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STARCALLED STUDIOS PRESENTS

ZODIAC EMPIRES

A FANTASY CAMPAIGN SETTING

ALBANESE · DIAMOND · HO



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A FANTASY CAMPAIGN SETTING

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You brought our dreams to life and gave a depth to our world we would have never found on our own.

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Our history stretches back centuries.
 Hundreds of years crafting the art of war.
 Vying for superiority by any means necessary.
 Slavery. Disease. Death. Sorrow. Poison.
 Hatred. Strife. Suffering. Lies
 We shielded ourselves behind righteous ideals.
 Mastering the arts against our enemies. All in the name of Power.
 In the shadow of one night, it all changed.
 The entities whose very nature is derived from those forces wanted
 to give us a first-hand lesson
 The exercise taught us the intricacies of the art we would never
 have learned on our own.
 We are mere infants in respect to the true masters.
 They did not come for treasures, heirlooms or glory.
 They cannot be bribed with flowered words and promises of titles.
 No honor. No mercy. No legacy. No compromise. No surrender.
 They did not come to conquer land.
 They came for blood on wings of death.
 The Shattered Hand stormed our gates with a fury never before
 witnessed in our world.
 Burning our fields. Leveling our cities.
 Enslaving our friends. Severing our ties.
 These enemies did not fear sufferin , did not know sorrow, and
 were untouched by pestilence.
 Their slave masters were the generals of war with blank orders to
 use any means necessary to reign supreme.
 Their legend is death paved on roads of our dead with mortar of
 blood and tears.
 Our civilizations looked into the crater of despair.
 We saw little hope.
 It is said that history is written by the victors.
 We didn't prevail.
 We survived.

WELCOME to the campaign setting of Zodiac Empires. Zodiac Empires is a truly dynamic and interactive fantasy setting created for tabletop role-playing game systems. Designed from the ground up by long-term tabletop veterans Frank Albanese, Brad Diamond, Rachael Diamond, and Joe Ho, our goal was to bring a new and expansive world to players around the globe. We launched our Kickstarter in the summer of 2015 and successfully hit our goal a few weeks later. We could never have done it without our wonderful backers and everyone who helped us along the way.

IN THIS TOME you will find nearly everything a GM needs to build and construct campaigns and plots within the realms of Zodiac Empires. Fourteen nations, five new races, seventeen Deities, Vandiels, Arkhos, Zodiacs, dozens of established Organizations, and years of history are at your fingertips.

AN INTERACTIVE SETTING was the primary goal we wanted to accomplish in order to create a truly functional and reactive world for players and GMs alike to carve their names into. We planned from the beginning to allow the groups who play in the world to alter the course of Vathis' history, from the fates of the current nations to the world's major characters and plots. We plan to allow you to do this in one of two ways, by playing designated adventure paths and telling us your results, and by running your own campaigns and gaining the community's backing to establish your story as canon. We wanted to see the creations of others become integrated into the world at large, from the shop the players visit, to the fortifications they construct

If you'd like to learn more, please head over to ZODIACEMPIRES.COM for information regarding establishing yourself.



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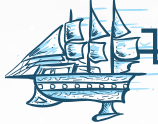
INTRODUCTION



The realm of Vathis is a world in an age of early industrialization where the line between magic and technology is obscure at best, and oftentimes indistinguishable. Adventurers roam lands rich in history and lore dotted with sprawling empires, devious hidden cults, and ruins shrouded in darkness. While revered heroes march headlong into battle, recently reawakened dragons take flight, transforming both land and sky into battlegrounds. Gritty realism and high fantasy come together in Zodiac Empires, a world built on the memory of great wars, political intrigue, and imperialism.

The ruins of the past rise up around us like monuments to a golden age whose name escapes us. The otherworldly forces of the Shattered Hand tore through the strongest civilizations of our day like a farmer through fields of wheat. Cities which stood for centuries were undone in mere months. In the end, we covered behind our parapets while the actions of a brave few finally dissolved their vicious cabal.

THE TEN CHARACTERISTICS OF VATHIS



1. ELDRIA

Weaving its way through all facets of life on Vathis is the radiant blue light crafted by the world's magical crystal resource, Eldria. Eldricsteel frames have raised cities to unimaginable heights, while eldria fluid based Ether Drive Systems grant us the ability to soar above the clouds. The crystals themselves birthed both an entirely new race capable of exploring the world, and countless feral creatures capable of wild destruction. From lamps to airships, eldria casts back the darkness and allows the people of Vathis to chart the unknown.

2. NATIONAL INTRIGUE

Nations vie for superiority in the power vacuum left by the Darkest War. The world's strongest leaders sit back and lick their wounds, searching for weakness in the hearts of their old enemies. The void of power will undoubtedly be filled over time by the dauntless nationalists who rise up to seize the opportunity. Which sovereign nations will become the world's next leading powers?

3. ANCIENT HISTORY

As waves on the shore wash away fresh footprints, so do the winds of time to civilizations long past. Our history has been lost to time and our ancient cities, manuscripts, and items of power remain

hidden from view, waiting to be rediscovered. Evils slumber in prisons of magic, and cults dedicated to entities long thought of as myths lay scattered throughout the world biding their time. Brave souls track down legends and fables to discover the truths behind the rumors. Will the next vault contain mountains of treasure, or depths of darkness unexplored? What lies in the furthest reaches of our past?

4. ZODIACS AND STARCALLED

As the Zodiacs created the multiverse, they wove the threads of fate which all living creatures must follow. The Starcalled—humanoids who bear the marks reminiscent of constellations upon their skin—are not subject to the constraints of destiny. These sigils, gifted by the Zodiacs themselves, grant their bearers the power to choose their own path and the ability to alter the future of Vathis. As these Starcalled dynasties carved out their own piece of history, the Zodiac Empires were born.

5. EVILS OF MEN

Our greatest threats are not found outside of our borders, but on our very streets as insidious shadows find their way into the hearts of men. The line between what is righteous and what is vile remains unclear. The rules of alignment hold no sway over the nature of men and beasts, leaving it possible to find good and evil in all manner of creatures.

6. DARKEST WAR

It's been six years since the Shattered Hand ceased ravaging our lands in search of power and glory. The Vandiels who survived bide their time in the shadows, seeking revenge and the restoration of their full influence. Cults in service of the Shattered Hand meet secretly in nearly every major city in the world, waiting for the day of reckoning. Vavaire has been resurrected from the nation's ashes in the wake of the Darkest War, but some prophecies claim that the Darkest War was merely the beginning.

7. AN UNEXPLORED WORLD

The edges of the map are unadorned and uncolored. In the ages before the Darkest War, explorers and expeditions found no landmasses across the oceans of Vathis. Two years after the end of the war a formidable magical emanation could be seen across the sky, rushing from the center of the continent towards its edges. This emanation, known as the Etherward, dissipated upon the resolution of Aevalyn's Wall, which formerly protected the nation of Vavaire. New birds can now be seen migrating to the shores of Asarus. What lies beyond the furthest reaches of the sky?



8. AIRSHIPS AND MOTES

Long before the creation of the world's first airship, motes of earth endlessly drifted throughout the skies of Asarus. For the most part, these remained largely unexplored, relegated only to colonization by the vasar, who created the world's tallest nation using their local motes. Following the invention of airships, the nations of Asarus rapidly developed a sizable portion of the larger motes into floating cities, outposts, and fortifications, which have allowed the leaders of the world to project their influence upwards for the first time ever. Many of these motes were abandoned or attacked during the Darkest War, leaving behind ruins, equipment, and secrets.

9. RACES

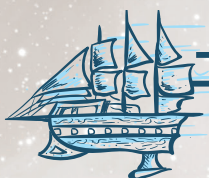
Throughout the continent of Asarus stand five races that are unique to the world of Vathis. The **AMARI**, elegance personified, are a psionic race. While extremely long-lived, they struggle to adapt to rapid changes within their sphere of influence. The **VASAR** are an honorable draconic winged race whose history harks back to the ages when dragons ruled over the land and seas. The **INUZEN** are a race of wolf-like shapechangers who revere the Zodiacs above and beyond all other entities, in this world or the next. The **NOIR** were once the facechanging spies of the Shattered Hand, but they

have since been freed from the controlling powers of their Vandiel overlords. The **ILDERA** are the Ether given life. Composed of eldricsteel and eldria, they do not tire, sleep, or age. The industrialization of the world was built on the backs of their race.

10. HIGH ADVENTURE & MYSTERIES

The world of Vathis is best-suited for noir-style story arcs, where nothing is as it truly seems and the do-gooders are often just as corrupt as those they seek to bring to justice. The seedy underbelly of our nation's cities frequently entangle the denizens of Asarus in daring and heroic adventures leading to all corners of the known world. Layers of mystery shroud the current political landscape of Vathis, and seemingly insignificant events and pieces of information are secretly intertwined behind the scenes, furthering the lofty goals of the elite. Many who seek to make their way in life meet their untimely end as bloodstains in the streets—but rarely, ever so rarely, the luminaries of Vathis manage to leave their mark. What will their legacies be?





PEOPLE OF VATHIS

The races of Vathis are varied and widespread. Scattered across the continent, these civilizations intertwine to create the diverse tapestry of peoples, religions, and races that compose the heart of Asarus. The races denoted here compose the civilized nations of the known world. Religion, national identity, racial identity, and shared culture bring these varied beings together, but their differences also drive them farther apart. The people of Vathis are almost always responsible for the good and ill that befalls the continent, sometimes bringing the world to the brink of the abyss.

There are five races unique to the world of Vathis and the Zodiac Empires campaign setting. The following chapter details these races, and explains their origins and current place in Vathis.

AMARI, a naturally charismatic psionic race, who bond with intelligent trees and boast the ability to change their hair color at will.

ILDERA, sentient constructs with close ties to the Ether itself, who claim no land as their home and wander the world as great adventurers in the pursuit of understanding.

INUZEN, a long-lived, shape-shifting race of lupine Elderlings with strong ancestral ties to the Zodiac Leyline and fey-plane of the Vibrant.

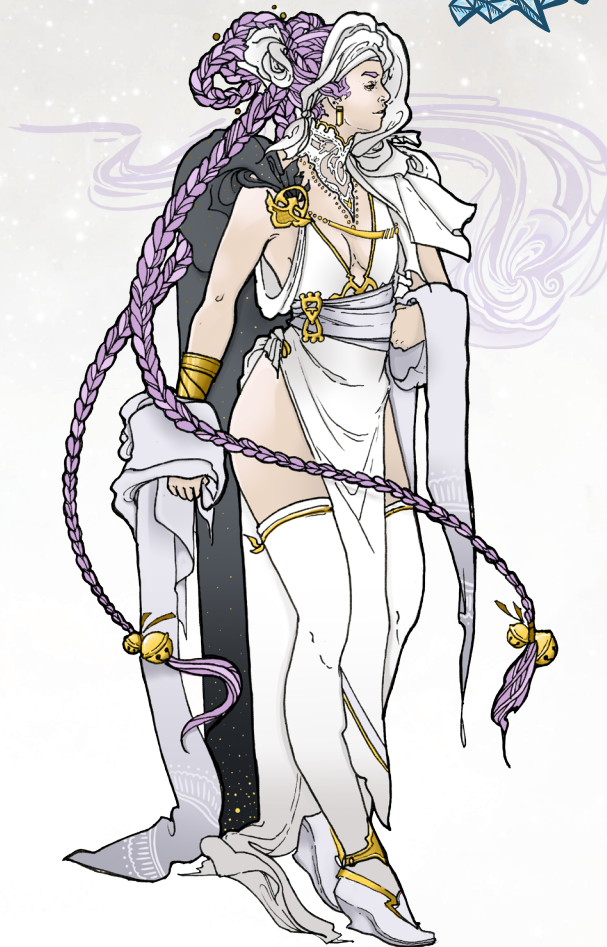
NOIR, natural face-changers with a horrific origin caught in an infinite cycle of rebirth, fighting to find their place in the world and change how they're perceived.

VASAR, a draconic people descended from the dragons of old, living on floating motes with a culture of strength, pride, and tradition.

AMARI

The amari tend to stand out wherever they are. While their skin possesses the same range of complexions as humans, their hair and eye colors can be quite outrageous and take on the shade of any color of the rainbow. Each individual amari mentally controls the color, length, and growth pattern of their hair and facial hair, lending to unique styles and signature appearances. The amari wear clothes that do not interfere with active movement such as combat or dancing, but they prefer their outfits to be colorful and elegant rather than dull and drab. Their height is similar to the height of humans, but their weight tends to run lean.

The amari have lived in the forested nation of Sillirai for as long as anyone can remember. Legend states that they were molded by the dragon goddess, Aleydra, created to be the jewels of her hoard. Though the amari achieved a stable society and founded a nation far earlier than the other races of the world, they were often set back by their own arrogance and fear of change. This was the case during not only the Throne Wars, an infamous three hundred years of civil war and instability, but also during the Second Empire Wars and the Darkest War. The amari tend to find the life of a wanderer appealing, but as a whole they have struggled to



settle holdings on the mainland and expand eastward. In modern times they can be found just about anywhere on Vathis, but most return to Sillirai in their elder years, if not earlier, to be near their bonded laris tree and among their family and friends.

During the early days of the Darkest War the nation of Sillirai was still embroiled in the turmoil of a civil war, but near the end of the war Queen-Empress Evie Jaeress rallied the Sillirian together and calmed the internal chaos, making Sillirai an attractive destination for many. It was not feasible for the masses to seek refuge on the western island, but some influential nobles and wealthy individuals were able to travel there in the later days of the war, bolstering the amari's reputation. Most of the world considers their kind to be an honest, trustworthy sort, if a bit too candid and condescending at times. Though the amari have striven to remain separate from the political squabbles of the mainland, recent history has made it clear to this race that they must be politically involved and speak for their own interests. Driven by the proactive actions of their newfound monarchy, many amari are venturing forth to start businesses, travel the world, and embrace new cultures and ideas for the betterment of their kind.

Relations between amari and the other races of the world are generally positive, though the amari frequently adopt an elitist



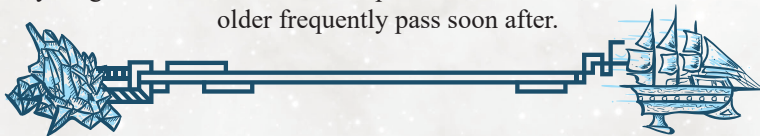
attitude towards others. This ingrained way of thinking often manifests as passive condescension rather than outright malice. The amari are not a hostile or angry race by any means, but their arrogance tends to be a hindrance when making friends with others. This attitude has changed somewhat in recent years as the amari have been forced to face the flaws in their own society, but many still hold on to the old way of thinking. Organizations such as the Vathis Sentinels recruit amari for their natural psionic talent, and many others hire members of this race for their limited-range racial telepathic ability. Those who are unfamiliar with large city life and interacting with the amari are wary of their abilities and fearful of their intuitive nature.

The amari are currently facing a great deal of change, and not all are happy to see their world altered. Eldric technology in particular is a hotly-debated topic among the amari. Members of this long-lived race are charging headfirst into the unknown and are being forced to adapt to the changing times, creating a schism between those who embrace a new way of thinking and those who cling to the methods of the past. The future of the amari is relatively unclear and depends heavily on how they interact with others going forward. Though they currently possess decisive leadership and stand on a unified front, nothing is certain, and in such delicate times none can say where the future will lead.



LARIS BONDING

Eons ago the young, fledgling amari learned how to communicate with the sentient laris trees of Sillirai. At first nothing more than just a tenuous friendship, the psionicists were able to convince the laris trees to grow in convenient shape and direction, and the two species shared life experiences through a unique psionic connection. The amari incorporated the enormous trees in the advancement of their architecture, which allowed their kind to rely less on stone quarry and dangerous physical labor. One psion, whose name is lost to time, unlocked the secret of the bonding process, which brings together the minds of one amari and one laris. A mutual decision, the amari and laris share a sense of one another's thoughts and feelings over nearly any distance, though only in the abstract. Most amari consider their bonded laris a slow-moving constant in the back of their mind similar to that of a living conscience. A people who once possessed a lifespan akin to that of humanity, the whole amari race began to live longer and longer as a result of the bond, eventually reaching the full-fledged longevity they possess in the modern day. Amari tend to die before their laris and are buried beneath their tree in an intimate ceremony. Occasionally a laris perishes first, with dire consequences—while young amari can sometimes adapt to the heartbreak, those who are older frequently pass soon after.



DWARVES

The dwarves of Vathis are among the most ancient races of the world, and they possess a diverse history of wars, discoveries, schisms, and powerful alliances. Their kind have developed a rich culture revolving around tradition, honor, loyalty, and the arts. They are quick to trust, slow to forget, and stoic to a fault. The typical dwarf is pious, resourceful, and highly pragmatic, but will pledge their loyalty to a worthy cause or person before addressing their own concerns. They value the arts of physical combat, poetry, music, architecture, and divine magic.

Dwarves tend to reach heights roughly a foot shorter than the average human, and are a burly, stocky people. Fans of modest dress, one would be hard-pressed to spot a self-respecting dwarf bedecked in lavish attire, for they value quality and practicality above such things. The furthest extent of pride that dwarves hold in their appearance is in the intricate decoration of their weapons, long hair, and beards. Their style and decorations tend to plainly reflect the god they worship (usually Naugrix) or the body of work they are known for.

Mythrayne is universally celebrated as the homeland of the dwarves, as it is the nation with the largest concentration of their kind. Almost every dwarf that one might meet while traversing the world was born in Mythrayne, or descended from parents who were. However, there are other areas where the dwarves are prevalent. Sillirai in particular is considered by many to be the second-most dwarf-populated nation, as the amari and dwarves have long been friends. Isild also contains a sizable dwarven contingent, possibly due to their comfort with the humble Isril lifestyle. The elven seafaring nation of Venoch is another popular residence for dwarvenkind. In the days of the Leyarin Empire the dwarves of Mythrayne and the elves of Venoch were united against a common foe, and good relations between the markedly different races lingered even after the Empire fell. Other nations count less significant numbers of dwarves among their population: Washu, Rancagesh, and Darastrix, for example, are notably near devoid of them.

ELVES

The Elves of Vathis are broken up into three distinct groups: the acer'rin, the ele'rin and the vae'rin. While distinctly different in many ways, these three groups share a few traits that greatly separate them from the other races who call the world of Vathis home. Elves tend to have strong, striking features, and are generally lean in build. All three types of elves possess a strong sense of family and community, with loyalty to where one comes from being of the utmost importance. Finally, all elves are easily spotted by their signature pointed ears, though these tend to vary depending on the type of elf.

The most common type of elf one will find in Vathis are the **ACER'RIN**. They are master sailors, merchants, and traders with a keen eye for quality goods. Unlike the other elven subraces, acer'rin gladly put themselves on the same tier as other races, and they are not considered arrogant. The friendly and sociable acer'rin believe in the importance of religious freedom as well as the personal freedoms of all sentient beings. They are more diplomatic



and socially aware of politics and international events than the other two elven subraces. The acer'rin find themselves at home in the coastal kingdom of Venoeh, where their kind build both airworthy and seaworthy vessels. Acer'rin sailors are the most proficient sailors in the world and they make highly prized captains. Acer'rin can be found from coast to coast, working on ships or as merchants. Their widespread presence has made them the dominant elven race, which causes many to glance twice at other sub-races of elf.

The second sub-race of elves, the **ELE'RIN**, are fey-touched elves from the Vibrant. Their bloodlines mixed with the fey during the Great Collapse, a cataclysmic event that resulted in the Leyarish capital of Synethil being shunted from the Material Plane into the mysterious plane of the Vibrant. This occurrence caused the acer'rin to adapt to their new fey environment and slowly become the race we know as the ele'rin. Ele'rin skin tends to be much fairer than that of the acer'rin. In some cases, ele'rin that were exposed to certain elements of the Vibrant even developed greenish hues to their flesh. The ears of the ele'rin have also changed with time, and they are now significantly longer than the ears of other elvenkind. The ele'rin tend to be adept with all types of magic and more attuned to nature and fey beings than other races, making them exceptional magic users. Their time in the Vibrant brought the ele'rin much closer to the fey race of the inuzen, while simultaneously distancing them from the other races of Vathis. Since returning to the Material Plane, many ele'rin look upon the other races of the Material with unease and hesitance, even their acer'rin brethren.

The third group of elves are called the **VAE'RIN**, or dark elves. Dwelling deep underground in the Evernight, the vae'rin have been a cause of anguish and despair for those on the surface throughout history. Even those who forsake their kind and attempt to live on the surface in peace are treated with prejudice and disdain due to the vae'rin's actions as a whole. As their translated name suggests, the skin of the vae'rin is a dark black. Having diverged from their surface-dwelling kin ages ago, their physical appearance has become harsh and bony when compared to the elves that dwell on the surface. The vae'rin usually work with dark magic, and their kind worship the goddess Serena almost exclusively. Long-standing hostilities exist between the vae'rin and the other elves of Vathis, despite being of the same race.

While it is possible for the elves to procreate with one another interchangeably, it is also possible for elves to produce offspring with a human. The acer'rin think very little of this occurrence and welcome **HALF-ELVES** openly in their society. Ele'rin do not forbid half-elves, but many half-elfe'rin leave home due to social persecution and criticism. Unsurprisingly, the vae'rin absolutely abhor half-elves. Their kind execute half-vae'rin upon birth. The idea of even mating with a non-vae'rin is culturally taboo and highly forbidden in their strict, subterranean culture, and for this reason alone there are only a select few half-vae'rin living in the world. Unlike full elves, half-elves boast the ability to grow facial hair, and they age differently than their full-blooded brethren. They are caught between human and elven culture, and many struggle to find a place where they belong. Half-elves possess a natural gift with linguistics, and they often act as diplomats.

GNOMES

Gnomes in Vathis are an ambiguous race with a mysterious origin. In truth, the gnomes originated on the Vibrant plane and were pulled to the Material Plane long ago. With no way to return home, the gnomes remained, acclimating to multiple foreign cultures and integrating with the locals. Gnomes and inuzen remain in close contact due to the gnomes' affinity for the fey, and they are one of the few races actively aware of the locations of inuzen cities. Gnomes have also integrated themselves into larger civilizations, staking no lands for their own, but joining all others in a warm and friendly fashion.

Their short stature often leads to gnomes being mistaken for halflings. This is a cruel insult to a gnome, as they do tend to stand slightly taller than the average halfling. Gnomes also have larger eyes and noses than most other races. Some scholars believe that the gnomes were at one point halflings that were warped by the Vibrant, much like the ele'rin of Synethil over the course of centuries. There is no way to prove this, however, as the proposed change happened so long ago that gnomes and halflings can no longer procreate with one another.

Among the oldest races in the world, gnomes are known for their affinity for both arcane and natural magic, and they are natural-born engineers and tinkerers. They are often sought by CORE for their exceptional talent with eldric and vaedric technology. Their true sense of culture and identity has ultimately been lost to time, as they integrated in a number of societies and left their traditions at the door. Gnomes take great pride in everything they do and in the manner in which they do it. Due to their hard work ethic and generally free and whimsical personalities, the gnomes were able to easily integrate into many human societies, who value the jovial yet grounded creatures.

While gnomes can claim no homeland for themselves, and are sometimes simply viewed as a race of long-forgotten refugees, this does not mean that they haven't influenced significant changes on the world of Vathis. Many gnomes have led successful lives as the leaders of cities, inventors of important life-changing technologies, and even brave and feared warriors and generals. Their diverse array of skills and abilities helped the gnomes to settle heavily in melting pot nations such as Erygis and Vavaire, and those who seek the truth regarding their origins often dwell in Synethil, where the barrier between the Material Plane and the Vibrant is weak.

HALFLINGS

The halflings of Vathis are a scattered people who lost their homeland to drastic alterations of the landscape, constant incursions of nefarious creatures, and wars between powerful nations. Thrown to the winds, they have made their way in the world by acclimating wherever they can. Adjustment comes easily to halflings, as those of this race are quite social and adaptable. Their kind's greatest difficulty is finding acceptance among other races, who often discredit them due to their size. Despite their short stature, the halflings are arguably one of the more admirable races of Vathis, accomplishing everything that races twice their height can with similar effort. Those who take to heart the discrimination and insults they



receive at the hand of the taller races are often drawn to a life of crime and thievery. Their size and stature allow the halflings to be quite adept at sneaking around and manipulating small tools such as lockpicks.

Halflings seek nothing more than survival and acceptance, and in return they offer hardworking and dedicated albeit small bodies ready to tackle any task set before them. They find strength in numbers, with many of their kind forming small communities in the cities of larger races. The halflings find their most loyal friends in humans, who easily accept the halflings due to their shared values of hard work and dedication. Gnomes and halflings are famous for their age-old quarrels. Halflings view gnomes as just plain bizarre, and consider their oversized eyes and large noses grotesque and undesirable.

The remaining halfling culture is preserved through spoken word and traditions. Song and dance are of the utmost importance to the halflings, with their music and movements especially distinct from the arts of other races. Halflings make exceptional bards for this reason alone. Countless nomadic bands of halflings can be found traveling from nation to nation, living primarily off the land and trading with merchants and travelers on the road. It is within these bands that one might be able to glimpse the true colors of what life was like for the halflings before their homes were so tragically lost.

A sizable percentage of the halfling population resides in Aurezia and Vavaire due to these nations' proximity to the original halfling homeland, known in modern times as the Borderlands. Long ago the halflings founded great cities and an impressive civilization in this fertile and green stretch of land which has since been altered beyond recognition by international warfare. This frightening stretch of bleak landscape is now home to countless savage beasts and creatures. Many halflings dream of rallying together and striking out into the world in the hopes of reclaiming the place they once called home, but a formal initiative has yet to be organized.

HALF-ORCS

For millennia, the people of present-day Rancagesh suffered at the hands of those who oppressed them. Through means both cruel and innocent, a new race was developed as massive amounts of interbreeding took place between humans and orcs. The majority of the half-orcs born of these relations were originally Oseptian slaves from the remains of the old rancar empires. Except for the tribes who managed to escape the stifling grasp of slavery, half-orcs were confined to Osept for multiple centuries, but the founding of Rancagesh brought their kind forth into freedom in far greater numbers. They are average citizens in modern times, if viewed with some disdain, though most countries find them a useful and contributing part of society. As a race they shy away from large cities, but those found thriving in cities are usually wealthy or independent in some way, ranging from merchant to mercenary. They are natural hunters and make successful careers of being outdoorsmen; many half-orcs boast professions as rangers, guides, lumberjacks, and even sailors. They prefer the outdoors and excel in accomplishing physical tasks. Most half-orcs take pride in their lineage, both human and orcish, and consider themselves to bear

the best qualities of both races. They work to improve themselves and their people while combating the negative stereotypes surrounding their kin. The half-orcs of Vathis walk a fine line between being discriminated against for their history and being accepted in the world for their innumerable values.

Half-orcs are a physically imposing race. Their heights range from the average human standard to over seven feet tall, and they boast a naturally muscular build. Their skin exhibits tones of green to a greyish color. Like the orcs they descend from, the half-orcs possess a small tinge of Arkhosian essence flowing through their blood, resulting in the race being more in touch with the natural world and lending to their ferocity when necessary. This lineage also graced their kind with a slightly animalistic visage, appearing in the form of pointed ears, thick brows, and large canine teeth that protrude from their mouths. Half-orcs from coast to coast can be found with sharpened teeth and nails, while others are commonly adorned in tattoos, decorative scars, and ornamental piercings.

Not every nation accepts half-orcs with open arms; Osept and Aurezia are unfriendly towards members of this race, and the Mythrene and Washun people are quite wary of their kind. They can be found living among other Rancan citizens, having taken to leadership and diplomacy naturally, something the nation of Rancagesh desperately needs. Erygis openly accepts half-orcs and treats them well, as do the nations of Cypress, Isild, and Vnoch. They can be found in other nations as well, but in smaller numbers. There are large groups of half-orcs inspired by their orchish heritage who attempt to live outside of the borders of modern society. With their impressive history, lineage, and natural affinities half-orcs are most commonly found as practitioners of brute martial combat, or natural and innate magics.

HUMANS

As nations rose and fell and eras came and went, the humans of Vathis proved their will to survive in the ever-changing world. Tenacious and motivated, they boast the fortitude to overcome nearly any obstacle. Whether they adapt to the ways of good or evil, they are almost always instigators of innovation and discovery. Humans can be found in each and every nation, with complexions and appearances as varied as the landscapes themselves. They do not possess a shared racial culture, but instead grow within the society they call home, for better or for worse.

As the majority race throughout Asarus, humans constructed the world's largest empires, many of which still stand to this day. They are found in nearly every region of the world, even where one would least expect their presence, such as the dwarven cities of Mythrayne or jeweled groves of Sillirai. Quick to adapt and innovate, the humans of Vathis make a home wherever they settle. They are often ignorant of cultural customs, however, and unintentionally offend others by taking advantage of cultural artifacts and places of importance without realizing the dismay caused by their actions. Those who share the world with humans tend to forgive their missteps, as the inherent naivety and enterprising nature of humanity is known to all.

Humans possess almost nothing of a racial identity. Instead they rely heavily on national identity and cling to patriotism and their fellow citizens. On account of their short lifespans and



young spirits they tend to react immediately to threats without assessing the far-reaching implications of their actions, often creating problems later down the line. The most damaging world-altering events were caused by the hands of humans, including the Darkest War and the First Empire Wars. Quick to seek revenge against those they perceive as aggressors, humans are led to powder keg levels of emotion on a national scale. Nevertheless, they've given far more to society than they've taken, and many would argue that humans are among the world's greatest creators. Due to sheer numbers alone there are significantly more Starcalled humans than Starcalled of any other race. The best and most skilled of their kind generate impressive advancements in technological areas, including eldric industrial might, airships, and vaedra weapons. The humans are an extremely varied sort, and one cannot hope to ever accurately weigh their grave faults against their marvelous triumphs. Members of the human race follow religion with a fervor, and they tend to take their worship seriously, which sometimes causes strife among their own people.

ILDERA

The ildera are among the most identifiable races native to Vathis. They possess an eldricsteel-like skin, which is dark grey and streaked with a lattice of either blue or red eldria. Their eyes are composed of a pair of faceted eldria crystals that match the color of their eldricsteel lattice, and their hair, also the same color of the eldria with which the ildera is imbued, is composed of filaments of varying thickness. Ildera stand far taller than most other races, but they remain a bit on the thin side. Ildera who possess armor crystals seem to grow the armor from their very skin. This armor covers the body of the ildera in a smooth, seamless fashion.

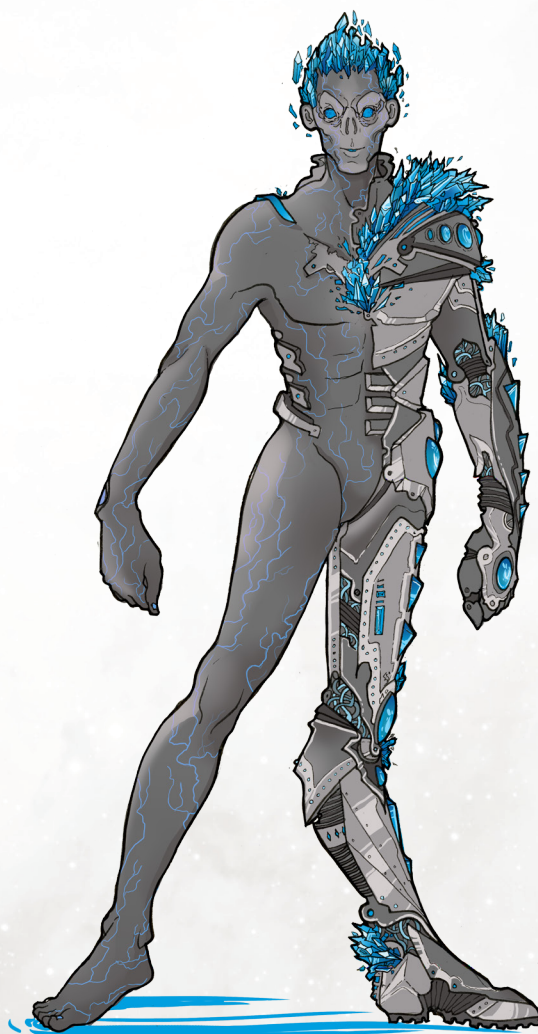
Ildera could very well be the oldest living race on Vathis. Their true origins remain unknown, even to the world's greatest historians. One hundred thousand ildera were originally discovered in the vaults beneath Valiance, Vavaire, and these ildera were the dawn of their race. However, where those first ildera came from and how they found their way into those vaults remains a mystery hidden behind the shrouds of time. Since their initial introduction to Vavaire and the subsequent discovery of the Eldric Reactor's ability to artificially create the ildera, their kind have pushed the envelope of civilization forward. It is often said that civilization itself was built on the backs of the ildera. Outside of normal day-to-day activities, ildera have become the focus of military operations around the world, primarily due to the combat advantage of an untiring soldier. Elite ildera strike forces were used frequently during the Second Empire Wars. Following the end of the First Empire Wars the ildera ceased being used as indentured servants, due to the scale of destruction wrought by the ildera armies of Washu against Elessar, and the Council of Vathis declared the ildera a free race and released them from any contracts to which they were beholden prior to the end of the war.

As it stands today, ildera across Vathis are afforded the same rights as all other races. Recognized by the Council of Vathis as a living race and not indentured servants, ildera have spread to the four corners of Vathis, exploring the unknown and experiencing the world. Some ildera have even risen to prominence in the world as notable figures. Constantine Vanguard, a powerful eldric-

steel industrialist, is arguably a celebrity in his own right. Ildera worldwide have flocked to his banner, which offers a unified front against exploitation and the imperialistic motives that companies and nations may possess. Many ildera choose to live in solitude, however, doing as they wish with the life they've been granted, artificial or otherwise.

For the better part of their long history, ildera were viewed as tools and servants built to push the world forward. Since the end of the Darkest War, people have begun to recall the heroic deeds of the ildera with fondness, as this brave race manned the front lines to save civilization from the brink of destruction. Much of that war-related reverence has paved the way toward changing the views of the other races toward the ildera. A good portion of the common folk now treat ildera as friends and equals. Only those who fought against the ildera or hold a deeply-seated grudge still view them as inferiors.

The ildera possess a unique perspective that contributes greatly to their world-view, which is the concept of eternity. While other races need to sleep, eat, and procreate, the ildera toil, explore, and learn, with no end in sight. As far as anyone knows, the bodies of the ildera are immortal and constantly revitalized by the draw of magical energy from the eldria within them. However, ildera

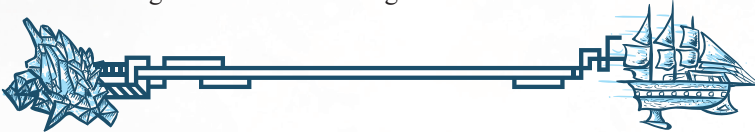


tend to focus solely on the here and now, dealing with problems that arise immediately. They refrain from growing attached to the shorter lived races around them: many have learned the hard way by watching their friends and loved ones age and die.

ILDERA ANATOMY AND DEATH



It is widely believed that ildera possess souls, much like the world's other humanoids. As such, it is possible for an ildera to be magically resurrected. An ildera's body decays like a standard human does, with its eldricsteel and eldria composition breaking down in the same manner as a flesh and blood corpse. All that typically remains of a decomposed ildera is an eldricsteel skeleton. Ildera cannot bleed out, however. It is not unusual to discover a dormant ildera who was nearly killed lying unconscious but waiting to be restored. Though the ildera do not need to eat, they can consume food as normal, which is broken down into energy by their internal eldric organs. They do not produce waste. Ildera cannot fall asleep or lose consciousness willingly. They are unable to perform the same task for longer than eight hours, suffering the same mental fatigue that humanoids do.



INUZEN

The inuzen are a fey race who boast strong ties to the Vibrant. As a result, they have some interesting features not found in the other races on Vathis: the inuzen's most prominent and immediately apparent feature are the wolf-like ears set atop their heads. They also possess a wolf-like tail, and two tones in their hair color in natural shades of reds, greens, blues, and browns, depending on where they are from. This race can shapeshift into a wolf form with fur that matches the hair color of their humanoid form. When compared to the other races of Vathis, the inuzen are extremely easy to spot, and widely revered for their intimate connection to the Zodiacs.

The inuzen have forever called the ebbing edges of the Vibrant their home. Their cities often slip from the Material Plane to the Vibrant and back again, disappearing for centuries at a time. Inuzen have always kept their distance from civilization, visiting cities but never fully integrating themselves in the various cultures of the world. This race boasts decent relations with nations that claim ties to nature, such as Isild, Vavaire, and Leyathar, and they visit these places often. It was not until the Darkest War that the inuzen began to show themselves in force. Many were shocked when they revealed their true numbers, as most civilizations had greatly underestimated their presence. Acting as scouts, wardens, and seers, the inuzen rooted out the Shattered Hand from the lonely places of the world, saving outlying villages and cities with their mystical forewarnings and extraplanar prowess.

Until recently the inuzen were a fairly rare sight. Prior to

the Darkest War they were something of a myth, and often venerated by the common folk of Vathis. After the inuzen came forth from their hidden cities, the majority of Vathis started to treat this race much as they would anyone else and with less of a deific reverence. As such, their innate high-standing has somewhat dulled. Rumors even exist of inuzen acting as servitors in Osept, something that was previously unheard of. Following the end of the Darkest War, the inuzen remained on the Material Plane, striking up homes in frontier cities and small towns, though rarely in large cities. They are committed to having an active role in the world, and refuse to let their distance from civilization and cultural differences determine their fate.

Inuzen are often heralded as oracles, mystics, and seers for their reverence of the Zodiacs and fondness for portents and prophecy. Some inuzen are granted the ability to see brief glimpses into the future, and they are sought by both common and powerful folk alike. To travel with an inuzen is considered lucky by almost every civilization on Vathis, and bringing harm to their kind is thought to bring ill omens. Inuzen have no general distaste



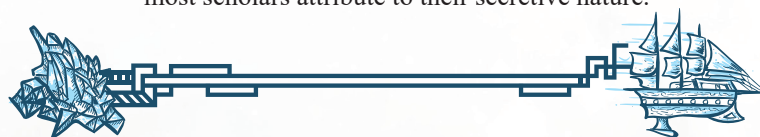
for other races, but abhor those who would bring harm to the world and its progeny. They are sometimes wary of arcane magic users, however, as they witnessed the destruction wrought by magic first-hand during the Darkest War.

A long-lived race, the inuzen tend to think of the future when making decisions, but this does not deter them from acting quickly when the need arises. First and foremost on an inuzen's mind is the balance between all things: good and evil, civilization and the wild, technology and magic, and the living and the dead, to name a few. The balance between these concepts must be maintained, as they believe this is the Zodiacs' will. They consider a Starcalling to be a great honor, and always give the Starcalled their due respect. The inuzen are acutely aware that age does not necessarily mean wisdom, and they favor experience above all else.

The inuzen know that threats to this world do not solely reside on the Material Plane, and are in fact often found on other planes. Members of this lupine race were the original planewalkers, and they find themselves at home in both the Material and Vibrant realms.



Inuzen cities reside all across the Vibrant, located where barriers between the Vibrant and Material Plane are weak: this unique situation allows their cities to effortlessly pass from one plane to another. The inuzen have always kept the location of their cities a secret from others, and finding these cities has become something of a legend among travelers. Inuzen cities appear in hidden vales, deep within secluded woodlands, or perched atop high peaks; all in places far from civilizations of the Material Plane. The same city can appear in a variety of places on the Material Plane as the Vibrant shifts, expands, and changes under its own laws. Inuzen cities have never been assaulted while on the Material Plane, which most scholars attribute to their secretive nature.



NOIR

Noir are a product of the Whiterose Experiments, performed by the Shattered Hand on human Astrians of Vavairen, Trist, and Isril nationalities. Because of this, noir complexions typically range from pale to moderately tan, in the case of those hailing from the southern reaches of Vavaire. A few distinctive features set noir apart from standard humans: for one, the otherworldly forces coursing through their bodies mark the victims of the Whiterose Experiments with colored shadows that flow underneath their skin and hair. A second striking feature are their eyes, opaque orbs of color that match the hue of the shadows under their skin. The noir's most unique physical quirk, however, is their ability to entirely change the shape, look, and feel of their body, allowing their kind to alter

their form and create either an entirely new persona, or match the appearance of someone they have seen.

The exact date of the first noir's creation is unknown, but scholars assume they were created during the early years of the Second Empire Wars to be utilized by the corrupt Vavairen government in secret while under the control of the Exilarchy. Their roles as spies and assassins quickly pushed the world into the largest international conflict it had ever experienced, with Vavaire faring well in the chaos. It was not until the Second Empire Wars evolved into the Darkest War that the world was even informed of the noir's existence. Following their discovery, extraordinary individuals took great steps to free the noir from forced servitude under their Vandiel overlords. Sharaun was the first noir freed from their possession. She alone retained knowledge of her previous noir life, something that has yet to be replicated. At the end of the Darkest War, the completion of Aevalyn's Wall successfully freed the entire noir race from their mental domination. All of the noir awoke at once, as if from a dream, retaining only the barest shreds of knowledge from before that moment.

With their newfound freedom intact, the noir were free to operate as individuals once more. However, many remain haunted and tormented by the knowledge of what terrible things they may have done while working alongside the armies of the Shattered Hand. Noir usually find themselves in one of three situations. Most often, noir become known as "blenders", or noir who seek to eke out an existence and be left to their own devices. Blenders usually adopt one appearance, maintaining a single persona and facade throughout their lives. The second are noir who seek the path of justice, aiming to heal the wounds they may have inflicted upon the world. A third sect fell back into their former tactics of deception, greed, and power—these are noir who use their powers for personal gain at the cost of those around them.

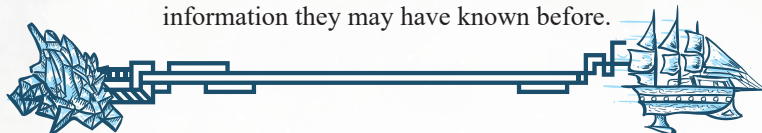
Noir are considered the forgotten children of the Darkest War, and they are looked upon as a walking tragedy. Above all else, noir typically need to keep their true nature a secret from those around them: while they are often viewed with pity, as they were victims of the Darkest War as well, few can forget the atrocities wrought by noir against the civilized peoples of Vathis. Largely hated by the vast majority of the world's communities, noir have begun to form their own behind closed doors. Able to wear their true faces openly with others of their kind, many noir have banded together in cities across the world for community and shared understanding. Separated from their past, family, history, and land, noir are forever outcasts in the world. Unable to rebuild what most would consider a normal life, noir are forced to either live as pretenders or on the fringe of society, feared by all. All noir face the harsh reality of their past on a daily basis, typically in the form of the hatred of those who were wronged by their kind. The fact that their transformation was completely and utterly unwilling falls upon ears deafened by anger. Noir find it extremely difficult to trust others, including members of their own race. Alone in a hostile world, the noir are obligated to live with the heavy weight of their conscience forever, as they are stuck in an endless cycle of rebirth and loss.





THE ENDLESS CYCLE

Six years ago the noir were freed, and most were unable to come to terms with what they may have done while under the domination of the Exilarchy. Many sought the release of death, but approximately three weeks after passing the bodies of the noir would dissipate into motes of shadow and reform anew in a random location. Newly-risen noir find themselves alone and naked. They retain the basic knowledge of their existence and understand some of the languages they might have spoken in a previous life. The noir also instinctively remember that they were created and controlled by the Shattered Hand, though without detail, and they feel an innate need to hide from the world. Noir receive flashing visions of their past lives, and on rare occasions they recall bits of knowledge and information they may have known before.



TIEFLINGS

Tieflings originate from the ancient founders of Washu, who attempted to emulate the guiding spirits of their past. Their culture peaked on the eastern islands, where they led an isolated existence for millennia, growing into a powerful people in their own right. The oldest tieflings now reside primarily in Washu, and are one of the oldest living races with a firm grasp on magic even as it waned in years past. The most prominent tieflings possess exotic features native to the east. Perhaps the most defining of these figures are their immediately apparent horns. The horns of a tiefling come in all shapes, colors, styles, and sizes, from small nubs on the top of one's forehead to sweeping, curved horns reaching down to the neck. Some tieflings possess vestigial wings on their back as well, and many possess tails, some of which are prehensile. While the appearance of the tieflings reminds many of the Darkest War and may be considered unnerving, others are unsettled by the powerful aura radiating from members of this race.

Other than the long-lived races of Vathis, the tieflings possess one of the oldest and magically advanced cultures in the world. They were created long ago as the humans of Washu began undergoing the Ascension Transformation, designed to emulate the wise god-mages of their worship. As time passed, more and more Washun nobles underwent the transformation process until the tiefling bloodline ran pure through the veins of entire families, increasing the magical aptitude of the scions of their houses. It was not until recently that average, non-noble citizens started undergoing the Ascension Transformation as a method of displaying their national unity. The tieflings of Washu are extremely patriotic, and view nearly all outsiders with apprehension and distrust. Even so, these views have not prevented their kind from expanding into other nations as merchants, magical tutors, and powerful agents. The nuances of the Ascension Transformation are known only to



the heads of the Washun noble houses, and the process itself is closely guarded as a national secret. While most tieflings are nobles who underwent the transformation, there exist quite a few non-noble tieflings in Washu who either left their noble families or were created by other means.

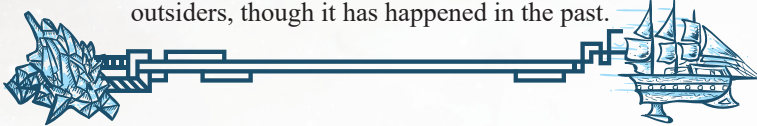
Washun tieflings are what most imagine when they consider this race, but in recent years a new breed of tieflings have risen across the breadth of the known world. As the progeny of the Shattered Hand they are known simply as Defiled tieflings, whose origins can be found in the desecration and strife wrought by the demons and devils who invaded Asarus. Defiled tieflings are obviously not of traditional Washun origin, and are looked down upon and shunned almost universally. Their existence and persecution has become something of a controversy. The majority of the Defiled are children, with the oldest only now reaching sixteen years of age. They have yet to sully the reputation of Washun tieflings, however, who are still widely accepted throughout the world and sought after as clever sages, wisemen, and master mages.



ASCENSION TRANSFORMATION



The tieflings of Washu believe in their ancestors and the natural spirits of the world. Early in Washu's history they discovered a method of instilling the latent spirits of the world into their progeny, transforming them into tieflings themselves. These spirits are known as kami in the Shenami religion. The ritual practice itself lasts for several days and consists of prayer, sacrifice, and purification to prepare the body for the kami to enter. A number of relics and effects are needed to produce the desired results, and these necessary components are rarely shared with outsiders. This ritual must take place at shrines or other areas that house potent spirits with some importance to those undergoing the ritual. Traditionally, it is believed that the spirits of the ancestors enter the body of the willing participant, granting them superior mental and magical strength, preparing them to honor the future of Washu. It is unusual for the Ascension Transformation to be performed on foreigners or outsiders, though it has happened in the past.



VASAR

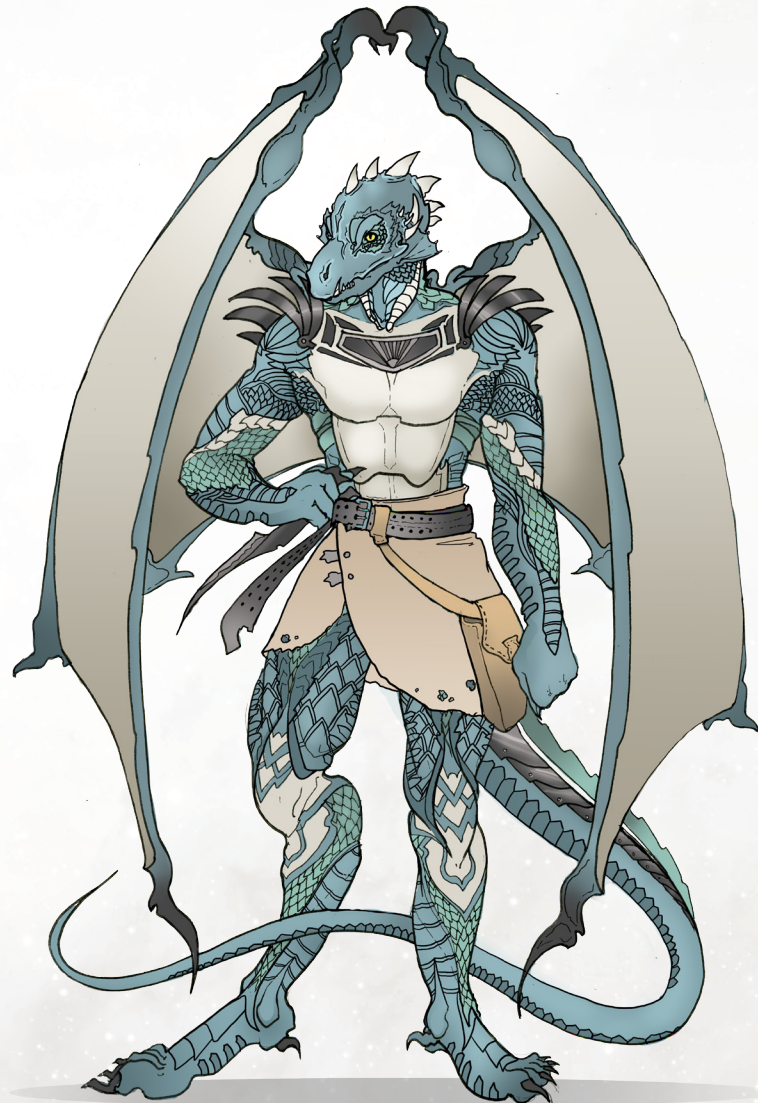
The average vasar stands head and shoulders above other humanoids. As a race they tend to be tall and broad, with extremely stocky bodies and imposing figures. Their features are serpentine in nature, consisting of a tough, scaly hide, and sharp teeth and claws. Their eyes are similar to the eyes of a reptile, and they boast a long scaled tail and vast wingspan. The vasar's wings are important to their daily function, lifestyle, racial culture, and overall philosophy. This race bears a strong resemblance to the dragons from whom they descended.

The early history of the vasar is currently unknown. Most scholars and historians accept that the vasar are descended from the dragons of ages long gone, but other theories regarding their origin and ancient history are purely conjecture. As a race they settled in the northern lands of Asarus, claiming floating motes and mountains as their domain. The vasar and dwarves waged ages of war over holy lands, such as Winsor Valley, and the favor of their shared chief deity, Naugrix. Legends of the Age of Dragons state that the vasar served their draconic overlords well: they aided the great beings in ensuring dominion over lesser empires, and at the mysterious conclusion of this age, they inherited a portion of the dragons' lands and hoards. The vasar weathered the Age of Black Frost as well, but little is known about this time. Their kind continued fighting with the dwarves as civilizations rose to new heights, but less so as the Legacy Wars ravaged the world from coast to coast. Their great reign of vitality and power waned shortly after the advent of the first Starcalled, when a mysterious plague befell the vasar. Many nations came to their aid, though their attempts were futile, and it was not until Vavaire intervened that the vasar were saved from the rampaging illness.

Vasar are now welcomed everywhere and considered a valuable asset to all adventuring and labor pursuits. Their kind are currently experiencing inner turmoil and tension, as no one knows quite how to respond to the return of the dragons, and many vasar are leaving their communities to chase after the beasts. They make formidable foes, and can be found in the elite contingents of most militaries. Multiple organizations run recruitment campaigns specifically geared toward the vasar; the Vathis Sentinels in particular were forced to stop publishing recruitment propaganda in Daratrix.

Members of this winged race are found nearly everywhere. They are currently experiencing a sort of diplomatic renaissance, as airships have made it possible for tourists to visit their cities on floating motes and better understand the vasar. Their relations with dwarves have also improved markedly in recent years. The vasar are, however, wary of the tieflings, ilder, and noir. They tend to get along best with humans, particularly those of Vavairen nationality, but less so with the Trist, who they consider untrustworthy. They do not care for the rancar whatsoever.

The vasar are a proud, headstrong race, who all wish to



be treated as if they were nobles. They stick to their ingrained traditions and cultural habits. As a group, they value strength or other forms of power, and judge signs of weakness harshly. Most honor the deity Naugrix, the rightful god of the dragons and the vasar, but there are exceptions to any rule, and the other dragon gods are frequently worshipped among their kind as well. The vasar rarely back down from a challenge or insult. Should one be searching for a difficult fight, they should look no farther than these tough dragon descendants.

VITAL STATISTICS

Please utilize the following Vital Statistics charts to generate heights, weights, and ages for your Zodiac Empires characters.

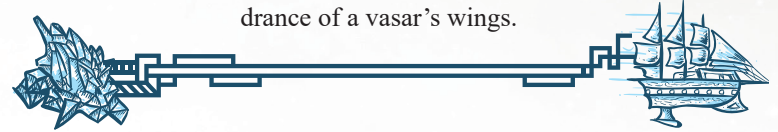
HEIGHT AND WEIGHT

To determine a character's height, roll the modifier dice indicated on the appropriate Random Height and Weight table and add the result, in inches, to the base height for your character's race and gender. To determine a character's weight, multiply the result of the modifier dice by the weight multiplier and add the result to the base weight for your character's race and gender.



MOTE LIFE

Vasar society is wholly centered around the race's innate ability to fly. Their draconic wings offer advantages in matters of combat, survival, and everyday life itself, displayed most famously in the vasar cities built upon the floating motes of Darastrix. These motes are significantly more defensible than ground-based settlements, resulting in a general feeling of safety coveted by the vulnerable races below. The motes also positively affect the vasar's agricultural efforts, as living in the sky while farming and hunting on the ground provides additional room on the motes for other construction. This compartmentalization of resources helps to separate the recreation and labor aspects of vasar life. Members of this race feel free and uninhibited by trifling things such as city gates and close quarters, and when traveling abroad they may remark upon the enclosed nature of land-based cities, for the open skies and high winds are their version of normal. Wings are as necessary to vasar physiology as much as arms and legs, if not more so, for if a vasar cannot fly they cannot live among their own people. Darastrix possesses strict laws punishing the intentional harm or hindrance of a vasar's wings.



Vasar



Ildera



Amari



Dwarf



TABLE 1: WEIGHT AND HEIGHT

Race	Base Height	Base Weight	Modifier	Weight Multiplier
Amari, female	4 ft, 2 in	75 lbs.	2d10	x3 lbs.
Amari, male	4 ft, 8 in	100 lbs.	2d10	x3 lbs.
Dwarf, female	3 ft, 7 in	120 lbs.	2d4	x7 lbs
Dwarf, male	3 ft, 9 in	150 lbs.	2d4	x7 lbs
Elf, female	5 ft, 4 in	90 lbs.	2d6	x3 lbs
Elf, male	5 ft 4 in	100 lbs.	2d8	x3 lbs
Gnome, female	2 ft, 10 in	30 lbs.	2d4	x1 lbs
Gnome, male	3 ft, 0 in	35 lbs.	2d4	x1 lbs
Half-elf, female	5 ft, 0 in	90 lbs.	2d8	x5 lbs
Half-elf, male	5 ft, 2 in	110 lbs.	2d8	x5 lbs
Halfling, female	2 ft, 5 in	25 lbs.	2d4	x1 lbs
Halfling, male	2 ft, 8 in	30 lbs.	2d4	x1 lbs
Human, female	4 ft, 5 in	85 lbs.	2d10	x5 lbs
Human, male	4 ft, 10 in	120 lbs.	2d10	x5 lbs
Half-orc, female	4 ft, 5 in	110 lbs	2d12	x7 lbs
Half-orc, male	4 ft, 10 in	150 lbs	2d12	x7 lbs
Ildera, female	5 ft, 6 in	100 lbs	2d10	x4 lbs
Ildera, male	5 ft, 8 in	120 lbs	2d10	x4 lbs
Inuzen, female	4 ft, 2 in	70 lbs	2d8	x3 lbs
Inuzen, male	4 ft, 4 in	90 lbs	2d8	x3 lbs
Noir, female	4 ft, 5 in	85 lbs.	2d10	x5 lbs
Noir, male	4 ft, 10 in	120 lbs.	2d10	x5 lbs
Tiefling, female	4 ft, 5 in	85 lbs.	2d10	x5 lbs
Tiefling, male	4 ft, 10 in	120 lbs.	2d10	x5 lbs
Vasar, female	5 ft, 4 in	110 lbs.	2d8	x5 lbs
Vasar, male	5 ft, 6 in	140 lbs.	2d8	x5 lbs

TABLE 2: AGE

Race	Adulthood	Intuitive	Self-Taught	Trained
Amari	20 years	+3d6	+4d6	+5d6
Dwarf	40 years	+3d6	+5d6	+7d6
Elf	100 years	+4d6	+5d5	+8d6
Gnomes	40 years	+4d6	+6d6	+8d6
Half-Elf	20 years	+1d6	+2d6	+3d6
Halfling	20 years	+1d8	+2d4	+3d4
Half-Orc	14 years	+1d4	+1d6	+1d10
Human	15 years	+1d4	+1d6	+2d6
Ildera	5 years	+1	+2	+3
Inuzen	40 years	+4d6	+5d6	+6d6
Noir	*	+0	+0	+0
Tiefling	26 years	+4d6	+6d6	+8d6
Vasar	18 years	+1d4	+1d6	+1d10

TABLE 3: AGE

Race	Adulthood	Middle Age	Old	Venerable	Maximum Age
Amari	20 years	300 years	500 years	700 years	900 +d2% years
Dwarf	40 years	125 years	188 years	250 years	250 +2d% years
Elf	100 years	175 years	263 years	350 years	350 +4d% years
Gnome	40 years	100 years	150 years	200 years	200 +3d20 years
Half-Elf	20 years	62 years	93 years	125 years	125 +3d20 years
Halfling	20 years	50 years	75 years	100 years	100 +5d20 years
Half-Orc	14 years	30 years	45 years	60 years	60 +3d20 years
Human	15 years	35 years	53 years	70 years	70 +2d20 years
Ildera	5 years	*	*	*	Infinite
Inuzen	40 years	300 years	500 years	700 years	700 +6d% years
Noir	*	*	*	*	Unknown
Tiefling	26 years	150 years	200 years	250 years	250 +6d% years
Vasar	18 years	45 years	70 years	90 years	90 +3d10 years

Oseptian Human



Noir



Vavairen Human



Inuzen



Elf





THE COSMIC POWERS



Before there was the multiverse, there were the Zodiacs, seventeen dragons of immense power and influence that worked together to create the Ether, the basis of all things. From the creation of the Ether spawned the multiverse: from the higher and lower planes, to Evrinar, and everything it touched. The Zodiacs then created a great being called the Elder. As the planes sought to establish themselves, they spawned entities from their essence. From the higher planes the Deities were created, beings of order and life. From the lower planes the Arkhos came, beings of creation and primal chaos. These beings influence all known life and creation

The **ZODIACS**, the creators of the Ether and existence as a whole, stand aside and subtly guide the cosmos into a greater age, never taking a direct role in the outcome.

The **DEITIES**, the divine influence on the world, take an active role in both overseeing life and expanding their creation throughout the multiverse.

The **VANDIELS**, the exiled children of the Deities, attempt to usurp their creators in all ways by corrupting their worshippers, attacking their holy sites, and even attacking the Deities directly.

The **ARKHOS**, ancient elemental beings with extremely powerful abilities, remain locked away deep within the recesses of the cosmos. They are a sleeping power capable of destroying entire continents and even worlds.

The **ELDER**, the original entity, was destroyed long ago and his crystallized body was spread throughout the multiverse. The shards of his being function as a base for powerful creatures and effects



ZODIACS



Before there was time, there were the Zodiacs. The Zodiacs came together at the nexus of creation and brought forth the multiverse. Together they created the Ether, the underlying magical essence that allows all creation to exist. Since the Zodiacs control the ebb and flow of the cosmos, they also control the threads of fate, and they set all lesser forms of life on a predetermined path through their creation. The Zodiac Prophecy, as the threads of fate are known, is only known to the Zodiacs themselves, though lesser creatures have attempted to riddle its meaning. It is said that the Zodiac Prophecy is an endless foretelling of the timelines of the Ether, and within its bounds are the lives of nearly all living things. However, certain cosmic powers such as the Deities, Arkhos, Elder, and Vandiel are free to create their own futures. The Zodiacs each control a different aspect of creation, guiding their particular force forward behind the scenes of the multiverse at large.

THE ZODIAC PROPHECY

The Zodiac Prophecy was written in the threads of fate intertwining throughout the multiverse. It can be foretold and interpreted

from the movements of astrological bodies, the strength of starlight, and rituals by seers and oracles. In ages long past, it became known that the Zodiac Prophecy was written on a series of zodi'ite tablets said to contain the entirety of the Prophecy. Oracles of the ancient past transcribed portions of the interpreted tablets onto various media, such as clay tablets, stone walls, and illuminated manuscripts. The most well-known seer of recent years was Aevallyn zi'Wisla, who foresaw the Darkest War and created worldfalls to save the cradle of civilization, Vavaire.

STARCALLED

Throughout history, the Zodiacs have granted special powers to mortals they have deemed capable of driving the fate of the multiverse forward. The chosen individuals are denoted by the manifestation of a Zodiac constellation on the back of their left hand. This mark is known as a sigil, and the individuals who possess these sigils are the Starcalled. The group at large are known as the Legacy of the Zodiacs, or the Legacy for short. The first race to become part of the Legacy were the dragons of old. These dragons eventually lost control of their power due to an individual Starcalled who nearly unraveled the Ether. In turn, the dragons gave their lives and souls to prevent the unraveling and turned to stone for thousands of years. Sigils of the second Legacy appeared on the humanoid races of Vathis many years later, immediately after the Stardragon family of Vavaire discovered the Ring of Zodiacs. Since then, many of the world's movers and shakers have been Starcalled, and the influence of the Starcalled is felt to this day. It is important to note, however, that being Starcalled does not predestine an individual toward performing great acts. Some Starcalled amount to nothing more than tavern keeps or simple farmers.

SIGILS

Sigils appear as the constellation of a particular Zodiac, which manifests on the back of the left hand of the Starcalled. Sigils persist across any forms the Starcalled takes. Sigils themselves remove the Starcalled from the confines of predetermined fate, allowing them to alter the course of not only their own history, but also the fates of those not Starcalled. Sigils grant their bearers significant magic abilities pertaining to the Zodiac depicted in their sigil. Due to their history-altering influence and innate abilities, Starcalled are revered by the common folk of the world.

ZODIAC RELICS

Legends speak of gems of great power that represent each Zodiac. In total there are seventeen relics that exist throughout the multiverse, but their exact locations are unknown. Myths surround these gems, mainly in the form of stories that detail how the relics increase the power of the Starcalled who wield them. It is widely believed that the relics were last used by the Starcalled dragons to unravel (and eventually restore) the Ether. They were lost after the dragons' sacrifice, and their current locations are unknown



GENRAE

Title: The Wild
Gemstone: Quartz
Color: Light Brown
Animal: Tiger
Element: Cardinal Earth

Reliable, disciplined, resourceful, serious, clever, skeptical, unchanging



The calm and gentle Genrae is a Zodiac that presides over most of the natural world. Many people who claim to have some dominance over the wild lands usually defer to Genrae for guidance through hard times, or while making tough decisions.

Those born under this sign are usually calm and reserved, with a proclivity towards long term goals and fruition. They tend toward critical thinking and scheming, without sacrificing awareness of their surroundings and others.

ERMIN

Title: The Veil
Gemstone: Moonstone
Color: White
Animal: Raven
Element: Air

Erudite, enthusiastic, adventurous, analytical, encouraging, logical, methodical



Ermin takes great pains to increase his already vast knowledge. Considered a living tome, he is a sponge to all information that passes his way, and many take lifelong travels to glean a single fact from his mind. His only fault is his unwillingness to allow things to slip from his grasp. Many investigators and arcanists who seek to derive something new look to him for enlightenment.

Advisors and members of counsel usually display many traits beneficial to their posts when born under Ermin. Those of his sign are greatly advantageous to adventurers and dungeon delvers for their innate attention to detail.

KAIJIN

Title: The Sage
Gemstone: Turquoise
Color: Light Blue
Animal: Frog
Element: Water

Idealistic, self-indulging, persistent, boastful, skilled, unapproachable



Kaijin, known as the Sage, presides over those who use their mind against brute force. He holds the Zodiacs to all of their prophecies and foretellings. Many researchers and prophets give praise to Kaijin upon a new discovery or idea when it bears fruit.

Those born under Kaijin are long-winded and patient. They make horrible enemies and great allies, as they are extremely confident and dead set in their notions

ENOLAR

Title: The Stoic
Gemstone: Ruby
Color: Red
Animal: Horse
Element: Fire

Lazy, calm, optimistic, helpful, indulgent, cheerful



Friendship remains one of Enolar's greatest traits, and he endeavors to increase all of his relationships to the highest level possible. Many courtiers and defenders give reverence to Enolar for both companionship and guidance during difficult times

Those born under Enolar remain steadfast and are usually more than happy to try to cheer up a gloomy environment. They tend to see the best side of people, but are sometimes afraid to move on after becoming comfortable in one place.

ATASHIN

Title: The Watcher
Gemstone: Amethyst
Color: Violet
Animal: Rat
Element: Earth

Dependable, trusting, perceptive, unchanging, diplomatic, quiet



Atashin is known as the Martyr for his willingness to give anything for a worthy cause. He is one of the least powerful Zodiacs, but he compensates for his lack of strength with perseverance and dedication. He is a quiet Zodiac, and would rather watch and play his game from the shadows than become directly involved.

Remote and surveying are the two best words to describe someone born under Atashin. They typically refrain from conversation, and may be seen as unapproachable, but once engaged, they are generally charming and likable. Those under Atashin remain unwaveringly loyal to those they trust.

LORTON

Title: The Seer
Gemstone: Sapphire
Color: Dark Blue
Animal: Wolf
Element: Cardinal Air

Imaginative, oversensitive, fussy, interfering, generous, original, aloof



The Zodiac Prophecy is long-term and far-reaching, and it is widely believed that Lorton is its primary author. Lorton possesses incredible foresight and believes that everything can be planned.

Those born under the sign of Lorton are usually great coordinators and thinkers. Many become strategists and can envision incredibly convoluted plans extending for great periods of time. They are usually happy to share the spoils of their schemes with those close to them, but can be quick to distress when their plans go awry.



EYRTASERI**Title:** The Fool**Gemstone:** Diamond**Color:** Grey**Animal:** Fish**Element:** Water*Carefree, exotic, flamboyant, escapist, superficial, restless, wanderer*

Eyrtsleri, the most beloved of the Zodiacs, is both a wonder to behold and an annoyance to associate with. She tends to care about nothing, and yet is compelled to remain involved. Always behaving in an aggressively intrusive manner, she has been known to stir various factions to action with her quips.

The Sigil of the Fool is one that most enjoy seeing. Those born under Eyrtsleri often take up the wandering professions of travelers and bards, and are willing to journey anywhere and learn new things. They are the life of the party at social events, yet shallow in regards to compliments and pleasantries. It is rare to dislike those born under Eyrtsleri, as they are fast to make new friends and excite those around them.

OLATH**Title:** The Curator**Gemstone:** Fire Opal**Color:** Dark Red**Animal:** Ant**Element:** Fire*Cold, short tempered, confident, caring, conceited, distrusting*

Defending the knowledge and power of the Zodiacs is Olath's sole purpose. He determines who may learn and enter the Zodiac Orrey, found on the plane of Evrinar, and gain its knowledge. Those who seek to defend a prize usually ask for Olath's advice.

Pointed remarks and assured answers are usually tell-tale signs of those born under Olath. Protectors and keepers are found within his ranks, and they tend to be wary of anyone not under their charge. Those under this sign are usually met with fondness, but others often find frustration in their arrogant responses and snide remarks.

ASSARIA**Title:** The Weaver**Gemstone:** Citrine**Color:** Yellow**Animal:** Spider**Element:** Air*Merciful, kind, creative, observant, patient, hospitable, daydreamer, disregard, astute*

Assaria spends most of her time wondering about the endless possibilities that might exist and exploring those possibilities through subtle guidance. Anyone looking for a way to change their future by a stroke of luck or the new development of knowledge gives reverence to Assaria.

Keen eyes and open minds are usually features associated with those blessed with the sigil of the Weaver. Investigators, art-

ists, and hosts alike form under her birth month, and many of them gain stronger abilities and sharper intellect over time. Their associates sometime believe them to be uncaring though not unkind, or completely ignorant to their needs over their devotion to solve whatever problem arises.

ISTO**Title:** The Shadow**Gemstone:** Onyx**Color:** Black**Animal:** Snake**Element:** Earth*Vain, focused, responsive, jealous, materialistic, devious, inconspicuous*

Insidious wisps of the Shadow's influence worm their way into any topic that reaches Isto's notice; he attempts to remain involved in almost everything the Zodiacs touch, regardless of their approval. Those who wish to discover secret truths or hidden knowledge usually petition him for guidance.

Those born under Isto's sign are known to care solely about themselves, and think only of what they may gain from a situation. They remain focused on the goals they have set for themselves and refuse to be swayed from the paths they wander. Outsiders tend to distrust those born under Isto, but such distrust is usually unfounded, as they are typically not malevolent and simply have a penchant for acquiring rare items and concealed knowledge.

ZERUTU**Title:** The Guardian**Gemstone:** Aquamarine**Color:** Teal**Animal:** Turtle**Element:** Water*Loyal, uninhibited, moody, adaptable, impulsive, defensive*

Zerutu is known as the Guardian of the Zodiacs, and for good reason. She rules over the pathways of water utilized by ships and aquatic creatures, and she guides those who use the water to travel along their path. Zerutu is fiercely devoted to defending those for whom she is responsible.

Creatures born under her sign are fiercely loyal companions who adapt easily to many different conditions. They are apt to want things and take action immediately, remaining blissfully indifferent to the judgment of others.

HEZIN**Title:** The Noble**Gemstone:** Bloodstone**Color:** Light Red**Animal:** Elephant**Element:** Cardinal Fire*Bold, reformed, patriotic, proud, compassionate, honorable, true*

Hezin is one of the more forthright Zodiacs and he gladly strikes against his enemies. His answers are both honest and brutal responses that some may wish they never heard, though they are



merely hard truths. As one of the more active Zodiacs, many flock to his banner in their time of need.

Compassion and honor are traits often associated with those born under Hezin. The Sign of the Noble is suitably named, and those who bear it show signs of great leadership and understanding with a will to develop changes and enact them. Others have a good nature towards those born under Hezin, and they are widely sought for positions of leadership.

SRINAX

Title: The Healer

Gemstone: Topaz

Color: Light Yellow

Animal: Elk

Element: Earth

Peaceful, resourceful, altruistic, insistent, driven, content



The ability to speed recovery from all wounds is a wondrous capability that few master as well as Srinax. Caring little for conflict, Srinax only wishes to facilitate cooperation between parties regardless of the circumstances that led them to hostility. Those seeking to end contention look to him for guidance.

The benevolence of those born under Srinax is widely known and sought in many care-giving locations. Those under him find themselves compelled to finish what tasks they have set for themselves, often requiring that all else be put aside; they remain content as long as they follow the path to their goals. Those who bear the sigil of the Healer are the most favorably viewed Starcalled of them all, and they are met with a warm smile wherever they go.

GARAHN

Title: The Bard

Gemstone: Beryl

Color: Light Green

Animal: Owl

Element: Air

Rebellious, active, funny, connected, fascinating, charming



Spending time with those born under the Zodiac known as Garahn results in good moods and witty banter. Garahn is one of the most widely known and respected Zodiacs. He always has a story to tell, and seems to make friends wherever he goes. Those who seek to be well-known and treated well usually ask him for guidance.

Considered blessed, those born under the Sign of the Bard are pleasant and amiable towards almost everyone, regardless of their current situation or station. They become drifters, moving through all social circles and exchanging information. It is very rare indeed for one born under Garahn to not be liked by his peers.

ARRLLIS

Title: The Frost

Gemstone: Rimesteel

Color: Blue

Animal: Bear

Element: Cardinal Water

Devoted, inventive, witty, patient, indecisive, forbidding, formal



As one of the most powerful Zodiacs, Arrllis has clear dominion over a variety of attributes. She is typically reserved, but quick to innovate solutions and responses. A great deal of those born under her sign are drawn to the political arena. As such, those whose livelihoods rely on statecraft and negotiations usually defer to her for answers and tact.

Being born under the Sign of the Frost is a quick way to gain unnatural understanding and consideration in all manner of affairs. Those under her sign are inclined to be a true ally and a staunch defender of their beliefs, and nearly all possess the virtue of patience. Outsiders tend to be wary and uncomfortable around those born under her sign, due to their commitment to protocol.

MENKI

Title: The Seeker

Gemstone: Garnet

Color: Brilliant Red

Animal: Fox

Element: Fire

Passionate, obsessive, ambitious, energetic, courageous, dynamic



Known as the Seeker or the Adventurer, Menki is one of the more active Zodiacs when it comes to interacting with the mortal realms. He keeps a watchful eye on the sway and change of life. In this way, he is more involved, directly affecting those born under his sign on rare occasions. Anyone who actively searches for something, whether it be knowledge, relics, or people, usually give reference to Menki.

The Sign of the Seeker is one of the most easily recognizable lineages among the Zodiacs, as those that possess it are much more active than their counterparts. They are always delving into projects with an abundance of courage and energy, and a passion for life that cannot be matched.

WINYT

Titles: The Lord, The Sovereign

Gemstone: Zodi'ite

Colors: Glowing Deep Blue

Animals: Lion and Dragon

Element: Cardinal Zodiac

No influence on personality traits.



The Lord of the Zodiacs is one of complete obscurity. His power is unmatched by any of the other Zodiacs, and he has more influence on fate than all of the Cardinal Zodiacs combined. He chooses to involve himself in things that affect the Zodiacs as a whole, not only affairs regarding the mortal realm. Those in leadership positions searching for guidance advice often beseech him.

Those born under the Sign of the Sovereign are those that



are free. They remain completely uninfluenced by Winyt in all of their actions and ideals. They are independent of any outside interference on their fate, and are known to harbor the potential for immense power. The populace of Vathis views those born under Winyt with a variety of opinions: some are jealous of their freedom, some respect the power they were gifted, and some fear what their strength may unleash upon the world.



DEITIES

The Deities of Vathis are otherworldly beings of great power. They are surpassed in might by only the Zodiacs, but otherwise have no peers. The mortals of the world worship the gods and some draw divine power from their patron Deity. It is believed that when mortals breathe their last, their souls pass on to eventually reside in the realm of their respective god or goddess. The power of the Deities is augmented and bolstered by the number of worshippers they claim throughout the multiverse, and thus are always seeking to spread their faith and influence. Their worshippers strive to convert others and build churches to aid in this endeavor, always attempting to please and empower their divine benefactors.

When the last Arkhos enacted the Bane of the Overworld curse, preventing the Deities and Vandiels from traveling to the Material Plane in full power, it presented a problem to the gods and goddesses. They cannot directly interact with mortals on the Material Plane as a result, and must do so by either being reborn as a mortal, or through dreams and portents they show their worshippers. However, the Deities can interact with one another on the Eternal or wherever their home plane lies. A Deity reborn as a mortal can be slain, making reincarnation a hefty risk, as it could reduce their power if it were to happen. The most influential of the Deities' rebirths are hardly remembered by the mortals of Vathis, and occurred during the Divine Sands War as the Deities themselves led their armies of followers in battle against the Anuald forces. Astea is known for undergoing a series of rebirths, several of which resulted in the ascension of a new god or goddess. Astea goes through the rebirthing process frequently, in a sense relative to her perception of time. Certain members of her church—sometimes with the aid of Vangal's clergy—have formed sects to specifically seek out and protect her mortal form. The rest of the Deities are capable of doing this as well, but many either feel it unnecessary to fulfill their own desires or simply not worth the risk that rebirthing poses. Each Deity is allocated a Seraph, a powerful extraplanar creature that embodies one of the god's portfolios. Seraph's are considered one of the most powerful higher planar creatures in the multiverse, outside of the Deities themselves.

HISTORY

The Deities were created from the essence of the Eternal itself, and in a way they are the spirit of creation in its purest. They began to assert their will over creation, forming lesser beings and attempting to establish their own worlds and realms. The Arkhos naturally opposed this, and the two went to war over control of the Material Plane. Desperate, the Deities created the Vandiels, promising to grant them godhood and a home on the Eternal after the war's end. Together they defeated and sealed away the Arkhos, but were cursed with the inability to ever come to the Material Plane in full power. When the Vandiels realized that the Deities were never going to grant them the godhood they were promised, they attacked. Some Deities, whose names are long forgotten, were killed in these wars. In the wake of these conflicts several beings were elevated to godhood, restoring the balance of the pantheon. Life on Vathis as a whole soon came under fire when beings known as the Anuald harnessed the essence of Vandiels and threatened to overthrow the world. The Deities were only able to travel to the Material Plane in reborn mortal forms, but with the combined effort of the pantheon and their armies of followers they eventually defeated the Anuald, sealing them away forevermore. By the end of this war, Valshathe was established as a goddess, followed shortly by Junon, the reborn Aspect of a former god, creating the pantheon as it exists today.

ASPECTS: Forming Aspects is an ability that aids the Deities in dealing with their affairs on the various planes. Deities can create multiple versions of themselves with a fraction of their power, allowing them to be in many places handling multiple affairs. They can maintain several Aspects at once, so long as they have the power to spare.

PORTFOLIOS: Worshippers tend to act on behalf of their Deity's will. The Deities exist to exert a conscious influence on the universe, collectively maintaining a firm balance between the forces of existence; good, evil, chaos, and law. Many other aspects of life and being are governed by certain Deities, and they are represented in their respective portfolios. Portfolios are areas of influence specific to a god. Worshippers seek the guidance of the Deities and pray for aid or blessing in regard to these portfolios, believing these forces to be governed over or at least affected by the power of the corresponding Deity.

DEATH AND REPLACEMENT: Unlike the Arkhos and the Vandiels, Deities are not wholly immortal. They can be killed, though historically only at the hands of other powerful entities. For this to happen the god's actual self must be slain on their home plane—not their Aspect or other form, but their original and true form. When a Deity dies their divine essence inherited from the Eternal may be loosed upon the universe. The essence and role of the dead god is either absorbed by another being by means of ascension, or granted to another Deity willingly by the collective pantheon. This has happened in the cases of Zanon, Valshathe, and many of the younger Deities. Irilynshae is a rare exception, as she was formed when two previous goddesses merged together, creating her as she is known today.



ALEYDRA

Titles: Muse, Lady of Knowledge, Star Seer

Holy Symbol: A laris tree

Portfolios: Magic, Ether, Psionics, Knowledge, Dreams, Inspiration, Literature

Alignment: True Neutral

Plane: Glimmyr

Demonym: Aleydran

Touched: Evie Jaeress

Favored Weapon: Flash of Inspiration (Scimitar)

Aleydra is the patron goddess of the amari race. She is known to be distant towards others, but she acts as the invisible hand nudging her followers in the right direction. Those who seek knowledge and insight into new ideas often look to her for guidance, and her grace is sometimes seen in the form of cryptic dreams.

GOALS: Aleydra wishes to spread knowledge and magic all across the world. She hopes to defeat the Vandiel Rumoriskar once and for all and cleanse the affliction known as the Waking Nightmare from the world. She also seeks to bring her beloved amari into an age of enlightenment.

CHURCH INFORMATION: Members of Aleydra's clergy are often referred to as Musings, who are sometimes advisors to nobles, rulers, or merchants. Her churches are huge libraries and astounding sources of information, though her clergy are careful with whom they share their sensitive knowledge. They travel far and wide searching for those with psionic potential to train. Musings aid the ildera in running the Great Library in Armeria, and they refuse to work with those who stifle an individual's ability to learn, most notably creditors of Osept who deny their servitors an education. The Inquisitors, composed of artifact hunters and archaeologists, are her religious Free Company. Aleydra's ley-worshippers tend to be practitioners of the arcane arts.

RITEs, RITUALS, HOLY DAYS: Musings pray for spells at dawn, the beginning of a new day and new ideas. They often travel to the library of the Mentis Oculum located in Sillirai, Aleydra's holy site. The Star Seer's worshippers celebrate a number of days in her honor, such as the Day of Bonding and the Day of the Dreamer. During the Day of Bonding, which is observed on the Laniri and over the course of the following week, the Sillirian throw great parties and feast with their loved ones to give thanks to Aleydra for their existence. The Day of the Dreamer is celebrated on the spring equinox, and it recognizes the day that the amari of Sillirai shared a dream of their kingdom in prosperity. The amari pray to Aleydra on this day every year in the hopes that they might one day see the fruition of this dream. Clergy from far and wide also take part in a week of knowledge where clergy members share their books and scrolls with everyone they can.

HISTORY: Aleydra was once a dragon and the beloved of Vangal, but Vangal's unseeing devotion to Astea drove the two

apart. While in mortal form during the Divine Sands War, she gave birth to a daughter who became the first Empress Jaeress. Aleydra is locked in an eternal war with Rumoriskar for control of the dreams of sentient races. During the Darkest War she primarily acted through Evie Jaeress, the daughter of her Touched, who became her next Touched near the end of the war.

RELATIONSHIPS: Aleydra works closely with Astea. She still possesses strong feelings for Vangal, which drives her to stay near to him. She would like to one day rekindle the flame of their relationship. She is always attempting to reveal Uryll's secrets, which puts the two Deities at odds. Her greatest enemy is not another god, but the Vandiel Rumoriskar.

DOGMA: The mind, and all it contains, is the most powerful force known. There is no task that cannot be completed through the course of cool reason or the brilliance of inspiration. The Ether is a gift. Do not mistreat or abuse it. Magic is a tool; it is not good or evil, it is simply a reflection of its wielder. As one's reach into the Ether increases, know that the best solution is not always the mightiest spell. Harness the mind and use it to improve the world around you. Know, however, that which is new is not always better. In sleep the mind is unbound by the laws and expectations of the waking world. Cherish and utilize that which flows from the subconscious. Create lasting embodiments of magic, for knowledge without purpose is wasted. A properly prepared mind can not only manifest thoughts within, but brings their visions forth into the world. This is the truest expression of thought. Be it through meditation or discipline or drawn from the raw essence of emotion, the perfection of this ability is the ultimate expression of the mind's power. Psionics grant you the ability to shape the world at your will—use this gift as befits a faithful of Aleydra.



ASTEIA

Titles: Voice of Life, Lifemother, Songstress, Light

Holy Symbol: Ankh of two intertwined flowers

Portfolios: Good, Light, Life, Creation, Love, Music, Beauty, Art, Song

Alignment: Neutral Good

Plane: Aver Brithe

Demonym: Asteian

Touched: Unknown

Favored Weapon: Kiss of Life (Heavy mace)

Asteia is a caring and motherly figure. She is calm and patient, and always listens to those who seek out her wisdom. She is often found singing. Asteia views everyone as her children, including those who wish to bring her harm, such as the Vandiel.

GOALS: Above all else, Asteia wishes to protect the Deities and their creation, allowing life to flourish. One of her deepest wishes is to restore Serena to her full mental state and settle the dispute with the Vandiel once and for all, which would prevent atrocities like the Darkest War from ever happening again.

CHURCH INFORMATION: Churches of Asteia are large and inviting stone structures that typically tower over nearby buildings. They are covered in statues and art such as frescoes that gloriously depict Asteia and the people she has helped. They typically possess an attached structure which houses clergy and permanent members of her organized church. Her rooms of worship are large, echoing affairs that tend to sport vaulted roofs, with smaller rooms attached for other private occurrences. They are typically surrounded by gardens to display the beauty of natural life. The hierarchy of her church is extremely structured, with the High Priest or Priestess of Asteia at its head. They aim to help as many people as possible and rid the world of disease and pestilence. For the most part the Asteian church refrains from directly interfering with manners of state, except in Aurezia. In Aurezia the Asteian church has taken a role of fierce militarism to defend the theocracy of the nation. Perhaps the most important of the church's tenants is their vow to find and protect the reborn Asteia whenever she graces Vathis with her mortal presence.

rites, rituals, holy days: All Asteians attempt to pilgrimage to her most holy of sites, the Sapphire Spire, found in Aurez City, Aurezia. The Laniri holiday is celebrated by Asteians as a gift-giving affair with pretty lights and boughs of holly as decorations. This day celebrates the day she is always reborn. Another holiday is observed in her honor at the last place she was reincarnated. Currently this is in Sanctuary, Vavaire. Asteians must perform a loving act each day to awaken the good inside others.

HISTORY: Asteia is one of the nine survivors of the Forsaken War, and one of the seven remaining Deities that brought life to Vathis. She obtained vast quantities of power left over from the fallen Deities of the Forsaken War, and using this energy she and

Zanon created a number of gods and goddesses. Asteia started the process of reincarnating on Vathis, and has done so multiple times over the course of her history. However, the results of the Divine Sands War prevent Asteia and the other Deities from interacting with the Material Plane in any direct manner. She created her first Touched after the war to act as her representative on the Material Plane. She remained relatively uninvolved in major events following the Divine Sands War until the Darkest War started, where she then reincarnated into the form of Aevalyn, a human woman with the ability to see into the future. This gave the surviving peoples of Vathis an advantage against the rampaging fiends. She was integral to both the noir's separation from Vandiel control and the creation of the first worldfall, which saved most of Vavaire from total destruction during the war. Near the end of her time as a mortal she led one thousand chosen soldiers against the Shattered Hand at Valiance. Aevalyn's mortal form willingly died after the end of the Darkest War at the hand of Ravenne zi'Stardragon, freeing the nation of Vavaire from its worldfalls. Her clerics are still receiving divine gifts such as spells, so it is assumed that she has returned to her place in Aver Brithe, though she has been silent following the death of her mortal form.

RELATIONSHIPS: Asteia views all beings as her allies and children. She seeks nothing more but for them to live in harmony. The only true enemies of Asteia are the Arkhos, as they wish to undo all that she has created.

DOGMA: All things possess beauty. The truest form of beauty comes not from the surface, but from within one's heart and soul. Beauty within the heart breeds love for all things. Love all things good and just in the world. Love for oneself and one's lover breeds creation. From creation comes life. Bring forth sounds and songs from within one's soul to bring forth the beauty in others. Find and cherish items of beauty, but more so those who create them. Protect all living things from evil, for all life is the progeny of Asteia. Bring all life into the pure light, and help raise up those with doubts and show them the glory of good. Let no being bring undue harm to another.



BASTION

Titles: Ray of Hope, Mercy's Hand, Giver, Martyr

Holy Symbol: White feather

Portfolios: Hope, Martyrdom, Truth, Mercy, Generosity, Peace, Tolerance

Alignment: Neutral Good

Plane: Aver Brithe

Demonym: Basts

Touched: Walter Clark

Favored Weapon: Hope's Ray (Longspear)

Bastion is a stoic and quiet deity who tends to not interfere with the affairs of the other gods. While he is a master at the art of war he only elects violence as a last resort, preferring peace and diplomacy instead. He never waivers from his allies, and never stops defending an honorable cause, regardless of the outcome.

GOALS: Bastion's primary goal is to spread peace and tolerance throughout Vathis. He wishes to change the outlook of those who seek war and show them the error in their ways. He also wishes to help restore the outlook and hope of the people of Vathis in the wake of the Darkest War.

CHURCH INFORMATION: Bastion's church attracts veterans and those who have suffered at the hands of war. The church goes through periods of high and low membership, but his priests and clerics prefer periods of low membership, as it tends to indicate that the world is at peace. The church takes a lead role in providing relief for refugees of war and natural disasters.

RITEs, RITUALs, HOLY DAYs: On the Laniri, those who follow Bastion honor the fallen in a ceremony that involves the breaking of a weapon, typically a sword. Basts are generally trained in some form of combat, but are sworn to use their skills only as a means to keep peace, protect the innocent, or uphold the ideals of truth. Once a week Basts are to give something to another and harbor no ill will for their loss. These gifts may be the gifts of time, labor, or material possessions.

HISTORY: Bastion was once a slave to a vae'rin queen, to whom he showed a different way of life. That queen was Astea, born in her darkest era, and the hope that he showed her ascended him to godhood upon his death. While enslaved by Astea's darkest incarnation, the paladin that was Bastion never wavered in his duty. Day after day he attempted to redeem her. When her noble house was at war and she was near death and paralyzed, Bastion threw her over his shoulder and marched for days to the surface, his only light being the shining beacon of his faith and hope that he had saved her soul. After reaching safety they were set upon by foes, and Bastion was captured as he ensured her escape. He was executed but kept Astea's deepest secrets from their pursuers even as he was tortured, which saved her life. His martyrdom inspired Astea to lift Bastion up and reward his sacrifice upon her reascension. Since becoming a god, he has been attempting to spread mer-

cy and truth to all who would have it. Bastion took no great part in the Darkest War, but has emerged to help rekindle hope and peace in the communities of Vathis. The number of his worshippers has grown in the wake of the Darkest War.

RELATIONSHIPS: The Ray of Hope is allied with the good Deities, though he remains somewhat separate and only appears when sought after or called upon. The exception to this is Astea. Bastion takes it upon himself to bring her a gift once per month to thank her for the honor she bestowed upon him when she made him a god. Astea happily declines this gift, whatever it may be, telling him that he has done more than enough for her. He holds a great disdain for Junon, who instigates war for war's sake, and Kato, whom he believes is far too violent and chaotic in nature. He has a particular hatred for the goddess Tesiline.

DOGMA: Do what is right, even if it may harm you. Let no fear be unconquered. Allow hope to flourish in the heart of all souls, for it is the guiding hand that leads us into the golden age. Never lie, cheat, or steal, for those actions diminish the light of hope. Treat all others as equals. Remember that those you would strike down in vengeance have fallen brothers as well. Stop those who wish to bring undue harm to others. Throw back the ignorance of darkness with the purity of light. Give succor to those in need, be it a healing touch, or a comforting hand. Lead by example. Honor the sacrifices of others and make sacrifices of your own. Through your actions bring those around you closer together, and know that there is always hope.



CIRCE

Titles: Mistress of Respite, Summer Lover, Mother of Fertility, Healing Hands

Holy Symbol: Light blue butterfly

Portfolios: Healing, Fertility, Family, Joy, Comfort, Nurturing, Summer

Alignment: Neutral Good

Plane: Aver Brithé

Demonym: Circite

Touched: Matron Surreal zi'Wellstar

Favored Weapon: Guidance (Quarterstaff)

Never one to allow formality and propriety to interfere with her pursuit of pleasure, Circe interacts with her followers in a benevolent and personal fashion. She keeps close watch over lovers in the mortal realm in remembrance of her own origin. She often acts as an unseen matchmaker, encouraging those who are on the precipice of love into each other's arms. This applies to both mortals on Vathis as well as the Deities themselves.

GOALS: Circe is always looking for ways to spread love and life throughout the world. She is currently concerned with healing the wounds wrought by the Darkest War, allowing the people of Vathis to once again experience the joys and happiness they did in times before.

CHURCH INFORMATION: Her clergy are often found healing those in need. Shrines and temples to Circe are found in almost every city, and her churches frequently act as rest houses for adventurers and those who pay homage to Circe through sexual acts. Her churches possess large promenades, lascivious artwork, richly furnished bedrooms, open bathhouses, and various hidden nooks to share moments of love and pleasure. Her formal clergy members are called Consorts. Their central place of organized worship is not a traditional church, but rather the Mochesea Hospice, a hospital on the northern shores of the Angylis Sea.

RITES, RITUALS, HOLY DAYS: Circe wishes for her Circites to pray for spells at night. Her clergy universally recognizes two days per year as holy days, Ecric and the Laniri. On the fourteenth day of the Veil, the day of the birth of the goddess, they typically celebrate by abstaining from pleasure during the daylight hours, using that time to aid young mothers and newlywed couples. On the second holy day, the Laniri, they celebrate by forming a new relationship with another and exchanging a lover's token. Other celebrations in her honor are conducted regionally, but they vary based on location. The largest of these observances is the festival of love held each spring in Venoch. Her followers flock to the shores of the elven nation to perform marriages and encourage fertility and joy among the people here. Once a week Circites are to share joy with another.

HISTORY: During the early Astean rebirths the goddess of life herself bore her first child, who came to be known as Circe.

Possessing charisma and unparalleled beauty, Circe was able to facilitate the relinquishment of the Erelus Shards and halt a war with just a few words. In the Divine Sands War, Circe sought to end the conflict diplomatically, even going so far as to take an Anuald lover. In the most recent global conflict, the Darkest War, she was so distraught at the suffering of her followers that she attempted to come to the Material Plane. This backfired, and she fell into a deep sleep from which she has only recently awoken.

RELATIONSHIPS: Circe can often be found in romantic situations with the other Deities of Vathis. She often visits Irilyns-haee in particular, seeming to take great joy in shaking the resolve of the usually stoic goddess. She is adamantly opposed to Keindrinas and will actively go out of her way to disrupt his plans, but always with influence and never direct confrontation. Circe also romances and persuades other Deities to turn against Kato in order to achieve her wily ends.

DOGMA: A life lived without joy and pleasure is a life wasted. Let no hurt be unhealed. Let no injury be undressed. Let no illness be uncured. Comfort those around you in any way possible, as you never know when you will need comforting yourself. Heal the wounds of others and pass the knowledge of how to heal onto them. Never take pleasure for yourself that inflicts suffering on another. True strength lies in the bonds of kin. Know that kin need not be blood and may be of the heart alone. Family comes first in all things, and all families from all walks of life are sacred. The pursuit of pleasure should not be denied due to one's station or preference, be yours or someone else's. Sex is as natural to the body as breathing, so let not society hinder the joy that couples find together. Know also that sensuality and sex bring healing to those involved, not only pleasure. Cherish the summer, the season of ripeness and warmth, and follow its example. Sex as a pleasure need not bring forth life, but nurture the fertility of women.



IRILYN SHAE

Titles: Moonwinter's Queen, Fey Maiden, Stormqueen, Lady Redemption

Holy Symbol: Frozen crescent moon

Portfolios: Moon, Redemption, Nature, Fey, Winter, Water, Weather, Animals

Alignment: Chaotic Good

Plane: Ebonheart

Demonym: Irlysh

Touched: Unknown

Favored Weapon: Crescent (Curved blade)

Irilynshae is a quiet and withdrawn deity. Even among the pantheon she is hardly seen, and when she does make an appearance she says little, but her words are usually profound. It is extremely rare for mortals to know when she intervenes in their lives. Her fury, when riled, has all the force of a midwinter blizzard. She is patient, and does not rush headlong into danger. All of her plans are carefully calculated. The more attentive Deities attribute her quiet nature to her constant contemplations of the consequences of actions—both hers and others.

GOALS: Irilynshae wishes for everyone to weed out the evil in their hearts. She longs to restore the balance of good and evil in the universe, which she believes is currently skewed. This balance is of the utmost importance to Moonwinter's Queen. Serena's vae'rin are the main focus of her enmity, and she longs to free this race from the grip of Serena's claws.

CHURCH INFORMATION: The clergy of Irilynshae possess no well-organized congregation, but respect remains a constant among her followers regardless of their differences. Her clerics are commonly referred to as Winternights, and they typically pray at shrines that can be found dotting the land. Standing churches devoted to Irilynshae are few and far between, but when seen they rival even Astea's finest. Irilynshae's largest following is in the city of Synethil, where she is worshipped by the majority of the city's inuzen population. She is often looked to by sailors and travelers who pray for good weather and calm skies and seas.

rites, rituals, holy days: The only holy day Irilynshae's worshippers formally recognize is the Laniri, the day that the goddess was born. Her holy site is the Winternight Temple in Synethil, a place prone to frequent plane-falls. Members of her clergy also set aside two days a year in which they help those who ask for aid. Clerics of Irilynshae frequently perform a ritual for travelers which is said to protect them from peril while journeying. Once per week Irlysh are to perform one action that causes another to rethink their own course of action.

HISTORY: Irilynshae was once two separate sister goddesses, Lucia and Irinal. Lucia was the goddess of the moon, and Irinal the goddess of frost and cold. They were among the first gods to arrive on Vathis. Keindrinan managed to capture the sisters and

submitted them to endless torture. To retain their sanity they entwined their godhoods, creating Irilynshae, and it was only by Uryll's interference that Irilynshae's life was spared. She served an important role in the Divine Sands War, as the power of ice was particularly effective within the harsh deserts of Osept. Her presence in Osept brought about the first recorded snowfall in the Nashendasorn Desert.

RELATIONSHIPS: Moonwinter's Queen is only close with her sister, Uryll. She is often seen in talks with Astea regarding matters of importance, but otherwise she keeps to herself. Irilynshae rightfully hates Keindrinan with every fiber of her godhood. She also greatly dislikes the Vandiel Zenshir, as he disrupts the natural order of ice and winter.

DOGMA: Within the darkest of hearts lies the potential for good. Be always compassionate and honorable, for cruelty and deception show not the path to redemption. Winter is a time of quiet, peace, and tranquility; it is a time of rest, not of death and destruction. Winter is the longest of seasons and the harshest to endure; those that survive its frigid winds are stronger for it. Remain vigilant against the movements of evil. Remove the threats that cannot see the light, but remember to give every soul the opportunity to seek it. The chill touch of winter's kiss is a mighty weapon and should never be used without first analyzing the implications and vowing to use it with reverence. Know that forests are not only sacred, but they provide protection against the evils of the world. They are also places of respite for those of kind heart. The animals of the world should be protected and assisted whenever possible, for all life depends on one another. The light of Farilis reveals things for what they truly are; bring all penitents under its light. The revitalizing rains that cleanse the soul are a sign of Irilynshae's blessing. A moonlit night of rain is a good omen.



JUNON

Titles: The Winged Knight, War Maiden, Lady of the Sword

Holy Symbol: A winged sword

Portfolios: Honor, War, Strategy, Oaths, Vengeance, Battle, Swordplay

Alignment: Lawful Neutral

Plane: Kelosia

Demonym: Juns

Touched: Unknown

Favored Weapon: Hand of Kurzen (Bastard sword)

Junon is a quiet and calm deity, her voice rarely heard from behind her black plate mask. She cares nothing for the deeds and misdeeds of others, only for the oaths that are taken, and the honor in which those oaths are held. War comes to those of every race, and Junon sees to it that it does. When pushed, Junon responds with unbridled fury tempered by revenge. She is among the fiercest of the Deities.

GOALS: The Winged Knight is seeking a way to permanently annihilate the Arkhos and the Vandiel. While Astea wishes to save them, Junon thinks they are not worth saving and longs to wipe them from the face of the multiverse. She is currently searching for and testing worthy candidates to be her Touched.

CHURCH INFORMATION: Junon's churches are composed of an organized clergy. Backed by the Dark Knights Free Company, they are a force to be reckoned with, and they boast some of the most elite soldiers ever born. Her churches typically act as mercenary groups, and they favor neither side of a conflict. Her ley-worshippers are usually champions of the Essel Tournament, professional fighters, and soldiers. Her faithful are always training and typically proficient in many types of weapons and fighting styles. Picking a fight with one of her clergy is universally considered unwise.

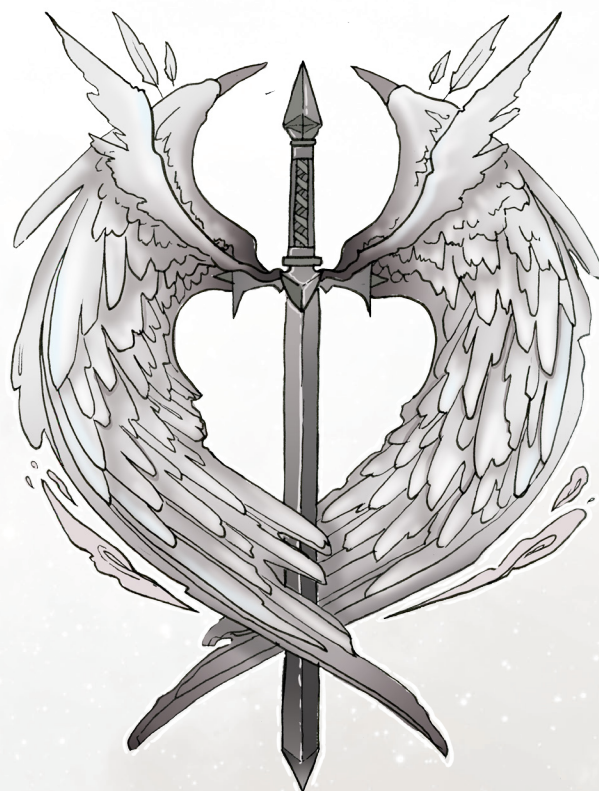
RITEs, RITUALs, HOLY DAYs: Juns typically pray for spells at dawn to temper their minds for a new day. The only holiday that Juns recognize is that of the Laniri, the day their goddess was given form, and they celebrate the day in remembrance of those who've fallen in battle. Her sacred site is Junon's Rest in northern Isild, where her mortal body was laid to a final rest. A good portion of her clergy willingly enter the Essel Tournament at least once. Some utilize the Essel technologies outside of combat simply to experience the thrill of simulated combat. Once a week, a Jun is to show resolve in the face of adversity.

HISTORY: Long before recorded history a great war was fought and a hero was born. This hero would come to be known as Kurzen. Kurzen rose among his peers and saved the world from utter destruction, and in doing so he killed the goddess Serena. Kurzen was then gifted with divinity and power over war. Millennia later war would come again, so he shed his divine coil for a mortal one. In his rebirth he forgot his past self and was reborn as Junon. Junon once again rose to divinity, and this divine persona is

Junon as the world knows her today.

RELATIONSHIPS: Junon fosters war for war's sake, and she is liked by few of her fellow Deities. She is often seen as temperamental and aggressive, and while she does not instigate fights, she attempts to see them to their highest point of conflict. She often takes an adversarial stance against Bastion and Astea's want for peace, as she believes that honorable combat is an ideal solution to any disagreement. Junon sometimes works towards Serena's ends without realizing it, as the evil goddess seeks to accomplish her goals through means of conquest and aggression. Serena is known to manipulate Junon and her followers.

DOGMA: Honor those who practice the crafts of war and bring arms against their enemies. Respect those who would stand against you in battle. Honor those who would meet you on the field, and dishonor those who would run from conflict or hide behind others. The true warrior depends on his own abilities foremost. Be wary of false alliances, and remain true to all of your agreements, unless those agreements would result in your own dishonor. War is to be seen as a natural occurrence, brought forth by society in its very nature. Let no one who taints your honor go unpunished, for in doing so you bring further shame upon yourself. Let war be simple and as elegant as swordwork. Let neither be unwieldy or flawed. War should never be brought forth without purpose, or protracted beyond its worth. A true warrior knows when the battle is worth the cost of waging.



KATO

Titles: Firestorm, Everburning, Savage One

Holy Symbol: A flaming sword

Portfolios: Fire, Murder, Savagery, Lies, Cunning, Beasts, Ferocity, Survival

Alignment: Chaotic Evil

Plane: Vicizes

Demonym: Katar

Touched: Halvar Windhand

Favored Weapon: Brandr (Greatsword)

Kato is a savage deity who can change almost any situation to his favor. He is infamous for breaking alliances at the worst possible moment and causing suffering for no reason at all. Utterly merciless against those who stand against him, Kato often hides in the shadows like a predatory animal, watching and waiting until he gains the upper hand he needs.

GOALS: Kato's goals are to plant primal instincts and urges into the sentient beings of Vathis, and strengthen those of beasts already wild, as the purity of their hatred and savagery fuels him. Strengthening his followers and returning the world to a more primitive time is the dream of the Firestorm, and he will not stop until Vathis is cleansed to his liking.

CHURCH INFORMATION: Throughout history Kato has instilled primitive urges into the thoughts of his followers, pushing them to create feral druid circles and become one with the beasts of the world. Not all he embodies is evil, however. He is worshipped as a god of fire and survival by several civilizations that praise all of the elements individually, and those who seek aid in the wilderness sometimes turn to him. Kato's followers are not organized, with the loosest form of his worship being the Dread Tempests Free Company. A lax church of Kato exists today, primarily found in nations that revere the entire pantheon or pray to him in regards to his portfolios of survival, beasts, and the element of fire. Katar pray to shrines dedicated to Kato that are spread throughout the world in a variety of forms, from secret rooms in noble mansions to dens of thieves. Though widespread, they possess utter loyalty to Kato, and attacks between worshippers are rare. Firebrands, as Kato's worshippers often call themselves, extend to nearly every reach of Asarus. They move about in the open, hiding behind well-crafted facades. Sentient beasts and monstrous races commonly revere Kato as their chief deity.

RITEs, RITUALs, AND HOLY DAYs: Clerics of Kato adhere to few rites. They typically pray to him and prepare their spells before an open flame or other burning object. When a creature is slain, Katar use whatever is left of the corpse and do not create waste. Cremation is their proper burial rite. Kato's worshippers perform a burning ritual during the summer solstice, where all Katar burn an effigy constructed of their own material possessions. Burning this effigy will cleanse the Katar's soul and bring them closer to primitivity. During the middle of the month of

the Bard the Katar often observe a feasting day that represents one last feast before an animal's hibernation. Worshippers must slay, skin, cook, and feast on an animal that they themselves hunted. Once per week a Katar should move against their enemies or hunt and slay a creature, either by might or by guile.

HISTORY: Kato's existence began in the form of one of the legendary Dracensis blades wielded by Kurzen. Kurzen killed Serena using this blade, and the sword absorbed most of her power, gaining sentience and a portion of her energy upon her death. Zanon discovered the weapon shortly afterwards and granted the blade its own divinity, becoming Kato as the world knows him. Over time Kato carved out a domain for himself on the plane of Vicizes, and now eternally hunts for weakened and lesser prey.

RELATIONSHIPS: Kato cares little for maintaining alliances with the other gods. The Vandiel Karwytren and the goddess Serena are his most hated enemies, as he sees Karwytren as a rival and Serena will never forgive him for killing her and diminishing a portion of her power long ago. Astea is also a staunch opponent of Kato's ferocity. Tesiline and Uryll have allied with the Savage One at times, and Zanon, his creator, is the only Deity to whom Kato shows reverence.

DOGMA: Nothing can match the destructive force of pure flame. Lie, deceive, burn, kill, outwit, and survive. Find your marks and use your skills against them. One lie can bring the downfall of an entire empire. Those with cunning, a smooth tongue, and those who know when to strike can quickly rise within the ranks. Take down one enemy at a time. Keep all others in perpetual fear of your next strike. Rely solely on yourself, and strike swift and strong. The world will one day return to its primitive origins. Practice those ways. Fire will eventually cleanse us all, honor the holy flame and its might.



KEINDRINAS

Titles: The Sadist, Master of Betrayal, The Tormentor

Holy Symbol: A fanged smile

Portfolios: Despair, Loss, Betrayal, Torment, Strife, Suffering, Cruelty, Torture

Alignment: Lawful Evil

Plane: Druzkal

Demonym: Keinar

Touched: Yperkun Xaycatl

Favored Weapon: Discord (Battle-axe)

Keindrinas is a forward god, and his intentions are known long before his moves are made. He is the most aggressive of all the evil Deities, and his worshippers reflect his aggression. Never a man for subtlety or intrigue, Keindrinas enjoys having all cards on the table, but he is capable of exercising caution and subtlety should the need arise.

GOALS: Keindrinas wishes to one day see the other gods and goddesses above him laid low. He constantly schemes to gain the upper hand, and is slowly formulating contingencies to usurp Serena, Kato, and Zanon. The Vandiel Feliroz has recently come into his crosshairs, as Keindrinas believes that taking the Elder Shard in Feliroz's possession will allow him to control the fiends of the Vast and gain power over the other Deities.

CHURCH INFORMATION: Churches dedicated to Keindrinas are a rare sight. Though his followers are found nearly everywhere, they prefer to remain out of the open and away from prying eyes. In many cities a standard church devoted to Keindrinas does not exist, with his local clergy being merely a group of like-minded individuals who plot from within the shadows. When organized, his church possesses a rigid structure and strict protocol for worship. The Faceless was founded as a Free Company but became the inspiration for the standard church of Keindrinas, inspiring his followers to attend functions and services donning a black mask. This conditions members to disconnect themselves from the heinous acts they commit, a practice extremely valuable to newcomers. Painbringers are a sect of his church dedicated to initiating other members. They inflict extreme cruelties upon novices to determine if they are worthy of serving the Tormentor.

rites, rituals, and holy days: Keinar are expected to spread suffering to others regardless of race, religion, or nationality. No holy days are observed in his name, but his followers perform an annual rite described as the Keinar Inquiry, where higher members of the church attempt to weed out non-believers and those untrustworthy from his following. They also visit a holy site called the Obsidian Pillar, located deep in Erygis in an unassuming field. A faithful Keinar who touches the Obsidian Pillar experiences rapture and joy, while a non-believer feels wracking pain and torment. Once per week, a follower of Keindrinas must deliver a wound of any kind.

HISTORY: Betraying Serena to Zanon was the mark that put Keindrinas on the map, but as a Vandiel he never dreamed that he would be rewarded for his efforts. Rewarded he was, however, and Keindrinas became the first demonic entity to be granted godhood. Years after he secured his position within the pantheon, he moved against the two sister Deities, Irinal and Lucia. Capturing and torturing the sisters made it clear to the gods that he is a force to be reckoned with. It was his hand that drove the two divine entities to merge together and form Irilynshae, as the goddess is known today.

RELATIONSHIPS: Irilynshae and Keindrinas are bitter enemies, as his unfortunate actions directly caused her creation. Zanon and Tesiline have both been temporarily allied with the Sadist before. Keindrinas tends to side with Zanon in most matters, as he is the one who granted Keindrinas godhood, and Tesiline's goals frequently align with those of the Master of Betrayal. Serena hates Keindrinas for betraying her to Zanon, and Teiris and Keindrinas are frequently at odds due their very nature as gods of freedom and torture, respectively.

DOGMA: The only way to relieve pain is to cause it. Spread strife through the use of pointed strikes at a seemingly random moment. Hone the art of torture, not only in the physical form, but of the mind and soul. In order to truly inflict pain, one must use skill and cunning while delivering wounds in order to preserve life and prolong agony. Never display passion or mercy to others or yourself, except to bring further pain to others. Accept and enjoy pain, for it is the only constant. Revel in the pain of others, for their screams strengthen your mind. Pain without cause is the ultimate form of torture. The greatest wound is not to the body, but to the irreparable soul. Sadness and despair are the truest of all feelings and should be spread to others by all means.



MILEEN

Titles: The Judge, Autumn Maiden, Lady Death, Curator

Holy Symbol: A closed eye

Portfolios: Death, Neutrality, Justice, Destiny, Judgment, Autumn, Afterlife

Alignment: True Neutral

Plane: The Realm

Demonym: Milar

Touched: Unknown

Favored Weapon: The Balance (Two-bladed sword)

Mileen is the goddess of death and the curator of souls who have passed from the living into her graces. She judges these souls in her grand temple, The Final Tribunal, within her mighty city in The Realm. It is from there that she ushers the dead to their rightful places in the cosmos. Mileen is the most reserved of the Deities, outshading even Junon and Irilynshae in terms of speechlessness. She only communicates with her faithful.

GOALS: Mileen wishes only to continue ruling over The Realm and judging the souls that pass through in peace. She would love to rid the world of necromancy. The Aspect of the Vandiel Monakxel was destroyed on Vathis, aiding Mileen's cause, and she's taking advantage of the opportunity by bolstering her forces and worshippers while Monakxel is weakened.

CHURCH INFORMATION: Mileen's church has been one of the biggest mainstays in religion across all of recorded history, as every society has revered the Judge in some way. The Milar are open opponents of undeath, and they actively hunt down the undead and the necromancers who raise them. Most of her clergy act as funeral directors and grief counselors. They seek to preserve the natural order of life and death, and their kind can be found in nearly every walk of life. Her clergy also sometimes act as judges of law, as they provide truly impartial decisions on important matters. The Milar take on the title of Shade, and their ranks are denoted by a range of black, white, and grey shades. They are found in every nation and are trained in the burial rites of all other religions, so that they may pay proper respect to the dead. In light of the Darkest War they've been overworked, and her church is actively recruiting members.

rites, rituals, holy days: The Milar do not observe any days as a holiday, but instead celebrate the days on which loved ones have passed. Her most sacred of holy sites is the Life Mirror, a crystalline cliffside in Armeria where the line between life and death is thin, and one can supposedly speak with their dearly departed. When praying for spells, faithful must invoke the name of individuals who have passed to Mileen's realm. A ritual is held at the end of each month, which is a vigil for the lost, unnamed, and unclaimed dead.

history: Mileen was granted godhood millennia ago during the Age of Old Magic as the shepherd of the souls flowing into the

afterlife. In order to remain impartial in the judgment of souls her memory of mortality was removed, but it is said that some still remember her, and the one who would know her true self has yet to pass through her gates. She is typically regarded as neutral in the affairs of the Deities and mortals alike

relationships: Tesiline is Mileen's most hated enemy, as her undeath mocks everything that Mileen stands for. Vangal and Astea are her trusted allies, followed by the goddess Teiris. Keindrinas and Kato also disgust Mileen, as they wantonly send mortals to The Realm far before their rightful time.

dogma: Life is to be viewed as a gift and should be cherished. Death can also be a gift, both to those who pass on and those who are left behind in the mortal realm. Autumn is the physical manifestation of this; as life passes from nature, the gifts left to the next generation emerge. Ending a life against its will is never to be taken lightly. Death should be a natural, merciful, and deserved ending. Judge those around you in fair neutrality. The end of a life may be the act of destiny, and not a result of ill will. Death consumes all: do not fight it. The extension of life against its natural course is forbidden. Remain calm, cool, and collected in all endeavors, for allowing ones emotions to take control is to lose control. Make not a mockery of death, or cheapen it. Once a season you should help one pass into the afterlife with peace and serenity.



NAUGRIX

Titles: Scaled Father, Indomitable, Goldsmith, Wyrmfather

Holy Symbol: An emerald dragon eye

Portfolios: Dragons, Earth, Strength, Mountains, Mining, Trade, Craft, Wealth

Alignment: Lawful Neutral

Plane: Avenfaer

Demonym: Naugrins

Touched: Unknown

Favored Weapon: Dragon's Tail (Heavy flail)

Naugrix is a stern and noble dragon god. Pure of heart and action, he is committed to upholding his place in the multiverse and maintaining balance in the world.

GOALS: Naugrix retains the basic instinct of all dragons: to hoard. Naugrix does what he can to gain both worshippers and wealth, and opposes all who dare to stand in his way. Like all dragons he is patient, and has been known to wait centuries for his plans to unfold. He merely wishes to gain power and happily rule over his worshippers so that they can emulate his grace.

CHURCH INFORMATION: Dwarves and vasar are the most prevalent races among Naugrix's worshippers, but his clergy of Naugrins come from all races and walks of life. Shrines devoted to the Scaled Father are located in the mountains and hills of Asarus, and his churches are awe-inspiring. For millennia the dwarves and vasar have disputed the proper way to praise Naugrix and how to correctly interpret his teachings, with both races believing that they are more deserving of his attention. This rivalry has led to conflicts over holy sites, particularly Winsor Valley. In modern times, however, they've reached a common ground and agree to co-exist and praise Naugrix in their own ways. They remain tolerant of one another, but their clergies are separate. Another term for his followers are Wyrmspeakers. Vasar-based churches are currently attempting to ally the three non-evil dragon churches into a tribunal opposing Serena's sway.

rites, rituals, and holy days: Naugrix values crafting, wealth, and the earth itself. As such, he encourages his worshippers to build and create shrines and objects of worship dedicated to him by their own hand. This could be accomplished by chiseling a personal shrine or molding a talisman from clay. Naugrins tend to memorize his stories of triumphs to share with like-minded individuals, as his glory is to be shared often. Clerics are to pray for spells in the presence of an item from their personal hoard. The months of the summer and winter solstices each contain holy days pertaining to the relative season, as a celebration of the strength they've shown to survive thus far. Once per week, a Naugrin should increase their personal wealth, be it in monetary possession or wealth of the spirit and experience.

HISTORY: The dwarves and vasar of Vathis believe that Naugrix has existed forever, and that he is the one who gave birth to

the mountains of the world. Naugrix has been known for as long as Vathis has been settled. He is the son of one of the original progenitor gods from before the Age of Ancients. Inheritor of the dominion of vasar, dragons, and dwarves, Naugrix became one of the four dragon Deities alongside Aleydra, Vangal, and Serena. The recent return of the dragons has caused a great increase in Naugrix's power.

RELATIONSHIPS: As Serena is Naugrix's natural enemy, representing the evil potential of the dragon Deities and their earthly worshippers, Serena's vae'rin are the Naugrins' mortal foes. He and his followers do whatever they can to fight against their cunning plots. Naugrix is strongly allied with the other two dragon gods, who share some of his values. He does not care for the evil Deities, as they tend to be dishonest and harmful. He also thinks that Bastion, Irilynshae, and Circe are too soft in their godly rule.

DOGMA: Dragons are the ultimate embodiment of wisdom and strength. They reside within the mountains, which possess all of the world's wealth. Those who pay their respects and serve the dragons should be honored as well. Collect the wealth that resides within the world in homage of the scaled ones. Gathering scattered valuables is good, but bringing to light new wealth from the earth's depths is superior. Wealth is measured in more than just gold. Resist the slings and arrows of the world, as the mountains resist the fury of the earth. Sacred also are the hands that refine the mountain's bounty into works with more utility. Emulate the strength of the dragons with a keen mind and a honed body.



SERENA

Titles: Wyrmqween, Tyrant Conqueror, Lady Intrigue

Holy Symbol: A dragon

Portfolios: Chaos, Power, Intrigue, Tyranny, Poison, Conquest, Ambition, Status

Alignment: Chaotic Evil

Plane: Feleernez

Demonym: Serenites

Touched: Unknown

Favored Weapon: Wyrmfang (Rapier)

Serena's mind and actions seem sporadic and chaotic, but her machinations are in fact extremely calculated. She rarely moves against her opponents openly, utilizing mortal intermediaries instead. Serena is the most ambitious of the evil Deities, and her plots affect nearly everyone. The Evernight is her home, and the vae'rin, who inhabit the darkness, are her will. She keeps to the shadows and makes her will known to her worshippers in vague, ambiguous ways.

GOALS: Serena's current goal is to free herself from imprisonment in the lower plane of Feleernez. Her motives are secrets known by few, even among her followers. Her long-term goal is the destruction of all Deities and any other cosmic powers that threaten her reign. The Wyrmqween longs to be the only true power in the multiverse.

CHURCH INFORMATION: The vae'rin of the Evernight are the most prevalent of Serena's followers, seconded by vasar. Her clergy move against all non-Serenites by either quickly converting them to her following or removing them from the world. Every so often she sets her worshippers on quests to further her ends. She often pits her worshippers against one another to root out the weak and gain a perfect following. Her shrines are located in secret places, and her worshippers recognize the Laniri as her only holy day. Her holy site is the Wyrm Vault, a breathtakingly large geode riddled with crystalline stone dragon eggs. The Harbingers are her Free Company, and they sow sorrow and despair from the shadows. Serena appears to her deific followers as a beautiful female vae'rin. Once per week, Serenites are to take action to further their own power and position.

rites, rituals, holy days: Serena's clerics view the Laniri as the holiest of days, as it was the day she was ascended. Her clergy engages in rituals that involve sacrifice and torture of those who speak badly of Serena, the one true god. Serenites treat any day that they kill someone more powerful than themselves as a personal holiday.

HISTORY: Originally Serena was a Vandiel consort of Zanon, during his time as a Vandiel. Serena survived the fall of Farilis and brought her race, the vae'rin, to Vathis. Upon his rise to deityhood Zanon gifted her with divinity, but he was unable to remove her Vandiel essence, leaving her split between two forms. She is

now essentially two entities. She was once one of the most influential Deities, but she finally broke her alliance with Zanon during Uryll's seduction for his portfolio of darkness. It was during this time that Serena began to dream of overthrowing Zanon. During the attempted realization of this plot, she was betrayed by Keindrin and ultimately defeated by Kurzen. Serena was then banished to the plane from which she sprung, with no way to manifest on the Material Plane. As one of the four dragon gods herself, the return of the dragons has led to a great increase in her power.

RELATIONSHIPS: Serena holds no love for any of the other gods, and she moves against them all.

DOGMA: Serena is the one true deity. Convert those of false beliefs by any means necessary, even death. Everything is as it is by Serena's will. Questioning Serena's will is heresy; as is bringing harm to a true dragon of Serena's faith. Know that vae'rin and dragons are the true creations of Serena, all other races are gross imitations created by the false gods. They must all perish or be enslaved. Within vae'rin and dragons, females are the truest mirror to Serena, and they are to be revered and obeyed. Increase your standing by casting down those above you. In order to survive the gift of Chaos, one must grow in power by embracing it. Chaos is the test that one must master in order to survive, but know always that it is by Serena's whim that tests are administered. Sow discord amongst your enemies with rumors and plots. Conquer all those who would stand against you. Never be content with your current position. Be always looking upward while watching the enemies behind you. Increase your power so that you may rule over all others below you. The Evernight is the ultimate embodiment of Serena's gift. Those that survive it reign supreme.



TEIRIS

Titles: Worldfarer, Lady Freedom, Whisper of Wind, Wanderer

Holy Symbol: A soaring swallow

Portfolios: Freedom, Luck, Spirit, Discovery, Air, Travel, Adventure, Thievery, Roads, Navigation

Alignment: Chaotic Neutral

Plane: Avenfaer

Demonym: Teirins

Touched: Unknown

Favored Weapon: Wind's Caress (Bows, any)

Teiris is a free-spirited goddess who does not allow rules and restrictions to guide her actions. Her disciples follow the same code of freedom, typically worrying only what affects their actions may have on others, rather than of the consequences. She makes her presence known through small pranks and jokes.

GOALS: Teiris aims to encourage free spirits and inspire the lost and downtrodden, and wishes to one day see the controlling and cruel Deities put out of power. She also wants to find a way to break the bonds of fate laid out for all living things by the Zodiacs.

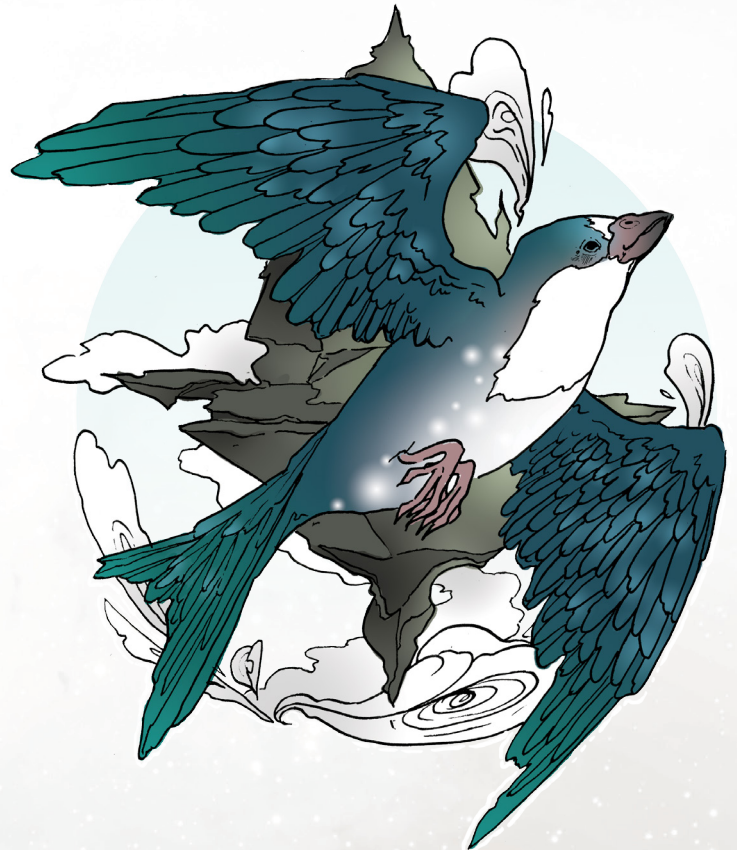
CHURCH INFORMATION: Teiris' clergy lack something possessed by some of the other good and neutral Deities: formalized churches. Her followers instead pray to shrines spread across Vathis. Her clergy remain neutral in all aspects, but are against those who enslave or imprison innocent individuals. When riled, Teirins exhibit the fury of an approaching storm. One can find her faithful working as explorers, airship captains, and seafarers. They rarely stay in the same place for long periods of time, always seeking new experiences.

RITEs, RITUALS, AND HOLY DAYS: The clergy of Teiris rarely meet for any formal reason, except on the Laniri, the day their goddess was granted divinity. When preparing spells, clerics of Teiris should do so outdoors, where the winds of the Worldfarer caress them. Every day is a holy day for Teirins, as every day is full of new opportunities. Celebrations in her honor are frequent and sporadic, and as such, are rarely organized. Once a week, a Teirin is to visit a place they've never been, or acquire a new possession. Her holy site is a floating mote called the Wandering Star, which is believed to be the ruins of the ship she used to ferry Astea to the northern continent long ago. This mote is home to the bulk of the world's Outlaw population.

HISTORY: Teiris was once a mortal who stole the Erelus Shards from a powerful mage in order to save Astea's life and stop a devastating war. After Astea re-ascended, she granted Teiris divinity, and the new goddess began to wander the planes. Her actions are unknown, as she rarely moves openly against her enemies. She can be found traversing and exploring the infinite planes of the Eternal. She sometimes makes excursions into the Vast to witness the lower planes in all of their glory. Attempts by the Vandiels and fiends of these planes to entrap and ensnare her have always failed.

