feet of visibility).

Winds: You are treated as one size category larger for the purpose of ignoring wind effects. You take half the normal penalty on Listen checks.

In addition, you gain a +2 bonus on all Constitution checks and Survival checks made to resist the effects of severe weather of any kind. If aboard a boat or ship, this bonus increases to +4.

Flotsam & Jetsam, Inc.

A curious business squats at the end of a sagging, rotten dock on the fringes of Drenchport's harbor. The spirited gnome Tho Rimplethember runs the Flotsam & Jetsam salvage company, regularly sailing her battered junk *Spit in the Eye* into the hurricane's maw. There, she uses a diving bell to plunder the treasure trove of wrecked and lost ships devoured by the mighty storm.

Tho's diverse crew includes a mute Mwangi tribesman, a hulking barbarian from the Lands of the Linnorm Kings, a Nexian weathertalker, and a locathah hunter. She frequently seeks new crewmembers to join her expeditions and always has an eclectic collection of salvaged relics for sale. Well known as an expert in the treacherous winds and currents around the Eye of Abendego (second only perhaps to the Master of the Gales), Tho is also surprisingly knowledgeable about the fashions of Keleshite desert nomads.

Sodden Lands, The

Hurricane-Ravaged Wasteland



Alignment: CN
Capital: None
Notable Settlements: Hyrantam (1,340), Jula (200), Kokutang (2,100)
Ruler: None
Government: None
Languages: Polyglot, Common (Taldane)
Religion: Unknown

More than 100 years ago came the eye. In 4606, at the precise moment the god Aroden is thought to have died, the greatest hurricane Golarion has ever known suddenly formed in all its fury just off the west coast of the continent of Garund. Within days, the Eye of Abendego, as the hell-storm soon came to be named, had completely destroyed the coastline of the neighboring nations of Lirgen and Yamasa. From there, the pulsing flood waters pressed further and ever deeper inland, forcing a massive and unprecedented evacuation. Today, a century later, the Eye continues to howl, and that which remains of the nations it destroyed is known as the Sodden Lands, a perpetually storm-battered region, largely uninhabitable by the likes of man.

Government: The Sodden Lands no longer possess large-scale unifying leadership. Instead, the tiny pockets of civilization that remain bow to their own rulers, typically a chieftain or a small despotic junta.

Hyrantam: This ruined city was once the capital of the now-destroyed nation of Lirgen. During Hyrantam's founding, the Saoc Brethren constructed hundreds of sky-reaching towers to host huge observatories for their nocturnal sky watch. As such, small surviving islands of tower tops jut from the water of this otherwise flooded city. Those tower tops are now interconnected by crude networks of rope bridges and pulleys built by the last of the Lirgeni who still remain behind, determined to survive. Unfortunately, the same ancient observatories somehow now act as a draw for forgotten aberrations from the depths of the Arcadian Ocean, and Hyrantam is no safer today than when the Eye first hit.

Jula: A coastal sanctuary that welcomes refugees from all walks of life, this small mountaintop village is well above the flood line but perpetually battered by wind. Those who struggle to subsist here have their own reasons to stay behind. Their leader is Father Heveril, an expert mountaineer and fallen paladin of Erastil who chose the survival and shepherding of Jula's desperate people as his path to redemption.

Kokutang: Once the capital of Yamasa, Kokutang is now the seasonal gathering place of the Kuboto and their reconstructed tribes. Visitors are never welcome and in fact risk becoming sustenance. While Kukotang includes a wind-washed village on the surface, much of what remains of the capital is now a complex of subterranean caves interconnected by flooded passages. Many of the hidden caverns are accessible only to those with the breath control (or magic) necessary to make the dangerous trip.

Lirgen and the Saoc Brethren: The northern half of the Sodden Lands was once the proud dominion of Lirgen, a land ruled by the Saoc Brethren, a syndicate of astrological philosophers dependent on prophesy. When the Brethren's prophesy suddenly failed following the death of Aroden, the ensuing storm caught Lirgen entirely by surprise. Lirgen's surviving refugees resettled far from home, and are scattered widely across Avistan and Garund. A number of descendants of the original Saoc Brethren return to the Sodden Lands, tenaciously searching for a hidden secret to at last extinguish the Eye and restore their homeland. Those who survive and return abroad to report to the Brethren, however, frequently do so with shattered minds, leaving the embittered philosophers no closer to the answers they seek. Indeed, in 4615, the Brethren lost its entire upper-tier of leadership to ritual suicide. It is whispered that the astrologists at last uncovered the true answers behind the source of the devastation, but the secret was more than their mortal souls could bear.

Yamasa and the Koboto: The people of the southernmost of the two west coast nations hit by the Eye, Yamasa, failed to retreat from the first wave of the Eye's hurricanes entirely.

At first, many observers believed that the Eye's wrath simply wiped out the entire primitive kingdom, although there were those who whispered that the Yamasarians chose to stay behind deliberately. Explorers now report that Yamasa's ruling caste, the Kuboto, did indeed survive, and that they did so by calling upon Yamasa's forgotten ways of old—resorting to cannibalism and forgotten necromancy.

The Abendego Piercing: The Knights of Salvation were a monastic order devoted to rescuing as many refugees as possible following the onset of the Eye of Abendago. To battle their way through the hurricanes and into the depths of the Sodden Lands, the selfless knights constructed chains of interconnected way stations collectively known as the Abendego Piercing. Where resources permitted, the knights built their stations using permanently affixed magic, resorting to elevated stone bunkers when their funding and magical supplies ran low. Each station was carefully connected by ropes or chains. By grasping the chain and following along it, a knight could navigate through the blinding storms and relay supplies or information to the next station deeper within the storm. Losing grip of the connecting chain in the watery hurricane was the equivalent of getting lost in a blizzard: a knight risked wandering aimlessly to his death, even if only a dozen steps from the shelter he had just left. After almost 30 years of service, the order at last disbanded, persuaded that no one is left who truly wants to be saved. Many of the knights' shelters remain in place as testaments to their hardy construction. Since the knights' departed, though, the aberrant monsters that now make the Sodden Lands their home have converted several of the shelters into lairs.

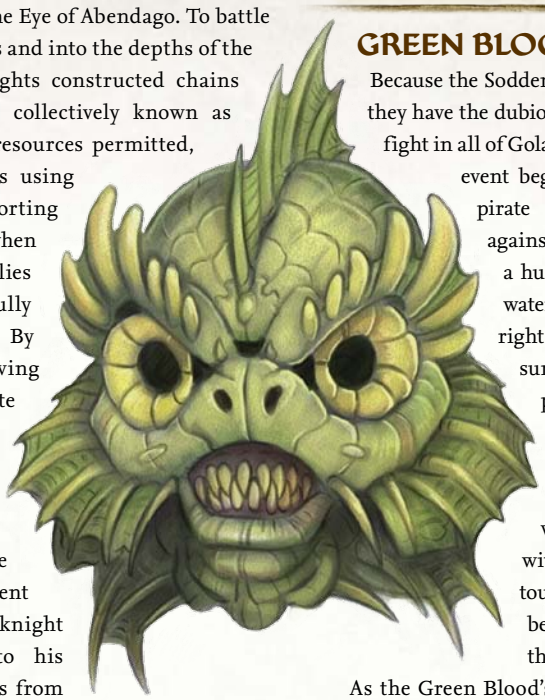
The Diving Bells of Oagon: The flooded ruin of Oagon, a lost city of Lirgen at the mouth of the Black Flow, provides a frequent destination for explorers. In particular, Oagon was reputed to be the host of the famed magical vaults of the Hundred Halberd Consortium, a once-opulent but now vanished merchant company that dealt in both magic items and exotic creatures. To access the sunken streets, Avistani explorers and the Knights of Salvation constructed a series of giant diving bells. The cables that lower the thick glass bells permit expedition teams to slowly descend to the ground and explore the flooded streets below. The bells are far from safe, however, and accidents are common. Worse, there are recent reports of slender, long-tailed aquatic creatures that snatch divers and then disappear in the maze of underwater streets.

Stoic

As a resident of the Sodden Lands, you know first hand that life is a series of unforgiving trials, and you persevere though sheer force of will.

Prerequisites: Cha 15, Sodden Lands affinity.

Benefit: You may use your Charisma bonus instead of your Constitution modifier for Fortitude saving throws. You gain a +2 on saving throws made against fear effects



Green Blood on a Black Rock

Because the Sodden Lands are almost entirely without law, they have the dubious honor of hosting the most savage pit fight in all of Golarion: Green Blood on a Black Rock. The event began as a Free Captain tradition where pirate vessels pitted their captured scrags against one another by depositing them on a huge spire of ash rock that juts from the water, with the surviving scrag earning the right to swim away to freedom. The betting sums exploded as the contest grew in popularity over time, and it didn't take long for ships to start acquiring actual trolls for an edge. This was followed by an unstoppable half black dragon troll, which in turn was ultimately countered with an enslaved red reaver. Today, the tournament knows no limits to the types of beasts that are entered, with the only rule that each slave-monster stands alone.

As the Green Blood's notoriety spread as far as Avistan, it became something of a guilty viewing pleasure for diviners and the few elite with the wealth to own a *crystal ball* or other scrying device. Some troubadours even make their living by bribing their way aboard a Free Captain's ship attending the tournament. Afterward, these "blood-bards" earn coin traveling far and wide, recounting authentic tales of the current year's blow-by-blow savagery.

Goz Masks

Shortly after the calamity of the Eye of Abendago began, a fanatical splinter-cult of Gozreh known as the Storm Kindlers flocked to the Sodden Lands, convinced the Eye was a manifestation of the Storm Lord himself. The upper-tier of their membership wore enchanted masks that enabled them to navigate the vast flood lands unimpeded. The Storm Kindlers, however, were unprepared for the savagery and evil that had claimed the Sodden Lands, and their home and they were quickly wiped out. Today, many of their distinctive masks remain, now worn by humanoid chieftains and Kuboto witch-doctors. The masks are often defaced, with the original appearance twisted into a monstrous or demonic visage. Their new owners refer to them only as "Goz masks."

Taldor

Decadent Failing Empire



Alignment: N
Capital: Oppara (109,280)
Notable Settlements: Cassomir (32,340), Maheto (11,790), Wispil (8,670), Yanmass (6,900), Zimar (17,540)
Ruler: Grand Prince Stavian III, Emperor of Taldor, Scion of Aroden, Doge of Andoran, Defender of Galt, Eternal Monarch of Cheliax, Primarch-in-Waiting of Absalom, etc.
Government: Decayed bureaucratic empire
Languages: Common, Kelish
Religion: Abadar, Aroden, Cayden Cailean, Shelyn, Sarenrae, Norgorber, Calistria

Nearly 6,000 years ago, survivors from Lost Azlant mingled with the primitive Keleshite tribesmen of the Inner Sea's eastern coast and founded the kingdom of Taldor. Ancient Taldorian legends claim that Aroden himself walked among the kingdom's earliest settlers in those days, and Aroden's worship was centered in Taldor for millennia.

The first half of the Age of Enthronement was the Golden Age of Imperial Taldor. Taldorian explorers charted the Sellen River in what is now the River Kingdoms, settled in Rostland and Issia (in modern-day Brevoy), and incorporated Galt as a tributary buffer state. Expanding westward over the years, Taldor's Armies of Exploration founded the provinces of Andoran, Isger, Molthune, Cheliax, and Lastwall. In its heyday, Taldor stretched from the World's Edge Mountains to the Arch of Aroden on the shores of the Arcadian Ocean.

As time passed, Taldor's colonial endeavors in Avistan brought unparalleled wealth and influence to her people. It also brought Taldor into conflict with the Keleshite kingdom of Qadira to the south. If exploration was one side of the coin of Imperial Taldor, rivalry with Qadira was the other, as both nations engaged in a series of escalating raids and counterattacks across their shared and heavily fortified border over the course of centuries.

Taldor's affluence also led to self-indulgence, and the Taldorans became increasingly obsessed with ceremony, elaborate costuming, and jaded pleasures. Taldor's culture grew more decadent and detached from the outside world. Old rivals sought to take advantage of Taldor's profligacy, culminating in a massive invasion of Taldor by Qadira in 4079, which in turn triggered the so-called Even-Tongued Conquest. Corrupt, weakened, and unable to fight a war on two fronts, Taldor focused its waning might on its ancient enemy in the east. It successfully repelled the Qadiri invasion, but over the next decade, it lost most of its colonial holdings—including Andoran, Galt, and Isger—to the nascent Empire of Cheliax. Even the church of Aroden abandoned Taldor to its mercurial obsessions and debauched appetites at this time, moving the center of the religion to Cheliax. Taldor's imperial ambitions were shattered, never to recover.

Today, beneath a pretense of high society and avant-garde culture, Taldorian society is shortsighted, degenerate, and moribund. Thousands of noble houses claiming heritage dating back to the earliest days of empire constantly jockey for position and control of the various departments of the nation's Byzantine bureaucracy. Greed and distrust characterize Taldorian politics, and betrayal and assassination are the preferred methods for the aristocracy to increase their stations.

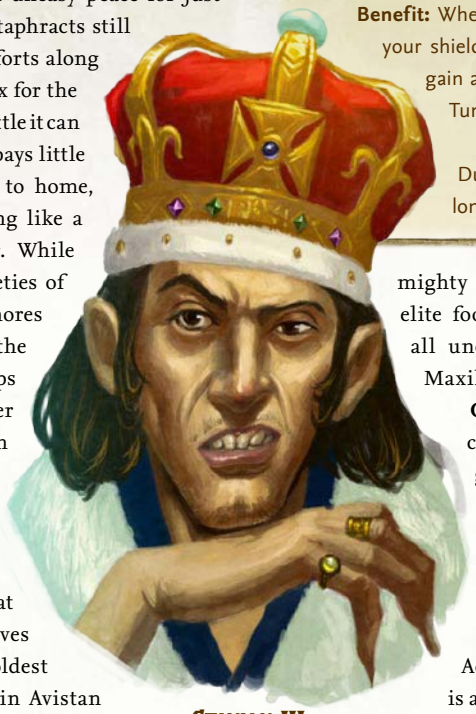
Even Taldor's monarch is not immune to such machinations. Unable to trust any of the feuding factions of Oppara, the emperor protects himself from the treachery of his subjects by employing fierce mercenaries from the Land of the Linnorm Kings as his personal bodyguards, although it is the office of the grand prince they protect, not the grand prince himself. The huscarls of the Ulfen Guard have served in this capacity since ancient times, and are paid with whatever treasure they can carry from Taldor's gleaming treasure vaults at the culmination of their terms of service.

After centuries of habitation, Taldor's heartland is mostly free of dangerous beasts. The Verduran Forest, though, is still home to druids, gnomes, ettercaps, and assorted fey.

In the north, the frost giants and thunderbirds of the Fog Peaks are an occasional threat, while orcs and grimlocks inhabit the World's Edge Mountains with homa, a strain of griffon-like creatures native to Casmaron. In addition, nomadic Keleshite horsemen frequently raid for livestock across Taldor's eastern and southern borders.

Taldor and Qadira have shared an uneasy peace for just over a century, but loyal Taldorian cataphracts still patrol the line of crumbling frontier forts along the border. Taldor still resents Cheliax for the Even-Tongued Conquest, but there is little it can do about it now. Cheliax, for its part, pays little attention to Taldor anymore. Closer to home, Absalom humors Taldor as something like a doddering and decrepit grandfather. While the city-state still follows all the niceties of politics and diplomacy, it basically ignores its northern elder. Meanwhile, the fledgling democracy of Andoran keeps alert minutemen watching its border with Taldor, afraid of a resurgence in imperial ambition.

Taldor's influence continues to wane, as it has for some time. And yet, many of the nations that now rule Avistan were once a part of its great empire. Without Taldor, they themselves would not exist, and so one of the oldest and most powerful human empires in Avistan continues its gradual slide into oblivion—most likely for centuries to come.



Stavian III

Government: Grand Prince Stavian III is Emperor of Taldor, but the awkward and immature sovereign is as dissolute as his empire. Surrounding himself with grandiose titles and sycophantic courtiers, he dallies in whatever takes his fancy. Meanwhile, the bloated ranks of the aristocracy send representatives to the ineffectual Senate to argue endlessly and pointlessly over trivial matters. In the end, the actual daily management of Taldor is left in the hands of its overtaxed bureaucracy—a sprawling, labyrinthine mess, with different bureaus and ministries constantly squabbling over jurisdiction. Even so, the civil service remains the clearest means of advancement to aristocratic status for the hordes of citizens without the benefit of titles to their names.

Taldor has always followed the rules of primogeniture, but Grand Prince Stavian has no male heir. His only child, Princess Eutropia, is disgusted with the stagnation of Taldorian society and decided in her recent youth to force Taldor to join the modern world. She intends to inherit the throne upon her father's death, by force if necessary, and has grand plans to restore Taldor to its former glory. Although Taldor's great Armies of Exploration are no more, its underfunded military is still impressive, consisting as it does of mighty war elephants, scale-armored cavalry, elite foot archers, and disciplined phalanxes, all under the command of High Strategos Maxillar Pythareus.

Taldorian Duelist

You graduated from one of Taldor's elite fighting schools and are skilled in Rondelero, the art of fighting with the falcata and buckler.

Prerequisite: Dex 13, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (falcata), Weapon Focus (falcata), proficient with a buckler, Taldor affinity.

Benefit: When fighting with the falcata and buckler, your shield bonus to AC increases by +1 and you gain a +2 circumstance bonus on Balance and Tumble checks.

Special: A fighter may select Taldorian Duelist as one of his bonus fighter feats, as long as he originated in Taldor.

Oppara: The towers and villas of Taldor's capital, Oppara, were once plated with gold, granting the Gilded City a title that remains today. The precious metal was long ago stripped by vandals and salvagers. The Imperial Palace and Senate are located here, as are two renowned bardic schools—Kitharodian Academy and Rhapsodic College. Oppara is also home to the Brotherhood of Silence, one of the largest and most influential thieves guilds in the Inner Sea region. The oldest known temple to Aroden, the Basilica of the Last Man, is located in Oppara, its clergy and influence but a shadow of their former selves.

Cassomir: This large trade city on the Sellen River handles the river trade from the River Kingdoms and the Verduran Wood, as well as much of Taldor's Inner Sea trade. While the Taldorian navy is stationed in Oppara, its best shipyards are found in Cassomir.

Maheto: The city of Maheto, in the foothills of the World's Edge Mountains, is home to a sizeable population of dwarves, and is well known for its metalwork and bladesmithing.

Wispil: In the Verduran Wood, the gnomish town of Wispil provides most of the kingdom's woodcraft and timber. Cassomir's bustling yards would not exist without the steady supply of lumber and gnomish shipwrights from Wispil.

Yanmass: Straddling the trade routes to and from central Casmaron and the Padishah Empire of Kelesh, the city of Yanmass hosts caravans from across the world.

Zimar: Zimar is a heavily fortified garrison town near the Qadiri border. Long the home of the phalanxes and other battalions of Taldor's armies, even after a century of peace with Taldor's ancient enemy Zimar remains a disciplined, militaristic city.

Thuvia

Desert Land of Eternal Youth

When the God-Kings of Osirion laid claim to all of Garund, they gave the desert land of Thuvia its name. Thuvia was a harsh realm with little to offer save sand and the burning sun. As the power of the ancient Osiriani empire waned, the lords of the land abandoned the far desert. The last Osiriani governor was murdered in –841, and the name of Thuvia was lost on the desert winds as the region descended into barbarism. In time, civilization rose again, as nomads resettled the Osiriani ruins. So it was with the city of Merab, and it was in Merab that an alchemist named Artokus Kirran made a discovery that changed the region forever. In 1140, Artokus developed a formula that combined various alchemical substances with the nectar of the sun orchid—a rare flower that bloomed only in the burning heart of the Thuvian desert. Through his experiments, Artokus produced a potion that temporarily halted the process of aging. The process was expensive, but Artokus quickly found that many people willingly paid any price for the promise of eternal youth. It soon became clear that the trouble was not the gold involved, but rather the alchemist's ability to meet the demand. Within a year, foreign powers threatened to lay siege to Merab, seeking to claim the alchemist and the secret of eternal life. Merab turned to the other cities of the desert for aid, offering a share of the wealth to be gained from the *sun orchid elixir*. Within 2 years the alliance was formalized, and the city-states united under the ancient Osiriani title of Thuvia.



Alignment: LN
Capital: Merab (56,870)
Notable Settlements: Aspenthar (25,680), Duwwor (8,300), Lamasara (11,450), Pashow (4,320)
Ruler: Ilepodus, Patron of Merab; Prince Zinlo of Aspenthar; Zamere, Queen of Lamasara; Kharane, Defender of Duwwor; Guldis, Emir of Pashow
Government: Loose association of independent city-states bound by treaties of trade and mutual defense
Languages: Osiriani, Polyglot
Religion: Nethys, Sarenrae, Pharasma, Gozreh

The lords of the newborn Thuvia met in council with Artokus. The priestess Taladere urged the leaders to resist the lure of immortality. "We are all children of Pharasma," she said. "Our journey begins with birth and ends with death. It is something we should embrace, not fear. Let these foreigners shatter the path of fate, but let us accept what Pharasma has woven." The council acknowledged the wisdom of her words, yet all agreed that the elixir could bring prosperity to their harsh and arid land. And so they decreed that only one man in Thuvia should ever partake of the *sun orchid elixir*: the alchemist himself. Artokus accepted this as his destiny and his burden. The cities joined forces to build a mighty fortress in the heart of the desert. It is said that Artokus remains within to this day, continuing to produce the elixir that brings foreign gold to the wastes of Thuvia.

Every month, a blind, mute servant emerges from the heart of the fortress with an iron case containing six vials of the precious elixir. By ancient pact, the right to sell the elixir rotates between each city-state on a monthly basis, and it is the duty of the host city to provide an escort for the elixir. Merab typically relies on heavily armed caravans. Lamasara uses multiple caravans following different paths, relying on decoys to deceive would-be thieves. Pashow relies on magic, although teleportation proves to be strangely unreliable in the heart of Thuvia. Once the elixir reaches the host city, it is auctioned off to foreign emissaries. A single bid is allowed in these sessions. The six highest bidders receive a vial of elixir, and the lords of the city keep the treasures bid by all participants, even the losers. It is a costly endeavor, but anyone who challenges the process loses any chance to acquire the elixir in the future.

The industry of Thuvia is based around the elixir. Entertainers and merchants dealing in exotic services and luxuries migrate from city to city, catering to the foreigners

in the month that the city hosts the elixir. As a result, each of the cities has a massive open market that stands largely vacant in the 4 months that pass between the cycle—the fifth month is always a time of festivals and celebration.

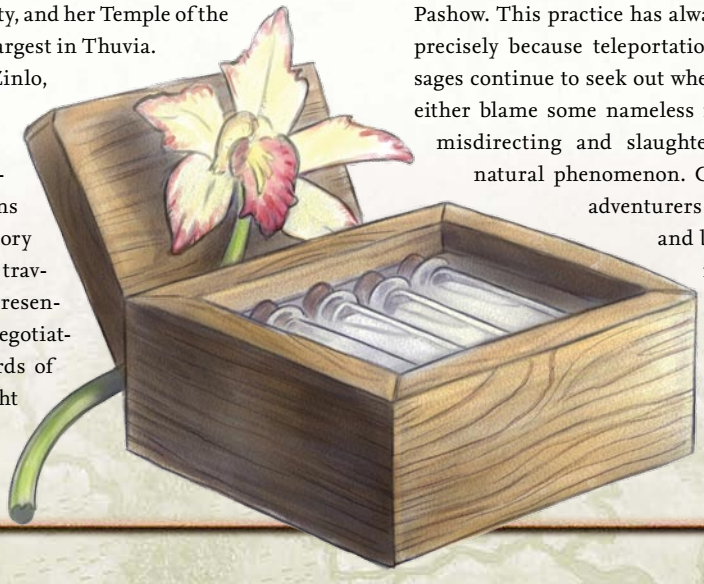
Many places and events draw adventurers to the land of the sun orchid, and while most are in some way connected to the *sun orchid elixir,* not all are. If a ruler has reason to believe that a particular shipment of elixir is in danger, he likely employs adventurers to protect it. On the other hand, unscrupulous adventurers might be drawn into a plot to steal a shipment of elixir. Beyond this, there is a secondary economy centered around the acquisition of the sun orchids themselves. Bands of hunters roam the interior, ranging across the dunes in search of the rare flowers. The oases and lakes of the interior are governed by the so-called Water Lords, and orchid hunters must deal with these warlords to acquire water and other vital supplies. If they are lucky enough to find orchids, the hunters must be cautious, as many of the Water Lords are no better than bandits who happily kill foreigners to gain the treasures of visiting adventurers.

Aside from the Citadel of the Alchemist, the interior of Thuvia is a mysterious and unknown land. Legends speak of Osiriani tombs buried within the shifting sands, holding fantastic treasures and artifacts of the mighty God-Kings. There is an industry in the creation of false maps supposedly showing the paths to hidden tombs, but it's always possible an adventurer could stumble upon a true document.

Government: The city-states of Thuvia present a unified front when dealing with foreign powers, but theirs is a very loose alliance. In theory, all of the five cities are equal, but in practice Merab has the loudest voice, both as the largest city and as the birthplace of Artokus.

Merab: Merab is the largest of the Thuvian city states and is generally considered the country's capital. Many of its greatest minds follow in the footsteps of Artokus. While none match his skill, the city is home to some of the finest alchemists in Garund, and there is always a wide selection of potions available at the Flowing Market. Sarenrae is the patron goddess of the city, and her Temple of the Redeeming Sun is the largest in Thuvia.

Aspenthar: Prince Zinlo, leader of Thuvia's second-largest city, is an ambitious man. He requires all of his citizens to undergo mandatory martial training, and travelers report seeing representatives of Aspenthar negotiating with the Water Lords of the interior. Zinlo might support groups seeking to steal shipments of elixir from other cities, and at some point he might even try to kidnap Artokus himself.



Duwwor: The people of Duwwor, which houses a great temple to Gozreh, seek to live in harmony with the desert. Most of the best guides to the interior are found in Duwwor, and a circle of desert druids make their home a short distance from the city—these mystics of sand and wind can be valuable allies or dangerous foes.

Lamasara: Thuvia's third city, Lamasara is known for its artisans and performers. While most of its greatest performers migrate with the elixir, there is always music in the air of Lamasara, and light and laughter in the nights. Queen Zamere is considered to be the cleverest diplomat in Thuvia, and when a single voice speaks for the city-states, it is usually hers.

Pashow: Pashow is the smallest of the Thuvian cities, largely due to the extremely limited resources of the region. The people of Pashow are devoted to the god Nethys, and in the past, their talents with arcane magic helped them survive in the harsh land. Pashow is also one of the most troubled of the city-states. The young Emir Guldis lost the two most recent shipments of elixir, costing his city hundreds of thousands of gold pieces. In both cases, the courier was to use a scroll to teleport himself and the precious potions to Pashow. This practice has always been forbidden in the past, precisely because teleportation often goes astray. Pashow's sages continue to seek out where they went. Current theories either blame some nameless malevolent force intentionally misdirecting and slaughtering the couriers or else a natural phenomenon. Guldis continues to search for adventurers willing to replicate the accident and bring an end to the threat. His recent failures have shaken the confidence of his people, and there is a group of agitators who seek to put Ziralia—the eldest daughter of Prince Zinlo of Aspenthar—on Pashow's throne.

Desert Dweller

Life in the merciless Thuvian desert gave you the ability to survive in extreme heat and without the benefit of constant nourishment.

Prerequisites: Con 13, Thuvia affinity.

Benefit: You gain fire resistance 5 against sources of fire damage that deal 5 points of fire or less, meaning you take no damage when a particular source deals 5 points of damage or less. Against sources that deal 6 points of fire damage or more, you gain no resistance and take the full amount of damage.

You gain a +2 bonus on Constitution checks made to avoid taking nonlethal damage from starvation and thirst.

Ustalav, The Immortal Principality of Fog-Shrouded Land of Gothic Horror

Cursed with a history of tragedy and faded glory, the Immortal Principality of Ustalav clings to its legendary past even as it struggles to forget centuries of horrors. From the fog-shrouded cliffs of Lake Encarthan to the tangled maze of the Shudderwood, the fractious nation bears an infamous reputation as the birth- and rebirthplace of tyrants.

United by the blade of the legendary hero Soividia Ustav during the Age of Enthronement, Ustalav began as numerous disparate communities—largely split along ancient Varisian family lines. For more than 500 years, the Principality of Ustalav followed the Ustav line, yet the clannish Varisians quarreled endlessly over territory and familial rights. In the face of civil war, the country was divided into 16 counties, formally establishing the domains of the land's most influential families and granting them broad administrative powers, so long as they remained loyal to and met the demands of the crown.



Alignment: NE
Capital: Caliphas (15,640)
Notable Settlements: Ardis (12,080), Carrion Hill (9,200), Karcau (10,240)
Ruler: Prince Aduard Ordranti III
Government: Loose confederacy of counties
Languages: Common, Skald, Varisian
Religion: Desna, Pharasma, Urgathoa

The country enjoyed several centuries of peace after its division—a never-reclaimed Golden Age in its dark past. Unknown to the princes of the nation, though, Ustalav was a poisoned land, tainted by the immortal remains of the wicked warlord Tar-Baphon, who, 1,500 years ago, resurrected as the vile lich-king known as the Whispering Tyrant.

The deathless legions of the legendary lich quickly conquered Ustalav and, for more than 600 years, the Whispering Tyrant ruled an empire of abominations rooted in the country's corpse. When finally the Shining Crusade succeeded in imprisoning the dreaded immortal within his fortress of Gallowspire, the victorious knights freed the lich's living slaves and returned the principality's shattered counties to its beleaguered people.

Reestablished and rechristened as the Immortal Principality of Ustalav, the country readopted the majority of the laws and systems of its near-legendary past. But, with the line of Soividia Ustav long broken, the crown came to rest with families claiming tenuous ties to the ancient hero—evidenced by the resulting era of slow recovery, infighting, and weak rulers.

Within the past 40 years, Ustalav has suffered continued upheaval. In 4674, as his last in a decade worth of unpopular behests, the ailing "Eunuch Prince" Valislav Ordranti moved the country's capitol—historically based in Soividia Ustav's home city of Ardis—to the cosmopolitan port of Caliphas, only to die shortly thereafter. In the wake of the prince's death and his brother, Aduard III's reluctant accession, Valislav's longtime companion, Millaera Caliphvaso, gave birth to a child she claimed to be the fallen prince's son. Her spurious claim made, Millaera disappeared soon after under mysterious circumstances. In the years since, Reneis Ordranti, would-be son of the Eunuch Prince, has lived under the guidance and protection of his conniving aunt, Countess Carmilla Caliphvaso, his eyes ever on his aging uncle's throne.

The past decades have also brought political strife to Ustalav's fractured lands. In 4670, three of the country's western counties shrugged off the rule of their ancestral counts in a bloodless revolution, devising egalitarian ruling bodies and renaming themselves the Palatinates. A less civil conflict erupted 19 years later, when the county of Barstoi engaged its neighbors in a long and violent border dispute. The result was the devastation of Ardeal's eastern reaches, leaving it a forsaken land now known only as the Furrows.

Today, Ustalav stagnates under the rule of an aging, impolitic leader, and the threat of princely infighting looms on the horizon. Fearing rebellion, the counts of Ustalav draw inward to their decrepit provinces, coveting their remaining power and further fractionalizing the decaying nation. And in the west, the voice of an ancient evil whispers once more. Thus, Ustalav teeters as it has again and again throughout the centuries: on the precipice of ruin.



Soivoda

Dominating the entire eastern half of the country, the lands of Soivoda have not weathered time and tragedy with uniform grace. Where some have entered the age as rising centers of trade and art, others have begun to collapse under the weight of antiquated ambitions and ruling families long bereft of truly noble blood.

Amaans: A land of mist-shrouded valleys and jagged mountains, Amaans lies in the shadow of menace. The county's relatively few residents largely occupy the lands around Lake Kavapesta, huddled near the border with civilized Ardeal. From their lowland homes they spread ancient tales of the Hundred Haunted Vales of the Hungry Mountains, and strange whispers and the hunting dead that stalk the Ghorcha Passage.

Ardeal: Historic home of Soividia Ustav, site of the former capital, and the supposed heart of Ustalav, Ardeal's glory lies in memory alone. For centuries, Ardis was the home of authors, poets, craftsmen, princes, and the Ustalavic elite. Now, though, it is a place of baseless arrogance and fading memories. The banks of the Vhatsuntide River are crowed with the crumbling estates of abandoned courtiers, while the fertile lands are left fallow.

Barstoi: Among the rocky hills and fields of Barstoi live suspicious but hard-working people. Although widely held as an unfriendly place, the county is perhaps the best managed in all Ustalav. Its people are well fed, its militias are finely trained, life brings with it rewards equal to one's toil, and all crimes are punished by death.

Caliphas: The soul of Ustalav has long been its largest city, the foggy, newly-crowned capital of Caliphas. Trade across Lake Encarthan brings substantial wealth to the city's nobelesse and royal court. Away from the shore, rural Caliphas retains much of its provincial charm, with numerous small communities of craftsmen growing up around the Droa and Raiteso River vineyards, perfumeries, and peat farms, all feeding the growing decadence of the cosmopolitan south.

The Furrows: In 4689, Barstoi drug Ardeal and Varno into civil war. Fighting for the Dragosvet Plains turned into 4 years of grim, futile trench warfare, with hundreds dying over mere yards of land. In the end, Count Neska conceded and recalled his armies, although not without orders to burn and salt every inch of abandoned land. The countryside once known as Furcina is now the Furrows—a dead plain riddled with mazes of trenches and haunted by the disillusioned ghosts of wasted lives.

Odranto: The guardianship of northern Ustalav has traditionally fallen to the counts of Odranto. Centuries of skirmishes forcing the savage Kellids north of the River Acher has left its mark on the county, dotting the region with the

remains of architecturally varied castles. While some are still manned, others are memorials of historic battles or long-abandoned ruins. The people largely avoid the land's forsaken fortresses, with tales of House Beumhal, the Ground of Lost Tears, and the dreaded Castle Kronquist serving as warnings of cursed ancestries and foul deeds.

Sinaria: In a land of cold swamps and moss-draped woodlands, the people of Sinaria live off what little fertile planting ground surrounds Lake Prophyria. The bounties of these plantations funnel into Karcau, a vibrant light in the heart of a dark wilderness. Known for the widely respected Karcau Opera, the canal-riddled Village of Voices has a tradition of musical genius. Built on the site of a vast underground lake, the city stands upon a labyrinth of submerged tunnels and underground channels.

Ulcazar: The smallest of Ustalav's counties, Ulcazar claims the highest peaks of the Hungry Mountains. Aside from a few scattered hermits and hunters, few people make their home amid the inhospitable mountains. At the headwaters of the Vhatsuntide River stands the little-known Monastery of the Veil, the home of a mysterious brotherhood of silent monks, known for strange ways but great wisdom.

Varno: The close-knit people of Varno flourish in a land of scattered lakes and dense forests. The land and weather of Varno is fickle, and a season of bounty might be followed by years of famine, souring the people against even their closet friends. Such turns make the folk of Varno a pious lot, just as quick to kneel to icons of capricious Desna and tempestuous Gozreh as they are to believe the sermonizing of soothsayers and con artists.

Versex: With much of its land poorly disposed to farming, the people of Versex largely survive by mining and plying the rough waves of Avalon Bay. Aside from the bustling town of Rozenport, numerous secluded communities of clannish, suspicious folk dot the Versex highlands. Of particular strangeness is Carrion Hill, a city built upon an ancient mound and its own sprawling slums. None can account for why people come to live in Carrion Hill, they just always have.

The Palatinates

In 4670, the county of Lozeri shrugged off control of its regional count, embracing rule by a council of politically savvy citizens. In short order, Tamrivena and Vieland followed suit, disposing their weak and largely inactive rulers in bloodless coups. Quickly acknowledged by the disinterested Prince Valislav, Lozeri, Vieland, and the refounded county of Canterwall became known as the Palatinates.

Canterwall: The breadbasket of Ustalav, Canterwall grows nearly half of the crops that feed the country, a fact that factored strongly in its royal release from hereditary rule. Since the country's founding, this land has defended the border with Belkzen and, more recently, the haunted mountains of Virlych. In past years, though, several hamlets in southwest Canterwall have been deserted without explanation, the people seemingly swallowed up by the mists.

Lozeri: Ruled by a collective of well-to-do but just-less-than-noble citizens, the county caters to the affluent with elaborate hunts—from staged events to those with quarry imported from afar. The everyday citizen of Lozeri sees little difference between the rule of the deposed Count Beauturne and the new council, and many complain that at least the count kept the woods' outskirts safe. In recent years, rumors of the Devil in Gray, a creature of varying size and description from conflicting reports, have haunted the woods, terrifying the populace while being disregarded by Courtaud's council.

Vieland: When Lozeri denounced Count Beauturne, the keen-witted Count Caromarc of Vieland recognized the changes in the wind and stepped down as ruler, retiring to his secluded manor north of the of the Dippelmere swamp. Life in Vieland has largely gone unchanged since Caromarc's resignation, and the people of the small region continue to live simply off a land marked in many places by strange, ancient stone monoliths. In recent years, disease, civil disorder, and a rash of murders in Lepidstadt have sent the city's ruling council begging at the door of Schloss Caromarc for their former ruler's guidance.

Virlych

Ustalav fell 1505 years ago—the first casualty of the legendary Whispering Tyrant's dreaded resurrection. For 25 years the country suffered the depredations of the ancient lich's foul whims, its lands and people despoiled to fuel his undead war machine. Although the tyrant's defeat in 3827 freed the country back to its historic rule, years of exploitation and tragedy left Ustalav a changed, accursed land.

A dead limb atrophied on the body of modern Ustalav, Virlych surrounds Gallowspire, the dreaded prison of the Whispering Tyrant. A pinnacle of jagged black stone and rent iron, the sealed fortress holds the remains of the immortal lich lord, locked away where they can supposedly do no harm. Yet, the lands surrounding the accursed tower—formerly the counties known as Virholt and Grodlych—are lifeless, haunted lands, seemingly poisoned by Gallowspire's very presence. No sane folk live in Virlych, rightly warned away from a land wracked by unnatural storms, choked with blighted plants, and stalked by tales of unquiet dead. Only seasonal patrols from neighboring Lastwall wander



the region, keeping a centuries-old watch over the immortal tyrant's throne. Yet, for all the dread the region inspires, Virlych endlessly fascinates explorers and arcanists eager to uncover secrets of the Whispering Tyrant's dark age, perpetuating the tales of horror that flow from such dreaded remnants as the bladed cathedral at Renchurch; Ghasterhall, the Palace of Travesties; and the Garden of Lead.

The Nobles of Ustalav

Beneath the rule of Prince Aduard Ordranti, nine nobles retain their ancestral titles as counts and countesses of Ustalav.

Prince Aduard Ordranti III: Aduard Ordranti never expected to rule. Having spent much of his life hunting and holding an honorary post as a general in the Ustalavic army, even after more than thirty years a prince, Aduard III still disdains the subtleties of political life. Relying on the lessons of this youth, the 63 year-old prince holds court with the bluntness of a soldier, relying heavily on the advice of his brother's ancient counselor Diauden in matters of courtly nuance. At his adviser's suggestion, Prince Aduard seeks a wife to produce an heir.

Countess Carmilla Caliphvaso: Widely known as the Ruby of Caliphas, Countess Caliphvaso is a decadent schemer. At more than 70 years old, she appears as a beauty half her age. Although Caliphas hosts the palace of Prince Aduard Ordranti III, the countess vehemently criticizes her monarch at every opportunity and actively seeks to turn his people against him. Her words have grown even more brazen as her nephew, Reneis—the supposed heir of Prince Valislav Ordranti—has grown to manhood. While no one doubts the cunning noblewoman's agenda to implant her nephew upon the throne, incestuous rumors whisper that a princess's crown might be her true goal.

Count Lucinean Galdana: Count Galdana presides over the few citizens of mountainous Amaans with a firm hand and even temper. A lifelong sportsman, hunter, bachelor, and friend to Prince Aduard, the count frequently forays into the wild vales of upper Amaans hunting boar, wolves, and brigands when the need arises. In recent years, though, the count has taken to going on such excursions alone, sparking fanciful rumors of ongoing dalliances with the maids of secluded mountain villages or the faeries of some hidden vale.

Countess Sasandra Livgrace: Beloved Countess of Sinaria and occasional belle of the renowned Karcau Opera, Sasandra Livegrace holds court from Swansong House, overlooking Lake Prophyria. Although a scandalous "kidnapping" in her youth remains a source of slanderous gossip, Countess Livegrace is widely held as one of the most beautiful women, most eligible bachelorettes, and finest virtuosos in all Ustalav.

Count Conwrest Muralt: The current Count of Ordranto claims right to rule by name, not birth, being the adopted son of the deceased Count Manfray Muralt. Having only recently taken up lordship of Castle Ordranto and married his sister by adoption, Lyrabella, Count Muralt's rule has been tumultuous, typified by contradicting mandates and violent mood swings.

Fortune Teller

Raised in a land steeped in tradition and superstition you are skilled in communicating with the spirit world.

Prerequisite: Ustalav affinity.

Benefit: Upon taking this feat, choose a focus item for your divination magic—crystal ball, runes, Harrow deck, and so on. Whenever you cast a divination spell, you may use this focus item instead of the spell's material component, regardless of the cost. If you choose to perform the spell using your focus item and the spell's normal material component, you cast the spell at +1 caster level.

Count Aericnein Neska: Cold and merciless, Aericnein Neska is a charming tyrant. Exceptionally intelligent and cultured, the aging Count of Barstoi demands much of his people, rewarding dutiful service and ingenuity while culling laziness and stupidity. By his hand, the unease of 4689 escalated into the civil warfare that reduced portions of his country and neighboring Ardeal to the wasteland of the Furrows. Yet despite his atrocities, many would see ambitious and farsighted Neska usurp the throne of Prince Aduard and lead Ustalav into a new age of glory.

Count Haserton Lowls IV: Moody and unlikable, the middle-aged Count of Versex cares little for his county or citizens, resenting his title and insatiable subjects. For his 14 years as count, Lowls has left rule in the hands of local mayors and magistrates, haunting the stacks of his estate's ever-expanding library and feverishly working on his unsettling amateur attempts at painting and poetry.

Bishop Yarsmardin Senir: High in the Hungry Mountains stands the Monastery of the Veil, the secluded cloister of an order of silent Pharasmin monks. Although he's forsaken one title for another, Bishop Senir rules the sparsely populated county of Ulcazar, discouraging all visitors and immigrants to his mountainous land. Behind his disguise as the only member of his brotherhood not sworn to silence, Senir hides the blades of the Anaphexia, an order of religious assassins sworn to Norgorber and the eternal keeping of secrets.

Conte Ristomaur Tiriac: Often traveling from his county seat and family estate at Corvischoir, Ristomaur Tiriac currently holds the title Count of Varno. Although viewed by his people as the latest in a long line of shiftless absentee rulers—having even altered his title to distance himself from his provincial roots—Tiriac has actually administered Varno for nearly two centuries, his travels serving as both a disguise and necessity in his unlife-long search for a cure for vampirism.

Countess Solismina Venacdahlia: The aging Countess of Ardeal, Solismina Venacdahlia arrogantly holds her family as embodiments of Ustlavic tradition and the stewards of the true capital at Ardis. Nearly 90 winters old, the bitter Countess tenaciously clings to her life and title, attended by her ambitious young daughters Lasara, Radania, Opaline, and Floriama.

Varisia

Wild Frontier Region



Alignment N
Capital None
Notable Settlements Celwynvian (unknown), Kaer Maga (8,000), Korvosa (18,486), Magnimar (16,428), Riddleport (13,300), Urglin (5,800)
Ruler No centralized ruler
Government Unaffiliated City-States
Languages Common, Varisian, Shoanti
Religion Abadar, Desna, Erastil, Calistria, Cayden Cailean, Gozreh, Lamashtu, Pharasma, Norgorber, Urgathoa, Zon-Kuthon

At the height of Old Azlant, the wizened mystics of that continent-kingdom exiled a powerful wizard named Xin for his heretical beliefs that cooperation with the lesser races could build a greater nation. The outcast arrived on the shores of Avistan with an army and a plan. He established the empire of Thassilon, and in so doing brought commerce and civilization to the simple folk he found living on Avistan as nomads, a people known as the Varisians. As Thassilon's reach and influence continued to grow, Xin appointed seven of his most powerful wizardly allies as governors, splitting his empire into seven nations. Xin's governors, each focused on one of the seven schools of rune magic he helped define in accord with his seven virtues of rule, became known as the runelords.

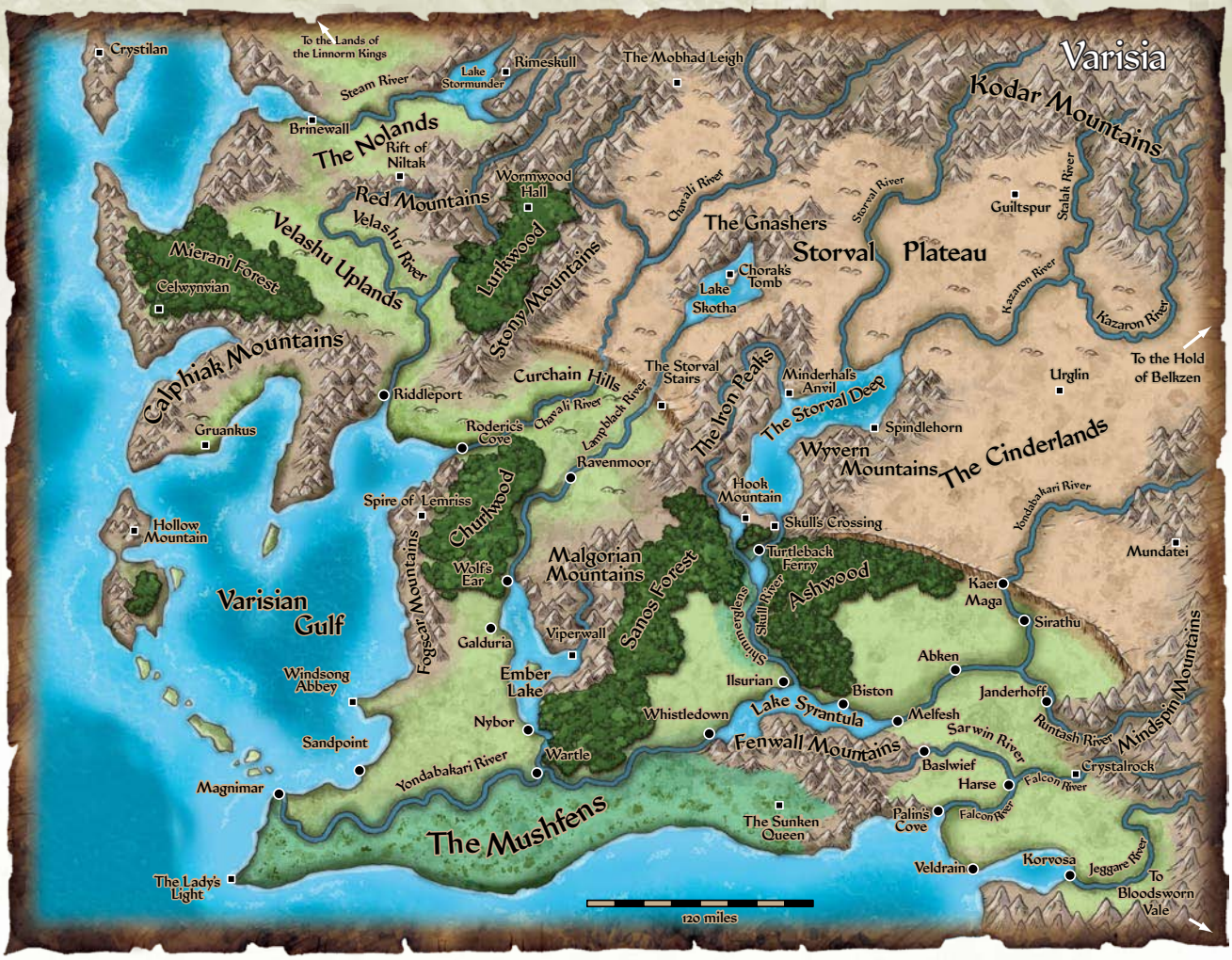
Yet Xin's optimism was sadly misplaced. The runelords wrested control of his empire from him, and for centuries their cruelty led Thassilon along the path of decadence, ultimately collapsing into ruin when the *Starstone* rocked Golarion (although sages argue to this day upon the exact cause of Thassilon's demise).

The region remained wild for thousands of years, inhabited only by barbarian tribes known as the Shoanti and the nomadic Varisian survivors of Thassilon's fall, until it came to the attention of expansionist Cheliax, whose armies marched on the region in 4405. Chelaxian soldiers drove the warlike Shoanti into the rugged regions to the northeast, while colonists adopted a tenuous peace with the native Varisians under the pretense of bringing "culture and civilization" into their lives. It was at this time that the ancient frontier came to be known as Varisia.

Modern Varisia is a region of conflict, a strip of frontier laid against the Storval Rise—a land of barbarians and giants to the northeast. Although no central government controls Varisia, three city-states have emerged, each of which could some day soon claim control over the region. The eldest and largest of these is Korvosa, a city of Chelish loyalists ruled by a monarchy but cleaving close to Cheliax in a bid to be reabsorbed into the empire. Korvosa is a haven for merchants and tradesmen, and functions as a gateway for trade throughout all of the region. The city itself is governed (some say *too* governed) by a complex charter that divides responsibilities between several magistrates, law-enforcing arbiters, and a monarchy of kings and queens. Most of Korvosa's citizens are native-born, but they retain much of their Chelaxian blood, both in appearance and tradition. The Varisian people are tolerated in the city but are often discriminated against, while Shoanti are openly shunned and thought of as crude and violent barbarians who have no real place in a civilized city.

Yet as much as her government might like to hope, Korvosa is far from the only center of civilization in Varisia. The second-largest regional city, cosmopolitan Magnimar, is in an era of growth while Korvosa, at best, stagnates in its thick traditional values. Here, unlike in Korvosa, guilds are actively encouraged, and with enough luck and skill, anyone can rise to a place of power. The local Varisians are much more tolerated here, although they do still tend to dwell in specific ghettos inside the city walls. Magnimar is ruled by a lord-mayor and a Council of Ushers. As the city grows, so does its Council, and in time, Magnimar might well outshine Korvosa, especially as word of Magnimar's fewer restrictions on trade reach further into the world.

Further to the north lies the region's third-largest city. Riddleport is a solution to those who find law of any sort oppressive, and serves as a safe harbor for mercenaries, thieves, bandits, and pirates of all cuts. Tales of bandits ruling the streets, of muggings and murder taking place in full light of



day, and of riots and anarchy are popular among the nobles of Korvosa, yet there is little truth to these tales, for the Overlords of Riddleport are undeniably harsh in punishing those who would attempt to disrupt civic function. Nevertheless, the fact that crimelords, pirates, and scoundrels rule the city shows in every street. Riddleport is not a place for the timid. Yet it still draws a surprising number of scholars and intellectuals to its filthy and dangerous avenues, for the city of Riddleport is host to one of the most intriguing and well-preserved Thassilonian monuments—the cryptic Cyphergate, a ring of stone that arches gracefully over the entrance to the city's harbor. This and other mysterious local remnants from the previous age have long intrigued wizards and sages and their like, enough so that these stereotypically meek folk have become a strong and tempering force in Riddleport's society.

Dozens of smaller towns and villages dot the lowlands of Varisia, and the majority of them see one of these three cities as their protectors. Korvosa takes a relatively active role in governing and guiding these holdings, but Magnimar prefers to let its holdings develop on their own, providing aid and support when a town asks for it. Riddleport has little interest beyond its walls, though, and as a result, very few villages survive for long in northwestern Varisia. Those that don't succumb to internal corruption and strife invariably become prey for bandits, pirates, or other dangers of the region.

In many areas, Varisia remains a true wilderness, claimed by deadly predators and ferocious humanoids none too eager to share their territories with the advance of humanity. Along the coastal reaches, hundreds of goblin tribes dwell in sea caves and thistle-thick woodlands, bickering among themselves until leaders strong enough to unite several tribes at once take hold. Further inland, ogres and trolls hold court on rugged mountaintops and in deep forest glens, yet the true lords of the wildlands are the giants. Descended from the slave castes of ancient Thassilon, giants of all types call the true wilderness reaches of Varisia home, and their periodic forays and raids against humanity make for constant and brutal reminders that this realm is far from tame.

Other creatures dwell in the darkest corners of Varisia as well—monsters in some cases left over from Thassilon's rule, tales of whom frighten even the giants of the land. These include mighty dragons, the cannibal spirits known



as wendigos, sinister and capricious fey, pockets of scheming lamia-kin, and even sinister explorers and pilgrims from other worlds whose eldritch corners brush unwholesome and unwelcome against parts of this haunted landscape. And against this menacing backdrop broods an even darker evil, for the ancient lords of the land are said to exist still, dead but dreaming, awaiting the time for their return to rule over lands once theirs. Should these all-but-forgotten runelords rise, Varisia could be but the first of Golarion's regions to fall.

Beyond its monsters, its cities, and its people, many other Varisian sites of particular interest have long lured explorers and adventurers to seek them out. The most notorious and famous of these are detailed, in brief, below.

Celwynvian: Deep in the Mierani forest, the ancient elven city of Celwynvian stands haunted, its verdant palaces and delicate towers locked in a mysterious conflict. The elves have tried numerous times to reclaim the abandoned city, but they are silent on what exactly lurks in the ruins that keeps them from success. Some whisper of a strange contagion, others of dragons or demons. A few rumors even speak of the drow, legendary elves from deep underground, and that Celwynvian is now the site of unknown dark elf atrocities that the elves themselves are loathe to admit exist, as if they were too ashamed of what their violent kin were up to.

Cinderlands: Home to three Shoanti tribes, the hostile Cinderlands are a unique region. Not quite desert, these rugged badlands are rather volcanic. Black blizzards of emberstorms, immense grassland fires, and deadly eruptions of poisonous gas make it a difficult place to dwell, yet the Shoanti continue to do so, having adapted to the harsh environs as necessary.

Hollow Mountain: The largest of Rivenrake Island's peaks still carries a particularly striking Thassilonian ruin—the carving of a stern woman's face. An immense rent down the center of the face opens into an equally immense network of caverns and underground ruins that, rumor holds, are connected to the dust-choked ruined city on Hollow Mountain's lower slopes. Scholars believe this is the site of Xin-Bakrakhan, the City of Wrath and capital of Runelord Alaznist's nation.

Kaer-Maga: Varisia's most notorious city, Kaer-Maga perches atop one of the highest runs of the Storval Rise, overlooking the verdant lands to the south. Built into and onto the ruins of an immense Thassilonian fortress, the denizens of Kaer-Maga enjoy anarchy in its purest form. All manner of strange factions hold court in Kaer-Maga's halls, from the bloodthirsty bloatmages to the militant monks of the Brothers of the Seal to the grisly augurs—troll soothsayers who use their own entrails to prophesize with questionably accuracy.

The Mushfens: One of Golarion's largest wetlands, the swath of swamp known as the Mushfens stretches along the entire southern border of Varisia. This trackless region has resisted every attempt at colonization so far, and to this day remains a wildland in every sense of the word.

The Sunken Queen: This towering pyramid has partially sunk into the sloppy depths of the surrounding Mushfens, leaving the immense Thassilonian ruin leaning at a severe angle. One face of the pyramid is decorated in an immense bas-relief carving of a beautiful nude woman, while curving towers extend from its peak like growths or chimneys. Tribes of the froglike humanoids called boggards hold the Sunken Queen with special reverence.

Xin-Shalast: Rumored to lie hidden somewhere deep in the Kodar Mountains, the legendary city of Xin-Shalast has long haunted the dreams of romantics and historians. Said to have been the capital of one of Thassilon's Karzoug the Claimer, stories tell of a vast mountaintop city with streets of gold and buildings shingled in slates of jade and other precious stone.

Legacy in Runes

Although a relatively large swath of Varisia has been settled by Chelish colonists and Varisian natives, the fact remains that this region is still primarily a dangerous wilderness. Legendary monsters, ranging from sinister local stories (such as the elusive Sandpoint Devil) on up to regional tales of terror (like deadly Black Magga, or the mythical Oliphaunt of Jandelay) have given the wilderness a singular menace, yet they are not as stark a reminder of the region's dangers as the numerous Thassilonian monuments that still dot the land. Built by armies of stone giant artisans under runelord command, these monuments were preserved and protected by magic.

Only today is this preservative magic beginning to fail, allowing the ancient monuments to slowly suffer the indignities of erosion and trophy seekers. Yet in many of these monoliths wait hidden dangers—immortal monsters trapped for centuries; enticing vaults of treasure protected by traps; and (some whisper) the slumbering runelords themselves, who wait patiently to awaken from their centuries-long sleep to reclaim a land rightfully theirs.

The Shoanti

Descended from numerous different peoples who once served as Thassilon's military caste, the barbaric Shoanti might well someday become Golarion's newest ethnicity. Unlike the more prolific Varisian people, these proud folk have not spread far beyond the lands of their ancestors. They dwell primarily in the uplands of the Storval Plateau or the hills of northern Varisia, where they hold their own against the many terrors that vie for territory in these wild lands. As Varisia becomes increasingly civilized, it's more common to see Shoanti turn their backs on tradition to dwell in the greater comfort afforded by civilization—and in some cases, as in the sheriff of Sandpoint, Shoanti are becoming part of society on a governmental level.

Totem Spirit

You are closely and mystically tied to your tribe's sacred totem.

Prerequisite: Member of a Shoanti tribe.

Benefit: The benefit granted by this feat depends on which Shoanti tribe you belong to:

Lyrune-Quah (Moon Clan): You gain a +1 bonus on Will saves and a +2 bonus on Listen checks.

Shadde-Quah (Axe Clan): If you have the rage ability, it lasts for one additional round. You also gain a +2 bonus on Intimidate checks.

Shriikirri-Quah (Hawk Clan): You gain a +2 bonus on Initiative checks and a +2 bonus on Ride checks.

Shundar-Quah (Spire Clan): You gain a +1 bonus on Fortitude saves and a +2 bonus on Spot checks.

Sklar-Quah (Sun Clan): You gain a +1 bonus on Reflex saves and a +2 bonus on Tumble checks.

Skoan-Quah (Skull Clan): You gain a +2 bonus on weapon damage against undead and a +2 bonus on Heal checks.

Tamiir-Quah (Wind Clan): Your base land speed increases by 5 feet. You also gain a +2 bonus on Jump checks.

Varisian Tattoo

You bear intricate tattoos which inspire and empower your natural magical ability. These tattoos mark you as a worker of the ancient traditions of Varisian magic. A Varisian tattoo typically consists of a long string of characters in Thassilonian, the language found on the ancient monuments of the land. Most are quite complex, running the entire length of an arm or leg.

Prerequisite: Spell Focus in matching school.

Benefit: Select a school of magic other than divination in which you have Spell Focus—you cast spells from this school at +1 caster level. Additionally, you can cast a single cantrip as a spell-like ability a number of times per day equal to your Constitution modifier (minimum 1/day, caster level equals Hit Dice, save DC is Charisma-based). The spell-like ability gained (and its Varisian name) are as follows:

Abjuration (*avidais*): *resistance*.
Conjuration (*idolis*): *acid splash*.
Enchantment (*carnasia*): *daze*.
Evocation (*ragario*): *dancing lights*.
Illusion (*vangloris*): *ghost sound*.
Necromancy (*voratalo*): *touch of fatigue*.
Transmutation (*avaria*): *mage hand*.

Physically, the Shoanti are the most akin to the Kellids or Ulfen, but generations of isolation allowed them to develop their own complex tribal society, divided into seven different "*quahs*," or clans. They speak a language called Shoanti similar to both Varisian and Hallit, but with a fair amount of Thassilonian as well. Anyone fluent in these three languages can communicate basic ideas in Shoanti, but only those who learn the tongue can ever hope to earn true respect from these proud people.

Worldwound, The

Ever-Shifting Demonic Warland



Alignment: CE
Capital: None
Notable Settlements: Dyinglight (unkown), Iz (unknown), Storasta (unkown), Gundrun (unknown), Undarin (unknown)
Ruler: None
Government: Loose coalition of demonic warlords
Languages: Abyssal, Hallit
Religion: Demon-worship

A century ago, the death of Aroden transformed the culture and politics of the Inner Sea nations. In the distant north, it changed the world, knocking Golarion out of metaphysical alignment in the direction of the Abyss, a nightmare realm in the Great Beyond screaming with wicked souls and vicious demons.

Strangeness first emerged in the barbarian nation of Sarkoris, a sprawling scrubland north of Numeria known for its fierce painted warriors and bizarre witchery. Sarkorian mystics spoke of ascendant chaos, a thinness between this world and the next. Strange, ravenous creatures stalked the mysterious tombs and barrows of the Northmounds, and then ill tidings came to horrific life as vile abominations quickly overran the Sarkorian clan-holds, scattering their people and spreading the legend of an insidious taint in the north, centered around the Worldwound, a mile-wide cosmic blight limned in black flame southwest of the barbarian city of Iz. The closer one approaches the Worldwound, the more the physical world itself becomes unpredictable. Terrain changes before the eyes, shifting form with a torturous deliberation that seems to cause pain to the earth itself. Foul creatures spew from the madness at the center of the blight, monstrosities from the depths of the Abyss, and almost overnight they became undisputed masters of Sarkoris.

In the southlands, the upheaval of Aroden's death brought focus to a vast library of esoteric writings and minor myths about the Last Azlanti, and much that was once considered fringe theory or unlikely folk stories has come to be regarded with authority. One particular tale, of a still-mortal Aroden, relates a journey to the distant north and a struggle against a foul cult dedicated to the demon prince Deskari, Lord of the Locust Host and usher of the Apocalypse. Aroden, it is said, drove the cult of Deskari into the Lake of Mists and Veils and forever locked the north from demonic influence, but his ban upon their influence ended with his death. Adherents of Aroden and his servant Iomedae the Inheritor thus believe it is their responsibility to pacify Sarkoris and seal the Worldwound.