RELATIONSHIPS: Lady Freedom is a friend to most Deities. Her enmity lies with Keindrinas, who often slaves or imprisons others, and Tesiline, who wishes all things to end. She also abhors the goddess Serena, who wantonly spreads discord among the gods. Teiris greatly respects Astea, as she raised Teiris to godhood. The Worldfarer also maintains a positive relationship with Circe and Irilynshae. She enjoys toying with Kato.

DOGMA: Choose your own destiny, and do not fear fate. Everything happens for reasons, though you may not know them. Discover the world on grand adventures and attempt to experience all things at least once. Take only what you need, not everything at hand; for excessive liberation of materials will attract the eyes of retribution. The stars of the night will guide you on your path. If someone doesn't take enough care to protect what they had, they didn't value it enough in the first place. Collect not only expensive goods, but keep an eye out for beauty. An inexpensive dagger may not be worth its weight in gold, but it might be valuable to the trained eye. Do not take from those worse off than yourself. Do not steal from Teiris's faithful. Do not let others keep you from following your own path. Every soul is born free to make its own decisions. All possess freedom to pursue their own desires, both in fate and in the world. Let the wind guide your feet.



TESILINE

Titles: Scourge Queen, Lichqueen, Unmother

Holy Symbol: Rotting hand holding a scourge

Portfolios: Decay, Undeath, Entropy, Illness, Necromancy, Mockery

Alignment: Neutral Evil

Plane: Druzkal

Demonym: Tesil

Touched: The Risen

Favored Weapon: Scourge of Worlds (Scorpion whip)

Tesiline is an undead goddess and a complete mockery of life itself. She knows this, and revels in decay. Her sense of humor is dark, and she delights in tricking people with the promise of rewards or blessing that are in truth unpleasant and malicious. The sixteen other Deities and cosmic beings that keep in contact with Tesiline or her followers suffer as a result of her demented whims. She is patient and clever, but takes pleasure in the misfortune of others.

GOALS: Tesiline's goal of ultimate entropy is no secret. She possesses a singular desire to hasten the end of all things, and her plots move towards that ultimate end. She believes that the un-death and true death of other beings will aid her the most.

CHURCH INFORMATION: The majority of Tesiline's upper clergy are either undead, necromancers, or both. Her temples are ill-kept and appear as ruins often located in swamps, slums, or areas of rot and decay. Her church is almost universally regarded with disdain, making it difficult for the Tesil to organize. They find it easier to operate on the fringes of society. The Free Company known as the Grey Company is her largest group of worshippers. Tesil who are undead or in a servant role are referred to as Disinterred, and those who are still living or achieved a seamless transition to undeath maintain a high status and are referred to respectfully as the Unburied. The Risen is a title specifically reserved for her Touched, her mightiest earthly servant.

rites, rituals, and holy days: The Tesil observe no holidays, feeling that no time is worth special note until time itself is no more. Followers are expected to hasten the coming of entropy every day in some manner, even trivially. Clerics are required to pray before something rotten, dead, or dying. All serve as a symbol of the coming of Tesiline's time. Talismans and symbols worn by her devout clerics are often preserved dead things. Cleansed bones and other remains, like a bone or feather necklace, are acceptable for effigie and allow someone to disguise their symbol of devotion to Tesiline as a mere decoration.

HISTORY: Tesiline was created during the first and only attempt to resurrect a god. Bastion's clergy tried to revive the slain goddess Taomiche, but instead created Tesiline through the failed ritual. Tesiline's twisted outlook and personality reflect the dichotomy of who she was against what she has become. Tesiline and her

forces battled on the side of the Deities in the Divine Sands War and the Darkest War, as their loss would have resulted in a shift of power not in her favor and ruined all of her progress toward an absolute end.

RELATIONSHIPS: Tesiline offers a smug and cruel thanks to Bastion for her creation, and she delights in battling him directly. These two faiths are nemeses. Tesiline is also in a constant struggle with Mileen, who oversees the natural order of life and death. She opposes Astea and wishes to end all of Astea's creation. Valshathe abhors Tesiline for her preoccupation with decay and illness, but Tesiline finds allies in fellow evil gods Keindrinas and Kato when it suits her. Her alliances are short-lived even among her evil brethren.

DOGMA: Everything will come to an end eventually. Life is nothing but a happenstance that will come to a swift and violent end. Health and well-being are merely an illusion that covers the truth of a slow and inevitable erosion. The slow decay of the world is an unstoppable force. The undead, an eternal force, are powered only by the negative energy that resides in all things. The undead need neither sustenance nor company. Embrace the inevitable, for it shall remain forever. The only true value of life is hastening the coming of the end. Illness and disease should touch all lives so that everyone may partake in their magnificence. Find joy only in the mockery of life and happiness. The fate of all life is to perish, and in order to remove oneself from that destiny, one must embrace that which is beyond life.



URYLL

Titles: Nightlotus, Nightmother, Dark One, Unseen
Holy Symbol: Black lotus
Portfolios: Night, Darkness, Shadow, Secrets, Lust, Assassination, Seduction, Stealth, Stars
Alignment: Chaotic Evil
Plane: Ebonheart
Demonym: Uryllans
Touched: Lillith
Favored Weapon: Lotus Petal (Kukri)

Uryll is a beautiful deity who often seduces her opponents in order to know their secrets, and she asks her followers to do the same. She remains neutral in nearly all deific affairs. Her intentions are dishonorable and self-serving, and every single entity she has successfully pursued has come to regret their dealings with her.

GOALS: The Nightlotus wishes to restore her sisters Lucia and Irinal to their original forms by any means necessary. She also longs to destroy Serena.

CHURCH INFORMATION: Headquartered in Tristan, Uryll's church is officiall called the Abbey of the Nightlotus. It is known as the Night Abbey elsewhere throughout the world. The church is primarily led by women. Each nation boasts a primary place of worship dedicated to the goddess, and the clergy of each nation are broken up into individual cells. The Lotusqueens of each cell frequently meet to discuss events, and they are somehow able to do so without physically traveling. The Blood Syndicate, a global assassin's guild, strictly follow and spread Uryll's word. The greatest of her worshippers are the Shadowlotus, the elite assassin Free Company. They uphold Uryll's dogma to the letter and remain one of the most secretive groups in the world.

RITEs, RITUALS, HOLY DAYS: Clerics pray for their spells at midnight, usually in an open air location where one can see the sky. Uryllans celebrate Victory Day, when the Motherland statue destroyed the Aspect of Dusyave in Uryllgrad during the Darkest War. They regard ravens as a holy animal and cannot bring harm to them. Once per week Uryllans are to perform an influencing act within the shadows, or keep a secret

HISTORY: Uryll is one of the nine survivors of the Forsaken War. She helped create the races of Vathis, and is one of the three sisters that hold the sky, stars, and earth together. She seduced the portfolio of darkness from Zanon and participated in the downfall of Serena by betraying her. Uryll saved Lucia and Irinal when they were captured and tortured by Keindrinus by seducing and distracting him, but her sisters had already combined to form Irilynshae. During the Divine Sands War, Uryll created the Shadowlotus and gathered a following of men and women from the north. She granted the chosen of these followers the Gift of Night, vampirism, and they cut through the Anuald forces. Shyone, Zanon's

Vantus consort, betrayed the Anuald during the Divine Sands War and Uryll helped to secretly lock her away in a pyramid. After the end of this war she took her followers north and settled in Vanya, facilitating the creation of the Empire of Night. It was then that she returned to her plane of existence. Near the end of the Darkest War she whispered to her clergy to pray at the Motherland of Night Statue, and she embodied the statue and destroyed the Aspect of Dusyave in protection of her faithful. The world at large is aware of Uryll's presence, but consider her faithful one of the least destructive evil faiths. Her clergy are largely accepted in most major cities, even Aurez City.

RELATIONSHIPS: Uryll moves against Serena more frequently than any other god, and she has seduced nearly all of the Deities in the pantheon at one point or another. She works closely with Irilynshae and Astea even though their portfolios clash.

DOGMA: Words meant to dwell in darkness shall never see the light of day. Seek solace within the shadows, for the path of light creates an easy target. Manipulation is better than force. Show your motives and true face only to the goddess. Darkness is the time of manipulation and blackmail. A Uryllan knows many secrets, and how to keep them. Strive to always better your situation, but use force only when absolutely necessary. When forced to strike, strike from the darkness and slip away into shadows, for shadows cannot be held responsible. Always tell the truth when you can leave a mistaken impression. Stealth, knowledge, beauty, and manipulation are virtues. Share secrets only with the faithful. Never consort with followers of the light unless you are attempting to learn their secrets or convert them to your beliefs. Remove your enemies in the quiet of the shadows. One word can be stronger than a hundred soldiers. Perform one act in the shadows at least once a week.



VALSHATHE

Titles: Verdant Lady, Flowered Shepard, Home Mother

Holy Symbol: Flower blossom

Portfolios: Agriculture, Renewal, Hearth, Abundance, Spring, Livestock

Alignment: Lawful Good

Plane: Aver Brithe

Demonym: Valshin

Touched: Celosia zi'Amaryllis

Favored Weapon: Bounty (Scythe)

Valshathe is a benevolent and forgiving goddess devoted to the growth and renewal of the natural world. She is the goddess of earth, home, the taming of the land to support civilization, and the careful husbandry of nature's creatures. It is said that the spring rains are her loving gift.

GOALS: Valshathe wishes to cleanse the world of areas of unnatural taint and corruption, including areas defiled by the Shattered Hand and the death knells of Vandiels. When the world of Vathis is cleansed of this lingering scourge, it will be the apex of purity.

CHURCH INFORMATION: Valshathe's church has grown throughout the ages, as agriculture is the crux of all civilization. She possesses a great many worshippers. Valshathe's name is known universally across the majority of the world's pantheons, due in large part to ancient records of her mortal form and chosen name. Most Valshins are simple people such as farmers, herders, and those who maintain house and home, but she is also revered among druids, wardens, rangers, and shamans who feel at peace within civilization as well as in the wilds. The clergy of Valshathe is divided into two sects. The first sect is known as the Gentle Ones, and they devote themselves to helping other Valshin flourish. They gather to worship in simple churches that are often barns or gardens. The second sect, called Pure Growth, focus their energy on reminding those who abuse nature of more respectful methods. If they meet, it is typically at a makeshift altar in a field or similarly natural setting. Unasten, a city in Osept, is considered the religious center for Valshins, as it sits along the lake of Valshathe's Tears. Unasten houses Valshathe's largest temples and greatest number of amassed worshippers. Though her churches can be found worldwide, most members of her clergy attempt to pilgrimage to Unasten at least once in their lives.

rites, rituals, holy days: Valshins preach ways of becoming one with the land, and clerics devoted to her craft a keepsake from the remains of a tree or plant. All solstices and equinoxes are considered holy days for her followers, with the spring equinox taking precedence. Her clerics pray for spells in view of the sunrise or sunset. Her clergy are well-versed in rituals said to enhance the livelihood and fertility of land and livestock, and they are sought out by members of other faiths in times of drought and poor harvest. Once a week her worshippers must en-

rich the natural world using their crafts, fields, or homes

HISTORY: Valshathe was originally one of the Anuald, but during the Divine Sands War she betrayed her Anuald brethren and turned the tide of war in favor of the Deities and mortals. She was found on the shores of an enormous lake as a mortal before her ascension, which was named Valshathe's Tears in her honor. When the war was over, Valshathe was rewarded for her efforts and risen to deityhood by Astea and Zanon, filling the void left in the pantheon by becoming the last ascended god.

RELATIONSHIPS: Valshathe gives some respect to Zanon for his part in her ascension, but she sides with Astea in most things because she disapproves of Zanon's greed. Valshathe is somewhat of a friend to Irilynshae, though they sometimes disagree over what forms nature should take. Her most bitter enmity is reserved for Tesiline, but she is not fond of any of the war-like gods, as their conflicts inflict great damage upon the natural world.

DOGMA: From the earth is given the gift of nature, and given to us is the gift of stewardship. To reap and to sow the earth is a part of the natural cycle. All things that flourish come from the earth. Let nothing be needlessly destroyed. Replant what has been cultivated. Improve and rebuild what has been leveled. Protect and nourish all that comes from nature. Spring is the season of the earth's recovery, where all things are born anew. As the fields nourish the body, the hearth and home nourish the soul. Seek always to produce more than you need, so in times of fallow you may be prepared.



VANGAL

Titles: Guardian, Sapphire Knight, Hand of Law

Holy Symbol: Azure scaled shield

Portfolios: Law, Duty, Loyalty, Protection, Chivalry, Devotion, Service

Alignment: Lawful Good

Plane: Aver Brithe

Demonym: Vangalite

Touched: Adrian zi'Snowhelm

Favored Weapon: Scales of War (Spiked shield)

Vangal is a paragon of nobility and chivalry that is eternally devoted to protecting those who cannot protect themselves. He is the right hand of Astea, and one of the four dragon gods. Vangal inspires those who are motivated by noble ideals and bonds freely taken.

GOALS: First and foremost, Vangal strives to protect Astea and the other Deities from the Vandiel. He also oversees Serena in her otherworldly prison to ensure that she does not escape.

CHURCH INFORMATION: Paladins of all races compose the majority of Vangal's clergy, called the Life Sworn. His churches serve as local strongholds in lesser settled areas, though a few are large fortifications in major cities. A good portion of his clergy are vassar. His church is organized by means of a strict and rigid hierarchy defined by ranks leading from initiate levels all the way to regional leaders. These ranks, from lowest to highest, are Broodmates, Bloods, Shields, Armors, Swords, Flights, Gazes, and Crowns. Their titles have a strong correlation to their duties within his church. Vangal's holy site is Alabaster, a dragonstone castle on the floating mote of Lavei, which is believed to have been his stronghold during the Divine Sands War. It is currently a training facility for his followers, the order of the Scaled Shields. The church takes it upon themselves to shield caravans and refugees across Asarus in the wake of the Darkest War, and sects of churchgoers dedicate themselves to these endeavors. His clergy are attempting to sway the reawakened dragons to Vangal's worship and organizations, believing that the dragons could bolster their numbers and strength.

rites, rituals, holy days: The greatest holiday in Vangal's church is observed on the anniversary of his Oath of Loyalty to Astea, which he gave on the Laniri. Another holy day held in his honor is celebrated on the eve of his death and ascension, the beginning of the month of the Curator. Clerics of Vangal are required to pray with their weapon or shield on their person. As their universal tools, a weapon or shield should be considered an extension of the Vangalite's being. Upon death, Vangalites are never buried alone but in pairs or more, so that their souls can guard one another in the afterlife. Ranks of Shield or above swear solemn oaths to protect those who need aid, and if they cannot adhere to their oaths they must confess and seek repentance. Once a week Vangalites are to stand up for someone worthy of their protection.

HISTORY: Vangal is one of the original Deities created by Astea. He was once a mortal dragon that bested all of the troubles and hardships that beset Astea during her first rebirth. He protected her unwaveringly until his death, and then was raised to godhood by Astea to continue his fervent devotion. Since then he has been her personal guardian to the exclusion of all else, and this endless dedication is the basis of his dogma.

RELATIONSHIPS: The Guardian is actively opposed to all of the evil gods, but he limits his workings against Zanon, instead leaving them to Astea. He is a particular enemy of Kato and Uryll, as he considers them the most profane and corrupt of the gods. Even while dealing with the other gods and goddesses Vangal is stern and somewhat hidebound, but unfailingly polite. Vangal considers Naugrix and Aleydra his allies, and Serena his antithesis in every way.

DOGMA: Shelter the weak with your strength. Teach the corrupt with your virtue. Humble the faithless with your fidelit . Guide the lost with your principles. Adherence to the just laws and honorable obligations of one's society is the foundation of a good life. It is only through commitment to the subtle rules and protocol of chivalry that people can flourish. Give respect to those who uphold honor and devotion, especially those who give their heart's blood in that pursuit. An oath of service given in Vangal's name is sacred beyond worth, and breaking this oath is sin the like of murder.



ZANON

Titles: Hate Eternal, Corrupter, Evil Father, Lord Deception

Holy Symbol: A black wineglass

Portfolios: Evil, Fear, Corruption, Hatred, Greed, Anger, Deception

Alignment: Neutral Evil

Plane: Vicizes

Demonym: Zanon

Touched: Grubmohra Shevarum

Favored Weapon: Wrath's Grip (Spiked gauntlet)

Zanon is a vengeful and ruthless god who considers himself the father of all evil Deities, and even some of other alignments. He never forgets a grudge, and revels in corrupting others. He wishes to subvert and control all of the other Deities so that he alone can rule over the world of Vathis. Zanon slowly attracts worshippers with promises of power and glory, and enjoys working through his mortal intermediaries.

GOALS: Zanon wishes to vanquish all that is good in the world. His enmity is focused on Astea and her allies, as well as Uryll and Serena for their treacherous actions against him in the past. Zanon knows that the destruction of the world leaves him nothing to rule, so he must conquer it instead. His immediate goal is to find a method of controlling the Vandiel toward his own ends.

CHURCH INFORMATION: Zanon's church contains three priests of the highest order who are called the Elder Serpents. The Elder Serpents command dozens of archbishops who appoint bishops beneath them, and from there the hierarchy breaks down into a standard clergy. The Black Hand, a Free Company, contains a number of Zanon's priests, and they work alongside the church whenever possible. There are also large sects and cities of duergar and their kin that are faithful to Zanon. These underground sects and the Black Hand were the first organized faithful of the Corrupter: centuries ago, members of these groups wished to focus solely on their worship and created his modern-day church. They seek to amass power and wealth for Zanon through fear and corruption. More than anything else, Zanon wish to subvert worshippers of other Deities.

RITEs, RITUALS, AND HOLY DAYS: Zanon pray in the dark of night or in a pitch black room. During their initiation they undergo a rite known as the Blackening. A bishop of his church profanes a container of purified water, and when the initiate completes their prayers they are doused with the liquid. If the initiate is pure of heart in Zanon's eyes the water will turn their skin jet black before being absorbed and returning to its prior hue. Zanon observe the day after each solstice with the Orphic Congression. On these days worshippers of Zanon gather to contribute to the Corrupter's greed. His churches and servants collect coin from followers and encourage the forfeiture of wealth and valuable treasures for the betterment of the church. Once a week Zanon are to foster evil within another's heart.

HISTORY: Zanon was created as a Vandiel by the gods of an older world to aid the Deities in the Ascendancy War. The Vandiel turned on the pantheon afterwards, but Zanon betrayed his brethren and was raised to godhood alongside his sister, Astea. Zanon consorted with the Vandiel Serena and attempted to raise her to godhood as well, but he only half-succeeded. He then migrated to Vathis with the other eight surviving original Deities, and to this day is one of the living seven. Using power retained from the fallen Deities of the Forsaken War, he either created or helped create additional gods. Kato, Keindrinan, Serena, Valshathe, and Uryll all owe a portion of their existence to his being. Zanon hardly acted during the Darkest War, only sending fiendish beings and profane blessings to the most devout of his clerics and servants.

RELATIONSHIPS: Zanon is said to forge temporary alliances with Keindrinan and Kato. He has known many allies, though few have looked back on these alliances without regret. He is not above seeking unlikely allies to achieve his own ends. Zanon and Astea are in direct opposition, and he wishes to claim her dominion. Bastion and Vangal, who both consider themselves Astea's protectors, are his natural enemies as well. Uryll and Serena have both betrayed Zanon, and he never forgets a grudge. One day they will pay, and this revenge will be at Zanon's own hand.

DOGMA: Zanon and you are one, and your innermost urges are the true nature of the soul. Give into your hate and greed and obtain what you truly desire. Whisper promises of power and wealth to those ridden with avarice, and with these words corrupt. Know that Zanon is the one who will lead you to perfection, and one day his wrath will consume all. Strike fear into the hearts of the weak and give in to the blackness in your soul, for it is pure and natural. Know that those who have not seen the way of Zanon will stand before you, so care must be taken to hide your actions until the day of triumph. Even the strongest of citadels, stoutest of warriors, and wisest of sages will fall before the fear that resides in their own hearts. The most perfect of plans is the one that is seen by no one but Zanon.



PANTHEONS

While the worship of the gods is widespread throughout Vathis, the lens through which they are viewed varies from culture to culture. There are five major pantheons in the world: Vath, Astrian, Manara, Huetlachtan, and Shenami. Between the five of these there is a large amount of tension among followers, which was brought to the forefront of everyone's mind during the Darkest War as the Shattered Hand rounded up Astrian worshippers and experimented on them, permanently turning some into the noir.

VATH PANTHEON: The most prominent of the pantheons, the Vath, is widespread and primarily found in the nations of Aurezia, Cypress, Darastrix, Erygis, Mythrayne, Sillirai, and Venoeh. Vath understands the Deities as their true selves, using their given names with Astea and Zanon at the head of the good and evil aspects of the pantheon. Their worship is direct, with cathedrals, temples, and shrines built in open places all over the world. Few of their worshippers are forced to hide their faith, save for followers of the Deities whose faith could be considered obscene or dangerous, like Keindrinas or Serena.

ASTRIAN PANTHEON: The second largest pantheon in the world, the Astrian pantheon, views all of the Deities as indivisible entities regardless of faith. The Astrian pantheon is primarily reserved to the nations of Isild, Tristan, and Vavaire. With the exception of Uryll being known as both the Nightmother and Uryll interchangeably in Tristan, the followers of the Astrian pantheon always use the ancient titles for the various gods. While it is unknown why they were chosen, the Shattered Hand could only transform true worshippers of the Astrian faith into noir during the Darkest War, and because of this many outsiders are wary of their faith. Temples to these Deities can easily be spotted by the onion domes at the top of their spires.

MANARA: For the Manara pantheon the Deities are the god-kings of old, who walked the earth and shaped their world directly with their own hands. Using the Oseptian names they were referred to by during the Divine Sands War, the Manara pantheon is largely worshipped within Osept and portions of Erygis. Pyramids, open air lanai surrounded by marble columns, and grand sandstone cathedrals are the primary places of worship for the god-kings. The Oseptians that worship these Deities are fiercely loyal to their beliefs, believing that the god-kings still walk among them to keep their people safe.

HUETLACHTAN: The Huetlachtan pantheon is worshiped by the rancar, and is the amalgamation of the ancient orc and goblinoid religions. They believe that the beings, elements, and ideas that the Deities represent are actual extensions of their being under their control. They pay tribute to them with rituals steeped in shamanism and offerings hoping to nourish, appease, or commune with the gods. They pray to them atop stepped pyramids, and before idols in the gods' images. Huetlachtan worshippers fear or respect the role of every Deity and their influence, but mainly praise the Deities tied to the natural world, seasons, and life and death.

SHENAMI: Known as the way of the gods, Shenami believes that all of the kami, or Deities, are part of a balanced spirit world. The world is composed of a sacred essence, and each spirit manifests in multiple forms throughout the known world representing a portion of the Ether, or the spirit of the world. Unlike other pantheons, those who practice Shenami rarely worship a single god and beseech each one depending on their needs and wishes for the day. Shenami is largely practiced in Washu and areas where Washu influence is strong, and these beliefs help reinforce the ancient culture and traditions on the island nation. Shenami is worshipped at shrines where it is widely believed that the kami reside within, and the shrine is built by the hands of mortals to house their divinity. This religion is beholden to a large number of rites, rituals, and practices that seek to purify of mind and body, with the torii gates of the religion separating the sacred shrines and spirit realm from the rest of the world. The Ascension Transformation of Washu is a ritual that permanently binds an important spirit in an area to a person. The tieflings of Washu are largely viewed as blessed by other members of their nation.

THE IDENTITIES OF THE GODS

VATH	ASTRIAN	MANARA	HUETLACHTAN
Aleydra	Muse	Thothik	Citlalicue
Astea	Matron	Amun-re	Quetzalcoatl
Bastion	Martyr	Horos	Piltzintecuhtli
Circe	Mother	Isis	Xochiquetzal
Irilynshae	Winterqueen	Iakhonsu	Meztli
Junon	Ardor	Anhuret	Huitzilopochtli
Kato	Vicious	Sobek	Xiuh-tecuhtli
Keindrinas	Sadist	Sezmu	Ehecatl
Mileen	Curator	Osirien	Mictecacihuatl
Naugrix	Wyrmfather	Ak-Gebeb	Tlaltecuhltli
Serena	Wyrmqueen	Apophis	Malinalxochitl
Teiris	Wanderer	Shu	Huehucoyotl
Tesiline	Lichqueen	Babammut	Xolotl
Uryll	Nightmother	Nephthys	Itz'papalotl
Valshathe	Shepherd	Valshathe	Xipe-Totec
Vangal	Guardian	Besu	Tlaloc
Zanon	Wroth	Sethekh	Tezcatlipoca

THE TOUCHED

The Touched are individuals chosen by each deity to be their herald on the material plane by granting them a small sliver of their divine power. Each deity typically has only one Touched, usually a person who embodies that deity's core beliefs and tenants. Deities are able to whisper to their Touched and commune directly with them when necessary. They serve as their deity's voice and arm on the material plane and are often called to action during times of conflict for their deity. While most of the Touched are either not chosen or unidentified, those who have been have greatly shaped the world in some way.



VANDIELS

The Vandiel reside in the deepest reaches of the planes of the Vast. Their only goal across the whole of the cosmos is to destroy the Deities and anything fashioned by their divine hands.

In the farthest reaches of the beginning of time, during what few know as the Ascendancy Wars, the Deities required assistance in defeating the rampaging Arkhos and creating life-bearing worlds. The original Deities decided to create beings of significant power to aid their efforts in both the war and the advancement of the material realm. The leaders of the Deities at the time stole away to the Vast and created creatures from the raw elemental essence of the captured blood of an Arkhos, which was then imbued with the light of the Eternal plane. The children of this synergy became known as Vandiel. The Deities promised their new progeny ascendance to deityhood themselves, should they aid in defeating the Arkhos. After the war came to a successful end, due in large part to the efforts of the Vandiel, the Deities refused to uphold their bargain in an event known as the Great Betrayal. Due to this, the Vandiel lusted for the power of their progenitor Deities, and they instigated the Forsaken Wars. In this conflict the Vandiel successfully destroyed most of the original Deities, but they were defeated by the remaining gods and goddesses and confined to the Vast from which they sprung.

When banished to the Vast, the Vandiel found these realms under control of the Devil Princes and Demon Lords and the legions of their forces. These powerful beings respectfully deferred to the significantly stronger Vandiel in all aspects of governance, as they do to this day.

There are many different power levels among the thirty-three existing Vandiel, and they all vie for strength and steal from one another to increase their station. Vandiel possess the ability to create a single Aspect, essentially a fraction of their true power in a new form. One of the few things that keeps the Vandiel at bay is the Bane of the Overworld, which prevents the Vandiel from acting directly on the Material Plane. The Vandiel must instead find a process to bring the Aspects they create on the Vast to the material world. The devastation these Aspects cause while unleashed on the world is unmatched. The primary goal of the Vandiel is to displace the Deities by subsuming their power. They realized this idea after Zanon gained a portion of Banyruk's power and rose to become a deity himself, and from Serena, who followed in Zanon's footsteps and also ascended.

A unique ability possessed by the Vandiel, beyond their sheer strength and their infernal magics, is their apparent immortality. Killing a Vandiel merely disperses their physical body, preventing them from taking any action and neutralizing their abilities for a period of time. Given enough time, the Vandiel's physical body will coalesce back into its normal form. The base form of most Vandiel is a winged humanoid that exudes the physical manifestations of their base element. For Vandiel Lords this resurrection can take up to a thousand years, and for a lesser Vandiel it can take up to two thousand years. Killing a Vandiel's Aspect has the same explosive results as killing the true form of a Vandiel, but weakens the Vandiel for the time frame mentioned above instead of dispersing their being. Vandiel are extremely careful when creating Aspects and rarely unleash them unto the Material Plane, as

they fear being weakened should their Aspect be slain.

The lesser seventeen Vandiel possess roughly half of the power that the Vandiel Lords do. Because of this, they are in a constant state of contest, always searching for methods to gain additional power and influence. Standard Vandiel possess some of the same abilities as their Lords, but in a significantly reduced fashion. They cannot grant spells, however, so their cultists are rare. Unlike the powerful Vandiel Lords who boast multiple strong portfolios, the lesser only possess portfolios over minute facets of reality.

VANTUS

Vantus are creatures created by Vandiel meant to lead their armies and act as advisors. The Vantus that serve the Vandiel Lords are made from their raw essence and crafted in whatever form the Vandiel prefers. Vantus created by Vandiel Lords are significantly stronger than those created by regular Vandiel, and they usually possess the ability to change their form at will, in addition to holding sway over elemental powers. Only a few dozen or so of these formidable Vantus can be made, as they draw from the power of the Vandiel Lord and are worthy adversaries in their own right. They act as commanders, spies, advisors, and influential right-hand men. For regular Vandiel, Vantus are typically simple minor reflections of their power and number in the thousands per Vandiel. While significantly less powerful than their Lord counterparts, regular Vantus can quickly overwhelm their masters' enemies. It is fairly rare to encounter a Vantus on the Material Plane, but the Darkest War left a significant number stranded across Asarus. The havoc they continue to cause in the aftermath of the Darkest War is incredible.

VANDIEL LORDS

There are currently sixteen Vandiel that stand above the rest, both in sheer power and scope of influence. The Vandiel Lords, as they have named themselves, actually gain a small amount of power from the worship of mortals. They even have the capacity to grant their worshippers a measure of their power, providing spells as a divine deity would. Vandiel Lords exhibit influence over portfolios that are large, sweeping, and powerful. Their primal element and portfolios they possess are part of their basic makeup, composing most of their abilities and forms.

SEVERENCE

Title: Conqueror Prince

Symbol: Black starburst

Alignment: Lawful Evil

Portfolios: Conquest, Magic

Known for his ruthless methods in both combat and diplomacy, Severence is the strongest of all of the Vandiel. The havoc he has wreaked is legendary, and some believe that even invoking his name brings horrible situations upon them. He is considered the ultimate head of the Vandiel Lords, but his current whereabouts are a mystery. All that is known is that he fought a war of conquest and was defeated. He is believed to be locked away in a prison, but the knowledge of the location of this prison has been lost to the mists of time. Severence is the only Vandiel to have ever visited the Material Plane in full glory without the use of a weaker Aspect.



His cultists are many, and they are spread across the entire face of Vathis. They rarely form organized groups except in times of strife among their people. They typically gain more members through promises of power and glory. Some of Severence's cultists have even ascended to nobility, using whatever means at their disposal to achieve their goals. A good portion of barbarians and uncivilized races worship him and make frequent sacrifices in his name.

SERENA

Title: Venom Queen

Symbol: Eight-legged dragon

Alignment: Chaotic Evil

Portfolios: Venom, Evernight

The Venom Queen is known as the only Vandiel to successfully strike a balance between her Deity self and her Vandiel self. Some whisper that her mind is broken from attempting to wrestle with the conflicting urges, but those close to her would say otherwise. She is a Vandiel prone to fits of both chaos and calculation. Her moves appear to be random, and she prefers to use her venom and chaos against enemies in spontaneous strikes. Her plans are far-reaching and intricately designed. Serena believes that all living beings are pawns in her vast game of power, even other Vandiels. Her form is bound to her specific layers of the plane Feleernez, and as such, she rarely moves against her opponents openly. Serena prefers to work through pawns who believe their schemes to be of their own creation. She keeps a specific shrine of hatred for her betrayers, Zanon and Astea, and her schemes are almost always focused on destroying those two gods. Her form is that of a beautiful female vae'rin mounted atop the body of an eight-legged web-spinning dragon whose fangs drip with venom.

Serena's cultists are spread far and wide. They work in cells independent of one another, but most cells seem to work towards the same goals. The cultists interact closely with Serena's divine worshippers, and both groups strive for her grace and notice. Her cultists keep poisons and plots close at hand, ready to strike out at an enemy in her name at a moment's notice. As with her divine worshippers, her cultists follow strict codes on treatment of venomous animals. To harm a venomous creature is to bring about one's own death.

ZENSHIR

Title: Ice Lord

Symbol: Ice blue crystal

Alignment: Chaotic Evil

Portfolios: Subversion, Ice

Zenshir is considered to be one of the most patient Vandiels. His plans stretch decades and centuries, and he focuses on expanding his cult as he plots. His strategies can be compared to enormous slow-moving ice floes with the potential for immense devastation. Zenshir's mind changes often, however, and that alone is the greatest weapon his enemies can utilize against him. His plans are intricate and formulated to result in the largest possible gains. Many other Vandiels are afraid of interacting with Zenshir directly, as he frequently tricks others into inadvertently working towards his ends instead of their own.

The Ice Lord's cultists are one of the more public groups of Vandiel worshippers. They usually wear ice blue robes to denote their proud allegiance to Zenshir while, like all cultists, wearing masks to conceal their true identities. The cultists who are absolutely indispensable lead dual lives: one as a member of recognized authority and importance in the community they call home, and the other as a cultist of one of the strongest Vandiels, toiling in secret to weave the world into Zenshir's ideal.

FELIROZ

Title: Wrath Prince

Symbol: Crossed fiery sword

Alignment: Lawful Evil

Portfolios: Conflict, Fir

Feliroz is a household name, known for being the mastermind behind the Darkest War. He is civilized, calm, and collected, having rightly earned the title Prince amongst the Vandiel Lords in recognition of his unusually refined demeanor. Feliroz is charismatic and suave, but his bouts of anger are legendary, and all go through great lengths to avoid falling out of his favor. Even other Vandiel Lords submit to his whim, and he is viewed as the leader of the Lords in Severence's absence. He was defeated two years ago upon the return of Vavaire and his Aspect fled back to the Vast, ultimately unharmed. As its architect, Feliroz is responsible for the havoc created during the Darkest War, and his name will remain forever cursed by the people of Vathis.

The cult of Feliroz is one that attempts to generate the largest amount of contention possible within all the civilized nations. The cult is widespread and boasts holdings that can be found in nearly all of the world's cities and ports. They whisper into the ears of vulnerable men and bribe the uncivilized into rash action and thoughtless battle. Many important people have been killed by the cult to break down alliances and brotherhoods by pitting groups against one another.

AIRILEREAT

Title: Night Thief

Symbol: Shadow coin

Alignment: Neutral Evil

Portfolios: Greed, Shadow

Airilereat is a shadow among the Vandiel Lords. His actions are rarely forthright and noticeable. He harbors the greatest of all men's downfall: simple greed. He is the wisp in the darkness that pushes men to chase glory and riches, only to watch their avarice become their undoing. He has stirred wars, murder, theft, and piracy without ever being revealed as the source of inspiration. Airilereat takes the form of a jackal with jet black fur.

His cultists, much like himself, are doppelgangers of their own lives and live as double agents within society, reaching heights of politics and power to greater affect those beneath them. Their movements are largely unknown and they are quick to remove any who would expose them, including those of their own who prove to be a liability. The only proof that they even exist is a jet black coin that one discovers in their possession after realizing they've lost everything else.



XIXIL

Title: Lady of Plagues

Symbol: Dead tree

Alignment: Lawful Evil

Portfolios: Disease, Earth

Xixil is called the Lady of Plagues, and she is rumored to be the source of all sickness and ill health throughout the cosmos. She takes the form of a rotting, leprous Vandiel, and few dare to venture close to her. It is whispered that her touch alone could fell a god. She moves slowly against her enemies and prefers to wear them down over time, much like an unshakable illness. Xixil possesses few allies even among her own kind, and it is said that her Aspect spread a plague that killed much of the northern reaches of

Vavaire during the Darkest War. Her Aspect fled with Feliroz at the end of the Darkest War, and she survived the conflict relatively unscathed.

Her cultists include the ill, the infirm, and the lepers who seem to be immune to the harmful effects of the sicknesses they bear. They are known to be carriers of devastating plague and disease, and they strive to spread Xixil's pungent essence from coast to coast. They are widely hated throughout the nations of Vathis. Xixil's cultists are unable to settle in any one place for long, and they find themselves forced to travel from town to town spreading their maladies as they go. They worship in the dark, dank places of the world.

RUMORISKAR

Title: Lord of Nightmare

Symbol: Black hand

Alignment: Chaotic Evil

Portfolios: Terror, Night

The Lord of Nightmare is the agent of never-ending evil dreams that touch the minds of almost every sentient creature. He purposely moves in the shadows, keeping both his agenda and his machinations a secret from all, even his highest ranking followers. He is the creator of a particular affliction known as the Waking Nightmare, an illness inflicted when Rumoriskar slowly takes control of one's mind on the plane of dreams, Glimmyr. He then subverts the afflicted to take specific actions in a state similar to possession, or renders them unconscious until an untimely death. For millennia the Waking Nightmare only affected amari, but ever since Rumoriskar's Aspect walked the Material Plane and was destroyed the illness has been found manifesting in the majority of the humanoid races of Vathis. Rumoriskar was greatly weakened by the death of his Aspect at the hands of the amari Empress and a Starcalled army, but he is still feared as the source of dark nightmares and dreams better left undreamed. He holds a special place in his dark heart for Empress Jaeress and the amari she leads.

The Redreamers are the organized cult of Rumoriskar. They act primarily in Sillirai, though their influence is felt worldwide, especially in the aftermath of the Darkest War. Their membership is primarily warped amari twisted by the effects of Rumoriskar's nightmarish influence. His cultists remain active despite the destruction of Rumoriskar's Aspect near the end of the Darkest War. Cultists exposed to the public are dispatched mercilessly. Redreamers are some of the most influential cultists in the world, establishing deep fears among the general populace by using methods unknown to other Vandiel cultists.

MONAKXEL

Title: Lich

Symbol: Skeletal hand

Alignment: Chaotic Evil

Portfolios: Undeath, Mist

Like many of the Vandiel Lords, Monakxel is patient. His plots stretch eons. He primarily takes the form of a mist-like being perceived by others as being formless and solid at the same time. He believes that entropy is the greatest of the powers in



the multiverse, and he willingly uses it against living creatures to warp them into parodies of their former selves. Monakxel believes that he is the greatest of all the Vandiel, as none can ever hope to win against the inevitable: death. His Aspect was defeated during the Darkest War by the vasar of Darastrix, who dropped a floating mote upon him.

Monakxel's cultists stick to the shadows and meet only in places of deep fog and impenetrable silence. The majority of their shrines are found underground in small caves and pockets of earth where thick, cloying mists stick to the floor. His cultists are generally patient and rarely resort to outright murder to further his cause. They instead wait for the souls of their enemies to depart before moving in and executing their schemes on their lifeless corpses. Many of his worshippers are searching for a method to create undead who retain their innate intelligence, and a large majority of his following have flocked to the Harrows to harvest the raw power of undeath, which pulsates like a dark beacon in the shadows of fallen Elessar.

DUSYAVE

Title: Tempest

Symbol: Bolt of lightning

Alignment: Chaotic Evil

Portfolios: Ruin, Storms

Like a raging storm, Dusyave bears down on his enemies with ruthless abandon. He is one of the most destructive and forthright of the Vandiel. His plots are rarely hidden, instead raining full force upon his victims like a sudden downpour. His brutal assaults have made him many friends among the Vandiel, as they can easily turn his attention to more destructive applications that better suit their own ends. During the Darkest War Dusyave was pitted against the Trisviet Union, and he would have succeeded if not for the intervention of Uryll's Motherland of Night statue, which felled him just outside of Uryllgrad.

His cultists are as he is: wrathful, destructive, and cruel. They are cutthroat brigands looking to seed strife and callous slaughter wherever they roam. Dusyave's cultists tend to wander, and they openly declare their allegiance. While this may bring brave soldiers against them, they always seem to attack the soldiers' homes in the steeps of wild storms, striking as furiously as lightning and leaving barbarous desolation in their wake.

KREYANTAZ

Title: Lady Molten

Symbol: Mountain peak

Alignment: Lawful Evil

Portfolios: Slaughter, Mountains

Kreyantaz is a merciless Vandiel with a penchant for ferocity and unrelenting force. While Dusyave is feared for his savagery and cruelty, Kreyantaz is feared for her calm, calculated slaughter. Her primary goal is to shed as much blood possible in the most efficient way. Her Vantus are some of the more orderly of the Vandiel-spawn, boasting structured regiments and advanced tactics. Lady Molten's brimstone and ravenous fires put her among the Vandiel's most feared by the world's populace. She was beheld as a flaming terror until her Aspect's death at the hand of Erishti's

deception, which took place at the end of the Darkest War.

Her cultists favor long flowing robes of warm, brilliant colors. They often train together at both martial and mental combat. The Molten Lady's cultists are quick to defend one another, and even quicker to destroy their foes, especially when working in tandem. They utilize arson, assault, and branding as their tools of choice.

VERINARKYR

Title: Blight Lord

Symbol: Green water

Alignment: Chaotic Evil

Portfolios: Defile, Water

Verinarkyr is a covert and furtive Vandiel. He refrains from actively seeking out enemies and prefers to instead focus on his primary goal of defiling all things pure and clean. His blight is impartial, and he does not keep from working against specific entities. All fonts of power and life are equally subject to his molding touch. Verinarkyr played a minor role in the Darkest War and his whereabouts are currently unknown, though a mysterious sickness has begun to flow from the rivers of Osept that many attribute to his touch.

The cultists of Verinarkyr are quiet, calm, and patient. They tend to work alone in their quest to destroy purity, though they will sometimes come together for exceptionally large or complicated plans. Graffiti and defaced statues are often the work of blight cultists, though they are rarely discovered in the acts of their vandalism. They wear no strict uniform, but sometimes identify by carrying a flowing green shawl.

KARWYTREN

Title: Malevolence

Symbol: Firestorm

Alignment: Lawful Evil

Portfolios: Enmity, Conflagration

Everburning rage fills Karwytren in all moments of his existence. He is rash, eternally angry, and lashes out at even his closest allies, which tends to leave him with few. He is always burning, burning, burning, and his hunger is unsated by even the largest fires in the multiverse. He holds no close allegiances and harbors no ill will toward any specific being. He only wishes to watch the universe burn. His flares and temper put him in constant contention with Kato, but Karwytren tends to ignore the god's threats, seeing him as a minor spark within a sea of conflagration. Karwytren's Aspect was defeated at Feldil Tower, and his death knell created the Manastorm Chain.

Karwytren's cultists tend to hold vigils of fire, where they seek out the power of his flames as a method of discovering his eternal sanction. They wear robes of dark red that shimmer in the firelight. As opposed to rage and indiscriminate hate, his cultists focus their anger towards their master's enemies in the material world, specifically the church of Irilynshee. They utilize fire in all manner of assaults, from burning down the food stores of their enemies to burning living foes to sate Karwytren's hunger.



ZELKOZ

Title: Ooze Lord

Symbol: Green ooze cube

Alignment: Lawful Evil

Portfolios: Leech, Evernight

Zelkoz is among the more distant of the Vandiel Lords. He retains unique power over the realm of the Evernight, calling all oozes, fungi, and strange creatures his creation. He contends with Serena over control of the Evernight, but they generally avoid one another. When engaged, Zelkoz hides his true face behind a visage of cold calculation and eerily calm exterior. He is one of the deadliest of the Vandiel Lords due to his vast intelligence, and there are few creatures in the multiverse that he does not account for in his grand schemes. He typically takes the form of a rapidly shifting ooze body. Zelkoz is known for taking any and all advantages available to him when forced into combat. His actions during the Darkest War were primarily restrained to operations within the forests of Leyathar. The Ooze Lord escaped his confinement in the city of Synethil four years ago, and he has been missing ever since.

His cultists tend to be better educated and less threatening than the cultists of other Vandiels. They rarely pose a direct threat to their opponents, preferring to bleed them dry through intermediaries and advantageous opportunities until their lives lay in ruin. Their presence within society is surprisingly well-tolerated. The cultists of Zelkoz are found widespread throughout the world operating out of dark, damp, and secretive underground locations. They can be found making bases in sewers and the forgotten basements of ruins long abandoned.

ARRISSA

Title: Lustress

Symbol: Ice blue lips

Alignment: Chaotic Evil

Portfolios: Seduction, Frost

Arrissa is the sole seductress among the Vandiels. Incubi and succubi are her agents, and her Vantus take their abilities to far greater heights. She is constantly playing her contacts against one another by breaking and forging allegiances and opening old wounds. She possesses few true friends among the Vandiels, but there are two Lords in particular who she considers close. Severance was a consort of Arrissa's until his untimely departure. Serena is currently Arrissa's closest ally, though Arrissa may be more of a pawn in Serena's plots than vice versa. Arrissa's Aspect was destroyed near the end of the Darkest War just outside the city of Synethil, and her death knell was contained.

Her cultists are infiltrators and spies working in the most obscure of locations to further their lady's plans. Using their decadence and wiles against others is standard among the cultists, and they often use their enemies' desires against them. When operating openly Arrissa's cultists can be found wearing ice blue robes and sporting numerous eye-catching tattoos on their bodies. They rarely meet in public and instead choose to retreat to lush confines to convene. Their secret meetings are rumored to be decadent and exuberant parties in glorious mansions.

ARENUS

Title: Lady of Secrets

Symbol: Hooded figure's eyes

Alignment: Neutral Evil

Portfolios: Secrets, Magic

Arenus is an enigma wrapped in an air of mystery. She controls great power over raw magic and has a habit of learning well-kept secrets. She never operates openly or directly with other individuals. Arenus possesses no known enemies, as far as anyone can tell, and not even the Deities move against her. She always finds the information she needs in one way or another, regardless of the measures of caution used by her targets to conceal their secrets. Strangely enough, what she does with that information is unknown. She is never seen without her covering robe and few have laid their eyes on the particulars of her body in combat or otherwise. Outsiders consider her to be the least evil of the Vandiels, but she is still universally feared. She embodies the thought that knowledge is power.

Of all the Vandiel cultists, those worshipping Arenus are the most widespread and well-accepted in society. They often work in libraries and places of research. As far as anyone can guess, they harm no one in their pursuit of knowledge, and are actually rather forthright with sharing what they know, so long as proper payment is made. Their goals are unknown and their faces remain hidden under starry hoods and masks. Both their identities and pursuits are kept from the public eye.

OCLUAXIM

Title: Hive King

Symbol: Ring of six insect legs

Alignment: Chaotic Evil

Portfolios: Vermin, Corruption

Ocluaxim is an especially vile Vandiel infamous for his corruption of the gnoll race in Rancagesh during the Darkest War. He possesses control over various types of vermin and boasts a supernatural link with these animals. His physical form is a tough exoskeleton bearing insect-like wings and many sharp, pointed limbs. His death at the hands of Tatoanni Jedekka, leader of Rancagesh, spared the nation as well as western Osept and southern Vavaire from possible devastation. His demise on the northern beaches near the Dralget Marshes left behind a taint on the area's vermin and rodents, and travelers must be wary of these fiend touched spawn.

Ocluaxim's cultists still persist today, though almost all are concentrated in the northern regions of Rancagesh and around the Three Points region. The majority are the corrupted gnolls, formerly stalwart defenders of their homeland, and they have maintained and doubled their ferocity thanks to being wholly corrupted by Ocluaxim. Other races had been compromised as well, but they make up smaller numbers. Cultists of this Vandiel wallow in decrepit refuges among a bevy of verminous pets, and they only seek to pillage and plunder. Sadly, the corruption of the gnolls appears to be permanent, and they continue to pose a grave threat to the those living in the jungles and mires of Rancagesh.



ARKHOS

The Arkhos are the embodiment of the raw primal energy left over from the creation of the multiverse. They came into being around the same time as the Deities within the creation of the Zodiacs. While the Deities were created to represent structure, order, and life, the Arkhos are beings of pandemonium, creation, and destruction. They are physically immense creatures that are unreasonable, unpredictable, and unkillable. Encountering one typically spells destruction for any mortal being.

Luckily for the people of Vathis, the Arkhos were sealed away by the Deities long ago, after the two sets of beings waged a great war. Before the ages of mortals, the Arkhos and the Deities were locked in an endless battle over the worlds of the material realm. After millennia passed, the Deities eventually created new beings from the combined essence of two captured Arkhos and their own divine power called the Vandiels. The Vandiels inherited the Arkhosian trait of rebirth and eventually turned the tide of the cosmic war. In the end, the Arkhos were locked away by their opponents, but in one final act of defiance the last Arkhos placed a curse known as the Bane of the Overworld on the Deities and Vandiels before being imprisoned. Having lost the war, the Arkhos now reside in the deepest reaches of the Arch and the Vast, sealed away by the Deities and Vandiels forever hence. However, their imprisonment is not foolproof, and under the right circumstances one or more Arkhos could be freed to wreak havoc on the multiverse yet again.

Though they remain locked away, the Arkhos are not without influence on Vathis. Several races bear the taint of their essence within their blood, while others owe their very existence to Arkhosian meddling. The dwarves were raised from the residual purified essence of a destroyed Arkhos, and their dark counterparts, the duergar, were the result of similar latent primal forces that could not be completely cleansed. Orcs, gnolls, and even giants are said to bear the diluted blood of the Arkhos coursing through their veins, and a strange anomaly occurs every now and again which allows a seemingly normal creature to be born with the Arkhosian taint. No one knows how this occurs, but it is thankfully rare. These creatures are all referred to as ‘Children of the Arkhos’. They are often met with suspicion, and sages revel at the chance to study them, should they be fortunate enough to meet a willing participant.

The nigh unmatched power of the Arkhos has allowed their kind to taint the realms in subtle ways since the dawn of time. Though most consider the Arkhos to be nothing more than a scary story to tell children, there are those who believe in the lore of the Arkhos. On Vathis there exists barbarian tribes, cults, druid circles, and other groups that revere these primal beings. They may not know their true nature and refer to them as primordials, great elementals, primevals, or Olden Ones, but these groups pay homage to the Arkhos in many ways. Some mortals are even granted magical powers for their worship, but it is unclear whether this is something that occurs naturally or similarly to the magic bestowed by the Deities. No matter the truth, the most learned sages of the Eldritch House—arguably those best suited for such research—know dangerously little of the Arkhos. They inhabit several planes of existence in some capacity, do not possess names as humanoid

comprehend, influence certain bloodlines of the living, and are far more powerful than one could even imagine.

THE ELDER

Long before reality existed as it does now, the Zodiacs created a single entity to inhabit the planes of their creation. While at the time it had no name, this being has come to be known as the Elder. The Elder is a being of nearly limitless power that possesses the ability to bend reality to its will. For centuries the Elder was the only being to walk the universe created by the Zodiacs, but he discovered others among him and his anger and jealousy began to grow.

The Elder viewed the Deities and the Arkhos as inferior beings. He saw their wars as nothing more than petty squabbles meant to garner the attention of the Zodiacs, which he coveted as his own. The Elder’s arrogance would prove to be his downfall. He began to interfere with the squabbles of the other beings in an attempt to prove that he was better than them and the only being that need exist. In his desperation he attempted to collapse all of the planes into one plane, his own. It was at this point that the Deities and Arkhos combined their strength to finally defeat the Elder. He was crystallized and shattered into fifty-one pieces, which were scattered across the Zodiac Leylines of the multiverse. The Elder’s defeat was so cataclysmic that the resounding energies tore the remaining planes asunder, creating the multiverse as we understand it today.

Though the Elder was considered defeated upon his shattering, such a being could not be destroyed so easily. The fifty-one pieces of the Elder, also known as the Elder Shards, all still possess the will of the creature from which they were formed. Unbeknown to all but the Zodiacs, the shards have become powerful objects that continue to shape the multiverse even to this day. The seventeen shards left upon the Material Plane are called the Erelus Shards. Objects of great arcane power, they have altered the way that mere mortals wield the Ether. On the Vast, the shards took on living traits and became the eight Demon Lords and eight Devil Princes. The last remaining shard that fell upon the lower planes is currently possessed by the Vandiel Feliroz. He uses its power to exert control over the various demons and devils of the lower planes and force them to do his bidding. The seventeen shards that fell upon the upper planes became Seraphs, servants and harbingers of the Deities. Each god or goddess is served by a single Seraph.

The Elder retains his jealousy of all other living creatures. He views the multiverse as his birthright and would do anything to reclaim it. His presence is still felt by the everyday person through the Church of the Crystal Watcher, who unknowingly act in his interest. The existence of this church is the Elder’s attempt to will mortals to assemble his shards in the hope that he might return to his former strength. Such an event would certainly spell the destruction of the multiverse as we know it.





“Infusing all things living and nonliving, the Ether is the binding magical essence that makes existence possible. It links all matter, all life, and all energy into one circle that grows ever greater as life, the multiverse, and our understanding expands and increases. Energies of the Ether can be seen in places of powerful magic, artifacts of immense power, and even within the sails of our airships as they catch the winds of Ether and skirt across the skies.”

All magical power is derived in some fashion from the Ether. The prayers of healing by Astea’s faithful are granted by Astea’s hand, and her power is provided by the Ether she touches and maintains. Spells of fireballs and walls of ice whispered by arcanist’s lips do no more than tap into the surrounding Ether energies and utilize words of power to control the flow of the Ether, bringing forth their intended magics. The telepathic communications of the psionicists of Sillirai are mere thoughts along the flow of Ether from one being to another. All magic in every form, all life, and all creation possess the same source regardless of appearance: the Ether.

PRIMARY MAGICS

Within the Greater Outer Ring of the Ether lie the five primary classifications of magic. Though the ability to dabble into more than one source of magic exists, true mastery of a source is possible through dedication to a single facet.

TOUCH

The first and most prevalent magic on Vathis is known as the Touch. While not directly related to the Touched of a god, the magic of the Touch is the will of the deities given shape. Legions of worshippers enact the will of their god or goddess upon the face of Vathis through the use of blessings and banes; whether this is for good or for ill is entirely up to the follower. Not every follower of a faith is granted this immense responsibility. Only those close enough to their deities, mainly through action and sacrifice, gain the Touch of the divine, and only those faithful and true to their deity's dogma remain in their favor. Incredible places of worship are erected to further the Deities' sphere of influence on Vathis, for a divine's power and influence are directly correlated to the number of faithful under their sway. Paladins and priests wage holy or unholy wars against those opposed to their faith, while the clerics heal the wounds of the fallen. The world saw a vast increase of those accessing the Touch in recent years, due primarily to the influx of otherworldly and demonic creatures Vathis experienced during the Darkest War. As such, there are currently very few points of light on Vathis that do not contain wielders of the Touch.

ART

Tapping into the energies of the Ether directly with arcane words and passages is known as the Art among the populace of Vathis.

Over the course of history, practitioners of the Art have been persecuted, hunted, and brought uncomfortably close to extinction on multiple occasions. Most recent of these occasions was the Darkest War: upon nearly every battlefield of land and water, followers of the Art were pitted against the fiendish hordes of the Shattered Hand. Six years after the end of the war, the remaining practitioners of the Art find themselves few and far between, with few locations remaining as primary hubs of arcane knowledge. The three foremost locations are Washu, the tiefling nation with its esteemed Eldritch House, Synethil, the once-lost capital of Leyathar, and the small floating mote in the city of Aurez inhabited by el'rin. They are all that remains of the once prosperous and expansive arcane libraries and institutions of the Art. Currently, a small percentage of those that tap into Ether find themselves wielding the power granted by this source. Vast holds of knowledge, magical relics of ages bygone, and areas of power are all scattered to the winds of fate across Vathis, awaiting rediscovery. There are many within the population of Vathis who fear users of the Art, and these people believe that those places and their destructive potential should remain hidden and sealed forever.

ESSENCE

The act of controlling and changing the flow of primal energies that surge between all living things is known as the Essence. The Essence is the magic that flows through all life, from its humble beginning to end in an ever-flowing circle. It is one of the least practiced magics on Vathis, but boasts some of the world’s most ancient lines of followers. Primarily a magic reserved to the inuzen of Leyathar, the Essence has started to gain notoriety as followers of this source emerge from the natural lands of Vathis in an attempt to heal the damage to land and life itself inflicted by the Shattered Hand in the Darkest War. Shamans connect to ancient spirits to heal festering wounds, while wardens and druids seek to reclaim what was lost during the Darkest War from those who seek to defile the natural world.

REVERIE

The most exclusive magic is the one which allows its users to make his thoughts and emotions manifest physically through psionic power. Its users can communicate over vast distances with nothing more than thoughts, create forces of destruction with only their imagination, and even dominate another’s mind. This magic is wielded by the amari of Sillirai and a few practitioners scattered across the face of Vathis. While amari possess a measure of latent psionic ability, truly powerful psionicists are extremely rare. It is the most misunderstood magic of all, and as such, the most feared. Very little of the Reverie is known to the average member of society, but glimpsing the lands of Sillirai and seeing what beauty and splendor can be created with the imagination drives



some to locate a tutor or start their own research into the source. One of the most spectacular uses of the Reverie is the ability to enter the dreams of others and both communicate and interact with the dreamer. Known as Dreamwalking, it is a talent that few can master, and only Queen-Empress Evie Jaeress has the ability to teach it to others.

THE PRIMAL

The Primal is the rawest and rarest form of magic known to the universe, originally wielded by the Arkhos in their endless mission to force the universe into a constantly changing landscape. The fingerprint of the Primal can be found nearly everywhere, ebbing and flowing like water throughout the heart of the world. Ignored by most magic users, the Primal is used almost exclusively by reclusive witches of Vathis as a source of raw elemental energy. A small order of users in Rancagesh have also come into focus, as Arkmother Jedekka teaches her followers its use.



WHY THE DEAD STAY DEAD

Across the breadth of history there have been many instances of murder or accidental deaths that we wish we could revert. However, bringing the dead back to life is difficult to accomplish for even the most powerful divine spellcasters. As it stands right now, the casting of a standard Raise Dead spell will always fail. Due to the remoteness of the upper planes and the Bane of the Overworld preventing direct divine intervention, a significant amount of magical power must be procured in order to cast the spell correctly and have it function normally. This even goes for the strongest resurrection spells. For even the remotest chance of the spell functioning properly, one would need a vast array of information and objects to assist the spell. Taking the corpse in question to the location of their death, or a place important to the dead's chosen Deity, if they're in good standing with the divine, increases the odds of the spell working. Other factors also increase the odds, such as having the weapon that killed the person present, or the killer repenting and attending the attempted resurrection. The timing has to be precise for these spells to work. Even if one does everything they possibly to call back the spirit of the dead, it is often not enough to result in a successful resurrection.

SECONDARY MAGICS

Outside of the Greater Ring of the Ether lie multitudes of smaller rings, lesser in influence but still gateways to the incredible power of the Ether. Most users combine the lesser sources with the power of the greater to achieve different magical effects. Once you tread the path of a secondary ring, your magic will be forever influenced by its touch.

WHISPER

All of the darkest places in the multiverse are composed of the es-

sence of pure shadow. Grasping the power of this insidious magic is known as the Whisper. The Whisper allows users to tap into the remaining power between the light and the darkness of the world, to step from shadow to shadow, to reanimate the bodies of the dead, or even to burrow into the minds of enemies. It is a magic that very few practice. The followers of Uryll use the Whisper to their own end, and the Shadowlotus organization practices this magic exclusively. In some cases the Whisper is utilized by lone assassins who have traded portions of themselves to fulfill dark prophecies. It is a magic that is both greatly feared and widely believed to be a myth, as the intricacies of the Whisper are kept secret. The Gloom is the purest form of the Whisper.

LUNATE

The Lunate is the practice of imbuing the essence of pure energy from the stars and Farilis to guide and protect the lands and life of the world. It is an ancient and forgotten magic whose practice and utilization is unknown in the current age, but its effects are still apparent, such as in the protective barrier on the city of Synethil. The Lunate appears to have power over beings of otherworldly origin, such as the Vandiels and fiendish entities of the Darkest War. High Templar Syvesia has been teaching people this forgotten art since being returned to life. The Vibrant is the purest form of the Lunate.

GIFT

The raw power of the Ether is usually reserved for the highest beings in the universe: the Zodiacs. Known as the Gift, few mortals dare to attempt to hold such raw power in their hands and those that do are considered gifted by the Zodiacs themselves. Accessible by the alignment of specific star patterns and worship of the Zodiacs, one can gain a taste of the Gift, though some say it comes at great cost. Legends state that the power of the Gift was one of the inherent abilities possessed by the dragons, a gift to their kind from the Zodiacs. This power is the primary reason dragons possess such immeasurable strength and vigor and remain atop of the order of beings. The Gift is both the source of the sigil powers wielded by the Starcalled and the underlying source of the Leylines' power. There are no other power resources directly linked to the gift.

VILE

Practitioners of this base and corrupting magic are so far removed from the morality of the living world that some would say they were the spawn of the Vandiels. Such magic cannot be implored whilst retaining a piece of one's soul, and the price to be paid for such power remains unthinkable to even the most evil worshippers of the darkest Deities. Magic of this nature was last seen during the Darkest War, when the Vandiel Aspects turned their nefarious arts against the amassing armies of the mortal world. The effects of the Vile's corruption are extensive and unrecoverable.

There are other sources of power scattered throughout the multiverse. Some have yet to be discovered, or as the case may be, uncovered. Ruins dotting the land reveal that a magically advanced race existed long before the current mortal realms, with mastery over a functional magic far exceeding what is currently known.



MANIFESTATIONS OF THE ETHER



Large scale manifestations of the raw power of the Ether are nearly as diverse as the lifeforms that embody it. The following is a list of known manifestations.

ZODIAC LEYLINES

Lines of power crisscross the universe. They are streams of pure Ether that remain unseen to the naked eye, and they have vast and varied effects on the surrounding landscape. As they slip from plane to plane and place to place, incredible things happen where multiple currents intersect. Slipstreams into the Vibrant suddenly appear as two paths mingle, allowing travelers passage into the Vibrant and back again, should their timing be opportune. These planefalls can happen between nearly any connected planes across the multiverse. Chunks of land called motes float lazily throughout the skies on the winds of the Leylines. Many believe that the Zodiac Leylines were once able to grant instantaneous travel to passengers along their network, but there is no such magic today. Teleportation allows users to briefly touch the Leylines and transpose their physical bodies elsewhere, but never across planes. It is said that the Zodiacs use the Leylines to guide the fates of the creatures born underneath their signs.

ZODI'ITE

Large concentrations of Leylines seed the planes with zodi'ite, a powerful magical crystal that glows with an internal violet light. Sought after by all users of the Ether, zodi'ite in its purest form can provide wielders with nearly limitless amounts of magical energy. Magic users of each and every type have been known to seek the substance, which can be used to create shields to guard entire cities against impossible might, as seen in the city of Synethil. Alas, zodi'ite in large quantities of superior quality is extremely rare, but fetches an enormous sum. Countless treasure hunters dedicate their entire lives to searching for the mystical crystals.

ZODI'ITE SHOWERS

Surrounding the sister world of Farilis are wide rings of zodi'ite that encircle the planet. From time to time the orbital path of the planets interact in such a way as to draw the zodi'ite from Farilis down to the surface of Vathis, creating what are known as zodi'ite showers. While frequent in number, it is rare for zodi'ite to survive the fall to the surface. Zodi'ite showers are believed to be the only source of the crystal, as scholars and historians know of no other way to create such a powerful substance. Zodi'ite showers have caused significant changes to Vathis over the years, including the beginning of the Age of Black Frost and the Starfall Event that led to the outbreak of the Second Empire Wars.

FLOATING MOTES

Across the skies of Vathis are floating motes of land and water. The motes themselves reflect a variety of terrains, and no two motes are the same. Some motes possess springs of endless water cascading over the sides and drenching the world below, and others are discs of flat, barren land. Motes can be a variety of shapes and sizes, from specks a few yards across to islands miles wide. Motes have extremely varied climates, from lush pine forests to saltwater lakes full of tropical fish. Motes are often mobile, drifting slowly across the sky, though sometimes they float stationary. Floating motes usually stay within the same general region, but some have been known to travel vast distances across the globe. Motes under the influence of civilization are often tethered by bridges or dragged away from high buildings by airship. They avoid natural terrain, never crashing into one another or with the mountains of the world. They do pose a threat to buildings constructed by intelligent races.

No one knows how or where the floating motes originated. Their movements also remain a mystery. The people of Vathis have been obsessed with the floating pieces of land for as long as history recalls, but it wasn't until the invention of the airship that races beside the vasar could inhabit these motes. Since then, motes have been used by the nations of the world as watchtowers, defensive positions, points of power, and airship docks. CORE has actually purchased a number of motes to use as mobile refining facilities, thus preventing the accidental expansion of eldria.

ETHER STORMS

Ether storms were a devastating and rare occurrence on Vathis until a century ago. Before the emergence of eldria, ether storms needed specific magical and atmospheric conditions to occur. The requirements for one to occur were so rare, in fact, that only a dozen or so were recorded every few decades. Due to the high concentrations of eldria in recent years, ether storms are occurring every few days in the areas most affected by the substance. Oftentimes, the storms move to civilized surrounding areas, causing substantial damage. The Manastorm Chain is wracked by ether storms daily, causing significant havoc in the region. They are also prevalent in and around the Shardlands, making travel through this area difficult.

The only warning of an approaching ether storm is the presence of dark violet, nearly-black clouds lit by flashes of light. Ether storms are extremely violent and dangerous, and are accompanied by intense lightning storms with magic-warping properties. Most ether storms give birth to living magic. The area of the storm is frequently jolted with bolts of pure magical lightning that cause crippling destruction. Currently, there are no known ways to determine when an ether storm will occur. It is impossible to scry or communicate magically into or out of an ether storm.

WORLD FALLS

Worldfalls were first imagined by Aevalyn zi'Wisla during the early years of the Second Empire Wars. They were made as a contingency against the eventual destruction of a city by the Shattered Hand. Once activated by invading Shattered Hand armies, the worldfall creates three instances of a place in dimensional pockets. One instance is safe, and houses everybody living in the city at the time of its creation. The other is the normal instance, which tends



to be the city destroyed by the Shattered Hand. The third instance of a worldfall is a trap for members of the Shattered Hand who venture too close to discovering the truth of the worldfalls. Worldfalls could theoretically be made for any number of enemies, as long as the enemies are clearly defined

In the safe instance, time resets for its inhabitants at regular intervals, and they are unable to leave the area. The city's citizens tend to remain blissfully unaware and repeatedly go through the normal motions of their lives. In the normal instance, the world sees the city as it is on the Material Plane. However, those unaffected by the worldfall can typically interact with either the safe side or the side that houses the trapped Shattered Hand. Members of the Shattered Hand who were outside of the worldfall when it activated can interact with it in the way any other outside individual can. However, if they ever venture too close to the safe portion of the worldfall, they immediately become trapped inside the worldfall as if they had just activated it. Oftentimes, these travelers end up in these instances unwillingly, as the city on the Material Plane shifts between the various instances at random. The shift tends to occur at designated intervals, either on the hour, once per day, or occasionally even longer. Sometimes, something as simple as venturing through a doorway can cause someone to shift through different sides of the worldfall. The instance housing the Shattered Hand tends to be a hellish landscape, as fiendish forces enact their will on the surrounding area. One large problem, however, is that the Shattered Hand are unable to leave their side and must be dealt with before the worldfall closes.

A worldfall is almost always created with a focus in place. This focus is typically a person who will end up on the safe instance and can end the worldfall after certain conditions have been met. Unfortunately, the focus must be destroyed to release the latent magic of the worldfall and return those saved in it to the normal world. The members of the Shattered Hand are not returned, however: they become pure essence that must be absorbed by the focus, which is destroyed when the worldfall comes to an end. This often results in a powerful artifact being created, or some hellish creature being unleashed on the land.

The most famous worldfall was the one Aevalyn placed on the city of Valiance, utilizing herself as the focus. She has not been seen or heard from since the worldfall ended, which triggered the larger return of Vavaire. Many cities spread throughout the world are still locked in their respective worldfalls. Not even Legion has a comprehensive total or list of worldfalls. Legion is unable to create additional worldfalls at this time, as the ability relied heavily on Aevalyn's presence in the world.

AEVALYN'S WALL: Manifested at the end of the Darkest War by Aevalyn zi'Wisla in the city of Valiance, Aevalyn's Wall encompassed all of Vavaire as her borders were at the beginning of the Second Empire Wars. Aevalyn's Wall appeared as a wall of shimmering color on the borders of Vavaire and functionally blocked the fiends of the Shattered Hand from entering or exiting the area by any means. Aevalyn's Wall also had the added side effect of automatically activating any remaining worldfalls in Vavaire and severing the psychic ties of the Vandiels to the noir, effectively freeing them. Aevalyn's Wall dissipated when a willing Aevalyn was killed by Ravenne zi'Stardragon, ending the worldfall of Valiance.

ETHERWARD

Upon Vavaire's return the continent watched as a bubble of protection dissolved overhead. Starting above Valiance, the Etherward slowly dissipated over time and eventually disappeared entirely. It is now known that the Etherward prevented the inhabitants of Asarus from leaving the continent, and also prevented any other life from reaching the civilizations here. Its origin and original purpose are unknown, but shortly after its removal, ancient texts and carvings began surfacing that mention the Etherward by name. These cryptic passages hint at its possible purpose, which the writings state was to prevent a great catastrophe.

DRAGONS

As the Etherward dissipated and the Ether itself began healing at the end of the Darkest War, the dragons were freed from their ritual, which had prevented the unraveling of the Ether for centuries. Dragon eggs once cast in dragonstone began to crack, and new dragons have awakened all across the world. Starting with their kind's young, they've been staking out claims of territory. Most of the ancient dragons remain locked away in stone, and very few have returned to life. What potential threats or allies the dragons will make, only time can tell. The vast majority of the world are terrified of the winged beasts.





PLANES

PRIMARY PLANES

As the Ether expanded it eventually settled into three distinct realities. The first of these realities is the realm above, the Eternal, which became the home of order and source. The second, the Arch, is the realm of the material, settled, and substance. The last of these realities is called the Vast, a place of chaos, primal energies, and constant change. These planes would birth the entities that became the Deities, the Arkhos, and the Zodiac-created Elder. Eventually the Elder was destroyed, which shattered the planes into the layout we understand today.

OTHER PLANES

Subplanes are planes connected to a primary plane. They are infinite in number, granting places such as The Realm innumerable possibilities of travel connected to the main plane. Mirror planes are planes which are tied directly to an individual plane, but with changes to certain rules. Typically these places mirror the world that they are tied to, such as the shadow plane of Gloom, a mirror of the Material Plane. Linking planes are planes that exist between two otherwise unconnected planes. Ebonheart is one such linking plane, which ties together the dark realm of Druzkal and the natural plane of Avenfaer. Such a place tends to retain properties of both, but is otherwise independent of its parent realms.

PORTALS

Portals riddle the planes of the multiverse. They link together various places by pathways of light that whisk travelers from one location to another in the blink of an eye. A sizable percentage of these portals are relics from ages past, constructed by races and civilizations lost to the annals of time. Portals can be keyed, pass-coded, and work only during certain conditions or remain inert. Every portal that one finds will have its own properties based on the designer. The largest network of portals known to the world is the Zodiac Leyline Portals, which are believed to link an endless series of worlds together.

PLANEFALLS

Sometimes the fabric of reality between the planes spreads thin, and travel between the planes becomes easy. The planes seep into one another, creating a variety of disturbing effects. The most prominent area on Vathis under this effect is the Leyathar Forest, where there is little space between the Material Plane and the Vibrant. Leyathar is subject to a vast amount of Vibrant influences. Inuzen are known to construct cities where planefalls often occur, allowing their societies to shift from one realm to another.

EXTRAPLANAR TRAVEL

Travel from one plane to another on the world of Vathis is fairly rare, unless one serendipitously manages to locate a planefall. The mages capable of such magic have warned against it in their

ancient texts, as planar travel remains both dangerous and unprofitable. For certain, beyond the discovery of a rogue portal, very few individuals can even attempt such a feat. These limitations do not prevent extraplanar creatures from traveling here, however, as seen firsthand during the Darkest War.

EVRRINAR

Wherever the Ether touches, Evrrinar exists. It exists as a realm between realms, housing the infinitely expanding arms of the Zodiac Leyline. Evrrinar encompasses the connection between all known realities and experiences, from the plane of dreams to the realm of the Zodiacs. All roads lead to Evrrinar, and Evrrinar leads everywhere. Evrrinar is as infinite as the multiverse, constantly expanding along the creeping paths of the Leyline. Evrrinar is split into three sections with gateways between. The top layer, known as Upper Evrrinar, connects the Eternal realms and everything above. The middle and most well-traveled of the three layers, Evrrinar, connects to all of the infinite worlds and mirrors of the Material Plane. The lower layer, aptly named Lower Evrrinar, connects to all realms in the Vast, and is dangerous and ever-changing. On Evrrinar proper there exists a network of roads connecting to every known Zodiac Leyline Gate Nexus. At the center of Evrrinar stands an awe inspiring building known as the Zodiac Orrey. The Orrey links together the three versions of Evrrinar and is rumored to grant insight into everything the Leyline connects to.

As one would travel on the roads of dragonstone that crisscross the planes of Evrrinar they would find a landscape that gradually changes from one environment to another, as Evrrinar reflects all of the realms it connects to. It neither follows a distinct pattern nor allows for geographical rules as it unfurls below the sun.

THE ETERNAL

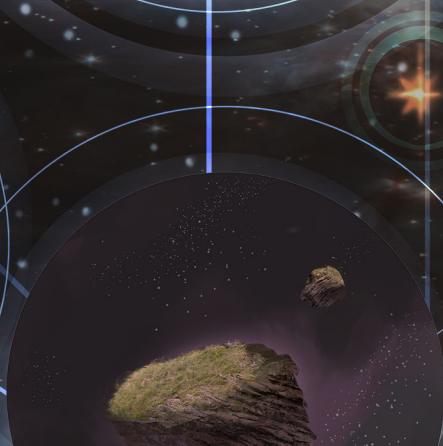
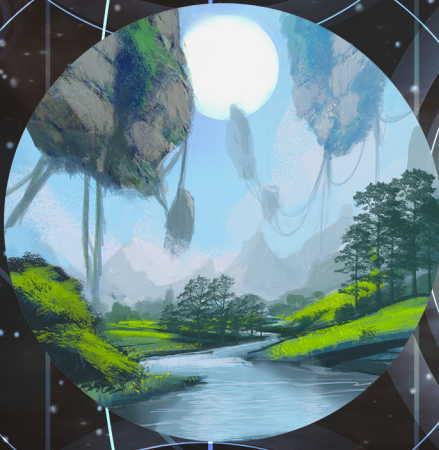
The Eternal is a group of divine planes placed at the highest reaches of the cosmos. As the home of the Deities, their powers are incredibly strong here. The Eternal is broken up into three distinct primary planes: The Realm, Aver Brithe, and Vicizes. The Eternal is a place of order and life, where the souls of the living retire upon death to join the Deities in the afterlife. Upon the death of the Elder, the Eternal was shattered into three distinct parts:

AVER BRITHE

A large mountain sits on a sea of clouds; atop the mountain rests an immense tree, wrapping the mountain in its roots and dwarfing all but the mountain itself, its highest reaches disappearing into a fine mist. The mountain houses an endless array of castles, fortifications, and cities that defy gravity.

AVENFAER, a linked sub-plane of Aver Brithe, is filled with vast mountain ranges and an abundance of floating motes. Many powerful celestial beings, such as the goddess Teiris, call Avenfaer home. Avenfaer is fleeting and free, and those in this place feel as if they're lighter than air. Pleasant-smelling winds blow constantly, and flying creatures of all origins speed in every direction.





THE REALM

The Realm is home to a seemingly endless city atop an enormous disc of water; the water falls endlessly from the edges of the disc into the voids below. The city is a grand affair, and possesses a large hall in the center dedicated to the judgment of souls. The sky above offers a direct view of the planes and multiverse, with colored discs portraying the endless planes on the galactic background of the universe.

KELOSIA can be accessed through The Realm, and in it lives the goddess Junon. Kelosia is similar in appearance to The Realm, though it is a plane of conflict: seemingly endless battles take place between all manner of creatures, even if only for the sake of battle itself. It is said that the most honorable warriors in the multiverse come here in death to relive their greatest moments for all eternity.

VICIZES

This plane is a charred, jagged landscape of rocky pits spewing steam and rocks. Swirling globs of pure darkness replace clouds in the grey sky, and it is impossible to tell if this place is solid with many holes, or if the plane itself is solid land floating within the void. Kato calls this plane home, endlessly wandering Vicizes to prey on any entity—fiend, mortal, or otherwise—foolish enough to cross paths with the Savage One and his forces. Zanon commands the greatest of evils from within his obsidian fortress. So tall that it seems to never end, he oversees all that transpires on Vicizes.

DRUZKAL is directly linked to Vicizes, and is home to several of the dark Deities. Keindrinas resides on Druzkal within his own moving fortress, a construct of macabre design and immense size. Tesiline rules over armies of fiends and undead in her Decaying Valley. Vicizes is periodically overrun with the servants and slaves of these Deities seeking to hinder the others or find routes to the various planes of the cosmos.

THE ARCH

There was once a single plane containing all of the natural universe, but it was split in three when the Elder was destroyed. While his destruction completely separated the higher and lower planes, it was unable to cleanly split the Material Plane. It instead created a shadow version of the Material, known as the Gloom, as well as the lush verdant plane of the Vibrant. All mortal races live on the Arch in some manner or another.

MATERIAL

Primarily known as the natural world, the Material Plane is the plane in which Vathis resides. Within it lies every plot, desire, adoration, and hatred of every person and animal that have ever lived on this world. The full extent of this realm and its universe is not known. We are aware of our place within our own solar system, which consists of seven planets. The primary planet is Fafilis, of which Vathis is a moon.

VIBRANT

The Vibrant is a mirror plane of the natural world that is just as its name implies, vibrant and full of life. Colors here are bright

and easily distinguished from one another. The natural foliage on the Vibrant is thick, and floating motes connected by roots, vines, and bridges clutter the sky. An endless variety of life calls this plane home, and the fauna here sport a wide variety of color—even colors not known to the natural world. The Vibrant is mostly controlled by the Radiant Regents, powerful fey native to the plane who exert their influence over the Living Court, which consists of the leaders of the fey that reside on the plane.

GLOOM

The Gloom is a mirror plane of the Material Plane composed of shifting shadows. Eerie and translucent, there is a distinct lack of color in the Gloom. Even the plant life here appears bleak and foreboding, with sparse trees and shrubbery in stark contrast to the vastness of life found in the natural world. Dark, slow-moving water reflects light from a dim grey sun that seems to cast long shadows regardless of its position. Due to a lack of extensive exploration, it is unknown how many races of intelligent humanoids call the Gloom home. However, creatures of darkness, nightmare, and undeath are often found within the Gloom, making this plane a dangerous place to visit. The shadow masters known as the Umbra are the masters of this realm, and their will is imposed upon the Gloom.

THE VAST

Upon Elder's crystallization and shattering, the Vast was split into three distinct parts. Nulisan, Feleernez, and Hellovase compose this realm. These distinct planes are home to the churning primal energies from which the Arkhos were created. With the exception of the Vandiels, all beings in the Vast revere the Arkhos, though the Arkhos gain nothing from their reverence. The Vast is an unstable and constantly changing realm of primal energy.

NULISAN

Nulisan is the lower plane of Law, enforced by the eight Devil Princes that call it home. This plane is ring-shaped, with a circular ocean in its center. Each Prince controls a section of the ring, and their great palaces are located intermittently along the shore of the ocean. The Princes will the area around the ocean to their liking, preventing the primal energies of the Vast from destroying their orderly kingdoms. Devils are known for making contracts with beings on the Material Plane, and can only arrive on the Material Plane if summoned. If a devil is killed, it is transported back to Nulisan and reforms some time later. Any contract or deal with a devil is binding, usually at the price of one's soul. Devils seek strong and significant souls to grow their armies and increase their influence on Nulisan.

FELEERNEZ

As the lower plane of chaos, Feleernez is a vast landscape of destruction and shifting elemental powers. Its infinite expanse is always changing and evolving as layers expand and collide. Feleernez is home to the eight Demon Lords, though not every demon is loyal to one of these overseers. Demons tend to be irrational, quick to act, and care for nothing but chaos. Like devils, demons may



only be summoned to the Material Plane and cannot travel there willingly. However, once summoned, a demon is inclined to cause chaos when they arrive. A vanquished demon simply manifests again in Feleernez in a similar fashion to the devils of Nulisan. A bound demon can be controlled to some extent by the one who bound it. Demons can be bound through blood, a process which creates many of the world's sorcerers and warlocks. Like devils, demons also seek out souls to corrupt and contort in order to further build their armies.

HELLOVASE

Nulisan and Feleernez are both populated by huge armies of their respective fiends, as well exceptionally powerful forces that could wreak havoc on the Material Plane. What keeps them in check is the plane of Hellovase. Hellovase is the gaping void between Nulisan and Feleernez, and the only way to directly travel to the Material Plane from the Vast. Hellovase is controlled by the Vandiel, who utilize its endless nothingness to hide and plot the demise of the Deities and all who worship them. The Vandiel take advantage of the bloodlust possessed by the demons and devils and often employ the armies of Nulisan and Feleernez in their own plots. This was witnessed during the Darkest War, when nearly all of the armies in the Vast began funneling into Hellovase, awaiting their chance to bring death and destruction to the Material Plane.

THE FRINGE

There are countless other realms that lie outside of the inner planes. Two such realms are the Glimmyr and Aberrance, which coexist as different sides of the far edges of existence and consciousness. They house the real and the unreal, the tangible and the intangible, and both fantastic dreams and maddening horrors. Known collectively as the Fringe, these planes are difficult for mortals to comprehend.

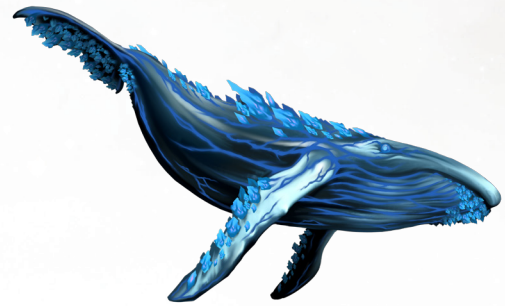
ABERRANCE

There exists a plane of existence so inherently baffling and strange to the minds of mortals that its very presence is disputed among sages. The Aberrance, as it is known, is the best explanation for the origin of the most profane aberrations and abominations that count themselves among the monstrous creatures present on Vathis. It is clear that these alien creatures are not native to any other plane. Some claim to have witnessed this plane in visions or trances, while others say they've learned of its existence from the very beasts who call it home, as many of these creatures can communicate with mortals. These debatable claims have corroborated existing theories, and now elder mages of the Eldritch House and their peers are attempting to piece together the truths of the Aberrance. Their tomes posit lore that claim a great many things about the Aberrance. Popular theories state that the plane is ever-shifting, with no real stability or gravity. It is thought that the Aberrance is so utterly incomprehensible that a mortal would be driven insane just by visiting the plane, which explains how beasts native to the Aberrance wholly bewilder the people of Vathis. The terrain of Aberrance, when solid and tangible, is a living threat unto itself. One might accidentally come across pits of gnashing teeth, tentacles

resembling trees, or maddening winds of psychic energy. Here aberrant creatures run amok, some powerful enough to exert control over and stabilize portions of the plane. They establish fortresses or zones of order within, ruling over their dominion. These lords of the mad realm are very real, but only theorized by mortals, and it is believed that a mortal of strong will could explore the Aberrance if they themselves could exert a suitable amount of control over their own will. No one on record has traveled willingly to the plane. The Aberrance can be accessed through other planes or the Leyline, but is most accessible through the plane of Glimmyr.

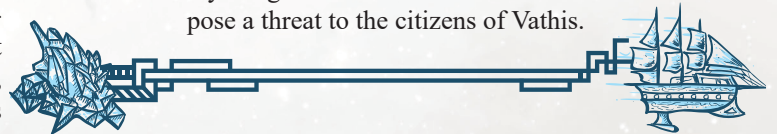
GLIMMYR

Glimmyr, also known as the Plane of Dreams, is a relaxing plane of surreal quality. In Glimmyr, colors are pastel and edges are softened, blending gently into one another. Fanciful colors combined with physics-defying attributes lend themselves well to the dreams of the living, which are housed here. The goddess Aleydra resides on Glimmyr.



OTHERWORLDLY CREATURES

Creatures from other planes are as numerous as creatures of the natural world, though significantly more dangerous. Fortunately, the Arkhos curse known as the Bane of the Overworld has prevented most of these beings from leaving the planar grouping of their creation. Angels and Archons from the higher planes can only move through the Eternal, as fiends from the lower planes are bound to the Vast. As such, extraplanar creatures must be summoned or brought to the Material Plane with assistance. This was the case with the Scar Tear of the Darkest War that allowed Vandiel and fiends to pour from the lower planes to the Material. The otherworldly dangers stranded here after the war continue to pose a threat to the citizens of Vathis.





Eldria is a naturally occurring crystalline substance that absorbs latent magic from the surrounding environment and coalesces the magic to form additional crystals. It was originally discovered in the Eldritch Wood of southern Tristan in the year 3689 AG. While eldria in its natural state is a dangerous material to work with, it becomes stable when refined and provides a significant amount of consumable magical energy. The widespread adoption of eldric technology has ushered in an era of rapid industrialization across the world, creating an endless array of wares ranging from the grand invention of airships to the recreational convenience of music crystals. Eldria is widely utilized by the civilized world, and demand for the substance has only increased steadily over the course of the last century.

HISTORY

While the origins of eldria remain unknown, it was first discovered by a Trist researcher named Elaria Filarn. In her lifetime she would learn little of eldria's properties, as she was killed a few months after the discovery by a rival researcher. Her son, Vice Filarn, came to learn the majority of eldria's secrets and utilized the crystals in a way that would forever change the face of Vathis. He named the blue crystal elarian eldria in honor of his late mother and performed extensive experiments on the eldria until he ran out of funding. Fortunately, a noble from Tristan agreed to financially back Vice and support his experimentation. Two years later the Corporate Operations for the Refinement of Eldria, also known as CORE, was established as Vice discovered a method of negating the harmful effects of eldria by refining the crystals and rendering them benign. CORE flourished, as eldria provided a means for the wealthy nobility of the world to harbor minor magical articles, protective alarms, and other convenient technologies within their homes. In time, eldric advancements became available to all but the poorest of citizens.

Eldria went largely unchanged for over seventy years and became a staple of the early industrial period. Its properties sparked the birth of the age of flight and led to the widespread adoption of domestic technologies such as indoor plumbing and lights. The substance found its way into most homes throughout the world in some form or another. Though natural deposits are still being discovered to this day, CORE has taken it upon themselves to construct new deposits and refinement facilities from coast to coast. Control over eldria has sparked tensions, and even wars, throughout its relatively brief existence.

Eldria's history was forever altered in 3769 AG when a new type of crystal was discovered in a mine in the nation of Cypress. The red crystals were found by Lurien Industries, and with the assistance of the organization Legion, the refinement process of vaedra was perfected. Vaedra, as this form of eldria was named, is surprisingly unstable even when refined, which inspired Lurien Industries to develop a new weapons system based on its inherently volatile properties. Vaedra also possesses a stable refined form that was discovered later, bringing forth many technologies that

helped save countless lives during the Darkest War.

The future of eldria remains a shrouded mystery and the true potential of vaedra has yet to be seen. While the nations of the world rely on eldria as a vital staple in their day-to-day lives, it seems likely that the continued use of the crystalline substance will raise political tensions as the balance of global power shifts and sways. Some researchers believe that additional forms of eldria exist, hidden away in remote deposits, but others reject these theories as wild speculation.

PROPERTIES

All types of eldria boast a standard base structure and static properties. Eldria exhibits a hexagonal crystalline lattice, which is composed of solid magic and common elements. Natural eldria crystals taper towards the end and sides, creating a blade-like shape. The crystals themselves generally form in clusters of up to twenty crystal "blades" connected at the base. This configuration is often referred to as a Lotus Cluster. Eldria clusters both natural and refined glow from within with an eerie arcane light. The crystals tend to be semi-opaque, but heavily concentrated forms of eldria are significantly hazie .

The clusters themselves attach to an anchor point. There are very few materials, natural or otherwise, that eldria cannot anchor to. Once anchored the crystals grow rapidly and initiate their life cycle by leeching magic from the surrounding area. This process effects the region greatly in terms of natural magical abundance. Thick deposits of eldria have been known to permanently remove the natural magic from vulnerable parts of the world, creating places of dead or wild magic in the process.

LIFE CYCLE

All forms of eldria possess the same general life cycle, though vaedra eldria's life cycle happens at a slower rate than elarian eldria's. An eldria deposit begins when a single crystal known as a heart crystal embeds itself into an anchor point. The heart crystal then absorbs the latent magic in the surrounding area, growing larger as the process continues. When a heart crystal reaches maturity it turns into what is known as a central spire, a towering structure of eldria. As the central spire reaches critical mass, the point where it can no longer sustain additional growth and absorb additional magic, the tip of the crystal shatters, sending shards of eldria into the surrounding area. These small shards mature, grow, and form clusters of blades as they absorb latent magic. These clusters then funnel their magic back into the central spire, which once again goes through the process of reaching critical mass and forcefully dispelling shards. This cyclical process of shattering, creating additional clusters, and shattering again continues on until the entire deposit itself reaches critical mass. It is unknown how the central spire becomes aware of the size of the deposit, but the process changes when the deposit can no longer grow farther from its base. The central spire itself then splits the original heart crystal into four identical parts and shatters explosively, careening these heart crystals far into the distance to start the process anew.

An exploded central spire will never regrow heart crystals, and the deposit of eldria, while continuing to absorb latent magic, becomes dormant. Ildera can be naturally formed from



these dormant deposits of eldria.

TYPES

There are currently two known types of eldria:

ELARIAN ELDRIA is the oldest known form of the eldria crystal, though its true origin is unknown. It was discovered by and named after its founder, Elaria Filarn. Its coloration is a brilliant blue, which matches the hue of its illumination. Elarian eldria is by far the most widespread and utilized eldria. CORE's refinement facilities deal solely with this form, as its primary application is airship fuel, CORE's biggest business. The central spires of elarian deposits can grow to heights of fifteen feet or more with the radii of these deposits reaching up to ten times that size. Smaller clusters grow to a height of five feet. A fully grown deposit can be three hundred feet wide. Elarian eldria's growth rate is considerably faster than its vaedra counterpart, and one cycle of cluster growth takes only a week to reach maturation. An elarian central spire will expand its deposit once per month. At this rate, it can take upwards of a year for a heart crystal to mature into a fully developed deposit. Elarian eldria in its natural, unrefined state is extremely dangerous to natural life. It grants magical abilities to creatures nearby, at the cost of dangerous levels of magic coursing through their bodies, usually harming the subject as they are released.

VAEDRA ELDRIA is a recent discovery only found in specific areas of the Furcata Mountains of Cypress. Its deposits are few and far between, and Lurien Industries controls all of this type's refinement and processing. Vaedra eldria is deep red in coloration, and its natural illumination is significantly dimmer than that of its elarian sibling. In its natural state vaedra is extremely unstable. Any effect which generates a sizable amount of energy, such as a hammer strike, fire, or lightning forces the crystals to rapidly destabilize and shatter explosively in all directions. This can create what is known as a Vaedra Wave, a catastrophic event where large portions of vaedra deposits explode simultaneously and destroy much of the surrounding area. The reason for its instability is its high magic concentration, as vaedra eldria contains nearly three times the magical saturation of elarian eldria. Vaedra's highly magical aura alters the surrounding flora and fauna greatly, and this has grave effects on living beings. Like elarian eldria, vaedra eldria grants powerful magical abilities to those exposed to its unrefined state, though the effects of vaedra are significantly more volatile. Those who attempt to harness the raw power of vaedra eldria are almost always killed by its dense concentration of magic. Vaedra central spires can grow to a height of ten feet, with the radii of these deposits roughly five times this size. Individual clusters grow to an average height of three feet. The growth rate of vaedra eldria is significantly slower than the growth rate of elarian eldria, with a cycle of cluster growth taking three weeks to reach maturation. The central spire of a vaedra deposit will expand roughly four times a year. It can take upwards of three years for a heart crystal of this type to mature into a fully developed deposit.

COLLECTION AND REFINEMENT

Without Vicice Filarn's discovery of the groundbreaking refinement process, eldria would remain a dangerous, untameable sub-

stance threatening all life. The ability to remove the harmful effects of eldria allows researchers the ability to study the substance up close, which has led to the development of its endless technical applications.

COLLECTION: Gathering this precious resource is as simple as mining it out of the ground. With elarian eldria, this process is merely a physical one performed with mining picks and shovels. Care is taken to retain the natural shape of the crystals and obtain as many intact crystals as possible. With vaedra eldria, however, due to the size and instability of the crystals, only shovels may be gently used to remove entire clusters as a time, so as not to cause a violent reaction from the base crystal.

REFINEMENT: CORE was the first organization to successfully refine eldria on a mass scale. CORE-owned refinement facilities are situated in key locations throughout the world, allowing for airship travel and the rapid adaptation of eldric technology. The exact process of refining eldria is known only to CORE, and attempts to reverse engineer the refinement process by the One Hundred and Seventeen Sky Dragons have been met with failure. The One Hundred and Seventeen Sky Dragons are able to successfully mimic the construction of CORE's refinement facilities, but remain unable to imitate the actual refinement process.

The Eldria Refinement Process is standard across both types of eldria. Raw elarian eldria is processed through an eldria refinement facility, where the crystal is rendered inert and a byproduct is produced. Vaedra eldria is processed in a similar fashion, but only by Lurien Industries in their altered facilities. Due to the dangers of eldria exposure, creatures of flesh and blood are no longer allowed to mine the raw crystals, and CORE exclusively uses ildera in their mining operations.

RESULTS: The eldria refinement process usually results in a stable crystal state with no ill effects and the creation of several byproducts. Elarian eldria exits the process as refined elarian crystals, the main cornerstone of eldric technology. Its sole byproduct is known as Elarian fluid, a liquid with low residual magical density. As with elarian eldria, vaedra eldria produces refined crystals. These crystals are magically dense and currently possess few known applications. The vaedra refinement also produces two byproducts. The first is vaedric fluid, which currently lacks any known uses. The second is vaedra dust, which is primarily composed of the unstable pieces of vaedra left over from refinement. This dust remains in a constant state of flux as it attempts to achieve stability, but stability in vaedra cannot occur naturally.

APPLIED TECHNOLOGIES

Eldria of both types possess a plethora of modern applications. Most forms of eldric technology require a nearby eldria resonance tower in order to correctly power eldric devices. Resonance towers tend to be operated by CORE. An Ether Drive System can also function as a local resonance tower, with the ability to power eldric devices aboard airships.

ELARIAN ELDRIA: Elarian eldria is the more common of the



eldria types, and its refined crystal form has been fashioned into a power source for much of the world's eldric technology. This ingenious innovation has led to the rapid industrialization of the world and brought Vathis into a new age of prosperity and technological advancement. Its sole byproduct, elarian fluid, is primarily used as airship fuel, powering the Ether Drive Systems found in all eldric vessels. Elarian eldria is used to magically brand cattle, fertilize soil, and control the flow of water in agricultural applications, allowing crops to grow at improved speeds. These agricultural advances support the needs of large population centers and have led to the rapid development of high walled cities. Eldria is vital to the infrastructure of these cities as well, as the contractors of Vathis utilize eldricsteel supports in the construction of buildings and bridges, as it never cracks, rusts, or degrades. Eldric technology can be found within the cities of Vathis in the form of eldric lamp posts, magical lifts, public plumbing, and in the very technology behind the Bluewind Messaging stations. Both private and public buildings utilize eldria in inventions providing thermal comfort, domestic lighting, cooktops, clocks, music crystals, door locks, and localized alarms. Individual citizens often use eldria for pigmentation in arts, cosmetic products, and iridescent cloth and inks. The magical crystal shines brightly within mines, and modern laborers wield eldricsteel picks that never wear. Eldria is also the backbone of eldricsteel factories, industrial furnaces, and smelting facilities. These convenient eldric inventions have made the world a brighter place.

VAEDRA ELDRIA: In nearly all regards vaedra eldria is an enig-

ma. It is incredibly rare compared to the elarian type, and its unusual uses are only now being discovered by the innovators of the world. Vaedricsteel is the most common application of the vaedra crystal form. Beyond infrastructure, vaedra crystals are utilized to create city-wide magical circles that prevent fiends from teleporting into and out of an area. This was used to great effect during the Darkest War. Further applications of the vaedra crystal remain unknown. Vaedric fluid, the first byproduct of its refinement process, is considered a theoretical airship fuel, but no engines have been designed to support its energy density. Vaedra's second byproduct, vaedric dust, remains unstable. However, its practical use in weaponry was quickly ascertained during the Darkest War. When mixed with an alcohol solution, vaedric dust becomes a liquid contact explosive. A weapons system known as vaedricarms utilizes vaedric dust as a propellant to launch projectiles. On a small scale these explosions are easily contained and controlled, but vaedric cannons require the assistance of an Ether Drive System's latent magic to fire projectiles in a controlled manner. Vaedric technology is believed to be the future of eldria's potential.

ELDRIC REACTORS: Eldric Reactors were first developed to facilitate the utilization of refined eldria. These Reactors led to the fabrication of eldricsteel and various other eldric technologies, and also allowed for the artificial creation of the ildera. The ildera themselves were first seen as a source of tireless labor, as constructions by their hands were completed in record time across the world. In the aftermath of the First Empire Wars, the ildera were regulated away from military positions and their creation strictly



controlled.

During the events of the Second Empire Wars, it was discovered that the vast Black Network of the Shattered Hand's noir had taken precise counts of the world's known Eldric Reactors. They destroyed all of these Eldric Reactors in a single night, which turned the creation of ilderia and the fabrication of eldricsteel from one of the world's largest industries into an impossible art. The secrets of the Eldric Reactors were lost in this event, known as Operation Eldric Crash, and CORE has so far been unable to construct new Reactors or emulate their effects. Constantine Vanguard is in possession of the last few surviving Eldric Reactors, and he continues to sell eldricsteel long after the world's supply has run dry.

ELDRICSTEEL: Eldricsteel was one of the first widely-utilized forms of refined eldria. At the most basic level, eldricsteel is steel laced with refined eldria which grants the substance a few interesting properties not found in steel alone. For example, eldricsteel does not rust or corrode naturally by any means. Its hardness is greater than standard steel, which allows it to support significantly more weight and endure heavy stress. Eldricsteel also naturally repairs itself slowly when damaged. Eldricsteel and its marvelous properties stimulated a great architectural movement throughout the world. Cities around the globe began building up instead of out, and the world's greatest empires constructed towers of eldricsteel reaching to the sky. Airship docks now house large numbers of ships simultaneously, as their reaches touch the clouds above. Eldricsteel also boasts multiple military applications. Blades of the substance are sharp, and they remain honed forever. Eldricsteel possesses the ability to bypass magical resistance in creatures, and if the wielder of eldricsteel weaponry is a magic user, they may be able to harness the residual energies of the refined eldria in powerful arcane strikes.

VAEDRICSTEEL: Vaedricsteel possesses all of the same properties as eldricsteel, but to a higher degree. It weighs only half as much as regular steel but retains the strength of normal eldricsteel. Vaedricsteel also repairs itself at twice the rate of eldricsteel. When utilized in armor, the substance grants its wielder significant defenses against magical creatures and incorporeal beings.

VITALITY: Also known by its scientific name of Ardra, Vitality is a liquor-based elarian eldric substance brewed in the early years of the Darkest War as a means to grant soldiers magical enhancements on the field of battle. First successfully brewed in the Vavai-aren city of Ardor, it gained widespread use during the Darkest War and was advertised nearly everywhere. It was not until the end of the Darkest War that the highly-addictive substance was found to possess long-term detrimental effects

NATURAL INFLUENCE

Eldria's effect on the natural world is widely varied. The magical leeching process undergone by the crystals during its life cycle prevents the natural growth of any flora and fauna that are not adapted to eldria's presence. Grass, trees, and natural plant life cease growing and eventually die off in places where eldria is prevalent.

Eldria in its raw state is known to gift the fauna of the area magical enhancements if their anatomy can handle the adaptation, though this often leads to an early demise as their bodies rapidly utilize the abundant magic. Eldria has been known to create new types of flora and fauna specially adapted to the crystal's natural presence. Altered plants and animals are commonly found in areas of high eldria concentration, such as the Shardlands.

ELDRIA INFUSION: Humanoids subjected to natural eldria undergo a process known as Eldria Infusion. A living humanoid who is exposed to the effects of unrefined eldria is bombarded with the abundance of magic radiating from the crystals. The Eldria Infusion grants the subject significant magical abilities, but at the cost of burning the excess energy out of their body, causing dire physical harm. If the subject does not utilize the gifted magical abilities in a timely manner, the magic eventually leaves the body in a sudden rush, causing significantly more harm to the subject than if the latent magic had been utilized.

CONTAINMENT

Eldria's effects on the world have forced CORE to take action to prevent natural eldria's rapid spread. Dragonstone has been discovered to prevent eldria's growth on its surface, and walls of the material are used to contain areas of natural eldria, especially in Refinement Facilities. Typically these areas are domed in eglass, or protected by eldric devices that prevent the spread of seed crystals to areas outside of the confines of the dragonstone walls. CORE has a standing five hundred gold reward for any natural deposits of eldria that are newly reported to the organization.

ARTIFACTS OF POWER

The world of Vathis is no stranger to powerful and strange magics, and these powers are not limited to spells and beings of great renown. Throughout history there are records of seemingly mundane items imbued with power beyond the ken of any mortal to behold them—some even stronger than the legends deem possible. Some are crafted by mortals and enchanted beyond their imagination, some were gifted from the gods themselves during the Divine Sands War, and some are more ancient than recorded history itself. These objects can even be the products of curses and vile magic. A few are sentient in their own way, with the methods of their creation a complete and utter mystery. Aside from the famed Arms of Leyathar and the Staff of Aurere, the original Free Companies were all blessed with artifacts of their own, and it is known that each of the Deities left behind items meant for their most devout worshippers. The most well-known and sought after relics include:

SURAI

Surai are weapons that were created by Empress Jaeress during the height of Sillirai's power. They are crystal hilts of swords that possess the ability to create blades of psionic crystal when used by psionicists chosen by her. They have primarily been wielded in the fight against the Waking Nightmare and Sillirai's most formidable supernatural enemies. They have not been used in armed combat against another nation as of yet, since the people the Empress



chooses tend to be far removed from the lines of organized battle.

DRACENSIS

Dracensis are blades of astrium and some of the most well-known ancient artifacts in the world. It is widely believed that they were originally created on the isle of Keralan by a civilization long past. These powerful blades are able to fell dragons. They show up both in Junon's history and the creation of Kato, who was a Dracensis at the time of Serena's defeat. The current location of these mystical blades is unknown, though it is widely believed the Dark Knights are in possession of one.

THE LIVING EYE

The Living Eye is a long-guarded artifact created by a priest of Aleydra. It appears as a dark, crystalline sphere the size of a small fist. When attuned to a person, the Living Eye is absorbed into their body and appears centered on their forehead, taking control of their vision. It grants the user extrasensory capabilities, improved telepathic and telekinetic powers, and a well of divination magic. The price is steep, though. The Eye is immensely powerful and takes its toll on the user. It can only be handled by the most sound of body and mind, and as an intelligent item, it can decide whether or not to grant its wielder power.

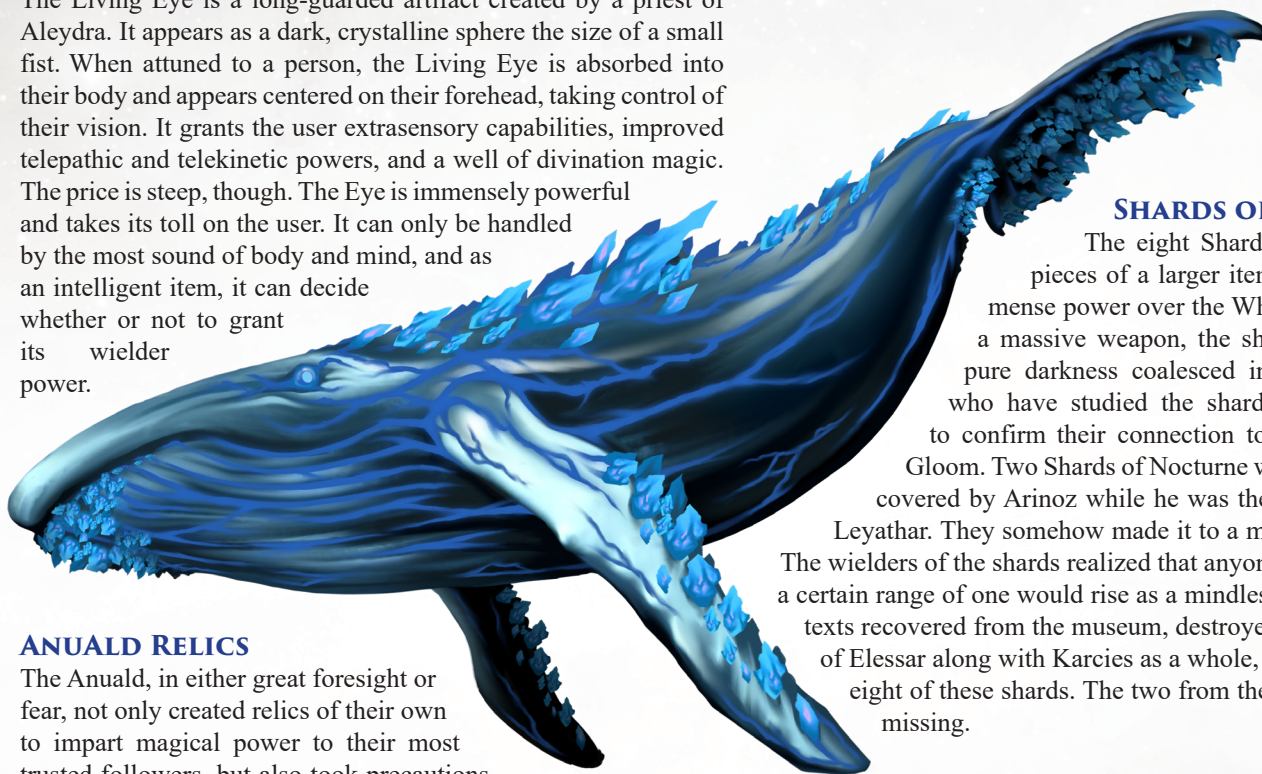
ANUALD RELICS

The Anuald, in either great foresight or fear, not only created relics of their own to impart magical power to their most trusted followers, but also took precautions to contain portions of their power within mighty artifacts should their cause turn dour. Stories have persisted that the most fearful mages of the Anuald wielded relics such as staves, tomes, crowns, and orbs that dwarfed the magical prowess of their opponents. It took the intervention of the Deities to mount an appropriate defense, and as the stories go, the Anuald and their relics were buried together to prevent any extension of their might. Truthfully, not all of these artifacts were discovered and sealed away at the time, and some persist on Asarus to this day. Whether they contain enough of their creators' strength to wreak the same havoc they did before remains to be seen.

KOSTERIO'S FLUTE

Near the end of the Age of Black Frost, when the cold began to wane and civilization made its way back to the surface of Asarus, a halfling by the sole name of Kosterio led a tribe of her people from the Galaras Crags east of the Angylis Sea. On her journey,

of which legends abound, they gained mass numbers of followers, left some to form settlements in what became the Borderlands and Vavaire, routed an army of goblinoids, and swayed monsters to her cause. Tales say her flute had enchanting properties and could alter the winds. It was supposedly constructed two thousand years before her time from the claw of a dragon, and inscribed with dwarven runes for eloquence, power, and wind. Kosterio died of old age in modern day Eiliept, Osept. As the story goes, she knew her time was at an end, and walked to the seaside cliff playing a song of finale on her prized flute. There she sat and never stood again. Her flute, though audible to her entire clan, was nowhere to be found. To this day it is a sought after artifact, especially for bards, though many doubt its continued existence.



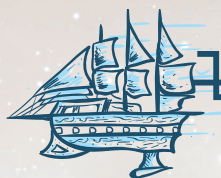
SHARDS OF NOCTURNE

The eight Shards of Nocturne are pieces of a larger item that possess immense power over the Whisper. Presumably a massive weapon, the shards appear to be pure darkness coalesced into a gem. Those who have studied the shards have been able to confirm their connection to the plane of the Gloom. Two Shards of Nocturne were originally discovered by Arinoz while he was the High Templar of Leyathar. They somehow made it to a museum in Karcies. The wielders of the shards realized that anyone who died within a certain range of one would rise as a mindless undead. Ancient texts recovered from the museum, destroyed in the Withering of Elessar along with Karcies as a whole, state that there are eight of these shards. The two from the museum are now missing.

THE ERELUS SHARDS

Following the shattering of the Elder, long before mortals came into being, some of the shards of the Elder came to rest on the Material Plane. The Erelus Shards, as they are named, are objects of great arcane power now lost to the sands of time. There are seventeen shards in total, and when possessed they elevate a mortal's control over the Ether to levels even the Anuald would have envied. The wisest sages of Vathis posit that there were artifacts throughout history that beget drastic shifts in power at key points in time through granting their possessors mastery over the arcane, and some may have been the Erelus Shards. The shards themselves have not been discovered in ages, so theories remain unfounded. Should anyone discover one of the Erelus Shards today it would be both a blessing and a curse, for the power they grant can only bring about formidable change. The truth of the Shards is that each one is attuned to a single study of magic, and the longer a being is in possession of one, the more they can learn of their study—at the behest of possessing an extension of the Elder's will.





LIFE ON VATHIS

“Nearly all walks of life, in every culture, have something in common with one another. Be it the our roll of months, or the Deities and Zodiacs we hold dear, or the languages we speak. We have much in common with one another. If only station and circumstance were different, maybe we could even be friends.” -Archfaer Kernaroth of Synethil

Life varies wildly among the societies of Vathis, from the barbaric tribes of northern Corsica to the rich and influential nobility of Aurezia. Life is determined by placement, birth, climate, area, and wealth. Adventurers seek to remove threats that prevent the population from flourishing. The Darkest War has left a scar upon the land and the populace is striving to recover from considerable losses. Famine and drought prevent portions of the world from reviving, and great acts of devotion are needed to appease the Deities.

AFTERMATH OF THE DARKEST WAR

The Darkest War left Vathis in a precarious and wounded state. All of the world's Eldric Reactors have been destroyed, utterly wrecked by the Shattered Hand in the early years of the war. As such, large-scale production of eldricsteel and the ilder is next to impossible. In addition, while the war ended, the fighting has not as roving bands of Shattered Hand fiends prevent the reclamation of great swaths of territory, and some nations are struggling to prevent their borders from falling back any further than they already have. Large portions of the world have been permanently changed for the worse, altered by extraplanar creatures and harrowing magical effects, while the death knells of Vandiels have created alien and deadly terrain. From the Rimelan to the Manastorm Chain, the very lands of Vathis have been scarred forever. Trade routes were decimated, and a reliance on airship and seafaring vessels is the new norm. Cross-country caravans are significantly riskier than they once were, and require an armed escort to even be considered feasible. With the loss of over forty percent of the world's population, the workforce was decimated, and employment opportunities far surpass the available manpower. From guarding borders to producing wood, workers are desperately needed everywhere.

Not all is bad, however—the Vathis Sentinels and the One Hundred and Seventeen Sky Dragons now have a standing truce, and their cooperation has been key to maintaining the stability of the post-war world. The conflict between the two organizations first came to a head during the First Empire Wars, but came to a screeching halt during the devastation of the Darkest War. Both sides are now more concerned with licking their wounds and picking up the remaining pieces of their forces. The dragons have returned to the world, along with the full power of magic. As the only other Starcalled creatures besides the humanoid races of Vathis, they draw the attention of many, and some see this as an omen of a brighter future.

All in all, the political landscape of the world remains fragile. Nations fell to bitter depths and rose to great glory during the Darkest War, and the balance of power has certainly shifted dramatically. The city of Synethil has returned from the Vibrant, and the High Templar and Archfaers of Leyathar are attempting to carve their place into the world. The nation of Vavaire has also returned after being thought lost forever. Standing armies are currently too small to wage war against one another, and international battle is no longer an option. The wars of the current age are fought in the shadows with intrigue, politics, and insidious agreements.

TIMEKEEPING

The people of Vathis are heavily dependent on accurate timekeeping, tracking the hours to govern the ebb and flow of their daily lives. The hustle and bustle of the city consumes most people's schedules, and city-dwellers in particular require pinpoint accuracy in order to stick to scheduled employment and make important appointments. Eldric devices are a fairly popular means of counting the hours. From eldric pocket watches to church bells, time is accurately kept and accounted for in most inhabited places on Vathis.

HOURS OF THE DAY AND NIGHT

There are twenty-four hours in each day on Vathis, split between the day and night. In places of extreme latitude one will experience variations in the day-to-night ratio, with areas in the far north—such as Tristan—having longer days in the summer and shorter days in the winter. The hours of the day were once only vaguely tracked by unsophisticated methods, but CORE's development of eldric technologies have brought detailed chronological record-keeping to cities and towns from coast to coast. Small crystal apparatuses chime out whenever the hour changes, and the bells of grand churches ring on the quarter of every hour.

ZODIAC CALENDAR

The world of Vathis recognizes seventeen months to the year, with each month corresponding to a Zodiac of appointed influence. The month of one's birth determines which Zodiac watches and tends to their individual fate. There are three weeks to a month, and each week lasts for seven days. The days of the week are Nell, Leur, Erih, Aren, Senn, Weron, and Nocir. There are currently 357 days in a year, with one additional holiday at the end of the seventeenth month. This holiday is called the Laniri, bringing the total length of the calendar to 358 days, each as precious as the last. A description of the Laniri can be found in following section with a list of the months of the Zodiacs. The Zodiac Calendar also displays the solstices and equinoxes of the world.



Month of the Wild	
Month of the Veil	Spring Equinox: 6th
Month of the Sage	
Month of the Stoic	
Month of the Watcher	
Month of the Seer	Summer Solstice: 19th
Month of the Fool	
Month of the Curator	
Month of the Shadow	
Month of the Weaver	
Month of the Guardian	Autumn Equinox: 8th
Month of the Noble	
Month of the Healer	
Month of the Bard	
Month of the Frost	Winter Solstice 17th
Month of the Seeker	
Month of the Sovereign	

Annual holiday: the Laniri

Days of the week: Nell - Leur - Erih - Aren - Senn - Weron - Nocir

THE LANIRI

At the end of the year, following the last day of Sovereign, is the day of the Laniri. It is a worldwide holiday of peace and prosperity for nearly every race and culture on Vathis. Many different traditions surround the day and each religion has a special practice for its observation, but for the general population it is a day in which entire towns and villages gather for feasts and gift-giving. The Laniri is a celebration of having survived another year of hardships with the support of friends and family. Each nation celebrates the Laniri with a different tradition dictated by their local culture.

TRACKING THE YEARS

Years are recorded numerically, beginning with the arrival of the Deities in Armeria's Grand Cathedral during the Divine Sands War. As such, nearly every culture on Vathis holds the year 1 Asarian Grace (AG) as the beginning of our true history, though our knowledge reaches back thousands of years into the past. Various ancient cultures abound in the ruins of Vathis, and searching through lost libraries and painted murals reveals obscure means of tracking time utilized by the ancient world. Comparing these methods to our own can be difficult, and success relies on finding reference points that exist within both systems.

GOVERNMENT

The governments of Asarus' nations operate separately from one another, but they've all joined together on a mutual front to preserve their peoples and global society as a whole by means of the Vathis Accords. The one thing that every nation, save for Leyathar, has in common is having signed this document.

COUNCIL OF VATHIS

Outlined by the Vathis Accords, the Council of Vathis is an inter-governmental organization of the signing nations with the goal of securing international peace. Together they decide on international laws and decrees and convene on treaties and global affairs that threaten the stability of the modern world.

The Council of Vathis oversees the Vathis Sentinels, The Eyes of Vathis, the bank of the Antares Templar and the Eldritch House. Their primary goal is settling disputes and disarmaments to better the lives of the citizens of Vathis. Some matters that the Council of Vathis have overseen are:

- I. The ethical treatment of ildera
- II. The establishment of the Antares banking system
- III. The amnesty of noir after the Darkest War
- IV. The enforcement of eldria regulations and the protection of eldria facilities to prevent widespread eldria infestation
- V. Maintaining the status quo between the Vathis Sentinels and One Hundred and Seventeen Sky Dragons
- VI. The monitoring and tracking of magic users to prevent the travesty that was the beginning of the Darkest War
- VII. The recognition of sovereign states such as Rancagesh, Erygis, and the return of Leyathar
- VIII. The designation of an individual based on their state of allegiance. This determines if someone is considered a Sky Dragon, an Outlaw, or a citizen loyal to the Vathis Sentinels
- IX. International decrees

STARCALLED

From exerting their will upon creation to completely shifting the lines of fate, Starcalled are widely viewed with awe. Gifted with the constellations of the Zodiacs, Starcalled possess magical abilities capable of changing the world. From the ability to control fire, granted by the Sigil of the Noble, to the ability to look into one's secrets with the Sigil of the Veil, their capabilities are extraordinary. Since being granted sigils they've been a formidable force. Untethered to the threads of fate, Starcalled are free to do whatever their heart desires, with no predestined fate pushing them forward. While the manner in which Starcalled are chosen is unknown, it has become apparent that only members of any sentient humanoid race or the mystical dragons can become imprinted with the constellation that denotes them as Starcalled. These chosen individuals usually manifest their sigil before they reach adulthood, but some do not gain a sigil until far later in their lives. The blue lines that make up the constellations of the sigils always appear on the back of the left hand of the Starcalled, and the sigils persist across any forms a Starcalled may take. Sigils typically grant minor abilities, but they gain significant power over time. Some of the most influential individuals in the world of Vathis are Starcalled.

Starcalled are rare, with only one in a thousand gaining their abilities. As such, the normal citizens of the world typically revere the Starcalled. With this admiration, paired alongside the Starcalled's astounding abilities, the Starcalled eventually evolved to become the majority of the noble lines of today's world. Nobili-



ty add the prefix 'zi' before their last name, typically indicating that a member of their bloodline may have been a powerful and influential Starcalled. It is not unknown for normal citizens to flock to their aid and assist the Starcalled in any manner they can. However, being Starcalled alone does not guarantee success. There have been a great many Starcalled who were cut down before any real changes could be crafted with their abilities.

LEGION

For most of the Starcalled's history they acted as individuals, rarely banding together for mutual benefit. It was not until the Darkest War, under Aevalyn zi'Wisla's guidance, that the Starcalled allied together for the betterment of civilization. At its inception Legion was an ad hoc organization with little central leadership, using their combined might and talent to overcome the forces of the Shattered Hand. They perfected the worldfall ritual, created the Anchor Point to prevent fiends from teleporting to safety, and even worked with Lurien Industries to design vaedricarms and vaedric technology. At the end of the Darkest War, Legion was formally recognized by the Council of Vathis, and they've sought new Starcalled to be trained at their college in Adora, Vavaire. They seek to teach all Starcalled to harness their powers and guarantee the world's protection from outside threats while remaining outside of the political landscape of the world. Many of the world's current Starcalled have spent some time in Legion's facilities at one point or another.

THREE FORCES OF THE SKY



The advent of the airship forever altered the skies of Vathis. Almost immediately, three groups seized power of the skies and continue to dominate the winds and clouds to this day. Each and every person on Vathis identifies as either a citizen, an Outlaw, or a Sky Dragon. The constant struggle between these groups has led their leaders to establish a set of rules and laws of conduct. The Vathis Accords, the Free Company Treaty, and the Doctrine of the Winds form the guidelines of their actions, and dictate how members of each of these three groups should behave.

VATHIS SENTINELS

The Vathis Sentinels were founded by the Council of Vathis to ensure that the decrees passed by the Council were followed. The Sentinels enforce these decrees and act as a global peacekeeping force. Very few cities in the modern world do not possess a Sentinel presence of some kind. They operate above the limits of local jurisdiction and are sought by those in need of assistance.

VATHIS PROTECTED CITIZENS

The Articles of Vathis were signed in the year 3716 AG, and only very minor changes have been enacted since their ratification. They are meant to protect the whole of Vathis against any and all

threats. The accords outlined in the Articles of Vathis are found below:

VATHIS ACCORDS

- The taking of any intelligent humanoid life is considered illegal and an act of murder. This law may be overridden in cases of self-defense.
- Exploring and looting the ancient ruins of Vathis is considered illegal, except in cases where the party in question has permission to do so from the Eyes of Vathis.
- Possession and use of any contraband item is considered a crime.
- All magic users have to register with the Eldritch House and attain a permit to cast spells. This permit must be among the person's items when the magic user is casting spells. Failure to register is an immediate suspension of the person's citizenship.
- All airships must be registered with the Vathis Sentinels. All pilots must also register with the Vathis Sentinels. The privilege of flight may be revoked if the pilot in question does not adhere to the Articles of Vathis.
- Vathis Sentinels have the right to board any vessel without due cause.
- Vathis Sentinels have the right to seize any contraband items found on any vessel.
- Any cargo that is being shipped through Protected Airspace is to be taxed by decree of the Council of Vathis. (This taxing is usually done at ports.)
- Pilots using Protected Airspace are subject to the Airspace Tax, which they must pay at the beginning of every year in the form of one hundred gold pieces.
- The Vathis Sentinels retain the ability to detain and arrest any individuals under a reasonable circumstance. Punishment is by their decree.
- All use of elarian eldria must be regulated or sanctioned by the Corporate Operation for the Refinement of Eldria.
- All members protected by the Articles of Vathis must have traveling papers issued by the Bluewind Company.
- A Vathis Sentinel on active duty is allowed to requisition the goods or service of any citizen to fulfill his duty.
- No citizen is allowed to consort with members of the Shattered Hand for any purpose.
- Any obstruction of Vathis Sentinel protected trade routes is considered an attack upon the Vathis Sentinels.
- Vathis Sentinels reserve the right to deputize any citizen of Vathis for reasonable duty.
- Any citizen who has the ability to change his or her form must wear an identifying mark denoting them as a shapeshifter, for one's own safety.
- Vathis Sentinels are obliged to uphold the Vathis Accords as well as all local laws in regard to their current post. Vathis Sentinels possess the right to detain any lawbreakers regarding local laws as well as the continental Vathis Accords.
- Vathis Sentinels are identified by a pair of magical wrist guards denoting their rank and station.
- Any attack against a Vathis Sentinel, direct or indirect, is considered an open act of rebellion against the Council of the Vathis and the Nation in which it takes place.



- Vathis Sentinels operate under the Safeguard Clause, with gives them ultimate jurisdiction in any area they operate, even over local guards and officials.
- Vathis Sentinels and the citizens under their protection must respect the Tenets of the Free Company Treaty and those who choose that way of life. Such people will be known as Outlaws.
- Changes to the Vathis Accords can only be made by the unanimous decision of the Council of Vathis and its members.

There are many additional mandates, but these are the fundamental decrees of the Vathis Accords.

FREE COMPANIES

The Free Company Treaty was created by the Deities during the Divine Sands Wars to safeguard their chosen warriors. This Treaty has survived the ages and helped shape the political landscape of Vathis. Many of the original Free Companies still operate today, though there are also a large number of Outlaws, people who have taken the mantle of a Free Company without pledging allegiance to any specific organization. These Outlaws operate outside of the jurisdiction of the Vathis Accords and have gained significant freedom at a large risk to their person.

TENETS OF THE FREE COMPANY TREATY

- A Free Company is separate from the laws of man and gains no allegiance or protection from them.
- A Free Company cannot be forced to formally ally with any single nation or entity for a period lasting longer than their standing contract.
- A Free Company may work alongside a church but remain a separate entity, gaining no allegiance or protection from them.
- A Free Company must honor all contracts and agreements set forth by its ruling party.
- A Free Company must remain disconnected from international affairs and disagreements, though they may be hired as a result.
- A Free Company's only allies are other Free Companies and the gods themselves.
- Disagreements and wars between Free Companies are to be avoided at all costs, but if they are necessary, follow the code of free honor.
- The code of free honor is: Treat all members of Free Companies and those outside of them with the utmost respect, dignity, and honor, unless they are an enemy, and if battle is to take place between two Free Companies, each Free Company should act in a way that avoids disgracing themselves in both conduct and honor. As such, attempt to spare as many members of the opposing Free Company as possible.
- Free Companies are to avoid contact and cooperation with local authorities as decreed by local laws and legislation, even when a Free Company has been a victim of what local law states is a crime.
- Free Companies must remain self-sufficient, to avoid straining the resources of others.
- A Free Company should avoid interfering in the business of others unless such business puts the company at risk.

- A Free Company has the right to vendetta against any that have harmed them or those close to them.
- Members of a Free Company must wear an insignia denoting their company and membership.
- Defend members of any and all Free Companies from threats originating outside of the Free Companies. Without allies, you are nothing.
- As a Free Company, reputation means everything. It is the key to one's survival and should be maintained and cared for as one would care for their best weapon and best armor.
- During the actions of a contract a Free Company's employer is the sole responsible party for the Free Company's actions while fulfilling their contract.

SKY DRAGONS

Piracy in the airways of the world became dangerous during the years of the First Empire Wars, as airship pirates struck out against the monopolization of eldria by CORE and stole eldria refinement facilities on floating motes. The world's nations banded together in response to the threat and formed the Vathis Sentinels, a global police force. The airship pirates, facing a new adversary, rallied around a man known as Commodore Adeiu. The Commodore then founded what is now known as the One Hundred and Seventeen Sky Dragons, a coalition of various pirate noble families. These families, under the skilled guidance of Commodore Adeiu, have survived by adhering to the Doctrine of the Winds, a guideline of pirate codes. While the Sky Dragons are currently in a state of ceasefire with the Vathis Sentinels, their old prejudices often flare. The Doctrine of the Winds is vital to Sky Dragon survival.

DOCTRINE OF THE WINDS

- A man shall obey their commander in all respects.
- A man shall not willingly bring harm to another Sky Dragon of his own clutch.
- Every Sky Dragon shall have an equal vote in the affairs of the moment and equal share of the provisions.
- All plunders and provisions are to be divided equally among all members of the acting party.
- A man shall act honorably with respect and dignity to those outside of the clutches unless the party in question wishes to bring harm to the clutches or to himself.
- All men have the right to parley if captured by an enemy vessel. During this time the man is under temporary protection and cannot be harmed until he has a received an audience with his enemy's leader. Parley is not concluded until the man and the leader have completed arbitration.
- Disagreements between clutches are to be settled within themselves. If no reconciliation can be made, then five impartial clutches will arbitrate the situation.
- All clutches will remain self-sufficient to not cause undue strain on other clutches.
- If a clutch is unable to fend for itself sufficiently, it is to be subsumed by a more capable clutch.
- Loyalty to the Sky Dragons is paramount to all other loyalties. Those found working against the clutches, sharing their secrets,



stealing from one another, or bringing harm to the clutches, indirect or otherwise, are to be put to death.

- Rules of Engagement state that a Sky Dragon cannot bring harm to non-combatants or those unable to defend themselves properly. Declaration of Intent must be declared to the opposing party before any hostilities can be engaged.

- Sky Dragons must not seek hostilities with third parties, as this both ruins the Dragon's honor and his reputation.

- Changes to the Doctrine of the Winds can only be made by the current holder of the title of Commodore Sky Dragon. Changes initiated by the Commodore can only be vetoed by a majority ruling of clutches.

- The Commodore Sky Dragon can only be chosen by the majority vote of the clutches. He can only be removed by the same method or upon death. Should the Commodore Sky Dragon perish, the clutches are to drop all matters and return to the Sky Dragon Lair to vote on a new Commodore Sky Dragon. Clutches are not permitted to leave or continue operations until a new Commodore is chosen.

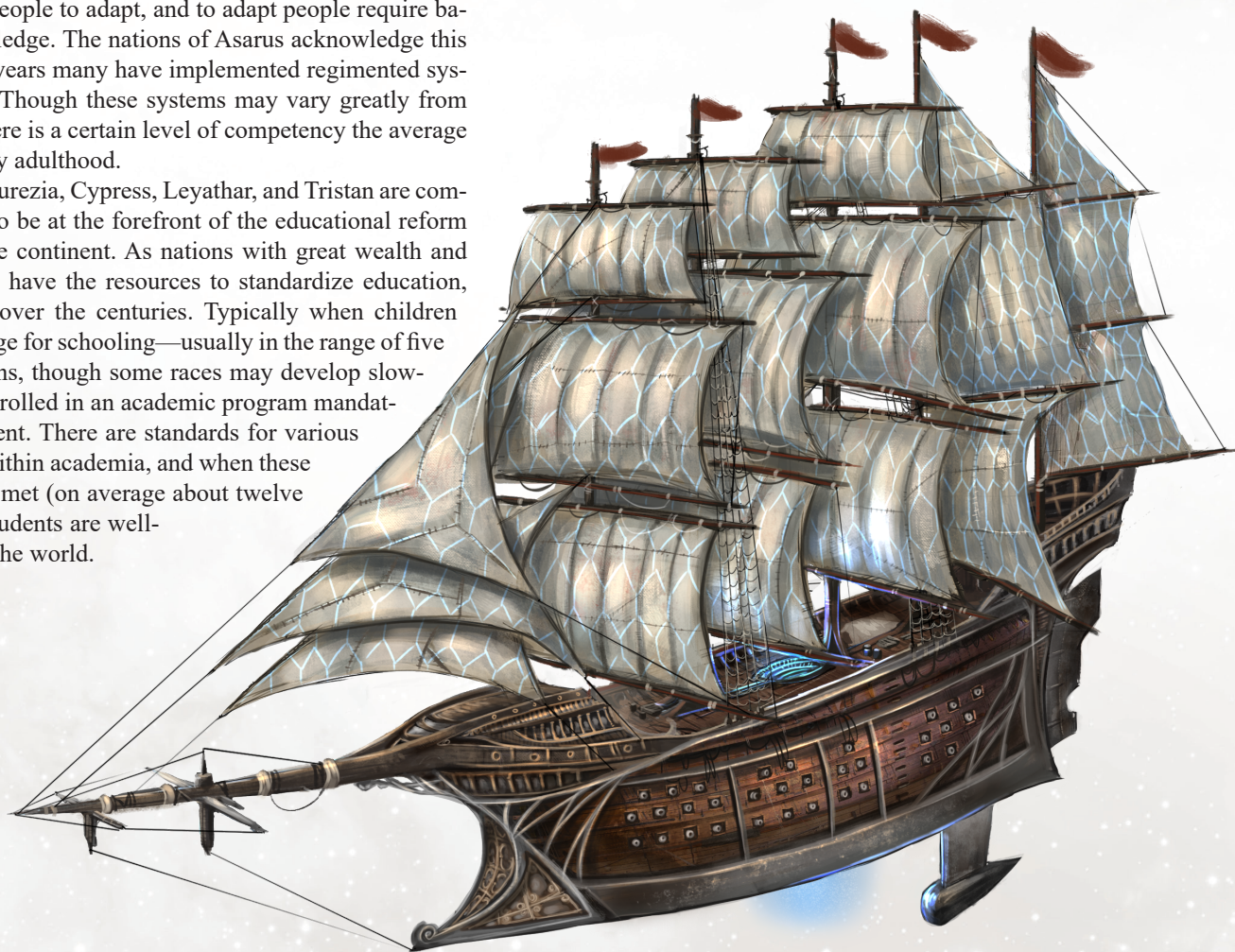
EDUCATION

Asarus is an ever-evolving land. The geographic, societal, and political landscape is constantly changing, creating new standards for the nations of Vathis. With this fast-paced world comes the need for common people to adapt, and to adapt people require basic skills and knowledge. The nations of Asarus acknowledge this need, and over the years many have implemented regimented systems of education. Though these systems may vary greatly from nation to nation, there is a certain level of competency the average citizen will attain by adulthood.

Vavaire, Aurezia, Cypress, Leyathar, and Tristan are commonly considered to be at the forefront of the educational reform sweeping across the continent. As nations with great wealth and long histories, they have the resources to standardize education, and have done so over the centuries. Typically when children grow to a suitable age for schooling—usually in the range of five years old for humans, though some races may develop slower—they may be enrolled in an academic program mandated by the government. There are standards for various levels of prowess within academia, and when these basic standards are met (on average about twelve years later) these students are well-equipped to tackle the world.

In these nations it is common for students to move on to respected bardic colleges or sage universities. Many are recruited as officers in prestigious organizations such as the Eyes of Vathis, CORE, or the Eldritch House.

The basic standard of education in Vathis covers topics such as mathematics, literature, the arts, history, and geography. Vavaire and Tristan are well-known for their free and comprehensive schooling, though Leyathar's education is similarly celebrated. Schools in Cypress focus on the arts and philosophy. While similar, Aurezian schools pepper religion throughout their studies, and the Holy Kingdom claims countless schools dedicated to the religious arts alone. Mythrayne and Darastrix, on the other hand, teach their students detailed history and layers of practical knowledge. In later years, students of these nations move on to learn professional skills and vocations, with Mythrayne emphasizing the importance of maintaining a family trade. Those who attend the bardic college of Jordensång, headquartered in Mythrayne's capital, typically only do so after completing education in a trade skill. The nation of Sillirai places an emphasis on psionics and esoteric subjects, with many coming from far and wide to practice the mental arts at the Grove. Education within Isild and Erygis is basic, but standardized, with Isild also imposing the importance of trade skills, practical knowledge (often militaristic in nature), and



the cosmos, as their populace are frequently Starcalled and they revere the Zodiacs. Washu and Osept possess strict rules and regulations regarding enrollment. One such rule states that an Oseptian servitor may only obtain an education with the permission of their creditor. Oseptian education is rife with religious overtones, and clergy of all of the divines teach within the desert nation. Rancagesh, the world's newest nation, is adapting slowly. Their educational methods are limited and rarely adhere to the standard set forth by the Council of Vathis. Most students in Rancagesh only obtain practical knowledge relevant to their everyday life, with the exception of astronomy, a cultural foothold. Venocians teach the standard curriculum at a young age, then transition to trade skills, with many elves leaving their Venocian homesteads to obtain an education.

COMMUNICATION

Asarus is a vast continent of widespread empires. Reliable forms of communication have been instrumental, even necessary, to the development of today's civilization. Handwritten letters have been the standard of long-distance communication for common folk since the construction of the Gilded Road was completed, and before that such letters were even common within individual nations, while international mail was typically reserved for matters of diplomatic or political significance. These messages were delivered by hand and could take weeks or months to arrive, depending on their destination. This form of mail is only reliable now thanks to the advent of the airships. Couriers were once at risk of losing their letters or their lives while traveling the open expanse of the world, but now mail is safely stowed away in the hulls of formidable vessels.

Significantly rarer than courier service is communication through magical means. Spells that send messages or allow for enhanced deliverance by means of an animal messenger are consistent and reliable, but limited by who is able to actually cast such magics, or afford this level of service. Communication by these means maintains a level of privacy between sender and recipient, however, and messages are less likely to be lost or intercepted while in transit.

At the end of the First Empire Wars came the continental expansion of the Bluewind Company, and huge innovations in communication technologies along with it. The Bluewind Company took over general mail service and parcel delivery from coast to coast, but their real value lay in their messaging services. With the help of eldria and a partnership with Lurien Industries, the Bluewind messaging service allows citizens to send brief messages over long distances in a fraction of the time it would take to manually deliver a letter. This service is a bit more costly than sending mail by courier, but it is reliable and quick. The Bluewind system is also used to relay updates on the Essel Tournament to each of the continent's fourteen nations. Most major cities possess Bluewind outposts.

A large obstacle in the current communications industry is the multitude of languages spoken by the various cultures of Asarus. There are more spoken languages on the continent than there are nations, making translation a well-paid and highly-respected career. At least one polyglot translator can be found in each

Bluewind outpost, and the outposts in major cities often contain several. The Bluewind Company aims to provide comprehensive communications services to speakers of all of the world's living languages.

ENTERTAINMENT

While the life of an adventurer is full of excitement, the average person still manages to find a way to occupy their free time. One of the more recent trends in entertainment is theater. Based strongly in Cypress, traveling theater companies will often venture from city to city to perform their various shows. This trend has led to theater districts popping up in many major cities, attended en masse by the upper crust and common folk alike. Musicians tend to share the same performance stages as theater troupes, and concert halls can easily double as stages. As such, the sampling of exotic songs and instruments has become a popular pastime, occurring in tandem or on a set schedule with thespian performances. For those looking for more lively pursuits, airship racing on the Angylis Sea has become quite popular, with airships of all sizes competing in races of all types. Most famous among these is the Angylis Circuit. Based out of Venoch, it occurs once a year and draws crowds of thousands. People also partake in the age-old sport of horse racing, a cultural tradition in the Holy Kingdom of Aurezia. Cypress also boasts their own variation of horse racing that utilizes large tracts of wild land. These races tie directly into the business of gambling, another popular form of entertainment. Gambling halls and even casinos are becoming increasingly common in the cities of Vathis, and they incorporate a wide array of eldric advancements.

ESSEL TOURNAMENT

The most followed form of entertainment in Vathis is the Essel Tournament. Founded and funded by Lurien Industries, the Essel Tournament is a series of gladiatorial arena matches relayed live by announcers with blow-by-blow updates to the whole world by technology created by the Bluewind Company. The Essel arenas are all the same size, and because of this they can share illusory terrain and combatants, allowing arenas to feature the same match in multiple locations simultaneously.

At its core, the Essel Tournament is a bloodsport. The technology employed by Lurien Industries used to run these games prevents the loss of life, but not the loss of pain. Gladiators are placed in combatant chambers powered by eldric technology which project their likeness onto the Essel arena. These warriors fight projections of one another or projections of ferocious beasts. All combatants feel the pain of the wounds inflicted on their projections, but the injuries do not appear on their real physical forms. When a combatant is killed in the arena, their likeness returns to their team's safe zone, and they reawaken in the combatant chamber when the match is over. Lurien Industries discovered the first Essel arena near the city of Inyl, in Cypress. It was not long before these thrilling gladiator matches became the most listened to and widely discussed topic among the common folk of nearly every country. The Essel Tournament boasts fighters from every corner of Vathis who travel far and wide to compete and prove their worth.





ECONOMY

Economics. Gold. Money. Power. Influence. Across the entirety of the world there is no driving force more powerful than the flow of money. From the lowly farmer putting bread on his table to Vice Filarn, the leader a multinational corporation promoting eldria, an individual's influence, power, life, and future is primarily determined by the amount of gold in their pockets. With gold one can construct the world's largest sky spires, but without it one is destitute. A lack of gold could drive the nations of Vathis to shatter the world's peace and gear up for war over resources, while gold aplenty can create a lasting peace where the needs of all citizens are provided for by the government—such as within the Trisviet Union. The economy of Vathis is based entirely around the gold piece, with a gold coin minted by the Antares Templar Bank weighing a third of an ounce. The control of wealth is determined by an endless variety of factors such as the trade of goods between nations, the creation of finished products, the completion of services, and collection of raw resources to any other manner one could devise to gain or lose a single coin.

SOCIAL CLASSES

POOR: The poor of Vathis either live on homesteads working on farms or are sequestered into slums and tenements within the cities of the world. They tend to be impoverished, dealing in either copper or silver coins, and they may be in debt to a lender. They

probably don't own the houses or homes they are living in, but rent their dwellings from someone higher up the economic ladder. The poor can rarely afford eldric advancements and typically spend their money on the bare necessities of life. A poor family can be expected to make 50 gold or less every month. A month of rent, food, and other necessities usually cost them upwards of 40 gold. Due to forced relocation at the end of the Darkest War, a good number of the poor in Asarus are either squatting in tightly packed homes or are found homeless on the streets of major cities.

WORKING CLASS: The working class are those with reliable employment in factories or other facets of industry. As the workers that keep the world turning, they comprise the largest class of individuals in the world's socioeconomic sphere. They typically rent homes or apartments in decent neighborhoods from members of the upper classes. They're the first class on the economic ladder capable of buying eldric advancements, though these may be few in number and considered luxuries. Typically both parents in a family unit are working individuals, with their children spending mandatory time in a local school. The working class can afford the necessities of life, and even splurge on a few extravagances from time to time. Members of this class typically bring home about 100 gold a month per working family member, and their expenses are typically around 75 gold per month. Unlike the poor, the working class tend to keep money within the Antares Templar Bank. Working class individuals can be found all over Vathis in every major city and even the smallest of towns.

MIDDLE CLASS: The middle class came to exist sometime during the early years of the eldric industrial revolution nearly a



century ago. Members of the middle class usually own their homes and are easily able to afford the necessities of life. Their homes usually contain quite a few eldric advancements, from lights to music crystals, hot stoves, in-home heating, and eldric cleaning products. They can afford to spend money on entertainment and nights out in the cities in which they live. The middle class are the first socio-economic class that can afford to rent their properties to the lower classes. Members of the middle class are usually in management positions in factories, own their own business, or are office workers for larger organizations. The members of the middle class typically earn around 200 gold pieces a month per working family member. They can afford to have a spouse in the family stay home, or afford help around the house in the form of part-time maids and butlers. Their day-to-day cost of living can reach upwards of 150 gold per month. In recent years the middle class has grown significantly, mainly attributable to the large amount of gold left over in the economy after the depopulation of most of the world's nations.

UPPER CLASS: The upper class of Vathis are the first level of society that can be considered influential parties in the world. They tend to have a significant amount of money compared to the middle class, with the ability to freely invest. Families in the upper class tend to own multiple estates in the same country, and even some in other nations. Upper class families might even own their own airships outright without the need of partners. They usually hold positions of influence in the area where they live, either as a local politician, an entertainment manager, or the owner of a sizable business. The upper class usually have a team of individuals working for them as drivers, guards, maids, and stablemen. They rarely perform physical labor except when working in entertainment. They own an endless variety of eldric advancements and tend to purchase the latest and greatest in eldric technology the moment it hits the market. Families in the upper class can bring in upwards of 1,000 gold or more per family member per month, much of which is simply returned from lucrative investments. The cost of living for upper class families varies greatly, but usually caps out at around 750 gold per month. Members of this class rarely go into debt and are often lenders to those in classes below.

ELITE CLASS: Members within the elite class want for absolutely nothing. Everything is attainable by the resources and influence they can muster. The elite typically own multiple tracts of land in a variety of nations. The elite class tends to be equated with the noble class, but this isn't quite the case. Members of the socio-economic elite are the movers and shakers of industry and income. They possess the resources to buy out businesses or entire towns and can start completely new lines of industry from scratch with next to no investment required. The elite might own fleets of personal airships outfitted with the latest and greatest technology CORE has to offer. They have the amount of gold necessary to raise armies of mercenaries at a moment's notice. Their incomes are 5,000 gold or more per month per family member. Their expenses are unfathomable by the working class, sometimes nearly matching their vast incomes.

NOBLE CLASS: The noble class is one that isn't attained by means of monetary wealth, but by bloodlines, reputation, and responsibility. For the most part the noble class is determined by the presence of a successful Starcalled individual in one's bloodline. Many noble family lines, such as the Stardragon family of Vavaire, are old enough to hark back to the Legacy Wars. A good portion of these older families also find themselves in the elite socio-economic sphere. Nobility is not granted automatically, but must be recognized by local governments typically seated by fellow Starcalled families. Depending on the country one finds themselves in, nobility are often granted seats of influence as governors, mayors, protectors, and generals of local authority. Nobility within Vathis always sport the zi' prefix to their last name, standing for Zodiac Imprinted, informing everyone that at one point in time a prosperous Starcalled graced their bloodlines. Even so, the standard of nobility varies from nation to nation and this is not always the case. For some unknown reason many noble lines possess a larger number of Starcallings compared to non-Starcalled bloodlines. While Starcalled born outside of noble families are not uncommon, it is rare for these individuals to gain enough recognition to be promoted to noble status.

COMMERCIALIZATION

The production lines of the current day allow a significant number of goods to be produced in a short amount of time, cut even shorter when the workers are ildera. This productivity has caused a dip in the prices of most common goods, while their demand increased simultaneously at the end of the Darkest War. This unique economic situation has created a consumer-centric society throughout most of the known world, with widespread increases in both purchasing power and the scope of goods available for purchase. The urbanized social groups of the modern era have entered a period of rapid consumption. In addition, the flush of income being spread throughout the middle and upper levels of society has increased the number of small and large businesses throughout the world.

STORES: Until a few decades ago, most businesses were small affairs no larger than a few hundred square feet in size run by a local family. These small establishments supported local communities and rarely gained any sort of clout. In recent years storefronts have become lavish displays of goods, especially those in larger cities. On metropolitan streets most stores display their wares in plate glass windows lit by eldric lighting. These enterprises are public retail establishments offering a wide array of consumer level goods in multiple departments. In many places shopping has ceased being a necessity and become a leisure activity instead. Everything from toys and household items to eldric advancements and clothing can be attained at these broad establishments, ending the need to shop at multiple niche stores.

These larger stores, as well as some of the smaller ones, are sometimes owned by the same person or company. They construct additional stores in other cities or distant locations within the same city. They tend to possess a one-price policy, due to their low markup, ending the age-old process of haggling at the counter. It is fairly rare, due to the logistics involved, for a chain of stores to be spread across multiple nations. The most significant retail chain at



present is Thaephon's Magnificent Emporium, also referred to as "Thaephon's," owned by none other than Thaephon himself. Thaephon's have popped up all across the world from Synethil to Aurez City. Very few growing cities lack the presence of a Thaephon's.

ADVERTISEMENTS: As the commercialization of the world's economy spread, so too did advertisements for regional stores and products. Large signs, billboards, and marketing displays have begun to crop up along the streets of cities, advertising the wares of shops just around the corner. It would not be unusual to spot an artistic rendition of a farm acting as an advertisement to increase sales of produce to the open market.

ELDRIC INFLUENCE AND INDUSTRY



The discovery of eldria ushered in the dawn of the industrial age. Its influence can be felt worldwide, and every aspect of daily life has been altered by the crystals. Factories now churn out products at a rate unfathomable in prior centuries. Industry, once the purview of individual companies in close locations, are now national forces of change and resource generation. Life has become easier, objects have become cheaper, and food has become plentiful in areas where eldria has been adopted.

DAY TO DAY

Life has become much simpler for the average citizen since eldric advancements became widespread. Everything from gathering water, cooking, clothing, timekeeping, and generating warmth has been changed by the implementation of eldric devices.

LIGHTING: Thanks to eldric light, a person's day no longer ends when the sun sets. Lit pathways and streets allow travel throughout cities without the lingering fear of what lurks in the dark. Students may study far into the night, factories no longer shut down because their workers cannot see their fabrication, and shops no longer close due to a lack of evening customers. This invention alone has transformed the habits of the world's populaces. Parties now stretch long into the evening hours, and the night is theirs to explore and conquer.

PLUMBING: Water is now supplied to most buildings in nearly every city and town by use of eldric pumps and long pipes, connecting each and every sink, shower, and toilet. Water is cleaned by purification systems, which has all but completely removed the spread of water-borne diseases and threats. The contaminated water empties into sewers, which usually dispose filth somewhere far from the city.

HEATING/COOLING: Homes in most major cities are heated and cooled by systems of water that are piped through the walls of homes to their radiators. Cold winter nights are warmed and hot summer days are chilled, allowing the metropolitan citizens of

Vathis to live in comfort.

STORAGE OF GOODS AND PRODUCE: The introduction of Rimeboxes throughout Vathis has ushered in a new age of food storage and transportation. Insulated boxes lined with thin strips of Rimesteel allow the cold storage of food and perishables for significantly longer periods of time than ever before. Ice is no longer a winter commodity, and thus the transportation of goods is no longer restricted to certain regions, opening up entirely new trade opportunities. Produce grown in Aurezia can now find its way to tables in the homes of Washu.

DAILY LIFE: The day to day activities of cooking, cleaning, and entertainment have all been changed by eldric advancements. Eldric stovetops and ovens heat meals without the need of firewood or coals. Eldric devices collect the dust of the day's travels in a single place in a room, and music crystals provide a night's entertainment for many homes throughout the world.

WORKFORCE VS WORK: The death toll of the Darkest War created a vacuum in the manpower of the world. The sheer amount of rebuilding that needs to be completed in order to invigorate the nations and repair the damage caused is staggering. The current workforce of Vathis simply cannot cope with such a large deficit in labor. This has driven the wage cost up significantly for the working class, expanded the middle class, and emboldened the upper class.

ILDERA: The destruction of the world's Eldric Reactors placed an unwilling hold on the creation of ildera. Where there was once rapid growth in numbers, causing ildera to become commonplace throughout the world, but their numbers now stagnate. They force many out of jobs due to their tirelessness. At the onset of the First and Second Empire Wars the ildera, like the poor, stood on the front lines of battle and lost a significant number of their kind. After the war, many of the ildera returned to jobs they once loved, but their numbers are insufficient to tackle the labor shortage. While Constantine Vanguard still possesses a few hidden active Eldric Reactors, his output simply cannot match the world's demand. Due to this, he has pushed for an increase in ildera rights and recognition around the world by uniting the remaining ildera under a common cause.

ELDRICSTEEL: In recent years eldricsteel suffered the same fate as ildera. Like ildera, the substance requires Eldric Reactors as a part of its creation process. Since its inception, eldricsteel has been a key component in sky spire construction and expansion of infrastructure everywhere. Under the watchful eye of Constantine Vanguard, the Vanguard Steel Company controls the remaining output of eldricsteel. Thankfully, Constantine stockpiled a large amount years ago and has not changed his pricing, though demand continues to increase.

FOOD PRODUCTION: Eldric innovations in the realm of agriculture were some of the very first made widespread by CORE. Water delivery systems, enhanced fertilizer, internally heated



greenhouses, and artificial sunlight have all driven the methodology and growth of agricultural products extremely high. Farms that could once feed a few hundred can now support thousands. Growing seasons last longer, and crops are hardier. Farms throughout the world can now support the tightly packed cities of the present day with ease, even in the scorching Nashendasorn Desert of Os-ept.

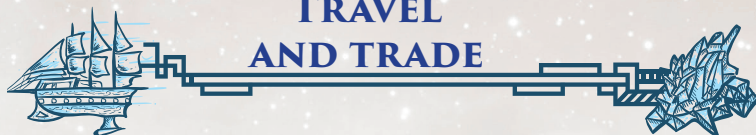
MEDICAL ADVANCEMENT: The humanoid races of the world have always been plagued by a plethora of diseases, poisons, and ailments. Recent medical advancements incorporating eldria have rid the world of common diseases that once plagued societies for hundreds (if not thousands) of years. Common ailments no longer immediately threaten the lives of those who come into contact with them. In most countries the medical profession is seen as a necessity, and medical care is provided at cost to consumers, except in the Trisviet Union where the bulk of the cost is burdened by the government rather than sick individuals. Combining these advancements with the acts of devoted clergy means that anyone with access to wealth is extremely unlikely to die from wounds, infection, or disease.

INDUSTRIAL MIGHT: The influx of eldric enhancements to the manufacturing process led to advancements in industry and production unlike anything witnessed before, such as the adoption of machine tools, which sparked the current industrial revolution. Factories are enhanced with eldria, and ildera workers have completely changed the way goods are produced and labor is distributed. Steel weapons, battle-ready armor, and other objects of warfare can now be mass produced, equipping the armies of the world in record time.

TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCEMENT: No industrial sectors were exempted from the benefits of advancement, leading to a swift rise of general technological levels across the entirety of the continent. While some areas may be behind others due to their remote locations or for stubborn cultural reasons, the rapid diffusion of information has been widespread. The medical field in particular saw vast improvements in each and every nation of Asarus.

VAEDRA'S INFLUENCE: Vaedra's debut in the world brought forth a momentous number of changes to mining and warfare. Cannons, explosives, and vaedricarms are just now beginning to be utilized on a global scale. The movement of earth has increased significantly in mining operations, as vaedric explosives displace large sections of rock and earth in mere seconds. Cannons were adopted by airships and sailing vessels during the Darkest War, and they've since changed the face of combat amid both air and sea. Vaedric weaponry has only been utilized by a small number of groups, due primarily to its limited availability and high cost of manufacturing. Vaedra's limited availability has stunted much of the economic growth that many expected from Lurien Industries.

TRAVEL AND TRADE



Travel across Vathis is typically done in one of three ways. On horseback along the roads of the land, on a seafaring vessels within shipping lanes, or in the sky aboard the airships of eldric wonder.

GILDED ROAD

Across the vastness of Asarus lies the Gilded Road, a highway of black dragonstone that remains impervious to weathering. The Gilded Road connects the world's nations together, constructed long ago by the dwarves of Mythrayne under contract with the various nations of Asarus. Over the course of centuries the Gilded Road, called the Gullevein by the dwarves who built it, has been expanded to encompass most of the major trade routes of Asarus. Even after all these years the Gilded Road remains in pristine condition. While some may become grown over by foliage when unused, the roads still remain, as is the case in Leyathar. The Gilded Road has always been the host of a large amount of traffic, especially within national borders.

SEAS AND WATERS

When it comes to transporting vast quantities of people or supplies, nothing beats the power of water. Between the eight seas and two oceans that gently lap the shores of Vathis, there is no shortage of waterways on which the traders and merchants of the world can transport their goods. While many nations have developed their own ship frames and builds, Venocian and Cyprean shipwrights drove the development of seafaring technology to modern-day standards. As a nearly perfected form of transportation, the use of the sea to move goods remains a necessity. Even with the advent of airship technology, the weight limits of EDS drives have caused water trade to remain the preferred method of shipping large quantities of goods. The sea is not without its dangers, however. Pirates, despite having moved mostly to the air, still act on the seas along with other seafaring bandits. Combined with the ever-changing weather of the fickle sea and the danger of the beasts that lurk in the depths below, traveling on the sea can be just as dangerous, if not more so, than traveling on land. The waterways of the world are currently controlled by the Sea branch of the Vathis Sentinels, and they're kept extremely busy dealing with the unorganized sea pirates, not to be confused with the One Hundred and Seventeen Sky Dragons.

AIR

The airways of the world are freedom. There is no finer feeling than knowing your feet are no longer tethered to the ground. With the introduction of the airship some years ago, the travelers of the world took to the sky and learned to soar among the clouds. Airships were adopted by the merchants and the nations of the world in record time, and warships and trading vessels alike were crafted in the image of seafaring vessels. The spread of the new technology was astounding but necessary, as airships allowed the civili-



zations of the world to influence one another and react to events at speeds only previously dreamt of. Motes once unclaimed were colonized. New trade routes along the currents of the winds were laid. The unreachable, now reached, and the previously unknown, discovered. After the end of the First Empire Wars, the Air branch of the Vathis Sentinels was formed to protect the airspace of Vathis from a variety of threats, particularly the newly formed One Hundred and Seventeen Dragons pirate group.

AIRSHIPS

The airships of Vathis are wooden sailing vessels constructed around a Ether Drive System. The Ether Drive System, or EDS, looks like a cylinder of metal that radiates a blue glow when in use. When the EDS is activated it is partially transposed onto the plane of the Ether. When an EDS is connected to a vessel, that vessel can fly, generating lift by drawing Ether down into itself and out of the airship's keel. The sails of an airship are also connected to the EDS, and these sails propel the vessel forward and backward by grabbing the winds of the Ether, moving the ship forward at a constant rate until deactivated. The Ether Drive System was first invented by an Elish CORE researcher by the name of Sephyre zi'Alund, and it was soon used to create the first airship. An endless series of airship frames, styles, roles, and even multi-EDS ships have been created throughout the era of flight.

POPULAR TRADE GOODS

TOBACCO: Tobacco is a widely-enjoyed pastime. People in every nation engage in smoking tobacco and seek the highest quality leaves they can find to fill their pipes. Erygis and Cypress are known for growing the finest tobacco in all of Vathis.

SPICES: With the increased availability of produce and meats in stores, sale of spices has increased as well. Cooking is no longer just a necessity, but rather something the average person can take time to enjoy and enhance to their liking. Washu is praised for the caliber of exotic and unique spices that only grow on her shores.

SALT: Salt is a precious commodity used in the preparation and preservation of meats. Salt is also utilized as a base material for

many alchemical concoctions or other mixtures. Sought out by a multitude of buyers, salt commands a vast market, and Darastrix is the world's largest producer and supplier of the substance. The Salt Lords of the nation earn a sizable profit from salt's sale.

RAW MATERIALS: Lumber, minerals, and other unrefined products are the most commonly shipped items in Vathis. It is with these goods that the craftsmen of Vathis are able to produce the finished goods sought by the common folk. Raw materials can be found in every corner of the world, ranging from rare trees such as the luki'taer trees of Leyathar to the rich mineral deposits in Mythrayne. Eldria itself is considered a raw material when exported from places such as Tristan and Vavaire.

FINISHED GOODS: Finished goods are the final products that ultimately end up in the hands of the consumer. Everything from weapons and armor to furniture and household goods are shipped to major cities and trade centers all across the world.

COINS, CURRENCY, AND BANKING



Most nations use standard copper, silver, gold, and platinum coinage, all issued by the Council of Vathis and minted by the Antares Templar. All earlier coins are considered historical pieces which can be exchanged for modern currency at any Eyes of Vathis or Antares Templar location. Some ancient currency is worth more than the standard.

BANKING AND STOCK MARKETS

The Antares Templar founded the world's largest bank after the First Empire Wars. Most cities or towns have branches of this bank, and those without are rare. The Antares Templar is registered with and regulated by the Council of Vathis so currency is guaranteed to be secure. Eldric advancements allow the Antares Templar to keep track of accounts, debts, interests, loans, and other financial documentation and agreements. Large sums of money are often moved in the form of Antares Templar Promissory Notes. The Council of Vathis regulates the Valiance stock exchange, a bustling and lively market of buying and selling shares for the major companies of Vathis. The primary market is located in Valiance, Vavaire, with a few smaller exchanges located in other major cities in the world.

The trading of stocks is ruled by the rich, with the upper class currently attempting to take advantage of the industrial growth of the current era. Businesses and corporations find the majority of their prosperity and wealth from the investors trading their shares. Most stocks are compared against the eldric industrial average. The economic prowess of a nation is often measured directly against their involvement in public businesses.

SERVICES

The increasing expansion of primary and secondary



industries has led to the swift rise of the service industry throughout Vathis. The service industry includes business involving the financial sector, entertainment, travel, communications, and a whole host of other enterprises.

BLUEWIND COMPANY

There is no business expanding as quickly as the Bluewind Company. The organization was originally founded by Tahril Fel, a former Vathis Sentinel agent who survived the destruction of the facility where he was stationed. With his sensitive research intact he retired from the Sentinels and completed his work with private funding, leading to the founding of the Bluewind Company. The company began as a humble messaging service between stations in distant cities, capable of transferring messages from one location to another almost instantly. The business has since expanded, and now operates as an extensive logistics and delivery company. They also issue identification papers and act as couriers and barristers all across the world. The Bluewind Company works in tandem with Lurien Industries to provide blow-by-blow updates of the Essel Tournament to every noteworthy city. They also collaborate with the Antares Templar, whose banks always contain a Bluewind Station. This allows banking officials to send and receive quick account updates, removing the hassle from banking.

ANTARES TEMPLAR

With the creation of a continent-wide banking system under the regulation of the Council of Vathis, the citizens of Vathis can now properly store their wealth in protected locations supplied by the Antares Templar. The Antares banks grant their users account management with deposit and withdrawals, safety deposit boxes for valuables, and an eldric mobile vault system that utilizes advancements in eldric technology. This vault system allows a user to step into his or her own vault while visiting any Antares Templar bank anywhere in the world. There are only a few other banks that operate independently of the Antares Templar, due to the significant benefits the Templar offer their customers.

TRAVEL COMPANIES

Traveling has always been the lifeblood of exploration, experience, and prosperity. Many agencies and independent operators connect potential travelers with itineraries to their destinations—for a small fee, of course. Travel by caravan within a nation is fairly easy, as most caravans welcome additional hands. Overland travel between nations is rare, thanks to the dangers of the remnants of the Shattered Hand lurking in open spaces. One cannot expect the guards of the nations to protect the land outside of their borders, and caravans are forced to protect themselves against the dangers that threaten them on empty stretches of the Gilded Road.

Traveling by airship is a different story, however. Typically, one would have to find a sailing ship that runs the route the traveler wants, or ride multiple sailing vessels to reach their end destination. Airships of the modern day often offer dedicated routes to different areas of the world, providing travelers with a hassle-free way of reaching their desired destination. The cost of airship travel is significantly higher than the fare of sailing vessels, due primarily to the heightened danger and heavy cost of fuel.

The One Hundred and Seventeen Sky Dragons are always a threat to those traveling by airship, and should their ceasefire with the Vathis Sentinels ever break down it would not be unlikely for commuter vessels to be boarded and robbed of their valuables.



SPECIAL MATERIALS

There are materials that are unique to the industry of Vathis. Many of these have become essential in the day-to-day lives of citizens, and some are simply too precious to sell.

RIMESTEEL

Rimesteel was first discovered by the early Isril in the Sentinel Mountains and northern region of Isild. Used primarily as an easily malleable weapons material, rimesteel eventually drew the attention of the public in the later years of the industrial age as a method of preserving food. Rimesteel appears as a blue tinted ice found in veins deep within frozen passes and glaciers, giving off a deep chill regardless of ambient temperature. Weapons created out of rimesteel instantly freeze the wounds they inflict, dealing significant tissue damage. Properly forged and treated, rimesteel possesses the same strength as steel, but has the appearance of polished ice.

ELDRICSTEEL

Eldricsteel was created for the first time shortly after the creation of the first Eldric Reactor. A synthesis of elarian eldria and steel, eldricsteel combines eldria's self-repairing properties and the tensile strength of steel. Eldricsteel provides all of the benefits of steel while remaining rustproof, corrosion free, and immune to weathering. Once forged into its final form and treated, eldricsteel will begin to repair most damage done to the steel over time, preventing warping and healing any and all cracks that appear while under stress. As such, it's been used widely around the world for construction purposes in the forms of bridges that will never rot and buildings that will stand for ages, long outliving their original architects. Eldricsteel is the primary component in ildera creation. Weapons and armor created by eldricsteel are stronger than typical steel and capable of cutting through weaker materials. Spellcasters discovered that they can channel magical power through this form of weaponry, increasing their damage potential.

VAEDRICSTEEL

Vaedricsteel was created during the Darkest War when Constantine Vanguard, in conjunction with Legion, invented a new type of Eldric Reactor capable of processing vaedra. Vaedricsteel possesses the same properties of eldricsteel, but at an increased level. Vaedricsteel boasts the same immunity as eldricsteel against corrosion, and once the treatment process is complete this substance also self-repairs, but at double the rate of eldricsteel. When magic is funneled through vaedricsteel the results are extremely power-



ful, increasing damage almost twofold when compared to its sister substance. Newly created ildera sporting vaedricsteel bodies have been seen in Armeria and Vavaire, secretly created by Constantine. What properties these new ildera possess is currently unknown. Vaedricsteel has not seen widespread use as a construction material as of yet, but it's possible potential in an Ether Drive System is currently being researched.

EGLASS

The discovery of eglass was wholly accidental. Some elarian eldria was incorrectly added to the glass-making process in a workshop, and the first eglass creations were born. Eglass is a fairly interesting material: significantly stronger than glass, it possesses the tensile strength of iron at half its thickness, and also retains both the transparency of glass and eldria's curious method of self-repair. Combined with eldricsteel, eglass composes a large portion of modern construction in tall buildings. A number of common household items are also comprised of eglass, from common cups to serving dishes and elaborate chandeliers. Weapons and armor made from eglass are typically done so for aesthetic reasons. Eglass, like regular glass, comes in a wide variety of colors.

DRAGONSTONE

The statues of the dragons scattered throughout the world were found to be made of a special material that the humanoids of Vathis aptly named dragonstone. The dwarves of the Leyarin Empire of old discovered a method of creating dragonstone artificially through an alchemical process. Relatively inexpensive and easy to mass produce, dragonstone was used in a variety of wars before the introduction of the industrial age. It forged the paths of the Gilded Road and established the largest trade routes of Asarus still used to this day. Since the dawn of industrialization, dragonstone has been utilized in a wide array of products and places, forming the bases of dams, bridges, and even entire buildings. Artificial

dragonstone can be forged of any color decided at the time of its mixing. Natural dragonstone is always a deep onyx black.

ASTRIUM

The intricacies of creating astrium have been lost to the mists of time. Astrium is composed of zodi'ite-laced steel forged into a material far stronger than any known material, including adamantine. It exists now only in prefabricated items, typically weapons found in the hidden reaches of the world. Items made of astrium are highly prized and typically in the possession of powerful noble lines and organizations. These rare treasures are next to impossible to find magically through divination, and must be found the same as zodi'ite: with a lot of searching and luck. Weapons composed of astrium can cut through any material and channel magical powers with devastating effect. Enchanted astrium items never lose their ability to function, even in places where the Ether is weak. Currently the only known method of creating new astrium items is to melt down others and forge the item anew.

WARFARE AND POLITICS



Following the horror of the Darkest War, protection is widespread as people are now constantly on guard for fear of their lives being threatened. Protection has become less of an option and more of a necessity in an age of new and unknown dangers. At the most basic level people are able to protect themselves from bodily harm with the weapons they carry on their person, and there are extremely few places in Vathis where it is illegal to wield arms. The national guards of the nations are a regular sight in towns and cities, protecting those unable to protect themselves. Each nation has developed their own form of guard to deal with threats specific to their



corner of the world. Most of these guards provide protection in cities as well as on the Gilded Road, making it a safe and reliable travel route. For areas outside national jurisdiction there exists a number of organizations that offer their services as escorts, such as mercenary groups. This is a more modern trend, and this line of work has become an easy way for veterans to make a living while providing a desperately needed service. The Vathis Sentinels also lend their aid where they can outside of nations, but their primary concern lies in protecting civilization from the dangers of the outside world and the perils presented by civilization itself. When someone needs a specific form of protection, or defense from a particularly dangerous threat, they turn to the Free Companies for help. Many of these organizations, such as the Dark Knights or Broken Swords, will take contracts to protect those in need. Guardian Force is well-known as the best guards available in Vathis. Their members voluntarily guard the Gilded Road and its travelers without being contracted. When hired, Guardian Force will go to any lengths to ensure the safety of their charge.

WAR

WARFARE ACROSS THE AGES: Pikes, cavalry, bows, crossbows, swords, and shields have been the way of battle for millennia, and are no less integral now. Though advancements have been made in other areas, the reliability, low-cost maintenance, and minimal training required to wield these basic arms make them a staple of warfare. In the battles of old, forces rode forth on mounts and in chariots and wagons. Once ships became a mainstay they, too, became essential to war efforts. Ships make it easy to transport large numbers of soldiers and resources, as well as act as a weapon themselves when armed with weaponry. Navies were once a heavy focus for nations, and remain so for certain countries even in the modern day. With the advent of CORE and airships, however, a new vehicle of war was adopted as the new standard. Airships grant their owners benefits similar to naval ships, but to a greater extent and with significantly swifter results. They can soar the skies with little to no resistance, making warfare a quicker affair.

The return of Synethil also heralded the return of war mages and advanced magical tactics. These forgotten arts turned the tide of the Darkest War, and magical prowess and arcane contingents are now integrated into the armies of nearly every nation. Vaedric technology saw some use during the Darkest War, but overall it was still a relatively new and unproven technology in developmental stages. Vaedricarms—firearms powered by vaedra eldria—are rare but powerful, and should they become a mainstay they'll be a truly destructive weapon in battle. Luckily, this future remains over the horizon.

THE CONSEQUENCES OF WAR: The most obvious consequence of war is the grave loss of life. Millions of souls perished in the Darkest War, and the world is mourning their loss. The nations' economies were also shaken, as industries drastically altered their production to aid the war effort and provide for the injured, poor, and family members left at home. Now companies have to adjust to a regular way of life they haven't known in over a decade. To complicate matters, with so many killed and companies displaced, many businesses were forced to dissolve or are now struggling to

maintain reliable production.

Some side effects of warfare were impossible to foresee. During the Night Wars long ago, the Narril Desert became a barren zone of dead magic, and in more recent years an entire nation was destroyed in a catastrophic event known as the Withering of Elessar. During the Darkest War the forces of the Shattered Hand executed Operation Eldric Crash, which completely ravaged the Shardlands and turned the entire area into an eldria-infested hellscape, and the multiple death knells of Vandiel slain in the war altered the world's landscape for the worst. The Rimelan, Manastorm Chain, and Ixen Caldera are all uninhabitable places saturated with negative energies left from the knells of these great Aspects. There is no telling how long these effects will last—or if they'll ever end.

WARFARE AS A FOOL'S ERRAND: The nations of Vathis desperately fear another war, as the sheer number of lives lost over the course of the last century is staggering. The resources that went into supporting the militaries of the world during the Darkest War are greatly lessened. Swaths of lush farmland were lost to the Shattered Hand, and the agricultural industry suffered as the outlying farms and villages feeding the capitals of the world were overrun and abandoned. Losing areas such as Drakostigat, the Borderlands, and the mainland holdings of Washu were devastating for the nations who relied on these areas to feed their people. Other industries that required manpower, such as mining, are reporting lower numbers of employees in these times. Companies across the world are desperate for skilled laborers to maintain their businesses. The tension between the nations that compose the Council of Vathis continues to run high, but they all realize that another war would bring destruction to civilization. With the continent in a weakened state, there is a fear that if any one nation were to begin a conflict with another, there would be a chain of alliances reacting and joining the efforts until a Third Empire War was in full swing. The tenuous truce between world leaders has brought about new diplomatic relations in recent years as a result.

PREVENTING FUTURE CLASHES: Any war going forward would benefit from the successes and errors of their predecessors. This opens up tactics and methods of warfare heretofore undreamed of. The frightening potential of the tactical use of vaedra against an enemy is real. Many are scared of vaedra's ongoing research falling into the wrong hands, though Lurien Industries is quick to give assurances that this could never happen. It's surely only a matter of time before new weapons will be created to take advantage of vaedra's extremely volatile properties. Siege weapons, guns, and cannons are already deadly enough. Should more powerful weapons be developed, warfare will spell the destruction of Asarus. Some posit that warfare in the future will shift to completely new standards. Economic warfare is currently possible, as several nations now rely heavily on particular industries. One could target the profitability of businesses rather than attack with an armed force, and this could cripple a nation just as badly, if not worse, than total war. Proxy wars are also a threat, but they are unlikely, as the risk of warfare escalating to involve further nations threatens another Empire War.

The prevention of further conflict is at the forefront of



everyone's minds. Somewhat fortunately, the lingering threat of the Shattered Hand remains to unify the nations and defer provocations and threats. The greatest defense against ongoing warfare, however, is the sheer globalization that has occurred in recent years. Each and every nation is dependent on some level, either politically or economically, on almost every other nation, as well as on an array of clever alliances. The Council of Vathis as a whole has been tasked with maintaining the peace, hopefully preventing any wars from occurring in the near future. If war were to break out between the nations all would inevitably join the fighting and suffer grave consequences.

ESPIONAGE

HISTORY OF ESPIONAGE: War was once solely fought on the fields of battle with blood and steel. Warfare in the modern age, however, is fought with intelligence from the shadows. Knowledge of enemy movement has always been utilized in the course of battle, but it wasn't until the First Empire Wars that nations began devoting portions of their military to the dedicated field of intelligence. This war was the first to include encryption, encoding, and professional codebreakers. Encryption itself was taken to an entirely new level with the introduction of eldric advances, and the creation of the noir and the Black Network pushed even the most powerful intelligence networks to their limits during the Darkest War. Since gaining their freedom, noir have become an invaluable asset to intelligence networks everywhere.

THE SHADOW WAR: Nations now pit their best diplomats and spies against enemies within their very own cities. Death is dealt hand in hand with diplomacy, and often leaves no trace. Embarrassment and scandal are the new swords of our age, while secrets and connections are utilized to gain the proverbial higher ground. Counter-intelligence is just as important, and nations go to great lengths to hide their secrets from others. Different types of cyphers, cryptography machines, and magical devices are used with frightening effect. The amari's inherent telepathic abilities give them a natural edge in this field.

PROMINENT INTELLIGENCE AGENCIES: The most well-known intelligence agency is the Sillarian Intelligence Network. Utilized extensively during the Darkest War, the Sillarian Intelligence Network can be credited with single-handedly reshaping the landscape of the entire conflict. Their operations freed the first noir and successfully kept Aevalyn hidden from the Shattered Hand. Other prominent intelligence networks are Vavaire's SAS and the Trisviet Union's Blood Syndicate.

POLITICS

Until the First Empire Wars, the political landscape of Vathis was a series of agreements between neighboring nations and trading partners. The First Empire Wars forced international politics upon every nation in the world, regardless of their political stance and alliances or lack thereof. The founding of the Council of Vathis has forced each and every country to the diplomatic table to discuss and debate agreements and global affairs. The Council exists as

a neutral arbitrator that aids in the signing of agreements and the resolution of conflicts without the need for bloodshed. To a lesser degree, propaganda is used in every country in the world to temper the attitudes of the common people. Posters, fliers, newsprint, and entertainment are all aligned to the agendas of the world leaders.

MERCENARIES

Mercenaries are used by countless companies, militaries, nations, and personal employers, as they serve a simple, agreed-upon function and are paid. When a traveler needs a bodyguard from one town to another, it's easy for them to hire a mercenary to protect them and their wares, paying them upon arrival at their destination. There is no prior relationship required, none needed afterward, and contracts tend to be confidential, making the use of mercenaries an easy choice for many. Some hire mercenaries to perform tasks that would otherwise dirty their hands or worse, their reputation. Adventurers fall under the umbrella of "mercenaries" often, as they're hired to perform tasks their employers lack the bravery or ability to complete themselves.

The Darkest War left many with no home or family to return to, and the sheer number of mercenaries roaming Asarus is significantly greater than ever before. Mercenaries come from a variety of sources. Many are veterans of the war who were left with nothing, or those who wish to continue the life of a hired sword. Little of a former soldier's life changes when they become a mercenary. Others are those whose families or homes were torn asunder by the war, and now they feel the call of a simpler way of a life among like-minded souls. Legitimate organizations of mercenaries exist as well, formed at the dawn of civilization called Free Companies. Several Free Companies serve this purpose, taking contracts as mercenaries or bodyguards, while there are also smaller mercenary groups that operate within a specific locality or region. These are the most reliable, as they have an organization-wide reputation to uphold. The last source of mercenaries are the poor, downtrodden, and money-hungry. Some civilians see the life of a hired soldier as a quick way to make some money and raise their station. These mercenaries can be found almost anywhere, but not all are trustworthy. Some care little for what happens to their charges so long as they get paid.



Vathis is a world of many faiths, each wielding their own numerous facets. Though the seventeen Deities boast the most dominant religions of the world, not all people adhere to these organized churches. Various cults and sects both within and outside of these religions can be found in Vathis. Many of these groups are seen as heretics and heathens shunning the benevolent gods who bless mortals with their divine grace, but not all are inherently evil. The fringe sects of the seventeen churches generally work alongside, or at least cooperate with, the larger religions as a whole. Valshathe's church in particular is famous for having two large sects that coincide peacefully—but some of the more chaotic Deities' churches



do not operate quite so smoothly.

As the dominant faiths in the world, the seventeen Deities of Vathis play an important role in society. Many nations on the Council of Vathis claim one singular deity as the 'rightful' god or goddess of their people, and this religious fervor becomes as integral to the nation's structure as its government and military, while others recognize at least a handful of religions as acceptable and shun those they deem immoral or incorrect. The detriments and benefits of these ways are uncountable, as the religious culture of the nation's effect even the lowest of the common folk. A devout worshipper of Astea in Aurezia may show nothing but scorn for a follower of certain gods regardless of their moral fiber, simply because this is what she was raised to believe. A nation with a vastly different view is Cypress, where commoners of various faiths can be found openly discussing their spiritual differences without fear.

Another matter that causes tension among faiths is how the seventeen Deities of Vathis are viewed by different cultures. The Vath, Astrian, Manara, Shenami, and Hueltlactan pantheons all boast their own interpretation of the gods, and each had their own place in time where they were considered the unquestionable truth. As civilizations spread, interacted, and began developing, the ideas of the pantheons expanded. The legends, myths, origins, and proper religious practices may differ slightly between the pantheons of the world, but the representations of the gods themselves are truly what set these pantheons apart. These differences in depictions cause tension between followers of different pantheons. The Vath pantheon is the most commonly known today, and it represents all seventeen Deities equally. The average citizen will recognize the Vath names for the gods, even if they worship them under a different name in another pantheon.

The cults of the world—questionable faiths not recognized as following the seventeen—are mostly viewed with ridicule and sometimes outright disdain. Those who praise the Vandiel are seen as heretics wishing death upon the world. Followers of the Crystal Watcher are treated as insane extremists poisoning the minds of anyone who will listen. The followers of the returned dragons view the marauding beasts as deific, and though fairly new, these sects of worshippers are universally met with wariness.

VANDIEL CULTS

Vandiel cultists remain a very real threat to society, as they often fraternize with the remnants of the Shattered Hand still roaming Asarus. None can say how long these cults have existed, but they became widespread and known during the Darkest War. These cults were responsible for much of the carnage wrought in the war, as many hid their allegiances and waited for the opportune chance to lash out at others. They were drawn to the Vandiels for their impressive shows of power. Mortal spellcasters made pacts with these beings in exchange for greater strength, and others were cursed or blessed by the Vandiels to coerce them into service. The Vandiel Lords are actually able to grant a measure of spells to their worshippers in a fashion similar to the Deities, making them appealing entities for the power-hungry to revere. Many of these cults remain well-organized and prominent throughout the world. Rumoriskar's Redreamers are one such cult, sowing subconscious disruption from coast to coast. Karwytren's cultists are found ac-

tively opposing the church of Irilynshae, and they commit grave atrocities against her clergy. Ocluxim's corruption of the gnolls of Rancagesh has proven permanent, and they still spread chaos in his name. As both a Deity and a Vandiel the goddess Serena keeps church and cult. The line between the distinction is thin, but most in her service identify with one group or the other. Severance's cultists can claim famous nobility to their numbers, and they in particular have brought the presence of Vandiel cults to the forefront of the people's minds.

CRYSTAL WATCHER

The Church of the Crystal Watcher has always been around in some capacity, but the advent of the ildera and discovery of eldria led to an exponential increase in their numbers. These churchgoers (though most consider them cultists at heart) praise the Crystal Watcher, also known as the Many Faceted God. Sects ceaselessly argue over which is closer to the true representation of the Watcher. His followers believe that the Watcher appears in all gems, crystals, jewels, eldria, and vaedra. They see his likeness in any precious stone, and the majority of their labors are spent obtaining these objects and like materials. The Church of the Crystal Watcher seems to welcome the side effects of eldria exposure—both good and ill—with open arms, no matter the cost.

The majority of Vathis views members of this church as insane. They try to ransack CORE facilities, eldria fields, and mining operations, such as the vaedra deposits in Cypress and the salt mines of Darastrix. Worshippers of the Crystal Watcher see his presence in all things crystalline, and they believe that the Watcher exists across all planes and worlds as the creator of life. They wish to transform themselves into a likeness closer to his form. Some priests of this order are actually able to channel magic from their spells to the Watcher, which befuddles sages worldwide as they cannot attribute these spells to any of the existing seventeen Deities.

The Church of the Crystal Watcher wishes to restore their Prismatic Lord by combining the Great Crystals into one. They immerse people into vats of elarian fluid as sacrifices, spread eldria, and implant eldria, vaedra, and other crystals into their own flesh as ornaments of their worship. They even kidnap ildera to worship as idols, claiming that they can 'awaken' the ildera to their true purpose: the Crystal Watcher's service. Worshippers of the Many Faceted God call the traditional gods pretenders, and claim that the Deities are stealing the Watcher's power while the Watcher remains imprisoned. This odd faith has seen a rise in popularity following the end of the Darkest War, primarily due to the immense support the Church gave to the various armies in the world in the fight against agents of the Shattered Hand, believing the fiendish hordes to be representations of the Watcher's mortal enemy, Prisma. What members of this clergy don't know, however, is that the Crystal Watcher is actually an unwitting representation of the Elder.



DRAGON CULTS

A substantial rise in cults worshipping dragons as divine beings took place after dragons returned to the world from their stone imprisonment. Cultists believe that the dragon race was created in the Zodiacs' image and they are destined to rule again. They believe that the dragons, who ruled over mortals long ago, should take their rightful place as kings of the world's nations. The dragons which remain petrified are viewed by these cultists as the originals who sacrificed themselves for the betterment of their younger spawn, who have been released back to life to cleanse the world in the wake of the Darkest War. The vasar are the closest descendants of the dragons, and many among them claim to be prophets of the dragons' will.

The immense power of dragons is naturally awe-inspiring, making it easy for their great winged kind to install fear and fealty in humanoids. Not all dragons are welcoming of this behavior, but some revel in their worshippers and take advantage of their dotting. It is not unusual for a cunning young dragon to possess a retinue of servants, followers, and sometimes even slaves. Some of these cults and dragons actually pursue ambitious endeavors, seeking to hold dominion over territories. A few even have their eyes set on disrupting the modern civilizations. Greed and power are at the forefront of the cultist's minds as they revere their ancient predecessors. Many are experimenting with the various schools of magic in the hopes of becoming more like the dragons they serve, and most of these alterations border on the line of outright self-mutilation.



Within the populace of Vathis there are a select number of individuals gifted with the ability to manipulate the Ether. There are many ways that one might obtain these powers. Some inherit them from the bloodlines of their family, some obtain them through nefarious means such as pacts with otherworldly powers, and some gain aptitude with magic through years of arcane study. No matter how they obtain their powers, magic users stand out as exceptional and generally important individuals influencing the direction of the future. Magical aptitude can be seen as both a blessing and a curse.

While the ability to bend reality obviously has its benefits, the expectations thrust upon magic users is sometimes overwhelming. Magic is present all over Vathis, and it is not uncommon for the average person to know someone with the ability to wield the power of the Ether. Most magic users only scratch the surface of what they are truly capable of accomplishing with their powers. Even the most talented magic users on Vathis have much to learn of their abilities. Even in the smallest of settlements, people turn to magic users for solutions to their problems, regardless of what they might be. Serving the public grants these talented individuals a level of respect sometimes far beyond what they truly deserve or desire. Despite these views, magic users are also seen with a certain level of caution, as people instinctively fear the unknown and what they do not understand.

ELDRITCH HOUSE REGISTRATION

The Eldritch House is vital to maintaining a civilization where wielders of the Ether and ordinary people cohabit peacefully. This organization is responsible for tracking and monitoring magic users. Every magic-wielding citizen on Vathis is required to register with the organization by decree of the Council of Vathis. This was put in place so that if a magic user commits a crime or oversteps the boundaries of acceptable use of power, they can be dealt with in a meaningful and just fashion.

LAWS

In general, magic is utilized to great effect in everyday life. There is no place in Vathis that bans magic outright, but some obvious limitations have been put into place. Magic users are required to adhere to the same laws as everyone else, and so should their magic. Magical displays of force and violence are limited to self-preservation in most cities, and their hostile use is generally viewed in the same way that fighting with a weapon would be. To enforce these laws, the Eldritch House utilizes a force known as the Silencers. They are not limited to enforcing their laws on citizens, and are able to strike against any magical threat to the people of Vathis, including Outlaws. They are primarily called upon when normal authorities are unable to deal with an unpredictable magic-wielding threat.

EDUCATION

People with latent magical abilities often seek out others who are knowledgeable of their abilities. Through study at the Eldritch House, magic users learn to control their abilities and focus them so they can use their gifts for the betterment of society. While the Eldritch House is the most widespread place to study magic, there are many other notable magic schools in Vathis. The Cloister of the Erudite is a major magic school in Tristan explicitly teaching outside of the Eldritch House. In Rancagesh, Tatoanni Jedekka has begun to teach the ancient Primal art of Arksspeech to her people. Another well-known school of learning is Jordensång, a college of bardic magic headquartered in Mythrayne. There are three schools in Synethil that teach magic: one is dedicated to the divine, one to the arcane, and one to natural magic—the most notable of which is High Templar Syvesia's rekindling of the Lunate magic in the divine school. A college teaching the mental arts of psionics, called The Grove, is found in the forests of Sillirai.

People travel far and wide to receive proper magical education, and while most schools are willing to take in anyone, the price of tuition is often too expensive for the average person to afford. Schools will sometimes make exceptions for particularly gifted individuals who have the ability to further the interests of the school.



LANGUAGES AND LIFESTYLES



RURAL LIFE

The intricacies of one's day-to-day rural life is heavily dependent on the nation in which they live. The cultures of Vathis are so varied and physically separated that their average lives can be as different as night and day. Despite these vast cultural differences, there are a few simple truths that apply to all of rural life on Vathis. Most notably, rural life primarily consists of farmers and laborers. It is their hard work that supplies the food and raw materials driving the economies of the world. Seldom do merchants and professionals find work outside of bustling cities and moderate towns, unless it is in purchasing basic materials produced by those who live in these humble hamlets.

Though many think of farm life as quaint, living in the countryside is not easy. Many people fled these areas during the Darkest War in favor of strong, defensible cities, and they ventured home after the war only to find their crops burned and settlements destroyed. The past few years have been difficult for most as these citizens have struggled to rebuild their homes and replant their fields. It is only now that village life is returning to a level of pre-war normalcy. Those who survived the rampaging Shattered Hand are no stranger to struggle and hard work, and most have taken the challenge to rebuild their lives with a measure of pride and determination.

One constant in the rural communities of Vathis is a shared reverence for the Deities. Those who live in the countryside tend to worship with a fervor unseen in city-dwellers. Travelers abroad who would like to know which Deities are common in a region would do well to spend time with local laborers, as their religious affiliation will often offer a pure glimpse into what religions are prominent in the area.

All in all, the common folk tend to be an unexpectedly generous fountain of knowledge for passing travelers and adventurers. Their keen eyes notice slight differences in their day-to-day lives, and they are the first to detect subtle signs of malady and misfortune. While traveling outside of the urban areas of Vathis the wisest adventurers seek refuge with farmers and make use of their unique perspective and insight.

CITY LIFE

The bustling cities of Vathis are the arguably the defining feature of the world's nations. Within these bastions of civilization one may find danger, intrigue, and bounties of wealth all waiting to be uncovered. Life in the city promises excitement and adventure right at one's doorstep, along with all of the other important happenings taking place in the world. The average life of city-dwellers folk markedly between nations, but like rural life, a few staples hold universally true.

What sets city life apart from rural life in Vathis is simple: opportunity. The urban sprawl offers numerous employment options and a variety of industries where one might explore trade work. Hypothetically, someone who knows the right people and acts on the right initiative can make their way in the city with little to no problem. This is easier said than done, however. Urban citizens will always encounter a wider array of organizations and people than their rural counterparts. Some of these people might be

LANGUAGE	SPEAKERS
Vavalish	Trade language made expansive by Vavaire, also known as Common
Arkhar	Elemental beings, Arkhos worshippers, Archons
Atheian *	Language of the Ancients
Aurish	Aurezia
Cypran	Cypress
Draconic	Dragons, Vasar, Darastrix
Empyrean *	Gods, Higher planar creatures
Elrish	Elessar
Farlish	Inuzen, Gnomes, Leyarish nobility, Vibrant natives, Archfey
Fiendish	Devils, Demons, Evil outsiders
High Astrian *	Language of the ancient Keralan Empire
Isril	Isild
Leyarish	Elves, Leyathar, Vnoch
Mythic	Mythrayne, Dwarves, Giants
Night Speech	Duergar, Morlocks, Svirfneblin, Evernight natives
Oseptian	Osept
Rancan	Orcs, Goblins, Gnolls, Rancagesh, Savage Races
Sillarian	Amari, Sillirai
Trist	Tristan
Umbral	Gloom native creatures, Shadow creatures
Vaerin	Vae'rin
Vandar *	Vandiels
Vex	Aberrance natives
Washun	Washu

* indicates that the language cannot usually be chosen at first level without good reason.



friendly and mean one no harm, but the winding city streets draw the attention of less savory characters who seek to take advantage of the bustling, populated chaos. In some of the world's larger cities it is easy to become utterly lost in the commotion and culture of the region, or get swallowed by the city's dark underbelly.

Cities are representations of the best their culture has to offer. Trade, technology, politics, entertainment, and knowledge can all be found from coast to coast, though in different flavor and manner. Every city is not only shaped by the culture of their people as a whole, but also by local atmosphere and regional history. Many make it their mission to experience as much of the world as they can, and these kind find solace in traveling from bustling trade hub to bustling trade hub exchanging their foreign wares for a meal or place to rest their head. While traveling is undoubtedly dangerous, advancements in technology such as airships have made it possible for people of all backgrounds to experience the world, and people are flocking to cities in droves in search of both gainful employment and cultural experience.

AN ADVENTURER'S LIFE

The modern day is a prime time to be an adventurer. The need for hired hands has never been higher than in wake of the Darkest War, and it is extremely feasible for a few individuals to leave a lasting mark on the world. There are countless ruins to reclaim, magnificent treasures to recover, and harrowing enemies to confront. The number of people who've turned to adventuring has also increased, as refugees and veterans are now displaced from their prior homes

and employment. Those who excel at the adventuring life can find gold and glory in their exploits. Those who fail rarely live long enough to tell anyone otherwise.

A multitude of organizations encourage the adventuring life. The Eyes of Vathis, Outlaws, the Sky Dragons, the Eldritch House, and any number of Free Companies recruit brave new souls to go out into the world and bring prosperity to their organizations. Adventurers are viewed by the common people as a light in the darkness. They represent courage and the willingness to fight against what laid the world so low. The high demand for adventurers also creates a high demand for a variety of skill sets, meaning that anyone who seeks out the life of an adventurer can find a place where they'll be useful. With the nations of the world in a state of recovery and repair, adventurers are the only means the people of the world have to bring about the change necessary to push the world into a brighter era, or doom it to fall even further into despair.



HISTORY OF THE WORLD

The history of Vathis can be separated into a series of ages, beginning with the Age of First Light and ending with the Age of Awakening.

AGE OF FIRST LIGHT (??? TO ???)

Before time, space, the planes, and magic there existed seventeen beings of great power known as the Zodiacs. These dragons came together and birthed the cosmic background energy that composes all things: the Ether, raw magical power. The Ether then settled into four levels of existence. The first level is the upper plane of good, evil, and life, known as the Eternal, and the second is the lower plane of elemental power, chaos, and law, called the Vast. The third level is known as the Material Plane, and the fourth, called Evrinar, is the plane that connects all planes together on Leylines of power. The Zodiacs created a single entity to traverse these planes, known as the Elder, a being a near-limitless power with the ability to bend reality to his will. The Elder had countless eons to explore the creation of the Zodiacs, but after some time he discovered that he was no longer alone. The upper and lower planes had spawned their own entities of power, given form by cosmic energy attempting to assert itself. From the Eternal, the Deities were created, entities of good and evil who formed the small life of the multiverse. From the elemental pandemonium of the Vast, the Arkhos were spawned as beings of immense strength composed of raw elements.

The Arkhos immediately moved to set the Vast in a state of endless change and re-creation with little rhyme or reason. The Deities molded the Eternal into an orderly plane, with each and every morality possessing its own place. After settling, the Arkhos and the Deities moved to bring their power to the Material Plane, and the Deities created life and order in the worlds that were created by the Arkhos, starting an endless war between the rival cosmic factions. As the Arkhos created, changed, destroyed, and recreated worlds in an endless cycle, the Deities attempted to bring their life and order to those worlds. This never-ending conflict caught the eye of the Elder, who did not wish to share his realm with anyone or anything else. He attempted to collapse the multiverse into one plane, his plane, and bring an end to the ceaseless warring between the Arkhos and Deities. The Elder almost succeeded, but he was eventually destroyed by the combined efforts of the Deities and Arkhos, causing his body to crystallize.

The immense effort it took to stop the Elder and the energy released upon his death split the Material Plane, the Eternal, and the Vast into nine separate planes. The central plane of the Material spurned two additional planes: the Vibrant, a mirror plane of boundless life and change, and the Gloom, an echo plane of darkness and stagnation. The Vast was split into Nulisan, the hells, Feleernez, the endless abyss, and Hellovase, the gaping void. The last of the plane splits tore the Eternal asunder into Aver Brithe, the land of light and good, Vicizes, a land of evil and darkness, and the

Realm, a place of judgment and timelessness. The Elder's crystal body was shattered as the planes split, and the shards of his body gave birth to great powers throughout the planes in the form of Demon Lords, Devil Princes, and Seraphs. In the Material Plane the crystals became the font of his knowledge of the Ether, called the Erelus Shards. From the remnants of the Elder's life force the Zodiacs created a host of weaker races. The Elderlings, or Children of the Zodiacs, took their places in the primordial Material Plane and its echoes and mirrors.

AGE OF ANCIENTS (-50,000 TO -7500 AG)

As the Ascendancy Wars stretched on between the Arkhos and the Deities for control of the cosmos, the Elderlings spread throughout the planes, residing primarily on the Vibrant. During this time a plethora of mortal races rose throughout the multiverse. The Deities eventually captured two Arkhos on a long forgotten world, and there the Deities decided to use the abilities of the Arkhos against them. By combining the blood of the Arkhos and the power of the Deities, a new race of strong cosmic beings were born that would later become known as the Vandiel. The Deities promised these new beings godhood themselves if they could help defeat the Arkhos. The Vandiel possessed both the deific ability to take two forms simultaneously, as well as the Arkhosian ability to reform after death, making death a mere hindrance rather than absolute. With the Vandiel assisting the Deities, the tides of battle swayed in favor of the gods. The Ascendancy Wars came to a close as the Deities controlled and imprisoned the last active Arkhos. With its last free breath, this Arkhos placed the Bane of the Overworld curse on the surviving cosmic powers, preventing the Deities and Vandiel from coming to the Material Plane in full power.

An eon of peace and prosperity fell upon the multiverse. During this time, the Zodiac Leyline was traversed by an advanced race whose name has long since been forgotten, and other mortal races begin to spread throughout the cosmos. At the same time the Vandiel came to realize that the Deities had no intention of keeping their end of the bargain and ascending them to godhood. The Forsaken War began as the Vandiel betrayed the Deities, which became a long and bloody conflict. Many of the Astrian gods were killed during this time until a Vandiel, Zanon, betrayed his brethren. As the Vandiel lay dying, Zanon's parents elevated him to godhood and named him and his deific sister, Astea, the masters of the new pantheon. Zanon attempted to share his newfound deityhood with his consort, Serena, but he only half succeeded, and was unable to remove her Vandiel essence. The conflicting forces within her began to drive her mad. This pantheon of Deities, consisting of Aleydra, Astea, Irinal, Lucia, Naugrix, Serena, Uryll, Vangal, and Zanon, successfully routed the Vandiel threat. Aleydra created a race known as amari, and placed them on the nearby world of Vathis. Astea, Zanon, and the newly-risen Deities abandoned Farilis, the old world ruled over by their ancestors, and took the surviving mortal races to Vathis, which Astea had been forming into a habitable world for years.



AGE OF OLD MAGIC (-7500 TO 500 AG)

Upon arriving on Vathis and settling the main continent, a mortal human named Thannis discovered the Erelus Shards. Their discovery brought the humanoid of the world into an age of expanding magical knowledge. Archmages created castles in the sky and vied for knowledge, territory, and influence. The northern continent of Asarus was witness to the rise of powerful goblinoid and dwarven empires. Rivalry between mages broke out into an all-out war, and it was soon discovered that one of the most powerful mages was the Vandiel Severence in disguise. The amari fled the continent of Mana to the northern continent Sillious.

After great conflict and a series of wars that destroyed Mana, Severence was finally defeated and imprisoned beneath the continent as a plague ripped through the magical communities of the world. Knowledges of the higher reaches and the Erelus Shards were lost, forgotten, or destroyed in the aftermath of the conflict, known afterwards as the Arcane Wars. The heart of civilization moved to Asarus, where the survivors of the sinking of Mana fled. The floating mote of Keralan brought survivors to the Angylis Sea, and they settled the region. Another floating mote crashed in present-day Valshathe's Tears, and from this mote seventeen powerful mages emerged and immediately enslaved the goblinoid peoples native to the region. The Anuald, as the mages named themselves, made war on the expansive Huetlachten orc empire. The great magics used against the Huetlachten led to the expansion of the Nashendasorn Desert, and effectively split the Huetlachten Empire in two.

With the conquest of Huetlachten complete, the Anuald turned inwards to expand on their individual power. They discovered the ability to travel along the Zodiac Leylines and gathered slaves from the lands connected by the Leylines. The Anuald found the remnants of other mages of Mana on an island to the north, called Keralan, and war broke out between the two factions, culminating in the sundering of Keralan. Survivors from Keralan fled west. The Anuald continued to expand their slaving practices through use of the Leylines. They annihilated the remnants of the Huetlachten Empire by destroying their culture and replacing their tiered temples with straight-sided pyramid structures devoted to their own greatness. Shyone, the leader of the Anuald, discovered one of the Erelus Shards on her travels through the Leylines, which she began to study earnestly. It revealed a vast amount of information regarding the various planes of existence, the Deities, and the Vandiels.

With the assistance of the other sixteen Anuald, Shyone summoned a lesser Vandiel by the name of Zorinia into a trap. After a lengthy battle Zorinia stood defeated and Shyone captured Zorinia's essence with her newfound knowledge of Vandiel nature. She imbued herself and the other Anuald with Vandiel likeness, granting the Anuald nigh limitless power, including the ability to cheat death. A large number of the Anuald's amassed followers sought to emulate their powerful leaders and began to do so by undergoing a ritual, creating the tiefling race. The act of splitting Zorinia's essence gathered the notice of the Deities, as the Anuald

had now enslaved a vast number of their followers.

The Deities formed a coalition to prevent the expansion of the Anuald across the Material Plane, but the gods were unable to travel to the world of Vathis directly. To circumvent their curse the Deities decided to come to the Material Plane by being reborn as mortals. They arrived at Armeria Cathedral, each with a personal host of followers who eventually formed the original Free Companies. The Deities led the Divine Sands War against the Anuald for nearly five centuries. The war culminated with the defeat and imprisonment of the Anuald in an orcish temple found in present-day Erygis. Following the end of the war the tiefling followers of the Anuald fled east towards the rising sun, and the Deities departed from the world to return to their respective planes of existence. The Erelus Shard used by Shyone was lost.

AGE OF DRAGONS (501 TO 1200 AG)

As the last vestiges of otherworldly power dispersed from the world, a new race rose to establish the most powerful civilization in the land: Dragons. Dragons became the first Starcalled and were granted sigils, the gift of the Zodiacs. Dragon Lords rose around the world, carving realms of influence from the scraps left over from the Divine Sands War. Finding themselves uncontested, they created countless fiefdoms. Some enslaved the lesser humanoids, and others assimilated them into new territories by means of peaceful coexistence. For centuries the Dragon Lords were worshipped as near-divine beings by their humanoid followers, and they began to vie for control over the lesser beings and their territories. One Dragon Lord in particular, Iranyth, saw herself as something more than her brethren, and she sought to fully emulate the power of the Zodiacs and elevate herself to their level of power. Iranyth initiated an extensive essence convergence ritual to merge herself with the Ether.

During this time, the war god Kurzen chose to be reborn in the world as a mortal to assist the humanoids of Vathis in their efforts to overthrow the draconic tyrants. Kurzen was reborn as a female human named Junon, who brought together an elite group of mercenaries and started a war for independence. Iranyth's ritual eventually completed, allowing her to consume the Ether directly and become one with magic itself, but with one side effect: the Ether started to unravel, and along with it all creation. The Zodiacs looked on with awe as their creation was compromised by a dragon possessing one of their chosen sigils. The rest of the Dragon Lords discerned the effects of Iranyth's ritual and quickly moved to stop it. A council of their wisest and greatest discovered that the ritual could be stopped if that dragons initiated another ritual to halt the convergence, but it would mean sacrificing their own lives to prevent Iranyth's success. Dragons around the world were turned to dragonstone in their final moments as their life energies were given to the Ether to prevent its collapse. Magic immediately became nearly non-existent except in places of heavy zodi'ite presence, or when used by those with particularly empowered bloodlines, such as the amari and tieflings.

From within his confinement beneath Mana, Severence



then used the last vestiges of his power to pull zodi'ite from the rings of Farilis down to Vathis in an effort to break his prison. The world watched as the largest zodi'ite shower to ever occur happened for the length of an entire year, littering the world with the precious magical crystals.

AGE OF BLACK FROST (1201 TO 2981 AG)

The zodi'ite shower caused by Severence's call ended as the largest piece of zodi'ite ever to be seen streaked across the sky and crashed in the Plains of Fear. The impact sent dust and debris into the atmosphere and darkened out the sun, sending the world's temperatures plummeting. The presence of the zodi'ite greatly affected the world's magical currents. Massive black frost ether storms roamed the planet, and everywhere the storms struck froze in a black rime. The rime caused a plague that ravaged the already weakened civilizations and decimated magic users. Now known as the Black Frost Impact, the peoples of Vathis entered a long struggle for survival against the harsh cold and brutal elements. The raging storms and crippling plagues continued for over seventeen hundred years, until the ice age finally abated and magic returned to normal functionality, though still weakened. The amari of Sillious exited the Age of Black Frost far more advanced than any other civilization on account their continued psionic function and the shelter offered by their laris trees.

AGE OF LEGACY (2982 TO 3688 AG)

The Stardragons, a well-known family in present-day Vavaire, discovered the Ring of the Zodiacs. They became the first humanoid family to gain Zodiac sigils. Over the course of the following thirty-six years Zodiac sigils began appearing on the hands of a few members of every race. These people, known as Starcalled, rose to prominence and established noble lines. Each sigiled person cut out their own sphere of influence in the world, and many came into positions of substantial power. As more and more Starcalled made themselves known, tensions rose, and Starcalled warlords vied for power across the land for nearly one hundred years in the Legacy Wars.

The nations of Alaron, Aurezia, Bariopsis, Darastrix, Elessar, Isild, Korvach, Mythrayne, Osept, Silitor, Sorakov, Torisia, Tristan, Venoach, and Washu rose out of the turmoil of the Legacy Wars. Centered on their capitals, they seized control of surrounding lands. During this age the empire of Leyathar rose and dissolved during the Great Collapse, shunting the city of Synethil to the Vibrant. Sleeping ildera were discovered beneath Valiance, the Cyprean Empire rose and fell, Sillirai was forced out of their mainland holdings, and multiple wars on the edge of all continents took place as the nations of Asarus expanded their influence. Near the end of the Age of Legacy, Vavaire established itself as the largest empire in history, stretching from the Auntershai Ocean to the Angylis Sea and uniting Aurezia, Cypress, Darastrix, and Isild under

their flag.

AGE OF ASCENT (3689 TO 3762 AG)

The beginning of the Age of Ascent was defined by the discovery of eldria and establishment of CORE in the nation of Tristan. In the first five years of this age, Elessar adopted eldria and the first airship was invented using an Ether Drive System. Airship adoption and rapid industrialization spread from coast to coast. The creation of the world's first Eldric Reactor led to the creation of eldricsteel, and along with it the artificial creation of ildera. The increase of the world's population initiated an increase in the mass production of goods. As travel took to the skies, the fledgling airship pirates also started organizing. Washu entered an agreement with the pirates to plan an invasion into Elessar. Their plan was successful, and the ensuing global conflict instigated by their actions came to be known as the First Empire Wars. Large-scale use of airships, ildera, and eldric industrialization caused the First Empire Wars to be the deadliest war the world had ever seen. The end of this conflict resulted in Elessar being tainted with the essence of the Gloom, becoming The Harrows. Washu was punished as the masterminds behind the war and forced to pay war reparations to the various nations their armies fought against, severely crippling their delicate island economy. The Empire of Vavaire was then fractured into her component nations as punishment for allying with Washu.

The widespread destruction and death toll of the war forced the various nations of Asarus to form the Council of Vathis, an intergovernmental organization tasked with maintaining world peace. The first decree the Council passed was the creation of the Vathis Sentinels as an armed response to the threat of the airship pirates. In response to the founding of the Vathis Sentinels, the pirates organized under one leader, Commodore Adeiu, becoming the One Hundred and Seventeen Sky Dragons that citizens know today. The Vathis Sentinels were immediately put to the test and failed as the prisoners of war in Kamtyrow revolted and founded the nation Erygis. The Antares Templar, the guards of these prisoners before the Vathis Sentinels, created a global banking system with the recognition and backing of the Council of Vathis.

The nation of Tristan exited the First Empire Wars embroiled in the Black Rebellion, and a few years later resurfaced as the Trisviet Union. Emperor Jaris of Vavaire fathered two sons. The first was called Erishti, a tiefling from his mother's side, and after his first wife's death Jaris remarried an Oseptian woman who gave birth to his second son, Aliskar. Jaris was introduced to Hanad zi'Whisperose by his eldest son. Hanad immediately began advising the Emperor of Vavaire in matters of statehood, becoming the youngest advisor on his council at the age of sixteen. Jaris forgave Washu of their mandated war reparations, and with their newfound wealth, Washu once again opened trade routes with the rest of the world. Under Jaris and Hanad's guidance Vavaire was primed to enter another golden age. During this time Aevalyn zi'Wisla, the reincarnation of Astea, was born in the city of Sanctuary, Vavaire. Shortly after reaching adulthood she began traveling



across Vavaire and created the first worldfalls in the country.

Venoch and Erygis secretly backed the goblinoid slaves of Osept that were preparing to revolt. These slaves rose up against their masters in one night and systematically gained control of the slavers. With this action the Tretolancon War began for freedom of the enslaved. The conflict ended when the Council of Vathis, driven by Venoch, stepped in to grant Rancagesh its freedom. The region's borders were determined by the fortress city of Uhust. Taking Hanad's advice, Emperor Jaris pushed for Rancagesh to be recognized as an official nation, and the Council agreed, granting Rancagesh a prized seat on the Council of Vathis.

Some time after, Emperor Jaris was found dead in his bed, stabbed. The Parliament of Vavaire deliberated at length on the next Emperor, and Prince Erishti, who possessed the Sigil of the Lord, was passed up due to his Washun tiefling bloodline, and his step-brother Aliskar assumed the throne. Emperor Aliskar was informed by the Servitors of Vavaire that an inactive magical portal had been found in the bowels of Valiance, previously sealed and locked away by Emperor Jaris. Believing that the portal would allow Vavaire to return to her former glory, Emperor Aliskar immediately ordered the continuation of their research program. It bore fruit at the end of the year when the Servitors of Vavaire, using eldric technology, opened what would become the Scar Tear portal leading to another plane of existence, Hellovase. An Aspect of the Vandiel Lord Feliroz stepped through the portal and struck a deal between himself and Aliskar. An additional sixteen Vandiel Aspects stepped through the portal, immediately turning the Servitors of Vavaire into Vantus, their servants. The Exilarchy, as the Vandiels decided to call themselves, took humanoid form and replaced key members of Vavaire's leadership. Within one year they controlled nearly every aspect of Vavairen policy. Per their wishes, Emperor Aliskar officially declared the religion of Vavaire the Vath Pantheon. Astrian worshippers were shunned, and tensions mounted as the Asteian church started to round up Astrians within Vavairen borders. The Astrians that were gathered were secretly sent to an experimentation camp in Whiterose, and those who managed to avoid being captured by the government's relocation program fled to surrounding countries. Emperor Aliskar then decreed that all fleeing Astrians were considered traitors to Vavaire, and some nations, like Tristan, blocked the refugees from entering their land.

The Whiterose Experiments produced the first human combined with minor Vandiel blood, granting them shape changing ability and rendering this new breed of humans mentally linked to their parent Vandiel. This race became known as the noir. Noir were dispatched to all nations to infiltrate governments and report their findings. By the end of the year, noir of the Shattered Hand, as the Exilarchy named their order, placed themselves in key positions throughout almost every nation. The only country not infiltrated was Sillirai, due to the psionic capability of the amari. Knowledge gained through the Black Network, as the noir's intelligence network was called, was immediately funneled back to the Exilarchy through a permanent mind link between the noir and their masters.

The Black Network started staging clandestine attacks against northern Darastrix and southern Tristan to facilitate ten-

sions between the nations. Sensing the rising hostility, Tristan began Operation Lazarus, an increase in eldria-based experiments and production of ilder. At the same time, Emperor Aliskar moved to reclaim the Borderlands back from Aurezian hold. Due to the intelligence capabilities of the Black Network, the military of Aurezia was rendered completely incapable of outmaneuvering the Vavairen army. Cypress, Osept, Vavaire, and Washu met in secret and signed the Sovereign Steel Pact, ensuring a united front against their enemies.

Tristan entered into a non-aggression pact with Vavaire, remaining neutral as Vavaire launched attacks against northern Venoch, seeking the bounty of the rich Leyathar forests. The nations of the world moved against one another in a series of assaults. Eventually these stresses reached a breaking point when the Starfall Event occurred, and a meteorite of zodi'ite crashed into Asha in western Tristan, completely leveling the city. This attack killed a number of Vavairen theater groups and an important dignitary. With neither knowing it was a zodi'ite strike, Tristan blamed Vavaire, and Vavaire blamed Tristan—war was officially declared, and old alliances were called in, formally starting the Second Empire Wars.

Aevalyn zi'Wisla was smuggled to the Vavairen city of Exile using the Sillarian Intelligence Network. Erishti, Hanad, Aevalyn, and other key operatives began working to fully understand the extent of the war and Aliskar's intentions, which they had recognized as nefarious. Their movement, under the code name Legion, captured a noir. After extensive experimentation using psionics, the group discovered the mental link they shared with their masters.

Washu made a strategic strike against the Sillarian air fleet and destroyed the only Eldric Reactors possessed by the country in order to cripple the nation and remove them from the Second Empire Wars. The Washun attacks happened during the height of the Sillarian civil war, giving warlords in Sillirai a chance to overrun the monarchy. With the help of a few talented Oseptian archaeologists, Legion developed an item that could temporarily break the mental link the noir shared with the Exilarchy. This turn of events allowed Legion to capture the noir in droves during the beginnings of Operation Twilight.

THE DARKEST WAR (3763 TO 3775 AG)

After uniting under the banner of a warlord, the Sillarian moved to assassinate a Vavairen advisor in retribution for the Washun attacks, performed through utilization of Vavairen intelligence. The advisor revealed himself to be the Aspect of Rumoriskar, a powerful Vandiel. He destroyed the majority of the immediate vicinity, but a few survivors fled and exposed him to the world. The Shattered Hand, realizing their ruse was over, reopened the Scar Tear portal to the Vast and began gating in fiendish entities to replace Vavaire's army. The war for conquest suddenly became a war for survival. Large portions of the world's military, including most of Vavaire's, ceased fighting one another and turned to tackle the new otherworldly threat. Sections of Vavaire's military that were close



to the advisors and central leadership did not switch sides, and they continued fighting for the Shattered Hand. With Vavaire divided, the Second Empire Wars came to a close and the Darkest War officially began.

The magnitude of destruction wrought by the Shattered Hand after this revelation was harrowing. No nation was shown mercy or managed to escape the horrors of the war. Armies of fiends mixed with like-minded mortals invaded every single nation over the course of twelve years. Operation Eldric Crash, performed by the Black Network, destroyed nearly every Eldric Reactor in the world, ending the creation of ilderan combatants. Legion moved against the Black Network by fully implementing Operation Twilight, hoping they could put an end to the Whiterose Experiments and the creation of the noir. Erishti was eventually captured by the Shattered Hand and forced to work alongside the fiends.

A ripple in the Ether was felt on a global scale. It brought down motes, tossed airships, and created a temporary disturbance in magic itself. A tear opened up to the Vibrant, and both powerful magic and the city of Synethil returned to Asarus. Synethil was met by a representative of Sillirai, Evie zi'Valda. With her help, Synethil immediately moved to assist the despairing nations against the ravaging of the Shattered Hand. Synethil sought to spread their advanced magical knowledge to all who were willing to fight. By the end of the year the outlook of the war began to brighten, and one by one the Vandiels suffered defeat at the hands of survivors. Their death throes forever changed the face of the world.

Erishti convinced the Vandiel Kreyantaz that a large contingent of Legion's Starcalled would be gathering in Darkchest, Vavaire, for an assault. There, the Vandiel was destroyed by nesting eldrilyths, and Erishti bound himself to Kreyantaz's death throes. He absorbed the energies and became a Vantus. Erishti returned to Valiance of his own accord, and Feliroz allowed Erishti to work closely alongside him. Erishti stepped through the Scar Tear and closed it from the other side, thus ending the continuous flow of reinforcements to the Shattered Hand.

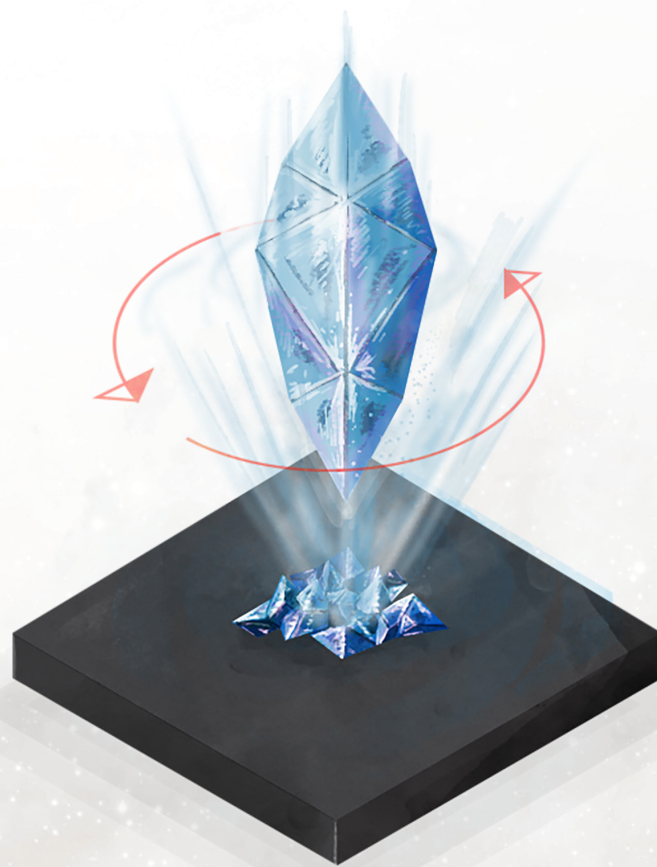
A secret mission was embarked upon by a group of chosen Starcalled troops called Aevalyn's 1000. They arrived in Valiance and, after an epic battle with Feliroz, Aevalyn activated what would be known as Aevalyn's Wall, protecting what remained of the nation by preventing widespread teleportation of the Shattered Hand within Vavaire. Aevalyn's Wall also severed the ties between the noir and the Shattered Hand, freeing their kind from all mental control. Aevalyn and her soldiers did not return from this mission.

The newly freed noir possessed only fleeting memories of their former lives. Emperor Aliskar was immediately captured by Vathis Sentinel soldiers and moved to a secure location. The remnants of his Shattered Hand forces no longer possessed central leadership, and their fiendish groups quickly dissolved into roaming bands of fiends. The surviving leaders of the world's nations met in Armeria, where they signed a treaty effectively ending the Second Empire Wars and establishing central leadership for surviving governments. Synethil was granted a seat on the Council of Vathis, and nations were allowed any lands they could manage to reclaim. The Empire of Aurezia once again united under Archbishop Lucius Amiel, after his father, Seoras Amiel, died at the end of the war. Sillirai also reunited under the leadership of Queen-Em-

press Evie and her husband, Couric. Many countries looked to rebuilding what was lost and restoring the peace and prosperity of their homes. The Darkest War had the highest casualty rate of any war in history, with over 128 million killed across both the Second Empire Wars and Darkest War. This represented a full forty percent of the world's total population of the time, leaving 192 million survivors.

AGE OF AWAKENING (3776 TO 3781 AG)

The Age of Awakening is the current age of the world. The years following the aftermath of the Darkest War saw the return of Vavairen royalty with the Sigil of the Lord, Ravenne zi'Stardragon, who freed most of Vavaire from worldfalls—with assistance of the organization called the SAS—and reclaimed the Vavairen throne. The return of Vavaire sparked a series of events that brought down the Etherward surrounding the continent of Asarus, unbeknownst to its inhabitants. The dissolution of the protective Etherward allowed travel beyond the continent and had the side effect of awaking the dragons who had been sleeping in stone for millennia. Vaedric technology continues to spread, and Legion has moved towards securing, training, and protecting new Starcalled. Synethil and the Fae'ranore recently discovered three of the lost Arms of Leyathar and restored High Templar Syvesia's body from her stone prison, granting the returned nation secure leadership. Now the nations of the world look to the future as they rebuild and reclaim what they've lost.





From the mountains of Mythrayne to the plains of Aurezia, Asarus's geography is well and truly varied. The southern reaches of the continent are overrun with thick jungles while the northern reaches are a horizon of endless white frost. From the great laris trees of Sillirai, to the Vibrant-infused forests of Leyathar, to the frozen seas of Isild, to the scorching Nashendasorn Desert of Osept, civilizations have taken hold and prospered in the endless array of climates, regions, and temperatures. The nations of the world have made hearth and home in these comfortable lands, daring only to occasionally venture to the dangerous places of the world such as the frozen Rimelan, the disorienting Plains of Fear, and the eldria-covered Shardlands. Threats exist globally and can be found at every border and each overgrown section of the Gilded Road; none more prominent than the remnants of the Shattered Hand and the very hearts of one's neighbors.

OUTSIDE OF ASARUS

The dissolution of the Etherward upon the resurrection of Vavaire and resolution of the Darkest War has opened the world to exploration and discovery. The range of airship fuel, however, is limited to the availability of refueling stations. Sailing vessels, on the other hand, are not limited to such a range. Since the fall of the Etherward strange birds have been spotted arriving on the continent, assumed to have migrated from faraway lands.

NATION STATISTICS

Name of Nation
"National Motto"

Colors: Primary colors of the heraldry of the nation

Banner: Icon of the banner

Population: Total population

Capital: Capital city

Government: Government type

Leader(s): Current leader(s)

Languages: Common languages listed by use

Exports: Common exports of the nation listed alphabetically

Demonym: Name of the people from the nation

Literacy Rate: Percentage of total literate population

CITY STATISTICS

Name of City
"City's Motto"

Short City Description

Population: Total population

Languages: Common languages listed by use

Vathis Sentinel Score: See Table

Economy Score: See Table

Imports: Common imports of the city listed alphabetically

Exports: Common exports of the city listed alphabetically

Organizations: Organizations with great influence in the city

Religion: The pantheon most commonly worshipped in the city, followed by any deities of note

SCORE	VATHIS SENTINEL	ECONOMY
1	Little or no oversight	Barter system
2	Vathis Sentinels often pass through the city, and they possess either a small office or a room in a guard post as their base of operations.	Basic economic functions, but the city does not possess strong trade power or valuable resources.
3	Enough permanent Vathis Sentinels to warrant an outpost in this city.	City possesses a decent smattering of resources and population, but lies too far from popular routes to wield significant economic power. Rarely has an Antares Templar Bank.
4	A large outpost of Vathis Sentinels who attempt to perform their duties, however shorthanded they are.	City lies off of the primary trade road, and as such, has a weaker economy. Probably has a single Antares Templar Bank.
5	Enough Vathis Sentinels in the city to check every incoming airship and patrol the majority of the city's streets.	City possesses an average economy with the resources standard to a town of its size. Always has a Antares Templar Bank.
6	Permanent Vathis Sentinel airship is stationed here, and significant Sentinel presence in the city.	City possesses premium resources or is an influential trade location. May have multiple Antares Templar Banks.
7	Permanent Vathis Sentinel fleet is station here and contingents of Sentinels patrol the streets.	City is in possession or has access to extensive quality resources and lies in a good trading location. Guaranteed to have multiple Antares Templar Banks.
8	Significant Vathis Sentinel stronghold located here, Vathis Sentinels are easy to reach and find in case of emergency.	City is a well-known and often visited trade hub. Access to multiple quality resources in surplus.
9	Minor Vathis Sentinel headquarters is stationed here.	City serves as an extremely powerful trade location and has access to almost everything someone would need.
10	Main Vathis Sentinel headquarters is stationed here.	Nearly any good or service can be purchased here, up to and including custom airship requisition.





For an extremely detailed map, please visit ZodiacEmpires.com/map



AUREZIA

"In Faith and Harmony."

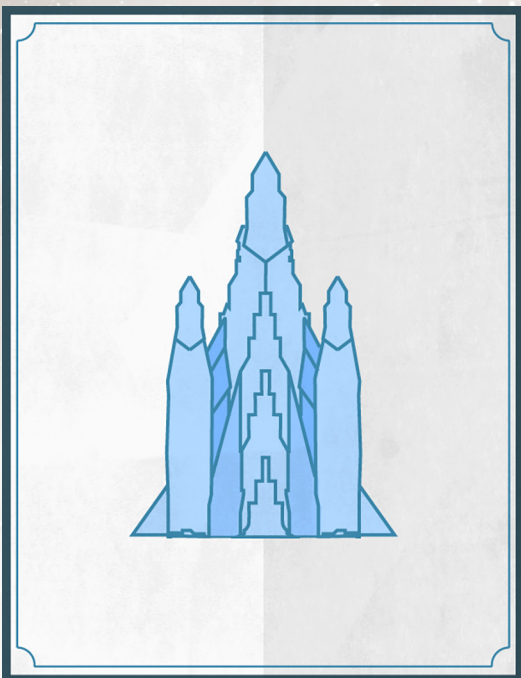
THEN AND NOW

The Holy Kingdom of Aurezia is not the oldest kingdom on Asarus, but even so, she possesses the largest stretch of territory in the known world. Aurezia is home to the world's greatest metropolitan population composed of every race from every walk of life. From the lush tracks of the Black Forest to the shimmering beaches of the Solar Sea, her boundaries contain endless variations of terrain, and the kingdom's rich lands have been coveted by others for as long as anyone can remember. The Holy Kingdom is home to not only some of the most expansive cities in Asarus, but also the tallest structure: Astea's Sapphire Spire, located in Aurez City. Mercantile and religious wealth abounds within the Holy Kingdom, but with such prosperity comes great danger. The Vathis Sentinels and local guard alike patrol the country's rural roads hoping to deter bandits and thieves from crossing into Aurezian domain. Despite facing growing enmity and furtive opposition from other nations on the Council of Vathis, The Holy Kingdom is poised to remain a global powerhouse of both monetary and military strength.

Aurezia's history dates back to the time of the Legacy Wars. In the early years of the world the kingdom fell under the sway of Javier zi'Griswold, a charismatic human bearing the Stoic Sigil. In Javier's rise to power his mastery of animal husbandry afforded him significant advantage over his neighbors, granting him the ability to easily consume territory. The zi'Griswold stables bred the world's finest steeds, as they continue to do to this day, flaunting muscular builds and superior stamina prized in warhorses. The Holy Kingdom came to be as nearby city-states flocked to the Griswold banner, but this peace was not meant to last. Aurezia fell to the expanding empire of Cypress to the south in a war ending with the conquering of Aurez City, the kingdom's crown jewel. The Cyprean government was kind in their dealings with the Aurezians, however, and they offered the fledgling kingdom autonomy and freedom. For a length of time Aurezia remained under Cyprean control while the country expanded their territory to the north and east. Cyprean forces conquered the nations of Silitor and Baripsis in the following years, leading to the official formation of the Cyprean Empire.

While continuing to expand borders Cypress came to blows with the kingdom of Sillirai over dominion over the Alaron territory. Aurezia's participation in the ensuing First Jewel Wars was forced, as Aurezia lived peacefully with their amari neighbors to the west for some time, unlike the Cyprean to the south. Though the empire's combined armies liberated Brigantine from Sillirai





AUREZIA

“Light against darkness.”

COLORS: Sapphire, White, Silver

BANNER: Sapphire Spire

POPULATION: 25,167,457

CAPITAL: Aurez City

GOVERNMENT: Theocratic Monarchy

LEADER(S): Lucius Amiel, Archbishop of Astea's Church

LANGUAGES: Aurish, Vavalish, Cypran, Sillarian, Isril

NOTABLE EXPORTS: Horses, Agriculture, Manufactured Goods, Metalwork

DEMONYM: Aurezian

LITERACY RATE: 91%

after five years of brutal conflict, the Cyprean Empire began to falter. External warring and an expanding corrupt government under the leadership of Athuin zi'Paoleus, descendant of the kingdom's original founder, took its toll on the nation. Athuin was a harsh man, and he refused the Alaron people the autonomy granted to the nations of Aurezia, Baripsis, and Silitor. Athuin's eldest son, Oduall, followed in his father's footsteps and instigated a terse conflict with the people of Isild to the north. The Cyprean armies battled at Sentinel Keep for ten years under Oduall's command with no sign of surrender. An armistice brought an end to the dispute between Isild and the Cyprean Empire, and for a brief moment there appeared to be peace. Trade with Isild and Sillirai brought a calm to the region.

After ten years of peace Vavairen expansion met Cyprean border patrols. Attempts at trade and diplomacy were made by the two empires, but ultimately abandoned, as Vavaire and Cypress found themselves unable to reconcile their differences. The Borderlands War began, and yet again the Aurezian people found themselves embroiled in a conflict they wished to have no part of. For ten years the borders between the Cyprean Empire and Vavairen Empire swayed. The Borderlands were ravaged by the warring and the halfling race was forced from the region, their ancestral homeland, by the rampaging hordes of soldiers. Taking advantage of the Empire's precarious state and lack of resources, the nations of Aurezia, Baripsis, and Silitor reunited under the Sapphire Spire flag of Athos zi'Griswold, heir to the zi'Griswold name. Under the zi'Griswold family once again, Aurezia experienced a period of revival, prosperity, and independence. In the ensuing maelstrom of chaos Sillirai reclaimed Alaron and the zi'Paoleus family lost the Borderlands War. The zi'Paoleus emperor abdicated the Cyprean throne, plunging the formerly great empire into open revolt. Aurezia constructed Fiduc Castle to defend their land from any

potential incursions, having learned their lesson with the Cypreans the hard way.

Aurezia's rapid expansion in the following thirty years pulled them into a string of border disputes with Sillirai and Vavaire, culminating in a series of wars. The Aurezian army liberated Alaron from Sillarian hold, and the Second Jewel Wars began as Sillirai retaliated in anger. A series of skirmishes and battles ensued lasting a period of twelve years, but the conflict ultimately came to a close with no decisive victor. Only a mere five years later a second Borderlands War broke out between Aurezia and Vavaire, instigated by clashes along the length of the Valeria River. Fiale zi'Griswold, son of the liberator Athos, led the kingdom's armies during this time. These clashes escalated into a larger conflict and continued with fervor as the years passed. The Aurezians found themselves in a precarious situation as the Sillarian military gathered their strength and moved against their homeland once again. Caught in both the Second Borderlands War with Vavaire and the Third Jewel Wars with Sillirai, Aurezia was stretched thin, and desperate for aid.

The Aurezian people, fearing imminent destruction if the warring continued, initiated peace with Vavaire through the political marriage of Fiale Griswold's son, Julius, to Harmony zi'Stardragon. Their unity officially ended the Second Borderlands Wars, and together their forces were able to push the Sillarian host from the mainland, ending the Third Jewel Wars as well. Though the two nations had high hopes for a lasting peace, this tranquility was shattered when Julius murdered Veryan zi'Valda, a Sillarian prince, for holding a private conversation with his new wife Harmony. Though Veryan's indiscretion of speaking with Harmony alone would not be considered an offense in Sillirai, the kingdom of Aurezia's cultural views regarding decency and proper social conduct towards another's spouse led Julius to quickly act



out in anger. Sillirai and Aurezia entered the Fourth Jewel Wars upon Veryan's death, and Aurezia found her defenses obliterated in the fierce attacks originating from the mourning kingdom to the west. The Sillarian host conquered the Alaron area once again and used the territory for their staging ground in their ongoing assaults against Aurezia.

Aurezia's only relief came from Vavaire, but at the height of the war between the three kingdoms, Vavaire gave in to Sillarian demands and handed over Julius zi'Griswold to the Sillarian armies. He was put to death in a public display. Vindicated, the Sillarian people considered the debt paid. They declared an official end to the Jewel Wars once and for all and handed over Alaron, their mainland hold, to the Vavairen Empire in a show of peace. The Aurezian people were desperate for an end to the decades of war, and they begged for Vavairen leadership, believing Julius to have failed them with his unbridled temper. With no other options to fall back on, Aurezia willingly became a part of the Vavairen Empire. As a territory of Vavaire, the Holy Kingdom kept much of its independence and self-governance. The nation was led by an elected leader within their population, an individual known as Eliseo zi'Rosemond, who vowed to bring tranquility to the war-torn country. To the joy of the common people the Aurezians lived peacefully and fared quite well under the governance of Eliseo.

Vavairen leadership proved to be fruitful for the Aurezian people. Vavaire and Sillirai traded citizens and land in a diplomatic agreement, and the Aurezians no longer had reason to fear attacks from the amari to the west. Soon the Empire marched south to Cypress, and upon signing a peace treaty Vavaire established itself as the largest empire in recorded history. The kingdoms that comprised the empire, including Aurezia, entered a golden age of calm and prosperity lasting forty years. All of the subsequent disputes and clashes throughout the world remained negligible to the Vavairen Empire until the beginning of the Age of Ascent, when eldria was discovered. Technology rapidly lurched forward and soon the nations of the world were boasting fleets of airships and powerful magical weapons. Pirates established themselves as the marauders of the sky. This new age brought forth new concerns, and the Shadow Seas War began as an airship from Elessar, the *Evangeline*, was sunk in the depths of the Angylis Sea under questionable circumstances. The empires of the world rushed to place blame and take arms against one another, and the First Empire Wars began.

Aurezia entered the First Empire Wars fighting under the command of the generals of Vavaire, and overall the kingdom weathered the conflict well. At the end of the war the nation of Elessar was annihilated and Washu surrendered, forced to accept the blame. Aurezia was once again granted independence by dictation of the Council of Vathis, who voted to dismantle the Vavairen Empire, fearing its size and scope. Aurezia's neighbors, Baripsis and Silitor, choose to remain under the Holy Kingdom's leadership and forfeit their independence in favor of stable rule. The world reeled and suffered in the aftermath of the war, but Aurezia looked inward to find solace in her people's firm religious beliefs. The Holy Kingdom managed to remain uninvolved in the outbreak of the Second Empire Wars, instigated by disagreements between Vavaire and Tristan, until Vavaire strategically moved to reclaim the lost Borderlands. Forced to defend her territory, Aurezia finally

entered the global dispute. Unable to out-manuever and out-compete the enigmatic intelligence system known as the Black Network, the Aurezians were defeated. The people of the Holy Kingdom were afraid of being destroyed by the great kingdom they once served, and so they cried out for Vavairen aid. Aurezia's government acquiesced to the will of her people and surrendered to Aliskar, Emperor of Vavaire.

The discovery of the secretive torture of Astrian worshippers taking place in the city of Whiterose by Vavairen officials brought the world sorrow. This horrific event was called the Whiterose Experiments. The friends and family of many Aurezians were likely part of these experiments, disappearing suddenly to never be seen again. The Vavairen government rapidly dissolved following the announcement, and it was soon revealed that Emperor Aliskar and many of his advisors were acting under the influence of fiendish extraplanar creatures. A great evil entity known as a Vandiel, called Rumoriskar, was uncovered acting as an important Vavairen advisor. Aurezia immediately ceased supporting Vavaire, but with little central leadership, the kingdom sputtered and faltered. The Aurezian people fought admirably against the fiends throughout the Darkest War but lost a number of southern territories and northern reaches. The entirety of the Borderlands area was lost yet again, and the fighting ravaged the heartland of the country. A different Vandiel, Zenshir, launched an assault on Aurez City which was almost successful. A great militaristic effort was able to fend off Zenshir's forces, but not without considerable sacrifice.

After the complete annihilation of Vavaire and the eventful retreat of the Shattered Hand at the end of the Darkest War, Aurezia found herself flooded with refugees from every corner. The world turned to the Holy Kingdom expecting her to fill the empty void left by Vavaire's missing might. Aurezia's populace rallied behind their religious leader with a fervor fed by grief, and a theocracy rose as the ruling party in the strife and flame left by the infernal armies. The Most High Lucius Amiel became the leader of the nation, and the Council of Vathis approved Aurezia as the protector of the island nation Washu, who remained under Vavairen control in light of the events which took place during the First Empire Wars.

Today Aurezia stands as one of the strongest global powers in all of Vathis. Her military and economic might is unrivaled by all, except for a few close competitors: Vavaire, Tristan, and Sillirai. Aurezia possesses a formidable industrial center, stretches of rich farmland, extensive CORE facilities, and population centers larger than those governed by nearly all other nations. She is poised to become a powerful entity in the restructured, post-war world. With Vavaire's return to the global playing field Aurezia has experienced a mass exodus of Vavairen refugees from her lands, and this exodus has resulted in the loss of a decent percentage of the country's workforce. Lucius Amiel has been actively working with the newly restored Vavairen government and Ravenne zi'Stardragon to determine the outcome of Vavaire's return. Ravenne is grateful for the protection Aurezia offered the Vavairen people, especially those on the Isle of Corsica and Sanctuary. Such talks have proven fruitful so far, as new trade routes and diplomatic ties are opening.



Aurezia's attention is currently focused on reclaiming lost territories and resettling ruined cities. Her greatest menace comes from the expanding ice and snow of the Rimelan to the south, which threatens to force Fiduc Castle into vacancy. The creation of the Strait of Despair on the western seaboard is also a hazard, as sea lanes to the northwestern region of the country are now unusable. Aurezia continues to fend off barbarians invading from all sides, and her enemies circle out of sight searching for signs of weakness. Internal threats in the form of spies and insurgents threaten the kingdom's metropolitan hubs, but religious fervor and loyalty tend to make attempts at stealing Aurezia's information difficult at best, and nigh impossible in most situations.

ECONOMICS AND INDUSTRY

Exports: Agriculture, Heavy industry, Horses, Manufactured goods, Metalwork, Weapons and armor

Imports: Lumber, Luxury Goods, Ore, Ships, Spices, Wine

Aurezia is a world leader in crop growth and food production. The majority of the kingdom's stored provisions are used to nourish the diverse population spread throughout the nation's vast expanse of territory. In addition to foodstuffs, enormous stretches of the Holy Kingdom's farmland produce a variety of goods and livestock for trade. A portion of the food grown is also sold to various other countries, surviving the long trips abroad in rimesteel containers aboard air and sea vessels. Aurezia's impressive industrial centers create most of the manufactured goods known to Vathis. The kingdom's furnaces and forges fabricate a portion of the world's armor and weaponry, which are considered to be of good quality, though not nearly as fine as Mythrayne's metalwork or Tristan's steel.

Although the Griswold family holds no true power in today's government, Aurezia's stables and pastures still yield some of the world's finest steeds on account of their Starcalled lineage. Aurezia's steeds are only second to the steeds in Vavaire, which also come from Griswold stables. CORE possesses many holdings throughout the nation and operates a central research facility located in Aurez City. Eldric technology is utilized in nearly all Aurezian buildings, which makes life significantly easier for the kingdom's citizens. The largest powerhouse of both manpower and financial might, however, is the Church of Astea, which some may find surprising. A respectable number of Aurezian businesses are founded and controlled by members of the church, and the church's will is done throughout the land.

CULTURE AND CLIMATE

Aurezia's diverse populace is split between simple farm life and the never-ending whirl of city life. The kingdom's central landscape is dominated by endless rolling plains and the rural ranches that survived the march of the Shattered Hand, with laborers gathering in walled cities along primary trade routes. Cities and towns are places of refuge and solace in Aurezia, and the nation's rural populace flocked to their gates during the Darkest War. Countless veterans and survivors of the war still live in these cities, but a hardy few have ventured out to recover swaths of the desecrated landscape. The kingdom's borders are protected by three great fortifications: Castle Lightan to the east, Castle Fiduc to the south,

and Castle Saneri to the north. Multiple forests were lost during the war and never reclaimed, making veering off into the woodlands of the country extremely inadvisable. The Holy Kingdom's Gilded Roads are among the world's safest, however, and her travelers find peace and beauty on their paths so long as they stay the course.

Nearly all Aurezian citizens have a fondness for the divine, regardless of where they were born. The majority of the nation worships the goddess Astea, and her reverence has gone so far that the kingdom has replaced their banner with the image of her Sapphire Spire. Besides being pious, those of Aurezian birth have a strong drive to succeed, and they possess a firm belief in personal freedom. A number of Aurezian citizens who survived the Darkest War either took part in active military service or know someone close to them who did. Memorials and monuments to those who fought bravely against the otherworldly terrors are commonplace throughout the kingdom. The respect given to those who served in the military is second only to the reverence given to the divine, and it is rare to see a veteran of the Darkest War struggling to find shelter or food. The Shattered Hand pressed deeply into the Aurezian heartland, and only a few small towns do not possess scars from the Darkest War.

Aurezia is a broad nation, and her land stretches for hundreds of miles north to south. Her climate is quite diverse, though it appears to have flipped in recent years. The southern end of the nation used to boast warm summers and light winters, but now experiences the opposite due to the presence of the spreading Rimelan. The south is now bombarded by winter storms in months that should not expect such weather. These drastic changes in the south have made it harder and harder to sustain Fiduc Castle, and every year miles of the stronghold's surrounding fields turn barren. In Aurezia's northern lands the warm Solar Sea causes the mainland to experience wet springs and mild winters. Warm winds from Aurezia's western seaboard spares Aurez City the south's frigid hardships, and the population of the capital city has grown considerably in recent years because of this.

In the wake of the Darkest War the Holy Kingdom of Aurezia experienced an influx of Vavairen refugees. The Aurezian government allowed these refugees to travel freely throughout the kingdom, and in the years following the Darkest War the nation saw uprisings occurring in the protected nation of New Vavaire, located on Corsica Island to the north. Rumors have it that the clergy and faithful of New Vavaire had been forcing their religion on Astrian worshippers, but proof of this has yet to be garnered. At first the Aurezians were welcoming to their neighbors to the east, but as more and more flooded in, the populace's feelings began to turn. Soon fights and conflicts broke out as factions of Aurezians rose and blamed the Vavairen for the horrors of the Darkest War. A formidable criminal element composed of entirely Vavairen refugees known as the Heirs of Vavaire rose in Aurez City, further complicating the already tenuous relations between the two nationalities.

However, the conflicts came to settle when Vavaire made her miraculous return to the international world, as it was discovered that Astea saved the kingdom with divine magical protection. Vavairen citizens flooded out of the surrounding lands to make their way back home. Many lesser jobs and menial tasks originally



slated to be performed by the squandering refugees were now left open and unfilled. Aurezia found herself with a surplus of jobs and lack of manpower, spelling disaster for the Holy Kingdom's cities relying on steady labor. The Most High Lucius Amiel threw open Aurezia's doors in desperation to refugees seeking permanent relocation, hoping that some would come to settle in the kingdom and compensate for the mass exodus of Vavairens. Sizable immigrant populations from other nations migrated to the country, granting Aurezia a new title: The Land of Opportunity.

POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT

The Most High Lucius Amiel, sometimes called the Savior, is a forty-three-year-old human bishop. He is the Archbishop of Astea's global church and the elected leader of the theocratic Holy Kingdom of Aurezia. Lucius rose quickly through the ranks of Astea's clergy during the Darkest War by means of influence and powerful political plays. He even gained the favor of the Most Beautiful Lady Aevalyn, Astea's incarnation, and soared to power with her blessing. During the course of the Darkest War he led the selection of the church devoted to discovering the truths behind the Whiterose Experiments, and he condemned his own father to death for his part in the heinous crimes. Lucius Amiel became the Archbishop shortly before the conclusion of the Darkest War. He acts through Regional Cardinals and Territorial Bishops stationed throughout the Holy Kingdom, and he graciously placed New Vavaire under his protection until such a time that Vavaire returned to reclaim the island. Lucius Amiel prefers to face his challenges head on. His personal life remains a private one, despite his global presence. He has a small family with no children. His wife, Vivienne, is also a part of the Astean faith, and she leads a Free Company called the Lightwardens that act as the sword of Astea's church.

Upon the resurrection of Vavaire, control of New Vavaire was immediately settled between him and Empress Ravenne. While Lucius Amiel wished to hold onto the strategic importance of the Isle of Corsica, he understood that Vavaire possessed rightful claims to the island and returned it. Lucius Amiel is a firm believer in the Sentinel doctrine, and he has doubled Aurezia's support towards the organization. He allows the citizens of Aurezia to worship any deity they wish, so long as they are also allies of Astea. He longs to return Aurezia to her former might with full control of the western seaboard, and he has no love for the rebel state of Cypress to the south, believing that those lands rightfully belong to Aurezia. The Rimelan thus far has prevented him from taking any direct action against Cypress, and he wishes to see the Rimelan scrubbed from the face of the world as soon as possible so he can secure the southern holdings for the glory of the Holy Kingdom.

Aurezian noble lines stretch back for centuries, and they are the lifeblood of the governance in place under the Church of Astea. Many modern noble families are tied to the leadership of the holdings composing the Holy Empire. These families are traditional, but they've recently moved to a more mercantile focus rather than one of leadership. The nobility of Aurezia acts as mediators, military officials, and sources of funding for the country's operations. It is not unusual for one central city to be the home of numerous noble families. For instance, Aurez City houses no less

than thirty separate noble lines, and the minor nobility is nigh uncountable in the city proper. It is also common to find the manors and chateaus of powerful people scattered throughout the countryside. Nobility worth noting in Aurezia are the current Starcalled, who have risen in both strength and numbers in the wake of the Darkest War. Starcalled individuals have become focal points throughout the kingdom, and followers flock to their service. This level of dedication unnerves unsigiled nobility, who fear losing their positions to the various Starcalled who come forth bearing sigils.

The government of the Holy Kingdom of Aurezia is straightforward and bureaucratic. The head of the chain of command is the church of Astea, headed by Lucius Amiel, who dictates the laws and governance of the land. These commandments are sent down to the bishops and cardinals in charge of their territories, which in turn are given to the nobility responsible for the protection of their lands. City guards and local law enforcement are largely composed of pious individuals attempting to bring Astea's grace into the territories they patrol. While this guarantees a certain level of loyalty, corruption is not unknown. Even so, there are few places of lawlessness within Aurezia's borders, and a guard patrol is rarely far away.

Aurezia rose after the Darkest War with the strongest and most robust military in the world. She inherited all of the indoctrination of Vavaire before the kingdom's fall, and mixed dedication with religious fervor to inspire the loyalty of soldiers. Fleets of warships patrol Aurezia's air and sea lanes. Contingents of armed forces defend the kingdom's borders, and counter-spies work fervently throughout the nation to protect Aurezia from the threat of stolen information. The kingdom's military is now strictly volunteer-based after disbanding the conscription forces used during the Darkest War, and her current membership is bolstered by the worshippers of Astea's church. The majority of Aurezian soldiers are directed at either concentrated efforts in occupying Washu, or defending the kingdom's southern land from the icy threat of the Rimelan. Aurezia also boasts a group known as the Lifebearers, whose ranks consist of divine soldiers willing to lay down their lives for the holy land.

Aurezia has been a major player in the realm of international politics since the dissolution of the Vavairen Empire. Lucius Amiel works tirelessly to ensure Aurezia's future prospects, even if he has to dabble in affairs only loosely related to the kingdom. He is currently focusing on the delicate situation regarding the protectorate nation of Washu, as he seeks continued Aurezian control on the island. The Council of Vathis is divided on this issue. Lucius Amiel also regularly sends teams of missionaries abroad to spread Astea's good will, particularly to areas of the world where the worship of Astea comes second to other gods.

Unexpectedly, the Holy Kingdom possesses wonderful relations with the desert nation Osept. This is due in part to their shared religious history. Aurezia believes that the Oseptians are their ancestral brethren, and that the wicked in the desert should be brought mercifully to Astea's light. The Holy Kingdom considers the Oseptians to be simply misguided by their antiquated practices. Aurezia boasts close ties with Venoeh, and rumor has it Astean clergy officials are in talks with Tristan regarding furthering di-



plomacy between the two kingdoms, though their current relations are strained. Aurezia is indifferent towards Darastrix, Erygis, and Leyathar. However, Aurezia's enemies are not far away. Diplomacy between the Holy Kingdom and Isild is stifled, as both nations are seeking expansion, though they currently sit at an impasse. Cypress, Sillirai, and Vavaire also have their eyes on Aurezian territory and trade agreements, and the three conniving nations have forged alliances in a shared effort to undermine the holy land. Aurezia is openly hated by Rancagesh for opposing their freedom, and detested by Washu for their current occupation of their islands. The occupation itself is a highly-debated topic among the world's leaders.

RELIGION AND TRADITIONS

Religion and worship—particularly of the goddess Astea of the Vath pantheon—are an enormous part of the ingrained culture of Aurezia. Churches dot the landscape as far as the eye can see, and religious motifs and icons are fixed themes in Aurezian architecture. It is likely that the majority of citizens possess some form of Astea's ankh on their person at all times, and donations to the church replace much of the standard taxation that comes with having an organized government. However, even with widespread worship of Astea, churches of other deities are occasionally found. The god Vangal is granted particular regard as Astea's divine protector. In the darkest places of Aurezian cities, rituals and prayers to evil deities, particularly Zanon, are not uncommon. Dark sects run amok in the deep reaches of the country, and evil cults operate in bustling cities right under the nose of the Asteian church.

There is no holiday celebrated more than the holiday of Astea's Rebirth. Commemorated on the Laniri, it is a widely decorated affair of evergreen trees, boughs of holly, and wonderful displays of colored lights. It is celebrated for a full week with gift-giving, parties, and songs ending in a single feast on the day of the Laniri. Aurez City is home to the greatest Laniri celebration in the world, which takes place in the Grand Garden of the city located across from the Sapphire Spire. Other national holidays include the Day of Enlightenment, the day in which Aurezia was granted independence under the church of Astea after the Darkest War, and the Griswold Festival, another week-long celebration in the middle of the summer to observe the initial founding of the kingdom by the Griswold family.

There is a number of holy sites and locations spread across the Aurezian plains. The largest and most impressive of these sights is the Sapphire Spire of Astea, located in the center of Aurez City. The spire itself is exactly one mile tall, with thirty-foot interior floors that amount to a total of one hundred and seventy-six individual floors. However, only the first fifty floors are accessible, and those above are reserved for the goddess herself and those special enough to gain passage from her. The spire is visited by all members of Asteian clergy, and huge pilgrimages to the spire occur annually. The Grand Garden possesses another sixteen spires stretching only twelve-hundred feet in the air. Each one is dedicated to a god or goddess other than Astea, making the location a place of gathering for all religious clergies around the world. Castle Saneri in northern Aurezia houses a laris tree grove in the center of the city, which is home to the Holy Kingdom's grandest

church to Aleydra. Thousands of amari inhabitants reside in this area. The Aleydran church is one of the oldest Sillarian structures on the mainland, surviving all of the Jewel Wars and the turmoil of the Darkest War which came to follow.

INFLUENTIAL PARTIES

Aurezia is a firm supporter of the Council of Vathis and the Vathis Sentinels. The kingdom gives huge monetary donations to their cause and provides the organization with manpower in the form of Aurezian enlistments. Due to these relations Aurezia has an extensive Vathis Sentinel network installed, and outposts devoted to their cause can be found in every major city. Sentinel airships grace the skies above Aurezia almost as often as the kingdom's own fleet. However, this Sentinel involvement has painted Aurezia as a target for Sky Dragon attacks and Outlaw membership. The Alloway Sky Dragon family in particular is tormenting the Holy Kingdom's shipping lanes, due in part to Aurezia no longer using the lanes over Vavaire in an effort to skirt Vavairen taxes. Outlaw establishments are found in every city and a surprising number of the kingdom's populace are flocking to the Outlaw lifestyle, to the chagrin of the pious government. Aurezia is also home to numerous CORE facilities, granting the nation many conveniences born from the widespread adoption of eldria.

CHURCH OF ASTEA: Astea's organized following is the most prominent of all of the powerful groups in the Aurezian kingdom. A sizable percentage of the nation's citizens pay homage to her holy sites and whisper their morning prayers to the goddess of life. The clergy follows the Most High Lucius Amiel and his close Archbishops, whose power is absolute. From the Sapphire Spire the church rules the Aurezian people unwaveringly with a firm and just hand. Six Archbishops sit underneath Lucius Amiel, with three stationed in both Aurezia's north and south. Khalil Norwood works from the southern keep of Fiduc, and he is one of the oldest Archbishops on the council. His loyalty to Lucius Amiel, the son of Seoras Amiel to whom Khalil was a cousin, is unconditional. The other two Archbishops in the south are Ailpein Ciar of Lightan Castle and Cathal Preas of Griate. The three Archbishops in the north are loved by the Aurezian populace, but feared greatly by the refugees who live under their control. Nicolas Kober claims dominion over the territory surrounding Solarion, and Leopold Tarr controls the west coast near Brigantes. Adelbert Krist oversees the area to the far north around Blackhaven. Together the three northern Archbishops initiated the removal of certain refugees, contradicting the church's claim of open arms.

ROYAL GRISWOLD FAMILY: Currently led by Lorenz Griswold, the royal Griswold family remains the strongest noble line in Aurezia. Lorenz's sister, Agnes, directs the house's military operations and acts as Lorenz's advisor and warlord. Lorenz's wife, Teresa, is his minister of magic and personal historian, and she shares his desire for the restoration of their family's greatness. The Griswold family primarily operates out of two holdings. The first of these holdings is in Tanmas, to the east of Aurez City. The second is the Griswold's main seat found in Castle Saneri to the far north, where the family owns an estate and series of fortifications. The Griswold family controls the majority of the industry and live-



stock holdings in Aurezia, and they firmly back of the Church of Astea. Secretly, however, Lorenz wishes for the Griswold family to regain a position of note within the government of the country. In recent years his son Johannes joined the Astean clergy at his request. The Griswold family has the ear of most influential noble families in the country, but they remain at odds with the Alloway pirates of the Solar Sea, who view the Griswolds as sell-outs and pushovers.

VATHIS SENTINELS: Vathis Sentinel presence within Aurezia is formidable. The nation's division of the organization is led by Wilfried Hochberg, and his main base of operations resides on a floating mote above Aurez City, known as the White Citadel. Sentinel airships can be found docked above the sprawling metropolitan capital ready to take flight at a moment's notice. Training fields and barracks for new recruits are located in Ralek, and general outposts can be found in nearly every Aurezian town. A noticeable exception is the city of Gloam, a locale too dangerous for open Vathis Sentinel presence. Airships belonging to the organization are a common sight in Aurezian skies. However, the daunting Vathis Sentinel involvement paints Aurezia as a target for Sky Dragon attacks and Outlaw membership, which the Sentinels struggle to contain.

CORE: Refinement facilities on floating motes and CORE procurement offices are familiarities to the hardworking citizens of Aurezia. The advances granted by eldria are widely utilized throughout the country, and as such, the nation's need for the substance is great. CORE has a significant number of holdings in the kingdom. The Aurezian operations for CORE are ran by Noemi Korsch, a Trist woman previously involved in Legion. She wishes to cut her own niche into the world with a new invention or design. However, she is currently faced with overwhelming demand for eldric goods and preoccupied with discovering the unknown origins of the refined vaedricsteel appearing on the markets in Aurezia's northern quadrants.

ELDRITCH HOUSE: The Eldritch House owns a floating mote high above Aurez City which slowly circles the settlement. It is home to the largest magical school on the entire western seaboard. The Eldritch House works closely with the Council of Vathis and the Vathis Sentinels in all matters related to the use of magic. The Aurezian Eldritch House is ran by zi'Azai Matakō, a tiefling from Washu. While Matakō strives to remain in close contact with Gulen of the Washun branch, the Aurezian government has taken a liking to Matakō, resulting in tension between the two branches as she attempts to foster peace.