To this end, the pontiffs of those religions called the First Mendevian Crusade, as well as the three that followed. Zealous followers of the Inheritor from throughout Avistan travel up the Sellen River to Mendev in an attempt to support the crusaders. The first efforts to pacify the Worldwound met with considerable success: the demonic hosts were driven back and a guard placed on the land. The malign, almost sentient chaos of the Worldwound was not content to stay within its carefully proscribed borders. The northern crusader city Drezen formerly stood within the borders of Mendev, but in 4638 the counterstroke of the demon-hordes overwhelmed its guardians and protective enchantments and the entire city fell under the influence of the Abyss. Tens of thousands of pilgrims and warriors drowned in the demonic wave that followed, depleting the armies of Mendev and necessitating the Second Mendevian Crusade.

The new influx of crusaders helped stabilize a new front line along the Sellen River in the wake of this disastrous reversal, and the discovery of nexavar (see Mendev) enabled the Crusader Magistery to craft the *Wardstones* that, for now, stem the Abyssal tide. Aside from constructing a tenuous hedge to keep the demons from spreading further south, however, little progress has been made in purging the land of demons, who seem to grow in number with each passing month. The subtler fiends managed to create such unrest and suspicion in Mendev that the Third Crusade was effectively dissipated in witch hunts, paranoia, and internecine bickering rather than meaningful advances at the front. The demons themselves were far too independent and disorganized to take

advantage of their enemy's indisposition. Their own mutually destructive tendencies make coordinated action very difficult, and minor victories and defeats characterize the past several decades of struggle.

In recent years, however, a powerful balor known as the Storm King has gained in power and respect, successfully destroying one of the *Wardstones* near the crusader capital of Nerosyan and breaching the frontier in force for the first time in a generation. While the attack was repulsed and the *Wardstone*s repaired, crusader leaders worried that he might be strong enough to whip other demons into line and lead a major incursion. This possibility led to the calling of the Fourth Crusade, a call to set aside differences and focus on the true enemy, and a hope that the demons of the Worldwound do not do the same.

Government: The Worldwound has no government as such, merely a loose coalition of demonic masters with sufficient power and malice to compel the allegiance of demons weaker than themselves, whether through onslaughts of raw savagery led by mariliths and balors, or whispering campaigns of terror and anarchy directed by succubi, cambions, and the occasional honey-tongued glabrezu. The strongest warlords in the Worldwound presently are the balor Khorramzadeh of Iz, dubbed the Storm King for the mantle of lightning that wreaths him in battle rather than the fiery shroud typical of his kind, and the marilith Zuhra Aponavicius, conqueror of the crusader city of Drezen.

The demonic archmagess Vahedifar Ayeshalmoutey has long held a position of prominence as a mostly neutral counselor in this shattered land, due to both her eldritch might as well as her encyclopedic knowledge of the Worldwound and its effects. She has studied this irruption of raw chaos since before the fall of Sarkoris, first from within the Abyss before becoming one of the first demons to fully emerge from this unholy crèche. Many believe she was largely responsible (through possessed Sarkorian thralls) for awakening the Worldwound from a faint trickle of chaotic energies to a festering sinkhole of reality. Her power, knowledge, and fell reputation for experimenting on any who displease her (and sending her pack of retrievers to fetch any who interest her) earn her a wide berth in her adopted home of Undarin.

The Worldwound has no capital, as the hordeling spawn roam to and fro across the land, seeking those they can devour. Any demon able to exert enough power can claim lordship over a petty fief, but his authority is only as great as his strength. Such power lasts only as long as fear holds underlings in thrall and no stronger demon comes along to take what the lord thought was his. The ruined cities of old Sarkoris, considered choice territory, are staked out by the strongest of demons, and by virtue of its proximity to the Worldwound the former capital of Iz holds a certain primacy. Numerous demon lords and princes have "embassies" or representatives in Iz to ensure that they are able to take advantage of opportunities that arise.

The Tainted Plague

Disease (Su): Contact Fortitude DC 15 (see below); incubation 1 day; damage 1d6 Con and 1d6 Wis.

Even in the absence of ravening abyssal hordes, the Worldwound causes a supernatural disease called the tainted plague. Those exposed to the Worldwound or creatures native to it (including creatures already suffering ability damage from the disease) must make a DC 15 Fortitude save once per day or become infected. Those reduced to 0 Wisdom are driven mad by the mind-bending horrors they have witnessed. Those reduced to 0 Constitution perish, their bodies rotting from the inside out and dissolving within 24 hours into primordial chaos matter.

Creatures that do not need to breathe gain a +2 bonus on saves made to resist the tainted plague, but any creature eating or drinking anything from within the Worldwound must save immediately at a suffers a –5 penalty unless *purify food and drink* is first used.

Drezen: The ruined towns and cities of the Worldwound were once Sarkorian settlements, with the notable exception of the lost crusader citadel of Drezen, a sad reminder of the overconfidence of the First Crusade. Countless thousands were lost in its fall, many overwhelmed in a wave of sheer chaos and perverted into hideous chaos-beastmen who turned on their fellows in a cannibalistic frenzy. Those who did not survive were taken from the city and nailed to the Crown of the World, their anguished spirits distilled as "white wraiths" capable of freezing a man to his marrow at a touch. The crusader shrines within the city were horribly perverted to cultic demon-altars, but much of the city remains intact or is even rebuilt. The marilith mistress of the city, Zuhra Aponavicius, is one of the most aggressive of the demon commanders, ready to sacrifice minions by the thousands as long as she can bloody the enemy.

Dyinglight: The wintry city of Dyinglight stands at the headwaters of the Sarkora River, surrounded by marshes and sulfurous hot springs. Dyinglight was once a mystical center of Sarkorian religion, its great ring of idols honoring Pulura, the North Star and mistress of the Aurora Iobara. Today, it is the haunt of the johud, demonic giants who hunt the Crown of the World and clash with the warclans of the Hold of the Mammoth Lords. Facing the great emptiness of the western tundra between the two lands, the demons have shown little interest in pressing for westward expansion.

Gundrun: The small town of Gundrun is unique in the Worldwound in that a semblance of normal life can be found there. Far from the heart of the Worldwound's taint, some few refugees of lost Sarkoris try to hold on to a sad shadow of their former homeland. Within the crumbling ruins of a city sacked long ago, hardy (and perhaps foolhardy) settlers return from surrounding lands to eke out a meager existence and live in a sort of barter-town that serves as a hub for isolated villages



scattered to the south and west, toward the Shudderwood and the Moutray River flowing along Ustalav's border.

In truth, the demon hordes of the Worldwound turn their eyes primarily toward Mendev and pay little mind to their far southwestern frontier, but Gundrun and the surrounding lands are not without danger, as the demonic invasion left something behind. Local legend names this menace as "Kakuen-Taka, the Hunger that Moves," which fireside tales describe as a swarm of tiny demonic horrors riding in "fleshy mansions," gnawed out of the animate remains of giants, mammoths, and similar creatures. Seemingly at random, these bizarre monstrosities shamble out of the plains, often presaged by an onslaught of misshapen carrion birds riding on a sour-sweet wind, laying siege to isolated settlements and then retreating into the vastness of the haunted plains. Despite this ever-present danger, the lure of reclaiming even the tiniest portion of their ancestral home is enough to drive many with even a drop of Sarkorian blood to cling to this savage frontier.

Iz: At the center of this blighted land, hard by the Worldwound itself, is the soot-choked city of Iz. Nearest to the mines of Sarkoris's central plateau, Iz was always a center of metalworking and stonecrafting, but the whips of its demonic masters elevate those trades far beyond their volume and importance in the days of the barbarian kingdom. Life in the mines and foundries is exceptionally dangerous, as the convulsions of the expanding Worldwound periodically wrack the area with earthquakes and violent wildstorms that reshape wind, weather, and terrain in an eyeblink. Once a full day's ride from the Worldwound, it is likely that within a decade or two, Iz will be entirely swallowed up by the burgeoning tumor on reality. Still, these raw emanations of chaos make Iz very popular with demons, especially those newly arrived on Golarion, and it is here that the Storm King recently rose to prominence.

Storasta: Storasta stands less than 70 miles downriver from Nerosyan, but the gleaming walls of the Diamond of the North stand in sharp contrast to the tumbledown heap of Storasta's crumbling ruins, blackened by abyssal fires and overgrown with putrescent moss and thorny tangles. This ruin, once known for its gardens and druid groves shared with Mendevian visitors, is now so infested with assassin vines, tendriculous, and blight-wracked treants that even demons find the place inhospitable. Still, the city's moldering wharves are home to many hezrou and the weed-choked banks and bottoms of the river are rife with murderous grindylows in their service, menacing any who dare the river.

Undarin: The river city of Undarin, its many bridges bestriding the now-befouled Sarkora River, was once a center for herdsmen of western Sarkoris to bring flocks and herds for trade and for slaughter, as miners came from the central plateau of Sarkoris to trade their goods as well. The stockyards west of the city were put to a fouler but tragically similar purpose in the early days of the invasion, as hapless captives were humiliated in animal pens before being taken for processing by their demonic captors. This unlovely city is most notable for the holdfast on the eastern bluffs inhabited by the demon-witch Vahedifar Ayeshalmoutey, a brilliant wizard and counselor to the more militant demon-warlords.

Caves of Chaos: As a fallen land infested with creatures of raw chaos, the Worldwound spawns dungeons as fast as inhuman monstrosities—whether demons or their lesser cousins—can find places to hide and prey upon anything weaker than themselves. Well-known Sarkorian holds such as Hruska's Mine or the Tower of Samhan Kuso are assumed to be long-since plundered and occupied by demons and their ilk.

In truth, one of the best-known "dungeons" in the Worldwound is on its far southern frontier, in the borderlands area where Numeria and Ustalav meet at the junction of the Moutray and Sellen rivers. A motley assortment of humanoid tribes resides here in a scrub-filled valley honeycombed with caves, sometimes fighting one another and sometimes raiding Sarkorian refugees and other settlers in the area. Many would-be heroes set out from the keep Ustalav constructed, through the cold marshes and tamarack stands, to bring ruin to the Caves of Chaos and those who dwell there.

Shudderwood: Far to the southwest, amid the fir-crowned hills and sparkling rills of the Shudderwood, far from the Worldwound itself, there is rumor that its taint has corrupted the local fey, or perhaps that fey creatures native to the Abyss supplanted those nature spirits and assumed their place. Woodsmen and hunters still brave the forest, but an ever-increasing number who venture beneath its boughs do not return, especially those who stray too close to pristine Lake Kotalya, so named for the nymph who guarded it (and who perhaps still does).

The Worldwound: The dominant feature of lost Sarkoris is the Worldwound itself. Once a narrow cleft vale little more than a mile long, with a reputation for bad luck and strange happenings, the Worldwound becomes more engorged with every passing year. It is now an enormous canyon more than a mile across and winding for dozens of miles like a pustulent scar on the landscape. The wound itself is filled with nightmare vistas of quivering mesas and undulant lunatic spires, its base filled with a gelid precipitate of congealed primal chaos-stuff, a burbling cauldron of faintly glowing sickly rainbow hues. The air above the Worldwound is choked with a pestilential fume shot through with multicolored lightning and echoing with the shrieks of mephits spawned as ripples and tendrils of raw chaos congeal around whatever form or state of elemental substance they happen to encounter. These tiny demonlings flit across a landscape teeming with fleshwarping chaos beasts and misshapen abominations of every description, vainly hoping to avoid being devoured by soaring vrocks, abyssal dragonspawn, and flapping horrors.

Twisted Flesh

The tainted plague does not always end in death, but sometimes merely fundamentally alters a person's physical form. You are one such "lucky" individual.

Prerequisites: Con 15, Worldwound affinity.

Benefit: You gain a +1 natural armor bonus to your Armor Class and cold, electricity, and fire resistance 2. In addition, thanks to your corrupted and scarred flesh, you gain a +1 bonus on Intimidate checks.

Special: You take a –1 penalty on all other Charisma-based skill checks, Charisma checks, and Fort saves.

You may only gain this feat at 1st level.

Warped Mind

Rather than being overwhelmed by mind-blasting distortions of reality, you gained a perverse clarity of insight and strength of will bordering on insane certainty.

Prerequisites: Wis 15, Worldwound affinity.

Benefit: Anyone attempting to read your thoughts, communicate with you via telepathy, or otherwise contact your mind is dazed for 1d4 rounds (Will save DC 15 + your Cha modifier negates). In addition, you gain a +2 bonus on initiative checks and a +1 bonus on Will saves.

Special: You take a –1 penalty on all Intelligence-based skill checks.

You may only gain this feat at 1st level.

Chaos Circles

The chaotic disruption of reality flowing from the Worldwound does not occur solely at a physical level. Its warping effects wreak havoc on supraexistential geometries and pre-existent portals, gateways, and convergences. This can be observed in the so-called "chaos circles" often seen in the remnants of Sarkorian villages and towns. The former human inhabitants of Sarkoris followed an unusual and primitive form of idol worship and witchcraft (with a passing resemblance to the druidism of Old Mendev) centered on communing—through a ring of sacred idols that created a thinning of the veil between worlds—with the spirits of ancestors, nature, and the Great Beyond. Rather than a mere spirit-journey, these rings—infused with primal chaos but still linked via their original spiritual connections—can be used as physical portals, enabling swift transit across the corrupted landscape. The passage is dangerous, unpredictable, and exposes travelers directly to the taint of raw chaos, but it sometimes provides a last resort of escape for those hotly pursued within the Worldwound.



Beyond the Inner Sea

Opportunities for adventure abound in the Inner Sea region, yet the countries detailed in this gazetteer are but a fraction of the nations that span Golarion. Sooner or later, an adventurer might yearn to travel beyond the horizon, to face the new challenges of a distant land. In addition to Avistan and Garund, six additional continents offer legends and mysteries of their own to challenge and reward the bravest and most enterprising explorers: Arcadia, Azlant, Casmaron, the Crown of the World, Tian Xia, and Sarusan. The following brief summary provides only the barest rundown of these strange and distant lands, listed according to their relative impact on the Inner Sea region.

Casmaron

East of the World's Edge Mountains spans the largest of Golarion's land masses, the sprawling supercontinent of Casmaron. Traders seeking the exotic markets of the east venture along the Golden Path, an informal trade route leading from Qadira's capital in Katheer through the hostile central steppes and deserts of Casmaron to the heartland of Imperial Kelesh. From there, the route ventures through the storied Impossible Kingdoms of Vudra, land of 10,000 gods and a 100,000 miracles, a realm so fantastic and sublime that the stories told by those who claim to have traveled there must surely be lies. Both Kelesh and Vudra claim immense regions as their own, rivaling the height of Avistan's moribund empires of Taldor and Cheliax, but they are hardly the only powers of vaunted Casmaron.

In the distant north, among foreboding pine forests rivaling the primeval Arthfell, the stalwart remnants of the stricken kingdom of Iobaria fight desperately against the barbarism engulfing the nation's collapsed colony states.

The vast, landlocked Castrovin Sea stares from the center of Casmaron like an unwinking eye, lapping against the forlorn shores of Iobaria in the north; the forgotten cities of ancient kingdoms like Ninshabur, Kaskkari, and Iblydos in the west; and mighty Kelesh in the south. The Castrovin's distant eastern shore touches the western reaches of the legendary land of Kaladay, a xenophobic realm of fabulous cities and arid plains inhabited by colonists from Tian Xia in ancient times but little visited by the folk of the Inner Sea. So remote is the land of Kaladay that only the most learned scholars of the Inner Sea are aware that it exists, and only a handful of living explorers can reliably claim to have visited there.

Padishah Empire of Kelesh: The Padishah Empire of Kelesh sprawls across south central Casmaron, along the Obari Ocean's vast Kardaji Bay. Kelesh flourished in the midst of the Age of Destiny, finally swelling into an empire in the early days of Taldor. Its unbroken line of emperors has remained dominant for millennia, drawing upon the potent wishmagic of bound genies and the arcane might of the empire's elementalists and esoteric mathematicians. The influence of Kelesh spreads even into Avistan, where its puppet-state of Qadira keeps watch on the Inner Sea. A half-dozen loosely held satrapy states extend between the heartland and Qadira, each with its own brusque character, obscure customs, and ancient legends. The satrapies further north more lightly feel the yoke of civilization, with horse nomads dominating the vast central steppes of the Windswept Wastes on the empire's frontier.

Keleshite exports, such as silks, philosophy, hashish, and bronzework, flow steadily into the markets of Garund and Avistan. Clerics and dervishes in service of the empire's patron deity, the sun goddess Sarenrae, spread into the Inner Sea in the early years of the Age of Enthronement, zealously spreading the message of the Dawnflower and touching off a series of struggles that cast much of Garund into political chaos. Nonetheless, the righteous message of truth and redemption took hold, and many pilgrims of Chelaxian, Taldan, Kellid, and Ulfen descent join their Keleshite brethren on journeys to holy shrines and temples in the Keleshite heartland.

Perhaps the most notable of these sites is the Everlight Oasis, a sanctuary the natives call Ourzid-Mah. Situated near the heart of the satrap state of Zelshabbar on the border of the imperial lands, the oasis attracts tens of thousands of adherents to the Dawnflower. The zealots come to praise the deeds and words of their patron deity, to commune with fellow members of the faith from distant lands, and to bathe in the rejuvenating waters that form the centerpiece of the swelling, largely nomadic community. Such traffic brings with it a great deal of trade and skullduggery, of course, and despite its healing properties and importance to one of the most stridently good faiths on the planet, Ourzid-Mah possesses a well-earned reputation as the very last place western pilgrims reach on their voyage before being robbed of their possessions, savagely beaten, or worse.

Windswept Wastes: The ethnic Keleshites inhabiting the central deserts and western steppes of the domain claimed by the Padishah Empire of Kelesh give only grudging respect to their distant overlords, clinging to ancient religious and cultural traditions born of the prehistoric cultures of north-central Casmaron. Horse nomads and settled tribes alike honor Sarenrae and the imperial gods of their southern cousins, but the tribal imams keep alive a legend from the days of Ninshabur, an ancient rival of Azlant and Osirion whose culture was destroyed by the Tarrasque early in the Age of Destiny. The legend speaks of a primeval human hero, Namzaruum ("the sword"), destined to return to Golarion in an era of uncertain prophecy to lead the heirs of his kingdom to triumph against their enemies. For centuries, agents of the padishah emperor have scoured the tribes for sign of this cultural hero, with strict orders to put him to the sword in the interest of greater Kelesh.

The eastern reaches of the Windswept Wastes give way to a desolate landscape of cracked mud and sickly plantlife that signifies the outskirts of the Pit of Gormuz, one of the strangest geographical features on the planet. The yawning chasm spans 20 miles from edge to edge, and seems to cut straight down into the very heart of Golarion. Those who brave the strange gales and savage inhabitants of the region to peer over the portal's side speak of a vague dull glow at the apparent bottom of the pit, a dolorous vision that forever gnaws upon the souls of those who see it even at a glance.

Legend holds that the Pit of Gormuz was once a great city of Ninshabur, cast into the depths of the earth by Sarenrae herself in retribution for its alliance with the monstrous god Rovagug. The Rough Beast himself is said to dwell at the terminus of the apparently bottomless pit, wounded still from his ancient battle and bound by terrible magics from blighting the world with his disastrous presence. His enormous spawn, legendary monsters in their own right, occasionally emerge from the Pit of Gormuz to terrify the people of Casmaron and beyond. The Tarrasque that destroyed Ninshabur and thundered into Avistan at the close of the Age of Destiny was but one of the dozen titanic monsters disgorged by the Pit of Gormuz in the last 5,000 years. Other Spawn include the great beetle Ulunat, whose mighty carapace still shrouds a portion of Osirion's capital; the enormous winged beast known as Volnagur; and Chemnosit, the so-called Monarch Worm feared throughout the Darklands.

Iobaria: In ancient days, Ulfen explorers from Avistan traced the southern expanse of the polar ice a thousand miles east from the Land of the Linnorm Kings, finally descending to settle the vast taiga between the ice cap

and the inland Castrovin Sea. In time, these settlements emerged as Iobaria, a powerful kingdom that spread its influence throughout Casmaron via the Castrovin's numerous waterways. In the second millennia of the Age of Enthronement, Iobaria blossomed into an empire whose colonies stretched into Avistan in the form of Issia (now Brevoy) and Mendev. A series of tenacious plagues toppled Iobaria from greatness, the most potent being the Choking Death of 2742, nearly 2 millennia ago. Three quarters of its people fell to the calamity, leaving the empire's great wooden palaces and forest cities almost completely abandoned. Vassal states rebelled without fear of Iobaria's decimated armies, only to collapse themselves without the meager institutional support of the heartland. The Choking Death never truly vanished from the pine forests of Iobaria. It and a host of other mysterious illnesses have, along with internecine strife, kept the local population near its nadir for centuries.

Today, barbarism rules much of Iobaria. Especially in the outer territories, the northern woodsfolk avoid the moldering cities in favor of a rustic life. Most worship a staggering array of minor nature spirits, with druids serving semi-nomadic human communities as spiritual shepherds and protectors from the harsh elements. Some measure of past grandeur still wafts from the old coastal capital of Orlov, where a powerful prince schemes of empire with a military force insufficient to defend his city's barren fortifications.

The *Record of Truan Iolavai,* an ancient text detailing a fantastic cross-Casmaron journey from Oppara to the distant Kaladay province of Yen-Shuan, describes a particularly chilling monument in the heart of Iobaria's remote pine forests. The edifice, called Hask-Ultharan by locals, took the form of an enormous cairn composed of monumental stone blocks quarried from a distant and unknown land. Marked with distinctive script of the ancient Cyclopes who ruled much of Casmaron, Avistan, and Garund before the rise of Azlant, the blocks reached above the treeline, serving as a sort of directional marker for Iolavai's Iobarian guides, who refused to approach it. Ever the scholar, Iolavai and his men advanced upon Hask-Ultharan, eager to explore the yawning portal along its longest side, only to be dissuaded by the appearance of a howling mob of malformed giants spewing from the towering pile. The greatest of these beings, a twisted, demoniac brute known as Kostchtchie, crushed more than a dozen of the expedition's strongest fighters before the humans fled to safer lands. Historians bitterly argue about the accuracy of many accounts in the *Record,* but numerous tales in the centuries since corroborate the essential facts of Iolavai's account.

Ninshabur: First and greatest of the so-called originlands lining the southwest coasts of the Castrovin Sea and its river systems, Ninshabur figures in many epic poems and fragmentary historical records dating to the middle centuries of the Age of Destiny. A warlike power of unrelenting aggression and prideful, blustering gods, Ninshabur's influence extended even as far as the Inner Sea, where its military phalanxes tangled with Ancient Osirion and the Azlanti survivor-states that ultimately became Taldor. Today, Ninshabur stands only as ruins, its massive fortress cities abandoned for millennia after a campaign of devastation by the Tarrasque. Dust and erosion clogs the complex canals that once irrigated the land and provided for Ninshabur's people, and the haunted spirits of terrified souls stalk the plains between a half-dozen monolithic cities. With its proximity to the Pit of Gormuz and millennia of fell legends to scare away explorers and would-be settlers alike, Ninshabur has all but disappeared into history.

The adventurers of the Pathfinder Society have not forgotten Ninshabur, of course, and no fewer than four volumes of the *Pathfinder Chronicles* contain accounts of exploits engaged on that nation's distant soil. The most famous of these involves a trap-laden temple complex called Tabsagal, the impregnable treasure-vault of Ninshabur's kings, situated at the center of a wide plaza of cracked stone accessed by four 6-mile boulevards lined with carven statues of sitting beasts (the shedu, the lamassu, the sphinx, and the gorgon). Those who manage to dispatch the plaza's indomitable guardians face a bewildering maze of darkened passages, ingenious traps, and immortal guardians like caryatid columns, stone golems, guardian daemons, and mishtus. The Pathfinder Durvin Gest claimed to have recovered several potent artifacts from a "Chamber of Heaven" within the temple structure, including the *Scepter of Ages,* the *Apollyon Ring,* and the treacherous *Lens of Galundari.*

Within the last 300 years, fanatical clerics of Namzaruum reclaimed the fallen city of Ezida, a crumbling stone graveyard on the southern coast of the Castrovin. Ezida's towering central ziggurat now serves as a temple for the religion's caliph, the supreme ecclesiastical authority of the imams who minister to the tribes of the Windswept Wastes. Prophets of Namzaruum ply the tradeways of central Casmaron, spreading word of their hero's imminent return. A few venture west through Qadira and onto the Inner Sea, bolstering minor Keleshite cults in Absalom, Katapesh, Quantium, and Sothis.

Vudra: Most of what is known about Vudra by the inhabitants of the Inner Sea comes from that distant land's emissaries dwelling on the mysterious Isle of Jalmeray, off the east coast of Nex. For nearly 2,000 years, these explorers from a distant land have brought their unusual customs, culture, and mental and physical regimens to the folk of the Inner Sea, spreading tales of their homeland so outlandish as to be deemed impossible by even the most

credulous audience. According to Jalmeri accounts, Vudra is composed of more than a hundred mahajanapadas, or semi-independent kingdoms ruled by rajahs in service of the maharajah. The emperor-like maharajah descends from the legendary Khiben-Sald, a godlike hero who united the kingdoms in antiquity and who even spent a decade as an honored guest of the Garundi wizard-king Nex.

The monk god Irori, Master of Masters, is but one of thousands of Vudrani gods. Together with powerful spirits known as devis, these beings form an immeasurably large pantheon of conflicting deities and philosophies that have guided the people of Vudra through the centuries. How many centuries remains a question, as the clerics of the Vudrani homeland claim a heroic dynasty of champions dating back more than 50,000 years, long before humans arose on Azlant and (conveniently) long before any intelligent race save perhaps the aboleths and dragons began recording history. Claims such as these earn the Vudrani of the Inner Sea a reputation for exaggeration and embellishment that, thanks to the charisma and good cheer of the Vudrani folk, often comes off as a curious affectation or endearing personality quirk than a true character flaw.

Vudra is a massive peninsula extending from southeastern Casmaron, with a total area spanning about half as large as Avistan. Ocean-going trade vessels from the Inner Sea sometimes travel the coastline of the Obari Ocean to put in at the exotic marketplaces of Vudra. The largest of that nation's port cities often boast populations in the millions, and while the common man generally adorns himself in simple cotton garments and leads a modest lifestyle, the princes and governors of Vudra bedeck themselves in the finest raiments and display their status by wearing elaborate jewels and accessories of the best jade. The latter comes from cross-ocean trade with Tian Xia along Vudra's treacherous eastern coast. Legendary adventuring sites in Vudra include the terraced tower of Hemachandra, Seat of the Golden Moon, said to boast a shrine to every Vudrani god (each with its own dedicated repository for priceless offerings); the jewel-laden haunted shadow-palace of Chhaya, a jungle princess beheaded by Khiben-Sald in ancient days as she unified the mahajanapadas; and the foresaken desert Narhari, wandering lands of Trilochan, the three-eyed dragon thought to be the wisest and wiliest of Rovagug's children.

Azlant

The bravest pirate captains of the Inner Sea abandon the coastlines of the civilized world and set off across the ocean in search of completely uncharted waters. A thousand miles west of the Arch of Aroden is a nightmare maze of jutting cliffs, swirling tors, and jagged channels that once formed the proud island continent-kingdom of Azlant, first of the great human realms of prehistory. When the arrogant elite of Old Azlant revolted against the aboleth lords that had raised them from barbarism, the aquatic masterminds brought down a great rock from the sky, triggering a world cataclysm that sank most of Azlant below the waves. The mysterious Mordant Spire sea elves still ply the cutways of continental ruin in their skimmers, guarding the few remaining secrets of their ancient enemies—the most technically and magically advanced human culture in history.

Despite its ferocious sea monsters and turbulent seas, Azlant draws numerous explorers. Along with the Mwangi Expanse, expeditions to Azlant make up a significant portion of the entries in the *Pathfinder Chronicles*. Rightfully or not, many humans trace their lineage to Azlant, believing it to be the first and mightiest of their great empires, and the periodic appearance of some priceless relic rescued from what remains of Azlanti culture serves to stoke the interest of anthropologists and tomb-robbers alike. And there are plenty of tombs.

Despite the fact that most of Azlant lies deep below the sea, the towering cutways that remain are shot through with ancient subterranean passages and complexes still visible from the frothing sea. Crumbling towers and statues regaling the unparalleled splendor of Old Azlant perch at odd angles atop the ocean ravines, beckoning the reckless to explore their timelost chambers. Very few spots descend to sea level, so adventurers must usually access the ruins by magic or by foolhardy ascents with ropes and pulleys. The moldering wreckage of countless ships dashed against sheer cliffs churn in the whirlpools and eddies of Azlant's channels, grim reminders of the dangers at play in these ruins of ancient glory.

The Sun Temple Colony: At the height of Taldor's imperial power, colonists from the vassal-state of Andoran sailed west through the Arch of Aroden to expand the grasp of the empire. After battling relentless storms that sank more than a dozen ships, the surviving vessels put in at one of Azlant's few approachable harbors at sea level, beaching themselves on the razor rocks and scuttling their chance of safe return to Avistan.

Instead, the explorers salvaged what they could from the wreckage and trecked 3 miles up a natural rise to the peak of a large tor. There they discovered an ancient temple presumably dedicated to a forgotten Azlanti sun god, along with several mostly intact stone structures. Thanking Abadar for their deliverance, some 200 men and women inhabited the temple and made their best effort to establish a colony here on the edge of the world. Throughout the passing centuries, travelers often reported strange lights in the temple, and for the first few hundred years scattered communications from the temple community reached the Taldorian viceroy in Augustana. As time passed, however, the communications grew more sporadic and erratic, until

the last message 300 years ago consisted only of gibberish about a "weeping gate" and an "inner eye in the minds of us all." Further investigation of the community was thwarted by revolution in Andoran and the savage storms of the Arcadian Ocean, but still the strange lights flicker from the Sun Temple Colony, and still the mystery of what happened to its people remains unsolved.

Arcadia

Few vessels survive the insidious whirlpools and ravenous sea monsters of Azlant to reach the open waters of the western Arcadian Ocean and the lush continent for which it is named: Arcadia, a wooded paradise 4,000 miles west of Avistan. The handful of explorers to venture there and return to the courts of the Inner Sea speak of vast natural resources, gorgeous panoramic displays of unbridled nature, and fierce native inhabitants.



Ulfen longships sworn to the Linnorm Kings first discovered Arcadia 5,000 years ago establishing a community called Valenhall on the rocky northwest shores. At first, the new land seemed unclaimed by civilized races—a place of limitless natural bounty with few protectors save the occasional monster or ferocious animal. In time, however, the solemn natives of Arcadia made themselves known, savaging the Ulfen settlement in hails of arrows and hurled tomahawks. A great shieldwall and rampant disease accidentally imported from Avistan thinned the ranks of the hostile natives, whom the Vikings called skraelings, creating an uneasy balance of power between Avistani settlers and native Arcadians that exists to this day.

Valenhall: Since ancient times, Valenhall has served as the resting place of Linnorm King monarchs, the final destination on their last great voyage upon the seas of Golarion. Survivors of an arduous, almost impossible journey from island to island along the northernmost seaways of the Arcadian Ocean, settlers of Valenhall and their descendants believe themselves to have traversed spiritual pathways into another world, a true afterlife fit only for the most valorous warriors. Guarded by einherar and valkyries and ministered to by a trio of reclusive norns, Valenhall certainly seems to have one boot firmly planted in the supernatural world, leaving it relatively free from interference from the skraelings or other Avistani settlements, such as Andoran's lumber and agricultural colony at Elesomare and Cheliax's voracious gold mine and slave operation at Canorus and Anchor's End.

The Crown of the World

A sprawling arctic desert called the Crown of the World squats upon the brow of Golarion, grasping with icy mountain claws the northern reaches of Avistan, Casmaron, and Tian Xia. An unforgiving realm home to ice dragons, frost giants, remorhazes, arctic worms, and worse, the Crown of the World nonetheless sees a great deal of traffic, as its frozen trails offer a reliable crossing between continents despite the considerable natural dangers. Most travelers stick to the well-worn Path of Aganhei, named for the Tien explorer who first charted it several thousand years ago. The treacherous route leads from Hongal in the northern reaches of Tian Xia through a winding series of ice ravines and open arctic wasteland before finally reaching the Icestair in the Realm of the Mammoth Lords, where a mighty glacier forms a natural descent to the hard earth of Avistan.

Encased deep in the ice, at the very top of the planet not far from the Path of Aganhei, are the ruins of an ancient humanoid civilization, its name and legends long lost to history. The ruins predate Thassilon, predate Azlant, predate even the coming of the aboleths to Golarion, and their existence and origin remain among the world's most intriguing mysteries.

Tian Xia

Despite having the least hospitable climate of any continent on Golarion, the Crown of the World remains one of the most traveled routes for world explorers, who venture across the ice shelf from one continent to the other. By far the most exotic of these travelers come from Tian Xia, a northern continent in the planet's eastern hemisphere, opposite Avistan. Despite this trickle of merchants and political exiles, tales of Tian Xia are rare outside the distant north and the markets of Katapesh and Absalom.

Mainland Tian Xia provides home to dozens of nations of varying size and governmental unity, from the vast khan-rule lands of the seminomadic Tian-La peoples beyond the imposing Qiang Tian ("Wall of Heaven") mountains in the north and west to the bureaucratic successor states of Imperial Lung Wa that vie constantly with one another and with neighboring Dtang Ma and Xa Hoi.

The Qiang Tian run perfectly straight east and west for nearly a thousand miles before curving in a gentle southwestern arc and plunging eventually into the Budra Sea. North of the mountains, vast steppes sprawl across the Aksai and Gang-Lo Plateaus, which rise nearly 2,000 feet and 3,000 feet, respectively, and form impressive cliffs along Tian Xia's northeastern and western coasts. While mountains, hills, and plateaus dominate the mainland, especially to the north and west, the vast lowland area known as the Crater Lands is nearly flat and provides the continent with most of its rice. The mainland covers a little more area than Avistan, but the numerous islands and archipelagos surrounding Tian Xia make it nearly twice the size. In many cases, the archipelagoes stretch for thousands of miles and come within a few hundred miles of Vudra.

Minkai Empire: Despite more than a millennium of relative peace, at least at home, the mighty but faltering Minkai Empire stands on the brink of civil war. Already, dozens of smaller islands belonging to this island empire have declared their independence from the Sakura Throne. Emperor Shigure, third son and accidental successor of Emperor Kenji, planned on spending life as a poet and mid-ranking governmental official. Upon his coronation 3 years ago, he found himself whisked to the family compound of the Higashiyama clan "for his own protection." True to its word, the Higashiyama clan protects the emperor—while keeping him imprisoned within its main family compound on the outskirts of the capital city of Kasai. To date, thanks to the power of the Higashiyama clan and its declining number of allies, opposition remains merely vocal at best. A growing movement—especially among the ninja clans spread across the major islands of the archipelago—seeks to free the emperor. Or kill him trying.

Nagajor: A kingdom of rivers and lakes with very little dry land, Nagajor is ruled by a dynasty of naga matriarchs, who have reigned here the last several thousand years. A massive dormant volcano sits near the center of Nagajor. Frequent storms centered on the mountain, as well as thick glaciers covering its upper half, provide water to several neighboring kingdoms in addition to Nagajor. A powerful group of humanoid monks known as the Order of the Poisoned Fang base their fighting style on the nagas (called Ular Tangan) and serve Nagajor as emissaries and spies throughout Tian Xia.

Successor States: When Aroden's death choked Golarion with devestating storms a century ago, mighty Imperial Lung Wa collapsed. Provincial governors, military warlords, noble families, and wealthy merchants all moved quickly to slice up the empire for their own gain. As a result, nearly a hundred tiny sovereignties rose from Lung Wa's ashes and swiftly erupted into war. In the century since the empire's collapse, consolidation, reconciliation, and conquest have thinned the number to 16 successor states, of which Lingshen, Po Li, and Qin are currently the strongest. At any given time, open war of some manner exists between at least two of the successor states, although these conflicts in general continue to shrink in scope and ferocity.

Xa Hoi: Known as the Dragon Kingdom, Xa Hoi exerts considerable influence over southeast Tian Xia despite its relatively small size. One of the only mainland kingdoms to never fall to Imperial Lung Wa or its predecessors, Xa Hoi's Dragon King Pham Duc Quan can trace his unbroken royal pedigree back to the kingdom's founding nearly 3,000 years ago. Despite its independence and influence, the Dragon Kingdom does little to provoke its neighbors, and instead maintains mostly positive relationships with nearly every other nation of Tian Xia. That said, the Dragon King is no fool, and like his fathers before him he maintains an active and well-trained army made up of compulsory conscripts. The most remarkable aspect of this army—and that which marks it as unique among the military forces of Tian Xia and rare even across all Golarion—is that women account for roughly half its membership.

Sarusan

Golarion's smallest continent, Sarusan, lies far from trade winds in the trackless sea and thus remains unknown to most modern cultures, half-recalled in oral traditions or hidden away in the lost literature of dead civilizations. What few records remain speak of a land out of phase with time, where immense mammals long extinct or completely unknown in the civilized world are said to thrive in vast deserts, fabulous jungles, and verdant plains. Many believe the black-skinned reed boat cultures of the Wandering Isles, a sprawling archipelago that appears different with each attempt to map it, descend from the human inhabitants of Sarusan, but no modern expedition to this lost continent has ever successfully returned to tell the land's tenacious secrets.



Religion

Nothing in all of the human condition inspires greater passion or leads to greater conflict than religion. The practices of faith are particularly important when the gods play active roles in not just the grandest world-changing events but also the simplest day-to-day tasks of living. Those who dedicate their lives to serving the gods are the most obvious manifestations of divine power, but the power of the deities touches the lives of everyone living on Golarion.

Scores, perhaps hundreds, of gods have followers on Golarion—the first section of this chapter looks at the 20 gods and goddesses whose faith has most widely spread throughout Avistan and Garund. Other gods generally have a relatively small number of worshipers, are only worshiped by a single race, or have very localized areas of control. A fair number of these other gods are demigods (many of whom are also demon lords, arch devils, or the like)—immensely powerful creatures whose strength does not approach that of the true gods. To a mortal, these distinctions are mostly academic.

The next two pages present 12 additional domains granted by the deities of Golarion. Domain spells marked with a single asterisk (*) are detailed in Chapter 5.

Artifice Domain

Granted Power: You gain a +4 bonus on Craft checks. You cast conjuration (creation) spells at +1 caster level.

Artifice Domain Spells

1 *Animate rope*
2 *Wood shape*
3 *Stone shape*
4 *Minor creation*
5 *Fabricate*
6 *Major creation*
7 *Hardening**
8 *True creation**
9 *Prismatic sphere*

Charm Domain

Granted Power: You can boost your Charisma by 4 points once per day. Activating this power is a free action. The Charisma increase lasts 1 minute.

Charm Domain Spells

1 *Charm person*
2 *Calm emotions*
3 *Suggestion*
4 *Heroism*
5 *Charm monster*
6 *Geas/quest*
7 *Insanity*
8 *Demand*
9 *Dominate monster*

Community Domain

Granted Power: You can cast *calm emotions* as a spell-like ability once per day. You gain a +2 competence bonus on Diplomacy checks.

Community Domain Spells

1 *Bless*
2 *Status*
3 *Prayer*
4 *Greater status*
5 *Telepathic bond*
6 *Heroes' feast*
7 *Refuge*
8 *Sympathy*
9 *Mass heal*

Creation Domain

Granted Power: You cast conjuration (creation) spells at +2 caster level.

Creation Domain Spells

1 *Create water*
2 *Minor image*
3 *Create food and water*
4 *Minor creation*
5 *Major creation*
6 *Heroes' feast*
7 *Permanent image*
8 *True creation**
9 *Genesis**

Darkness Domain

Granted Power: You gain Blind-Fight as a bonus feat.

Darkness Domain Spells

1 *Obscuring mist*
2 *Blindness*
3 *Blacklight**
4 *Armor of darkness**
5 *Summon monster V***
6 *Prying eyes*
7 *Nightmare*
8 *Power word blind*
9 *Power word kill*

Glory Domain

Granted Power: Turn undead with a +2 bonus on the turning check and +1d6 to the turning damage roll.

Glory Domain Spells

1 *Disrupt undead*
2 *Bless weapon*
3 *Searing light*
4 *Holy smite*
5 *Holy sword*
6 *Bolt of glory**
7 *Sunbeam**
8 *Crown of glory**
9 *Gate*

Liberation Domain

Granted Power: You gain a +2 morale bonus on all saving throws against enchantment spells or effects.

Liberation Domain Spells

1 *Remove fear*
2 *Remove paralysis*
3 *Remove curse*
4 *Freedom of movement*
5 *Break enchantment*
6 *Greater dispel magic*
7 *Refuge*
8 *Mind blank*
9 *Freedom*

**The Darkness Domain version of *summon monster* V only summons 1d3 shadows

Madness Domain

Granted Power: Once per day, you may add +4 on any one Will save, Wisdom-based skill check, or Wisdom check. You must choose to use this power before you roll.

Madness Domain Spells

1 *Lesser confusion*
2 *Touch of madness*
3 *Rage*
4 *Confusion*
5 *Bolts of bedevilment**
6 *Phantasmal killer*
7 *Insanity*
8 *Irresistable dance*
9 *Weird*

Nobility Domain

Granted Power: Once per day, as a standard action, you can grant your allies a +2 morale bonus on saving throws, attack rolls, ability checks, skill checks, and weapon damage rolls for a number of rounds equal to your Charisma bonus. Allies must be able to hear you speak for 1 round. This is a spell-like ability.

Nobility Domain Spells

1 *Divine favor*
2 *Enthrall*
3 *Magic vestment*
4 *Discern lies*
5 *Greater command*
6 *Geas/quest*
7 *Repulsion*
8 *Demand*
9 *Storm of vengeance*

Repose Domain

Granted Power: You may use a *death touch* once per day as a spell-like ability. If you make a successful touch attack, roll 1d6 per your cleric level. If the total at least equals the creature's current hit points, it dies. This is a death effect.

Repose Domain Spells

1 *Deathwatch*
2 *Gentle repose*
3 *Speak with dead*
4 *Death ward*
5 *Slay living*
6 *Undeath to death*
7 *Destruction*
8 *Surelife**
9 *Wail of the banshee*

Rune Domain

Granted Power: You gain Scribe Scroll as a bonus feat.

Rune Domain Spells

1 *Erase*
2 *Secret page*
3 *Glyph of warding*
4 *Explosive runes*
5 *Lesser planar binding*
6 *Greater glyph of warding*
7 *Instant summons*
8 *Symbol of death*
9 *Teleportation circle*

Weather Domain

Granted Power: Survival is a class skill.

Weather Domain Spells

1 *Obscuring mist*
2 *Fog cloud*
3 *Call lightning*
4 *Sleet storm*
5 *Call lightning storm*
6 *Control winds*
7 *Control weather*
8 *Whirlwind**
9 *Storm of vengeance*

Abadar
Master of the First Vault



God of cities, wealth, merchants, and law
Alignment: LN
Domains: Earth, Law, Nobility, Protection, Travel
Favored Weapon: Light crossbow
Centers of Worship: Absalom, Andoran, Brevoy, Cheliax, Katapesh, Molthune, Nex, Sargava, Taldor, Varisia
Nationality: Taldan

Abadar dwells in the perfect city of Aktun, where he watches over the First Vault. Its vast halls hold a perfect copy of every object ever made, from the flawless longsword to the faultless law. Abadar is a patient, calculating, and far-seeing deity who wishes to bring civilization to the frontiers, order to the wilds, and wealth to all who support the progression of law. His primary worshipers are judges, merchants, lawyers, and aristocrats, all of whom benefit from established laws and commerce. Those who are poor or who have been wronged also worship him, hoping he helps to reverse their ill fortune, for most mortals seek wealth and the happiness it brings. He expects his followers to abide by the laws (although not foolish, contradictory, toothless, or purposeless laws) and work to promote order and peace. Abadar is shown as a clean, well-dressed man bearing the markings of riches and civilization. From his gold breastplate to his richly embroidered cloak, everything about him is refined and cultured, and he always carries an ornate gold key.

Clerics of Abadar are an organized lot, spending much of their time helping the community thrive and grow. They care less about morals and more about helping the culture itself to continue expanding. Despite this, their efforts generally trend toward the advancement of all, such as taming the wilderness, passing laws, and eliminating disease—as all of these are helpful toward the growth of civilization. Formal garb for religious ceremonies includes white silk cloth trimmed with gold thread, a belt or necklace of gold links bearing a golden key, and a half-cloak of deep yellow or golden color. Temples are elaborate buildings with rich decorations and high, thick, stained-glass windows. These windows have small frames (to restrict access from thieves) and usually feature vivid yellow glass that casts a golden hue on everything within the church. Their holy book is Abadar's *Order of Numbers*.

Abadar is sometimes viewed as a father figure, particularly to other Taldan deities like Shelyn and Zon-Kuthon (although Zon-Kuthon no longer exhibits his true Taldan traits). He makes his will known to the faithful via sudden windfalls of cash, while those who have angered him find the opposite to be true—sudden mounting expenses leading to destitution.

Asmodeus
Prince of Darkness



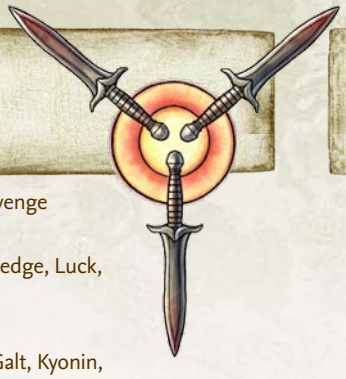
God of tyranny, slavery, pride, and contracts
Alignment: LE
Domains: Evil, Fire, Law, Magic, Trickery
Favored Weapon: Mace
Centers of Worship: Cheliax, Isger, Nidal
Nationality: Devil

Some say that when the world was forged, Asmodeus wrote the contract of creation, agreed to by the gods. His faithful believe that this contract holds the key to their lord's final victory, ushering in a new age under his infernal reign. Asmodeus believes in strict discipline, unwavering obedience, and the strong ruling the weak. He loves the art of negotiation and delights in deals that appear fair but actually give one party a disparate advantage. The Prince of Darkness expects and appreciates flattery, although he recognizes it for what it is. Frequently shown as a red-skinned human with black horns, hooves, and a pale aura of flames, Asmodeus often appears as a foil in art depicting good deities. In his temples, such roles are reversed, with the Prince of Darkness standing tall over the other deities bowing before him.

Public temples dedicated to Asmodeus thrive in Cheliax, where they often share space with the nation's bureaucracy, although secret shrines are scattered across Golarion. Asmodeus's impeccably clean and orderly clerics dress mostly in dark tones, usually black with red accents; many ceremonies use horned masks or helms. His faithful abound among slavers, bureaucrats, tyrants, and even some silver-tongued nobles. Temples built to him look and feel distinctly diabolical, but many are actually temples of other gods that were abandoned or purchased and redecorated to suit their new master, with rituals designed to blaspheme what was once practiced there. His doctrine is recorded in the *Asmodean Disciplines*, although that work is greatly simplified and relies on numerous appendices and supplementary volumes.

Asmodeus is also the most powerful of Hell's archdevils, and the only one of that realm's rulers to rightfully claim the title of deity. The eight other archdevils have long sought Asmodeus's throne, but to date, none of them have been able to displace the Prince of Darkness from his position of power. Of all the evil gods, the other deities find Asmodeus the easiest to bargain and deal with, although few are foolish enough to do so unless it is absolutely necessary. The most legendary tale of such an event was the imprisonment of Rovagug—after Sarenrae cast the Rough Beast into the Pit of Gormuz, it was Asmodeus who locked Rovagug away. He carries the key to that lock still.

Calistria
The Savored Sting



Goddess of trickery, lust, and revenge
Alignment: CN
Domains: Chaos, Charm, Knowledge, Luck, Trickery
Favored Weapon: Whip
Centers of Worship: Absalom, Galt, Kyonin, Nex, River Kingdoms, Shackles, Taldor, Varisia
Nationality: Elf

Although the elves worship a great many deities, they hold none so highly as Calistria. The Savored Sting speaks to the mercurial, detached nature that makes elves elves. Some favor her as a trickster goddess, while others appreciate her lustful, audacious spirit. Ever scheming and planning her next conquest, Calistria is always maneuvering to a more advantageous position. Spies, prostitutes, and thrillseekers are often followers of Calistria. Scarce races such as half-elves and tieflings are attracted to the faith, seeing their "exotic" appearance as an advantage in a society where they stand out as different. Iconography of the faith depicts her as the ideal of elven beauty, dressed in revealing gowns with long graceful ears, slender limbs, and a suggestive smile playing across her lips. Giant wasps, her favored creatures, commonly appear beside her; unlike bees, wasps can sting again and again without dying—which represents Calistria's vindictiveness.

In human lands, temples of Calistria often host a lively community of sacred prostitutes, each with his or her own contacts in the community. The resulting hotbed of gossip, double-dealing, and opportunities for revenge assure the cult's growing popularity. In elven lands, her temples are more like thieves' guilds, catering to suspicious lovers seeking evidence, wealthy folk wishing to escalate feuds, and only tertially a place for carnal release. Formal clothing is very scant, typically yellow silk that covers little and conceals even less, often augmented with henna dyes on the palms of the hands and in narrow bands on the arms. Her holy text is *The Book of Joy,* a guide to many passions.

Calistria's promiscuity is well documented in many religious texts (including her own), but often these accounts seem to be at odds, indicating that some of her supposed trysts may be little more than wishful thinking on the parts of other gods and goddesses. Some tales preach that Cayden Cailean got drunk and took the Test of the *Starstone* after Calistria rebuffed his advances, claiming that no mortal could enjoy her charms and survive.

Calistria shows her favor among the faithful with sudden runs of luck among attempts to find companionship, while those who displease her often find themselves plagued by wasps with an unerring ability to sting in sensitive places.

Cayden Cailean
The Drunken Hero



God of freedom, ale, wine, and bravery
Alignment: CG
Domains: Chaos, Charm, Good, Strength, Travel
Favored Weapon: Rapier
Centers of Worship: Absalom, Andoran, Galt, River Kingdoms, Shackles, Taldor
Nationality: Taldan

The legends say that Cayden Cailean never meant to become a god. As a hired sword working out of Absalom, Cayden was renowned for taking on any job, so long as the cause was just and the coin was plentiful. One night, in an intoxicated stupor, a fellow drunk dared him to take on the Test of the *Starstone*. He accepted, and somehow, 3 days later Cayden Cailean emerged from the *Starstone's* sacred cathedral as a living god. Amazed that he passed the tests and unable to remember how he did it, he continued in his godly life much as he did when a mortal—fighting for just causes, enjoying various alcohols, and not doing anything he didn't want to do. This simple philosophy appeals to many mortals both high and low, and he is the patron god of adventurers, philanthropists, revelers, and freedom fighters. In art, Cayden Cailean appears as he did in life, as a bronze-skinned man with a short beard, carrying a tankard of ale in one hand. Some depictions of the Drunken Hero display broken shackles about his wrists, representing Cayden's escape from the concerns of mortal life. In more heroic art he is shown defeating swarming devils, all the while grinning happily and hoisting his tankard high.

Members of Cayden's faith make excellent guides and explorers, quick to smile at danger and always willing to have fun even in the direst of circumstances. His festive temples resemble common ale halls and attract members of all social classes. Formal raiment is a simple brown tunic or robe with a wine-red stole bearing his ale-mug symbol (adventurer-priests of the faith sometimes carry a magical stole that doubles as a rope). He has few buildings that function only as temples; most are actual alehouses bearing a shrine to him above the bar. His simple holy text is the *Placard of Wisdom,* condensing his divine philosophy into a few short phrases suitable for hanging on the wall.

The faithful of Cayden Cailean often carry tankards with them for luck, or pause before a particularly dangerous or stressful task to pour a splash of ale out upon the ground. He often shows his approval through the discovery of a fresh bottle of wine, but in cases where a mortal has instead drawn his ire, such found bottles invariably taste of vinegar or sewage.



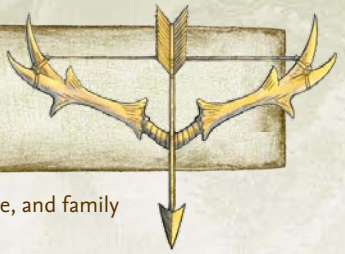
Desna
Song of the Spheres

Goddess of dreams, stars, travelers, and luck
Alignment: CG
Domains: Chaos, Good, Liberation, Luck, Travel
Favored Weapon: Starknife
Centers of Worship: Kyonin, Lands of the Linnorm Kings, Nidal, Numeria, River Kingdoms, Ustalav, Varisia
Nationality: Varisian

While the other gods created the world, legend holds that Desna was busy placing stars in the heavens above, content to allow the other deities to create a world full of wonders for her and her faithful to explore. Since that day, all those who look up to the stars find themselves wandering in the endless mysteries of the sky. Trailblazers, scouts, adventurers, and sailors praise her name, as do caravaneers and those who travel for business, and her luck makes her a favorite of gamblers and thieves. Desna often appears as a comely elven woman, clad in billowing gowns with brightly colored butterfly wings on her back. Delicate clouds of butterflies frequently accompany her image.

Wanderers at heart, the faithful of Desna travel the world in search of new experiences, while always trying to live life to its fullest. Their temples are light, open affairs, with most possessing a skylight to allow in the night sky and a significant number of astrological charts to mark important celestial events. Formal attire for most of the priesthood is a flowing white robe with black trim and a matching silken cap, although ranking members of the church add more decorative elements. Desna keeps few temples, preferring unattended shrines at crossroads and places of secluded beauty, like hilltops or peninsula points. Her temples also double as celestial observatories or at least have one room partially open to the sky, and in rural areas they often have services for travelers. Her holy text is called *The Eight Scrolls*.

Desna is one of Golarion's oldest deities, yet she has changed little since the dawn of civilization. Her worship has always been strongest in the regions known today as Varisia and Ustalav, and despite the fact that she herself does not generally appear as a Varisian, she seems to identify most strongly with these folk, perhaps as a result of their love of travel and respect for the world. Desna often shows her favor through the manifestation of butterflies, particularly bright blue swallowtails. Her priests often make it a point to master the use of her favored weapon, a throwing blade known as a starknife—the weapon has become quite popular among others as well. She is said to dwell in a palace called Cynosure, visibile in the northern night sky as the star around which all other stars dance.



Erastil
Old Deadeye

God of Farming, hunting, trade, and family
Alignment: LG
Domains: Animal, Community, Good, Law, Plant
Favored Weapon: Longbow
Centers of Worship: Andoran, Cheliax, Galt, Isger, Lands of the Linnorm Kings, Molthune, Nirmathas, River Kingdoms, Varisia
Nationality: Ulfen

Worship of Erastil dates back to before the Age of Darkness, when early man began to domesticate and dominate his natural surroundings. Pastoral legends claim that Old Deadeye crafted the first bow as a gift to mortals so they might learn to hunt and survive in the dangerous world. Many—if not most—of his worshipers never set foot in a city, choosing instead to live simple lives in rustic villages, lonely shacks, or quiet towns on the border of untamed land. Erastil's followers often mount about their fireplace a carven wooden placard depicting their god's image. He appears alternately as an old human trapper with bow in hand or as a tall humanoid creature with the head of an elk. These images often depict Erastil fighting off wild animals and other beasts.

Erastil's faithful are found in most small villages and towns, administering to the people less through sermons and more by deed. His clerics are often called upon to help build homes, birth children, oversee trade, and bless crops. Shrines to Erastil are almost always simple wooden buildings that serve rural communities as gathering places. Even in large cities where his faith is overshadowed by more progressive religions, his temples are usually just large houses converted for church use, offering visitors a place to pray and sleep. Given his focus on the simpler things in life, formal raiment is practical—usually a leather or fur shoulder-cape, sometimes branded with his symbol or affixed with a wooden badge bearing his mark. His book, *Parables of Erastil*, gives homilies on strengthening family bonds, almanac-like advice on planting, and lore on game animals and tracking.

Erastil manifests his approval through bountiful hunts or harvests. At other times he might appear as a magnificent stag and lead a lost hunter back home. Erastil also works through the actions of all manner of hooved mammals, particularly caribou, elk, deer, and moose. He indicates his disfavor through omens such as failed crops and broken arrows.

Traditionally a patron common in rural areas in the northern reaches of Avistan, Erastil's faith has increasingly become entangled with civilization. Conflicts over jurisdiction and representation with the church of Abadar seem, unfortunately, to be on the rise as a result.



Gorum
Our Lord in Iron

God of strength, battle, and weapons
Alignment: CN
Domains: Chaos, Destruction, Glory, Strength, War
Favored Weapon: Greatsword
Centers of Worship: Brevoy, Lastwall, Lands of the Linnorm Kings, Hold of the Mammoth Lords, Nirmathas, Numeria, River Kingdoms
Nationality: Kellid

Gorum's clerics say that the Lord in Iron was forged in the first great battle between orcs and humans. When the dust from the conflict finally settled, all that was left was one suit of iron armor. From that day forward, dying warriors and victorious knights sometimes swear they see Gorum delivering their deathblow or charging alongside them. Warriors from across Avistan and beyond call out to Gorum to strengthen their blades and aid them in upcoming battles. This sometimes leads to both sides of a conflict carrying the standard of Gorum, but the Lord in Iron favors the battle itself more than either side. The Lord in Iron commonly appears as a suit of terrible spiked plate mail armor possessing a pair of fiery red eyes, with no flesh visible. His followers believe that when there are no more battles to fight, Gorum will collapse and rust away, having lost all will to continue. His faith is strongest among warrior cultures and "barbaric" folk, as he has little use for anyone unwilling or unable to take up arms for battle.

In battle and ceremony, his priests wear heavy armor modeled after their god, although the armor is always functional. Followers claim that the spirit of Gorum lives in all iron, be it armor or a weapon, and they take great care to polish and maintain the artifacts of war for fear of offending their deity. His temples are more akin to fortresses than places of worship, made to withstand any assault and stockpiled with armor, weapons, and preserved rations. He has no sacred text, but a collection of seven heroic poems called the *Gorumskagat* explains the church's creed.

Traditionally, Gorum (and by extension, his priests and followers) has little interest in the affairs of other gods. If they oppose him directly, he'll fight them—otherwise, their affairs and politics are wastes of time. Gorum is a headstrong and impatiant deity, prone to impulsive and emotional outbursts. His first reaction to an unexpected situation is typically violence, and when he sees something he likes, he takes it. His priests often emulate these traits, and as a result, there are far more evil followers of Gorum than good.

Gorum shows his favor in iron weapons or armor that shed blood and filth when touched. His anger most often manifests in sudden patches of rust, often enoguh to completely ruin an item.



Gozreh
The Wind and the Waves

God of nature, weather, and the sea
Alignment: N
Domains: Air, Animal, Plant, Water, Weather
Favored Weapon: Trident
Centers of Worship: Sargava, Shackles, Sodden Lands, Thuvia, Varisia
Nationality: Mwangi

Sailors claim that Gozreh dwells at the horizon, where the sea meets the sky. Born of the ocean's fury and the wind's wrath, Gozreh is a fickle deity. Those who ply the waters or rely upon the rains know this better than most, and are sure to placate Gozreh and honor him when the winds and waves are favorable. Gozreh has two aspects, equally depicted in art and sculpture. When at sea, or over water, Gozreh is a woman, with wild, flowing green hair whose body transforms into endless waves. In the sky and over land, Gozreh appears as an aged man with a long white beard, emerging from a mighty storm cloud. Temples in port cities often venerate both images. His worshipers are typically sailors, naval merchants, and farmers (especially those in need of rain).

Male priests are expected to grow long beards and female priests must keep long hair; both weave dried seaweed, strands of white cloth, and other decorative items into their hair. Formal garb is long flowing robes of sea-green, storm-gray, or sky blue, offset with coral and pearl jewelry. Gozreh's temples always open to the sky above and often contain some sort of pool or open water at their heart. Travelers preparing for a long ocean journey frequently seek the council of his clerics, who also bestow an annual blessing upon farmers before the spring planting. Gozreh's *Hymns to the Wind and the Waves* is a collection of susurrant prayers and rules for personal behavior and respect for the natural world.

The majority of druids follow various philosophies, the most predominant of which is the Green Faith (see page 176), yet some druids do turn to deities for guidance and inspiration. Of these, Gozreh is easilly the most common choice—his druids tend to be loners who eschew organizations, including Gozreh's own, and live lives as hermits in secluded corners of the world.

Signs of Gozreh's favor include a sudden but gentle warm breeze that carries a strong scent of flowers, the unexplained sound of waves crashing on a distant beach, and dreams of a specific, recognizable animal (such as a white wolf, a frilled lizard with glowing blue eyes, or a ghostly raven). Signs of her displeasure include being watched and shrieked at by wild birds or beasts, sudden rainstorms localized over a specific building or individual, or an unending taste of blood in the mouth.



Iomedae
The Inheritor

Goddess of valor, rulership, justice, and honor
Alignment: LG
Domains: Glory, Good, Law, Sun, War
Favored Weapon: Longsword
Centers of Worship: Andoran, Cheliax, Galt, Lastwall, Mendev, Molthune, Nirmathas, Sargava
Nationality: Chelaxian

As a mortal, Iomedae rose to prominence in the era of the Shining Crusade, where she led the Knights of Ozem in a series of victories over the Whispering Tyrant. Success in the Test of the *Starstone* a short time later granted the valiant swordswoman a spark of divinity and the attention of Aroden, who took her on as his herald. Today, Iomedae's church has absorbed most of Aroden's remaining followers and devotes a great deal of its focus to the Mendevian Crusades against the horror of the Worldwound. Followers of Iomedae have a strong sense of justice and fairness and an even stronger dedication to swordcraft, statesmanship, and bringing civilization to "savage" people. Her clerics have a reputation for trustworthiness that serves them well in political affairs. Iomedae appears as a fierce Chelaxian mistress of the sword, complete with full battle armor, heraldic markings, and resplendent shield.

Formal raiment is a white cassock with gold or yellow trim and matching mitre; most followers prefer these colors and wear them in their day-to-day garments. Pious adventurers usually wear a narrow chasuble in the goddess' colors. Her temples are bright whitewashed buildings that double as courts and living space for holy knights. Her holy text is *The Acts of Iomedae* (usually just called "*The Acts*"), a recounting of 11 personal miracles performed in ancient times by Iomedae throughout Avistan and Garund as demonstrations of the power of Aroden. Having absorbed most of her dead patron's followers, she informally enforces his teachings as well, although she is more forward-looking in her goals and doesn't let herself be constrained by the events of history. Likewise, her followers use converted churches of Aroden as well as her own unique temples.