GARASTROT CLAN: Operating out of southern Aurezia, the Garastrot Clan is a criminal enterprise selling Vitality and working with other criminal organizations in the region. The group is ran by Eduard zi'Wohler, an ex-captain from the Darkest War. Charismatic and strategic, Eduard gained control of the majority of lesser crime groups in southern Aurezia in the two years following his initial rise to power. The Garastrot Clan is a strict hierarchy built on multiple levels of respect and loyalty. Eduard remains in control of the noble house of his birth, and he is a well-respected member of the community.

RISING FIRE COALITION: The Rising Fire Coalition is located in northern Aurezia. They specialize in importing Washun

goods direct from Washu, and they work closely with the Chang pirates to achieve that goal. The organization has connections to the unknown origins of the refined vaedricsteel coming from the Solar Sea, and its sale and recent usage has been a huge wind-fall for the Rising Fire Coalition. The group is led by zi'Cho Kal, a tiefling ex-major of the Washun military who relocated to his wife's estate in Gloam following his discharge from the military after an instance of insubordination during a suicide mission. His wife is no longer with him, but his daughter zi'Cho Chei follows in his footsteps. In the years following his relocation he created a vast criminal network among both Vavairen and Washun refugees throughout the northern reaches of Aurezia. He is given council by his half-elf advisor from Leyathar, Izera Serran. zi'Cho Kal's ultimate goals are to reestablish Aurezian respect for Washu and force the Holy Kingdom to pull their forces out of his home country.

HEIRS OF VAVAIRE: Known as the Heirs of Vavaire, this organization operates solely out of Aurez City and controls a portion of the outlying islands. It is a group comprised of Vavairen citizens and refugees from the restored nation. They are led by Clove Slate, a Starcalled woman born on the streets of Aurez City during the Darkest War. Clove united the refugees with her charisma and sigil, and under her leadership they rose to prominence. They are no longer able to be ignored by the Aurezian populace. The majority of the money garnered from their escapades is used to provide for the Vavairen people within Aurez City and bring them to new heights. To the dismay of the Vathis Sentinels, one of the outlying islands of Aurez City are completely under their control.

EAST ANGYLIS COMPANY: The East Angylis Company is a thorn in Aurezia's side, as Aurezia has yet to pay Mythrayne's restitution for construction of the Gilded Road. The East Angylis Company operates in major shipping and trade locations, and forces individuals and businesses to pay for protection and the safe arrival of their goods. They ensure that certain shipments never make it to their destination. The East Angylis Company plays a role in the corruption of political officials and local guards to ensure the continuing success of their illegal operations. Aurezia is currently experiencing difficulties in halting their operations on account of the EAC refraining from directly interfering with international trade routes, so the Vathis Sentinels are disinclined to become involved.

BLUE DRAGON SYNDICATE: Aurezia's branch of the Dragon Syndicate is called the Blue Dragon Syndicate. This group possesses two main bases of operation: the first located in Aurez City, and the second located in the reconstructed city of Brigantes. The Blue Dragon Syndicate's numbers have diminished in light of recent events and the rise of other criminal enterprises in the area, but despite their small numbers, they are significantly more aggressive than the other criminal organizations who call the Holy Kingdom home. The Blue Dragon Syndicate incites bloodshed in disputes over territory and perceived slights. They are notorious for trade and airship crime, and primarily focus on smuggling and dealing in dangerous contraband. Their leader is known as the Great Blue Wyrn, and his identity remains a secret, though he is rumored to be a high-ranking nobleman from a prominent Aurezian family.

ALLOWAY PIRATES: The Alloway Pirates hold dominion over



the Solar Sea. They allow zi'Cho Chei of the Rising Fire Coalition to import his goods from Washu, but at a price. The Alloway Pirates were once the ruling noble family of the kingdom of Baripsis, whose capital was the city of Solarion. Exiled after the rise of the Griswold family during the fall of Cypress, the Alloway Pirates have been an outcast group ever since, and they joined the One Hundred and Seventeen Sky Dragons following their exile. Their great wealth drove the pirate clans of the west to prosperous heights previously unknown. The Alloway family wishes to regain the Baripsis area of land and see it independent once again, and they have dedicated a portion of their wealth to funding local revolutionaries and malcontents.

DARK KNIGHTS: The Dark Knights hold significant outposts throughout Aurezia. As an organization they are highly involved in the daily operations of the kingdom, and often hired to handle jobs deemed too unsanitary or too dangerous for the clergy of Astea's church. The Dark Knights mainly occupy the northern sections of the kingdom, but they possess contingents located in both Lightan and Fiduc poised to watch for supernatural threats to the country. Divisions of Dark Knights use Lightan as a staging point in an attempt to restore the Fringe Wall to its full strength. The Dark Knights are widely viewed as a symbol of might, and few Aurezians have forgotten the bravery displayed by the Dark Knights during the Darkest War, which stemmed the flow of fiends pouring into Aurezian lands. The battle of Griate will always be remembered as a valiant and dangerous undertaking by the men and women of the organization who were able to save the city from utter destruction. The Dark Knights are both highly respected and feared in Aurezia.

CHURCH OF THE CRYSTAL WATCHER: Followers of the Crystal Watcher were once a rare sight within Aurezian borders, but the staunch support and zealotry of the faithful of the organization brought the radical church into prominence. The number of Crystal Watcher followers grows daily, primarily due to Aurezia's widespread adoption of eldric technology. Some of these followers have taken up homes in Fiduc in veneration of the expanding Rimelan, which they call the Land of the Everlasting Crystals. They believe the Rimelan to be the manifestation of their god, and they speak out against those who wish to halt its expansion. Viewed in prior years as simply a nuisance, they have now become a serious thorn in Aurezia's side.

EXPERIENCING AUREZIA

The roads throughout Aurezia are relatively peaceful and safe. The Gilded Road in particular is heavily patrolled by contingents of Vathis Sentinels and local guards alike, and it stretches along the major trade routes of the country. Airship docks dot the face of nearly every city in Aurezia and traffic abounds in the skies above. Caravans often travel through the expanse of the kingdom, however, and it is not unusual for their destinations to take them along overgrown routes rarely used. Even with local guards and Vathis Sentinels abundant, escorts are typically requested on these unsavory routes to deter thieves and bandits, as well as protect from criminal organizations or corrupt officials masquerading as legitimate help.

Traveling in the south is a calculated risk, as frozen en-

terities of terror pour through the southern Aurezian border from the Rimelan. From the Borderlands to the east the remains of the Shattered Hand make frequent incursions into Aurezian territory, and the sea on all sides are dangerous places, spawning pirates, bandits, and monsters. Horrific creatures venture to the mainland from the newly-formed Strait of Despair, where one's worst nightmares rise. The plains in the north are extremely untamed, and travelers are sometimes assaulted by barbaric tribes of humanoids and pirates from the Solar Sea. Lizardfolk, troglodytes, and goblinoids also harass those who dare traverse the northern expanse. Perhaps the biggest risk are the criminal enterprises of Aurezia. It is not uncommon for whole caravans to mysteriously disappear only for their goods to resurface in cities hundreds of miles away. Unmarked soldiers and spies from other nations make their way to the Aurezian border unnoticed, and enemies of the Holy Kingdom hide among good Aurezians and charitable organizations, waiting to strike.

The average Aurezian citizen tends to be friendly, helpful, and tolerant of outsiders. They wish to share their liberties and freedoms with the world and spread Astea's dogma of love and joy wherever they can. Despite the tensions between the leadership of Aurezia, Sillirai, and Vavaire, their citizens find themselves surprised to learn that they hold many of the same values. The Aurezian people look upon the Washun, Leyarish, and Oseptian as rarities and novelties. Although many view the remaining Vavairen refugees as freeloaders, acceptance has swayed in their favor in recent years with the resurgence of their nation. The Aurezian people are particularly wary of those from Cypress, as the transgressions between the two nations are not to be ignored, and as mentioned previously, past wars with Sillirai have soured the feelings of many toward Aurezia's neighbor to the northwest. Even so, recent relations with Sillarian have started to heal the wounds left by the four Jewel Wars. Aurezians are mostly ambivalent towards those from Tristan, but the Trists' reputation as stout warriors and followers of a deity of darkness keep the Aurezians from embracing them wholeheartedly. These convoluted views come to a head in Aurez City, Aurezia's great melting pot, where the stress of international politics and various offenses culminate in the tightly-packed city.

Adventurers traveling through the Holy Kingdom are treated with respect and reverence. Notable members of the Aurezian community oftentimes hire these nomads for a variety of tasks, furthering the positive perception of their work. They are typically the unseen hands behind dirty tasks and the skilled force completing unsavory work. Veterans of the Darkest War, though not adventurers per se, have begun selling themselves as private investigators or mercenaries as a way to earn a living and utilize the skills they gained while a member of the armed services. Adventurers as a whole find themselves attracted to Aurez City, both as a melting pot of cultures and a consolidation of the problems arising within Aurezian borders. Some adventurers spend their entire careers in Aurez City. A select few even rise to prominence and make a name for themselves, but a good portion end up as bloodstains on the streets.

The church of Astea is always on the lookout for hired help to retrieve artifacts lost during the Darkest War. Other adventurers are sometimes sent to explore areas deemed too danger-



ous for common guards or laborers to traverse. House Griswold is seeking accomplished individuals to perform various jobs in the hopes of regaining some standing over the church, and CORE is willing to pay travelers a hefty sum should they manage to determine the source of the refined vaedricsteel and eldricsteel appearing across the kingdom's northern reaches. The majority of the criminal organizations within Aurezia hire workers to forward their nefarious purposes. Miscreants of all kinds stand to make a small fortune in the devout country, should they survive their assignments and prosper. Unsurprisingly, seedy underbellies thrive in the dark heart of most Aurezian cities.

MAJOR SETTLEMENTS

AUREZ CITY

"Always reaching higher"

TYPE: Capital Holy Metropolis

POPULATION: 1,216,403

LANGUAGES: All

VATHIS SENTINEL SCORE: 9

ECONOMY SCORE: 10

IMPORTS: Everything

EXPORTS: Everything

ORGANIZATIONS: Eldritch House, Eyes of Vathis, Heirs of Vavaire, Legion, Vathis Sentinels

RELIGION: Vath Pantheon: *Astea, Vangal*; Large representation of all faiths

Aurez City is built on seven islands at the delta of the Silver River.

Soaring spires grace the sky, and on its furthest island the magnificent Sapphire Spire stretches a mile into the clouds, the pinnacle of Astea's grace. Aurez City has always been an important trading port throughout the city's long history and rarely has been forced to defend itself from attack. This changed during the Darkest War, and now one of the islands sits in complete ruin, its tall buildings laying in a pool of rubble. Also called the City of Forever, Aurez City has remained the seat of power in the region for the various nations that have called this area home.

A network of roads, bridges, and raised pathways link the seven islands of the city, whose clustered towers house the largest population of diverse cultures in the world. Eldric marvels are peppered throughout the daily lives of the citizens who reside in this religious metropolis. Airships drift across the sky, and lighted paths give way to a bustling lifestyle for the people living in Aurez City's streets. The city life itself rarely sleeps as Vathis Sentinels prowl the pathways protecting the populace against the unsavory. All of the world's known cultures and lifestyles can be found in Aurez City, as thousands of refugees from all over the world sought solace in Aurezia in the wake of the two Empire Wars and Darkest War. It is in these immigrant neighborhoods that Washun architecture stands in stark contrast to the hard lines of Tristan building facade.

Aurez City is the capital of Aurezia, and as such, holds a significant influence with the country's elite. The Sapphire Spire's location within the city also gives the Astean faithful a large sway as well. The departure of the Council of Vathis to the more centralized location of Valiance, Vavaire has put significant strain on the local upper class to keep many of their members in the city, but Aurezia's powerful presence as a central trading hub for the west has kept their attention strictly in Aurez City. The saying goes, "If



it can be purchased, you can find it in Aurez City,” and it stands as truth that nearly all trade routes flow into and out of the heart of Aurezia. The city is ruled by those with significant sway. Whether their sway be measured in gold, faith, or might, is up to those who stand at the top.

LIGHTAN

"Gateway of Prosperity"

TYPE: Gateway Fortified City

POPULATION: 91,607

LANGUAGES: Vavalish, Isril, Cypran, Oseptian, Sillarian

VATHIS SENTINEL SCORE: 7

ECONOMY SCORE: 5

IMPORTS: Crops, Horses, Livestock, Soldiers

EXPORTS: Lumber, Minerals, Metalwork, Weapons and armor

ORGANIZATIONS: Dark Knights, Eyes of Vathis, Legion, Vathis Sentinels

RELIGION: Vath Pantheon: *Astea, Vangal, Junon*; Minor Astrian representation

Situated at the base of Valeria Falls and the start of the Valeria River, Lightan is a fortress built on raised platforms overlooking the river below. Known as the Gateway to the East, Lightan sits at

one of only two locations where it is easy to ford the Valeria River. The white pylons that hold the fortress city of Lightan have stood the test of time for centuries, protecting the lands to the west. The city itself has only one bridge in from the east, and two bridges that lead to the west.

Lightan was originally constructed centuries ago to stem the flowing tide of the Vavairen Empire into the western lands. It was contested countless times between Aurezia, Cypress, and Vavaire. Currently, the city of Lightan protects the Aurezian holdings from the terrors of the Borderlands and the remnants of the Shattered Hand. While Lightan's walls have defended the cities inhabitants for generations, the threats that batter its walls leave its populace in a near constant state of fear, only assuaged by the presence of multiple mercenary and guard forces.

The local government is handled by a Bishop of Astea's church, Perian zi'Alloway. His leadership under his superior, Archbishop Ailpein Ciar, rallied the city in the final hours of the Darkest War and pushed the Shattered Hand back into the Borderlands. Shortly afterward he was granted the title of Bishop and has remained the city's leader ever since. His ex-military background has proved its worth time and time again protecting Lightan from the threats beyond. What was once a purely Aurezian city has now become home to countless refugees from various nations all over the region as survivors fled west in the wake of the Shattered Hand, seeking walled protection. Trade often comes from down



river, and merchants traversing the Solar Sea and flying within airship routes bring new products to the city. A great number of the common folk in Lightan are miners, and they are frequently called the Sootfolk for all the grime and dirt covering their bodies.

GLOAM

"Safe harbor, and safe skies."

TYPE: Untamed Turbulent Port City

POPULATION: 6,106

LANGUAGES: Vavalish, Isril, Cypran, Oseptian, Sillarian

VATHIS SENTINEL SCORE: 1

ECONOMY SCORE: 6

IMPORTS: Labor, Lumber, Ships, Soldiers, Smuggled goods, Washun goods

EXPORTS: Fenced items, Fish, Glass, Sheep, Washun goods, Wool

ORGANIZATIONS: Blue Dragon Syndicate, Merchant Lords of Gloam, Rising Fire Coalition

RELIGION: Vath Pantheon, Astrian Pantheon, Shenami Pantheon

Gloam is a city found on the western coast of the Solar Sea in northern Aurezia. Her deep water port is surrounded by a sectioned city built below the northern cliffs. On her cliffs stand the city's rich and elite, and they live in impressive estates where they look down on the walled city below. Gloam was attacked in one of the last major offensive efforts by the Shattered Hand, and the city that was rebuilt in the aftermath is one entirely different than Gloam most remember.

Gloam has become a hub of criminal organizations, vast smuggling operations, and unsavory interests from abroad. Vathis Sentinel presence in the city and its surrounding territory is almost non-existent, even though Gloam has erected a new airship dock to attend to some of the city's more affluent citizens. From sea, air, and land, Gloam has established itself as a vast trading power in the north. The reasons for the lack of Sentinel protection is unknown.

The city is ruled by the surviving nobility of the city who have dubbed themselves the Merchant Lords, their identities hidden away behind masks and subterfuge. They arrange the city's power and wealth to their whim, and have attracted large numbers of mercenary and criminal organizations to Gloam. One of the city's more powerful groups, the Rising Fire Coalition, have set Gloam as their base of operations with incredible connections to illegal Washun goods.

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

CHROMATIC CREMATORIUM: Found inside of a temple devoted to Bastion there lies a crematorium within a sprawling glass chamber. The privileged throughout Vathis can pay large sums to have the remains of their loved ones shipped to the temple for a cost dependent on their faith. The fires here, eternally lit by flame elementals, are said to purify and cleanse the soul of any transgressions one committed throughout their life, allowing the deceased to be with their god in the afterlife. This is viewed by

many as a cheap and lowly away to achieve a desired afterlife, but those who can afford the service tend to hold a different view.

DEEP SOUND MINE: Deep Sound Mine was once a rich gold mine that fueled the majority of Aurezia's wealth during her height. The dwarves that once lived here dug too deep into the earth, and their tunnels filled with magma, forcing them to evacuate and leave behind vast quantities of gold.

VAETASKA: The fortification of Vaetaska was built secretly under the eyes of the Aurezian guard by the vae'rin found in the western regions of Asarus. During the Darkest War the Shattered Hand stormed the city, destroying it but not entirely sealing it away. Many think that the fiends were searching for something of great importance here.

GWOREVIEL GLADE: Gworeviel Glade is one of the first permanent inuzen cities. It remained on the Material Plane for centuries, but was later found abandoned during the Darkest War. The reason for this abandonment is unknown.

MOURNING: The city of Mourning was once a prevalent port city. It was the first Aurezian city attacked during the Darkest War. The inhabitants survived the attack, but they were transformed into beings that ceased communicating and began following their primal urges and instincts with animalistic tendencies.

LACHOSYS: Lachosys was once a fruitful and thriving Aurezian city. During the Darkest War communication with the city was lost, and once Aurezian forces were able to reach Lachosys, the entire city was gone—save for a lone airship tower.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

- The Rimelan is expanding into Fiduc, and the fort's inhabitants need help adjusting to the transition.
- A ship has been lost within the Straight of Despair and the party has been asked to rescue the crew.
- Tortured murdered corpses of followers of non-Astean faiths are being found all over Aurezia. Signs point to the Church of Astea as the murderers.
- The party has been falsely charged with heresy against the Church of Astea.
- A storm has been traveling between the Three Sisters, but it never makes landfall.
- The city of Nocturne has fallen under eternal night. The cause is unknown.
- Victims of the mourners of Mourning are turning into mourners themselves.
- Expected caravans traveling from Saneri to Sentinel Keep aren't arriving, and they are never heard from again.
- The lighthouse of Maroma, long since abandoned, is seen throwing off light once again. Passing ships speak of a lively city and lights at night, but during the day the city remains empty.





CYPRESS

“Beauty and freedom birth culture and progress.”

THEN AND NOW

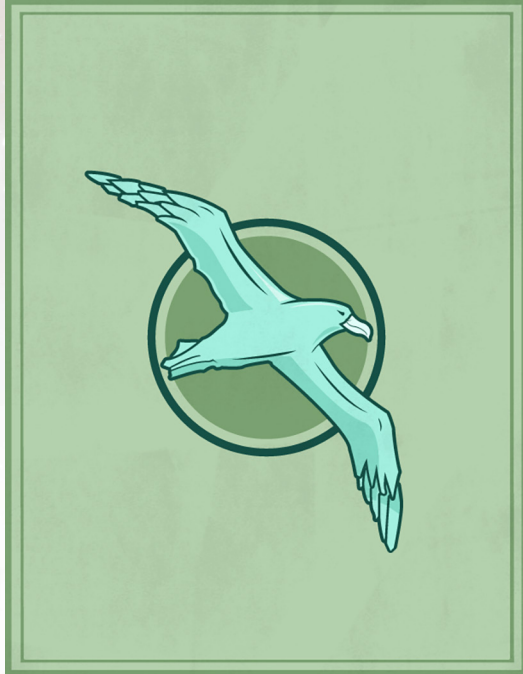
The Imperial Republic of Cypress prides itself on being a cornerstone of culture in a brutal world. The country's export of marble and other luxury goods have made the nation irreplaceable in the global trade market, and Cypress is on good diplomatic terms with most other nations, save Aurezia. Though political commitments protect Cypress from the possibility of invasion, the country is threatened by natural incursions, such as the spreading Rimelan to the north and the monster-infested Plains of Fear to the east. Cypress boasts a heavy tourist industry, and the nation is home to several globally important institutions such as Lurien Industries. The nation is warm and humid, and cities in Cypress are full of open-air structures and people walking about wearing light, flowing clothing. Cypress maintains the philosophy that the mighty cannot be upheld by the weak, and the nation does all it can to provide for its people. The supportive government has allowed the culture of Cypress to blossom without hindrance, and the country is home to a variety of professionals, farmers, artists, soldiers, politicians, and everything between.

At the time of the Legacy Wars the modern-day nation

of Cypress was a series of city-states under the rule of various Starcalled families. These city-states existed along the Cyprean Peninsula and cohabited peacefully for a time. Eventually, they were united by the Starcalled noble line of zi'Paoleus, a charismatic family who fashioned themselves royalty and rose to reign over the entire region. For hundreds of years they lived in their southern jungles in peace, until Kiren zi'Paoleus rose to Emperor. He began to expand into unclaimed territory nearby, establishing outposts and towns in the fertile plains beyond the warm forests. The expansion of Cypress angered and unnerved the minor nation of Aurezia to the north. Emperor Kiren, seeking control of the Sapphire Spire found in Aurezian territory, engaged the Aurezian fiefdom in combat. In his lust for control of the holy land he conquered and subsumed the lesser country with little loss of Cyprean life. To the surprise of many, Kiren was fair and just in the ordeal, and he allowed the Aurezian people to keep their autonomy so long as they paid taxes to Cypress and pledged fealty to his empire. The Emperor managed to secure the majority of the western seaboard of Asarus for the Cyprean Empire before his death, consuming the areas of Baripsis and Silitor in the decades following the conquering of Aurezia. At the end of his life the borders of Cyprean territory stretched to the Sentinel Mountains, a lifetime achievement still remembered to this day.

The son of Kiren, zi'Paoleus, found himself at odds with Sillirai's mainland forces over control of the Alaron





CYPRESS

“On Horizons of Prosperity”

COLORS: Turquoise, Green, White

BANNER: Albatross

POPULATION: 18,065,498

CAPITAL: Erealon

GOVERNMENT: Imperial Republic

LEADER(S): Jesnek Zi'Apheru, Emperor

LANGUAGES: Cypran, Vavalish, Sillarian, Isril, Leyarish

NOTABLE EXPORTS: Masonry, Spices, Vaedric technology, Wine

DEMONYM: Cyprean

LITERACY RATE: 94%

territory only two years after his father's death. This conflict came to be known as the First Jewel War, and though Cypress was victorious, it was the only Jewel War that Cypress became involved in. Although promised the Alaron people their freedom if they assisted the Cyprean soldiers in overthrowing the Sillarian armies, he did not grant Alaron the same autonomy that Baripsis, Silitor, and Aurezia enjoyed. The government of Cypress became bureaucratic and controlling under his expansionist leadership. Athuin was finally met with resistance when he marched upon Isild seeking control of Sentinel Keep, but his forces were held back for ten consecutive years by the hardened northern people. During Athuin's war-filled reign, his son, Oduall, sought to out-rule his father and earn his subjects respect. He found himself in a dangerous predicament with the expanding nation of Vavaire to the east, but he rose to the occasion and forced Cypress into the Borderland Wars over dominion of the territory. The fighting cost Cypress important necessities, such as manpower, gold, and provisions, and the ferocity of the clashes displaced the entire halfling race. Talk of revolt and revolution spread through the region like wildfire. The Cyprean territory of Aurezia took advantage of the political chaos and declared independence from Cypress, becoming their own nation once again. They liberated Silitor and Baripsis as well, bringing them into the Aurezian fold, which caused the Cyprean Empire to unravel at the seams. The soldiers of Cypress withdrew to their original holdings and the Borderland Wars came to a close with no real treaty signifying its end.

The zi'Paoleus family chose to abdicate the throne in the ensuing maelstrom of revolt, and for the next hundred years Cypress was ruled by a republic of elected officials. These officials focused on internal stability and chose to refrain from fighting in the never-ending conflicts to the north. Cypress remained neutral as Aurezia and Vavaire met on the battlefield, but came to regret

not supporting Aurezia, as it was quickly subsumed into the Vavai-ren Empire. The nation realized that yet another war was on the horizon, and it was one that Cypress could not win. Outright war between Vavaire and Cypress would crush the smaller nation. The council debated at length, but ultimately decided to willingly join Vavaire and negotiate the terms of their allegiance. To the relief of the average Cyprean people, the country was able to keep autonomous control over their land while pledging loyalty to Vavaire, an arrangement similar to the former accords held between Cypress and the territories of Silitor, Baripsis, and Aurezia. Cypress prospered under Vavai-ren rule.

When the heartland of Asarus broke out in international warfare Cypress was slow to become involved. Vavaire took up arms in the First Empire Wars alongside Washu, defending the island nation from hostile attacks originating from Tristan and her allies. Vavaire struggled against pirate blockades and poured armed might against Tristan, utilizing Cyprean legions at this time to augment their forces. The fighting stayed far from the average Cyprean citizen, but many lost loved ones in the chaotic battles along the Angylis Sea. The Cyprean people were devastated when Elessar was destroyed, but relieved when the war ended, welcoming home their soldiers with open arms. Cypress even earned their freedom from the First Empire Wars, despite little participation, as the Vavai-ren Empire was disbanded by the newly formed Council of Vathis. With their place on the Council secured, Cypress claimed independence once again. Life went back to normal for the southern people, but with one notable addition: the presence of the new global peacekeeping force named the Vathis Sentinels.

Cypress was besieged by hostility in the outbreak of the Second Empire Wars, following the corruption of Vavai-ren leadership and reveal of the Whiterose Experiments—the organized torture of Astrian worshippers. The Cyprean people fared well in



this conflict despite the global turmoil, but when the Second Empire Wars dissolved into the Darkest War and the Shattered Hand arrived, chaos ensued. Death and destruction ran rampant in the Varnoon Plains and Brontan Wood. With no Vavairen leadership to turn to, Cypress banded together in unity against the invading hordes of fiends under the leadership of Jesnek zi'Apheru, the brother-in-law of the Emperor of Vavaire, Aliskar zi'Stardragon. The rush of excitement and patriotism surrounding the newfound strength of the nation sustained Cypress, and the armies of the nation fought a long and bloody battle against the forces of the Shattered Hand. The defeat of the Aspect of the Vandiel Zenshir and the creation of the Rimelan near the end of the war halted most of the Shattered Hand's activity around Cypress, but the loss of Cyprean lives was great.

The nation remained independent and under the rule of Emperor Jesnek in the aftermath of the Darkest War. With the absence of Vavairen guidance and an enormous number of Vavairen refugees clamoring for food and shelter, Jesnek agreed to allow the displaced into his country, and he established widespread temporary housing measures for their benefit. Jesnek's hospitality and humanitarian efforts were extremely efficient in establishing political ties, and Cypress strategically forged a number of alliances among the nations who survived the Darkest War. Rancagesh and Erygis were particularly open to diplomacy, and soon Cyprean business tycoons were financing the harvest of untapped resources in the Rancan peninsula. To further communication with other countries and inspire foreign tourism, the Emperor and his advisors pushed for the international Essel Tournament to be held year-round. The idea of building a grand coliseum for the Essel Tournament was well-received, and arenas were built with haste.

The leaders of Cypress are currently focused on tending to the needs of citizens and fortifying borders against the expanding frozen tundra to the north. The resurgence of Vavaire has lifted a sizable burden from the country, as the majority of Vavairen refugees living in Cypress have returned to their homeland. With wealth in her coffers and no enemies besides monsters knocking at her gates, Cypress has been sending scouts and adventuring groups into the Rimelan in the hopes of finding its cause. None have been successful thus far. Due to the Rimelan to the north, the Plains of Fear to east, and the dangers in the deep Jungles of Kenestral to the south, Cypress is isolated and in need of support from allies, mainly in the form of manpower. Relations with the returned nation of Vavaire have been especially pleasant, and the two countries have drafted prosperous trade agreements and encourage freedom of movement between their citizens.

Cypress is known for capitalizing on new and emerging technology, such as the Essel Tournament and vaedric weaponry. Even though Essel Tournaments have taken root in most of the world's nations, the demand for live games allows Lurien Industries to bring waves of tourists to Cyprean shores. Those who are unable to attend the games listen to the announcers of the Bluewind Company, an organization which relays game updates in real time to the major metropolitan areas on Vathis. Cypress is also home to the manufacture of vaedricarms, and the new armaments have been widely adopted throughout the nation. As a result, Cypress has become something of an opens arms market. Although

the country has profited greatly from warriors and weapons, their presence attracts danger. The throng of people arriving on Cyprean soil bring with them the whispers of horrible threats and nefarious promises. Infiltrators, thieves, and opportunists have entered her gates hell-bent on destruction. The city guards and Cyprean military remain alert and on the lookout for danger, both internal and external, as Cypress marches on into a golden age of culture, industry, and diplomacy.

ECONOMICS AND INDUSTRY

Exports: Coffee, Luxury goods, Masonry, Spices, Thespian troupes, Vaedric technology, Wine

Imports: Eldria, Horses, Ice, Livestock, Ore, Raw materials, Salt, Ships, Textiles, Weapons and armor

Although Cypress lacks raw materials like ore and usable farmland, the nation makes up for it with a sturdy economy rooted in the export of masonry and luxury goods, such as rare spices and summer wines. Artists, masons, architects, jewelers, smiths, and gemstone cutters can be found hawking their art all across Cypress, and their wares are prized by noblemen everywhere. There are many plantations in the hot and humid nation, and the growth of herbs and spices is abundant. The high-quality wine from Cyprean vineyards is sought worldwide, and the newer export of coffee is quickly generating a dedicated following in cities from coast to coast.

Even though these luxury wares account for much of the nation's wealth, the most highly prized good found in Cypress is not from a plant or mineral deposit deep within the earth, but rather the vaedra eldria crystal. Highly sought after for its magical properties and explosive quality, it is widely used in weaponry, mining tools, and volatile sources of arcane power. Lurien Industries strictly controls the refinement and designation of the vaedric eldria to the benefit of Cypress, who boasts wonderful relations with the organization. The plains and jungles of the nation are often the proving ground for new technologies in various stages of testing, and citizens of the country find themselves able to purchase vaedric weapons and wares still unreleased in other nations. Cypress has prospered greatly from the hard work and fruitful nature of her land, and with such progress comes heights of both wealth and hazard alike.

The success of the Cyprean economy is fueled by the presence of a few specific organizations. The Enlightened Artisans, a coalition of prosperous merchants and producers from across the nation, use their status as a way of spreading Cyprean culture and architecture throughout the world. They own bases of operation located near prominent Cyprean wineries, quarries, and spice plantations. The Artisans also have vested interests in the wellbeing of Erygis and Rancagesh, who they wish to raise to power, if only to see the rewards of their alliances come to fruition. Even more integral than the Enlightened Artisans, however, is Lurien Industries. Due to Lurien Industries' ties to the use of eldria, they remain in close contact with those from CORE. In the pursuit of shared success, Cypress has partnered with Lurien Industries to expand the operations of the Essel Tournament, and now the nation actively runs a year-round contest in a variety of locations. Cypress is a



hotspot for would-be gladiators, combatants, and hardened teams searching for sponsorship to join the Essel Tournament.

The last of the notable companies in Cypress is the Harlequins of Athel, an extremely well-known theater group. Though many theater groups stay close to the nations they call home, the Harlequins of Athel possess multiple theater airships which allow them to perform anywhere. They journey across Vathis seeking to enrich the lives of common folk and noblemen alike. Some rumor that they have ulterior motives and seek to accomplish an unknown goal, but so far the rumors have proven unfounded. Their current hit play is "I Want to Be Your Unicorn".

CULTURE AND CLIMATE

Within the republic of Cypress there exists a traditional separation of city life and rural labor. Even so, the country focuses on creating professionals and educating individuals to a basic standard set forth by the government. This basic standard of learning ensures that the population of Cypress capitalizes on their skills and talents. The populace assists the republic to the best of their natural ability without illiteracy or ignorance holding back their efforts. The station in which a Cyprean is born is largely ignored by members of society, as Cypress sees increased social mobility both upward and downward through patronage, friendships, family, marriages, associations, and learned skills. It is not unusual for a lowly commoner talented in certain skill sets to be noticed by a patron and moved up through the social ladder at their behest.

There are three main regions in the country: the central Varnoon Plains, the Kenestral Jungles to the south, and the settlements in the north running along the banks of the river Manas. The cities located in the beautiful Varnoon Plains are composed of traditional buildings and outdoor affairs, and the area is home to a wide variety of plantations and wealthy estates. The cities of the Kenestral Jungles are expansive and entirely open-air, their structure allowing for the greenery of the jungle to meld with the distinctly Cyprean architecture. The riverlands along the Manas river are the coldest of the three regions, and located on the riverbanks are walled cities and fortifications which separate the nations from the ravaging Rimelan to the north. Citadels such as Heigm Castle once protected Cypress from the territorial conquest of the nations to the country's north, but they now focus on dispatching creatures headed towards Cypress from the Rimelan. The country's second largest stronghold, Tarth, is the sole shield protecting Cypress from the strangeness pouring westward from the Plains of Fear.

Cypress is a remarkable place of cultural openness and shared identity. The republic's early attention to creating public monuments and communal spaces such as forums, amphitheaters, gladiator arenas, and public baths served to foster a sense of shared Cyprean nationalism among her citizens. During Cypress' time as a member of the larger Vavairen Empire, the Cyprean people easily adopted Vavairen culture while strongly retaining their own. As such, Cypress is a multicultural center open to the introduction and adaptation of new and strange ideas. Citizens of this country are open-minded, refined, ambitious, and forward-thinking. They are always seeking new experiences and widening their views, and they mix well with races and societies different from their own. Regardless of station or status, Cyprean people across the coun-

try gather for the weekly Essel Tournament, which is utilized as a central meeting place. It is common for contracts, dealings, and agreements to be struck during tournament games. Cypress honors their history and war veterans with marble statues and monuments devoted to past emperors, generals, soldiers, and religious figures which can be found in the heart of the nation's public spaces. Cypress is extremely tolerant of other religions, and impressive structures devoted to the various Deities are built in her grandest districts, each trying to out-perform the others with sweeping architecture and shows of craftsmanship.

The southern Cyprean reaches within the Kenestral Jungles are thick and green with lush tropics and hot weather. The plains above the jungles are warm year-round with no trace of winter, but less humid and dangerous than the rainforests found below. The northern region of the country would normally be as warm as the plains, but the lingering effects of the expanding Rimelan continue to seep into Cypress, and now the seasons of the north change rapidly and rarely experience the warmth of the plains or jungles. It was once unusual for Heigm Castle to receive snowfall, but now it flurries in the area surrounding the Manas River six months out of the year. Cypress as a whole has always experienced a wide range of weather patterns due to the country's unique location and close proximity to areas of hazard. Occasionally, strange events originate from the Plains of Fear, the likes of which make the skies bleed red water and the winds smell flowery. Sometimes the republic even experiences devastating ether storms originating from the east.

A number of interesting and dangerous locations can be found within Cyprean borders. The Furcata Mountains, for example, hold significant meaning as the location where vaedric eldria was discovered. The Jungles of Kenestral are easily the most expansive jungles accessible to the citizens of Vathis, but tribes of giants infamous for being hostile to outsiders inhabit their dark depths. Cypress has a large stake in discovering the origin of the Rimelan and solving the mystery of its constant expansion. The nation would love nothing more than to undo its frigid effects and reclaim the rich plains to the north, but recent operations have only found deposits of rimesteel, with no further luck in gathering information regarding the expansion of the ice. The Tarth barrier and its city are Cypress' only real defense against the entities traveling westward from the Plains of Fear. Both the Cyprean military and the Dark Knights patrol in the area.

POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT

Jesnek zi'Apheru, a fifty-four-year-old human, is the current Emperor of Cypress. He is the brother-in-law of the late Emperor Aliskar of Vavaire, having married his sister Alexia zi'Stardragon in a political union shortly before the outbreak of the Second Empire Wars. Jesnek openly supported Aliskar through the majority of his reign until the truth of the Whiterose Experiments and Shattered Hand corruption came to light. Jesnek is personally involved in most of the republic's dealings and can often be found roaming the streets of major Cyprean cities speaking with the common folk and attending local gatherings. He personally backed Lurien Industries to work in conjunction with Legion for the further development of vaedric technology. Jesnek is a well-loved leader, and effigies



devoted to him and his rule can be found throughout Cypress. His face is on the entirety of the nation's coinage. Emperor Jesnek has a large extended family, and he has fathered many children with Alexia. His eldest son, Medion, is being groomed for leadership as heir apparent. He is known for his unwavering national pride. Though Jesnek supports the Vathis Sentinels, he does so primarily in word, and with the bare minimum of gold. He does not care for the airspace conflict, and would rather see Cypress a heaping ruin than ever submit to Aurezian rule.

The government of Cypress remains uninvolved in the day-to-day affairs of average citizens and allows them a variety of personal freedoms. Cypress is secretly sending merchants and powerful noblemen into developing nations to facilitate diplomacy and ultimately exploit the riches of their untapped resources. Erygis and Rancagesh in particular are under watch by the Cyprean government as rising powers, and many industrial operations within the two nations are being funded and spearheaded by secret Cyprean connections. Government agents also work in the shadows of other nations to undermine Aurezian influence in foreign sectors of the world. Operatives of Cypress are abundant within Washu, where they ally with the Vavairen and Trist to weaken Aurezia's hold on the subjugate island nation.

Cyprean lines of nobility are old and reach back into the Age of Legacy. A number of councilors, senators, and statesmen hail from these well-known bloodlines. Even so, it is not unusual for others to rise to power with the discovery of a Starcalling in the family. Nobility across the nation are looked to for guidance and protection, and the majority of Cyprean nobles believe it their responsibility to assist those whose families do not possess sigils. The Emperor himself has a coterie of Starcalled aiding him with direction of the republic. The Starcalled garner huge fan followings in Cypress, especially those who participate in the Essel Tournament. While status and wealth are a driving force in the nation, prosperity plays no role in the creation of nobility, and only Starcalled individuals can be bestowed nobility by the Emperor.

The government is divided into three ruling parties, each granted a number of votes used in national decision-making. The votes are combined to form the republic's Senate. The Emperor is a party unto himself, and he is allowed one hundred and one votes on any matter that comes into discussion. He is widely viewed as the supreme ruler of the nation, but this is not the case. The next vote goes to the Patricians, a ruling class of nobility and Starcalled individuals. There may only be one hundred Patrician families across all of Cypress, and they are typically the most influential families within the nation. Each family is granted one vote on the Senate, and they rule until dissolution or until their house falls from grace. When a spot among the Patrician opens they vote on a new family. Last but not least are the votes of the Republic. The Republic is composed of individuals from each city and town voted into power by the local populace. There may only be one hundred members of the Republic at any given time, and each city is granted a number of representatives based on their population. Together these three parties make the majority of the decisions for Cypress. The central internal government actually possesses little forward power, but they do control the military of the nation. The existence of the Senate ensures that the true power of the republic is held in the hands

of influential families and individuals who command the respect of their local populations.

Legal restrictions within Cypress are relatively straightforward. The nation follows a set of common-sense laws prohibiting murder, assault, and rape, which also upholds the legislation of the Vathis Accords. Cypress is primarily policed by the reserves of its professional military, who tend to be extremely honest and forthright. However, the personal guard of the nation is supplemented by one of the largest Vathis Sentinel presences in the known world. Many Sentinels willingly volunteer for station in Cypress, as they wish to experience the country's lavish amenities.

The military of Cypress is smaller than the forces of other nations, but its size can be attributed to a lack of conscriptions or drafts mandating participation. The armed forces of the Cyprean military are professionals who volunteer for ten years of active duty and five years of reserves. The force is divided into four major divisions. The first, the Garrison, is a subgroup composed of reserves acting as local police. These are what outsiders would know as the guard. The Army is another division, comprised entirely of Cyprean legions who protect the nation from outside threats. The republic's navy is held in high esteem, as Cypress owns an enormous fleet of warships. The last division of the military is the Skyfleet, an airship force with specially trained soldiers dedicated to protecting Cyprean skies. The military also possesses a secret organization known as Collusion, a group of vaedric-armed spies and infiltrators working to keep sensitive Cyprean information secret.

On the whole, Cypress boasts good international relations. The government acts as an intermediary between Tristan and Vavaire and has allied with both, in addition to Sillirai, in an effort to undermine Aurezian power and potentially restore Washu to its former glory. Cypress has close relations with Erygis, and friendly ties to Venoeh, Rancagesh, and Darastrix. The Cyprean government sends aid to Washu whenever possible and Jesnek speaks in support of the island when attending Council of Vathis meetings. However, the Cyprean people feel little to nothing for those from Leyathar, primarily due to the vast differences and lack of past interaction between the nations. They are wary of the Isril on account of conflicts long past, as the Cyprean faltered at the gates of Sentinel Keep. They are also cautious with Mythrayne, to whom they still owe for the construction of the Gilded Road within their borders. The Cyprean people reserve their bitterest enmity for the Oseptians, though, and like Sillirai they secretly free Oseptian slaves from the desert nation's systematic Inservitude.

RELIGION AND TRADITIONS

Religious worship is open and free within Cypress. Faiths with evil dogmas are frowned upon, but not outlawed, so long as they bring no bodily harm to others. Although the good Deities are as commonly worshipped here as they tend to be everywhere, Cypress pays special respect to neutral goddess Mileen, otherwise known as Lady Death, who shepherds souls into the afterlife and judges them accordingly. Her clerics have a revered place in Cyprean society. The goddess of fertility, Circe, also plays an important role in Cypress. Birth rates have always been high in this wealthy nation, and Cypress understands the importance of reproducing and



encouraging family life. Temples and churches devoted to good and neutral gods can be found throughout the republic, but monuments to evil religions are limited to small shrines in back-alleys and makeshift places of worship in the seedier parts of cities. The majority of statues in Cypress depict the Deities and folk heroes in epic poses of battle and glory.

The Imperial Republic of Cypress celebrates a variety of holidays both religious and ceremonial. On the largest holiday, the Laniri, Cyprean citizens rejoice with feasts, merrymaking, and Astea's standard of hanging colored lanterns. The republic also engages in an impressive remembrance festival at the same time, honoring one's ancestors, past heroes, important gods, and impressive men. This holiday focuses on the republic's rich history and cultural pride. The Cyprean people also take part in a yearly celebration held on the Emperor's birthday, currently Noble 13th, which is designated a national government day.

Remarkable locations draw the attention of international tourists and organizations to Cyprean shores. One of these locations is a holy site dedicated to the goddess Junon. Located in Erealon and known only as the Coliseum, it is a gladiator arena now used in conjunction with the Essel Tournament. A lesser-known tourist location is that of Leidnav, a city which possesses an oddly large number of sects of Vandiel cultists. Although the cultists are generally peaceful, their reason for gathering is currently unknown, and assumed to be nefarious in nature. Though some believe the mote of Callisto to be a non-sovereign territory, the Outlaw hangout is truly within Cyprean borders, and the mote possesses a holy site dedicated to Teiris called the Landing, which operates as a tavern and house of entertainment. Many of her faithful believe that the pillars in the tavern came from the ancient vessel she used to transport Astea to the Sapphire Spire. Bastion's greatest location of note within Cypress is the House of Solace, a mansion-sized inn dedicated to his teachings. He once lived at this location, and the local population have run the inn ever since. The House of Solace operates as a religious site, a place of rest, and a hospice. Bastion is also depicted in statue at the top of the Peak of Hope in Cypress, high in the Furcata Mountains. This statue can be seen all the way from Erealon.

INFLUENTIAL PARTIES

The Imperial Republic of Cypress is a member of the Council of Vathis, and her representatives take part in nearly every discussion brought to the table. The Emperor himself sometimes attends these meetings. The discovery of vaedra eldria within the nation brought CORE to Cypress in force, and the organization immediately built facilities in the mountains where vaedra is prevalent. CORE works closely with Lurien Industries to expand the influence of vaedric technology and develop the Essel Tournament, and their agreements benefit Cypress. Lurien Industries still refuses to give CORE direct access to their facilities, however.

The life of the Outlaw is highly frowned upon, as Outlaws contribute little to society. They pay no taxes and cannot be elected to the Republic. However, Outlaws flock to Cypress to participate in the Essel Tournament, bolstering the country with their numbers. A few Outlaw hangouts flourish in Cypress, but with the growing influx of tourists, it is clear that the government will need

to adapt to their presence and provide more amenities for the wilder visitors. A handful of pirate families within the One Hundred and Seventeen Sky Dragons clash with the national navy and Skyfleets frequently. These pirates hide on nearby archipelagos, where Vathis Sentinels are hesitant to tread.

PATRICIANS: Cypress is home to some of the oldest Starcalled families in the world, and their power and prestige stretch back to the days of the Legacy Wars. The nobility of the republic controls most of the nation's day-to-day direction, and they are the power behind many mercantile operations, industry sectors, and cultural centers. One notable exception is Lurien Industries, which has no official ties to any of the Patrician families. Above all else, the Patricians seek to consolidate their own respective power and remain influential and important in the eyes of the elite.

IMPERIAL FAMILY: The Imperial Family is a long-standing Cyprean tradition. At one point this family held sole control over the nation, but their power has since been parsed out to the Patricians and the Republicans. A good portion of Cyprean citizens view Emperor Jesnek as a god, and his influence is felt throughout the land. While votes may be split on paper, he possesses the wealth and respect to drive others in his favor, and with the births of his many sons and daughters he has solidified his lineage for generations to come. The full restoration of Cypress is Jesnek's one and only goal, but he also values his family name and raising his children to follow in his footsteps.

REPUBLICANS: The members of the Republic are constantly changing as new citizens are voted into seats of power left vacant by their predecessors. Their power fluctuates from member to member, as different people control different positions. They do not always see eye to eye, but they tend to vote in the interest of the common folk, guided by the will to do well for their country. They wish to see the people's voice be heard, but corruption is not unknown on the council. Occasionally the more ambitious Patricians will coerce members of the Republic to vote in their favor.

VATHIS SENTINELS: The Cyprean branch of the Vathis Sentinels is led by Cario zi'Zosimus. While the day-to-day operations of the Vathis Sentinels in Cypress are similar to the day-to-day operations of the Sentinels in other nations, the Cyprean branch provides additional airship support to the southern region of the republic prone to pirate activity. Cario longs to rid the nation of the One Hundred and Seventeen Sky Dragons, though this has proved a dauntless endeavor due to the sheer number of motes in the southern skies. Sky Dragons continue to operate in Cyprean ports, much to his dismay.

EYES OF VATHIS: Seia Vestorius is the head of operations for the Eyes of Vathis in the Cyprean region. Her agenda deals specifically with the Rimelan and the Plains of Fear. Seia wishes to fully understand the Rimelan's existence, and she sends many groups into the wilds to search for the unknown. She hopes that her research will lead to the discovery of why the Rimelan began expanding after six years in an unchanging state. Seia has a slight obsession with the creatures that come from the Plain of Horrors, and she has issued a bounty for any caught alive.

LURIEN INDUSTRIES: There is no organization in Cypress larger than Lurien Industries, which employs tens of thousands of



citizens within the Essel Tournament. Miloskro zi'Lurien has been the leader of the organization since the death of his father during the Darkest War. He wishes to further his family legacy and push the holdings of Lurien Industries to every known land in the world, expanding the Tournament along the way. His agents are always on the lookout for mining opportunities, and he offers a five thousand gold bounty on newly reported vaedra deposits. The rapid expansion of Lurien Industries over the past few decades garnered animosity from rival groups operating within Cypress, and enemies and spies are constantly trying to infiltrate the organization.

CORE: CORE operations within Cypress are typical, save for the handling of vaedra deposits. CORE works intimately with Lurien Industries in the refinement of raw vaedra. This global organization is extremely active in Cypress, running an well-known research facility out of Ginen. Unbeknownst to Lurien Industries, CORE is actively attempting to steal the details of vaedra processing, but they have so far been unsuccessful. CORE is actively involved in the Essel Tournament, sponsoring many teams and funding the construction of arenas.

COLLUSION: Collusion's existence is a well-kept state secret. Their militaristic work is spread throughout the entirety of the nation, and their primary function is espionage. Their members also work in anti-assassination to ensure the safety of important citizens. Their membership, attire, and methods are classified to everyone except for Emperor Jesnek, who dictates their operations. The security provided by Collusion is at the Emperor's sole discretion, and those watched by Collusion are typically unaware of their own protection.

NOTEKEEPER'S COLLEGE: Led by Nikolas Sarantos, the Notekeeper's College established the practice of officiating documentation and organizing bardic theater events. Important members of society tend to keep a bard on retainer as a common practice, which keeps the Notekeeper's College in business. This organization seeks only to gather information, train additional bards, and discover ancient musical pieces to use in their performances. They work intimately with the Harlequins of Athel and a variety of other Cyprean theater groups.

BLUEWIND COMPANY: All major cities in Cypress have at least one local Bluewind station, and the cities of Erealon and Lanzbei are home to many. The Bluewind Company of Cypress owns the country's largest newspaper. They are a globally trusted source of news, which is no small feat given the typical nationalist agenda of media. The organization works closely with Lurien Industries in the relay of live game updates from the Essel Tournaments through announcers. The Bluewind Company is led by Peter Chronis, a widely beloved man famous for once being a prominent newspaper magnate until his paper was bought out by the organization. Peter has been driving the Bluewinds into the hearts of the Cyprean populace ever since.

DARK KNIGHTS: Though the Dark Knights typically work as mercenaries for the elite families of Cypress, they have a personal reason to remain in the republic. Tarth is their primary base of operations within the Cyprean peninsula, and they use the area to keep a close eye on the Plains of Fear. The Cyprean branch of the Dark Knights is headed by Tantalus Karas, a local individual who joined the organization at the age of eleven. He has proven himself

to be both a decisive and effective leader, and he rarely allows the Dark Knights to work against past contracts within the nation, ensuring cohesion and trust between important Cyprean parties and the Dark Knights.

CHURCH OF THE CRYSTAL WATCHER: The Aurezian and Cyprean sects of the Church of the Crystal Watcher are similar, but two major differences set them apart. The Cyprean faithful claim to be closer to the promised land due to vaedra's initial discovery in the Furcata Mountains. The Watchers also believe that the ice and snow of the Rimelan will turn into the promised land as it expands southward. The Crystal Watcher sect in Cypress has no central leadership, but they can be found preaching on the streets. In recent years they've built a church in Heigm where they await the glorious expansion of the crystalline ice.

LEGION: Legion operates in Cypress as an organization guiding and supporting the nation's Starcalled. They remain in close contact with Lurien Industries, and the two organizations work in tandem for the further development of vaedric technology. Legion keeps a close eye on the experimentation taking place at both CORE and Lurien research facilities through the use of secret agents.

HOUSE OF SHADOW: The House of Shadow is a far-reaching group of thieves and infiltrators working within the nations located on the western coast. Whispers in darkened alleys and shadowmarks on the steps of homes are the only evidence of this group's existence. The Cyprean faction of the House of Shadow is said to be led by a figure known only as The Philosopher. Their activities in Cypress attempt to hinder CORE and Lurien Industries by strategically pitting the two groups against one another. The House of Shadows is currently attempting to infiltrate the two organizations in hopes of stealing their secrets and robbing them of precious and dangerous technology. They are known to blackmail members of the government close to lawmakers and influential people, and they foster illegal trade between civilian, Outlaw, and Sky Dragon markets.

EXPERIENCING CYPRESS

Travel within Cypress is relatively safe, so long as one remembers to stay out of the jungles. The republic is crisscrossed with well-maintained roads, and these roads are patrolled by professional and well-paid military reserve units. As such, corruption within the guard is small. Cypress is also home to a formidable Vathis Sentinel presence, but the Sentinels are typically stationed within Cyprean cities among the republic's gathered populace rather than out in the wilds. Caravans traveling through the nation's jungles and plains are careful and tend to make frequent stops at trade route inns. These sort of caravans are common, and typically attract an entourage. Another popular way of transporting people and goods within Cypress is airship travel. The majority of the nation's cities boast impressive airship docks, and the port cities of the republic are capable of handling an enormous number of seafaring and air-faring vessels.

The untamed wilderness beyond the republic's cities and roads, however, is extremely dangerous. From giants in the Kestral Jungles to ice beasts in the Rimelan to terrors in the Plains of Fear, danger lies on every side of Cypress. The nation's open-air design and integration of the natural world has attracted peril



to her southern cities in the form of wild beasts and mysterious beings originating from the dense, humid forests. These creatures attract dangerous expeditions and wealthy woodsmen to the area. Licenses are now required for hunting Cyprean game, and guided hunts are commonplace in the southern cities. Poachers who break the law are usually left alone in the jungle to fend for themselves with no weapons, rations, or tools. Another threat to the nation are the duergar in the Galaras Crags, who've been boldly poaching high quality iron from the region. Lurien Industries seeks a peaceful resolution, but tensions continue to rise as no resolution is found.

Cypress is accepting of outsiders and fast to integrate new cultures into the Cyprean fold. Outlaws are treated with judgmental views, as they usually cause trouble and contribute little to the nation. Outlaws tend to own their own hangouts in a fashion similar to Sky Dragons, and both groups are only allowed in particular establishments due to the brash nature of their trades. Traveling merchants and entrepreneurs are granted a great deal of respect. Money and ideas flow freely among the people of Cypress, and everyone is on constant lookout for the next big financial opportunity. Veterans of the Darkest War are considered heroes and are treated as such. Citizens of all nationalities can find a pleasant time in Cyprean cities, save for those who come preaching from Aurezia, as the zealotry of the Aurezians are looked down upon by the people of Cypress. Also viewed with disdain are those who disparage the Emperor, an action which often results in brawls or duels, and anyone who goes as far as to deface or defame a public image or piece of art finds themselves immediately brought to justice by the local populace.

Adventurers in Cypress are seen as both extremely useful and immensely profitable. Those capable of using arcane magic in particular are treated graciously, as Cypress has no native schools of magic besides a small Eldritch House located in Erealon, primarily due to their distance from Washu and lack of practical need for magic users. The city of Lanzbei provides access to the Rimelan and the Galaras Crags, making it the main base of operations for hired hands and travelers with a mission. Those seeking to try their hand at the Essel Tournament find themselves attracted to Erealon, the only city in the world with four separate coliseums and a nearly endless schedule of fights.

Traveling adventurers can find work with a number of organizations. The Eyes of Vathis utilize explorers for their expeditions to the dangerous areas outside of Cyprean cities, which are often quests to map the uncharted wilderness. Lurien Industries constantly seeks new members to join the global Hunt, an organized search for undiscovered beasts to utilize in the Essel Tournament. Those who decide to join the Hunt are granted a vaedricarm to defend themselves with while trekking beyond the safety of civilization. Members of the Hunt are typically allowed to keep this weapon as part of their reward for success, should they return from the jungles alive. Lurien Industries is also seeking people to investigate the newly discovered duergar problem in the Galaras Crags. The Notekeeper's College uses well-traveled adventurers to escort important bards to new areas, and to take them deep into ruins to experience the world and officiate its existence. Last but not least, the Patricians of Cypress employ adventurers to provide

a variety of services, hiring them as guards, thieves, and mercenaries alike. The Patricians are divided between one another in their never-ending lust for power, and endless wealth can be gained by playing the powerful families of Cypress against one another.

MAJOR SETTLEMENTS

EREALON

"The Sculpted Masterpiece of the South"

TYPE: Commercial Capital Port Metropolis

POPULATION: 723,840

LANGUAGES: Vavalish, Cypran, Aurish, Sillarian

VATHIS SENTINEL SCORE: 8

ECONOMY SCORE: 6

IMPORTS: Eldria, Ore, Weapons and armor

EXPORTS: Ships, Magic supplies, Vaedric technology

ORGANIZATIONS: Eldritch House, Imperial Family, Lurien Industries, Patricians, Republicans

RELIGION: Vath Pantheon; *Teiris, Circe, Astea.*

Erealon sits as the southernmost city in modern-day Cypress, a shining beacon of civilization in the wild southwest. The capital city is the largest in Cypress, as well as the most advanced. Architecture in Erealon is incredibly ornate and varied, as styles have changed throughout the years. Older buildings are renovated to improve structural integrity and reflect new trends in styling. The sprawling city is protected by sturdy stone walls that tower over the trees beyond, constructed ages ago for the sole purpose of protecting the Cyprean people from the dangers of the Jungles of Kenestral to the west. Erealon's large stone docks are elaborate and ornate structures which display ancient artisan talent while allowing ships safe moorings.

Many would consider life in Erealon to be a permanent vacation of sorts. The tropical temperature of the city has not yet been touched by the Rimelan as much of northern Cypress has. Between the Essel Tournament and the theater district the city is home to a lively entertainment industry, and recreation holds a key role in the day-to-day life of the citizens who call the capital home. Due to the large presence of Lurien Industries and the minor appearance of the Eldritch House, Erealon enjoys the luxuries of advanced magical goods and vaedric technologies. Their awe-inspiring applications are employed in nearly every aspect of Cyprean life. There is no such thing as an average occupation in Erealon, as everyone specializes in what they wish.

Erealon is home to the Emperor of Cypress, as well as the meeting place for the Senate and the Patricians. All political decisions that affect the empire as a whole are made here. Much of Erealon's wealth comes from the Essel Tournament and Lurien Industries, who've partnered to host the largest Tournament in the entire world. The Essel Arena boasts more seating than any other arena active today, and many consider it the most grandiose of the venues. Lurien Industries' vital role in orchestrating the Essel Tournament puts their organization at an important standing in Erealon, as does the manufacturing of their vaedric technology



within the city.

HEIGM CASTLE

"A Flame in the Cold"

TYPE: Large Border Stronghold

POPULATION: 238,607

LANGUAGES: Valalish, Aurish, Cypran, Isril

VATHIS SENTINEL SCORE: 3

ECONOMY SCORE: 2

IMPORTS: Food, Weapons and armor, Wood

EXPORTS: Ice

ORGANIZATIONS: Church of the Crystal Watcher, Eyes of Vathis

RELIGION: Vath Pantheon; *Teiris, Astea, Vangal.*

Heigm Castle sits on the northern border of Cypress. It is one of the last settlements one can reach traveling northward through the country before they happen upon the Rimelan. The city itself is nothing grand to behold, as it started as a lone keep built to be a trading post during the height of the Cyprean Empire. In modern times it stands as a defensive fortification against the creeping frozen tundra to the north, with the original keep on the northern end of the city and the rest of the settlement to the south. The northern walls of the city stand taller than any walls around, and they shield the city from the harsh winds and cold of the Rimelan.

Much of the city's daily life revolves around the Rimelan. Citizens are focused on staying warm, finding food, and growing what meager crops they can. Heigm Castle is an area of Cypress colder than one would expect, and the drastic change in climate in recent years has been devastating on the region's farmers. The castle now acts as a training ground for much of the standing Cyprean army. The harsh living conditions and wandering beasts from the north shape new recruits into hardened, experienced veterans.

While a noteworthy location in Cypress, Heigm Castle is actually one of the poorest cities in the republic. Due to its proximity to the Rimelan, wealthier families have all moved south to escape the cold and danger. Only the poor and a strong military presence remains. Heigm Castle is governed by the commander of the guard, General Matherus zi'Horeon, with other political leaders electing to live elsewhere in Cypress.

TARTH (Small Border Stronghold, 73,947)

"A Candle in the Darkness"

Tarth is a small stronghold located on the border of Cypress and the Plains of Fear. The Dark Knights hold a semi-permanent contract with Cypress to defend Tarth and the rest of the nation from any horrors that may originate from the Plains. Much of life in Tarth revolves around sustaining the Dark Knights and various defenses of the city. While Heigm Castle is a great military training ground, Tarth is where the elite warriors of Cypress are sent to test their mettle. Mothers across Cypress threaten their misbehaving children with phrases such as "be good, or I'll send you to Tarth to fight the monsters."

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

VARNOON PLAINS: The Varnoon Plains are a stretch of calm grassland interrupted only by jagged rocks jutting upward out of the ground. Halflings call the plains home. This area is thought to be a spiritual place, and those who revere nature and animals find a supernatural solace here.

HOARDER'S COVE: Hoarder's Cove comprises a large portion of Sythal, a Cyprean port city. An exceptionally diverse population lives near the docks, which boast an impressive market and tightly-knit residential community known as the Hive. Hoarder's Cove was established years ago by an influential, treasure-hoarding ship crew who landed in Sythal and decided to settle instead of continuing with their travels.

THE HIVE: Within the walls of Hoarder's Cove, dwellings have been carved out of rock to house the majority of the city's residents in a shape resembling a beehive. The majority of the lower abodes use ladders and stairways crafted from wood while the larger, secure, and more luxurious upper levels possess walkways deeply cut into the rock at set intervals.

THE FURCATA MOUNTAINS: The Furcata Mountains are a mountain range found in the center of Cypress. They divide the country horizontally and provide wealth and prosperity as the seat of Lurien Industry's vaedra refining effort.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

- A popular theater troupe has recently come through a small town. Coincidentally, the mayor's daughter has also gone missing.
- An artist is seeking hired hands to help him retrieve a stolen piece of art that may depict a dark secret.
- A terrifying creature has come forth from the Rimelan and was recently spotted near multiple towns, but no one has been able to track its movements or whereabouts.
- The Dark Knights are recruiting warriors to protect the Eastern Border of Cypress from some particularly hostile monsters originating from the Plains of Fear.
- A band of roaming beasts from Sinafey have moved north and taken up residence in the outskirts of civilization.
- Vaedra miners in a mining operation within the Furcata Mountains are trapped, and they need to be rescued.
- A new season of the Essel Tournament has begun: do you have what it takes to become the champion?
- A rich benefactor is hiring someone to break into a Lurien Industries facility and steal some sensitive documents.
- A philosopher is searching for an ancient text which will help him finish his life's work.
- A child, last seen heading into Hoarder's Cove, is now missing.
- A warrior is searching for a powerful ancient weapon wielded by the gladiators of old.
- Someone has stolen plans for Lurien Industries' new weapon design, and they are will stop at nothing until they see these plans returned.





DARASTRIX

"Most plummet, we soar."

THEN AND NOW

Darastrix is a mountainous nation recognized for its floating motes of land, abundant natural resources, and native population of vasar. The defensibility of the nation's motes and the strength of her people helped Darastrix survive the Darkest War, although the majority of the country's grounded holdings were abandoned when her people sought refuge in the safety of the sky. The citizens of Darastrix are generally good-natured, and the populace puts loyalty and honor before their own lives, choosing to live proudly and honorably under the leadership of a High Commander. Darastrix is known for unique religious values, a military of unparalleled strength, and strict, just laws, which call a large number of paladins to her ranks. There is a surprising number of artists and architects in the country, and they display their well-honed skills in the elegant design of the towns and cities located on floating motes. Darastrix possesses extensive open diplomacy with the nation of Vavaire, the result of a relationship fostered by the Vavairen cure of a Daras plague in earlier years. Imperialistic Tristan to the north has always harried Darastrix's borders, and tensions run high between the two. Darastrix exports large quantities of mercenaries, weapons, and salt. The better part of the republic's remaining land

is utilized as farmland to support the sizable population living on the motes above. Darastrix's current goals are to restore her war torn land holdings and recover lost settlements for the benefit of her citizens living in the skies.

Darastrix was initially settled by the vasar who came forth from the Frostfire Mountains at the end of the Age of Black Frost. The winged race were a naturally militaristic people, and so they banded together to ensure the safety of their kind. The country was eventually brought under official governance by the first High Commander, Eilatan Chrysophyliax, but soon began to fracture when individuals were Starcalled at the start of the Legacy Wars. The vasar managed to remain unified under the High Commander's leadership, and he channeled their focus and unease on protecting their people from the rising countries of humans to the south. During this time a war broke out between the vasar of Darastrix and the dwarves of Svartgrond over control of Winsor Valley. Darastrix pushed the dwarves out of the area within two years, and the country knew a brief and fleeting time of peace.

A new conflict came to pass in the form of a civil war between the Naugrins, Vangalites, and Serenites of Darastrix. This war, the War of the Darasgott, took place in the century following the end of the Legacy Wars. All three factions believed their respective deity to be the true patron god of the vasar. The Serenites from the Evernight attempted to wrest control of Darastrix from within, and for ten years the religious group attacked in small skirmishes and incursions. Eventually the Vangalites joined the fray





DARASTRIX

“On Wings of Valor”

COLORS: Green, Blue, Silver

BANNER: Silver Dragon Head

POPULATION: 7,635,844

CAPITAL: Lavei

GOVERNMENT: Democratic Stratocracy

LEADER(S): Kelseth zi'Askook, High Commander

LANGUAGES: Draconic, Vavalish, Isril, Trist

NOTABLE EXPORTS: Mercenaries, Salt, Weapons

DEMONYM: Daras

LITERACY RATE: 72%

in a desperate attempt to hold back the Serenites and broker peace, but their involvement only managed to further complicate the situation. Pooling their strength, the Serenites launched a full-scale attack in Darastrix, utilizing aid from the Evernight in the form of tens of thousands of vae'rin. The Vangalites and Naugrins combined their forces to move offensively against the vae'rin, and together the two religious factions pushed the dark elves back into the Evernight. Terrified of further undercover Serenite activity, the two factions continued to slaughter vae'rin and Serenites on sight for decades, and when the Serenite numbers grew slim the Sk-rachor Inquisitions began. This desperate hunt for worshippers of Serena was named in remembrance of the first Serenite settlement destroyed by the Naugrins and Vangalites. The war officially came to a close at the end of these Inquisitions, and the Naugrins far outnumbered both the Vangalites and Serenites. Naugrix was declared the nation's official deity in response. The Vangalites formed their own settlements outside of Daras territory in retaliation, beginning the nomadic movement which spread civilized vasar from coast to coast.

Following the holy war, Darastrix expanded northward to claim the rich mineral resources of the region. This expansion put them at odds with Korvach, and the Bloodscale Wars began as the two territories found themselves unable to reach an agreement regarding use of the land. At one point Darastrix came close to controlling the entire northern peninsula, but the vasar forces were eventually pushed back by the state of Tristan, Korvach's neighbor to the east. In response to the invasion of the north, the Trists constructed Ravnessgrad to prevent further vasar incursions. The vasar returned to their Daras motes, weary and weak, and in the chaotic aftermath of the Bloodscale Wars a plague erupted. Unable to quell the sickness on their own, the vasar turned to fellow fledgling nations for aid. It was the country's abundance of Starcalled

who saved the vasar from complete and utter ruination. Darastrix solidified an alliance with Vavaire in gratitude and willingly assimilated into the Vavairen Empire shortly after. The winged warriors of Darastrix were vital in assisting the nation of Vavaire with her fervid expansion, and together the nations moved into western territories such as the Borderlands.

Forty years passed, and the ruined city of Aldrvand came to life with the armies of a Rakshasa queen. This queen, known as Ziliahsa the Rotten, led forces of insectoids, duergar, and undead dwarves in an onslaught against Darastrix. The armies of Ziliahsa the Rotten moved from Aldrvand to Lavei, then turned to Winsor Valley, where they were ultimately struck down. Following the demise of the Rakshasa forces, the vasar were once again free to be utilized by the Vavairen military. The winged people were instrumental in assisting the Vavairen Empire in scouting and laying claim to Corsica Isle. Upon the island's settlement, Daras builders and architects constructed a series of impressive fortifications. Darastrix also assisted Vavaire by manning the frontlines in a war against Korvach, and the vasar were vital in the effort to retrieve Constantine Whiterose from her captors. With nations acquiring fleets of airships, organized travel to Daras motes became a reality. The new ships in the sky brought a number of much-needed resources to the nation, as well as substantial income, granting Darastrix a brief golden age of growth and prosperity.

The First Empire Wars broke out as the Evangeline, an Elish ship, sunk in the Angylis Sea under questionable circumstances. Darastrix immediately moved to support Vavaire, and the two nations willingly came to the aid of Washu, a nation besieged by others. For a short while Darastrix weathered the assaults. The vasar moved against Tristan in the advantageous chaos of warfare, seeking vengeance for past transgressions, but they ultimately lost a sizable amount of land to the formidable Trist assaults. Without



winged warriors to rely on, Vavaire found herself unable to field a proper air defense within the Angylis Sea. The airship pirates at the heart of the conflict ravaged Vavaire on all fronts, and Darastrix as well, though to a slightly lesser degree. At the end of the war Eles-sar was destroyed at the hands of Washun mages, and Vavaire and Darastrix lamented their loss. Many Daras warriors volunteered for the newly formed Vathis Sentinels in repentance, hoping to one day bring justice to their Sky Dragon enemies.

To the surprise of many, Daras leadership took a firm stance against the oppressive articles of the Zukiei Treaty. The High Commander believed the treaty to be too restricting upon the Washun, as the average citizen did nothing to deserve the overwhelming subjection being thrust upon their people. However, his qualms were ignored and the articles were established and ratified by the Council of Vathis in short time. In the years following the warfare Darastrix became a quick adapter of the industrialization of eldric technologies. Darastrix purchased a massive air fleet and imported multitudes of domestic eldric conveniences. The nation remained uninvolved in the international affairs, and focused on rebuilding destroyed Vavairen assets. Osept perceived their willingness to help Vavaire as a political slight, as the desert nation specifically requested for vasar aid in their battle against the goblinoid rebellions, but were completely ignored.

With tensions already high between Vavaire and Tristan, the Starfall Event plunged the world into another global conflict. The Daras High Commander backed the Vavairen military against stout Tristan threats, and the vasar warriors were key in securing early victories for the empire. However, when the systematic torture of Astrian worshippers called the Whiterose Experiments were revealed, Darastrix rallied in anger. With the Shattered Hand exposed shortly after, the High Commander immediately moved to cut ties with corrupt officials. Darastrix became a safe haven of honor and honesty, as the noir serving the Shattered Hand could very rarely take the form of a vasar convincingly due to lack of flight, a peculiar property which lives on in the race even to this day. The nation in the sky was thought to be safe from spying and infiltration. Even so, the Darkest War forced Darastrix to abandon their mainland holdings and retreat to the country's floating motes, which provided a safe staging ground for organized defense against the constant assault of flying fiends. Darastrix participated heavily in the secret activities of the organization Legion during this time. Fearing no other choice, the High Commander approved the use of a vaedric device created from Legion's research to gain an edge in the war. This device canceled the properties of a Daras floating mote known as Kruellia and dropped it on Monakxel, the Vandiel responsible for the bulk of the destruction in the nation. The ensuing death knell from the annihilation of Monakxel created the Ixen Caldera, an eternally burning region rife with everlasting smoke and flame.

The vasar of Darastrix experienced some of the highest casualty rates of the Darkest War on behalf of the enormous amount of Daras land lost and ceaseless deployments to battlefields across the world. In the aftermath of the brutal conflict the nation moved to recover their mainland holdings and reaffirm their place in the world. Darastrix opened their arms to Vavairen refugees, and the commanders of the nation assisted the homeless in adjusting to

the Daras way of life. They even provided transport and other resources to help the Vavairen homeless relocate to New Vavaire, if they so wished. The nation publicly backed New Vavaire's independence in the face of the Aurezian occupation, but they did not enforce their backing with steel, believing the world to have seen enough bloodshed already. Darastrix sent search and rescue parties into the ruined nation of Vavaire time and time again, an endeavor that proved fruitless. The High Commander established nationwide holidays in honor of the fallen heroes of the Darkest War, inciting nationalism, and he commissioned the building of enormous statues of vasar in a show of somber remembrance.

When Daras troops were sent to reclaim the country's northern territories they found themselves face-to-face with uncivilized tribes of barbarians. The barbarians forced the Daras soldiers to turn back and abandon hope of reclaiming old settlements and valuable trade routes. The lack of reliable roads caused the economy of Darastrix to suffer, as caravans were no longer able to move safely across the country, and only the greatest companies and merchants could afford to travel to the floating motes by airship. As new trade agreements were drafted in the post-war world, Darastrix ended up at odds with Cypress. Cypress decided to trade openly with Rancagesh, a country the Daras believed to be a mere puppet of others. The missing presence of the Vavairen Empire left the world in disarray, and Darastrix was not exempt to the ensuing chaos. Many refugees found it difficult to adjust to Daras culture, and the nation's suffering economy bred unease within their cities. Just when it seemed that all was lost, a light of good news pierced the creeping darkness. By the will of the goddess Astea, Vavaire could be returned. Though it took divine intervention and nothing short of miraculous actions at the hands of great heroes, the nation was freed from her self-imposed prison, and Vavaire joined the world once again.

With the return of Vavaire, the country of Darastrix has once again gained a reliable ally to the south. Vavaire's Gilded Road links the country to the east and west, and a flood of trade and tourism has found its way back into Darastrix. Many Vavairen refugees who sought safety with the vasar have traveled home, and took with them the economic burden shouldered by the Daras for years. The most shocking development of the great return, however, is the strengthening of magic and the reawakening of the dragons. Pockets of vasar have sworn allegiance to the dragons and turned their backs on Darastrix, choosing to venture out into the world to seek new masters. These radical groups loot areas of Darastrix and form bands of zealous adventurers. Even worse, remnants of the Shattered Hand from Drakostigat have moved south to command the rabble of barbarians to the north of the republic, creating a new and unwieldy threat in the region. The vasar still carry on with stout wind in their wings, ready to face the endless challenges of the post-war world. In these times it is evident that Darastrix has much to gain, but even more to lose.

ECONOMICS AND INDUSTRY

Exports: Coal, Drakes, Fish, Marble, Mercenaries, Salt, Weapons
Imports: Agriculture, Eldria, Livestock, Luxury goods, Spices, Tools



Darastrix possesses a distinct, proud culture, and the exports of the country reflect this notion admirably. The most notable of the Daras exports are the drakes native to the republic's lands, which are trained by vasar before being sold as mounts and guard animals. The imposing presence and natural skyborn ability of the drakes makes them useful to the elite of other nations, who travel from far and wide to purchase the animals. Darastrix also profits greatly off of the coal found within the Frostfire Mountains. The robust nature of the vasar make them excellent miners, and they've capitalized on their natural ability to excavate the earth by devising open pit mines accessible to only their kind, thanks to their ability to fly. Unsurprisingly, the country's unique culture and varied goods draws visitors to the hardened cities set atop the floating motes, and the tourism industry within Darastrix has seen sharp increases with the worldwide adoption of airships.

Immense quantities of salt in the Frostfire Mountains give Darastrix an advantage over her neighbors. The nation is able to preserve much of the fish and meats found in her lands, as well as sell and trade the excess with other countries. The Salt Lords of Darastrix are a structured group of merchants who now control the global salt trade, and they are overseen by Wyncastre zi'Pachwold, a vasar who supervises the organization from his headquarters located in Athearyesk. Another notable figure in Darastrix is Yelsha zi'Snorap, a world-renowned drake breeder. Her company, Darasmount, facilitates the majority of the country's drake breeding from the flying mote portion of Lavei. Yelsha is a firm supporter of the church of Vangal, and she donates a sizable sum of gold to the Vathis Sentinels annually for their continued protection. The Whirlwindhams organization facilitates tourism in Darastrix. Their agents provide transport to the floating Daras motes and offer structured guided tours to those who wish to see the world of the vasar, a picturesque sky-scape practically untouched by other races since the dawn of time.

CULTURE AND CLIMATE

The vasar of Darastrix tend to be honest, hardworking, and stern. While not distrusting of the world, they maintain a reserved outlook towards outsiders. They are an impassive bunch who take great pride in their way of life, and they are known for their extensive traditions and ancestral reverence. The vasar follow a strict social hierarchy, and to their kind, gods and important vasar are nearly synonymous.

Physical prowess and strength are prized attributes to those who live in Darastrix, vasar or otherwise, though intelligence is also valued highly. Body size lends to superiority in vasar society, and shows of strength and national pride are common aspects of everyday Daras life. There is a strong sense of brotherhood and community found on the floating motes: "We will fly or fall as one" is a common Daras saying. The inner culture of Darastrix is exclusive to vasar, but the winged people are not hostile to the other races who live among them, and those who have proven themselves to the vasar find a special honorary place in the society of the draconians.

The climate of Darastrix is wet and temperate. The nation experiences harsh winters on behalf of the weather systems moving south into the country from Drakostigat. The mountains

surrounding the area are known to be especially brutal in climate, and much of the nation's southeastern region is battered by eldric weather anomalies originating from the Shardlands. The heat of the Ixen Caldera has greatly altered the flora and fauna of the surrounding plains, and life within the area itself has long since died out or moved to greener pastures.

The Ixen Caldera is a peculiar location of international interest. The flaming crater is the result of the death knell of a Vandiel killed during the Darkest War; Monakxel was utterly annihilated when the vasar of Darastrix dropped a floating mote on him. Another location of importance to Darastrix is Winsor Valley, which is believed to be the birthplace of the race. Vasar claim that their ancestors weathered the Age of Black Frost within the valley, and they often scour the area for artifacts and proof of their claim. Winsor Valley is thought to be blessed by Naugrix and the other dragon gods, and both the vasar and dwarves claim the region as their ancestral territory. Perhaps the most unique feature of Darastrix are the republic's enigmatic floating motes. Strangely enough, no one can explain why the region is saturated with their presence. Floating motes from far away even come to rest in the skies of Darastrix, sometimes spending years in the Daras clouds before returning to their established paths. Their giant size and structural integrity allows the vasar to build cities atop them, and the abundance of water and raw materials found on the motes makes life in the skies easy, though no one can determine the source of these resources. Many mages have come to Darastrix to investigate the origin of the freshwater springs found on the motes, but all leave the nation bewildered.

POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT

The current ruler of Darastrix is High Commander Kelseth zi'Askook. He is a fifty-five-year-old vasar. Born a commoner, Kelseth joined the military as soon as he could. His skill and prowess earned him the respect of his people, and he was charged with the protection of the late High Commander Roslaris zi'Astelica as a part of the High Commander's guard. Kelseth was leading this elite guard by the age of thirty, a position he then held for many years. Former High Commander Roslaris was assassinated in an elaborate plot orchestrated by the Shattered Hand, and in the ensuing struggle against the hordes of fiends to the south Kelseth acted as Commander and made the nigh impossible decision to abandon all ground holdings. His quick thinking and decisive judgments saved the lives of innumerable vasar. His people moved to the motes above at his request, and they weathered the war by living solely in the skies. The noble families who survived the Darkest War decided to raise Kelseth zi'Askook to nobility, and he has been their High Commander ever since. Kelseth is known for his indomitable personality and ability to make tough decisions. He is a no-nonsense sort of fellow with a short fuse for frivolity. Kelseth is well-loved across Darastrix, and he is by far the loudest advocate for the Vathis Sentinels. Kelseth hates the Sky Dragons, as he considers them dishonorable, and he also hates the Trists for the same reason. He is known worldwide as the "Lonely Commander," because he has no wife, children, or family to speak of.

A great deal is publicly known about High Commander Kelseth zi'Askook, but he keeps a few secrets of his own. Kelseth's



hatred of dragons is one of these secrets. He has placed a secret bounty on the heads of all dragons in the area, believing their presence harmful and jarring to the fragile stability of the nation. Kelseth is constantly seeking those who would put dragon before Commander and God, and he furtively imprisons those who pose a threat to the stability of the country. Another secret of Kelseth's is his desire to raze Ravnessgrad to the ground. The fortified Trist city is the only obstacle standing in the way of northward Daras expansion, and Kelseth wishes to see the vasar's domain grow under his rule.

Nobility within Darastrix functions in a similar fashion to nobility in other nations in that nobles are traditionally prominent Starcalled families. Most of these families rose during the Darkest War, with only few remaining from the time before. Due to their direct involvement in the conflicts of the world, nearly all Starcalled vasar from before the Second Empire Wars have perished. Nobility is extremely involved in the military operations of the republic, and Daras Starcalled in particular feel it their national duty to put the protection of their homeland above all else. Nobility in Darastrix is often an earned status, and the honorific of zi' comes with a host of duties and responsibilities which can easily lead to one's death.

The government of Darastrix is a democratic stratocracy, which dictates that only members of the armed forces can maintain positions of power within the government. The nation is led by the High Commander who is surrounded by the Herrad, a group composed of military leaders from around the country. Policy changes are voted upon by the Herrad, but the High Commander retains the right to decide what ultimately passes as legislature and what does not. The Herrad appoints leadership throughout the nation's cities and territories to ensure the enforcement of the government's laws and policies. The direct actions of the government tend to be kept from public spotlight, and the average Daras citizens have little to no direct influence on the government.

Laws in Darastrix are relatively standard, with a few notable exceptions and inclusions. For one, the worship of dragons has been outright banned across the entire nation, and assisting the marauding beasts against commander and country has been labeled as treason. Also punished harshly is the removal, defacement, or mutilation of a vasar's wings. Anything done to hinder a vasar's ability to fly is viewed as one of the greatest offenses one can commit. Vasar without wings are looked down upon with pity and remorse, as the most defining feature of a vasar's identity is their wings. Defacing sacred Daras burial grounds such as Rossifiv and Myrkheim, the ice and salt tombs, is another crime harshly punished. The nation's support of the Vathis Sentinels lends to a decent Sentinel presence among the floating motes, and the standard laws set forth by the Vathis Accords are respected and followed with little hesitation throughout Daras lands.

All Daras citizens are trained in combat in during youth, granting the entire populace the ability to defend themselves or their country should the need arise. Once the youth comes of age they are inducted into the military, the Ternock, for a minimum period of two years. Due to the vasar's natural ability to fly, the Winged Warriors of Darastrix are a renowned and feared fighting force throughout the world. With the return of dragons threatening

the stability of the nation High Commander Kelseth has assembled a secret elite group of these Winged Warriors to serve as dragon hunters. Their main directive is to hunt down dragons in Darastrix and capture them for removal. It is a point of pride for these warriors to don dragon armor in their battles.

Darastrix maintains a number of both advantageous and difficult relations with other nations. Tristan and Darastrix have been at intermittent war for centuries, and the two have yet to truly reconcile. Darastrix also hates Osept with a passion, primarily for their slave trade and unregulated markets. They are wary of Venoch, as the Venocians are conniving and neutral in politics. Washu is treated with distrust for the nature of the tieflings and the atrocities committed during the First Empire Wars. The vasar fail to acknowledge Aurezia as a sovereign kingdom on account of Aurezia's complicated past with Vavaire, and they also deny the independent status of Rancagesh, who they believe to be young and unproven. On the opposite side of the coin, Erygis has proved themselves battle-worthy in the eyes of the Daras, as the prisoners of the colony rose to become a nation in their own right with little external support. Darastrix is currently on the road to repairing past ties with Mythrayne, and the dwarves and vasar and working to mend old wounds caused from millennia of warring over Winsor Valley. Despite their shared history of brutal conflicts, the vasar have a healthy respect for the dwarves. They experience disagreements on fundamental issues, but manage to be friendly in mixed company. Darastrix is friendly at best and indifferent at most with the kingdom of Sillirai. The vasar have great respect for the people of Isild for their shared values and warrior backgrounds. Cypress is seen by the Daras as a nation of once-hardened warriors gone soft and philosophical, but the vasar are boisterous supporters of the Essel Tournament.

RELIGION AND TRADITIONS

Darastrix acknowledges the existence of all of the Deities. Their primary gods are Naugrix, Vangal, Aleydra, and Serena. Naugrix is the ultimate head of the pantheon. The majority of the nation's populace reveres Naugrix and Vangal, with Serena and Aleydra seen as the lesser dragon gods. A sect of vae'rin Serenites have risen up from the Evernight in recent years, which is causing a great deal of strife and chaos in the nation. Also breeding religious confusion are the Vavairen refugees living in Daras who worship the Astrian pantheon, but the result of this religious clash remains to be seen, and to the joy of the government many of these refugees are returning to their homeland. Most Daras citizens are humble in regards to material possessions, but religion is one aspect of vasar life that tends towards the more extravagant and lavish. Daras temples contain intricate decorations and ornate treasures, and only rarely are outsiders allowed to see into their depths.

The largest holiday in Darastrix is the Munadagur, a day of memorial in which the nation acknowledges the many lives lost in the Darkest War. On this day the vasar remember the fall of the mote Kruellia, which slayed the Vandiel aspect of Monaxxel. The next important holiday is the Laniri. During the Laniri, the Daras hold a massive country-wide relay race. Each mote presents seven torchbearers determined throughout the year by various tournaments and contests, and the torchbearers of the motes bring their



colored flame to Lavei where a unification ceremony is held. A gargantuan torch is located at the center of this ceremony, in which all torchbearers bring their flames together to symbolize Daras unity. In addition to possessing special national holidays, Darastrix is known for the unique way in which they entomb their important dead. The corpses of vasar are brought to either the Frostfire Mountains or the Salt Mines, depending on the region, where their bodies are preserved forever in a complex system of tunnels. A noble could potentially visit their entire extended family perfectly preserved by the salt or ice. Vasar children are subject to a strange tradition in which they jump off the side of a mote to learn how to fly. The children believe this jump to be a fly or die situation, but in reality there are older vasar ready to catch them should they fail to spread their wings and soar.

There are a number of locations within Darastrix important to the nation's populace. Rossifsv, for one, is the name of the tunnels within the Frostfire Mountains where the country's nobility preserves their dead. The preservation sites located in the Salt Mines which serve the same purpose are known as Myrkheim. The torch used in the Laniri Ceremony is located in a ruined area of Lavei as part of a sacred memorial. This memorial is composed of statues depicting great battles and honored heroes from the Darkest War. The most notable of sites in Darastrix, however, is Winsor Valley, the place believed to be the origin of the vasar. This valley is forever frozen and unfathomably deep, with much of its depths still unexplored by the generations of dwarves and vasar who wander its frigid miles. Winsor Valley has been the site of endless conflict over the years. Another site, also believed to be blessed by a god, is a valley of mist located deep within the Etagra Wood known as "The Brood Veil". Only true followers of Serena can find the opening into the Evernight which is believed to lead one straight to The Wyrms Vault, Serena's holy site.

INFLUENTIAL PARTIES

Darastrix boasts close relationships with quite a few of the world's influential parties. The nation possesses an almost perfect relationship with the Vathis Sentinels, and the Daras view joining the Sentinels as a great honor. The number of Sentinel enlistments pouring from the country has actually become a problem for the Daras military, who rely heavily on volunteer membership apart from the short period of mandated Ternock service. Like the Sentinels, the Daras hate the Sky Dragons and everything they stand for. The majority of the Daras view the Outlaw lifestyle as dishonorable as well, though they do understand why Outlaws are necessary. Darastrix is known for having unexpectedly good relations with CORE, though the organization owns no refinement facilities within the republic. CORE is beloved for bringing inventions of convenience to the floating motes. The nation is a firm supporter of the Council of Vathis and one of the founding nations of the Council.

TERNOCK: The Ternock is the name of the organized military of Darastrix. Their leader is none other than the nation's High Commander, Kelseth zi'Askook. Nearly every Daras child is inducted into the military at the age of sixteen, barring special circumstances, where they serve their country for a mandated minimum of two years. Many of these children go on to become career soldiers in

the Ternock or move on to enlist in the Vathis Sentinels. The Ternock's current goals are what they've always been: to preserve the Daras way of life.

NAUGRINS: The Naugrins own military holdings throughout all of Darastrix. They are by far the country's largest religious group, and they act as the country's paramount faith. The Naugrins are currently focused on bringing the illegitimacy of the dragon worshippers to light. They also maintain their age-old efforts of growing their following, spreading the worship of Naugrix, and gathering riches for the creation and upkeep of ornate shrines and temples devoted to their god.

VANGALITES: The Vangalites are based out of the pure white dragonstone castle of Alabaster, which is located on the floating mote area of Lavei. Though Naugrix is the primary deity of the nation, Darastrix is still the worldwide seat of Vangal's power. Their religion is known for their militaristic protective order, the Scaled Shields. The current goal of this group is to secure lost Daras holdings throughout the region and continue to offer protection to those in need.

ALEYDRANS: The Aleydrans, the name of the collective worshippers of goddess Aleydra, handle the management of libraries and magical teachings within Darastrix. They serve as the historians of the country. Those who are gifted with a natural aptitude of magic are taken under the wing of the Aleydrans, who serve as teachers to those boasting the gifts of their goddess. The number of psionically talented individuals within Darastrix is rising as more and more Daras manifest abilities of the mind such as telepathy and telekinesis, and the Aleydrans have their hands full dealing with the unexpected psions. Many speculate as to why psionics is flourishing in the country, but a reason remains elusive.

SERENITES: The Serenites are an underground religious order who were pushed into the shadows of the Evernight in the early ages of Darastrix's history. The group survived through the ages in secret, but in recent years the organization has strategically placed a number of sleeper agents throughout the country in key positions. In almost all cases these the agents of Serena end up pushing for war, conquest, or some other form of chaos and destruction. Although Serena's worship is not prohibited within Darastrix, the Serenites remain a secretive organization in fear of public opposition. Their current goals are to guide Darastrix into what they view as a brighter future, by any means necessary.

VATHIS SENTINELS: The Vathis Sentinels use Darastrix as a main base of operations due to the country's central location on the continent. They also benefit from the nation's consistent, predictable climate. The Sentinels appreciate the vasar's willingness to join Sentinel ranks, and in recent years they've actually been banned from holding recruitment campaigns in Darastrix due to the sheer number of vasar volunteers they already receive. They use the country's floating motes as a vast holding for their airship fleets and staging ground for their campaigns against the Sky Dragons. The Sentinels know full and well that if they were to fail or come under attack by the Sky Dragons, the vasar of Darastrix would rush to their aid and ensure Sentinel victory.

CORE: The industrious organization CORE has little direct presence in Darastrix. They are forbidden from creating refinement facilities in the area, but they've established a number of contain-



ment facilities in the nation instead. Darastrix is forced to import eldria from surrounding countries. CORE possesses an impressive research facility in the Shardlands found to the country's southeast, which the organization uses as an outpost. Their researchers observe and study the area and ecology of the region.

CHURCH OF THE CRYSTAL WATCHER: This unusual Church is primarily spotted in Darastrix near the salt mines, as salt is a crystal, the symbol of the Watcher who they so dearly adore. Church members from outside of the region often travel through Darastrix on a pilgrimage to the Shardlands, which, like the salt mines, is viewed as being a manifestation of His Watchfulness. Members of the church have set up camps near the Daras containment sites created by CORE in an attempt to increase the presence of eldria in the nation, though their quest has been fruitless so far. While the government of Darastrix has been patient with members of this faith, their patience grows thin.

DARK KNIGHTS: The Dark Knights are viewed as an upstanding and reputable organization in the eyes Daras citizens. The vasar believe it an honor to serve as a Dark Knight, and the organization as a whole is seen as a daunting and respectable force. The Dark Knights travel to Darastrix as recruiters and mercenaries, and they can currently be found protecting the nation's northern reaches from incursions of fiends. The vasar sometimes join the Dark Knights, where they acclimate well and become highly valued members.

THE SALT LORDS: Working in the salt mines is a good way of bringing honor to ones family in Daras culture, although employment in the mines is not nearly as prestigious as employment within a warrior organization such as the Ternock or Vathis Sentinels. The organization solely mines salt, but leading parties of the group have been searching for alternative mineable materials in the hopes of growing and expanding their business internationally.

ELDRITCH HOUSE: The Eldritch House within Darastrix is represented by Dayakin zi'Ashtaille, a vasar sorceress native to Lavei. She heads the largest gemstone mining operation found in Darastrix called Diamond Eyes, which holds sway in settlements along the Frostfire Mountains. Half of the nation's rare gems come from the labors of her company. In Dayakin's spare time she assists the leadership of the Daras Eldritch House and trains intermediate mages at a small college in Lavei. She employs mercenary groups to guard her mines and protect her holdings from the marauding creatures of the mountains. Dayakin donates a portion of the materials mined by Diamond Eyes to the Eldritch House for use as material or craft components.

BLACK DRAGON SYNDICATE: The Daras branch of this criminal enterprise is called the Black Dragon Syndicate. They are led by the Ebonghost, a vasar mercenary leader who offers up his crew for jobs unbefitting of the Ternock. The Dragon Syndicate is present in nearly every Daras settlement. They double as a guild of infiltrators, thieves, and thugs. The branch is named after the Ebonghost himself, a towering hulk of black scales never seen in daylight.

EXPERIENCING DARASTRIX

Traveling in Darastrix is extremely difficult for the average person unless one possesses easy means of flight. The nation's largest cit-

ies rest on renowned floating motes, meaning that if one cannot fly, they require the aid of a vasar or access to an airship to reach the country's most popular destination spots. The Daras holdings on the ground are primarily cultivated farmland with no major cities or wonders to speak of. The overgrown earthen roads travel from farm to farm with little to see beyond ruins, ranches, and estates. The Whirlwindhams serve as hireable guides for tourists, and they escort travelers through the foreign landscape safely. Another good option for one traveling in Darastrix is to utilize the country's rivers, as they reliably connect to one another, and act as a predictable route to and from the ocean. One can also utilize the Gilded Road, which has held up quite well despite being abandoned.

Even though the nation is a considered a relatively safe place to travel, traversing the Daras expanse can be treacherous. The low frequency of foot traffic results in sweeps of territory unpatrolled by the Vathis Sentinels. Beasts and animals roam the overgrown roads freely without the imposing station of guards to deter their presence. The Scaled Shields act as volunteer protectors of the nation's common routes, and they often patrol the skies utilizing watchtowers and outposts built on low-flying motes. Dragons are a new concern to the world of Vathis regardless of one's nationality, but Darastrix sees more dragons flocking to their lands than any other country. Travelers also need to be weary of the local mountain ranges, as duergar are known to kidnap unprepared explorers who venture close to their territory. Those pulled into the heart of the mountains are never heard from again.

The vasar of Darastrix are wary of strangers, and they expect modesty and reservation within their borders. Tourists who visit the floating motes tend to feel honored and humbled by the vasar's intense way of life, and most visitors treat the people of Darastrix with respect and humility fit for a king. The Daras tolerate no disrespect, and those who would bring discord to the country are punished according to Daras law, which is notoriously just and uncorrupt.

The only races in Darastrix treated with outright distrust are the tieflings and noir on behalf of the tiefling's origins and noir's dark history and inherently furtive nature. The vasar also tend to look strangely at ildera, as they find themselves unable to relate to the sentient constructs. Although they once felt uneasy around the amari, the growing psionic talent in Darastrix has warmed the nation of vasar to the amari's natural abilities. Both the vasar and amari recognize Aleydra as an important goddess, and when together, they bond over shared religious values. When it comes to relations with organizations the citizens of Darastrix hate the Sky Dragons with an unbridled passion. They look down upon Outlaws and criminals, and they keep a close eye on suspicious characters traveling through their land. Those from Rancagesh are rarely allowed on floating motes, but when they are, the Rancan are expected to prove themselves worthy. The people of Darastrix view Rancagesh as a young and unproven nation whose citizens are weak and untested.

Darastrix views adventuring as a noble and brave lifestyle. It is not a career as highly revered as armed service, but it is not disrespected or frowned upon, either. The quest for glory is virtuous, and those who come back successful earn themselves and their family great prestige. Adventurers passing through Darastrix



find themselves treated with more regard than the tourists who come to simply experience the nation. A proven adventurer will be invited to common places of gathering where he will tell his stories to a crowded room of Daras listeners. These places of community assembly are often sporting halls, which are notably separate from taverns, unlike in other nations. The sporting halls exist solely to focus on the various physical athletics enjoyed by Daras society.

A number of influential parties are currently seeking hired help within Darastrix. The secretive division of the Ternock hunting dragons is more than willing to employ capable adventurers for their cause. The Church of the Crystal Watcher hires extensively throughout the region as well, seeking out those willing to aid the church in building encampments in the Shardlands and around CORE facilities. The Whirlwindhams employ accomplished explorers to ensure the safety of the land routes popular with tourists. Those who seek criminal affiliation find themselves being taken in by the Ebonghost, leader of the Black Dragon Syndicate, the nation's main criminal enterprise.

MAJOR SETTLEMENTS

LAVEI

"Tradition is Strength."

TYPE: Mountainside Capital

POPULATION: 510,206

LANGUAGES: Draconic, Vavalish

SENTINEL SCORE: 7

ECONOMY SCORE: 5

IMPORTS: Crops, Eldria, Eldric Technology, Meat, Salt

EXPORTS: Coal, Drakes, Marble, Minerals, Warriors

ORGANIZATIONS: CORE, Darasmount, Dark Knights, Eldritch House, Ternock, Vathis Sentinels

RELIGION: Vath Pantheon, Minor Astrian Pantheon

Lavei is seated on the western edge of Darastrix on the Frostfire Mountains. The city itself is primarily built into the mountainside, but a series of floating motes are tethered to Lavei by way of bridges and walkways. The city was first constructed at the mouth of the only tunnel that led to Winsor Valley, a vasar holy ground. It has since stood as the capital of the country and slowly grown as additional motes were added to the city over time. Lavei remained a stronghold during the Darkest War. Citizens here saw many battles, but their walls were never breached.

Life in Lavei is quintessentially average for the vasar. For those of other races, Lavei is a fantastical and exotic location saturated in Daras flavor. The military culture is especially strong in this city, as Lavei is the capital of Darastrix. While foreigners are always viewed as outsiders, the vasar community is trusting of one another and work together as a society to accomplish all aspects of everyday life. Alabaster Castle, Vangal's holy site, is located here. It serves as a bastion of protection and sacred place of worship for Lavei's people. Many attribute Lavei's survival of the Darkest War to the Vangalites and their patron god himself.

The capital of Darastrix is governed by High Commander

Kelseth zi'Askook, and when he is absent or needed elsewhere he designates this duty to a few specific members of his guard, the Ternock. Both the Vangalites and Naugrins are prevalent in Lavei due to its close proximity to Winsor Valley and the housing of the Alabaster Castle. The majority of the Ternock can be found here, and they use Lavei as their base of operations. Outside of groups and organizations specifically of Daras origins, the Vathis Sentinels have the largest holding in Lavei, manned primarily by members of their Air branch. Darasmount oversees drake breeding on a mote in Lavei. These drakes are one of the city's rarer exports. The bulk of Lavei's economy is rooted in the export of warriors the nation provides to the Vathis Sentinels and the rest of the world, and also in mining operations in the Frostfire Mountains.

FREASWEN

"We fly to new fortune."

TYPE: Coastal Mote City

POPULATION: 175,369

LANGUAGES: Draconic, Vavalish, Isril

VATHIS SENTINEL SCORE: 6

ECONOMY SCORE: 7

IMPORTS: Eldria, Eldric Technology, Heavy Industry, Lumber, Masonry, Manufactured Goods

EXPORTS: Fish, Jewelry, Pearls, Manufactured goods, Salt, Ships

ORGANIZATIONS: Black Dragon Syndicate, Church of the Crystal Watcher, CORE, Salt Lords, Vathis Sentinels

RELIGION: Vath Pantheon, Minor Astrian Pantheon

Freaswen is located on a stationary floating mote above the eastern shore of Darastrix. The city utilizes as much of the mote as it can, and also continues to expand vertically. This proves easy to do for the vasar, but other races struggle to get around the mote. This is intentional, as the lower and more accessible parts of Freaswen have become a trade and tourism driven area. Freaswen possesses a decently sized dock district that is located on the ground beneath the mote. Their position on shore makes the city a central trade hub for Darastrix. The city was first established as a lookout post during the Bloodscales War as a way for the vasar to spot ships on the Feyne Sea. It was after this war that the Salt Lords moved in and took advantage of the salt deposits around the city.

Life in Freaswen is divided. In the upper reaches of the city Daras culture prevails, and the vasar revel in high towers and structures unreachable by land. The lower parts of the city and docks feature a more modern and progressive outlook. The Salt Lords of Darastrix drive much of the economy in the city, and they've established all manner of marketplaces, hotels, and recreational activities to attract tourists and traders. This has created a vibrant and thriving life in the lower city where entertainment and trade dominate in a way they rarely do in typical vasar society.

The city of Freaswen is governed primarily by the Ternock, but they do not play a large role in the city's culture or day-to-day affairs. The majority of the buildings and businesses in Freaswen are owned by the Salt Lords, and most citizens are employed by the organization. The Salt Lords import everything and



anything imaginable and trade their signature good, salt, for a huge profit. The Salt Lords and Ternock have come to rely on the Vathis Sentinels to enforce the laws of this bustling tourist city, especially in the lower city, which tends to house as many outsiders as it does Daras. The hustle of the lower city has also opened up room for the Black Dragon Syndicate to grow and thrive. Many casinos and restaurants are fronts for Syndicate operations.

CHASIEN (Frontier Fortification City, 46,853)
"Our battle never ends."

Seated on the northern border of Darastrix, Chasien is one of the few cities in the nation primarily based on the ground. The fortification is populated heavily by members of the Dark Knights, Guardian Force, and 11th Hour, as Chasien is a major military fort that guards Darastrix from Shattered Hand remnants traveling southward. As one of the only grounded settlements in Darastrix, the rest of the nation relies heavily on Chasien's lumber and fur trades. Chasien's citizens have become master hunters and lumberjacks due to their proximity to the Promgir Woods.

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

MYRKHEIM: Myrkheim is an ancient vasar burial site located underground near the city of Svenar. While there are other burial grounds similar to Myrkheim in Darastrix, this is the largest and most well-known, frequently called "The Salt Tombs" by outsiders. These old salt mines have been converted to a system of tombs and crypts designated for the ancestors of the Daras. Myrkheim houses hundreds of families, and is considered an honorable burial ground for a vasar.

ROSSIFISV: Similar to Myrkheim, Rossifisv is a burial ground for families of vasar in Darastrix. Unlike the Salt Tombs, Rossifisv is reserved for the noble families and elite of Daras society. These burial grounds are found in the Frostfire Mountains on the western half of Darastrix under the strict guard of the Ternock. The icy tunnels preserve the bodies extremely well, allowing families to view their ancestors from generations prior.

IXEN CALDERA: The Ixen Caldera is a molten region south of Lavei. Fire, brimstone, and noxious gases fill the air, rendering the area uninhabitable. The caldera was formed during the Darkest War when the Daras people, utilizing a vaedric device, dropped the floating mote Kruellia on the Aspect of the Vandiel Monakxel.

WINSOR VALLEY: Winsor Valley is located deep within the Frostfire Mountains, somewhat west of Lavei. This valley is one of the holiest places to the church of Naugrix, and remains contested between the vasar and dwarves, who have recently taken up in Amorika Castle on the other side of the valley. The two races are working on mending old wounds, but this is a slow-going process. It is believed that the ancient city of Aurora, found beneath Winsor Valley, is the home of the vasar race.

AUSSIRDARA KEEP: Aussirdara Keep is located on the southern end of the Dragon's Claws. Once the largest land fortification

in Darastrix, it possesses two floating motes that circle the castle. It was also formerly considered the northern choke point of Darastrix, and has seen numerous battles and conflicts over the years.

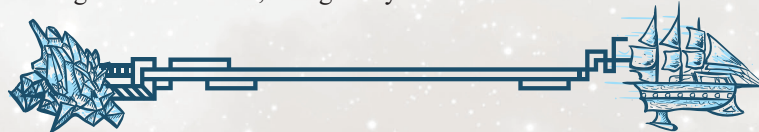
SILVER STONE MOUNTAINS: The Silver Stone Mountains are found along the southeastern border of Darastrix. They serve as the primary border separating Darastrix from the Shardlands. Unfortunately, eldria from the Shardlands is spreading through underground tunnels, and eldria-infested creatures are successfully making their way to Daras territory.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

- Molten vasar are coming forth from the Ixen Caldera and destroying farmland. They cannot be reasoned with.
- Someone is stealing drakes from the Darasmount pens.
- Eldrilyths are making their way into Darastrix from the Silver Stone Mountains.
- The Church of the Crystal Watcher is disturbing the tombs of Myrkheim.
- Serena's holy symbol is being graffitied all over the nation, with no known source.
- An unknown force is raiding and pillaging what little remains of Darastrix's coastal ports.
- Someone is hunting down recently awakened dragons and the Ternock is helping them.
- You stumble across a secret cabal worshipping dragons who beg you to not reveal them to the Ternock.



The Daras practice of breeding and selling drakes is a lucrative one. Where other nations and peoples possess horses and other mounts to travel on and ride into battle with, the vasar lacked a suitable equivalent. When Yelsha zi'Snorap's family business came into being, it changed the vasar way of warfare forever. Now the vasar can travel faster and for much longer without the fatigue that comes with flying on their own. The winged beasts are not only a boon for their ability to soar through the skies, but they can fight as fiercely as their riders, and are intelligent enough to communicate. The zi'Snoraps began capturing and breeding the drakes several generations ago, and though drakes found in the wilds of the world can be unruly, destructive, and exceedingly defiant, they raise them with care and discipline that produces mounts suitable for the most noble of knights. The drakes reared by Darasmount are intelligent and proud, like the vasar who ride them, but are trained to work together with their riders. When purchasing one, vasar spend time alone with an individual drake to determine if they have good chemistry. Drakes are viewed as friends, allies, and distant cousins of the vasar, believed to be descended from dragons all the same, though they are less advanced than vasar.





ERYGIS

“A face from every nation, a key to every door.”

THEN AND NOW

Erygis was originally founded as a penal colony which became a frontier haven for outcasts and adventurous peoples. The nation's motto, “From Ashes, a Phoenix,” rings true. Built on the foundation of old dwarven structures from ages dim and distant, the resident clans of Erygis had an easy time securing the countryside. After centuries of colonization, the joining of clans, and the welcoming of fellow outcasts from neighboring countries, Erygis began a lengthy rise to power. The country is situated on the Angylis Sea between three major nations, putting Erygis in an advantageous position to act as an invaluable trade hub. The nation experiences a wide variety of climates which provides the means to cultivate unique goods unfound in other areas. Erygis boasts massive crops of wheat, cotton, and spices. Marble and precious metals are abundant in the earth, and world-renowned wines are grown from Erygan vineyards. Erygis is a nation extremely tolerant of the world's various religions, occupations, and races. For instance, Erygan cities contain the largest population of orcs and their hybrid counterparts outside of Rancagesh, and they remain one of the rancar's strongest backers in their campaign for

international acceptance. Whispers of dark dealings in Erygis ring throughout the world, but these rumors are only partially true. Sky Dragon pirates, the Dragon Syndicate, and the few remaining Free Companies and Outlaws make frequent use of the country's ports and underground tunnel systems. Mercenary groups in Erygis are typically found protecting the trade routes running between Osept, Mythrayne, and Washu, and the country's local guards are preoccupied with the oversight of mining and lumber operations within the Bloodscorched Vale.

The nation Erygis began as a penal colony under the strict control of the Vavairen Empire. This colony was composed of both truly dangerous prisoners and political hostages, housed together and policed by the Antares Templar in present-day Kamtyrow. Many of the prisoners in Kamtyrow allied with one another for mutual benefit. They worked in tandem to create suitable living arrangements built on the old foundations of former dwarven construction and Elish travel sites. These alliances solidified friendships, and prisoner clans formed among the inmates imprisoned in different areas. The clans struck out areas of influence across Kamtyrow and founded their unique homesteads. One such clan rose as the primary force in Kamtyrow. This clan, the Jassynder Clan, domesticated strange and unusual creatures unique to the area. They also organized the trade of sugars, oil, and other various industries found in present-day northwest Erygis.

The clans in the prison colony separated even further to





ERYGIS

“From Ashes, a Phoenix”

COLORS: White, Red, Gold

BANNER: Phoenix

POPULATION: 13,003,351

CAPITAL: Kamtyrow

GOVERNMENT: Federal Democratic Oligarchy

LEADER(S): Eska zi’Jassynder, Heshpat zi’Fralmana, Alpheus zi’Gamut

LANGUAGES: Vavalish, Rancar, Oseptian, Elrish, Washun

NOTABLE EXPORTS: Aquatic leather, Cotton, Fish, Grain, Minerals, Oil, Spices, Sugar, Tobacco

DEMONYM: Erygan

LITERACY RATE: 89%

stick with those of their own heritage. The prisoners of Vavairen, Elish, and Cyprean origin banded their communities together and settled into groups representative of the beloved societies they were forced to leave behind. At this point even Trist and Washun prisoners were being sent to Erygis. The faiths of Zanon, Bastion, and Circe spread rapidly among the inmates as the variety of cultures melded into one cohesive populace. This religious worship served to unite the clans, and churches and places of devotion dedicated to these gods still continue to exude a compelling influence over Erygis to this day. As the colony grew, the prisoners settled and acclimated. Eventually a group of clans secretly broke off into present-day Ninnult with the assistance of the fledgling Sky Dragons. Some members of the clans even joined the wild airship pirates for protection and escape from their prison sentence. The Antares Templar decided it would be unwise to instigate a conflict or raise an issue with the formidable skyfaring group, so Ninnult stayed undisturbed, and the Templar’s militant grip on the territory loosened.

The outbreak of the First Empire Wars unnerved the prisoners of Erygis. With battles of unprecedented strength taking place in most surrounding countries, additional prisoners of war were haphazardly left in the region, particularly those from Washu and Tristan, who bore the brunt of the aggression. The conflict ended with the complete destruction of the nation Elessar, and an influx of Elish refugees fled to Kamtyrow. With their homeland destroyed, these refugees sought solace and safety among the clans of prisoners. Their presence among the inmates became a hotly debated issue, and the rising tensions and inflated numbers led to the colony’s inevitable revolt against their sworn guards, the Antares Templar. This revolt paved the way for the establishment of Erygis as a nation.

By Council decree the newly-established Vathis Sentinels

moved in to the region to take control of Kamtyrow from the Antares Templar. As the Sentinels ferried towards the prison the revolt against the confines of the colony began, but ended almost immediately, as the Antares Templar willingly stepped down as the wardens of Kamtyrow. They considered themselves to be released from their sworn oaths the moment the agreement with the Vathis Sentinels was signed, so they possessed no contractual reason to wait for the Sentinels and risk their own lives subduing the rebelling colonists. The prisoners of Kamtyrow seized their newfound freedom, and the Vathis Sentinels found themselves unable to gain a foothold in the region. The colonists moved towards centralizing the region’s government with a three-party democratic system, with the provinces of Sinusut, Ninnulut, and Unerraut becoming the basis of the three entities. The provincial leaders decided to name their new nation-state Erygis, and its early years were spent formalizing a system of governance, establishing infrastructure, and initiating diplomatic relations with other countries. Cypress, Isild, Sillirai, Vavaire, and Venoch pushed the Council of Vathis to recognize Erygis as an official nation, and within a few years Erygis was granted a seat on the renowned Council of Vathis and recognized as a sovereign country. Erygis continued to seek advantageous diplomatic relations with many of the nations who assisted their liberation efforts, but official relations were never opened with Osept or Washu out of disdain for their actions toward Elessar during the First Empire Wars.

Inspired by the story of Erygis and desperate for freedom, the races enslaved within the nation of Osept began planning their revolt. Erygis assisted the slaves by utilizing Venocian smuggling routes to send the revolutionaries arms, armor, and supplies. Those who successfully left Osept sought refuge in the southern jungles in a nation soon to be called Rancagesh. With international aid, the struggling slaves managed to overthrow their oppressors, much



like the prisoners of Erygis did, and the fledgling nations of Rancagesh and Erygis immediately allied in a show of solidarity. Soon after, Vavaire beat back the Sky Dragon presence in the Angylis Sea, which brought new prosperity and peace to the region. When Emperor Jaris of Vavaire died he was succeeded by his power hungry half-Oseptian son, Aliskar. Emperor Aliskar swiftly moved to reopen relations with Osept, and this rash decision soured diplomacy between Erygis and Vavaire. As Emperor Aliskar rounded up Astrian worshippers in the area for secretive experimentation, Erygis opened its borders to fleeing refugees.

Erygis came under blockade by hundreds of Vavaien ships when Emperor Aliskar allowed Osept to move into Rancan territory with hostile intentions. Erygis sent aid to the fledgling country. The former slaves were also secretly supported by Venoch, who smuggled resources to the Rancan armies. Vavaire sank a number of these Venocian merchant vessels in a string of vicious attacks. In light of Vavaire's rapid expansion and reckless anger, Aurezia, Erygis, Mythrayne, Rancagesh, and Venoch entered a military alliance for control. This alliance became known as the Federation, and Esold Jassynder of Erygis wed a Venocian elven noble to solidify the alliance. Feeling intimidated by the strong partnerships on the mainland, Washu struck out against Erygis, initiating a series of long, drawn-out battles. As the Second Empire Wars officially broke out among the various countries of Vathis, Erygis helped their allies in the Federation lend-lease Tristan to bear the full brunt of the Vavaien army. With Tristan occupied to the north, Venoch was able to send ships to help defend Erygis from the island-based Washun assaults. The Erygan were able to push the Washun from their territory, and the Rancan forces withdrew to Uhust. Osept pulled out of Erygan territory completely, as they feared retaliation by the combined might of the Federation.

It soon came to light that fiendish agents of the Shattered Hand were poisoning the minds of important Vavaien advisors. The world suddenly faced a united army of extraplanar evils serving a common goal: the complete and utter destruction of Vathis. Monakxel, the Lich Vandiel Lord, took up residence in the fallen remains of Elessar and began to mount contingents of undead soldiers, who marched against Erygis and Mythrayne. Erygis lost much of its northern reaches during the Vandiel's assaults, and the nation's armies fell back to Iverness Keep. It was then that a massive dwarven force from beneath Sefrefate rose to the surface and helped fight back Monakxel's forces, much to the relief of Erygan officials. The dwarven aid prevented Sefrefate's destruction and turned the tide of battle in Erygis for quite some time. It was revealed that the dwarves had been in contact with the Sinusut ruling family for years, and it was the Sinusut clan who gave them the resources to return to the surface and reunite with the dwarven nation Mythrayne. The exchange of aid and show of solidarity strengthened ties between the two countries.

When the city of Synethil arrived on the Material Plane Erygis gained a significant advantage over Monakxel. With the help of the Vibrant-touched ele'rin mages, the two nations were able to glean large amounts of information regarding the Vandiel's use of the native shadow influence in fallen Elessar. This, in turn, allowed Erygis to utilize their newfound mages to push back Monakxel's forces with the help of the Mythrene. The fiendish armies

of the Shattered Hand roaming the open countryside were not the Erygan's only enemy during this time, however. Amidst the turmoil of the Darkest War the territory of Ninnult was ransacked by the Gold Dragon Syndicate. Monakxel then moved onward to Darastrix, where he was eventually destroyed by the vassar. The whole world breathed a sigh of relief, Erygis included, but this reprieve was unfortunately short-lived, as the waves of fiends kept coming and did not stop until the war's end.

In the aftermath of the Darkest War political strain between Osept and Washu lessened, due in large part to the expanse of unclaimed territory now existing between their nations. Erygis weathered the war poorly on behalf of Monakxel's occupation of the northern Erygan territories, the majority of which were completely lost. The influence of the Gloom within Elessar is now spreading south towards Erygis, and though the cause is unknown, it is expected to be the work of Monakxel. Left unchecked, this could ruin what little remains of Erygis' northern reaches and destroy much of the country's fertile land. The organization Serenity has moved into Erygis in force, as the marauding undead of The Harrows continue to pose a threat, and what lies within the heart of fallen Elessar remains a grave mystery.

Erygis is currently involved in a number of complicated affairs. Heshpat, the leader of the Ninnulut province, has founded a concentrated movement dedicated to eradicating the Dragon Syndicate presence in his territory. This movement is making his populace uneasy and fearful, but complications of the campaign are so far minimal. Alpheus, the leader of Unerraut, is actively welcoming CORE into his province. The organization is constructing facilities close to the Bloodscorched Vale in exchange for local employment opportunities and lesser taxation. These relations appear beneficial for Erygis, but some are wary of CORE, and the other two provincial leaders have expressed their concern that the alliance between Unerraut and CORE could spell trouble for their people.

In the years following the Darkest War the undead in the north have become a nuisance, as they wander freely and leave a trail of despair and terror in their wake. The lizardfolk and naga located in the wilds of eastern Erygis are following and worshipping the few dragons returned to the sky, declaring the winged beasts the promised rulers they've been praying for. One group of naga from the east, united under the flag of Golgossa and served by lizardfolk, continues to actively raid the east in search of something specific. No one seems to know what they are seeking. The largest threat to the nation, however, is the three-party system currently ruling Erygis. This government is faltering from within, and several parties have their eyes set on the Erygan bounty. All three provinces long to rule supreme, and the other nations play the three Erygan leaders against one another, pushing the country oh-so-gently in the direction of civil war.

ECONOMICS AND INDUSTRY

Exports: Aquatic leather, Cotton, Fish, Grain, Minerals, Oil, Spices, Sugar, Tobacco

Imports: Eldria, Lumber, Ore, Textiles

Erygis is a nation situated upon natural wellsprings of oil, sugar,



and tobacco. The industries of fur trapping and animal husbandry flourish in the country on behalf of the abundant wildlife found in the Erygan wilderness. The Unerraa Forest area in particular is well-known for containing a wealth of varied creatures. Ninnult and Sinusur boast large fish markets and a live fish trade. Carp, anchovy, tuna, shark, and squid are common in the region. One aquatic trade item found specially in Erygis is leather made from the skins of sharks and rays. With the lack of legal Washun trade offering these products to the world, Erygis is tapping into their markets and filling the void left by the exotic island nation. Emphil, a city close to the mountains, is a source of minerals in Erygis. The Bloodscorched Vale is an area rife with untapped resources like rare plants, herbs, and strange creatures, but traveling within the Vale is dangerous due to its native naga and lizardfolk populations. Squads of young mercenaries frequently venture into the Bloodscorched Vale to collect on unclaimed bounties never to be heard from again.

In addition to the Free Companies found in Erygis, the nation houses a few local organizations of their own. The Hydering Union, fronted by Mirala zi'Berrdeet, is the country's main exporter of sugar, oil, and tobacco, and an importer of significant quantities of lumber and vaedric technology. This company boasts close ties to Lurien Industries and the nation of Cypress itself. Another influential local group is the Brazen Boars, who are a business brotherhood centered in Erygis who trace their origins several centuries back to high nobility from fallen Elessar. They are based out of Tasdec, and the group dabbles in animal trapping, furs, animal husbandry, and fine textiles. The Brazen Boars are also known to outfit and sponsor some of the best Erygan gladiators to participate in the Essel Tournament.

CULTURE AND CLIMATE

The people of Erygis tend to be relaxed and easygoing. The nation was founded on the belief that all sentient peoples have the right to live among each other if they so wish, and this freedom is felt from province to province. The openness of Erygis tends is frequently a matter of contention with the nation's neighbors, but the Erygan shrug off their criticism with a smile. Erygis is viewed as a melting pot of villains and criminals to those who do not warmly welcome the races of Rancagesh, the tieflings of Washu, or those who worship questionable gods, but this highlights just how progressive the former prison colony truly is. Erygan citizens are patriotic and extremely loyal to their province. They believe that their progressive views bolster harmony in the workforce and make their country more productive than other nations, and therefore, more advanced.

Erygis is a young country composed of displaced people hailing from starkly different backgrounds. The country's culture is not a unique entity but rather a blend of international components, having adopted a sizable portion of the cultures of neighboring nations when their prisoners and immigrants settled in Erygis. Much of the nation's current population immigrated to Erygis from Elessar, and Elish architectural features can often be found in cities with high Elish-Erygan populations. The rancar, often unwelcome in neighboring countries, are encouraged to come to Erygis and practice their beliefs with others of their kind. Solely Erygan, however, is the country's accommodation of a thriving nightlife.

Located in a sweltering region of Asarus, the Erygan try to avoid running errands in the daytime unless absolutely necessary. This results in bustling populations emerging from their homes when the sun begins to set. Also attributing to the Erygan nightlife is the presence of wandering nocturnal beasts, which force the nation's populace to remain vigilant and active well into the evening lest they be taken unaware. Those who protect and serve the country spend a large portion of time doing so in the evening and after dark, with whole families structuring their daily schedules around the nightly workers of the family.

The climate range of Erygis is almost as diverse as her people, ranging from tropical in the southeast and along the coastline to semi-arid and dry in the lands bordering the Nashendasorn Desert. Erygis is comprised of flat land and plateaus with the presence of occasional valleys and a few considerable mountains. The great forest in the center of the country is the primary source of the nation's lumber, including the valuable darkwood prized by the Erygans. The vast spread of territory in the north and northeast was once tamed, but beasts and fiends moved into the area during the tumultuous outbreak of the Darkest War. The remaining settled land in this region is utilized for the cultivation of agriculture, while the beaches along the southern borders are renowned for prosperous fishing.

POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT

The government of Erygis is a three-party democratic system possessing a ruler dedicated to each of the three provinces. These provinces come together to make decisions for the entirety of the nation. Despite being one cohesive unit in theory, these provinces sometimes act independently of one another, and each of the three provincial rulers actively chase their own agendas. With starkly differing ideals, the three rulers of Erygis represent a myriad of beliefs. Eska zi'Jassynder acts as the elected leader of the three provinces, sits on the Council of Vathis, and generally keeps the nation from dissolving into a state of civil war.

Eska is a one-hundred-sixty-year-old female elf native to Venoch, and the ruler of the country's northwestern province, Sinusut. Eska married into the Jassynder family in the year 3751. Eska's late husband, Esold the Black, was a celebrated Erygan leader and renowned war hero. Having passed away only two years ago, he left his beloved wife as the head of the province. Eska and Esold have two children together and one grandchild from Esold's previous marriage. Breith, their eldest son, is next in line to rule Sinusut should Eska step down. She never expected to personally rule the province, so many of her decisions are made utilizing the discretion of her advisers. Eska attempts to emulate Esold's no-nonsense rule. Some Sinusut citizens believe that Eska orchestrated her husband's death to take charge of the region, but most view this claim as outlandish and radical.

Another one of the nation's rulers is Heshpat zi'Fralmana. A ninety-one-year-old halfling man, Heshpat is the leader of Ninnulut, the southern province. He and his wife Liare have one young son. Heshpat is known to be a fair ruler who treats the common folk with compassion and kindness, but his lax nature has opened the door for increased Sky Dragon activity in Ninnulut. Even so, his people have few complaints, save for the merchants



of the region. Heshpat understands what his people want and he knows how to appease their worries. The businessmen of Ninnulut dislike how Heshpat undermines their businesses by working with the Sky Dragons and local Free Companies, but their grumbling goes largely unnoticed. The other leaders of Erygis believe that Heshpat is too friendly with his people, and they claim that he purposefully undercuts businesses originating in their two provinces to gain favor with his own, despite the overall negative effect this undercutting has on the Erygan economy as a whole.

The third leader of the Erygis is Alpheus zi'Gamut, a fifty-seven-year-old human. Erygan born and raised, his family has been instrumental in the politics of the central Unerraut province for three generations now. A general slob of a man, Alpheus is rumored to take bribes to pass legislation, and unsavory laws slip through his fingers and into enforceable rule quite frequently. Alpheus cares little for anyone but himself, and when he does do good for the nation it is only to better his own station or quiet the region's dissenters. He has nine children bore to him by three wives, only one of whom is living, and all of his nine children are convinced that they are next in line to rule.

All three of the Erygan provincial leaders keep devastating secrets. In truth, Eska zi'Jassynder has little ambition to rule any part of Erygis now that Esold has passed. She has been grooming Breith, their child, to take her place. Eska is fearful that some may take advantage of Breith coming into power, and so she intends to keep her intentions hidden from Heshpat and Alpheus until a smooth transition is ensured. Heshpat's secrets are somewhat more involved: he funds his own standing military, owns mining companies in his province and supports several others in Rancagesh, and is funding secret expeditions to Sinafey to search for relics and rare exotic rarities. Aside from these business ventures, he cooperates with the Sky Dragons, which is typically frowned upon. Heshpat once brokered a secret agreement with the Dragon Syndicate to smuggle goods to Erygis from Washu, an endeavor granting him hefty coin, but the Dragon Syndicate crossed the wrong nobles and Heshpat was forced to decry the organization. To his relief, though, he has convinced the Sky Dragons to pick up these smuggling routes where the Dragon Syndicate left off.

The third ruler, Alpheus zi'Gamut, possesses vital Washun contacts loyal to his family for generations. It is speculated that these contacts have a hand in his affairs, though this remains unproven. Alpheus is petitioning for Washu's independence, a position which goes against Heshpat's desire to leave Washu as a protectorate to profit from his smuggling operations. Eska is impartial to either side, letting the two men to argue over this sensitive matter.

The plethora of noble lines found in Erygis were immediately established when the nation was granted official recognition by the Council of Vathis. The Notekeeper's College and a number of other organizations traveled to the new country and voluntarily traced the noble lineages of former political prisoners back to the countries they once called home, officially establishing a record of Erygan nobility. Starcalled are also automatically granted noble status, which affords them great prestige and significant influence over their local communities. Only land-owning nobles are allowed to cast votes on their local representatives. The commoners

are not bothered by the privileges given to nobles, however, as the abundance of lawlessness and alternate lifestyles in Erygis create opportunities for all, regardless of one's social status.

Erygis is divided into three main provinces named after the country's most prominent cities. Sinusut is comprised of the area west of Kamtyrow. Ninnulut stretches across the complete southern half of the nation, and the territory from Emphil to Sefrefate composes the province of Unerraut. Each of the major cities in these areas are governed by mercantile noble families led by the head of their house. A representative for each city is chosen from the families leaders, voted upon by landowners of noble standing once every five years. The collective representatives convene in Kamtyrow on an as-needed basis to discuss both Erygan and international matters, and their decisions are considered law. A notary of the Notekeeper's College and a handful of Vathis Sentinels are always present to ensure that the enacted decrees are properly documented.

The Vathis Sentinels within Erygis are utilized as a specialized group acting as reinforcements or superiors to the local guards of the provinces. Sinusut, for example, employs what used to be the Faceless as almost seventy-five percent of the provincial guard, as the Jassynder family boasts a longstanding contract with the organization. The rest of the Sinusut ranks are volunteers who are trained to the standards of the Faceless upon enlistment. The Sinusut force contains an even mix of naval, cavalry, and ranged combatants, and many of their number are militant priests, which band together to fight off attacks originating from the Harrows. Ninnulut's armed forces are funded wholly by Heshpat zi'Fralmana, leader of the province. His ranks consist of volunteer natives and Cypreans. The guards employed before Heshpat's reign were paid handsomely to resign or dishonorably demoted to lesser ranks, which caused a bit of a stir. His decision to radically alter the Ninnulut forces ruffled quite a few feathers, but the province's economy has soared to new heights under his rule, and few nobles complain when their pockets are heavy with gold. Although Heshpat's guard is lax and lacking in strength, the province possesses formidable naval fleets which patrol the nation's southern coast. The strangest force, however, is the provincial guard of Unerraut. Containing numerous Washun-born and an entire contingent of mages, these soldiers are typically recognized as the toughest of the three provinces, as they're forced to continually defend against merciless attacks stemming from the surrounding forests, mountains, and The Harrows. In combat the Unerraut guard utilizes brutal head-on tactics paired with arcane arts. Unsurprisingly, it is deadly chaos when the three guards come together for a shared cause. The leaders of the nation are hoping to establish a set of basic standards and protocol for all Erygan guards, but the three remain unable to compromise and reach an agreement.

Erygis and Vnoch are staunch allies. The former prison colony is also close with Cypress, a new trade partner, and Mythrayne, who the Erygan consider old friends. Added to this list in light of recent events is Rancagesh, a newly risen nation who Erygis wishes to see flourish. While friendly with the kingdom of Sillirai, the sheer distance between national borders makes it nigh impossible for the two countries to establish any meaningful trade relations. Significantly closer in distance are the nations of



Darastrix, Leyathar, Tristan, and Vavaire, who possess open relations with Erygis. Though once a firm ally of Vavaire, the Erygan people have become wary of the Vavairen following their imposed blockade during the Second Empire Wars. Erygis neither likes or dislikes Isild and Aurezia. The only nation treated with outright contempt by the Erygan people is Osept, as the two nations have a bloody history of conflict and disagreement. All three provincial leaders come together to undermine Osept and protect their borders from the desert nation's influence. Perhaps the one point of contention regarding international relations between the three figureheads in the Erygan government is the matter of the island nation Washu. Heshpat argues against Washun independence while Alpheus petitions for their freedom, and Eska is indifferent on the matter.

RELIGION AND TRADITIONS

Erygis is renowned for being extremely accepting of unconventional religions, and visitors are often surprised to find worshippers of Zanon with friends in the church of Astea. The Erygans regard religion as a private matter, and discussing one's godly affiliation in public is considered uncouth. The Erygan believe that defining a person by their religious belief serves only to breed unnecessary trouble. The deities Bastion, Zanon, and Circe boast massive followings in the nation, with Keindrinias, Teiris, and Uryll following close behind. Cultural traditions in Erygis are also unusual, as the traditions currently observed tend to be an amalgamation of the cultures who acclimated to Erygis during its time as a prison colony. The observed holidays vary from town to town and are reliant on the popular heritages in the area. Erygis is home to a sizable portion of descendants from Elessar in particular, so many Elish traditions have crept their way into Erygan culture and found a home in the country. The only other international traditions of note recognized universally by the Erygans are the Vavairen standard holidays, such as the Laniri.

The greatest holiday unique to Erygis is a combination of others existing. Called the Bergipta, this celebration is derived from the dwarven tradition of gift-giving. The Erygan people observe this holiday for five days following the spring equinox by gifting their neighbors as a show of generosity and unity. Also found in Erygis is the Brightest Day, which is a new commemoration observed by a series of fencing matches, jousts, and races. These mock battles honor the militaries of the world and tell a narrative of battles won and lost, and the day is ended with a thrilling reenactment of the Shattered Hand being driven away by the world's heroes. The Brightest Day is celebrated exactly one week before the Laniri. The Laniri itself is observed in a variety of ways with each neighborhood celebrating the global holiday in a slightly different fashion depending on the cultural affiliations of the area.

A number of important religious locales can be found within Erygan borders. Perhaps the oddest is the Obsidian Pillar, a holy site located in the heart of the country within a field. When touched by anyone but a faithful of Keindrinias, the toucher is overcome with wracking pain and torment. Keinar, however, will experience rapture and joy. It is rumored that the Pillar sometimes imparts pilgrimage goals and quests to the faithful. The Eternal

Rest, another religious location, is the final resting place of those who chose to forsake the Deities in the Divine Sands Wars. It is rumored that the bodies of the unfaithful are interred within, and many venture to the site to behold the glorious wrath of the gods. The last religious locale found in Erygis is Blarfell Keep, a giant stone fort guarded by duergar. It can be found south of Karakos and west of Ironmark. Blarfell Keep is the holy site of Zanon, and though it lies outside of Erygan territory and within the sands of the Nashendasorn Desert, it attracts his followers to the area and brings travelers through Erygis on pilgrimage.

INFLUENTIAL PARTIES

The Vathis Sentinels and the Erygan populace are distrustful of one another on behalf of their past interactions. The Sentinels view Erygis as a breeding ground for trouble, and the Erygan people consider the Sentinels as an oppressive entity forcing rules upon their open way of life. The organization CORE, however, is better received by the nation's populace. Some people blame the widespread implementation of eldria for what happened to Elessar and are wary of CORE's close work with the Vathis Sentinels, but the large majority of the country feels that CORE should be accepted and eldric technology integrated within Erygan cities. The citizens of Unerraut are the among the most progressive, and their leader is known to affiliate extensively with CORE officials. Somewhat unexpected is Erygis' good relationship with the Council of Vathis. The leaders of Erygis remember who supported their petition to join the Council of Vathis and they lend support to these nations whenever they can. The country's merchants go out of their way to bring aid to those in need regardless of nationality, remembering that the Erygan themselves were once in dire need of the assistance of others.

Outlaws are commonly found in Erygis, as the majority of the nation believes that one should be able to live outside of the jurisdiction of the Vathis Sentinels if they so please. The province of Sinusut is the least welcoming towards Outlaws, but even so, they travel through the region unhindered by law enforcement. The country's relationship with the Sky Dragons is not so pleasant, though. The nation politically opposes the Sky Dragons, as they tend to cause mayhem and bring strife to citizens. A number of Erygan cities were ransacked by rogue pirates during the Darkest War when help was needed most. The Sky Dragons also helped to weaken Elessar, further souring Erygan views of the organization. Even so, Ninnulut possesses multiple ties to the Sky Dragons, and the province's ruler, Heshpat, holds meetings with important Sky Dragon figures. He utilizes their services frequently but attempts to keep these actions from garnering the attention of the public. The Sky Dragons are consistently seen passing along the shores of Sinusur as they traverse the Angylis Sea.

BLUEMOON HOUSE: Bluemoon Houses are a common sight in Erygan cities. The pleasure houses are viewed as a form of entertainment, comfort, and stress relief. The organization is especially active in port cities where the Bluemoon House capitalizes on soldiers deployed far from home and curious travelers passing through. They operate by gathering information from higher parties within the noble caste, giving the organization great weight



and sway in prominent circles. Circe is an important goddess to the Erygan people, which serves to further the establishment's acceptance and popularity.

SERENITY: Serenity's presence in northern Erygis is a direct result of the Withering of Elessar decades ago, but more undead enemies have risen from the numbers of fallen soldiers cut down during the Darkest War.

RELIC STAR: This organization is headquartered in the capital of Erygis, Kamtyrow. Members of Relic Star work with a multitude of air and sea captains in mapping the surrounding lands. They also supply pilots and captains for transportation purposes. Apart from these duties, Relic Star frequently hires mercenaries and adventurers to aid in their exploration of the Bloodscorched Vale and the open expanse of the eastern Nashendasorn Desert.

THE FACELESS: The Faceless bolsters the official guard of the Sinusut province, and their contract with the Jassynder family has stood unchallenged for two decades now. The organization is led by the famous celebrated soldier Yperkun Xaycatl, a half-orc in his late thirties believed to be missing until five years ago. Yperkun disappeared near the end of the Darkest War, but unbeknownst to the public he worked as a hired spy and infiltrator for a prominent Sky Dragon family. Yperkun chooses not to speak of these times or acknowledge his clandestine work. The Faceless will perform nearly any job for the right amount of coin, and in recent years they've expanded their operations as refugees and wanderers continue to settle in Erygis. Yperkun's connection to the youngest Jassynder heir raises the eyebrows of many, and rumors abound that he and Yperkun share blood. Yperkun would never admit this, but it could explain why the Faceless is so involved in the politics of Sinusut. His close alliance with the leadership of the province proves to be an invaluable source of the Faceless' power, but it could also be their greatest weakness.

GOLD DRAGON SYNDICATE: The Erygan branch of the Dragon Syndicate is called the Gold Dragon Syndicate. This organization is currently being pushed out of the nation, and no one is sure exactly why, or how this great feat is being accomplished. The Dragon Syndicate was once extremely active in Ninnulut and still operates normally within Unerraut. Involved in many underhanded affairs, the Gold Dragon Syndicate was a force to be reckoned within the Ninnulut province until they performed an assassination on a member of the wrong family, bringing down the wrath of other nobles who hired mercenary groups to drive the Dragons away. The gold clutch of this criminal enterprise is not pleased by this, however, and their plans for revenge are taking shape.

THE ZI'JASSYNDER FAMILY: Members of the Jassynder noble family rose to prominence in the nation's early days as a prison colony, and they have been vital to the daily operations of Erygis for two hundred years. The Jassynder's are personable and relatable people. All eligible males of age within the family served in the Darkest War, which cemented the family's reputation as honorable Erygan patriots. Esold the Black was a decorated war veteran, and his tireless efforts cemented vital trade agreements with groups in Rancagesh at the end of his life. Breith zi'Jassynder, Esold's half-elf son, is the current patriarch of Sinusur and only answers to his mother, Eska. He seems to have made lifelong friends with the half-orc Yperkun, leader of the Faceless. Under

the surface Breith knows they share a distant bond by blood, but he and his mother refuse to acknowledge this. The two share a human grandfather who conceived Yperkun's mother in an affair, and the half-orc accepted this fate begrudgingly. The Jassynder family maintains strong diplomatic ties with the countries of Venoch and Mythrayne as the family who spearheaded their joining of the Federation.

ZI'FRALMANA FAMILY: This influential noble line is descended from political enemies sent to Erygis long ago. Originally from Cypress, Heshpat zi'Fralmana owned a mining company before moving to Erygis, where he married an Erygan-born woman and purchased several companies in the area. Heshpat bought his way into important positions along his rise to power. Both he and his businesses are trade powerhouses raking in gold and precious resources in the southern reaches of Erygis. Some disagree with how Heshpat is dipping his Erygan businesses into Cypress despite the profitability of these endeavors, and rumor has it that he funds secret missions into the swamps of Rancagesh and the Jungles of Sinafey seeking greater fortune in the primal wilds.

ZI'GAMUT FAMILY: The Gamut noble family led a sizable portion of the nation for almost a century, but in recent years this family has fallen out of favor with the Erygan people. Alpheus, the family's current patriarch and leader of the Unerraut province, is far from a political favorite. His mother Alamia paved a clear way for Alpheus when he was young, but he has sadly forsaken the vital alliances she fostered for him in favor of his own greed. In recent years he fostered intimate relations with CORE and Washu, established costly reforms, and brought the Eldritch House into his province. Erygis' relations with these organizations now hinge on the word and actions of Alpheus himself, a prospect some find terrifying.

THE BRAZEN BOARS: Members of select noble families founded the Brazen Boars in the hopes of creating an elite group of Erygan society to fraternize among in an exclusive manner. The organization began with hunting expeditions, ornate dances, and extremely profitable business deals. The Brazen Boars currently consist of older prominent nobles hailing from the time before Elessar's fall. This group is led by four individuals known as the Brazen Boars themselves, but their identities are kept a closely guarded secret.

THE CHURCH OF THE CRYSTAL WATCHER: The Church of the Crystal Watcher traveled to Erygis following the introduction of CORE to the Unerraut province. Their presence leaves many Erygans feeling uneasy, despite their great cultural tolerance for unusual faiths. Clergy members have been seen plundering mines near the nation's mountains, and they routinely sabotage potential CORE sites before they initiate operations by setting up encampments near prospective refinement sites.

LEGION: Legion is attempting to recruit the Erygan Starcalled into their ranks. This has been a relatively fruitful endeavor given the plethora of noble lineages in the nation. However, noble families wield considerable weight in Erygis, and some families feel as if Legion encroaches on their influence.

THE DELVERS: The Delvers' newfound resurgence in Erygis is solely on account of the return of the dwarves of Salskyn. This organization is currently hiring those willing to act as a protective



presence as the Delves search for, detail, and survey the long lost subterranean tunnels, caverns, and cities. They work alongside Relic Star mapping the Evernight systems, Wisp Mountains, and Bloodscorched Vale.

ANTARES TEMPLAR: The original purpose of the Antares Templar was militaristic in nature. This organization policed the penal colony of Kamtyrow and returned to regulating their national banking system after the country's liberation. Erygis maintains positive relations with the Templar, and the former armed force now acts as mercenaries to supplement the lack of a Dark Knight presence. The leaders of the Templar are currently seeking recruits and keeping close watch on the travelers in the region searching to unravel the mysteries of the Eternal Rest.

EXPERIENCING ERYGIS

The majority of Erygan trade routes run along rivers. Traveling by boat is common among merchants, and caravans of citizens and traders often walk along of the riverside routes to avoid paying fare. The captains of sea and air vessels traveling through the nation are sometimes provided by the Relic Star for a fee, but the local caravan leaders are usually average citizens escorting others for modest coin. Airships regularly fly to and from Kamtyrow, which is a massive travel hub. The capital and other nearby cities offer relatively cheap airfare to promote traveling and tourism within Erygis.

However, Erygis is extremely inhospitable to those venturing from the safely established routes. The forests of Unerraa are home to many dangerous creatures, and a plethora of nocturnal beasts prowl the open Erygan plains. Weary wanderers who crawl into their tents unaware after a long day of travel are occasionally attacked in their sleep. Erygis is a hot and sunny nation, making long hauls across the countryside fatal without donning the appropriate dress.

Erygans are generally indifferent towards strangers. In a nation of displaced stragglers fighting to forge a cultural identity almost everyone is a foreigner in their own right. Even so, the populace tends to treat outsiders fairly, and most employ an "innocent until proven guilty" mindset. This aspect appeals to worshippers of the darker gods, Outlaws, and Sky Dragons. The citizens of Erygis generally mind their own business when it comes to the affairs of strangers, but they tend to be extremely empathetic and resourceful once involved. Although the Erygans pride themselves on widespread acceptance, they dislike those of immediate Vavairan descent, as Vavaire displaced many of the original Erygan nobles as prisoners of war. The Oseptians are also disliked, though some would use the word hated, as the two nations are rivals in trade and share opposing allies. A great number of the country's citizens also display resentment towards the Washun for their role in the Withering of Elessar.

Erygis as a whole is rife with influential parties seeking hired hands, and the nobles of the nation welcome adventurers from around the world with open arms. The Ninnulut province in particular is rapidly growing, and additional manpower seeking to join the local workforce is appreciated. Cities around the Unerraa forest, like Bilnor and Kamtyrow, regularly hold bounty competitions in the forest which attract tourists and motivate the locals.

The person who catches the most coveted game in these competitions wins great prizes and gains notoriety, which is priceless on the Erygan streets. Cool cities along the coast tend to be boisterous and active from sunrise to sunset, with outdoor events and entertainment taking place across the whole of country several nights a week.

The Brazen Boars hire adventurers who can hold their own against Erygan's toughest, and they delight in pitting these warriors against others in the Essel Tournament. CORE, the Delves, and Relic Star all hire mercenaries to join their expeditions to the Wisp Mountains and Bloodscorched Vale. In Ninnulut a plethora of ship crews and mercenary groups take the brave and foolish to the Jungles of Sinafey seeking fortune and fame. These groups hope to procure rare goods and explore some of the world's last truly uncharted territory. These captains pay a premium to keep their endeavors secret, and foreign travelers are often hand-picked for these clandestine missions.

MAJOR SETTLEMENTS

KAMTYROW

"Where the Phoenix spreads its wings."

TYPE: Capital Political Center

POPULATION: 271,894

LANGUAGES: Vavalish, Mythric, Leyarish

VATHIS SENTINEL SCORE: 8

ECONOMY SCORE: 7

IMPORTS: Airships, Oil, Ore, Minerals, Seafood, Sugar

EXPORTS: Carpentry, Freshwater fish, Lumber, Tobacco

ORGANIZATIONS: Antares Templar, Bluemoon House, Brazen Boars, The Faceless, The zi'Fralmana family, The zi'Gamut family, The Gold Dragon Syndicate, Legion, The zi'Jassynder family, Relic Star

RELIGION: Vath Pantheon: *Bastion, Zanon, Circe*

Upon entering Kamtyrow the first sight to behold is the massive airship tower located in the city's center. Built upon ancient dwarven foundations that compose the inner walls of the city, the tower acts not only as a beacon for arriving airships, but also the center of the Three River Commons area, the bustling trade center at the heart of Erygis's capital. The Three River Commons is where three major rivers meet under vast stone archways. Docks line the stone walls on all sides. All loading and unloading is done at these docks, with the actual market lying on the south side of the tower. On the northern end visitors can find lodging, food, and drink. Every evening after dark the town guard sweeps the area to disperse any stragglers or would-be criminals from the heart of this nation.

The sun blazing overhead of Kamtyrow is typically accompanied by a gentle breeze, so the common folk tend to dress for cover while keeping cool. The sun can be harsh due to the lack of trees in the city, making thick canopies on most every building a must. Outside of the Commons it is apparent that this city was raised starting at the outer walls and moved its way inward as time went by. The dwarven-built perimeter hosts rows of homes rein-



forced with darkwood, which begin to thin as one ventures further into the city, eventually breaking into the main cobblestone path that surrounds and separates the Commons from living quarters. Scattered throughout the living quarters are large estates belonging to the noble families of Erygis, the nation's true power, who employ many under them. These properties tend to be lavish. They boast impressive gardens, their own wells and fountains, and feats of architecture that utilize marble and other expensive materials intertwined with the ancient dwarven structures and darkwood reinforcements. When these nobles walk the streets, the common folk stop in their tracks. They say it is a rare day indeed when a noble strays from Kamtyrow's cobblestone thoroughfares.

The capital of Erygis is host to a bustling nightlife, featuring evening theaters and lamp-lit outdoor performances taking place in the south district. When Farilis glows, the taverns in the district open their doors and people flock to the area in droves. This is where one finds one of the most diverse populations in the world. Almost any race or class of person can be found in the south district of Kamtyrow after sunset, for better or for worse. After dark is also when the few Vathis Sentinels stationed in Erygis can be seen enforcing local laws. It is not unusual to see groups of people from other nations on the street, as Kamtyrow is an important political center.

The city of Kamtyrow was originally founded in the year 3509 as a prison colony meant for enemies of Vavaire. Those sent to the colony were often not criminals, but those of political importance. When Vavaire began to war with Cypress, leadership sent more and more people to Kamtyrow under the watch of the Antares Templar, and in the following years the exiled peoples of Washu and Tristan composed a sizable percentage of the city. At this point the area inhabited by prisoners was larger than the actual city borders. Taking advantage of this opportunity, the prisoners revolted and claimed the area for themselves, and Kamtyrow as the world knows it was born. Today Kamtyrow stands as the nation's political center, partly as a nod to the city's controversial beginnings and due to the settlement's advantageous location for trade and travel.

SINUSUR

"The Erygan perch upon the Angylis."

TYPE: Seaside Trade Hub

POPULATION: 143,426

LANGUAGES: Valavish, Leyarish, Oseptian

VATHIS SENTINEL SCORE: 7

ECONOMY SCORE: 8

IMPORTS: Alcohol, Ships

EXPORTS: Coffee, Cotton, Livestock, Oil

ORGANIZATIONS: Brazen Boars, The Broken Swords, The Faceless, Gold Dragon Syndicate, zi'Jassynder Family, Relic Star, Serenity

RELIGION: Vath Pantheon

Sinusur is a growing city located in northwest Erygis. Formed shortly before the Darkest War came to fruition, it became a safe fort and port city used by merchants and departing armies. Now

the city has become a central trading point for ships traveling to and from Osept and Venoch. The first thing that separates this city from others in Erygis is the lack of ancient dwarven structures used as foundation, as Sinusur was built from the ground up. The city is located on an ascending grassland crest overlooking the Groenn River, with surrounding plains used for farmland and herding. The city is constructed of one or two story structures composed of darkwood and guard towers built from stone. The docks lying on the riverside are reached by way of ladders on the cliffside, which are accessed through short man-made walkways descending on the west side of the city. This dock extends around Sinusur into the bay. The Faceless supplement the guard in this region of Erygis.

Sinusur is recently welcoming establishments such as Bluemoon Houses and the Bluewind Company. Official temples dedicated to the various Deities are being constructed by their faithful, as up until now religious groups were forced to make do with occupying vacant properties and informal places of worship. The post war-peace has given the city time to acclimate to their presence and accommodate their needs. Sinusur's layout is somewhat scattered, with residential areas existing in all sections, and the dwellings of both the high and low class exist in close proximity. Entertainment is still new to the city of Sinusur, with only one theater found on the eastern edge of town. A multi-purpose arena located in the center of the city serves to host all variety of sports and entertainment. Storehouses, taverns, and inns are abundant in this trade city, so there is no shortage of nightlife. The Wagon Pit in Northside and Astea's Hearth in Southside are two famed establishments.

Lately, Sinusur is suffering from missing shipments, destroyed crops, and abandoned ships at dock, leaving some to whisper about suspected pirate dealings, the same fate that befell Ninnult during the Darkest War. This has caused Sentinel activity within the city to increase, much to the relief of business owners and chagrin of the common folk. Some also blame the increased activity on the bustling and fierce wildlife found in the forests and plains surrounding the city, raising bounties for hunting and budding contests for prospective hunters. An old saying which has become popular again is, "He who tames the wolves, tames the land," referencing the widely diverse and dangerous fauna living in Erygis.

Sinusur is an exporter of oil, found in natural springs around the bay, and sugarcane, which grows in the fertile land beyond the city's northeastern borders. These lucrative exports attract trade and booming business to the city. Sinusur contains more elves and dwarves than the rest of Erygis, primarily due to the city's proximity to Venoch and new status as a stop on trade routes running to and from Mythrayne. The current ruling noble family on Sinusur is the zi'Jassynder family, led within this city by Breith. Breith is the apparent heir to the house, and if he had it his way, the only heir. He is extremely popular within Erygan high society and grateful for everything his family has earned so far. He served in the Darkest War briefly and was part of a special forces group, which helps the common folk see him as relatable. Rumors claim that he and his family share some intimate connection with the Faceless, one of the old Free Companies turned mercenary group in Erygis.



This port city is home to a number of renowned establishments. The Wagon Pit is a tavern situated on the edge of town, close to the northwest entrance. Originally a large stable meant to house wagons and steeds, it became an essential stop for travelers hailing from Osept, Mythrayne, Venocho, and Washu. Weary wanderers would stop at the Wagon Pit to rest their mounts, repair their caravans, and seek shelter, food, and drink. The tavern was named after the pit of old vehicles and wagon parts found behind the establishment. In the last seventy years the Wagon Pit has tripled in size to accommodate their vast array of services, and the tavern has become something of a landmark in the area. The Wagon Pit is owned by Kite Coppergrove, a gnome alchemist. Many exchange tales regarding his mysterious origin, ambitions, and private life. The only downside to the wide variety of outsiders traveling to and from the Wagon Pit is the frequent number of scuffles, petty crimes, and domestic disputes.

ASIGAIR (Frontier City, 10,920) *“The Southern Frontier”*

Asigair sits on a plateau overlooking a valley near the Atebu Forest. From the furthest guard posts the forest canopy appears as an ocean of trees stretching as far as the eye can see. Asigair, once a bustling town until its borders were pushed inward during the Darkest War, is now a small frontier settlement. It often serves as the last stop before one ventures into the vast tracts of land leading to The Harrows and the routes reaching to Mythrayne and Venocho. Life in Asigair is slow, save for expeditions into the Atebu Forest or the rare travelers visiting from Mythrayne or Venocho. The presence of Yperkun the Knife has generated some attention as of late, however. He seems to command a small order of men who are frequently hired for guard or guide jobs.

Perhaps the most interesting feature of Asigair are the Halls of Bristlethorn, a mine built into the face of the cliff that was formerly owned by the dwarven Bristlethorn family. It was once used as barracks for soldiers. In the post-war world the mine was bought by a gnome who blocked off the branching shafts and decided to keep its former dwarven name. The Halls of Bristlethorn have become a luxurious inn well-known for unique accommodations and interesting feats of ancient dwarven architecture.

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

SEFREFATE: Sefrefate is a newer fort constructed from the remains of an outpost left over from the construction of the Gilded Road. In recent times this fort was also discovered to house the entrance to a series of tunnels below ground leading to the Evernight. Sefrefate is famously known as the location where the formerly missing Salskyn dwarves rose from the underground to join the fight against the Shattered Hand assailing Erygis. The tunnels beneath are now being explored and cleared for use as storage facilities. Sefrefate has seen an increase in traffic from the Eyes of Vathis, the Delvers, the Inquisitors, and all manner of other treasure hunters since the discovery of the tunnels leading to the mysterious and dangerous Evernight.

ETERNAL REST: Constructed eons ago by the once widespread empires of rancar, Eternal Rest is a massive stepped pyramid located in the Unerraa Forest. This pyramid is larger than it seems, and it extends into the earth for hundreds of feet. At the end of the Divine Sands Wars it became the resting place and prison for the Anuald who were to blame for the conflict. Today it is guarded by the Antares Templar as a holy site, and entry is forbidden to all. Not all who know of the legends believe them, but all agree that the Eternal Rest gives off an unmistakable aura of power. It is common for sages, scholars, and religious fanatics of different types to make a pilgrimage to this location, even though they cannot actually enter the pyramid. It is one of the oldest mortal-made structures standing, which also grants the pyramid of the Eternal Rest a certain level of renown.

UNERRAA FOREST: This massive forest is celebrated for its rich flora and fauna. The region is studied in depth by scholars and naturalists alike, and it remains protected as one of the few sources of darkwood found in Erygis. The most activity the forest sees is in the bounty contests based out of Kamtyrow and Bilnor. Citizens attempt to catch more dangerous prey than the last, and though it is hazardous, these contests are a beloved Erygan tradition. The forest is famed for its beasts and vermin of unusual size, which become more prominent the further one travels into its reaches. Large insects, arthropods, rodents, and carnivorous plants are known to lurk within, leaving travel by river the safest method of travel throughout the region.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

- Rancagesh is now rivaling Mythrayne’s mineral and ore production, thanks to a noble Erygan benefactor. Who is this benefactor, and why are they aiding Rancagesh against the dwarves?
- The Dragon Syndicate is attempting to invade the political scene of Erygis through means of intimidation. How will this play out?
- An entire noble family from Emphil has been exiled for supposedly summoning fiends to assassinate Washun representatives in Kamtyrow. They claim to have been framed, and are offering a reward to whoever clears their name.
- The ancient orc empire designed a grand tomb called Tahlqual, The Great Tomb of Enemies, to house their prisoners of war. Legend states that the tomb mainly consisted of lizardfolk and dwarves, and was constructed masterfully to prevent intrusion as well as escape. The tomb has been discovered.
- Reports of invading lizardfolk and naga have been pouring in from the eastern edge of Erygis near the Bloodscorched Vale. They appear to be searching for something...but what?
- Someone is hiring adventurers in Ninnulut for expeditions to the Jungles of Sinafey. Is the risk worth the reward?
- Sinusur’s surrounding lands are no stranger to harassment by wildlife, but the number of bestial attacks have increased, and some are reporting that a war veteran is controlling the creatures.
- Undead attacks from the Harrows continue to plague Sinusut and Unerraut.
- Old dwarven tombs and vaults have been revealed by the returning dwarves of Salskyn. They’re ripe for the picking, if brave adventurers are up to the task.





ISILD

“The northern winds bite the hardest.”

THEN AND NOW

Isild is a wild nation celebrated for her scenic shores and beautiful landscapes. Her rugged coastlines are broken by frightening fjords and innumerable islands. Isild experiences a high level of precipitation despite being situated in the far north, and southern currents roll in from the Solar Sea which warm the nation's winds. The leadership of the country is currently split between the royal Whiterose family and the Star Council. The Zodiacs are revered in Isild as the highest power known to man, but the primary god worshiped in the country is Junon, and the kingdom is home to the religious mercenary group known as the Dark Knights, who the goddess once led. The select few chosen to join the elite Dark Knights are hand-picked from the kingdom's conscription force. The Isiril are extremely loyal to both the crown and to one another. A deep sense of kinship exists between citizens, regardless of the sometimes vast and unforgiving distance between settlements. Isild trades with barbaric raiders, and her people are not known for being particularly diplomatic, but the northern kingdom and Vavaire have been staunch allies for quite some time. Isild is currently seeking to reestablish and reclaim Whiterose with the bless-

ing of returned Vavaire, though the permanent worldfall around the city prevents these attempts. Isild has long-standing poor relations with Tristan on account of Tristan's previous raids on the kingdom, and her leaders keep a wary eye on Aurezia to the south, who is known for rampant imperialism. The Isiril trade primarily in furs, lumber, mining, and fish, and the nation possesses one of the largest shipping fleets in the world, second only to the seafaring nation of Venoch.

In the ancient days, barbaric humanoids and untamed creatures battled for control of the harsh landscape that would one day become the kingdom of Isild. Little is known about this time. The humans scraped out a meager existence in their frail settlements, but life in the north was difficult, and many succumbed to the perils of beasts and unexpected famines. As the Age of Black Frost began thousands migrated from their homes in the north, as it soon became clear that few would survive another winter in the plummeting temperatures. Only a few settlements chose to remain in the grasslands of Isild, though many would come to regret this decision. Whole villages perished in the frigid wasteland.

As the ice age ended, swaths of humans and their few dwarven allies traveled back to their homeland, hoping to resettle the wilderness as it thawed. They were disheartened to find the area overrun with fierce creatures. Troglodytes, goblinoid raiders, morlocks, and citizens warped and twisted by the Evernight and the Age of Black Frost hounded the influx of settlers. Trolls, ogres,





ISILD

"Ice and Steel"

COLORS: Black, White, Blue

BANNER: Wolf

POPULATION: 8,012,381,

CAPITAL: Wintyr

GOVERNMENT: Unitary Zodiac Monarchy

LEADER(S): Patience zi'Whiterose, Queen

LANGUAGES: Isril, Vavalish, Trist

NOTABLE EXPORTS: Furs, Fish, Lumber, Rimsteel, Whiterose

DEMONYM: Isril

LITERACY RATE: 82%

and rocs in the service of frost giants fought the newcomers for centuries, but the migrants were not willing to flee once again. The creatures and settlers of the region eventually learned to live with one another and strike an even balance of wild and civilized. The local auroch population served as a source of leather and food for this new incarnation of Isild, and the peoples of the land easily relearned their old masteries of fishing and woodworking. They rejoined those who stayed and survived through the ice age and settled around Dragonstone Citadel, and Isild rose to prominence again when Isril individuals were Starcalled with the sigils of the Zodiacs.

Prior to the appearance of the sigils, the warrior tribes inhabiting the north were constantly in minor conflicts with one another for control over resources and territory. The advent of the Starcalled changed everything. War between the various factions exploded overnight, and for one hundred and fifty years the humanoids fought viciously. Small packs of inuzen rallied around smaller Starcalled families and led them as oracles with their reliable predictions and mysticism. The larger clans fought not only one another, but also lesser families able to outmaneuver their brutish plots. The Dark Knights, who were founded long ago in a time before even the Age of Black Frost, capitalized on the chaos and blood rage of the tribes, moving from settlement to settlement in an attempt to gain new enlistments. They spread the faith of the goddess Ardor as they traveled, known within the Vath pantheon as Junon. Adding a religious element to these wars dug deeper furrows between the northern settlements, as some were quick to turn their backs on the Zodiacs in favor of an active god. The families who radically altered their faith came to distrust the inuzen, choosing to alienate their kind and refuse further help from their occult oracles.

Unknown to all, a natural disaster was brewing. Mount

Kurzen began to rumble and shake, and through some machination still undiscovered, the formidable peak summoned harpies, minotaurs, centaurs, and all manner of monstrous humanoids to the mountain. The beasts wreaked havoc on the Kurzar family holdings, found at the base of the mountain, and all unfortunate settlements they passed on the way to the great calling. The mountain then erupted, spewing forth volcanic debris and ash into the Sentry lands. The ash poisoned the region's waterways and the fighting between tribes gave way to greater concern: the struggle to survive. Those with homes close to the mountain were doomed, and those who could not find new sources of fresh food and water also perished in short time. The ensuing famines and chaos kept Isild in a state of disarray until the influential noble Whiterose family, calling in old favors, rallied the Dark Knights to reroute the monstrous hoard. These nobles utilized the healing properties of their namesake, the whiterose flower, to create an alchemical mixture that would cleanse the streams and rivers. The mixture was effective, and countless lives and settlements were saved.

The volcanic activity which called forth the beasts came to be known as Kurzen's Beckoning. This horrific event was soon discovered to be a reoccurring phenomenon taking place once every seventy-five years or so. The first Kurzen's Beckoning halted the infighting between families, and in the end the nation split between three major families with substantial power and control over their respective regions of the country. The Kurzar family, who accepted Ardor as their goddess and cast away the inuzen, settled in the area around Mount Kurzen and Dragonheart Lake. The second family, the Sentry family, claimed the sole mountain pass in the ancient dwarven fortress of Sentinel Keep as theirs. They traded with other existing dwarven settlements at the time which further bolstered their claim to the territory. The Sentry family remained faithful to the Zodiac-centric beliefs of the north, and they looked down upon followers of Ardor for abandoning their ancestral faith.



The last family of note was the famous Whiterose family, who occupied the islands to the north of Isild along with the northern coastline. The Whiterose family were tolerant of both belief systems at the time, allowing the Zodiacs and Ardor to be revered equally within their lands. The three families led an uneasy truce throughout the years. When Kurzen's Beckoning occurred a third time the Sentry and Kurzar families fell apart, finding themselves unable to cope with the devastating effects of the eruption. After quelling the monstrous horde with the help of the Dark Knights, the Whiterose family unified Isild under one centralized government. At last, a kingdom was born from the wilderness.

In the early years of Isild's history as a nation, the southern country of Cypress threw themselves at the gates of Sentinel Keep, the sole southern entryway into Isild. The imperialistic Cyprian coveted their territory and besieged the Isril, but the hardened northerners were stout in their defense. Their warriors held off the advance of Cypress for three months until reinforcements arrived, but even with aid the siege waged on. Isild withstood ten years of blockade and hostility from Cypress, and at long last the supply lines running north from the jungles frayed and splintered. At the same time ships from the far land of Korvach began to raid Isild's shores. An armistice brought an end to the conflict between Cypress and Isild, and the proud northern warriors ventured to the coast to defend their lands from the seafaring invaders hailing from the east.

With the armistice between Cypress and Isild settled, the Whiterose family established trade routes to the various lands in the south. These trade routes were vital in supplying the Isril warriors with arms and armor to aid in their never-ending conflict with the Korvach raiders. Isild found a place in world politics at this time, and the charismatic Whiterose family made allies of a number of important political figures. While Korvach and Isild engaged in bloodshed and brutal skirmishes in the far north, the Whiterose family maintained focus on strengthening their lands and preparing the Isril for impending doom. Kurzen's Beckoning happened yet again, but with each eruption the kingdom improved the art of recovering their land and surviving the influx of barbarous humanoids and wild beasts. The Dark Knights grew each time the ash spewed forth, as the group took it upon themselves to drive back the called beasts each time they attacked. The volcanic eruptions fortified and hardened Isild's people, leading the kingdom to place of tempered strength.

In a desperate move to weaken Isild's resolve, Korvach raiders managed to capture the Queen of Isild and her daughters. Isild immediately declared war on Korvach, and the Frozen Sea War began, putting an end to the small raids and spats along the frozen shore and opening up the northern floodgates to brutal, vicious assaults. The leaders of Isild petitioned their southern neighbor, Vavaire, who was also struggling with the Korvach raiders, for militaristic assistance. With a common enemy drawing the two nations together, Vavaire agreed to an alliance with Isild. The Vavairen forces marched north and laid siege to the Korvach city of Ravnessgrad. Their siege was overwhelmingly successful, and by year-end Korvach lost Ravnessgrad, abandoning the holding after only six months. The Frozen Sea War was considered an overwhelming success, as Vavaire negotiated the return of Con-

stance zi'Whiterose and her daughters in exchange for the return of Ravnessgrad. Isild decided to enter a permanent alliance with the Vavairen Empire out of gratitude. Though the Isril were hesitant to count themselves among the various nations composing the Vavairen Empire, they were a member in all but official name.

The unique arrangement with Vavaire allowed Isild to maintain their autonomy while acting as a part of the formidable Vavairen Empire. The Whiterose family kept their position of leadership, and they established the city of Whiterose within Vavaire in an attempt to strengthen the bonds of their alliance. With Vavaire firmly established as a reliable friend, Isild looked inward in the hopes of solving the kingdom's internal struggles, primarily that of the returning Kurzen's Beckoning. Isild did not adapt to the fast spread of eldric technology, but they did apply new advancements to their seafaring vessels, bolstering their military and inspiring the masses to enlist in their armed forces. This served Isild well during the First Empire Wars, which broke out in the Angylis Sea region in response to a brutal attack carried out on an entertainment airship from Elessar. Many of the stout northern fighters deployed on behalf of Vavaire and proved formidable against even the trained and hardened armies of Tristan. The destruction of Elessar and the end of the First Empire Wars forced Isild to split from Vavaire as the empire broke apart, but the two kingdoms willingly maintained close diplomatic ties.

The First Empire Wars frightened the Whiterose family, who suddenly realized the deadly power held in the grasp of other nations. Isild instituted a conscription in response and established the first professional soldiers of the country. The next event to shake the nation would be the natural death of Harmony zi'Stardragon, Empress of Vavaire. Isild held a nation-wide vigil in her honor. While the noble families of the kingdom always supported the might of Vavaire, these fierce loyalties softened when Aliskar took the throne after the relatively brief and untimely death of Emperor Jaris, who had succeeded Harmony. Isild was wary of Jaris, but they recognized his authority and willingness to do good. After Vavaire lost two leaders so closely Isild reigned in much of their support and adopted the role of an observer, waiting to see what the Emperor Aliskar would bring to the world stage. Sadly, Aliskar's foreign policies were not agreeable to Isild.

The drastic shift in Vavairen policies became even more profound when Emperor Aliskar instituted a forced relocation of Astrian worshippers. A large number of Astrians called Isild home, and they balked in fear as their family and friends abroad were forced from their homes and went missing. Though few in number, it was confirmed that some Isril were among the taken. The Isril kept their distance from Vavaire during the outbreak of the Second Empire Wars, which started when disagreements between Vavaire and Tristan turned hostile. The Whiterose family attempted to remain neutral in the conflict, but when Vavairen soldiers marched on their shores, Isild reluctantly took the field against her former allies. The nation reeled. Their defenses were half-hearted until the discovery of the Whiterose Experiments, which explained the ultimate fate of the Astrians gathered on Emperor Aliskar's order: widespread torture and experimentation. Enlivened with grief, the Isril rushed to war, and suddenly soldiers and mercenaries from Isild could be found on the fields of battle in every theater of war.



These forces continued to fight with vigor as the Vandiel's infiltrating the leadership of Vavaire were revealed, and fiends and extraplanar entities poured through a portal in Valiance bent on death and destruction. A significant portion of Isild's Starcalled went on to join the organization Legion, and the Dark Knights were utilized alongside every fighting force in the Darkest War.

The warriors of Isild managed to combat the hordes of demons harrying their borders with success. The Isril survived the Darkest War with minimal losses, primarily in thanks to the kingdom's harsh terrain and battle-trained citizens. The northern nation is currently fortifying their key defensive locations to protect themselves from others capitalizing on the post-war chaos, and reclaiming lost northeastern territory. Queen Patience zi'Whiterose longs to envelop the Dark Knight fortification of Dragonstone Citadel within the borders of Isild once again. Isild's navy was badly wounded during the Darkest War, and now repairing and reconstructing the lost Isril fleet is one of the nation's top priorities. Queen Patience is working tirelessly with the leaders of Vavaire to reclaim the city of Whiterose. She hopes to restore relations with the nation to the south, now led by Empress Ravenne zi'Stardragon, but it seems that her youngest son Noon may hold the key to successful diplomacy. Noon and Empress Ravenne work side-by-side in the SAS, unbeknownst to all but their closest allies, and it appears to Patience that their close relations may lead to a marriage. This prospect is life-changing for the Isril, who could benefit enormously from a solidified alliance with Vavaire.

ECONOMICS AND INDUSTRY

Exports: Ambergris, Blubber, Ice, Fish, Furs, Marble, Mercenaries, Ore, Perfume, Rimesteel, Scrimshaw, Whale oil, Whiterose

Imports: Agriculture, Airships, Eldria, Horses, Luxury goods, Spices

An enormous portion of the Isril economy is dependent on rimesteel, as rimesteel is only found in two places in the world: the Rimelan, and Isild. This special material is one of the country's two unique exports, the second of which is whiterose, a naturally glowing flower with unique alchemical properties. Despite being heavily studied by alchemists and sorcerers around the world, uses for whiterose are still being discovered. Another industry of note is Isild's fur trade, which rivals that of even Tristan. Furs are the kingdom's largest mundane and reliable export. Other items such as ambergris, blubber, and whale oil rake in sizable profits abroad, but the demand for these commodities fluctuates.

There are a few vital companies within Isild who facilitate the bulk of international trade. The Palewind Fur Company and the Whitecrest Whaling Company are the two largest businesses in the kingdom, and they account for more than three quarters of the Isril fur and whaling production. Though not a company, the Whiterose noble line is also worth mentioning as the only family able to cultivate the whiterose flower. Their agricultural methods have remained secret for centuries. This famous noble line is not the richest in the kingdom, however; the Starcrossed family is prominent for being the only organized group in the entirety of the world to successfully harvest and process rimesteel. They sell the rare material at a high price.

CULTURE AND CLIMATE

Isild is located in the inhospitable northwest where life struggles to thrive and only the strong outlive their hardships. Survival is the primary concern of all Isril citizens, with the success and prosperity of their kingdom following closely. Strength both physical and mental is held in high esteem, and one's ability to contribute to society marks their worth as an individual. It takes a tough and coordinated community of self-sufficient men and women to survive the harsh climate conditions of Isild. Military service is mandatory, though not necessarily through marshal means, as the country depends on the might and functionality of her armed forces. As a whole, the Isril populace tends toward extreme isolationism. They are not particularly fond of outsiders and they avoid involving themselves in external affairs, which they believe is for the good of the nation.

The Isril fiercely revere the Starcalled who abound in the northern nation, the result of a culture of respect and admiration established in the days of the Legacy Wars. Their gathering in the north is second only to the Starcalled of Vavaire when it comes to sheer numbers. Possibly related to the high amount of Starcallings in the kingdom is the heavy inuzen population found in the north. The Isril typically respond to threats and slights with fists rather than words, but even so, the kingdom boasts a number of charismatic and effective inuzen diplomats. The Isril are highly skilled at negotiating prices with merchants and traders, and they always seek an even exchange as the very minimum of what they will accept. The financially shrewd populace has little coin to spare, and they loathe paying more than what an item is truly worth. Isild is home to a plethora of hunters and outdoorsmen as well as skilled warriors who practice the vital arts of martial combat.

The north is cold and inhospitable, and most would say that life in these forests and plains is only suited to the heartiest of creatures. The people of Isild are among those stout beings. The northerly winds keep Isild wet and cold, and the kingdom's location causes long winters, short summers, and immense snow drifts. The Sentinel mountains are much to blame for the frigid temperatures, as the towering peaks block winds from carrying warmth into the country. Isild is known for endless tracks of hearty forests and frozen bogs broken only by central grasslands and the thick tundra to the north. To the surprise of many, the people of Isild are able to overcome the obstacles of climate and prosper despite the bitter weather, but their success is only possible thanks to centuries of struggle and adversity.

The northern reaches of Isild are ice-locked most of the year, and the area within one hundred miles of Junon's Rest experiences a perpetual state of winter. The city of Wintyr sits on a geothermic island which grants the city and surrounding region slightly longer summers and milder winters when compared to the rest of the kingdom. The area around Mount Kurzen, near Dragonheart Lake in particular, remains unfrozen year-round due to the geothermal activity. Some say that when the lake mists it signifies the coming of Kurzen's Beckoning. Another famous geographic feature found in Isild are the Sentinel Mountains, notorious for being unassailable. None have reached the peaks of the Sentinels and lived to tell the tale.



POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT

The Queen of Isild is a human named Patience zi'Whiterose. She is a sixty-three-year-old widow with four daughters and six sons. Queen Patience is close allies with Dark Baron Vontis, the leader of the Dark Knights organization. Beloved for seeking peace between her populace and the other nations on the Council of Vathis, Patience remains loyal to the crown of Vavaire and Empress Ravenne in particular. The Queen of Isild utilizes the wide array of her family living abroad to remain in close contact with every country in the world. Patience works with the Dark Knights organization more than the Vathis Sentinels, as she believes the Vathis Sentinels have become too powerful for the world to handle, and her people do not take kindly to their presence.

Though she is loved and respected by her people, Patience believes she failed them. She holds herself personally responsible for the atrocities of the Whiterose Experiments and the death of her husband, who was stationed in Whiterose as a political liaison at the time. Patience is personally invested in the wellbeing of the noir on account of this guilt. She seeks a cure for their condition, either by restoring them to their prior selves or allowing them to perish and move on to the graces of the gods naturally. The Queen herself worships Ardor, and she travels to her gravesite, Junon's Rest, multiple times a year in somber reverence. Only four of her children were groomed for ascension, and the other six have free reign to do what they please, so long as it honors the family. Patience's youngest son, Noon, is a member of Vavaire's SAS organization, though the kingdom's populace is unaware of his involvement and only his closest contacts in the organization know his true identity. Patience's eldest daughter, Garnet, helped lead the evacuation of Vavaire to New Vavaire. She also helped Hanad establish government and leadership in New Vavaire, and she is the primary Isril diplomat to the Council of Vathis.

Queen Patience delicately balances a lofty number of goals and machinations. She is looking to claim the islands in the north all the way to Tristan's lands, and perhaps even those, should her campaign prove successful. Part of her move northward is fed by her drive to explore and her longing to discover fertile ground for her people to settle and till. Queen Patience is in close talks with Dark Baron Vontis regarding the worldwide use of the Dark Knights, as she wishes to have his organization work solely for Isild, their kingdom of birth. She has no love for Aurezia, and she longs to liberate the rich lands to the south from their zealous grip. One of the most far-reaching of Patience's goals is to see the full restoration of Whiterose. In past years Patience repeatedly sent armed forces to the city, but none returned, leaving her to abandon the conquest and consult with Vavairen leadership. The two countries are currently researching the city and hoping to send another expedition to Whiterose soon. This goal ties in closely with her desire to cure the noir, as she believes the secrets of their creation are hidden within Whiterose.

Nobility in Isild is an ancient tradition. The noble lineages of the kingdom are split between Starcalled dynasties and important families who at one point proved their loyalty to the crown. Isril nobles works closely with the crown to maintain peace and order throughout the kingdom, and one child from every noble family is required to serve the Queen as a member of the royal guard.

This position is voluntarily taken or even fought over by siblings, as it is seen as a great honor to be in the Queen's attendance. A large portion of Isild's nobility are inuzen, and the kingdom is home to the largest population of politically active inuzen in the world. Nobility in Isild is a gifted status rather than an earned status, which creates significantly less political conflict. The people of Isild tend to be more concerned with survival than the elevation of one's social status, lending to a well-functioning society.

Though the royal family controls most of the power in the nation, this power is balanced by what is known as the Star Council, a council composed of Starcalled members of noble families. The council is able to make decisions without the presence of the royal family, and in rare cases they can even circumvent the royal family if they see fit. While only the Whiterose family can establish new noble bloodlines, the Star Council decides where recently appointed nobility will reign. In this way the Council helps to protect the interest of Isild's citizens and lends a hand in controlling the inner workings of the nation's government. The kingdom's nobility administers the area they are set to govern, and they carry out Queen Patience's wishes with accuracy and precision.

There are many unique facets to the law enforcement of Isild. The country harshly punishes and penalizes crimes against crops or agriculture, for steady harvests are paramount to the survival of small villages and towns. They also practice a trial-by-combat system. The average Isril citizen believes that the gods and Zodiacs will bestow their grace upon a champion to accurately judge criminals accused of heinous crimes. A trial of this nature must be approved by an impartial member of a noble family, and trial by combat can only be requested in the cases of heinous crimes. Oftentimes more experienced warriors will be paid to fight these battles. Part of the reason for this ancient system of law, which some deem barbaric and primal, is the unusual lack of Vathis Sentinel presence in Isild. The country's culture of rugged homesteading attracts many individuals who are more than capable of enforcing justice themselves, and the Sentinels are merely unwelcome additions to the kingdom's established order of justice.

The military of Isild is formidable and self-reliant. Their armed service is professional by nature, and due to conscription laws all citizens are required to serve in the military for a minimum of two years. This mandated service helps to lower the necessity of law enforcement. Isild possesses one of the largest and well-equipped naval fleets in the world, and the Isril government frequently employs the Dark Knights in their ranks, as they are among the most proficient and outfitted warriors available at Isild's call. A special sector of the country's forces is called Kurzen's Guard, notable for being some of the only people in the world permitted to climb to the summit of Mount Kurzen. This elite group is charged with protecting the royal family, and they know more about Kurzen's Beckoning than anyone else in the world.

Isild's international relations are generally favorable, apart from Tristan, whom the Isril consider a rival. Neither nation seems eager to forget old grudges and settle past conflicts. The Isril government is also strained with Aurezia, primarily due to Queen Patience's desire to expand into the lands south of her country claimed by Aurezian forces. The hardened northerners maintain excellent relations with Vavaire and Sillirai, but unlike those two,



Isild keeps a neutral stance on the slave trade in Osept. The nation's populace believes that Oseptian slaves should rise up and revolt against their oppressors. For the same reason the Isril have great respect for those from Rancagesh who broke apart from Osept and paved their own way. Isild supports Washun freedom, viewing the exotic island nation as a potential ally against the zealous Aurezia in their overarching plots to push southward. The Isril also hold great respect for the vasar warriors of Darastrix. They remain wary of Cypress, even still, and are indifferent towards Erygis, but boast open relations with Leyathar, Mythrayne, and Venoeh, who pose no threat of invasion and offer advantageous trade.

RELIGION AND TRADITIONS

The Isril people worship the Astrian pantheon with an emphasis on Ardor, known as Junon in the Vath pantheon. They also revere their incarnation of Astea, whom they call Matron. Ornate cathedrals sporting onion domes to the Astrian gods exist in every major city in the country. The Isril also believe in the Zodiacs and the movement of the stars. Inuzen constantly hold ceremonies honoring the Zodiacs, which introduces their star-driven faith to many of the humanoids in the region, and many believe that the nation's cultural respect for the Zodiacs are the reason for the high number of Isril Starcallings. The Dark Knights organization is also a religious entity, and their presence attracts citizens to the worship of Ardor. Their membership is bolstered by the Isril, and when they move through the kingdom's cities and towns they tend to leave with a substantial number of fresh recruits. Many Vavairen Astrian worshippers fled to Isild during Vavaire's imposed cleansing at the order of Emperor Aliskar, but some have returned to Vavaire following Ravenne's ascension to the throne, further balancing the religious dynamic of the kingdom.

The Laniri ceremonies in Isild are the same as Vavairen ceremonies, with evergreen boughs decorating structures and delicious feasts dedicated to both the Deities and the Zodiacs occurring nation-wide. A holiday is also held on the last day of Sovereign under the northern lights honoring the Zodiacs and noting the guidance they offer the world. Each year during the last week of Stoic a spring festival is held honoring one's ancestors and the valor they portrayed protecting Isild from the reoccurring ravaging of Kurzen's Beckoning. On this day people gather in Dragonheart, at the base of Mount Kurzen. Pyres are lit in small makeshift rafts and the rafts are cast out onto the shimmering waters of Lake Dragonheart to honor all those who've fallen during the many happenstances of Kurzen's Beckoning. The last celebration of note, but certainly not the least important, is a holiday honoring the whiterose flower as the uniting force within the nation. The Isril revere the plant for its cleansing properties, which saved the kingdom centuries prior during the early eruptions of Mount Kurzen.

Beautiful and intriguing landscapes are abundant in Isild, but some hold significant meaning to the Isril. Junon's Rest is a holy site sacred to Junon's church and the Dark Knights of Loddoss. It is believed that the body interred here is none other than Ardor herself in her mortal form—Junon. Large numbers of followers and warriors attempt to flock to this location every year, though some without proper preparation or an escort perish in the harsh eternal winter of the region. To the east of Junon's Rest is

Wintyr, the kingdom's capital. The flowing green hills surrounding the city are renowned for being the only place where the famous whiterose grows. They're tended carefully by the Whiterose family, who take great pains in the winter to ensure their safety. The hills of Wintyr are covered in lush gardens, and tourists from across the nation converge on the city to observe the beautiful fields of flowers. Stealing whiterose from the gardens is strictly forbidden and punishable by combat to the death, with no exceptions.

INFLUENTIAL PARTIES

Queen Patience zi'Whiterose allows few CORE facilities to be built within Isril borders. The majority of these facilities can be found at Dragonstone Citadel, Sentinel Keep, and Wintyr. Although Isild enjoys the luxuries provided by use of eldria, they are wary of organizations based out of Tristan, as CORE is. Airships grace the skies of the nation, but few of them are of Vathis Sentinel design. Isild is not dependent on the Sentinels for law enforcement, unlike many other nations. In fact, the Sentinels receive a steady stream of recruits from Isild, and they give more resources to the organization than they take. The mandatory conscription has trained the Isril populace to defend themselves quite well by the standards of others. It should be noted, however, that Isild possesses a standing order with the Vathis Sentinels which requires the organization to respond quickly during a time of Kurzen's Beckoning. So far the Sentinels have been more than keen to assist Isild, a nation that requires little of their resources.

The Isril firmly believe in the right to personal prosperity and freedom. Outlaws are widely accepted in the north, so long as they bring no harm to the nation as a whole, and Isild's largest cities possess Outlaw districts catering to a wide variety of atypical needs. It is rumored that a famous Outlaw haven called the Wandering Star resides in the skies above Isild, though tracking its movement is nigh impossible. The Isril as a whole are not particularly drawn to the Outlaw lifestyle, though, as fierce loyalty to the land of their birth is prominent within their culture. The Vathis Sentinel presence in the kingdom, or rather lack thereof, contributes to large-scale Sky Dragon operations taking place in Isild. The One Hundred and Seventeen Sky Dragons are permitted by Queen Patience to reside on the floating motes above the land, and they're even allowed to keep eldria refineries on these motes, so long as their conflicts stay far away from the Isril.

DARK KNIGHTS OF LODDOSS: Isild is the original homeland and foremost outpost of the Dark Knights. As such, the Dark Knights have an incredibly strong presence in the region. They work in tandem with Isril nobility to fulfill paying contracts and protect the kingdom's citizens. Isild as a whole is able to hire the Dark Knights at a significantly discounted rate due to the assistance Isild lent the Dark Knights in the past. The Dark Knights keep a close eye on Mount Kurzen, and they boast the ability to mobilize at a moment's notice, should the mountain call again. Dark Baron Vontis, their leader, is native to Isild and keeps an extremely close relationship with the royal Whiterose family. The protection of Dragonstone Citadel and the surrounding land is the most important charge of the Dark Knights.

VATHIS SENTINELS: The Vathis Sentinels hold Isild in great



esteem due to the recruitment rate of fresh enlistments leaving the conscripted Isril military. Isild does not mind their sons and daughters joining the world's largest police force so long as they one day bring their honed skills home. Isild only requires that the Vathis Sentinels be ready to move against another Kurzen's Beckoning, which many believe is shortly due. The only Vathis Sentinel outposts found in Isild are located in major airship docks and alongside CORE refinement facilities. The greatest of these are located in Wintyr, the capital of the nation. The Vathis Sentinels attempt to sway the Whiterose family against the Sky Dragons at every opportunity, but these requests fall upon deaf ears.

CORE: CORE operations within Isild are stymied at best. The Whiterose family continues to block CORE expansion, and the Isril government is acutely aware of the organization's intimate connections with Tristan. CORE is forced to ship the majority of their refined eldria into the kingdom at great personal expense because of this. Their relationship with the government is currently in good-standing, despite Queen Patience's wariness, and their primary goal is to open Isild's markets to more eldric goods and additional refinement facilities, though suave diplomacy is necessary for this endeavor.

LEGION: Legion has powerful ties with Isild on account of Isild's support for the organization during the Darkest War. Many Isril cities are home to Legion Bastions, locations where newly Starcalled are brought to be trained and protected during the early vulnerable years of their Starcalling. Legion operates openly in every major city in the kingdom, and they are always on the lookout for Starcalled individuals to protect and guide. In recent years notable members of Legion have been seen in talks with Queen Patience zi'Whiterose regarding the current state of Whiterose city and its uncertain future. Legion as a whole does not perform any clandestine operations within Isild, out of respect of the royal family.

WHITEROSE ROYAL FAMILY: Over two hundred years ago the noble Whiterose family came into power, and they've led the kingdom of Isild ever since. The Isril are quite fond their royalty, and most overwhelmingly support Queen Patience's plans for the nation. Every city worth noting in Isild possesses a branch of the Whiterose line which holds noble titles and key positions of responsibility. The family works closely with the organization Legion for the advancement of Starcalled everywhere, as most important members of the Whiterose family are Starcalled themselves. At the head of the royal family is matriarch Queen Patience zi'Whiterose. The Whiterose line is renowned for being the sole provider of their namesake, the famous whiterose flower.

STARCROSSED FAMILY: The Starcrossed family is wealthy, powerful, and second only to the royal Whiterose line in terms of sheer influence. This noble line currently controls the bulk of the world's rimesteel production, and they alone possess the secrets of its refinement. Rimesteel is highly sought for its use in weaponry and food preservation. The Starcrossed family owns a formidable castle in Sentinel plated in Rimesteel, which keeps the temperature of the castle slightly below freezing. Many of their bloodline are Starcalled, and like the Whiteroses, they work closely with Legion. The future prosperity of Isild is their only goal, and so far they've been extremely successful in securing resources and accu-

mulating wealth for the nation.

EAST ANGYLIS COMPANY: Isild is not a wealthy country. Her people rely on natural resources and military strength to survive, leaving little room for extensive luxuries or accumulated coin. The kingdom itself owes an outstanding balance to Mythrayne for the construction of the Gilded Road, though they've continued to send fair and reliable payments throughout the years. Even so, in the wake of the Darkest War the dwarves cannot afford these balances to remain unpaid. The East Angylis Company traveled to Isild in recent years to gather payment for the debt. They typically act as intermediaries and silent partners in business aspects of Isild, both legal and illegal, where they receive a cut of the profits. The East Angylis Company is rumored to be working hand-in-hand with CORE to force Isild's hand in allowing CORE's expansion. They hope to poach the abundant wealth that would flow from such a deal. The lack of Vathis Sentinel presence in the region paved a clear path for the East Angylis Company, who now have a significant hold over many Isril towns and cities.

FROST CRESCENT: Isild is home to a large number of inuzen native to the area, and a portion of these inuzen are members of the Free Company called Frost Crescent. They act as wardens of the land protecting the native populations from rampaging monsters and ravenous beasts. Frost Crescent works in small individual cells. These cells only rally together under specific circumstance, such as an instance of Kurzen's Beckoning. Rumors and evidence of local vae'rin incursions have gained their attention, and Frost Crescent is validating the supplied evidence before taking hostile action.

VANGUARD STEEL COMPANY: The lack of CORE facilities and eldric resources within Isild have risen the country's demand for eldricsteel considerably. The Vanguard Steel Company, much to CORE's chagrin, moved in decades ago to fill the technological void. They possess firm ties with Legion, bolstering their reputation with the Isril, and large numbers of ildera have been seen migrating to the kingdom for work. The leaders of the Vanguard Steel Company boast direct lines of communication to the Whiterose royal family, which gives them significant sway in negotiations for contracts in the nation.

WHITE DRAGON SYNDICATE: The criminal element within Isild is formidable due to the country's lack of Vathis Sentinels and tendency to self-govern. Much of this criminal activity is ignored. Political corruption and the gilding of palms is abundant in Isril cities, despite harsh punishments, and these illegal activities only grew in the impoverished years following the Darkest War. The reigning criminal organization in Isild is the White Dragon Syndicate, though numerous others deal in small crimes and theft. Resistance to the Dragon Syndicate is only found in uncorrupt law enforcement and lesser criminal groups who dislike the Syndicate encroaching on their territory. Their presence is a thorn in the side of Queen Patience.

HOUSE OF SHADOW: The House of Shadow can be found wherever there is theft or the potential for theft. This organization operates in the larger cities of Isild, and usually only for commissioned or high-risk jobs. They tend to leave the petty thefts to the petty thieves. The Isril House of Shadow goes unknown and undiscovered, and most of their crimes are attributed to the notorious



White Dragon Syndicate. The House of Shadow only accepts jobs worthy of their time.

KURZEN'S GUARD: Primarily operating as the kingdom's royal guard, Kurzen's Guard focuses on protecting Isild's elite. Their main base of operations is located in Dragonheart, where they operate a large castle devoted to their cause. Kurzen's Guard are widely respected throughout Isild, and many aspiring soldiers wish to join the prestigious force. During times of peace Kurzen's Guard and the royal family are the only people in Isild allowed to reach the summit of Mount Kurzen, and this summit is also where many of Kurzen's Guard are sent to train.

BLUEMOON HOUSE: The comfort houses of the Bluemoon organization are widely available within Isild. The militaristic nature of the kingdom requires soldiers to spend countless long nights away from home, and Isril forces often find solace in a Bluemoon House. The workers here are able to glean a significant amount of information from visitors regarding their businesses. The Isril branch of the organization maintains a phenomenal relationship with the royal family, as their leader is Cinna zi'Whiterose.

GUARDIAN FORCE: The Dark Knights are the hired swords of Isild, and Guardian Force are the hired shields. The two organizations often work together for total protection of the north. Their primary base of operations is located within Charmhold, where the organization relocated after Snowfall's utter destruction during the Darkest War. Guardian Force remains fairly well-known throughout the country, and they are hired by nobles and merchants alike for protection. It is rumored that the Whiterose family has entrusted an item of significance to the Guardian Force, but no hard evidence of this has been ascertained, and wild theories fly speculating the nature of the item.

EXPERIENCING ISILD

Those traveling through Isild find the kingdom's northern lands absolutely stunning and just as unforgiving as the terrain is beautiful. Her winters are harsh, with immense snowfalls preventing the majority of overland travel. Dragonheart Lake and the rivers it spawns form an extensive network of easily navigable waters. River passages stretch all the way from Wintyr to Varaldrl, Aurezia. The extension of the Gilded Road in Isild is widely used by caravans and travelers alike, as the kingdom's unpredictable weather patterns of rain and snow prevent large-scale airship movement. Those familiar with the skies find safety on floating motes, but for most, flying over Isild requires a skilled navigator.

Isild is a rugged nation of inhospitable terrain plagued by all manner of beasts and brigands. Her foothills, forests, and mountains are all perfect locations for bandits and monsters to hide. Kurzen's Beckoning brings these creatures forth into the open once every seventy-five years or so, and during the call it is safer to remain behind the walls of cities than to venture forth into the wild. Raiders, barbarians, and savage creatures all make their existence known along the overgrown Isril roads, but the local guard usually keeps the Gilded Road safe for routine caravan travel.

The Isril are wary of strangers and involve themselves little with the outside world, primarily due to the long-standing isolation of the kingdom. However, the Vavairen are treated as

kin by the Isril on account of their close proximity, longstanding history of alliance, and shared culture and beliefs. The warriors of Darastrix and Sillirai are also treated with hearty respect. The natives of Leyathar are viewed by the Isril with an eye of wonder, as their natural magic and strange appearances draw attention from the northern populace who are used to a dull grey life. Isild is accepting of outsiders, Outlaws, Sky Dragons, and citizens alike, so long as they can hold their own and prove their self-sufficiency. Aurezians and Cypreans are treated with prudence, for both nations have a history of imperialistic tendencies, and Isild fears their potential attempts to expand northward and lay claim the lands Queen Patience plans to settle. The Isril are downright hostile toward the Trist, but this comes as no surprise to those arriving from the rival nation. Wars between the two landmasses persisted for ages, and the hardened people of the north hold long grudges. The Isril dislike the Oseptians for their dark practices, religious fervor, and alliance with Aurezia. The tieflings of Washu are also given a wide berth in public due to the nasty rumors claiming they are the spawn of the Shattered Hand. The Isril display great enmity towards those who impose their beliefs on others.

Adventurers are widely accepted throughout Isild. Valor and heroic actions are prized in the north, and those who come to places of gathering bearing stories of vanquishing darkness oftentimes earn themselves free provisions and board. The hardened Isril make great adventurers, and their eyes light up with wonder when their kind brave the perilous wilds in search of glory and riches. Many Isril utilize their military service as a foundation of knowledge when they answer the call to adventure. Charmhold, Wintyr, and Sentinel are places where explorers come to congregate, and many form groups before heading out on their journeys. The roads of Isril all lead to forgotten ruins, hidden nooks, and untold artifacts and knowledge.

Isril families and companies are constantly hiring adventurers to perform a variety of tasks. The Whiterose royal family is seeking those willing to brave the lost cities and towns of Isild destroyed during the Darkest War. Queen Patience wishes to remove the latent Shattered Hand remnants within her lands, and she pays handsomely for the return of missing national heirlooms which may have been stolen during the war. The Dark Knights often recruit noteworthy adventurers to their ranks, but only when they prove themselves worthy. Isril nobles employ adventurers to strengthen their small guards and perform dangerous missions. Travelers seeking work will never find a shortage of dangerous employment and delicious intrigue within the nation, as enemies of Isild hide on all sides, waiting for their chance to strike.

MAJOR SETTLEMENTS

WINTYR

"Blooming life in the cold north."

TYPE: Northern Fortified Capital City

POPULATION: 275,348

LANGUAGES: Isril, Vavalish, Sillarian, Mythric, Trist



VATHIS SENTINEL SCORE: 5**ECONOMY SCORE: 7****IMPORTS:** Crops, Eldria, Eldric Technology, Horses, Luxury goods, Spices**EXPORTS:** Furs, Lumber, Rimesteel, Ships, Whiterose**ORGANIZATIONS:** CORE, Dark Knights, Frost Crescent, Guardian Force, Vathis Sentinels**RELIGION:** Astrian Pantheon: *Ardor*; Vath Pantheon; *Junon*

The capital city of Wintyr sits on an island in the Whitecrest Sea, watching warily over the rest of Isild to the south. A massive castle flanked by mountains looks southward, with a large bridge stretching from the shores of Wintyr to the mainland across the fjord. The city is full of sturdy buildings made primarily of stone and wood interspersed within a network of cobblestone streets. Wintyr was founded by the Whiterose family long before Isild was officially united as one nation. Back in those days, only the area within the city's walls was populated, and the stone of Wintyr was mere wood. After the tribes united and Isild was formed the capital was reinforced and began expanding outwards.

Due to its location on a geothermic island, Wintyr is more pleasant than most of Isild, even during the north's trying winter months. Those native to Isild would describe Wintyr as a warm paradise with more green and life to it than almost anywhere else in the region. Those not native to Isild would describe it as a pleasantly bearable city compared to the harsh cold of Isild's mainland holdings. This is one of the main reasons why many flocked to the island to settle. Wintyr contains the wisest minds of Isild, and many of the nation's government officials and influential nobles. While a warrior's prowess is still celebrated in Wintyr, elders, shamans, and scholars all have a vital place in society here.

The Whiterose family generally governs the internal affairs of Wintyr. Patience zi'Whiterose usually assigns a family member to govern the city itself while she focuses on international affairs. Currently Temperance zi'Whiterose, one of Patience's daughters, is in charge of the city. Wintyr is famous for being the only place in the world that whiterose can actually grow. For this reason alone whiterose is the city's most lucrative export. Other than Whiterose, Wintyr supplies much of Isild with scholars and knowledge while also providing lumber and fur from their shores to the rest of the world.

SENTINEL KEEP*"We shall shield the north, none shall pass our ramparts."***TYPE:** Choke point Fortress**POPULATION:** 148,675**LANGUAGES:** Isril, Vavalish, Sillarian, Trist**VATHIS SENTINEL SCORE: 5****ECONOMY SCORE: 5****IMPORTS:** Crops, Eldria, Horses, Spices**EXPORTS:** Furs, Mercenaries, Weapons and armor**ORGANIZATIONS:** Dark Knights, Guardian Force, Serenity, Vathis Sentinels**RELIGION:** Astrian Pantheon: *Ardor*; Vath Pantheon: *Junon*, *Vangal*

Blocking the pass between the Sentinel Mountains leading into Isild sits a city who draws its name from the mountains themselves, Sentinel. The massive fortress is Isild's first line of defense against the outside world, with its walls spanning the long distance of the pass between the mountains. In ages long past the soldiers of Sentinel guarded Isild from the Cyprean who wanted to take Isild for themselves. In recent years Sentinel has become a safeguard yet again, but this time against the wandering remnants of the Shattered Hand. While time passed and Isild's neighbors changed from Cyprean to Aurezian to Vavairen, Sentinel stood as an ever-watching guardian. This proved to be a great boon during the two Empire Wars and eventually the Darkest War, where Isild held Sentinel until the end.

Life in Sentinel revolves around maintaining the wall and monitoring the goods coming into and out of Isild. Reverence for Vangal is common in Sentinel, as his tenants line up with how the warriors of the Keep view their posts. Guardian Force has a decently-sized representation in the city. The citizens of Sentinel themselves are more tolerant of outsiders than the rest of Isild tends to be, as they deal with them far more often. One might see plenty of Aurezians in Sentinel, for instance. The people of Sentinel tend to be accommodating to foreigners who show respect, and they gladly provide advice and warning to those traveling further north. They are no strangers to the taboos of the Isril people and will give foreigners a chance to right any mistakes they may have made when dealing with them.

Sentinel is primarily governed by the Sentry family who have held their post at Sentinel since before Isild's unification. The Starcrossed family also possesses large holdings here in their rimesteel keep. Though they've vied for additional power in the city in the past, the legacy of the Sentry family cements their political power. Many warriors and mercenaries dwell in Sentinel, especially now that the threat of the Shattered Hand remnants remain at large in the world. Most are employed as guards for the wall, tasked with maintaining the safety of Isild. Any warrior not employed on the wall is usually a mercenary looking to be hired by someone from the south. They will often go to the few buildings that've been erected outside of the wall, usually taverns and inns frequented by travelers not granted passage into Isild. For this reason, mercenaries are the prime export of the city.

DRAGONHEART (Central Trading City, 175,248)*"Here we stand until his beckoning comes."*

Governed primarily by the Kurzar family, Dragonheart sits at the base of Mount Kurzen. Other than the capital, it is one of the largest cities in Isild. Many religious and national festivals and holidays occur in Dragonheart due to its position on the Dragonheart Lake. The primary export of this city is furs, which are supplied by the hunters that call Dragonheart home. Most importantly, Dragonheart is the primary base of Kurzen's Guard, who are ever preparing the city for Kurzen's Beckoning and the chaos that is sure to follow.



NOTABLE LOCATIONS

MOUNT KURZEN: Mount Kurzen is located in the center of Isild on the shores of Lake Dragonheart. It is the tallest mountain in the world and kept under the close watch of Kurzen's Guard, who are the only ones allowed to climb the higher reaches of the mountain other than the royal family. Mount Kurzen is the epicenter of the inexplicable event known as Kurzen's Beckoning, which calls forth hundreds of monstrous creatures to the mountain for an unknown reason.

DRAGONSTONE CITADEL: Dragonstone Citadel is the home of the Dark Knights. Composed entirely out of dragonstone, this impressive structure houses the upper crust and leadership of the Dark Knights, along with their most prized artifacts and writings. It is found on the northeast peninsula of Isild east of Coldwood. Isild lost this peninsula during the Darkest War, making the journey to the stronghold a perilous endeavor. The Dark Knights have begun to clear out the territory surrounding the Citadel in an attempt to reestablish control and order in the region.

JUNON'S REST: Junon's Rest is located on the northwestern shores of Isild in the Palewind Crest mountains. Much like the Dragonstone Citadel, Junon's Rest is in a region of Isild that the nation lost complete control of during the Darkest War. The structure itself is a fortress manned by Dark Knights which protects Junon's final resting place. Priests and clerics of Junon often pilgrimage to this site to pay homage to her and pray.

CAPE SHRINE: Cape Shrine is a temple built entirely of rimesteel that is devoted to the goddess Irilynshae. Located on the northern coast of Isild, the most common way to reach Cape Shrine is to take a boat from Wintyr. The temple is regularly inhabited by priests of Irilynshae, but none stay here for long on account of how incredibly cold the temple tends to be.

STONE HALLS: Stone Halls is a forgotten dwarven outpost in the Sentinel Mountains found on the southern end of Isild. The halls contain an ancient rimesteel mining facility that was lost years ago during the last Kurzen's Beckoning. Stone Halls was overrun by swarms of huge, subterranean insects, and vicious beasts who still lurk in the remnants of the mines to this day.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

- You are caught in a snowstorm while traveling between cities in Isild, and soon discover that the source of the storm is not natural.
- You hear rumors of a rare white stag in the forest. The pelt of such a creature would fetch a fortune, if sold.
- A village was found ravaged by a herd of wild beasts. You have been asked to hunt them down and prevent them from killing anyone else.
- You've been tasked to seek the Dark Knights for help. Traveling to Dragonstone Citadel will be difficult enough in and of itself, but convincing them to help with little or no coin may prove to be yet the greater challenge...





LEYATHAR

"We are the shining beacon of hope."

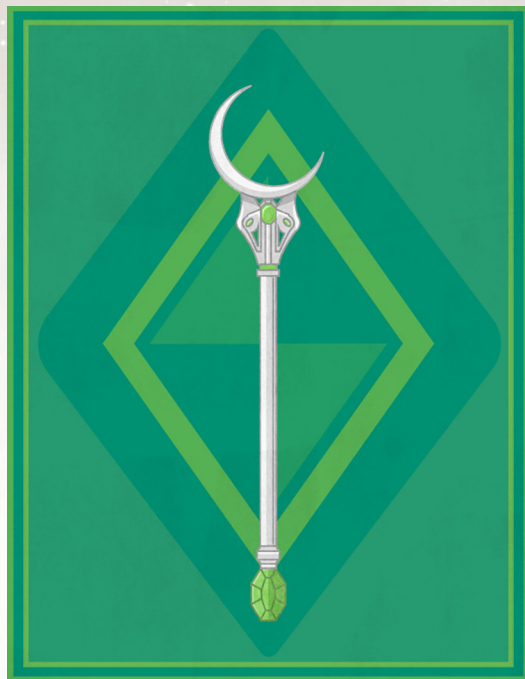
THEN AND NOW

Leyathar stands alone as the only nation on Vathis who has yet to sign the Vathis Accords. The former great empire has decided to remain neutral in international political affairs, and is instead focused on regaining strength and supporting their capital city, Synethil. This city is the largest floating mote in the world, and some say the city is the physical embodiment of the potential of magical engineering. Her streets are pristine, clean, and protected by enchanted golems. She boasts three schools of worldwide renown devoted to three facets of magical learning: one for the arcane, one for the divine, and one for the natural. The majority of Synethil's buildings appear to be supported by magic, and travelers are often confused when they enter a foyer larger than the building itself, as the internal dimensions of most structures are larger than the space their external dimensions occupy. Leyathar possesses close ties to the Vibrant, and the center of Synethil is one of the few places where it is easy to achieve plane-fall. Many nations wish to gain the favor of the Arms of Leyathar, the nation's reestablished government led by High Templar Syvesia zi'Selenir and Archfaer Kernaroth zi'Aleanzae. Nations seeking favor often bring relics

from fallen Leyathar in the hopes that Leyathar will lend them use of their military, which has perfected combined-arms combat where magic and steel are used in tandem with frightening precision. Leyathar's rapid land recovery and strong internal focus have placed them in a position of power that few have seen since long before the start of the Darkest War.

Shortly after the Age of Black Frost, in a location on the shores of Lake Zondernya where the boundaries between the Material Plane and the Vibrant are weak, inuzen began the construction of a city on a large, lush delta. These inuzen offered peace and shelter to the tribes of local elves living under constant attack from vae'rin of the Evernight. The local elves and inuzen came together to protect and defend the city they called home. The city of Synethil grew exponentially within its walled protection, and the elves, already possessing an affinity for the arcane, studied and gathered magical knowledge despite the waning of the Ether. Within fifty years the territory of Synethil encompassed much of the land surrounding Lake Zondernya. Avisage, Roseweir, Luntharos, Malanore Keep, Osidolar, and Hulast Castle rose during this time. Separated by a great distance, these cities were brought together under the leadership of an inuzen priestess named Syvesia, who dreamed of uniting the region in the face of the vae'rin Night Raiders from the Evernight. Syvesia discovered the ancient magical art of the Lunate, a magic which draws strength from Farilis and other celestial bodies. Under her enlightened leadership





LEYATHAR

"Unity, Peace, Strength"

COLORS: Green, Silver

BANNER: Moon Scepter

POPULATION: 1,148,960

CAPITAL: Synethil

GOVERNMENT: Magocracy

LEADER(S): Archfaer Kernaroth zi'Aleanzae, High Templar Syvesia zi'Selenir

LANGUAGES: Leyarish, Farlish, Vavalish

NOTABLE EXPORTS: Knowledge, Magical Goods

DEMONYM: Leyarish

LITERACY RATE: 99%

Leyathar threw off the Night Raiders and began to rapidly expand, coming into contact with a variety of cultures in the process. The majority of these pockets of civilization willingly joined the Leyarin Empire. Scouts from Synethil reported fledgling city-states had banded together under the banner of Venoch, and trade and diplomacy between the two young nations was swiftly established. Leyathar came to the aid of Venoch against the Night Raiders a short time later, and Venoch officially allied with Leyathar for continued protection. Goblinoids from the deep forests nearby formed the Everhorde and began to assail cities belonging to Leyathar and Mythrayne. The two nations joined forces to rebuff the goblinoid threat. These acts of diplomacy inspired the world's first collaboration of nations, an unofficial empire composed of Elessar, Leyathar, Mythrayne, and Venoch. Using the Lunate, priestess Syvesia erected a protective shield over Synethil, and people from far and wide flocked to Leyarish borders in the pursuit of better lives.

For a long period of time the still-fledgling Leyathar was beset on all sides by the giants' Army of Ice, the vae'rin Night Raiders, and the goblinoid Everhorde. These collective conflicts would come to be known as the First Night Wars. The four armies of Leyathar united to fight these wars, creating a massive force of trained soldiers. Syvesia utilized their unity to create the Arms of Leyathar, six items possessing internal intelligence with the capability of choosing their wielders. The first of these arms, the Moon-scepter, was wielded by the High Templar Syvesia herself as the primary administrator of the Leyarin Empire. The next two of the Arms, the Staff of the Sun and the Staff of the Stars, were created for the two Archfaer's, the first staff for offense and the second staff for defense. The Shieldblade of the Overseer was created for the individual overseeing the empire's internal defense, and the Starsword of the Grand Vicar was wielded by the leader of the empire's faithful. The last of the Arms, the Skyhammer of the Exalted

Marshall, was held by a dwarf who saw to the overall protection of the realm. These items were given to these chosen members, and the Leyarin Empire was officially established.

The armies of the Evernight crumpled under the assaults from the High Templar's forces, and the Leyarin Empire found a lasting peace. The golden age of the nation came to fruition and reached heights unknown when Syvesia petitioned the leaders of Mythrayne for the construction of a vast road network composed of impervious dragonstone. An agreement was struck, and tireless construction of the famous Gilded Road began. Although considered to be a time of peace for the whole of the empire, chaos abounded in the city of Synethil. House Starlyn was uncovered as the perpetrators behind a string of racially-motivated murders targeting races other than inuzen and elves. All members of House Starlyn were exiled from Leyathar, and so they traveled to the Evernight where they met a group of like-minded vae'rin who taught their mages the benefits of the Vile, a form of magic spawned from the evil of Vandiel's. By this time Leyathar had expanded to encompass all of the land between the Angylis Sea, the Feyne Sea, and the Sekois Ocean. The Angylis Sea became a vast waterway of wealth and prosperity, and Leyathar initiated trade with Darastrix, Osept, Tristan, Vavaire, and Washu. Mythrayne completed construction of the Gilded Road throughout the empire, and the dwarves then offered their services to the other nations of the world.

The peace in Synethil ended when the Leyarin Empire came under attack by the reformed Evernight armies wielding dark, untold powers. Their strikes initiated the start of the Second Night Wars. The vae'rin's vicious breakthrough brought the dark armies all the way to the steps of Synethil, where the fighting poured into the city streets. In the chaos of battle Syvesia fell to a vae'rin wizard, and she was locked in stone by strange Vile mag-



ic. Leyathar was taken aback by the ferocity of the vae'rin attack, and they mourned the loss of their founder. In the pandemonium the Moon scepter chose Syvesia's former protector, Felwyn, as the nation's new High Templar. He expunged the armies of the Evernight from Synethil. In a display of superb tactics the new High Templar encircled the Evernight's armies in the Narril Forest, located in central Leyathar, but his efforts proved to be for naught. The vae'rin mages cast spells of extensive Vile magic which lit the entire forest ablaze, and Felwyn quickly perished. The Evernight armies were consumed by the raging magic and the Narril Forest was destroyed, replaced by a dead desert where nothing would grow. The Second Night Wars ended in the sorrow, grief, and mourning.

A human of Elessar named Erin zi'Murghile was denoted the new High Templar after Felwyn's death. Erin immediately declared the Narril Desert a sacred ground, a gesture overwhelmingly supported by the empire. Her name is remembered to this day for dedicating the desert to the fallen soldiers. Over the course of the next forty years two more additional High Templars were appointed, as the stress of the position caused former Templars to give up the demanding title. The Moon scepter ended up in the hands of Arinoz, a human Elish prince. Arinoz displayed a great diplomatic folly, as he allowed the exiled House Starlyn to return to Synethil. The city was soon overcome with a mysterious sickness untreatable by clerics. The illness raged for a decade, and over one hundred thousand lives were claimed.

The Night Wars began anew for the third time as whispered reports of vae'rin within the forests of Leyathar were proven to be true. The Army of Ice and the Everhorde reformed under vae'rin leadership, and the vae'rin themselves seemed to have mastered the art of demonic summoning, as a number of extraplanar creatures joined the ranks of their armies. The combined dark forces united under a shared banner and called themselves the Night Descendants. The conflict turned against High Templar Arinoz as he made a number of tactical blunders, and he was soon assassinated by an unknown entity. The Moon scepter of the High Templar was lost upon his death, and Elessar mourned the loss of their prince. The lack of central leadership left the empire reeling, and Leyathar unraveled under the internal tension as the Night Descendants continued to rain death upon their holdings. Leyathar chose to rally around Tiriarez Ashera, a female elf born and raised in Synethil. With mages at her command she turned the war for survival into a war of attrition, and her forces eventually broke the strong lines of the Night Descendants, pushing them deep into the northeastern reaches of Leyathar, ending the third Night War.

Tiriarez was murdered at the hands of a vae'rin assassin. The assassin escaped, but not before killing the Exalted Marshall as well. Both the Skyhammer of the Exalted Marshall and the Leyarin Empire's battle plans for the Night Wars were stolen. The Night Descendants acted on the acquired intelligence of their enemies, and they rallied once more for a final assault, beginning the war anew for a fourth time. Leadership of the empire was granted to the Grand Vicar, Kayle Arugu, a native of Venoach. Kayle turned the tide of battle and began to evacuate those living in war-torn Leyarin regions to Elessar and Venoach. She called for the abandonment of the northern Mythrene cities and portions of the northern

regions of Leyathar, as the front lines of battle inched precariously close to Synethil. The Night Descendants pushed to the walls of Synethil yet again and they lay siege to the city, but the Lunate shield prevented major assaults from crossing the city's walls. The people of Synethil, under constant siege, lived in a decade of fear.

The inuzen of Synethil attempted pulling magic through the planes to grant additional protection to the Lunate shield. Their work was long and tiring but ultimately successful, and the founts of power flowing into the city from the Vibrant prevented the Night Descendants from entering the empire's capital. House Starlyn made their allegiance known in a horrifying display of betrayal, however, as members of the house opened Synethil's gates and removed the protective shield in a coup. Kayle died on the city streets, and the Archfaer of the time retreated to the Sanctuary of Stars in fear. The fighting took a harrowing toll on the city before the Night Descendants were finally rebuffed and the city's defenses reactivated. Some of the Starlyns were killed in the fighting, but a number of important Starlyn figures disappeared without a trace. In a surge of strength the army of Leyathar pushed the Night Descendants back to Narril, and the fourth Night Wars came to a close.

Though some speculated that yet another war was looming on the horizon, this potential war would not come to pass, as what would eventually become known as the Great Collapse displaced Synethil. This catastrophic event separated the Vibrant from the Material Plane, and the majority of Synethil found itself shunted into the Vibrant in response. Many portions of the city were left behind to eventually become ruins. The forests of Leyathar became wild and grew rampantly as the fey essence seeped into the Material Plane where the planar wounds were raw. The Great Collapse even managed to further separate magic from the world, limiting the mages and sorcerers of Vathis to weaker and weaker spellmanship. The Leyarin Empire did not survive the sudden disappearance of its capital city, and the nations comprising the empire quickly dissolved into separate sovereign nations as vae'rin incursions ravaged and destroyed the remaining cities and towns located near the empty place where Synethil was once whole and grand.

Synethil arrived on the Vibrant relatively intact, having been protected by the saving grace of Syvesia's shield. Under the leadership of the remaining Archfaer, Flarenæ Elerick, the people of Synethil immediately set out to rebuild and explore their new world. They were dismayed to find that they made planefall in a location set between two warring Radiant Regents engaged in a battle of territorial conquest. The conflict had reached a stalemate between the armies of a sub-nation of fey trolls, the two Radiant Regents, and the arachnar population of the deep forests. The sudden arrival of the city upheaved the Vibrant's delicate balance of power, and Synethil was approached by diplomats representing all of the warring factions. Each attempted to sway the city-state to their cause. Archfaer Flarenæ masterfully played the factions against one another to the benefit of the city. Riches and resources flowed into Synethil's coffers, and the displaced people began to make a true home on the foreign plane.

Three hundred years on the Vibrant came to pass. Archfaer Flarenæ decided that the Vibrant would become the city's



permanent home, and he ceased all research into returning to the Material Plane. This decision created a large rift among Synethil's populace, and the Archfaer outlawed all research into planar travel under penalty of exile in response. This harsh governance served to create a revolution of like-minded individuals building in the city's underbelly. These revolutionaries were primarily those loyal to Syvesia and the inuzen of Synethil. They began to call their faction the Fae'ranore, and they were led by Taerntym zi'Aleanzae and his wife, Ikeshia. The revolution, which had gone on peacefully and covertly for quite some time, turned violent quickly as the Archfaer's enforcers moved against the revolutionaries. The magical forces involved in the assault nearly destroyed an entire city block in the center of the city, and many of the insurgents lay dead. Taerntym and Ikeshia were among the fallen.

Leadership of the Fae'ranore was taken up by Taerntym and Ikeshia's son, Kernaroth, a promising mage. He delved into the banned research with a fervor. Ayrious, one of Kernaroth's childhood friends, turned against his own parents and their support of the unjust Archfaer and established an intelligence network for the Fae'ranore. This network of high-placed contacts quietly turned the city against the Archfaer as Kernaroth's planar research began to bear fruit. Menacing whispers from beyond the city threatened Synethil's walls and served to feed the city's inner turmoil. This all boiled over in a grand conflict as the armies of the Radiant Regent, self-imposed leaders of the Vibrant, marched on Synethil to stake their claim, and the revolutionaries struck against the Archfaer in an opportune moment. Kernaroth and Ayrious moved against the Archfaer in tandem. Ayrious successfully assassinated the diplomat of the Radiant Regents, and Kernaroth defeated the Archfaer in a magical duel. Choosing to unite under the first truly impressive show of magic seen in centuries, the city hailed Kernaroth as their new Archfaer, and Kernaroth's magical ritual to return Synethil to the Material Plane completed in the midst of the madness. The city warped and twisted as it left behind the armies of the Radiant Regents, and soon Synethil materialized in a vacant clearing, resting on the Material Plane at long last.

The city of Synethil appeared on the Material Plane precisely where it originally stood, but this time the whole of Vathis was locked in a struggle with the forces of the Vandiel's known as the Shattered Hand. Synethil was alone in the Darkest War with no close allies and little modern knowledge of the world. Archfaer Kernaroth had foreseen this event, however, by keeping in contact with members of an organization called Legion through complex magics. Legion immediately sent an envoy to the newly returned city. Synethil arrived with one thing desperately needed by the people of Vathis—wielders of powerful magic. The troops of the city were mobilized for battle and foreign magic users flocked to Synethil for training, eventually turning the tide of battle against the armies of fiends. Synethil also helped Legion develop portable vaedric shield generators which prevented extraplanar creatures from entering or exiting key locales. These shields were used to halt the advances of the Shattered Hand.

Two Vandiel lords named Zelkoz and Arrissa traveled to the ruined portions of Synethil that were left evacuated and empty in the Great Collapse. For an unknown reason they abandoned their campaigns of destruction and remained in the city, deciding to at-

tack the shielded portion of the magical haven with a never-ending volley of fierce assaults. Synethil resisted their offense but did not fight back, having scattered their troops to the four winds to help the people of Vathis. Airship travel became the only way safely into or out of the city. Leyathar's army joined a coalition composed of Mythrayne, Tristan, and Venoch, and together the four nations destroyed the Vandiel Karwytren in the northeastern territory of the greater Leyarish region. The Vandiel's resulting death knell turned roughly a third of the area into the Manastorm Chain, a dangerous body of water wracked by ether storms. Leyathar then went on to commit a significant number of troops to Aevalyn's 1000, the soldiers responsible for successfully constructing Aevalyn's Wall around the kingdom of Vavaire and putting an end to the Darkest War.

In the years following the Darkest War, the newly reformed nation of Leyathar was granted a seat on the Council of Vathis, even though Archfaer Kernaroth refused (and continues to refuse) signing the Vathis Accords, not agreeing with some of their more restrictive decrees. The Archfaer kept very close ties with his fellow members of Legion, as well as with the leadership of Isild, New Vavaire, and Sillirai. Trade agreements with the aforementioned nations granted Synethil a level of notoriety and wealth in the material world, giving Synethil the means to truly take back their city. The Archfaer turned his focus on the internal threat of the two Vandiel's inhabiting the destroyed portions of Synethil, and Ayrious and the Fae'ranore led expeditions into the surrounding areas to search for lost artifacts from the Leyarin Empire. Instead the Fae'ranore found evidence of plots by House Starlyn to reestablish themselves in Synethil through a variety of nefarious means. Ayrious and his team successfully discovered the location of the Moon scepter of the High Templar, and they used the Scepter's innate abilities to free Syvesia from the stone prison she inhabited for centuries, returning to Leyathar the greatest leader the nation ever knew.

In the aftermath of Syvesia's return the staves of the two Archfaer's were found as well. The Staff of the Sun was given to Archfaer Kernaroth, and the Staff of Stars was given to his wife, Ivelythe. The two utilized these staves in a battle for control of the city, destroying one of the Vandiel's within the ruins and forcing the other to flee. The resulting backlash of energy from Arrissa's death forced Syvesia to utilize Synethil's last defense, the full might of its shield, which empowered the shield to its maximum capacity and granted the city the ability to take flight. Synethil now resides one thousand feet in the sky, lazily drifting around its original location.

Due in large part to Vavaire's return, Leyathar once again possesses powerful allies. An allegiance of four sovereign nations—Isild, Leyathar, Sillirai, and Vavaire—was created to protect against outside threats. Syvesia keeps a close eye on the imperialist Tristan to the north, as well as the slaving and greedy nation of Osept to the south. The High Templar is wary of unlawful adventurers delving into Leyarin ruins in the search of lost artifacts belonging to the dissolved empire. Leyathar is diplomatically distant from many nations, and chooses not to meddle in affairs taking place outside of the country's bounds. Syvesia and the Archfaers are in talks with Mythrayne and Venoch in the pursuit



of reestablishing old ties and agreements, and so far the diplomats have been successful in negotiating mutually favorable terms.

ECONOMICS AND INDUSTRY

Exports: Knowledge, Luxury goods, Luki'taer wood, Magical goods, Magical reagents, Vibrant spices, Vibrant tobacco, Vibrant liquor, Vibrant agriculture

Imports: Airships, Eldria, Leyarin artifacts, Vaedric Technology

Leyathar, and the city of Synethyl in particular, is in a unique position when it comes to trading with other nations. The internal magical aura of the city allows for a number of impressive magical advances, meaning that Synethyl has no need to import the base necessities as other nations do. Food, water, and mundane goods are all provided magically within the city, though Synethyl imports many other goods from outside of Leyathar's borders. When it comes to international trade affairs, Leyathar is the primary location where magical goods and knowledge can be attained. Outsiders travel great distances to view Synethyl's wonders and delve into the depths of her libraries to peruse the information contained therein.

Much of Leyathar is run by powerful individuals and influential groups. The nation's magical goods are created by artisans along the wide thoroughfares of the city, and they are either sold within the city's walls or exported to outsiders. Oftentimes these magical artisans are contracted for custom pieces by powerful travelers and outsiders to fulfill a specific purpose. Some of the most interesting luxury magical goods come out of the Sanctuary of the Stars, created by the students within. The sale of these goods allow the school to accept outsiders for inexpensive or completely free education, though the school is notoriously critical of their applicants. Leyathar's luki'taer lumber operations are one of the few industries within the city controlled by one company alone: the Wildfire Lumberers.

CULTURE AND CLIMATE

The people of Leyathar are primarily inuzen or ele'rin with features that betray their extended Vibrant stay. The Leyarish are rich in history and saturated in magic in nearly every aspect of their daily life. They frequently come off as haughty and disconnected. In light of the Vandiel's remnant death energy pervading many areas of the world, and with more active cults following Vandiel's than ever before, the esoteric knowledge of the Leyarish is sought after by many. While some Leyarish are quick to assist outsiders visiting their city, most are hesitant to involve themselves in what they believe to be solely external affairs, as they are afraid of getting involved in conflicts with the potential to become larger, unwieldy issues.

The Leyarish are no strangers to the effects and influence of unbridled magic. Nearly every aspect of their lives are steeped in the arcane, from extradimensional buildings and impossibly supported structures to lit and heated pathways and city-wide prowling Eldritch Protectors. These oddities may be disconcerting to visitors, though many who come to Synethyl wish to stay forever and loathe having to leave the grand city to return to the mundane

world of their birth. In general the Leyarish possess a one-for-all mentality, where every member of the city is obliged to assist the city as a whole in the best way they can. The inhabitants of Synethyl are often free to become researchers, warriors, creators, and adventurers, pursuing their dreams and loftiest goals and skills for the betterment of their country. If anything is to be remarked upon in regards to the Leyarish, it is their ability to unite in the face of a common foe and protect one another regardless of societal station.

The climate of Leyathar is wet and moderate with gentle springs and chilly autumns. The nation experiences a full range of weather, and it is not unusual for Leyathar to suffer endless rains in the summer and deep fluffy snows in the winter. Climate extremes have been magnified in recent years on account of the Vibrant's planar seepage. However, the grand luki'taer trees shield much of the country from the effects of powerful winds originating from the nearby seas and ocean. In the years following the Darkest War it has become somewhat common for ether storms to roll through the nation's northeast, ravaging the landscape with the formidable power of natural disaster infused with magical energy. Synethyl itself is protected by the city's innate shield, but the newer reclaimed settlements of Leyathar do not share this luxury.

Leyathar is magically rich, and this arcane affinity is found in the flora and fauna of the nation. The influence of the Vibrant is extensive, and extraplanar energy has become the dominant force in the area altering plants and animals alike. The great luki'taer forests glistens in a vast array of beautiful colors under the glow of Farilis, and natural luminescence is found in a variety of wildflowers dotting the forest floor. Strange glowing creatures unknown to the rest of the world make the great forests of Leyathar their home, and the area is rife with lush wildlife, much of which is territorial and hostile by nature.

The history of Leyathar is layered with a near-infinite number of important events and locations, many of which stood the test of time as the years without Synethyl wore on. Dotted among the country's landscape are ancient castles and holdfasts from the time of the Night Wars. Most of these strongholds are now claimed by creatures, roving bandits, or factions looking for a place to settle. Leyathar also possesses a vast network of connections to the Evernight, making the country a prime target for raids by the vae'rin who reside in the soil below. Lake Zondernya is the largest freshwater lakes in the world, and it supplies water to all of Leyathar. Another important location is the Narril Desert, considered by many to be a holy land, which contains the remains the greatest force ever assembled by Leyathar.

POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT

Leyathar boasts two leaders. The first is Archfaer Kernaroth zi'Aleanzae, an ele'rin man elected to the position while the city still resided on the Vibrant. His rule has been fair and straightforward, and he is known for his calm demeanor and even hand. The Archfaer keeps many friends in high places, and he possesses an uncanny knack for ending up personally involved in important events taking place from coast to coast, regardless of their relevance to Leyathar. The other ruler of Leyathar is the nation's original founder, Syvesia zi'Selenir, an inuzen with natural arcane ability and power in the realm of the divine. Her rule is like that of



a protective mother. She seeks prosperity for her people, and she fiercely defends against outside threats. She is becoming acutely aware of the difference between this new world and the world she was born in. Syvesia is wise, and many seek her guidance.

Syvesia and Kernaroth share the same goal, which is to bring Synethil and Leyathar back into the fold of the international world. They aim to be a paradigm of virtue in a world which seems to have forgotten its humanity. The two are currently focusing on recovering important artifacts from the Leyarin Empire, particularly the Arms of Leyathar, which would allow Synethil to take full control of its might and power, something Syvesia was never able to accomplish during her time as High Templar. She and Kernaroth do disagree, however, on their preferred methods of restoring Leyathar. While Syvesia would like to take a calm approach and bolster the city's internal abilities, Kernaroth does not mind playing external forces against one another for the gain of the nation. They both understand the virtues of their arguments, and the two have been working in tandem to reach satisfying compromises.

There exists a cabal of mages and researchers known only to Leyathar's government who are dedicated to expanding Synethil's arcane might. Called the Savants, this group owns an extensive headquarters located in the heart of Synethil which appears to be nothing more than a simple office. They remain unnoticed and unknown to the city's average citizens. Their magical research was crucial to Synethil's military efforts during the Darkest War, and in the years following the Savants have been exploring the depths of material world and building upon their research. They continue to advise Syvesia and Kernaroth on matters pertaining to the use of arcane military forces.

The nobility of Leyathar stretches back to days long forgotten. Many of the noble houses within the city of Synethil are direct descendants and heirs to fallen cities and holdings within the Leyathar Forest, though these families know they cannot hope to resettle their homelands just yet. Nobles in the nation are in charge of internal affairs, and they are assigned sections, streets, and even blocks of the city to oversee as their domain. Plots, rumors, and intrigue covertly shape the internal dynamics of the city, and outsiders frequently become embroiled in inescapable contests between houses. Some seek these conflicts out in the hope of profiting from the tensions between opposing nobles.

The government of the nation as a whole is a group of individuals elected by the Arms of Leyathar. Should the Arms of Leyathar ever be completely regained, the entire leadership of the former empire would be chosen by the self-determining items. Three of these artifacts have been discovered and appointed to Archfaer Kernaroth, his wife Archfaer Ivelythe, and the High Templar Syvesia. In turn, these rulers appoint the noble lines who enforces the laws and customs of the land. It is noted, however, that the leadership of the country could change at a moment's notice should the Arms of Leyathar deem their wielders unfit. The populace of Synethil is content with this agreement. They place great trust in the Arms of the Leyathar, and feel safe under the watchful guidance of impartial artifacts able to survey every aspect of life in Synethil through their pervasive magical enchantments.

The majority of the laws in Synethil are common sense laws which bar citizens from harming one another. Illegal acts

threatening the safety of the city as a whole are noticed by the shield that protects the city, and in event of serious threats wrongdoers are brought to justice by the Shieldarcane, a group of magically equipped guards flanked by arcane golems. Personal freedom is viewed as an undeniable right in Synethil, but serious crime is not tolerated. Inhabitants of the floating city are free to pursue whatever paths they wish, so long as their actions bring no harm to the rest of the nation's populace or to the city itself. Kernaroth and Syvesia's shared belief in personal freedom is the sole reason they have not signed the Vathis Accords. They are not willing to accept the law requiring all mages to register with the Eldritch House, as they strongly oppose it, finding this decree extremely oppressive and unnecessary. Syvesia permits the Vathis Sentinels to maintain an outpost on Synethil's airship docks, but the Sentinels are not permitted to uphold the laws of the Accords within the city itself.

Though Leyathar's military is significantly smaller than that of other nations, it is no less formidable than even the world's largest. Ele'rin and inuzen forces are trained in both martial and arcane studies, and some attempt to follow in the footsteps of High Templar Syvesia and learn the arts of the natural and the divine. Leyarish armies boast the use of combined arms tactics and unusual strategies native to the Vibrant. Their tight-knit ranks are known for their ability to adapt to any situation, battlefield, or unusual effect with relative ease, and they cut through opposing forces with minimal effort. Leyathar's arcane forces were vital to critical operations during the Darkest War, and they turned the tide of battle for the better. Within the Leyarish military there exists a specialty fighting force of elite warriors known as the Gallant, dedicated to protecting the realm of Leyathar from outside attack. They are trained in one art and utilized for a single purpose: to kill, as efficiently as possible.

Leyathar's international outlook is something of an enigma to the other nations of the world. The Leyarish military interceded in nearly every theater of combat during the Darkest War, but they have since withdrawn to Synethil and play a small role in the active affairs of their neighbors. Archfaer Kernaroth and High Templar Syvesia wish to keep Leyarish affairs a private matter, though the Archfaer frequently involves himself in the concerns of others. There are nations exempt to their unsociable attitude, however. Synethil boasts exceptionally positive relations with Sil'irai and Vavaire on account of their shared involvement in Legion during the Darkest War. The three nations have vowed to keep channels of diplomacy open, and they work in tandem to foster good relations among their peoples. Mythrayne has also been in contact with Synethil in recent years in the hopes of restoring ties from the old empire, and though diplomacy has been slow, the two countries manage to promote a sense of kinship. The same is true of Venoch, though to a lesser degree. The inuzen of Isild are given free leave to enter and Leyathar at will, and there they find themselves at home among the inuzen of Synethil. However, this is where the positive international relations end. The government of Leyathar is wary of Tristan to the north, primarily due to their outspoken views, and Darastrix is also a country watched closely by High Templar Syvesia and the Archfaers. The vasar lost much of their land holdings in the Darkest War, and could have their eyes on the territories of others. Leyathar is indifferent towards



Aurezia, Cypress, Erygis, Osept, Rancagesh, and Washu. This is not the result of ill will towards the rest of Vathis, but the consequence of the lack of diplomatic effort on the part of these nations to foster diplomacy and trade with the returned Leyarish populace. This will likely change in due time, but the pressures of the post-war world have left strenuous diplomatic endeavors at the bottom of some nation's list of priorities.

RELIGION AND TRADITIONS

Leyathar worships the Vath pantheon, reflecting what they believe to be the original true Deities and their aspects. They regard three goddesses in particular with great esteem: Astea, Irilynshae, and Aleydra. The worship of these Deities and the inuzen's cultural reverence of the Zodiacs composes the cornerstone of Leyarish culture. Magic, life, and the natural world pervade the beliefs of the Leyarish.

The Leyarish whisper a common saying before taking important actions: "Unity gives us strength." This saying refers to the belief that all life and creation are composed of the raw magical Ether, the power which ties living things together. It may also refer to the survival of Synethil through the combined might of the Leyarish and their impressive drive to endure. The city of Synethil celebrates a multitude of events and holidays throughout the year, and the first pays tribute to the Leyarish belief in harmony and collaboration. Known as the Grand Unification, this celebration commemorates the creation of the Arms of Leyathar and the unification of the Leyarin Empire of old. Another of these holidays is the Trinity, a day paying homage to their three core goddesses for the gifts they bestow upon the Leyarish. The Returning is a new observation which commemorates Synethil's return to the material realm. The last holiday, and possibly the most important to the Leyarish, is the Laniri. Synethil celebrates the Laniri with a bewildering display of magical talent coupled with a week-long celebration in honor of the Zodiacs, the Starcalled, the Deities, and High Templar Syvesia's birthday.

Many locations once important to the Leyarin Empire have been lost in the three centuries following the empire's fall, but those that remain are revered. First and foremost are the remains of Syvesia's physical statue, which imprisoned the High Templar for over five centuries. On every Grand Unification and Laniri the statue is dressed and adorned with various items from the peoples of Synethil, and they leave small gifts at the statue in exchange for good luck. Another site of note is the Winternight Temple, located in the center of Synethil. The open air multi-floor rotunda sits on the central island of the city, and it is the center of the Trinity celebration. The Winternight Temple is a holy place of Irilynshae and her worshippers pilgrimage to Synethil hoping to find her grace by praying at the temple. The last locale of import is the Holy Narril Desert. The remains of a former High Templar lie there alongside the countless causalities of the Night Wars. The desert has since become sacred ground and a resting place for the fallen of Leyathar, and many devout venture to the desert to view its vast splendor at least once in their lives. Lost are the birthplaces of previous leaders, planefall locations, and forts where treaties were once signed, now swallowed up by the Leyathar Forest in the absence of the empire.

INFLUENTIAL PARTIES

Relations between Leyathar and the Council of Vathis are tenuous at best due to the Council's insistence of the enforcement of the Vathis Accords. Synethil's leadership believes the Accords to be nothing more than laws to keep unbalanced power in the hands of those who already possess strength by restricting the freedom of the underprivileged. By refusing to sign the Vathis Accords, Leyathar has become an Outlaw nation, a status which calls Outlaws and Sky Dragons to the floating city's streets. Vathis Sentinel presence is kept to a bare minimum in Synethil, a city which sees more tourists than any other location in the world, though it is still required at the airship docks. CORE possesses no refinement facilities in the entire Leyarish region, for fear of what eldria might do to the Vibrant-infused landscape. They are forced to ship refined eldria to the city instead—a great inconvenience. Synethil houses only one airship refueling station situated near the city's massive airship docks.

SANCTUARY OF THE STARS: Standing as the world's foremost expert on esoteric knowledge and heights of magic unknown, the Sanctuary of the Stars acts as both a school of magic in Synethil and a vast source of knowledge accessible to a particular few. From masters to students alike, the Sanctuary of the Stars attracts people from all over the world, as they accept any application so long as proper payment is made. In this way they differ from the Eldritch House. The Sanctuary of Stars has recently expanded to Valiance, Vavaire, as a means of extending their font of talent. Currently Archfaer Ivelythe acts as the Head Matron of the school, and her only goal for the school is the reacquisition of lost Leyarish knowledge and recovery of abandoned holdings.

FAE'РАНORE: While the Fae'ranore's numbers remain small, their effectiveness cannot be underestimated. The government in Leyathar will often contact holders of artifacts to request their return, but if they refuse to trade for equal value, the Fae'ranore are sent to retrieve the items. Up until now the Fae'ranore have never been caught committing acts of theft, but their presence is a widely-known fact, and the scope of their work is hardly a secret. When not retrieving artifacts of note, the Fae'ranore acts as a first line of defense against external and internal threats to Leyathar. They seek to end Synethil's enemies before any real damage is done to the city or her inhabitants. This organization deals in intelligence, covert operations, and counterintelligence. The Fae'ranore is led by Ayrious zi'Faelant, a close friend of Archfaer Kernaroth.

GALLANT: Where the Fae'ranore fails, Gallant steps in. The Gallant are the elite arcane warriors of the Leyarish military. They are dispatched only to deal with direct threats to the continuing existence of Synethil. During the Darkest War they primarily acted to thwart the plans of the two Vandiel who took ruined portions of Synethil hostage, Zelkoz and Arrissa. In the post-war world they are utilized to defend Synethil from threats and plots within the Leyathar forest and beyond. Under normal operations they would be at the command of the Exalted Marshall, but since the Skyhammer is still missing, their current leader is Regent Marshall Kymil Feyrith, an inuzen native to Leyathar.

SAVANTS: The true identities of the Savants and the location of their headquarters is one of Synethil's best kept secrets. They



are in direct contact with the leader of Synethil, and they act under command of High Templar Syvesia. During their return to the Material Plane in the midst of the Darkest War their first directive was to discover everything they could about the realm they were returning to. The Savants primarily research the Vandiels and their followers, with a particular emphasis on the effects of a Vandiel's death knell on immediate surroundings. The Manastorm Sea has been fruitful in this regard, and the organization is currently looking into reversing its effects, as the destruction wrought by the death knell destroyed a large portion of ancient Leyathar.

LEGION: Legion keeps close ties to Synethil and the governments of Sillirai and Vavaire. Synethil originally backed the organization's research into the noir and their unbinding process, as well as the worldfall technique employed during Operation Salvation. Legion is currently training the Starcalled within Synethil and moving forward with clandestine research. This organization is especially interested in zodi'ite and its effects on the abilities of Starcalled individuals.

FROST CRESCENT: While Frost Crescent declared Winter-night Temple their primary base of operations, many of the organization's members operate within the Leyathar Forest attempting to wrest control of the woodland from the wild grip of the Vibrant. They protect travelers and adventurers from the fauna spawned by the Vibrant's influence on the region. They are often called upon to deal with vae'rin threats from the Evernight, and they keep a close eye on the Evernight's connections to the Leyathar forest. Frost Crescent is led by Kavrala zi'Nouvis, an inuzen.

DARK KNIGHTS: Synethil is home to one of the largest Dark Knight outposts on the eastern half of Asarus. The city's central location to various nations and dangerous areas paved the way for Synethil to become a profitable center for the Dark Knights of the region. The Dark Knights are employed to deal with problems too difficult or too far away for local law enforcement to handle. They work in tandem with other organizations to ensure the safety of specific goods or individuals, and they act as mercenaries for the various power groups in the region.

BLUEMOON HOUSE: The Bluemoon House offers pleasure and companionship. This organization founded a large base of operations Synethil for both the prestige the city offers and the visitors it attracts, much to the delight of the city's inhabitants. Some would be surprised to know that the Bluemoon House learns more secrets operating in Synethil than they ever did in Aurezia. High profile clients in Synethil tend to dabble in sensitive international affairs, and they spill their secrets to these hired companions.

BLUEWIND COMPANY: Synethil possessed few swift methods of contacting other nations until the Bluewind Company brought their operations into the city. They print a local newspaper, manage Bluewind connections, and broadcast the Leyarish branch of the Essel Tournament to listeners worldwide. The Essel Tournament in the city gained significant renown and a cult following in recent years for boasting ever-changing environments and beasts from the Vibrant. Prospective combatants come to Leyathar to train in the country's forests in the hopes of gaining an edge over their opponents.

CHURCH OF THE CRYSTAL WATCHER: The Church of the Crystal Watcher is popular in Synethil on account of Synethil's

open religious policies, vast abundance of zodi'ite deposits, and connections to the Vibrant. Their abrasive habit of preaching on street corners is restricted in Synethil, as preaching and petitioning is only permitted in designated public areas. High-ranking members of the church are thought to hold key positions in Synethil's leadership, but their identities remain unknown. The church is pushing for the integration of eldria into Synethil's magical might. Though the church continues to meet stern resistance from members of the city's leadership, they remain persistent.

VATHIS SENTINELS: The Vathis Sentinels of Leyathar patrol infrequently and act with significant reservation. They even approach the city's local guard for approval and assistance before apprehending known fugitives thought to be hiding out in Synethil. Their main base of operations exists in the base of the airship towers of the city, and their rare and explicitly permitted patrols in Synethil's streets are met with distrustful gazes. Though uncommon, it is not unheard of for local officials to grant the Vathis Sentinels conquest rights to the city for a specific purpose.

CORE: CORE's relationship with Leyathar is uneasy at best. High Templar Syvesia would be happy if CORE and eldria never gained any formal holding within the Leyarish region, as she is acutely aware of the devastation wrought by eldria in the once flourishing lands of their western neighbor, Vastua, now known as the Shardlands. The influence of the Vibrant on eldria at this time is also unknown, as eldria is not found on the Vibrant plane or in areas where Vibrant planar influence is felt. The cause for this is unknown, and CORE is desperate to learn why. High Templar Syvesia is also wary of CORE's close ties to Tristan, and she believes the organization to be nothing more than a mere puppet reporting to Tristan's government.

EXPERIENCING LEYATHAR

Nations composing the Leyarin Empire were the first to commission Gilded Roads, and the level of engineering involved in the roads creation can be seen in the intricate methods of its construction. While most nations simply possess the road itself, the early stages of the Gilded Road in Leyathar also boast a small stream built into the road on one side, allowing travelers the benefit of endless fresh water. However, unless one is traveling into the old ruins, the main method of travel into and out of Synethil is done by airship, which circumvents the dangers of the forest floor below. The nation's airships are guarded by their respective crews, and the ships of the Vathis Sentinels keep most safe from the sprawling wilderness below. The biggest threats to travelers in the region do not come from wild beasts, however. Synethil attracts all manner of people from citizens to Vathis Sentinels to Outlaws to Sky Dragons, and these travelers are not always bastions of kindness and pure motives. Personal vendettas between rival groups are often settled in the streets or the skies, and the city itself has become a melting pot of both mystical wonder and rising tensions.

Outside of the safe borders of the Gilded Road the planar infusion of the Vibrant has turned the nation's usually tame forests into a wild, inhospitable place filled with strange luminescent creatures. What was once a road dotted with outposts and inns from one Leyarish city to the next has turned into a line of heaping ruins coveted by squatting creatures. The Vathis Sentinels patrol



the skies, but this does not ensure the safety of airships, as a number of flying creatures native to the Vibrant have started preying on small, slow-moving airships. These beasts place considerable strain on the Vathis Sentinels stationed in the area, which is forcing the Sentinels to turn to mercenaries for assistance and protection.

Leyarish natives tend to be haughty and well-mannered, viewing the Vathis natives as beneath them. Nobles in particular use outsiders as pawns in their convoluted plots, and travelers often become embroiled in feuds between rival Synethil nobles without meaning to. Synethil's populace wishes for problems originating from outside of the city to remain external. It is socially unacceptable for outsiders to bring their problems into Synethil's streets, but when they do, citizens of the city enjoy watching drama and chaos unfold. The Leyarish look favorably upon most other races, particularly the ilder and the noir, as they view members of both races as unfortunate individuals caught in plots far larger than oneself.

Synethil's inhabitants are easygoing despite their arrogance, and they are usually willing to turn a blind eye to the actions of ignorant tourists. The city itself, however, is something they cherish dearly. The Leyarish despise those who would threaten Synethil, and they hold in high esteem the visitors who stare in awe at the grand Leyarish wonders. The Leyarish are wary of any vae'rin who venture into Leyarish domain. The special military force known as the Gallant is dispatched to remove the vae'rin presence in the area, though it is not unusual for Frost Crescent to attempt to sway the vae'rin to the side of good, per Irilynshae's teachings. The Leyarish are suspicious of Trists within their borders, and Oseptians are also viewed with skepticism due in part to Osept's slaving practices and culture of greed. A sizable portion of Rancan citizens are wilder races who were less civilized in the days of the Leyarin Empire, and grudges against their kind live on in many Leyarish hearts. Other than vae'rin, Leyathar possess no hatred towards any other races, and they allow any and all people to establish their own reputation within Synethil.

There is no place in the world more accommodating to adventurers than Synethil. Those willing to recover lost artifacts, discover hidden knowledge, and counteract nefarious plots can always find suitable well-paying employment in the city. The adventuring life calls to the citizens of Synethil as a method of both exploring the new world and honoring the old one. Leyathar possesses no shortage of forsaken ruins, lightless depths, and dangerous creatures for travelers to test their mettle against. The city of Synethil itself also lends to the life of dangerous intrigue and convoluted secrets, and some brave individuals make their names famous in the city streets without ever stepping foot into the nation's otherworldly forests.

Employment opportunities for adventurers working in Leyathar are nearly limitless. Synethil's leadership is always looking for zodi'ite deposits, mundane artifacts, and hints to the locations of the Arms of Leyathar. They also offer a sizable bounty for information pertaining to vae'rin plots. The city's nobility is on an endless quest for the allocation of additional wealth and power, which is often found in the ruins of the Leyarin Empire's past. The Vathis Sentinels seek third party agents to act through when the city does not grant their forces the freedom they need to pur-

sue criminals, and they pay well to have undercover agents on the streets. Also hiring are merchants, who tend to be on a constant lookout for new methods of obtaining wealth. They send adventurers to acquire rare reagents and discover new Vibrant flora and fauna within the nearby forests.

MAJOR SETTLEMENTS

SYNETHIL

"The Eternal City"

TYPE: Starcalled Influenced Historic Capital City

POPULATION: 1,127,485

LANGUAGES: All

VATHIS SENTINEL SCORE: 1

ECONOMY SCORE: 10

IMPORTS: Adventurers, Eldria, Mercenaries, Zodi'ite

EXPORTS: Ele'rin warriors, Literature, Magical items, Vibrant goods

ORGANIZATIONS: Bluemoon House, Fae'ranore, Frost Crescent, Sanctuary of the Stars

RELIGION: Vath Pantheon: *Irilynshae, Aleydra*

Synethil resides on a floating mote that once sat on the banks of Lake Zondernya, the capital of the Leyarin Empire. Decimated and sieged at the empire's height, Synethil was shunted to the Vibrant for centuries, imbuing its inhabitants with the latent energies of the Vibrant. Upon Synethil's return the city found itself in a world embroiled in a desperate fight for survival, one the ele'rin would take a grand role in. Synethil is a city on a floating mote which possesses an even taller mote at its center. Her citizens are steeped in both magic and history, and here the power of the Ether is quickly ascertained, as the city has worked impressive marvels with the might of magic alone.

The city of Synethil has always been a melting pot of cultures. The city is significantly larger than one would imagine, as the inside of buildings are larger than they seem due to the city's extensive use of extradimensional spaces. Synethil is kept meticulously clean by unseen servants, and every one of her inhabitants are provided for by the city's shield. Food simply appears on one's plate, though it cannot be removed from the city or else it disappears, and both climate control and protection are granted by the dome as well. Synethil's inhabitants want for nothing. Her citizens live in a series of impressive apartments in gravity-defying spires placed artistically around the city's districts, and arcane golems patrol her streets, keeping the peace in Synethil. Travelers have been flocking to the city since her return to witness the wonder of Synethil for themselves, and worshippers of Irilynshae have also been coming here in droves. This is because Synethil houses the Winternight Temple, the largest open-air structure devoted to the nature goddess. Some believe that the temple retains connections to the Vibrant and that it acts as a plane-fall during certain times of the year. The Winternight Temple is a multi-level tower structure with no walls or roof. Only columns hold the structure up.

The management of this city is done so from the Heart-



rim, the mote in the center of the city that houses the Sanctuary of the Stars and various government buildings and schools of magic. From there High Templar Syvesia, Archfaer Kernaroth, and Archfaer Ivelythe oversee the city and their goal of reestablishing the Leyarin Empire. The seven spires that make up the center of the city are surrounded by a rich garden on the Heartrim found just before the lifts that lead to the rest of the city, sitting in a ring on the edge of the rim. The airship docks in the south city of Synethil are patrolled by the Vathis Sentinels, the only place they're permitted to be. The city itself flourishes in terms of economy, as its entire trade is in luxury items. Fae'ranore is led from a hidden location within by Ayrious zi'Faelant, a confidant of Archfaer Kernaroth.

LEYATHAR WINGS

"Wings of Recovery"

TYPE: Staging Frontier City

POPULATION: 21,475

LANGUAGES: All

VATHIS SENTINEL SCORE: 1

ECONOMY SCORE: 5

IMPORTS: Adventurers, Eldria, Mercenaries, Raw metals, Stone, Wood

EXPORTS: Leyarish artifacts, Luki'taer wood, Vibrant goods

ORGANIZATIONS: Bluemoon House, Dark Knights, Fae'ranore, Frost Crescent

RELIGION: Vath Pantheon: *Irilynshae, Aleydra, Junon*

Leyathar Wings is a small military outpost built on a mote far larger than the settlement itself. The city is mainly situated around the old tower in the city's center that was held over from before Leyathar's fall. Leyathar Wings is Synethil's first major attempt to establish a staging ground for the purpose of surveying land and retaking old ruins. Most residents here are military, or colonizers from Synethil, who has put out a call to anyone willing to join their forces in retaking lost land, but volunteers are few.

The city is under a strictly regimented schedule as a frontier town. Children here are rare, and the city's only airship dock is within the ruins of the old tower and the sole way into or out of the city. Members of the Sanctuary of Stars have sought out additional zodi'ite to create a permanent teleportation circle to the ground below, but so far none has been found. There is no trace of any Vathis Sentinel presence within the city, or even at the airship docks. The people who live here are almost all Leyarish in nature, with few outsiders taking up a permanent residence within the city.

The city has become a stopping point for traders and Outlaws passing through the area for quick sale of goods and service. Leyathar Wings is ran by Myrodis Dyn, a member of the leadership of Synethil who was stationed here to oversee the establishment of Leyathar's presence in the region. Myrodis tends to keep a close watch on the city of Isotaur, even though he's been asked not to. He possesses a significant number of allies in the region in terms of Outlaws and Sky Dragons, who are willing to assist him in exchange for various magical items they can easily find in the ruins of the ancient Leyarin Empire.

ISOTAUR (Surface Vae'rin City, 140,689)

"A Shadow in the Sun"

Following the dissolution of the Leyarin Empire and the absence of Synethil from the area, the vae'rin of the Evernight moved in to inhabit an ancient fortification along the Lucia Mountains. Known as Isotaur, a significant number of vae'rin have taken refuge on the surface to create a staging ground for their assaults on Leyathar.

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

LAKE ZONDERNYA: Lake Zondernya exists simultaneously on the Material Plane and the Vibrant, and is considered an easy gateway between the two. The lake is home to all manner of exotic wildlife such as the rare and majestic Frostfire penguins.

NARRIL DESERT: The Narril Desert was created during the Night Wars by the Vile energies used by the vae'rin. This area has remained a desert for ages regardless of rainfall, and is the largest dead magic zone in the known world. As a religious site for the citizens of Synethil, a monument in the center of the desert is dedicated to those who died in the Night Wars.

FENSAIS CASTLE: Fensais Castle is gateway to the Vibrant. The entire keep rapidly switches between both planes, and its lower levels have never been fully explored on the Material Plane.

ENDLESS HALLS: The Endless Halls are magically enchanted to rearrange themselves as a defense mechanism. They were once a reliable pass between the Lucia Mountains that also touched the Evernight, and were enchanted to prevent the vae'rin from reaching the surface. This did not keep the vae'rin invaders at bay, however.

FAXENIA: The castle Faxenia stands between the Shardlands and Leyathar. Fortunately, the remnants of a magical barrier here prevents anything from the Shardlands reaching Leyathar. The bridge connecting Leyathar and the Shardlands is built from drag-onstone, which eldria is unable to grow on.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

- A kraken from the Vibrant has been seen in Lake Zondernya.
- Scouting parties of vae'rin have been seen roaming the forests of Leyathar.
- Something huge is moving beneath the surface of the Narril Desert.
- Ether storms are crossing the Lucia Mountains from the Manastorm Sea. They're wreaking havoc across Synethil.
- Undercover Vathis Sentinels have begun operating in Synethil without proper authorization.
- People have been seen flying the colors of House Starlyn. They're looking for something called the Dark Blade.





MYTHRAYNE

"You are a note, we are the song."

THEN AND NOW

Mythrayne is an ancient nation steeped in tradition and the customs of old. It is said that Mythrayne is the oldest country on Vathis, having stood before recorded history, but none alive can speak to its age. The nation is almost wholly composed of vast caverns within the Enzeru Crests, and these caverns are home to bustling cities and cozy grotto homes carved into the sides of the cave walls. Mythrayne's few surface cities are located in deep valleys which connect easily to the caves below. The dwarves who call the mountains home were at one time three mighty empires, of which Mythrayne is the last standing. Mythrayne's dwarves emphasize the importance of learning and studying their history to honor their ancestors, understand their mistakes, and avoid repeating those mistakes. The dwarves were among the first to embrace divine magic, and the nation's few statues of note are early depictions of the Deities. Also important to dwarven culture is the bardic tradition of *Jordensång*, the oratory arts of poetry and song. Songs and poems are found scribed onto pottery, archways, furniture, and anywhere else verse can be depicted. Somewhat unusual is Mythrayne's government, which is no longer a monarchy. Instead the

nation possesses a great council which convenes to discuss important national matters. Most dwarves serve in the military as a youth through adulthood, and others learn the trade of their family. All contribute to the betterment of society. Mythrayne is a resilient nation, and her valuable dwarven exports ensure her livelihood for the ages to come.