The Mendevian Crusades look to be confronting the faithful of Iomedae with an unexpected trial—many of the soldiers recruited by her paladins and priests tend to be more interested in the violence of war than its solution, and are increasingly using the crusade as an excuse to pillage and plunder. The true followers of Iomedae in the region are thus doubly taxed, faced with demonic atrocities from without and reprehensible "allies" from within.



Irori
Master of Masters

God of history, knowledge, and self-perfection
Alignment: LN
Domains: Healing, Knowledge, Law, Rune, Strength
Favored Weapon: Unarmed strike
Centers of Worship: Absalom, Jalmeray, Katapesh, Nex, Osirion, Qadira
Nationality: Vudrani

The followers of Irori claim that he was once a mortal who achieved absolute physical and mental perfection, and thus attained divinity. While many Avistani of the Inner Sea are wary of his strict adherents, the disciplined regimen of the Master of Masters is gaining popularity among those who seek order in these troubled times. There is a minor rivalry between his faith and that of Cayden Cailean, Iomedae, and Norgorber, for unlike them he became a god without the help of a magical artifact. Irori is very rarely depicted in art because his faithful believe that any icon of him cannot hope to live up to his perfect image. Instead, they describe him as a flawless Vudrani man, with no hair save a long braid, simple robes, and wooden sandals.

Irori's priests have no formal garb other than a long rope of braided hair tied in a loop and worn about the neck like a necklace. Temples are usually sprawling complexes featuring rooms for prayer, sleep, and exercise, where his faithful study and train night and day in an endless quest to achieve perfection and purify their *ki*, or lifeforce. Those who rise to the rank of master are said to go to Irori's side when they die, to serve him forever, while those who fail are reincarnated to begin the journey anew. The temples are not generally open to the public. His holy text is *Unbinding the Fetters*, a lengthy tome describing physical exercises, meditation, diet, and other methods to transcend the limitations of the mortal form.

Many of Irori's followers are monks, men and women who have dedicated their lifestyles to simplicity and purity in order to perfect their bodies. Yet there are others who focus instead upon the secrets of the mind, turning their focus inwards to perfect their very thoughts. Although more common in Vudra, psionic worshipers of Irori are not unknown in the Inner Sea region. Most react to such individuals with wonder and awe, and in some nations (notably Cheliax), spellcasters react to the similar yet alien powers these devotees possess with a mixture of jealousy and fear that swiftly leads to persecution. As a result, most psionic followers of Irori avoid using their powers in public except in the most dire of circumstances when little other option is available.



Lamashtu
Mother of Monsters

Goddess of madness, monsters, and nightmares
Alignment: CE
Domains: Chaos, Evil, Madness, Strength, Trickery
Favored Weapon: Falchion
Centers of Worship: Belkzen, Irrisen, Nex, Osirion, River Kingdoms, Varisia, Worldwound
Nationality: Demon

Gnolls claim that when Lamashtu first saw the hyena, she took it as her consort and the first gnoll was born. A thousand such stories abound about all manner of creatures, each citing the Mother of Monsters as the beasts' progenitor. Lamashtu's worshipers seek out deformity both in themselves and others. Scarring rituals and mutilation are common among the faithful. Although typically venerated by monstrous races, such as gnolls, medusas, and goblins, some human cults practice her dark litanies in secret, promoting tainted births and destroying works of beauty. Some use magic to become more hideous or beastlike in appearance, while her monstrous followers do the opposite to spy on city-dwellers. Lamashtu's crude depictions usually paint her as a jackal-headed woman, with long feathered wings, taloned feet, and a great swollen belly. Such images frequently include a multitude of monsters gathering to her call, with the favored rising above the rest.

Ritual garb includes a jackal mask made of leather or precious metal, a cloak of black feathers, and a pair of swords or knives decorated to resemble the Demon Queen's own weapons. Places of worship are often as simple as a flat rock but might include a ring of stones, pillars, trees, or wooden blocks; some might have a deep hole in the ground or access to some sort of chasm representing an entrance to the goddess's underworld realm. Her holy "text" is the *Skull of Mashag,* a magical skull that recites the goddess' doctrine.

Lamashtu is one of countless demon lords—quite possibly the most powerful of demon lords. One of her monikers reflects this level of power—the Demon Queen. Yet Lamashtu does not seek to rule the Abyss or bend the other demon lords to her will. She maintains wars with some (such as her arch-nemesis Pazuzu) and is rumored to be the lover of others (decadant Socothbenoth often brags of the children he has sired with her), yet her true interests lie beyond the petty squabbles of the demon host.

Lamashtu's favor appears as violent dreams, the appearance of sudden deformities, or unexplained pregnancies resulting in the painful (often fatal) birth of a deformed child.



Nethys
The All-Seeing Eye

God of magic
Alignment: N
Domains: Destruction, Knowledge, Magic, Protection, Rune
Favored Weapon: Quarterstaff
Centers of Worship: Absalom, Geb, Katapesh, Kyonin, Nex, Numeria, Osirion, Thuvia
Nationality: Garundi

Ancient Osiriani texts mention a powerful God-King named Nethys, whose mighty sorceries allowed him to see all that transpired, even across the planes of the Great Beyond. The knowledge he gained through these visions fueled his divinity, but shattered his psyche as well. Ever since, Nethys has been of two minds—one set upon destroying the world and another pledged to protect it. The church of Nethys tries to balance the god's two aspects, but individual temples might lean one way or the other. His followers are those who desire magical knowledge or power, arcane or divine, regardless of how they want to use it—to destroy, invent, or protect. Nethys is often shown with both his aspects in action. One side of him is burned and broken, unleashing terrible magic upon the world, while the other half is calm and serene, using magic to heal the sick and protect the innocent.

Formal ceremonies in the church require an elaborate robe, skullcap, mozzetta, and hood, all in similar colors (such as red, maroon, and burgundy), the color range chosen depending on the temple. Depending on its focus, a particular temple might look like a fortress, sanctuary, wizard's tower, or even a small palace, but always staffed by knowledgeable people unfazed by loud noises and strange appearances. His bible is *The Book of Magic,* a comprehensive guideline for channeling magic and the moral ramifications of its use and misuse (often taking alternative positions in the space of a few paragraphs); its words are always written on the temple's interior walls but most priests also carry it as a book or scroll bundle.

It is said that the manifestation of zones of unpredictable magic are the results of Nethys passing close to the Material Plane, while the manifestation of zones of "empty magic" (areas where magic simply doesn't function) are indications of his anger over a region. Nethys is not known for showing favor or wrath to his followers or enemies, a fact that many of his worshipers hold with some pride—they are quick to point out to other faiths that their god does not patronize them or coddle them with frustrating dreams or bizarre omens—traits that generally do not endear the faithful to members of other churches.

Norgorber
The Reaper of Reputation



God of greed, secrets, poison, and murder
Alignment: NE
Domains: Charm, Death, Evil, Knowledge, Trickery
Favored Weapon: Short sword
Centers of Worship: Absalom, Galt, Nex, Osirion, River Kingdoms, Shackles, Taldor, Varisia
Nationality: Taldan

Little is known of Norgorber's life in Absalom before he ascended to godhood through the Test of the *Starstone*. Members of his debased faith go to great lengths to keep this life a secret, using murder if necessary to obscure Norgorber's origins. Some believe that if the Reaper of Reputation's true nature were discovered, he would be undone. Of the known Ascended gods, he is the only evil one. Norgorber's cult splits itself into four groups, with each focusing on one of his aspects and ignoring the others. They often wear masks as a symbol of this devotion, and to keep their identities a secret (even in Absalom, where their faith is marginally allowed). Some worshipers even carry additional masks to portray different emotions or signals, holding them in front of a simplified mask they only remove in private. Despite the division in the faith, Norgorber's followers still work together in some regards, taking careful actions meant to shape the future, all according to some secret plan. Those who call him the Reaper of Reputation venerate him primarilly as the god of secrets and are typically spies or politicians. Thieves' guilds often venerate him as the Gray Master, and look to his skills as a thief more than anything else. Many alchemists, herbalists, and assassins know him as Blackfingers and see his work in every poisoned meal and venomous beast. Yet his most notorious, and most dangerous cultists are the madmen, murderers, and maniacs. These cultists know him as Father Skinsaw, and believe that with every murder, the future is sculpted according to their dark god's unknowable plan.

Ceremonial colors are black and brown, and the clothes themselves usually follow current fashion so the wearer can blend in with those outside the faith. Masks are used to invoke the mysteries of the divine in Norgorber's various aspects and are quite elaborate, often with colored lenses and hinged jaws. Temples dedicated to Norgorber are often hidden in other businesses, transformed at night so the faithful can plot and pray. His clerics are master imitators, stealing others' identities and using them to cover up dark deeds. At least 17 short texts are associated with the faith, all given innocuous code names and often disguised as mundane books or encoded to prevent easy scrutiny.

Pharasma
Lady of Graves



Goddess of fate, death, prophecy, and birth
Alignment: N
Domains: Death, Healing, Knowledge, Repose, Water
Favored Weapon: Dagger
Centers of Worship: Brevoy, Nex, Osirion, Shackles, Thuvia, Ustalav, Varisia
Nationality: Garundi

Sitting atop an impossibly tall spire, Pharasma's Boneyard awaits all mortals. Once there, they stand in a great line, waiting to be judged and sent to their final reward. Only the unworthy end up in her graveyard; their souls left to rot for all eternity. Legends claim that Pharasma knew the death of Aroden was fast approaching and even judged him, but did nothing to warn her followers, many of whom were driven mad by the event. Pharasma is depicted as the midwife, the mad prophet, or the reaper of the dead, depending upon her role. Pregnant women often carry small tokens of her likeness on long necklaces to protect the unborn and to grant it a good life. Her followers are midwives, expectant mothers, morticians, and (less so since Aroden's death) diviners.

Pharasma's temples are gothic cathedrals, usually located near a town's graveyard, although a single bleak stone in an empty field or graveyard can serve as a shrine. Her faithful dress in funereal clothes for religious ceremonies, always black (regardless of the local custom) and accented with silver and tiny vials of holy water. They despise the undead as abominations to the natural order. Her holy book is *The Bones Land in a Spiral;* much of it was written long ago by a prophet, and many of its predictions are so vague that there is much debate about what events they foretell or if they have already passed. Other sections were added later and deal with safe childbirth, disposal of the dead to prevent undeath, proper ways to perform auguries, and so on.

Pharasma manifests her favor through the use of scarab beetles and whippoorwills, both of which function as psychopomps and serve to guide recently departed spirits to the Boneyard. Black roses are thought to bring good luck, especially if the rose's stem sports no thorns. Pharasma will also sometimes allow the spirit of someone who died under mysterious conditions to transmit short messages to their living kin to comfort them, to expose a murderer, or even to haunt an enemy. Her displeasure is often signified by cold chills down the spine, bleeding from under the fingernails, an unexplained taste of rich soil, the discovery of a dead whippoorwill, and the feeling that something important has been forgotten.



Rovagug
The Rough Beast

God of wrath, disaster, and destruction
Alignment: CE
Domains: Chaos, Destruction, Evil, War, Weather
Favored Weapon: Greataxe
Centers of Worship: Belkzen, Hold of the Mammoth Lords, Osirion, Qadira
Nationality: Monster

In the dawn of prehistory, Rovagug was born to destroy the world, but all the other gods stood against him, side by side. Many died in the struggle, but in the end, Sarenrae sliced open the world to imprison him within, and Asmodeus bound him there, keeping the only key. The only images of Rovagug show him as a terrible monster of unimaginable size and power. Of all the religions, few are more despised by civilized people than Rovagug's. In the wild lands, various monsters pay homage to him, including driders, orcs, ropers, and troglodytes. Many of his faithful believe that the Earthfall awoke their god, and that the time of his freedom is fast approaching. Foremost among his stirrings are the so-called Spawn of Rovagug, immense beasts who periodically surge from the Pit of Gormuz in central Casmaron, site of the Rough Beast's imprisonment long millenia ago. The legendary Tarrasque is merely the most powerful and terrifying of the Spawn, although several others have left their mark upon history over the years.

His priests wear shaggy coats dyed in strange colors and hideous masks depicting horrid beasts, melted faces, or maddening shapes. His temples are banned in nearly every major city, driving his followers to erect secret shrines, often no more than a fanged mouth or clawed hand surrounded by a spiraling line. The very rare temples are built in caves or dungeons and usually have some monster as the focus of worship, hand-fed by the priesthood to keep it reasonably tame except to outsiders. Rovagug has no holy text but his monstrous primitive thoughts press themselves upon his worshipers, flooding them with a desire to break, destroy, and rend, as well as to find a means to end his imprisonment and bring about the end of the world.

Rovagug has long railed against the other gods, but his hatred for Sarenrae eclipses all others. Even before the Dawnflower cast him down, their wars were legendary, and it is said that Sarenrae placed the fire of the sun in the core of the world to constantly burn him in his prison. Volcanic eruptions and earthquakes are held to be indications of him twisting in his sleep, and storms the evidence of his breath coursing up from the dark places of the world.



Sarenrae
The Dawnflower

Goddess of the sun, redemption, honesty, and healing
Alignment: NG
Domains: Fire, Glory, Good, Healing, Sun
Favored Weapon: Scimitar
Centers of Worship: Absalom, Katapesh, Osirion, Qadira, Taldor, Thuvia
Nationality: Keleshite

When the primal forces created Golarion, Asmodeus planted a malignant evil upon the world under cover of perpetual darkness. The doctrine of Sarenrae's faith tells how the Dawnflower brought light to the world, and with it came truth and honesty. Those who had turned to evil saw their wickedness and were forgiven by the light of Sarenrae. The clergy of Sarenrae are peaceful most of the time, administering to their flock with a gentle hand and wise words. Such kindness vanishes, however, when the church is stirred to action against an evil that cannot be redeemed—particularly against the cult of Rovagug. At such times, Sarenrae's clerics become dervishes, dancing among foes while allowing their scimitars to give their opponents final redemption. Thus, her faith attracts those with kind hearts, but only those willing to harden them when kindness is a dangerous weakness. Religious art depicts the sun goddess as a strong woman with bronze skin and a mane of dancing flame. While one hand holds the light of the sun, the other grasps a scimitar, so that she might smite those who do not change their ways.

Formal raiment includes a long white chasuble and tunic decorated with red and gold thread depicting images of the sun, and officiating priests usually wear a golden crown with a red-gold sunburst device on top. Scimitars inlaid with gold sunbursts or golden gems are common ceremonial implements. Temples are open-air buildings (with satellite buildings having ceilings) open to the sky, sometimes with large brass or gold mirrors on high points to reflect more light toward the altar. Her holy book is *The Birth of Light and Truth*, and most copies contain extra pages for the owner to record uplifting stories he experiences or hears in order to repeat them to others. Swordplay, particularly with the scimitar, is held to be a form of art by her followers.

Sarenrae indicates her favor with sightings of doves, or through the shapes of ankhs appearing in unexpected places. Her displeasure is most often made apparent through unexplained sunburns or periods of blindness that can last anywhere from only a few moments for minor transgressions to a lifetime for mortal sins.



Shelyn
The Eternal Rose

Goddess of beauty, art, love, and music
Alignment: NG
Domains: Air, Charm, Good, Luck, Protection
Favored Weapon: Glaive
Centers of Worship: Absalom, Galt, Sargava, Taldor
Nationality: Taldan

An ancient story tells of how Shelyn stole the glaive of Zon-Kuthon (her half-brother) in an attempt to redeem him from the alien influence possessing his mind. This attempt failed, but she has not given up hope, and out of love for him she retains the so-called *Whisperer of Souls* as her favored weapon despite its malign influence. Her story of love and devotion despite sorrow inspires mortal friends and lovers to persevere in adverse circumstances, bards to craft epic songs and tragedies, and artists to create works that touch the soul. All depictions of Shelyn, regardless of race or ethnicity, show her as a young woman barely out of her youth, with eyes of blue or silver (or sometimes heterochromatic, with both colors). Shelyn's ankle-length chestnut hair bears several strands colored bright red, green, and gold. She always wears tasteful clothing and jewelry that accentuates her beauty without revealing too much of it. Shelyn preaches (and practices) that true beauty comes from within, and she favors relationships not based solely on carnal desires, which often puts her at odds with Calistria.

Formal garb for the church is a pair of leggings and a long tunic for men or a calf-length dress for women, cut and tailored to make the wearer attractive but not overtly sexual. Red is her primary color, accented with silver, although blue is acceptable. Clerics of Shelyn must endeavor each day to create something of beauty—typically a work of art or piece of music but other skills might be appropriate (such as a gardener tending flowers). Her temples are roomy places surrounded by gardens and statues, decorated inside with paintings and sculpture and always filled with song and music. Shelyn's temples are havens for young lovers and are the sites of many wedding ceremonies. Her prayerbook is *Melodies of Inner Beauty,* most of which is stories in song form.

Shelyn sometimes sends messages to her faithful directly by means of a short but precise whispered message in the ear. Songbirds are sacred to the sect; their presence is considered good luck. Her displeasure can be manifested in a number of ways. A brief glimpse of a repellent reflection in a mirror, a lover's quarrel, a drably-colored bird, and wilted rose beds are all common signs of her disappointment.



Torag
Father of Creation

God of the forge, protection, strategy
Alignment: LG
Domains: Artifice, Earth, Good, Law, Protection
Favored Weapon: Warhammer
Centers of Worship: Kalistocracy of Druma, Lands of the Linnorm Kings
Nationality: Dwarf

The dwarves believe that Torag created the world at his great forge, striking it again and again with his hammer to get the shape he desired. As the rocks tumbled and the sparks flew, the dwarves were born, made of stone with bellies full of fire. Torag appears as a powerful and cunning dwarf, busy at his forge hammering at a weapon or shield. He is the consummate planner, with a contingency for nearly every situation. Nearly half his clerics are dwarves, although a great many humans have taken up his call. His faithful are skilled architects, craftsmen, and military planners. Guardians and watchmen sometimes offer up prayers to the father of creation, hoping he protects them as they watch over their charges.

Formal dress for the clergy is a work-worn heavy leather knee-length smithing apron, often with a large blacksmith's hammer. Some priests affix rivets, plates, or badges to their apron to commemorate significant events, such as marriage, birth of a child, completion of the first set of plate mail, and so on. Rings (on fingers, in ears, on beards, and so on) are common decorations and are exchanged among the faith to show friendship, debt, or allegiance. Temples tend to be circular, built around a large central and fully-functional forge and satellite anvils used for even mundane tasks, for every act of smelting and smithing is considered a prayer to Torag. His holy book is *Hammer and Tongs: The Forging of Metal and Other Good Works,* usually bound in metal with lacquered leather interior pages to resist sparks and burns.

Burrowing animals are sacred to the faithful of Torag, as are all animals that dwell in caves and mountainous areas. Flying creatures that live in such regions are viewed as abominations and freaks—bats in particular are hated by the church of Torag. He sometimes sends messages through the appearance of cryptic riddles that appear on stone surfaces for a short period of time. Earthquakes are the ultimate indication of his displeasure, but those who survive are thought to be blessed. The cult of Rovagug is particularly hated by the followers of Torag, for his spawn have long seethed and squirmed in the deeper corners of the earth. Yet despite this loathing, Torag's followers do not get on well with those of Sarenrae, since their willingness to forgive and their devotion to the sun seem to many dwarves an indication of weakness.

Urgathoa
The Pallid Princess



Goddess of gluttony, disease, and undeath
Alignment: NE
Domains: Death, Evil, Magic, Strength, War
Favored Weapon: Scythe
Centers of Worship: Geb, Ustalav
Nationality: Varisian

Some claim that Urgathoa was a mortal once, but when she died, her thirst for life turned her into the Great Beyond's first undead creature. She fled from Pharasma's endless line of souls and back to Golarion, bringing with her disease to the world. She appears as a beautiful, raven-haired woman from the waist up, but below that her form begins to rot and wither, until only blood-covered bones remain at her feet. Urgathoa is worshiped by undead as well as dark necromancers and those hoping to become undead. As such, her clerics must often keep their activities a secret. Some who are sick with the plague make offerings to the Pallid Princess in hopes of alleviating their illness, but most turn to Sarenrae. The occasional gluttonous prince might make offering to Urgathoa as well, be it for more food, women, or other carnal pleasures. She and Calistria vie for control of their overlapping interest, with the elven goddess representing lust and the undead one representing physical excess.

Ceremonial clothes in her church are a loose gray floor-length tunic with a bone-white or dark gray shoulder-cape clasped at the front. Traditionally the lower half of the tunic is either shredded or adorned with strips of cloth or tassels to give the overall appearance of increased damage as it approaches the floor, mirroring the goddess' own decay. Because most ceremonies involve indulging in large amounts of food and wine, these garments are usually stained from spills. Her temples are built like feast-halls, with a large central table serving as an altar and numerous chairs surrounding it. Most temples are adjacent to a private graveyard or built over a crypt, often inhabited by ghouls (which embody all three of the goddess's interests). Her sacred text is *Serving Your Hunger,* penned by Dason, her first knight-blackguard.

Urgathoa sometimes gifts female clerics who serve her particularly well by transforming them after death into hideous undead creatures called the daughters of Urgathoa. She has also been known to lend support to the daemon Horsemen from time to time, for many of their goals closely match her own. It is not uncommon to encounter daemon servants and guardians in her most powerful temples as a result.

Zon-kuthon
The Midnight Lord



God of envy, pain, darkness, and loss
Alignment: LE
Domains: Darkness, Death, Destruction, Evil, Law
Favored Weapon: Spiked chain
Centers of Worship: Belkzen, Cheliax, Geb, Irrisen, Nidal, Varisia
Nationality: Alien

The beauty goddess Shelyn once had a half-brother, but his envy over her talents led him to abandon her for a journey into unknown regions beyond the edge of the Great Beyond. There, he encountered something that changed him for the worse—when he returned, he had become a new god entirely, a god of pain and suffering and loss. He committed terrible acts against those who tried to redeem him, particularly his father and his half-sister, and for his crimes, he was banished to the Plane of Shadow, there to reside for as long as the sun hung in the sky. He came back to a world benighted by in the Age of Darkness, weeping tears of hateful joy at the prize he found before him. In time, his influenced declined but he and his worshipers remain ready to surge across the world with lash and chain and cruel laughter. His horrid affection attracts evil sadists, demented masochists, and those whose spirits are so wounded that only overwhelming pain distracts them from their sorrows. Those wallowing in a spiritual darkness find themselves pulled to his dark embrace, while others left to starve in oubliettes might cut their own flesh just to remind themselves that they exist.

His appearance often changes, with wounds on different parts of his body and clothing cut to reveal them, and often with a metal crown that distorts his flesh into an obscene sunburst; mortal representations of Zon-Kuthon are usually simplified to a pale man in black with one significant wound. Zon-Kuthon's temples look like torture chambers, and many are actual torture chambers converted for church use. In smaller locales, the church might be a secret cave or basement where the cultists meet, littered with surgical and torture instruments that can pass as farm or craftsman's tools in case the lair is discovered. The church has no official formal garb, although their self-mutilation and use of black leather makes them identifiable. His book of laws is *Umbral Leaves,* penned by a mad prophet of his church.

Zon-Kuthon's faithful have carved out a nation of their own—founded at the height of the Age of Darkness, the people of Nidal venerate the Midnight Lord as thier savior and king.

Other Gods

Listed here are ten additional deities who have relatively widespread worship, yet have not become so ubiquitous that their names and faiths can be found throughout Avistan or Garund. In some cases, this is simply because their worshipers do not actively seek out new members of their faith, while in others it is the deity who discourages growth. Beyond these ten, there exist still more deities, but those are generally focused on specific races or regions of the world and have not yet expanded out of their relatively narrow confines to touch other realms and believers.

Achaekek (He Who Walks in Blood): Also known as the Mantis God, Achaekek serves many of the gods as an assassin, sent to murder those who have risen in power and in some way challenge the gods. Not all of Golarion's deities approve of these heavy-handed methods, yet neither have any of the gods stepped in to directly oppose Achaekek. The Mantis God itself does not actively seek worshipers, but it has them nonetheless—He Who Walks in Blood is the divine patron of the assassins known as the Red Mantis, a group of infamous murderers who use the methods and themes of the Mantis God to strengthen their own notoriety. Achaekek's symbol is a pair of red manits claws clasped together as if in prayer.

Aroden (The Last Azlanti): Some 5,000 years after the destruction of Azlant, its last true son—the immortal hero Aroden—raised the *Starstone* from the depths of the Inner Sea, installing it in Absalom and becoming a living god. In time, Aroden became the patron deity of Taldor, a nation rife with Azlanti blood and hungry for conquest. As Taldor's influence spread, so too did the reach of Aroden's proud religion. Yet at the height of his faith's power, Aroden died, leaving his followers adrift and bereft of miraculous ability. Much of Aroden's cult turned to his divine patron saint, the missionary heroine Iomedae, but the full repercussions of the death of the Last Azlanti have yet to be felt. True clerics of Aroden no longer have any divine magic, although some cling to their faith and duplicate miracles with magic items, a handful of which might contain a spark of the god's power.

Formal raiment in the church still echoes the elaborate costuming popular when the church's center was in Taldor, with multilayered costumes and tall hats and helms supposedly designed in the fashion of the ancient Azlanti, with colors appropriate to the priest's national colors. Temples are usually elaborate buildings slowly falling into disrepair or being converted to temples of Iomedae. Aroden's symobl is of a winged eye in a circle.

Besmara (The Pirate Queen): Pirates rarely have the time or patience to dedicate their lives to worship, but all buccaneers know of Besmara the Pirate Queen. Said to sail the turbulent seas of the Maelstrom of the Outer Rifts in her grand ship *Seawraith*, Besmara's raids on places as diverse as Olympus, Axis, Heaven, and Hell are legend among certain circles of pirates. Yet few honestly worship her until their deaths loom large, be it in the form of a sinking ship, a ravenous sea monster, a violent storm, or a war at sea, at which point even the most callous pirate suddenly finds faith and prays to Besmara for just one more day of life. Besmara's actual priests are most commonly found in the waters off the Shackles or on the waterfront boardwalks of Ilizmagorti—those found at sea generally serve double duty as priest and captain, and their reputations on the seas are among the most notorious. Her symbol is the jolly roger, a black flag decorated with a skull and crossbones.

Droskar (The Dark Smith): Droskar once held promise as the greatest of Torag's students. Day after day he labored at the forge, and the designs he produced brought wonder and delight to all who beheld them. Droskar's greed for power and respect outstripped his good sense, though, and Torag soon uncovered the truth: Droskar's works were copies. He had kidnapped, imprisoned, and tortured a talented smith for the designs that garnered so much admiration. Torag's wrath was great, but rather than slay Droskar outright, he cast the cheat out of his kingdom and cursed him to struggle forever in a fruitless quest to produce an original work. Droskar recruited worshipers by promising salvation in return for ceaseless toil, or enslaved them and forced them to labor, but his followers could not inspire Droskar to originality. His presence gradually faded from Golarion, and while most scholars believe him dead, certain ruined temple forges still carry whispered prayers inside their halls. Droskar's symbol is a fire burning under a stone arch.

Ghlaunder (The Gossamer King): A demigod of parasites and infection, Ghlaunder's faith is a foul and festering blight that often takes root in small, defenseless, rural areas. Often, as the parasites they venerate, a cultist of Ghlaunder will serve a village as priest, posing as the faithful of an obscure cult or pagan religion while slowly encouraging worship practices that bring the locals unknowing closer to the Gossamer King. A cultist of Ghlaunder does not bleed his flock dry, but rather protects and aids them so that they will always be there for sustenance. When exposed, a cultist of Ghlaunder often preaches of the necessity of parasites and infection, lest the weak and old overrun the world.

Said to have been freed from a cocoon on the Ethereal Plane by Desna, Ghlaunder manifests as an immense mosquito-like monstrosity when he appears in the world, often paying secret visits to feed from the heart blood of his favorite followers. He favors drinkers of blood and fungoid creatures, and his symbol is a blood-fat mosquito.

Groetus (God of the End Times): The god of the end of the world, Groetus has no organized faith. Most of his worshipers are loners—either madmen who live on the street and prophesize the end of the world, or more dangerous megalomaniacs who actively seek methods to bring about the end of existence only to please their insane god. Groetus himself doesn't really care about his flock, since when he has his way, they will all be gone. He knows he will eventually have his way, because all things

Ten Other Gods

Deity	AL	Areas of Concern	Domains	Favored Weapon
Achaekek	LE	The Red Mantis, assassination	Death, Evil, Law, Trickery, War	sawtooth sabre
Aroden	LN	human culture, innovation, history	Community, Glory, Knowledge, Law, Protection	longsword
Besmara	CN	piracy, strife, sea monsters	Chaos, Trickery, Water, War, Weather	rapier
Droskar	NE	toil, slavery, cheating	Artifice, Charm, Darkness, Evil, Trickery	light hammer
Ghlaunder	CE	parasites, infection, stagnation	Air, Animal, Chaos, Destruction, Evil	spear
Groetus	CN	empty places, ruins, oblivion	Chaos, Darkness, Destruction, Madness	heavy flail
Kurgess	NG	competition, sport, self-sacrifice	Community, Good, Luck, Strength, Travel	javelin
Milani	CG	hope, devotion, uprisings	Chaos, Good, Healing, Liberation, Protection	morningstar
Sivhana	N	illusions, reflections, mystery	Knowledge, Madness, Magic, Rune, Trickery	bladed scarf
Zyphus	NE	accidental death, graveyards, tragedy	Death, Destruction, Evil, Plant, War	heavy pick

must end, whether or not he has worshipers. Some speculate that he might not even know he has worshipers.

The God of the End Times plays a small role in Pharasma's worship, for in her Boneyard, it is said that Groetus looms as a gibbous and huge moon in the sky above. No one knows if this "moon" is actually Groetus, his shell, or simply the object upon which he dwells. The few explorers who have braved this moon and walked upon its surface and do not vanish invariably return to the world as Groetus's newest insane cultists. The Gods likely know Groetus's secrets, but they refuse to speak of them. Groetus's symbol is of a full moon with the faint image of a skull seen in the pattern of craters that decorate its surface.

Kurgess (The Strong Man): Legends hold that Kurgess was born in a small village somewhere in Taldor, a simple farmer's son who grew into a towering, strapping young lad. One day, a traveling merchant's carriage ran off the road near Kurgess' home, and the towering man single-handedly lifted the carriage out of the ditch. So impressed was the merchant that he offered Kurgess a chance to become famous; he brought the simple man to the city of Cassomir and began entering him in numerous competitions and events. Kurgess won each of them, splitting the money with his sponsor. They went on the road, traveling from town to town and entering in one competition after the other. Be they contests of strength, speed, or endurance, Kurgess won them all. Yet eventually his fame grew too great—with each win, he left in his wake bitter and jealous rivals. Finally, during the third-annual Raptor Run in sprawling Oppara, his enemies caught up with him and rigged the event so that there was no way for anyone to win. Yet when the truth of the sabotage became clear, Kurgess managed to save most of the other competitors from death on a raptor's talons, but only at the cost of his own life. In attempting to avenge themselves, Kurgess' enemies had merely made him into a martyr.

In the decades to follow, Taldor's fortunes were destined to decline, yet word of Kurgess' luck, skill, and bravery spread. People took to calling upon his memory during competitions for luck and favor, and many local fairs and events began using his name to attract customers. In the last 300 years, rumors that Kurgess has returned to Golarion to attend festivals anonymously, either to participate and win or to protect those who compete, have seen his faith rising and spreading throughout southern Avistan. Kurgess' priests are generally travelers who carry small portable shrines, but tournaments, fairs, and competitions are their temples. Kurgess' symbol is a flexing muscular arm with a golden chain gripped in the fist.

Milani (The Everbloom): For many centuries, the Inner Sea region was dominated by the sprawling Empire of Cheliax. This changed drastically only 100 years ago when that nation's patron deity, Aroden, died. In the years to follow, even while the Thrice-Damned House of Thrune regained control of the nation's core, several outlying regions seceded to varying degrees of success. These times of upheaval were dark and grim, and in many cases, only hope carried the unfortunate citizens through. Many of them turned to new faiths, seeking guidance among any who would offer it. In the years immediately following Aroden's death, charletans and con artists were thick among these faiths as well, but one faith in particular rose to give the downtrodden not only hope, but to aid in organizing their rebellions in ways that could rebuild society rather than damn it to eternal barbarism. This was the faith of Milani.

Until Aroden's death, Milani herself was nothing more than a minor saint, one of dozens associated with the Last Azlanti. The patron of partisans and rebels alike, Milani's clerics became one of Aroden's widest-reaching inheritors, yet she never quite reached the popularity of Iomedae, perhaps because Iomedae still retained a valuable connection to humanity through her relatively recent ascension into divinity, but more likely because Iomedae's faith had already spread wide before Aroden's demise. Today, Milani's worshipers are generally small congregations in oppressive nations where hope and uprisings are the only chance at a better tomorrow. Her faithful have come to terms with the fact that once an uprising is successful, the need for hope fades—they understand this, and wait patiently in their small village chapels for the time when they will be called upon again to defend the common man from oppression. Milani's faithful

are currently most active in struggling Galt and some of the more unstable River Kingdoms. Her symbol is a rose growing to bloom between the cobbles of a bloody street.

Sivanah (The Seventh Veil): While mysterious Nethys is widely accepted as the greatest god of magic, other deities claim control over certain specific focuses in magic. Some of these, like Urgathoa's mastery over necromancy or Asmodeus's association with enchantment are well known. Other faiths are more obscure, but none are quite as mysterious as Sivanah. The patron of illusionists, tricksters, and those who work to preserve secrets and mystery, none can truly say what Sivanah's true form is, although most agree that she is a woman. Legend holds that she dresses in six veils, and that each veil is tied to a different race (human, elf, halfling, gnome, aranea, and naga); she can appear as any of those races while wearing the appropriate veil, but that she herself is an unknown seventh that masks her true race. Sivanah works her deeds through reflections in mirrors and the surface of water, and is said to speak to some of her followers through their own shadows. Her ultimate goals are secrets even to her most faithful, a level of secrecy that ironically prevents her faith from growing much more beyond the level of a cult. Worship of Sivanah is relatively strong in parts of Nex, Irrisen, and among illusionists throughout the world. Her worship is expressly forbidden in Nidal, for she is said to be one of Zon-Kuthon's greatest enemies, and views his use of shadows as a corruption and enslavement. Sivanah's symbol is six drab-colored veils knotted together.

Zyphus (The Grim Harvestman): Not every death makes sense. Those who have strong faith often seek to explain unexpected death as the "will of the gods," yet for many, this justification holds little sway. To them, such tragic deaths can only be explained by the influence of a malevolent, hateful force, something that seeks to bring ruin and sadness into the world. Unfortunately, there is some truth to this belief in the godling known as Zyphus.

Known as the Grim Harvestman and the harbinger of unexpected tragedy, cultists of Zyphus hold that he was formed from the enraged soul of the first mortal to die a hollow, meaningless death. Each additional accidental death is said to add to Zyphus's strength, so that some day he will be powerful enough to engineer the death of his most hated rival—Pharasma. The true believers of Zyphus preach that those who are slain by accidents they engineer do not travel on to Pharasma's Boneyard, but are instead captured by the Grim Harvestman, their souls consumed and absorbed by this malignancy. His cultists are widespread, but relatively small in number—they hold court in graveyards that have fallen from favor or otherwise no longer sit upon hallowed ground. Even in well-used and relatively safe graveyards, it is not uncommon to see carvings depicting Zyphus or his symbol on gate arches or vault roofs, wardings against the Grim Reaper. Zyphus's symbol is a heavy pick made of a femur, skull, and rib.

Archdevils

There are nine circles to Hell, each of which serves a different role in the punishment of sinful mortals, and each of which is ruled by a different archdevil. The lord of Hell and ruler of its deepest circle is Asmodeus, a god in his own right—the other eight Lords of Hell bow before him and exist to serve him even as they scheme among themselves for methods of gaining in power. Cultists of these other eight archdevils are uncommon outside of Cheliax, and even there they tend to exist in the shadow of the church of Asmodeus. Often, a worshiper of an archdevil is a lone cultist who keeps a small, usually hidden shrine, yet lives another life as an upstanding citizen. It is said that these cultists each bear a hidden mark upon their bodies, proof of their pledge to Hell.

Baalzebul: The Lord of Flies rules the seventh Hell, a frozen realm of icy seas and jagged glaciers. His whispers are brought to cultists throuh the buzzing of flies.

Barbatos: The current ruler of the uppermost Hell, Avernus, Barbatos holds the keys to the gateways into Hell, and has dominion over birds that feast on the recent dead.

Belial: Desire and adultury are the areas of concern for Belial, ruler of the molten layer Hell's fourth circle, Phlegethon.

Dispater: The immense city of iron-walled Dis is ruled by Dispater, Hell's greatest politician and jailer.

Geryon: The stinking swamps of Stygia are the dominion of the Serpent, Geryon, source of all great heresies and the venomous treachery of the snake's fatal kiss.

Mammon: Hell's treasurer and accounant, Mammon lurks in the dark and dreary sewers below Dis, a lightless realm called Erebus.

Mephistopheles: Silver-tongued Mephistopheles rules the Hanging Garden of Caina, and is the keeper of many of Hell's greatest secrets and contracts.

Moloch: Mighty Moloch, Lord of Malebolge, trains Hell's infernal army and wages his eternal war on Heaven and goodness throughout the Great Beyond.

Demon Lords

Whereas there are only nine archdevils, the number of similarly powerful demons is beyond knowing. The Outer Rifts of the Abyss fall away into infinity, and the legions of demons and their realms are endless. Nonetheless, certain demon lords have risen above their kin to become known and feared beyond the endless realms of the Abyss. Of these, some have even been rewarded with cultists or entire religions on the Material Plane. Chief among these few is Lamashtu, the Demon Queen and Mother of Monsters, the most widely-worshiped demon lord on Golarion. Yet numerous other demon lords have worshipers on the Material Plane as well, particularly among the drow, the northern regions of the world (most notably in the Worldwound), and in the Mwangi Expanse. The thirteen most widely-worshiped demon lords of Golarion are listed nearby.

Eight Archdevils

Deity	AL	Areas of Concern	Domains	Favored Weapon
Baalzebul	LE	flies, lies	Air, Death, Evil, Law	spear
Barbatos	LE	gateways, birds	Evil, Law, Magic, Travel	quarterstaff
Belial	LE	desire, adultery	Charm, Destruction, Evil, Law	ranseur
Dispater	LE	cities, prisons	Evil, Law, Nobility, Trickery	heavy mace
Geryon	LE	snakes, heresy	Evil, Law, Strength, Water	heavy flail
Mammon	LE	wealth, avarice	Artifice, Earth, Evil, Law	shortspear
Mephistopheles	LE	contracts, secrets	Evil, Knowledge, Law, Rune	trident
Moloch	LE	fire, war	Evil, Fire, Law, War	whip

Thirteen Demon Lords

Deity	AL	Areas of Concern	Domains	Favored Weapon
Abraxas	CE	magic, forbidden lore	Chaos, Evil, Knowledge, Magic	whip
Angazhan	CE	apes, jungles	Animal, Chaos, Evil, Plant	spear
Baphomet	CE	labyrinths, beasts	Animal, Chaos, Evil, Strength	glaive
Cyth-V'sug	CE	fungus, parasites	Chaos, Earth, Evil, Plant	scimitar
Dagon	CE	the sea, sea monsters	Chaos, Destruction, Evil, Water	trident
Deskari	CE	locusts, infestation	Chaos, Destruction, Evil, War	scythe
Kostchtchie	CE	giants, cold	Chaos, Evil, Strength, War	warhammer
Nocticula	CE	darkness, lust	Chaos, Charm, Evil, Darkness	hand crossbow
Orcus	CE	undead, necromancy	Chaos, Death, Evil, Magic	heavy mace
Pazuzu	CE	winged creatures, the sky	Air, Chaos, Evil, Trickery	longsword
Shax	CE	lies, murder	Chaos, Destruction, Evil, Trickery	dagger
Socothbenoth	CE	perversion, taboos	Charm, Chaos, Evil, Travel	quarterstaff
Zura	CE	cannibalism, vampires	Chaos, Death, Evil, Madness	rapier

Six Empyreal Lords

Deity	AL	Areas of Concern	Domains	Favored Weapon
Andoletta	LG	consolation, respect, security	Good, Knowledge, Law, Protection	quarterstaff
Ragathiel	LG	chivalry, duty, vengeance	Destruction, Good, Law, Nobility	bastard sword
Arshea	NG	freedom, physical beauty, sexuality	Charm, Good, Liberation, Strength	flail
Korada	NG	foresight, forgiveness, peace	Good, Magic, Healing, Protection	unarmed strike
Valani	CG	change, growth, primality	Chaos, Earth, Good, Weather	club
Sinashakti	CG	journeys, joy, messengers	Chaos, Good, Luck, Travel	shortbow

Four Archdaemons

Deity	AL	Areas of Concern	Domains	Favored Weapon
Apollyon	NE	Pestilence	Air, Darkness, Destruction, Evil	scythe
Charon	NE	Death	Death, Evil, Knowledge, Water	quarterstaff
Szuriel	NE	War	Evil, Fire, Strength, War	greatsword
Trelmarixian	NE	Famine	Earth, Evil, Madness, Weather	spiked gauntlet

Abraxas: Master of the Final Incantation, Demon Lord of Magic and Forbidden Lore. Abraxas is a hideous creature, with the head of a deformed and fanged bird and two writhing vipers in place of legs. His torso is humanoid, and he wields a whip that is forked like a snake's tongue. Abraxus is believed to know countless magical formulas, spells, and secrets, particularly those that cause great devastaiton and pain—including the "Final Incantation," a potent word that, when uttered, strips away and destroys magic.

Angazhan: The Ravener King, Demon Lord of Apes and Jungles. Angazhan appears as a towering blood-red ape with six long thin fingers, tusk-like teeth, and relatively small bloodshot eyes. His presence is strongest within the Mwangi Expanse, where his chattering brood, the simian charau-ka (known to outlanders as ape men), hold court amid the ruins and feast on the flesh of human cattle.

Baphomet: Lord of the Minotaurs, Demon Lord of Labyrinths and Beasts. Baphomet is one of Lamashtu's favored consorts, and while the original minotaurs were the childern of the Demon Queen, an increasing number have come to view Baphomet as their true lord. His cult is spreading among humanity as well, where he is secretly venerated in rual areas by those who have turned their backs on Erastil. Baphomet looks like a hulking, muscular minotaur with sharp teeth and immense horns—he wields a magical glaive made of rare red adamantine in battle.

Cyth-V'sug: Prince of the Blasted Heath, Demon Lord of Fungus and Parasites. The hideous Cyth-V'sug dwells upon a layer of the Abyss that consists of a single massive colony of parasitic fungus that transforms all it touches into an extension of its own vile consciousness. The Prince of the Blasted Heath dwells at the heart of this realm, a mishapen monstrosity the size of a house that constantly sees ways to infect creatures and plants elsewhere in its constant drive to pull other realms out of their proper place in the Multiverse and into his own tangled lair. The Material Plane has long been one of Cyth-V'sug's obsessions, and the demonic minions he sends there are often infested with deadly parasites who thrive in the flesh of mortal hosts. Cyth-V'sug's most powerful spawn, a unique demon called Treerazer, recently established a domain on the Material Plane, a move that raises concern that the Prince of the Blasted Heath may be closer to his goal than many think.

Dagon: The Shadow in the Sea, Demon Lord of the Sea and Sea Monsters. One of the largest demon lords, Dagon dwells in the depths of the Abyssal sea of Ishiar. Not quite fish nor octopous nor eel, the Shadow in the Sea often sends his spawn into the depths of Material Plane oceans to serve as high priests for vicious oceanic monstrostities like the sinister gutaki or the malevolent deep ones. His cult is also strong along remote coastlines, where societies of humans or marsh giants mix with icthyic visitors, taking them into their homes in exchange for good fishing or gifts of strange gold jewelry.

Deskari: Lord of the Locust Host, Demon Lord of Locusts and Infestation. Thought to be the son of Pazuzu, many scholars of demonoligy believe Deskari be the Usher of the Apocalypse. The insectoid demon long plagued the northern nation of Sarkoris, where his cultists were eventually driven into the Lake of Mists and Veils by Aroden. Yet with Aroden's death, the manifestation of the Worldwound and the demon armies that emerged speak to Deskari's growing influence over this reach of the Material Plane once again.

Kostchtchie: The Deathless Frost, Demon Lord of Giants and Cold. Born an Ulfen man possessed of a legendary temper and hatred of women and giantkind, Kostchtchie bargained with Baba Yaga for immortality. The result of his ill-advised bid for eternal life saw his body twisted and deformed into a hideous giant—Kostchtchie found eternal life only by becoming what he hated most. His hatred has since shifted to humanity, and he leads terrific wars against the northern tribes of Iobaria as often as possible, doing so through proxies and priests when he is unable to do so in person. His current goal is the destruction of the nation of Irisen, the next step in his vengeance against the Witch Queen Baba Yaga.

Nocticula: Our Lady in Shadow, Demon Lord of Darkness and Lust. As seductive and beautiful as she is cruel and sadistic, Lady Nocticula is the patron of the succubus and assassin alike. She appears in whatever form the observer most desires, shifting gender and race and appearance with unsettling speed—her true form is that of a shapely succubus with three tails and hooved feet. Her worship is strong among those who live by treachery and murder, and most of Golarion's largest cities unknowingly host assassin guilds devoted to her glory. The Red Mantis is a fierice competitor to the Nocticulan Slayer's Guilds, and when guild wars break out between the two, entire districts and cities suffer for it.

Orcus: Prince of Undeath, Demon Lord of Necromancy and the Undead. Although mighty Orcus is perhaps one of the most widely-worshiped demon lords throughout the countless worlds of the Material Plane, his cults have remained relatively small on Golarion due to competition from those dedicated to his rival Zura and the Pallid Princess Urgathoa. He appears as an immense fat humanoid with a ram's head, batlike wings, cloven feet, and a long stingered tail—his legendary weapon, the Wand of Orcus, is never far from his taloned hand.

Pazuzu: King of the Wind Demons, Demon Lord of Winged Creatures and the Sky. Pazuzu appears as a wiry human with eagle's legs and talons, a demonic avian head, two pairs of bird wings, a scorpion tail, and a writhing snake in place of his genitals. Pazuzu is an aggressive demon lord fond of possessing mortals to use them as tools to work his evils upon the world. It is said that Pazuzu can hear his name when an innocent speaks it unknowingly, and that this may be all that is needed to invite possession by the cunning demon. Certainly tales are ripe with evidence of Pazuzu's works upon the world, from the large (his hand in the formation of the Worldwound through

his ally Deskari) to the small (such as the Chopper murders in the small Varisian town of Sandpoint).

Shax: The Blood Marquis, Demon Lord of Lies and Murder. Cruel and sadistic, Shax revels in the act of torture and murder. He is particularly fond of eating the eyes of his living victims. His cultits are killers and warmongers who invoke his name for glory and luck in their bloody acts. Shax appears as a human man with a dove's head and birdlike legs and an immense collection of knives and other bloodstained weaponry.

Socothbenoth: The Silken Sin, Demon Lord of Perversion and Taboos. Sister and lover to Lady Nocticula, deviant Socothbenoth views all the world as having been created for him to take pleasure in. His tastes (and those of his faithful) run to the violent and destructive. Although fond of changing his appearance on a whim to aid in whatever pleasures he currently seeks, in his true form he appears as a lithe, handsome human man with black eyes, long brown hair, large pointed ears, and numerous body piercings of metal and bone.

Zura: The Vampire Queen, Demon Lord of Cannibalism and Vampires. Gothic and beautiful, Lady Zura is said to be the first vampire, an Azlanti Queen who succumbed early to that people's growing decadance. Tales of her cannibal feasts and baths of blood persist today as vague legends. What mysterious force catapulted her into the ranks of the demoniac is unclear, although evidence points to the influence of a forgotten Horseman of Famine. Zura often assumes the form of a voluptuous maiden, but in her true form appears as an almost skeletal woman with batlike wings instead of arms, blood red eyes and hair, immense fangs, and taloned feet.

Other Demon Lords: The depths of the Abyss may well be endless and infinite—the thirteen lords detailed above are by no means the full extent of the demon host. No less powerful than the thirteen presented in greater detail above, these additional fifteen generally have smaller or more remote cults. The names and titles of these fifteen are as follows.

Aldinach: She of the Six Venoms, Lord of Sand and Scorpions.

Andirifkhu: The Razor Princess, Lord of Knives and Traps.

Areshkagal: The Faceless Sphinx, Lord of Portals and Riddles.

Flauros: The Burning Maw, Lord of Fire and Salamanders.

Gogunta: Song of the Swamp, Lord of Boggards and Swamps.

Haagenti: The Whispers Within, Lord of Alchemy and Change.

Jezelda: Mistress of the Hungry Moon, Lord of the Moon and Werewolves.

Jubilex: The Faceless Lord, Lord of Poison and Ooze.

Kabriri: Him Who Gnaws, Lord of Graves and Ghouls.

Mazmezz: The Creeping Queen, Lord of Vermin and Bindings.

Mestama: The Mother of Witches, Lord of Hags and Deception.

Sifkesh: The Sacred Whore, Lord of Heresy and Suicide.

Urxehl: Trollfather, Lord of Storms and Trolls.

Xoveron: The Horned Prince, Lord of Gargoyles and Ruins.

Zevgavizeb: The God of the Troglodytes, Lord of Caverns and Troglodytes.

Empyreal Lords

Just as there are powerful and unique fiends who rule portions of the Outer Rifts of the Great Beyond, so too are there paragons of good in the brighter reaches of the Outer Sphere. These powerful angels exist in the realm between outsider and divine, and are known collectively as the empyreal lords. Sarenrae ascended to true godhood from this rank eons ago. Those listed below are those whose burgeoning flocks upon the Material Plane place them in the rarefied category of demigod.

Andoletta: Sharp-tongued and stern, wrinkled Grandmother Crow watches over the innocent, sternly chides the wavering, and raps upon the wicked with a walking stick made of willow.

Ragathiel: Patron of the valorous, five-winged Ragathiel leads a legion of spirits, among whom number some of the greatest heroes in history.

Arshea: Alternatively depicted as either a man or a woman, silken-skinned and androgynous Arshea dances amid many-colored veils, comforting the weary and freeing the repressed.

Korada: Korada sits within the Dream Lotus of Nirvana, balancing the spheres of existence in his mind and communing with enlightened spirits.

Valani: The Father of Islands, where Valani touches new lands are born. His whispers lead people to shelter and schools of fish, while his screams bring the storms and prove that nothing lasts forever.

Sinashakti: The dawn-skinned Walker of Worlds, Sinashakti sprints through the planes, eager to see all there is and learn the ways of all people. He knows stories in a million languages and shares them with all he meets.

The Four Horsemen

The fiendish lords of the foul plane Abaddon are known to mortals collectively as the Four Horsemen. Although certain shadowed myths speak of a fifth lord, the so-called Oinodaemon, this mysterious figure has not yet made its presence known upon the material world. The Four Horsemen are not represented by organized faiths or churches on the Material Plane, for the most part—rather, their worshipers venerate them out of fear or ignorance, actual clerics usually being among the more monstrous races of the world.

Apollyon: The Horseman of Pestilence is known also as the Prince of Locusts, a hulking ram-headed monstrosity that dwells upon the carcass of a dead god.

Charon: Perhaps the most powerful of the Four Horsemen, Charon's realm is the River Styx—he is the Horseman of Death, and the ferryman for lost souls that travel to the Outer Rifts.

Szuriel: Szuriel, the Horsman of War, is a black-winged woman with bleeding eyes and ragged teeth, and is the harbinger of countless battles and conflicts.

Trelmarixian: The youngest of the four, Trelmarixian is the Horsman of Famine, a jackal-headed man with crystal teeth and an unending hunger.

Four Philosophies

A philosophy takes as its central tenet not the teachings of a deity, but the teachings of a train of thought. In most cases, a philosophy is created by a mortal, and while philosophies often persist long after the founder's death, the founder himself is not a deity. Followers of philosophical ways of thought can (and usually are) of varied classes.

There are countless philosophies to choose from in Golarion. Some of them are simple concepts, such as atheism (the "gods" may be real, but not divine and therefore not worthy of blind devotion and worship), pantheism (veneration of all the deities as warranted by the situation at hand), and agnosticism (no mortal can say what is divine and what isn't—the workings of the divine are fundamentally unknowable by mortals). Others are so fantastically complex that very few creatures count themselves as followers of the philosophy, and fewer still claim to fully understand it.

Listed here are four of the most widespread, well-known, or notorious philosophies currently active on Golarion. For the most part, adherence to a philosophy does not preclude membership in another organization, prestige class, or religion, although there are certain implications in most philosophies that make some choices untenable—you wouldn't expect to ever see a diabolist priest of Desna, for example.

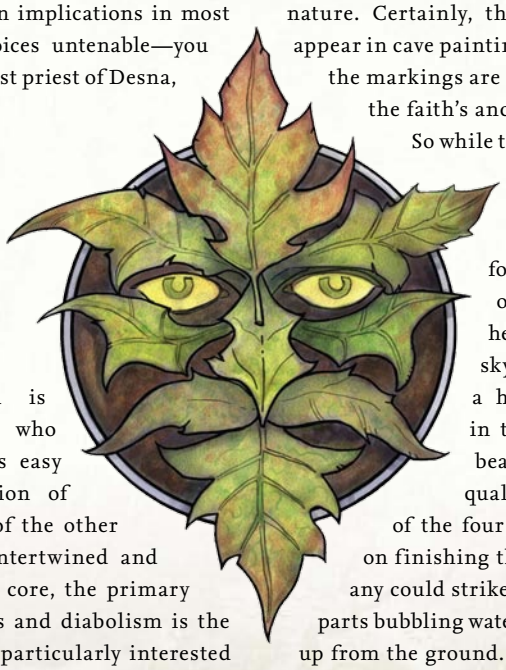


Diabolism

Veneration of the Nine Circles of Hell
Alignment: LN, LE
Scope: Regional
Centers of Belief: Cheliax
Associated Religions: Asmodeus

The philosophy of diabolism is often misunderstood by those who do not adhere to its tenets. It is easy to misunderstand, as the religion of Asmodeus and the various cults of the other eight archdevils are inexorably intertwined and support the philosophy. Yet at its core, the primary difference between these religions and diabolism is the simple truth that a diabolist isn't particularly interested in serving one of the Lords of Hell. His interests lie in the fundamental structure of Hell itself.

A diabolist sees each of the archdevils as architects of the purest form of society, and Hell itself as the model for which such a society must be based. There cannot be rulers without the ruled, cannot be pleasure without the existence of pain and suffering, cannot be light without darkness. The argument that good is defined by evil, and that kindness could not exist without cruelty is a favorite point of debate among diabolists. Many don't view their interest and admiration in Hell as evil, but as an honest and open appreciation of the simple fact that Hell is a necessity, and its rulers are not to be reviled but to be respected.



The Green Faith

Veneration of the Natural World
Alignment: Any neutral
Scope: Global
Centers of Belief: Andoran, Nirmathas
Associated Religions: druidism, Erastil, Gozreh

The concept of druidism is, many scholars believe, older even than the concept of faith. In the earliest days of the world, before even mortal man could envision such abstract ideas as gods or philosophies, the world in which he lived was a constant. The heat of the sun, the coolness of rain, the violence of the storm, the strength of the beast, and the beauty of the wildflower were all physical proof of the complexity and power of nature. Certainly, the fact that ancient druidic marks appear in cave paintings or carved in stone so ancient that the markings are little more than shadows testifies to the faith's ancient genesis.

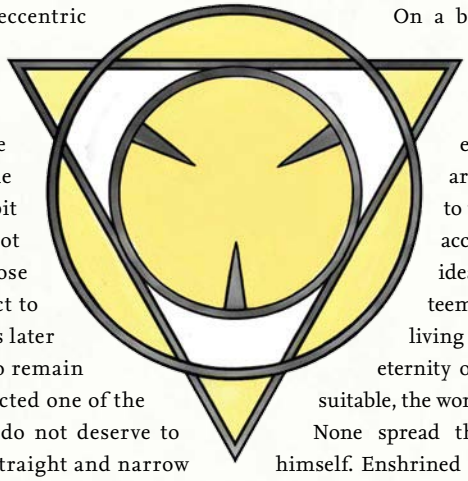
So while the philosophy of the Green Faith may be one of Golarion's oldest, its roots lie far beyond. Legends hold that the Green Faith first began in war, as four sects of druids battled for control of a great natural wilderness. One sect held their faith in the storms of the sky, another in the earth that provides a home to all living things, another in the strength and purity of the wild beast, and the fourth in the cleansing quality of fire. One morning, the leaders of the four gathered in a war-torn vale, intent on finishing their conflict once and for all. Before any could strike, a geyser that seemed made of equal parts bubbling water, soil, and snapping flames spiraled up from the ground. A host of multicolored birds sprung from the geyser and flew away before the geyser sank back into the ground. The druids realized that, although their methods differed, their philosophies all held root in the same concept, and where they had come to do battle they instead forged a lasting peace.

Dedicated worshipers of the Green Faith spend some time each day in deep meditation, communing with the natural forces. Peasants and farmers show their adherence to "the old ways" by hanging bundles of fresh herbs over their doorways, tending to their regions without disturbing the natural order, and showing respect for nature whenever possible. Not all druids are members of the Green Faith, but only the most bitter and disenfranchised druids scoff and deride the philosophy's values.

The Prophecies of Kalistrade

Achieve Wealth through Denial of the Physical World
Alignment: LN
Scope: National
Centers of Belief: Kalistocracy of Druma
Associated Religions: None

Based on the dream-records of an eccentric mystic from the early days of the Age of Enthronement, the *Prophecies of Kalistrade* teach a regimen of sexual and dietary prohibitions, exclusive adornment in the color white, and the wearing of full-length gloves to prohibit physical contact with those who do not follow this path to enlightenment. Those who adhere to the Prophecies can expect to achieve vast personal wealth and success later in life—followers of the Prophecies who remain poor or destitute have, invariably, neglected one of the philosophy's core teachings, and thus do not deserve to reap the benefits of a life walking the straight and narrow path of Kalistrade.



Followers of the *Prophecies of Kalistrade* have weathered the recent change in ages quite well—they feel sheltered from the panic and turmoil surrounding Aroden's death, and point to this as proof of the inherent superiority of following this philosophy over blind allegiance to a god. Gods can die. Thought and tradition can not. Many followers of this philosophy have come to believe that a time of transformation is at hand, a transition into an age where the gods become relics of the past, and the true followers of the prophecies shall inherit the world. Certainly, ongoing and relentless expansion and ever-growing financial holdings speak to Druma's continued growth in the years to come.

This philosophy's great strength is in its open acceptance of new members, regardless of gender, race, or background. Anyone capable of demonstrating the ability to adhere to the philosophy's strictures and thus amass personal wealth is welcome, making this philosophy (and the nation of Druma) a popular destination for refugees fleeing from Cheliax, or Isger.

The Whispering Way

True Life Begins With Undeath
Alignment: NE
Scope: Regional
Centers of Belief: Geb, Ustalav
Associated Religions: Urgathoa

Adherents of the Whispering Way believe that undeath is the truest form of life, an eternal reward for those clever enough to snatch it by any means necessary. The philosophy certainly predates its most famous convert, the necromancer Tar-Baphon, who came to be known by history as the Whispering Tyrant. The Whispering Way is a secret so potent it cannot be spoken aloud, written, or recorded. It must be passed mouth to ear, *sotto voce*, from one adherent to another. The secret is dry in the mouth when whispered. It smells of foulness and decay. Once heard, it is never forgotten.

On a basic level, the Whispering Way is a formula for becoming a lich. But it is much more than that. Domination of the gate from life to eternal undeath—even the mere pursuit of it—breeds arrogance and entitlement. Adherents to the Whispering Way believe—or more accurately come to understand—that the ideal state of life is undeath, and a planet teeming with life is inimical to this goal. A living world is an insufficient throne for an eternity of undeath. For conditions to be truly suitable, the world itself must die.

None spread the secret so widely as Tar-Baphon himself. Enshrined in his haunted capital of Gallowspire and bolstered by the terrified armies of enslaved Ustalav, the lich-king savaged neighboring nations, all in the hope of attracting the attention of his great enemy, Aroden. Tar-Baphon believed that the story of humanity's rise during the Age of Enthronement had become the story of Golarion itself, and that the fate of the world and of Aroden had become intertwined. By slaughtering Aroden on the field of battle, the Whispering Tyrant strove to drive a lance into the heart of the planet.

It didn't work. Aroden's attention remained elsewhere. The gambit instead drew the unified attention of Ustalav's enemies, and a triumvirate of nations drove their way to Gallowspire and imprisoned Tar-Baphon forever in the dungeons below his haunted tower.

But the Whispering Way remains a potent threat throughout the Inner Sea region, and indeed throughout the entire world. In the last century the legend has taken on a new dimension. Adherents to the Way don't know if Aroden's recent demise was at the hands of Tar-Baphon or not, and few of them care. Their metaphor has been satisfied, and they now move from a program of anticipating and bringing about the literal death of Golarion to planning for its inevitable aftermath.



THE GREAT BEYOND

The Great Beyond exists as a tremendous layered nesting sphere. Every plane within the Great Beyond is made of a finite but unimaginably immense hollow sphere of varying thickness and diameter. At the heart of the sphere lies the Material Plane.

INNER SPHERE

At the center of this Multiverse, the planes collectively known as the Inner Sphere hang suspended within the Astral Plane like the core of a ripe fruit. The Elemental Planes—Air, Earth, Fire, and Water—act like the skin of this core, arranged exterior to interior, physically bordering one another in a churning dance of miscible and immiscible, leading to mixed borders of such pseudo-elements as ooze, magma, and ice, while occasionally spawning even more unique admixtures. Beyond the Elemental Planes, deeper within, reside the dualistic Material and Shadow Planes, with the misty Ethereal Plane bordering between them. Buried deepest, and locked within the metaphysical space of their mirror offspring, the Energy Planes, the Positive and Negative, exist like twin poles of creation and destruction.