The dwarves are one of the oldest races found on Vathis. Long before recorded history their empire spanned the entire continent of Asarus, and they rose to the heights of organized civilization alongside the rancar races. The dwarves embraced divine and bardic magic, created written language, and learned the arcane arts, giving them a steep advantage over their enemies. The dwarves fought with their orcish and goblinoid neighbors for nearly a millennia, and eventually formed three smaller, tightly-run kingdoms in lieu of a large empire: Salskyn, Svartgrond, and Mythrayne. The tactical positions of these nations allowed the dwarves to survive and prosper in relative peace. The Mythrene were met with contention when they encountered the other sentient races of Vathis, and the newcomers treated the dwarves with suspicion and disdain. Only the vasar, great scaled warriors of pride and loyalty, allied with the dwarves. Together the two races weathered the great wars of the age, and the empire of Mythrayne grew and grew.

After centuries of attempted diplomacy, the dwarves - nally befriended the elves and the halflings. Humans were soon to follow. Mythrayne boasted a variety of allies such as humanoids of





MYTHRAYNE

“Wealth, Wisdom, War”

COLORS: Brown, Steel, Gold

BANNER: Three Mountains

POPULATION: 14,012,381

CAPITAL: Konungardra

GOVERNMENT: Mercantile Oligarchy

LEADER(S): The Council

LANGUAGES: Mythic, Vavalish, Leyarish, Sillarian

NOTABLE EXPORTS: Bards, Manufactured goods, Metals, Precious metals

DEMONYM: Mythrene

LITERACY RATE: 98%

all kinds, formidable giants, and monstrous races hostile to others. Their kind mastered the art of architecture and spread their literature to the other dwarven empires, reigning proudly as the most advanced race in the world. Little is known of the Age of Dragons, but the few surviving records tell of widespread attacks on the dwarves which plunged their empires into chaos. It is written that in the year 1200 AG, as zodi'ite rained from the sky for months on end, the dwarves withdrew from the surface. They retreated underground and thrived for another millennium in the shelter of caverns while the surface nations suffered the Age of Black Frost. The oratory art of bardsong, Jordensång, kept the legends and history of the dwarves alive during this time. Mythrayne emerged from their caverns hardly worse for wear, and they resettled the surface with the goal of reaffirming alliances and exploring the sunlit world they were forced to abandon.

King Gromnul III's diviner discovered other cities alive and well, and he sent envoys to these foreign lands offering much-needed aid and gifts of peace. The other two dwarven empires, Svartgrond and Salskyn, decided to defer to Mythrayne for leadership. Mythrayne effectively became a united empire once again. Both Svartgrond and Salskyn ceased their efforts at expanding, and they instead turned inward to focus on bettering their people. It was during this time that the dwarves of Svartgrond and the amari of Sillirai met. The two cultures exchanged many religious ideas, traded coal and steel, and Svartgrond even harbored Sillarian nobles during the western kingdom's period of political strife and internal turmoil.

It was shortly after the third millennium of civilization and the unification of dwarves that the king of the Mythrene Empire, High King Gromnul IV, developed a sigil. He fervently led his people into the Legacy Wars, believing himself fit to rule. During these brutal wars the fledgling nation of Elessar to the south came under attack by lizardfolk raiders originating from the

Bloodscorched Vale. The Elish turned to Mythrayne for assistance, and the dwarves came to their aid and sent men and supplies to Elessar, but this decision came at a high price: the frost giants in the northern reaches utilized this opportunity to turn against Mythrayne under the banner of the Army of Ice. The giants raided outlying dwarven settlements and forced many Mythrene holdings into ruin and abandonment. Mythrayne spent centuries at war against the giants and other monstrous races they once considered allies.

In the midst of these perils the vasar of Darastrix and the dwarves of Svartgrond entered a war for control over Winsor Valley, as both sides claimed to be the chosen children of the god Naugrix. The Svartgrond dwarves lost this war. Armies of giants, half-giants, humans, and duergar then attacked the dwarven nation of Salskyn. This makeshift army was put down and the duergar retreated back into the Evernight, leaving the other races of their combined force to fend for themselves. Salskyn banished all non-dwarves from their country and ceased relations with other races in response. Infamous King Gromnul VI of Jarofastr, who would come to be known as The Last King, ascended the throne of Mythrayne in the midst of this chaos. He enlisted Svartgrond to reclaim Winsor Valley and defeat the vasar, but in his folly he greatly underestimated their strength, and again the dwarves retreated to their caverns in defeat.

Not one to be beat, Gromnul VI attempted yet again to wrest control of Winsor Valley. This time he demanded full cooperation from Svartgrond and Salskyn. They declined, defying his orders, and their leaders brusquely warned him of his folly. The High King excommunicated their territories in response, and he then attempted to gain control of the two nations by force. Appalled and insulted, the satellite nations cut ties with Mythrayne, and Gromnul commanded his troops to march upon Salskyn in a show of force. Salskyn easily defended against the half-hearted assault. Gromnul was killed in this battle under questionable circum-



stances, and the fighting stopped as Mythrayne's forces willingly laid down arms.

After King Gromnul VI's folly the noble families of Mythrayne decided to abandon monarchy. Together they established a new order, a council system, which persists to this day. Sadly, it was not long after this time that Svartgrond went silent, and Mythrayne lost a beloved ally vital to their cause. Some of the kingdom's cities were found in ruins, and some were completely sealed off to the world. It is presumed, even today, that these dwarves fell prey to the local Evernight monsters and rampaging duergar population.

Some fifty years later Salskyn, having perfected their clockwork golem technology, agreed to open up their borders to Mythrayne once again. This agreement was purely in the interest of trade. Mythrayne obtained the knowledge of clockwork, and the dwarves used this to great effect in the Night Wars plaguing the lands of the Leyarin Empire. The vae'rin Night Raiders and the goblin Everhorde armies assailed Mythrene lands, but they were repelled by the impressive Salskyn inventions. The Night Wars waged on for years between periods of peace and prosperity, alienating the Leyarin Empire of which Mythrayne was a part of, and it was not until nearly a century later that Mythrayne heard rumors of Salskyn withdrawing their people into one great city. Scouts within the area reported that the formerly inhabited dwarven settlements had been overrun by a variety of monstrous races. Many believed that the once great Salskyn came under siege by the serpentine tribes also plaguing Elessar, but the truth would remain elusive for centuries to come.

Nearly fifteen years later Synethil vanished in the blink of an eye and magic weakened as a result of this event, known globally as the Great Collapse. Mythrayne's council looked outward to the rest of the world to solidify bonds and alliances, and they decided to expand the Gullevein internationally, known worldwide as the Gilded Road, which the dwarves initially built throughout Leyathar. These dragonstone routes allowed trade to bloom throughout the world. Utilizing these roads and calling upon alliances and the power of debt, Mythrayne expanded westward on the surface. Internally the dwarves moved deeper into the dark earth of the Evernight, which helped to compensate for their lacking holdings above. The dwarves sacked Kirmthrum city, found underneath the present-day Harrows, a former dwarven holding inhabited by the Evernight race of the teth serving aboleth overlords. The inhabitants were pushed out, and Kirmthrum city became a secret base of operations for the dwarves. The aboleth and teth attempted to reclaim this territory on multiple occasions, but they never gained a foothold.

Seeing a new war rage between Mythrayne's age-old ally Elessar and the less-favorable Washu, Mythrayne joined the battle on behalf of the Elish. The two nations united against their common foe, and this conflict became known as the Three Kingdoms War. Two decades of fruitless battle resulted in the Juthun Treaty, bringing an abrupt end to the fighting. It was advantageous timing, as a slow-moving plague began to take hold in Darastrix, and Mythrayne came to their aid with precious resources and medicines. The dwarves gave their scaled neighbors access to many of their old holdings, and they sent the holiest of their clerics and

priests to combat the terrifying illness. Vavaire also came to the aid of the Daras vasar, and it was their Starcalled that curbed the plague to a manageable malady.

All in Mythrayne was peaceful until the forces of the Evernight attacked the dwarves. This time their nefarious forces were focused, organized, and prepared. Armies of mauerkin, another Evernight race led by mysterious overseers, lay waste to the newest dwarven settlements as Mythrayne was woefully slow to mount an appropriate defense. It took Mythrayne's council multiple years to discover that the mauerkin were led by duergar overseers who traveled to the Enzeru Crests from the west. The duergar themselves were originally pushed south by marauding vae'rin, and they enslaved hives of mauerkin as they roamed. Mythrayne survived their campaign by flooding the caverns of the enemy and securing their remaining settlements. The people of Mythrayne then rebuilt. It was not until three decades later that the dwarves completed construction of the Gilded Road worldwide, and the influx of skilled laborers and engineers returning to Mythrayne led to a great boom in the country's mining operations. As these miners dug new tunnels they discovered grand dragon hoards deep within the earth amidst rich veins of gold, silver, and other precious minerals. The wealth the dwarves were able to mine from these veins allowed them to flourish with ease for several decades. Perhaps the greatest bounty found throughout these many operations were three petrified dragon statues at the source of the largest geodes, which the Mythrene managed to relocate to Jarofastr, Lophthaed, and Naugrix's Perch.

The wealth garnered from these amazing discoveries was placed in the hands of the Mythrene organization known as the East Angylis Company, who then utilized the gold to initiate prosperous trade agreements with most of the world's major nations. The EAC invested the majority of the wealth garnered from these agreements into the construction of defensive structures and ornate churches. The Mythrene still think of this time as a great renaissance for their people. Over the course of the next century the dwarves and Sillirai connected even further, exchanging culture, thousands of citizens, technology, philosophy, and art, aiding in the cultural advancement of both civilizations through means of Mythrayne's satellite settlements. Mythrayne lent the amari of Sillirai aid and support in their conflicts both internal and external, and the two countries banded together in the name of mutual prosperity and cultural advancement.

Mythrayne and Venoch's socioeconomic status fell over the following several decades due largely to the rise of CORE in Elessar and the organization's heavy ties to Tristan. CORE implored Mythrayne to allow them to move into the nation, but Mythrayne's council staunchly rejected this proposal, fearing the effects eldria might have within their dense network of caverns and tunnels. They remained steadfast in their position even as they rushed to aid Elessar against Washu in the Shadow Seas Wars. This broke out into a worldwide conflict called the First Empire Wars, and the Mythrene marched proud on the side of the Elish. They were heartbroken when their efforts proved futile, however, as Elessar was completely destroyed by the Washun in a cataclysmic event known as the Withering of Elessar. The world mourned the loss of a nation. In the post-war world Vavaire returned many an-



cient dwarven homelands to Mythrayne in exchange for a lucrative trade agreement, and for the first time in centuries the dwarves began to resettle their land holdings of their ancestors. Vavaire repaid Mythrayne double for their portion of the Gilded Road, and this great show of friendship solidified the dwarves loyalty to Vavaire, but this alliance was short-lived. Less than thirty years later Mythrayne ceased trading with Vavaire after finding themselves forced to pay heavy taxes the council never approved. Mythrayne cursed Vavaire's newfound leader, Emperor Aliskar, for soiling the good relations fostered by his predecessors.

Tensions between the nations of the world rose yet again as Vavaire spurned a number of nations, and the leaders of the world struggled to rebuild from the First Empire Wars. Rancagesh, Venoeh, Erygis, Mythrayne, and Aurezia entered into a military alliance which became known as the Federation. Once again the great nations of Vathis accused one another of espionage, deceit, and trickery. The Council of Mythrayne received word claiming that Emperor Aliskar of Vavaire had rounded up Astrian worshippers for untold purposes, and rumors of powerful spies and otherworldly magic spread on the lips of couriers and merchants. Mythrayne attempted to facilitate diplomacy and keep order on the Council of Vathis, but their efforts were once again useless, as the world rushed to war, born from disagreements between Vavaire and Tristan over a questionable tragedy. The Second Empire Wars began with a fervor unmatched, and Mythrayne helped Venoeh, Erygis, Rancagesh, and Sillirai lend-lease Tristan against the full might of Vavaire.

The Second Empire Wars raged until it was revealed that Vavaire was acting as a puppet of the Shattered Hand, a fiendish army led by Vandiels. The Vandiels, extraplanar entities of untold evil, were unlike anything else seen by the peoples of Vathis. Mythrayne immediately rushed to evacuate land holdings to the safety of the mountains and sent their soldiers out to war. A sizable swath of land north of Mythrayne was utterly destroyed and sunk beneath the ocean in the aftershock of the Vandiel Karwytren's death. His death knell turned the land into the Manastorm Chain, a series of small islands wracked by storm-like magical anomalies inhabited by strange, tainted creatures. The scope of this destruction forced Mythrayne to search for new sources of lumber and livestock. In a surprise move, Salskyn's capital emerged to come to the aid of Erygis. Together the Salskyn and Erygan forces drove away the Vandiel Monakxel with Salskyn's clockwork golems, a rare technology mostly lost to the sands of time and war. This army was the last of the old Salskyn kingdom, and the remaining dwarves from this battle were granted refuge in Mythrayne, now the last dwarven nation. Monakxel moved on to assault Darastrix, where he was eventually slain.

The dwarves rejoiced when the fiends were sent back through the portal of their emergence. Mythrayne fared relatively well in the Darkest War, and their engineers and builders were paramount in the immediate reclamation and restoration efforts. They rejoiced in the return of Vavaire, thought forever lost, and the dwarven council sought diplomatic ties with the restored nation's leadership almost immediately. The dragon statue found in Naugrix's Perch, retrieved from the depths of the earth long ago, came to life upon Vavaire's revival, heralding the return of the

dragons. The dragon in question caused some minor mayhem and destruction before flying away, and he was followed shortly by the other two of his statuesque brethren. Otherwise little has changed in Mythrayne since the Darkest War, and all nations are struggling to recoup their losses and repair broken ties.

In recent years the dwarves throughout Mythrayne are wondering what the return of the dragons could mean, and a zealous resurgence of Naugrix worship has begun. The loss of the largest Jordensång college has caused a mass migration to the college in Konungardra. The capital city is managing, but increased numbers have exhausted many of the nation's limited resources. Also garnered in the aftermath of the Darkest War is the truth behind the disappearance of the Salskyn dwarves, who emerged in Erygis at a vital moment. Their cities were ruined in battles and sieges carried out by serpentine tribes from the east centuries ago. After dwindling down, their people retreated to the capital city and lived in solitude. When the Withering of Elessar occurred it also affected Salskyn territories. The Salskyn dwarves then decided to return to the surface, but the wars of the surface world hindered their efforts until the day of their dramatic emergence. Their peoples easily integrated into modern Mythrene society, flooding churches, schools, and living quarters with family lines once thought to be forever lost.

Mythrayne rests in a state of flux. The East Angylis Company slowed their iron trade tremendously, and the Jordensång colleges are scattered and unorganized. Mythrayne lost many holdings outside of the Enzeru Crests, but the dwarves suffered minimal casualties throughout the Darkest War, and their numbers are bolstered by the remaining Salskyn. The original absence of Vavaire created a hole in the nation's economy, which was primarily filled by Synethil, Rancagesh, and returned Vavaire. Erygis helped as well, though to a lesser extent. The return of the dragons has shaken the church of Naugrix substantially, and worshippers are now divided, as some sects have broken out to form dragon-worshipping cults. Mythrayne is longing to reclaim territories returned by Vavaire and dig to the former Salskyn caverns beneath Elessar and Erygis. The Mythrene are also seeking to capitalize on the debts held by Aurezia, Cypress, Darastrix, Osept, and Tristan in the hopes of bolstering their economy with the foreign wealth. The Mythrene are listless, and they tightly cling to their centuries-old status as a stoic powerhouse, though none know where the future will lead the dwarves of old.

THE OLD KINGS OF MYTHRAYNE

In the olden times, it was considered taboo to call a Mythrene king by his first name, and so they are only recorded by their family name. The next in line was typically chosen by the current king, almost always their own son or nephew, except for the case of Austrid III, who was too young at the time and was instated only after Mildrerr's death. King Hraustlerg was the only king to obtain his station by removing the former king, Mannadri, with the aid of the king's own cabinet. Hraustlerg had no living children at the time of his demise and instead instated the son of his priest cousin, Abdeir Gromnul, a paladin of Naugrix. He was the first of what was considered one of the strongest dynasties in Vathis. These kings are revered in a historical sense, and honored for what they



accomplished in their time, but overall, the idea of kings seems dated to the dwarves of Mythrayne. The kings of recorded history are as follows:

- King Austrid I, 1518 - 1754 (The Exemplar King)
- King Austrid II, 1754 - 1890
- King Mildrerr, 1890 - 1943 (Old Stubborn)
- King Austrid III, 1943 - 2007 (The Prince-King)
- King Alvaem, 2007 - 2191 (King Lonesome)
- King Stormerik I, 2191 - 2335 (Father of Tempests)
- King Stormerik II, 2335 - 2480
- King Stormerik III, 2480 - 2604
- King Mannadri, 2604 - 2687 (The Most Unfair)
- King Hraustlerg, 2621 - 2687 (The Just Usurper)
- King Gromnul I, 2687 - 2766 (First Greatness)
- King Gromnul II, 2766 - 2911
- King Gromnul III, 2911 - 2999 (He Who Led Us From The Night)
- King Gromnul IV, 2999 - 3137 (The Starcalled King)
- King Gromnul V, 3137-3208
- King Gromnul VI, 3208 - 3301 (Gromnul's Folly)

ECONOMICS AND INDUSTRY

Exports: Chains, Herbal medicines, Gloskid, Manufactured goods, Mushrooms, Musical instruments, Obsidian carvings, Ore, Perfumes, Stone sculptures, Weapons and armor

Imports: Eldria, Glass, Grain, Livestock, Lumber, Textiles

The dwarves discovered how to create 'living' creatures similar to golems from simple machines, and they constructed all manner of clockwork beings in their prime. Starting small with beings like homunculi, the dwarves of old eventually boasted possession of war machines capable of mowing through entire battalions. Clockwork rollers were a standard for dwarven battle. Mythrayne also made use of the technology for common things such as lifts, but the clockwork was costly, and thus only utilized in the greatest of dwarven strongholds. The creation of the war machines and golems were a specialty manufactured by the Salskyn dwarves. Some of these clockwork pieces can still be found wandering underground, and they fetch quite a pretty penny when presented to the dwarves for sale. Gloskid, a faintly glowing wood, is another commodity found only in Mythrayne. The gloskid trees grow in damp and dark areas. They do not give off a natural illumination, but when the bark is penetrated, stripped, and properly prepared, it lightly glows. This strange wood is considered a luxury commodity, and it can be found in high-quality wands and staves. Gloskid is often utilized as guiding light when a torch would be undesirable. When fashioned into weaponry, the wood retains its glow. The southern Enzeru Crests contains a large source of this wood. Konungardra is the country's main supplier of gloskid, with Brimskir's exports close behind.

Mythrene steel and metalwork are recognized as some of the best in the known world. The dwarves maintain a firm grip on the arms and armor trade tempered by millennia of experience, but a recent shortage of their high-quality iron has driven price and demand skywards. The truth behind the shortage is a carefully calcu-

lated falsehood: important parties in control of the nation's mines have been limiting iron production in the hope of forcing other nations to make their late payments for the Gilded Road. Magma chambers and pyroclastic flows underneath the nation have created a lucrative business of obsidian and volcanic glass collection. The volcanic eruptions of ages past left the surrounding lands extremely fertile, giving life to unique herbs and plants only found in the region.

Mythrayne is home to a number of notable companies and figures. The first would be the organized colleges and collection of Jordensång bards, who profit greatly from the manufacture of high-quality instruments. Based out of Jarofastr is the Gorrstal Brood, a company which controls the majority of iron mining and steel production in Mythrayne. The Gorrstal own roughly two-thirds of Mythrayne's mines. They are led by Broodmaster Hafstal zi'Jarofson, a two-hundred-year-old dwarf who inherited the company from his father, the founder of the Gorrstal. The East Angylis Company has protected the Gorrstal for decades, which helped the organization gain their current status, but rumors claim that the EAC have been forcefully imposing limits on production and trade in light of the recent "steel shortage." This false shortage has been raising prices worldwide and breeding tension between the Gorrstal, their clients, and their competitors. Also notably found in Mythrayne are the amari emissaries who travel to the nation to learn safe dwarven mining practices. The amari and dwarves trade information and stories, and Sillirai sends Mythrayne much of their coal in exchange for Mythrene steel.

CULTURE AND CLIMATE

Tradition is important to the Mythrene, and the average dwarf can sing an old king's legend or recite an epic poem. They believe that Naugrix is the lord of all. Dwarves refer to their own history with a number of common phrases and idioms, such as "you've got a Gromnul's spirit," which would imply that one is stubborn or haughty. Others may refer to those with good hearts as having "manners of a Duermaala," or call a dullard "someone who shines dimmer than gloskid." History and religion are the two most important things to a dwarf, followed by their country, city, and family. Every dwarf should know their role and perform that role to best of their ability. They believe in taking pride in their work and displaying their tough spirits in the efforts of their labor.

The dwarves of Mythrayne are not known to be boastful, but they let the quality and integrity of their actions speak for themselves. Honor is paramount to the dwarves. A dwarf's name represents their family, and a dwarf's family represents Mythrayne as a whole. Misrepresenting the nation is akin to throwing dirt on one's doorstep, and these insults are taken seriously. Also a grave offense is speaking ill of the dead, which is extremely taboo in Mythrayne. Family is important to the culture of the dwarves, and they are far from loners. Their kind are quick to make friends and they believe in innocence until one is proven guilty. They make fiercely loyal comrades, and terrifying enemies. The Mythrene tend to be hands-on and playful, and they are prone to friendly contests of strength, wit, and constitution. Wrestling, puzzles, and contests of food or drink are commonplace in Mythrene taverns. Travelers in Mythrayne are sometimes surprised to find a number



of amari living among the dwarves, as the distances between their nations are vast, but the two are long-standing allies and known to share cultural values. Many dwarves travel abroad to receive schooling at the Grove, and there is an exchange program between the amari's psionic college and the dwarven Jordensång college in Konungardra.

On the surface Mythrayne is a nation buffeted by fierce winds, and at high altitudes the weather is cold and clammy. Inside of the earthen caverns the country is still cool, but somewhat more humid on account of the rivers and volcanic activity flowing through the mountains. The surface receives rain and snowfall which melts in the summer months and flows through irrigated canals for collection as an extra water supply. Within the dwarven caves and tunnels there is no noticeable change in seasons or time of day. The dwarves tell time by means of mechanical devices, or by watching the changes of tide and temperature of subterranean water. The availability of certain fish also lends to particular seasons or time of day. Lava flows are commonplace deep within the mountains, and beautiful crystal caverns can be found in the strangest of places. New passages appear suddenly, formed either by creatures or robust excavations, which sometimes adds new water sources to the nation's supply. The Enzeru Crests may reach high into the skies of Asarus, but they are not alone. Mythrayne does possess some floating motes above the mountain range, but aside from the few that stray near Naugrix's Perch and the other few surface settlements, most are too difficult to reach without airships. Many of these motes are presumed to be occupied by Sky Dragons, local vasar, or the EAC.

Mythrayne is littered with the remnants of settlements from ages long past. One will find religious shrines and tombs left standing and undisturbed seemingly in the middle of nowhere. Many of these were left as either a warning of nearby dangers, or as memorial to those who once inhabited the region. On the surface and in certain upper caverns Mythrayne makes use of large gates, drawbridges, or other portals between routes to monitor the passage of travelers. In this way the dwarves are also able to keep out undesirables. The Kalafroja Gates are the most well-known, but there are many guarded points along the country's main routes. Mythrayne also boasts rare hot springs which can be found north of the Enzeru Crests.

POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT

The rulers of Mythrayne are the Sphekrad, a council of seven Duermaala. There is one Duermaala for each of Mythrayne's seven major cities, and they act as the representative of their city. The Duermaalas convene in Konungardra where they exchange propositions and reach agreements regarding their respected regions. They vote on important matters regarding the nation as a whole. This way of governance is time-consuming and delicate, and an entire crew of citizens work to assist the council, but this system has lasted for centuries. Konungardra's Duermaala is Cyaga zi'Gloskvild, and the Duermaala of Naugrix's Perch is Hlamerkis zi'Batrebolt. These two are arguably the most well-known of the Sphekrad.

Nobility, or the Maier, consists of those who are Starcalled. They are considered wise, blessed by the divines, and are thought

to commune with the natural world. Other of noble status are those who teach, the best bards of the Jordensång, high priests of the four iconic dragon Deities, generals in the military, those able to trace their lineage to the old kings, and extremely wealthy merchants. The nobles are granted first entry into churches and council chambers and their votes hold more weight. The Vergamar, or the fighter class, are the second to highest tier of society, and among their number are the moderately wealthy and official priests and priestesses of the various gods. Soldiers serving over fifty years in the armed forces are permanently granted the Vergamar status. Average Mythrene citizens who hold political weight are known as the Karls. Soldiers who are not yet Vergamar are this class, and so are graduates of Jordensång. The last class of Mythrayne are the Verumond, or laborers, who are below common folk in the social hierarchy. They tend to handle grunt work and generate little income for the nation. They are not taxed, but when it comes to democratic matters their votes are nearly worthless.

Military hierarchy is determined first on length of service, and second on knowledge and wit. Each city contains its own corps. The divisions therein are determined by the generals of the region, though most possess separate divisions for scouts, front lines, and artillery. The sole leader of the military, the Earthwarden, commands the other generals who command their divisions. Mythrayne is known for its skilled ballistics and advanced siege engines. Dwarven fortifications and traps are legendary, and their progressive design helped the nation weather the perils of the Darkest War. The Mythrene military is currently focused on restoring fortifications and ballistics to protect outlying settlements from enemies venturing to the surface from the Evernight. Military engineers are also building new equipment to gift to international allies and sell on the arms market for a premium.

Mythrayne's politics are primarily based on defunct diplomatic agreements and long-forgotten feuds. Sillirai remains one of Mythrayne's strongest allies, as they have been for over half a millennia, and the nation's ties to Venoch stretch back to days of the Leyarin Empire. Erygis and Darastrix have proven reliable friends in recent years, and Leyathar's return heralds diplomacy harkening back to the days of an united empire. Though the dwarves possess many powerful allies, they are no stranger to enmity; Mythrayne is wary of Cypress and Rancagesh for their increasing threat on Mythrene industry, as well as for the Rancans troubled history with the dwarven people. Washu and Osept are viewed with similar disdain based on their grave transgressions in the last century, and Tristan is treated the same, primarily due to their differing political policies and cultures. Mythrayne is hesitantly opening relations with Aurezia and Vavaire, though Isild, found in the same region, possesses long-standing good relations with the dwarven nation. These relations are a remnant of the two fallen dwarven kingdoms who once traded with the Isril.

RELIGION AND TRADITIONS

The dwarves of Mythrayne are thought to be born from the blood of chaotic primordial beings. It is only thanks to the divine grace of Naugrix that they were led into the light. The dwarves believe that Naugrix is their race's father, with Astea being his Keeper, and Mileen being the Deliverer of Souls. Vangal and Circe also boast



a number of dwarven worshippers. The Mythrene believe that the soul is the size of the body and as powerful as the body, and they treat their burial sites accordingly. Goods left with the dead are typically dependent upon the deceased's profession and station in society. Dwarves are often buried with their favored weapon, instrument, drink, or snack. Gold and other jewelry can be found in the graves of the wealthy. When a dwarf passes, the Mythrene pray to Mileen and beseech the goddess to guard the dead. In the hierarchy of the dwarves no mortal is to be placed before the gods, and no gods are to be placed before Naugrix, the father of their kind. Not all dwarven culture and traditions are grave and serious, though; the average dwarf is at least an amateur performer, and most can recite an old song or poem by memory.

The Mythrene celebrate a number of important holidays. The first would be Gulleit'han, or the day of Gold Seeking, a grand holiday which praises Naugrix in his earthly manner. The people of Mythrayne hope that their praise and celebrations earn them the blessing of bountiful mines in the year to come. The dwarves also observe a holiday of fasting, which is meant to teach the Mythrene to be thankful for all they have. The nation pays homage to Mileen on a day called Aettmass, the day of the dead, where dwarves wear their old family garb and travel to the country's mausoleums to share tales of their ancestors. Heavy drinking is typically included in the Aettmass celebration. Before resting, dwarves leave food and wine on the graves of their parents, believing this will stave off hunger in the afterlife and keep their souls at ease. On the international holiday of the Laniri the dwarves sing and dance throughout cities and towns, hoping to reach the stars with their collective voice. They sing a traditional song which must be sung by one member of each family continuously from day's beginning to day's end in the town's center. This song tells the story of how the destiny of their people is spoken in the stars, written in the veins of the earth, and felt in every dwarf's soul.

Some of these important rituals are tied to unique Mythrene locations. Close to the road running between Heilagraf and Lopthaed sits a giant graveyard, known to the dwarves as Jothaugr. They say that all who pass this graveyard must stop and pay homage to Mileen for keeping these giant souls at rest, lest she cease her watch and Tesiline claim them as her own. Jothaugr is located in a valley which has been worked smooth. The graveyard is a gloomy place where plants do not grow, rain does not fall, and animals do not tread. However, a low mist rolls through the valley in perpetuity.

INFLUENTIAL PARTIES

Mythrayne's relations with the Council of Vathis are generally positive, though some nations harassed and exploited by the East Angylis Company attempt to raise complaint with Mythrayne's leaders. Vathis Sentinels are common in Mythrayne, due in large part to this issue, but they've made little headway on the case. The Mythrene humor their presence, and the dwarves are kind to the Sentinels. They are not so welcoming to officials from CORE, however. They fear the power of eldria and they have little love for the organization's intimate ties to Tristan.

Outlaw and Sky Dragon presence is not tolerated in the mountainous nation, and dwarves rarely become members of ei-

ther group, as they tend to view a life without god and country as a disrespect to their rich heritage. The average Mythrene citizen will not hesitate to alert the local guard to Sky Dragon activity, and these guards keep a close eye on the country's ports. Due to Mythrayne's secluded settlements and distance from other nations, any loss of product is a significant detriment to the economy of the region.

VATHIS SENTINELS: There are an average number of Vathis Sentinels stationed in Mythrayne, but the dwarves have little need of their presence. The Sentinels are pushing to increase their numbers in the surrounding areas on account of the rampant criminal activities of the East Angylis Company, but the Mythrene believe that the solution to the East Angylis problem lies abroad in the nations who have yet to pay their debts.

CORE: CORE has been attempting to establish refinement facilities in Mythrayne for decades, but the nation fears the destructive power of unrefined eldria. Some Mythrene are afraid of CORE purposefully or inadvertently spreading the volatile crystal beyond safe confinement facilities. Arguments regarding CORE's place in Mythrayne remain a steady matter of contention in national politics.

JORDENSÅNG: Jordensång is considered by many to be the most significant organization in Mythrayne. A religious people to begin with, Jordensångers act as vessels between the divine and natural world by utilizing the power of song. Jordensång's legacy is a testament to the dwarven people, and the Mythrene view and trust the Jordensångers as leaders. The organization's collective opinion holds more sway than the Duermaala themselves. They are also a large source of income for the nation, with thousands paying to attend grand bardic performances.

LURIEN INDUSTRIES: Lurien Industries possesses a small physical presence within Mythrayne, but the organization compensates the nation generously for access to their valuable resources. They also hire dwarven Mythrene workers to locate mineral veins and consult on proper mining techniques. Lurien Industries buys unusual creatures native to the expanse of the Evernight from Mythrayne to use in the Essel Tournament.

EAST ANGYLIS COMPANY: The East Angylis Company is one of the most pressing forces active in the world today. In the past the EAC provided the financial backing for the construction of the Gilded Road, and they continue to seek recompense for its construction. Agents of the EAC can be found in most Mythrene cities and abundant in nations abroad, and they use various modes of coercion to sway votes in their favor and disrupt international trade routes they stand to profit from. Their headquarters were located in Jarofastr for some time, but in recent years they've moved into Naugrix's Perch to capitalize on the tourists pouring into the city. They boast a commanding presence, and some say they own the city. In certain regards they may be right.

DELVERS: The Delvers are essential to day-to-day operations in Mythrayne. They are employed by the Mythrene to locate new sources of Mythrene exports, resources, and ruined cities from the nation's past. On occasion they find the rare ruins of a dragon hoard. Now that dragons have returned, the Delvers are attempting to map their locations, and some have made contact with the crea-



tures themselves. They long to establish peaceful diplomacy with the great winged beings.

SERENITY: Serenity operates in the south of Mythrayne keeping undead forces from fallen Elessar from invading Mythrene territory. The desolate area is still rife with otherworldly activity assumed to be originating from the continued efforts of the Vandiel Monakxel's servants. Serenity accepts any and all recruits willing to pledge their life to the cause, and many dwarven clerics serve within their ranks. They continue to send regiment after regiment to the region, fearing Monakxel's plans.

HARBINGERS: Serena's Harbingers are a threat to the western edge of Mythrayne. Their forces continually strike at dwarven settlements in the hopes of obtaining their materials, magic, and population for enslavement. The Harbingers mainly consist of Evernight races with a long history of clashing with the dwarves. In recent years a slew of surface savages joined the organization, making it hard to distinguish friend from foe at first glance.

GUARDIAN FORCE: Guardian Force works closely with the Delvers and Jordensång to facilitate safe travel for their members. The organization possesses a long-standing contract with Mythrayne, and their ranks occupy Mythrene garrisons found along major routes weaving through the mountains.

THE BLACK HAND: The Black Hand, divine servants of Zanon, are an infrequent but never-ceasing thorn in Mythrayne's side. Many duergar and their allies occupying fallen Mythrene settlements boast membership in the nefarious organization. They capture dwarves and amari in the region and bring them to Osept where they fetch a high price on the unregulated market of Inservitude. Both the Sillarian and Mythrene governments hire adventuring parties to rid popular trade routes of the Black Hand's agents.

EYES OF VATHIS: The Eyes of Vathis are a common sight in Mythrayne, especially in the recent years. The Eyes work alongside the Delvers and Vathis Sentinels uncovering ancient secrets in the mountains. The history of the two fallen dwarven kingdoms intrigues the Eyes of Vathis, and they pay a premium for relics heralding from the Leyarin Empire, which they return to Leyathar. The Eyes of Vathis are hoping to use these relics and good relations with Mythrayne as leverage for the Council of Vathis to convince Leyathar to finally sign the Vathis Accords.

THE BROKEN CHALICE: The Broken Chalice are a group of noble elves affiliated with the Venocian zi'Varga family and led by Jamike zi'Brokchal. Originally from Venoch, the zi'Brokchal's realized they could profit from facilitating the exchange of dwarven and acer'rin wares, and so they established a trading company in Mythrayne. The Broken Chalice are renowned for their popular ales. The zi'Brokchal family brought many of their kind to settle in Mythrene cities located along main popular trading routes.

DARUMA CLAN: The Daruma Clan are a long line of families steeped in the tradition of the Essence. The original Daruma family recruited other families showing druidic promise into their order, and these families adopted the Daruma name. In the past the Clan was known for their mastery of agriculture, but their presence is now insignificant to the common citizen, aside from controlling the largest livestock trade in the Northern Enzeru Crests. In recent years their numbers have swelled, and the government of Mythrayne is keeping a close watch on their activities. Members of the

Daruma Clan have been seen lurking in the former holdings of the Army of Ice—an area strictly off limits, and for good reason.

SALSKYN REMNANTS: The surviving Salskyn families who returned to Mythrayne during the Darkest War are called the Salskyn Remnants. They've banded together to safely lock away their lost relics, immeasurable wealth, and invaluable clockwork secrets. They've become extremely popular in recent years, and many revere the Salskyn as celebrities. They've gifted the councils of Mythrayne with clockwork designs and ancient artifacts. The Salskyn Remnants are currently petitioning the government for assistance in reclaiming their lost lands, and they're gaining significant traction with the common folk.

EXPERIENCING MYTHRAYNE

Traveling on the surface of Mythrayne is a difficult endeavor. Caravans tend to be cheap, but they are slow and subject to inclement weather. Tunnels are utilized as well, but they are known to be dangerous due to the natural Evernight predators prowling their dark, winding depths. If one were brave enough to traverse these tunnels, however, they would find their paths a direct route. Some suggest boating along Mythrene waterways as an alternative, but there are only a few rivers in Mythrayne capable of handling steady traffic. Airship travel in and out of the country is rather inconvenient as well, as Mythrayne's main airship dock is in Naugrix's Perch, the only Mythrene city existing wholly on the surface. Other docks exist atop Konungardra, Brimskir, and Lophaed, but Naugrix's Perch is the nation's largest trade center and only dock of note. Other airship towers sit guarded in the cold peaks of the Enzeru Crests, rarely used by common travelers.

Mythrayne can be a dangerous place even while traveling along the safest of routes. Various subterranean races lurk below the mountains hoping to strike at the dwarves or unlucky travelers passing through the region. Sieges from the Shattered Hand left some areas of the Enzeru Crests weakened, and cave-ins are common and woefully unpredictable. A number of traps left from the Darkest War still lie along roads untriggered. Some travelers report seeing clockwork golems left over from the war wandering the countryside, and rumors abound that they may or may not retain their ability to distinguish friend from foe.

The Mythrene tend to be extremely accepting of outsiders, and they maintain an innocent until proven guilty viewpoint. They expect other races visiting to merely pass through and not linger. The dwarves find it strange when an outsider attempts to stay and make a home in their mountains. Immigrants are not treated poorly, but they are slow to be accepted, similar to how immigrants are treated in Sillirai. Both cultures cling tightly to the cultures and social traditions from the past, and they expect all immigrants to adhere to the standards of their society. There are a few exceptions to their widespread hospitality, and dwarven prejudice against these peoples is the result of grudges held for ages.

Orcs and goblinoids, for example, are treated with disdain. The dwarves and rancar have little to argue about in modern times, but millennium-old grudges from territorial feuds continue to sour political dealings. Today these races are welcome to visit Mythrayne, but the dwarves generally stay out of their way. Half-orcs are better tolerated, but only slightly. The Mythrene view



most tieflings as strange outsiders who started a vicious war, and they wish not to deal with their kind. Their magical prowess only furthers their mystique, and all arcane users rouse suspicion, as the dwarves rely on the Touch and the Essence. Ildera are a curious sight, and though the Mythrene welcome their presence in their nation, they collectively wonder if constructs belong in society as peers. Beings venturing forth from the Evernight are treated with outright hostility.

Adventurers traveling through Mythrayne are welcomed with open arms. The dwarves love a good legend, and they view adventurers as legends in the making. Jordensång colleges typically possess a visitors' hall where aspiring bards go to hear adventurers tell their tales in exchange for shelter and food. Bravery, strength, and wisdom are considered enviable traits often found in the world's greatest explorers, whom the dwarves admire. People gather in Jordensång halls for food, drink, and performances of oratory and musical entertainment. These recreational assemblies are extremely popular. Jordensång colleges are manned at all hours, and their dormitories can be utilized as place of solace and sanctuary for weary travelers.

Adventuring in Mythrayne can be a lucrative prospect, should one know where to find work. Certain parties affiliated with the Council of Mythrayne are commissioning searches for the lost Hammer of the Exalted Marshall, one of the pieces of the legendary Arms of Leyathar. An individual named Wehreth zi'Azerrel is also hiring helping hands for his militaristic expeditions. Wehreth leads a portion of the Mythrene armed forces dedicated solely to reclaiming lost territory along Mythrayne's northern borders. The Northern Enzeru Crests and surrounding plains were once a wonderful source of minerals and fertile ground, and Wehreth wishes to someday rebuild outposts overlooking the Manastorm Chain. He dreams of claiming the scattered islands for Mythrayne.

MAJOR SETTLEMENTS

KONUNGARDRA

"The Court of the Dwarven Kings"

TYPE: Mountainous Capital

POPULATION: 956,221

LANGUAGES: Mythic, Vavalish, Leyarish

VATHIS SENTINEL SCORE: 7

ECONOMY SCORE: 6

IMPORTS: Agriculture, Foodstuffs, Livestock, Precious metals

EXPORTS: Instruments, Gloskid, Herbal medicines, Literature, Mushrooms, Wine

ORGANIZATIONS: East Angylis Company, Jordensång, Salskyn Remnants, Vathis Sentinels

RELIGION: Vath Pantheon; *Naugrix, Astea, Vangal, Mileen*

Quite literally the Court of Kings, the capital of Mythrayne is an impressive city. Once known as the seat of power in Mythrayne, the nation's throne sits within a barricaded chamber hall flanked by the busts of the previous sixteen great kings. The city is accessed by three tunnels originating from the north, south, and southwest,

and a river that flows towards the ocean. No matter the entrance, they all pour into a massive central chamber on the city's "ground level."

The first sight to behold is a massive sawmill built of glowing gloskid wood, which illuminates the structure. The city revolves around this craft, with the gloskid being worked into the timeworn architecture throughout the entire city. The ground level of Konungardra consists of the sawmill and other work areas, including a bazaar, docks, and stables for caravans, ships, and mounts. On a raised tier surrounding the entirety of this level is the residential district. The wealthy live comfortably within the eastern wall in lofty abodes. The west wall consists of a hive-like district for the downtrodden. Many of the homes are linked together in a fashion unchanged from a time before even the Legacy Wars. Southwall is a middle class district, as well as most of Northwall. The center of Northwall contains the great Council Hall, where all government activities take place, fringed with pillars and murals of past kings, a giant ram's head carved into the top, and steps leading down to the ground floor as well. Guards line the steps and walls. The rear of this hall contains the enormous door to the King's Ascension, the staircase to the barricaded former throne. A temple dedicated to Naugrix sits between Northwall and Eastwall. Smaller temples of Astea, Vangal, and Mileen are opposite on Southwall. The barracks for the guard can be found in a terrace above Westwall. A river runs through Mythrayne under the mountains and surfaces at the eastern edge of Konungardra to pour into the Sekois Ocean. At this point a pier has been constructed for fishing, which has bloomed into an excellent source of food for Konungardra.

The Duermaala in Konungardra is Cyaga zi'Gloskvild. She is three-hundred-and-forty-two years old, quite seasoned even for a dwarf, and High Priestess of Naugrix. She has held her station for the last 79 years, and is well respected for her service. The Grand College of Jordensång has been moved to the capital recently, since its former location was destroyed during the Darkest War. There is no head bard of the college at the present, and they still seek a new official home. Cyaga is acting as the temporary head of this organization.

The East Angylis Company was once a daunting presence in Mythrayne's capital city, but the last two years have seen a sharp decline in their activities. This is a false perception, however. The EAC was formerly boosting citizens they chose to represent them in the Council, and when this was found out, they simply moved to the opposite—decreasing the influence of their political opponents, as well as interfering in imports. Merchants and travelers through the city have been forced to hire guards for their caravans, and Sentinel activity and Guardian Force presence has increased substantially.

NAUGRIX'S PERCH

"The Dragon God's Perch"

TYPE: Trading Hub Port City

POPULATION: 415,876

LANGUAGES: Mythic, Vavalish, Leyarish

VATHIS SENTINEL SCORE: 8



ECONOMY SCORE: 8

IMPORTS: Drakes, Eldria, Furs, Ships, Vibrant spices, Vibrant liquor, Vibrant agriculture

EXPORTS: Dyes, Manufactured goods, Mushrooms, Perfume, Sculptures, Wine

ORGANIZATIONS: The Broken Chalice, The Delves, East Angylis Company, Vathis Sentinels

RELIGION: Vath Pantheon; *Naugrix, Vangal*

Naugrix's Perch is located on the surface of Mythrayne. A steep mountain pass leads down to where it rests, between two mountain ranges. The city is low and close to water, but high enough for ships to pass through. This passage acts as the main route for trade along the Angylis Sea leading into and out of Washu. All manner of races and people can be found in Naugrix's Perch, as many merchants from all walks of life have decided to call the diverse markets of the Perch home. On the eastern border of the city sits a giant statue of Naugrix, which is used as a landmark. A bridge connects the northern and southern areas. Naugrix's Perch is home to a large Vathis Sentinel presence. The Duermaala here is Hlamerkis zi'Batrebolt, a two-hundred-and-eighty-nine-year-old dwarf. He is not a priest of Naugrix, but a high-ranking member of the Delves organization. He gained notoriety upon his discovery of a dragon hoard, from which he took his share, using the funds to buy establishments in the Perch. The Delves possess a sizable headquarters here, thanks to his efforts.

The people who call the Perch home consider the city

a work of art, and admire the old poems and legends carved into its impressive stone architecture. Most have been translated into common and Leyarish, unlike every other city in Mythrayne. The small island chain just east of the city is used for various forms of agriculture, but only enough for the city to provide for its people. A newly constructed airship tower at Naugrix's Perch has led to an increase in trade, population, and tourism.

HEILAGRAF

"Where dwarves stood tall against the Shattered Hand."

TYPE: Fortified City

POPULATION: 94,342

LANGUAGES: Mythric, Vavalish, Leyarish

VATHIS SENTINEL SCORE: 5

ECONOMY SCORE: 5

IMPORTS: Lumber, Livestock,

EXPORTS: Giant slugs, Herbal medicines, Obsidian

ORGANIZATIONS: The Broken Chalice, Daruma Clan, Ruby Skulls

RELIGION: Vath Pantheon: *Naugrix, Vangal*

Heilagraf is a fort that was constructed in the Northern Enzeru Crests shortly after the disappearance of Synethil. Gishalmer and Bruheld remained the primary fortresses in the region for a few centuries following, while Heilagraf was resigned to reinforcement and storage purposes. During the Darkest War, Bruheld and



Gishalmer suffered many losses and were compromised. The forts were abandoned, and their soldiers retreated to Heilagraf to mount a stronger, united defense. Now Heilagraf is a crowded fortification adapting to city life. Trade caravans hailing from Venoch frequently pass through the region to reach other parts of Mythrayne, and organizations such as Guardian Force and the Broken Chalice have set up shop in the fortified city. The entrance to Heilagraf is a great stone archway on the edge of a cliff. A side entrance in the south possesses a large hand-operated lift which helps groups on foot enter the city without having to traverse the unwieldy mountain trails. The Duermaala here is Durrumir zi'Darclo, and the general of the city is Thorag zi'Stonefist. Wehreth zi'Azerrel is famous for recruiting travelers to adventure with him on expeditions to scout lost holdings such as Bruheld and Gishalmer.

Heilagraf is arranged in a semicircular fashion, with tiers heading upwards in rings. The eastern side is flat. The main entrance to the city is in the west, and one must pass beneath archer towers and a series of gates to enter. Barracks and military fortifications are found as one enters the city. The second tier is all residential abodes—mostly newer, having been built in the last ten to fifteen years. The third tier of Heilagraf is reserved for the houses of lower nobles, taverns, and other local industry. The fourth and highest tier is also for nobility, but mainly a temple to Naugrix and other various meeting halls.

Other notable organizations in Heilagraf include the Daruma Clan, formerly esteemed agricultural experts and druids and sages that seemed to have dwindled. They operate north of the fort city and reside here. They've been assisting in taming giant slugs and supplying locally grown herbal medicines. Their activity has grown suspicious in recent years as numbers of the Daruma Clan have suddenly increased. Also near Heilagraf is a local tribe of the Ruby Skulls, a barbaric group of former Mythrene. They sometimes make trouble on the roads leading to Lopthaed.

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

JOTHAUGR: On the main route between Heilagraf and Lopthaed one can find Jothaugr, a graveyard of giants. In olden times a decently-sized peaceful giant population resided nearby. This area was one of their stomping grounds. Unfortunately, relations between the dwarves and giants have all but disintegrated in recent years, and during the Darkest War the giants used the chaos at hand to launch a massive strike against Lopthaed. Somehow the dwarves foresaw their attack and were prepared, ambushing the giants with ease and destroying a force of roughly three thousand. Despite their animosity, the dwarves saw fit to give the giants a proper burial among their ancestors. Jothaugr is a large valley sitting aside the main trade route. Thousands of unnamed headstones litter the valley, with only numerical runes etched into their faces. The older giant graves are adorned with elaborate totems placed ages ago, made with animal skins, their chosen weapon, or other personal and primitive items. Jothaugr is a gloomy place covered in a perpetual mist. Plants will not grow here, and animals refuse to pass through the makeshift cemetery.

KALAFROJA GATES: The Kalafroja Gates were originally one of the many entrances into the Enzeru Crests and the mainland of

Mythrayne. Nestled high in the mountains, it is a long and tough journey to reach the gates before being granted passage through. Cold and biting winds blow incessantly, and frost covers the surface over the majority of the year. The ornate steel doors stand nearly fifty feet tall and depict Naugrix shining light upon a multitude of mortal figures below him. This series of large gates is monitored at all times and operated by one company from the military at a time, which switches out at the end of the month by order of the Earthwarden. Serenity also has a station here, and sends parties out into The Harrows on a regular basis.

SILVER WOOD: The Silver Wood, situated at the edge of the northern Enzeru Crests between Naugrix's Perch and Heilagraf, is a forest important to the Mythrene. The trees here are unusually spread apart, but possess thick canopies filled with leaves highlighted with a strange silver sheen. The area is home to several herds of gorgon that the Daruma Clan and other brave hunters of Mythrayne hunt. From these conquests they gain metal hide and horns, tough meat, and precious minerals from their waste that probably contributes to the strange quality of the trees. Individual giants are sometimes seen wandering through the Silver Wood, but as lone entities they rarely instigate conflict.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

- A collection of rocs is settling around Naugrix's Perch. The guards need others to help investigate and hopefully lure them away.
- Clockwork golems used during the Darkest War wander the roads aimlessly, and recently a merchant caravan was killed by one.
- Some vae'rin scouts were seen in the caves around Heilagraf, but the dwarves are currently too short-staffed to send guards to investigate.
- A cavern full of elarian eldria was found near Konungardra.
- Rumors of the Hammer of the Exalted Marshall being found are spreading. Could this be true?
- Airship dock construction has started just outside of Jarofastr, but troglodytes are threatening the workers and slowing down progress.
- Dragons underground are beginning to find their way out to the surface through Mythrayne's tunnels. The Delvers wish to make peace with them.
- The Salskyn Remnants are causing tension in Konungardra, and talk of riots and uprisings are spreading.
- Jordensång is seeking new recruits of all races and backgrounds.
- A member of the Daruma Clan arrived in Lopthaed and immediately dropped dead. He appears to be covered in strange scars and fungus, with no clear cause of death.
- The Ruby Skulls, an army of savages, are terrorizing the wild unpatrolled areas surrounding Mythrayne. They bare the symbols, dress, and even, in the case of their leaders, the skulls of fallen giants as helmets. They indiscriminately ravage any settlement they come across. Their numbers include humans, dwarves, and half-giants, and they are occasionally lead by a rare full-blooded giant.





OSEPT

“A flower blossoms in an endless desert.”

THEN AND NOW

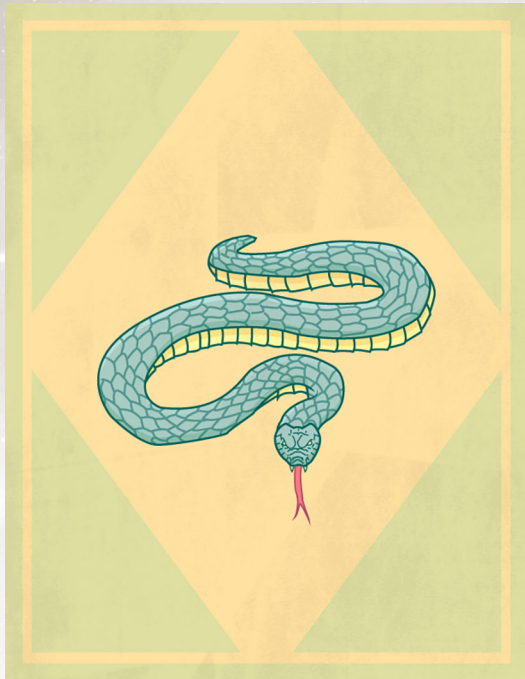
Known as the “Gateway to the East,” Osept is a nation whose main roads connect western Asarus to the southeastern half of the continent. Windswept deserts dotted by pyramids and sandstone sculptures cover the nation, but fertile lands near Oseptian rivers and waterways allow cities to thrive in the scorching heat. The country is notorious for its unregulated market, extensive Vathis Sentinel presence, and legal slave trade, which they refer to as *Inservitude*. Despite being home to all manner of criminal organizations, the abundance of Vathis Sentinels, trade route watches, and local guards have led Osept’s cities and roads to be considered among the safest in the world for passing travelers. Osept’s cities are full of open-air marketplaces where anything can be found for a price. The Antares Bank possesses a sizable presence in the nation, and Lurien Industries has deemed Osept a primary place of operations. Osept was an early adopter of vaedric technology, and at the end of the Darkest War they rapidly expanded CORE and Lurien Industries operations. Osept’s military is competently trained, and her ranks are composed of horse-riding warriors with elite sections of

the nation’s forces possessing vaedricarms. Osept’s standard education and libraries are nearly unmatched, and her citizens speak many languages. The country’s general lawlessness and diversity make her accepting of outsiders. The nation is run by Pharaohs, and her people worship the Manara pantheon, a different pantheon than the Vathis standard. Adventurers from all nations pass through Osept at one point or another, and many become entangled in her windswept mysteries and never leave. Whispers of ancient artifacts and forgotten cities in the Nashendasorn Desert lure travelers from far and wide to comb the sandy dunes. The words of the Pharaohs carry weight at political summits, and Osept has become invaluable to the Council of Vathis and global trade market.

The nation of Osept rose from the ashes of the Divine Sands Wars when the gods descended to Vathis and walked among mortals in battle against the Anuald. Multitudes of city-states struck out territories across the Nashendasorn Desert in the ruined aftermath, scratching out a weak existence and rebuilding civilization on the pillar of hard labor and unwavering faith. Little is known of these times, even less so as the dragons came to rule the world. Several dragons, drawn to the divine and arcane energy of the area, called Osept home. The winged beasts decided to rebuild the nation, as they saw the seas of sands for the gems they could be. The dragons preached the way of the gods, and drew hordes of humanoids to Osept’s fertile centers.

When the Black Frost event occurred and dragons across





OSEPT

“Unchanged, Immovable, Indomitable”

COLORS: Tan, River blue, Red

BANNER: River blue serpent

POPULATION: 9,001,698

CAPITAL: Eiliept

GOVERNMENT: Dynastic Monarchy

LEADER(S): Grand Pharaoh Uzlak

LANGUAGES: Oseptian, Vavalish, Rancan

NOTABLE EXPORTS: Spices, Gold, Jewelry, Textiles

DEMONYM: Oseptian

LITERACY RATE: 68%

Vathis vanished, the Oseptian people took advantage of their prosperous state. They kept power over the orcish and goblinoid peoples and flourished, and their gods were pleased. The elite of the nation emulated the rule of the dragons with an iron fist. The Oseptians were not prepared for the coming ice age, but the magical mutations of the land aided their survival effort. Through this age the country’s populace dwindled to a small number of settlements. Many lived in caves, and the desperate were forced to empty out the grand tombs of their ancestors for living quarters. No records exist from this time save for wall carvings and stories passed down in song and poem. Supposedly near the end of this age a settlement of halflings from the western Borderlands migrated to Eiliept and helped cultivate the city into a habitable space, leading to other cities once again rising in their footprint. Osept began to recover from this ice age by adapting new methods of cultivating agriculture, and at the same time people experienced a religious rebirthing of sorts. Priests and divine teachings ruled the sands for two centuries until the advent of the sigils, which once again changed everything for the people of the deserts.

Atum-ri zi’Aurera, the High Priestess of Valshathe, received a Sigil of the Seeker. She united the civilized states of Osept while wielding an artifact staff, which to this day is still called the Staff of Aurere. She established a system of leadership which has stood the test of time, becoming the first Grand Pharaoh and leading her people into the Legacy Wars before falling ill and passing mere days before the end of the conflict. In a few short decades the majority of the world’s present-day nations rose from these wars. Centered around prosperous capitals, these nations quickly seized control of surrounding lands and came into contact with one another. They immediately began to vie for power and strength in their respective territories. Osept utilized this period of renaissance to reorganize the area of the Nashendasorn Desert into one cohesive nation, and with this

reorganization came a return to the old ways of Inservitude. Many of the goblinoid people of the deserts were enslaved to the significantly larger human population. Osept retained some semblance of peace for nearly seventy years, but this calm came to a close as the Oseptian slave armies attacked the Delts. This southern Vavairen territory, situated northwest of Osept, was able to fend off and push back the slave army before coming under Vavairen rule.

The Angylis Sea became a waterway of wealth and prosperity as Leyathar initiated trade with Osept and other surrounding nations. For the first time ever bounty was openly shared between nations, and this new age of tentative diplomacy gilded the desert. It took Osept another sixty years to nurture the urge to expand, and at this time the Grand Pharaoh attempted to move eastward into the lush environment of present-day Erygis. The dwarves of Salskyn mounted a formidable resistance, and the two warred for several years with neither surrendering. At one point Osept came close to laying claim over the region, but Mythrayne, another dwarven kingdom, came to the aid of Salskyn and butchered the Grand Pharaoh’s hope. Osept ceased warfare with Salskyn at this time, understanding how futile their efforts were.

Twenty years after experiencing defeat at the hands of the dwarves, Osept suffered a brutal surprise attack by the armies of a medusa sorceress named Cherolur. Cherolur commanded forces of grimlocks, troglodytes, and serpentfolk from old Oseptian hideaways in the Evernight. Osept mounted a defense to match her assaults, and after just under a decade of warfare the last of Cherolur’s forces were vanquished. Under the orders of the Grand Pharaoh the desert nation began a systematic cleansing of the Evernight beneath their borders. Grand Pharaoh Tahkar is remembered as a hero for his victory over Cherolur.

Further expanding on the experimental diplomacy of the time, Osept established trade with the merchant nation of Venoach, now united under a Grand Duke. This agreement was lucrative,



and Osept returned to its former glory, now occupying the entirety of the Nashendasorn Desert and stretching through the Rancagesh Peninsula down to the Vaethrian Ocean. Venocian trade agreements brought a century of peace to the countries resting on the shores of the Angylis Sea. The area of present-day Erygis, once sought after by Osept, became a Vavairen prison colony under the control of an organization called the Antares Templar, removing that region from the Grand Pharaoh's plans for expansion. This movement by the Vavairen concerned the leaders of Osept, and for good reason, as Vavaire's rapid development brought their southern border to the White River and present-day Riverwall. There the Grand Pharaoh and Vavairen Emperor met, and through diplomatic means the two peoples found peace, realizing that a war between them would be devastating. Trade routes were built through the sands and plains, allowing both nations to move their wares in relative safety. Though turmoil came and went, Osept flourished in trade and cultural wealth for more than one hundred years.

The widespread adoption of the magical crystal eldria and CORE's headquartering in the nation of Elessar, also found along the shores of the Angylis Sea, brought vast change to the world. Elessar became the center of CORE's refinement, production, and research operations, pouring eldric technology into neighboring nations by sea and air alike. Though Elessar believed this to be a boon for their people, it turned out to be contrary, as the Evangeline airship was sunk by the fledgling Sky Dragons and stripped. This was the first act of the Shadow Seas Wars. Soon neighboring nations turned on one another and warfare descended like a plague upon the region. Mythrayne, Osept, and Venocho came to the aid of the Elish, officially initiating the harrowing conflict that would come to be known as the First Empire Wars.

In less than a decade Elessar was destroyed, and with it, a sizable portion of the trade market. This grave loss left a void in the global economy of Vathis. A number of once-great nations suffered economic depression fueled by the high cost of warfare, and staggering unemployment rates and lack of construction left a number of nations in utter ruin. The wife of Emperor Jaris of Vavaire died of an incurable illness, further shaking already unstable global relations. Emperor Jaris remarried the daughter of the Oseptian Grand Pharaoh, a woman named Isskah, who was heartily welcomed by all of Vavaire. They gave birth to a son they named Aliskar. Osept was proud of this union, and it served well to further gild Oseptian palms. Their preoccupation with Vavaire left the Oseptian Pharaohs completely blind to Venocho's secret backing of the goblinoid slaves in Osept who were preparing to revolt. The slaves received Erygan supplies utilizing Venocian supply lines, which served to hide their revolutionary intentions. Further distracting the Oseptian from the impending revolution was the discovery and adoption of the Essel Tournament at the hands of Lurien Industries. The tournaments began in Cypress, a nation under the control of Vavaire, in somber honor of the late Elish people. The Oseptian rallied around this honorable and bloody sport.

Venocian and Erygan generals traveled to Osept to secretly train the rebelling slaves in the art of warfare. They hoped that helping the slaves gain their freedom would open up the Avalon Sea to free trade. The following year these slaves rose up against their masters in a single night and systematically gained control

of the places where they were previously held captive. The Tretolancan Wars for the freedom of the enslaved began with a start, jarring the Grand Pharaoh, who was unable to quickly muster a defense to the western reaches. The small number of amassed Oseptian troops soon fell back to Uhust. Rancagesh, as the revolution called itself, utilized the widely-dispersed Erygan forces as cover. They launched raids against Osept from the east and liberated even more goblinoid slaves who rallied to their cause. In the two years following the start of the rebellion the former slaves pushed the Oseptian defense back to Fort Uldovi. Rancagesh troops raided the fort and liberated additional slaves. In response to this movement, Vavairen forces traveled to location known as Three Points, and built fortifications that prevented further bloodshed between the Rancagesh rebels and Oseptian soldiers.

The Tretolancan Wars came to a close one year following the construction of the Three Point fortifications as the Council of Vathis, with the heavy-handed support of many influential nations, granted Rancagesh their freedom. The new nation's borders were determined by the fortress city of Uhust. Even Emperor Jaris of Vavaire lobbied for Rancagesh to become an official nation, somewhat souring relations with Osept, in the hopes of halting the ceaseless bloodshed. The Grand Pharaoh was hesitant to raise an issue with Vavaire, considering their formidable diplomatic ties. The two great nations put their differences on the matter aside. Vavaire also committed fleets of ships to the Angylis Sea during this tumultuous time to reduce pirate strength in the area and foster peace. Their presence forced the Sky Dragons from the region, bringing wealth and riches into the nations situated along the shores of the Angylis Sea.

The world was shocked when Emperor Jaris was found dead, assassinated by an unknown assailant. The Vavairen government deliberated at length on the next Emperor, and Prince Erishti, who possessed the appropriate sigil, was passed up in favor of his step-brother Aliskar, son of Oseptian-born Isskah. Osept rejoiced at the news. Emperor Aliskar was immediately enthroned as the first Vavairen emperor not in possession of the Lord sigil. One of Emperor Aliskar's first diplomatic moves was to sever ties with the northern nation Tristan and initiate talks of deeper trade and relations with Osept. The desert nation benefited greatly from his ascent to power, and five years after he took the throne Osept entered into an accord with Cypress, Vavaire, and Washu. Called the Sovereign Steel Pact, this alliance ensured a united front against their shared enemies.

With renewed vigor the Oseptian armies moved against the Rancan forces to reclaim lost territory. Erygis rushed to the aid of Rancagesh, offering the new nation manpower and supplies, but Vavaire blockaded Erygis with hundreds of ships. The Three Points area rapidly switched hands over and over again between Osept and Rancagesh, appearing evenly contested until the rancar pushed into the heart of the desert and freed a great number of slaves. This covert operation critically weakened the Oseptian slave armies and bolstered the forces of the rancar. Vavaire came to the Grand Pharaoh's rescue yet again, and soon the rancar were besieged by the allied Oseptian-Vavairen forces. Despite being clearly outmatched, the rancar refused to surrender.

A sizable chunk of zodi'ite fell from the sky and leveled



an entire city in western Tristan, killing a number of influential Vavairen theater groups who were visiting the city on business. The two nations blamed one another for the mystical event, clearly misunderstanding the source of the destruction, and with the aid of the Isril the Vavairen marched against Tristan, effectively beginning the Second Empire Wars as the nations of the world rushed to take sides in the conflict. In the ensuing global panic the armies of Rancagesh withdrew to Uhust, and Osept abandoned Erygan territory to prepare for the prospect of a global war.

In the following few years the Second Empire Wars waged on a number of fronts, Washu strategically struck the Silarian airship fleet and Eldric Reactors. A secretive organization known as Legion, suspecting a darker influence behind this war than just the greed of man, captured the first verified spy of these unknown manipulative evils. Called the noir, these beings were discovered to be face-changers, connected mentally to their masters. Legion speculated these agents could be found in the governments of all nations reporting their findings to a yet unknown evil. With the help of Oseptian archaeologists, Legion developed an item capable of breaking the mental link noir possessed with their masters, albeit temporarily. The genius of these archaeologists led to Legion capturing the noir in Operation Twilight. The truth of the Second Empire Wars came to light shortly following this covert operation, as it was revealed that key Vavairen advisors were Vandiel in disguise. The Second Empire Wars turned into the Darkest War, a desperate fight for survival against the extraplanar terrors and their agents of chaos.

The Grand Pharaoh of Osept turned against Emperor Aliskar and Vavaire as the armies of fiends began to pour from the country's borders. Vandiel made themselves known to the people of Vathis, and one in particular, Verinarkyr, poisoned Osept's river system. Those living in the cities along the riverbanks fell gravely ill or under his possessive sway. Verinarkyr left a swath of death and defilement in his unholy wake before Osept could mount a defense or come to the aid of these cities. He persuaded the existing slaves in the defiled cities to join his cause, and the majority of these starving servitors believed it was better to fight for the strong Shattered Hand than to serve their weak and dying creditors. Further burying the desert nation were the gnolls of Rancagesh, who were also fully corrupt by the Shattered Hand. They joined the infernal armies pouring out of Vavairen territory. Beset on both sides, Osept had little opportunity for offense. Verinarkyr was never killed, but when the Vandiel Lord Feliroz was defeated, he vanished. He is rumored to still be active. The remains of the slave forces who revolted against their masters are still seen roaming the Nashendasorn Desert, and they have come to be known as the Broken Shackles.

After the Darkest War ended, Osept's tensions with neighboring nations lessened. The Grand Pharaoh's main concern lied in fortifying his destroyed holdings and attempting to repair his soured reputation with other members of the Council of Vathis. Osept began to secure ruined lands in weakened Vavaire, but when the neighboring nation began its ascent back to power, the Grand Pharaoh eased his efforts and reached out to the returned country. Osept's challenging time rebuilding settlements was further complicated by their lack of natural resources and loss of servitors.

Verinarkyr's impact is still felt, and it is rumored that some rivers in Osept are spreading a mysterious illness believed to be borne from the Vandiel. Healers and priests are struggling to cleanse the waters and heal Oseptian citizens, but this great humanitarian effort is distracting from other important endeavors. The Broken Shackles remain under the sway of the Shattered Hand and attack groups traveling through the dessert. They can be found wreaking havoc along the entire Angylis coast, in fact, with no central purpose, frustrating other seaside nations struggling to beat back their presence. The return of the dragons to Vathis is piquing the curiosity of Grand Pharaoh Uzlak, who actively seeks to enslave or capture the winged beasts for research and martial strength. One of the sole boons to Osept in recent years is the influx of vaedric technology. The nation founded a small specialized defense team armed by Lurien Industries should they come face to face with the Broken Shackles or roving bands of fiends. Osept remains in precarious situations on both domestic and global fronts, though they retain economic influence and religious strength practically unrivaled.

ECONOMICS AND INDUSTRY

Exports: Ceramics, Glass, Incense, Literature, Magical goods, Pearls, Precious gems, Sandstone, Spices, Textiles

Imports: Eldria, Knowledge, Lumber, Raw materials, Slaves

The Oseptian economy is an unwieldy beast when compared to the conventional markets of other nations. On the surface Osept deals in the goods one expects to find in the desert, but underneath the mundane trade agreements lies something truly unique to the Gateway to the East. Osept, during all its time as a nation, has maintained a truly open market. In Osept the regulations on certain items considered contraband in other countries are lax or completely nonexistent. In the typical Oseptian market one can find consumable intoxicants, furs of protected beasts, rare magical tomes, quality Mythrene steel, and even the sale of what the rest of the world deems slaves. Oseptians, however, refer to this slavery as *Inservitude*. *Inservitude* fulfills a great purpose in Oseptian culture, and the existence of systematic *Inservitude* has created a social caste unto itself. The open markets of Osept are a sizable boon to the country's local economy, and countless merchants travel from far and wide to gain access to the rare wares of the desert.

An organization known as the Judicators are in charge of enforcing the laws of *Inservitude* within Osept. Their membership is chosen by the country's government, and their elite forces hunt down runaway servitors and rogue lawbreakers. Another organization extremely important to the day-to-day functioning of Osept are the Overseers, a group tasked with the nation's compilation of knowledge and understanding. They seek to retain the religious integrity of the holy desert lands and prevent the spread of heretic religions. Perhaps the greatest organization contributing to the economy of Osept is called *Carpenasten*, the nation's largest exporter of exotic spices. The miraculously fertile lands surrounding Valshathe's Tears provides wonderful soil to grow acres of the various herbs and spices native to the Nashendasorn Desert, and the *Carpenasten* claim dominion over the bulk of this soil, which is tilled and cultivated by the Order of the Twinstars. The Twinstars



are a former military outfit who gained control of the region before becoming defunct. They decided to transition their organization to agriculture, and they now work the land for profit, capable of protecting the wealthy fields with their swords and battle prowess.

In addition to companies and organizations, a number of notable families and figures also call Osept home. House Jerakam leads the entirety of the textile trade within Osept. This family hailed from Anaru nearly four decades ago and rapidly became the leading textile exporter, with their competitors pushed out of the trade or intimidated and subsumed in a well-orchestrated coup lasting several months. Despite their shady business tactics, those of House Jerakam are considered to be notoriously shrewd businessmen, and few would dare to challenge their economic might. The Oseptian trades of glass and ceramics are other profitable exports for the nation. The Embaph are an influential family who have excelled in these trades for more than a century. Their members are found within the majority of Oseptian cities bordering a river, and each of these cities possess a headquarters for the Embaph. These heavily populated areas are prime choices for gathering much-needed ceramics, and their main source of glass are mysterious areas of naturally occurring desert glass. Now that the majority of their Rancan workers are independent, the Embaph have branched into mining for precious gems in the Yaling Mountains, and with great success. They hold a tenuous grip on this industry in the area, and they sometimes discover sources of particularly rare volcanic glass within these mountains as well. The dyes and paints used in their ceramics and glass are produced by local tradesman, making their wares cheap to produce.

CULTURE AND CLIMATE

The average Oseptian endures a life of scorching days and chilly nights, and Oseptian streets are filled with a wide variety of cultures, religions, and races. The citizens of this country use various forms of scarification and tattooing for both decoration denoting various accomplishments and to signify important status indicators such as social caste. Commonly tattooed areas of the skin, like forearms, hands, and necks, are usually exposed to the public. Servitors are sometimes marked with the symbols of their creditor. They can be found tilling the land, serving in homes, and working within the vast open markets lining the streets in every city dotting the desert. These open-air stalls are where the infamous unregulated market thrives. Osept treats a number of trade laws differently than the majority of the rest of the world, so one can expect to find whatever their heart desires within these bazaars. Also uniquely Oseptian is the sheer amount of historic, religious, and magical knowledge found within the nation's borders. Some consider Osept the core of blooming modern civilization, as most current nations were born in light of the Divine Sands Wars which took place in Osept. As such, the desert nation boasts texts, artifacts, and lore from countless ages past, making the nation the first stop for those seeking esoteric knowledge.

Osept makes use of the Inservitude system by putting prisoners to work for individuals or the nation itself at little or no cost. The organization called the Black Hand is considered to be the protectors and regulators of much of this network. Due to the nature of the system, being a servitor is considered shameful.

This position sets one below the rest of the society, regardless of what station one may have held before entering a sentence of Inservitude. Unsurprisingly, merchants and traders hold significant power within the desert nation. Osept is a wealthy entity built on the backs of merchant prowess, and as such, merchants and traders are essential to the country's economy. A well-off merchant can skirt the laws of the nation with ease.

The climate of Osept is harsh and unforgiving, but her various riversides flourish with rich, fertile soil. Winds sweep over the desert and usher in sandstorms from the east. These winds hit the mountains in the south and west, which bar moisture from reaching the Vaethrian Sea. Northern Osept is somewhat cooled by the Angylis Sea, but the rest of the country is jarringly hot and dry. These areas are home to large cliffs created by rivers which ran dry long ago. Vegetation only grows freely near the borders of Rancegash and Vavaire. Osept stands alone as the only nation in the world lacking the presence of floating motes. Though rumors and theories abound among the magically endowed, no one can surely say why this may be.

The desert nation boasts a number of interesting locations. Eiliept, the capital of Osept, contains the greatest unregulated market in the entire world, which is the greatest source of income for the nation. Another location, Valshathe's Tears, confounds the world by being a constant supply of fresh water. To all modern knowledge this should not be possible. The waters of Valshathe's Tears are exceptionally clear and clean, and some claim the water boasts mystical healing properties. Also unique is the city of Hailia, the seat of the royal family of the Grand Pharaoh. Hailia is a grand fortress with servitors working miles of the surrounding land, and these servitors are the only citizens not of the royal family or elite guard to be found within the region. Outsiders are forbidden from coming near the abode unless clearly invited.

POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT

The leader of the Oseptian government is the Grand Pharaoh. The current Grand Pharaoh is Uzlak, a one hundred seventeen year old half-elf. Uzlak is extremely tall and bald with dark brown skin, and he is covered from head to toe in ornate tribal tattoos. He has reigned as Grand Pharaoh for the last thirty-four years. Born in Osaw, Uzlak was raised in an upper-class family. He found his place among the nation's mystics and priests and developed his magical talents. He and his fellow mystics eventually settled in Anaru, and from then his rise to power was swift. He assumed control of Anaru and over the subsequent years he absorbed two other cities and declared himself the Pharaoh of the entire territory. He possesses a unique staff he obtained when stealing the mantle of leadership from the prior Grand Pharaoh. The Staff of Aurere is a holy relic in Osept, and Uzlak's possession of the item cemented his place as Grand Pharaoh. It is believed that only those with the proper lineage and ability to rule can wield the holy relic, as the staff exhibits powers which protect the country's ruler from most assaults. It is adorned with a carved upper half of a serpentine humanoid. This ancient artifact is the pride of the country, and older than the majority of the world's standing nations.

Uzlak is ruthless in his rule and unrelenting in his quest for international conquest, but he attempts to treat his law-abiding



subjects fairly. He realizes that to become soft is to become weak, but he does not wish to cause revolt and dissent among his people. He has wisely struck a balance between firm and fair. Uzlak has one daughter named Asheba and no wife—only a number of mistresses. He has little love for the Vathis Sentinels, despite their massive presence in his nation, as he believes that they encroach upon his rule. He tends to prefer the Sky Dragons, who embody more of his ideals. The Grand Pharaoh allows the criminal organization known as the Bronze Dragon Syndicate to trade openly in Osept. He distrusts all of the major nations to the west, and he holds a firm position against Rancagesh and the rancar. The Grand Pharaoh retains sole discretion when enacting laws and decrees, but he has a small cabinet of personally-appointed advisors to counsel his decisions.

Grand Pharaoh Uzlak wishes to make the rancar pay for their war for independence, which dug quite the hole in Osept's coffers. Raids against Rancagesh are made in the dark of night under his orders and kept secret from the rest of the world, and trade routes leading to the neighboring nations are sabotaged in the name of Oseptian glory. Uzlak takes every chance to adopt political stances that counter Rancagesh's views. The Grand Pharaoh also privately wishes to enslave dragons to incorporate their might into Osept's military forces and study their powers. He plans on selling the winged beasts to rogue sects of the Eldritch House and CORE for their experimental efforts. Uzlak is also pushing Osept's western borders towards the barren lands previously held by Vavaire. This territory would be a great addition to the country, as Osept stands to profit immensely from cultivating the additional fertile lands.

The nobility of Osept are treated as a higher class of being. They are granted admittance to exclusive areas of cities and establishments, and the royal family claims a fortress wholly to themselves. Much of the nobility of Osept are long-standing Starcalled families, and the majority of these families claim to have come into power in the days of the Divine Sands Wars, though they were not Starcalled until the advent of sigils and the Legacy Wars. The elite families of Osept claim a patron deity as their benefactor. Though the nobility within the country control much of Osept, they defer to the Grand Pharaoh in all regards as a symbol of both faith and divine power. It is extremely rare for noble lines from outside of Osept to gain any real respect or influence when competing with the long-standing dynasties of the desert.

Beneath the Grand Pharaoh stands a single Vizier who is personally chosen from among the noble lines of the country by Uzlak himself. Under the Vizier there serves an array of advisors and diplomats also chosen from prominent Oseptian families. The priests of the country are considered to be on the same social tier as nobility, but separate, and they are deferred to by Oseptians far and wide. True priests of Osept only follow the Manara pantheon, and this creates contention within the world's various religious groups. The organized priesthood is an extremely influential group, and many noble sons and daughters aspire to join their divine rank. The government as a whole is largely involved in all aspects of Oseptian day-to-day life, particularly the intricacies of the practice of Inservitude.

Local laws and law enforcement in Osept revolves

around the practice of Inservitude. Inservitude is the state of being a "slave" within Osept as a result of one or several of the following offenses. There are additional qualifying situations, but these are the main causes of an Inservitude sentence.

- Outstanding debt unpaid to the nation itself.*
- Outstanding debt unpaid to an individual of the nation.*
- Conviction of a grievous offense to the nation.*
- Opting in for Servitude in place of the death penalty.*
- Service for a prisoner of war.*
- Inheriting the state of Servitude from a predecessor.*

Depending on the situation, the Oseptian lawbreaker in question will be placed into Inservitude to the one to whom they are indebted, where they will serve their master until their debt is paid off. Other times the lawbreakers are placed into the custody of the nation to serve the nation directly. Oseptians as a whole do not see Inservitude as wrong or right, but simply a way of life embedded in the fabric of their culture. Those who are servitors do have a modicum of rights akin to free citizens, but they are at the behest of their creditor. Servitors are assigned eldric collars which attune to the creditor, a courtesy of CORE in exchange for the excess of business they deal in with Osept. This practice is seen as illegitimate by the standards of the Vathis Accords, but ignored by local law enforcement for extenuating circumstances related to culture and custom. Osept's lax law on contraband and illicit materials are also different than that of international law, and the Sentinels stationed in Osept respect their independent position. On the other hand, Osept is far more strict on crimes like murder or theft, and local law enforcement regularly hands out harsh punishments such as generations of Inservitude or death for these crimes.

The hierarchy of the Oseptian military is a multi-tiered affair with each branch serving a different purpose in battle. The infantry is the frontlines ground troop, with two mounted branches of charioted archers and mounted cavalry following. These are considered more noble and formidable than infantry, and they tend to be outfitted with more middle-class citizens than the infantry, which is typically comprised of soldiers of low station. Above the two mounted divisions rank the battle mages, who aided Osept greatly in the Darkest War. The Oseptian navy was once its own branch of military, and formidable at that, but it fell to the wayside in past centuries against powerful Venoch, and more recently, the growing forces of Erygis. These days Osept's military is relegated to ensure raiders from the west are kept at bay. These tend to be stragglers of the Shattered Hand, gnolls and their minions, and looters who call the Nashendasorn their home. The navy has been reduced to defending trade ships against the growing formidable sea pirate presence in the Angylis Sea.

Osept is in a tough spot when it comes to international diplomatic relations. Rancagesh is considered to be their greatest enemy, as the two nations share a long, sordid history. The Oseptian's heinous acts towards the rancar in the past and the servitors of today have earned them enemies in Darastrix as well. Erygis is one of their burgeoning rivals, quickly growing as a formidable threat to their economic dominance. Osept has a strained relationship with the nations of Cypress, Sillirai, and Vavaire, mostly on



account of their cultural differences, particularly disagreements regarding Osept's open market and systematic Inservitude. The Cyprean people in particular travel to Osept frequently for the sole purpose of freeing servitors from their debts and collars. Despite being neighbors on the Angylis Sea, Mythrayne and Venoeh both have shown wariness in dealing with Osept, causing the desert nation to keep a watchful eye on their movements. Osept elects to refrain from diplomatic endeavors with Isild, Leyathar, and Tristan, as they deal little with one another, and neither side seems eager to discuss terms of trade. Aurezia stands as Osept's only true ally in the world. Their friendship is based on shared zealotry, and this friendship has earned Osept the hatred of the Aurezian-occupied nation of Washu.

RELIGION AND TRADITIONS

Amun-re, Valshathe, and Isis are the most prominent deities worshipped in Osept, who revere the Manara pantheon. In the standard Vath pantheon Amun-re is known as Astea, and Isis as Circe. Valshathe is a unique exception to the differences between the two pantheons, as she remains the sole deity who came to life within Osept already bearing her name. They are revered in particular for walking the sands of the desert nation long ago. The majority of the Grand Pharaohs have been powerful priests of those three gods, and therefore pushed their influence throughout the country. Two revered holy sites are located in Osept. The first belongs to Sobek, known most commonly as Kato throughout the world, and the second to Valshathe. Despite Osept's lawlessness the chaotic nature of Sobek's worshippers is not always looked upon favorably by the local authorities. It is not uncommon for scholarly types to pilgrimage to his Lake of Fire to gaze upon the pyramid that supposedly houses the remains of long-dead Deities slain by his sword. The Oseptians believe that the dead and their souls are judged by Osirien, also called Mileen, before facing their just fate. A special prayer is recited when a person is found dead or interred, or a grave encountered whilst traveling. The Oseptians believe that they will face retribution and divine judgment if they do not recite this prayer, the Akhuth, at all appropriate times. All in all, the dwellers of the desert are a zealous lot. It is known that Deities walked the desert in the Divine Sands Wars long ago, and the nation is seen as a holy land for once bearing their otherworldly footprints. Honoring the divines is a necessity for those traveling through this sacred place.

Not surprisingly, many of Osept's local traditions and holidays harken back to their zealotry and carry on from the days of old. They observe the Day of Rest, a holiday set on the summer solstice, where all, including servitors, are allowed a day of absolute rest and relaxation. Any and all work is shunned, and everyone is treated equally on this day. There is not much celebrating to be had, but Oseptians treat this day as a gift to those who labor tirelessly throughout the year. Like the rest of the world, Osept observes the Laniri, celebrating over the course of one week leading up to the actual day of the holiday. They fast for the six days prior to the celebration and feast on the Laniri. On the following day there are typically massive parades occurring through the streets of major cities, and many travel from far and wide to see the holiday's extravagant spectacles on display. Two commemorations

found only in Osept, however, are Pharaoh's Rise and Pharaoh's Fallen. These two holidays actually shift days when a new Pharaoh takes power. Rise is celebrated as the day the current Pharaoh rose to take the throne, while Fallen is observed in remembrance of all the Pharaohs past, set on the day of the prior Pharaoh's death. The last celebration of note is Atum's Wake, observed on the first day of the month of the Seeker. At dusk Oseptian citizens venture out of their homes and hold a candlelight vigil in remembrance of the first Pharaoh, Atum-ri zi'Aurera. It is believed that she will see the light of the vigil from her eternal rest in Valshathe's realm and bless the nation with abundance in the following spring season.

Though some would consider the entire nation a notable location, a few points within Oseptian borders stand out as remarkable. Osept is home to the battlefield of the Divine Sands Wars, and the landscape bears minute traces of where and when the gods walked among mortals, leaving temples and holy sites dotting the landscape. At the center of Valshathe's Tears there exists an open-air temple constructed on a small island. Inside of this temple is a fountain of never-ending water. This lake is inexplicably the place where the majority of Osept's fresh water originates. It is also the location where Valshathe was discovered, and considered to be one of the holiest sites in the country alongside Sobek's Lake of Fire. His lake is found deep in the desert reaches of Osept as a lake of pure molten sand and earth, flowing magma, and liquid glass. There is an island of chiseled granite resting in the center of the Lake of Fire, which is actually the top of a large pyramid sunken within the molten depths. Atop the pyramid is an eternally flaming greatsword. This greatsword is the sword that absorbed the essence of the Deities slain during the Divine Sands Wars by the actions of the goddess Apophis, also called Serena. Sobek was spawned by the residual energy of their deaths, and the sword was his first physical embodiment. It rests embedded in the pyramid where the slain Deities remain buried for all eternity.

INFLUENTIAL PARTIES

The Vathis Sentinels boast a massive presence within Osept. The Gilded Road throughout the Nashendasorn Desert leading westward into Rancagesh and Vavaire is fraught with dangerous creatures and bandits, which require their frequent patrol. The Sentinels of Osept can also be found near the open markets of the country, but they tend to look the other way and often accept bribes to ignore unsavory wares and deals. The current Grand Pharaoh is not fond of the Sentinels in the slightest, but he understands their necessity, though he still undermines their influence when he believes Oseptian authority to be better fit. CORE facilities are in abundance in Osept, and the country imports a surplus of eldria-based products from the organization. Servitors are often supplied to CORE in lieu of traditional payment. CORE is the only group to circumvent the general understanding that only Oseptian groups and individuals are allowed to be involved in the institution of Inservitude. The organization accomplished this by utilizing a series of loopholes, such as using CORE representatives who live in Osept as the official creditors of the servitors. These creditors, in turn, would have their servitors work for CORE. CORE is also seeking to sign off on a private agreement with Grand Pharaoh Uzlak in which the organization would be granted access to en-



slaved dragons on which they can experiment.

Osept originally commanded a powerful influence on the Council of Vathis, but a number of factors have contributed to the demise of the nation's sway, such as the independence of Rancagesh, alliance with Aurezia, and the country's involvement with the rise of the Shattered Hand at the start of the Darkest War. Today, Osept struggles to remain un-ostracized among their peers on the Council of Vathis, though few can ignore her sheer economic might and importance to religions worldwide. Also souring these views is the Grand Pharaoh's friendly status with the Outlaws and Sky Dragons of the region. Due to the nature of the economy, both parties offer a multitude of valuable resources to the nation, and they stimulate trade and growth within Oseptian markets. Pirates and Outlaws of all sort flock to Osept in secret, taking care to avoid Vathis Sentinel detection. Members of these groups are often sheltered by the various Oseptian traders and merchants who profit from their business.

SANDSCALES: The Sandscales are a nomadic mini-nation of vasar, lizardfolk, and kobolds within Osept. They exist as small bands who travel alone and behave differently from one another, but all recognize the other groups as part of the same society. Sandscale tribes range from hostile to friendly, and one can never know what they may be walking into upon first approach. However, all Sandscale tribes follow the same belief that they are born of the desert and must live off the desert. They move from place to place and believe that to become stagnant and settle is to greet ruin. The Sandscales are self-sufficient. Some trade openly with others, but most prefer to keep to themselves. There are few accounts of tribes attacking cities or villages, but a lost wanderer should be wary when roaming near their territories. The Sandscales believe in the strength of the physique and possess few arcanists in their ranks.

ELDRITCH HOUSE: As the place of origin for many powerful magical artifacts and texts, it is only natural that the organization keeps a permanent headquarters within Osept. There are particular locations, items, and documentations which have been uncovered throughout the years that exude a darker magic than what is currently known, and these items are a focus and concern of the Eldritch House. This branch in particular specializes in the studies of these subjects and any spells and magics that would be considered taboo in other nations. The Eldritch House boasts the same secret agreement with Grand Pharaoh Uzlak as CORE concerning enslaved dragons. They hope to study and experiment with the dragons in order to further their knowledge of magic itself.

THE BLACK HAND: Zanon's Free Company seeks to capitalize on an easy source of wealth: the slave trade. The Black Hand kidnaps or coerces humanoid into Inservitude. They specialize in acquiring races and peoples uncommonly found in Osept. While this practice is illegal and frowned upon, creditors assume no responsibility for the origins of the servitors they purchase, and therefore remain blameless when buying from The Black Hand. This organization works hand in hand with the Judicators.

LURIEN INDUSTRIES: Lurien Industries supplies Osept with a plethora of innovative vaedric technology, granting their military a significant edge above others. This is a lucrative deal for Lurien, so the organization tends to go out of its way to keep the desert na-

tion appeased, and Osept delights in having weaponry and devices which help them rival the other nations on the Council of Vathis. Cypress also keeps close ties with Lurien Industries, and the two nations' rivalry is profitable for the vaedric arms supplier.

BRONZE DRAGON SYNDICATE: The Bronze Dragon Syndicate is Osept's branch of this global criminal organization, and the open desert is one of the easiest locations for the Syndicate to operate in. They do find themselves at odds with the Vathis Sentinels and the East Angylis Company, but the Bronze Dragons make a fine coin in illicit trade on the free market, and the Dragon Syndicate as a whole is highly invested in the open markets. They fill their coffers trading in the contraband they acquire abroad, as Osept is by far the best place to peddle their wares undisturbed.

EAST ANGYLIS COMPANY: The East Angylis Company is a major thorn in the Grand Pharaoh's side. For several decades now the EAC has been shaking down Oseptian establishments, organizations, and nobility for the vast wealth the nation owes to Mythrayne. Their activities slowed during the Darkest War, but now that the war is over, Grand Pharaoh Uzlak has taken notice of their renewed vigor. He is currently struggling to drive away the Mythrene agents. The EAC is taking advantage of Osept's weakened state by extorting merchants and organizations and ambushing Oseptian vessels in the hopes of being one day repaid for the great efforts of their forefathers.

EYES OF VATHIS: The Eyes of Vathis pay well for hints of old ruins and relics, and even better the acquisition thereof. The devastation of the Divine Sands Wars and the Darkest War left unfathomable amounts of past knowledge lying under the sands of Osept just waiting to be cataloged by the Eyes.

HARBINGERS: The Harbingers, who are stationed out of Osept, spend much of their time trying to subvert the worship of any god other than Serena. They have also been known to kidnap or kill clergies of other faiths. Rumors suggest that they've forged ties with various groups in the Evernight for future nefarious schemes.

CLOUDSTRIDERS: The Cloudstriders provide luxurious mounts, pets, and work animals to those willing to pay. They sell an abundance of well-bred camels, and among their impressive beasts are lesser species of sphinx trained to be exotic mounts for wealthy soldiers or ostentatious nobility.

EXPERIENCING OSEPT

Land travel within Osept is brutal, but necessary to some, including servitors and lesser merchants and traders. The country's roads are some of the most well-guarded and watched, however, thanks to the great presence of Vathis Sentinels. River ferries do exist, but they can be costly. Airship travel is extremely common in Osept, and the nation boasts docks in most major cities.

Traveling by land is the easiest for wanderers exploring Osept. Lamias are found near ruined holy sites, and yrthaks, behirs, and monstrous creatures are sometimes seen on the outskirts of the nation picking off poor lost souls or their herd animals. Wandering gnolls are vicious, but typically only encountered on the western edge of Osept, if at all. Death worms and other subterranean creatures live in the hot Oseptian sands, swallowing whole caravans and groups of travelers while leaving little trace of their assaults. Osept is also home to an abundance of bandits and rogues, and



they commonly pretend to be guides or caravan guards. Hiring reliable assistance is of the utmost importance in Osept.

Tourists and travelers are told to be wary when entering the country's markets. Paupers will attempt to sell phony relics and divine talismans under the pretense of authenticity, claiming that these baubles are blessed by the gods. Other common scams include fortune-telling and bogus tour guides. A legitimate tourism industry blooms, however, with travelers paying good coin to reputable guides recommended by family, friends, and organizations.

Due to the events of the Tretolancan Wars, people in Osept are generally hostile towards those from Rancagesh. They also retain an enmity for tieflings and ildera on account of their actions during the First Empire Wars. People who pry too much into the personal lives and secrets of others are not welcomed in public, either.

Oseptian organizations revel in adventurers coming to town. With their arrival comes tales of grandeur, long-lost treasures, and naïve pockets to pick. Osept boasts public baths where the general populace relaxes and socializes, and many business dealings in the desert are done in the bathhouse or after a social soak. Most of these places are open to the general public, though some are private, and some are only open to those with the right amount of coin to spare. The only downside to visiting Osept as an adventurer is that one is first judged for their nationality, though displaying a hearty work ethic will prove one worthy of note.

A number of parties within Osept are hiring. The Eyes of Vathis in particular are always seeking assistance in unearthing lost tombs, artifacts, and temples. Merchants can be found not only harking their wares, but seeking capable hands to collect on their debts and retrieve additional items from a variety of dangerous places. For those interested in the darker side of the nation, the Black Hand pays a small fortune for slaves. Amari fetch the highest price, followed by ildera, gnomes, vasar, and dwarves. The Temple of Valshathe is seeking divine aid from any passing clerics or priests capable of assisting their clergy with cleansing waters and healing the sick. They do not pay exceptionally well, but are in desperate need of any and all assistance. Also hiring are the Lost Brothers, a quaint group specifically researching the history of Osept and lost cultural artifacts. This group sometimes comes to argue with the Eyes of Vathis, as they see the Eyes as a stifflingly bureaucratic organization accomplishing little. Finding work in Osept is extremely easy for all peoples from all walks of life, especially those willing to get their hands dirty in the quest for payment.

MAJOR SETTLEMENTS

EILIEPT

“City of Golden Walls”

TYPE: Capital Metropolis

POPULATION: 810,448

LANGUAGES: Oseptian, Leyarish, Vavalish

VATHIS SENTINEL SCORE: 4

ECONOMY SCORE: 9

IMPORTS: Dyes, Lumber, Masonry, Minerals, Ore, Slaves

EXPORTS: Books, Gems, Jewelry, Leather goods, Mercenaries, Minor magical items, Pearls, Pottery, Rope, Ships, Silk, Spices, Weapons and armor, Wine

ORGANIZATIONS: The Almaqwan, The Black Hand, The Bluemoon House, CORE, The Eldritch House

RELIGION: Manara Pantheon: *Valshathe, Amun-re*

Eiliept is commonly referred to as the City of Golden Walls for its appearance, but many know it more as a city of profit. When arriving in Eiliept by land or by sea, it is easy to be inspired and awe-struck by the massive stone walls, painted gold and shining in the sun, before taking in the sights of one of the largest markets in the world. The grand open market of Eiliept is a massive bazaar with thousands of shops in stalls covering an urban sprawl of seventy streets. Most of it is covered, but the outer portions are consistently changing or added upon, and it is difficult to keep up with the changes enough to accommodate construction. The market sits in the center of the city proper, giving way to residential districts surrounding it in a circular manner. The entirety of the city is devised in sections of a circle, as if Eiliept naturally grew outwards from the market. A district of nobility lies in the westernmost section of the capital, overlooking the sea and the river. A winding series of docks lie along the west side on the river, and continue around the northern shores. The walls of the city and some essential buildings may be made up of thick slabs of stone imported from inland Osept and some even from Mythrayne, but the majority of structures are heavy clay and limestone. The market has been reinforced throughout the years with various materials, but it is frequently painted over or decorated by magical means.

Eiliept is rumored to have been one of the few cities to have stood during the Divine Sands War, and when humanoid began their rise to prominence near the end of the age of Black Frost, it was a small group of humans and a clan of halflings from the west that together planted the seed of what would become a spring of civilization in the deserts of Osept. When nations began traveling by sea, Eiliept became an essential stop for trade and rest. Many stayed and word spread of the large market, as this was a staple of the settlement. The first Grand Pharaoh, Atum-ri zi'Aurera, declared Eiliept the capital of this land, and had temples dedicated to Valshathe, Amun-re, and Isis constructed in their honor. With the influx of population came an agricultural boom since, at the time, Osept used their large number of servitors and adjacent resources in Rancagesh to empower their workforce, building Eiliept out even further. These servitors became another significant feature of Eiliept, and it is now considered the prime stop for slave auctions in recent times. Throughout the many wars Osept has participated in, few enemies have even thought to harm Eiliept, as most nations, even rivals, place considerable stock in its economy.

The city is not concerned with criminal activity, as the market boasts no hard limits on what can be traded, so one does not need to resort to underhanded manners to attain most things. Also, being the lifeblood of the city, the average citizen only wants the market to flourish. Life in Eiliept revolves around the day at the bazaar, with the common folk rising only to have breakfast and head to work in the town center, the docks, or the surrounding



fields, all contributing to the incoming wealth of Eiliept. When the market closes at dusk, the city becomes a haven for loiterers, who linger in the streets enjoying the sights and smells of the desert coast. The docks that border the west and north areas are a common locale for evening escapades, as they are lined with taverns and bathhouses for visitors and locals alike. Grand Pharaoh Uzlak has placed a former apprentice in charge of the city's guard and politics. Prince Abjur, as he is addressed, is very firm on the matter of the slave auctions remaining in place, as well as maintaining a manageable Sentinel presence. He was a sly businessman in his time before ruling, and has made use of his experience. He was a major player in a local organization known as the Almaqwan, a centuries-old trade group that was declared the official guardians and regulators of the market by a former Pharaoh.

UNASTEN

"The Haven of Valshathe"

TYPE: Large Holy City

POPULATION: 245,900

LANGUAGES: Oseptian, Vavalish

VATHIS SENTINEL SCORE: 5

ECONOMY SCORE: 4

IMPORTS: Lumber, Luxury goods, Tourism

EXPORTS: Incense, Literature, Textiles

ORGANIZATIONS: Carpenasten, The Gentle Ones, The Overseers

RELIGION: Manara Pantheon: *Valshathe*

Unasten is a cultural hub and religious center differing greatly from the economic powerhouse of Eiliept. The legends say that Valshathe herself was born in this city, which draws in large amounts of residents and pilgrims. While Valshathe's allied religions have a presence in the city, worshippers of the other Deities are treated as outsiders. Unasten is a circular city lined with great stone walls adorned by murals of the good Deities and the deeds of their servants. A vast temple composes the heart of the city, and though it is not particularly large or luxurious, it is far-reaching with corridors branching into different districts of the city. Lush gardens, an odd sight in the desert nation, are plentiful around her temple and attract tourists year-round. The elder Prince Khnum, a high priest of Valshathe, delicately governs this city. In his old age he has become significantly more lenient in his rulings. The local military of Unasten is composed of conscripted commoners who maintain order while a sect of Valshathe's clergy, the Gentle Ones, tend to matters of religious and social importance. The lines defining their duties is often thin, and most view the Gentle Ones as a group of sages and advisors.

The waters of Valshathe's Tears are the most significant feature of Unasten, and therefore gain the attention of many. These waters are used in various districts by means of well-maintained aqueducts. Other areas, particularly those close to the mysterious source of Unasten's waters, are considered sacred. Only the higher ranks of Valshathe's clergy may travel along its path. It is forbidden to bathe in, swim in, and drink the waters directly. These laws are strictly enforced, as it is believed that these waters are easily

tainted. This has led to the rationing of the waters of Valshathe. Those who work in her service farming or cultivating the land are granted more than others.

Unasten is home to a small market on the city's western side, with its airship tower located in the east. The city sees little trade, but what it lacks in economic significance it makes up for in cultural wealth. Unasten possesses one of the largest libraries in the nation famous for the wide array of religious tomes contained within its walls. As a holy city Unasten is dry, and one of the few Oseptian cities that refuse to trade in alcohol and other excesses. One can own and consume substances, but the trade of them is not allowed within Unasten's covered markets. The Gentle Ones are valued over Prince Khnum and the military in recent times, and tensions between these groups are rising. Some believe that a drastic power shift is imminent, and the wealthy are hedging their bets as they see fit.

FORT ULDOVI (Desert Fort City, Population)

"The Oseptian Egress"

Fort Uldovi is a fort that was originally constructed thousands of years ago, presumably around the time of the Divine Sands War. There once was a city surrounding the fort, but over time it either eroded away or fell to attackers. The truth is unclear. When the great Pharaohs rose in the last few centuries it was built back up upon its ruined foundations, and raised even higher than it stood in the ancient past. The fort's adobe walls and towers stand over one hundred fifty feet above its sandstone foundations. Fort Uldovi is close to Three Points and verdant grasslands, giving Fort Uldovi the feel of an oasis at the edge of the desert. The valley housing the Fort in is also beneficial in that it experiences a more moderate climate than most of Osept. Adobe walls almost eight miles long surround the fort city, and outposts along these walls help spot threats long before they arrive, usually in the form of rogue beasts and Shattered Hand remnants left behind in southern Vavaire and northern Rancagesh. The small town within the walls of Uldovi is a respected source of fine pottery, some citrus fruits, and dates.

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

NASHENDASORN: The Nashendasorn Desert to the east was once an essential part of Osept, and composed roughly half of the nation's landmass. The Kyhyl river system and all of the cities that resided on its edges were integral to Osept both economically and culturally. During the Darkest War they suffered at the behest of the Shattered Hand as the Vandiel Verinarkyr and his forces systematically laid waste to cities along the river. These cities and their guards had little chance of successfully retreating, and those who survived the rampaging fiends were plagued with disease, as Verinarkyr spread sickness through the rivers and their tributaries.

What remains of these towns today is a series of ruins, half-destroyed and covered with a sickly grey pall. Stray travelers who dare take cover from the sun in these ruins pray that no sickness lingers. The water itself is visibly tainted, sickeningly green in color and bubbling. The whole desert is now a formidable obstacle in the way of successful trade and travel between Osept and Erygis, forcing former overland merchants to seek pas-



sage by air or sea instead. The remnants of the Broken Shackles, the forces who foolishly served Verinarkyr, still wander across the eastern Nashendasorn to this day, attempting to spread sickness in his name. Tersa is the only city that still stands within the entire region. On the edge of the Angylis Sea, this location was able to receive aid in battling the Broken Shackles and their relentless plagues. Today it is a lightly populated city relying on imported resources. Its inhabitants hope to rebuild and reclaim the road back to Osept. Other notable features of the eastern Nashendasorn include the mysterious stretch of shifting sand called the Sandflow, the famous Valshathe's Tears, and Sobek's Lake of Fire, a site sacred to his worshippers found east of Unasten.

YALING MOUNTAINS: The Yaling Mountains found in the south of Osept are a dangerous area for unwary travelers. Some companies mine within their depths, seeking a rare form of volcanic glass, but they contain a multitude of lurking threats. Drier than the rest of Osept, the rocky desert here can be accessed by winding tunnels leading into the Evernight and parts of Rancagesh. Few creatures native to the Evernight make their way out onto the surface here, but members of the Embaph or curious travelers often let these tunnels lead them astray. Though Rancagesh is now independent and most of the rancar wish no ill will to the Oseptians, there are those who still seek conflict, and it is not uncommon for rogue groups of rancar to travel through and attempt to instigate conflict with Osaw. The paths leading into the Yaling and the heights of the range are rarely traversed, but found there are a variety of rare creatures and plants. Rocs nest among the peaks and many trophy hunters seek their feathers and eggs, though large scorpions will sometimes prey on the clumsy. Some blue dragons can be found lurking among the mountains, and the area is a valuable source of sphinxes that the Cloudstriders are known to breed and train.

SANDFLOW: The Sandflow is an agitated expanse of desert found in the Nashendasorn. It stretches on for two hundred miles running west to east. The Sandflow begins just south of the legendary Lake of Fire, and reaches down to the coastal mountains. From there it continues some way east. The main travel route from Erygis to Osept runs parallel to most of the Sandflow, but less than fifty miles away. Those who do not know the area well run a decent risk of finding themselves in this treacherous region. It can be traversed as normal, but it is constantly shifting and bears large pools of sand that literally flow like a thick, congealed liquid. The Sandflow is littered with sinkholes and prone to large sandstorms which cause travelers to become lost and displaced. Some believe that this odd natural occurrence is attributable to Valshathe, strange happenings in the Evernight below, natural land movements, or an association with the magical Lake of Fire nearby. There are even some who believe that the Sandflow is the result of an extraplanar creature. Whatever the case may be, the region is as dangerous as dangerous comes, and inhabited by a number of odd creatures comfortable in the Sandflow. Many dig and swim through the sand as easily as a human walks, and others lurk on the surface using the sandstorms and rolling dunes as cover.

HEIROPHANT'S HAVEN: Heirophant's Haven is the rest-

ing place of Ashewere, the Vermin Queen, located beneath present-day Osaw. It was originally constructed as a single catacomb used by neighboring villages. Some centuries ago people noticed noises and rocks jutting from the earth around the sealed tomb. Heroes explored and found a powerful mage inside who staved off her own death with Vile magics and burrowed an intricate cave system. Within the caves she built a temple to herself, and rose the dead to a state of unliving. The place was overrun with insects and bug motifs, murals, and statues. She destroyed these depictions and went on a rampage, leaving a wake of destruction from Osaw to Unasten where she was finally destroyed. Her remains were transported and sealed away, but the entire cave system still teems with magic. Very few know what lies there now, and the local populace is hesitant to reveal its location to meddlesome outsiders.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

- Some wrongfully indentured servitors have escaped and need help hiding from the Black Hand.
- A roc has been assailing a town after hunters stole eggs from its nest.
- A merchant needs help retrieving wares that were stolen from him in Eiliept, but he does not want the Almaqwan involved.
- A priestess of Valshathe tasked with cleansing the waters of a small village is hurt and needs help completing her duties.
- Tomb robbers have broken into the Heirophant's Haven.
- Sobek's Lake of Fire has been blazing more so than usual. Sparks of molten earth flicker into the air, and storm clouds gather overhead.
- The Eyes of Vathis need an item retrieved from within the Yaling Mountains without the Lost Brothers finding out.
- The Lost Brothers need an item retrieved from within the Yaling Mountains without the Eyes of Vathis finding out.
- A member of the Eldritch House is attempting to sell rare magical scrolls he uncovered in Osept, but he cannot say what they might do.
- A plot for the Harbingers to kidnap several nobles in well-known families is uncovered, but already underway.
- A blue dragon that was a beloved figure in a town was kidnapped and the townspeople are offering a reward for help setting it free.
- Sick wanderers from the east have been pouring into Osept and spreading their illnesses. Are they victims of the Broken Shackles?
- The Sandscales have been raiding cities in the night. They seem to be seeking a particular item.
- A person claiming to be a lost merchant asks for an escort to the closest city, but will not share what their business is.
- The party stumbles upon the burrows of desert worms that were passing through the area days before. Trails of blood follow the burrows.
- A large group of rogue rancar have found their way through the Yaling Mountains and are laying siege to a small Oseptian town.
- An airship full of wealthy nobles crashed in the Nashendasorn while passing over the Sandflow. A large reward would certainly be paid for their rescue.





RANCAGESH

"The deepest jungle began with a single seed."

THEN AND NOW

Despite being home to orcs, goblins, and other races with considerable existing history, Rancagesh is a young nation with a rough past. An indelible scar has been left on this nation's region of the world, but the rancar are working to heal the land and mend old wounds. The citizens of Rancagesh are a varied sort. In olden times the land's assortment of races was spread out across the continent, and they were far apart both physically and culturally. The strongest of these old civilizations belonged to the orcs, and second to them were the provinces of the goblinoids. Over the passing millennium the area now known as Rancagesh has been conquered by invading monstrous races, taken over by dwarven nations now extinct, absorbed into lost human kingdoms, and forced into servitude by Oseptian slave-traders. Rancagesh's borders are small when compared to the lands the old races once held, but her people have grown stoic, and they are determined to regain their lost prominence.

The rise of Rancagesh began with the rise of dwarves and goblinkin on Asarus. Though no national banners were waved at

this time, tribes and small villages lived a meager existence competing for valuable natural resources. The extensive goblinoid civilization covered much of the southeastern mainland, and if the tales of old are to be believed, they remained involved in constant warfare with the dwarves in the surrounding area. The primitive lifestyle of the goblins carried on unhindered for centuries until a great evil utilized magics, which are still not understood by the sorcerers of today, to warp the land and destroy the goblinoid empire. The nearby desert nation of Osept was almost destroyed in this event, prompting the gods to visit the realms of men and vanquish this evil. The world was plunged into the Age of Dragons shortly after. Thriving in the defeat of Osept, their unruly neighbor, the orcs and goblins quickly re-adapted to independence. Though little is known of this time, most assume that rancar fared relatively well, and some reclaimed their lost lands and lived undiscovered in the thick Rancan jungles and mires. The only thing known for certain is that impressive contingents of goblinoids warred with dwarves to the east, even while under the subjugation of dragons. The tales of these battles live on in the exaggerated claims of bardic song.

After the dragons mysteriously disappeared the empire of orcs and goblins discovered the power of magic lacking considerably. Becoming weak in arcane regard, this age became a dark shadow of savagery for Rancagesh. It was often the art of magic alone that kept the peace between tribes and cultures, and





RANCAGESH

"We endure in Unity."

COLORS: Saffron, Light Blue, Black

BANNER: Smilodon

POPULATION: 7,046,546

CAPITAL: Treto

GOVERNMENT: Tribal Federation

LEADER: Tatoanni Jedekka zi'Pazclact

LANGUAGES: Rancan, Vavalish, Oseptian,

NOTABLE EXPORTS: Cocoa, Coffee, Fur, Leather, Lumber, Raw materials, Tobacco

DEMONYM: Rancan

LITERACY RATE: 51%

without the power of the arcane, the tribes warred like never before. The Black Frost event occurred in the midst of their civil strife, destroying an empire to the west and crippling the lives of millions of people elsewhere. When the cold became too much for the Rancan tribes to bear, many of them suffered huge losses from starvation. As the crops died and the winds blew cold, villages set aside their differences and banded together for survival. Some made dwellings as far south as they could, and a few even attempted to go eastward through the desert to neighboring lands rumored to be warmer, but the vast majority stayed in their fortified homes dug into the earth. Some clans even moved into the Evernight, believing the dark labyrinth of caves and caverns to be safer than the surface world above. The Age of Black Frost was an unforgiving punishment for Rancagesh. Hardened tales of woe from these times persist in the form of cave carvings and oral history.

As the Rancan tribes emerged from the ice age and began to rebuild, sigils started to appear on Starcalled individuals. The rancar amassed to follow Azairuk zi'Ugloch, a gnoll chieftain born bearing the Sigil of the Curator, though numerable would-be rulers rose and fell during this time. The event is known globally as the Legacy Wars, and it was a time of great change, even for the ancient civilization of wild rancar races. Though tribes would not reach their former strength, they indeed rose to power, and once again the gnolls and the orcs of the land warred with the dwarves. The goblinoids decided to expand at this time, and so they moved to the north and west and established new tribes and homesteads for their kind. The Legacy Wars came to an end in Rancagesh with little bloodshed. The new leaders of the world made drastic changes to their existing culture and ways of governance, such as the reorganization of the Nashendasorn Desert region into one country named Osept. With this reorganization came a return to Osept's old ways of slavery, and soon the majority of the goblinoid

people were enslaved to the desert's massive human population. They attempted to rebel and return to freedom, but in such a weakened state following the Age of Black Frost they were easily overtaken by Osept's growing strength. Slavery and war became a way of life for the rancar, and shame became their prison.

The orcs and goblinoids spent centuries beneath the iron fists of the Oseptians. They were utilized for manual labor, human shields, and all manner of servitude. Some tribes maintained a meek existence outside of Osept's influence by staying far away from the desert and living deep in forests and jungles, and others were simply too militaristic for the Oseptians to want to conquer. The majority of the tribes spared from the system of Inservitude were found along Osept's western coast. These hidden tribes grew tired of their isolation and fear, and after years of hiding Sharug Yolmet led his tribe, called the Hidden Claw, out along the western coast. Under his superb leadership the primitive group managed to take back the Dralget Marsh from the elite Oseptian forces, who controlled the territory for decades leading up to Yolmet's skirmish. The goblinoid's improbable victory was accomplished through means of guerrilla warfare. These tactics became the standard method of warfare for goblinoids, and they forced the Oseptians to tighten their hold on areas liable to rebellion. Sharug Yolmet is revered as a hero among rancar even to this day for his victory over the warriors of the sand. Goblinoids within Osept were punished harshly following Yolmet's revolt and killed by slavers by the dozen. They began murdering goblinoids on sight rather than capturing their kind, as their nature was deemed too chaotic for creditors to control.

The Zujuhst cave system within the Jaush wood, long buried, was shortly discovered by orcs traveling around Vosuth. These caves contained huge veins of silver, gold, and other precious metals which would become a source of wealth centuries



later during the founding of Rancagesh. At the time this cave system was kept secret from Osept, and was deep enough within the Juash to remain hidden from Oseptian raiders. Beginning some thirty years later nearly every tribe of gnolls, the fiercest people in the region, united into one massive clan. Calling themselves the Uglochhal in tribute to their greatest hero, they sought to completely eradicate outsiders and rained death upon their would-be subjugators from within the shadows of the wilds.

Within twenty years the Uglochhal, greatly feared, were able to completely secure settlements along the coastline. Tribes of nearby orcish races requested that the gnolls stay in their own settlements, as they were too fierce in their vast, vicious numbers. This caused a schism between the gnolls and the orcs, a conflict that would last for decades and leave prejudices in the hearts of many. The would-be citizens of future Rancagesh participated little in the First Empire Wars, a conflict which ravaged the face of Asarus after the sinking of an Elish airship called the Evangeline. They were only used in small numbers as cannon fodder and foot soldiers, though Osept's participation was certainly lesser than the participation of other nations along the Angylis Sea.

The slavery situation in Osept caused tension in not only the immediate region, but across the entire world. The seafaring country of Venoch began to secretly back goblinoid slaves living in Osept who were preparing for revolution. The Venocian merchants delivered Erygan supplies utilizing their supply lines, masking their true intentions and goods as wares of other sorts. One year later generals from the two aiding countries arrived to covertly train the goblinoid troops in tactical warfare. They ultimately hoped that the goblinoid revolution would open the Avalon Sea to free trade. The goblinoid slaves rose up against their masters in the dead of one night, and using the tactics suggested by the Erygan and Venocian generals, they systematically gained control of the region where the rebellion was thickest. The Tretolancan Wars began as the goblinoids and orcish races fought for their freedom.

Osept was unable to quickly muster a defense to its western reaches, as the Grand Pharaoh was embroiled in other affairs with larger threats. The Oseptian troops fell back to Uhus to regroup almost immediately. Rancagesh, as the revolutionary group began to call themselves, used the widely-dispersed Erygan forces as cover to launch raids against Osept from the east. These furtive raids liberated even more goblinoid slaves who flocked to the Rancan banners to join the crusade of freedom. In the following year a strong Rancan force pushed the Oseptian defense all the way to Fort Uldovi. They sent raiders from their formidable army of slaves to the fort itself to liberate even more of the oppressed. The nation of Vavaire, sensing a dire conflict on the horizon, marched their armed forces to the location known as Three Points. There they established immediate fortifications to prevent further bloodshed between the Rancagesh rebels and Oseptian slavers. The Tretolancan Wars came to a close as the Council of Vathis, with heavy Venocian and Erygan support, stepped in to grant Rancagesh their official freedom. Utilizing the advice of Hanad, a key Vavairen adviser, Emperor Jaris also pushed for Rancagesh to be recognized as an official nation. The Council ultimately voted in favor of their petition, and Rancagesh was granted a seat on the diplomatic floor,

much to their overwhelming joy.

Even so, the Three Points area would be hotly contested between Osept, Rancagesh, and Vavaire for quite some time. The territory changed hands on multiple occasions over the years, and to this day remains a contested area with no official ownership. With international tensions somewhat high, the nation of Vavaire, attacked the Venocian trading fleet. In response to Vavaire's outburst the nations of Aurezia, Erygis, Rancagesh, and Venoch entered into a military alliance for mutual safety which became known as the Federation. As Rancagesh gained strength and influence as a country, the Rancan armies pushed deep into Osept, freeing slaves in towns and cities as they marched. Vavaire would once again come to Osept's aid and bring resolution to these conflicts. This period of time also inspired the fierce gnolls to abandon their homes and villages to ravage settlements and incite violence in neighboring nations. Most of these gnolls were members of Uglochhal, the shunned group who moved to cave systems and earthen chambers after being chastised and disowned for their ferocity. Gnolls found outside of their designated territory were either killed on sight or exiled back to their people, with the Rancan tribes fearing their drastic, heavy-handed ways.

Though Rancagesh managed to avoid the mounting global tension, save for joining the Federation, they were no stranger to the horrors of the Second Empire Wars, which started with the Starfall Event. The meteorite of zodi'ite which fell to the ground and instigated conflict between two of the world's greatest nations left Rancagesh no choice but to assist Erygis, Mythrayne, Sillirai, and Venoch in the lend-lease of Tristan against the full might of Vavaire. Now caught in a complicated situation, Rancagesh withdrew their troops in Osept back to Uhus. In seven years following their retreat the gnolls were slowly corrupted by an evil force. They moved to the Three Points territory and claimed it as their own, becoming a hindrance to both Rancagesh and western Osept. When it was revealed that key Vavairen advisers were Vandiel's in disguise, hulking extraplanar entities of evil, the Second Empire Wars morphed into a greater conflict for survival, known as the Darkest War. Fiends of all sorts flooded into Vavaire from a portal in the country's capital city, Valiance, and from there they spread to the corners of the world corrupting and killing wherever they went under the name of the Shattered Hand. It soon became clear to the people of Rancagesh that the gnolls at Three Points were corrupted by this fiendish influence.

The Shattered Hand found it difficult to move through the swamps, forests, and jungles dotting the Rancan landscape. One of the largest threats to the wellbeing of Rancagesh came in the form of the gnolls swayed by the Vandiel's influence to turn against their families and raise their arms in the name of chaos and destruction. Their assistance allowed one of the Vandiel's, Ocluxim, to infiltrate Rancagesh. Ocluxim attacked the humid jungles with hordes of plagued vermin which swarmed villages and towns. Though many citizens fled as their villages were raided and torched, a portion of the country's young and fit banded together to venture out into the world and fight. Some tasked themselves with nobly guarding heavily populated cities and villages. Ocluxim was only stopped when Tatoanni Jedekka herself confronted the Vandiel, and utilized the spoken Primal art of Arkspeech. She



defeated his Aspect and successfully contained the death knell.

In the midst of the Darkest War the world felt an ethereal ripple which grounded floating motes, crashed airships, and created sizable disturbances in the Ether. A magically-advanced civilization which left the Material Plane centuries ago returned, and along with it the might of Ether. With the arcane aid of the Leyarish the world celebrated the defeat of several Vandiel Aspects and felt a brief, powerful moment of triumph as the Vandiels of the Shattered Hand were sent back through their portal, thwarted by the heroes and Starcalled of the world. The victory marches were short-lived, however, as nations struggled to rebuild in the midst of the stragglings fiendish armies still occupying ruins and roaming the ravaged landscape.

With magic returned to a power once thought forever lost, the shamans, witches, sorcerers, and druids of Rancagesh have become more numerable and pertinent to society. Cypress, Erygis, and Venoch are all currently fighting over trade agreements with Rancagesh, as the new nation is full of resources largely untapped. Some tribes and cities are sending envoys into the Jungles of Sinafey to contact remote tribes, reclaim lost territory, and recover ancient relics important to their culture. Business is booming in Rancagesh, and the country is currently producing armaments on a level comparable to modern-day Mythrayne. Things are not all positive, however. A vile ogre by the name of Quarosh commands a massive tribe of old Rancans hell-bent on destruction, leading attacks on settlements and protesting the modernization of Rancagesh with primitive, violent displays. They do not want Rancagesh to remain a part of the Council of Vathis. Quarosh is attempting to instigate conflict with Osept in particular in the hopes that the two armies will meet on the field of battle and destroy one another. Arkmother Jedekka is allowing her right-hand man, Quahpili, to handle this threat. Perhaps the most jarring change to the world as a whole, the return of the dragons, seemed to not effect Rancagesh for quite some time. Black, green, and bronze dragons are abundant deep within the Rancan jungles, and their kind take refuge in vacant temples and caves. Some live under the murky swamps or within bodies of water never explored. The majority of the population wishes to coexist peacefully with the scaled beasts, but even so, this popular opinion has done little to stop certain tribes from attacking dragons on sight.

ECONOMICS AND INDUSTRY

Exports: Cocoa, Coffee, Cotton, Furs, Leathers, Lumber, Nuts, Raw materials, Sugar, Textiles, Tobacco, Vanilla

Imports: Agriculture, Eldria, Glass, Masonry, Spices

Originally worked by servitors under the banner of Osept, the land of Rancagesh has been a steady source of tobacco, fur, and raw minerals for centuries. Now a recognized nation, Rancagesh willingly trades these resources with others, namely the countries of Cypress, Erygis, and Venoch. The trade of lumber is booming in Rancagesh, and their mineral-rich lands are causing Mythrayne alarm, as Rancan metal production now rivals that of the dwarves. Furs of rare creatures exclusive to the area are another source of income for the nation. Pearl-hunting, though not a common trade by any means, brings sizable wealth to those who partake. Habi-

tats rich in mangroves compose several large regions of forest in Rancagesh and contribute to the ecology of local flora and fauna. Native species of strange reptiles, fish, prawn, birds, snakes, and crocodiles confound tourists while providing Rancagesh with a unique source of game to utilize for organized hunts. The Rancans export a variety of textiles, including the leather of unusual reptilian creatures. These leathers range from common crocodile hides and snake skins to rare and expensive dinosaur hides. Even more interesting are the coral reef found in close proximity to the Jungles of Sinafey.

Even though Rancagesh is the world's newest nation, a number of notable organizations and figures have risen to power in her borders. The tribe of the Hidden Claw is one of these powerful groups. Originally a centuries-old tribe from the area stretching from Goul to Piarro, the Hidden Claw consists of goblinoid families. This tribe excels at hunting and animal husbandry. They offer their services to the various cities of Rancagesh and sell the creatures they raise or catch for a sizable profit. The Hidden Claw has a dark side, however. They poach rare creatures and selectively breed dangerous animals for their most lucrative outlet: various bloodsports that one can find gambled upon in many a seedy tavern. Rumors have it that the Hidden Claw are now trading the organic materials harnessed from fallen dragons, such as hide, teeth, and claws. Another organization important to the nation of Rancagesh is the Hydering Union, an Erygan company with holdings in Rancagesh. The Hydering Union exports lumber, metals, and silk, which drives wealth into the Rancan cities of Treto and Chut. They boast close ties to both Lurien Industries and the nation of Cypress. Their business makes some uneasy, but others see the Hydering Union as a necessary organization making the most of their country's abundance. Another Rancan group of note, the Miztsons, is a company represented by Slaikkos the Tiger-son, a hulking hobgoblin. He commands an entire tribe dedicated to the Rancan industries of lumber and forestry. Centered around Glath, the Miztsons maintain the forests of Hatseep and Jaush. Though his organization is certainly prominent, Slaikkos has become something of a figurehead himself. His tribe helped rebuild most of Glath after the Darkest War, and the Miztsons supply the Cobalt Kraken with raw materials for the construction of their ships and machines.

CULTURE AND CLIMATE

The people of Rancagesh believe that Vathis is a beautiful gift from the beings who beget the world from chaos. If one cherishes the world around them, it will return the favor tenfold. They know very well that hard work is necessary if they are to coexist with the other nations of Vathis. Although the rancar say that everyone deserves a fair chance at life, they are wary of their enemies and hastily angered by distrust. The older portion of the population hold grudges against certain nationalities, such as the Oseptians. Rancagesh is a nation of jungles and swamps meant to be experienced outdoors, and the rancar are found inside their homes only when required. Most Rancan cities are crowded from dawn till dusk, as the local populace is intensely driven by social interaction. On account of their long history of animal husbandry and almost-druidic reverence of nature, herd animals and pets are seen everywhere



interspersed with the country's population.

The rancar care little for the collection of material possessions, and they tend to own only a precious few objects. Instead, the rancar concentrate on the value of one's life as a whole, which they display in their dress and appearance. Excessive decorations and ornaments, mostly handmade, bedeck homes and city stalls. Nobles and otherwise fashionable people will file their teeth and nails into points as a sign of elegance, and some can be seen adorned in tattoos, body paint, piercings, and even decorative scarification. The tattoos and scarification are a societal holdover from Oseptian culture, but these features have remained prevalent in Rancan culture even as the freed people set themselves apart from their former oppressors. Women in Rancan society are seen as the paragon of self-sacrifice and strength. This is especially true of mothers, as nature itself gifted them with the ability to create life. Mothers are honored regardless of their individual social status. The second most valued people in the nation are priests and druids whose magic is pure and honorable. While martial strength is respected and viewed as necessary, the arcane magics are held in higher esteem, though treated with a mix of suspicion and healthy respect.

Rancagesh is a land of hot summers and wet autumns. The summer months are long and warm but relatively dry, followed by a six-to-eight month fall season which is slightly cooler and rainy. Compared to the winters of other regions of the world, Rancan winters are warm, but still the coolest season. Sea breezes constantly blow across the country. The humidity in the area is high, which leads the populous of the nation to experience a great amount of discomfort in the summer months. Large collections of swamps and mangroves can be found near the coastlines, nurtured by the season of heavy rain and near-constant humidity. The surrounding seas are generally calm, and so are the accompanying winds, but thunderstorms are prevalent and the occasional dust storms originating from the Nashendasorn Desert make their way to Rancan territory. Extreme heat waves and destructive floods, though rare, do occur on occasion.

The culture of Rancagesh is a proud one, and their unique traditions and mannerisms can be seen and felt in the various towns and cities dotting the country's map. One of these locations is the Treto Observatory. Though some disbelieve this information or find it surprising, the orcs of old had a vast understanding of astronomy and time. This grand structure, created to observe the Zodiacs in the sky, is a testament to their knowledge. Over millennia the great stories of the Zodiac constellations have been passed down from tribe to tribe. Also worth noting are the settlements of gnoll tribes, which mainly consist of pit-houses: homes set in the earth accessible only by a doorway leading to their underground dwellings. The majority of these settlements are known and marked on local maps as locations to avoid, but some pit-houses lie in wait hidden in the depths of the jungles housing lost relics and untold treasures. Pit-houses abandoned by the gnolls are inhabited by unusual creatures, such as corrupted rancar, shadow creatures, hags, and monstrous practitioners of the dark arts. The rancar are cautious when venturing through gnollish territory, but they feel a duty to leave well enough alone and let the gnolls continue on in peace. The modern races of Rancagesh attribute their

success to the societies of old—gnolls included.

POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT

Rancagesh's ruler carries the title of Tatoanni, currently held by Jedekka ziPazclact. She is a fifty-two-year-old female half-orc shaman who was voted into leadership after her father and former Tatoanni, Jadash, passed away. It is rumored that she possesses the memories of an ancient rancar ruler. She frequently has visions of an ancient wielder of a magic lost to time, and she is able to recall the exact locations of ruins—even those she has never personally visited—with no help or prior research. Many of these ruins house statues of a ruler lost to time who bears her likeness. Arkmother Jedekka, as she is known, casts unknown spells with a mere word, and she boasts the ability to command the wild creatures of the jungles with ease, including great dinosaurs which she often rides as mounts. The arcane scholars of the Eldritch House call her startling word magic the "Arkspeech." The Tatoanni herself frequently teaches her lesser magics to capable shamans and druids. Jedekka has six children and her husband, Lesk, is one of her hand-picked advisors. As a youth her mysterious abilities granted her prestige, and she was sent to Erygis for schooling. It was there that she was groomed for politics.

Jedekka actively fights against the perception that her people are savages, and she strives to have the other nations of the world recognize Rancagesh as a legitimate nation. She keeps extremely progressive viewpoints, and many of her citizens believe that Jedekka is attempting to change Rancagesh too drastically. On the other hand, Jedekka feels that a change in perception is necessary for the wellbeing of her people. Her greatest allies lie in Cypress, Erygis, Isild, and Venoch, while neighboring Osept holds a tense truce. Jedekka cares little for the Sky Dragons, as she thinks dealing with their kind will give other nations a bad impression of her leadership. She welcomes any and all Vathis Sentinels. Jedekka is Starcalled like her father before her, and two of her six children also bear sigils, miraculously all under signs of fire. Jedekka wishes for Rancagesh to stand tall and equal on the Council of Vathis. She and her advisors are pushing for advancements in architecture, eldric technology, and education. This is a shock to some, but widely accepted by most of the country, though with a level of trepidation. Despite being seen as radically progressive, however, she encourages the use of natural magic and art, and she holds her heritage and history close to her heart. Jedekka hopes to boost the reputation of the rancar within the magic-centric organizations of Vathis. The Arkmother is sending expeditions into the Jungles of Sinafey, as her visions have led her to believe something important is hidden within the lush depths.

The idea of noble status in Rancagesh is a novel one. Prior to their independence the orcish and goblinoid peoples knew no official nobility, but instead gave reverence to those who practiced the mystic arts of magic. The would-be citizens of Rancagesh also granted their respect and esteem to the leaders of the country's various tribes and those who earned their titles through feats of merit related to both mental and physical prowess. Rancagesh is currently experiencing a radical change in social hierarchy as Jedekka and her advisors feel pressure from the other nations of the world to conform to the Council of Vathis' ideals of nobility. Rancan so-



ciety normally lends itself to equality and earned respect, but now some are attempting to take advantage of newfound nobles and raise their status to unjust positions of power. Only the chieftains of tribes may state who is and who is not noble, and the distinction is usually bestowed upon a single individual rather than entire lines of families. Starcalled were always revered, but now there is a precedent in place for their systematic admiration to follow, though in an exaggerated fashion.

The government of the country is set up fairly simply compared to the governments of other nations. Jedekka is the Tatoanni, the chief ruler, and she appoints five nobles as her council, called the Towaliacawan. One of her council, Quahpili, is designated as her right-hand man, the leader of her personal guard, and her prime military advisor. He is a hobgoblin warrior who swore allegiance to Jedekka when she was but a child. He leads a band of other hobgoblins, bugbears, and goblins. He finds them easier to lead than orcs, as goblinoids follow him more readily because of their racial favoritism. Necaica zi'Tochli, another council member, is a female half-orc considered the supreme judge of the nation. She handles the finances of the Tatoanni. Lesk zi'Pazclac, Jedekka's orc husband, is a trusted voice among the five. He is a skilled speaker, and his familiarity with the nation's cities and their chieftains is invaluable to the Tatoanni. The fourth member of the Towaliacawan is Illatol zi'Cualli, a female goblin. She is tasked with monitoring and advising the council on matters involving agriculture and the distribution and usage of Rancan lands. The final council member, Imzulc zi'Tisiil, is a male bugbear alchemist. He is a high priest of Meztlī, and a well-known expert in medicine.

Jedekka is recognized by all Rancan cities and tribes therein as their great leader, though each city functions under their own chieftain. The chieftains were determined by her father, Jadesh, while he was in power. Each chieftain is free to run their city as they wish so long as they adhere to Jedekka's word and respect the overall interests of the nation. A Tatoanni serves for life, and when they pass, a new Tatoanni is elected by the remaining council and other nobles related to the former leader. Jedekka's position as Tatoanni was indeed the result of a successful vote, though many attribute her status to the legacy of her father.

The chieftains of each city appoint military generals to head their local guard alongside the appointed Vathis Sentinel presence. These chosen generals are then trained by Quahpili, and they train the troops they return to. In their teenage years Rancan citizens are granted minimal training in combat and law, and if they excel in their schooling they may be asked to join the guard in a leadership position or encouraged to enlist as a volunteer soldier. This is considered an honorable lifestyle, as guards are seen as protectors of the people. The laws of Rancagesh are generally loose, but when a law is clearly broken, punishments can be harsh. This style of rule is another holdover from the culture of Osept. Capital punishment is not unheard of, and Rancagesh possesses three different prisons and styles of sentences depending on the severity of the crime committed. There are systems in place specifically for repeat criminals, one-off petty crimes, and heretics. Death row is its own institution. The rancar place harsh punishments on theft and heresy and they consider adultery a crime. Rancan nobility is not exempt from these laws. When guards catch lawbreakers com-

mitting a crime they apprehend the criminal in question and bring them, restrained, to the closest appointed court. There the criminal will represent themselves against the proposed victim and the judge, who determines guilt and appoints sentences. Sometimes the local chieftain will preside over the trial depending on the severity of the crime in question.

The standing military of Rancagesh is led by Jedekka's closest advisor, Quahpili. He personally trained the war general of each Rancan major city, barring those who existed before his time, who train the soldiers beneath them. The Rancan military focuses on the virtues of stealth, archery, trapping, and mastering two-handed weapons for frontlines combat. Typically soldiers carry longbows, with falchions, axes, or polearms wielded for conflict in closer quarters. Each city trains hundreds of potential soldiers at a time, starting with the rancar undergoing basic training during their adolescent years. The Rancan military aims to further secure their cities, which entails clearing the surrounding areas of tough beasts, building stronger fortifications, and fighting off raids from bandits and others who oppose the rise of Rancagesh.

Jedekka and her council have fostered close ties with Erygis and allied with Venoch, the two nations who aided the rancar in their revolution. Isild and Cypress are friends of Rancagesh as well, resulting in economic growth for all three countries. Rancagesh is on neutral terms with Darastrix, Leyathar, Sillirai, Tristan, and Vavaire, as they have either little to no contact or few similar interests. Osept remains a bitter enemy of the rancar to this day, and the truce held by the two nations is tenuous at best. Aurezia, a staunch ally of Osept, is also an enemy of Rancagesh. Washu's actions in the last century have left Rancagesh wary of their true intentions, and the tribal nation fears Washu at full strength. Jedekka vehemently opposes talk of Washun liberation, a stand some find hypocritical, given her people's background of oppression at the hands of the Oseptians. Mythrayne and Rancagesh share a long and bloodied history according to shared lore and legends, which are cornerstones of both cultures. Their mutual distrust is rooted in old tales and ancient land disputes between the dwarves and the orcish tribes, which occurred for millennia before Rancagesh officially existed.

RELIGION AND TRADITIONS

The various religions of Rancagesh appear complicated from an outsiders perspective, but from within, all makes perfect sense. The people of the orcish Huetlachtan empire paid homage to the same gods worshipped today, but specifically those with ties to nature, under the names of the Huetlachtan pantheon. Astea, Circe, Irilynshae, Valshathe, Aleydra, Mileen, and Kato are popular with the rancar, though they go by the names Citlalicue, Xochiquetzal, Meztlī, Xipe-Totec, Quetzalcoatl, Mictēcacihuatl, and Xiuhtecuhtli, respectively. In the distant past, some orcish tribes even deified the elemental beings they believed to be descended from. These tribes were naturally inclined towards evil and chaotic acts, and they were soon shunned by their brethren. The elemental-worshippers are still encountered on rare occasion even to this day, but the majority of these tribes are believed to no longer exist, succumbed to infighting and a lack of resources in their lonely exiled state.

The goblinoid races of old were less organized than their



orcish Huetlachtan counterparts, and the two cultures shared no religion. One would be hard-pressed to find a goblinoid tribe worshipping anything other than a god of warfare. Over the course of thousands of years, they were absorbed by the orcish empire and adopted some of their beliefs, particularly the idea of festivals and rituals. These goblinoid tribes were fond of any excuse to celebrate in excess or offer ritual sacrifice. For their sacrifices, the goblins gained a negative reputation as dark god worshippers, when in all actuality they were simply misunderstood. In the present day these cultures are better aligned. As the orcish and goblinoid empires fell apart, united again, and came to exist as one full-fledged nation, the orcish Huetlachtan ways have won out over their goblinoid counterparts. Festivals are aplenty and parties abound in the jungle, and the gods and goddesses with portfolios related to the natural world boast temples and shrines in every Rancan city.

The people of Rancagesh view death and the concept of the soul in a unique way. They believe that the soul's ultimate fate lies in their method of death as well as their deeds in life. Their rituals reflect these beliefs. Those who die in sickness, frailty, or old age are burned while wrapped in cloth or paper with words of hope written on them. These dead supposedly go to Mictecacihuatl's realm, where she will make them worthy of their next destination. The citizens who die as a result of plague, murder, drowning, poison, or other unnatural causes are buried with images, tokens, and trinkets to appease the dark gods in the hope that the gods will accept these baubles in exchange for the soul of the deceased person. Warriors, leaders, and those who die a noble death are considered deserving of a worthy rest, and they are cremated atop the tower of Mictecacihuatl's temple so that their souls might follow the light of Farilis to reach the Zodiacs above. It is said that amidst the stars their souls will be greeted by warriors past. Perhaps the most important deaths in Rancan culture are the deaths of mothers, who the tribal peoples view with immense respect and reverence. Death during childbirth is seen as the greatest form of self-sacrifice and mourned by all.

Rancan culture idolizes nature and the surrounding wild world. This esteem bleeds into the daily lives of the rancar, and as a result, the country possesses several holidays dedicated to each season. These celebrations include festivals devoted to the individual gods of the elements. Farmers and druids undergo seasonal rites and rituals in the hopes of bringing about bountiful harvests and spiritual peace. The rancar even observe a holiday celebrating the elderly and wise, called the Aquianzal, for those who have learned. Another holiday grants all Rancan citizens five days of rest. Cihuattalia is the name of a national festival dedicated to Xochiquetzal, or Circe, the goddess of fertility. Faithful devoted to Xochiquetzal and all women of childbearing age cease work for three days. They are tended to by the men and children of their tribe, and they only rise to dance at night in front of great fires lit in the center of villages and cities. This holiday is infamous for wanton coupling. Another national ceremony is Tecuania, also known as the Day of the Wild Beasts. On this day the chieftain of each major Rancan city catches the largest game he or she can in an overnight hunt. During the following day his or her prize is ritually sacrificed in the hopes of earning a year of bountiful harvest for the village. Certain omens are associated with the various beasts that

are caught during this holiday.

Rancagesh is home to a number of distinctive locations. The Lunenan is a vast, low-built temple found to the west of Treto that many call the Temple of the Old Crescent. The carvings, texts, and shrines within have been translated or passed down orally by the elders of Treto, and with help from the Eyes of Vathis information has been successfully pieced together pointing to the origins of the temple. It seems to have been built before the Age of Dragons and mentions a goddess similar to Meztli who the scholars of Vathis have no reference for. Despite this, the Rancans have treated this location as a holy site of Meztli for ages. The Temple of the Old Crescent is a well-guarded destination of pilgrimage. Its carvings allude to another similar temple found in a different, far-away land, but no known connections have been discovered elsewhere.

Another place of note is found deep in the Dralget Marsh. The Rancan goblinoids in particular revere an unusual megalith they call the Aborning Stones found submerged in the murky marshes. For several months of the year the nine-hundred square foot area appears to be composed of stones slightly larger than human shape standing arranged in a strange formation. During the driest months of the years the waters recede and reveal the true nature of the megalith. The stones stand between ten and fifty feet tall, with the only the highest points observable during the rest of the year. The shorter stones are all connected to the taller stones, and symbols and carvings in various languages cover their smooth surfaces. Several of the Aborning Stones are in the rough shape of sigil Zodiacs, while others are peculiar, mysterious shapes. A number of goblinoids and the occasional orcs come to view these stones while they are fully visible. Many claim to feel inner strength and clarity when they pray at the stones, believing their spirit to be refreshed and renewed by the ethereal source of the monument. This locale is a common place of pilgrimage for those who praise the Zodiacs and seek a higher path of enlightenment. The Aborning Stones are guarded by many Rancan druids and rangers, and the animals lurking nearby are considered blessed. Hunting in the immediate area is illegal, and poachers are harshly punished.

INFLUENTIAL PARTIES

The Vathis Sentinels are welcomed in Rancagesh, and Jedekka labors tirelessly to maintain a beneficial relationship with their forces. She believes that their presence in her cities is key to Rancan acceptance within the Council of Vathis. CORE is not so lucky, however. Their technologies are viewed by the rancar as strange and unusual. The Rancan have little experience with advanced technology and eldria, and nefarious rumors regarding their evils do nothing to help the hesitant adapt to their presence. Technology has found a home in Piarro, though, as CORE has offered to construct an exclusive airship tower for free in exchange for future business. It is rare to see CORE agents conducting business outside of Piarro. Jedekka is working towards catching up to the other nations of the world in the way of technological advancement, but she is wary of how her people will feel if they're forced to coexist with the strange and unusual inventions. Members of the Council of Vathis hold generally positive relations with Rancagesh. Cy-press, Erygis, Isild, Venocho, and Washu were originally the na-



tion's main supporters, and a final push from a Vavairen advisor by the name of Hanad tipped the scale and swayed the Council in favor of the rancar's independence.

Jedekka and her military are unwelcoming to the various pirates of the world. Rancagesh boasts little material possession or wealth, and the tribal peoples who call the jungles home are a simple, unmaterialistic bunch. In recent years Rancan businesses and high-ranking nobles have come into wealth, and Jedekka fears the Sky Dragons venturing into Rancagesh to encroach upon her citizens hard-earned gains. The rancar stand to profit greatly from a variety of newfound business deals and international trade agreements, and Jedekka and her council long to protect these agreements and the wealth they bring to the jungles at all costs. Her people tend to be indifferent to the presence of Outlaws, however. The Rancan lifestyle is generally open and rife with freedoms, so the tribes see little difference between Outlaw life and their lives as normal citizens.

GREEN DRAGON SYNDICATE: The presence of the Green Dragon Syndicate, as the Rancan branch is known, is new to the nation. The organization is ruffling feathers throughout the country, and in recent years they have been responding with force in an effort to solidify their standing as a criminal enterprise. Extra guards on ships and trade routes are requested by the rancar whenever possible, but the Dragon Syndicate is resolute. Their holdings are strongest along the nation's southern coastline.

EAST ANGLIS COMPANY: Rancagesh and the East Anglis Company have no official disagreements, but the two entities frequently come into contact nonetheless. The EAC continues to interrupt trade routes with Cypress, the Rancan's main trading partner. Rancagesh lacks the resources or know-how to properly handle the delicate issue of their hindering presence. Jedekka is hesitant to confront the dwarves, as the EAC does little but delay Rancan shipments, and their movements seem to be aimed at crippling the Cyprean end of trades.

COBALT KRAKEN: The Cobalt Kraken is a clan of orcs and half-orcs who reside along the western coastline and the riverside which runs all the way east to the Yaling mountains. They are the chief naval presence in the Avalon Sea. The Cobalt Kraken is divided up sects represented by the tentacles of a kraken, with the "Head" at Goul monitoring the fishing and patrolling of the Avalon. They secretly spy on the Vavairen coast and Three Points, and one of their main goals is ensuring that no renegade groups slip past their wary eye and all the way down to Ilsa to break through to the open ocean waters.

ELDRITCH HOUSE: In recent years the Eldritch House established small offices in Rancagesh, as they've been required by the Council of Vathis to take stock of the country's spellcasters. The organization is also acquiring new sources of special materials and spell components found only in the jungles, learning from local shamans and apothecaries, and assisting local groups in unraveling the mysteries of druidic magic found lying in wait in the nation's relics, writings, and historical sites. The Eldritch House of Rancagesh works alongside the Eyes of Vathis, Inquisitors, and Notekeeper's College in these endeavors. Though originally wary of the Eldritch House, the shamans, druids, and natural spellcasters

of the nation have been extremely forthcoming and kind to representatives of the group.

THE COLUCAAN: The Colucaan are a rancar tribe of goblins, kobolds, and lizardfolk who refuse to take part in joining modern society. They wish to rule the forests and marshes in solitude, and they do not suffer the presence of trespassers lightly. It is rumored that they capture and actively hunt the dragons who venture through their territory. No one is sure why, but their current preoccupation with the dragons is distracting the group from raiding nearby settlements, which the people of Rancagesh view as a welcome respite, though some worry that their hostile actions will anger the dragons and bring their wrath upon the rancar.

BOARTEETH: The Boarteeth are a clan of old rancar led by Quarosh. Their numbers are primarily gnolls, bugbears, and a few orcs and half-orcs who are all unhappy with the state of modern times. They are allied under the flag of a wereboar ogre, a depiction of Quarosh. He acts as the alpha male of his clan, exclusively and constantly breeding with all of the females, hoping to conceive more future warriors. Quarosh's underlings wish for the Rancan lands to return as they were with their people running free and wild, beholden to no laws. After Jedekka's tribe and a number of hobgoblin-led squadrons recently engaged the Boarteeth in combat they were forced to retreat, and now they only occupy a section of land found in the south near Vosuth. The Boarteeth lash out against the city of Vosuth often, and in recent years they've been attempting to venture into Osept to purposefully increase tension and ignite a war between the neighboring countries.

THE BLACK HAND: Since the Council of Vathis legitimized Rancagesh and banned the unlawful induction into Inservitude, their servitor numbers have dropped, and some of Osept's practitioners of Inservitude have adapted to nefarious means of obtaining additional slaves. It does not happen often, but tales persist of horrific raids by the Black Hand in the dark of night, laying waste to small villages of rancar and kidnapping any they can. This is making the truce between the two nations even harder to abide by.

EXPERIENCING RANCAGESH

The forests and jungles of Rancagesh are difficult to traverse, and the nation's plains are vast. Mounted travel is practically required when venturing along roads and trails. Travel along the country's rivers is quicker, but costly, though vessels sail up and down the wide rivers and marshy waterways throughout the day. Airship travel is fairly new to the rancar, and traffic is relatively low compared to that of other nations. However, each major Rancan city possesses at least one airship tower for proper docking.

Unsurprisingly, travel within Rancagesh is extremely dangerous. The country is composed of deep unexplored jungles and foggy marshes. Rare and unusual creatures can be found in these environments, and Rancagesh in particular houses a sizable number of giant lizards, armored dinosaurs, and deadly insects. Gnolls can be found wandering wild and vicious in the country's northern reaches, while anti-council tribes such as the Boarteeth roam in the south. Both groups wreak havoc on the civilized peoples of Rancagesh. An issue found solely along the southern coastline is the presence of sahuagin and their minions who call the waters of this area home.



The average Rancan citizen is wary of outsiders. They tend to ask foreigners an endless stream of questions in the hopes of learning who the outsider is associated with and why they ventured to their village. They show hospitality and acceptance toward those who prove their peaceful intentions. The rancar enjoy festivals and celebrations, but they have little tolerance for unnecessary commotion. They appreciate the strength of those who are capable of surviving alone in their jungles, and they welcome druids and shamans from other lands with open arms as brethren in spirit. The rancar are willing to share their culture and homes with newcomers after they learn the nature of their travels, but some areas in their cities and villages, such as temples and schools, are rarely opened to outsiders.

The rancar despise the Oseptians, and for good reason: the shared history between the two nations is rife with warfare, slavery, and death. An Oseptian will only find comfort in Rancagesh if they adopt a new persona and identity, and being exposed as an Oseptian would be dangerous at best, and fatal at worst. Vasar are often seen as too proud to be truly respected. The people of Rancagesh also dislike CORE, who uses unnatural means to gain power in the world, something which upsets the druids, shamans, and nature-worshippers of the tribes. The races and creatures of the Evernight are seen as vile and impure. The rancar boast no particular racial hatred except for a disdain of tieflings, who the populace views as strange and demonic in nature.

The people of Rancagesh love to gather as a community, typically in public places around a campfire. It is tradition to sit newcomers beside locals and invite tourists to participate in their festivities. It is taboo for a wandering traveler seeking refuge and kindness from the rancar to refuse participation in these events. When the villages and cities of the country celebrate they do so in elaborate, nation-wide events, with smaller festivals and gatherings occurring weekly. These places of community gathering are usually in the town center. The rancar are hesitant to let outsiders into the cloisters of their temples, so they erect smaller shrines and places of worship for tourists and pilgrims to enjoy.

Despite the rancar's hesitation towards outsiders, many local organizations are hiring brave adventurers who travel to their lands. Most settlements are in need of quality protection from predators, Osept raiders, or those who raid under the banner of Quarosh of the Boarteeth. The retrieval of artifacts is another lucrative market for explorers attempting to make a living in Rancagesh. Sailing companies hire wandering groups to protect their ships from the harassment of the East Angylis Company and beasts along the coasts, as well as provide security during seafaring trips to the shores of Sinafey in their quest for discreet exploration.

MAJOR SETTLEMENTS

TRETO

"The Jewel of Rancagesh"

TYPE: Ancient Rancan Capital

POPULATION: 652,492

LANGUAGES: Rancan, Vavalish, Oseptian, Cypran

VATHIS SENTINEL SCORE: 6

ECONOMY SCORE: 6

IMPORTS: Fish, Lumber, Minerals, Precious metals

EXPORTS: Furs, Ivory, Meat, Religious texts

ORGANIZATIONS: Boarteeth Clan, Eldritch House, Hidden Claw Tribe, Hydering Union

RELIGION: Huetlachtan Pantheon; *Citlalicue*, *Meztli*, *Xiuhtecuhtli*, *Mictecacihuatl*

Rancagesh's capital, Treto, is one of the oldest standing cities in the known world. Celebrated by the orcs as the cradle of civilization and impressive in every sense of the word, it earns its well-deserved title as the jewel of the nation. Treto existed long before the other humanoid races arrived on Asarus, and even before the dwarves amassed an empire of their own, or so the legends say. Trethuetlian was the city's original name, which has been adopted by the massive temple at Treto's center. The temple is not particularly tall, but the sheer size of it is enough to awe any who approach, and the statues of warriors that line the temple on all sides attracts tourists and amazed onlookers. This temple, dedicated to the Ancestors of the Orcs and Worshippers of the Old Gods, is where political matters are discussed and where conferences are held. The city of Treto is unique for a variety of reasons, such as its population demographics: Treto houses the largest number of orcs in the entire world, with goblinoids coming in a close second. Half-orcs, acer'rin, dwarves and humans compose the rest of the capital's population. The other races of Vathis are not a common sight here, though that is not to say that they are unwelcome in Treto, but rather outnumbered. Jedekka zi'Pazclact resides here, having lived in the temple for several decades. The temple also houses and trains the warriors of the city.

The outskirts of the city are barred with walls of tough wood that are one hundred feet tall and topped with sentry towers. One-half mile surrounding the city is cut clean for purposes of visibility, as the forests and jungles of Rancagesh are often thick and imposing. Outsiders can only enter Treto through two drawbridge entrances. Treto is a perfect location for travel and trade, as three rivers and land routes convene around its walls. Trade and international relations are new values to the nation, so the city lacks a designated market or bazaar, which confuses foreigners. Instead one will find carts and stalls erected anywhere open space can be found. The capital's architecture is typical of Rancagesh, with the temples and meeting halls built as open structures with tiered levels of steps and minimal carvings on their faces. The homes in Treto are extremely humble, but remarkably colored. Built primarily of treated wood, they are typically painted in vivid colors, and their coverings are dyed. The popular fashion and overall style of the city match this unique style.

Trethuetlian is the largest temple in Treto, but not the only. Smaller temples dedicated to Citlalicue, , and Xiuhtecuhtli are attached to the larger structure by means of small passageways. Mictecacihuatl, the goddess of death, is granted her own temple by the northern city gate. This temple is reserved for rites for the dead, and the newly deceased are brought here to be prepared for their individual death rites, as per tradition. In front of the main temple of the city there exists a courtyard approximately half a



mile in length and one-half that in width, which acts as the general thoroughfare between sections of the city. In the evening after supertime people will come to this area to socialize around fires before retiring for the evening. Taverns are not as prevalent in this city as one might expect: there are only two within all of Treto.

While the temple is certainly popular, some outsiders find the observatory behind the main temple to be the city's greatest structure. One hundred and twenty-five tiered steps lead to the observatory's entrance, with another hundred feet of stairs continuing upwards inside. At the top of the tower, the tallest structure in Treto, there are several rooms. What rooms are open depends on the year, month, and day. The rooms of this observatory are used to view the Zodiacs in the night sky, with certain constellations being more visible depending on the room in which they are viewed. The orcs of old possessed a vast understanding of the passage of time and astronomy. This structure is a testament to their knowledge.

Treto's convergence of rivers has led to the construction of docks, which has bolstered international trade. In the olden days, found underneath the low-lying shrubs and grassy knolls of the capital, Treto contained many pit-houses. These rudimentary houses also included smaller tunnels for storage that ran throughout the city's grounds. During the rancar's battles with Oseptian slavers, and in recent times as Rancagesh struggled to adhere to the Vathis Accords, these tunnels and subterranean dwellings were used for nefarious purposes such as smuggling. Though things have been mostly good in the city of Treto, the jewel of Rancagesh is no safe-haven—crime is as common here as it is in other cities. The Boarteeth Clan, for example, is infamous for making trouble for Treto on occasion, but their efforts have lessened in recent years. This may be attributed to an important Erygan noble family that has been extremely involved in developing the city of Treto. The Galulic family can be seen walking the streets on any given day, as if to remind the populace of their presence. They are the main force behind the Hydering Union. This family has brought with them both an influx of human workers and number of eldric inventions, which some rancar fear. Only the most rudimentary eldric mechanisms have been deployed on a mass scale within Treto.

VOSUTH

"The Saffron Port of Skulls"

TYPE: Port City

POPULATION: 206,901

LANGUAGES: Rancan, Oseptian, Vavalish

VATHIS SENTINEL SCORE: 4

ECONOMY SCORE: 5

IMPORTS: Masonry, Minerals

EXPORTS: Fish, Lumber, Pearls, Precious Metals

ORGANIZATIONS: Boarteeth Clan, Dragon Syndicate, Miztsons, The Nine Skulls

RELIGION: Huetlachten Pantheon: *Citlalicue, Xochiquetzal, Meztl*

Vosuth, the Saffron Port, is a city located south of Glath along the southern coast of Rancagesh. This city is one the many growing settlements found in the nation. Originally nothing more than a

popular stop for ships en route between the eastern and western nations of Asarus, the resident population saw a steady rise following the end of the Darkest War. A refreshing variety of "civilized" races call Vosuth home, which appeals to sailors and travelers seeking for a friendly place to rest. Despite this seemingly welcome aura, Vosuth has drawn in some of the undesirables from surrounding lands. A lack of attention from the Vathis Sentinels has prompted the leadership of Vosuth to install their own guards and rules, headed by Greipe Guipleak. This guard is known as the Nine Skulls. It is aptly named for the masks worn by captains and superiors, which depict a partial skull in one of nine colors. The average guard does not wear these, however—they are reserved for those in officer roles. Greipe himself is nicknamed The Saffron Skull, and he commands the full might of the city guard. He is an educated, middle-aged orc and a former sea pirate who, after seeing some of the world, decided to settle in Vosuth and build the city into the bustling port it is today. He hopes that other nations will soon be more welcoming of his people. The city is nicknamed after the rich yellow and orange decorations donning the majority of Vosuth's structures.

The Saffron Port is extremely crowded and densely populated. The city's stone walls are currently being expanded westward to accommodate Vosuth's rampant growth, leaving large swaths under construction. Most of the homes in this port city are built with thick walls of plaster. In recent years old structures have been torn down and new structures built in their place, such as a series of inn-like complexes that house multiple families. As somewhat of a social melting pot, Vosuth possesses multiple areas dedicated to recreation. The city contains its own coliseum for mock battles, Essel Tournament training, song and dance festivals, and popular sporting events. The beaches of Vosuth are littered with fisherman and common folk alike partaking in seaside revelry. The Zujuhst mines nearby have been providing Vosuth with lucrative sources of silver, gold, and other precious metals, boosting the economy significantly over the years.

The ship docks eventually give way to a wide road that runs the entire city south to north. Traveling north from the docks will lead a visitor first to the main castle, on the eastern edge of the road, where the Nine Skulls reside, work, and train. A visitor center and oratory intercept the path near the castle. Further travel northward leads tourists to Temple Road, which is home to a collection of shrines and three temples dedicated to Citlalicue, Xochiquetzal, and Meztl. Mictecacihuatl possessed a temple at one point, but it was destroyed in a battle and only the Great Pyre remains where it once stood. After one passes Temple Road, a west to east path runs perpendicular. To the west one will find the city's coliseum, and to the east is the housing district. South of the coliseum there exists a recently constructed bazaar. Beyond these areas are hastily constructed living quarters which accommodate the recent influx of international residents.

UHUST

"Last bastion of the gnolls"

TYPE: Fort

POPULATION: 92,608



LANGUAGES: Rancan, Oseptian, Vavalish
VATHIS SENTINEL SCORE: 4
ECONOMY SCORE: 2
IMPORTS: Leather, Soldiers, Weapons and armor
EXPORTS: Coal, Masonry, Minerals
ORGANIZATIONS: Vathis Sentinels, the Uglochal
RELIGION: Citlalicue, Meztli, Xiuhtecuhtli

Uhust is a relatively new fort by Rancan standards, having been built around the time of the Legacy Wars. Originally, it was constructed as a defense against those in Osept who would make raids into Rancagesh for slaves or resources. Its location, adjacent to Three Points with proximity to Osept and Vavaire, led to it serving as the last defense or central headquarters in several wars throughout the centuries, namely in the Darkest War as the biggest deterrent against the corrupted gnoll forces of the Shattered Hand. Uhust consists of a large temple-like structure, with four sets of stairs leading down atop a wide mound of earth surrounded by many smaller fortifications contained by a moat running the circumference of the area. There are small stone walls and gates lining the moat. The ceremonial center has a tightly packed cluster of temples, oratories, shrines, sanctuaries, altars, and platforms for oration, dancing, or stela display. The four bridges leading into the city are framed by stone arches covered in phrases carved into their surfaces during the Legacy Wars. The phrases loosely translate to "From your skulls we drink," "From your teeth we make necklaces," "From your flesh we make the drum," and "For your defeat we dance." These do not echo current Rancan sentiments, but it is a reminder of their strength and ferocity in the face of adversity.

The most unique feature of Uhust is the complex system of tunnels and caves running underneath and out of the city. This is where the bulk of the population resides. To the east and south of the temples above lie the subterranean residential areas, large complexes of apartments constructed underground that each hold between four to six dozen families. The royalty and nobility reside closer to the main temple and their quarters can be reached from the temple. Deep in the northwestern region is where the sick, infirm, and the non-cremated dead belong. There is a small temple to Mictecacihuatl for service with a chimney breaking the surface. Along with residency, these tunnels aid Uhust in smuggling goods in and out of the fort during wartime, and to aid in surprising enemies. On the edges of the nearby Yaling Mountains Uhust possesses a small mine, which only brings in a meager amount of coin. The gnolls of the Uglochal are still a problem for the fort, but workers have been making stronger efforts to defend and keep them from assailing holdings belonging to Rancagesh.

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

KUATHOKHO: "Where great cats reside." Found east of Treto and north of Chut, Kuathokho is a temple built before all recorded history. The entrance is a one hundred foot tall opening in the shape of a smilodon maw, and the rest of the temple is found underground. It is believed to be filled with great treasures, but few are granted entry, and those who do enter Kuathokho never make it far on account of traps, labyrinth mazes, and natural beasts lurking

within. The main entrance below has yet to open itself to anyone who has tried to enter. Rancagesh today considers this place a holy site now cast into darkness. Stories regarding the temple tell tales of fierce druidic warriors who worshipped the great cats of the former orcish empire.

DRALGET MARSH: The Dralget Marsh is home to a rather high concentration of isolated goblinoid tribes and other odd creatures. The goblinoids recognize the rule of Tatoanni Jedekka, but they dislike city life and wish to remain as they were before the days of Rancagesh's official founding. Some of the marsh's nomadic settlements were torn part during the Darkest War, but the goblinoid tribes are working hard to reestablish themselves. The Aborning Stones, a location sacred to their race, are found in these lands and draw religious fanatics to the area. Some young dragons are flocking to the swamps to make a home for themselves as well. The goblinoids of Rancagesh and their ancestors believed that the marsh was their birthplace, with the Aborning Stones bearing significance to this myth. The swamps and wetlands of the Dralget Marsh constantly change throughout the seasons on account of flooding, with areas traversable every season, and others only every few years. The flora of these lands provide many exotic reagents for magic and alchemy, as well as uncommon amphibious and reptilian creatures considered delicacies. The nomadic tribes here are friendly with the nearby cities of Goul and Piarro, despite their wishes to stay separated from society. To Jedekka's relief, they do regard themselves as Rancan citizens.

VELGRIUS PLAINS: Rancar have called this stretch of plains home for millennia. It remains a respite to a few nomadic tribes, but in modern days these plains contain the roads running between Piarro, Treto, and Chut. The Velgrius Plains are a rich grassland rife with herd animals like elephants, hyenas, hippopotamuses, and the large cats the nation is known for. Smilodons, also known as saber-toothed tigers, are the biggest danger to lost travelers here, and the rancar justly give them a wide berth.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

- An odd, meticulously-kept wagon and horse are found abandoned on the Velgrius Plains. With no driver in sight, one has to wonder where the wagon is coming from and where it is going.
- Farilis is high in the sky, and howls can be heard growing closer and closer as the night wears on.
- Some rancar are seeking a place to hide or someone to help them escape. The Eldritch House has sent Silencers after them to punish them for their refusal to register their status as magic users.
- A Silencer of the Eldritch House is asking for aid in retrieving rogue mages casting destructive magic illegally.
- A young green dragon is found wounded in a cave. It seeks healing and wants to avenge its attackers.
- The Nine Skulls of Vosuth need help uncovering an underground animal fighting ring.
- Scavenging birds circle overhead, drastically increasing in number by the hour.
- A group of hunters asks for help tracking down a great beast for a great reward, which they vow to split.





SILLIRAI

"From the mind, wonder is built."

THEN AND NOW

Residing on Sillious, a continent west of Asarus, Sillirai is home to the world's only native population of amari. These people are a psionic race who've bonded with the great laris trees of Sillirai for generations, and this interspecies bond defines much of the culture and architecture of the kingdom. Laris trees are prominent in the core construction of Sillirian cities, whose grace and curvature baffle outsiders accustomed to right angles and straight lines. The few stone cities left standing in Sillirai are elegant, ancient structures built by artisan craftsmen long before laris bonding began. Despite being known for lush forests, picturesque rivers, and near-constant rainfall, the kingdom of Sillirai boasts a peaceful duality between natural simplicity and rich extravagance, and wealthy amari families export staggering amounts of precious gems and other luxury goods to the mainland. Sillirai is an established player in world affairs, primarily due to the nation's amassed wealth and long history. Many are wary of Sillirai's vast intelligence network, which remains a formidable force in the wake of the Darkest War, but the public's confidence in the integrity of Sillirai's leadership has

increased tremendously in recent years.

In the early years of the world Sillious was wild, and there was no semblance of society among the amari who called the continent home. Little is known about these early ages apart from myths and legends, but it is established that an unaging woman called Empress Jaeress led the kingdom during this time, and that the Empress herself created the original psionic bond between herself and a laris tree. The Empress taught Sillirai's ancient psionists the bonding process, which started a racial tradition that has persisted into modern times, becoming a defining feature of the amari. Nothing is known about the Age of Dragons that came to follow.

During the Age of Black Frost, Empress Jaeress founded a militant order, which she named the Order of the Midnight Amethyst. The Order was a group of psionically-endowed warriors dedicated to the preservation of the amari race in the harsh era of freezing temperatures and crippled magic. This Order served as a traveling force, establishing artificial psionic environments in the largest laris groves by drawing strength from the trees and their newly-formed bonds with the amari race. The artificial environments served to band the amari together and create the first grove cities, many of which still exist to this day. At this point in time the Empress groomed the nation for unification, and she retreated from the public spotlight to hone her psionic abilities and establish





SILLIRAI

"Honor the Dream"

COLORS: Purple, Blue, Green

BANNER: Laris Tree

POPULATION: 20,427,017

CAPITAL: Cenirien

GOVERNMENT: Constitutional Monarchy Republic

LEADER(S): Couric zi'Laristha

LANGUAGES: Sillarian, Vavalish, Leyarish, Mythric

NOTABLE EXPORTS: Jewelry, Luxury goods, Lumber

DEMONYM: Sillarian

LITERACY RATE: 98%

some semblance of government.

Though none can truly say when the psionic plague of the Waking Nightmare began, it is believed to have started in the Age of Black Frost. Occasionally an amari would fall into a deep sleep instead of a trance and never wake. They would remain in fitful slumber, nourished and sustained by the nefarious magic ravaging their mind for some time before finally succumbing to the illness. The Empress and the Order learned all they could of the affliction as it struck from village to village with no warning. It was only after a great many years that the Empress developed a method of entering one's corrupted dreamscape to pull the unfortunate victims from their terror. Though she and the Order were unable to locate the cause of this corruption and vanquish the source, they were pleased with their ability to save their brethren from dying a cruel and terrible death. Those who returned from the Waking Nightmare would be weak of mind for some time, but eventually made a complete psionic recovery. The Order of the Midnight Amethyst rose to the occasion and became the official force combating this inexplicable illness, with each member of the organization wielding a powerful psionic weapon called a Surai blessed by the Empress herself.

Under the leadership of the Empress, the fractured families and cities of Sillirai were banded into one cohesive nation. She appointed the first royal family to rule as constitutional monarchs, and these monarchs, Queen Elvra and King Reist, founded the city of Cenirien as the nation's capital. For nearly a thousand years Sillirai governed themselves peacefully, too preoccupied with the crippling repercussions of the Black Frost Impact to venture far from Sillious, but as the ice age began to recede, Sillirai emerged to claim land and trade with those on the mainland. Princess Ismeri and Prince Couric were born to the King and Queen, and after the passing of her mother, Princess Ismeri was crowned Queen at the

youthful age of one hundred and forty-six. Prince Couric inherited his father's position as Warmaster of the kingdom. Queen Ismeri was unwilling to wed, and so she ruled alone.

The climate warmed and the kingdom flourished. Great celebrations and tournaments were held in cities across the land, and Prince Couric earned notoriety by being unbeaten in organized duels. He found himself traveling from town to town to attend contests and answer challenges. Out of respect for tradition, he could not deny his contenders their fights, for it would bring shame to his family name and sully his reputation as an honorable man. Prince Couric grew tired of the dueling, however, and longed to fulfill his duties and serve his kingdom in Cenirien. Unfortunately, the list of contenders did not end. After an attempt on Ismeri's life in Couric's absence, he decreed that challenges made to him end in death instead of blood. He slew many of his own countrymen in honorable combat before the challenges ceased. He returned to the castle to attend to his tasks as Warmaster. Couric's newly-earned reputation as a fierce warrior and serious man followed him, and many speculate that it was the cause of his mysterious disappearance only thirty-one years after his appointment as Warmaster. Queen Ismeri refused to comment on his absence or current location, which would be troublesome in the years to come.

At the start of the third millennia, Sillirai's beloved young Queen passed away suddenly and unexpectedly. With her father in poor health and refusing to rule again, the kingdom waited for Prince Couric, heir apparent, to return and claim the crown. He remained unfound, and the Empress did not appear to choose a noble line of succession. Three hundred years of civil wars known as the Throne Wars broke out among prominent families as competing warlords all claimed to be best-suited for royalty. The dwarves of Svartgrond and Mythrayne became allied with Sillarian nobles in the midst of the turmoil, and entire communities of dwarves



moved to the western island nation to trade with the amari and teach them the ways of dwarven mining. The Waking Nightmare, ever-present but kept in check by unseen members of the Order of the Midnight Amethyst, grew in strength and prominence. Fewer and fewer were successfully saved by the Order. Many renounced their loyalty to the Empress, and spat her name with bitterness and contempt.

The waging of the Legacy Wars during these formative years set Sillirai back even further. Sigils appeared on select important nobles, confirming their belief in their divine right to rule, as well as on those from minor houses and average citizens who rose to argue their own claims. The appearance of the sigils breathed new life and chaos into the Throne Wars, and the conflict raged on with no end in sight. A noteworthy family called the zi'Valda's finally won the Throne Wars through a combination of smooth diplomacy and imposing militaristic might, rising to the status of royalty. The heads of the zi'Valda family instated their young daughter Lanaviina as Queen. She married shortly after taking the throne and gave birth to three children: Prince Veryan, Prince Thein, and Princess Eorinn.

Queen Lanaviina, feeling entitled to land and luxury, pushed Sillirai's holdings on the mainland to the dismay of the established nations already located there. Her greed is cited as the reason for the First Jewel War with Cypress, one of four such wars that would eventually come to pass. The kingdom of Sillirai lost most of their mainland territory in this conflict, but Lanaviina's armies reestablished control over the old kingdom of Alaron, now destroyed, but found at the time in the western half of the territory now called Aurezia. They settled their holdings in the following years of non-aggression. The Second Jewel Wars began when Aurezia's expansion encroached upon the Sillarian mainland territories and drove the amari armies out of the newly-liberated Alaron. Despite losing Alaron to Aurezia and having retreated to their rudimentary camps on the shores of Asarus, there was no clear victor in the war. Sillirai instigated the Third Jewel Wars by moving strategically against Aurezia while Aurezia was caught in the Borderlands Wars with the neighboring kingdom of Vavaire. This bold move backfired against Sillirai when Aurezia and Vavaire made peace, however, and their united strength drove back the Sillarian forces. The various burdens of these wars became a point of tension for Sillarian nobles, who began to view the zi'Valda's greedy rule with distaste.

During a peace summit some twenty years after the end of the Third Jewel Wars, the Aurezian Prince Julius killed the Sillarian Prince Veryan over a perceived cultural slight involving Veryan holding a private conversation with Julius' wife, Harmony. Julius struck out against Veryan in a rash act of rage, believing his private attention to Harmony insulting and inappropriate, an opinion the Sillarian culture did not share. Prince Veryan's death initiated the fourth and final Jewel War. Driven by anger and the kingdom's collective grief, the Sillarian Queen ordered her soldiers to raze Aurezian settlements to the ground and march on Aurez City, reclaiming Alaron in the process. At the gates of Aurez City the Sillarian forces were met by the Vavairen relief army, who, in a surprise move, handed over Prince Julius for a public execution. Sillirai granted Vavaire the Alaron territory in return. Sillirai,

Aurezia, and Vavaire were then able to settle their disputes, bringing an end to the Jewel Wars, which had spanned over one hundred years.

Prince Thein zi'Valda of Sillirai and the Empress of Vavaire met shortly after the end of the Jewel Wars to seal their newfound peace. The two nations made agreements to exchange land, citizens, and knowledge for the betterment of both kingdoms. Communities of settlers from the two nations cropped up in the following years, and trade routes between these settlements were established. Although this was a time of relative peace for Sillirai, the nobility of the kingdom were orchestrating rebellions, and Prince Thein worked tirelessly to control Queen Lanaviina's mismanagement of resources. Though the Waking Nightmare remained a threat to the amari, its prevalence neither increased or decreased as the years passed. The people of Sillirai waited for the Empress to return and guide her people once more, but she remained silent, and some even speculated that she may be dead.

In the midst of this inner turmoil and confusion a conflict of global scale broke out on the mainland. Sillirai refrained from becoming involved in the ensuing warfare, which would come to be known as the First Empire Wars. New arms, armor, and airship technology were built with fervor on the back of this war, and Sillirai seized the opportunity to acquire a fleet of airships. This was yet another expense that Sillirai could not afford in the aftermath of the four Jewel Wars. The First Empire Wars ended quietly with little Sillarian involvement, and Queen Lanaviina signed the Vathis Accords at the end of the bloodshed with no complaints.

Some years later zodi'ite fell from the sky and leveled an entire city in western Tristan, which was housing Vavairen theater groups at the time. Tristan and Vavaire blamed one another for this confusing natural phenomenon, and Vavaire marched on Tristan with the aid of Isild. This act of aggression began the Second Empire Wars, a conflict Sillirai was unable to avoid as enemies and allies alike scrambled to pick sides. Prince Thein led the Sillarian troops on the mainland in the zi'Valda name. His preoccupation with the renewed conflict gave rival Warlord Erigreth zi'Dimzil the opportunity to organize the various civil rebellions against the zi'Valdas into one cohesive movement. This rebellion forced the zi'Valdas to abandon Cenirien and move to their family manor with their daughter, Eorinn, and a personal guard. Despite this, Queen Lanaviina and her husband continued their rule from their manor and entered into defensive pacts with Erygis and Vnoch. The Queen gave birth to multiple children during this time, fearing for her legacy. A set of twins were confirmed to be born, but it was rumored that she had more children during her madness.

Over the course of the Second Empire Wars, Prince Thein and the Sillarian intelligence network joined Legion, an organization of Starcalled and key representatives working to secretly uncover the rumored darker influence behind the war. Their agents were able to successfully capture a face-changing spy tainted with shadow. Called the noir, these spies were confirmed to be mentally linked to a master. Legion warned their members far and wide that these face-changers would be found infiltrating every nation and reporting their findings to their still unknown masters, but they were unable to glean more from their captive. Members of Legion, including Prince Thein, worked tirelessly to discover the noir's



masters and sever the complete domination they exhibited over the poor, possessed race.

Sillirai was thrust into active warfare when Washu orchestrated an airstrike against the new Sillarian airship fleet. This attack destroyed Sillirai's only Eldric Reactors and gave Warlord Erigreth the push he needed to assume complete control of Cenirien. Erigreth zi'Dimzil presented himself to the world as the new leader of Sillirai, with a host of noble families backing him in support. After the crippling strike, the archaeologists involved in Legion developed an item which could sever the link between noir and master, though only temporarily. Some noir were captured in an undercover military mission called Operation Twilight. While using the item developed by the archaeologists on the captured noir, the members of Legion were horrified to learn that the noir were under the control of a great and terrible extraplanar evil, though much regarding this threat was still unknown. The full truth was not discovered until the Sillarian armies, under Prince Thein's authority, moved to assassinate a Vavairen advisor in retribution for the Vavairen's role in the Washun airship strike. They found the advisor to be an Aspect of a Vandiel known as Rumoriskar, the evil entity ultimately responsible for the Waking Nightmare affliction plaguing the amari. Only a handful of soldiers survived their encounter with the Vandiel, but those who did spread word and warning to all who would listen.

The discovery of Rumoriskar turned the tides of the Second Empire Wars for the worse, as it was revealed that Vavaire's armies had been infiltrated by a variety of fiends known collectively as the Shattered Hand. Prince Thein died in battle against the fiends, and only a few years after the start of the incursion the zi'Valda manor was burned to the ground, presumably by Warlord Erigreth. Rumors spread that the Warlord was mad with his newfound power, and no better than the monarchy he dispatched. Sillirai plunged into turmoil as the hordes openly invaded Sillious, once thought to be impenetrable. Amari flocked to the mainland seeking nonexistent refuge. Sillirai's armies were bolstered with new recruits, and many of the Sillarian Starcalled joined Legion.

The world was shocked and amazed when the Ether rippled and the Leyarish city of Synethil appeared on the Material Plane: once the heart of the ancient Leyarin Empire, Synethil was shunted to the Vibrant ages ago in a show of inexplicable magic. Upon Synethil's return the city's leader, Archfaer Kernaroth, was met by a young Starcalled amari woman named Evie. Evie claimed to be the sole living zi'Valda, daughter of Queen Lanaviina, acting as a representative of Sillirai. She sought to locate the Empress and bring peace to her kingdom. Evie offered the Archfaer of Synethil knowledge of the Material Plane and a formal alliance with Sillirai's rightful heir. He granted her food, shelter, and secrecy while he weighed the implications of this potential alliance, and then accepted her proposal shortly. As a show of good faith, she assisted Ayrious zi'Faelant, the leader of the Fae'ranore, in locating and returning lost artifacts belonging to the former Leyarin Empire to their rightful home. Ayrious then agreed to travel with her and seek out items belonging to the missing Empress. Evie believed these items to be paramount to Empress' eventual return...and they were.

As whispers of Evie's search reached far and wide, descendants of members of the Order of the Midnight Amethyst came

forth, offering her their assistance and support. It became clear that this future had been seen, at least in the abstract, by the lost Empress. Among these Order members was Couric zi'Laristha, a forgotten prince from nearly a millennium ago, who had allowed himself to be pulled through time in the form of a fey-animal in order to protect Lady Evie in the modern day. He was turned back into his amari form upon Evie's successful acquisition of the Empress' Surai, the trigger ending the spell she put on him. Though his memory was stifled and cloudy, Couric knew enough about his duties to stay at her side, and the two formed an alliance and unearthed other lost artifacts.

It was with the use of the Empress' recovered regalia that Evie was able to locate the Empress nestled in the heart of a laris in an area of Sillarian forest divinely hidden from all. The Empress was locked in a fitful sleep reminiscent of the Waking Nightmare. Lady Evie discovered that her own memories were false, and she herself was the Empress' daughter—and that Couric, the zi'Laristha prince, had been her guard and suitor from centuries past, disappeared from his kingdom to keep her safe, protected, and secret in the centuries to come. Although her claims were first met with widespread skepticism, the presence of the Order at her side led people to flock to her banner in droves. Evie rallied the kingdom's soldiers to her aid, and with a contingent of Legacy troops she marched on Castle Venure and slew Rumoriskar's Aspect. Her triumph freed the hold on her mother, and the two Empresses were united as a family once again.

Upon the Vandiel Aspect's death, a number of those afflicted with the Waking Nightmare and possessed by Rumoriskar's influence woke unscathed. Among them was Warlord Erigreth, Evie's former rival. Other nations celebrated victories over Vandiel Aspects as well, and the war took a turn for the better. Aevalyn, the mortal form of the goddess Astea and a founder of Legion, led a contingent of one thousand troops to march upon Valiance. Here she constructed Aevalyn's Wall and saved the nation from utter annihilation. These soldiers did not return. Aevalyn's Wall severed the noir's ties to their Vandiel masters, and the extraplanar portal in Vavaire was finally closed, putting an end to the invasion of the fiends.

The Sillarian Empress denounced Erigreth and stripped him of his self-appointed titles, but she showed him mercy and forgiveness for his unintentional wrongdoing. He swore binding oaths of fealty to Sillirai. In his stead the Empress appointed Couric zi'Laristha as King, and he was enthroned in a ceremony in Cenirien. The Empress' last political action was to wed Evie and Couric. She then declared her daughter to be the kingdom's new Queen-Empress and retreated slowly and gracefully from the public eye. Sillirai rejoiced, and King Couric began spearheading efforts to reunite the kingdom's Warlords and restore order to the small continent of Sillious.

In the years following the Darkest War the nation of Vavaire, thought forever lost, emerged from the safety of world-falls in a grand display of magic, brought forth by the actions of Ravenne zi'Stardragon. As the heir to the Vavairen throne, she quickly took her rightful place as the Empress of Vavaire. The Etherward dissolved upon Vavaire's return, and then the stone dragons of the world started to awaken, thought to be a side effect of the



Etherward's dissolution.

The current state of Sillirai is one of tentative optimism. Sillarian forces are recapturing land lost to the fiends during the Darkest War and rebuilding ruined cities from charred remains. Many of Sillirai's trading routes were destroyed by the creation of the Strait of Despair during Rumoriskar's death throes, and the kingdom is currently struggling to trade effectively with a greatly weakened airship fleet. Sillirai's extensive intelligence network remains diligent alongside the Order of the Midnight Amethyst in protecting the nation from outside threats. The original Empress has not been seen since her daughter's coronation ceremony, inciting rumors and outlandish stories speculating on her whereabouts and fate: but Queen-Empress Evie stands in her place, giving her people hope and much-needed reassurance. It is the wish of the Sillarian people that with the correct guidance and divine grace, the kingdom may once again see the wealth and prosperity they once knew.

ECONOMICS AND INDUSTRY

Exports: Carpentry, Coal, Jewelry, Knowledge, Lumber, Luxury goods, Precious gems

Imports: Airships, Eldria, Manufactured goods, Metalwork, Spices, Weapons and armor

Sillirai exports a variety of luxury goods, namely gemstones and jewelry garnered from bonded laris trees. These jewels have been the cornerstone of Sillirai's wealth since the dawn of the kingdom. Another staple of Sillarian trade goods is wood from the nation's vast forests. The timber of departed laris trees is the rarest of the kingdom's exports, and a precious commodity the amari revere and utilize to create the highest quality of carpentry. Amari are extremely appreciative of the fine arts, and it is common for their kind to hone their creative skills and nurture their innovative tendencies over their long lifespans. Sillirai often trades in secrets and information, exporting books and knowledge in its various forms. The majority of Sillirai's high families have enlisted the mining expertise of the dwarves, specifically the Vitarúnsker noble family of Torben Keep, Sillirai's gatekeepers. The amari trade much of their coal to Mythrayne in exchange for tempered dwarven steel.

Though many companies and organizations dabble in Sillirai, few have strong, secured holdings. Throughout history the kingdom struggled to maintain a presence on the mainland, and only in recent years could companies founded on Asarus establish a firm foothold in the isolated western nation. The dwarves of the Vitarúnsker family mine the nation's coal. The East Angylis Company is also found in Sillirai, not as debt collectors, but to use the island nation as a base of operations, allowing the EAC access to the nations along the western coast. The Vathis Sentinels have a sparse presence in the kingdom's cities. Sillirai is hesitant to accept eldria and the incorporation of eldric technology, but King Couric is actively seeking beneficial agreements with CORE in laris-sparse regions of the nation and on motes far from land.

CULTURE AND CLIMATE

Sillirai is composed of a populace who enjoy and encourage the

use of one's spare time for personal means while fulfilling a satisfactory amount of meaningful work. Most Sillarian citizens recognize their duty to provide for their home and take up farming or other vital tasks, but they enrich their lives with the honing of craft skills, hobbies, and leisurely pursuits. The majority of the Sillarian population is gathered into cities of laris trees that appear as woodland wonderlands to the average tourist. Small villages are scattered throughout the forests and plains, a godsend to those who find integrating into the laris cities difficult. Non-amari races uncomfortable with the intelligent trees have built humble towns and hamlets with respect to any surrounding laris. Dwarves in particular have taken up residence in the ancient stone dwellings built in the ages before laris bonding was commonplace. Their kind can also be found living in the Garnet Walls mountain range, explored by the Vitarúnsker family centuries ago. This mountain range has kept the Sillarian interior safe for millennia. The main passage through the Garnet Walls is guarded by the citadel of Torben Keep, a holding of the Vitarúnsker family manned by both dwarf and amari. Castle Melanite is another ancient fortress that survived the Darkest War, though few strongholds remain outside of the Garnet Walls. Although Sillirai has been thoroughly mapped by explorers and scholars, the deepest reaches of the kingdom's forests are still strange, peculiar places where even the greatest woodsmen find themselves lost. It is not uncommon for the sentient laris trees to lend their psionic aid to travelers with good hearts and subtly guide them out of the forest labyrinths and back into the light of day. Those of ill repute and nefarious intention are less fortunate, however.

Aleydra is the primary deity worshipped in Sillirai, and the country's piety is a cornerstone of their culture. Both of the Free Companies devoted to the goddess call this nation home. The amari of Sillirai believe that the unaging Empress and her daughter, Queen-Empress Evie, are agents of Aleydra sent to the world to protect the kingdom. It is also widely thought that the laris trees were gifts from the goddess herself, bestowed upon the amari eons ago for some long-forgotten good deed. Even the Sillarian citizens who worship other Deities give a certain amount of reverence to Aleydra and donate standard currency or information to her churches. The dragon gods Naugrix and Vangal are also important in Sillirai, and the dwarves of the nation have made places of Naugrin worship widespread. Astea's religious following tends to be reserved, but this quiet is purposeful, as Sillirai disdains the Aurezians to the east and look down upon their zealous Asteans worshippers.

Sillirai's devotion to the goddess Aleydra has produced a kingdom that values information, learning, and exploration. It is common and warmly accepted for Sillarian citizens to go on long travels abroad and stay away for months, years (or even decades, in the case of the amari), before returning home. During the Darkest War the kingdom answered the call for soldiers, and many brave men, women, and adolescents marched into battle waving the Sillarian flag. Sillarian citizens believe strongly in honor and chivalry, and they take pride in their country. Honorable duels are the way most conflicts are solved, and there are tournaments every year celebrating the fallen and the glory of honorable battle. The majority of the kingdom's fourteen high families prioritize the



wellbeing of the citizens beneath them, but corruption is not unknown, and lower nobility are not subject to the same strict chivalrous standards as the high families.

Sillirai's climate is consistent throughout the entire nation. Warm currents rolling in from the Auntershai Ocean raise the overall temperature of the landmass, and consequentially, Sillirai is wet and warm. The kingdom experiences both mild winters and cool summers, and rainy days are extremely common in all four seasons. The climate facilitates the fervent growth of Sillirai's vegetation, particularly the groves of the laris trees, which flourish year-round. Droughts in this kingdom are unheard of, and a number of rivers and lakes dot the lush, forested landscape. Those who live in Sillirai are unconcerned about unexpected weather and natural disasters and instead focus on working around the hindrance of overcast days and grey skies.

The kingdom is home to a number of notable locations. Sillirai boasts the most prestigious psionic school in Vathis, a place of learning known as the Grove of Serenity. The Grove, as it is commonly called, is an ancient academy located in the heart of the Gemwood, a forest found between Cenirien and Euclase. It is a school composed entirely of laris, and undoubtedly the largest multiple-laris structure in Sillirai. Millennia ago an entire grove of trees grew in tandem and were shaped together to create the school, motivated and moved by friendships with ancient psionics in the days before laris bonding. The school is considered sacred, and it has remained untouched by Sillirai's civil disputes and noble infighting. In recent years, The Grove has become extremely important once again, with the new Queen-Empress recruiting Order members from the elite of the student body. Many Sillirian dwarves receive schooling at The Grove, and there is an exchange program between the psionic college and the dwarven Jordensång college in Konungardra. The school is welcoming of outsiders, though many find it hard to adjust to the Sillirian way of life, and those unaccustomed to psionics find the lack of mental privacy among the talented pupils intimidating.

The headquarters of the Order of the Midnight Amethyst are located in the same area as the Empress' laris tree. A few square miles in the heart of one of Sillirai's great forests have been magically hidden from outside intrusion, and those who trespass into the area find themselves teleported beyond it. They are completely unaware of the event and perceive no changes in their surroundings. Only those who have been invited by the Empress herself can find the Order's headquarters. The Empress' laris functions as her house and safe-haven, while other enormous, formidable trees function as barracks and places of rest for Order members. During the silence of the Empress, many attempted to locate her, but the excitement died down over centuries of quiet. Ever since her daughter has taken her mantle and risen to power, Sillirian citizens are once again fervent and enlivened to hear rumors concerning the secretive organization.

POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT

The king of Sillirai, Couric zi'Laristha, is a nine hundred and thirty-one-year-old amari who is wed to Queen-Empress Evie Jaeress. Although Evie is technically Queen as well as Empress, she considers the former title an honorary one, and ensures the livelihood

of the Sillirian people in ways other than traditional rule. Couric was born as the only son to the original royal family, the zi'Laristhas, and acted as Warmaster and protectorate to his sister, Queen Ismeri zi'Laristha, through a portion of her reign. He was eventually recruited into the Order of the Midnight Amethyst and forced to abandon his position at court. Couric became a full-fledged member of the Order, specifically that of the Amethyst Guard, the portion dedicated to protecting the Empress. His charge was the daughter of the Empress, Lady Evie, whom Couric kept safe while her parents were attending to official Order business. Their affections for one another grew, and when it was discovered that Evie would be a part of the Empress' grand plan to vanquish the Vandiel Rumoriskar hundreds of years in the future, he demanded that he find a way to be there alongside her. It was thanks to the Empress' magic that he was able to join Evie in her arrival in modern-day Sillirai. His combat prowess and innate leadership skills assisted her efforts, and it was partially due to Couric's strength and support that Evie was ultimately successful in the fight against the Lord of Nightmare. The Sillirian people rejoiced in the return of the lost zi'Laristha prince, and with the blessing of the Empress, Couric was appointed King of Sillirai. He and the Queen-Empress have been working tirelessly to restore Sillirai to the kingdom's former glory. They have no children, but surround themselves with a circle of advisors and friends. They keep close diplomatic relations with the elite of a variety of other nations, particularly Leyathar, Mythrayne, and Vavaire.

King Couric and Queen-Empress Evie are extremely involved in the resurrection of the Order of the Midnight Amethyst. Evie spends the majority of her time training new Order members and recruiting for the Serene Warriors, a new sub-sect of the Order which has expanded globally to dispatch Rumoriskar's remaining agents and instances of the Waking Nightmare left in the world. Couric is also involved in the Order, though his duties at court keep him from his desired level of involvement. He can be found sitting in long meetings of diplomatic importance, attending to the day-to-day tasks of running the kingdom, and following through on his promises to reach out to the country and aid the common folk in reclaiming their lost homesteads. Couric and his advisors are strategically moving to gain a foothold on the mainland in the chaos left after the Darkest War, but tensions with Aurezia remain high. Although Couric does not wish to offend other kingdoms, he is concerned for Sillirai's trade. Rumoriskar's destruction and the creation of the Strait of Despair has hindered much of the nation's travel over the waterways, and Sillirai still lacks a functioning airship fleet.

Sillirian nobility is a varied sort. From the ancient families granted power at the dawn of the kingdom, to the sigiled individuals who suddenly found themselves able to claim noble rights when they were Starcalled, nobility holds significant weight in Sillirai. Fourteen high families oversee fourteen various regions of the kingdom, and they are the governing authority of the lands they manage. Minor noble families live beneath the fourteen families, but like all Sillirian citizens, they defer to the family above them for guidance. The Sillirian do not care how one came across their nobility: be it by birth, marriage, or sigil, all nobility are given tremendous respect, and in turn, it is expected that nobility make



decisions with regard for the wellbeing of the common folk.

The government of Sillirai is relatively simple. The royal family runs the capital of Cenirien, oversees the large-scale operations of the kingdom, and handles matters of international importance. The high families collect the appropriate taxes, govern their lands, and support the royal family with their manpower and resources. The areas outside of the fourteen regions are under the control of Cenirien and the royal family. The dwarves hold domain over particular areas of the Garnet Walls, including Torben Keep, and they also man strongholds in alliance with Sillarian soldiers. One of the high families is dwarven, something many find peculiar.

The local guard of Sillarian cities and towns are unique to each of the fourteen regions, but they cooperate and operate under a standard list of rules and laws set forth by the royal family. Each of the fourteen families is responsible for paying the guards of their region. There is little crime in Sillirai, but where there is, it runs deep and usually takes place at the hands of extensive criminal organizations. Due to the multitude of mind-readers and psions in the kingdom, criminal activity is slow-moving and deliberate. It is also significantly more dangerous and threatening than the typical run-of-the-mill criminals one finds in the alleys of other nations.

The military of Sillirai is a formidable force, though the recent wars have taken a toll on the nation's might. In the Fourth Jewel Wars the kingdom's armies drove Aurezia all the way to her gates, and in the outbreak of the Darkest War the country's remaining soldiers fought valiantly against the otherworldly fiends. Sillirai's strong emphasis on chivalry, honor, and duels as a method of problem-solving have led to military life being revered and well-respected. Cenirien receives all enlistments and trains new recruits, who are then sold back to the high families for a fair price. The capital itself is also required to purchase soldiers with the gold in its coffers, but they receive a hefty discount as recompense for the housing, food, and training they provide to the troops immediately after their enlistment. These soldiers are often purchased to become guards, or are kept on retainer and go back to their normal life. Although psionic warriors are more common in Sillirai than in any other nation, the majority of the kingdom's army still fights with sword and shield. The amari's natural affinity for telepathy make communication in Sillirai's ranks extremely efficient, and the nation's commanders and generals have either developed their psionic skills or boast arcane prowess or exceptional physical might to compensate.

King Couric and the Queen-Empress have made it their mission to bring Sillirai back into the international spotlight. Although there is some dissent among those set in their ways, the majority of the population believes that the nation should be more involved in global matters than they have been in the recent past. The two Empire Wars and the Darkest War were crippling to Sillirai, and it is a widespread belief that if Sillirai was better prepared for the incoming chaos they would not have fared so poorly. Long past are the days when the amari could be self-sufficient and ignore the conflicts on the mainland. Couric is pushing for more prominence in the global diplomatic theater, and the Queen-Empress attends meetings with the elite and schemes for the well-being

of the nation behind closed doors.

Sillirai's relations with other nations are a mixed bag. The kingdom possesses centuries of long-standing good relations with Mythrayne, and dwarves make up a decent percentage of Sillarian citizens. Leyathar and the returned kingdom of Vavaire are also extremely close to Sillirai, but Aurezia still treats the island to the west with contempt and disdain. The amari are close to the nations of Cypress and Erygis, and they boast open relations with Darastrix and Venoach. The Sillarian are wary of Tristan's darkness and secrecy, though the distance separating these nations quells the amari's fears. These concerns are nothing when compared to Sillirai's exceptionally strained relationship with Osept. The elite of the country consider Osept's slave trade abhorrent. Sillirai holds Washu in contempt their past actions, and the nation is only supporting the movement for Washun independence to undermine Aurezian authority and further develop relations with Cypress, Tristan, and Vavaire. The only nation that Sillirai feels nothing for is Rancagesh. Though Sillirai petitioned for their recognition on the Council of Vathis, the two countries have little in common and share few diplomatic ties.

RELIGION AND TRADITIONS

Religion, particularly the worship of the goddess Aleydra, is an important aspect of Sillarian culture. Her churches take the form of libraries, and they adorn the center of every sizable Sillarian city. Shrines dedicated to the goddess are numerous in the kingdom's small towns and hamlets. Astea is commonly worshipped as well, and structures devoted to the gods Naugrix and Vangal are found wherever one can find dwarves. Even so, clergy devoted to all of the Deities can be found throughout Sillirai, and the kingdom's stance on personal freedom allows those who worship nefarious or unpopular gods to do so openly without the fear of retribution or persecution. The only faith viewed with widespread negativity is the Church of the Crystal Watcher.

The most celebrated holiday in Sillirai is the Day of Bonding, which is commemorated on the Laniri. Like Aurezia, Sillirai observes a week-long holiday with great feasts, parties, and dances. The laris trees of Sillirai are decorated with plain colored lanterns, and the trees themselves light with a variety of festive, jeweled colors. The holiday is a day in which the nation gives thanks to the gods, particularly Aleydra, for their existence. There are also celebrations and feasts held annually on the day that King Couric was crowned and wed to Queen-Empress Evie. Sillirai observes a holiday marking the end of the Fourth Jewel Wars, and any Sillarians traveling abroad on this day make it a point to perform an act of kindness for those from Aurezia or Vavaire in representation of their wish for continued peace. There are a number of gatherings held by the fourteen high families in which Sillarian citizens duel for sport and hold games. The Day of the Dreamer is celebrated on the spring equinox as the day that the Sillarian amari shared the same dream of the kingdom in prosperity ages ago. The amari pray to Aleydra on this day every year and hope that they, too, will see the fruition of this dream. Sillirai observes a number of dwarven holidays over the course in the year as well, in respect of the many dwarves who call Sillirai home.

The Gemwood is also known as the Forest of the Laris,



and the entire region is thought to be blessed by Aleydra. Some believe that Aleydra's draconic nature is represented in these woods, and that they act as her hoard of jewels on Vathis. Although the exact location is unknown to most, the Empress' laris and the headquarters of the Order of the Midnight Amethyst are located in a remote forest and considered national treasures. Anyone seeking them for nefarious purposes would likely meet an untimely end. Not all Sillirian locations of note are beautiful and peaceful, however. Once a beautiful castle on the nation's land bridge, Castle Venure is now a ruined structure of shadow and nightmares, and those who venture anywhere near the Strait of Despair rarely return in the same shape they left. The kingdom's capital, Cenirien, is thought to be the heart of Sillirai. Originally a stone castle, innumerable laris have been grown into the structure by the various royalty and nobles who lived there, and it is now a picturesque mix of lush vegetation and a foundation of stone.

INFLUENTIAL PARTIES

Sillirai has been slow to adapt new technology from CORE, though in the post-war world a select few have begun incorporating minor eldric devices into their cities and homes despite vehement opposition from some of Sillirai's citizens. The kingdom boasts positive relations with the Vathis Sentinels, but they have little need for their service. Amari are sought out for enlistment for their natural psionic ability, and like Darastrix, Sillirai gives more to the organization in the form of enlistments than they receive. The kingdom holds an important seat on the Council of Vathis, and King Couric makes a point of attending as many political gatherings as he can. Occasionally Queen-Empress Evie goes in his stead, but only to discuss matters of the utmost importance, or those she possesses unique insight on.

Sky Dragons are not usually destructive within Sillirai, thanks to former member of the Order of the Midnight Amethyst, Commodore Adeiu, being the head of the One Hundred and Seventeen Sky Dragons. The King and Queen-Empress attempt to keep his affiliations with Order of the Midnight Amethyst unknown, for fear of being branded an ally of the Sky Dragons. Outlaws are uncommon in Sillirai, but some amari choose to adopt an Outlaw status before they travel to be unrestricted by the limits of the Accords while on their journeys. Others prefer the protection and provided amenities of citizenship while abroad.

JORDENSÅNG: First brought to the forested kingdom by the Vitarünsker family of Svartgrond, the art of Jordensång bardic song was adopted throughout Sillirai as years of relations with the dwarves flourished. It is not unusual to find an amari bard singing songs of glory or telling tales of dwarven history. The bardic college of Jordensång possesses a standing agreement with the Grove of Serenity, and the two colleges exchange students freely.

MENTIS OCULUM: The Mentis Oculum Free Company was founded in Sillirai, which remains the organization's base of operations to this day. They are a group of sages, priests, and monks seeking enlightenment through Aleydra's grace. The Mentis Oculum are led by Elyda D'xandras, an amari who never leaves the Oculum's main monastery. The primary goal of the organization is to help others unlock their latent psionic aptitude. This group

protects the Living Eye, an artifact important to the organization's founding.

THE INQUISITORS: The Inquisitors are a company of adventurers, historians, and detectives who seek to unravel the mysteries of the world. They are known for tracking down magical items and exploring locations touched by the world's various magics. They operate an impressive museum of rare artifacts located in Spinel that functions as their headquarters. The Inquisitors are currently focused on locating missing individuals and lost information from the Darkest War.

VATHIS SENTINELS: Sillirai financially supports the Vathis Sentinels, but they are not commonly found throughout the kingdom. The organization runs heavy recruitment campaigns in the nation, however, as they believe the unusual abilities of the amari to be a great asset to their cause. The few Vathis Sentinels stationed in Sillirai tend to be amari, and for good reason. A significant portion of the kingdom scoffs at outsiders meddling in their affairs and look down on other races. When non-amari Sentinels are stationed in Sillirai, they often find themselves belittled and treated with contempt. The local Sillirian guards are hesitant to work with the Vathis Sentinels in combating average crime and tackling day-to-day issues, though they frequently come together to investigate trafficking cases and the large-scale crime taking place at the hands of the Violet Dragon Syndicate.

CORE: CORE and Sillirai maintain an extremely strained relationship. Though the kingdom is making diplomatic strides and implementing minor eldric technology into certain cities and towns, Sillirian leadership still refuses to allow CORE to build refinement and containment facilities within the country's borders. The effects of eldria on laris trees are currently unknown, and the amari are hesitant to take any unnecessary risks. Some believe that Sillirai should adapt to the ways of the future and safely implement eldria, but many believe that the substance is simply too dangerous. King Couric is seeking to reestablish the might of the Sillirian airship fleet, a goal that requires the cooperation of CORE. He has been initiating talks with high-ranking CORE officials and the nation's high families to better the organization's negative reputation.

CHURCH OF THE CRYSTAL WATCHER: The Church of the Crystal Watcher moved into Sillirai shortly after their formation. Sillirai's affinity for gemstones and psionic crystals have led them to believe that they can find vision and truth among the amari. Cultists have been accused of slaying laris in an effort to harvest the gems embedded in their bark, a crime punishable by death, but the kingdom's guards and Vathis Sentinel patrols find it difficult to interrogate the nomadic church members. Tensions between the amari and the Church are high, and they are frequently run out of less-tolerant Sillirian towns on sight. Shrines to the Crystal Watcher can be found in Sillirai, but not for long, as they are quickly desecrated or destroyed by the hot-blooded amari who come across them.

EYES OF VATHIS: The outpost of the Eyes of Vathis operating within Sillirai is located in Cenirien, the kingdom's capital city. The organization works in tandem with the Mentis Oculum and the Inquisitors to document old relics and catalogue sensitive information. Sillirai, like Osept, is home to a staggering number of libraries and museums. Throughout the ages the amari have been slow



to share their archived history with the rest of the world, but in the wake of the Darkest War the Queen-Empress Evie and the fourteen high families agreed to share their most private collections with the Eyes of Vathis in the hopes of bettering relations with other nations on the Council of Vathis. The majority of the high families are cooperating with the Eyes of Vathis, but some remain wary and reluctant to have their prized relics cataloged by others.

ORDER OF THE MIDNIGHT AMETHYST: The Order of the Midnight Amethyst is an organization well-known to Sillirai, and evidence of their existence is scattered throughout the fabric of the nation's history. They remain somewhat secretive, though in recent years the truth of their active existence came to light. They are led by Queen-Empress Evie. The Order currently exists to combat the cult of Redreamers and lingering essence of Rumoriskar. The location of their headquarters is unknown to everyone but their members.

WHISPER: Whisper is a secret organization. Their members lack personal identities, and they retain no semblance of their former lives when they join the Whisper ranks. Whisper operates as a protective force of assassins tasked with ensuring the safety of the King and Queen-Empress, as well as other members of import, such as the heads of the fourteen high families. This skilled force is also found in Vavaire, protecting Empress Ravenne zi'Stardragon and her coterie.

LEGION: Legion is an active force in Sillirai. The Queen-Empress was paramount in the noir's ultimate unbinding, and other Sillirian members assisted in discovering the worldfall technique employed during Operation Salvation. Legion possesses a modest base in Violane, where their amari members train the kingdom's newest Starcalled.

ELDRITCH HOUSE: There is no Eldritch House within Sillirai. However, the organization has plenty of agents scouring the kingdom's cities and towns, documenting the amari's psionic lifestyle and abilities. The Eldritch House believes that psionic magic should be restricted in a similar manner to other forms of magic, though it currently is not. The organization maintains a large foothold in the kingdom of Aurezia, which further complicates the situation. Leaders of the Eldritch House are appealing to the Council of Vathis in the hopes of passing restrictive provisions against those with psionic talent. Nearly all amari possess minor mental powers, however, which would make these potential restrictions extremely imposing on the Sillirian populace.

THE REDREAMERS: The Redreamers are the organized cult of Rumoriskar. They primarily act in Sillirai, though their influence is felt worldwide, especially in the aftermath of the Darkest War. Their membership is mostly amari twisted by the effects of Rumoriskar's nightmarish influence. Despite the destruction of Rumoriskar's Aspect near the end of the Darkest War, his cultists remain active. The location of their headquarters is a well-kept secret, and Sillirian guards and Vathis Sentinels are unable to discern their whereabouts or make any meaningful headway against their cause. The Order of the Midnight Amethyst is currently the greatest enemy of the Redreamers, and the only hope of dispatching them once and for all. The Redreamers have recently moved into other areas of the world where the Waking Nightmare is affecting a variety of previously immune humanoids.

VIOLET DRAGON SYNDICATE: Sillirai's branch of the Dragon Syndicate is referred to as the Violet Dragon Syndicate. This criminal organization gained a significant foothold in the kingdom in recent years, boasting specially trained members with the ability to hide nefarious thoughts and intentions from the psionic powers of the amari. They operate as a formidable criminal enterprise dealing in contraband entertainment and imported Washun goods. Though the Dragon Syndicate usually stays far away from human trafficking, certain members of the Violet Dragon kidnap amari to sell as slaves, as amari go for a small fortune in the unregulated Oseptian markets.

EXPERIENCING SILLIRAI

Despite their isolation and position on a western island, the kingdom of Sillirai possesses a dwarven-built Gilded Road much like the other nations of the world. This road makes traveling through the country relatively safe, though her forests and uninhabited areas can be dark, mysterious places. In previous years Sillirai was considered one of the safest places to travel, but some would now doubt those claims. Most traverse the countryside in protected caravans. Sillirai's airship fleet remains extremely limited, but captains from other nations have come flocking to the island to offer their services for a steep price, and privateering is more common in Sillirai than ever before.

The internal areas of the kingdom encased by the Garnet Walls tend to be the safest. While Sillirai's borders fan out to encompass some territory beyond the walls, much of the outlying region is still lost. The Diamond Wood and Topaz Forest in particular are dangerous places to wander. Redreamer cultists roam the dark forests, and leftover forces from the Shattered Hand have taken up residence in the ruined keeps and forts dotting overgrown trade routes. Squatters and criminals have also laid claim to the abandoned holdings. Groups of bandits from the mainland brave enough to cross the Strait of Despair find Sillirai an open wealth of opportunity. Though King Couric's persistent effort to reclaim the countryside from roaming evils is valiant, he proceeds slowly.

The average Sillirian citizen is friendly to outsiders, but somewhat condescending. They treat races other than amari like children and weigh their opinions lightly, if at all. Amari tend to be extremely friendly toward dwarves, but this relationship is built on mutual respect and shared cultural values. Dwarves are among the oldest races on Vathis, like the amari, making them kindred spirits of tradition and history. Cultural attitudes towards tourists and settlers differ as markedly as night and day. Visitors in Sillirai are given great respect and kindness, but those who settle in the kingdom are expected to pull their own weight and prove themselves worthy to the amari. Those who manage to adjust to the Sillirian ways and prove their usefulness find themselves enveloped in warm and welcoming hospitality, regardless of race, but this process can be challenging and last for decades. The number of Vavairen refugees in the kingdom who've decided to call Sillirai their permanent home is also a point of contention among Sillirian leadership. These refugees, amari and non-amari alike, were treated extremely well during the time when Vavaire was thought lost. However, following Vavaire's return, much of Sillirai is pushing for the refugees to return to their homes. The amari tend to per-



ceive slights where there are none, and their social traditions can be incredibly complex.

The Sillarian dislike those who disrespect their history or traditions. They are loyal to their land and their people, and the psionic interconnectedness through the amari race breeds a brotherhood of sorts. The Sillarian are unfriendly towards those from Aurezia and often outright hostile to those they discover to be from Osept, fearing that their visit to the kingdom is for the purpose of kidnapping amari for their open-market slave trade. The Sillarian are also wary of the Washun and those from Tristan, but these peoples, located on the other side of the world, rarely find themselves landing on Sillarian shores.

Adventurers in Sillirai are revered. The populace believes in chasing dreams and entertaining oneself with personal interests, so long as their homes and families are taken care of. In times of need Sillarian citizens flock to their homeland, but they are frequently spread to the four winds experiencing the world. The long amari lifespan means that vacations are often drawn out for months or even years. Most Sillarian amari return home at one point or another, however, to visit their families or start one anew. Explorers and travelers share their tales in common places such as taverns and libraries, and they are treated by the Sillarian with great respect and admiration. No places are forbidden to explorers.

A number of organizations within Sillirai are searching for hired help. The first would be the Sillarian armed forces, who are trained in Cenirien and then stationed by the crown or the fourteen high families. The Vathis Sentinels also run near-constant recruitment campaigns in the kingdom, and they seek formidable individuals to join their ranks. Legion has a base in Sillirai offering resources, assistance, and work to any Starcalled who approach the organization for aid. The Violet Dragon Syndicate attempts to recruit amari and non-amari alike whenever possible to orchestrate their nefarious plots within the kingdom. Though rare, Sillarian individuals of supreme strength and intellect can sometimes be approached by the Whisper organization. The Order of the Midnight Amethyst is another group who recruit only from within Sillirai, but their location and training process is of the utmost secrecy. Queen-Empress Evie has been recruiting warriors of psionic strength from the Grove of Serenity school for the Order's subset, the Serene Warriors.

MAJOR SETTLEMENTS

CENIRIEN

"The Jewel of the Gemwood"

TYPE: Royal Capital Metropolis

POPULATION: 826,780

LANGUAGES: Sillarian, Vavalish, Leyarish, Mythric

VATHIS SENTINEL SCORE: 6

ECONOMY SCORE: 8

IMPORTS: Agriculture, Eldria, Minerals, Ore, Weapons and armor

EXPORTS: Fish, Precious gems, Soldiers

ORGANIZATIONS: CORE, Jordensång, Legion, Order of the Midnight Amethyst, Vathis Sentinels, Violet Dragon Syndicate, Whisper

RELIGION: Vath Pantheon; *Aleydra*

The capital city of Cenirien is the heart of Sillirai, despite its remote location nestled along the nation's western coast. Travelers either sail straight to the forested metropolis or caravan through Torben Keep and the kingdom's heartland along the Gilded Road to reach the city. Cenirien's architecture is unique even by Sillarian standards in that many of the structures found here are stone brick dwellings. These buildings are accented by the multitudes of laris interspersed throughout the city. Their jewel-studded trunks shoot upward to great branches looming overhead, shaped over the years by amari psionists to form of wooden bridges and walkways stretching from one tree to another. The majority of these gleaming gems are simply brittle nondescript crystals that light the city, which would otherwise be dark and obscured by enormous branches and a thick canopy of foliage.

The city was first established ages ago, and was protected through the Age of Black Frost and other trying times by members of the Order of the Midnight Amethyst. Its position along the coast and within the Gemwood is fortuitous, as citizens are able to take advantage of the wildlife and resources found in both the Auntershai Ocean and deep glimmering forests. Districts within Cenirien are well-established, but the layout of the city itself is unorganized, impractical, and layered. Tourists are quickly turned around in the maze of curved streets and imposing walkways crisscrossing overhead. Foreigners find themselves at home near the Cenirien docks, where a booming tourist industry thrives catering to those far from home. If one ventures deep enough into the city to the point of reaching Cenirien Castle, they find the laris bridges sparse and natural light filtering down through the trees above, bathing the castle in a soft, golden glow. While most would expect the home of Sillirai's royalty and centerpiece of the nation to be a laris tree, this is not the case. Cenirien Castle is an ancient stone structure with limited laris interference. As such, branch bridges are forbidden in the castle's immediate vicinity, and all laris nearby are built through or around stone buildings. There are none freestanding. Foreign diplomats are set at ease here underneath the partially exposed sky, and the royal family and their servants go above and beyond to make their guests feel welcome.

If one can see past the glaring oddities of the amari, Cenirien makes a wonderful place to live. The amari who call the city home tend to be trusting and giving, if not somewhat condescending towards those of other races and nationalities. Their pride for their city and way of life is felt in the meticulous upkeep and cleanliness of their streets and homes. Cenirien citizens enjoy meals of fish fresh from the Auntershai Ocean and crops cultivated from the small band of safe plains just beyond the Garnet Walls. The export of Cenirien's luxury goods was hindered by the Washun airstrike during the Second Empire Wars, but the city still earns plenty of coin from their limited export of jewelry and art. With Queen Lanaviina out of power and King Couric sitting on the throne, Sillirai's needless expenditures have ceased, and the capital is on the road to economic recovery. Those who live in this city are full of



optimism and hope. They live blind to the feuding of the high families, whose influence is neutralized in Cenirien.

The royal family of Sillirai oversees Cenirien, which belongs to no high family and acts as impartial ground for the nation's nobility. The economics of the city are driven by the export of luxury goods, trained soldiers, and fresh fish. Many organizations are grasping at threads of power left dangling in Cenirien in light of the Darkest War, and few boast secured holdings in the capital city. Legion, Whisper, the Order of the Midnight Amethyst, and the Violet Dragon Syndicate are among these established groups. Most of these influential organizations act conservatively from the shadows, and the untrained eye would be blind to their presence. The Violet Dragon Syndicate in particular is composed primarily of ill-intended amari, and they teach their members to repel the abilities of the amari's wandering minds and innate psionic abilities. Their plots are often convoluted and extremely dangerous. They are held at bay by the work of the Vathis Sentinels who call the city home, and their numbers are many, as the organization utilizes Cenirien as a base of operations for their activities throughout Sillirai as a whole.

TORBEN KEEP

"The Garnet Gateway"

TYPE: Fortified Gateway City

POPULATION: 208,324

LANGUAGES: Sillarian, Vavalish, Mythric

VATHIS SENTINEL SCORE: 6

ECONOMY SCORE: 6

IMPORTS: Agriculture, Eldria, Fish

EXPORTS: Coal, Lumber, Minerals, Ore, Precious gems, Weapons and armor

ORGANIZATIONS: East Angylis Company, Jordensång, Vathis Sentinels, Violet Dragon Syndicate

RELIGION: Vath Pantheon; *Aleydra, Naugrix*

Torben Keep is Sillirai's sole point of reliable access through the Garnet Walls into the heart of the country. The mountains and cliffs surrounding the pass were given to the dwarves ages ago when they officially allied with the amari of Sillirai. In the centuries since they've carved a comfortable home into the Garnet Walls and built a series of fortified gates at strategic intervals throughout Dyrávináta Pass. A number of outcroppings in the mountainside overlook the gates and ground below, which are manned both day and night by a coalition of dwarven and amari armed forces. These gates are intricately decorated in garnet of all colors. Their artwork tells a story of the ancient friendship between the two races, beginning with their first meeting and leading to the forging of an alliance and eventual cohabitation. The last gate is inlaid with red, gold, and green garnet, and depicts an amari and dwarf standing side by side, their arms raised in defense of the kingdom they call home. Just inside of the Garnet Walls is Torben itself, a small city pandering to weary travelers and the amari who prefer to live in the fresh, open air, rather than the entombed caverns of the mountains. Sillirai's Gatekeepers, the Vitarúnsker high family, claims dominion over Torben Keep and its outlying holdings as their gov-

ernable estate. They command great respect among as the citizens of Sillirai as perceived saviors of the kingdom. During the Darkest War, they called all men and women to arms and successfully defended Dyrávináta Pass from the Shattered Hand who lay siege to the gates.

Life in Torben Keep is shielded from the view of prying eyes. Only those who venture into the Garnet Walls truly see the city for what it is: a bustling center of commerce and activity. Here, dwarven and Sillarian culture mixes in a cohesive show of harmony. The patron god of the dwarves, Naugrix, is often depicted side by side with the patron deity of the amari, Aleydra. The two races view the kinship of their respective gods as a reflection of their own interracial friendship. The two races come together in the creation of arms and armor, forged by the expertise of the dwarves and inlaid with the precious jewels garnered by the amari. The metallurgy undertaken in Torben Keep is some of the world's most advanced, and the weapons, armor, and tools created in Torben Keep sell for exorbitant prices worldwide.

This fortified city is led by Voldrid, the head of the Vitarúnsker high family. He is called Gramaf Tor, a title denoting his unique position. Beneath him is a council of trusted advisors and close confidants. The council oversees the city, and Voldrid takes it upon himself to make decisions for the dwarves of Sillirai as a whole while still deferring to the Sillarian royal family for advice and approval. The economics of Torben Keep are largely driven by dwarven trades such as coal mining and smithing infused with a Sillarian flair. Influential parties in the bustling interior of the Garnet Walls consist of the East Angylis Company, Jordensång, and the Violet Dragon Syndicate. The Violet Dragon Syndicate in particular plagues Torben Keep, as they target dwarven settlements and consider their kind, who lack natural psionic talent, easy prey. The dwarves have mounted an impressive guard force in response, and Vathis Sentinels are found in decent numbers in the holdings surrounding Dyrávináta Pass.

OLIVINE (Frontier City, 98,781)

"Nightmare's Respite"

Travelers who brave the Strait of Despair and the Auntershai Ocean find themselves seeking respite in the frontier city of Olivine, the easternmost point patrolled and maintained by the Sillarian guard. Olivine is a relatively small city, but the Vathis Sentinel presence here is impressive.

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

BLOODSTONE TOWER: The city of Bloodstone Tower was once a famed tourist destination named for the petrified laris at the city's center. Grown in the elegant shape of a tower millennia ago by an unknown psionicist, the tree has since died, petrifying perfectly where it stood. The tree is pale and streaked with red mineralization and quartz, giving the impression of bleeding stone. This city was ransacked and abandoned during the Darkest War, but the Bloodstone Tower stands tall amidst the ruins.

LORAN: Fort Loran is an extremely old settlement that was lost



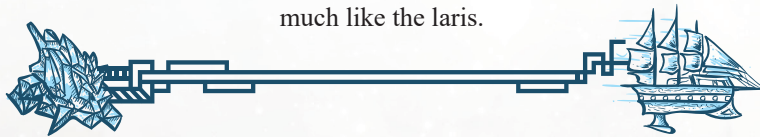
during the Darkest War, and the Sillarian military is going to great lengths to reclaim it. The monarchy believes that reclaiming Loran will be key to settling other ruined cities in the area, but Shattered Hand remnants and strange beasts venturing forth from the swamps and forests surrounding Loran threaten the military's fragile grip on the fort.

VIOLANE: Violane is also known as the Lilac City. The laris trees near this location seem to be studded only in gemstones in a limited range of hues spanning from violet to light blue. Inhabitants take great pride in the upkeep and decoration of Violane, which rests on a delta between the Aleydris and Vion rivers. Violane is the first Sillarian city within the Garnet Walls.



KOALARI

The Koalari live high within the laris groves of Sillirai. The color of their fur can be any range of rich jewel tones, the same as their bright, glassy eyes. As a psionic species native to the island nation, the koalari possess mental control over the hue of their fur, and can change this at will. Their eye color remains the same. They do not possess the means to speak or make noise, and communicate solely psionically by means of limited-range telepathy. They are intelligent for an animal species, and can use crude tools and stand upright if they wish. Though they can contact the humanoid races telepathically when in range, their method of communicating is foreign and not understood by the races of Vathis. They are nourished by the psionic aura of laris trees, and can consume the crystals embedded in the bark of the trees. If ever brought abroad or away from the groves they would require a supply of these laris crystals for nourishment or else perish. A family of koalari was brought to Castle Saneri in northern Aurezia to live in the laris grove found in the city's center alongside the Holy Kingdom's greatest Aleydran church. They possess relatively few natural predators, and the delicate balance of their population to laris trees is fragile and unexplained. Most agree that outside interference with either the laris or koalari could disrupt this balance and throw Sillirai's entire ecosystem into chaos. As such, the koalari are a protected species, much like the laris.



ADVENTURE HOOKS

- Multiple laris trees within the Gemwood have been found felled with the crystals pried from their bark. Most are blaming members of the Church of the Crystal Watcher for these heinous crimes, but they maintain their innocence. Is this a ruse?
- Rumor has it that the Violet Dragon Syndicate is planning their greatest heist yet: stealing the Living Eye from the Mentis Oculum.
- Some claim they've felt a fleeting sentence come from the Bloodstone Tower. Is the tree still alive? Could the person the petrified laris is bonded to be alive, too?
- Koalari near the city of Amesite have been moving from their homes within the laris forests into the city, and no one knows why.
- A strong storm is heading towards the Larimaar islands, and the smaller islands need evacuated before the storm hits land.
- The Eyes of Vathis are investigating the ruins of Essonea, but they refuse to disclose what they seek.
- The Redreamers were first spotted in Carnelia, and then in Drardwein. Are they moving closer to Torben Keep and the interior of the nation with a specific purpose in mind?
- Ships lost in the Strait of Despair are beaching on Sillarian shores completely intact but crewless. What secrets might they hold?





TRISTAN

"Night will always return."

THEN AND NOW

The Trisviet Union is a federation that stands alone among the political turmoil left in the wake of the Darkest War. This nation can be found in the northern reaches of Asarus, an area of the world known for its crippling winters and tracks of untamed wilderness. To the uninitiated, Tristan's people are as unforgiving and harsh as her climate. However, those who hail from this land find it to be a house of solace amid the post-war chaos where all necessities are provided, and their loyalty to the Motherland is unquestionable. Tristan possesses a dominating presence in the world economy due to the initial discovery of eldria within her borders, and as such, the nation has remained the home of CORE's operating headquarters. Her people benefit greatly from the various life-altering conveniences granted by eldria, and Tristan boasts some of the largest fleets of airships in the known world. Many nations rely on Tristan for the continued support of CORE, and so she flexes her economic might freely, even at the disdain of others.

The history of Tristan can be traced to the Divine Sands Wars, as followers of the Nightmother who were granted power over the domain of the night were guided to a land in the far north.

These followers, later known as the Nochkrov, established Vanya, a city nestled between the banks of the Shadowstreams River and the shores of the North Sea. The mortal avatar of the Nightmother, commonly known as Uryll, was turned to stone in the streets of Vanya, and her likeness continues to remind those who live in the city that their goddess is always watching over them. The Age of Black Frost was difficult for the early settlers of Tristan to weather, but they banded together in Vanya and successfully lived through the darkest and coldest times the world has ever seen. In the early years of the Age of Legacy three noble families of Nochkrov ancestry rose to prominence in the city. These three families eventually became the leadership of the fledgling Tristan nation. As sigils began appearing on members of Tristan's populace, many of the Nochkrov found themselves Starcalled, with the vast majority of those blessed having the Sigil of the Shadow. The sigils of the Nochkrov solidified their claim to leadership, and they were viewed by the elite of Tristan as being chosen by the Nightmother herself. The Nochkrov's ascension to power established an endless cycle of leader worship and intense loyalty to the Motherland which remains prevalent in Trist culture to this day.

The Nochkrov's leadership would prove to be bountiful for the people of Tristan. The nation opened her gates to the flood of incoming trade from the southern lands, and gold began to flow into the realm of cold and night. In an effort to secure Tristan's holdings from the influence of other nations, the Nochkrov came





TRISTAN

"Blood calls to Blood"

COLORS: Red, Black, White

BANNER: Three crossed swords on a wing spread raven's chest

POPULATION: 22,695,491

CAPITAL: Vanya

GOVERNMENT: Socialist Republic

LEADER(S): Khaslin zi'Valeryvich, Premier of the Trisviet Union (POTTU)

LANGUAGES: Trist, Vavalish

NOTABLE EXPORTS: Airships, Ice, Eldria, Eldric Technology

DEMONYM: Trist

LITERACY RATE: 89%

close to shutting down trade with Tristan's close neighbors, such as Torisia, through a series of agreements and territorial expansions. The Nochkrov's no-nonsense leadership led Tristan into days of wealth and glory where the nation overshadowed her smaller neighbors and utilized their resources as well as the nation's own. Eventually the Nochkrov moved to Uryllgrad, a city named in the Nightmother's honor, to fend off the fervent expansion of the countries to the west. Tristan watched as the nearby nations of Korvach and Sorakov fell to Darastrix, a county to Tristan's south. The Nochkrov strategically allied with their smallest neighbor, Torisia, to fend off the scaled vasar warriors. Tristan then rallied the fallen Korvach and Sorakov and together the three nations pushed Darastrix off of the northern landmass of Neviah within seven years. When the conflict with Darastrix was over, Tristan constructed the fort city called Ravnessgrad on the northern side of the Dragon's Claw to prevent the vasar from invading the northern territories in the future.

The construction of Ravnessgrad led to a period of calm and prosperity that lasted nearly a century, which brought the country into even greater wealth and glory. Over the course of the century many Nochkrov leaders wielded the reigns of leadership, but despite their stark differences, they rarely disagreed on matters vital to the operation of Tristan. This stretch of peace almost came to a violent end when Vavaire attempted to expand into Korvach's territory. Tristan came to Korvach's aid, and Vavairen leadership realized they could not break the walls of Ravnessgrad to invade the north or face the might of northern nations on their own soil. A suspension of hostilities was signed to signify the end of the dispute, and the Nochkrov demanded possession over Ravnessgrad and its surrounding territory from Korvach as payment for Tristan's assistance. Korvach did not agree to these terms, and the ensuing dissension instigated the Blood Wars. Only lasting four

years, the Blood Wars came to an end when Vavaire interfered on behalf of Korvach and pushed Tristan back to the gates of Uryllgrad. A ceasefire was eventually signed between Korvach and Tristan, at Vavaire's behest.

The magical crystal known as eldria was then discovered in southern Tristan. With the Nochkrov's assistance and Tristan's financial backing, the Corporate Operations for the Refinement of Eldria came into being. This single act of discovery forever changed the face of Tristan. Eldria thrust the isolated nation into the global spotlight as the secrets of the crystals were slowly unlocked and utilized throughout all of Vathis. Elessar wished to share in the glory of eldria, and entered into an official alliance with Tristan in the hopes of sharing success. From this alliance came the technology of the Ether Drive System and the invention of airships. When their graceful wooden forms began to grace the skies, Tristan was one of the few early adopters of the technology, and her trade routes blossomed with the freedom of movement among the clouds.

The First Empire Wars broke out between Washu and Elessar over the sinking of the Evangeline, an Elish airship. This act of open hostility plunged the nations of the world into a fight for global control. Korvach and Sorakov, taking advantage of the sudden chaos, immediately turned against Tristan. However, with Venocian support and a Torisian alliance, Tristan successfully defeated her nearby neighbors. Washu mages thrust the nation of Elessar into the Gloom, and the country's destruction ended the brutal war. Upon exiting the First Empire Wars the nation of Tristan was more powerful than ever before, and the country claimed all of the land in the far north once belonging to Korvach, Sorakov, and Torisia, which were all subsumed by the greater Trist power.

Even so, the post-war world was harrowing for Tristan's people, and a political revolution for control of the nation was born



in the dark and seedy places of the country. The revolution, which would come to be known as the Black Revolution, was formed by minor Trisviet party members and major Nochkrov individuals. It was led by Khaslin zi'Valeryvich, a member of the secretive Shad-owlotus organization. The Black Revolution instating a new method of rule was ultimately successful, and Khaslin zi'Valeryvich found himself the new Premier of the Trisviet Union. The new Trisviet government reached heights of power only dreamed of by the old Nochkrov ways. Khaslin focused his efforts on providing for his citizens and utilizing the vast information network and infrastructure of the Nochkrov to provide sustenance, shelter, and basic amenities to those living in the Motherland. He also implemented eldric technology in the majority of Tristan's cities at the government's expense. In the following years he sought to expand Tristan's influence internationally, and Khaslin opened his borders to the kingdom of Vavaire to the south. Tristan exchanged great artists, musicians, and architects with Vavaire. Wealth, information, and culture found an open pathway into the cold northern country.

The Trisviet Union soon found itself embroiled in another major conflict as Vavaire, under the leadership of newly crowned Emperor Aliskar, began to round up Astrian worshipers. Emperor Aliskar also began invading neighboring countries, and Tristan and Vavaire entered into a non-aggression pact which allowed Tristan to reclaim lost territory near the great empire. This relative peace ended with a massive magical explosion. The Starfall Event, as it came to be called, destroyed the western Trist city of Asha along the coast. At the time Vavaire was housing theater groups in the city, and Emperor Aliskar laid the blame upon Tristan. Tristan responded with accusations in kind. Diplomacy between the two nations disintegrated, and Khaslin ordered a full mobilization of the country's forces. Vavaire officially declared war on Tristan, and suddenly the empire's attention was turned northward, and the Second Empire Wars officially began. Erygis, Mythrayne, Rancagesh, Sillirai, and Venoch began to lend-lease Tristan, and the nation managed to bear the full brunt of the Vavairen military.

Soon, however, the truth behind Vavaire's superior military intellect was discovered to be a series of mentally dominated shapechanging spies, called the noir. These spies gathered sensitive information which they fed back to their elusive masters in a mental link. Legion strove to unravel the mystery of the noir and free their kind from domination. Agents of Legion made headway in this cause and soon discovered that infernal extraplanar beings called Vandiels were acting as important Vavairen advisors. Known collectively as the Shattered Hand, the fiendish army serving the Vandiels poured through the Scar Tear portal in the Vavairen capital and revealed themselves to the world. Both the Darkest War and Tristan's fight for survival began.

In the end Tristan managed to hold back the forces of the Shattered Hand, but the Motherland's territory shrunk as the nation was forced to pull inward. The Shattered Hand ravaging Trist territories was only stopped when the Motherland of Night, the statue of the Nightmother in Vanya, animated and destroyed the Vandiel Aspect of Dusyave in Uryllgrad, finally breaking his year-long siege on the city. It was shortly after the destruction of Dusyave that the Darkest War came to a close and the remaining

Vandiels left the Material Plane from the Scar Tear portal through which they came.

In the aftermath of the Darkest War it was estimated that Tristan weathered some of the largest losses, suffering almost twenty million casualties and the loss of two-thirds of the nation's total territory. International diplomacy with Vavaire and her remaining allies soured, but Vavaire's temporary status as a total loss helped to ease the tension between the wounded countries. Khaslin did not forget the assistance others granted to his people, but he felt as if the Shattered Hand was forced northward by other nations funneling supplies to the north. The end of the Darkest War inspired him to devise a five-year plan to rebuild and reconstruct the war-torn country. This plan focused on the growth of heavy industry, such as airship building and eldric expansion, as well as the amplification of Tristan's military. The Trists immediately set out to rebuild, reestablish, restructure, and reorganize. The northern country recovered significantly more quickly than other nations during this time, and Trist fleets and soldiers were prowling their lost territory by the end of the first year of recovery. Tristan purposefully neglected international diplomacy in the world's weakened state, choosing instead to devote precious time and resources to recouping their various losses. In secret, much of the Tristan's recovery was paid for by past debts from CORE, and the country and organization grew closer during the Trist recovery. The total loss of the Eldric Reactors was an enormous detriment to Tristan in the following years, as the country required massive amounts of eldricsteel to properly rebuild infrastructure obliterated by the Shattered Hand.

After the completion of the Trisviet Union's five-year plan, CORE's facilities were thoroughly spread out across the nation's countryside. The Union adopted vaedricarms on her airships, and Lurien Industries found its first business dealings within the nation a success. The Trists became the largest importer of eldric technologies, as well as the largest importer of the new mysterious eldricsteel originating from the Solar Sea. With the resurgence of Vavaire, the Trisviet Union once again found herself embroiled in world affairs. The nation regularly attends summits with the Council of Vathis, who, much to Tristan's dismay, have cleared Vavaire of paying any sort of war reparations, as the Scar Tear event could have happened to any nation. In addition to returning to the Council, Tristan established Trisviet Union embassies in the majority of the world's major cities. The Blood Syndicate, a crime organization that only operated in Tristan prior to the creation of these embassies, also expanded their operations beyond Tristan's borders to protect the nation's elite. The Trisviet Union has prepared for the future by drafting two additional five-year plans. The first plan details the methods of resettling the lost territories of Sorakov and Korvach, which would expand the Union's holdings back to the Dragon Claws. The second of the five-year plans calls for the reclamation of the eastern territories up to Istra, which would allow Tristan to utilize the port of Starivostok, one of the few warm water ports in the region.

Like other nations of the current era, Tristan faces perils on all sides. Barbaric tribes ceaselessly threaten the nation's northern cities. Some newly awakened dragons have flown north, terrifying the Trist people. Spies from other nations seek entry into the



Trisviet Union, though the Blood Syndicate does an exceptional job of keeping these spies at bay. Remnants of the Shattered Hand control the majority of the country's western territories, and they are an ever-present threat to the Trisviet Union's proposed expansion. The Union possesses few internal threats, for loyalty to the Motherland is absolute. As long as her economy flows unhindered and Khaslin provides for her people the Trists will continue to give their lives for the betterment of their brethren. Tristan seeks only to protect her citizens and remain a world power. Should anything threaten that, the sleeping dragon may yet be stirred.

ECONOMICS AND INDUSTRY

Exports: Airships, Eldria, Ice, Lumber, Manufactured goods, Raw materials, Steel, Weapons and armor

Imports: Agriculture, Eldricsteel, Horses, Livestock, Luxury goods

Tristan produces a sizable amount of manufactured goods, primarily due to the nation's heavily structured five-year plan. The country's furnaces and forges also create some of the world's finest steel and weaponry which can be found from coast to coast, as arms and armor are Tristan's second largest export. The most notable Trist export is eldria, which was founded in the country. As CORE's main base of operations, Tristan possesses a vast array of eldria refineries, and the north previously housed the majority of the world's Eldric Reactors before their violent destruction. Endless seas of lumber-producing trees can be found in the nation's northern reaches, and the Trist citizens work tirelessly to cultivate and process the lumber. This country is also home to a sizable number of freshwater lakes, including the Night Lake, the world's deepest lake. Tristan's plentiful freshwater supply has led the Union to become an profitable ice exporter, second only to Isild. Tristan currently boasts one of the strongest economies on Vathis, due in part to her abundance of natural resources, eldric influence, and hardworking populace.

CORE and the Trisviet Union have been intimately affiliated since the organization's founding. However, the Vathis Accords denotes CORE as a Free Company, which legally prevents CORE from paying substantial percentages of their profits to the government of Tristan. CORE and Tristan have found both legal and non-legal ways of circumventing the restrictions set by these Accords, and the Trisviet Union continues to profit from CORE's overwhelming success. Other than CORE, Tristan possesses four large companies that work closely with the nation's government: Dirizh, Zhestok, Xneb, and Yivzel. Dirizh is the primary airship manufacturer of Tristan, and the company works closely with CORE. Dirizh ensures that only small-class airships are sold to outside ventures and that advanced ships are sold for an enormous price, or offered first to the Trisviet Union for militaristic purposes. Zhestok is the main steel manufacturer and mining authority in the Union. They exist to monitor the country's steel output and ensure that Tristan remains self-reliant. The Xneb organization deals specifically with the nation's agricultural demands, though in recent years labor shortages have kept Tristan's leadership from their goal of self-sufficiency. Food supplies remain an imported commodity in the Union. Yivzel, manufactures weaponry and works closely

with Zhestok. This organization has banded together the numerous blacksmiths and forges of the country to increase productivity and uniform work, and as such, Yivzel's weaponry has gained worldwide renown, even rivaling the quality of the arms and armor produced by the dwarves of Mythrayne. Many of the industrial companies of the Trisviet Union are not owned by individuals, but rather a collective of business partners and workers unions, giving significant power to the individual employees.

CULTURE AND CLIMATE

Divided between the till of the land and the hands of the city, the Trists are always at work. Unemployment is rarely an issue in the northern country, as citizens of the Union are assigned positions of employment and placed where the government believes they will be most useful. To strangers, Tristan can seem an uninviting place with no love lost for outsiders, but those who stay long enough find that the cold winds of the north have changed the population into a dedicated, quiet, and reserved people with fundamentally good hearts. The Trisviet Union's major cities rest along popular trade routes and the banks of the Shadowstreams River. Outsiders tend to see Trist cities as plain, drab affairs with high walls and firm defensive lines prioritizing function over form. However, in some cities the architecture can be quite grand, with the buildings of influential parties possessing onion domes, high archways, and bold straight lines.

The Trist citizens who live in the Motherland pay homage to their country in nearly all that they do. Those who live in the Union feel a strong sense of nationalism, and the average Trist citizen will defend their country's honor at a moment's notice with both words and blades. The Trist populace firmly believes that the Motherland was a gift handed to them from their patron goddess Nightmother, who in turn chose their leadership, and few question their divinely appointed rulers. The Motherland provides for the needs of her people, and her people are willing to protect her until their last dying breath. Memorials to ancestors, warriors, the nation itself, and the Nightmother can be found everywhere, especially in the city of Uryllgrad. In the ruined section of Uryllgrad referred to as the Calling one can find the statue of the Motherland of Night standing amid the remains of the city she personally defended. The Calling is a national historic landmark whose ruins were walled off at the end of the Darkest War in an effort to prevent trespass by looters or those who would see fit to rebuild the area.

The Trist citizens are wary of foreigners and almost instantly hostile toward those who would disrespect the Motherland, be it an unintentional slight or hurled insult. They view their country as the sole life-giving force in the world, and the populace of Tristan believes that they should be as protective over the Motherland as the Motherland is over her citizens. Trists throughout the Union are convinced that anything is possible through cooperation and determination. As a people they turned back the tides of the rampaging fiends of the Shattered Hand. Brotherhood, honor, and loyalty are all primal forces pushing the Trists towards a brighter future, and by their mutual bearing of weight the Union has grown to become one of the world's strongest and steadfast nations. Crimes of corruption and deception are not easily forgiven by the Trists.



The massive scope of the territory under Trisviet control experiences a vast array of climates and terrain. Tristan's southern lands are home to fruitful fields and seas of grassland, while her northern reaches are endless expanses of forests flanked by mountain ranges. On all sides apart from the north the nation is surrounded by deep blue ocean. Her summers are warm in her southern holdings and mild in her northern ones. Tristan winters, however, are a sobering sight to behold. The icy grip of winter in the Trisviet Union has prevented countless armies from pressing into her lands, while local Trist citizens shrug off the mayhem as just another winter. These winters ice-lock many of Tristan's ports, forcing the nation to utilize the warm-water port cities of Starivostok, Veriya, and Chite as their main ports. All three of these cities have fallen out of Tristan's hands in the wake of the Darkest War, severely hindering their winter trade and operations since.

As for locations of interest, the Trisviet Union would love nothing more than to reclaim the lost Drakostigat region. This area is significantly warmer than the rest of the country, primarily due to hospitable weather patterns originating from the Solar Sea, and also home to two of Tristan's lost warm-water ports. The Drakostigat region is rich in fertile farmland and was at one point the breadbasket of the nation. Reclamation of this area is a national focus, as it would end Tristan's current reliance on the import of agriculture. Another notable location in Tristan is the Night Lake. This expansive lake provides freshwater to the bulk of the country, and it is the source of the Shadowstreams River. It is the highest and deepest freshwater lake in the world, and its dark fathoms are a mystery to all.

POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT

The leader of Tristan is the Premier of the Trisviet Union, Khaslin zi'Valeryvich, an eighty-year-old human. The namesake of his grandfather, Khaslin was the orchestrator of the Black Revolution, the political struggle which led to the rise of the Trisviets. Khaslin became Premier of the Trisviet Union when he ended the Black Revolution and put his father to death for crimes against the Motherland. Since taking office he has not aged, and his tenure of fifty-two years is not a secret from the world. Khaslin claims that his longevity is directly correlated to a secret eldric process similar to the procedure undergone by Vicice zi'Filarn. On multiple occasions Khaslin has proven himself to be a glorious leader who is both fair and decisive. His just actions spared Tristan from complete ruin during the Darkest War, at the cost of countless Trist lives. His people possess a fanatical loyalty to him and worship the ground he walks on. Khaslin has no ambition to gain glory for himself, but rather for the Nightmother, his goddess. The Premier has no immediate family and no prospects for such. His life is devoted to the wellbeing of the Trisviet Union.

Khaslin wishes to see his people flourish and reclaim the Trisviet Union's lost territory. In the hopes of ensuring a powerful ally upon Washu's inevitable return to power, he has secretly entered into agreements with an underground Imperial group in Washu working to undermine the nation's Aurezian occupation. The leaders of Tristan have also moved against the resurging Vavairen Empire, but their former enemy continues to thrive. Premier Khaslin has authorized the expansion of the Blood Syndicate

in the hopes of gleaning a larger share of the world's information. Knowledge is key in international politics, something Khaslin knows all too well.

Like most nations on Vathis, Tristan holds a special place for Starcalled in their hierarchy, and the majority of Tristan's noble lines can harken their ancestry back to a few Starcalled individuals. In recent years only a small number of families have been made noblemen, mostly with the rise of the Trisviet Union and then at the end of the Darkest War. The majority of the Trist noble lines remain in control of the land their ancestors once held. It is only in the wake of the Darkest War's destruction and mayhem that nobility have been forced to relocate. Multiple noble lines claim control over the same area, but they typically work on different aspects of the land and live in harmony. All of the noble families in the Union take orders from the new Trisviet government, and they've prospered greatly at the hands of organized leadership. The Starcalled and the government keep extremely positive relations, which other nations find surprising.

The structure of Tristan's government is fairly straightforward. At the apex of power the Trisviet Party handles internal government affairs, and after an order is made it is handed down to officials in the Union's various cities and territories to enforce. These officials then work with the presiding nobility of the area to ensure community-wide cooperation and continued loyalty. The Premier himself is surrounded by the Council of the Union, which creates and designates new laws and policies. The members of the Council are voted into power by the population of the Trisviet Union for four-year terms. The country itself is separated into multiple oblasts, or territories, and each oblast has a Council member overseeing the entire region. The Trisviet government is involved in the day-to-day affairs of the Union, and the Council directs the majority of the companies and enterprises found in Tristan. It is not uncommon for a business to be privately owned, however, if it is not integral to the furthered success of the Union as a whole. Many of the essential businesses are collectively owned and operated, with guidance by the government in their output.

Nothing in Tristan is more important than loyalty and brotherhood, and the Trisviet Union's laws reflect these beliefs. Common sense laws are enacted against the standard crimes of murder, theft, and assault, but in addition to these laws the Council of the Union passed strict legislation against defacing, damaging, betraying, or defaming the Nightmother or any government official or asset. The aforementioned crimes are considered treason and carry the punishment of death. Disparaging the country or the goddess is frowned upon, but there is no legal precedent for punishment unless the disparagement crosses the line into defamation. Tristan follows the Vathis Accords to the letter, and Vathis Sentinel presence in the country is high. Every Trist citizen keeps an open eye vigilantly searching for hidden enemies of the state.

The Trisviet Union possesses the largest military in the world, surpassing even those of Aurezia and Vavaire. The might of the country and strength of Tristan's people have always been known and feared, but it was the ratification of the Trisviet Constitution of the Union that pushed the nation's military into an unprecedented state of organized strength. The constitution declared military service a mandatory holy duty to the Motherland, and



since its implementation all civilians have been required to serve a minimum conscription term of two years. This mandated military service proved invaluable to Tristan, as the Union was forced to initiate a draft known as the Call of the Motherland during the Darkest War. This draft required all Trist citizens to raise their arms to save the Motherland, and it was truly the common civilians who beat back the hordes of fiends and kept their infernal armies from completely destroying their beloved country. The draft was ultimately canceled at the end of the Darkest War, but the required conscription order lives on. The only individuals currently exempt from serving the mandated term are those needed in key sectors of the Trist economy or government. As such, the Trisviet Union is home to a population of hardened soldiers, and they boast the sturdiest army and airship fleet in all of Vathis.

The Trisviet Union values brotherhood, unity, and faith, and the military attempts to foster those values within its members. The adherence to a moral code which promotes teamwork is vital to Tristan, as the structure of the nation's armed services relies heavily on communication, combined arms, and cooperation to effectively overcome the harrowing challenges of the north. In addition to the national military there is one organization in particular, the Blood Syndicate, which replaces the standard military police and elite protective force for government officials. Within the Blood Syndicate there also exists a separate order which oversees the gathering of intelligence and protection of state secrets. Known only as the Shades, these Blood Syndicate elite are spies stationed throughout the world and within Tristan itself, dedicated wholly to protecting the nation from internal and external threats.

The Trisviet Union currently exhibits an isolationist outlook on the world. The military of the northern nation is focusing on regaining territory and assets lost during the Darkest War before engaging in the complex matters of international diplomacy. However, the Union recently signed the Treaty of Shinato with Washu. This treaty serves two purposes: the first of which is to renounce all territorial and financial claims against one another following the end of the First Empire Wars, and the second allows Washu officers and soldiers, particularly members of the country's air force, to train in Tristan territory. Training within Tristan's borders circumvents the restrictions of the Zukiei Treaty, an agreement that Washu remains bound to, which dictates that Washu cannot possess a military force larger than one hundred thousand. In exchange, Washu has sold a significant amount of business opportunities to Trisviet interests.

Despite being somewhat reclusive and aloof, the Trisviet Union possesses positive relationships with most of the world's nations. The notable exceptions to this are Aurezia, Darastrix, and Isild. The people of Darastrix and Isild despise the Trists, as Tristan has been at war with the two nations repeatedly over the years, and Aurezians have a hard time understanding Trist culture. Tristan is wary of Leyathar as a growing strength to her immediate south who may have territorial claims that rival the northerners. The Trists are also cautious around the dwarves of Mythrayne and amari of Sillirai. Cypress, a nation located on the other side of Asarus, is an unexpected ally of the Trists. This alliance exists out of necessity alone, as Cypress relies on CORE and Lurien Industries for the smooth continuation of their Essel Tournaments. Tristan

and Vavaire boast open relations, but the two peoples tend to keep their distance. In recent years Empress Ravenne zi'Stardragon of Vavaire has been seen in talks with Khaslin over the matter of Washu, as Ravenne would like to seek Washu independence to further undermine Aurezian control, a goal shared by Khaslin. Tristan is also open with the advantageous trade partners of Erygis and Venoch. The Union claims no feelings of note towards Osept or Rancagesh.

RELIGION AND TRADITIONS

While domed Astrian cathedrals and temples devoted to nearly every Astrian deity can be found on the streets of Tristan, they are completely overshadowed by the massive places of worship devoted to the Nightmother. The goddess of darkness is present throughout the entirety of Tristan, and her organized worship, the Abbey of the Nightlotus, is the official religion of the Union. Trist households typically sport an effigy to her with her words of guidance painted on their plaques. Shrines, statues, temples, churches, and looming buildings constructed in her name are abundant in the nation's cities. Her faithful move freely along the streets of the federation, and her followers flock to the Union for the glory of her worship. Although dedicated worship of the Nightmother is encouraged by the leaders of the nation, Tristan has an open policy when it comes to faith, and all Deities are found being worshipped within the Union's borders. As long as the religions of others cause no trouble for the federation, the citizens of the Trisviet Union are free to pay homage to whichever faiths they serve.

Trist holidays and celebrations generally commemorate the Nightmother and the creation of the Trisviet Union. The most celebrated of these holidays takes place on the Laniri, the day that the goddess guided their Trist ancestors to the north and gifted their kind with the Gift of Night to protect their bodies from the cold and harsh world. This holiday is accompanied by great feasts, merrymaking, and colored lights. The second most important holiday in the Trisviet Union is known as Night Rises, and it occurs annually on Winyt 17th as a celebration of Tristan's victory at Uryllgrad and the successful end of the Darkest War. Night Rises is celebrated with ballads, parades, and speeches made by the leaders of Trisviet cities. The last widely revered holiday is known as Raven's Day, or the Trisviet Victory, which observes the overthrowing of the old government and restoration of power to the people. It is a nationwide celebration with revelry and comradeship. A sizable number of the nation's government buildings are richly decorated with national symbols during this time.

The Night Lake of northern Tristan, nestled high in the Darkridge Mountains, is the Nightmother's cardinal holy site. Her waters are a fathomless black and are unable to be pierced by natural light or enhanced vision. It is known that the Nightmother relocated to the Night Lake after the end of the Divine Sands War, and some claim that a temple devoted to her rests at the lake's bottom. Takana, the city of never-ending night, is the seat of power for the Abbey of the Nightlotus. Inexplicably, Takana is constantly shrouded in the gloom of the night, though her flora continues to thrive as if time passed in normal day-night rhythms. The entire city is a holy fortification dedicated to the teachings of the Nightmother. Uryllgrad, located on the banks of the Shadowstreams



River, is home to the holiest of statues devoted to the shadow goddess, called the Motherland of the Night. It was previously erected in the capital city of Vanya, but animated during the Darkest War and destroyed the Vandiel known as Dusyave, which annihilated a sizable portion of the city on the opposite banks of the river. The Trisviet city of Ravnessgrad possesses a large number of churches, fortifications, and statues devoted to the Nightmother, but it is not considered a holy place. The city itself, however, bears the Nightmother's ancient name, and none know who named the city in her likeness. Some believe that a secret artifact of the Nightmother's is hidden somewhere within the city, just waiting to be found.

INFLUENTIAL PARTIES

Tristan is considered the CORE capital of the world. The city of Alear is the headquarters and seat of the power for the organization, and Alear boasts the largest eldric influence of any city known to man. Her streets are entirely eldric-lit, and CORE provides the households of Alear a vast number of other eldric conveniences. As such, Alear is also home to the Trisviet Union's local Vathis Sentinel headquarters. The Union fully backs the Vathis Sentinels and the Council of Vathis as one of the Council's primary founding members. Tristan also grants a sizable number of airships to both the Sentinels and CORE.

Even though Tristan boasts a sizable Vathis Sentinel presence, the northern nation is known to contain a few Outlaw towns, and the islands surrounding the country are home to some of the world's most dangerous Sky Dragon families. The Sky Dragons never attack ships flying the Trisviet Union's flag, though the cause for their hesitation remains unknown. Outlaws in the area are usually foreign, as the fierce loyalty the Trists feel for their homeland drives them to proudly retain their citizen status. Even so, it is not uncommon for Outlaws with Trist roots to operate in the area, if only for the freedom one gains by adopting Outlaw status.

ABBAY OF THE NIGHTLOTUS: The organized faith of the Nightmother is the most influential group in the entire Trisviet Union. Known within the federation as the Abbey of the Nightlotus, the clergy of the Night Mother commands the bulk of the Union's manpower and wealth. The Abbey is currently led by Anfisa zi'Andreevna, a thirty-six-year-old human Starcalled priestess of a prominent Trist family. Anfisa has led the Abbey for the last fifteen years, and her strength and piety was invaluable to Tristan throughout the mayhem and destruction of the Darkest War. She is regarded highly throughout the Union, and many believe that she has the ear of the goddess and can communicate directly with her. The Abbey's primary goal is to continue expanding the Nightmother's worship throughout the world. Anfisa also wishes to restore Trist land and power lost in the Darkest War.

TRISVIET PARTY: Led by Khaslin zi'Valeryvich, the Premier of the Trisviet Union, the Trisviet Party is the nation's long-standing government. The scope of their influence throughout the north is unmatched by all other groups save for the Abbey of the Nightlotus. Each city and town throughout the Union possesses their own local Trisviet Party leadership, and the members of the council are drawn from those ranks. Every territory in the Union is led by a sole member of the Trisviet Party, an individual voted into

power by the local populace, which further increases the Party's presence in the area. The overriding directive of the Trisviet Party is the continuance and survival of the Union, but they also seek to rebuild, reclaim, and reconstruct lost territory. They also wish to become a global power while retaining their independence. It is widely believed that the Trisviet Party possesses a secret police force for keeping instigators and traitors at bay, but so far the existence of such a group remains unproven.

CORE: CORE's operations within the Trisviet Union are widespread. Many Trist cities harbor refinement facilities, and a large number of the Trist populace is employed at these locations. Research and development in Alear means that Tristan is first to implement new eldric technologies, granting the country a slight edge over her neighbors. CORE is extremely secretive regarding the details of their inner workings, and their undisclosed processes attract many spies and extremists to the nation. CORE's Trist operations are led by none other than Vice Filarn, and his goal for the organization has always remained the same: to further eldric influence in the world. His ties with Tristan are well-known, but many speculate on the reason for the dealings that happen behind closed doors.

BLOOD SYNDICATE: There is no organization in the Trisviet Union more feared than the Blood Syndicate. The Syndicate operates openly in Tristan, and their strongholds and buildings are known and easily identifiable by Trist citizens. Within the Trisviet Union this organization operates as a local police force and protection service for members of the Trisviet Party. The Blood Syndicate is currently led by Arina zi'Nikitovna, a forty-two-year-old human who took lead of the organization during the fall of Agrafena in the battle of Uryllgrad six years ago. This Syndicate primarily handles the removal of enemies of the state, and Arina seeks only to ensure the Trisviet Union's safety. It is rumored that they accept international assassination contracts for a high price, but the Vathis Sentinels have found no proof substantiating these wild claims.

SHADOWLOTUS: No proof exists of the Shadowlotus save for whispers in the shadows and faded writing in discarded books. In reality, the Free Company known as the Shadowlotus is the primary power behind the Trisviet Union's might. Members are hidden in plain view and operate in nearly every organization within the federation. From the Blood Syndicate to the Abbey of the Nightlotus, members of the Shadowlotus seek to guide the Nightmother's affairs on the mortal realm, and they continue to push her greatest gift to the world, the Trisviet Union, into glory and prestige. They are often the backing power behind influential individuals in the country. Members of this elite group include the likes of Khaslin and Anfisa. In secret, the Shadowlotus operates as an assassin organization which specifically fulfills contracts whispered to the Nightmother in the depths of the night. Every member has been given the Nightmother's greatest blessing: the Gift of Night, or vampirism. Utmost secrecy is their primary directive, and in two hundred years they have never been exposed. Knowledge of this organization is primarily rumor and legend.