Elemental Plane of Air

The Elemental Plane of Air metaphysically surrounds the Material Plane like an idealized expression of the skies from any number of material worlds. Sparkling blue vistas mingle with regions of churning thunderheads, gently drifting snow, and massive banks of white clouds. Regions of storms grow increasingly frequent near the border with the Elemental Plane of Water, and it is not rare to find massive globules of water intruding into its neighboring plane like incongruous floating seas filled with all manner of marine life.

Air is scantly populated compared to the other Elemental Planes, with only a fraction of the non-native populations present in the other three, largely due to the lack of solid ground except for drifting chunks of ice and the occasional magically created platform of stone. Still, the plane is home to the djinn, residing in floating cities of their own creation; air mephits; elementals; and a surprising population of constantly warring silver and white dragons.

One of the Elemental Plane of Air's rare instances of solid ground is also something of an ancient mystery: great spheres of iron and bronze, apparently hollow and seemingly sealed eons ago by their vanished creators. Heavily weathered by

the passage of time, myriad lines of symbols and runes set into their surface long ago have since grown illegible, scoured away by the millennia. Despite their nature and origin being unknown, the spheres—most of them hundreds or thousands of feet across—are used as stable ground by many of the plane's natives, and especially non-native colonizers from the Material Plane. Curiously, though, the djinn abhor any contact with the spheres, although they claim as much ignorance of the spheres' nature as any other race. The genie's reactions might be grounded in pragmatism, however, as occasionally settlements built upon them vanish without a trace, leaving behind no clues that they had ever been there at all.

Elemental Plane of Earth

A place of solid, eternal rock, the Elemental Plane of Earth is riddled by caverns the size of planets, mineral veins like rivers, and hollow geodes like pocket crystalline seas. Unlike mundane caves and mineshafts burrowing into the earth on material worlds, the Elemental Plane of Earth is not a lightless place, although it is possessed of vast blackened reaches. Many of its caverns and open places are lit by phosphorescent crystals, miniature stars crafted and suspended by the magic of the shaitans, and glowing fungus that feeds off the slow trickle of water from the bordering Elemental Plane of Water.

Lit by natural or conjured light, precious stones, valuable ores, and pure veins of every metal imaginable riddle the plane's vast expanses. Without exception, the plane's natives realize this, and approach their wealth with differing perspectives.

The sinister and always mercenary shaitan genies rule a vast empire across this plane, led by Sultana A'shadieeyah bint Khalid of the Opaline Vault, and their view is distinctly pragmatic and mercantile. Locked into a ferocious war with the efreet of the neighboring Elemental Plane of Fire, the shaitans are more than willing to trade gemstones and minerals to extraplanar buyers, and do so most frequently to the nomadic janni merchant nations. On the opposite extreme from the shaitans, the native elementals are typically hostile to actions they see akin to putting a wound in the flesh of their parent plane. Somewhere in the middle, then, are the ruling nobles of the empire of the crystal drakes, a species of gem-like dragons who rule over vassal kingdoms of mephits, dwarves, and other minor races. The drakes, actual natives rather than transplanted true dragons, willingly sell what they see as a portion of their own hordes locked away in the stone "for safe keeping from shaitans and other thieves," in exchange for something of greater value (or whatever their fickle minds happen to become fixated upon) depending on the potential buyer's means.

Elemental Plane of Fire

The Elemental Plane of Fire is a plane of deadly beauty. From its border with Elemental Plane of Earth to the edges of the Astral Plane, it encompasses seas of flame, "snowfall" of burning embers, rivers of molten iron, scorching white skies dotted with ash-filled clouds, and sheets of flame oscillating with a panoply of colors like burning rainbows.

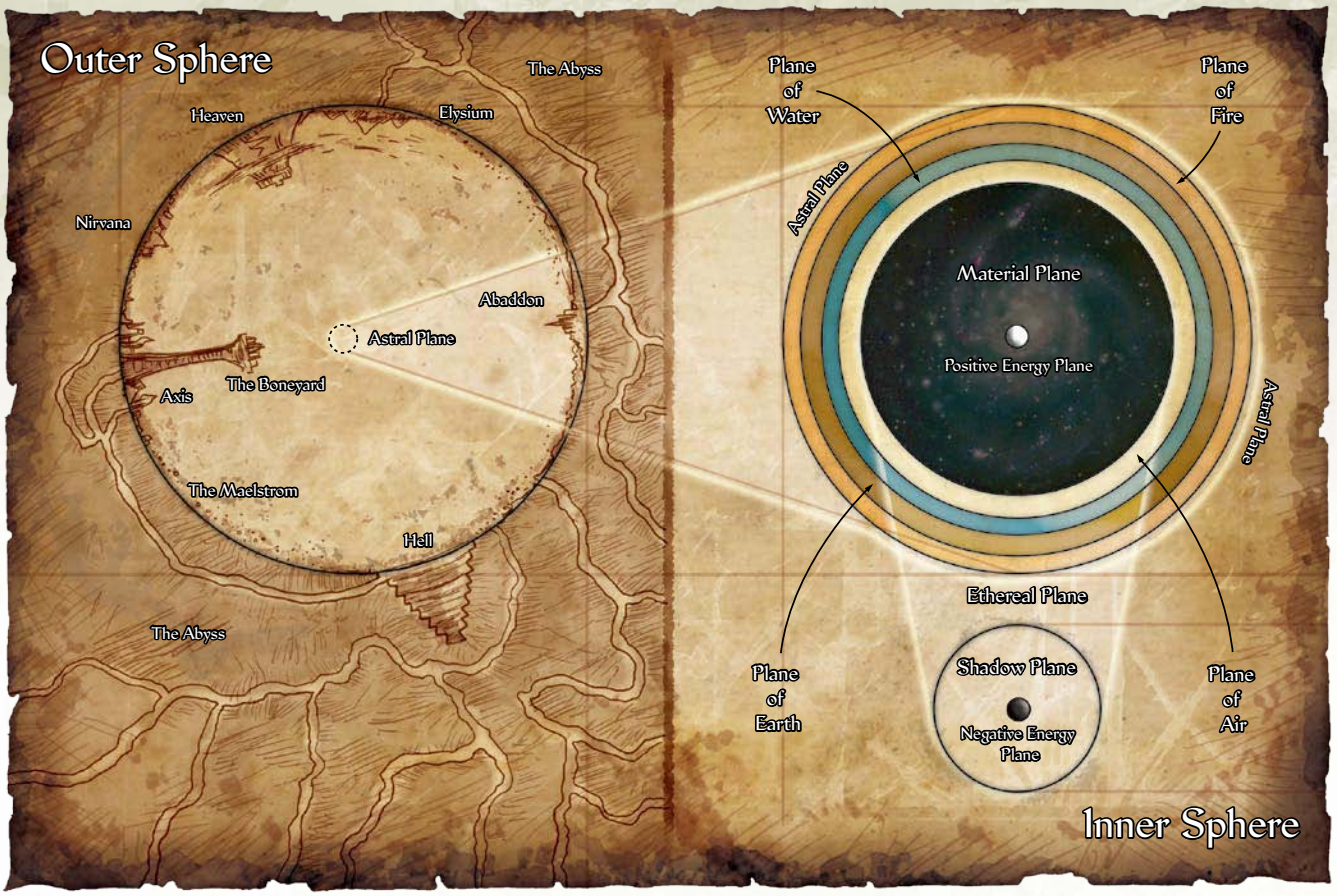
Outside of the animalistic fire elementals, the most recognizable natives are the tyrannical efreet. Ruled by their grand Sultan Hakim Khalid Suleiman XXIII, Lord of Flame and Khan of Magma, they dwell within grandiose palace cities that float atop the flames on hemispheres of iron and steel, and—for their imperial capital—upon gleaming brass. The City of Brass is the plane's most notable location. Without the protection of personal might, great wealth, or official status as a trader or diplomat, the efreet are notoriously quick to imprison and enslave outsiders. For those seeking shelter from the plane's worst conditions, or wishing to do business or gather information, the genies of flame are the first source, but yet they are not the only source.

Within a massive lake of molten copper on the border of Elemental Plane of Fire and Elemental Plane of Earth rise nine Great Spires of gold-veined crystal, the Ninefold Towers of the Matriarch of Holy Sublimation. Towering high above the flames, their golden impurities remain perpetually molten and locked within a cycle of deposition and sublimation within the quartz. Within their walls reside the ruling classes of a theocratic nation of fire mephits and a great underclass of azer slaves, ruled over by their eponymous matriarch. Widely known for their alchemical experimentation and long-running territorial disputes with the efreeti—and rumors of an alliance with the shaitans—the fire mephits are much more receptive to outsiders than the tyrants of brass, but they are also incredibly particular with regards to their extensive religious and cultural taboos.

Elemental Plane of Water

A vast liquid shell between the Elemental Planes of Air and Earth, the Elemental Plane of Water alternates between immense stretches of saline seas and freshwater oceans. A crystalline clear world illuminated by filtered light exists near the border with the Elemental Plane of Air, while the regions bordering the Elemental Plane of Earth fall into a perpetual twilight in the murky depths of silt and mud where the planes bleed and merge more fully.

Paramount among the natives of the Elemental Plane of Water, the marid genie-kin rule a vast but fractured empire that extends from the border with Air down to the twilight depths touching Earth. The self-demarcated rule of their various clans ends only with the reach of the light and the territorial claims of the great brine drakes and krakens. Bordering the marids' domain, and largely co-existing peacefully with them (although not always among themselves), entire nations of sahuagin exist who long-ago fled their homes on the Material Plane to become adoptive natives, along with smaller kingdoms of tritons, merfolk, water mephits, and all manner of mundane sea and freshwater life.



Despite the inability of most mortal creatures to breathe there, the Elemental Plane of Water is the most hospitable of the Elemental Planes when it comes to populations of adapted non-natives and the ease with which mortal visitors can find survivable conditions. Situated as it is between the Elemental Plane of Earth and Air, bits of both neighboring planes occasionally break away and intrude into the eternal sea, providing stable ground and pockets of breathable atmosphere, sometimes in conjunction when they collide.

One such great island of stone drifts through the depths with a magically tethered bubble of air and shelters the city of Vialesk, the capital of a small kingdom of gillmen. Descendants of the ancient and lost human empire of Azlant and possessing the blood of native marids, elementals, and mephits, the gillmen eschew allegiance with any of the plane's major power groups, and instead serve as neutral brokers of trade and diplomacy. The partially submerged capital extends upward into its pocket of air with soaring stone and shell towers, and down into the flooded interior of its rocky base, providing equal habitat for both air- and water-breathing occupants.

Ethereal Plane

A misty, fog-shrouded realm made of equal parts reality and illusion, the Ethereal Plane serves as the divider between the twin, mirror realms of Material and Shadow. The fluid, shifting ether overlaps the fringes of both realms like a shallow river between two very different shores, with distorted, hazy visions of both planes visible as if through frosted glass.

The Ethereal's position allows for travel between the Material and Shadow Planes. In places, the boundaries grow thin, both by natural variation and magical influence. Caution is urged, however, as it is by no means an empty no-man's land between antithetical realms. The Ethereal Plane is haunted by ghosts unable to release their hold on the Material world; shades tempted by but forever denied the touch of life; dreams and nightmares taken animate form within the mists; and the nomadic, predatory night hags who hunt the vulnerable spirits of dreaming mortals.

Legends also tell of stranger things within the Ethereal fog: paths to other worlds within the Material or Shadow Planes; doorways to the Outer Spheres constructed eons ago by unknown beings; and even a hidden pocket-plane, sequestered by the gods as a repository for their unwanted but beloved mistakes.

Material Plane

Golarion orbits its yellow parent star along with nearly a dozen other sibling worlds within a small, isolated corner of the Material Plane. While Golarion, with its great oceans

and diverse continents, is certainly a cradle of mortal life, it is not alone in this respect among its neighboring spheres. The Green World of Castrovel, sunward from Golarion, is covered by thick jungles, swamps, and swirling oceans of colored gas. Golarion's other nearest neighbor, the fourth world from their shared star, is the Red Planet of Akiton, a world of rusted deserts and vanished seas, strange monsters, and the warring empires of rival god-kings.

Other worlds participating in gravity's clockwork dance are known or suspected by Golarion's sages and astrologers, but their nature remains shrouded in mystery. Ancient Azlanti legends mention the existence of these other worlds, including lifeless orbs of desolate rock, massive spheres populated by alien entities swimming in seas of toxic gas, shattered worlds that retain their old orbits as clouds of rubble, artificial planets populated by the clockwork servants of long-dead creators, and frozen spheres whose inhabitants live in perpetual night. These same legends also state that the ancients constructed—or found already made—a series of magical gates connecting each of these disparate worlds, and perhaps even others beyond the gulfs of night.

As vague as legends can be, however, the truth is that the planets that orbit Golarion's life-giving sun are not the only shallow tidal pools of life within the Material Plane's star-speckled void. Other stars with other worlds exist, drifting in the dark with wonders and horrors all their own, and despite the separation, these remote cousins occasionally prove to be the source of beings both benevolent and malignant, who have in the past—or even now—influenced events on Golarion.

Negative Energy Plane

A jealous, hollow twin to the Positive Energy Plane, the Negative Energy Plane cannot create. It can only consume and destroy.

The devouring void forges twisted mockeries of the Material Plane's denizens, with the Shadow Plane itself the greatest expression of this warped emulation. Largely sterile and desolate, the Negative Energy Plane is yet populated by great numbers of undead, especially the more powerful and intelligent, as well as predatory flocks of sceaduinar, the "raptors of the void."

According to a rambling story told by the mad planewalking lich Xegirius Malikar, deep within the void is a sphere of polished black glass the size of an entire material world, known as Eternity's Doorstep, nearly invisible against the darkness if not for its own gravity well. Engraved upon its surface in uncountable languages were the words, "What you think of as life is a great deception. The faithful have already been claimed, taken, and saved. You are ours." While the lich was unharmed by the experience except for questionable effects on his sanity, he described the sphere as a "soul trap," ensnaring ghosts and shadows, and seemingly hungry for the spirits of the mortal dead. The sphere's nature, purpose, and very existence is an open, if deeply disturbing, mystery.

Positive Energy Plane

At the metaphysical heart of the Material Plane sits the cradle of life itself, the Positive Energy Plane. Spoken of by some as the embers of creation's forge, blown and tended by the gods, or something that existed even prior to the deities, it is the source of vitality and souls themselves. Pretty metaphysics aside, however, the raw vitality of the plane proves overwhelming to mortals and most immortals alike, incinerating their bodies within seconds of unprotected exposure.

Due to this, virtually nothing is known of its interior, save for barely intelligible fragments learned with extreme caution from the rarely seen beings of luminous energy who call the plane home. These energy creatures allude to embryonic gods, transcendent angelic beings singing souls into existence, and other deadly wonders. The truth of their tales might exist beyond the reach of mortals, but for the suicidally curious, natural gates exist at the center of each star within the Material Plane.

Shadow Plane

Isolated on the far side of the Ethereal mists, the Shadow Plane exists as a twisted reflection of the Material Plane. Like a funhouse mirror or a broken, warped pane of glass looking out into a caged menagerie, the Shadow Plane emulates the Material Plane's life but only manages to produce and populate itself with hollow perversions.

Where cities appear on the Material Plane, the corresponding region of Shadow might hold crumbling ruins or a metropolis swarming with its own creeping life. Deserts on the Material exist on Shadow as syrupy seas of leaking, wind-blown darkness and oceans as open, bottomless pits in the world of their dark reflections. The correlation is imperfect, and distances are grossly skewed from one plane to the other, making it a useful, if treacherous, method of travel. Transit from two points separated by many miles on the Material Plane might involve only a fraction of that distance on Shadow, and the reverse as well. Travelers should beware, however, as such transit often risks the attention of shadow creatures. In addition, missteps from a carefully planned course could spit out unwary travelers many leagues from their destination and into unplanned circumstances (such as deep within an ocean's depths or inside an active volcano).

The Shadow Plane is also known as the Plane of Death—not so much for any association with the afterlife, or any metaphysical quality with the soul or dying, but rather with the sense of physical oblivion due to its association with the Negative Energy Plane. In a very real sense, the Shadow Plane is a misbegotten child of the Negative Energy Plane, which sits nestled at the Shadow Plane's heart like a putrid, open sore, occasionally leaking its essence beyond its borders, sterilizing

swathes of Shadow and creating many of the types of undead commonly thought of as being natives of the Shadow Plane.

A portion of the plane's antipathy to natives of the Material Plane also stems from its use as a prison plane for the deity Zon-Kuthon. Although the deity long ago ripped free from his bonds, his eons of brewing hatred infected whole regions of the plane, and even now, the landscape there unconsciously enacts the imprisoned god's ancient desires, as if his dreams and nightmares sullied the plane's very fabric. Hinterlands affected by Zon-Kuthon still dot the planar landscape, drifting uncannily to where mortal planewalkers frequently pass. For his part, still making his home within Shadow, Zon-Kuthon shows little interest in altering the regions he long ago affected.

Astral Plane

Viewed from its exterior, the whole of the Inner Sphere resembles nothing so much as a great and burning star, clad as it were by the Elemental Plane of Fire. Beyond this point, a great and vast void surrounds the Inner Sphere, stretching out to the limits of sight and to virtually unimaginable distances yet beyond, ultimately reaching the edge of the Outer Sphere at the far reaches of this gulf.

By no means, however, is the void empty.

Like the rushing air of a forge bellows, or the solar wind of a true star, the flames of Elemental Plane of Fire whip and churn the Astral's metaphysical substance, casting it out into the void like thin clouds of drifting silver haze. As these winds near the Outer Sphere, some of them collide and aggregate, solidifying into nascent demiplanes formed and defined by the influence of what portion of the Outer Sphere they drift toward, or by the diffuse mental whispers of the memories of the dead.

Of all the Astral's visitors, only the souls of dead mortals are truly a constant. Carried along by currents within the silvery haze, like flocks of birds or schools of fish these souls group together and swim within the many branches of the vast River of Souls. The Astral's natives tend to give these spirits a wide berth, and many seem incapable of perceiving them, potentially through some natural law of the Multiverse or deific fiat. Beyond this natural protection, and the protection of numbers they exhibit within the river, it is not uncommon to see the river shadowed and watched over by protective natives of the Outer Planes. These Outer Planes natives might desire the safety of the souls out of benevolence or enlightened self-interest in ultimately receiving those souls due to them, their god, or their plane. Of course, these self-appointed guardians—including various celestials, inevitables, proteans, devils, and demons alike—frequently come into conflict with one another, despite a collective desire to see the souls reach their appointed destinations.

Migrating souls typically have little to fear during their long journey, with two major exceptions. Night hags, native to the Ethereal mists of the Inner Sphere, migrate through the Astral with their captured souls in tow like herds of cattle. Occasionally, the night hags come upon branches of the River of Souls where—faced with such opportunity to enrich their pull, destined for sale within the Abyss, Abaddon, and the courts of Hell—many hags fall into temptation. The other danger, virtually endemic to the plane, is the predation of the soul-collecting astradaemons. Like blind, anemic giants hybridized with translucent jellyfish, these fiends act like sharks within the Astral seas, devouring souls and carrying the partially digested essences back to their lords in Abaddon.

Still, the vast majority of Golarion's dead encounter no trouble during their journey, and although the routes they travel are innumerable, they ultimately arrive at a single destination: Pharasma's Boneyard.

Outer Sphere

Passing through the Astral Plane, at such incredible distances that the Inner Sphere's light is no longer distinct, the silver void ends at the edges of the planes that comprise the Outer Sphere. Arranged like a gigantic shell that surrounds the Astral Plane and the entire Inner Sphere, the Outer Planes range from heavenly paradises to infernal hells, domains of chaos and regimented law, and everything in-between. They are places of wonder and horror, the domains of Golarion's gods and beings stranger still, each plane existing like an island within the shifting wilderness of the chaotic Maelstrom.

Abaddon

Perhaps the most hostile of the Outer Planes, the waste of Abaddon stands as the source of the river Styx and is the native plane of the daemons. Dominated by the competing courts of the four god-like archdaemons, sometimes called the Horsemen of the Apocalypse, the remainder of the plane is filled by unclaimed wastelands and the fiefdoms of many minor lords and vassals to the Four. Like a land in the bleak aftermath of total depopulation via war or plague, the landscape is filled by an unnatural hush. A cold, cloying black mist shrouds the ground and the sky overhead feels heavy and rotten, shrouded as it is by the weird perpetual twilight of a solar eclipse.

The native daemons are the youngest of the fiendish races, born from the spark of mortal evil untainted by the dueling forces of law or chaos. They are bound to the existence of mortality, and they view its existence as a curse. Corruption and domination mean nothing to them, nor does physical pain and destruction. The daemons of Abaddon instead feast upon mortal souls and ultimately seek to bring about the end of all things, dissolving creation—and perhaps themselves with it—into a selfish suicidal oblivion.

Surrounded by the Plaguemere—a vast, continent-sized region of swamps and flooded forests—Apollyon, the Archdaemon of Pestilence, holds sway over the first daemon

court. Said to be the body of a god, or a protean lord dredged from the depths of the Maelstrom, the Throne of Flies is a gargantuan corpse whose broken, extracted bones rise piled atop one another miles into the dark sky, obscured by black clouds and flocks of leukodaemons.

The river Styx feeds the Plaguemere and filters out into the other Lower Planes and the Maelstrom before pooling below Pharasma's spire. The Styx is ruled by Charon, the Archdaemon of Death, lord of the thanodaemons. The Drowning Court resides within artificial islands chained to the shore and one another at the heart of a massive whirlpool, where eight branches of the river infernal mingle and swirl down into foaming darkness.

The third daemon citadel, the Cinder Furnace, is carved into the slopes and interior of a dead volcanic cone, surrounded for leagues by fields of razored obsidian, great yawning troughs of ashes and bones, and the fortresses of lesser daemonic nobility. Appearing as a black-winged, ivory skinned woman with bleeding eyes and piranha-like teeth, Szuriel, the Angel of Desolation, resides over the purrodaemons, living clouds of frozen ash bound into the shapes of soldiers with the mingled features of hyenas and crocodiles.

The final citadel is a tower of crystallized mucus that appears to perpetually pulse and flow from the lights of its inhabitants, like erratically firing nerves around some great teratoma. Riddled with passages and chambers filled with lymph, partially clotted blood, and spinal fluid, the tower's non-submerged pockets hold vast chambers of records and squirming masses of stolen souls. The final archdaemon is also the youngest, ruling over the meladaemons. The Lord of Wasting, Trelmarixian the Black, takes the form of an anemic, jackal-headed man with unnaturally elongated limbs, crystalline teeth, and a body composed of a constantly shifting and undulating syrupy black liquid, like a slurry of blood, bile, and mucus given form by a transparent membrane. Like their lord, the canid, shapeshifting meladaemons are among the most subtle of their kind, obsessed with the process of how souls are destroyed, and endlessly experimenting upon the damned, themselves, and—most disturbingly—other outsiders.

The Abyss

Winding through the Outer Planes, in places the Maelstrom breaks open—torn asunder by great, yawning cracks plunging down through the Outer Sphere to unknown depths—chaos itself is corrupted and reality curdles like spoiled milk. In these places, the Abyss waits and hungers, spawning forth myriad races of demons from the raw froth that boils and churns within, belched forth from the interaction of the Abyss with other planes, and even from the meddling of other fiendish races.

The Fifth Archdaemon

Rumors abound that the Four Horsemen serve a greater master, unknown to any outside of the daemonic courts. In truth, there is a region of Abbadon loosely bound by the four citadels, surrounded by a ring of ancient monoliths, cairns of skulls, and carved and petrified trees where space itself seems to bend, preventing entry to whatever lies within. Whatever that might be, the archdaemons periodically vanish into that interior realm. Darker rumors claim that the Four Horsemen killed this fifth member, or overthrew and bound it eons ago, and now dine upon its perpetually regenerating flesh like some perverse sacrament.



Unlike a mundane canyon or volcanic rift on the surface of a Material world, the gargantuan chasms of the Abyss are not bound by the normal laws of reality as most mortals conceive of them. Once over the yawning lip of a particular crack in the Outer Spheres, gravity is local, twisted, or in some cases non-existent. Each chasm opens into a different layer of the Abyss: some dump the unwary doomed into burning netherworlds or acidic seas with no visible connection to the chasm just plunged into, while others might open into enormous forested regions with a land of exploding volcanoes hanging above like a sky on the opposite side of the original chasm. Everything is local, everything is meaningless, and pain is part and parcel of the land itself.

The rifts that open up in the surface of the Outer Sphere rarely lead to a layer claimed by one of the various demon lords and queens, but instead to unclaimed territory, and frequently into regions of the Abyss currently in flux or claimed by multiple fiendish lords. The opening rifts frequently change and shift without rhyme or reason, belching forth marauding armies of demons from their depths or else eerie, desolate silence in the aftermath of demonic struggles on the other side.

All of the various rifts are interconnected, twisting and changing connections perpetually, like the shifting of great metaphysical tectonic plates deep within the ground of the Outer Sphere. One constant—beyond inconsistency, even—is the River Styx. The dark ribbons of Abaddon's tainted water run alongside the majority of Abyssal openings, flowing out of or cascading down over the edge and into the depths perpetually. Such is the connection of the river infernal to the Abyss that within 24 hours of a shift in location by a given rift, the riverbed dries, vanishes, and reappears at its linked destination, offering the damned souls within a cursed escape from the depths.

The demons of the Abyss are among the oldest beings of the Great Beyond, originating at the same time or shortly after the elementals of the Inner Sphere and the proteans of the Maelstrom, rising out of a corrupted portion of the chaos lands, or perhaps most disturbingly having ripped their way into the Outer Sphere from somewhere outside. The most powerful demons—such as Abraxus, Cyth-V'sug, Dagon, Deskari, and Pazuzu—possess unique forms and godlike powers. The demon queen Lamashtu exists as a paragon of her kind by having actually claimed the mantle of true divinity, temporarily transcending her jealous kindred in their eternal struggles. To the demon lords' credit, godhood has not enabled Lamashtu to dominate or destroy them—just hold them back more effectively.

Axis

Axis, the plane of rigid perfection and unyielding Law, surrounds the base of the Great Spire of Pharasma, like a perfect axle and a bastion of order against the malignant forces of the Maelstrom and the Abyss. Composed of a single, massive city, Axis extends out from the spire toward its neighboring planes, separated from one another by the shifting borderlands of the Maelstrom. Such is the antipathy of Axis's denizens to disorder that more ferocity is given to guarding over those walled borders than to the waters of the Styx that lap against the base of Pharasma's spire.

Axis holds idealized versions of houses, public institutions, barracks, factories, and temples, while massive spires of crystal and stone rise above the skyline, carved with theorems and equations: the laws of Axis and thus of reality itself. There are no shortages of labor or raw goods, no social disorder. The native population possesses a selfless, almost hive mentality. Everything moves according to the best interests of universal order: the discovery of laws and the promotion of the collective will of Axis for what its natives view as the obvious betterment of the Multiverse.

Unlike the similarly ordered planes of Heaven and Hell, which the denizens of Axis view as compatible, if misguided at times, Axis is not ruled by any single race of natives. The outer walls are watched over by legions of inevitables, while other groups of that construct race are regularly sent out to battle the forces of the Maelstrom across the planes. Deep underground, great hives of formians mine the substance of the planes and provide the raw materials to expand and improve the perfect city, while drifting high above like artificial clouds, a variant of their race—more wasp-like than ant—live in paper-thin metallic hive colonies. The third major group of natives, who plan and direct the operations of the plane at ground level, are known as the axiomites. They appear as humanoids of many different races—seeming to correspond to the original race of the soul that birthed them—but with distinct differences. When they move, the axiomites disperse into moving hive-like clouds of fine, golden crystalline dust, resolving into moving patterns of equations before they finally coalesce back into their bodily forms.

The Boneyard

Every soul passing through the Astral migrates toward a Great Spire rising up from the surface of the Outer Sphere that physically reaches into the silvery void, attracting the swirling currents of souls like a mundane lightning rod in the center of a storm.

Situated at the top of the spire, the deific domain of the goddess Pharasma rises up as a vast necropolis filled with solemn courtyards, graves, monuments, and forums teeming with the souls of the newly deceased awaiting judgment—be it self-imposed or external. Each vast court bears the motifs and styling of the plane to which it corresponds, containing celestial or infernal heralds who await the arriving dead, and gates allowing for a soul's egress once its fate is determined.

The souls in the Boneyard are each assigned to their ultimate destination within the Outer Sphere, be it Heaven,

Hell, or any other plane or god therein. When the ownership of a soul is in dispute, deific representatives petition them to settle their claims, although in the case of souls bound by contract to an archfiend or similar planar entity, Pharasma herself plays the determining role. Angels, avatars, devils, demons, and innumerable other proxies of gods and the planes themselves reside within this purgatory, arriving and departing with each conflicted soul, with one singular exception: daemons. The soul-devouring fiends are exclusively forbidden, although Pharasma still allows for Abaddon's natural allotment, passing on those corrupted spirits without comment as she does with all souls naturally migrating to a plane without any pre-existing association with a god or other contractual bindings.

The Boneyard is not exclusively dominated by Pharasma's court, though. Floating above the landscape like a sentient moon, the minor god Groetus watches the shuffle and judgment of souls with grim dispassion, waiting for a day when the last soul is judged. The godling's relationship with Pharasma is unknown, as are his intended actions far in the future, although it is thought that unclaimed souls might at that point default to his authority. That, coupled with his title, "God of the End Times," is perhaps telling, if unsettling.

Far beyond Pharasma's palace and the surrounding necropolis, the souls of the neutral dead reside in much the same way they did in life, living an idealized mortal existence in regions that mimic the landscape of the worlds they originated within, or alternatively those they dreamed of living within. These souls are not free from danger or violence, only the natural hazards of the mortal world, such as disease, starvation, and age. "Death" in their afterlife is followed by a natural cycle of reincarnation, and many of the boneyard's souls seek a state of balance and enlightenment, ultimately merging with the plane, or choosing rebirth back into the mortal sphere.

One group of souls stands apart, however—atheists who actively denied their own afterlives. Unlike agnostics—whose souls Pharasma judges against their own character without punishment, like many other souls without a pre-determined fate—the truly atheist have, in a way, impacted their souls' solidity and disrupted their natural ability to migrate through the Astral. Many remain behind as ghosts or similar spirits on the Material Plane, others fall into the hands of fiends, while those who reach Pharasma's palace are locked away within the tombs and graves therein, awaiting an unknown, uncertain fate below Groetus's grim, eternal vigil.

Elysium

Elysium is a plane of good unhindered by law, a land of unrestrained passions and emotions, and a land where the creative spark is coaxed and adored with all the force of a benevolent storm. A land of many terrains, Elysium encompasses a wild variety of climes ranging from thick evergreen forests to jagged mountain ranges and lush—if isolated—river valleys, all presenting a place of unplanned, wild beauty.

To the unprepared, Elysium might seem harsh and uninviting, with little of civilization's trappings, but a deeper understanding of the plane reveals its true character. Elysium and its native inhabitants desire two things: selfless cooperation or hardy self-sufficiency.

More often felt than seen, the native celestials operate with little regard to order and structure, constantly moving about and eschewing cities or large, formal settlements. Foremost among them are the fey-like azatas, of which the bralani and ghaele are the most common and well-known. Omnipresent across the plane, they usually appear as formless balls or collections of glittering, winking lights, although they often masquerade as localized weather phenomena or as elf-like humanoids.

Secondary to the azatas are the lillendi. Winged humanoids with the lower bodies of rainbow-scaled serpents, the lillendi dwell in small groups, coming together infrequently to collaborate on the race's true passion: musical or artistic pursuits. The bards of Elysium otherwise constantly travel across their plane, most often encountered through the beautifully haunting echoes of their songs rather than seen or otherwise directly encountered.

The one exception to this rule of wandering impermanency are the titans. These towering, regal humanoids dwell in hidden castles atop the highest, most isolated peaks, and in floating palaces in the clouds higher still. Their true history is an open question, and while they are not native to Elysium, they arrived there eons ago and have established some agreement with the celestials of Elysium.

Heaven

The celestial mountain of Heaven rises high above the landscape of the Outer Sphere, nearly to the heights of Pharasma's spire. It is situated as the bulwark of enlightened order and the redoubt of organized compassion. Surrounded by glittering walls of glass and gold, magically tempered to the strength of iron, its gates are guarded by the native archons who shepherd each arriving soul to the region on the slopes that best reflects their character—and when at all possible—reunites them with loved ones or comrades who wait for their arrival.

Heaven is divided into seven distinct regions, with each watched over by a single unique archon granted power by a deep spiritual communion with the plane itself. The regions begin at the outer gates leading onto Heaven's slopes and end with the area surrounding—but not including—the peak. Although not rulers of the plane's souls in the strictest sense, these unique archons act as shepherds to the spirits of dead mortals and beloved commanders to the archons. The archons are those souls who, upon entry into Heaven, climbed the mountain on their own in response to what

they collectively describe as a voice calling to them by name, asking them to serve for the common good. Having listened to that voice, they vanished into the heights and then later descended, transfigured and given a place within the archons' ranks.

Linked to this transfigurative event, the very summit of the heavenly mountain is a mystery precisely because of what it does not contain. The peak of the mountain holds a garden surrounded by a golden wall, with a single arched entryway, but one whose gates long ago fell away. The archons do not prevent travelers from approaching the gates, but visitors report a tremendous sense of power and majesty from within, as if the entire mountain was somehow concentrated and even personified by something just beyond. Some claim to have seen a brilliant, fruit-laded tree at the garden's center, others a massive throne awaiting an occupant worthy to be seated there, while many see nothing at all. Yet the garden's gate remains open—perhaps waiting, perhaps calling—for the souls of the just and worthy to reveal its true nature to them alone.

Hell

The domain of the god-fiend Asmodeus, the Prince of Darkness, Hell is a constructed plane rather than one claimed fully-formed or coaxed from the wilds of the Maelstrom. Best described as multiple planes stacked within and upon one another, each layer of Hell is a labyrinth of planned and calculated evil whose gates swing wide to an even deeper truth revealed to those deemed worthy enough to breach them or corrupt enough to perceive the path. Each layer of Hell, like stacked dolls of gold and iron, is ruled over and administered by one of the archdevils, paragons of their kind and suzerains of the god-tyrant himself. Eight layers are known and feared, but the palace of Asmodeus himself resides beneath them all, in a ninth layer so dark and deep that few have seen it and fewer still wish to.

The Iron Wilderness of Avernus is the first layer of Hell as seen from the borderlands of the Maelstrom and the walls of Axis. A blasted wasteland of volcanic rock interspersed with lakes of cooling magma, the souls of those damned to Hell assemble here like press ganged soldiers, marshaled by diabolic overseers to the gilded fortress courts of the layer's titular ruler where they are judged, weighed, and shuffled off to the deeper layers below.

The court of Dis supplies a constant stream of soldiers to the layers above and below. Inside the burning walls of Dispater's garrison-cities, the wrathful dead are trained and transformed by combat alongside the most elite souls of the other seven courts. Exiled into the wastes, the slothful damned are used as target fodder for the archlord's waxing armies, and in the interim they make easy prey for daemons on the shores of the Styx.

The searing sewers of the city of Dis comprise the third circle of hell—darkened Erebus. Here at the eternal counting house of Mammon, Hell's material fortunes of conquest are listed, its supplies cataloged, and its outbound soldiers equipped.

The Burning Legions of Phlegethon are a place and a thing. It is to Phlegethon's foundries and smelting pits that mortal souls not deemed worthy of joining the armies in Dispater's cities are sent. Here, amid the clang of hammers and the stench of burning flesh, those souls are melted down, purified of weakness and rebellion, and recast into the forms of devils according to the will of Hell's rapine forgemaster, Belial.

Populated by temples to the base sins and the libraries of diabolic scholars, Stygia is where the sages of Hell scribe new lies to inflict upon mortals to lead them astray, especially heresies to split apart the faithful of Asmodeus's deific rivals. The River Styx flows through this realm, connecting the stinking swamps and dark seas of the realm to the canals of Dis and other, more distant realms. Serpents rule these swamps, and are in turned ruled by Geryon, one of Hell's most accomplished tempters, a creature whose whispers may have spawned more heresies than any other.

Deeper still, the layer of Malebolge is a smoldering forest covered in a constant snow of white ashes, where the damned are falsely rewarded within Moloch's palaces of silver and stone. At a pre-selected time, or upon failing their hosts in some subtle manner, the damned are released and hunted by Moloch's vassals for sport.

In the seventh circle of Hell, a realm of frozen oceans and razored glaciers known as Cocytus, frozen cities squat where the souls of mortals eternally starve within their prisons of black ice, while the devils gorge themselves in full view of the ever-watching but never partaking damned. Baalzebul, the Lord of Flies, rules this frozen wasteland, where swarms of flies cover heaps of wasted food from the debauched meals, and their biting cousins torment the hungry damned.

Below these frigid reaches lies Caina, a realm of iron and steel cages suspended above an almost living darkness. Mortal souls hang suspended from the ramparts and bridges of Mephistopheles' domain, at the center of which rises his vast palace.

Of the deepest circle of hell, a searing volcanic desolation known as Nessus, very little is known beyond the fact that here, in Hell's fundament and genesis, rules the greatest devil of all, the Prince of Darkness—Asmodeus.

The Maelstrom/Limbo

Collectively referred to as the Maelstrom, vast swathes of uncharted, unclaimed terrain borders and surrounds each of the Outer Planes. Mysterious and dangerous wild lands untouched by the gods, these regions lack the cohesive stability present in all of the other planes; even the hellish depths of the Abyss possess a structure that the Maelstrom does not.

Rather than some ever-changing sea of randomness, when viewed from the edge of another plane, the Maelstrom appears

much like that of its adjacent neighbor. The differences grow more profound further away from the stabilizing anchor of the borderlands, eventually falling back into the mutable freedom of perpetual change. The Maelstrom defies the efforts of mapmakers, as its very character shifts and flows like the tide of an unseen ocean, to which the borderlands are but shores and calm shallows. Crystalline forests melt like candle wax into shallow brine seas with jewel-like icebergs, and then sublimate to vast parched deserts, all within the stretch of days. Still, islands of stability do exist within the depths of the Maelstrom. These islands are ruled by petty gods, exiled fiends, and fallen celestials, and even the rare stronghold of a mortal wizard or priest-king can be found holding itself against the metaphysical lapping tide.

Creatures wandering in from the structured planes, long since grown native, populate the Maelstrom's borderlands, often possessing characteristics and behaviors at odds from their origins. Deeper still, chaos beasts, chaos incarna, and the mysterious serpentine proteans thrive within an environment of plastic potentiality. Claiming to be the first children of the Outer Planes, the keketar, imentesh, and naunet proteans worship godlike beings they refer to as the Speakers From of the Depths, whom scholars speculate to be something akin to a pair of conjoined gods or a single dualistic entity.

Nirvana

Nirvana's idyllic expanse is filled with rolling pastoral hills, breathtaking mountains, and lush forests of every clime, with the landscape encountered by travelers curiously matching their expectations of a restful, physical paradise. Beyond appearances, though, there is mystery and there is majesty.

Nirvana's native celestials correspond to the plane's dualistic aspects of Good—one turned inward and the other turned outward. The agathions are those souls who have delayed their own transcendence in order to protect Nirvana and contemplate its hidden mysteries, while the angels are those who have turned outwards, prepared to martyr themselves on the Material Plane, within the Maelstrom, and even in the Lower Planes themselves in the defense of universal benevolence.

Dwelling near Nirvana's fringes, the leonals guard its planar gates and borders, the avorals dwell in monastic, contemplative seclusion, and the ever-wandering vulpinals travel across the plane like blissful itinerant philosophers. Each race of agathion follows the teachings of a single, elder member of its kind, said to be the first mortal souls to reach Nirvana, each of whom transcended to some greater existence. These elders, having witnessed Nirvana's hidden secrets openly in those primal days, willingly returned to guide all those who came after them. Each type of agathion sends representatives to Pharasma's court to act as shepherds to mortal souls. Other agathions exist with their own unique ways of serving their plane and ethos.

Legends abound of hidden citadels, doorways in the depths of forest glades, and stairways atop the plane's highest peaks that reveal themselves only to those capable of understanding what lies beyond—or those in dire need. These apocryphal tales speak of the souls of long-dead and vanished heroes waiting for times of great danger, the souls of the truly innocent dead in peaceful repose, and a titanic dragon of unknown type attended by celestials reading the dreams of gods within the reflections in his scales. The agathions do not deny these legends—and their lords smile knowingly—but they state that the truth finds only those who seek it, just as they do.





Organizations

While nations and major religions can command vast resources and control large swaths of land or huge numbers of people, they do not alone compete for loyalty. In addition to church and state, many people feel influence from various other groups. These groups can vary wildly in size and purpose, from local thieves' guilds interested only in filling the pockets and bellies of their members to vast international commercial conglomerates with their own private armies.

The largest of these organizations compete with lesser (or sometimes middling) sovereign nations in wealth, power, and influence. In some cases, such as with Cheliax's Hellknights, sovereign nations go so far as to rely upon the powerful groups from time to time. In other cases, such as with the Red Mantis, even nations bow to their power.

Smaller groups, while lacking in resources, can nonetheless occasionally inspire even greater zeal from their members. Those groups that strive to grow in size, influence, or wealth frequently attract more dedicated and motivated members.

This chapter looks at five of the most influential and important groups in the Inner Sea region: the mysterious and slightly sinister Aspis Consortium, the earnest and sometimes annoying Eagle Knights of Andoran, the tough and pitiless Hellknights, the widespread and curious Pathfinders, and the deadly and distinctive Red Mantis.

In addition, the end of this chapter takes a look at a handful of smaller organizations that nonetheless exert enough influence to be known beyond a single city, nation, or region.

Aspis Consortium

Alignment: NE
Headquarters: Various Chelish cities
Leader: Aspis Prophet
Prominent Members: The eight Patrons
Structure: Loose affiliation of tiered agents
Scope: Regional
Resources: Real property, other material, and liquid assets worth tens of millions of gp across Avistan and Garund

To most of the world, the Aspis Consortium is a secretive, wide-ranging group of merchants and non-landed nobility with a private army of agents, mercenaries, and cheap labor. The world regards the Aspis Consortium, under its ubiquitous banner of a rampant serpent upon a shield, with equal measures of respect and worry.

While its agents are consummate mercenaries—interested only in profit and little beyond that—the Aspis Consortium is one of the major hands in international trade and often the only source for rare, extremely valuable commodities. This penchant for the exotic ingratiates the company with the nobility of many nations, even as its agents wander largely unimpeded with their hired swords in tow. The Consortium's mostly positive public image assures that in whatever nation it operates, most of its labor force and much of its mercenary support is local, recruited from among the native populace. The fraction of wealth that thusly filters down to the citizenry engenders a fair amount of goodwill, especially when combined with its already extant favor from higher quarters.

Why, then, would there be another shade of opinion?

An undercurrent of suspicion surrounds the Aspis Consortium's true motives, loyalties, and—ultimately—whether any goal beyond profit lurks beneath its public persona. Surely the masters of the Consortium must bow to some greater power. Surely there must be some purpose behind their profiteering beyond personal enrichment. The only question, then, is what? It's a question often asked, if rarely in the open, for worry that the Consortium's fingers and ears run wide and deep.

The truth of the Consortium's success is that, while good merchants know their market, the Consortium refuses to become a slave to supply and demand. It actively manipulates its buyers to make markets more favorable or to create a market where none would otherwise exist. Crops fail, and the Aspis Consortium provides imported food, gaining the gratitude of people entirely unaware that the Consortium itself engineered the blight. Nations go to war, and the Consortium provides weapons to both sides, having likewise fostered the rise in tensions that led to the bloodshed.

The Aspis Consortium's use of mercenaries gives it a certain distance from the actions of its agents and a valid claim of plausible deniability when those agents (often unaware of their true masters) perform actions that would damage the Consortium's public face. Away from prying eyes, the group practices a mix of uncaring ruthlessness and outright malevolence in the name of profit. Death, torture, starvation, disease, and all other forms of human misery are either unintended side effects of business or ways to actively foster demand for their products.

The majority of Aspis Consortium employees are not actually members. Most of its unskilled labor and simple mercenaries work on a job-to-job basis, hired temporarily or placed on retainer, knowing little of the group as a whole.

Agents of the Consortium are grouped into three tiers, bearing the names of three different metals corresponding to small badges they carry (almost always concealed) somewhere on their persons. Bronze Aspis Consortium agents are skilled mercenaries, former professional solders, and educated members of the mercantile classes or lesser nobility picked for a particular skill-set or knowledge of a given region. All possess a drive for profit or power to the exclusion of many other things. Still, this bottom tier has little sway outside local operations, and a lack of information is usually not something they question, thanks to the gold filling their purses. Silver Aspis agents coordinate multiple operations and sift through intelligence gathered by their lessers. Above them, Gold agents control the operations within entire regions (not necessarily confined to distinct national borders), and above them are the Consortium's true masters, collectively named the Patrons.

Masked by this overly mundane title, these eight men and women keep their identities a closely guarded secret. They meet once every other new moon in a different Chelish city, never fully revealing their faces to one another and never gathering as a full group if anyone beyond their circle might be present, including lower-ranking agents. Of the Patrons, enough grounded rumors exist to only speculate upon the identity of five: a male half-fiend illegitimate heir to a major Chelish house, a priestess of Zon-Kuthon, a female gnome alchemist, a former Andoren nobleman, and an exiled Druman merchant-lord. As for the others, the rumors run wild and dark.

The Aspis Consortium first appeared in Cheliax, and to the current day, many of its operations center there and within that nation's former colonial holdings. The majority of Avistan's nations recognize the group's charter, making the Consortium omnipresent in most major centers of trade and commerce. Without the full resources of a nation-state, the Consortium sponsors many distant trade outposts and operations far from its typical buyers and those nations who recognize its compact. Distance allows for a maximization of profits with a minimum of ethical concerns.

Eagle Knights of Andoran

Alignment: LG
Headquarters: Golden Aerie, Almas
Leader: General Reginald Cormoth
Prominent Members: General Andira Marusek, Marshal Helena Trellis, General Hedrik Traxxus
Structure: Military hierarchy
Scope: National
Resources: Numerous castles, citadels, and fortresses across Andoran

The Eagle Knights of Andoran are viewed by many as a shining example of the best of humanity in the face of a dark and cruel world populated by tyrants and filled with injustice. Others view them as benevolent but misguided ideological imperialists. Based within the nation of Andoran, the Eagle Knights find inspiration in its creed of common rule by the people, free mercantilism, and the respect of individual liberty. In many ways, they are best characterized as a military order devoted to the preservation and spread of Andoran's philosophical tenets.

The common impression of an Eagle Knight is that of a soldier or paladin dressed in the blue and white regalia of the order and clad with the hallmark golden epaulets. Even the least foot soldier within the Eagle Knights' ranks stands among the best of the Andoran military from which most of their number are initially recruited. Not all Eagle Knights are so open in their self-identification, however, nor are they all recruited from the upper tiers of the Andoran military, or even from the Andoren people.

Frequently operating beyond the borders of Andoran, the Eagle Knights recruit non-traditional soldiers, many of them from the diverse ranks of adventurers and others equally at ease on the battlefield, performing diplomatic missions, or delving into a crypt beneath a ruined city. Rogues, bards, and rangers find equal opportunity alongside fighters and paladins so long as they hold to the same philosophical and nationalistic beliefs. Barbarian and druid Eagle Knights are exceedingly rare. Clerics and arcane spellcasters are actively recruited into the organization's fold, bypassing the typical military origins of their fellows. Clerics of allied churches often straddle a line of loyalty, though within Andoran this line often becomes very blurry as both are wont to cooperate in their shared goals. Wizards and sorcerers are prized for their diverse and powerful abilities. Diviners are especially valued for their abilities to plumb the future and provide detailed information that oftentimes eludes agents on the ground, even deep-cover sleepers.

Structure and Activities

The order's current leader is General Reginald Cormoth, paladin of Iomedae and a sitting Executive Consul of the Andoran People's Council. Cormoth serves as the Eagle Knights' public face—spokesman as well as commander.

Officially known as the Guardian Tower of the Golden Aerie, the Eagle Knights' headquarters is a massive, seven-story column of white marble whose interior was quarried and converted into a gigantic watchtower overlooking the Andoren countryside. The column itself is ancient, and prior to its restoration 150 years ago, it was part of a sprawling, cyclopean ruin discovered and explored by Eagle Knights who carried the column back, piecemeal, as a spoil of conquest to the greater glory of Andoran. The exact location of that ruin, and the circumstances behind its discovery, are not entirely clear outside of the Eagle Knights' higher echelons, but following the column's restoration, the Knights erected a golden statue of Talmandor atop it in honor of their—and Andoran's—celestial patron. Rumors persist that the column and the ruins in which it was found might be connected to an ancient center of archon influence on Golarion, or that they might have some deeper connection to the legendary avoral lord himself.

Cormoth has held his position within the Aerie for a decade. Before that he served as a high-ranking member of the Andoran military and, most importantly, the unacknowledged operational leader of the Eagle Knights' Twilight Talons. In his present role, Cormoth serves as the hand behind the Eagle Knights' operations within Andoran and as an elite adjunct to the standard Andoren military and its foreign and covert activities, with each of these areas' operational management delegated to his three under-marshals.

Below Cormoth, General Hedrik Traxxus of the Golden Legion, General Andira Marusek of the Steel Falcons, and the publicly unnamed Marshal Helena Trellis of the Twilight Talons control the three branches of the Eagle Knights' operations. Collectively, any ranking member of the order is known as an Eagle Knight, with their respective branch added to their title for formal address. For instance, General Traxxus is an Eagle Knight of the Golden Legion.

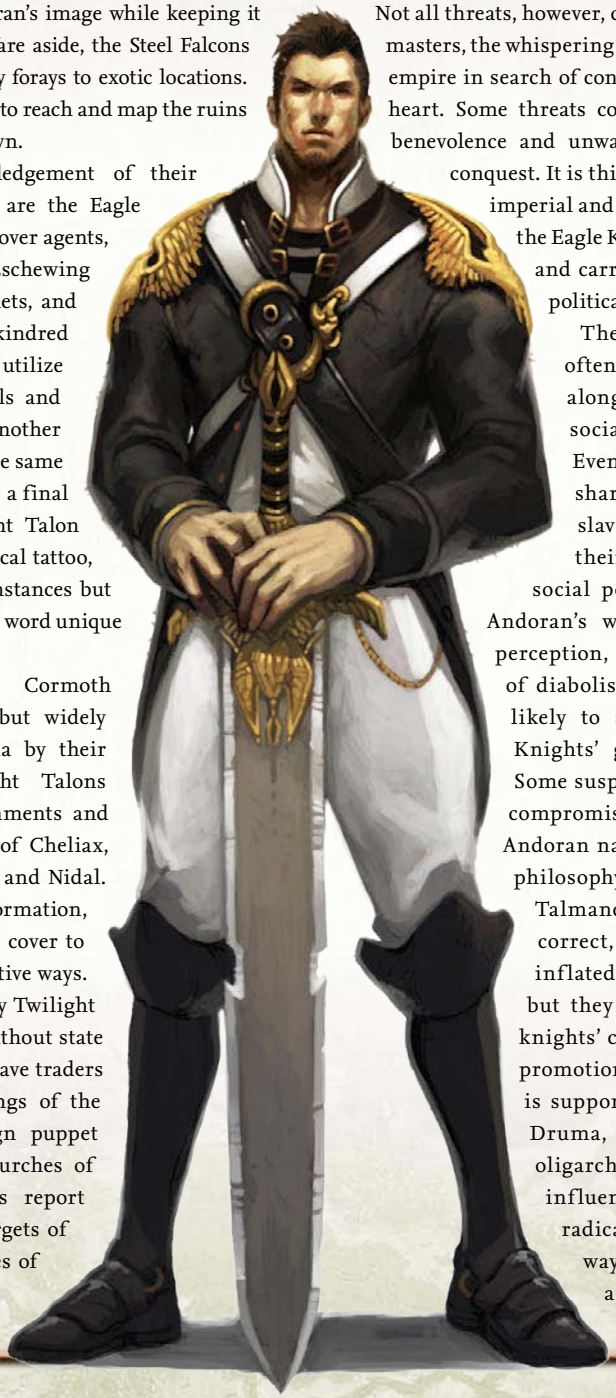
Operating within Andoran, the Eagle Knights of the Golden Legion operate alongside the nation's military as elite adjunct units, doubling as field commanders and trainers depending on the needs of a particular area. The Golden Legion guards Andoran's borders and its interior trade routes and keeps a watchful eye on the nation's wilder regions. In the infamous Darkmoon Vale, for example, the Diamond Regiment operates under Commander Ingrid Odeber, the woman many say General Traxxus is training to take his place.

Not simply bound to serve as defenders of Andoran proper, the Eagle Knights of the Steel Falcons act beyond their patron state's borders, spreading Andoren philosophy like armed missionaries. Although the Steel Falcons do not openly acknowledge it, their

foreign activities include guerilla, shadow, and proxy warfare directed against groups threatening Andoren security and those holding hostile ideologies, particularly the slave trade. In fact, the Gray Corsairs—a fleet of unmarked ships infamous for sinking a trio of Katapeshi slave-galleons and dozens of allied pirate vessels—are crewed, supplied, and directed by the Steel Falcons. In recent years, the Steel Falcons have launched operations against inland interests of Katapeshi's faceless overlords, pirates of the Shackles, and suspected mercenary proxies of the Cheliax-based Aspis Consortium. Hoping to spread their ideology to other nations, the Falcons even provided a small number of military advisors to the fragile government of Nirmathas, helping to mold that nascent land in Andoran's image while keeping it free of Molthune's control. Warfare aside, the Steel Falcons have made numerous exploratory forays to exotic locations. The results of one recent attempt to reach and map the ruins of legendary Kho are still unknown.

Operating without acknowledgement of their existence, the Twilight Talons are the Eagle Knights' spies, saboteurs, deep cover agents, and—at times—its assassins. Eschewing the uniforms, symbology, epaulets, and other overt regalia of their kindred Knights, the Twilight Talons utilize a covert system of hand signals and passwords to recognize one another and prevent their discovery by the same groups they seek to infiltrate. As a final identifying mark, each Twilight Talon operative is marked with a magical tattoo, invisible under ordinary circumstances but revealed by speaking a command word unique to each individual tattoo.

Known only to General Cormoth and Marshal Helena Trellis but widely speculated upon with paranoia by their affected targets, the Twilight Talons have agents among the governments and militaries of Andoran's rivals of Cheliax, Taldor, Katapesh, the Shackles, and Nidal. These spies only provide information, rather than risk breaking their cover to act in more immediately disruptive ways. More open action is provided by Twilight Talons who infiltrate groups without state support, such as independent slave traders and pirates, mercenary hirelings of the Aspis Consortium, and foreign puppet extensions of the diabolist churches of Cheliax. The Twilight Talons report their findings and pinpoint targets of opportunity for the larger forces of the Steel Falcons.



Perception and Rumors

Despite their noble intentions and the prestigious light in which the citizens of Andoran hold them, the Eagle Knights are not always held in high regard outside their patron nation's borders.

Realms such as Cheliax and Nidal are feared for being beholden to infernal powers and seeking to expand the mortal dominion of their distant masters—the collective lords of Hell and the god Zon-Kuthon, respectively. Likewise, should the crumbling empire of Taldor ever seek an expansionist renaissance, a return to its ancient days of conquest and cultural assimilation would be feared by all of its neighbors.

Not all threats, however, come at the direction of diabolic masters, the whispering of mad shadows, or a crumbling empire in search of conquest to obscure its own rotten heart. Some threats come wrapped in callous, blind benevolence and unwanted ideological and cultural conquest. It is this threat that many of Andoran's imperial and aristocratic neighbors fear, and the Eagle Knights are viewed as the heralds and carriers of Andoran's high-minded political infection.

The support of the Eagle Knights often comes to those who need it, along with a push for Andoran's social and government model. Even enlightened nobles who share the Eagle Knights' hatred of slavery feel a creeping worry that their own success and entrenched social power might be threatened by Andoran's waxing ideological tide. This perception, rather than the open hostility of diabolists and slave traders, is more likely to stunt and inhibit the Eagle Knights' goals in the world at large. Some suspect that the Eagle Knights are compromised by loyalties divided between Andoran nationalism and their founding philosophy as inspired by the legendary Talmandor. Perhaps such concerns are correct, and perhaps they are over-inflated by the Eagle Knights' rivals, but they exist nonetheless. While the knights' crusade against slavery and the promotion of open trade between nations is supported by the merchant lords of Druma, some within the mercantile oligarchy worry about undue foreign influence from Andoran's more radical political elite arriving by way of their smiling, always well-armed missionaries.

Hellknights

Alignment: LN (although often skewed toward LE)
Headquarters: Varied
Leader: Varied
Prominent Members: Lictor Uro Adom, Lictor Richemar Almansor, Lictor Severs "Boneclaw" DiViri, Lictor Resarc Ountor, Lictor Rouen Stought, Lictor Toulon Vidoc, Vicarius Giordano Torchia
Structure: Multiple orders of crusading law-bringers
Scope: National
Resources: Varies (individual order resources vary from 12,000 gp to multiple million gp)

They are law without exceptions, justice without mercy, punishment without recourse. They are the weapons of desperate times and soldiers with the force of will to do whatever must be done. They are intimidation, relentlessness, and conviction. They are the black-gauntleted fist of absolute order. They are the Hellknights.

Grim-armored law enforcers disinterested in social goodliness and exceptions to the rules, Hellknights exist to enforce and stringently maintain order. In their iron-handed exaction of law—specifically, the codes of their varied orders and that of their home country of Cheliax—Hellknights emulate the most organized and effective armies in all the planes: the legions of Hell. They are not concerned with morality. They are not concerned with methods. They are concerned with results. If men cannot be trusted to obey the law out of their own senses of civility and social righteousness, then they will be treated like beasts and obey out of fear of a master's stern hand.

Although severe, the Hellknights are not an evil group. There are doubtlessly numerous evil members—particularly among the upper echelons of power—but the majority of members are lawful neutral, with members of all lawful alignments filling out the ranks of each order.

To strengthen their resolve, Hellknights study the methods, laws, tactics, and atrocities of Hell. They train with summoned devils until battles with mortal foes seem like welcome dalliances. Through soul-shaking horror, they seek to purge themselves of emotion, replacing it with steely discipline. Thus, Hellknights learn that sacrifices must often be made for the greater good, obey draconian regimens of military conduct, commit to encyclopedic memorization the laws of their orders and local governing bodies, and undergo constant drills to temper both body and mind.

While widely feared and respected, most Hellknights join out of a sense of duty and a desire to be a part of something greater, seeing a world ruled by just law and free of rampaging beasts and cheating thieves as a future well worth striving toward—even at the sacrifice of some freedoms. Countries and rulers sometimes invite Hellknights into their lands, leaving the dirty business of harsh law enforcement to an already loathed third party. Convincing Hellknights to leave once they've been welcomed sometimes proves problematic, though.

Hellknight Orders

In addition to their shared goals of enforcing law and bringing absolute order, most Hellknight orders have unique methods and specialized interests.

The Order of the Chain: A man lifts himself upon the backs of other men, or so believe the Hellknights of the Chain. Fugitive slaves, escaped convicts, and runaway indentured servants are their favored quarry, although freedom fighters, revolutionaries, and—on a more altruistic note—slave owners who keep their servants past a prearranged term also capture the chain-clad Hellknights' attentions. Unlike many of its brethren, the Order of the Chain rarely executes those who offend its code, either returning its quarry to their proper bondage, reselling them as slaves, or permanently detaining them in the order's prison-headquarters of Citadel Gheradesca on the cliffs outside Corentyn. Master of Blades Mardinus is the former slave of the order's Orsirion-born Lictor Uro Adom, and holds himself as an example of the heights to which one can attain through obedience to the social order.

The Order of the Gate: From its redoubt Citadel Enferac in the western Menador Mountains, the secluded Order of the Gate deals and bargains with fiends in ways that give even the other Hellknight orders reason to dread. The crimson-cloaked signifers of the order outnumber the rank-and-file Hellknights three-to-one, and they claim to be granted otherworldy knowledge of egregious crimes before they are committed. While the signifers' infernal servants wreak their will in the world beyond, the order's actual members turn their efforts toward gleaning knowledge from the planes and the guardianship of some vague charge. The Hellknights of the Gate have no lictor, and are instead overseen by the ever-masked Vicarius Giordano Torchia.

The Order of the God Claw: The pentomic Order of the God Claw extols variations and virtues of five lawful deities, distilling select tenants into a dogma far from any one god's faith. Although the God Claw venerates aspects of Abadar, Asmodeus, Iomedae, Irori, and Torag, it is unclear from which of these gods it draws its power; indeed, it is possible that its own convictions grant it divine strength. Where other orders of Hellknights enforce their visions of law out of a sense of duty and grim necessity, the God Claw does so out of religious fervor and a belief that the world must forcibly be set upon a righteous path. The sharp-tongued Lictor Resarc Ountor preaches his order's iron-shod doctrine from its fortress Citadel Dinyar at the headwaters of the River Isled. Clerical signifers and other religious members of the order have access to the Glory, Law, Protection, Strength, and War domains.

The Order of the Nail: The only order of Hellknights with headquarters outside of Cheliax, the Order of the Nail relocated to Citadel Vraid in the Mindspin Mountains near Korvosa 26 years ago. Tenacious brigand-hunters and crusaders against savagery, the order members' interests often parallel those of local law enforcers, although their forbidding ways unsettle many provincial lawmen. Lictor Severs "Boneclaw" DiViri—so nicknamed for the distinctive gauntlet he wears to cover his fire-withered left hand—commands the order and proves markedly open to requests for his Hellknights' aid.

The Order of the Pyre: The Hellknights of the Pyre view faith as the clearest window into the darkness of a man's heart. Seeking out cults of imaginary gods, crude shamans, and backwater witches, the order sees heathenish belief as an impediment to civilization and excuse for lawlessness. Hunts for practitioners of godless faiths often lead the Hellknights far from their home in Citadel Krane outside the port of Ostenso—particularly into the depths of Garund. A strict atheist, Lictor Rouen Stought eyes the strange religions of Jalmeray with particular distaste, and while wise enough not to provoke the Vudrani on their island home, her men frequently hound travelers from the Impossible Kingdom.

The Order of the Rack: The Hellknights of the Rack contend that knowledge can wound as deeply as any blade. With this in mind, they seek out and cleanse dangerous knowledge. What qualifies as unlawful information varies, from the unholy texts of demonic cults, to revolutionary prints from Galt, to many of the more egalitarian philosophies of the ancient Azlanti. These writings coerce men to think frivolous thoughts, making them more likely to sow discord than the seeds of the next season's crops. The order takes an example of dangerous learning as its symbol, and often uses the rack to prove the danger of misguided invention. On the second Oathday of every month, Lictor Richemar Almansor hosts public burnings of confiscated texts in the shadow of Citadel Rivad near Westcrown.

The Order of the Scourge: With anonymity and no consequences, every man becomes a criminal. The Order of the Scourge combats the lawless tendencies within mortal hearts through ever-present watchfulness and brutal reminders that no crime goes unpunished. It employs a vast network of informants, pays bounties for substantiated accusations, and publicly metes out grim punishments. Under the perfectionist Lictor Toulon Vidoc, the Hellknights frequently travel from Citadel Demain near Egorian to patrol crime-ridden slums and annihilate criminal organizations.

Lesser Orders: Numerous lesser orders of Hellknights exist, although few are known outside the borders of Cheliax. For example, Egorian's Order of the Scar stalks murderers and assassins, while the Whisperwood's Order of the Pike hunts down monsters that flourish in civilized lands. Although less pervasive, these smaller orders are only slightly less feared than their better-known brethren.

Hellknight Titles

Hellknight orders are first and foremost military organizations, and as such, they share a system of ranking individuals based on their skills, experience, and exemplary enforcement of their order's tenants.

Lictor: A general of a Hellknight order.
Vicarius: A scholarly leader of a Hellknight order (rarely used).
Master of Blades: A marshal commander of a Hellknight order, second to a lictor.
Paravicar: A leader of a Hellknight order's signifers.
Paralictor: A Hellknight officer.
Signifer: A Hellknight arcane or religious spellcaster.
Hellknight: A rank-and-file soldier in a Hellknight order.
Armiger: A Hellknight in training, a Hellknight squire.



Pathfinder Society

Alignment: N
Headquarters: Absalom
Leader: Decemvirate, names unknown
Prominent Members: Janiff Ivulxtin, Ezralow Glyphcatcher, Ling Yayao, Evni Zongnoss
Structure: Loose affiliation of like-minded explorers
Scope: Global
Resources: Lodges and small holdings in most major cities in Avistan and Garund, a network of venture-captains and agents throughout the same regions, and moderate budgets at most lodges

The greatest heroes of Golarion's modern age record their victories in an ongoing series of chapbooks known as the *Pathfinder Chronicles*. The amazing, often unbelievable tales bound in these oft-traded volumes tell of lost gods and sunken continents, of creatures older than the world itself who fell from the stars in the eldest days, and of the fantastic ruins they left behind. These volumes also tell the stories of people, of individuals who experienced some of the very best and very worst Golarion has to offer.

The authors of these tales belong to the Pathfinder Society, a loose-knit group of explorers, archaeologists, and adventurers who span the globe in search of lost knowledge and ancient treasures. Some seek to unlock the secret history of the world, piecing together the past one fragment at a time. Others are in it for the money, filtering priceless antiquities through a series of unscrupulous merchants to enrich themselves beyond measure. Other Pathfinders take up the trade because they find the thrill of risking their lives more addicting and exhilarating than any vice or drug.

The Pathfinder Society was founded 400 years ago by the original Decemvirate, a shadowy group of masked individuals whose identities are unknown and unheralded. Presumably, the composition of the Decemvirate has changed in passing centuries, but when or how the Ten recruit new members is as secretive as their makeup.

Operatives known as venture-captains coordinate teams of Pathfinder agents in their assigned regions, tipping them off to ancient legends, passing along newly discovered maps, and supporting efforts in the field. Each venture-captain oversees the activities of several tightly-knit groups of Pathfinder field agents who conduct much of the exploration and adventure that fuels the society as a whole. Venture-captains are fairly autonomous but still answer to the Decemvirate. The ultimate goals of the Decemvirate are inscrutable, and not even the venture-captains understand the full picture of what the Pathfinder Society does with the information it collects.

The society makes few demands on agents. It does request a 10% assistance fee from all money or treasure found. There is no reckoning or oversight of this percentage to the society's coffers, and some agents of dubious character (even published ones) brag that they have never given a single copper to the society. Presumably, the money that members do choose to give is sufficient for operations.

Agents are expected to provide detailed written reports of their exploits to their venture-captains, who then forward the most compelling records to the Grand Lodge in Absalom for consideration by the Decemvirate. Periodically, the masked leaders of the society collect and publish the greatest exploits into new volumes of the *Pathfinder Chronicles*, which they send back to their venture-captains in bulk for distribution to field agents. Whenever a new volume of the *Pathfinder Chronicles* hits the field, dozens of adventurers flock to the sites described therein for further exploration and adventure.

Although they belong to the same society, individual groups of Pathfinder agents often find themselves at cross-purposes in the field, particularly if each team reports to a different venture-captain. Competition between Pathfinders rarely results in outright battle, but certain agents aren't above collapsing passages, triggering ancient traps, or selling out their rivals to hostile natives—all in the name of friendly competition, of course.

Although volumes of the *Pathfinder Chronicles* are technically intended only for the eyes of Pathfinder agents, unaffiliated adventurers, crooked scholars, and ambitious antiquarians also track down stray volumes and use them as maps to adventure. Even the oldest volumes, whose subjects have been plundered again and again, often contain hints leading to undiscovered treasure.

In recent years, former venture-captain Surit Shema has begun acquiring copies of the *Pathfinder Chronicles* and reproducing them for sale to the public. Shema sometimes updates stories that he finds lacking before reproducing them. The chapbooks are hungrily lapped up in the River Kingdoms, surrounding lands, and points beyond. Even those who never leave their home cities thrill to the tales within. Shema's reproductions can be troublesome for agents who try to follow one, only to find that Shema "updated" a critical passage to his liking. An experienced eye can tell a cheap Shema reproduction from a real *Pathfinder Chronicles* chapbook, though few who read them are of such discerning caliber. If the Decemvirate dislikes Shema's burst of capitalism, it hasn't shown it.

The Grand Lodge is a great fortress complex within Absalom proper, and it is quite public. The outer doors almost never close, and Pathfinder agents stumble or stride

across its threshold at all hours. Janiff Ivulxtin is a Garundi venture-captain of the Grand Lodge. Janiff maintains order in the Lodge by overseeing everything personally and getting rid of agents quickly. He keeps a file of relatively safe but time-consuming jobs to keep new, untested agents from loitering. At the Grand Lodge, Janiff is the primary authority figure. He receives communications from the Decemvirate regularly through a small, rotating, pass-through door.

In addition to Janiff, several other members of the society stand out among their many peers. Ezralow Glyphcatcher, a churlish know-it-all who lives in Azir, is the society's most prominent venture-captain in Garund. Ezralow plays scry-chess with fellow wizards from all over Golarion, and he seems to have professional acquaintances nearly everywhere. Evni Zongnoss is a gnome venture-captain in the city of Vigil. Unlike some venture-captains, Evni cares for her agents and tends to mother them. Ling Yayao is a Tian monk frequently called on for rescue duty of lost or trapped agents. Several volumes of the *Pathfinder Chronicles* mention Ling crossing impossible distances on her horse, Fallow Grain, to arrive in the nick of time. In exchange, she demands only a kiss from those she saves.

The inner circle of the Decemvirate manages the various venture-captains throughout the world through couriers and spells. Sometimes a venture-captain does not know his orders until an agent arrives bearing the writ of instruction. Agents then carry out exploration and codification of their findings.

The society's chief resource is its vast organization of operatives spread throughout the Inner Sea region and beyond. Venture-captains in cities or especially remote locations usually run lodges where they conduct Pathfinder business. Typically a house or building owned by the society, a lodge is completely under the administration of the local venture-captain. Agents may stay in a lodge as long as they are on legitimate Pathfinder business, but to deter freeloaders, lodges rarely offer food or extensive free services. Most venture-captains keep small stores of potions, scrolls, and mundane adventuring equipment for sale to agents. Mercenary venture-captains charge exorbitant prices for these if they believe their agents found a treasure haul. As information conduits, venture-captains also pass along letters or messages through Pathfinder channels at agent request.

Members

The Pathfinder Society is so loosely organized, it's difficult to identify it as having a particular flavor or character. In most cases, venture-captains are members of their communities and participate in local customs and habits. For instance, the only lodge in Razmiran is operated by a true believer in the Living God.

Field agents are even more of a hodge-podge. The freedom for agents to be, do, and say anything they want is likely the organization's most consistently distinct aspect. The liberty of agents occasionally clashes with the rootedness of a venture-captain, but it rarely creates too deep a rift for them to work together.



Wayfinder

Aura faint evocation; **CL** 5th

Slot —; **Price** 500 gp; **Weight** 1 lb.

DESCRIPTION

A typical *wayfinder* is made from silver with gold accents, and functions as a compass. A *wayfinder* grants its user a +2 circumstance bonus on Survival checks to avoid becoming lost. All *wayfinders* include a small indentation designed to hold a single *ioun stone*. While still granting the user their normal benefits, *ioun stones* slotted in this manner frequently reveal entirely new powers due to the magic of the *wayfinder* itself. A *wayfinder* can be commanded to emit *light* (as the spell) as a standard action.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *light*; Cost 250 gp, 20 XP

Red Mantis

Alignment: LE
Headquarters: Ilizmagorti, the island of Mediogalti
Leader: Blood Mistress Jakalyn
Prominent Members: Individuals are not noted
Structure: Religious cult/assassins' guild
Scope: Regional
Resources: Covert sources in nearly every government, guild, religious order, merchant group throughout Avistan and Garund

Some say the Red Mantis are death cultists, others believe they are members of an ancient and incredibly secretive thieves' guild, still others think they are fiends from some dark plane beyond our ken. The truth is, the Red Mantis are the most tenacious and efficient assassins the world has ever known. The timeline of recorded history is stained with the blood of their victims.

One never has to wonder if an assassination is the work of the Red Mantis; they always kill with a ceremonial sawtoothed sabre, the victims often drowning in their own blood before their hearts cease beating. No palace, fortress, hidden safe house, or underground cavern is secure enough to keep out the Red Mantis. A hundred years ago, they killed Duke Kotaros of Cheliax, and history is replete with tales of generals and heroes the Red Mantis has slain in their tents the night before a key battle. Victims of the Red Mantis stay dead—no matter what.

As reliable as they are, even the most desperate plotters think twice before calling on the Red Mantis. One never knows what price they will ask—it varies widely based on the client and the target. They might request a handful of coins, a priceless artifact, or an unspecified favor to be redeemed at a future date. In every case, the price is non-negotiable. Even those who get apparent bargains often end up feeling that the price cost more, either in gold or in conscience, than they originally thought.

Getting the attention of the Red Mantis is no simple task, either. There is no way to contact them directly. One has to spread word in the seediest, most disreputable quarters and wait for the Red Mantis to take notice (if, indeed, they ever do). On the other hand, individuals who might be in need of the assassins' services sometimes find themselves approached by a business-like agent who presents an offer for the Red Mantis's assistance. How they come by this information is unknown, but they seem to have a supernatural way of knowing the name and details of anyone wronged or offended in a manner that calls for revenge.

The Red Mantis take on any assassination of any kind, save one. They do not commit regicide against a rightfully sitting monarch. It is said that this is because kings and queens, due to their divine right to rule, are the closest mortal approximations of the gods. Since the Red Mantis's own deity works for the gods as an assassin, it would be blasphemous to strike down a ruler whose rule has holy sanction. Princes, princesses, dukes, and all other royal personages are considered viable targets, as are rulers of non-monarchies and any other sort of leader. The prohibition is as specific as it is sacrosanct.

Once an assignment is accepted, the Red Mantis stop at nothing to locate, isolate, and strike down their target. They have, either openly or covertly, connections in nearly every government, guild, religious order, and merchant group throughout Avistan and Garund. There is practically no piece of information so obscure or well guarded that they cannot learn it. And once the target is found, they do anything necessary to insure his death. No decoy, magical duplicate, or sacrificial lamb fools them for long.

What's more, the Red Mantis see to it that anyone they mark for assassination not only dies, but remains dead. Through means mundane and magical, they keep track of their victims, and if by some happenstance one of them returns from the land of the dead, the Red Mantis mark the target again and pursue him with renewed vigor. Assassination is not merely a job nor even an artistic endeavor as far as they are concerned. It is a holy calling. The group is dedicated to the worship of the Mantis God—He Who Walks in Blood. Many scholars believe this nameless deity to be Achaekek, an obscure servant of the gods tasked with striking down those who would threaten the rightful order of the universe. The assassinations, then, are sacred rites, not mere business transactions.

Unlike lesser orders of assassins, the Red Mantis do not dabble in other forms of skullduggery. In fact, they take it as a personal affront if a client even inquires about any other services. It occasionally strikes an enterprising villain that while they are performing an assassination, it would be child's play for the Red Mantis to gather information and perform other sorts of minor espionage. Anyone who actually suggests this finds his assignment turned down (if the Red Mantis haven't already accepted it). In addition, the Red Mantis never perform assassinations without being paid. It is part of their sacred bond.

The Red Mantis headquarters is the Crimson Citadel, a castle hidden in the jungles of the Garundi port city of Ilizmagorti on the island of Mediogalti. While the Red Mantis power base is centered on the city of Ilizmagorti, there are cells and individual agents ensconced in nearly every major city, and many small towns as well.

Members of the Red Mantis have contact with many of their fellows, and they may even interact with the Vernai (the "High Killers"), a cabal of assassin lords who lead the organization and interpret the will of the Mantis God.

Like the majority of the members, the Vernai gave up their names and are only known by their title. The only member of the organization who has a name is the Blood Mistress: the ultimate authority on the will of He Who Walks in Blood and the only person with access to the Sarzari Library (see Mediogalti in Chapter 2). The current Blood Mistress is Jakalyn. No one knows her exact age, but she is old enough that those who follow the actions of the Vernai are already speculating on who should succeed Jakalyn when she joins the Mantis God in the hereafter.

Blood Mistress Jakalyn heads the organization, but she serves mostly as a resource for the Vernai. The council of High Killers does not have a specified number of members; any Red Mantis assassin who proves skilled, knowledgeable, and canny enough to draw the Mantis God's attention is invited to join the cabal. Currently there are 13 members. Below that, the organization breaks into cells and hierarchies that change as the current assignments and needs of the order require.

The Red Mantis have covert sources in nearly every government, guild, religious order, and merchant group throughout Avistan and Garund. They also control all business that takes place in Ilizmagorti. Members of the Red Mantis are given access to all reasonable resources needed to fulfill their duties and assignments.

Red Mantis Gear

When on a job, a typical Red Mantis wields two cruel blades called sawtooth sabres, using a distinct fighting style in which the blades are held point down so that the assassin's arms resemble the claws of a praying mantis. They favor mobility and finesse, and thus most Red Mantis assassins prefer leather armor over other forms of protection (although mithral shirts are valued when they can be had).

One signature piece of gear most Red Mantis assassins utilize is the notorious *mask of the mantis*. As much as they are veils to hide the assassins' identities, these insectile masks are tools of murder and death. Only the most egotistical and notorious Red Mantis eschew the use of these masks.

High-ranking members of the Red Mantis are often granted draughts of the potent *elixir of shadewalking* so they can more swiftly infiltrate an enemy's domain undetected.



Red Mantis Names

Members of the Red Mantis come from all nations and walks of life. They give up their former names and stations to devote themselves, body and soul, to their new purpose. Red Mantis assassins often take on various aliases and personae while working in the field. They are adept at blending into any situation in which they find themselves and taking on completely believable roles, perfect down to the accent, mannerisms, and taste in food. They never use the same cover identity twice, so it is possible to meet the same Red Mantis operative several times and never even know it.

Red Mantis members not working as assassins are merely referred to by the name of the job or role they fulfill in the brotherhood. There are an unguessable number of agents called Smith or Scribe or Healer—any other name is merely an affectation, just like a cloak or a fake limp.

Mask of the Mantis

Aura faint divination; **CL** 3rd

Slot head; **Price** 6,000 gp; **Weight** 1 lb.

DESCRIPTION

These masks cover the entire face, and give the assassin the look fostered by the organization. A *mask of the mantis* has three daily charges. The wearer can spend a charge to gain darkvision to a range of 60 feet, the effects of *see invisibility*, the effects of *deathwatch*, or a +5 competence bonus on Spot checks. Once a charge is spent, the effect granted persists for 30 minutes before fading. Multiple effects can be active simultaneously. Charges replenish in 24 hours.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *darkvision*, *see invisibility*, *deathwatch*; **Cost** 3,000 gp, 240 XP

Elixir of Shadewalking

Aura moderate illusion; **CL** 11th

Slot —; **Price** 3,500 gp; **Weight** 1 lb.

DESCRIPTION

Typically kept in a small bone flask, a draught of this potent elixir is enough to catapult the drinker and up to 11 additional creatures the drinker is in contact with at the time of imbibing into the Shadow Plane. Once there, the affected creatures are under the effects of a *shadow walk* spell and may travel at an effective speed of 50 mph over land for up to 11 hours.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *shadow walk*; **Cost** 1,750 gp, 140 XP

Lesser Groups

The following smaller groups—organizations, cults, families, and businesses—exert some small amount of power in Avistan and Garund. Most of these groups have relatively narrow zones of influence and few are known to the common folk of the Inner Sea region.

Blackfire Adepts: When foul magic rends the veils between planes, Golarion itself burns with an insidious black flame. A mysterious cadre of outcast mystics, demonologists, and arcane explorers collectively known as the Blackfire Adepts tracks the ebon flame wherever it is found, venturing through these wounds in the multiverse to explore Outer Rift landscapes as they brush against the reality of the Material Plane. Those who return often do so changed in spirit and in body, possessing fell powers granted by or stolen from otherworldly entities. Rank-and-file adepts usually adorn themselves in red robes with fiery black trim, while the inscrutable leaders of the group secret themselves among academics and world travelers. The adepts once enjoyed great influence as a ruling faction of Nex, but their exile in the dying days of the Age of Enthronement scattered them to the secret corners of Golarion.

The Coils of Ydersius: Many of Golarion's civilizations have risen, flourished, and died. Some, like ancient Thassilon or mighty Azlant, are still very much a part of modern legend, but others have fallen into utter obscurity. One such civilization was vast and powerful Ydersius, the empire of the serpentfolk. Themselves practicioners of the forbidden magic of the Old Cults, the serpentfolk were one of Azlant's greatest enemies. Yet Azlant prevailed over them, and so great was Azlant's victory that knowledge of the underground empire has been lost. However, there are some who maintain that the serpents of Ydersius are only sleeping, waiting for someone to rediscover and awaken them into a world ill-prepared for their coming. Those who seek this end are the secret members of the Coils of Ydersius, a hidden cult composed of rare spirits of the serpent reincarnated into the flesh of modern man.

Darklight Sisterhood: Cheliax and the Pathfinder Society have been enemies for almost as long as the latter has existed. In that time, the popularity of the Pathfinder Society and its members across Avistan and Garund has grown, while the love for infernal Cheliax has not. In order to try and beat the Pathfinders at their own game, Cheliax organized the Darklight Sisterhood, a small organization of women (from all races and ethnicities) who perform all the same functions as Pathfinders, but with absolute loyalty to Cheliax. As a sign of obedience, members of the sisterhood must adopt "Darklight" as their family name. Because of the huge differential in size, Pathfinders rarely know of the Darklights, while members of the sisterhood frequently obsess over their one-sided rivalry with the much larger international organization.

Harbingers: The Harbingers were founded 60 years ago by Lord Garron, an ousted noble of Cheliax living in Absalom who found the *Book of One Thousand Whispers*. The book contains prophecies that should have resolved during the Age of Lost Omens and mentions places and nations that simply don't exist. Lord Garron's Harbingers believe that the Age of Lost Omens is a mistake on a cosmic level. To them, every major event of the past century is compounding that mistake. The Harbingers believe that all prophecies are about the world as it should be. Lord Garron became convinced after reading the book that he could trigger the missing Age of Glory if he could only cause the conditions of just one of the prophecies from the book to occur. He died pursuing his insane goal, but his daughter, Lady Arodeth, continues his work. Her Harbingers seek out people, places, and things that might meet the terms of any of the prophecies written in the book. Of course, the drastic steps and actions the Harbingers take in their increasingly desperate attempts to right this cosmic wrong only seem to make matters worse, and as failure mounts on failure, the group drifts further and further from Aroden's teachings and deeper into utter madness.

Hemotheurges: It's often said that magical ability runs in the blood. To hemotheurges—derisively termed "bloatmages" by many—this is no less than the literal truth. By overloading their circulatory systems and forcing them to produce as much blood as possible, these arcanists are able to achieve great leaps in magical ability. Yet such power does not come without a price. In addition to becoming morbidly swollen and obese, the bodies of hemotheurges are always pushed near to their breaking point. In order to survive, these practitioners must carefully regulate their blood pressure with constant leeching. Those deprived of such methods quickly fly into an insane rage due to pressure exerted on their brains, attacking those nearby indiscriminately before messily bleeding to death.

Iridian Fold: Denizens of a far and unnamed nation, the men of the Iridian Fold are rarely seen outside of cosmopolitan markets. Easily recognized, each bonded pair of Iridian Fold men consists of a man swathed in veils that conceal all but his eyes followed two steps behind by a man in chains and lacquered armor who is widely believed to be his slave, bodyguard, and lover. Confusing to Inner Sea residents, however, is that the apparent servant is sometimes seen to take control of situations and in some cases is both smaller and weaker than his seeming charge. If the Iridian Fold contains women, they have yet to be encountered in the Inner Sea region.

Lumber Consortium: Operating out of the Andoran city of Oregent, the infamous Lumber Consortium holds a monopoly on darkwood and other hardwoods in Andoran. It also

controls more than half of the nation's supply of softwoods. In a ruthless drive for profit, the Lumber Consortium works to death its lumberjacks, blacksmiths, and day laborers, particularly in the darkwood-rich Darkmoon Vale. The past abuses and unfair practices of the Lumber Consortium earned it the animosity of the democratic government that came to power in Andoran 40 years ago and that, at least for the time being, relies heavily on the Consortium for lumber. Much reduced in power and size, the amazing profits the Lumber Consortium once enjoyed have all but disappeared. Regardless, the Lumber Consortium remains one of the most powerful private organizations in Andoran, and its influence can be felt throughout southern Avistan.

Norns: The Norns are hooded fey-women who travel in threes (known as a triumvirate) throughout the Lands of the Linnorm Kings. Many sages assume a triumvirate represents one soul split into three bodies, as a trio always speaks in perfect unison and killing one drastically weakens the other two. Norn triumvirates frequently appear to lost travelers and questing adventurers. Young heroes seeking the linnorms often encounter Norns who test their resolve and wisdom, rewarding an abundance of those traits with cryptic prophecy. This prognostication seems tied to the mysterious First World, and even in an era where the old prophecies have failed, the omens of the Norns seem at times almost dependable. The tests of the Norns are almost always inscrutable, and most who survive their trials do not realize until afterward—if ever—that they even faced a challenge.



Lumber Consortium Symbol

Odeber Family: Spread throughout Avistan, the ancient Odeber family's origins lay hidden in the uncertain mists of ancient history. The Odeber family tree traces back hundreds of generations to a man named Arn Odeber, father of the first recorded paladin of Shelyn, Saint Marcus Odeber. To the north, particularly in the Holds of the Mammoth Lords, the name has changed over time into Debarr. In Galt, the family goes by Deboir, while Osirion knows it as Andabar. Regardless of its form, the Odeber name has enjoyed a reputation for piety and religious fervor—almost always toward goodly gods, but occasionally toward more neutral deities (particularly Pharasma). In recent years, this reputation has tarnished somewhat, and some members now worship evil gods or have turned away from divinity altogether, much to the chagrin of the rest of the family.

The Old Cults: In certain remote corners of the world, ancient traditions from epochs before recorded history persist. These are the Old Cults, a diverse but universally insane selection dedicated to strange and alien powers. Those who follow the Old Cults engage in foul rites and weave eldritch magics forgotten by the world's sane historians and scholars—rites once practiced by unknowable entities from the dark places between the stars or the hidden cradles of deepest earth. The Old Cultists maintain that these entities, the Great Old Ones, will one day return to wipe clean the world, although these alien entities seem not to care about (or at times even notice) their mortal worshipers. Nevertheless, the secrets and power held in these ancient traditions can be just as potent as magic granted from the gods themselves.

Riftwardens: Legend holds that the Riftwardens, sworn enemies of the Blackfire Adepts, first came to Golarion from elsewhere in the Great Beyond, drawn to this world by their villainous enemies in an eternal effort to close planar rifts and gateways. Today, mortals and extraplanar allies alike bear the Sign of the Seeker's Spiral, raising arms and magic against their hated foes. Riftwardens travel the Great Beyond and know some measure of its secrets, making them sought-after guides in arcane cities like Quantium, Egorian, and Absalom. Those who assume the secretive Riftwardens are pure simply because they align themselves against evil make a terrible mistake, however, for the obscure leaders of the Riftwardens surely serve other otherworldly interests.

Sczarni: The Sczarni are a loosely-organized association of Varisian bandits, smugglers, and thieves. Although only a small fraction of Varisians have Sczarni ties, these criminals are notorious enough that their activities are in large part the genesis behind the Varisian stereotype of an untrustworthy thief. The Sczarni organize into tightly-knit families, each of which has little to nothing in common with other Sczarni bands in other locations beyond their shared skills, techniques, and pursuits. Their crimes tend to focus on thievery, scams, pickpocketing, and other forms of relatively non-violent acts, and most tend to select non-Varisians as their marks.

Sweettalkers: Few in the western reaches of Avistan and Garund know much about the origins of the mysterious far-eastern merchants and traders known as Sweettalkers. Less an organization than a loose association of ascetic zealots, Sweettalkers are defined by a religious paradox. To them, speaking any word less perfect than the true name of their mysterious god is heresy, yet so far none of the Sweettalkers encountered in the west have considered themselves worthy of the Name. As a result, Sweettalkers sew their own lips shut rather than risk uttering an impure word, communicating instead through a unique language of clicks, sighs, and whistles.



The World

Tragedy, sorrow, and loss define Golarion's history. Infrequent cataclysms undo cultural and technological advancements, periodically forcing human society into a state of relative barbarism and flux. Earthfall, the catastrophe that brought about the end of mighty Azlant—the most advanced human society yet to dwell on Golarion—marks humanity's greatest resetting. A thousand years of darkness, fear, and savagery followed Earthfall, during which time the magical, technological, and cultural successes of Azlant and Thassilon were lost. Ever so slowly, though, humanity drew itself from barbarism, as the great empires of Osirion and Taldor arose from the ashes in the Age of Destiny. Human civilization once again spread across Avistan and Garund.

A hundred years ago, humanity stood on the edge of a new age. Prophecies spoke of the return of the great god Aroden and, with him, a new renaissance for his chosen people in the modern empire of Cheliax. Instead, Aroden's connection to his clerics grew silent, and Golarion was plunged into weeks of worldwide storms and chaos. With Aroden's apparent death, mighty Cheliax fell apart, its outer territories escaping from its grasp in a series of revolutions and civil wars. In the north, the walls between worlds shifted, and Golarion inched ever closer to the demonic Abyss with the opening of the Worldwound. The great prophecies failed, and humanity looked with apprehension upon an uncertain world. Thus was born the current era, the Age of Lost Omens.

The following pages present a timeline of the Inner Sea region, followed up by a diverse collection of other topics of interest to scholars, adventurers, and explorers alike.

The current year is 4708 AR (Absalom Reckoning). As the calendar advances in the real world, time also marches forward in the world of Golarion. This book was published in the year 2008, with Golarion's corresponding year ending in the same digit.

AGE OF DARKNESS

–5293 Earthfall. The *Starstone* tumbles to Golarion, creating the Inner Sea and kicking off a thousand years of darkness. Azlant and Thassilon destroyed. Elves depart Golarion.

–5133 King Taargick founds the Kingdom of Tar Taargadth, uniting dwarves in a common cause to abandon the subterranean Darklands.

–5102 Orcs first emerge onto the surface world, fleeing vicious pogroms by righteous dwarves tunneling toward a prophesied land of the open sky.

–4987 Dwarves fulfill the Quest for Sky, emerging for the first time upon the surface of Golarion.

AGE OF ANGUISH

–4294 The veil of dust and darkness lifts from Golarion. Primitive peoples grasp and claw for power in a broken world.

c. –4120 Founding of the Jistka Imperium.

–3923 The Pit of Gormuz opens in central Casmaron, disgorging the Spawn of Rovagug upon Golarion for the first time.

–3708 Belkzen besieges Koldukar.

AGE OF DESTINY

c. –3470 Founding of Ancient Osirion.

c. –3300 Loss of trade revenue and constant raids from desert nomads weakens Jistka.

c. –3250 Desert nomads band together to form the Tekritanin League.

–3047 The Song Pharaoh overthrows the Pharaoh of Forgotten Plagues and founds Shiman-Sekh.

c. –3000 Osirion at its height under the reign of the God-Kings.

–2764 Jistka Imperium collapses in prolonged series of succession wars.

–2323 Shory aeromancers establish Kho as the first of their legendary flying cities.

–1498 The Four Pharaohs of Ascension join forces to rule Osirion, initiating that empire's Second Age.

–1452 Armies of the Four Pharaohs break the Tekritanin League, absorbing some member city-states and razing others.

–1431 The power of the Four Pharaohs breaks and Osirion again slips into decline.

–1281 Taldor founded by descendants of Lost Azlant and indigenous primitive humans.

–892 Nex and Geb at war.

–841 Osirion fails to replace the assassinated governor of Thuvia, effectively ceding the province to barbarism.

–632 The Tarrasque, greatest of the Spawn of Rovagug, destroys Ninshabur and devastates Avistan until it is defeated and sealed away in a hidden cavern.

–473 The Linnorm King Ulvass discovers Arcadia, establishing the colony of Valenhall as an earthly paradise.

AGE OF ENTHRONEMENT

1 Absalom founded. Aroden, the Last Azlanti, raises the *Starstone* from the depths of the Inner Sea and becomes a living god.

23 First Siege of Absalom—Warlord Voradni Voon's ill-planned siege fails catastrophically.

37 Taldor's First Army of Exploration destroys the Goroth Lodge in the Verduran Wood and charts the Sellen River as far north as Sevenarches.

166 Nex unsuccessfully sieges Absalom.

253 Nex captures the Isle of Jalmeray.

563 Khiben-Sald, the legendary Maharaja of Vudra, spends a decade on the Nexian Isle of Jalmeray, bringing eastern culture to the Inner Sea.

571 Vudrani traders introduce gunpowder to the Inner Sea region.

576 Nex vanishes from his capital in Quantium during a Gebbite attack that kills thousands.

632 Geb attempts to escape Golarion in an act of ritual suicide, but soon returns as a ghost.

896 Aroden mortally wounds the wizard king Tar-Baphon on the Isle of Terror at the center of Lake Encarthan.

1140 Artokus Kirran formulates the *sun orchid elixir*.

1532 Qadiri operatives topple the decadent Pharaoh Menedes XXVI, establishing the first in a long line of foreign rulers over Osirion.

1551 The Glorious Empire of Tar Taargadth collapses when orcish raiders launch massive assaults against the Sky Citadels, conquering several and throwing dwarves into uncharacteristic chaos for several years.

1571 The First Five Kings War erupts, engulfing all of the Five Kings Mountains and many of the surrounding human settlements.

1707 Andoran founded as western border of Taldor when General Khastalus of Corentyn clears the Arthfell Forest and establishes Augustana.

1893 Norgorber passes the Test of the *Starstone*, following Aroden's path to divinity.

1903 Alkenstar builds the Gunworks.

1975 Ulfen longships raid heavily along the west coast of Avistan and in the region now known as Cheliax.

2009 Alkenstar completes the bombard known as Worldbreaker for Taldor's Fifth Army of Exploration.

2089 Taldor's Sixth Army of Exploration loses Worldbreaker to the Gorilla King in disastrous Battle of Nagisa, within the jungles of the Mwangi Expanse.

2133 Taldor's Seventh Army of Exploration pacifies the Isgeri tribe of Kellids inhabiting the valleys between the Menador and Five King Mountains, forming

the protectorate of Isger to capitalize on trade from Druma and inner Avistan.

2187 Teachings of Irori reach mainland Tian Xia.

2217 The cult of Sarenrae flourishes in Osirion, threatening the Qadiri satrap, who banishes the zealots to the western deserts.

2253 The resurgent Cult of the Dawnflower vanquishes the Satrap of Osirion, establishing an independent dynasty of Keleshite sultans.

2361 Varisian wanderers settle the Principality of Ustalav north of Lake Encarthan.

2498 The Oath Wars begin in northwest Garund. Clergies of Nethys, Norgorber, and Sarenrae vie for dominance.

2497 The demon Treerazer begins his perversion of the forests of Kyonin.

2555 The city of Azir exiles all clerics, burns their temples, and enacts the Laws of Man.

2560 The bloody Oath Wars come to an end, as the Laws of Man spread throughout the region.

2632 Elves return en masse to Golarion via the Sovyrian Stone in Kyonin.

2664 In Tian Xia, Yixing courtiers perform the first *chadao* tea ceremony for their emperor.

2742 The Choking Death spreads west from Iobaria, decimating human populations in northeast Avistan.

2765 Cayden Cailean drunkenly survives the Test of the *Starstone*.

2822 Vudrani rajahs wrest control of Jalmeray from the decadent Arclords of Nex.

2920 A violent earthquake rocks Qadira and Taldor, killing tens of thousands in both nations.

3001 Daralathyxl, known as the Sixth King or Emperor of the Mountains, arrives at the Five Kings Mountains.

3007 Cheliax founded as western frontier of Taldor.

3129 Assassins murder Grand Prince Jalrune of Taldor.

3203 Tar-Baphon returns to life as the Whispering Tyrant. The lich king unifies the orc hordes of Belkzen and terrorizes central Avistan.

3313 The nation of Irrisen is born when the Witch Queen Baba Yaga conquers the eastern reach of the Lands of the Linnorm Kings.

3332 The famed dwarven engineers of Jernashall, within Droskar's Crag, create the first successful and safe magmafall in the middle of their city.

3537 Arthfell Forest trampled by the Slohr.

3616 In Tian Xia, the Perfect Swordswoman, Setsuna Kuga, leads the armies of the Minkai against the forces of the Teikoku Shogunate in the Battle of Eight Bridges. With the shogun's forces routed, Minkai's armies march upon the old capital of Uddo and raze it.

3619 Minkai Empire established in Tian Xia. Kasai named the new capital.

3754 Taldor launches the Shining Crusade against the Whispering Tyrant.

3801 The Shining Crusade secures a beachhead on the northern shore of Lake Encarthan, in Ustalav.

3818 The Knights of Ozem summon Arazni, the warrior goddess Herald of Aroden.

3823 Tar-Baphon humiliates and kills Arazni.

3827 The Whispering Tyrant imprisoned in Gallowspire.

3828 The Shining Crusade officially comes to an end with the founding of Lastwall, a holding of Taldor tasked with watching over the prison of the Whispering Tyrant.

3832 Iomedae, heroine of the Shining Crusade, successfully attempts the Test of the *Starstone* and becomes Aroden's Herald.

3890 Geb abducts Arazni's corpse from the Knights of Ozem, reanimates her as a lich, and takes her as his Harlot Queen.

3923 Merivesta Olinchi of Nex, famed satiric playwright, assassinated during the premiere of her masterpiece, *The Conception Exception*.

3980 The Rending. Droskar's Crag erupts, rocking much of southern Avistan and causing widespread destruction in Darkmoon Vale. Sections of Almas wash away in massive flooding.

4043 Kazavon drives Belkzen orcs from western Ustalav.

4079 Qadiri army crosses Taldor's southern border.

4081 Chelish King Aspex the Even-Tongued breaks from Taldor, claiming Andoran and the winged folk of the Devil's Perch by diplomacy and Galt and Isger by force. The decade-long power grab becomes known as the Even-Tongued Conquest, and greatly undermines Taldorian influence throughout western Avistan.

4113 Karas "the Falcon" Novotnian enters Darkmoon Vale and begins pacifying the region.

4137 Under the banner of the mad prince Haliad I, Cheliax unsuccessfully sieges Absalom for the first time. Gains in Garund, however, grant Cheliax complete control of the Arch of Aroden, cementing a naval supremacy that remains to this day.

4138 Cheliax establishes the colony of Sargava on Garund's western coast.

4142 Imperial Lung Wa established in Tian Xia, uniting 10 of the 16 Kingdoms of Shu.

4217 The Yellowtongue Sickness ravages Avistan.

4275 Powerful earthquake off coast of Vudra causes devastating flooding in coastal areas, killing thousands.

4305 King Haliad III of Cheliax launches the Wars of Expansion to broaden the empire's northern borders by claiming land in Molthune and Varisia. This struggle lasts more than a century and spans the reign of five Chelish monarchs, eventually becoming known as the Everwar.

4307 Foundation of the Pathfinder Society in Absalom.
4317 Pathfinder Durvin Gest explores the ruins of Lost Azlant.
4329 Geb petrifies the invading army of the Pirate Queen Mastrien Slash, creating the Field of Maidens.
4332 Durvin Gest casts the *Lens of Galundari* into the Nemesis Well near Osibu.
4338 Nidal falls to Cheliax.
4407 Cheliax founds Korvosa in the frontier region of Varisia.
4410 Cheliax cedes territorial ambitions in Varisia and Belkzen, officially ending the Everwar.
4450 Alkenstar completes the massive bombard known as the Great Maw of Rovagug.
4499 Choral the Conqueror carves Brevoy from the corpses of Rostland and Issia.
4507 Chelish army forces Shoanti barbarians to the Storval Plateau.
4508 The Forest King Narven dies in the Arthfell Forest.
4552 Mengkare, the great gold dragon, begins his grand experiment on the Isle of Hermea.
4576 First Hellknight order, the Order of the Rack, founded in Westcrown.
4584 Chelish explorers from Korvosa settle Magnimar.
4603 Taldor and Qadira reach an uneasy peace.
4605 King Gaspodar of Cheliax prepares for prophesied manifestation of Aroden, foretold to mark the advent of the Age of Glory.

Age of Lost Omens

4606 Aroden dies, leaving the Empire of Cheliax without a divine mandate. Imperial Lung Wa collapses in Tian Xia.
4608 Thousands abandon Korvosa for Magnimar.
4609 Osirians overthrow their Keleshite masters and Prince Khemet I takes control, citing a bloodline that dates back to the ancient pharaohs. Ulizmila, reportedly the granddaughter of Baba Yaga, arrives in Darkmoon Wood.
4613 Baba Yaga installs her daughter Elvanna as sovereign of Irrisen.
4615 The astrological philosophers of Lirgen take their own lives after evacuating their people from what becomes known as the Sodden Lands.
4622 The faltering Church of Aroden launches the First Mendevian Crusade.
4632 The province of Molthune declares its independence from Cheliax.
4638 Drezen falls to Worldwound demons. Second Mendevian Crusade begins.
4640 Diabolists of the House of Thrune wrest control of Cheliax, brutally ending three decades of vicious civil war. A dark shadow envelops the empire.
4648 The northern half of Molthune rebels against the avaricious nobles in Canorate.
4655 The conflict in Molthune ends with the founding of Nirmathas.
4661 Razmiran established.
4667 Red Revolution begins in Galt.
4669 The People's Revolt transforms Andoran.
4672 Razmir founds Thronestep.
4674 The pirates of the Shackles unite under one banner to harass the fleets and merchants of the north.
4680 Alkenstar completes the Bridge of the Gods, one of modern world's most impressive engineering wonders.
4682 Queen Domina of Korvosa courts the Hellknight faction of Cheliax, gaining the service of the Order of the Nail.
4695 A contingent of 173 heavy cavalry from Lastwall rides down and routs Warlord Graukrad's force of 2,000 orcs.
4696 The Beast of Bloodcove, an immense froghemoth, claims 204 victims over the course of a record hot summer before it is finally slain by a dozen heroes.
4697 The Goblinblood Wars shake Isger.
4698 A terrible earthquake rocks Absalom.
4699 The royal house of Rogarvia vanishes in Brevoy, leaving the nation in turmoil. House Surtova takes the contested crown. Last appearance of the great wyrm red dragon, Daralathyxl.
4700 Over the course of the month of Rova, the eyeless bodies of thirteen krakens wash up on the western shores of the Isle of Kortos.
4701 Gnolls surge from White Canyon in Katapesh, attempting to enslave the population of the walled city of Solku.
4702 The runelords stir to life in Varisia. In the sleepy town of Sandpoint, gifted artist Jervis Stoot murders 25 men, women, and children.
4703 The *Night Terror,* a Chelish merchant ship thought lost to the Eye of Abendego years ago, is found adrift off the Andoren coast in pristine condition but with its entire crew missing.
4704 White Estrid slays Boiltongue and becomes a Linnorm Queen; her use of strange weapons she claims were gifts from "earth spirits" enrages other rulers of the Land of the Linnorm Kings.
4705 The Gray Corsairs sink three Katapeshi slave galleons in the Inner Sea.
4706 Followers of the Gorilla King behead 17 missionaries and Aspis Consortium merchants in the Mwangi Expanse.
4707 Adventurers reopen the Bloodsworn Vale. Pharaoh Khemet III opens the ruins of Osirion to foreign explorers.
4708 The current year.

The Darklands

There is another world hidden below. A world that slumbers under city foundations, dreams below the deepest roots of the oldest forest, and plots in hidden places as far below as the mountains are high. The endless caves and twisting caverns of this ever-nighted world are known by many names, yet in the world above they are collectively known as the Darklands.

Legends of the three realms of the Darklands are legion among surface folk. Some of them, such as the worshipers of Sarenrae (who preach that their goddess imprisoned the Rough Beast Rovagug in the deepest of all the Darkland Vaults) are tales of faith. Some are fanciful legends told by drunkards (witness the popularity of the bar room tales of Silent Kessa, a mute seductress said to visit lonely men on dark nights only to lead them to their doom in a deep cavern haunted by talking snakes and carnivorous mushrooms) with little basis in fact. Those who plan on expeditions into the Darklands know that it is both in dwarven legend and Pathfinder report where the most reliable information can be found. And often, these tales are more horrific and unexpected than even the most outrageous religious parable or drunken vision.

THE THREE REALMS

The Darklands are inhabited by numerous intelligent races. Yet unlike the relative safety above, the Darklands are a brutal, deadly place, where even the air you breathe or the ground you stand upon can kill you. This environment has bred its hostility into those who dwell within; kindness and charity are all but unknown in the Darklands. Torment and swift death, unfortunately, are not. The races mentioned herein are not all of those who dwell in the Darklands, yet they do count themselves among the most prolific, dangerous, or legendary.

Although most surface dwellers believe the Darklands to be one continuous region of danger, the underground realm in fact consists of three distinct regions, each of which is described below.

Nar-Voth

The caverns of Nar-Voth comprise the uppermost reaches of the Darklands, and it is with these caverns that the majority of Golarion's adventurers and explorers are most familiar. Nar-Voth consists of countless isolated cave networks sometimes connected to each other via long winding tunnels, and at other times existing only as a single independent network of caves—you cannot cross a continent underground by traveling solely through Nar-Voth. The thing that differentiates Nar-Voth from other near-surface cave networks is the fact that all Nar-Voth warrens include at least one lower passageway that winds down deeper into the earth, eventually connecting to vast Sekamina below. The caverns of Nar-Voth extend from the surface to a depth of 2,000 feet on average.

Nar-Voth is the ancestral land for both the orcs and the dwarves, although both have largely abandoned these lands since the Age of Darkness. Many dwarves have since attempted to return to their ancestral cities in Nar-Voth only to find the task impossible, for these cities have been claimed by other races and monsters in their long absence. The most common of those who dwell now in these ancient dwarven cities are the duergar—degenerate dwarves who never left their homes and have descended into a violent society of killers and sadists.

Yet the duergar are far from the only denizens of Nar-Voth. At least two races of devolved humanity dwell here as well—remnants of those who fled underground at the outset of the Age of Darkness. Some of these are little more than feral animals, while others have been transformed by inbreeding, cross-species breeding, and stranger variables. These folk retain echoes of civilization, and are known as mongrelmen. Troglodytes are also common in the tunnels of Nar-Voth, but the region's most sinister denizens are without a doubt the derro. Dwelling in tangled tunnels lit by softly glowing blue mold, the derro make secret raids against denizens of the surface world, abducting them to perform strange and sometimes crippling experiments before returning them to their homes, the memories of their horrific time spent below mostly (but not completely) wiped away by drugs and magic.

Sekamina

The most notorious realm of the Darklands, the region from which the majority of tavern tales and Pathfinder expeditions report, is the middle region known as Sekamina. The seemingly endless caverns of this realm span continents, and often consist of immense chambers, rivers, and even vast underground lakes. While the majority of the entrances to Sekamina from above pass through Nar-Voth, some notable exceptions exist. Some sages suspect that the Mobhad Leigh in northern Varisia provides a direct link from the surface world to Sekamina, for example. The caverns of Sekamina range from the foundation of Nar-Voth at 2,000 feet below the surface to depths of 8,000 feet.

Numerous races dwell in the caverns of Sekamina, many of which have never had contact with the surface world except in the form of brave explorers from above seeking treasure and fame. The eyeless humanoids known as grimlocks are the descendants of pre-Earthfall humans escaped from the realm of Orv after the Vault Keepers abandoned those depths. Strange fungal growths haunt caverns claimed by the violent vegepygmy tribes, and settlements of amphibious skum rule

strange ruined cities in some of Sekamina's more remote underground lakes and waterways. Stories speak of entire kingdoms ruled by strangely civilized ghouls, serpentfolk who mastered the arts of alchemy and magic, hairy giants with multiple arms and vertically-aligned mouths, and sadistic wormlike creatures (some of whom may seem humanoid in form but are in fact composed of colonies of ravenous worms that cling to manlike shapes), yet it remains unclear if some or all of these tales are fabrications. At least one Sekaminan race lives in harmony with their environs. The more populous of these two are the svirfneblin—deep gnomes who find solace in the purity of the rocks around them.



Yet none of these races can be thought of as the "rulers" of Sekamina. If any race has a legitimate claim to that title, it is the drow. Long held to be little more than a myth, recent events have proven that the decadent demon-worshiping dark elves of legend are fact, despite claims to the contrary by most of Kyonin's diplomats and leaders. While the drow seem content at this time to remain in their lightless realm, if even half the stories of their resources, vast cities, and endless capacity for violence are true, they could well present one of the Darklands's greatest threats to the world above.

Orv

Few on the surface suspect that Sekamina is not the deepest realm of the Darklands, yet there does exist an even deeper realm. These are the vaults and underground oceans of Orv. No direct connection between the surface world and Orv has yet been discovered, and even those entrances from Sekamina are often heavily patrolled and guarded by svirfneblin or even drow eager to see that what dwells in Orv stays in Orv. The caverns of Orv extend to an unknown depth below Sekamina's deepest point, yet many of these tunnels do not succumb to intolerable conditions one might expect so deep underground. The reason for this is the vaults.

The number of vaults that exist in Orv is unknown, as is where they came from, but commonly-accepted theory points to a now-vanished race of mysterious elders known in myths today as the Vault Keepers—a race, perhaps, analogous to the mysterious entities who once dwelt upon the Crown of the World. The Vault Keepers predate even the land of Azlant, and if some theories are to be believed, even the impossibly ancient aboleth empires themselves. Something in the magical construction of these vaults helps to regulate temperatures, pressure, and seismic activity throughout all of the Darklands, for in regions where vaults have collapsed or were never created, the caverns above remain uninhabitable by most life.

The vaults of Orv are connected by winding tunnels that rarely diverge into smaller cave systems. Each vault is a different size, with some being little more than a few hundred feet across. Most of the vaults of Orv are immense, though—caverns stretch for dozens, if not hundreds, of miles, creating regions that could well rival the size of many surface nations. The denizens and environments in each of these vaults varies wildly, prompting sages to suspect that they were originally constructed as controlled ecosystems by the Vault Keepers—gardens or menageries in which they could propagate their latest experiments or victims to observe from afar their evolution and growth. Some vaults contain icy wastelands, others seas of magma, and still others steaming jungles of fungus and plantlife. Some are lightless, while others are lit by eerie phosphorescence or patches of brilliantly glowing stone. Some are said to be so huge that they are themselves inverted worlds, that the denizens walk and live along the inner surface of the vault in defiance of gravity, and that their skies are lit by a glowing orb of brilliance akin to the sun itself floating at the immense cavern's center.

Little is known of the denizens of Orv's vaults, but if the tales of the svirfneblin, drow, and other denizens of Sekamina are to be believed, the creatures of Orv are horrors indeed: vampiric humanoids with transparent skin who dwell in haunted cities and venerate Rovagug, immense worms the size of dragons who are said to spawn the smaller wormlike monsters sometimes seen in Sekamina above, and strange beings called "intellect devourers" capable of invading a host and replacing the brain, so as to infiltrate any society undetected to work their unknown plots. Many of the denizens of Orv are said to have strange magical powers born from thought itself, and to have once been the servitors of the Vault Keepers. What their goals might be remain unknown.

One thing is certain, though. News and rumors of Darkland uprisings are on the rise throughout the Inner Sea region. Something seems to be at work in the lightless depths, and chances are that whatever writhes and wakens below is bad news for those who dwell above.

Domain Spells

Armor of Darkness

School Abjuration [darkness]; **Level** darkness 4

CASTING

Casting Time 1 standard action
Components V, S, DF

EFFECT

Range Touch
Target Creature touched
Duration 10 minutes/level
Saving Throw Will negates (harmless); **Spell Resistance** Yes

DESCRIPTION

This spell envelops the target in shadows that can, if you desire, conceal the creature's features. It grants the recipient a +3 deflection bonus to Armor Class (+1 for every 4 caster levels, to a maximum bonus of +8). The subject can see through the armor and gains darkvision to 60 feet. The subject gains a +2 bonus on saving throws against any holy, good, or light spells or effects. Undead creatures under the effect gain +4 turn resistance.

Blacklight

School Evocation [darkness]; **Level** darkness 3, sor/wiz 3

CASTING

Casting Time 1 standard action
Components V, S

EFFECT

Range Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)
Area A 20-ft.-radius emanation
Duration 1 round/level (D)
Saving Throw Will negates or none (object); **Spell Resistance** Yes or no (object)

DESCRIPTION

You create an area of total darkness. The darkness is impenetrable even to darkvision, but you can see normally within it. Creatures outside the spell's area, even you, cannot see through it.

You can cast the spell on a point in space, but the effect is stationary unless cast on a mobile object. You can cast the spell on a creature, and the effect then radiates from the creature and moves as it moves. Unattended objects and points in space do not get saving throws or benefit from spell resistance. *Blacklight* counters or dispels any light spell of equal or lower level. *Daylight* counters or dispels *blacklight*.

Bolt of Glory

School Evocation [Good]; **Level** glory 6

CASTING

Casting Time 1 standard action
Components V, S, DF

EFFECT

Range Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./level)
Effect Ray
Duration Instantaneous
Saving Throw None; **Spell Resistance** Yes

DESCRIPTION

You fire a ray of positive energy. A creature struck takes varying damage, depending on its nature and home plane of existence. Neutral outsiders and creatures native to the Material Plane and Elemental Planes take 1d6 points of damage per 2 levels (maximum 7d6). Evil outsiders, undead, and natives of the Negative Energy Plane take 1d6 points of damage per level (maximum 15d6). All other creatures take no damage.

Bolts of Bedevilment

School Enchantment [Mind-Affecting]; **Level** madness 5

CASTING

Casting Time 1 standard action
Components V, S

EFFECT

Range Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)
Effect Ray
Duration 1 round/level
Saving Throw Will negates; **Spell Resistance** Yes

DESCRIPTION

You can fire one ray per round that dazes one living creature for 1d3 rounds.

Crown of Glory

School Evocation; **Level** glory 8

CASTING

Casting Time 1 full round
Components V, S, M, DF

EFFECT

Range Personal
Area 120-ft.-radius emanation centered on you
Duration 1 minute/level
Saving Throw Will negates; **Spell Resistance** Yes

DESCRIPTION

You gain a +4 enhancement bonus to Charisma. All creatures with fewer than 8 HD are compelled to stop and pay attention to you. Any such creature that wants to take hostile action against you must make a Will save to do so. Any creature that fails this saving throw the first time it attempts a hostile action is enthralled for the duration of the spell (as the *enthrall* spell), as long as it is in the spell's area. It does not try to leave the area on its own. Creatures with 8 HD or more are not affected.

When you speak, all listeners telepathically understand you. You can make up to three *suggestions* to creatures of fewer than 8 HD in range, as if using the *mass suggestion* spell (Will save negates). Only creatures within range at the time of a *suggestion* are subject to it.

Material Component: An opal worth at least 200 gp.

Genesis

School Conjuration (Creation); **Level** creation 9

Casting

Casting Time 1 week (8 hours/day)
Components V, S, M, XP

Effect

Range 180 ft.
Effect A demiplane on the Ethereal Plane centered on you
Duration Instantaneous
Saving Throw None; **Spell Resistance** No

Description

You create an immobile, finite demiplane with limited access. Demiplanes created by this spell are very small. At first, the demiplane grows at a rate of 1-foot-radius per day, up to a 180-foot radius. You determine the environment in the demiplane, reflecting most any desire you can visualize, such as atmosphere, water, temperature, and the shape of the terrain. The spell cannot create life, nor can it create buildings. If desired, these must be brought in by some other fashion.

You can cast this spell again to enlarge the demiplane by 60 feet per casting if you are inside its boundaries.

Material Component: A small crystalline sphere.

XP Cost: 5,000 XP.

Hardening

School Transmutation; **Level** sor/wiz 6, artifice 7

Casting

Casting Time 1 standard action
Components V, S

Effect

Range Touch
Target One item of a volume no greater than 10 cu. ft./level
Duration Permanent
Saving Throw None; **Spell Resistance** Yes (object)

Description

This spell increases the hardness of materials by 1 point per 2 caster levels. The *hardening* spell does not in any way affect resistance to other forms of transformation.

This spell affects up to 10 cubic feet per level. If cast upon a metal or mineral, the spell affects 1 cubic foot per level.

Status, Greater

School Divination; **Level** community 4

Casting

Casting Time 1 standard action
Components V, S, DF

Effect

Range Touch
Targets One creature touched/three levels
Duration 1 hour/level
Saving Throw Will negates (harmless); **Spell Resistance** Yes

Description

As status, but you can also cast a limited selection of spells through the link, as if you were touching the target. You can cast any spell that meets all of the following conditions:

Level 0, 1st, or 2nd; **Range** touch; **Target** creature touched; **Saving Throw** harmless

Surelife

School Abjuration; **Level** repose 8

Casting

Casting Time 1 round
Components V, S

Effect

Range Personal
Target You
Duration 1 minute/2 levels

Description

This spell protects you (but not your gear) from a natural occurrence or condition (not against a spell or the action of a creature) that would kill you. You must specify the condition, and the spell is effective only against that condition. If you are subjected to that condition during the duration of the spell, you feel no discomfort and take no damage from the condition. At the end of the spell's duration, the condition has full normal effects if you are still subjected to it.

Touch of Madness

School Enchantment [Mind-Affecting]; **Level** madness 2

Casting

Casting Time 1 standard action
Components V, S

Effect

Range Touch
Target Creature touched
Duration 1 round/level
Saving Throw Will negates; **Spell Resistance** Yes

Description

On a successful touch attack, you daze a creature that fails a save.

True Creation

School Conjuration (Creation); **Level** creation 8

Casting

Casting Time 10 minutes
Components V, S, XP

Effect

Range 0 ft.
Effect Unattended, nonmagical object, up to 1 cu. ft/level
Duration Instantaneous
Saving Throw None; **Spell Resistance** No

Description

You create a completely real, nonmagical, unattended object of any sort of matter. The volume of the item created cannot exceed 1 cubic foot per caster level. Complex items require successful Craft checks. Objects created can be used as material components.

XP Cost: The item's gold piece value in XP (minimum 1 XP).

Equipment

Adventurers across the Inner Sea region utilize a wide variety of weapons, armor, and gear unique to Golarion. This section presents a sampling of what is available.

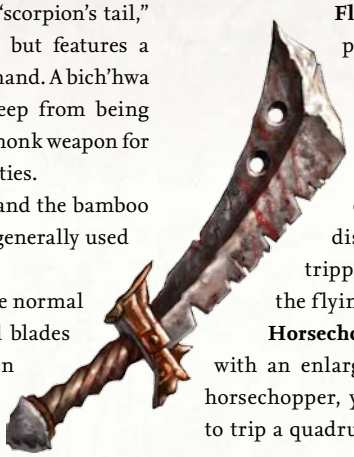
WEAPONS

These weapons were developed across Avistan and Garund.

Bich'hwa: Also known as the waveblade or "scorpion's tail," this short, double-curved blade has no hilt but features a knuckle guard and can easily be used in either hand. A bich'hwa provides a +2 bonus on any roll made to keep from being disarmed in combat. This weapon is a special monk weapon for the use of flurry of blows and other monk abilities.

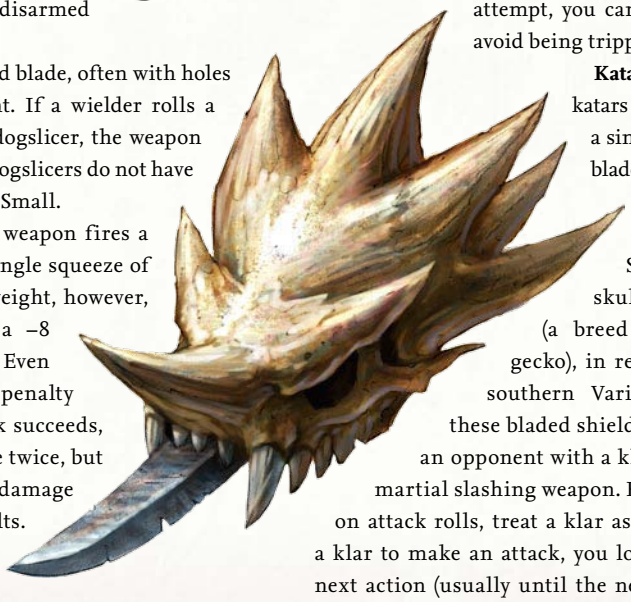
Blowgun: Popular in the Mwangi Expanse and the bamboo jungles of Vudra and Tian Xia, blowguns are generally used to deliver poison at range.

Curved Blade, Elven: A longer version of the normal kukri but with a thinner blade, elven curved blades are rare even in Kyonin. When using an elven curved blade, you gain a +2 bonus on opposed attack rolls to disarm an opponent (including the roll to avoid being disarmed if such an attempt fails).



Dogslicer: This is a short curved blade, often with holes drilled in it to lighten its weight. If a wielder rolls a natural 1 when attacking with a dogslicer, the weapon breaks. Masterwork and magical dogslicers do not have this flaw. Most dogslicers are size Small.

Double Crossbow: This heavy weapon fires a pair of iron tipped bolts with a single squeeze of the trigger. Due to its size and weight, however, non-proficient wielders suffer a –8 penalty on their attack rolls. Even proficient wielders takes a –2 penalty on their attack rolls. If the attack succeeds, the target takes the listed damage twice, but critical hits and precision-based damage are only applied to one of the bolts. Reloading a double crossbow requires 2 standard actions (1 for each bolt), although the Rapid Reload feat reduces this to 2 move actions (meaning it can be accomplished in 1 round). The Crossbow Mastery feat allows you to reload one bolt in a double crossbow as a free action, but not both bolts.



Dueling Sword, Aldori: You can use the Weapon Finesse feat to apply your Dexterity Modifier instead of your Strength modifier on attack rolls with an Aldori Dueling Sword sized for you, even though it isn't a light weapon. You may wield an Aldori dueling sword in two hands in order to apply 1-1/2 times your Strength bonus to damage, even when using it with Weapon Finesse. These swords are about 3–1/2-feet long, very slightly curved, and sharp only along the outer edge.

Earth Breaker: A massive hammer, the crude metal of this weapon's head ends in multiple blunt spikes which channel the momentum of a powerful swing.

Falcata: The traditional weapon of Taldor, the falcata has a single edged, concave blade and a hook-shaped hilt often stylized in the shape of a horse. Its shape distributes the weight to give it the momentum of an axe with the cutting edge of a sword.

Flying Talon: This weapon consists of a three-pronged barbed hook attached to a length of chain. A flying talon has reach, so you can strike opponents 10 feet away with it. When using a flying talon, you gain a +2 bonus on opposed attack rolls to disarm or trip an opponent (including the roll to avoid being disarmed if such an attempt fails). If you are tripped during your own trip attempt, you can drop the flying talon to avoid being tripped.

Horsechopper: This weapon is essentially a halberd with an enlarged hook opposite the blade. When using a horsechopper, you gain a +2 bonus on opposed attack rolls to trip a quadruped. If you are tripped during your own trip attempt, you can drop the horsechopper to avoid being tripped.

Katar, Tri-bladed: Although most katars (or punching daggers) boast a single long, thick blade, the tri-bladed katar features a fan of three splayed razor edges.

Klar: Traditionally a Shoanti blade bound to the skull of a horned spirestalker (a breed of Storval Plateau giant gecko), in recent years the armorers of southern Varisia have started crafting these bladed shields from iron. You can attack an opponent with a klar, using it as an off-hand, martial slashing weapon. For the purpose of penalties on attack rolls, treat a klar as a light weapon. If you use a klar to make an attack, you lose its AC bonus until your next action (usually until the next round). Both the sword and shield segments of a klar can be enhanced separately. An enhancement bonus on the shield does not improve the effectiveness of the blade.

Maulaxe: This versatile weapon is a unique design passed down through the dwarvish lords of the Five Kings. It initially appears like a heavy-headed axe, but a skilled wielder can strike equally well with its chopping edge as with the forged sledge that backs the blade; thus, it can be used to deliver bludgeoning or slashing damage as the wielder desires.

Weapons

Simple Weapon	Cost	Dmg (S)	Dmg (M)	Critical	Range Inc.	Weight	Type
Light Weapon							
Wooden stake	0 gp	1d3	1d4	x2	10 ft.	1 lb.	Piercing
Ranged Weapon							
Blowgun	2 gp	1	1d2	x2	20 ft.	1 lb.	Piercing
Martial Weapons	**Cost**	**Dmg (S)**	**Dmg (M)**	**Critical**	**Range Inc.**	**Weight**	**Type**
Light Melee Weapons							
Dogslicer	8 gp	1d4	1d6	19–20/x2	—	1 lb.	Slashing
Starknife	24 gp	1d3	1d4	x3	20 ft.	3 lb.	Piercing
War razor	8 gp	1d3	1d4	18–20/x2	—	1 lb.	Slashing
One-Handed Melee Weapons							
Klar	12 gp	1d4	1d6	x2	—	6 lb.	Slashing
Two-Handed Melee Weapons							
Earth breaker	40 gp	1d10	2d6	x3	—	14 lb.	Bludgeoning
Horsechopper	10 gp	1d8	1d10	x3	—	12 lb.	Piercing or slashing
Ogre hook	24 gp	1d10	1d12	x3	10 lb.		Piercing
Osirian khopesh	20 gp	1d8	1d10	19–20/x2	—	8 lb.	Slashing
Exotic Weapons	**Cost**	**Dmg (S)**	**Dmg (M)**	**Critical**	**Range Inc.**	**Weight**	**Type**
Light Melee Weapons							
Bich'hwa	5 gp	1d3	1d4	19–20/x2	—	2 lb	Piercing or slashing
Flying talon*	15 gp	1d3	1d4	x2	—	5 lb.	Piercing
Katar, tri-bladed	6 gp	1d3	1d4	x4	—	2 lb	Piercing
Maulaxe	25 gp	1d4	1d6	x3	10 ft.	5 lb.	Bludgeoning or slashing
Pata	14 gp	1d4	1d6	x3	—	3 lb	Piercing
Sawtooth sabre	35 gp	1d6	1d8	19–20/x2	—	2 lb.	Slashing
Thorn bracer	30 gp	1d4	1d6	x2	—	3 lb.	Piercing
One-Handed Melee Weapons							
Dueling sword, Aldori	20 gp	1d6	1d8	19–20/x2	—	3 lb.	Slashing
Falcata	16 gp	1d6	1d8	19-20/x3	—	4 lb.	Slashing
Temple sword	18 gp	1d6	1d8	19–20/x2	—	4 lb.	Slashing
Urumi*	30 gp	1d6	1d8	19–20/x2	—	3 lb	Slashing
Two-Handed Melee Weapons							
Curved blade, elven	24 gp	1d10	2d6	x3	—	7 lb.	Slashing
Scarf, bladed*	12 gp	1d4	1d6	19–20/x2	—	2 lb.	Slashing
Ranged Weapons							
Double crossbow	300 gp	1d6	1d8	19–20/x2	100 ft.	18 lb.	Piercing
Shoanti bola	15 gp	1d3	1d4	x2	10 ft.	2 lb.	Bludgeoning and piercing
Thorn bow	50 gp	1d4	1d6	x3	40 ft.	2 lb.	Piercing

*Reach Weapon

A dwarven maulaxe is a martial weapon for dwarves and an exotic weapon for members of other races. It is not a double weapon, and any enchantments applied to the weapon operate normally regardless of which part of the weapon's head is used to deliver the blow, except for enhancements that apply only to blunt or sharp weapons. Such enhancements apply only to attacks dealing the appropriate type of damage.

Ogre Hook: A huge crude crook of sharpened metal, an ogre hook takes its name from the savages who most typically employ them. You can use an ogre hook to make trip attacks. If you are tripped during your own trip attack, you can drop the ogre hook to avoid being tripped. Usually created by ogres, these are often Large and awkward for most humanoids to use.

Osirian Khopesh: The Osirian khopesh begins as a straight blade extending 2 feet from its hilt. It then extends a further 2 feet in a curved crescent, enabling the weapon to be used for trip attacks. If you are tripped during your own trip attempt, you can drop the khopesh to avoid being tripped.

Pata: An evolution of the standard katar, the pata is a short sword that ends in a full, fingerless gauntlet hilt. You punch rather than stab with the weapon, allowing you to put more force behind each strike. A pata provides a +10 bonus on any roll made to keep from being disarmed in combat.

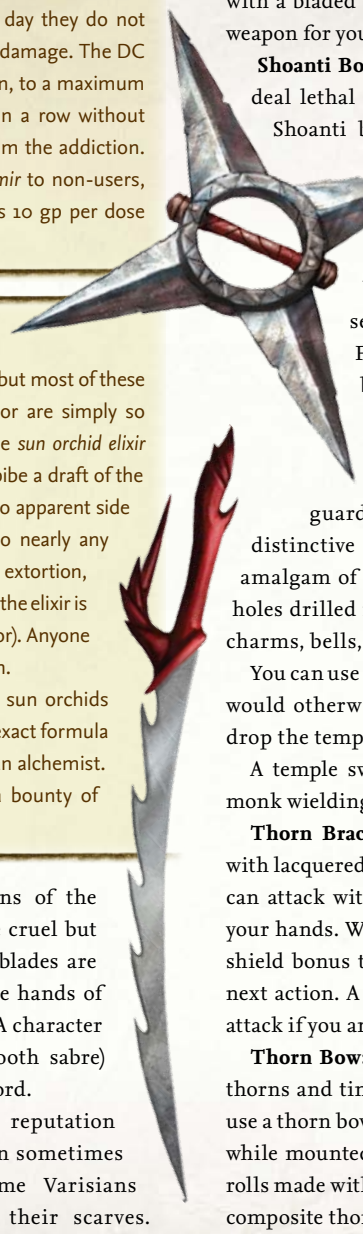
Tears of Razmir

Razmir's faithful utilize a number of tools to help them control the local populace, but none is more insidious than the *tears of Razmir*. This concoction, invented by Razmir, contains a number of mild narcotics and hallucinogens. It is highly addictive. A user gains a +1 enhancement bonus to Constitution for 1 hour. After that, the user suffers a –2 penalty to Wisdom for 1d6 hours and must make a DC 18 Fort save or become addicted. Addicts must make a DC 18 Fort save each day they do not imbibe a dose or take 1 point of Constitution damage. The DC of the save increases by +1 for each dose taken, to a maximum of 25. Those who make five saving throws in a row without taking a dose manage to free themselves from the addiction. Although the clergy gives away *tears of Razmir* to non-users, it eventually demands payment—as much as 10 gp per dose from wealthy addicts.

The Sun Orchid Elixir

Magic can do a great deal to extend one's life, but most of these paths lead to a perverted form of undeath or are simply so powerful as to be extremely rare. As such, the *sun orchid elixir* is a near priceless commodity. Those who imbibe a draft of the potent brew cease to age for 1d4 years, with no apparent side effects. Not surprisingly, vanity-seekers go to nearly any length to acquire the elixir, resorting to bribery, extortion, and murder. To curtail such troubles, the use of the elixir is outlawed in Thuvia (except the formula's creator). Anyone found breaking this law faces exile or execution.

Each vial of the elixir requires six mature sun orchids and 1 month's time to ferment, although the exact formula used is a secret known only to a single Thuvian alchemist. Individual sun orchids typically command a bounty of 500 gp apiece.



Sawtooth Sabre: The signature weapons of the notorious Red Mantis, sawtooth sabres are cruel but efficient weapons. Their curved, serrated blades are capable of making deep wounds and in the hands of a skilled user are treated as light weapons. A character without Exotic Weapon Proficiency (sawtooth sabre) can wield one of these weapons as a longsword.

Scarf, Bladed: Knowing their unkind reputation and that their seductive performances can sometimes bring out the worst in watchers, some Varisians craft rows of razor-sharp blades into their scarves. While one side is all color and sequins, the other hides a deadly weapon. The skill required in using such scarves effectively and not revealing their deadly nature makes them exotic weapons.

A bladed scarf has reach, so you can strike opponents 10 feet away with it. In addition, unlike most other weapons with reach, it can be used against an adjacent foe. You can make trip attacks with the bladed scarf. If you are tripped during your own trip attempt, you can drop the scarf to avoid being tripped. If you are proficient with a bladed scarf, you deal 1d4 points of slashing damage to any creature that makes a successful grapple check against you.

You can use the Weapon Finesse feat to apply your Dexterity modifier instead of your Strength modifier on attack rolls with a bladed scarf sized for you, even though it isn't a light weapon for you.

Shoanti Bola: These bolas function as standard bolas but deal lethal damage rather than nonlethal damage. Most Shoanti bolas can also function as bullroarers—tiny holes carved in the weights cause them to emit a mournful keening sound when spun.

Starknife: An ancient weapon widely used by Varisian wanderers, this weapon has long served the church of Desna as a holy weapon. From a central metal ring, four tapering metal blades extend like points on a compass rose. A wielder can stab with the starknife or throw it like a chakram.

Temple Sword: Typically used by guardians of religious sites, temple swords have distinctive crescent-shaped blades, appearing as an amalgam of a sickle and sword. Many temple swords have holes drilled into the blade or places on the pommel where charms, bells, or other holy trinkets might be attached.

You can use a temple sword to make trip attacks. If someone would otherwise trip you in retaliation, you can choose to drop the temple sword to avoid being tripped.

A temple sword is a monk special weapon. This gives a monk wielding a temple sword special options.

Thorn Bracer: These sturdy leather bracers are studded with lacquered rose thorns that can be used to pierce foes. You can attack with these bracers even while holding objects in your hands. When attacking with thorn bracers, you lose any shield bonus to AC gained from a readied shield until your next action. A thorn bracer can be used to make an offhand attack if you aren't wielding a weapon or shield in that hand.

Thorn Bow: This polished rosewood bow is studded with thorns and tiny rose flowers. You need at least two hands to use a thorn bow, regardless of its size. You can use a thorn bow while mounted. Penalties for low Strength apply on damage rolls made with a thorn bow. Thorn bows cannot be made into composite thorn bows.

Urumi: This terribly sharp longsword appears as a coil of steel, similar to a metal whip, but is capable of cleaving flesh and holding an edge as well as any forged blade. An urumi has reach, so you can strike opponents 10 feet away with it. In addition, unlike most other weapons with reach, it can be used against an adjacent foe.

With an urumi, you get a +2 bonus on opposed attack rolls made to disarm an enemy.

Built for flexibility, an urumi takes only half damage from attempts to sunder it.

War Razor: In all appearances, a war razor is an oversized razor or flip knife. As the razor folds into the handle, no sheath is required, making the weapon easy to hide, granting you a +2 bonus on Sleight of Hand checks made to conceal the weapon on your body.

Wooden Stake: Popular in certain parts of Ustalav, a wooden stake proves very handy against vampires.

Ammunition

The following specialty ammunition can only be fired from the appropriate weapons, as described.

Blowgun Dart: These light darts have tiny grooves behind the tips. A character can apply poison to a blowgun dart without risk of poisoning himself. A bundle of 10 blowgun darts costs 5 sp.

Bullets: Although each type of firearm fires differently sized bullets, individual bullets cost the same, regardless of the firearm they are used for. A pouch of 10 bullets costs 1 gp.

Smoke Bullet: These sling stones require only a touch attack to succeed. When they strike a target, they burst, releasing a cloud of noxious gas that requires the creature struck to attempt a DC 13 Fortitude save. If the save fails, the target is nauseated for 2 rounds. A smoke bullets costs 100 gp.

Thistle Arrow: These arrows are a specialty of the Ekujae shamans, who craft the arrowheads out of the thistles of a toxic plant that most creatures find highly caustic. They deal normal damage but then become embedded in the wound and deal an additional 1 point of damage each round for 1d6 rounds from their irritating sap. Creatures immune to poison are immune to this extra damage. A creature can remove an embedded thistle arrow as a move action without provoking attacks of opportunity, but doing so deals an additional 1d3 points of damage as the thorny barbs are pulled free. A DC 12 Heal check (made as a standard action) can pull free a thistle arrow's head without dealing any additional damage. A single thistle arrow costs 1 gp.

Armor

In addition to new and creative ways of killing one another, Golarion's peoples also work hard to develop new ways of protecting themselves.

Armored Kilt: Popular among the Keleshite soldiers of Qadira, the armored kilt is made of a thick cloth skirt with bars of steel hanging down from the waist and a ring of horizontal steel plates just above the hem. An armored kilt can be worn separately as light armor, or it can be added to other suits of light or medium armor. Adding an armored kilt increases a suit of armor's armor bonus by +1, but it adds 15 pounds to the armor, lowers the maximum Dex bonus by 1, and increases the armor's weight category (from light to medium and from medium to heavy). Adding an armored kilt to heavy armor does not provide an armor bonus increase.

Field Plate: This heavy armor is similar to full plate but lighter in construction, sacrificing a bit in protection for greater flexibility and mobility.

Klar: You can attack an opponent with a klar, using it as an off-hand, martial slashing weapon. For the purpose of attack roll penalties, treat a klar as a light weapon. If you use a klar to make an attack, you lose its AC bonus until your next action (usually until the next round). Both segments of a klar can be enhanced separately. An enhancement bonus on the shield does not improve the effectiveness of the blade and vice versa.

Leaf Armor: Druidic elves use secret alchemical compounds to treat special leaves used in crafting armor for their warriors. Stitching the overlapping leaves into a leather jerkin, bracers, and leggings provides great flexibility while deflecting blows as well as metal armor. Leaf armor is always masterwork. It cannot be constructed from other special materials.

Rosewood Armor: This suit of leather armor is wrapped in special rose vines. Anyone grappling a creature wearing rosewood armor takes 1d4 points of piercing damage per round. This damage can be prevented by taking a –10 penalty on the grapple check. The rose vines must be watered with

Armor

Armor	Cost	Armor Bonus	Maximum Dex Bonus	Armor Check Penalty	Arcane Spell Failure Chance	—Speed— (30 ft.)	(20 ft.)	Weight
Light Armor								
Armored kilt*	20 gp	+1	+6	0	0%	30 ft.	20 ft.	10 lb.
Rosewood	50 gp	+2	+6	0	10%	30 ft.	20 ft.	15 lb.
Leaf	500 gp	+3	+8	0	10%	30 ft.	20 ft.	10 lb.
Heavy Armor								
Field plate	1,200 gp	+7	+2	-6	40%	20 ft.	15 ft.	50 lb.
Stoneplate	1,800 gp	+9	+0	–8	40%	15 ft.	10 ft.	75 lb.
Shields								
Klar	12 gp	+1	—	–1	5%	—	—	6 lb.

* Can be worn alone or added to existing suits of armor.

at least 1 gallon of water each day or they whither and die, turning the armor into normal leather armor.

Stoneplate: Crafted by dwarven stonesmiths from alchemically strengthened plates of shale or basalt, stoneplate is heavy and unwieldy, but it offers unparalleled protection to its wearer.

Firearms

Although generally quite deadly, firearms remain rare on Golarion thanks to the greater power and reliability of magic. In places where magic is fickle or doesn't work at all (such as the Mana Wastes), firearms become more desirable but no less expensive. Firearms generally work like any other weapons, except where noted here.

Firearm Proficiency: The Exotic Weapon Proficiency (firearms) feat grants proficiency with all the firearms listed here. A non-proficient character who attacks with a firearm does so at the standard –4 penalty on attack rolls, but also suffers twice the normal chances for a misfire.

Attacks of Opportunity: Attacking with a firearm provokes attacks of opportunity.

Capacity: This lists the number of shots the weapon can hold. You may fire a weapon as many times in a round as you have attacks, up to this number. Reloading a flintlock firearm (blunderbuss and musket) requires 1 round. Reloading a percussion cap firearm (pistol, revolver, rifle, scattergun) requires 1 move action per shot.

Damage: The round bullets of firearms deal bludgeoning and piercing damage because they rely on kinetic force to punch into their targets. A bullet that fails to penetrate deeply can still damage its target, just from the force of impact alone.

Blunderbuss: This weapon fires lead shot from its trumpet-shaped barrel, making it effective as a fowling weapon or as a close-fighting personal defense weapon. While potentially devastating up close, it becomes quickly ineffectual against human-sized targets at a distance.

Musket: This smooth-bore longarm fires large-caliber bullets. What it lacks in accuracy it makes up for in high damage potential.

Pistol: The single-shot, rifled-bore pistol is relatively easy to conceal. You gain a +2 bonus on Sleight of Hand checks made to conceal a pistol.

Revolver: The most advanced firearm available, a revolver has up to five chambers that each hold a bullet and a wad of guncotton. Cocking the hammer spins the chambers to align the next bullet with the barrel. The complicated mechanism of a revolver makes it misfire on a natural 1 or 2.

Rifle: Firing small-caliber rounds at high velocity from a rifled barrel, a rifle makes for an excellent long-range weapon and is favored by snipers.

Scattergun: A larger version of a blunderbuss, a scattergun fires a devastating blast of shot that can be quite ruinous at close range.

Optional Rules

In order to better simulate the deadly but relatively fragile nature of firearms, consider using the following optional rules for firearms of all kinds.

Exploding Dice: Whenever you deal damage with a firearm and roll maximum on any damage die, reroll that die and add that roll to the total as well. If you roll maximum on rerolls, continue to reroll, adding to the damage each time.

Misfire: Whenever you roll a natural 1 on an attack roll made with a firearm, your firearm might misfire. Immediately roll 1d20. On a 1, the firearm is damaged and the powder explodes out the breech, dealing the weapon's damage to you; on a 2–7, the firearm is damaged; on a 8–18, the firearm jams; and on a 19–20, you simply miss. A damaged firearm requires a DC 20 Craft (gunsmithing) check and 1 hour to repair. A jammed firearm requires 1 round to clear before it can be reloaded. A jammed revolver requires 1 round to clear, but as long as at least one chamber holds a bullet it can be fired immediately.

Firearms

Weapon	Cost	Dmg (M)	Critical	Range Inc.	Capacity	Weight	Type
Ranged Weapons							
Blunderbuss[1,3,4]	1,400 gp	2d6[5]	x2	20 ft.	1	5 lb.	Bludgeoning and piercing
Musket[2,4]	1,800 gp	1d8	x3	90 ft.	1	9 lb.	Bludgeoning and piercing
Pistol[1]	1,400 gp	1d6	x2	60 ft.	1	4 lb.	Bludgeoning and piercing
Revolver[1,4]	2,600 gp	1d6	x2	60 ft.	5	5 lb.	Bludgeoning and piercing
Rifle[2,3]	3,000 gp	1d8	19–20/x3	150 ft.	1	8 lb.	Bludgeoning and piercing
Scattergun[2,3]	2,200 gp	3d6[5]	x2	30 ft.	2	8 lb.	Bludgeoning and piercing

1 This firearm requires only one hand to use.

2 This firearm requires two hands to use.

3 Small creatures take a –2 penalty on attack rolls when using this firearm.

4 This firearm has a misfire chance on a natural 1 or 2.

5 This firearm deals 1 die less damage per range increment beyond the first. It cannot deal precision-based damage, such as from a sneak attack or from attacking a ranger's favored enemy.

For more information on firearms and gunpowder, see Alkenstar in Chapter 2 and the Technology entry in this chapter on page 235.

Equipment

People across Avistan and Garund develop all sorts of unique gear useful for their particular needs.

Coffin, Common: This is a plain, wooden funerary box for transporting and holding dead bodies or remains.

Coffin, Ornate: A more ornate version of the common coffin, favored by aristocratic families for displaying the remains of their dead scions before they are reanimated as undead. Some undead Gebbites, particularly vampires, continue using their coffins as beds after their reanimation.

Harrow Deck: This is a traditional fortune-telling deck of cards used by Varisian soothsayers and seers. Some Harrow decks are elaborately illustrated, but most are parchment or paper cards with hand-painted images. Harrow decks are often handed down through generations and treated with utmost care by their users as a result.

Marker Dye: This alchemical liquid leaves an obvious, bright stain wherever splashed. The stain is nearly impossible to remove with anything but time—it fades after 72 hours, and disappears in 2 weeks. Molthuni explorers use it mark trails, scouts to mark positions, some jailers to mark special prisoners, and conquerors to claim their primacy. When thrown, treat it as a ranged touch attack with a range increment of 10 feet.

Necrotic Talisman: These unholy symbols have been desecrated by clerics of Urgathoa and imbued with negative energy. When worn by an undead creature with an Intelligence score, a necrotic talisman provides +1 turn resistance.

Perfume/Cologne: Perfume and cologne are common accessories for those who hope to avoid offending through scent. More expensive scents are available in finer quarters of any city. Rare perfumes and colognes are sold in vials containing 10 applications, with a single dose lasting for 24 hours during which its wearer gains a +2 circumstance bonus on Diplomacy checks against targets of her own race. Exotic perfumes grant a +2 circumstance bonus on all Diplomacy checks.

Scarf, Pocketed: An elaborate design disguises several small pockets on one side of this scarf. This scarf grants you a +4 bonus on Sleight of Hand checks made to hide objects on your body. This bonus does not stack with the bonus wearing heavy clothing provides, but does stack with bonuses for attempting to hide small objects.



Scarf, Reinforced: One side of this 8-foot-long scarf is reinforced with chain links and metal plates. While not enough to provide a benefit to Armor Class, these versatile scarves can be used like a length of chain to climb short distances or bind an enemy. A reinforced scarf has hardness 10 and 4 hit points. It can be burst with a DC 24 Strength check.

Unguent of Revivification: The preservation of dead flesh is important in undead-friendly Geb. Geb's elite commonly use this alchemical ointment as a cheaper alternative to *gentle repose* to give their undead flesh the blush of life. A single dose staves off the decomposition of dead flesh for 1d6 days. It cannot reverse decay that is already present and has no effect on the time limit for raising creatures from the dead.

Heatstones

These round or ovoid stones of volcanic glass have a decent heft to them, weighing from 2 to 4 pounds, and generate their own heat. They provide enough heat to keep chambers warm in the coldest winter. One heatstone keeps a 20-foot-square area comfortably warm even in extreme cold (below –20°), or a 40-foot-square area in severe cold (below 0°).

Heatstones do not generate enough warmth to be useful in direct combat, although they are helpful in keeping troops battle-ready. They last just three winters and then must be replaced, ensuring that the trade in them as luxuries in the North stays constant. Rumor has it that some such stones are scrying devices that enable Keleshite sorcerers to hear the conversations of distant lands, but this is surely idle paranoia. These naturally occurring magical stones are found all throughout Qadira, and desert nomads frequently arrive in Katheer bearing dozens of them.

Heatstones sell for 300 gp.

Gear

Item	Cost	Weight
Coffin, common	10 gp	30 lb.
Coffin, ornate	100 gp	50 lb.
Harrow deck	100 gp	—
Marker dye	1 gp	—
Necrotic talisman	500 gp	1 lb.
Perfume, common	1 gp/dose	—
Perfume, rare	10 gp/dose	—
Perfume, exotic	100 gp/dose	—
Scarf, pocketed	8 gp	1/2 lb.
Scarf, reinforced	10 gp	1 lb.
Unguent of revivification	50 gp/dose	—

Fauna

Innumerable animal species thrive on Golarion, ranging from the relatively innocuous to the deadly. Some of the more unique animals of Golarion are detailed briefly here.

Aurochs: Standing 7 feet at the shoulder, these grazing bovines sport massive pairs of ridged horns sharpened by habitual abrasion against boulders. Low, warning grunts are typically sufficient to warn away hunters and predators alike.

These normally docile creatures migrate in large herds across the lower ranges of far-northern mountain chains, defoliating entire slopes before moving on to the next peak. Adult males stand on the edges of the herd, protecting females and younger males alike. Aurochs form the relatively small herds and disregard family structure or mating history except during brief, seasonal mating periods during the late spring.

Firefoot Fennec: These small, large-eared foxes possess a distinctive pattern of flame-colored fur around their paws, rather than the typical black "socks" of more common vulpines.

Ranging across northern Andoran, southern Isger, and northeastern Cheliax, firefoot fennecs are regarded as good luck symbols, and by extension their uniquely colored pelts are prized by furriers, especially in Absalom and Molthune. Due to their keen hearing and generally skittish and semi-nocturnal nature, they prove difficult to hunt—much to the ire of farmers raising small game—which only add to their reputation of being quick and lucky.

Live specimens raised from birth are prized for how quickly they tame, and ships out of Almas occasionally keep one aboard as a mascot and defense against rats and mice in the hold.

Giant Gecko: These lizards can lie at ease sunbathing motionlessly for hours before suddenly dashing up and across a sheer cliff face—without any apparent difficulty—in search of food. The giant gecko's wide-spaced, uniquely textured toe-pads allow it to scale most any solid surface.

The giant gecko is widely known by its various regional breeds, each adapted to a slightly different environment. Numerous, wide-ranging subspecies are scattered across Golarion. Horned spirestalkers dwell in the Cinderlands, while frostleapers grow in the colder climes of the Lands of the Linnorm Kings. Other examples include the Storval Plateau's spire striders, Geb's glitterscale geckos, Sargava's six-toed geckos, and the comparatively rare mist-walkers of Galt's Fogpeak Mountains.

Larger than their more common cousins, the giant gecko regional subtypes subsist on omnivorous diets of small animals (nearly anything smaller than a dog, including humanoids), insects, fruit, and certain plants. Giant geckos also possess intelligence above their smaller kin, and with sufficient training they are useful as mounts or uncommon pack animals among certain humanoid cultures.

Razorcrow: Half again the size of a standard carrion crow or raven and covered with greasy black feathers, this breed of rook exhibits a signature curved, jagged-edged beak.

Using their specialized beaks to tear into the flesh of tougher game or those with thicker hides, razorcrows are notoriously covetous of fresh kills, and larger groups defend carcasses against even larger predators. Despite this fearsome bravery, the crows rarely drift from carrion eating, except when on the edge of starvation, which itself is rare, as their habitats rarely preclude a lack of the dead.

Razorcrows are themselves common sights on and above battlefields in the aftermath of war. Their feathers on the leading edges of their wings are longer and tougher, and find a common use by fletchers, especially in Cheliax and Isger.

Sargavan Boar: No larger than a small dog, this species of boar is adapted to living in the warm, wet environment of the jungle and the veldts along its fringes. Easily able to hide among the underbrush due to its small size, the creature gives a loud, ear-splitting squeal when threatened, and its pointed tusks can be quite dangerous.

Long adapted to the wet jungle environment of the Mwangi, the Screaming Jungle, and the tropical forests south of Desperation Bay, the Sargavan boar has for many years served as one of the primary sources of meat for the Mwangi natives and the Chelish colonists alike. Although small in size, Sargavan boars breed quickly, and their numbers have actually increased ever since the Chelish arrival. This population boom is largely due to the boar's quickness to adapt to foraging for roots in the Sargavan crop fields, much to the colonists' irritation.

The local Mwangi natives hold the boars to be watchers over the souls of men who died within the Screaming Jungle. As such, Mwangi eat a boar's meat only after giving thanks to the deceased animal's spirit, and they prefer to consume it as infrequently as possible. The heavy consumption on the part of the Chelish colonists is but another source of friction between the two groups.

Sevencoat Serpent: Furiously hissing when disturbed, the sevencoat serpent appears indistinguishable at first glance from its venomous kindred. Curved fangs extend from its mouth, but despite the snake's stance and threatening behavior, it lacks a poisoned bite.

Named for a thieving monster famous for wearing disguises to evade bumbling constables in a series of Nirmathan children's fables, the sevencoat serpent is actually a group of non-venomous snakes with a dozen or so regional variants. Regardless of habitat, sevencoats bear uncanny resemblances to the poisonous snakes dominant in their regions. This mimicry of color and banding patterns gives the family of serpents a wide berth by many potential predators, although skilled hunters are often trained to know the difference.

Scribes and artists prize their fangs—extracted whole from captured specimens—as unique alternatives to quills and tattoo pens, with the latter being an invention of the Ekujae elves of the Mwangi Expanse.

Slurk: Around the size of a wild hog, this pale, squat, subterranean frog exudes a potent stench that permeates its damp, slippery burrows. Covered with a thick brownish slime, a slurk produces a tacky, natural adhesive from its skin as a defensive measure.

Resulting from long-abandoned dwarven attempts to breed a domesticated, underground frog, the slurk has since expanded into its adoptive environment, subsisting on a diet of fungus and lichen. Frequently captured and raised by less aesthetically sensitive races, it yields a renewable source of rubbery but nutritious flesh, but among these races the slurk is most prized for the adhesive present in its slime. Kobolds often keep larger specimens as trained mounts, and runts as pets.

Dried and mixed with water, reconstituted slurk adhesive can be spread upon the hands for traction, much like tar, granting a +5 bonus on Climb checks. When used as a fixative between objects, dried slurk-slime adhesive also acts as a waterproof seal.

Snowflake Moth: Drawn to the lanterns and torches of humanoid settlements, these fist-sized moths glitter like living frosted glass. The light turns their bodies translucent as they draw ever closer, ultimately igniting them in brief, extremely bright, blue-white flashes.

Common to the western regions of the Mindspin and Menador Mountains and portions of the Uskwood, snowflake moths are known for their distinctive appearance. The moths are commonly preyed upon by bats and other nocturnal fliers, although pseudodragons distinctly shun them as having a "wretched taste fit only for imps."

The dried and powdered wings of snowflake moths find use as a decorative glitter for noblewomen in the shadow-swathed courts of Nidal.

Vudran Gharial: Looking much like a crocodile with a white and blue speckled back, and a thinner, elongated maw, the Vudran gharial lazily drifts half-submerged among marsh-reeds, looking for prey. Unseen, however, are the dozen others of its kind fully submerged nearby, ready to encircle anything they spot while potential prey focus on the obvious threat.

Known as much for their markings—which resemble an archaic standard of the Vudran army—as for their unique pack structure, the Vudran gharial is a relatively rare but much feared aquatic predator. Dwelling mostly in the brackish waters where rivers empty into oceans, as well as saltwater marshes and coastal estuaries, gharials cluster in groups of up to 15, hunting together like lions or wolves to take down larger aquatic prey or the occasional grazing animal or human that blunders upon them as they collectively sun themselves on a riverbank. On its own, an individual gharial's jaws are typically incapable of subduing a large animal before it can escape, but the pack structure overcomes this weakness.

Tough and distinctive, the Vudran gharial's hide can be fashioned into armor of exceptional quality and durability. Raw hides fetch upwards of 50 gp apiece. Hide armor prepared from the gharial skin grants an additional +1 armor bonus but at triple the cost.

Zhen Worm: Although these carnivorous worms rarely measure over an inch in diameter, they often grow to lengths of up to ten feet. A series of orange bands along their lengths allow zhen worms to detect tremors and vibrations, sensing the approach of prey, typically rodents, lizards, and particularly slow birds.

Dwelling in warm, wet environments, these worms frequently migrate to regions with geothermal hot springs and mud pots, such as Darkmoon Vale in Andoran, the Gorum Pots of Numeria, Teratze in the Mwangi Expanse, and similar areas. Their ability to burrow and even sense quarry is disrupted by colder, rockier soils, and as such, they tend to avoid such regions.

Zhen worms have a particularly horrific and disgusting method of feeding. They have no actual mouth at the end, but instead absorb nutrients through thousands of tiny holes along their sides. The mucus they constantly ooze is mildly acidic—not enough to damage flesh instantly, but over time, a zhen worm wrapped around a dead body can reduce the corpse to a foul-smelling slurry and bones in a matter of days, during which time they absorb the result into their bodies. Strangely enough, if distilled by a skilled alchemist, this mucus proves useful for the long-term preservation of game—excepting the aftertaste, if such foodstuffs are not properly cleaned afterward—preventing spoilage and dissolving the outer, indigestible layers without doing the same to muscle and other edible tissues.



Flora

Hundreds of thousands of different plant species exist on Golarion. Most require no explanation and deserve no notation, but a few stand out for their usefulness—or deadliness.

Blackscour: These squat, fat mushrooms bear black caps dotted with small white spots. They exude a repellant odor similar to that of a rotting carcass. They are said to have a hard, bitter, sharp flavor.

Blackscour is extremely rare. It was only recently discovered in Darkmoon Vale, where popular belief states that kobolds are responsible for bringing it to the surface world. It is more commonly found growing deep in the earth in and around fetid pools, often cultivated by subterranean races.

Consumption of any part of a blackscour mushroom, including its spores, exposes the eater to a horrible wasting disease known as blackscour taint (ingested; incubation 1d3 days; 1d2 Constitution; Fortitude DC 14).

Brinestump Clover: Brinestump clover patches grow throughout Brinestump Marsh, in the eastern wilderness of the River Kingdom. The boggards living there often cultivate it. The small yellow flowers of Brinestump clover are said to possess numerous medicinal qualities, but they are hard to wrest from the fierce frogmen of the marsh.

Brinestump clover flowers can only be found in Brinestump Marsh. They are unknown elsewhere. When the pale yellow flowers are steeped in boiling water, they provide several curative qualities. Treating a character suffering from a nonmagical disease with a poultice soaked in the water grants a +2 bonus on Heal checks to treat the disease. When ingested, Brinestone clover flowers act as antitoxin, but the effect only lasts 5 minutes. Finally, mixing the flowers with healing potions (requiring a DC 20 Craft [alchemy] check to mix in the proper amount) increases the healing by +1 point per die rolled.

Flayleaf: Narrow reddish-brown leaves droop from these wiry shrubs. Harvesting the narcotic leaves of flayleaf plants is fraught with peril, as colonies of poisonous red-bellied spiders often build their nests in the plants.

Flayleaf is found in nearly any temperate environment. When harvested before the leaves turn brittle and dark brown, flayleaf leaves can be smoked as a pipe weed or rolled into thin paper and burned until they smolder. Flayleaf acts as a hallucinogenic and sedative when the fumes are inhaled. Its effects also serve as a potent painkiller and muscle relaxant. A creature under its influence is immune to effects that produce pain for up to 4 hours. It has the side effect of weakening the will power of creatures under its influence—users suffer a –5 penalty on saving throws made against mind-affecting effects.

Ironbloom Mushrooms: Short and stunted, these small mushrooms are a favorite among dwarves and are rarely found outside of dwarven enclaves. They gain their name thanks to thriving in areas rich in iron, often sprouting in and around dwarven forges.

Ironblooms grow in dark places thick with metal. The diets of Five Kings Mountains dwarves consist heavily of these mushrooms, mainly because the plants grow abundantly throughout their holdings. Ironblooms are rich in protein and have a light salty flavor but a somewhat unpleasant earthy aftertaste. Because they are filling and weigh next to nothing, they make great traveling rations. Outside of dwarven settlements they are difficult to find.

Jukamis: This tall, rubbery plant grows as high as 15 feet in the jungles of the Mwangi Expanse. The jukamis is most often found growing near river banks.

The jukamis, or "fan leaf," is famous for its thick, enormous leaves that are used for a variety of tasks in the vast central jungles of Garund. It produces a rubbery substance when boiled down that can be used to waterproof huts, strengthen weapons and armor, and to help support buoyant rafts. Its leaves often serve as roof coverings for huts or makeshift raincoats and hats. In the wilds, a jukamis can be used as a makeshift shelter against the frequent rains that soak the jungle.

Nettleweed: Commonly found in the forests of Avistan, this pale green vine-like weed produces ochre-colored burrs that cause horrible itching when they come in contact with flesh.

Alchemists and naturalists have yet to find any beneficial use for nettleweed and its itchsome burrs, except as an irritant. When it comes in contact with the skin of most creatures, nettleweed creates such an irritation that the afflicted creature can do little more than scratch itself furiously. While affected by nettleweed, a creature must succeed at a Concentration check to perform any action other than to scratch at the itchy welts. The DC is 10 for any action that does not normally require Concentration checks, or else DC 15 + spell level (if applicable), with a minimum DC of 20. A DC 15 Heal check or any *cure* spell ends the effect. Otherwise, it subsides on its own after 30 minutes.

Noosetree: These eerie carnivorous trees prey on small woodland creatures. A noosetree rarely grows higher than 20 feet, and its branches are long and thin, hanging limply toward the ground. The tree's leaves are long, dark-green fronds that are often as long as the branches from which they grow, giving the entire plant the appearance of an immense hairy column.

The noosetree senses prey through vibrations in the earth and snares potential meals with long vines, which can lash out with surprising speed to a reach of up to ten feet. Most specimens of noosetree prey primarily on squirrels, rabbits, birds, and other small forest fauna, although rumors persist of larger and more aggressive trees in certain deep parts of the woods.

Pauliel: Towering above lesser trees, the lofty pauliel are widely held as the "first trees." Lumberjacks superstitiously connect them to the fey races of the woodlands and don't touch them. Nature enthusiasts revere them.

These silver-barked softwoods grow to immense heights, but never spread to more than a few feet in diameter. Among foresters and lumberjacks, the pauliel have a mystical connection to nature, causing them to give pauliel copses a wide berth when logging. These superstitions are likely based on a few specimens with known links to dryads or the discoveries of tatzlwyrms lurking in the branches.

Pesh: This fuzzy, cactus-like plant grows in hot, moist areas (such as around desert oases or near mudpots and hot springs) where it often chokes out all other vegetation. The bulbous bodies contain a sweet sap that, when reduced to a slurry and ingested (usually by adding salt or tiny bits of broken glass or grit and taking the concoction nasally), evokes euphoric hallucinations that also cause paranoid, aggressive behavior. Its distinctive spring-blooming yellow flowers bear distinctive crimson stripes that serve as a non-narcotic spice.

This strong stimulant was originally imported from Vudra, but quickly became prominent throughout Katapesh. Outside of Katapesh, Darkmoon Vale is the largest supplier of pesh to the nations of Avistan. Pesh fields are often guarded by well-paid mercenaries who do not themselves use the drug. Pesh addicts are easy to identify by their bloodshot eyes and frequent nosebleeds.

Because of its hallucinogenic nature, pesh imposes a –2 penalty on Will saves to disbelieve illusions. It also grants a +2 enhancement bonus to Strength and Constitution. Both effects last for up to 1 hour, after which time the pesh user is fatigued.

Spirit Moss: This gray-green moss grows in patches on dead trees. It reeks of decay and tastes even worse. Those who brave the perils of consuming this odious substance, however, find the barrier between the world of the living and the dead parted for a short time.

Spirit moss is extremely valuable among creatures who value the knowledge waiting to be discovered among the dead. Consuming spirit moss weakens the body significantly, dealing 2d6 points of Strength and Dexterity damage (no save), but sharpens the consumer's senses, who gains the ability to *speak with dead*, as the spell (CL 10th).

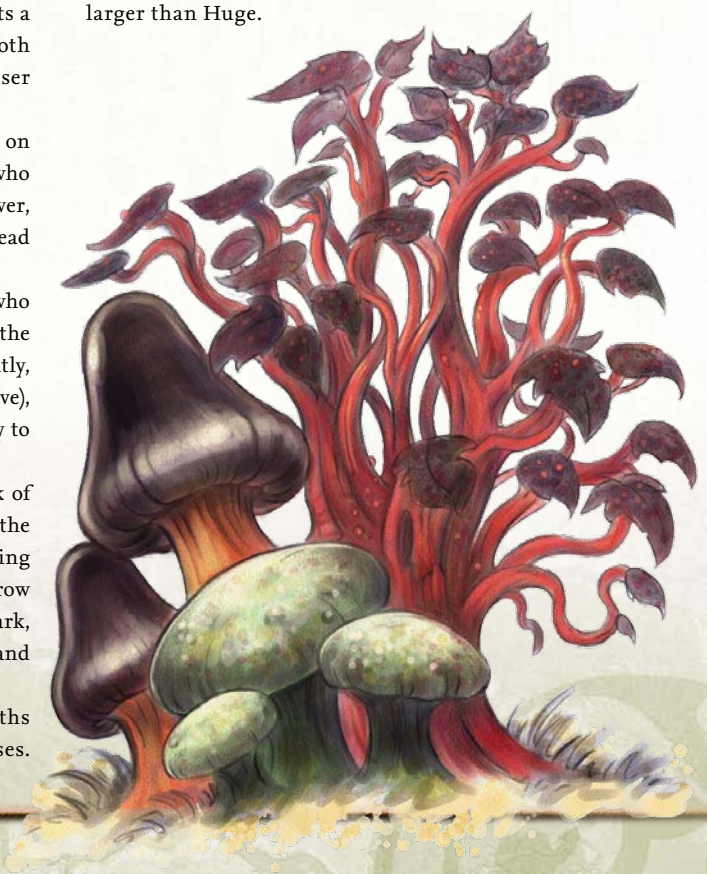
Thileu Bark: The slow-growing cinnamon-brown bark of the Varisian thileu tree is a closely guarded export among the nomadic Varisians, who alone know the secrets of stripping the bark without killing the plants. Because thileu trees grow very slowly and can take nearly a year to replenish their bark, Varisia exports no more than 50 pounds of this strong and expensive spice a year.

Other than its use for seasoning food, the bored youths of Cheliax took to snorting the hot powder up their noses. They claim it causes a hallucinogenic reaction, but their equally bored Korvosan cousins found that doing so causes only incredible pain, theorizing that enough pain is sure to create hallucinations, and instead they use the spice on their food.

As a spice, the powder from thileu bark is very hot. Mixed with water, the powder can be made into a paste that burns the skin. Although it deals no real damage, the sensation can be excruciatingly painful.

Wolfberry Bush: Carnivorous but blessedly immobile, the wolfberry bush mimics other berry bushes to lure creatures close enough to strike, strangle, and feed.

Unlike its cousin, the assassin vine, the wolfberry bush is incapable of movement, it has thus developed the ability to camouflage itself as any of several varieties of berry bushes indigenous to an area. Its fruit usually tastes the same—overly sweet with a bitter aftertaste—no matter what form it takes. It has the same statistics as an assassin vine (MM 20), although it cannot move and it never grows larger than Huge.



Flayleaf Spiders

Flayleaf spiders have long cephalothoraxes and red markings on their abdomens. They infest flayleaf bushes by the thousands and are highly aggressive when protecting their homes. An agitated colony of flayleaf spiders can bring down human-sized and even larger creatures with their venom. Treat a colony of flayleaf spiders as a spider swarm (MM 239). Their venom deals Constitution damage.

General Feats

The nation entries in Chapter 2 present many local feats available to characters with affinity to those places. These feats, though, are freely available to characters from all over the Inner Sea region.

Altitude Affinity

Through means either mundane or magical, you have hardened your body to the grueling rigors of surviving at altitudes where the thin air is not conducive to normal life.

Prerequisites: Con 19, Endurance.

Benefit: You are unaffected by altitude fatigue, altitude sickness, lack of oxygen, or any of their accompanying complications while at high altitudes, including the death zone above 26,000 feet. In addition, you gain a +4 bonus on all Survival checks made at high altitudes (above 5,000 feet).

Normal: Only creatures with the air or incorporeal subtypes, aberrations, constructs, dragons, elementals, oozes, outsiders, plants, or undead, as well as creatures that do not breathe, are immune to the harmful effects of high altitudes.

Bloatmage Initiate

The practice of hemotheurgy is an ancient practice performed by those who believe that "magic lies in the blood." Using foul rituals and gruesome rites, you increase the amount of blood and lymph your body produces in an attempt to increase your body's natural reserves of magical potential. Practitioners of this hideous type of magic are known as bloatmages.

Prerequisite: Spell Focus (any school).

Benefit: When you gain this feat, you learn the ancient secrets of hemotheurgy. By subjecting your body to various rituals, imbibing strange elixirs, and focusing your mind, you dramatically increase your body's production of lymph and blood and form a magical bond between these fluids and your spellcasting powers. Pick one school of magic in which you possess the Spell Focus feat—you cast spells from this school of magic at +1 caster level.

Hemotheurgy's benefits do not come without a price. Your increased girth leaves you constantly under the effects of a medium load—your maximum bonus to Armor Class from Dexterity is +3, you gain an armor check penalty of –3, and your speed decreases as appropriate (generally from 30 feet to 20 feet for a Medium creature).

Crossbow Mastery

You can load crossbows with blinding speed and even fire them in melee with little fear of reprisal.

Prerequisites: Dex 15, Point Blank Shot, Rapid Reload, Rapid Shot.

Benefit: The time required for you to reload any type of crossbow is reduced to a free action, regardless of the type of crossbow used. You can fire a crossbow as many times in a full attack action as you could attack if you were using a bow. Reloading a crossbow for the type of crossbow you chose when you took Rapid Reload no longer provokes attacks of opportunity.

Special: A fighter may select Crossbow Mastery as one of his fighter bonus feats. A ranger may select Crossbow Mastery in place of Manyshot for his improved combat style at 6th level.

Green Faith Acolyte

You have trained to channel your magical energies in ways that do not harm the natural world around you.

Prerequisite: Ability to cast 2nd level divine spells.

Benefit: Spells you cast that deal damage, channel negative energy, or otherwise harm life do not hurt normal or magical plants. Plant creatures are not protected by this feat, but plants that grow or are created as a result of magic are.

In addition, whenever you cast a spell that utilizes, heals, or enhances normal or magical plants (such as *entangle* or *plant growth*), you cast the spell at +1 caster level. This benefit does not extend to plant creatures, nor does it extend to spells with an area effect that you use to affect some plants and some creatures (such as using *mass cure light wounds* to *cure* both plants and allies).

Finally, you gain a +2 bonus on Diplomacy checks made when interacting with fey and plant creatures.

Harmonic Spell

You can weave bardic music effects into your spellcasting.

Prerequisite: Perform (any) 8 ranks, bardic music ability.

Benefit: When you cast a harmonic spell, you can activate one of your bardic music abilities as a free action. The bardic music is incorporated into the spell's casting time, and the effect of the bardic music lasts for as long as the spell's casting time continues and for 5 rounds thereafter. Activating a bardic music ability with Harmonic Spell consumes an additional bardic music use per day, but does not increase the effective level of the spell being cast.

Harrowed

Numerous Harrow readings early in your life seem to have hit the mark precisely, increasing your belief that you are destined for a specific purpose in life; the Harrow deck and your destiny seem intertwined.

Prerequisites: Cha 13.

Benefit: You get a +2 bonus on all Will saves made to resist charm or compulsion effects. Once per day, you may draw a card from a Harrow deck you own. At any one time for the rest of that day, you may apply a +2 bonus on any d20 roll modified by the card's suit. For example, if you drew a card from the suit of Wisdom, you may apply a +2 bonus on a Will save or a

Wisdom-based skill check. If you drew a card from the suit of Dexterity, you could apply this +2 bonus on an Initiative check, a Reflex save, a Dexterity-based skill check, or a ranged attack roll. You may assign this +2 bonus after you make the roll, but you must do so before you know if the roll was a success or not.

If you don't have an actual Harrow deck handy to draw from to determine your bonus, you can randomly determine the ability score by simply rolling 1d6 (1 = Strength, 2 = Constitution, 3 = Dexterity, 4 = Intelligence, 5 = Wisdom, 6 = Charisma).

Special: You may only gain this feat at 1st level.

One Finger

You can bring to bear the energies of your entire body in a single point, allowing you to strongly affect your foes with the slightest touch.

Prerequisite: Dex 13, Wis 13, Improved Unarmed Strike, Stunning Fist, Weapon Finesse, base attack bonus +8, ki strike class ability.

Benefit: You can make Stunning Fist attacks as melee touch attacks. You may not use Power Attack in combination with this feat. You may choose to expend one use of Stunning Fist when making a bull rush, disarm, grapple, sunder, or trip attempt to provide a bonus equal to your Wisdom modifier (if positive) to any attack roll or opposed check required. This bonus applies only to a single attempt and does not apply to subsequent checks (as when continuing a grapple in subsequent rounds). You may use this ability once per round on your turn. You may not use it to defend against combat actions attempted against you.

Spirit of the River

You carry in body and mind the spirits of the river that flow and sustain.

Prerequisite: Aquatic subtype, Knowledge (nature) 1 rank

Benefit: You gain the ability to breathe air or water interchangeably. You become fatigued if you remain out of the water for a number of days equal to your Constitution bonus plus your character level. This fatigue only goes away once you immerse yourself in water for 8 hours. Mundane or magical effects that remove fatigue have no effect on this condition.

In addition, choose one of these skills: Knowledge (geography), Knowledge (history), Knowledge (local), or Knowledge (nature). That skill is always a class skill for you.

Spirit Strike

You can call upon the sprits of ancient heroes to convey the blessings of the gods in battle.

Prerequisite: Knowledge (religion) 5 ranks, ability to turn undead, at least one favored enemy.

Benefit: As a swift action, you can expend a use of your turn undead ability to imbue a weapon you touch with the bane property against your favored enemy (choose one if you have more than one favored enemy) until the beginning of your next turn. The affected weapon may be used by you or by someone else.

Veiled Vileness

Your human blood shows itself dominant.

Prerequisite: Half-orc.

Benefit: You appear outwardly human, with no obvious signs of your orcish heritage (no Disguise check required). Your subtly menacing presence and strength grant a +1 bonus on Diplomacy and Intimidate checks and Will saves.

Vermin Companion

Your understanding of vermin has grown to the point where you can bond with one as a companion.

Prerequisites: Vermin Heart, animal companion class feature, wild empathy class feature.

Benefit: Add the following vermin to your list of possible animal companions at the indicated druid levels. 1st—giant ant (worker), giant fire beetle, Medium monstrous centipede, Medium monstrous scorpion, Medium monstrous spider; 4th—giant ant (soldier), giant bee, giant bombardier beetle, Large monstrous centipede, Large monstrous scorpion, Large monstrous spider; 7th—giant praying mantis, giant stag beetle, giant wasp, Huge monstrous centipede; 10th—Gargantuan monstrous centipede, Huge monstrous spider; 13th—Huge monstrous scorpion; 16th—Gargantuan monstrous spider. Vermin companions can only learn bonus tricks.

Vermin Heart

You have a special bond with things that creep and crawl.

Prerequisites: Wild empathy class feature.

Benefit: You may target Vermin with spells and special abilities that normally only affect animals (although they are still affected by spells targeting vermin as well). You may use wild empathy to influence vermin as easily as you influence animals.

Wand Dancer

An ancient tradition of Garundi courtesans and court-mages combines a supple mobility with delicate rhythms in a deadly exotic dance of wand and staff.

Prerequisite: Dex 13, Dodge, Mobility, Perform (dance) 1 rank, Tumble 1 rank, caster level 5th.

Benefit: When using a spell trigger item, you can move both before and after triggering the item, as long as the total distance moved is not greater than your speed. Choose one creature potentially affected by your spell trigger item. Your movement does not provoke attacks of opportunity from that creature (only). You must move at least 5 feet before and after using your spell trigger item to utilize this feat.

Languages

The varied peoples of Golarion speak hundreds of languages, from widespread Taldane to the dying tongues of fallen human empires.

Modern Human Languages

The following are the most common of hundreds of tongues.

Common (Taldane): One of the oldest languages still in use in the Inner Sea region, Taldane is also the most widely spoken. From the Linnorm Kings in the distant north to the necromancers of Geb far to the south, Taldane is known and used to facilitate conversation with disparate people. Written Taldane uses an alphabet of 26 letters, 17 of which come directly from Jistka, which in turn adopted them from Ancient Azlanti. Taldane uses Kelesh numerals to represent numbers.

Hallit: Spoken by the Kellid people in the far north, Hallit is a coarse, rough-sounding language with a vocabulary centered on survival and war.

Kelish: Throaty, phlegmatic, and passionate, this ancient language derives from the tribal tongues of the Padishah Empire of Kelesh in the distant east

Osiriani: The most widespread language of Garund, Osiriani is directly descended from Ancient Osiriani. Modern Osiriani readers can, with some effort, decipher writings made in Ancient Osiriani.

Polyglot: The countless dialects of Garund's Mwangi tribesfolk share enough remnants of a mysterious root language that members of different tribes from vastly divergent regions of the Expanse can generally understand one another even though they appear to be speaking completely different languages.

Tien: Tian generally speak Tien, the official language of fallen Imperial Lung Wa and its many successor states. This tonal language contains thousands of homonyms and its written form utilizes nearly 24,000 pictographs.

Skald: Famous for its long words and chanting pronunciation, Skald sounds at the same time lyrical and hard to the ears of southern Avastani. Although it uses the 23-letter Dwarven alphabet, Skald adopted four letters from Jistka a few hundred years ago to give it more letters than Taldane.

Varisian: A mix of a lost proto-Varisian tongue, Taldane, and Thassilonian, with a smattering of Giant and Orc, Varisian is rife with subtle double meanings, innuendo, and very slight gradations of meaning.

Vudrani: Vudrani borrows and adapts words from both Kelesh and Tien, but its basis lies in a number of ancient tribal tongues from the Dhavala River basin. Even more than Skald, Vudrani is known for combining prefixes, expressions, and suffixes into tongue-twistingly long words.

Dead Languages

Although no longer actively spoken, the following languages nonetheless continue to play active roles in the lives of people around the Inner Sea.

Ancient Osiriani: This precursor to modern Osiriani shares many similarities and differs mainly in its hieroglyphics (modern Osiriani uses much simplified images) and lexicon (modern Osiriani contains more words, and a few words bear different meanings).

Azlanti: One of the most widely spoken languages of its time, Azlanti became the basis for dozens of languages all over Avistan and Garund. Its linguistic legacy is seen in languages as diverse (on the surface) as Hallit, Polyglot, Taldane, and Varisian.

Jistka: Jistka's major contribution to modern languages is its alphabet. Skald, Taldane, and Varisian all use at least a few letters from it. Jistka numerals, where letters represent numbers (I is 1, V is 5, and so on), remain in use throughout Avistan as an alternative counting system employed almost exclusively by scholars and royalty.

Tekritanin: When desert nomads banded together to form the Tekritanin League, they combined elements of their different but related languages to form Tekritanin. Hundreds of words in use in a dozen modern languages, particularly those dealing with heat, deserts, and governance, come from Tekritanin.

Thassilonian: One of the ancestor tongues of modern Varisian, Thassilonian is mostly remembered for its now-unused alphabet, consisting of three sets of runes. Some linguists put forward that Thassilonian was the first language with three grammatical genders.

Nonhuman Languages

Humans are far from the first race to communicate verbally or in a written form. The most common non-human tongues follow.

Abyssal: Many believe Abyssal was the first language to develop among natives of the Outer Sphere, although the high mutability of the language makes determining its history or parentage impossible.

Aquan: Developed from an ancient and unknown proto-Elemental language, Aquan shares many constructions with the other elemental tongues, but its vocabulary is decidedly water-based. Aquan pronunciation by humanoids relies heavily on the use of vibrating phlegm in the back of the throat.

Auran: Sharing its sentence structures and mechanical aspects with its three sibling elemental tongues, Auran is a breathy, gentle-sounding language that sounds best without the use of vocal cords.

Celestial: Celestial is used by all of the good-aligned planes of the Outer Spheres. Celestial borrows from other amazingly ancient tongues—such as Draconic and Sylvan—but retains the unique syllabic combinations that make it sound distinct.

Draconic: Considered by many (dragons) to be the oldest and most important language in existence, the influence of Draconic can be heard in nearly every other tongue. Draconic has provided thousands of words to various other tongues and dialects all across the multiverse, from the Taldane word "dragon" itself to the Elven "ithallyn." Almost every word from Draconic has been absorbed by other languages, although as with all dialects time has often made its etymology difficult to discern.

Druidic: Since only druids speak this language, and they guard it so jealously, non-druids generally succeed only in picking out individual borrowed words from a variety of languages (mostly Elven and Sylvan), although without context they cannot know if the meanings remain the same. To date, no non-druid has discerned the grammatical rules of this mysterious tongue.



Dwarven: A guttural, phlegmatic language spoken from the back of the throat and consisting of hard consonants and clipped syllables, Dwarven sounds as rough-and-tumble as the hard-working beings who first spoke it. Dwarven owes much to the earthen language of Terran (which, although older, uses the Dwarven runes for its written form).

Elven: Linguists believe Elven formed when elven speakers of Sylvan attempted to integrate Celestial grammatical conventions and Draconic words into their already complicated tongue. The resulting conglomeration became impossibly complex, but over the course of only a few elven generations, it formed into a much-simplified yet beautifully expanded language capable of expressing concepts utterly alien to speakers of Sylvan. Elven is frequently considered the eldest mortal tongue.

Giant: Original Giant (perhaps the tongue of the ancient cyclopes is lost to time. During the reign of Thassilon, giants across Varisia were forced to forsake their ancient language. Over time, as Thassilon's influence spread, so too did the use of the tongue among free giants. Today, the Giant language is believed to be a mesh of Original Giant and Thassilonian.

Gnome: Thanks to their propensity to code switch, gnomes created a very complicated language, which they inexplicably tied to Dwarven runes. Since the creation of Gnome, the language has grown and evolved at a dizzying pace. Modern linguists estimate that Gnome contains more than twice as many words as the next largest language (Draconic).

Goblin: An oral-only language known for its wide variety of subtly different expressions meaning, essentially, "kill that one," Goblin also possesses a large vocabulary relating to death, servitude, and fear. The language is extremely flexible, and the nigh-incomprehensible yapping of goblins, the strict militaristic barking of hobgoblins, and the sibilant taunts of bugbears all use the same grammar and vocabulary.

Gnoll: Punctuated by high-pitched yips, deep barks, and throaty growls, this cacophonous language is difficult for non-gnolls to pick up—much less master. Gnoll contains 37 words for "slave" but only two for "work."

Halfling: Whatever language halflings possessed before they met humans is lost to the dark clouds of time. The modern language of Halfling descends directly from Taldane, and is a code-based pidgin dialect of that language and Varisian. Halfling first arose in Cheliax, where halfling slaves spoke with one another in a code to baffle their masters. Over time, as halfling ex-slaves slowly disseminated out into the world and brought their code with them, this weird dialect became its own language.

Ignan: Sounding the most aggressive of the four elemental languages, Ignan consists of short words meant to be spoken quickly. The staccato feel of the language emulates the popping of fire.

Infernal: Infernal requires precise enunciation, for many of its words without similar meanings nonetheless bear extremely close pronunciations.

Orc: Harsh, loud, and known for the staccato delivery of its disjointed hard-consonant syllables, Orc sounds hard and angry. Despite the long animosity between their races, the native language of the orcs uses the alphabet of Dwarven for its written form—a development many suspect originated from dwarves trying to understand the language of their enemies.

Sylvan: One of the oldest languages, possibly nearly as old Abyssal and Draconic, Sylvan is estimated by many to be one of the smallest (in terms of vocabulary). Observers point to the immortal, insular nature of fey as an explanation for the language's slow evolution and nearly nonexistent expansion.

Terran: Like its brethren languages, Terran uses the subject, object, verb sentence construction. It is a slow language, the sounds of which cannot be rushed.

Undercommon: Descended from Elven, drow-created Undercommon expands upon certain specific areas of its mother tongue's vocabulary while completely ignoring others. Pronunciation of shared words evolved so differently as to make them nigh-unintelligible to speakers of the opposite tongue.

Lost Kingdoms

The empires and kingdoms that stand today, while sometimes quite vast and powerful, in many cases stand upon the ruins of even greater civilizations that came before them.

Ancient Osirion: Osiriontologists refer to the millennia-long era in Osiriani history prior to Qadiri rule as Ancient Osirion. At its height, Ancient Osirion was one of the largest human nations ever to grace the Inner Sea region; its reach extended into and encompassed all of what is today known as Katapesh, Thuvia, and Rahadoum. A succession of god-kings ruled mighty Osirion, and under their pharaonic rule, the empire prospered. Ancient Osirion was built upon the backs of conquered nations and slaves who toiled to raise towering monuments dedicated to the glory of their living gods. Eventually, the rule of divine kings faltered—it would take Osirion many centuries to recover from the age of barbarisim that followed.

Azlant: In the ancient days long before the Age of Darkness, alien aboleths enhanced primitive humans, drawing them from their caves and nomadic lifestyle and setting them on the path to civilization and high culture. For thousands of years these humans flourished, eventually forming humanity's first great empire, Azlant, stretching from coast to coast upon a vast island continent at the heart of the Arcadian Ocean. Azlant developed unparalleled arts, philosophy, and science until its prideful leaders came to believe themselves superior to the aboleths who had raised them out of barbarism. In preemptive retaliation for their disloyalty, the aboleths looked to the stars, uniting in a great ritual that brought a great stone tumbling from space. The resulting catastrophe shattered the island of Azlant, wiping out its people and creating a ruin-laden maze of crumbling sea canyons where once a mighty empire had stood. Elves from the Mordant Spire, ancient enemies of the humans of Old Azlant, still ply these waters in an attempt to protect the secrets of the distant past from the opportunistic explorers of the present.

Ruined Azlanti colonies, sometimes no more than a few buildings but occasionally significant sites with signs of hundreds of structures, exist along the borders of the Inner Sea, but most that have not gone on to become cities of Andoran or Taldor either hold little historical value or remain undiscovered (and thus laden with almost unimaginable treasures).

Ghol-Gan: The waterlogged temple of Xanthuun in the Sodden Lands contains the treasures of Ghol-Gan's last patriarch, Ammelon VI. Explorations into those ruins provide most of the information known today, which, thanks to the high mortality rate of expeditions sent there, remains frustratingly limited.

Jistka Imperium: At its height, the Jistka Imperium controlled or influenced all of northwestern Garund. The rise of Osirion, however, coincided with the decline of Jistka as many of its trading partners in the east opted for shorter trade routes with Osirion. Much of this empire's contributions to history were lost to conquest, adoption by the Osirians, and the relentless desert sands.

Lirgen: Once hailed as nation of fortune, the Lirgen of today rots in the hurricane-lashed swamps of the Sodden Lands. Lirgen was ruled by a powerful caste of astrological philosophers, known as the Saoc Brethren. These scholars consulted the heavens in all things, from business deals to national laws. After the hurricane brought ruin to their nation, these philosophers took their lives in ritual suicide.

Sarkoris: The brooding barbarian kingdom of Sarkoris is merely the latest failed state to tumble into the mass grave of Avistan's tumultuous cultural history. A savage, windswept land of painted warriors and weird witchery, Sarkoris was first to fall under the influence of the pernicious Worldwound following Aroden's death.

Tar Taargadth: Petty bickering and infighting ground to a halt the dwarven Quest for Sky, forcing General Taargick to unite the fractious dwarves. In so doing, he created the Kingdom of Tar Taargadth. The kingdom became an empire when it broke the surface and established ten Sky Citadels, some of which still exist to this day. Tar Taargadth existed in some form for 6,500 years before collapsing.

Tekritanin League: Caught between Jistka and Ancient Osirion, this decentralized federation of semi-independent city-states served as a mixing point of the two cultures, even while it frequently engaged in wars and boundary disputes against them. The Tekritani nomads retained their own ancestral language even after their league collapsed, which continues to influence parts of the Inner Sea region today.

Thassilon: The First King Xin founded Thassilon deep in the recesses of time. With Xin's death, his seven governors, known as runelords, seized their domains for themselves. Each runelord championed one of Xin's virtues of rule, and in so doing made those virtues into the seven sins of envy, gluttony, greed, lust, pride, sloth, and wrath. The runelords (wrathful Alaznist in Bakrakhan, envious Belimarius in Edaasseril, greedy Karzoug in Shalast, slothful Krune in Haruka, lustful Sorshen in Eurythnia, prideful Xanderghul in Cyrusian, and gluttonous Zutha in Gastash) created monuments to themselves that still stand throughout northwestern Avistan to this day.

Yamasa: Although primitive, Yamasa was once a proud and powerful nation, controlling much of the trade along western Garund. In the years following the formation of the Eye of Abendego, the kingdom was totally destroyed, with many of its people retreating to the interior or falling into foul practices in the rain-drenched ruins of their former glory.


Lost Kingdoms
Sarkoris
Cyrusian
Edasseril
Gastash
Thassilon
Shalast
Bakrakhan
Haruka
Eurythnia
Gardadth
Doggadth
Tar Khadurrm
Saggorak
Grakodan
Taggoret
Jistka
Tekritan
Ancient
Osirion
Ghol-Gan
Lirgen
Yamasa
Ghol-Gan

Harrower

Towers, a game played for coin in the gutters and back alleys of cities, uses a Harrow deck to make or break fortunes. Most participants don't realize that the game of *Towers* is based off six ancient Varisian philosophies, which the Varisians correspond to six of the towers of Desna's palace (the seventh tower represents the unknown future—a subject of endless fascination to a harrower).

Fortunetellers use the six towers to influence and inspire their meditation, but some forge a strange and wondrous connection to the six principles. Those who learn to channel and wield this power develop amazing abilities tied to the use of a Harrow deck and claim the title of harrower.

A Harrow deck consists of 54 cards divided into six suits of nine cards. The six suits correspond to the six ability scores (hammer for Strength, key for Dexterity, shield for Constitution, book for Intelligence, star for Wisdom, and crown for Charisma). Each card in a suit ties in with one of the nine alignments, corresponding with the location of the symbol on the face of the card. In addition, each card has its own unique name, independent of its suit and alignment.

Even if you do not have access to a Harrow deck, you can still play a harrower by using a d6 and a d10. Roll 1d6 to determine a card's suit, as follows: 1—Strength, 2—Constitution, 3—Dexterity, 4—Intelligence, 5—Wisdom, 6—Charisma. The 1d10 determine its alignment, as follows: 1—LG, 2—NG, 3—CG, 4—LN, 5—N, 6—CN, 7—LE, 8—NE, 9—CE. Reroll results of 10. For most of the harrower's class features, you need only roll the d6, which allows you to determine how many cards of each suit are drawn for a Harrow casting. Only the blessing of the Harrow and spirit deck class features pay attention to a card's alignment.

Requirements

To qualify to become a harrower, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Alignment: Must be chaotic, evil, good, or lawful (cannot be true neutral).

Special: Ability to cast 3rd-level spells. Must be able to cast at least three divination spells.

Special: Must own a Harrow deck.

Class Features

The following are class features of the harrower prestige class.

Spells: When a harrower gains a level (except for her first harrower level), she gains new spells per day as if she had also gained a level in a spellcasting class she belonged to before she added the prestige class. She does not, however, gain any other benefits a character of that class would have gained. This essentially means that she adds the level of harrower to the level of whatever other spellcasting class she has.

If the character had more than one spellcasting class before she became a harrower, she must choose to which class she adds each harrower level for the purposes of determining spells per day.

As long as the harrower owns a Harrow deck, she gains access to the *harrow* spell (from the Harrow deck), as if it were on her spell list as a 3rd-level spell (regardless of her spellcasting class). If the harrower prepares spells as a wizard, she prepares the spell from her Harrow deck instead of her spellbook.

Blessing of the Harrow (Ex): The harrower may, once per day, perform a harrowing for herself and all allies within 20 feet of her. This harrowing takes 10 minutes, and allies to be affected by it must remain within 20 feet for the entire time. The harrower interprets the harrowing as normal.

At the conclusion of the harrowing, count up suits of cards used in the reading. This harrowing provides a

The Harrower — Hit Die: d6

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Spells
1st	+0	+0	+0	+2	Blessing of the Harrow	—
2nd	+1	+0	+0	+3	Harrow casting, tower of intelligence	+1 level of spellcasting class
3rd	+1	+1	+1	+3	Tower of strength	+1 level of spellcasting class
4th	+2	+1	+1	+4	Tower of charisma	+1 level of spellcasting class
5th	+2	+1	+1	+4	Spirit deck	+1 level of spellcasting class
6th	+3	+2	+2	+5	*Divination*	+1 level of spellcasting class
7th	+3	+2	+2	+5	Tower of constitution	+1 level of spellcasting class
8th	+4	+2	+2	+6	Tower of dexterity	+1 level of spellcasting class
9th	+4	+3	+3	+6	Tower of wisdom	+1 level of spellcasting class
10th	+5	+3	+3	+7	Reading the signs	+1 level of spellcasting class

Class Skills (2 + Int bonus per level): Bluff, Concentration, Craft, Diplomacy, Knowledge (arcana), Knowledge (local), Knowledge (the planes), Perform, Profession, Spellcraft.

bonus based upon the suit with the most cards showing. In case of a tie, choose one suit. The bonus lasts for 24 hours. The suits grant morale bonuses as follows. Strength: +1 on attack rolls; Dexterity: +1 to AC; Constitution: +1 on weapon damage rolls; Intelligence: +1 on all skills; Wisdom: +1 on all saving throws; Charisma: +1 on caster level checks. All of these bonuses are insight bonuses.

Harrow Casting (Su): Beginning at 2nd level, the harrower may, as she casts a spell, draw three cards from her Harrow deck. This adds both a somatic component (if the spell does not already have one) and a focus component to the spell, but does not add to the spell's casting time. Depending on the harrower's level, the cards she draws might change the parameters of her spell or grant her some other benefit, as described in each tower ability. The harrower gains all of the different tower abilities available to her. If she draws cards for which she has not yet gained use, those cards provide no benefit. Each card the harrower draws that are exact matches to her alignment count as two cards of the proper suit. A spell may not be affected by both Harrow casting and a metamagic feat.

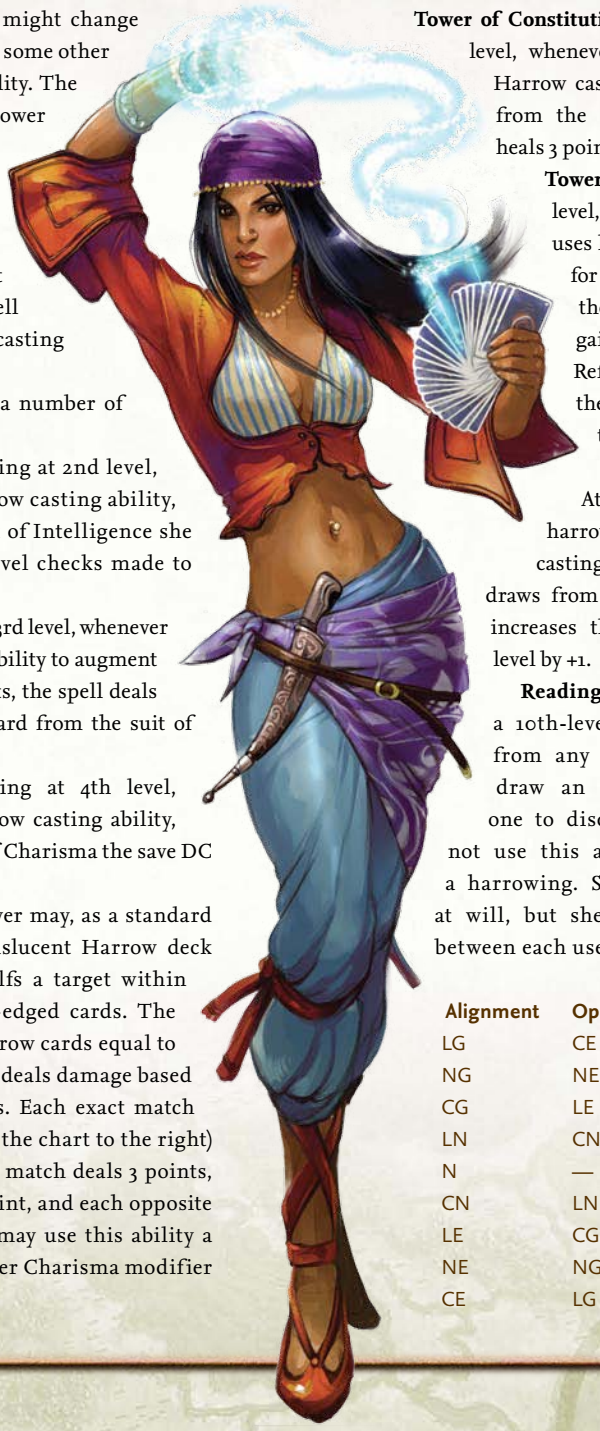
The harrower may use this ability a number of times per day equal to her class level.

Tower of Intelligence (Su): Beginning at 2nd level, whenever the harrower uses her Harrow casting ability, for each card she draws from the suit of Intelligence she gains a +1 insight bonus on caster level checks made to penetrate Spell Resistance.

Tower of Strength (Su): Beginning at 3rd level, whenever the harrower uses her Harrow casting ability to augment a spell that inflicts damage to hit points, the spell deals +1 point of damage per die for each card from the suit of Strength she draws.

Tower of Charisma (Su): Beginning at 4th level, whenever the harrower uses her Harrow casting ability, for each card she draws from the suit of Charisma the save DC of the spell increases by +1.

Spirit Deck (Su): A 5th-level harrower may, as a standard action, summon a shimmering, translucent Harrow deck that flies through the air and engulfs a target within 30 feet in a whirling cloud of knife-edged cards. The harrower then draws a number of Harrow cards equal to her harrower level, and the spirit deck deals damage based on the number of matches she draws. Each exact match (based on her alignment, as shown on the chart to the right) deals 5 points of damage, each partial match deals 3 points, and each non-matched card deals 1 point, and each opposite match deals 0 points. The harrower may use this ability a number of times per day equal to 1 + her Charisma modifier (minimum 1/day).



Harrowing and the GM

A harrower reads the future. Unfortunately for PCs, though, they have no real control over the future. The GM might wish to use harrowings to help guide his campaign, tying in readings or specific cards to future events. The harrowing doesn't need to tie in to major events, but it could help immerse players into a campaign's verisimilitude if it does.

***Divination* (Sp):** A 6th-level harrower gains the ability to cast *divination* once per day as a spell-like ability. Her caster level equals her character level.

Tower of Constitution (Ex): Beginning at 7th level, whenever the harrower uses her Harrow casting ability, for each card from the suit of Constitution, she heals 3 points of damage.

Tower of Dexterity (Su): At 8th level, whenever the harrower uses her Harrow casting ability, for each card she draws from the suit of Dexterity, she gains a +1 insight bonus on Reflex saves and to AC until the beginning of her next turn.

Tower of Wisdom (Su): At 9th level, whenever the harrower uses her Harrow casting ability, for each card she draws from the suit of Wisdom, she increases the spell's effective caster level by +1.

Reading the Signs (Ex): Whenever a 10th-level harrower draws cards from any deck of cards, she may draw an extra card and choose one to discard. The harrower may not use this ability when performing a harrowing. She may use this ability at will, but she must wait 1d4 rounds between each use.

Alignment	Opposite	Partial Matches
LG	CE	NG, CG, LN, LE
NG	NE	LG, CG, N, NE
CG	LE	LG, NG, CN, CE
LN	CN	N, LG, LE
N	—	—
CN	LN	N, CG, CE
LE	CG	NE, CE, LG, LN
NE	NG	LE, CE, NG, N
CE	LG	LE, NE, CG, CN

Low Templar

Low templars are an enigma of Golarion. They represent those who took the Crusader's Oath to shatter the powers of the Worldwound and eradicate its taint from the world.

Members of this prestige class, however, represent those crusaders who involved themselves in this holy cause for entirely different reasons. Under a sanctified veneer, they are greedy, grasping, treacherous, and often brutal as they walk a wavering line between heroism and thuggery. Some still hold the sparks of faithfulness within them, with remembered courage or the pangs of guilt or duty eventually leading them back to a true renewal of the crusading spirit. Others fall ever deeper into a dissolute miasma of drunken hypocrisy that betrays every false-mouthed piety they ever uttered. The church of Iomedae constantly struggles to maintain the morals of the crusaders, but when faced with the raw destruction of a demon host, sometimes the decision to support of the lesser of two evils is the only real choice that can be made.

Requirements

To qualify to become a low templar, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Base Attack Bonus: +5

Feats: Mounted Combat

Skills: Bluff 4 ranks, Knowledge (nobility and royalty) 4 ranks, Ride 4 ranks

Proficiency: Must be proficient with the lance and with heavy armor.

Class Features

The following are all class features of the low templar prestige class.

Favored Enemy (Ex): Whatever his faults, the low templar is a skilled warrior against the demon hordes of the Worldwound. This ability is identical to the ranger class ability of the same name, applies only to chaotic outsiders or a specific humanoid subtype, and stacks with any favored enemy ability the character has from other classes.

Flag of Convenience (Ex): A low templar is adept at aligning himself with the winning side and has mastered the art of shifting or switching allegiance when convenient. He can disappear in one place and appear in another with new affiliations and associations, and yet without besmirching his reputation. Even when caught in illicit acts, he smoothly evades blame. Attempts to learn reliable information about a low templar with bardic knowledge, Gather Information, Knowledge (local, history, or nobility and royalty), or Sense Motive checks suffer a –4 penalty.

In addition, when requesting food, shelter, or similar aid befitting the low templar's role, the initial reaction of humanoids is one step better than normal (hostile becomes unfriendly, unfriendly becomes indifferent, and so on). A low templar never suffers a penalty to his Leadership score for moving around frequently, aloofness, cruelty, or the loss of prior cohorts or followers, and can replace lost followers in half the normal amount of time.

Dirty Fighting (Ex): A low templar melds the stately forms of jousting and chivalric standards with the down-and-dirty style of a barroom brawler. No trick is beneath him, and he is an expert at making due with whatever weapons present themselves. A low templar never takes a penalty on attack rolls with improvised weapons and gains a +2 bonus on bull rush, disarm, grapple, and trip checks. In addition, when he

The Low Templar — Hit Die: d10

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+1	+2	+0	+0	Favored enemy +1, flag of convenience
2nd	+2	+3	+0	+0	Dirty fighting
3rd	+3	+3	+1	+1	Wolf in sheep's clothing
4th	+4	+4	+1	+1	Favored enemy +2, sneak attack +1d6
5th	+5	+4	+1	+1	Path of darkness/path of light
6th	+6	+5	+2	+2	Live to fight another day, reputation for ruthlessness
7th	+7	+5	+2	+2	Favored enemy +3
8th	+8	+6	+2	+2	Sneak attack +2d6
9th	+9	+6	+3	+3	Parting shot
10th	+10	+7	+3	+3	Favored enemy +4, path of damnation/path of redemption

Skills (2 + Int bonus per level): Appraise, Bluff, Craft, Diplomacy, Disguise, Escape Artist, Forgery, Gather Information, Handle Animal, Hide, Intimidate, Knowledge (local), Knowledge (nobility & royalty), Knowledge (the planes), Move Silently, Ride, Sense Motive, Survival, Use Rope

lands a critical hit, the low templar may opt to deal normal damage and roll on the following table rather than dealing extra damage.

d6	Result
1	2 points of Strength damage
2	2 points of Dexterity damage
3	2 points of Constitution damage
4	Target blinded for 1 round
5	Target sickened by pain for 1 minute
6	Target becomes fatigued for 1 hour

Roll twice if the critical multiplier is ×3, three times if it is ×4. If the same result is rolled more than once, the effect or duration stacks.

Wolf in Sheep's Clothing (Ex): The low templar can put people at ease even when on the edge of violence. At 3rd level, he gains a +4 bonus on saving throws made against divinations and Hide or Sleight of Hand checks to conceal weapons. A low templar can overcome uncanny dodge as a rogue of his class level (which stacks with any levels he possesses that already grant uncanny dodge).

Sneak Attack (Ex): This ability is identical to the rogue ability of the same name. This stacks with sneak attack ability gained from other sources.



Path of Darkness/Path of Light (Su): As a low templar advances, he must eventually decide how closely he wishes to hew to his oaths to Iomedae and her ethos of law and goodness. If he chooses the path of light, he may choose to ignore the lawful or good aspect of their alignment (choose one) for determining alignment-based magical effects (e.g., reducing damage from *unholy blight* or an unholy weapon, masking alignment from *detect good*, or ignoring some effects of a *magic circle against good*). He also gains a +2 circumstance bonus on Diplomacy checks with creatures with the lawful or good subtypes.

If he chooses the path of darkness, he may do the same, but instead disregards either chaos or evil from his alignment and gains a Diplomacy bonus with creatures of the chaotic or evil subtypes.

Live to Fight Another Day (Ex): At 6th level, a low templar using the withdraw action can move three times his movement rate (rather than twice his movement).

He may instead choose to withdraw at double his normal movement and then attempt a Hide check as a free action at the end of his movement if there is some cover or concealment available.

He may also withdraw at his normal movement rate while simultaneously attempting a Bluff check to create a diversion and then Hide, even if no cover is available.

Reputation for Ruthlessness (Ex): Once per round, a low templar who makes a melee attack against one of his favored enemies can attempt an Intimidate check against that foe as a free action. Alternatively, as a standard action he can Intimidate all favored enemies he threatens or one favored enemy within 30 feet.

Parting Shot (Ex): At 9th level, once per encounter, a low templar using the withdraw action can also make a Bluff check to feint and take a single attack at the same opponent at any point during his move.

Path of Damnation/Path of Redemption (Su): At 10th level, a low templar must make a final choice of what path he chooses. He may mask a second alignment trait versus alignment-based effects, as the path of darkness/path of light ability. A low templar can chose the path of darkness at 5th level and then choose the path of redemption at 10th level (or vice versa).

When the low templar makes this choice, he gains a planar cohort appropriate to his actual alignment, even if he does not have the Leadership feat. This planar cohort appears to him and pledges his loyalty to the low templar immediately. If the cohort perishes, the low templar must wait a week before calling upon a replacement. If the low templar has the Leadership feat, he gains a +1 bonus to his Leadership score. If he replaces his cohort gained from the feat with the planar cohort, the maximum level equivalent for his planar cohort equals the templar's class level –1, rather than –2.

Pathfinder Chronicler

The Pathfinder chroniclers are wide-ranging raconteurs and heralds, tale-tellers and story-spinners who form and shape the views of history and public opinion across the face of Golarion. Commonly known by their wayfinders—magical compasses that can be used to hold *ioun stones*—the Pathfinder chroniclers are recorders of great deeds, but ones who do not fear getting their hands dirty in the midst of the action. While they rarely write themselves as the stars of their tales, they are always found near adventure and romance. Commoners delight when a Pathfinder chronicler comes to town, bearing news, gossip, or favorite tales of yore.

Requirements

To qualify to become a Pathfinder chronicler, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Skills: Decipher Script 4 ranks, Perform (oratory) 8 ranks, Profession (scribe) 8 ranks, Speak Language (at least 2 non-native languages).

Special: Must have written and published something (other than a magical scroll or other device) for which another person (not a PC) paid at least 50 gp.

Class Features

The following are class features of the Pathfinder chronicler prestige class.

Bardic Knowledge (Ex): This ability is identical to the bard's class ability, and levels in this class stack with levels in any other class that grants a similar ability.

Deep Pockets (Ex): A Pathfinder chronicler collects items as well as lore, picking up small amounts of this or that throughout her travels. As a result, she may carry up to 10 pounds of unspecified equipment worth up to 100 gp per class level. This can be any kind of nonmagical gear that can reasonably fit into a backpack. At any later time, as a full-round action, the chronicler may dig through her pockets to retrieve an item she specifies at that time, deducting its value from the allocated amount of cost and weight. When either cost or weight reaches 0, the chronicler can retrieve no more items until she refills her deep pockets by spending a few hours and 100 gp in any settlement.

In addition, if she takes 1 hour to pack her gear each day, she gains a +4 bonus to Strength to determine her light encumbrance. This does not affect her maximum carrying capacity. The efficient distribution of weight simply encumbers her less than the same amount of weight normally should. Finally, the chronicler gains a +4 bonus on Hide or Sleight of Hand checks made to conceal small objects on her person.

Master Scribe (Ex): A Pathfinder chronicler adds her class level as a bonus on all Decipher Script and Profession (scribe) checks, as well as Use Magic Device checks involving scrolls or other written magical items. A Pathfinder chronicler can make Decipher Script checks as a full-round action and can always take 10 on Decipher Script and Profession (scribe) checks, even if distracted or endangered.

Live to Tell the Tale (Ex): At 2nd level, once per day per two class levels, a Pathfinder chronicler can attempt a new saving throw against any ongoing condition against which she failed a saving throw in a previous round, even if the effect is normally permanent. This ability has no effect on conditions that do not allow saving throws or against instantaneous effects.

The Pathfinder Chronicler — Hit Die: d8

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+0	+0	+2	+2	Bardic knowledge, deep pockets, master scribe
2nd	+1	+0	+3	+3	Live to tell the tale, pathfinding
3rd	+2	+1	+3	+3	Bardic music, improved aid
4th	+3	+1	+4	+4	Epic tales
5th	+3	+1	+4	+4	Whispering campaign
6th	+4	+2	+5	+5	Inspire action (move)
7th	+5	+2	+5	+5	Call down the legends
8th	+6	+2	+6	+6	Greater epic tales
9th	+6	+3	+6	+6	Inspire action (standard)
10th	+7	+3	+7	+7	Lay of the exalted dead

Skills (8 + Int bonus per level): Appraise, Balance, Bluff, Craft, Decipher Script, Diplomacy, Disguise, Escape Artist, Forgery, Gather Information, Intimidate, Knowledge (all skills, taken individually), Listen, Perform, Profession, Ride, Search, Sense Motive, Sleight of Hand, Speak Language, Spot, Survival, Swim, Use Magic Device

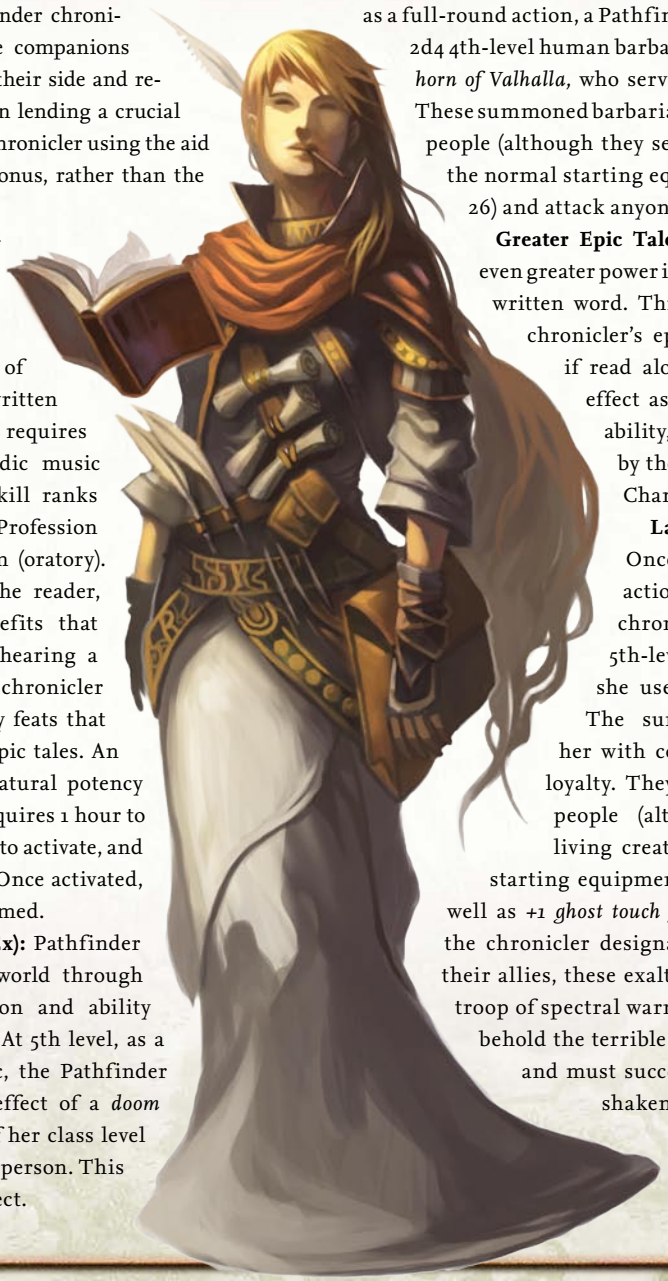
Pathfinding (Ex): A Pathfinder chronicler develops an excellent sense of direction and skill at leading others through difficult terrain or by following ancient maps. A Pathfinder chronicler gains a +5 bonus on Survival checks made to avoid becoming lost and to Intelligence checks to escape a *maze* spell. In addition, she always uses the "road or trail" overland movement modifier even when in trackless terrain, whether on foot or mounted. With a DC 15 Survival check, the Pathfinder Companion can extend this benefit to one companion per class level.

Bardic Music (Su): This ability functions like the bard ability of the same name, except that the chronicler's effective bard level is 2 lower than her chronicler level. Levels in this class stack with levels in any other class that grants a similar ability to determine her effective bard level.

Improved Aid (Ex): Pathfinder chroniclers frequently serve as the companions of great heroes, standing by their side and recording their deeds, but often lending a crucial helping hand. A Pathfinder chronicler using the aid another action grants a +4 bonus, rather than the normal +2.

Epic Tales (Su): A 4th-level Pathfinder chronicler can inscribe a tale so evocative and so moving that it conveys the effects of bardic music through the written word. To create an epic tale requires two daily uses of her bardic music ability, and any relevant skill ranks or checks are made with Profession (scribe) rather than Perform (oratory). An epic tale affects only the reader, but it grants all the benefits that would normally apply for hearing a performance. A Pathfinder chronicler may apply the effects of any feats that affect bardic music to her epic tales. An epic tale retains its supernatural potency for 1 day per class level. It requires 1 hour to inscribe, a full-round action to activate, and has a duration of 1 minute. Once activated, an epic tale's magic is consumed.

Whispering Campaign (Ex): Pathfinder chroniclers influence the world through their control of information and ability to shape public perception. At 5th level, as a special use of bardic music, the Pathfinder chronicler can create the effect of a *doom* spell as cast by a sorcerer of her class level by denouncing a creature in person. This is a language-dependent effect.



Alternatively, the chronicler can denounce a particular target (an individual or a definable group of creatures) to others. This form of bardic music creates the effect of the *enthrall* spell, but at the end of the performance all creatures who failed to save shift their attitude toward the target of the oration by one step (in the direction of the Pathfinder chronicler's choice) for 1 day per class level.

Inspire Action (Su): As a special use of bardic music, a 6th-level Pathfinder chronicler can exhort any ally within hearing to a sudden surge of action, allowing her ally to immediately take an extra move action. This does not count against the ally's number of actions on his own turn.

At 9th level, she can enable an ally to immediately take a standard action instead.

Call Down the Legends (Su): At 7th level, once per week as a full-round action, a Pathfinder chronicler can summon 2d4 4th-level human barbarians, as if she used a bronze *horn of Valhalla,* who serve her with complete loyalty. These summoned barbarians are constructs, not actual people (although they seem to be). They arrive with the normal starting equipment for barbarians (PH 26) and attack anyone the chronicler designates.

Greater Epic Tales (Su): This ability imbues even greater power in the Pathfinder chronicler's written word. This ability functions like the chronicler's epic tales ability, except that if read aloud, the bardic music takes effect as if the author had used the ability, but the effects are targeted by the reader and use the reader's Charisma score where applicable.

Lay of the Exalted Dead (Su): Once per week as a full-round action, a 10th-level Pathfinder chronicler can summon 1d4+1 5th-level human barbarians, as if she used an iron *horn of Valhalla*. The summoned barbarians serve her with complete and unquestioning loyalty. They are constructs, not actual people (although they seem to be living creatures). They arrive with the starting equipment for barbarians (PH 26) as well as *+1 ghost touch greataxes* and attack anyone the chronicler designates. To the chronicler and their allies, these exalted dead appear like a noble troop of spectral warriors. Her enemies, however, behold the terrible wrath of the ancient heroes and must succeed at Will saves or become shaken for 1 round per summoned barbarian (DC 15 + the Pathfinder chronicler's Charisma modifier).

Red Mantis Assassin

Initiates of the Red Mantis begin their training as rogues or multiclassed fighter/rogues, as stealth and skill at arms are both prerequisites to joining the order.

Requirements

To qualify to become a Red Mantis assassin, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Alignment: Lawful evil.

Skills: Hide 8 ranks, Intimidate 5 ranks, Move Silently 8 ranks.

Feats: Alertness, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (sawtooth sabre), Weapon Finesse

Class Features

The following are class features of the Red Mantis assassin prestige class.

Spells: To cast a spell, the Red Mantis assassin must have a Charisma score of at least 10 + the spell's level. Her bonus spells are based on Charisma, and saving throws against these spells have a DC of 10 + the spell level + the caster's Cha modifier (if any). When she gets 0 spells of a given level, he gains only bonus spells. She prepares and casts spells as a bard, and does not suffer arcane spell failure chance when wearing light armor.

At 6th, 8th, and 10th level, she can choose to learn a new spell in place of one of she already knows, provided the new spell is of the same level as the one she is replacing.

Sneak Attack (Ex): This is exactly like the rogue ability. This stacks with sneak attack from other sources.

Sawtooth Mastery (Ex): At 1st level, the Red Mantis assassin gains Weapon Focus (sawtooth sabre). Her proficiency increases as she gains levels, as noted on the table below.

Prayer Attack (Su): At 2nd level, a Red Mantis assassin gains this deadly attack. To initiate a prayer attack the Red Mantis assassin holds her sawtooth sabre out before her, point down, and weaves the blade in the air in a circular pattern. The mantis must be within 30 feet of his victim and must be visible to her victim. While wielding a sawtooth sabre, the assassin can fascinate a victim. His victim can resist with a Will save against DC 10 + the assassin's class level + the assassin's Charisma modifier. By concentrating, the assassin maintain this fascination, and after 3 rounds of fascination, he may make a coup de grace attack against the target. Activating or concentrating on maintaining a prayer attack does not provoke an attack of opportunity.

The victim may attempt a new saving throw to resist the fascination each time a potential threat (other than the fascinating assassin) approaches him. Taking damage from any source automatically breaks the victim's fascination, as can a fascinated creature's ally who takes a standard action to shake the victim free of the effects. This assassination attack is therefore most effective against foes who are alone.

Red Shroud (Su): At 3rd level, the Red Mantis assassin gains the ability to create a veil of red mist a number of times per day equal to her Constitution bonus (minimum once per day) as a move-equivalent action. The red shroud persists for 1 round per class level and grants a +1 dodge bonus to AC and fast healing equal to his Constitution bonus (minimum of fast healing 1). The mist cannot be dissipated by wind. When a Red Mantis assassin is slain, at the moment of her death, she can choose to remain corporeal or disintegrate into a cloud of red mist that leaves behind only her gear.

The Red Mantis Assassin — Hit Die: d8

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Spells per Day 1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th
1st	+0	+0	+2	+2	Sneak attack +1d6, Weapon Focus (sawtooth sabre)	0	—	—	—	—
2nd	+1	+0	+3	+3	Prayer attack	1	—	—	—	—
3rd	+2	+1	+3	+3	Red shroud	2	0	—	—	—
4th	+3	+1	+4	+4	Call mantis, sneak attack +2d6	2	1	—	—	—
5th	+3	+1	+4	+4	Resurrection sense, Weapon Specialization (sawtooth sabre)	3	2	0	—	—
6th	+4	+2	+5	+5	Mantis form	3	2	1	—	—
7th	+5	+2	+5	+5	Sneak attack +3d6, Greater Weapon Focus (sawtooth sabre)	3	3	2	0	—
8th	+6	+2	+6	+6	Blood mantis form, fading	4	3	2	1	—
9th	+6	+3	+6	+6	Mantis doom, Greater Weapon Specialization (sawtooth sabre)	4	3	3	2	0
10th	+7	+3	+7	+7	Death mantis form, sneak attack +4d6	4	4	3	2	1

Skills (6 + Int bonus per level): Appraise, Balance, Bluff, Climb, Concentration, Disguise, Escape Artist, Heal, Hide, Intimidate, Jump, Knowledge (religion), Listen, Move Silently, Search, Spot, Tumble.

Call Mantis (Sp): At 4th level, a Red Mantis assassin may summon 1d4+1 fiendish giant praying mantises or 1d3 half-fiend giant praying mantises once per day (as per *summon monster IV*). Both types of mantis are bloodred, and thus do not gain the typical bonus on Hide checks in foliage.

Resurrection Sense (Su): At 5th level, a Red Mantis assassin senses if a creature she has slain within the last year has been restored to life, as long as they are both on the same plane.

Mantis Form (Su): At 6th level, a Red Mantis assassin may *polymorph* into a bloodred giant praying mantis once per day. The Red Mantis Assasin does not gain the bonus to Hide checks in foliage. The assassin may cast a quickened still silent *fear* once per hour, and may remain in mantis form a number of hours equal to his class level.

At 8th level, this form improves. In blood mantis form, she gains a +2 bonus to Strength and Constitution, and causes 2 points of Constitution damage when she makes a successful bite attack as she drains blood from her foe.

At 10th level, the Strength and Constituion bonuses increase to +4, and her first successful attack in a round imparts a negative level. Each negative level inflicted heals 5 points of damage to the assassin. The save DC to remove this level is 10 + the Red Mantis assassin's level + her Constitution modifier. In addition, while in mantis form, the Red Mantis assassin gains DR 10/good.

Fading (Su): At 8th level, the Red Mantis assassin can become ethereal as a free action a number of times each day equal to her Constitution modifier (minimum once per day) for an instant as she is struck by a weapon or is forced to make a Reflex saving throw. This grants the assassin a 50% to avoid taking damage from the attack or effect.

Mantis Doom (Su): At 9th level, a Red Mantis assassin may call forth a mantis doom as a full round action, targeting any one creature within 100 feet. Thousands of summoned mantises shroud the targeted creature and slice away at exposed flesh. The Red Mantis assassin rolls 1d8 per class level and compares the result to the target's current hit points. If the result equals or exceeds the target's hit points, the target dies; otherwise he takes nonlethal damage equal to the amount rolled and becomes panicked for 1d4 rounds. He can negate the panic and halve the damage with a successful Reflex save against DC 10 + the assassin's class level + the assassin's Charisma modifier. The swarm's attack is non-magical, so spell resistance does not apply. The mantis doom's damage penetrates damage reduction as a magic and evil weapon.



Red Mantis Assassin Spells Known

	Spells Known				
Level	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th
1st	2*	—	—	—	—
2nd	3	—	—	—	—
3rd	3	2*	—	—	—
4th	4	3	—	—	—
5th	4	3	2*	—	—
6th	4	4	3	—	—
7th	4	4	3	2*	—
8th	5	4	4	3	—
9th	5	4	4	3	2*
10th	5	5	4	4	3

*Provided the Red Mantis assassin has sufficient Intelligence to have a bonus spell of this level

Red Mantis Spell List

Red Mantis assassins choose their spells from the following list.

1st Level: *animate rope, cause fear, change self, darkvision, detect magic, expeditious retreat, feather fall, ghost sound, inflict light wounds, jump, magic fang, obscurement, silent image, spider climb, true strike*

2nd Level: *alter self, blur, cat's grace, darkness, fog cloud, hold person, inflict moderate wounds, invisibility, keen edge, levitate, minor image, scare, see invisibility, summon swarm*

3rd Level: *clairaudience/clairvoyance, deeper darkness, fear, fly, gaseous form, giant vermin, inflict serious wounds, major image, rage, scrying*

4th Level: *dimension door, greater invisibility, inflict critical wounds, insect plague, modify memory, phantasmal killer, polymorph, solid fog*

5th Level: *mark of justice, nightmare, prying eyes, slay living, word of recall*

Shackles Pirate

Pirates of the Shackles prowl rivers in skiffs, rowboats, and coracles in search of easy prey. Those who prove handy at waterway robbery might someday find a position on the galleons that frequently raid along the coast and waylay trade ships. They are adept at navigating the treacherous marshes of the area, and able to survive the unending raging hurricane.

Some gifted pirates possess the ability to sail unharmed into the Eye of Abendego, harness its power for their own purposes, and make legends of their names.

Requirements

To qualify to become a Shackles pirate, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Alignment: Any nonlawful.

Base Attack: +3.

Skills: Appraise 8 ranks, Profession (boater or sailor) 8 ranks, Swim 8 ranks, Use Rope 8 ranks.

Special: +2d6 sneak attack.

Class Features

The following are class features of the Shackles pirate prestige class.

Quick Appraise (Ex): A Shackles pirate must at times quickly select the most valuable items to spirit away. She may appraise the value of an item in 1 round.

Sodden Stealth (Ex): Shackles pirates spend their careers studying and adapting to their unique, marshy environs. As a result, they develop skills which allow them to stealthily approach their targets even over the wettest, muddiest ground. Most wear dark green and brown clothes made of oilcloth (to repel water) and reed hats with angled brims to keep rain out of their eyes. Shackles pirates sometimes string small beads in their hair to generate a quiet susurrus as they walk. This mimics the sound of wind in the bogs and helps mask the noise of their footsteps.

A Shackles pirate gains a +2 competence bonus on Move Silently checks made in marshes, bogs, or swamps. At 5th level this bonus increases to +4, and at 10th level the bonus increases to +6.

Bogstep (Ex): At 2nd level, a Shackles pirate learns how to move quickly through the treacherous terrain of her home. She moves through shallow bogs normally, and it costs her 2 squares of movement to move into a square with a deep bog. She can Tumble through shallow bogs with no penalty and can Tumble through deep bogs with a –4 penalty.

Deep Breath (Ex): At 2nd level, a Shackles pirate can hold her breath for a number of rounds equal to three times her Constitution score before she must start making Constitution checks.

Sneak Attack (Ex): This is identical to the rogue sneak attack ability, and stacks with sneak attack gained from other sources.

Navigate Maelstrom (Su): The Eye of Abendego, the hurricane that constantly rages offshore, poses a hazard to all ships moving along the Shackles coast. Shackles pirates know how to successfully navigate the gusting winds and churning water. The hurricane exerts some unfathomable mystical influence over some of the pirates of the area.

At 4th level, a Shackles pirate treats all storms as if they were one category less severe for purposes of sailing and navigation. She treats the Eye of Abendego as if it were a zone of inclement weather, rather than a powerful storm, for purposes of sailing and navigation.

The Shackles Pirate — Hit Die: d8

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+0	+0	+2	+0	Quick appraise, sodden stealth +2
2nd	+1	+0	+3	+0	Bogstep, deep breath
3rd	+2	+1	+3	+1	Sneak attack +1d6
4th	+3	+1	+4	+1	Navigate maelstrom
5th	+3	+1	+4	+1	Sodden stealth +4
6th	+4	+2	+5	+2	Sneak attack +2d6
7th	+5	+2	+5	+2	Grapple ship, quick appraise
8th	+6	+2	+6	+2	Shipmind
9th	+6	+3	+6	+3	Sneak attack +3d6
10th	+7	+3	+7	+3	Fogcraft, sodden stealth +6

Skills (8 + Int bonus per level): Appraise, Balance, Climb, Craft, Gather Information, Hide, Intimidate, Jump, Knowledge (local), Move Silently, Profession, Search, Spot, Survival, Swim, Tumble, Use Rope.

Grapple Ship (Su): As a Shackles pirate's connection to the Eye of Abendego grows stronger, she learns to perform impossible feats. At 7th level, a Shackles pirate gains the ability to stop another ship dead in the water for a short time. To use this ability, the Shackles pirate must hurl a grappling hook at the target ship. The pirate is proficient with the grappling hook, and she throws it with a 20-foot range increment.

If the Shackles pirate hits the target ship, she then makes an opposed Strength check. She gains a +1 bonus on her check for every crewmate who also grapples the enemy ship, although crewmates are considered non-proficient with grappling hooks and throw them with 10-foot range increments. For every point by which the Shackles pirate exceeds the ship's Strength check, she halts its progress for 1 round.

Shipmind (Su): At 8th level, a Shackles pirate can, once per day as a standard action, control her ship with a thought. The Shackles pirate must be on the deck of the ship she wishes to control and she must be conscious.

Once the Shackles pirate activates her shipmind, she can feel the ship as if it were an extension of her body. She can "see" from the ship anywhere she wants, and adjusting her point of view is a free action. The Shackles pirate can move the ship as if it were her own body, and it moves over water at her base move or the ship's normal speed, whichever is greater. She and her ship can move forward and backward, make right angle turns, and come to a dead stop, despite the ship's size or the weather conditions.

While the Shackles pirate uses her shipmind ability, her body appears paralyzed and unresponsive. She is considered helpless and cannot defend herself, but she retains an awareness of what goes on around her body (and can see her body from her perspective on the ship if she wishes). She may end the shipmind effect as an immediate action. This ability lasts for 1 round per class level.

Fogcraft (Su): At 10th level, the Shackles pirate gains the incredible power to shape a vessel out of the fog that roils across the boggy landscape. This ability functions only in the Shackles and is usable once per day.

Forming a craft takes 10 minutes, and the craft's duration lasts for a variable number of hours depending on its size. A fogcraft appears made of swirling gray mist but feels solid to the touch. Its unique composition can make it difficult to spot, and the craft makes no sound, but it does not baffle sounds made by its crew.

A fogcraft has a carrying capacity equal to an ordinary ship of its type, but its impermanence makes it a poor cargo ship. It requires the appropriate number of crewmen in order to sail. A fogcraft possesses speed and maneuverability equal to that of an ordinary ship of its type, but unlike ordinary ships, a fogcraft can move over land as easily as water.

A Shackles pirate receives a +4 competence bonus on skill checks made to sail her fogcraft.

When a Shackles pirate creates a fogcraft, she can chose its size from any of the options listed below. With larger ships comes a trade-off in stealth, Armor Class, and duration.

Fogcraft Type	AC	Strength	Carries[1]	Duration	Hide
Raft	10	18	4	10 hours	+12
Rowboat	10	20	6	10 hours	+10
Longship	8	24	170	4 hours	+8
Keelboat	8	28	115	4 hours	+8
Sailing Ship	6	30	220	4 hours	+8
Warship	6	32	240	2 hours	+6
Galley	4	34	450	2 hours	+4

[1] Including the Shackles pirate herself.



Psionics

Psionics are a strange and mysterious form of power manipulation that produces the same effects as magic, but through an entirely different mechanism not well understood by most. Traditional wielders of powerful arcane and divine energies in the world look upon psionics with considerable suspicion. Psions are often seen as the tainted residue of otherworldly entities or the unpredictable and dangerous byproduct of dabbling into realms of the fragile psyche that should not be probed too deeply for fear of the consequences. The rarity of psionics on Golarion does little to increase the understanding of them by those who fear and avoid psionic characters.

The Nature of Psionics

Scholars speculate that the potential to manipulate reality through the power of pure thought has long lain latent in every sentient race. As best can be determined, though, the sentient mind naturally rebels at the thought of maintaining the critically fragile dynamic tension between want and need, between order and chaos, between necessity and impulse. Sentient beings crave a certain habit of mind or perspective on the universe that gives them a consistent lens through which to interact with reality.

The point of psionic awakening, beyond the rare wild talent, is when principled superego, radical id, and actuating ego are simultaneously fully unleashed and yet held in perfect counterpoint. Psions describe their abilities as leaning over a raging torrent and yet neither falling in nor pulling back in the slightest, in the moment of action and yet not frozen in that moment. Small wonder, then, that the talent to use these powers is rare and the desire to plumb their depths rarer still.

Arcane spellcasters can enjoy the conceit that through study or even pure instinct they can master the forces of the universe, and divine casters that through their piety entities greater than themselves can reshape reality on their behalf. Those who master the powers of the mind are afforded no such supports or delusions. To be able to marshal these disparate mental resources without losing touch with the necessities of the self and its relationship with reality is a difficult feat, and it must be wedded to the innate talent and potential to make thought a manifest reality. Many use meditative exercises, physical discipline, or the contemplation of perfect forms (crystals are a popular focus for such efforts) to properly frame and orient their perspective and psyche. Of course, the most accomplished and powerful users of psionics have no real need to resort to such beginner's practices.

Psionics in the World

Psionics suffer under a certain prejudice, mostly because of ignorance and fear of their potential. It is a dangerous art, but in truth no more or less than magic. Wielders of psionics often try to pass off their skills as sorcery to avoid confusion or persecution, or to find employers or associates who care more about results than methods. In most places, psionics continue to be a bit of a shadowy art, but those who wish to learn about psionics or find those who use the power can do so, if they but take time to look.

Psionics certainly exist elsewhere in the near universe, often in much greater quantities than they do on Golarion itself. One notable such location is the Green World of Castrovel, a planet connected to Golarion via certain potent (and invariably remote) portals created long ago by elven explorers. While Castrovel might at first seem an idyllic world rife with abundant forests and jungles, teeming with exotic flora and fauna and limitless bounty, the world is not as tender and idyllic a place as its first glimpse might portend. Many Castrovel natives, from simple plants and predators up to its intelligent races, manifest various psionic powers. Some of these creatures (such as the pernicious brain moles, the crystal-eating inesctoid folugubs, and the carnivorous plants known as udoroots) have no obvious analog on Golarion, while others are so similar to creatures found in remote regions of Avistan and Garund that some scholars believe interplanetary exploration has not always been instigated by explorers from Golarion. Psionic variants of normally mindless predators like gray oozes or even dangerous flora like yellow mold have been encountered on Castrovel with some frequency, drawing into question to which planet these creatures are actually true natives. The true scions of Castrovel are a mysterious race of matriarchal, warlike humanoids, and while contact between them and the intelligent races of Golarion has been limited, it seems apparent that their psionic powers are quite formidable and deadly.

Closer to home, the power of psionics is strong in the far-off land of Vudra, where the concept of mind over matter bears an almost religious aspect—those who manifest psionic power are often viewed as "closer to the divine," and are generally treated with a mixture of awe, respect, and fear. Monastic orders preach the value of sharpening and honing both the mind and the body, and it's not uncommon in Vudra to find monks and psionically gifted individuals rubbing shoulders. Many of Vudra's great heroes and legendary leaders are said to have had eerie and strange powers to affect the physical world with their thought alone. Certainly, one of Vudra's most successful exports to the Inner Sea region—the faith of Irori, the Master of Masters—teaches the value of self-perfection and its inexorable connections to the mind and to knowledge. Yet just as with other forms of magic, not all who practice

the delicate art of mindcraft (as it is known to some) are benevolent. Vudra is a vast realm, and there are countless tales of those who rule isolated mountain valleys or islands hidden in remote lakes—legends of rakshasa lords, exiled asuras, and other fiendish outsiders whose mastery over psionics give them particular and potent advantages over the weaker minds and bodies of those they enslave.

The psionic traditions of Vudra have little to do with the denizens of the Green World. Rather, these traditions date back thousands of years, centered on the great shrine of the *Stone Egg of Jayalakshmi*. This massive cracked ovoid, its petrified surface graven with incomprehensible curves, whorls, and mazelike patterns, rests in a great cave near the town of Udayasankar. The first monks who studied the *Stone Egg* found that contemplations upon it produced strange visions and mental images that realigned the mind. Concentrated study and focus enabled some penitents to awaken the powers of the mind in radical ways. Here, psionics are well-known and established. In Vudra they are as much a part of lilfe as arcane and divine magic, though some associate psionics in a negative light because of the vile rakshasa-spawn who practice the art so well.



There is another realm to the Inner Sea region wherein psionics are common—yet ironically, while this realm is far closer than Castrovel or Vudra, it is a realm of which even less is known—the Darklands. Psionic creatures become increasingly common in certain regions of these endless caverns, particularly deeper into the third realm of Orv. Explorers of the mysterious vaults of this realm who had the good fortune to survive and escape back to the surface world tell of all manner of psionic horrors, but strongest among these horrors are three races in particular. The aboleth are easily the most widespread of these three races, and certainly the most ancient, yet they have in large part apparently abandoned attempts to colonize the Darklands' waterways. Likewise, it would seem that the mysterious ichthyic masters have largely abandoned their psionic skills as well, in favor of glyph-based magic, although verifying these assumptions is difficult at best due to their isolated nature.

Easily the most physically terrifying and imposing of the Darklands' psionic denizens are the neothelids—vile, enormous worms who lay claim to at least three Orvian Vaults. Served by wormlike minions who exact their will upon the upper realms of the Darklands, the neothelids rarely emerge from these nighted depths. It does seem that the neothelids had some involvement on the aboleths' abandonment of the Darklands, perhaps after an ancient and now-forgotten war. Whatever the cause, there is no love lost between these two deep-dwelling psychic horrors, nor should any surface dweller unfortunate enough to fall into either's clutches or happen upon a lost, buried city of their ancient and alien race hope to cling long to life or to sanity.

Yet perhaps the most sinister of these deep races are the intellect devourers. Evidence points to the possibility that these horrid creatures aren't originally from Golarion at all, but came to the world from the Dark Tapestry, finding a place to settle after an unimaginably long pilgrimage through the black places between the stars. Certainly an extrasolar source for these creatures would go a long way toward explaining their notoriously tough-to-kill natures. Whatever their original source, the intellect devourers were already established in Orv at the time of Earthfall, for early drow texts record of their first terrifying encounters with the body thieves. Indeed, the intellect devourers are one of the few creatures of the Darklands consistently capable of driving the drow to fear and horror.

The most horrific facet of these creatures isn't their shape (though their four wickedly sharp-clawed limbs and the sheen of their brainlike bodies are certainly that) or their deadly skill with mental attacks and psionic warfare, but rather their ability to consume the minds and memories of other creatures they encounter, leaving their bodies as fleshy chariots for them to hide within and use to infiltrate the victim's society. Many drow families fell from within to the predations of intellect devourers before they learned what signs to look for and developed methods to cull and prevent the creatures from stalking them, yet no solution is final. Worse still are rumors of entire cities built in distant Orvian Vaults; cities inhabited entirely by creatures whose bodies have been stolen and whose cultures were consumed by these malevolent parasites. As the drow grow more adept at hedging out infestations and protecting their growing claims to Sekamina from intrusion, the intellect devourers seem only too happy to turn their ravenous hungers ever upward—to entirely new societies on the surface above who are ill-equipped at best to defend themselves from an enemy who can make your very memories a weapon and who can make enemies of allies with a thought.

Technology

The complex question of technological advancement among the peoples of Avistan, Garund, and beyond is not one to be approached lightly, for the world of Golarion has passed through countless eras of strange discovery, of technology both high and low, from primitive to futuristic—and back. With the dawning and closing of each Age, the tool-working peoples of this magic-infused place have again and again pushed back the mists of ignorance and savagery with shimmering wonders great and small. They master arts ranging from alloying iron into steel to the mind-bending riddles of electro-thaumaturgy. As each successive disaster, uprising, and cataclysm washes over the lands of Golarion, the secrets of earlier Ages are lost—and new discoveries are made.

As the peoples of the Inner Sea enter the second century of the Age of Lost Omens, the world stands once again upon a great precipice—new magics, mechanical practices, arcane theories, and alchemical procedures become increasingly more common and more accessible to clever minds with each passing day. The first Spark of Tomorrow is already lit, and a time approaches when the confluences of trade and learning, need and chance, might bring about the technologies of the next Age. Of the many innovations of the present and past, the following five represent a spectrum of world-altering ideas both current and ancient.

Aeromantic Infadibulum

Little is known as to what the Shory themselves called the magnificent machines that gave their legendary cities aerial buoyancy, but current research settled upon the term "Aeromantic Infadibulum." Powered by a combination of theoretical "Hard Aeromancy" somehow synched with the processes of still-incomprehensible electro-thaumaturgy, these glass, adamantine, and mithral metropolises represent a godlike zenith of mechanical and arcane engineering scarcely understood today.

Still, evidence of such wonders plainly exists. Crushed into the southwest side of the Barrier Wall, where the mountains form a near-impassible border between Osirion and Mwangi, the Ruins of Kho shudder quietly with the release of ancient and mysterious energies, confounding and cursing all who plunder there. Although the means to replicate Shory technology were lost long ago, none can ignore the horrible, tempting suggestion that research into the field of Aeromantic Infadibulum might yet bear fruit. An unassailable, sky-borne throne-palace that can outrun even the seasons of the world would make a living god of any who possessed it.

Many spend the whole of their lives seeking some intact example of Shory mage-craft, chasing after stories of hovering buildings glimpsed gliding through the Eye of Abendego, hanging silently above the thickest of jungles in the Mwangi Expanse, or sweeping across the blistering voids between the Zho Mountains. Among the paranoid of the Inner Sea, in fact, there are persistent rumors of flying towers, ziggurats, and less recognizable strongholds that appear and vanish from the sky more swiftly than clouds—it is possible, if not likely, that undying remnants of the Shory yet soar above the world, cloaked from sight for some unknown purpose.

Clockworks

Magical constructs are rare, but knowledge of their existence is relatively common—especially for those who dwell upon or trade with the Isle of Kortos. Golems make for powerful—if straightforward and breathtakingly expensive—weapons of war. Still, technology can always be improved, and can always be made more efficient in creation or application. In various academies, from the vaulted Clockwork Cathedral of Absalom to the mosaic-laid Magaambya of the Mwangi Expanse, clever artisans seek to further unlock the mysteries of the mechanical application of magic, striving to vastly reduce the amount of magical energy necessary to power their creations.

Those who lack the magical power or resources necessary to create golems and other powerful constructs reliant wholly on magic turn their attentions to the advancement of clockwork technologies. Unlike the creation of golems, though, even those without command over arcane magics can contribute to the creation of clockworks, allowing this burgeoning technology to advance at an increasing rate. Clockwork creations differ from other magical constructs in their technological basis. A clockwork machine—whether human-shaped warrior or paddle-driving engine—exists as an actual mechanical device made of interlocking pieces. Magic provides the clockwork mechanism with power with which to turn its gears, spin its wheels, and drive its pistons. Unlike golems and other constructs held together and granted motion by arcane energies, in the absence of magic a clockwork device becomes merely inert. It does not fall apart. Its pieces do not freeze together. Even nonmagical forms of energy (such as the hard labors of animals on treadmills) can provide a clockwork mechanism with movement, but magic remains—by far—the most efficient form of power. Rumors circulating among the arcane and mundane developers of clockwork mechanisms whisper of engineers in the magic-dead city-state of Alkenstar who experiment with steam as a potential energy source, but most arcanists laugh off the notion as yet another bizarre development from that "backward" place.

Electro-Thaumaturgy

Of all the mysteries the Azlanti took with them when they were scoured from the face of Golarion, none holds such promise as the fabled arts of electro-thaumaturgy, a means by which the transmission and broadcast of pure arcane energy might be harnessed, wielded, and rerouted.

The very simplest of electro-thaumaturgical designs and practices, of course, are the cornerstone of wizardry and of magic item creation—the binding in batteries of static arcane energies, to be summoned upon arcane command at a later time. Yet the more esoteric applications of this art reveal untapped and godlike potential, a weave of storm and steel that could light the entire world. In theory, the tools of electro-thaumaturgy are even capable of generating raw magic, conducting power through rune-scribed and powerfully warded mediums in such vast quantities as to set the sky ablaze, divert the course of rivers, or even bear aloft an entire city. None alive today, however, comprehend the deepest mysteries of this science, and while talented arcanists can sometimes coax life from ancient electro-thaumaturgical devices, no one understands how they work or how to repair them. With each passing decade, even as understanding of electro-thaumaturgy inches ahead, more and more found devices cease to function—likely forever.

There are those who seek to manipulate the power of electro-thaumaturgy. Used properly, the gift of electro-thaumaturgy might bring about an age of wonders undreamt of. Used unwisely, it might shift the balance of power in the world in frightening ways.

Firearms

Of all the forms of technology that appeared or disappeared from the lands of the Inner Sea, none are as universally misunderstood or despised as the firearm. From the high halls of the Lands of the Linnorm Kings to the tent-cities south of the Screaming Jungle, the appearance of a firearm suggests at once an outrageous expenditure of gold, a sorrowful impotence of limb, and an immediate threat of dishonorable violence.

Vudrani visitors to the legendary court of Nex first introduced the strange, explosive alchemical substance now called "gunpowder" to Garund—a costly novelty brought at great expense from the courts of Tian Xia. The merchant-lords of Jalmeray supplied great quantities of the curious stuff to arcanists and lore-masters across the continent.

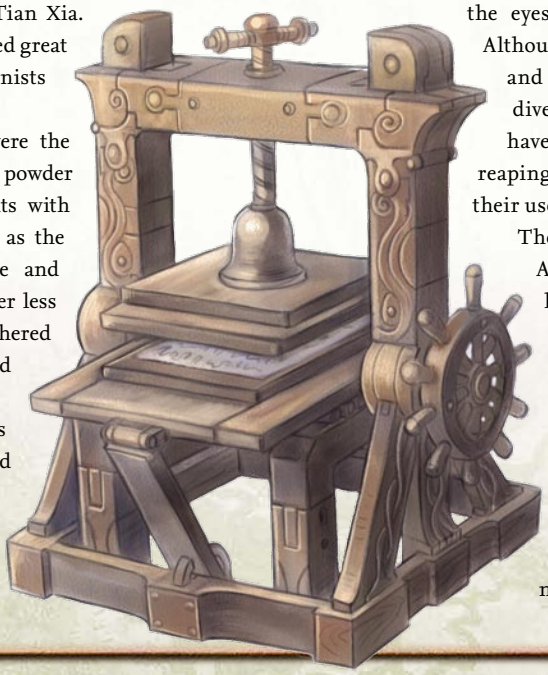
The people of Avistan, however, were the first to employ the foul-burning black powder in weapons of war. These experiments with firearm technology did not last long, as the weapons proved supremely expensive and too dangerous to ill-trained users. After less than a decade, the few armies that bothered with firearms in the first place returned to more reliable and easier-to-use crossbows. Today, no such early firearms still exist—all were scrapped or converted into crossbows—although newer weapons, manufactured in southern Garund, infrequently appear in the markets of Absalom and Katapesh.

In the blighted lands of the Mana Wastes, where magic itself has disappeared, firearms are more common. The powerful firearms manufactured in Alkenstar range from simple single-fire muskets to repeating pistols and trench-clearing scatterguns. Alkenstar measures the diameter of its firearm barrels using the stone-pebble-grain system. In this system, a stone equals 3 inches, with 12 pebbles to a stone (making a pebble 1/4 inch) and 24 grains to a pebble and 288 grains to a stone (making a grain 1/96 inch). Bore diameters are given in the largest of three categories that is a whole number, followed by the measurement category (thus, most bore diameters are measured in grains, as they rarely confer exactly to a pebble or stone). The most common bullet diameters produced by Alkenstar are the 1P for rifles (sometimes called a "Single"), the 47G for pistols (known as a "four-seven"), the 66G for muskets (inexplicably called a "Hammer"), and the 3P for shotguns and blunderbusses (usually referred to as the "three-peb"). The largest known cannon in the world, a broken and blackened device called Worldbreaker that hangs in the treasure hall of the great Silverback King of Usaro, measures a full 30S in diameter.

Printing Press

Among the finest of treasures is the printing-press, a weapon of subtle power capable of turning a quiet populace against its ruler, making an entire nation unsafe for an outlaw, or setting a hundred militias ready for war against an enemy.

With but a few weeks of preparation, a print-master and his apprentices can engrave a special "press" containing words, images, or a series of words and images that are then perfectly replicated, in ink and paper, hundreds or even thousands of times. These ink-printed papers, often handsomely detailed with grandiose portraits of honored leaders or crude caricatures of hated foes, are then swiftly distributed to reach the eyes of a widely scattered people. Although terrifyingly expensive to build and upkeep, leaders in nations as diverse as Absalom, Nex, and Qadira have benefited from the technology, reaping their investments tenfold from their use of the printing-press.



The mighty aristocracies of Andoran, Cheliax, Galt, and Nex, however, possess use of greater technology still: movable-type printing-presses capable of shifting their lettered engravings to create hundreds of different prints, from the square-lettered pages of bound books to posters decrying the wickedness of their enemies in multiple colors.

Time & Space

For ease of use, this book uses Absalom Reckoning (AR) for all of its dates. This reckoning system is based on the foundation of Absalom (which occurred on 1 Abadius, 1 AR), and because of Absalom's expansive influence the city's calendar has achieved great popularity throughout the world, although many independent nations maintain their own systems as well. In Absalom Reckoning, the day of the month is always given first, followed by the name or number of the month, with the year coming last.

Golarion spins on its axis roughly once every 24 hours. Weeks consist of 7 days, with 52 weeks per year. A year has 12 months, each of which corresponds to a popular deity. In order to most accurately reflect reality, many calendars across Golarion add in leap days. In the Absalom Reckoning, the leap day is tacked on to the end of Arodus and occurs on every year divisible by 8. Thus, the current year (4708) is not a leap year, but 4704 was and 4712 will be.

Days of the Week

Day	Task
Moonday	Work, religion (night)
Toilday	Work
Wealday	Work
Oathday	Work, pacts signed, oaths sworn
Fireday	Work, market day
Starday	Work
Sunday	Rest, religion

Months of the Year

Month	Season	Deity
Abadius	Winter (January)	Abadar
Calistril	Winter (February)	Calistria
Pharast	Spring (March)	Pharasma
Gozran	Spring (April)	Gozreh
Desnus	Spring (May)	Desna
Sarenith	Summer (June)	Sarenrae
Erastus	Summer (July)	Erastil
Arodus	Summer (August)	Aroden
Rova	Fall (September)	Rovagug
Lamashan	Fall (October)	Lamashtu
Neth	Fall (November)	Nethys
Kuthona	Winter (December)	Zon-Kuthon

Holidays and Festivals

The following list records most of the major holidays and a few of the minor ones. A parenthetical marks which religion(s) or state(s) celebrate that particular holiday. If no parenthetical is listed, the holiday is celebrated throughout the region.

Abadius

1: New Year, Foundation Day (Absalom)
6: Vault Day (Abadar)
20: Ruby Prince's Birthday (Osirion)

Calistril

2: Merrymead
19: Treaty of Egorian (Cheliax)
Last Oathday: Batul al-Alim (Qadira)

Pharast

5: Day of Bones (Pharasma)
13: Kaliashahrim (Qadira)
1–15: Vernal Carpentry Court (Andoran)
26: Conquest Day (Nex)

Gozran

7: Currentseve (Gozreh)
15: Taxfest (Abadar)
16–30: Wrights of Augustana (Andoran)

Desnus

2–3: Ascendance Night (Norgorber)
13: Old-Mage Day (Nantambu, Mwangi Expanse)
Last Sunday: Goblin Flea Market (Andoran)

Sarenith

3: Independence Day (Andoran)
10: Burning Blades (Sarenrae)
21: Talon Tag (Andoran)
Last Sunday: Goblin Flea Market (Andoran)

Erastus

3: Archerfeast (Erastil)
14: Founding Festival (Korvosa, Varisia)
17: Burning Night (Razmiran)
15–21: Kianidi Festival (Garundi)
Last Sunday: Goblin Flea Market (Andoran)

Arodus

6: First Crusader Day (Mendev)
9: Day of Silenced Whispers (Ustalav)
16: Armasse (Aroden, Iomedae)
Last Sunday: Silverglazer Sunday (Andoran)
31: Leap day

Rova

First Sunday: Silverglazer Sunday (Andoran)
Second Oathday: Signing Day (Andoran, Cheliax, Galt, Isger)
6: Start of Classes (Acadamae, Arcanamirium, College of Mysteries, Clockwork Cathedral)
19: Day of the Inheritor (Iomedae)
16–30: Autumnal Carpentry Court (Andoran)

Lamashan

Second Moonday: Harvest Feast
6: Ascendance Day (Iomedae)
27: Jestercap (Andoran, Druma, Taldor)
30: Allbirth (Lamashtu)

Neth

5: Independence Day (Galt)
8: Abjurant Day (Nethys)
14: Even-Tongued Day (Andoran, Cheliax, Galt, Isger, Nidal)
18: Evoking Day (Nethys)
23: Seven Veils
28: Transmutatum (Nethys)

Kuthona

Second Week (Sunday to Starday): Winter Week
11: Ascension Day (Cayden Cailean)
30: Night of the Pale

Lunar and Celestial Holidays

Some recognized holidays occur on different days every year, and cannot be easily incorporated into the calendar used in the Absalom Reckoning.

Vernal Equinox

Firstbloom (Gozreh)
Planting Week (Erastil)

Summer Solstice

Ritual of Stardust (Desna)
Sunwrought Festival (Sarenrae)

Autumnal Equinox

Harvest Feast (Erastil)
Swallowtail Festival (Desna)

Winter Solstice

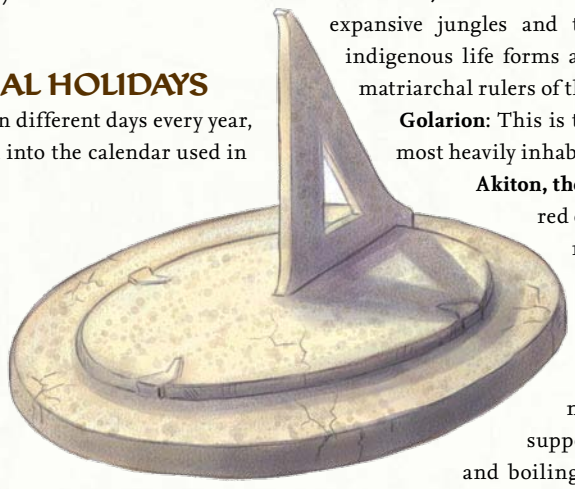
Crystalhue (Shelyn)
Ritual of Stardust (Desna)

Full Moons

Abadius: Longnight
Calistril: Lust Festival (Calistria)
Desnus: Remembrance Moon (Lastwall, Ustalav)
Lamashan: Admani Upastuti (Jalmeray, Vudra)

Other Worlds

Golarion is but one world of eleven that orbits the sun. To the vast majority of the planet's denizens, the other ten worlds are little more than points of light in the sky, with the exception of the two closest planets—Castrovel (the Green Planet) and Akiton (the Red Planet), which are visible to the naked eye as distinctly colored objects. Often, in art depicting night skies, artists take to embelishing the presence of these two intriguing solar bodies, and while the two planets may only appear as points of light in the actual sky, they certainly loom large in the minds of the world's artists.



The following section lists the solar system's eleven planets (along with the remains of two others that now form an asteroid belt around the sun). Travel to these planets from Golarion requires magic. Most are linked by a network of portals that allow instantaneous travel between them, but as these portals tend to be heavily guarded or lost in remote corners of the world, such interplanetary travel is rare and limited to a tiny handful of adventurers and explorers.

The following planets are listed in order, from the closest to the sun (Aballon) the the furthest (Aucturn).

Aballon, the Horse: Aballon's searing surface is dotted with strange ruins that seem almost mechanized in nature.

Castrovel, the Green Planet: This planet is covered with expansive jungles and trackless swamps. Many of the indigenous life forms are psionic, including the violent matriarchal rulers of the world.

Golarion: This is the core world of the system—the most heavily inhabited of the eleven.

Akiton, the Red Planet: A planet of immense red deserts, torturous mountains, and rugged badlands, the denizens of Akiton are known primarily for their violence.

Verces, the Line: A planet tidally locked, only the terminator line of Verces is capable of supporting "normal" life—the frozen and boiling extremes to either side are the lands of monsters.

The Diaspora: This is a belt of asteroids, many of which are large enough to be small planetoids of their own.

Eox, the Dead Planet: An ancient apocalypse saw the destruction of this once thriving planet's atmosphere. Today, only the undead dwell upon this airless world.

Triaxus, the Wanderer: Triaxus's oribt sends it through alternating extremes of frozen winters and boiling summers.

Liavara, the Dreamer: Several colorful rings surround this immense gas giant, as do a large handful of moons, some of which are inhabited.

Bretheda, the Cradle: The system's largest planet, the upper reaches of this gas giant's atmosphere are inhabited by a mysterious race of aliens who have seeded the planet's dozens of moons with diverse environments and inhabitants.

Apostae, the Messenger: Barely large enough to be counted a planet, many believe that some of the portals on Apostae lead to planets beyond this solar system.

Aucturn, the Stranger: Little is known about this ominous planet apart from rumors connecting it to the Dark Tapestry, the empty places between the stars wherein true madness lies.

Trade

Regardless of the goods—raw timber from northern Andoran, exquisite glass from Cheliax, or exotic spices from Qadira—trade powers the nations that rest upon the rocky shores of the Inner Sea. Golarion's most powerful trading nations launch thousands of merchant fleets every week into the salty, wind-tossed waters that link the massive Arcadian Ocean to the stormy Obari Ocean. This crowded trade route ensures the finest silks from distant Vudra are linked to the rotting catshark-curing huts of the frigid Lands of the Linnorm Kings—a link that flows like molten gold through the ports of the Inner Sea.

Trade routes through the Inner Sea generally run east-to-west and vice versa. Most merchant fleets choose one of two main sea routes through the Inner Sea. The first is known as the North Tack and runs from the Spice Harbor of Sedeq in southern Qadira to the militaristic naval trading stations of Corentyn in southwest Cheliax. This route hugs close to the coast for most of the journey, but sails hard for Absalom after putting in at Qadira's enlightened capital of Katheer. The faster but less profitable South Tack launches from Sothis, the ancient port capital of Osirion, sails due north for Absalom, and then runs along the northern coast of Garund due west and out into the Arcadian Ocean through the Arch of Aroden. Here, the South Tack turns hard to the south and ends at Azir, the godless coastal capital of Rahadoum.

Several other trade routes exist in the Inner Sea region, including the increasingly profitable Varisian Run, and nearly two dozen various routes that start in the fabled city of Katapesh and range as far as Eleder in Sargava and Kalsgard in the Land of the Linnorm Kings. Yet when merchants compare rates and routes, they invariably speak of the North and the South Tacks.

The North Tack

Qadira links the Inner Sea trade routes to the rest of Golarion in two very important ways: its well-constructed and strongly-defended overland spice roads stretch deep into central Casmaron and its well-positioned port city of Sedeq functions as the Inner Sea's gateway to all of the distant nations that border the Obari Ocean. As such, all manner of spices, fruits, rare ores, fabled cures, mystic weapons, and the slaves of countless nations can be bought or traded throughout Qadira. It is said that every spice ever dreamed of on Golarion is available in the city-sized Qalli Spice Market of Sedeq, and this reputation has made Sedeq a top destination for royal chefs the world over.

Absalom, the City at the Center of the World, is the beating economic heart of the Inner Sea. All trade routes make their way here, as nearly every imaginable good from all corners of Golarion can be found somewhere in Absalom. The Isle of Kortos itself exports rare metals and gems from the central mountains that loom tall and jagged above city's skyline and imports large quantities of foodstuffs and weapons to feed and power its massive defensive military. Absalom's desire to keep large stores to protect it from frequent sieges makes it a guaranteed market for the sale of firewood, wine, dried grains, smoked meats, and lamp oil. Absalom's rich heritage and decadent Petal District ensure that spices, incense, body oils, fine silks, and household slaves are well-stocked in dockside markets.

Taldor is largely cut off from interior Casmaron by the World's Edge Mountains and relies heavily upon sea-going trade to keep its economy from collapsing. As such, the Taldorian Imperial Navy remains a significant sea power in the eastern Inner Sea. If Taldor's navy ever faltered, the declining empire would sink quickly into oblivion. Taldor's primary exports are lumber, tar, iron, olives, salt, and wine, and it does a decent trade in artifacts as well (although not nearly as brisk as the Osirian relic markets). Taldor relies heavily on the rest of the Inner Sea for the finer accoutrement of everyday life to keep its decadent ruling class fat and happy. It's sarcastically whispered among the merchant fleets of the Inner Sea that Taldorian nobles go to war when their silk robes become tattered. The best way to stop a Taldorian nobleman from invading your country, they say, is to ensure his coffee is warm, his silks are clean, and his gems shine like a thousand suns.

Andoran's wealthy merchant class regulates its trade and keeps Andoran firmly in control of the trade routes of the central Inner Sea. Once a massive hub for the construction of sea vessels for its father nation of Taldor, Andoran continues this proud tradition by building great warships and using them to crush the rampant slave trading of the Inner Sea. Despite these harsh reprisals on slave ships (and the backlash they cause throughout the rest of the Inner Sea merchant community), Andoran still does a brisk trade in softwood lumber, brass and copper fittings for ship parts, fish, lentils, glassworks, and raw ores for weapons and armor. Most of Andoran's material wealth derives from ancient artifacts pilfered from the Mwangi Expanse and the newly opened tombs of Osirion. Because of this, the Almas-Sothis sea trade route is one of the wealthiest and most heavily preyed-upon trade routes on Golarion. The Andoren navy could better progress toward eradicating slavery from the trade routes of the Inner Sea if it didn't spend so much time protecting the influential (and vocal) Andoren merchants who ply this busy north-south trade route.

Cheliax is both the largest nation of the Inner Sea and the gateway to the near and distant states that border the Arcadian Ocean. Its size results in a ravenous hunger for goods and slaves and its location supplies the rest of the Inner Sea with

all manner of products flowing eastward from beyond the world's largest ocean. Cheliax is both a boon and a calamity for the other trading nations that ply the waters from the Arch of Aroden to the Isle of Jameray. Its size and thirst for material goods as well as its massive exports of gems, ores, fine cloth, tapestries, gilded luxuries, and glassworks keep the western end of the Inner Sea flowing with material wealth and profit. Its unapologetic support of dozens of privateer fleets—with reputations for capturing and enslaving ship crews and coastal villages, as well as harassing and sinking non-Chelish merchants sailing through the Arch of Aroden—causes headaches and near conflicts with its neighbors.

The South Tack

Osirion currently experiences a trade surplus the Ruby Prince's government is trying hard to quash. The typical desert exports of livestock, leather goods, quarried stone, slaves, and wool clothing are supplemented (quite illegally) by a massive trade in the ancient and sometimes holy relics of Osirion's lengthy history of antiquity. Prince Khemet III opened the tombs of Osirion, hoping his bounty would bring in artifacts that Osirion herself could store in museums or protected vaults or (in the case of lesser statuary and minor relics) sell to the antique-hungry nations of the Inner Sea. Although Osirion does sell a lot of such items, especially to nations such as Andoran, the amount of artifacts illegally smuggled out of Osirion to foreign ports continues to rapidly grow and, by some estimates, is nearly 10 times that of the total legal domestic exports. Another oddity Osirion exports are the mummified remains of the nation's ancestors. The opened tombs unveiled hundreds of thousands of mummies, perfectly preserved, and ready to be displayed in any wealthy nobleman's summer palace. So many mummies are sold legally by the Osirion authorities that wealthy estates from Korvosa to Mechitar frequently display one or two mummies, often with nameplates bearing crude (and almost always false) names that reflect the state in which the mummy's owner chose to dress the corpse. Rumors that some of the mummies come to life and devour their new owners are attributed to illegal mummy smugglers; the Osiriani merchant guilds vehemently decry these allegations as falsehoods.

Thuvia is known as the Desert Land of Eternal Youth. The nation generates a significant portion of its income by exporting six small vials per month of *sun orchid elixir*, a potion that eliminates aging in the imbiber for a period of time sometimes measuring in years. Thuvia's port in the capital city of Merab is often a chaotic scene, as representatives of Golarion's wealthiest individuals scheme to be one of that month's chosen six. The day the vials are released from the nearby fortress in which they're created, the Thuvian infantry patrols Merab in full force to keep the peace. When merchants and seneschals aren't competing for the elixir, they trade for the nation's abundant supplies of natural incense, smelling salts, sulfur, wool, quarried stone, Mwangi slaves, and glass. If not for the *sun orchid elixir*, Thuvia might be nothing more than an overnight stop for merchants to resupply their ships with fresh water. Because of the youth-preserving concoction, though, Thuvia is one of the wealthier nations resting on the shores of the Inner Sea.

Neighboring states underestimate godless Rahadoum—the nation that expelled religion and forbids its countrymen to beholden themselves to any god—in its sheer will and force of merchant power. Rahadoum borders both the Arcadian Ocean and the Inner Sea, and in order to ship goods even between its own ports, Rahadoum merchants must pass through the Arch of Aroden. All major trade routes in the Inner Sea eventually spill out of the Arch and into the vast Arcadian Ocean. With the Arch narrowing the Inner Sea to fewer than a few dozen miles, and with Cheliax controlling both sides of the Arch, Rahadoum became desperate to maintain its own sea lanes. In response to Chelish blockades and the occasional Cheliax-backed privateers, Rahadoum conscripted native merchant ships into a massive merchant marine fleet capable of protecting itself from attack. Under Rahadoum law, merchant marines can only remain conscripted during a time of war, but thanks to a loophole wherein pirate attacks on shipping lanes are considered an act of war, the Rahadoum merchant marine fleet has become a traditional wing of the nation's military, all but replacing its navy despite focusing solely on protecting the shipment of Rahadoum's goods. Some of the independent merchant fleets of the Inner Sea unload their goods in Manaket, transferring them to armed Rahadoum merchant vessels, then traveling overland to Azir where they meet their protected cargo and load them onto new ships bound for Sargava or Varisia, just to avoid Chelaxian entanglements near the Arch of Aroden. Beyond its militarized merchant services, the desert nation enjoys a profitable trade in salt, dates, assorted tropical fruits from the Eternal Oasis, various base metals, tools, and herbal remedies for a variety of ailments.



Weather and Climate

A wide range of climate bands exist in the Inner Sea region, from blisteringly hot in the deserts of Garund to regularly freezing snows at the border with the Crown of the World. In general, weather patterns in Avistan flow from west to east, sweeping cold rains across Varisia, Nidal, and northwestern Cheliax. The rain shadow created by the Mindspin Mountains is partially offset by the rain-birthing waters of Lake Encarthan. South of the Menador and Five Kings Mountains, the chill of the north gives way to influence from the warm waters of the Inner Sea, allowing for extended growing seasons and larger populations.

The deserts of northern Garund speak to the relatively arid conditions north of the Barrier Wall. South of those imposing mountains, though, heavy rains create the rainforests and jungles of the Mwangi Expanse. Off the western shore of Garund churns the century-old hurricane, the Eye of Abendego, which contributes to the production of driving rains across central and western Garund. These endless rains, in fact, flooded a section of the coast, creating the storm-soaked devastation of the Sodden Lands. East of the Shattered Range, the dominant weather flow brings warm rains from the Obari Ocean, creating lush grasslands over most of eastern Garund. Only the destructive influence of life-stripping magic prevents Nex from growing abundant crops like Geb.

While most of the Inner Sea region experiences weather typical for its climate, several aberrant weather conditions manifest in various areas around the Inner Sea. Some of these bizarre phenomena are relatively localized, and draw only curious locals or passing experts. Other unusual weather events affect wide swaths of territory and are known (and often feared) even thousands of miles away.

Cracklenights: The northern lands use the term "cracklenight" to refer to the first days of winter. During the night, the temperatures drop below freezing and in the morning, a thin layer of hard but brittle ice covers trees, plants, houses, and any other exposed surfaces. Most crops cannot survive these freezes, and so northern communities use the first cracklenight of the year as a marker for bringing in the last harvest and preparing their fields to lie fallow through the winter.

Emberstorms: Also known as "black blizzards," the terrible and destructive emberstorms are one of the most fearsome natural occurences in the already quite fearsome Cinderlands. These duststorms, composed of ash and embers left behind by the region's immense and common brushfires, roar across the plains and scour all in their paths. The indigenous Shoanti tribes of the region believe that the emberstorm is the Cinderland's way of claiming those whom the gods have called away.

Eye of Abendego: A vast and terrible hurricane rages day and night off the coast of the Sodden Lands. The permanent storm appeared at the time of Aroden's death, along with numerous other massive storms that lasted "merely" a few weeks or months. Although the hurricane's strength waxes and wanes with the seasons, it can rip the sails off of ships even at its weakest—at its strongest, it can tear galleons in half. The Eye constantly spawns storms which roil along the coastline. Over the years, these storms swept away the nations of Lirgen and Yamasa, leaving behind the desolate rain-swept region known as the Sodden Lands.

Mistgales: These clouds of fog form mainly in the ancient forests of northern Avistan, but they sometimes appear in graveyards and ruins as well. Fog rises from the ground at nightfall and forms swirling storms anywhere from 10 feet to a mile in diameter. Damp and chilly, mistgales are the bane of travelers who find the road obscured and their journey made more unpleasant (and somewhat frightening) by the unusual, but ultimately harmless, storms. Soft breezes sometimes accompany mistgales and cause the storms to move, sometimes for miles, before the sun rises and the fog vanishes.

Morozko's Rage: More legend than verified phenomena, those who report surviving passage over the Crown of the World sometimes speak of a terrible, driving storm filled with severe winds, unbelievable cold, and a hint of malevolence. Believers of these tales claim Morozko's Rage was born in the same period of supernaturally powerful storms that spawned the Eye of Abendego, and that it moves across the northernmost continent with some semblance of intellect, ever seeking new victims to freeze. Many scholars, explorers, and guides across the Crown of the World dismiss the legends of Morozko's Rage as exaggerated explanations for what they call the true danger of crossing: stupidity.

Spider Storms: This term for a torrential downpour lasting several hours originated in Korvosa, where arachnid menaces known as drain spiders infest the sewers. After a sudden and violent rainstorm, the water level in the sewers rises enough to drive the drain spiders to street level—resulting in an eruption of spiders pouring from the gutters, outhouses, and aqueducts of the city. Varisian traders bought stories of these fortunately rare plagues out of Varisia and now the term "spider storm" finds use in most areas, especially around Lake Encarthan.

Tumblefires: In the dry summer months of Andoran, Cheliax, Taldor, and surrounding areas, thunderstorms can generate unusual effects. Often a "dry" thunderstorm—an electrical storm that rages without rain—strikes an area and fills the sky with a crackling lightning show while thunder

Seasons and Planting

Just as each month corresponds to a specific god, each season has its own patron, and its own cycle of planting. While planting times vary from region to region, most populated areas adhere to these seasonal guides.

Spring

Patron: Pharasma
Months: Pharast, Gozran, Desnus
Planting Season: lettuce, spinach, peas, onions, new potatoes, oats, corn, wheat

Summer

Patron: Sarenrae
Months: Sarenith, Erastus, Arodus
Planting Season: cabbage, potatoes, carrots, parsnips, beets, mustard greens, chard, scallions, shallots, sorghum, flayleaf, millet, buckwheat

Fall

Patron: Rovagug
Months: Rova, Lamashan, Neth
Planting Season: berry bushes, fruit trees, garlic, fennel, alfalfa, barley, clover, rye, trees and shrubs

Winter

Patron: Zon-Kuthon
Months: Kuthona, Abadius, Calistril
Planting Season: winter cabbage, winter lettuce, winter wheat

Folk Wisdom

While some superstition indicates ignorance or fear, much folk wisdom is rooted in sensible advice. The following advice from commoners pertains to weather.

One for critters, two for snow, three for harvest, four for show. Farmers use this rhyme to teach good planting habits. Three seeds go into each hole: one for scavengers to eat, a second to compensate for inclement weather, and a third to grow. More than three seeds shows unnecessary waste or bragging. Well-to-do farmers sometimes throw in a fourth seed to display their wealth—to make a "show."

Orange sun, red sky, pull your collar up high. This chant took root in Westcrown and people rarely repeat it outside large cities. When the weather begins to turn cold, the populace responds by piling wood on the fire. The combined smoke from innumerable chimneys creates a haze that turns the sky a rosy red at dusk.

When the wheat is green and the grass is high, somebody is sure to die. This children's chant refers to overly wet growing seasons. Too-heavy rains flood the fields, causing weeds and grass to shoot up but stunting the growth of the crops (and providing a rich breeding ground for disease-carrying insects, such as mosquitoes). Not only is the subsequent harvest small, but the moisture turns to heavy snows in the winter, making for a lean, cruel season. In some areas, children sing "grandmother is sure to die," or substitute the name of a local leader—particularly an unpopular one.

Wind from the west, travel is best. Wind from the east, cover the beast. Varisian caravans often stay put when a strong easterly wind blows. This chant only applies west of the Mindspin Mountains, where Varisians learned that such strong winds early in the morning indicate a storm coming down from off that range.

booms an accompaniment. During these storms, ball lightning sometimes hits the ground and rolls like a flaming tumbleweed across fields, or even through city streets. Despite its frightening appearance, tumblefire generates no heat and leaves no fire in its wake. Touching tumblefire results in a mild shock, and sometimes causes the lightning to wink out without a trace. Some peasants report that tumblefires seem attracted to metal objects, and can even be "led" with pitchforks or knitting needles.

Zarasan: Travelers from the hot, central areas of Rahadoum, Thuvia, and Osirion brought to Cheliax tales of unseasonable gentle rains which come during times of drought. Varisian storytellers dubbed these rains "zarasans" after a Varisian word which means "relief." The term caught on, and now farmers wish for zarasans whenever the fields go too long without water. In some northern communities, peasants instead use the term for the strong, warm winds which come every year to melt the snow and signal an end to winter.



Appendix A

This appendix reveals the locations for all Pathfinder adventures and supplements set in Golarion published as of August, 2008.

Spoiler Alert!

This appendix contains location-based spoilers for modules and adventure paths. **Do not** read this appendix if you never plan on being a GM in Golarion.

Product	Pages	Level	Location
Adventure Paths			
Pathfinder #1: "Burnt Offerings"	96	1st	Sandpoint, Varisia
Pathfinder #2: "The Skinsaw Murders"	96	4th	Sandpoint and Magnimar, Varisia
Pathfinder #3: "The Hook Mountain Massacre"	96	7th	Hook Mountain, Varisia
Pathfinder #4: "Fortress of the Stone Giants"	96	10th	Sandpoint and Janderhoff, Varisia
Pathfinder #5: "Sins of the Saviors"	96	12th	Sandpoint and Runeforge, Varisia
Pathfinder #6: "Spires of Xin-Shalast"	96	14th	Kodar Mountains, Varisia
Pathfinder #7: "Edge of Anarchy"	96	1st	Korvosa, Varisia
Pathfinder #8: "Seven Days to the Grave"	96	4th	Korvosa, Varisia
Pathfinder #9: "Escape from Old Korvosa"	96	8th	Korvosa, Varisia
Pathfinder #10: "A History of Ashes"	96	10th	Cinderlands, Varisia
Pathfinder #11: "Skeletons of Scarwall"	96	12th	Scarwall, Belkzen
Pathfinder #12: "Crown of Fangs"	96	14th	Korvosa and Mushfens, Varisia
Pathfinder #13: "Shadow in the Sky"	96	1st	Riddleport, Varisia
Modules			
D0: Hollow's Last Hope	16	1st	Darkmoon Vale, Andoran
D1: Crown of the Kobold King	32	2nd	Darkmoon Vale, Andoran
D1.5: Revenge of the Kobold King	16	5th	Darkmoon Vale, Andoran
D2: Seven Swords of Sin	32	7th	Kaer Maga, Varisia
D3: The Demon Within	32	11th	Clydwell Keep, Mendev
E1: Carnival of Tears	32	5th	Darkmoon Vale, Andoran
J1: Entombed with the Pharaohs	32	6th	Sothis and Underdunes, Osirion
J2: Guardians of Dragonfall	32	11th	Dragonfall, Unknown
J3: Crucible of Chaos	32	8th	Shattered Range, Mwangi Expanse
LB1: Tower of the Last Baron	32	5th	Aspodell Mountains, Andoran
LB2: Treasure of Chimera Cove	32	7th	Chimera Cove, Andoran
TC1: Into the Haunted Forest	16	1st	Arthfell Forest, Andoran
U1: Gallery of Evil	32	8th	Absalom
U2: Hangman's Noose	32	1st	Absalom
W1: Conquest of Bloodsworn Vale	32	6th	Bloodsworn Vale, Nirmathas
W2: River into Darkness	32	4th	Vanji River, Mwangi Expanse
W3: Flight of the Red Raven	32	4th	Fog Peaks, Galt
Guides			
Guide to Absalom	64	—	Absalom
Guide to Darkmoon Vale	64	—	Darkmoon Vale, Andoran
Guide to Korvosa	64	—	Korvosa, Varisia


Adventure Locations
N
D3
PF6
PF11
PF13
PF4
PF3
PF10
D2
PF1, PF2,
PF4, PF5
PF2
PF7-9, PF12
Guide to Korvosa
W1
W3
D1, D1.5,
E1, D0
LB1
TC1
LB2
Guide to
Darkmoon Vale
U1, U2,
Guide to
Absalom
J1
W2
J3

Appendix B

This guide provides the proper pronunciation (shown phonetically) of many of Golarion's most challenging names, locations, and other words.

Word	Pronunciation
Abadar	AH bah dar
Abadius	ah BAY dee us
Abaddon	AH bah don
Abendego	ah BEN deh go
Abraxus	a BRAHK zuhs
Absalom	AB sah lahm
Abyss	uh BIS
Achaekek	uh CHAY kek
aeromantic	AIR oh man tik
agathion	a GATH ee on
Akiton	AK eh ton
Alaznist	a LAZ nist
Alevrah	ah LEV rah
Aldinach	ALL di nach
Aldori	AL door ee
Alkenstar	AL ken star
Almas	AHL mehs
Amiri	ah MEE ree
Andirifkhu	an de RIF ku
Andoletta	an do LET ah
Andoran	ann DOHR ann
Angazhan	ANG uh zan
Apollyon	uh POL yuhn
Arabasti	air ah BAS tee
Areshkagal	uh RESH ka gal
Aroden	AIR oh den
Arodus	AIR oh duhs
Arshea	AHR shey
Asmodeus	azz MOH dee us
astradaemons	AH strah day mon
asura	a SUR ah
Avernus	ah VUR nuhs
Avistan	AV ihs tan
avoral	ah VOR al
axiomite	AK see oh myt
Axis	AK sihs
azata	ah ZAH tah
Azlant	AZZ lant
Azlanti	AZZ lant ee
Azrinae	AZZ reh nay
Baalzebul	BALL zee bull
Baba Yaga	BAH ba YAH guh
Bakrakhan	BAK ra khan
Baphomet	BAPH oh meh
Barbatos	BAR ba tus
Belial	bee LIE uhl
Belimarius	bell uh MARE eh us
Belkzen	BEHLK zen
Besmara	bes MAR uh
bich'hwa	BEECH hwah
boggard	BAH gurd
Boneyard	BONE yard
bralani	brah LAW nee
Brevoy	BREV oy
Caina	CANE uh
Calistria	kah LISS tree ah
Calistril	KAHL izz trihl
Castrovel	KAHS tro vehl
Cayden Cailean	KAY den KAY lee en
Celwynvian	sehl WIN vee enn
Charon	KAIR unn
Chelaxian	che LAX ee en
Cheliax	CHEL ee ax
Chelish	CHEL ish
Chesed	CHES ed
Cocytus	koh KY tus
Corentyn	KOHR ehn tin
Cyrusian	si ROO see un
Cyth-V'sug	SITH vih SUG
daemon	DAY mon
Dagon	DAY gon
Deskari	des KAR ee
Desna	DEZ nuh
Desnus	DEZ nuhs
Dis	DIHS
Dispater	DIHS pay tuhr
djinn	JIHN
Droskar	DROH skar
drow	DROW
Druma	DROO muh
Eando	ee AN doh
Edasseril	eh DASS ur ill
efreet	eh FREET
efreeti	eh FREET ee
Egede	eh GEHD eh
Egorian	eh GOR ee an
Elidir	EL eh deer
Elysium	ee LIZ ee uhm
Erastil	eh RAS til
Erastus	eh RAS tuhs
Eurythnia	yoo RITH nee ah
Ezren	EZZ ren
falcatta	fahl KAHT uh
Flauros	FLOR us
formian	FOHR mee an
Galt	GALT
Garund	gah ROOND
Garundi	gah ROON dee
Gastash	GAS tash
Geb	GEB
Geryon	JER ee ehn
ghaele	GAYL
Ghlaunder	GHLAWN dur
Ghol-Gan	GOHL gahn
Gogunta	go GUN tuh
Gorum	GOR um
Gozran	GOHZ ran
Gozreh	GOHZ ray
Groetus	GRO tus
Haagenti	hah GEN tie
Harsk	HARSK
Haruka	hah ROO kah
Heaven	HEV uhn
Hell	HEHL
Hermea	her MEE uh
Iadara	eye uh DAR ah
Ileosa	ihl ee OH sah
Ilizmagorti	Ihl izz mah GOR tee
imentesh	IH mehn tehsh
incarna	in KAHR nah
infadibulum	ihn fah DIHB uh luhm
Iomedae	ahy OH meh day
Ipeq	ahy PECK
Irori	ih ROHR ee
Irrisen	IHR ih sehn
Isger	IZ guhr
Ishiar	IH shee ahr
Iz	IZ
Jalmeray	JAHL meh ray
Jandelay	JAN deh lay
Jezelda	jeh ZEL dah
Jistka	JIHST kuh
Jol	JOL
Jubilex	JOOB eh lex
jukamis	joo KAH mihs
Kabriri	ka BREE ree
Kaer Maga	kare MAH gah
Kalistocracy	kal ihs TOK rah see

Word	Pronunciation
Karcau	KAHR cow
Karzoug	kahr ZOOG
Katapesh	KAT a pesh
katar	KAH tahr
Kazavon	KAH zah von
keketar	KEH keh tahr
Keleshite	KEHL esh eyt
Kellid	KEHL id
Kerse	KERS
khopesh	KOH pehsh
klar	KLAHR
Korada	KOH rah dah
Korvosa	kohr VOH sah
Kostchtchie	KOSH chuh chai
Krune	KROON
Kurgess	KUR gess
Kuthona	koo THOH nah
Kyonin	ky OH nihn
Kyra	KY rah
Lamashan	lah MAHSH ahn
Lamashtu	lah MAHSH too
Lem	LEHM
leonal	LEE oh nahl
leukodaemon	LOO koh day mon
lillend	LIHL ehnd
Limbo	LIHM boh
Lini	LEE nee
Lirgen	LIHR gehn
Lissala	lis SALL uh
Macridi	ma KRID ee
Maelstrom	MEYL struhm
Magnimar	MAG nih mahr
Malebolge	MAL eh bulge
Mammon	mam MONN
marid	mah RIDD
Mazmezz	MAZ mez
Mechitar	meh KEE tar
Mediogalti	med ee oh GALL tee
meladaemons	MEHL ah day mon
Mendev	MEN dev
Mephistopheles	mef uh STOF uh leez
Merisiel	meh RIHS ee el
Mestama	me STA mah
Mierani	meer AWN ee
Milani	meh LAW nee
Minderhal	MIN dehr hawl
Mivon	mih VON
Moloch	MOH lok
Molthune	mole THOON
Mwangi	MWAN gi
Nar-Voth	nar VOTH
naunet	now NEHT
Nessus	NEHS uhs
Neth	NEHTH
Nethys	NETH uhs
Nex	NEKS
Nidal	NYE dohl
Nirmathas	NEAR math ehs
Nirvana	nir VAH nuh
Nocticula	nok TICK you lah
Norgorber	NOR gore ber
Numeria	new MARE ee uh
Oenopion	oh NOH pee ohn
Oinodaemon	OIN oh day mon
Oliphaunt	ALL eh faunt
Oppara	op PAH rah
Orcus	OHR kuhs
Oregent	OHR eh gehnt
Orv	ORV
Osiriani	oh seer ee AH nee
Osirion	oh SEER ee on
pata	PAH ta
paueliel	PAW ehl ee ehl
Pazuzu	pah ZOO zoo
Pharasma	fah RAZ mah
Pharast	fah RAHST
Phlegethon	FLEG uh thon
Pitax	pih TAHKS
Plaguemere	PLEYG meer
protean	PROH tee uhn
purrodaemon	PUHR oh day mon
Qadira	kah DEER ah
Ragathiel	rah GATH ee el
Rahadoum	rah ha DOOM
Razmiran	RAZZ meer ann
Rova	ROH va
Rovagug	ROH vah gug
sahuagin	sah HOO ah gihn
Sajan	SAW jonn
Sarenith	sa REHN ihth
Sarenrae	SAER en ray
Sargava	sahr GAH vah
Sarkoris	sah KOHR ihs
sceaduinar	SKAY doo nahr
Seelah	SEE lah
Sekamina	seh kah MY nah
Seltyiel	SELT yeel
Seoni	see OH nee
Shaitan	shy TAWN
Shalast	sha LAST
Shalelu	sha LEE luu
Shax	SHAX
Shelyn	SHEHL ihn
Shoanti	show AHN tee
Shory	shoh REE
Sifkesh	SIF kesh
Sinashakti	sin ah SHOK tee
Sivhana	siv AHN ah
slurk	SLUHRK
Socothbenoth	so KOTH beh noth
Sorshen	SOHR shehn
Stygia	STIJ ee uh
Styx	STIKS
Szuriel	ZUR ee el
Taldan	TAL dan
Taldor	TAL door
Tar Taargadth	TAHR TAHR gahdth
tatzlwyrm	TATZ el werm
Tekritanin	tek rih TAN in
teratoma	ter uh TOH muh
thanodaemon	THAN oh day mon
Thassilon	THAHS ih lon
thaumaturgy	THAW muh tuhr jee
thileu	THIHL ee oo
Thuvia	THOO vee uh
Tian	TEE yawn
Tian Xia	TEE yawn shaw
Torag	TORR awg
Trelmarixian	trel mar IX ee an
Ulfen	OOL fen
Urgathoa	oor gah THO ah
urumi	er OO mee
Urxehl	URK zhell
Ustalav	OO stah lahv
Valani	wah LAH nee
Valeros	VAHL err ohs
Varisia	vah RHIS ee ah
Varisian	vah RHIS ee ann
Vialesk	VEE ah lehsk
Vudra	VOO drah
Vudrani	voo DRAW nee
vulpinal	VUHL pihn ahl
Xanderghul	ZAHN dur gool
Xer	ZER
Xoveron	ZOV er ahn
Yamasa	yah MAH sah
Ydersius	yeh DER see us
Yled	EH lehd
Yondabakari	yawn dah ba KAR ee
Zevgavizeb	zev GAV ah zeb
zhen worm	ZHEN wurm
Zirnakaynin	zeer nuh KAY nen
Zon-Kuthon	ZONN koo THON
Zura	ZOO rah
Zutha	ZOO tha
Zyphus	ZIE fess

Appendix C

Natu Tuata

A native of Minata, a vast island chain dotting the crowded seas southeast of Tian Xia, Natu Tuata wandered far and wide throughout the eastern lands before arriving in the lands of Avistan. As a young man, he was impressed with the monastic discipline of Tian monks and left his home to travel with them. Over time, he mastered the arts of total expression of body, mind, and spirit, whether in physical perfection or the formal arts of diplomacy and calligraphy.

Using Natu Tuata

Natu can serve numerous roles in your campaign. As a monk, he can play the role of master to any new PC monk. As a Pathfinder chronicler, he can step in to serve as a point of contact between your PCs and the Pathfinder Society. With his impressive collection of scrolls (all kept neatly ordered between two polished cherry wood slats), he could even play the role of traveling merchant.

Natu Tuata

Male human monk 4/wizard 1/pathfinder chronicler 2
LN Medium humanoid
Init +5; Senses Listen +7, Spot +7

Defense

AC 21, touch 18, flat-footed 16
(+2 armor, +1 deflection, +5 Dex, +1 natural, +2 Wis)
hp 51 (4d8+8+1d4+2+2d8+4)
Fort +9, **Ref** +13, **Will** +13 (+15 vs. enchantments)

Offense

Spd 40 ft.
Melee unarmed strike +9 (2d6+3) or unarmed strike +7/+7 (2d6+3)
Ranged masterwork sling +10 (1d4+3)
Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.
Spells Prepared (CL 1st)
1st—*enlarge person*, *feather fall*
0—*light*, *mage hand*, *message*
Special Attacks *ki* strike

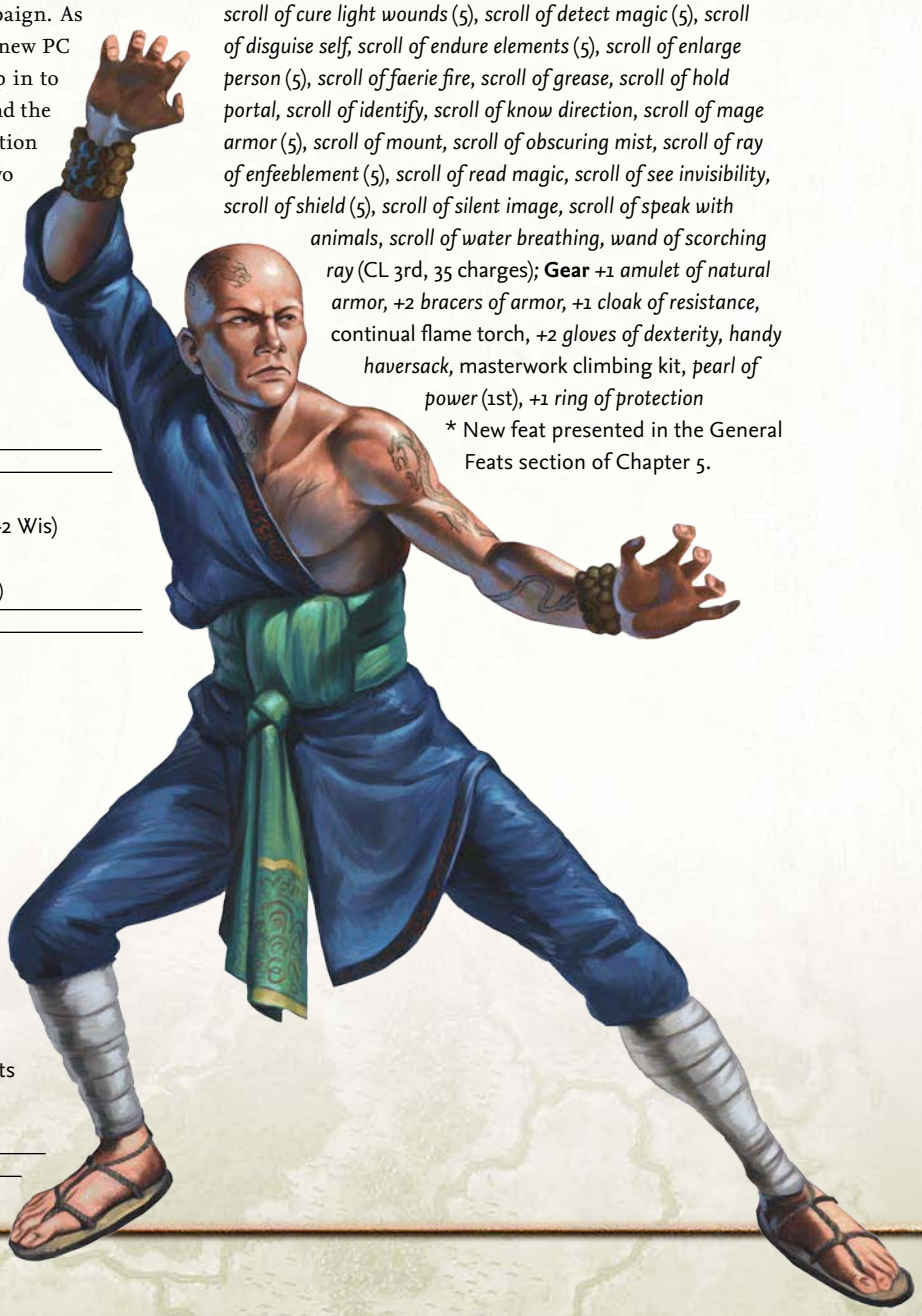
Tactics

Before Combat Natu allows others to be taken in by his unassuming appearance.
During Combat At his first opportunity, he casts *enlarge person* on himself. Natu attempts to crush humanoid enemies in a devastating grapple.

Statistics

Str 16, **Dex** 20, **Con** 14, **Int** 14, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 10
Base Atk +4; **Grp** +11 (+16 with enlarge person)
Feats Deflect Arrows, Improved Grapple, Improved Natural Attack (unarmed strike), One Finger*, Scribe Scroll, Stunning Fist, Weapon Finesse
Skills Balance +10, Climb +10, Jump +14, Listen +7, Knowledge (arcana) +3, Knowledge (geography) +3, Perform (oratory) +8, Profession (guide) +6, Profession (scribe) +12, Sleight of Hand +6 (+10 to hide small objects), Spot +7, Survival +5, Swim +5, Tumble +16, Use Magic Device +11 (+15 with scrolls)
Languages Common, Gnome, Kelish, Tien, Vudrani
SQ bardic knowledge +4, deep pockets 133 lb., evasion, familiar (rat named Chimmedorj), live to tell the tale, master scribe, pathfinding, slow fall 20 ft., still mind
Combat Gear *scroll of alter self*, *scroll of charm person*, *scroll of comprehend languages*, *scroll of create food and water*, *scroll of cure light wounds* (5), *scroll of detect magic* (5), *scroll of disguise self*, *scroll of endure elements* (5), *scroll of enlarge person* (5), *scroll of faerie fire*, *scroll of grease*, *scroll of hold portal*, *scroll of identify*, *scroll of know direction*, *scroll of mage armor* (5), *scroll of mount*, *scroll of obscuring mist*, *scroll of ray of enfeeblement* (5), *scroll of read magic*, *scroll of see invisibility*, *scroll of shield* (5), *scroll of silent image*, *scroll of speak with animals*, *scroll of water breathing*, *wand of scorching ray* (CL 3rd, 35 charges); **Gear** *+1 amulet of natural armor*, *+2 bracers of armor*, *+1 cloak of resistance*, continual flame torch, *+2 gloves of dexterity*, *handy haversack*, masterwork climbing kit, *pearl of power* (1st), *+1 ring of protection*

* New feat presented in the General Feats section of Chapter 5.



Stricia Zuzulova

Publicly, Stricia is a brave crusader against the hordes of the Worldwound. If a bit unorthodox in her skirmishing and hit-and-run tactics, she proved her mettle on the field after serving as an acclaimed ghost hunter and vampire slayer in her native Ustalav.

Unbeknownst to all, Stricia is actually a half-orc. A rare birth "defect" left her almost indistinguishable from a human but raised along Belkzen's frontier with Ustalav. She found her true calling in a chance encounter with a mysterious mercenary captain named Avinash, who encouraged her to become a crusader and secretly serve in his mercenary band, the Catspaw Marauders.

Using Stricia

Stricia's wide range of skills make her a very versatile villain to use against your group; she can be a bounty hunter, a commander in an enemy army, or even an assassin working for a thieves' guild. That said, there's nothing in her class makup that requires evil—by changing her alignment, you can suddenly have a unique ally to send with your PCs as they head in to their latest adventure.

Stricia Zuzulova
Female half-orc fighter 2/ranger 2/rogue 2/low templar 5
CE medium humanoid
Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., Listen +7, Spot +7

DEFENSE

AC 23, touch 15, flat-footed 18
hp 97 (7d10+2d8+2d6+33)
Fort +14, **Ref** +13, **Will** +5

OFFENSE

Spd 30 ft.
Melee improvised weapon +11/+6 (1d6+1) or
lance (+12/+7, 1d8+1)
Ranged light crossbow +16/+11 (1d8+1+1d6 electricity/17-20/x2) or
light crossbow +14/+14/+9 (1d8+1+1d6 electricity/17-20/x2)
Special Attacks dirty fighting, sneak attack +2d6
Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

STATISTICS

Str 12, **Dex** 21, **Con** 16, **Int** 12, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 12
Base Atk +10; **Grp** +13
Feats Improved Critical (light crossbow), Mounted Combat, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Reload, Rapid Shot, Track, Veiled Vileness*
Skills Appraise +5, Bluff +9, Diplomacy +19 (+21 with evil creatures), Disguise +19 (+2 when acting in character), Forgery +15, Gather Information +12, Intimidate +12, Knowledge (local) +6, Knowledge (nobility & royalty) +6, Listen +7, Ride +9, Sense Motive +7, Sleight of Hand +12 (+16 to hide objects on person), Spot +7, Survival +5, Tumble +10
Languages Common, Orc
SQ evasion, favored enemy (humanoid [human]) +4, flag of convenience, path of darkness, trapfinding, wild empathy, wolf in sheep's clothing
Combat Gear *potions of cure moderate wounds* (4), *potions of shield of faith* +3 (2), *potion of heroism*; **Other Gear** +1 *buckler*, +1 *cloak of protection*, *hat of disguise*, *pendant of persuasion (as circlet, but worn as necklace)*, *stone of alarm*, *handy haversack*, +2 *gloves of dexterity*, masterwork forgery kit, masterwork lance, +1 *shocking burst light crossbow* with 40 bolts, 10 cold iron bolts, 10 alchemical silver bolts, 10 adamantine bolts, 20 *assorted +1 bane bolts appropriate for expected foes*, 10 +1 *ghost touch bolts*,+3 *studded leather*

* New feat presented in the General Feats section of Chapter 5.



Stronfeur Uherer

Stronfeur Uherek is a dwarven soldier of the Five Kings Mountains, a born warrior and a proud warden of dwarven tradition. He is a stickler for appearance and the dignity of his post and always takes care to ensure his equipment and uniform are kept in top condition (to best present the honor of his rank and service), but he is relaxed and easygoing when out of uniform. The soldiers of the Five Kings are not "wed to the axe" as are the warriors of many Sky Citadels, and in fact they are encouraged to start families. Home life is encouraged by rotation of soldiers between active and reserve duty, allowing Stronfeur to enjoy time with his wife and two daughters (a rarity in dwarven births, where males usually outnumber females by a wide margin) when not deployed to the frontier.

Five Kings soldiers such as Stronfeur embody a peculiarly dwarven tactical concept of heavily armored skirmishers, prepared to close and crush foes with a heavy pounding of their reinforced shields and dwarven maulaxes, or to hurl weapons at enemies standing off at a distance or those attempting to flee.

Using Stronfeur

Stronfeur is in may ways the "classic dwarf." Armed with a warhammer and armored to the ears, he can serve as a cohort or other close ally to any PC who seeks a loyal and devoted companion. Alternatively, you can use his stats to represent a small army of dwarven fighters, perhaps a group sent with the PCs to challenge a nearby tribe of orcs.

Although Stronfeur as presented here as lawful good, he certainly doesn't have to stay that way. You can adjust his alignment with ease to create any sort of dwarven fighter you need. Combine this with the option above of using his stats to represent a small army, and you've got a whole platoon of violent dwarven enemies to face your PCs. If you need a commander for this army, look no further than Stricia Zuzulova on the previous page. Simply change Stronfeur's alignment to match hers and you have the seeds for an adventure against a bitter crusader who, after being discharged from the army, sought out and hired a legion of dwarven thugs to aid her in taking revenge.

Stronfeur Uherek
Male dwarf fighter 4
LG medium humanoid
Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., Listen +0, Spot +0

DEFENSE
AC 19, touch 12, flat-footed 17 (+7 armor, +2 Dex)
hp 42 (4d10+16)
Fort +10, **Ref** +3, **Will** +3 (+2 against poison, +2 against spells and spell-like abilities)

OFFENSE
Spd 20 ft.
Melee +1 *warhammer* +9 (1d8+6)
Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

STATISTICS
Str 16, **Dex** 15, **Con** 18, **Int** 10, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 10
Base Atk +4; **Grp** +7
Feats Great Fortitude, Iron Will, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (warhammer), Weapon Specialization (warhammer)
Skills Craft (armorer) +5, Craft (weaponsmithing) +5, Intimidate +5, Ride +5
Languages Common, Dwarven
SQ stability, stonecunning
Gear +1 *heavy steel shield*, +1 *warhammer*, field plate*
* New item presented in the Equipment section of Chapter 5.



Tjaden Ludendorff

Tjaden Ludendorff is a rarity—a paladin in the frozen Lands of the Linnorm Kings. A grizzled veteran of many winters and many wars against the giant clans and other menaces that bedevil his land, his legendary battleaxe and still-mighty thews always stand at the forefront of the fight.

Using Tjaden

Tjaden works best as a "fish out of water." He can be an honorable warrior in self-exile from a barbaric northern land who might contact the PCs to hire them to return with him to handle a cruel and destructive chieftain. Alternatively, he can be an unusual paladin whom a more "civilized" order of knights who might want to try to recruit the PCs' help.

Tjaden Ludendorff
Male human paladin 8/ranger 1
LG medium humanoid
Init +3; **Senses** Listen +8, Spot +8
Aura courage (immune to fear, allies +4 morale bonus vs. fear)

DEFENSE
AC 21, touch 9, flat-footed 21
hp 72 (8d10+8 and 1d8+1)
Fort +15, **Ref** +9, **Will** +12

OFFENSE
Spd 20 ft. (4 squares)
Melee *battleaxe of thunderbolts* +21/+16 (4d6+14/x3) or armor spikes +14 (1d6+5)
Ranged *battleaxe of thunderbolts* +14 (4d6+11/x3)
Special Attacks smite evil 2/day (+5 atk, +8 damage), turn undead 8/day (1d20+7, 2d6+10)
Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 8th)
At will—*detect good*
1/week—*remove disease*
Spells Prepared (CL 4th)
1st—*bless weapon, endure elements*
2nd—*remove paralysis*

STATISTICS
Str 20 (22 when using *battleaxe of thunderbolts*), **Dex** 8, **Con** 13, **Int** 19, **Wis** 18, **Cha** 20
Base Atk +9; **Grp** +14
Feats Combat Expertise, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Spirit Strike*, Track[B], Weapon Focus (battleaxe)
Skills Craft (armorer) +5, Diplomacy +16, Handle Animal +10, Heal +6, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +5, Knowledge (geography) +5, Knowledge (nature) +7, Knowledge (nobility and royalty) +5, Knowledge (religion) +9, Listen +8, Profession (fisher) +5, Profession (miner) +5, Profession (sailor) +10, Profession (siege engineer) +10, Profession (soldier) +16, Ride +13, Sense Motive +10, Spot +8, Survival +9
Gear silver dagger, *+1 animated heavy steel shield*, *+4 belt of strength*, *+1 cloak of resistance*, cold iron dagger, *+1 full plate with masterwork armor spikes*, *+2 gauntlets of ogre power*, *hammer of thunderbolts* (as *hammer of thunderbolts*), *ring of feather falling*, Svadilfare (male griffon mount)
SQ aura of courage, detect evil, divine grace, divine health, favored enemy (giants) +2, lay on hands (40 hp), wild empathy
* New feat presented in the General Feats section of Chapter 5.



Appendix D

The following charts provide random encounters for various environs. Many of these creatures come from volumes of *Pathfinder* or Pathfinder Modules, as indicated after a creature's name. If you do not have the indicated source, use the creature from the next line down or roll again.

When a dragon is indicated, roll 1d4+1 to determine its age category (wyrmlings rarely present a challenge and dragons older than young adult should not be encountered randomly). When a skeleton is indicated, roll 1d10–2 to determine its CR (on a roll of 1 or 2, it is a human skeleton).

Civilized Lands[1]

d%	Encounter	Avg EL
01	Peasant with broken cart	—
02–05	2d4 pilgrims	—
06–15	Merchant caravan	—
16–55	Roaming livestock	—
56–65	1d4 goblins	1
66–68	1 bat swarm	2
69–75	2d4 raiders (brb 1)	5
76–84	1d4 thugs (war 3)	5
85	1 revenant (PF 2)	6
86–95	3d4 guards (ftr 2)	7
96–00	2d4 elite guards (ftr 4)[2]	9

1 Within 10 miles of small city, 20 miles of large city, 50 miles of metropolis; 10% chance of encounter 3/day.

2 Eagle Knights, Hellknights, or similar groups.

Cold Hills/Mountains[1]

d%	Encounter	Avg EL
01–02	Powerful storm (DMG 94)	—
03–10	1 snowdrifter (W3)	4
11–20	1 ettin	6
21–30	1 redcap (PF 4)	6
31–34	1 remorhaz	7
35–44	1d3+2 frosty chiselers (E1)	8
45–54	1 cold rider (E1)	8
55–66	1d3 ogre magi	8
67–70	1 argorth (PF 3)	11
71–80	1d6 frost giants	12
81–84	1 frost worm	12
85–88	1 frost giant jarl	17
89–92	1 wendigo (PF 6)	17
93–96	1d3 dark ice fey (E1)	Varies
97–00	1 white dragon (roll for age)	Varies

1 All hills and mountains north of Menador, Five Kings, and Fog Peaks mountains; 10% chance of encounter 1/day.

Cold/Temperate Forests[1]

d%	Encounter	Avg EL
01–06	1d2 wolverines	2
07–18	3d6 kobolds	3
19–20	1 wooden protector (TC1)	3
21–24	1d2+1 satyrs	4
25–30	1d4 tatzlwyrms (Do)	4
31–36	2d4 goblin dogs (PF 1)	5
37–38	1 werebear (lycanthrope)	5
39–42	1 winter wolf	5
43–50	2d4+1 elves (rgr 1)	6
51–58	1 dire bear	7
59–66	1d3 assassin vines	5
67–68	1 cold rider (E1)	8
69–74	1d3+2 frosty chiselers (E1)	8
75–76	1 Gargantuan monstrous spider	8
77–88	3d6 wolves	8
89–92	1d2 tiaga giants	10
93–98	1d3 dark ice fey (E1)	Varies
99–00	1 green dragon (roll for age)	Varies

1 All forests from Backar Forest, Boarwood, Kyonin, and Uskwood north; 10% chance of encounter 3/day.

Ruins[1]

d%	Encounter	Avg EL
01–18	1d3+1 svirfneblin gnomes	3
19–22	1 attic whisperer (PF 1)	4
23–26	1d2 minotaurs	4
27–34	1d3 wights	4
35–38	1 chariot beetle (D1.5)	5
37–42	1 forge spurned (D1)	5
43–54	2d4 ghouls	5
55–60	1d4 ghasts (plus 1d6 ghouls)	6
61–80	2d4 harpies	9
81–84	1d2 harpy archers	11
85–88	1 ghost	Varies
89–00	Roll for surrounding environment.	

1 All ruins; 20% chance of encounter 1/hour.

Temperate/Warm Hills/Mountains[1]

d%	Encounter	Avg EL
01–08	1d2 lyrakiens (PF 2)	2
09–20	1d6 giant geckos (PF 1)	3
21–32	1 mosquito swarm (W2)	3
33–44	1 redcap (PF 4)	6
45–54	1d2 chimeras	7
55–66	1d4 wyverns	8
67–74	1d3 rocs	11
75–86	1d4+3 stone giant	13
87–88	1 red dragon (roll for age)	Varies
89–00	1d4 skeleton (roll for CR)	Varies

1 All hills and mountains south of Menador, Five Kings, and Fog Peaks mountains; 10% chance of encounter 1/day.

Temperate Marsh/Swamp[1]

d%	Encounter	Avg EL
01–04	Quicksand (DMG 88)	—
05–10	2d6 goblins	2
11–16	1d6 giant geckos (PF 1)	3
17–18	1d4 assassin vines	4
19–20	1 devilfish (PF 7)	4
21–24	1d12 giant flies (PF 8)	4
25–30	1d4 boars	4
31–32	2d6 goblin dogs (PF 1)	5
33–36	1d4 mosquito swarms (W2)	5
37–42	1 giant constrictor snake	5
43–46	2d12 stirges	5
47–48	1 shambling mound	6
49–58	1d12 crocodiles	7
59–60	1d4 scrags	7
61–72	2d6+1 boggards (PF 2)	8
73–74	1d4 tendriculoses	8
75–78	1d6 trolls	8
79–80	1d4 will-o'-wisps	8
81–86	1d12 crocodiles	9
87–90	1d12 harpies	9
91–92	1 mogobo (PF 12)	10
93–96	1d6 marsh giants (PF 5)	11
97–98	1d4 ten-headed hydras	13
99–00	1 black dragon (roll for age)	Varies

1 Mushfens, Sodden Lands; 20% chance of encounter 3/day.

Temperate Plains[1]

d%	Encounter	Avg EL
01–12	Merchant caravan	—
13–20	Roaming livestock	—
21–28	1d6 giant bees	2
29–36	1d3 horses, heavy	2
37–44	1d4 horses, light	2
45–48	1 worg	2
49–50	1d2 cockatrices	3
51–64	3d4 goblins	3
65–66	1d4 blink dogs	4
67–74	2d4 giant ants, worker	5
75–80	1d4+1 giant ants, soldier	5
81–86	2d4 bison	7
87–98	3d4 bandits (war 3)	8
99–00	1 gorgon	8

1 Plains not within Civilized Lands (see above); 20% chance of encounter 2/day.

Urban[1]

d%	Encounter	Avg EL
01–06	Important person (noble or royal)	—
07–16	Important person (bureaucrat)	—
17–36	Peasants blocking path	—
37–56	Pushy vendor	—
57–58	1 dream spider (PF 7)	1/2
59–60	Pickpocket (rog 1)	1
61–62	Bar brawl spreads to street (2d6 com 1)	4
63–70	1d3 thugs (war 3)	4
71–82	2d4 city guards (ftr 2)	6
83–90	1d3 elite guards (ftr 4)	6
91–92	1 redcap (PF 4)	6
93–96	1 attic whisperer (PF 1)	4
97–98	1d3 veteran mercenaries (ftr 6)	7
99–00	1 totenmaske (PF 3)	7

1 Cities of at least 5,000 residents; 10% chance of encounter 1/hour.

Warm Desert[1]

d%	Encounter	Avg EL
01–02	Powerful storm (DMG 94)	—
03–22	Merchant caravan	—
23–30	2d4 Small monstrous scorpions	3
31–34	1 basilisk	5
35–46	2d4 camels	5
45–46	1d3 janni (genie)	6
47–56	1d2 bulettes	7
57–68	2d6 hyenas	7
69–70	1 efreeti (genie)	8
71–74	1 gynosphinx	8
75–78	1 androsphinx	9
79–88	Gargantuan monstrous scorpion	12
89–92	1 brass dragon (roll for age)	Varies
93–94	1 blue dragon (roll for age)	Varies
95–00	1 Osirion mummy (J1)[2]	Varies

1 Katapesh, Osirion, Qadira, Rahadoum, Thuvia; 10% chance of encounter 1/day.

2 Osirion only.

Warm Forests[1]

d%	Encounter	Avg EL
01–04	1 dream spider (PF 7)	1/2
05–16	1 spider swarm	1
17–20	1 ettercap	3
25–30	1d6 giant geckos (PF 1)	3
31–40	1 mosquito swarm (W2)	3
41–44	1d3 tatzlwyrms (D0)	3
45–48	1 wooden protector (TC1)	3
49–58	1 giant constrictor snake	5
59–70	2d4 hobgoblins	5
71–74	1 girallon	5
75–88	1d8+1 hunters (rgr 1) + 1 leader (rgr 3)	6
89–94	1 dire tiger	8
95–98	1d4+1 flying apes (J3)	8
99–00	1 couatl	10

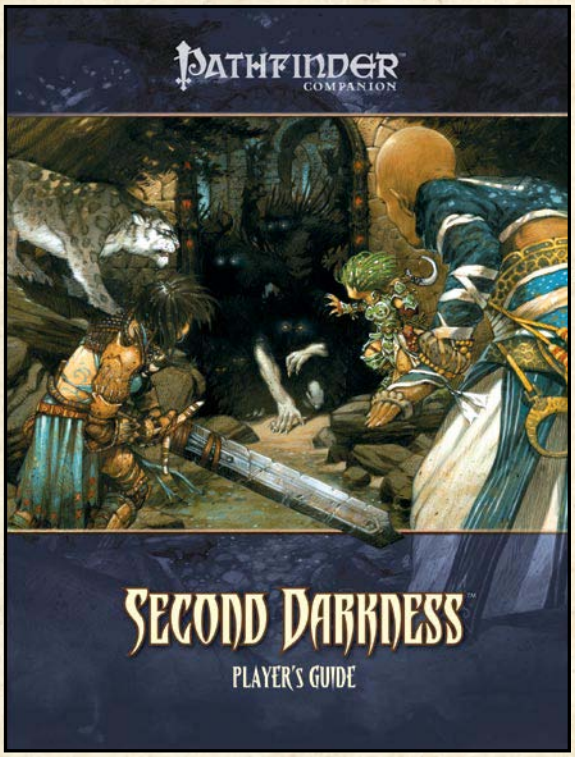
1 Arthfell Forest, Barrowood, Mwangi Expanse, Screaming Jungle, Whisperwood, Verduran Forest; 10% chance of encounter 2/day.

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