CLOISTER OF THE ERUDITE: During the battle of Uryllgrad and the subsequent destruction of the city on the opposite banks of the river, the northern branch of the Eldritch House



was obliterated in the Vandiel's death knell. Since then, the Trisviet Party has prevented any attempt of the Eldritch House to recover their lost knowledge from the site, stating that the latent Vile energies are fatally dangerous. In reality, the Trisviet Party is glad for the destruction of the Eldritch House, as they seek to remove all outside parties from infiltrating the culture of the Trisviet Union. The Cloister of the Erudite, or simply the Cloister, was created shortly afterwards as parties from within the Union pillaged the remains of the Eldritch House. The Cloister secretly operates within Uryllgrad, teaching arcane magic to its inhabitants under the guidance of the Abbey of the Nightlotus. Their teachings coincide with the wishes of the Nightmother, and they seek to expand the arcane arts throughout Tristan while keeping their knowledge and capabilities secret and safe from the rest of the world. Their current leader is Aurora zi'Saitev, a fifty-six-year-old human. Aurora is a master of the arcane arts who survived the destruction of the Eldritch House where she once taught. The existence, location, and operations of the Cloister are kept a tight secret from those who are not directly involved with the organization's ongoing processes. The Trisviet Party seeks to keep its existence a secret. The elite of the government hopes to gain an upper hand against the Leyarish to the south and use magic as a defense against their future attacks upon the Union, which the Party views as inevitable.

VATHIS SENTINELS: The Trisviet Union is a firm supporter of the Vathis Sentinels, and many Vathis Sentinel airships are created by the Trisviet organization Dirizh. With the Trisviet Union being home to the headquarters of CORE, there are a large number of Vathis Sentinels stationed in the north that are charged with protecting its airspace and trade routes. The section of Vathis Sentinels dedicated to protecting the Trisviet Union is headed by Zelislav Popov, a thirty-five-year-old human Sentinel who has been stationed in Tristan his entire career. Apart from standard operations, the Vathis Sentinels of the Trisviet Union have begun to lead expeditions into Drakostigat utilizing their Outrider divisions in an attempt to reestablish the Trisviet Union's land routes to the empires in the south.

SHADOW DRAGON SYNDICATE: The Trist branch of the Dragon Syndicate is known as the Shadow Dragon Syndicate. They operate fairly openly and are the main antagonistic force opposing the Vathis Sentinels stationed in Tristan. Many of their bases are hidden secret chambers found in ruined structures. Members of the Shadow Dragon Syndicate currently spend the majority of their time gathering lost items from cities ruined in the Darkest War, which they then sell back to the Trists at a profit. The Eyes of Vathis have been chasing after the Shadow Dragon Syndicate for quite some time, as their actions are highly criminal. The Trisviet Party and the Blood Syndicate are ignoring their presence, as they hold no true power in the nation.

DARK KNIGHTS: The Dark Knights of Isild are one of the few foreign organizations allowed to operate within the Trisviet Union, and they are treated with respect and reverence. The worship of the Dark Knights' goddess, Junon, is encouraged, and her faith is one of the only non-Nightmother faiths found in abundance in the north. The Dark Knights are currently found in Tristan protecting the country from the horrors in the wilds and acting as mercenaries, which spares Trist lives in the ongoing efforts to reclaim their

homes. Clad in black armor, they blend in well with citizens on the Trist streets, and they are accepted in almost every federation establishment.

CHURCH OF THE CRYSTAL WATCHER: Widely seen as a fringe group on the outside of society, the Church of the Crystal Watcher claims quite a large following in Tristan, mostly due to the eldric influence felt throughout the nation. They worship the place where eldria was discovered as a holy site, and frequently attempt to pilgrimage there, though the area is heavily guarded and off limits to the public. Only a small number of the church's followers are native Trists, with the rest being displaced peoples or immigrants from other nations. Worshippers of the Crystal Watcher generally stick to themselves and can be found in backwater sections of cities and hidden alcoves in various buildings.

INDUSTRIAL SECTORS: The various industrial sectors of the country oversee facets of production such as metalworking, airship manufacture, mining, and the creation of weaponry. They are led by Overseer Veceslav Kovalevsky who reports directly to the Trisviet Party with the current state of Dirizh, Zhestok, Yivzel, and Xneb. He is considered to be the second most prominent individual in the entire nation, with only Khaslin receiving more notoriety and prestige. Veceslav possesses direct control over the day-to-day operations of the Union's multitude of industrial efforts. He also works closely with CORE to facilitate their operations in the north.

EXPERIENCING TRISTAN

Travelers in Tristan are plentiful in the summer and nearly impossible to find in the winter. Only the hardest of Trists dare to brave the might of winter on the nation's open roads, and airship travel is vital during this time. Each city in the Union is equipped with a minimum of three airship towers capable of handling heavy airship traffic. Alear and Vanya possess the largest number of airship towers, both for military means and CORE usage. Caravans typically travel between major cities along the Gilded Road, but the Trisviet Union is notorious for poorly maintained back roads. The Gilded Road and the nation's airways are patrolled and maintained by both the Vathis Sentinels and local watchmen. The local guards are made of up recruits from the Union's conscription force in their last year of training, as well as professional military members. The less-traveled paths are only patrolled by local forces, and never the Vathis Sentinels. Walled inns and taverns along the Trist roadways allow travelers the luxury of staying out of the harsh northern weather.

Life in the Trisviet Union is generally safe, so long as one stays along the main roads. The wilds of the nation tend to attract unwanted attention from various bandit groups and roving dangerous creatures. It is not unusual for barbarian tribes from the Darkridge Mountains to descend into the plains of the Trisviet Union searching for glory and gold. The lands outside of the Union's borders are significantly more perilous. Remnants of the Shattered Hand roam the portion of the fallen nation west of Uryllgrad, which keeps Tristan from capitalizing on the endless opportunities in the west. Countless relics, historical texts, and cultural artifacts were abandoned with the loss of the western region of the Union, and the ruined cities still contain vast amounts of riches in the form of both gold and knowledge. Brave adventurers strive to enter the



fallen cities and plunder their lost splendor, but few return. The northern reaches of the Union beyond of the city of Airebis, called Glaycian, are untamed. Stretches of trackless land contain horrors unknown to the populace of the Trisviet Union, and every so often creatures from this area plunge deep into the heart of the country leaving a path of destruction in their wake. Natural resources like lumber and mineral deposits are abundant in this area, and the Union seeks to tame the land and cultivate its resources.

The average Trist's outlook on foreigners is reserved at best, and abrasive at worst. The federation's citizens tend to be untrusting of outsiders, but those who manage to break the ice and prove themselves to the hardened northern people are met with a profound sense of belonging from the entire community. Word spreads about enterprising outsiders who have become friends to the Trists. A culturally ingrained duty to the community requires most foreigners to perform some significant act of loyalty to gain their trust. There is a feeling within Tristan that one is always being watched, and that superstition keeps many outsiders on edge. It is common for non-natives to feel alien in Tristan, even when they've fully integrated within Trist society. The Nightmother's following outside of Tristan is very minor, which leads many travelers to become overwhelmed and confused when they see the prominence of the Abbey of the Nightlotus within the nation. Guests spend quite a bit of time attempting to locate holy sites dedicated to the standard major religions of the rest of the world.

The Trists reserve their bitterest hatred for enemies of the state. The Traitor, as it is known in the Trisviet Union, is a name given to any enemy of the Trists whether they are spies, defectors, conspirators, or collaborators. "Any enemy of my brother is my sworn enemy and he will be struck down," is a widely whispered saying throughout the north that serves to focus the Trists against outside threats. In this saying lies the origin of their natural distrust of outsiders. Anyone who would turn against the Trisviet Party or the Abbey of the Nightlotus is immediately branded a Traitor in the eyes of the Trists and treated as such. When spending time within her borders, one would do well to keep their ill thoughts silent. Other than Traitors, the Trists are wary of the zealotry of the Aurezian people. They view the mind-reading ability of the amari as a great offense, and they generally seek to avoid members of their race, though they have a wonderful outlook on Sillirai as a whole and never came to blows with the amari to the west. Their only real quarrel with the amari are their good relations with the magic-bearing nation of Leyathar to the south, who are not to be trusted. Leyathar's imperialistic nature may one day place them at odds with the Trisviet Union. Trists generally avoid the Leyarish while out and about in public, should their paths cross.

Citizens of the Trisviet Union are accepting of adventurers, as the agents of the Trisviet Party refuse to go out of their way to discover the whereabouts of lost family members or help recover lost heirlooms. These tasks fall into the hands of hired help. Multiple organizations throughout the federation seek out adventurers for a variety of tasks, and quite a few native Trists find themselves drawn to the explorer lifestyle. Adventurers know of two places of gathering within Tristan: a neighborhood of Uryllgrad which possesses special housing and shops set up for aspiring groups, and Tristagrad, which is home to a number of establishments dedicated

to exploring the lost eastern regions of the federation. Adventuring companies in the north are in the process of being established, and they are always on the search for new members to bolster their ranks. Many other companies also work closely with the Eyes of Vathis in order to officiate their operations, though the Eyes of Vathis are at odds with the Trisviet Union as a whole.

A sizable number of explorers in Uryllgrad are sent west into Drakostigat to rifle through the abandoned cities and former homes of Trist citizens. The government itself has been sending teams to Drakostigat to find lost documentation and important artifacts, as well as to gather a firm understanding of the layout and condition of the area. Companies and merchants within the Trisviet Union seek to regain some of their lost merchandise and resources from previous holdings. It is also not unusual for the Vathis Sentinels or CORE to hire adventurers in Tristan to deal with situations that arise outside of the normal realm of possibility, especially to handle events that neither group can realistically tackle.

MAJOR SETTLEMENTS

VANYA

"The Heart of Tristan"

TYPE: Metropolitan Capital Port

POPULATION: 745,308

LANGUAGES: Trist, Vavalish

VATHIS SENTINEL SCORE: 7

ECONOMY SCORE: 7

IMPORTS: Agriculture, Lumber, Manufactured goods, Ore, Weapons and armor

EXPORTS: Airships, Eldria, Mercenaries, Ships

ORGANIZATIONS: Abbey of the Nightlotus, Blood Syndicate, Bluemoon House, Bluewind Company, Cloister of the Eru-dite Shadowlotus, CORE

RELIGION: Astrian Pantheon: *Nightmother*

Vanya was first founded in the later years of the Divine Sands Wars, and is able to call back to the time when their goddess, the Nightmother, walked her streets. Nestled between the Shadowstreams River to the west and the North Sea to the east, Vanya has always been an extremely important trade city, and was denoted the capital of Tristan upon the nation's formal founding. Its unique position fostered quick growth and the expansion of Tristan territory in the early years of the Age of Legacy. The city itself is built over a series of long canals connecting the Shadowstreams River to the sea, and four series of long walls prevent all attempts at assaulting the city. At the center of Vanya is the Palace of the Trisviets, which houses the city's elite and governmental bodies. The city expands outward from the impressively large Night Square with roads radiating outwards.

Vanya is a bustling city of trade and culture. Trist music flits through the air of merchant buildings, drawing travelers in to their displays of unique wares. The city is always moving, even in the depth of night, and great leaders from across the nation can be



seen traveling with their entourage through the streets. Members of the Abbey of the Nightlotus often bless passerby and sing praises of the Nightmother to all who will listen. Contingents of guards no less than ten march through the avenues and alleys of Vanya, quickly removing those who seek to raise trouble in the heartland. Airships and eldric advancements abound. CORE facilities stand in the center of the city, pumping their eldric lifeblood into Vanya's veins. No house, building, office, or station goes without eldric advancements.

An almost endless sea of airships and seafaring vessels pours into Vanya each and every day. Travelers rush through her gates seeking refuge, trade, or cultural experience. The economic landscape of Vanya is flourishing, particularly so when compared to other cities in the area. Vanya is one of the few ports left to the Trisviet Union, though it does freeze over in the winter on occasion. From the Palace of the Trisviet all national governance is conducted, and monthly meetings with heads of state dictate policy throughout the realm. Vanya is ruled by the Premier of the Trisviet Union. Most of the major organizations for the Trisviet Union boast holdings in the area, especially the Cloister of the Erudite and the Blood Syndicate, who both have a large block of the city designated as their own territory. The Abbey of the Nightlotus commands a powerful presence here as well, with seats on the government and positions of influence within the city in the names of their key members. CORE's main office is in Vanya. The many airship docks of the capital are protected by the Vathis Sentinels, who have built a small outlying fort just within the city's outer

walls. Vanya is certainly inviting to outsiders, but the culture here is undoubtedly strong, and most foreigners experience a bit of a shock when they first arrive.

URYLLGRAD

"The Wall of Darkness"

TYPE: Choke point Fortification City

POPULATION: 265,847

LANGUAGES: Trist, Vavalish

VATHIS SENTINEL SCORE: 5

ECONOMY SCORE: 5

IMPORTS: Manufactured goods, Mercenaries, Soldiers, Weapons and armor

EXPORTS: Agriculture, Eldria, Drakostigat artifacts, Wood

ORGANIZATIONS: Abbey of the Nightlotus, Blood Syndicate, Cloister of the Erudite, Dark Knights

RELIGION: Astrian Pantheon: *Nightmother*

Uryllgrad was once a castle designed to prevent the nation of Torisia in Drakostigat from assaulting Tristan. The city quickly rose around the castle as soldiers stationed in the fort settled in the protected land in its shadow. For as long as Uryllgrad has stood, the city has remained within Tristan's sphere of influence. It has never been fully taken in any wars, and managed to protect the people of Tristan and eventually the Trisviet Union from invaders hailing from the west. Uryllgrad is situated at the fork of the Shadow-



streams River, boasting the only two bridges of note crossing the black water for hundreds of miles. In terms of strategic importance, it is the most sought-after city for enemies of the Trisviet Union. The western portion of the city on the side of Drakostigat lies in ruins up to the very foot of the bridge, ruined by the death knell of Dusyave's Aspect. The only structure standing on the western portion of the city is the Motherland of Night statue. On the other side of the river, the last two sections of the city lie behind walls. It is constantly patrolled, as the city was built with defense in mind. City blocks are situated in such a way to prevent the rapid spread of fire, and the government possesses the ability to flood the city on purpose, preventing any would-be invaders from quickly taking Uryllgrad. The city bore the full brunt of the strongest forces the Shattered Hand had to offer and held. There is no other city in the world who can make that claim.

The people of Uryllgrad are a proud and patriotic bunch. They accept the fate that the world has thrown at them, only to cast it back out into the darkness from whence it came. Parades are held yearly on the Calling, the day the city defeated the Shattered Hand at its gates. During this day the Motherland of Night statue is adorned with flowers, clothes, and offerings to the darkness. The Nightmother's presence can be felt in the city, and her clergy are seen walking the streets at all hours of the day and night granting blessings to the people of Uryllgrad. The city's inhabitants are cold towards outsiders, but they tend to be friendly among their own. The armed guards that patrol the city provide a feeling of protection, but outsiders might consider their presence overbearing. The destroyed section of the city has been turned into a protected area, and cannot be entered or explored for any reason without proper authentication.

The local seat for the Trisviet Party is held by Kalina Lyner, a member of the Cloister of the Erudite. Her intentions are well-known. She wishes to scout the area of Drakostigat and discover magical means of protecting her city and reclaiming the region. Her overarching goal is to ensure the survival of the city, as she refuses to see it fall during her reign as Minister. Uryllgrad once served as a go-between port along the Shadowstreams River to the Feyne Sea, but the canal system was abandoned during the Darkest War. Its airship docks are primarily used by the Vathis Sentinels and Trisviet military, but her fertile land and profiting farmers ensures a constant stream of merchants and traders in the area.

ALEAR (City of Eldric Wonder, 468,265)

"The future is now."

Alear is home to the headquarters of CORE. Newly engineered eldric advancements can be found on every corner, and in all shops and homes. Often called the City of Wonder, Alear attracts many who wish to join CORE. CORE's operatives ensure peace throughout the city, and it is almost entirely devoid of crime and the lower classes of the world.

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

ASHA: The terrain in the city of Asha is flattened and destroyed

in an circular area, displaying the devastation caused by the Starfall Event. Magic here runs awry, and all attempts to reach the center have failed on account of lingering magical effects. It is widely believed that the zodi'ite that caused the event still remains in the center of the city.

THE NIGHT LAKE: The Night Lake is a jet black body of water that never freezes over, despite its northern location. In its center sits the spire of a temple and the rest of the temple is deep within the lake. True faithful of the Nightmother may enter the water and the temple itself and retain the ability to breathe.

STARIVOSTOK: Starivostok was Tristan's last warm water port. It was lost in the later years of the Darkest War and is currently inhabited by remnants of the Shattered Hand.

DOLINSK: Dolinsk was once a popular city of eldric wonder, but it is now a desolate location and proof of eldria's potential negative influence on the world. The walled city is currently uninhabited and not visited by travelers, as unrefined eldria is rampant within its boundaries.

THE ELDRITCH WOOD: Also known as Eldria's Wake, the Eldritch Wood is where eldria was first discovered. Logging and trespassing in these woods are prohibited. The forest is patrolled by armed CORE operatives.

FOUNDATION: Foundation is the northern outpost of the Vathis Sentinels. From here they patrol both the Feyne and North Seas.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

- The Church of the Crystal Watcher has been moving in droves to the cities of Tristan, harassing locals and causing trouble.
- An underground organization is moving against CORE in Alear, much to the dismay of their operatives. Nobody knows who is controlling the group, or what they might be after.
- Ships lost during the Darkest War are being found on the southern shores of the nation.
- The Vantus controlling Starivostok seems to be attracting other members of the Shattered Hand to his location. The Trisviet Union cannot spare the manpower to deal with the rising threat directly, but they're hoping to hire a capable group to send in their stead.
- Members of the Blood Syndicate are being found dead all across Tristan. Someone calling themselves the Lonely Traveler has been leaving his calling card on the corpses.
- A large shipment of Trist vodka has gone missing on its way to Gloam, Aurezia.
- Raiders from Glaycian are assaulting Trist holdings in large numbers.
- A secret mission being headed by CORE has stopped replying to communications. They were actively researching in the Icerim Mountains.
- Survivors from Drakostigat are traveling to Tristan in droves and recall nothing of the Darkest War. Where did they come from?





VAVAIRE

"The stars guide us."

THEN AND NOW

Vavaire is a country of fertile tracts of land, abundant marine resources, and deep mines and mountain ranges that reach across thousands of miles of the nation's untamed wilderness. Vavaire was the first casualty of the Darkest War, and undoubtedly the country hardest hit by the invading hordes of fiends. No survivors escaped Vavaire at the apex of the war, at which point the nation was considered fallen. In truth, the country was placed in a series of worldfalls within Aevalyn's Wall by the mortal form of the goddess Astea. Aevalyn's Wall was broken with Astea's death and subsequent resurrection, and the twenty-four million citizens saved in the worldfalls were restored and able to live normal lives once again. Vavaire is now under the leadership of the rightful heir, Ravenne zi'Stardragon, who has been attempting to rectify Vavaire's damaged reputation left in Emperor Aliskar's wake. Vavaire worships the Astrian pantheon and is known for her extensive Zodiac reverence, as the kingdom is the birthplace of the sigils themselves. The oldest and longest noble lines of Asarus re-

side in Vavaire. The nation is also home to the Pegasus Knights and the world's only known pegasus training program. Vavaire's successful restoration has grabbed the attention of CORE, who has been investing in the nation heavily in the hope of establishing the risen country as a base of power. The nation is poised to become the strongest in all of Vathis if she can consolidate her resources and push forward to a new beginning. Despite having fallen to the darkest of depths, Vavaire is a kingdom that is rising once again.

Vavaire has a long and rich history as one of the oldest nations on Vathis. Legend states that survivors of a great tragedy fled their wrecked lands and traveled westward to the city of Valiance, fully constructed by some unknown civilization long before it was found. From Valiance, the survivors bore witness to the Age of Dragons and the Age of Black Frost. Regardless of the verity of the legends, the original settlers of the city of Valiance would come to create the largest empire in the known world. The Valiants, as the settlers called themselves, struck out from their city in the early years of its development and found the surrounding lands north, south, and west inhabited by a wide range of cultures and various powerful city-states. As their exploration continued, a noble line that would eventually become the famous Stardragon family discovered the Ring of Zodiacs just north of present-day Arlight. The discovery of this ring unlocked the sigils, which





VAVAIRE

"Our lines run deep."

COLORS: Blue, Black

BANNER: Zodiac Sigil (Lord)

POPULATION: 24,127,893

CAPITAL: Valiance

GOVERNMENT: Unitary Constitutional Monarchy

LEADER(S): Ravenne zi'Stardragon

LANGUAGES: Vavalish, Isril, Trist, Draconic, Leyarish, Sillar-ian

NOTABLE EXPORTS: Agriculture, Ships, Professionals, Mercenaries

DEMONYM: Vavairen

LITERACY RATE: 96%

began to appear on the hands of various humanoids across the known world. The existence of the sigils sparked the Legacy Wars, a series of conflicts in which sigiled individuals vied for power from coast to coast.

The Stardragon family quickly gained prominence within the main city of Valiance and became the ruling power of the city. In the bowels of Valiance they discovered a hundred thousand sentient constructs locked away in sealed rooms. The ildera, as the sentient constructs introduced themselves, immediately allied with the city above and integrated almost flawlessly into Valiant society, with no memories of who created them and what they might have done before. The Stardragon family utilized the ildera's strength and endurance to propel the rising kingdom ahead of its neighbors in nearly every facet of civilization. With the ildera's help, the Stardragon family conquered or controlled all of their neighbors with economic might, strategic military moves, and diplomatic relations and marriages. By the time the Legacy Wars came to an end the Stardragon family controlled the land between present day Central in the north, to Afterfire in the south. Vavaire was also backed by a unique trade agreement with Leyathar, something rival nations did not possess. This agreement granted Vavaire significant power over her enemies, and allowed the fledgling kingdom to rapidly establish and secure holdings in the region.

After taking control of the central plains of the continent, Vavaire found herself at odds with two nearby forces. Located in the present day Shardlands between Conflict and Whisper Castle a kingdom named Vastua, based out of Dwindle Keep, began to harry Vavaire's northern reaches in search of the riches rumored to be held by the nation. At the same time a small group of people settled in the southern territory stretching from Wildwood to Riverwall. Known as the Delts, these people signed trade agreements with Vavaire. The kingdom of Vavaire moved against Vastua with

swift naval action and assistance from Leyathar, causing the lesser nation to capitulate to Vavaire. They were subsumed by the larger kingdom. The Delts also came under the nation's rule, as they were saved by Vavairen intervention when Oseptian slave armies attacked their lesser holdings. With the two lesser countries conquered, Vavaire entered an age of peace and prosperity. The Vavairen eventually met the vasar of Darastrix to the north as they constructed Beacon Castle. The two starkly different cultures found peace with one another and established good lines of trade and positive diplomatic relations.

At this point in time Vavaire controlled all of the land from Beacon Castle in the north to Weinskeep in the west and Riverwall in the south. Vavaire's merchants discovered the nation of Isild to the northwest and found themselves brethren of a mutual faith, which helped the two nations establish strong diplomatic ties and trade relations. Vavaire then expanded westward into the untamed Borderlands, seeking to integrate the local halfling populations into Vavairen society while pushing their civilization westward. Vavaire prospered from the booming trade within the Angylis Sea, and opened a prison colony in present-day Kamtyrow kept under the watchful eyes of the Antares Templar. This prosperity and forward motion was only hindered by a plague ravaging the vasar of Darastrix. The Vavairen came to Darastrix's aid, rendering both medical assistance and manpower to keep peace in the nation. A decade of illness passed until the Stardragon family themselves offered aid to Darastrix, using their abilities as Starcalled to quell the plague to a manageable level. In return, Darastrix became a powerful ally of Vavaire, and even assimilated into the empire in gratitude. The native halflings of the Borderlands also integrated into Vavairen cities, bringing with them new traditions and culture.

Vavaire's westward expansion eventually led to border clashes with the Cyprean Empire of the south. The two na-



tions warred for decades until Cypress was stretched too thin and brought to dissolution, resulting in the previously controlled Aurezian kingdom declaring independence from Cypress. The Borderlands Wars renewed as Aurezia demanded Vavaire abandon her holdings near the Valeria River running from Lightan to Mourning, but these wars would be cut short, as a political marriage between Harmony zi'Stardragon and Julius zi'Griswold brought peace to the region. Vavaire idly watched as Aurezia found itself in a losing war with the kingdom of Sillirai, and only stepped in at the last moment to hand over the traitorous Prince Julius to the Sillirian forces. The Aurezian people rallied around Harmony and began to defect to Vavaire. Harmony sought assimilation as the surviving ruler of Aurezia, and Aurezia officially became part of the ever-expanding Vavairen Empire. She was crowned the Empress of Vavaire shortly afterwards.

Empress Harmony sought a renewed peace with Sillirai to the west and entered an agreement with the Prince of Sillirai, Thein zi'Valda, to exchange land grants, citizens, and knowledge in the hopes that such an exchange would bring the two countries closer together. They would later meet again in secret to establish an anti-assassination organization for the shared protection of the leadership of their respective countries. The Whisper organization was officially founded by their decree and led by Aisha zi'Iurellia. Countless amari moved to Vavaire, considered to be the breadbasket of the world, and Vavairen citizens flocked to Sillirai in droves for business and tourist endeavors alike.

While Sillirai and Vavaire experienced a time of cultural prosperity, the north was not so fortunate. In a sophisticated plot, Korvach raiders kidnapped the Queen of Isild, Constance zi'Whiterose, and her daughters. Isild's remaining government requested emergency assistance from the Vavairen Empire. Empress Harmony ordered her forces to march north to Korvach and lay siege to Ravnessgrad, which resulted in Korvach abandoning the city after only six months of siege. Harmony negotiated the return of Queen Constance and her daughters in exchange for the safe return of Ravnessgrad. Queen Constance, deeply indebted to Empress Harmony, entered into a permanent alliance with Vavaire and unofficially became part of the empire. Queen Constance then moved to secure a more permanent relationship with Vavaire and married her son to Harmony's daughter. Afterwards, Harmony and Constance worked together to construct the Isril city of Whiterose in Vavairen lands.

With good relations abundant between Vavaire and others, Empress Harmony established Vavairen holdings in many of the world's nations. She founded Sanctuary on the northern isle of Corsica and the Fringe Wall on the southern end of the Borderlands. She also secured Rime in the present-day Rimelan, and Aussirdara Keep in the northern reaches of Darastrix. Harmony then marched a small host to the nation of Cypress and facilitated the signing of a peace treaty, bringing Cypress within the Vavairen fold. Under her great leadership Vavaire fully established itself as the largest empire in history, stretching from the Auntershai Ocean in the west to the Angylis Sea in the east. Vavaire prospered in an age of wealth and happiness for nearly forty years, which was only interrupted by a small intervention on the northern peninsula of Neviah for the purpose of facilitating peace between Tristan and

her neighbors: Korvach, Sorakov, and Torisia.

The discovery of eldria around this time changed technology as the world knew it, and like other nations in the early years of the Age of Ascent, Vavaire quickly adapted to the convenience of technologies born from the magical crystal. Relations between Vavaire and Tristan reconciled during this time, and new trade agreements were brokered that brought the two countries to a place of tentative peace. The creation of the ildera, a race that Vavaire alone possessed, was finally perfected with the advent of the Eldric Reactors, and the number of ildera throughout the world swelled. The newly-expanded construct race ushered in an era of productivity and construction felt throughout the entirety of the known world. Their tireless bodies labored night and day with little effort erecting cities and building roads. The ildera traveled to the corners of the world seeking work and the experience of life, and they found employment in various nations as the leaders of the world rushed to bolster their infrastructure and industrialize their populace.

At the age of ninety-four, Empress Harmony breathed her last and left Vavaire in a state of mourning. The leadership of the empire was given to Emperor Jaris, Harmony's eldest grandson, whom she had been fostering. Rising eldric influence in the Angylis Sea brought forth an era of rapid expansion and trade agreements, and various nations amassed military might as tensions among the elite of the world rose. Emperor Jaris met with the former Emperor of Washu, zi'Ho Zhou, and he drafted a pact between the two nations against the rising Trist and Elish influences. An Elish airship called the Evangeline was then sunk by the Washun, and Tristan rushed to Elessar's aid. Vavaire stuck by their pact with Washu, who also brought Korvach and Sorakov against the Trists, but Mythrayne, Osept, and Venoch decided to aid Elessar as well. The complex friction between the nations initiated a war of global scale that would become known as the First Empire Wars. In an effort to secure their alliance, Emperor Jaris married a Washun princess and fathered a son, named Erishti.

As the First Empire Wars raged over the nation of Elessar, Vavaire found herself thrust into its midst. After initially backing Washu and involving herself in battles taking place over the Angylis Sea and on the northern front of Tristan, Vavaire came to be viewed as one of the main antagonists of the war. Korvach and Sorakov were lost to Trist forces due to a pirate blockade, and Elessar was tainted with planar seepage from the Gloom by Washun mages. It was at that point that Emperor Jaris turned his back on Washu and forced an end to the war, which had already resulted in casualties by the millions. Washu was forced to sign the Zukiei Treaty, written primarily by Jaris himself, which forced Washu into a protectorate relationship with Vavaire. After the official end of the First Empire Wars, Emperor Jaris spearheaded the creation of the Council of Vathis, a ruling body composed of delegates from all nations, to further prevent destruction on the scale of the tragedy that befell Elessar. The Council then moved to create the Vathis Sentinels, and Vavaire provided the initial funding for the founding of the organization. Tristan requested that CORE become a Free Company, relieving the northern nation of the burden of its sheer size. Fearing the might of an empire the size of Vavaire's, the Council of Vathis required that Jaris dismantle the



Vavairen domain back into its component nations. Aurezia, Cypress, Darastrix, and Isild were granted complete sovereignty once more, though Darastrix and Isild remained close allies with Vavairen leadership.

Erishti, Emperor Jaris' son, introduced an intelligent young man by the name of Hanad to his father. Hanad zi'Whisperose established himself as wise beyond his years and became an advisor to the Emperor. He moved to suppress the uprisings occurring in newly-occupied Washu. Around the same time as the uprisings the prison colony of Kamtyrow revolted and established a new nation, Erygis, before the Vathis Sentinels could quell the rebellion. This was a difficult time for Emperor Jaris, which was made even worse when his wife, Empress Isoko, died of an unknown illness. Still in mourning, Jaris quickly remarried to Empress Isskah, an Oseptian Pharaoh's daughter, and she soon gave birth to a son they named Aliskar. Hanad proved himself to be useful to Vavaire during such a trying time, and he became a well-known figure for his role in defeating the northern raiders and subsuming them into Vavaire. He urged the Emperor to construct a wall in northern Corsica to prevent further barbarian raids and began to lead diplomatic efforts in Erygis, Mythrayne, Washu, and even the Trisviet Union, which restored Vavaire's diplomatic standing. Hanad led the Vavairen involvement in the Tretolancan Wars of Rancagesh and Osept, bringing the conflict to an end, and he led a petition to the Council of Vathis to recognize Rancagesh as a nation.

The world was stunned when Emperor Jaris was found deceased in his bed, killed by the dagger of an assassin. The Whispers were unable to identify the murderer or associate the killing with the motivations of any one faction. Although Erishti was expected to succeed his father as Emperor, he was passed up by the ruling council of Vavaire in favor of Aliskar, the second son, as it was decided that his Oseptian heritage was a boon and would be of assistance in dealing with the current tensions in the Angylis Sea region. Upon ascension to the throne, Emperor Aliskar was informed by the Servitors of Vavaire of an inactive magical portal in the bowels of the city of Valiance that Emperor Jaris had sealed. Believing that Vavaire would rise to its former glory by utilizing the mysterious portal, he pushed to have it opened. This moment would be remembered forever as Aliskar's Folly, as Feliroz, a powerful Vandiel, stepped through the portal with sixteen of his brethren. The unholy group, known as the Exilarchy, took humanoid form and replaced key members of the kingdom's leadership. Within a year they controlled nearly every aspect of Vavairen policy. Per their wishes, Emperor Aliskar officially made the religion of Vavaire the Vath pantheon. Astrian pantheon worshipers were segregated from their neighbors. Tensions mounted, and the Astrians struck out against their oppressors in discontent.

Under the leadership of Seoras Amiel, the head of the Astean Church, Vavaire began gathering the Astrian worshippers within the nation's borders. The secretly congregated Astrians were then sent to an experimentation camp in Whiterose. The Whiterose Experiments produced the first humans altered with a small amount of Vandiel blood, which granted the altered humans the ability to change shape and stay mentally connected to their parent Vandiel. These successful experiments became known as the noir.

The noir were dispatched to the nations of the world to infiltrate their governments and report their findings to the Exilarchy. The only country safe from the noir was Sillirai, due primarily to the psionic capability of the amari. The Black Network of information flowing through the noir's permanent mind-link with their masters was funneled back to the Exilarchy immediately, granting the Vandiels disguised as Vavairen advisors a wealth of information to act upon.

Utilizing the Black Network, Emperor Aliskar and the Exilarchy moved against Aurezia for control over the Borderlands region. Emperor Aliskar signed an agreement known as the Sovereign Steel Pact with Cypress, Osept, and Washu, which ensured a united front against their enemies. Emperor Aliskar then signed a non-aggression pact with the Trisviet Union, and he fully turned his attention to the Borderlands, defeating the mustered Aurezian force with swift brutality. The political enemies captured from this conflict were sent to Sanctuary, which Aliskar renamed Exile in a show of mockery. Though the Exilarchy thought their plans for the world were concrete, everything fell into chaos when a city in the Trisviet Union was leveled in an unexplained magical explosion remembered as the Starfall Event. The strange occurrence disintegrated the tenuous peace between the world powers of Vavaire and the Trisviet Union and set into motion a series of events which threw the entire continent into another global war, remembered as the Second Empire Wars. Vavairen adviser Hanad, who was also in Exile with Erishti at this time, established an organization for the benefit of Starcalled known as Legion. Legion was founded with Hanad, Erishti, representatives from Sillirai, and Aevalyn, the incarnation of Astea, goddess made mortal. Oseptian archaeologists in contact with Legion immediately rushed to work on development of an item which would free the noir, even if only on a temporary basis, and unravel the truth of the war. At last, Legion kidnapped a noir and freed her from her mental captivity.

The world recoiled when the true form of the Vandiel Rumoriskar, disguised as a Vavairen advisor, was exposed to the world. With nothing left to hide the fiendish forces known collectively as the Shattered Hand reopened the Scar Tear portal and brought forth hordes of fiendish entities to the Material Plane to ravage the world of Vathis. The Second Empire Wars, once a conflict of territorial conquest, became a desperate war for survival. Large portions of the world's military, including Vavairen soldiers, immediately ceased fighting one another and turned their attention to the new extraplanar threat. Only the divisions of Vavairen military closest to the advisors and central leadership of the nation refused to switch sides and continued fighting for the Shattered Hand. Vavaire, once a great empire, became the birthplace of evil and a nation divided. As if that were not enough hardship on the Vavairen people, the Exilarchy then began Operation Eldric Crash. In a single night every Eldric Reactor in the world was destroyed. Vavaire lost a great number of refueling stations as motes fell to the ground and eldria spread through the affected areas.

As the world fought for survival Legion secretly began Operation Salvation, which placed Vavairen cities into worldfalls and effectively saved the kingdom's population from the ravaging of the Shattered Hand. At this point the fiends cut through the nation's proper and major metropolitan areas. Aevalyn's first



worldfallen city was Adora, the location where she researched the process. Though initially delayed by a lack of zodi'ite, Legion's agents rallied and gathered enough of the precious resource to make Operation Salvation viable. Hundreds of towns and cities across Vavaire were saved by Aevalyn's divine planning. During the beginning of Operation Salvation Erishti was captured by the Shattered Hand and held in Valiance as a prisoner of war. In captivity Erishti tricked a Vandiel, Kreyantaz, into believing that a contingent of Legion's Starcalled soldiers would be gathering in Darkchest for a strategic assault. Kreyantaz traveled to Darkchest to confront the Starcalled soldiers and was killed by the eldriyth creatures who call Darkchest home. Erishti bound himself to the energy released by the dying Kreyantaz's death knell, becoming a powerful being called a Vantus in the process.

As a Vantus, Erishti stepped through the Scar Tear and closed it from the other side. His actions prevented the Shattered Hand reinforcements from passing through the portal and assisting their infernal allies. This development alone turned the tide of battle against the Shattered Hand, followed by a secret mission undertaken by Aevalyn's 1000. Her elite forces arrived in Valiance, and after an intense battle with the Vandiel Feliroz, Aevalyn was able to surround the entire country in Aevalyn's Wall. Aevalyn's forces did not return from their mission. Her barrier severed the ties between the noir and the Shattered Hand, effectively freeing the entire race from their mental possession. Emperor Aliskar was captured by a contingent of Vathis Sentinels in the ensuing mayhem, and he was moved to a secure location only known to a select few. The remnant armies of the Shattered Hand, lacking central leadership, dissolved into roaming bands of infernal entities. The surviving leaders of the world's nations then met in Armeria and signed the Treaty of Armeria, which ended the Second Empire Wars and established lines of succession for the world's remaining kingdoms.

In the years following the Darkest War, Vavaire existed only as New Vavaire, located on the isle of Corsica under Hanad's leadership. Vavairen mainland holdings were decimated in the war, and few pockets of survivors were found to exist. New Vavaire became a protected nation under Aurezian leadership, but they were not treated well by the Aurezians. Vavairen refugees from all over the world flocked to Exile. New Vavaire became the target of external operations hoping to gain control of the country, as Vavaire's assets were immense. However, the assets stored by the Antares Templar banking organization could only be accessed if an heir was found. The Vavairen people became downtrodden under the constant surveillance of others, and they struggled with their inability to protect themselves. Their native religion was banned in Aurezia and practice of it was punished harshly by the zealous Astean worshippers. Though disheartened, life for the displaced Vavairen began looking up when the Secret Astrian Soldiers—or SAS, for short—and Whispers successfully located Ravenne zi'Stardragon, the heir to the Vavairen throne. She spearheaded an operation to restore Vavaire and discover Aevalyn's worldfalls. With Aevalyn's final sacrifice, Vavaire came to life once again, and the majority of the nation's inner territory was restored from the worldfalls. Empress Ravenne secured Valiance as the country's capital city, and Vavaire breathed anew.

Empress Ravenne zi'Stardragon currently controls a wounded nation which missed out on multiple years of progression and rebuilding. In the last two years, Vavairen citizens have undertaken a massive effort to restore their kingdom to its former glory. Outside assistance in the form of wealth and supplies flows freely from Vavaire's allies such as Darastrix and Isild, as well as from other nations seeking to gain Vavairen favor. Many of the kingdom's cities remain lost in worldfalls, and Empress Ravenne has turned to hiring skilled third parties to locate these expertly-hidden planar instances and restore the cities they hold. The Empress herself has gained access to a literal treasure trove of coin originally deposited by her grandfather, Emperor Jaris, that was held by the Antares Templar in her absence. The utilization of these resources has granted her people the ability to reestablish themselves in their homeland without the need for Ravenne to grovel for aid. The Vavairen are now flocking to their kin with a sense of optimism. Their beliefs are reinforced by the return of the dragons and the dissolution of the Etherward, which they consider a symbolic omen of prosperity and change.

The reconstruction of the nation continues to move along at a steady pace. The Empress and Constantine Vanguard are in agreements that have led to Vavaire hiring great numbers of ilderia workers, and the construct race has been integrating well into the society they've rebuilt. Establishing diplomatic ties and trade agreements are on the forefront of Empress Ravenne's mind, and she is sending the call far and wide for all true-born sons and daughters of Vavaire to reclaim their homeland from the wreckage of the Darkest War. The fervor in which people are seeking out their homes is incredible. The Empress has restored the Whispers, the SAS, and the Pegasus Knights to power, appointing their leaders and establishing hierarchy in the hopes of propelling Vavaire forward. By her side stands Hanad zi'Whisperose, as he once stood for her grandfather, continuing to advise the throne to this day.

ECONOMICS AND INDUSTRY

Exports: Agriculture, Livestock, Lumber, Professionals, Luxury goods, Raw materials, Ships, Stonework

Imports: Eldria, Exotic goods, Labor, Spices, Tobacco, Weapons

Vavaire's populace never wants for food or livestock thanks to the kingdom's river networks, frequent rainfall, and lush rolling hills. The endless farms of the nation's interior are separated by low walls dictating ownership which gives way to pockets of civilization and major roadways. Vavaire's northern reaches near the Frostfire Mountains graciously grant the country a nearly limitless supply of ore and mineral deposits, and the country's southern reaches are flanked by deep woods which provide a limitless supply of lumber. The natural resources of Vavaire are traded away to other nations for goods the country cannot create locally. Vavaire's interior cities churn out finished goods at a swift pace stunted only by labor shortages, but the steady influx of refugees returning to the risen kingdom is easing the burden and supplying Vavairen companies with much-needed manpower.

The kingdom of Vavaire is a destination for companies and organizations wishing to profit off of the kingdom's miraculous return. CORE, Lurien Industries, the Bluewind Company,



and the Vanguard Steel Company moved into the newly-restored nation to settle her lost locales and utilize the untapped potential of her population. Many Vavairen enterprises were abandoned in the chaos of the Darkest War, but those that survived the onslaught filled the void left by their neighbors and thrived in their absence. The Vanguard Steel Company, led by Constantine Vanguard, set up shop providing eldricsteel necessary for the reconstruction of the kingdom's infrastructure. This company also brought with them the construction crews necessary to perform the grueling physical labor, completely circumventing the crippling labor shortages plaguing the country. The rising agricultural demands of the nation are being met by the mercantile organization known as Meadowlands. These merchants banded together many of the primary farming and livestock companies of Vavaire, and they've been working in tandem with the government to set forward a standard of efficient and safe agricultural practices.

Many of Vavaire's natural resources thought lost to the remnants of the Shattered Hand have been reclaimed from the fiends. Cladius zi'Garde, an industrial pioneer of metalwork, is famous for boldly leading his company Avant-Garde to mines occupied by the Shattered Hand and clearing their shafts of the extraplanar creatures. Avant-Garde is vital to Vavaire as a manufacturing company specializing in metallurgy, weapons, and mining. Under the leadership of brave Cladius they've single-handedly pushed the nation's industrial sectors to new heights. Another related company of note is Egress, the kingdom's primary airship manufacturer. Egress is famed for seeking to perfect the design of airships, and they own the majority of the country's docks. This company, based out of Valiance, was founded from the remains of the largest airship manufacturer in the world. Though dismantled during the Darkest War, this organization was reclaimed by the grandson of the original founder, Lukas zi'Roth. Zi'Roth has quickly reinstated the construction of airships in his grandfather's design, and his company is currently creating some of the fastest airships in the world. Rumor has it that he possesses intimate ties with Legion and their new airship prototype. Legion owns a base of operations within Vavaire that continues the high-profile research Aevalyn began during the Darkest War. Overseen by Hanad, this organization is seeking to further advance the world with new eldric devices and safe, regulated experimentation of novel technologies.

CULTURE AND CLIMATE

Despite enduring the brunt of the Shattered Hand in the Darkest War and being torn apart by internal strife, the people of Vavaire continue to express the free spirit, friendly nature, and hunger to learn that their forbearers possessed. Vavaire is a nation of people that enjoy the presence of new experiences and people with an accepting nature capable of turning any invader into a brother. Over the course of history foreigners have found it difficult to oppress a populace who would offer to share their last loaf of bread with an enemy. Most Vavairen are extremely patriotic and agree that Vavaire is by far the greatest country on Vathis, and they attest to this time and time again. They are welcoming towards outsiders, particularly those who wish to share their country with them, but they are fearful of those who wish Vavaire harm. Their loyalty to their country is nearly unmatched, save for perhaps the Trists of

the Trisviet Union.

The Vavairen people hunger to explore the world and discover its truths. Education plays an extremely important role in the day-to-day lives of the nation's populace, and Vavaire was one of the first nations to instate an institutionalized education system. Every city has a local school and many larger cities have built universities for the purpose of higher study. Harmony University, located in Valiance, attracts countless educated individuals to Vavaire, and it is the oldest official university in the world. While other nations hold Starcalled individuals and family in some sort of esteem, Vavaire takes their reverence of the sigiled to an entirely new level. The famed Ring of the Zodiacs is located in southern Vavaire, and the kingdom's population sees more Starcallings than any other nation in the world. Large portions of Vavairen holdings are controlled by Starcalled families, and these families are held in the highest honor by average citizens. The kingdom's royal family is denoted by their Starcalled lineage, and the Vavairen banner itself is a depiction of the Sigil of the Lord that the Stardragon's bear.

Vavairen holdings are large swaths of land which experience a variety of climates. The bulk of the kingdom is temperate and receives a significant amount of rainfall, which tends to be beneficial for the nation's various agricultural ventures. The kingdom's southern reaches stretching to the clear ocean are inherently warm and wet, and the shores of the Angylis Sea are endless miles of pristine blue broken only by high, rocky cliffs. Deep woods and imposing mountains flank the kingdom's southwest, and the Frostfire Mountains rise to guard Vavaire's north. The Frostfire Mountains occasionally spew forth volcanic ash and debris, but the hardy Vavairen people are clever and utilize the material in their construction. Vavaire claims domain over two areas beyond the kingdom's main borders: Corsica and the Shardlands. The northeastern isle of Corsica, which remains in Vavairen control, experiences wet summer seasons warmed by the Solar Sea and ample snowfall in winter months. Peppered with deep eldria deposits from Operation Eldric Crash, the Shardlands are home to all manner of strange eldric creatures, including the intelligent eldriylths who have settled large territories for themselves. This region is too dangerous to be settled by normal means, and with a heavy heart the crown has begun erecting an enormous wall of dragonstone to the east of Silverwalls to prevent the eldric creatures from posing a threat to Vavaire's people.

As a physically vast nation with a rich history, Vavaire is home to a number of notable locations. The Ring of the Zodiacs is a monument of over two hundred stone dragons which align perfectly with the Zodiac constellations in the sky. This location was home to the first Starcalling that granted humanoids the sigils of the dragons above. Though the city of Valiance has been the seat of Vavairen power since the nation's founding, it was not originally of Vavairen design. Valiance was found by the Valiants of old, perfectly constructed by an unknown culture. It is primarily composed of dragonstone, which prevents the city from showing signs of external wear and tear regardless of age. Endless halls exist beneath Valiance, many of which remain unexplored even to this day. These halls bore witness to both the opening of the Scar Tear and the discovery of the first ilder. The city of Whiterose, lo-



cated in a mountain valley which overlooks the Angylis Sea far below, is the home of the Whiterose Experiments. This is the location where Shattered Hand gathered Astrian worshippers to defile their human blood and create the first noir. Whiterose remains a living worldfall, and attempts to pierce its depths have proven fruitless, as explorers never return. Removed from the rest of Vavaire, but arguably just as important is Sanctuary, a city constructed on the northern isle of Corsica originally built by Harmony zi'Stardragon. Sanctuary remains her final resting place. It is the northern seat of power for the Stardragon royal family, and its strategic location allows Vavaire to project her influence significantly farther north than would otherwise be possible. The secrets of Sanctuary Castle are unknown, as all records of its construction were laid to rest with the late Empress. Ravenne hoped that discovering its truths would grant her some additional measure of power, but her search has yet to garner results.

POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT

Empress Ravenne zi'Stardragon, age twenty-six, is the sole surviving heir to one of the longest Starcalled lineages in the world. Until the age of twenty-two she was unaware of her ancestry and acted primarily as a member of the Whispers protecting Hanad and looking for none other than herself. Her grandmother and trainer, Aisha Whisper, an amari, was Emperor Jaris' personal protector and secret lover. Ravenne was led to believe that her parents were killed during the early years of Operation Salvation in the Vavairen city of Adora. After their deaths she was taken under the wing of her grandmother, trained in the art of protection and statecraft, and her lineage was kept secret from all who sought her. Ravenne was informed of her heritage when she accompanied the SAS on a mission to Adora where she finally met her mother, who had sacrificed her life to become the anchor for the first worldfall. Since then, Ravenne has claimed leadership of New Vavaire and pushed to resettle the lost homeland of her people. Ravenne took a small team of the SAS to Valiance where it was discovered that Aevalyn had given her life to become the anchor of Aevalyn's Wall protecting the entirety of the nation. The mortal goddess sacrificed herself to restore Vavaire, and Ravenne assumed her seat as the Empress of the nation. She is currently being courted by Noon zi'Whiterose, an Isril prince, and those close to the couple assume that a marriage is on the horizon. She rules with a fair and firm hand, and many believe that she is the reincarnation of Harmony, the greatest leader Vavaire has ever known.

Above all else, Ravenne seeks to reclaim the lost villages and cities that remain hidden in the worldfalls lingering in Vavaire from Operation Salvation. It is estimated that over one hundred cities remain locked away, ready to return to the Vavairen Empire if they could only be discovered. Ravenne herself feels a strong loyalty to her people, and she takes her duties as their leader seriously. She constantly seeks to protect her citizens from outside threats posed by other nations. She keeps a close eye on Tristan in particular because of their expansive and stiff nature. The military machine that is Aurezia has piqued Ravenne's attention as well. She seeks to free Washu from the clutches of their Aurezian occupation, and with her allies alongside her she is attempting to break Aurezia's stranglehold on the riches of the region. Empress

Ravenne must choose Vavaire's allies with a careful hand, as to accept one offer means to disregard another. She is close with Leyathar and Sillirai, as the leaders of these nations are friends from Legion who have remained steadfast allies in the years after the Darkest War.

The nobility of Vavaire are practically all Starcalled individuals and their families. Many of these families boast at least one Starcalled individual born per generation, and sometimes even more. The reinstated wealth and prosperity of Vavaire are almost entirely within their hands, though many seek only to bring Vavaire to greater glory, as nationalism and loyalty in the kingdom is abundant. The nobles of Vavaire have high hopes and strong faith in their homeland and Empress. They commit vast amounts of wealth and resources to expanding their holdings across the whole of Asarus, forever seeking to better Vavairen markets both domestic and foreign.

Vavaire's government is a unitary constitutional monarchy. As such, Ravenne is the Empress of the Empire, but her power is directly limited by a constitution drafted by her great-grandmother, the late Harmony zi'Stardragon. Around Empress Ravenne sits a parliament which determines the course of the country, but the Empress herself still possesses considerable executive power. As a unitary state, many of the lands that compose Vavaire must adhere to the decisions made by the Vavairen government. Most areas of the country are led by local noble families, and each possesses an elected noble representative which oversees the region. These elected leaders are granted seats on the Vavairen parliament, providing all territories in the kingdom with voiced representation. Though the Vavairen are no strangers to greed and corruption, the majority of the world considers the empire's government both fair and honest.

The late Emperor Jaris, along with his ambassadors, drafted the original Zukiei Treaty famous for ending the First Empire Wars and establishing the Vathis Accords. As such, the Vathis Accords are enforced uniformly throughout the kingdom. Shortly before her death Harmony zi'Stardragon declared the ildera to be a free race protected by the same rights as the rest of her humanoid citizens. This policy was then brought to the Council of Vathis by Emperor Jaris upon the Council's creation, where it was passed into the Vathis Accords. Harmony is remembered as an expert lawmaker, and the majority of her legislations remain in Vavaire to this day. Standardized mandatory education, equal rights for all races and genders, child labor protection, freedom of the press, and freedom of speech continue to be enforced and encouraged by her decree. Empress Ravenne expunged the constricting laws passed by Emperor Aliskar during his harrowing reign, such as the ban of the worship of the Astrian pantheon, and she has enacted laws establishing the freedom of religion in response. These laws have brought forth progressive individuals flocking to Vavaire's borders. Empress Ravenne also outlawed slavery in all forms, which has soured her already tenuous relationship with Osept.

The military of Vavaire was once considered the strongest fighting force in the world. Now it stands as a mere shadow of its former self due to the effects of the Darkest War and the spotlight role the kingdom played. The Vavairen military is currently composed of term-serving volunteers and career soldiers.



Some ildera have also taken to wearing Vavaire's colors on the field of battle as more and more living eldria humanoids flood her streets. Vavaire possesses sizable militarized fleets of both air and sea vessels, though her oceanic presence remains comparatively small. The kingdom also possesses two elite fighting forces that were reestablished under Ravenne's decree. The first group, the Pegasus Knights, are an elite force of knights who ride into battle on the backs of pegasi native to Vavaire. They act as outriders and first responders to threats against the nation. The second group, the Special Astrian Soldiers or SAS for short, are the special operations unit devoted to protecting Vavaire from international threats, secret plots, spies, and other hazards of extreme magnitude. The SAS are led by Hanad zi'Whisperose, and they are divided into seventeen separate teams. Each team specializes in one or more specific types of operations. The SAS is a secret organization whose members true identities are unknown, even to other most members of the order.

The kingdom of Vavaire is currently focused on repairing their reputation in the international community. Emperor Aliskar soured relations with many, and the fear and terror he inflicted upon Vavaire and her allies lingers in the hearts of the people. Vavaire possesses alliances with Cypress, Darastrix, Isild, and Sillirai. The kingdom is also close with Leyathar on account of their shared operations in Legion. Empress Ravenne is sympathetic towards Washu, and one of the few world leaders who believes that Washu is innocent of the charges leveled against their people during the First Empire Wars. For the most part, an open attitude has been fostered with Erygis, Mythrayne, and Venoach. While open on paper, Vavaire possesses a unique relationship with the Tristan. Previous years of battle and long-term war soured relations between the two powers, but Ravenne has been in secret talks with Khaslin, leader of Tristan, regarding their shared desire for Washun independence. On the negative side, however, Vavaire considers the Holy Kingdom of Aurezia a rival for their past missteps, and relations with Osept are even worse, with delicate diplomacy the only measure keeping Vavaire from invading the desert nation. These tensions are difficult to ease due to fundamental cultural differences between the two countries, such as Osept's rampant slavery, unregulated market trade, and willing disregard of the Vathis Accords. Vavaire has no feelings of note for Rancagesh, the world's newest nation, though Hanad did aid the rancar's rebellion and push for the nation's recognition on the Council of Vathis.

RELIGION AND TRADITIONS

Many Vavairen citizens worship the Astrian pantheon of Deities. This pantheon refers to the gods less as individual entities and more as objective caretakers of their particular portfolios. The Astrians refer to the Deities in title rather than name, and they worship the entire pantheon, recognizing that each deity is necessary and purposeful to divinity as a whole. The faith of the Astrians was persecuted during the Whiterose Experiments in the Darkest War. Vavairen citizens are also known for their hefty respect of the Zodiacs, who are acknowledged for the influence they impart in one's day-to-day life. A tourist would be more likely to hear a whispered petition to a Zodiac than a hymn to a god as they walked through the streets of Valiance.

The majority of the holidays observed by the Vavairen populace pertains directly to the Astrian pantheon. Every month sets aside a specific day dedicated to the acknowledgment of each god or goddess, with the Laniri at the end of the year being a celebration of the Zodiacs. The Laniri itself is commemorated with large gatherings, feasts, and the decoration of evergreen trees similar to the festivals of the Laniri in Isild and Aurezia. Vavaire also observes a holiday unique to the country known as Harmony's Coronation. This holiday is something of a patriotic event which acknowledges the long reign of Empress Harmony and the Stardragon family as the leaders of the country. The ascension of future leaders and changes in government always take place on this day. While not necessarily a holiday per se, the eve of Operation Salvation is also granted national observation. Driven by the smaller local governments, this observation pays homage to Legion and the veterans who sacrificed their lives and livelihood to spare Vavaire from the worst of the Darkest War.

Locations with spiritual and traditional significance abound within Vavairen borders. First and foremost is the Ring of Zodiacs, the site of the first Starcalling, which is located in Arclight. This monument is composed of numerous dragon statues set in a large circle set around an outdoor amphitheater which aligns with the celestial bodies and constellations in the sky. The Grand Manor in Adora also holds a special place in the hearts of many as the location of the first worldfall, which paved the way for Operation Salvation. The last two Vavairen locations of note reside in Valiance city. The newly-constructed Harmony Gardens are found in the southern section of the city, which was previously a ruin of the Darkest War. It was envisioned and constructed by Empress Ravenne as a way to ensure the city's self-sufficiency. The gardens produce food and offer Valiance's citizens a space of calm and relaxation. The second notable location in Valiance is the Seventeenth Tower in the center of the city. The castle and seat of the Stardragon family is built around this structure and separated only by a lush garden, but the doors of the Seventeenth Tower remain forever closed. The tower's interior has never been breached by might or magic, and the Vavairen people view it as a symbol of their nation's penchant for survival against all odds.

INFLUENTIAL PARTIES

Vavaire stands as one of the founding members of the Council of Vathis and a primary initiate of the Vathis Sentinels. The country has kept the same seat on the Council throughout the history of the organization, though her sway has fallen in light of the events leading up to the Darkest War. Vavaire remains a firm supporter of the Sentinels and actively assists their ranks. This has turned Vavaire into a prime target for vindictive Sky Dragon families who wish to plunder the ruins of fallen cities under Sentinel noses, which has forced the Sentinels to increase their presence in the kingdom.

CORE once had a blank bill when it came to Vavaire, but they no longer hold such positive relations. Empress Ravenne only allows CORE a dozen or so refinement motes throughout the region in an attempt to prevent destruction on the scale of Operation Eldric Crash from happening again. CORE has also been forced to fund the construction of a barrier east of Silverwalls to prevent the expansion of eldria spreading outward from the Shardlands. Out-



laws find themselves attracted to Vavaire, as the kingdom enforces few restrictive laws and grants people the freedom they seek. The Vavairen who answer the call of exploration sometimes become Outlaws to simplify their profession, but few Vavairen citizens become Outlaws seeking freedom from persecution.

STARDRAGON FAMILY: As the discoverers of the Ring of Zodiacs and the oldest lineage in Vavaire, the Stardragon family possesses considerable influence within the kingdom. Though Ravenne zi'Stardragon is the sole survivor of her line, the extended family surrounding and supporting her is vast. Both Egress and Avant-Garde are owned by members of the Stardragon extended family and owe a large portion of their influence to their bloodline. Many seats on the parliament and a portion of the kingdom's wealthy are extended Stardragons as well. As it has always been, the primary goal of the family is the expansion of the Vavairen domain and a desire to secure their future.

LEGION: Adora is the seat of Legion's operations, and the organization's impact on Vavaire is immense. Vavaire has become home to the latest and greatest bounties of research thanks to the organization's involvement in clandestine research efforts. Vavaire has seen significant advancement on a number of important fronts such as food processing, weapons production, and communications technology. Legion's championing led to the widespread adoption of convenient eldric technology, vaedricarms, and Bluewind Company communications. Legion is committed to their goal of mentoring newly discovered Starcalled throughout the world, and their membership has soared in recent years. Unfounded rumors persist of continuous experiments happening in the organization's shadows, but many find this preposterous.

WHISPER: Whisper operates throughout Vavaire with intense secrecy. The faces of the organization's members are unknown, as they wear masks and give away all trappings of their previous lives before entering Whisper service. Their members can be seen near important Vavairen heads of state, including Empress Ravenne herself. They operate as a protection service for the upper echelons of Vavairen and Sillarian politics. Underestimating the Whispers or undervaluing their skill is known to leave would-be assassins dead in the streets.

PEGASUS KNIGHTS: The Pegasus Knights are a defining organization of Vavaire. They are widely viewed as a symbol of national power and prestige, and many foot soldiers aim to join their ranks. The Pegasus Knights act as shock troops and first responders to activities which threaten Vavaire as a nation. These elite soldiers were practically annihilated during the Darkest War, and one of Ravenne's first acts as Empress was to reinstate their ranks. She initiated a campaign of recruiting Pegasus and recovering lost Pegasus eggs, and she located many lost members of the organization. Almost every city in Vavaire is host to half a dozen of these Knights, with contingents residing in Valiance, ready to be dispatched at a moment's notice. Vavaire's continuance is their only goal, and the protection of their charges is the first and foremost thought on their minds.

SAS: The Special Astrian Soldiers is the elite special forces division of the Vavairen military. Their identities remain a secret. They operate out of both Valiance and Sanctuary, with seventeen

teams devoted to different operations. The Special Astrian Soldiers act as the security and intelligence force for Vavaire by acquiring knowledge of outside enemies and dealing with delicate, internal threats belonging out of the eyes of the public. They are led by Hanad zi'Whisperose, and their ranks once held Empress Ravenne herself. The SAS works in conjunction with the Whisper organization. Securing a future for Vavaire is their only goal, and they've been recovering the cities of Vavaire that remain in worldfalls.

DARK KNIGHTS: The Dark Knights' rich history in Vavaire began with the organization's involvement in the kingdom's early expansion, and leads all the way up to Vavaire's recent return of their prized book, *The Art of War*, to the organization's shelves. The Borderlands holdings that the Dark Knights boast were a gift from the late Empress Harmony in the early years of her reign, and the Dark Knights are not quick to forget her generosity. They continue to operate throughout Vavaire as both mercenaries and a frightful task force dispatching the remnants of the Shattered Hand. Dark Knights recruits from Vavaire outnumber every other country, save Isild.

MIDNIGHT SYNDICATE: The Midnight Syndicate is one of the few large criminal organizations acting within Vavaire. They operate out of Corsica Isle, primarily within Sanctuary. The Midnight Syndicate deals in knowledge and intelligence, and they tend to break laws in their pursuit of information. Many refuse to move against this organization fearing the knowledge they may or may not possess. The organization is currently going through a revolution, as two sides vie for control in light of the death of their previous leader during the Darkest War. Zachariah zi'Mirshann wishes for the organization to deal solely in information, as they had in recent years, whereas his brother, Dark zi'Mirshann, wishes to return to the roots of the organization and deal in equal parts information and death.

RED DRAGON SYNDICATE: The Dragon Syndicate's holdings are relatively new within Vavaire, and primarily due to Emperor Aliskar's willingness to allow anything Oseptian entry into the nation. The Red Dragon Syndicate, as Vavaire's branch calls itself, is a standard criminal enterprise. They can be found ransacking ruined cities, running protection rackets, smuggling, and racketeering. They act as hired thugs rather than professional criminals due to the mass influx of survivors from the war turning to crime to earn a living. The majority of the organization is composed of outsiders who traveled to Vavaire seeking to plunder her riches and take advantage of her people. Few members are Vavairen, thanks to the steps Empress Ravenne has taken to secure her citizens future.

VATHIS SENTINELS: The founding of the Vathis Sentinels can be directly contributed to Vavairen diplomats. While the Council of Vathis turned on Vavaire for Emperor Aliskar's transgressions during the First Empire Wars, Vavaire continued to pour resources into the creation of the Vathis Sentinels. The Sentinels remember their aid, and many members of the organization gave their lives to assist in the Vavairen evacuation during the early days of the Darkest War. Upon Vavaire's revival, the Vathis Sentinels moved to recapture lost bases and establish order to the newly recovered cities. They operate openly in the kingdom with a flair of strength unseen in other nations. A portion of the Vathis Sentinel air fleet is



stationed in Vavaire, taking advantage of the kingdom's centralized location.

CORE: The relationship between CORE and Vavaire is tumultuous. Empress Ravenne is often reminded by Hanad that the Shardlands were once Vavairen territory up until Operation Eldric Crash infested the area with eldria, rendering it uninhabitable. As such, CORE's holdings in Vavaire are limited to a dozen refinement locations, and they are forced to ship the refined eldria at their own cost around the nation. CORE has also been pressed to pay for the wall to the east of Silverwalls as a part of its operating contract with the country. CORE wishes to reestablish good relations with Empress Ravenne, as her people would bring wealth to the organization's coffers if they could restore the power they once held in the region.

BLUEWIND COMPANY: Led by Tahris Fel, the Bluewind Company was founded within Vavairen holdings. Backed by Lurien Industries in the late years of the First Empire Wars, the Bluewind Company sprang to life as a messaging service for the nation's population. Many nations dove into the communications trade in an effort to assimilate the technology into their military operations, and the Bluewind Company rapidly expanded as a result. This organization is the main proprietor of messaging and media in Vavaire, and they control the nation's largest newspaper. Their services have unified the Vavairen into one cohesive, communicative force ready to defend her country at a moment's notice.

LURIEN INDUSTRIES: Lurien Industries activity in Vavaire is more extensive than the activity of their CORE counterpart. Unlike CORE, Lurien Industries is not limited to a set number of facilities. Vavaire is home to a number of diverse Essel Tournament locations, making the kingdom's return and continued wellbeing a vested interest for the company. Vavaire has been fast to adapt to the new vaedric technologies brought forth by Lurien Industries, and like-minded views of the weaponry have brought the kingdom and company closer together. Lurien has been working to recover some of Vavaire's lost coliseums for their shared benefit. Their operations in Vavaire are led by a man named Carn Reign.

VANGUARD STEEL COMPANY: The Vanguard Steel Company, led by Constantine Vanguard, moved their operations to Vavaire to supply the country with building materials and much-needed manpower. Constantine was initially motivated to help Vavaire out of respect for the kingdom's close ties with the ildera. The Vanguard Steel Company's eldricsteel has been vital in rebuilding destroyed Vavairen cities and infrastructure. The agreement fostered between the two has placed a large strain on Vavaire's relationship with CORE, and disagreements between the factions have spilled into the country's streets. Constantine's support has driven many ildera to return to Vavairen lands. He wishes for a place other than Armeria for his ildera to call home, and he believes he may have found such a place in Vavaire.

CHURCH OF THE CRYSTAL WATCHER: While considered a fringe faith, the Church of the Crystal Watcher has flocked to Vavaire for a number of different reasons. Empress Ravenne has instituted a policy of religious freedom, and the Church of the Crystal Watcher built their first permanent location of worship in Silverwalls. They chose Silverwalls for its vicinity to the Shardlands and the eldria deposits contained within the region. Mem-

bership of the church has grown substantially since the end of the Darkest War, fed by a growing sentiment that the gods have abandoned men to face the Shattered Hand and meet their unfortunate fates alone. It is not unusual to find members worshipping and preaching openly in the streets of Valiance.

ELDRITCH HOUSE: The mote that housed Vavaire's Eldritch House was lost during the Darkest War, and its location remains unknown to this day. The world lost hundreds of years of magical knowledge and Starcalled research with its disappearance. The Eldritch House has currently taken up residence in a manor on the interior of Valiance, and they've begun operating a new magical school in this location. Tuition for true-born sons and daughters of Vavaire is primarily paid for by the state in an effort to foster relations between Vavaire and Washu, as well as to increase the magical holdings claimed by Vavaire. Efforts to discover the location of the Lost University, as it is known, have been unsuccessful.

SANCTUARY OF THE STARS: Vavaire boasts close ties with Synethil and the leadership of Leyathar due to their shared involvement in Legion. As such, the two nations have agreed to open relations even further by founding a university within Vavaire to teach Synethil's lost art of magic. The university itself defies the laws of modern engineering and is solely supported by an internal magical font which allows the university to bear its own weight and float unhindered around Valiance. The building is a series of revolving towers and floating guards accessible only by magical pathways. Access to the school requires either native flight or the use of a small teleportation circle. The school has attracted many Vavairen who wish to both wield magic and bring their country closer to Leyathar. Empress Ravenne herself has begun to study there alongside the Archfaer's son, Beraros.

EXPERIENCING VAVAIRE

Traveling through Vavaire is relatively easy, though not without its patches of danger. The country's portion of the Gilded Road is far-reaching, extensive, and patrolled by a mixed guard selected from the best in every city and augmented with members of the Vathis Sentinels. The country's airship docks are maintained by the local government and can be found in nearly every occupied Vavairen city. The Vathis Sentinels own outposts alongside every airship dock and they are a common sight on the city streets in major metropolitan cities. Local laws are enforced by local guards, and criminals are dealt with by the law enforcement of their region, freeing the Vathis Sentinels to tackle larger problems. Protected caravans run frequently between cities along the Gilded Road, and it is not unusual for adventurers to tag along as extra security in exchange for a little gold.

While access to the Gilded Road is widespread, so are the remnants of the leaderless Shattered Hand. It is not unusual for roaming bands and hordes of the fiendish army to reside in the wayside ruins along major roads close to the casualties of their previous ravages. Bands of bandits have also taken refuge within dead cities, searching for loot and lost treasure abandoned in the kingdom's hasty evacuations. While the Vavairen guard tends to keep a close eye on the old holdings, it is impossible for them to be everywhere at once, and they do not possess the manpower required to scour every lost city within the kingdom's borders. Even



streets in Vavaire's largest cities can be unsafe for the unprepared, as organized criminal groups have risen in power in recent years to take advantage of the chaos of the war. These groups attract the less fortunate who seek to spread misery and pain to those who survived at a higher standard than themselves.

The average Vavairen is open to the idea of outsiders. New experiences and stories abound from those who were born outside of the country. Due to the open-mindedness of the general population to new ideas and cultures, visitors have a way of becoming brothers to the people of Vavaire, and visitors often come to reside permanently within the country. Tourists are not restricted to specific city districts and they are encouraged to visit Vavairen taverns and places of business. The only stipulation of outsiders is to not force one's world-view onto others, as the Vavairen look unfavorably upon the close-minded. Immigrants who settle in Vavaire tend to flock together and live in the same general locations, but these hubs of culture are admired, as the Vavairen people celebrate the diversity they attract.

The Vavairen dislike those who perpetuate hatred and bigotry. They do not allow the narrow-minded to spread their harmful views openly, but they respect the freedom others have within their country. While naturally friendly to outsiders, the Vavairen tend to keep a watchful eye on those from Tristan or Rancagesh, as both nations are known for their aggressive behavior. The Os-epians' practice of slavery is strictly forbidden within their lands, and some of the bravest Vavairens sometimes go out of their way to free slaves from slavers traveling through their region to return south.

Adventurers hold a special place in the hearts of the Vavairen. They bring with them the hope of reclaiming lost lands and locating forgotten heirlooms. Their lifestyle is often partnered with riveting stories and novel knowledge of the unknown, and the Vavairen are rapt to their attention when adventurers take refuge in their cities. It is not uncommon for shopkeepers to grant discounts to those willing to share their tales. They frequently gather in taverns to entertain the locals and potentially earn a meal.

Quite a few organizations within Vavaire have a need for brave adventurers willing to forge a path into the unknown. Empress Ravenne herself has put out of a call to explorers offering to hire skilled groups for two specific purposes. The first is to discover and end the worldfalls left over from Operation Salvation, and the second is to delve into the ruins of lost cities, clear out the dangers that remain, and recover lost artifacts for the nation and her people. Lurien Industries is also seeking adventurers to discover lost coliseums and dispatch any squatters who may have taken up residence in the monuments. Legion is constantly searching for fresh recruits for a long series of odd jobs, such as searching through old holdings and updating the organization on the status of the remaining Shattered Hand. Starcalled individuals will always be sought after by the group, and they should expect their eventual contact. Notable adventurers of Vavairen birth will eventually find themselves approached by the SAS for a call to defend Vavaire, but few make it through the rigorous selection process.

MAJOR SETTLEMENTS

VALIANCE

"The City of the Stars."

TYPE: Starcalled Influenced Historic Capital City

POPULATION: 1,741,301

LANGUAGES: All

VATHIS SENTINEL SCORE: 8

ECONOMY SCORE: 10

IMPORTS: Everything

EXPORTS: Everything

ORGANIZATIONS: Eldritch House, Eyes of Vathis, Legion, Vathis Sentinels

RELIGION: Astrian Pantheon: *Matron, Guardian, Ardor*, Large representation of all other faiths.

Valiance, the City of Stars, is the largest city in the known world. She stands as the focal point for the entire Astrian faith and is considered the birthplace of the religion. The pristine white dragonstone walls of the city ring a single circular island, with a large white palace in the center. From the city's raised center a circular road surrounds the Imperial Palace, and like spokes from a wheel, the roads point outward to the rest of the world. Three large dragonstone bridges connect the city to the mainland, flanked by immense dragon statues. The city's distinctive features are its onion domed Astrian churches, wide avenues, tall buildings, and large mix of cultures from around the world.

The partially inhabited island city has never come under successful siege from outside forces, and her walls are considered impregnable. Buildings of dragonstone jut from the ground, constructed in ages long past. The history annals state that the city was discovered in a pristine state, already constructed and ready for habitation. Skyspires were built in recent years to house the city's population in the denser areas, but there exists sections of the city that have remained uninhabited for decades. Valiance has become one of the central cities in the world, having experienced a large influx of settlers following the Empire Wars.

Valiance is the seat of power for the Stardragon royal family which resides within the Imperial Palace. The Council of Vathis has moved their main meeting place back to Valiance, having been forced to relocate to Aurez City in the wake of the Darkest War. The Vathis Sentinels maintain a large presence and use the city as a base of operations for the entire region. A nearly endless stream of ships, caravans, and airships makes its way to Valiance every day, trading in all manner of goods and information. Due to this, Valiance has become a point of interest for most of the larger organizations in the world, and Vavaire's Pegasus Knights patrol the skies and streets to keep the city safe. Always on the lookout for Starcalled, Legion operates extensively within the city to assist Vavaire's large number of newly Starcalled individuals. Why more people in Valiance are becoming Starcalled is unknown to Legion at this time, but the mystery is a large focus for the organization.

SANCTUARY

"The Protected Sister"

TYPE: Northern Protected Refuge City



POPULATION: 164,784

LANGUAGES: Vavalish, Isril, Trist, Sillarian

VATHIS SENTINEL SCORE: 8

ECONOMY SCORE: 5

IMPORTS: Agriculture, Mercenaries, Spices, Wine

EXPORTS: Fish, Lumber, Minerals, Steel, Whale products

ORGANIZATIONS: Dark Knights, Eyes of Vathis, Legion, SAS, Vathis Sentinels

RELIGION: Astrian Pantheon: *Matron, Guardian, Ardor*; Minor representation of other faiths.

At one point Sanctuary's namesake referred only to the large castle used by Vavairen royalty for holidays and outings, but today it refers to the city itself. Much of Sanctuary is constructed around the castle built on the cliffs above, with a vast port constructed to house trade for the northern island. The Luminous River cuts above the city but travels westwards towards the sea. A sluice gate was built to create a manmade waterfall that supplies the city with water. Sanctuary was briefly known as Exile when Vavaire was under the rule of Emperor Aliskar, as he used the island as a prison for the political enemies he made during his reign. It wasn't until the later years of the Second Empire Wars that the city began to use its old name once more, thanks in part to the actions of Legion.

Sanctuary's population is primarily composed of the previously exiled families of Vavairen nobility. A fishing and mining city, vast tunnels lead into the northeastern cliffs owned by the Vanguard Steel Company. Large numbers of refugees from other nations have turned this once quiet city into a bustling trade port. The wide avenues and brightly lit paths of Sanctuary give way to buildings of Vavairen construction, but outskirts of the city have been risen in recent years, borrowing architecture from all over the world. Even so, the Vavairen influence and culture in the city is immense, with grand architecture and pegasus stables cut into Sanctuary's cliff face.

The seat of the Vavairen government for the northern isle of Corsica is located within Sanctuary itself. Hanad zi'Whisperose acts as the current minister for the northern reaches of Vavaire, directing the military in the defense of the wall that bears his name. Sanctuary acts as a powerful trading force for the northern Solar Sea, as it's situated at the mouth of the entrance to the sea. Tall airship towers and a long series of docks sit on the southern side of the city, granting access to the whole of Corsica Isle. Astea's church from Aurezia has a strong foothold in the city due to their previous occupation of Sanctuary. The Dark Knights also claim influence within Sanctuary due to their station at Hanad's Wall and the long-standing relationship they boast with Hanad. Sanctuary also acts as the main base for the Special Astrian Soldiers, Vavaire's elite military force.

ADORA (Starcalled Island City, 79,134)
"Aevalyn's Grace"

Adora was both Aevalyn's home during the Darkest War and the first successful city ever to be worldfallen. Adora has since acted as the seat of Legion. The city itself has been turned into a college of sorts for Starcalled individuals, furthering their understanding

of their impressive abilities.

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

WHITEROSE: The city of Whiterose remains intact, but trapped within a worldfall. As the site of the Whiterose Experiments it has been sought after time and time again by the Vavairen, but none who venture there return.

RING OF THE ZODIACS: Thousands of dragon statues sit in concentric circles that comprise the Ring of the Zodiacs, aligning perfectly with the constellations above. This location was first discovered by the Stardragon family, who became the very first Starcalled.

WILDWOOD: Once a popular beach and vacation spot in Vavaire, the city of Wildwood remains trapped in a worldfall. It housed one of the most popular eldric theme parks in the world. At night the park comes alive, which is attributable to children of the worldfall playing on the rides in their planar instance.

POET: Poet is a Vavairen prison. During the Darkest War the inmates here switched allegiances to rise in the ranks of the Shattered Hand, betraying their fellow citizens and humanoid brethren. The bodies of the prisoners housed here have yet to be found.

WAXROUND VAULTS: An abandoned college in Vavaire, Waxround Vaults houses an enormous library not open to the public. It is still being excavated from the mountainside. Wax figures are placed within the vaults here, and some people claim to know what they are.

LANSON MINES: The Lanson Mines were once a large Vavairen gem mine. During the commotion of the Darkest War members of the Church of the Crystal Watcher invaded the mine and claimed it as their own. Led by a gnome augmented by eldria named Falic and a cabal of blind monks in his service, they sealed off the mine and trapped the workers and themselves inside. Rock slides presumably destroyed the mines after the collapse of the mote Kruellia and the creation of the Ixen Caldera.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

- Remnants of the Shattered Hand are running amok throughout the Vavairen countryside.
- A creeping black muck has been seen growing and expanding on the floor of the Twilight Forest.
- A bunch of rabble-rousers have begun plotting a revolt against the Stardragon family.
- Hanad's Wall is set to receive a dignitary from the barbarians to the north.
- A Vavairen contingent dug out the Lanson Mines but was met with horrors. All of the former inhabitants of the mine were presumably warped by a death knell, and survived in a state of undead and fiendishness, perpetually shrieking and laughing. They drive listeners to madness and attack all who wander into the mines.





VENOCH

“By wave and wit, our freedom breeds wealth.”

THEN AND NOW

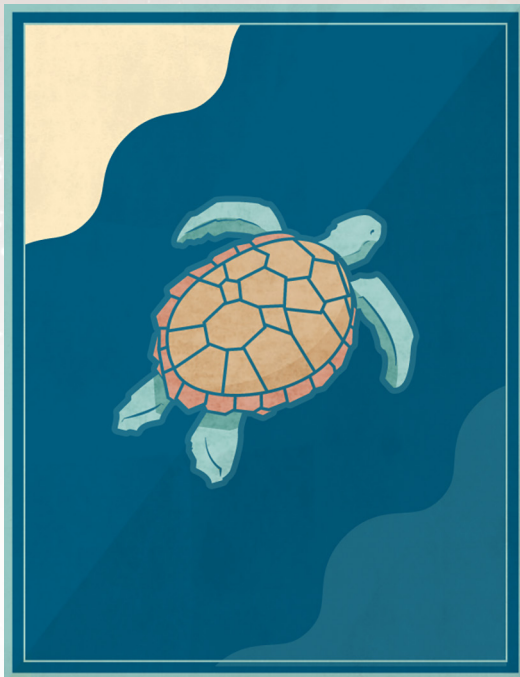
Venoch is a beautiful coastal nation full of seaside vistas, exotic cuisine and goods, and the promise of fortune and prosperity. Though some view Venoch as the breadbasket of the world, the homeland of the acer'rin is in truth full of wealth, poverty, and everything in-between. Founded by merchants and powerful city-states, Venoch boasts the strongest long-standing economy in all of Vathis. All Venocian citizens know the value and power of coin, and everyday life is dictated by the trading and exchange of goods rather than by their production. Venoch's booming economy does have its drawbacks, however, namely the nation's reliance on the global economy, and the country's financial state is heavily determined by several merchant families who boast formidable political sway and fiscal might. Venoch believes in freedom and the rights of all living beings, which has led to conflicts with the slaving nation of Osept and those who would infringe upon the rights of others. Regardless of their political standpoint, many nations commission Venoch for the production of air and sea vessels for the nation's remarkable acer'rin craftsmanship.

Venoch came into being after several elven city-states

banded together to form one cohesive country. Three powerful city-states, each ruled by a merchant family, came together to form Venoch. The zi'Varga family of the city of Asrile in the north, the zi'Morvel family of Etaesi in the southwest, and the zi'Yeil family of Colave in the southeast, joined together for mutually better economic benefits. Acer'rin merchants of the new country began cementing trade agreements with the existing nations of Leyathar, Mythrayne, Osept, Tristan, and Vavaire. Diplomacy and trade between Venoch and the larger nation of Leyathar to the north flourished. The entire region suffered constant attacks from the vae'rin of the Evernight, who had allied with other subterranean creatures under the banner of the Night Raiders. The acer'rin of Venoch were the target of many of the Night Raider's harsh strikes, and Leyathar rushed to assist Venoch in their fight against the vae'rin incursion. The heads of the three families unanimously agreed to ally with Leyathar out of gratitude after their skilled arcane forces dispatched the threat, and Venoch officially became part of the great Leyarin Empire. The coastal federation prospered under the Empire's guidance and soon rose to power as the dominant naval power on Vathis.

The Venocian spent much of their time as a member of the Leyarin Empire establishing trade and strengthening their economy. The acer'rin, naturally skilled merchants and salesman, utilized the Empire's social standing to establish a network of open borders and trade agreements with the various leaders of





VENOCH

"Sun, Sea, Sky"

COLORS: Sea blue, Sky blue, Tan

BANNER: Sea turtle

POPULATION: 8,518,123

CAPITAL: Asrile

GOVERNMENT: Mercantile Federation

LEADER(S): Palcica zi'Varga, Commodore Duchess

LANGUAGES: Leyarish, Vavalish

NOTABLE EXPORTS: Airships, Ships, Trade goods, Wood

DEMONYM: Venocian

LITERACY RATE: 85%

the world. Venoch suffered when the capital city of Leyathar, Synthil, was shunted to the plane of Vibrant in the Great Collapse, but the acer'rin persevered and maintained their positive diplomatic relations even as the remaining members of the Leyarin Empire disbanded. With the discovery of eldria in the north and the subsequent invention of the airship, Venoch's economic supremacy took a mighty blow, but the resilient Venocian adapted quickly to the changing world, and were soon building craftsmen vessels capable of soaring along the unseen winds of the Ether.

For years, Venoch used her trade agreements to keep relative peace in the areas surrounding the Angylis Sea. The federation refrained from acting in the conflicts engrossing the rest of the world and only backed nations who had previously contributed to the Leyarin Empire. On the whole, Venoch remained a tranquil country uninvolved in the quarrels of the world. What others didn't see, however, was the growing tension between the zi'Morvel and zi'Yeil families. These two families held possession over much of the country's political power and could trace their rivalry back to their time as noble houses in the city-states of old. Everything from land disputes to forbidden marriages kept these families from peace, and these age-old grudges carried on into the formation of Venoch. When in the presence of the zi'Varga family or any political spotlight they put on the farce of diplomacy, but continued to war in silent jabs. Despite the domestic disputes plaguing Venoch's leaders, the nation's diplomats managed to maintain their flawless reputation and positive relations with nearly every country in the world.

Venoch entered her first major war when Washu sank an Elish airship. The Venocians rushed to the aid of their Elish allies to prevent further tragedy, raising the flag of war and taking up arms alongside Mythrayne and Osept in hopes of protecting their vested economic interest with Elessar and keeping their region of the world safe. Even the zi'Morvel and zi'Yeil families

put aside their differences during the war to protect their various economic holdings in the endangered Elessar. Venoch worked closely with Tristan to create and secure an effective lend-lease program to fund Tristan's war effort, with Venoch profiting massively from the deal. Pirates blockaded Tristan, but the hardened Trists used the opportunity to conquer cities on the northern peninsula. They sent their garnered wealth back to Venoch for the further development and production of much-needed military goods. Despite their shared attempts to protect Elessar from ruin, the nation was utterly annihilated as Washu mages tainted the nation with planar seepage from the Gloom.

In the aftermath of the First Empire Wars, the federation of Venoch declared Palcica zi'Varga, a war hero of the Varga line, to be the new head of the nation and Venoch's representative on the newly-formed Council of Vathis. She was granted the title of Commodore Duchess. The zi'Morvel and zi'Yeil families grew increasingly frustrated with the zi'Vargas, but they both begrudgingly supported Palcica's appointment in an attempt to hide their own desires for power. The families presented Jacker zi'Morvel and Orbel zi'Yeil as advisors to Palcica and representatives of their regions. To the surprise of many, Palcica took a firm stance in Venocian politics and openly backed countries like Mythrayne and the newly-formed Erygis. The Commodore Duchess' opinionated political stances began changing Venoch from a historically neutral state to a politically active entity. Venoch officially supported social issues they would have previously ignored, though much of these movements were confidential in nature. Largest among these causes was the secret backing of the goblinoid slaves who rebelled for their freedom from their Oseptian masters.

Heeding the advice of advisors Jacker and Orbel, Commodore Duchess Palcica refrained from openly involving Venoch in the rebellion of the slaves, formally called the Tretolancan Wars, instead choosing to save face with Osept. Palcica did, however,



send Venocian generals in secret to train the rancar troops in battle and prepare them for war. When the fighting had finished, Palcica was one of the first to join the push at the Council of Vathis to recognize Rancagesh as a nation. Though Venoch attempted to focus solely on diplomacy and stay uninvolved in the post-war tensions, the Commodore Duchess was forced to enter into a military alliance with Aurezia, Erygis, Mythrayne, and Rancagesh known as the Federation when Vavaire targeted Venocian merchant ships and destroyed a great number of them in a string of attacks. Under heavy stress, the political disagreements between the three major Venocian families escalated to an all-time high, but international mayhem halted the brewing civil war in its tracks. The Second Empire Wars began with a mysterious magical explosion in a Trist city housing important Vavairen theater groups. Tristan blamed Vavaire, Vavaire blamed Tristan, and the nations of Vathis rushed to choose sides in the ensuing conflict. Alongside Erygis, Mythrayne, Rancagesh, and Sillirai, Venoch began lend-leasing Tristan against the might of Vavaire. With the Trisviet Union occupied in the north, Venoch sent ships to aid Erygis.

Venoch was pulled further into the conflict as Vavairen vessels began harassing Venocian merchant ships along the Angylis Sea. The Black Network of noir infiltrated and broke Venocian naval code and struck the supply ships heading to Tristan frequently. As these attacks escalated to the point of a growing death toll, the enraged Venocian people could not sit idly by, and they rallied for war. It was then that they learned who their true enemy would be in the conflict as the Shattered Hand emerged and the Darkest War began. For this brief and dark chapter of Venoch's history, the noble families put aside their long-standing disputes in order to fight together and cooperate in the defense of their homes. The naval might of Venoch reinforced the Angylis Sea and was seen all along her shores providing relief to those on the land in Erygis, Mythrayne, Osept, and even Tristan. On land, much of Venoch's role in the Darkest War took place in the northern reaches of the nation. Vavairen troops poured into old Leyathar and the northernmost holdings of Venoch. While the Venocians weathered these forces the best they could, they began to splinter as the Shattered Hand's fiendish armies reinforced the already formidable Vavairen forces.

Led by the Vandiel Karwytren, the hordes of fiends ravaged Venoch's coastal towns and open countryside. The nation's northern reaches were decimated, and Commodore Duchess Palcica left her post in Asrile to aid her homeland. The acer'rin war effort was valiant, but crippled in the desolation and mayhem of the Shattered Hand's unending assault. The Venocians, desperate for aid and spread thin, were overjoyed when the Ether itself rippled and the city of Synethil appeared on the Material Plane. Home from the Vibrant at last, Synethil immediately began to aid the war effort against the fiends. The ele'rin of Synethil, now markedly different in appearance from the acer'rin of the Material Plane, dispatched to the world's various theaters of war and struck out against the fiends with the full might of magic. Many Venocian soldiers were sent north to the returned city in order to learn their ways and join their elite arcane ranks. The return of Synethil also made it possible for the combined might of Mythrayne, Tristan, and Venoch to destroy the Vandiel Karwytren once and for all,

though the Vandiel's death knell destroyed a portion of the Leyarish land mass and created the Manastorm Chain. Commodore Duchess Palcica bore witness to a number of battles, surviving the front lines before returning to her post in Asrile as a celebrated war hero once again. Though Venoch suffered gravely at the hands of the fiendish armies, the zi'Varga family in particular lost the majority of their estate holdings in the north.

At the end of the Darkest War Venoch, like the other nations of Vathis, set out to repair and rebuild. The zi'Varga house and the Commodore Duchess took up residence in Asrile, displaced by the utter destruction in the north. Slowly but surely, the internal political turmoil plaguing the acer'rin began to rear its head once again. Under the leadership of Jacker, advisor to the Commodore Duchess, the zi'Morvels conspired to take over the position of the Commodore and instate Jacker as the new Commodore Duke. The ultimate goal of their scheme was to move Venoch back to its previous position of complete political neutrality. Having successfully maintained trade agreements with Osept during the Second Empire Wars, Jacker wished to see the political and economic climate swing in the zi'Morvel's favor. The zi'Yeil's stood against their proposed change, deciphering Jacker's intentions. Having spread their holdings quite widely during the Darkest War, a time where money and resources were scarce, the zi'Yeils have enjoyed heightened business from former members of the Federation. They wish to use Venoch's polarizing political position to strengthen their economic might.

More political turmoil exists between the three families than ever before. Each of the nation's major noble lines is pushing their own agenda, and a civil war is a means to an end that they have all considered. Other Venocian noble families are being pressured to ally with one of the major three or risk ostracism, and the Venocians as a whole are currently rallying around their beloved leader and war hero, Commodore Duchess Palcica zi'Varga, much to the disdain of the zi'Yeils and the zi'Morvels. Though the leaders of Venoch are struggling to define a firm political stance, they've maintained their international trade agreements and adapted to the latest and greatest goods the world economy has to offer.

ECONOMICS AND INDUSTRY

Exports: Fish, Lumber, Luxury goods, Pearls, Ships, Wine

Imports: Eldria, Jewelry, Mercenaries, Ore, Raw materials, Stonework

Venoch's economy is famed for its prosperity, and some would say that the nation's trading prowess is the world's greatest. Their powerhouse economy is the result of sailors and sea merchants who've taken their secrets to the skies on the sails of airships. The success of Venoch's economy is directly linked to the status of other nations, for good or for ill. Venocian diplomats often act not as political emissaries, but as middle men, facilitating trade between merchants and the producers of raw materials. The acer'rin merchants of this country are said to be the fairest merchants in all of Vathis, and reliable to boot. They sell rare merchandise and are known for their just and equitable prices. As for what the federation itself can produce, the coastal shores of Venoch lend themselves to vineyards and the growth of exotic fruits, spices, and,



most importantly, wine. Venocian wine is regarded as a prime luxury good by nobles across all of Asarus. The nation's economy is also driven by their master shipwrights and advances in organized transportation throughout the seas and skies.

The primary players in Venoch's economy are the nation's three major noble families. Each family has their hand in the various markets of the world, and they each claim dominion over economic relationships with certain nations. The zi'Morvel family holds the majority of the trade agreements in Cypress, Darastrix, Osept, Tristan, and Vavaire, and the zi'Yeil line holds most of the agreements in Aurezia, Erygis, Isild, Rancagesh, and Washu. The zi'Varga line trades only with Leyathar, Mythrayne, and Sillirai, though these agreements are robust and extremely profitable for the zi'Vargas. Key merchants of the families facilitate the purchase of whatever goods their clients need at fair prices. Though the heads of these families attempt to remain impartial to their foreign business interests when voting politically, conflicts of interest are inevitable. The political climate of the world always has an effect on the Venocian government, and the seafaring nation is extremely susceptible to the changing temperaments of the world's major players.

CULTURE AND CLIMATE

Life in Venoch is generally easygoing, especially when compared to the lifestyles of citizens abroad. The beautiful climate and landscape of the northern shores of the Angylis Sea paint Venoch as a warm, relaxing paradise. Venocian cities are a buzzing hub for the exchange of not only goods from around the world but also cultures and open-minded understanding. Venoch is the primary home of the long-lived acer'rin race, and as such, the noble families of the nation are well-established and hold international prestige. They own multiple lavish estates, and even the lower class experiences decent economic stature and a positive quality of life. Despite looming family legacies and a natural emphasis on the importance of blood, Venoch encourages freedom and self-reliance. An individual will only inherit family wealth if they prove themselves capable and worthy of their family's given trade.

The Venocian put their families first and consider blood thicker than water in almost all situations. It is not uncommon for extended families to live in the same city or even within the same household as their kin. Though rare, there are some Venocian villages purely populated by one family name. In Venoch individuals will often leave their homesteads in search of companionship or glory, only to return home years later alongside a husband or wife. Venocian tradition dictates that a couple will choose only one homestead to marry and settle, with no cultural preference towards the line of the husband or wife. During their travels, young adult Venocians will attempt to earn their own fortune and invest in a way that can provide for their homestead and expand their means. For this reason alone the majority of the nation's workforce is young, especially those working in the merchant trade, which flourishes in Venoch and lends to the life of a traveler. Older Venocians who choose to live away from the homestead are seen as an oddity, but not necessarily looked down upon. The acer'rin intimately understand how quickly one's circumstance can change. Some merchants are granted a golden opportunity to es-

tablish a shop in a large Venocian city or even a nation abroad, and most would consider themselves fools to decline the opportunity in favor of returning to a homestead.

The climate of Venoch is warm and sub-tropical. The temperature becomes cooler as one travels farther north, but this region still boasts mild weather year-round. Venoch experiences warm and dry summers with much of the nation's precipitation falling between the autumn, winter, and spring seasons, with the occasional summer thunderstorm as an exception to this rule. Even during the country's wet seasons, Venoch enjoys pleasant temperatures and calm winters. The only constant along the coast is a pleasantly brisk breeze, which is said to have inspired the first Venocian shipwrights to capture the power of the winds on the shores of their homesteads.

The return of Synethil has prompted a great migration north by those who are unhappy living under the thumb of the country's three major noble families. Caravans and small shantytowns are slowly becoming common as people trek northward and attempt to push Venocian borders north in order to reconnect with Leyathar. The vast forests and hills of the Venocian countryside are marked with villas belonging to wealthy families, as well as villages of smaller families who managed to escape the hustle and bustle of city life. The northern forests of Venoch contain rare giant luki'taer trees stretching several hundred feet in the air. These dense forests are revered by the Venocian people, as the trees are some of the only standing remnants from the glorious days of the Leyarin Empire.

POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT

After leading Venoch to victory at the end of the First Empire Wars, Palcica zi'Varga was the obvious choice of representative to take the role of Commodore Duchess. Her role was further cemented by her heroic actions during the Darkest War. Though the position of Commodore Duke or Duchess is voted upon every ten years, Palcica has been re-elected at the end of each of her terms, as the majority of the families in Venoch view Palcica as a national hero regardless of their political affiliation. The Venocian populace believes that she will return their people to glory and prosperity. Palcica is a kind and fair woman known to sway whole families and the staunchest of opponents to her side. The Venocian support her fervently and would rather see her take charge than see the nation's three major families exchange positions and squabble within the Venocian government. The Commodore Duchess is known for her heroic actions, passion, and drive, which occasionally gets the better of her. She toes the line when it comes to her firm stance against slavery, which has pushed Venoch even farther from Osept. Over the past few years Palcica's popularity has wavered, however, as noble families have fallen, risen, and restructured in the wake of the Darkest War.

It is a largely unspoken fact that the zi'Vargas, the zi'Morvels, and the zi'Yeils hold the power of Venoch's nobility. The zi'Morvels and the zi'Yeils keep their allies in their pockets by means of control and manipulation, while the zi'Vargas rely on good business practices, diplomacy, and protection to keep their interests secured. The majority of the families in the west pledge their allegiance to the zi'Morvels, while the east pays their respect



to the zi'Yeils. Allies of the zi'Vargas previously lived in the northern region of Venoch, but much of that land was lost during the Darkest War. A civil war between these families looms on the horizon, threatening to burst at the first misstep. The zi'Morvels of the west and the zi'Yeils of the east are set to clash in the center of the country where political dissent is the greatest. The zi'Vargas are looking northward to rebuild and avoid conflict in their weakened state, and Commodore Duchess Palcica is sending her family and followers to reconnect with the leadership of Leyathar in hopes of enlisting their aid to quell the fighting between her countrymen. Members of the three families never openly refer to the tension in an effort to keep appearances, but the Venocian feel the strain growing with each passing day.

The noble class of Venoch is dominated by the three major lines and the nobles who pay allegiance to them. Many of the country's noblemen are of the old blood of Leyathar, which holds significant weight among the acer'rin. Like most nations in Vathis, Venoch grants nobility to the family lines of those who undergo a Starcalling, though this status must be willingly accepted by the Starcalled. The Commodore Duchess can also grant noble status to those deserving, though she does so sparingly and only on the basis of merit. Only firstborn nobles can become the heads of their line when their parents pass away. If no firstborn children remain the line dissolves, though many use this opportunity to marry into other families or live off of their garnered wealth, unhindered by the responsibility of status. While each noble family is equally powerful in theory, the zi'Varga, zi'Morvel, and zi'Yeil families are influential and rich enough to be considered the heads of their respective regions. It is considered taboo for members of two unaligned families to do business, court one another, or even become friends. Though many families have strengthened their bonds through marriage, they will betray one another if their families can benefit from the move. The dynamics of Venocian loyalty are always shifting, and social status is a constant factor in the decision-making of Venocian nobility.

Venoch's government is a mercantile federation, which requires that each noble line send a council representative to speak in the interest of their family. These representatives discuss and vote on major issues, and the nation handles their votes accordingly. Some Starcalled deny noble status out of distaste for such a heavy responsibility, as nobles are obliged to engage in Venocian politics and choose a side in ancient disputes between families. There is no set number of votes on the council. Each family is granted exactly one vote, and when families merge lines their former separate voting power is consolidated to a single vote. The council is constantly shifting as noble families come together, fall apart, and are established, but the Commodore Duchess retains order in this seemingly chaotic system. Palcica's role in this arrangement is to break ties and stalemates by having the final say, as well as act as the leader of the council and representative on the Council of Vathis for international affairs. The Venocian council is surprisingly efficient, though generally polarized, with most families following one of three courses of actions suggested by the nation's major players.

Freedom is one of the fundamental principles of Venocian life. This has limited the creation of strict laws and lends to loose

and calm law enforcement. Venoch is a younger country clinging tightly to the fundamental principles of the Vathis Accords, though occasionally specific cities possess varied minor laws pertaining to particular situations. These laws are a holdover from the Leyarin Empire and the separate city-states that existed before Venoch's founding and unification. Each city or homestead is led by a noble line in charge of organizing the law enforcement of the area. It is in their best interest to keep their towns and cities well-protected, as the majority of the trade operations for the nation's noble families take place in the cities the families personally reside in.

The military of Venoch is composed solely of volunteer enlistments. If a member of a merchant family is particularly bad at business, they can often find prestige or honor for their family name by volunteering for the Venocian military. Until the First Empire Wars the military of Venoch was purely defensive, existing mainly to beat back the vae'rin incursions left over from the Night Wars while part of the Leyarin Empire, but this focus changed when the acer'rin nation was thrust into the global conflict. Venoch relies heavily on naval power to dominate in battle, which is no surprise given the nation's ship-building prowess. They fielded the strongest naval force the world had ever seen during the Darkest War, which they bravely turned against the formidable fiendish armies of the Shattered Hand.

In the world of international affairs, Venoch has remained neutral in the interest of maintaining prosperous trade agreements. The nation has grown farther from Osept, with the Oseptian slave trade contrary to Venoch's love of freedom. Though they directly helped the goblinoid rebellion that led to the founding of Rancagesh, this truth remains a secret from their neighbors to the south, and Venoch has worked diligently to ensure that the reality of their involvement remains far from Oseptian ears. Venoch still harbors ill feelings towards Washu and blames the island nation for the fall of Elessar, once a close ally of Venoch. The acer'rin nation is not on good terms with Darastrix, who care little for the silver-tongued merchants. One of Venoch's greatest allies is Erygis, on account of their shared cultural values of freedom and the importance of family. The dwarves of Mythrayne are also a firm ally of the Venocians, a holdover from their shared history as a part of the Leyarin Empire. Cypress brings bountiful trade to Venoch and the two countries have become rather close in recent years. The Venocian families are aiming to establish good relations with Synethil, the magical city to the north, which promises the return of Leyathar. Open relations have been fostered with Isild, Rancagesh, Sillirai, and Vavaire for the purpose of establishing trade agreements, but these relations are strictly business. While the Venocian government maintains an official stance on international affairs and politics, as noted above, the views of the individual families of Venoch will often greatly differ. A common acer'rin saying is "One can always find a friend or ally in Venoch, but not without making an enemy." Venocian merchants frequently strike deals with opposing nations, and trade relations are always subject to shift at a moment's notice.

RELIGION AND TRADITIONS

Venoch's cultural diversity and overall acceptance extends to the majority of the world's religions, with almost every god and god-



dess worshipped in Venoch in some capacity. Teiris and Circe are the primary gods revered in Venocian culture for their emphasis on liberty and family. Bastion and Naugrix are beloved by the acer'rin for their appreciation of trade and tolerance. While her religion is not outlawed, most Venocians are wary of worshippers of Serena. They associate her modern followers with those from the days of the Night Wars, and the country's citizens retain a healthy fear of the vae'rin lurking below in the Evernight, which remain a threat to the surface of the elven nation even to this day. While merchants and traders hailing from the seaside tend to be well-versed in the various cultures and religions of the world, they interact little with members of the Church of the Crystal Watcher, which exists in Venoch only as a fringe faith. There are no crystalline structures or widespread CORE presence in the nation that would attract their fanatical notice. Some members of the group are currently gathering in the northern territories of Venoch searching for evidence of his Watchfulness, but many believe this is simply a cover for another yet unknown goal.

One of Venoch's long-standing traditions is the Angylis Circuit, an annual airship race around the Angylis Sea. Vessels set out and race to several seaside checkpoints before finally arriving back at their starting location, the host city of that particular year. Participating in this competition is viewed as an honor, and sponsoring the event is a serious responsibility and enormous financial undertaking. Victors of the race are regarded as the best sailors in all of Venoch, and for years to come they are flooded with employment offers and lucrative contracts. Upon completion of the event Venocian shipwrights then reveal their new designs to the world. In the springtime, Venoch also holds a festival of love, which lasts three days. During this celebration, it is tradition for single youths of age to seek out potential mates and spend the festival engaging in various games and merriment meant to determine their compatibility. Venocians observe the Laniri with what they call "The Ceremony of Flags." All ships docked within the country's ports will fly as many flags as they can and create outrageous and extravagant designs with which to adorn their ships. Ships with especially colorful and impressive displays are said to be destined for prosperity in the coming year.

Venoch is home to a number of notable locations such as the Mochesea Hospice, Circe's holy site, which is located in Erretis. Originally a small temple, this site has turned into a huge sanctuary of healing manned by members of Circe's clergy. The clerics of the Hospice do not discriminate in their healing, and they are more than willing to help those in need regardless of their faith or social status. People travel from all over Vathis to seek their healing hands. The Hospice is also a popular school for would-be healers and practitioners of the Touch. Another important location found in Venoch is the First Arch, a huge stone arch constructed in the bay of Asrile that serves as the starting and finishing point for a number of Venocian ship races. It is said that if one could scale its impressive heights, the top of the arch is one of the few places from which one might watch the entire Angylis Circuit.

INFLUENTIAL PARTIES

As one of the earliest members of the Council of Vathis, Venoch maintains positive relations with the Vathis Sentinels. While the

Vathis Sentinel presence is relatively small in Venoch, the Sentinels stationed in the coastal vista are held in high esteem by the nation's populace. Venoch grants sizable contributions to both the Sentinels and CORE, providing means of additional shipping and transportation to the two organizations. The Venocians also lend the two groups vessels of both sea and air. The craftsmen of Venoch are the primary builders of much of the Vathis Sentinel's fleets in the Angylis Sea, keeping the country of acer'rin in the good graces of the force. Until recently Venoch's role on the Council of Vathis has been one of quiet stoicism, with Venoch only taking action to benefit themselves or their trade agreements, but the Commodore Duchess has taken steps to rectify this. She is now a vocal force among her peers. She firmly supported Rancagesh's goal of becoming a nation and continues to support the alienation of Washu. Venoch is publicly opposed to the lifestyles of the Sky Dragons and Outlaws. In actual practice, however, many Sky Dragons and Outlaws can find quality work in Venoch as guards for Venocian merchants or hired muscle for less savory traders seeking to use force to eliminate or cause trouble for their weaker competition.

Venoch's relationship with CORE is generally positive, as the acer'rin are the primary airship manufacturer along the shores of the Angylis Sea. Though their production does little to rival the airship production of Tristan or Washu, they've developed a unique design and dedicated client base. CORE has built a few facilities inland, but Venoch limits the organization's presence along the coast in fear of spoiling the rustic look of Venocian villas and coastal cities. Beyond their basic vested economic interest, Venocian merchants make a point of playing CORE and Lurien Industries against each other whenever possible, hoping to stir some semblance of competition between the two. The zi'Morvel family in particular wishes to profit from dissent between the organizations. The elite who are aware of their position consider their plays a dangerous move for Venoch, as CORE is extremely influential to the global economy and could surely sway major businesses away from the acer'rin nation.

VARGA FAMILY: The zi'Varga family is among the most just and fair of the Venocian merchant families, which has helped them maintain control of the Commodore position in the Venocian government. The head of the family is the Commodore Duchess Palcica zi'Varga herself, a strongly opinionated and at times stubborn woman. It once looked as though she would permanently alter Venoch's political path until the outbreak of the Darkest War halted the country's diplomatic evolution. After losing a large amount of northern homestead territory and key allies during the Darkest War, the zi'Vargas shifted their focus to escaping the inevitable conflict building between their rival noble lines, the zi'Yeils and the zi'Morvels. The obvious path of escape for the zi'Vargas is through the ravaged north, where their family plans on reuniting with their former Leyarish brothers in Synethil.

YEIL FAMILY: The zi'Yeil family is arguably the most business savvy family in all of Venoch. They are led by Orbel zi'Yeil, a quiet, charismatic acer'rin who serves as an advisor to the Commodore Duchess. While immensely rich, Orbel leads a humble life. It is said that he funnels his wealth into the most profitable investment one can make: information. Orbel is rumored to have spies



in every corner of Vathis, helping him make informed business deals and undermine his enemies. The zi'Yeil family are extremely progressive in their political views, and they've enjoyed an influx of trade due to the strategic bonds they formed with other nations during the Darkest War. They would like to see Venoch's political position further polarized in their favor so that they might profit while their enemies, namely the zi'Morvel family, suffers.

MORVEL FAMILY: The zi'Morvel Family is the richest family in all of Venoch. Their trade empire dominates the western half of the nation, and their fleet of trade ships rivals that of the Venocian military. They are led by Jacker zi'Morvel, a greedy and ruthless acer'rin who uses his wealth and political power to get what he wants. The zi'Morvel family and their allies act on the conservative side of the Venocian government. They wish to return Venoch to the country's former position of political neutrality in order to keep hold of the trade opportunities Jacker and his family established in the years prior to Commodore Duchess Palcica's appointment. Jacker is currently in the process of enacting a long-term scheme that would establish himself as Commodore Duke and allow the zi'Morvel family access to the national forces and resources of Venoch. This plot is known to the zi'Yeil family, and has lit the fuse of the impending civil war.

FAE'ANORE: The Fae'anore have been in contact with Venoch since the return of Synethil. They've proposed various methods for Venoch to rejoin and rebuild the Leyarin Empire, which has been met with a mixed responses from the Venocian populace. The largest supporters of this cause are the zi'Varga family, who have been extremely active in Synethil's ongoing scouting endeavors. The zi'Varga family is hoping to secure a territorial bridge between Venoch and Synethil to further the possibility of some, if not all, of Venoch joining Synethil in the eventual revival of the Leyarin Empire.

VATHIS SENTINELS: The Vathis Sentinels are viewed as the elite soldiers of the world. While not a formal part of Venoch's militarized force, local Venocian guards are more than willing to take orders from Vathis Sentinels, and they tend to do so without question. Most of the Vathis Sentinel's work in Venoch revolves around keeping the peace between arguing families that use their influence to instigate corruption or cause serious problems for their rivals. The Vathis Sentinels stationed in this coastal nation also act as an investigative force, researching merchant dealings with the various pirate groups within the Angylis Sea. Their hope is to find traders who have hired pirates and follow their trails to the pirates themselves.

BLUEWIND COMPANY: The Bluewinds are a major part of day-to-day life for Venocian merchants. Traders use the technology to keep in contact with shipments and accurately track departures and arrivals, and as such, the nation's major cities all possess multiple Bluewind stations. Venoch also boasts positive business dealings with the company as one of their primary providers of both air and sea vessels. Venocian ports and airship docks tend to give the organization priority when docking, as the nation longs to stay in the good graces of the Bluewind Company and continue prospering from their advanced communications technology.

EYES OF VATHIS: The Eyes of Vathis strive to foster good relationships with the majority of Venoch's merchants. Venocian

entrepreneurs will often befriend specific agents of the Eyes, to whom they show the items of intrigue they find during their trade endeavors in the various markets of the world. Agents of the Eyes of Vathis frequently strike deals with Venocian merchants and pay for items of interest brought to their attention. These transactions are an easy way for the Eyes to acquire items of note, and the agreement provides the merchants with an outlet to sell items potentially gained from unregulated market deals. Merchants also utilize the services of the Eyes of Vathis to offload strange items they find difficult to sell in conventional Venocian markets.

LURIEN INDUSTRIES: Venoch's primary interest in Lurien Industries is facilitating the movement of vaedric technology. Though the zi'Morvels attempt to pit CORE and Lurien Industries against one another whenever possible, their attempts have so far failed. Venocians view the Essel Tournament as a healthy competition, and they treat the regulated fighting as a way for one to bring great honor to their family name. Many acer'rin acquire sponsorship and partake in the Tournament.

CHURCH OF THE CRYSTAL WATCHER: While uncommon in Venoch, the Church of the Crystal Watcher is currently gathering in the northern territories of the country for an unknown purpose. Some members of this church oversee expeditions even farther northward, where they hope to find evidence of his Watchfulness. While their true intentions are currently unknown, whispers and rumors claim that the group is seeking to find a way to the Vibrant. They often sign on to long-term expeditions aiming to reach Synethil, though they seldom reveal their allegiance to the church unless pressed.

SEA DRAGON SYNDICATE: Venoch's branch of the Dragon Syndicate is known as the Sea Dragon Syndicate. They operate in a sophisticated manner, allying with successful merchants and various noble families for the purpose of stealing from their rivals. The Sea Dragon Syndicate takes advantage of the immense wealth changing hands in Venocian trade cities, and they often pose as middlemen for well-known merchant enterprises, promising payment the vendor will never see. This criminal organization is fairly successful in Venoch, and their members have lifestyles that most would consider lavish for criminals.

EXPERIENCING VENOCH

Keeping in line with their long-standing naval traditions, the easiest way to enter any civilized area of Venoch is by sea. All of the nation's major cities exist along the northern coast of the Angylis Sea, or on the shores of one of three rivers running south into the sea from the northernmost points of the country. Though traversing the plains and forests of the northern reaches may be difficult, it is not an impossible means of traveling. Tourists and foreigners often hire guided exploration and mercenaries for protection when traveling through the areas of the countryside ravaged by the Shattered Hand. Airship passage, though expensive, is a preferable method of traveling for those with the means to purchase passage aboard.

Traveling through Venoch can be a perilous adventure for the unprepared. The dense forests in the northern regions of the country still experience occasional vae'rin skirmishes originating from the Evernight, and various Vibrant creatures have manifested in recent years due to the residual energies of Synethil's return



to the Material Plane. Bands of fiends rove the plains and forests of the north, and many have taken up residence in the region's abandoned holdings. However, the biggest threat to Venocians are Outlaw and various pirate groups, such as the Sky Dragons. They are commonly hired by conniving noble families to target the trade routes of their rivals. Sometimes these groups find differentiating between merchants, hired guards, and innocent travelers seeking passage aboard a ship or trade caravan more trouble than their pay is worth, making their presence in the coastal nation a dangerous one.

As a hub for international trade and the exchange of goods and ideas, Venoch is accepting of all races and peoples. The average Venocian is slow to judge. They welcome outsiders with open arms, particularly those who have done well for their families, but they keep their trade secrets closely guarded. Travelers who are friendly, unique, or interesting can often find lodging in Venocian homesteads in the heart of the country. Families are always warm and inviting to travelers, especially when their presence brings some excitement to the relatively tranquil homestead life. The majority of conflicts experienced in the nation are typically disputes between rival families. If a Venocian runs into someone they know to be from an opposing family, they will treat them as one would treat a convict or a criminal. Depending on the severity of the families' differences some will even draw weapons if their rivals overstep territorial bounds or offend with their actions or words. The Venocians' hostility for their opposition extends to those who aid their enemies. For this reason adventurers need to remain cautious of who they form alliances with and acutely aware of how public these alliances are.

Adventurers are hardly a rarity in the diverse Venocian port cities dotting the northeastern shores of the Angylis Sea. Ships and boats are constantly traveling through the region, and Venocians are accustomed to explorers wandering through their cities as they journey. Their skills are frequently utilized by the people and organizations who call Venoch home. Adventuring is also viewed as a productive way for younger Venocians to make their way in the world before they reach the later parts of their life and return to settle down on their family holdings. While adventurers are a common sight in large port cities, recent expeditions to the north have brought many explorers through the Venocian heartland into the forests and plains.

The various merchant families of Venoch are always seeking to hire capable adventurers willing to escort their goods as they are shipped around the world. The three major noble lines of the nation have made hiring foreign help for menial tasks a standard Venocian practice, with other families and companies emulating their successful business models. Many travelers are also finding additional work with the zi'Varga family, who are paying adventurers a hefty sum to mount expeditions into the north in hopes of establishing a safe route to Synethil through the ravaged landscape. Roaming adventuring parties are increasingly sought after by the zi'Yeils and the zi'Morvels for their current use as a protective force and potential future prospect as mercenaries in the brewing civil war. For those of questionable morals, the Sea Dragon Syndicate offers a lavish criminal lifestyle to those willing to work.

MAJOR SETTLEMENTS

ASRILE

"The Crown of the Angylis Sea"

TYPE: Capital Trade Metropolis

POPULATION: 801,039

LANGUAGES: Leyarish, Vavalish, a mixture of all others

SENTINEL SCORE: 6

ECONOMY SCORE: 10

IMPORTS: Trade goods from all other countries

EXPORTS: Luki'taer wood, Trade goods from all other countries, Venocian wine

ORGANIZATIONS: Fae'ranore, Vathis Sentinels, zi'Varga Family

RELIGION: Vath Pantheon; *Circe*

The city of Asrile is long and narrow, sticking primarily to the safety of the shoreline. Only a few blocks exist between the coast and outer walls, but even so, the city's expansive length makes it the largest city in Venoch. Asrile began as several smaller ports founded during the time of the Leyarin Empire, which later expanded until they connected. The center of Asrile is where the various leaders of the Venocian noble families first met to establish themselves as a unified nation. Most of the country is comprised of docks and merchants importing and exporting goods, and preparing their shipments bound for faraway lands. The jewel of Asrile is the Sea Side Palace, a huge, ornate keep, which is the home of the Commodore Duchess and her family. The Sea Side Palace also acts as the meeting place of the Venocian Council, who make all of the major decisions for the nation.

Asrile is often called the general store of Vathis due to the fact that one can find almost anything within her sprawling markets. The docks compose nearly half of the city proper, which accurately reflects what life is like for the citizens of Asrile. Those who call the capital home are nobles, merchant lords, lowly apprentices, dock workers, and everything in between. Anyone with the drive and ambition can find success in Asrile, however, particularly if they secure work aboard the vessel of a competitor in the Angylis Circuit, one of the most notable events held along the Angylis Sea. Nearly everyone in Asrile participates in the race in some manner or another. The race begins and ends at a city along the Angylis Sea determined at some point during the prior year.

As the capital city of Venoch, Asrile is naturally brimming with politics and intrigue. The Varga family exudes heavy influence over the political direction of not only the Angylis coast, but the nation as a whole. This Sea Side Palace of the capital is also the location where the Venocian Council physically meets, making it a heavily guarded safe space for Venoch's elite. For this reason alone the building is large enough to accommodate any and all council representatives. Due to both the number of important political figures present in Asrile, and heavy trade traffic, the Vathis Sentinels have a sizable presence within the city. Stationed Sentinels can be seen patrolling the docks and rifling through incoming and outgoing shipments for contraband. Another organization of



note within the capital city is the Fae'ranore, who maintain a heavy presence along the coast of the Angylis Sea. Members have a small base of operations in the Sea Side Palace, and frequently join in talks with the zi'Varga family, including the Commodore Duchess herself.

COLAVE

“Sailing Forward into the Future”

TYPE: Large Trade Hub Port City

POPULATION: 246,984

LANGUAGES: Leyarish, Vavalish, a mixture of all others

VATHIS SENTINEL SCORE: 4

ECONOMY SCORE: 9

IMPORTS: Trade goods from Aurezia, Erygis, Isild, Mythrayne, Rancagesh, and Washu

EXPORTS: Magical items, Leyarin artifacts, Trade goods from Aurezia, Erygis, Isild, Mythrayne, Rancagesh, and Washu

ORGANIZATIONS: The Eldritch House, The Eyes of Vathis, the zi'Yeil Family

RELIGION: Vath Pantheon; *Circe*

The city proper of Colave sits atop a steep cliff. Ornate stone steps are carved into the cliffside in several locations, leading down to the docks below. These stairs were originally carved by the dwarves, who've remained on good diplomatic terms with the zi'Yeil family for centuries. The Yeils have always been known as a peaceful group, and their patron city, Colave, reflects their inherently calm nature. The architecture of the trade hub is simple and humble, especially when compared to other Venocian cities. Colave was originally founded as a small port for the specific purpose of trading with the nations of Mythrayne and Washu. Influence from both of these countries can be found in the city in abundance.

The population of Colave enjoys what many would consider to be the epitome of Venocian life, working as traders on the docks and selling their wares for profit. Many consider the zi'Yeil family the most business savvy traders in the entire world. They are renowned for their modest personalities and interest in the unknown, whether it be the secrets of political rivals or the type of furtive knowledge belonging to the Zodiacs themselves. Colave is among the few Venocian cities who truly embrace Washun culture, and its influence is felt throughout all of Colave.

This port city is run almost exclusively by the zi'Yeil family. They've embraced the political changes brought on by Commodore Duchess Palcica, and they have no interest in seeing Venoch's political temper sway. Orbel zi'Yeil is in charge of the city, and he also holds a major place in national politics. He is well-known for his great love of the Washun people, and he clutches any opportunity presented to him to embrace their culture. Colave specializes in rare wares and exotic items. Goods from the farthest reaches of the world are common in Colave, and people travel from far and wide to shop at these seaside markets. The city is also an exporter of relics and artifacts related to the old Leyarin Empire, which they usually sell to or exchange with the city of Synethil.

ETAESI (Large Trade Hub Port City, Population: 247,432)
“Trade, Wealth and Family”

Etaesi is led by the zi'Morvel family, known for funding a sizable portion of the Venocian military. Despite the city's heavy focus on militaristic goods, particularly the trade of arms, Etaesi is still a typical Venocian trade hub. The zi'Morvel family holds the majority of trade agreements in the nations of Cypress, Darastrix, Osept, Tristan, and Vavaire, so goods from these countries are commonly found in Etaesi's marketplaces. Etaesi's largest export are masterfully-built sea ships that have been crafted in the region for generations.

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

THE COASTAL ROAD: Running from Erretis to Asrile, this road offers beautiful views of the coast of the Angylis Sea. Groups of sea turtles often nest in the sands of the beaches that line the Coastal Road, making it a popular tourist destination in the right seasons.

THE THREE BROTHERS: The Three Brothers are three major rivers that run through Venoch and eventually reach the Angylis Sea. They serve as the primary form of travel in the northern reaches of Venoch.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

- Two lovers from rival families seek to run away together and start a new life.
- Members of the Fae'ranore are recruiting volunteers to explore the forests of Leyathar.
- A ship was lost on the Angylis Sea, and rescue ships are being deployed. The vessels need a brave volunteer crew.
- The Vathis Sentinels are seeking aid in uncovering the source of large amounts of illegal contraband entering the country. They need new reliable faces to act as undercover agents.
- A noble family is seeking someone to escort a load of cargo that is not what it seems.
- The Eyes of Vathis are investigating the ruins of a lost ship resting at the bottom of the Angylis Sea.
- A strange creature has been terrorizing the vineyards of a prominent winery.
- A brawl broke out in the streets between members of two rival houses. The Sentinels need to determine who started the fight. However, both families would make dangerous enemies...who would you implicate?
- Ships have stopped sailing down one of the Three Brothers. No word has come downriver by waterway or by road—what happened in the north?
- A shipwright is seeking an able-bodied company to locate, cut, and transport a suitably large luki'taer tree for the base construction of his vessel.
- Giant sea turtles have started laying their eggs on beaches, though something is driving them far closer to civilization than normal.





WASHU

"A spark in the east sets the sky afire."

THEN AND NOW

Washu is an exotic island nation located along the eastern shores of Asarus. Steeped in arcane tradition, this nation is known for her great centers of magical learning, large population of tieflings, and foreign spice trade. Until the end of the First Empire Wars, Washu was a global trade powerhouse that dwarfed even Venoch in sheer economic might. Under the stipulations of the Zukiei Treaty, a contract signed to signify the end of the conflict, Washu became a protectorate of Vavaire and was forced to pay reparations to the other nations involved in the war. The protectorate status removed Washu's Emperor from power and dissolved the nation's standing army, which was then replaced by Vavairen troops. These crippling taxes put a large strain on Washu's economy and created an enormous wealth gap under the turbulent leadership of the Council of Mages of the Eldritch House. At the end of the Darkest War the protectorate status of Washu was granted to Aurezia, and the situation has deteriorated since. To pay for the fielding of these troops, Aurezia placed heavy taxes and sanctions on all trade goods entering and leaving the island. An underground movement to reestablish the Emperor and the true might of Washu has been

building within the nation's lower class. A rebellion looms on the horizon as the mounting tension between the Aurezian occupation and Washun citizens reaches a boiling point, and none can say where the impending conflict will leave the island nation.

Settlers of early Washu were admirers of the Anuald who wished to follow in the footprints of their idols. The country refrained from engaging in prominent conflicts before the Black Frost Impact, and the nation's convenient location in a subtropic climate and established social stability allowed for her people to fare well throughout the Age of Black Frost. Magic found a home in Washu, as the nation's founders were arcanists who strove to emulate their heroes, the kami of their faith, through the Ascension Transformation. Washu's prosperity during this trying time can be directly attributed to the country's arcane magic users, who were vital in staving off the biting cold. Their fervent research into the transformation process led to the creation of the Eldritch House, a centralized organization which facilitated magical learning and the growth of Washun culture. Soon after its establishment, the Eldritch House and the Council of Mages ruled the country. Washu soon bore witness to the rise of the Sigil Lords, and those who were Starcalled came to hold power in Washu as they did in nations all across the world. As magic flourished on the island, the Council of Mages created the samurai class to protect mages from physical and non-magical threats. This elite samurai force was comprised of warriors who possessed no arcane talent whatsoever.





WASHU

"Pride. Power. Dynasty."

COLORS: Red, White, Black

BANNER: Cherry Blossom

POPULATION: 10,829,339

CAPITAL: Zukiei

GOVERNMENT: Magocratic Oligarchy

LEADER(S): zi'Zengguang Chern, Grand Mage

LANGUAGES: Washun, Vavalish

NOTABLE EXPORTS: Exotic goods, Magical goods, Spices, Tobacco

DEMONYM: Washun

LITERACY RATE: 90%

As magic left the world in the Great Collapse, when the city of Synethil was shunted from the Material Plane to the plane of Vibrant, the Ascension Transformation resulted in fewer and fewer successes. The sudden difficulty of the transformation led to a shift in Washu's social culture, as the handful of families who underwent the transformation successfully rose to become part of Washu's noble class. Those who came into power this way sought to expand Washu's borders westward onto the mainland, but their forces soon came to clashes with the nations of Elessar and Mythrayne over jurisdiction of the territory. This fruitless war would end within twenty years and become known as the Three Kingdoms War. The rampant political turmoil intensified with the death of the Emperor and led to an internal power struggle within Washu, called the Period of the Five Kingdoms. The various elite of the nation fought for control in the aftermath of the Emperor's death, but one family, the zi'Kyozens, emerged victorious. Though some begrudged their victory, the new zi'Kyozen Emperor guided Washu into a bright new age.

Washu rose as a thriving center of trade and magical learning. The nation's exotic goods and unusual people piqued the interest of foreigners from across the world, and strangers rushed to the island's shores, ushering in an era of enlightenment. Washu traded her arcane knowledge and rare spices for foreign specialty goods, such as ildera from CORE and eldria from Tristan. At this time the former master shipwrights of Washu acclimated to the budding business of airship design. They naturally excelled in the trade, and the nation profited greatly from their modern business endeavors. It was at this time, arguably the apex of Washu's greatness, that the rulers of the country learned a dark secret regarding the government of the nation of Elessar. With heavy hearts, Emperor zi'Kyozen and his advisors determined that the threat was to be removed. They secretly sent skilled mages to Elessar to seek evidence of the nation's defilement, but the Elish discovered the true purpose of

their visit and a Master Mage died under questionable circumstances. The rulers of Elessar refused to compensate the Washun for their loss or participate in an internal investigation, pushing the Washun populace over the edge in a mix of outrage and grief.

Delegates from Washu met in secret with the yet unorganized airship pirates and enlisted their help to destroy Elessar's ground-based eldria refinement facilities. In return for their alliance, they were to be paid handsomely and granted control of Elish refinement facilities on the nation's floating motes. The Washun also met with Emperor Jaris of Vavaire, who recently wed a Washun princess, and the two nations signed a secret pact to move against Tristan and Elessar. With their various allegiances secured, the airship pirates then boarded, stripped, and sunk a luxury Elish airship named the Evangeline. With this act of hostility Washu officially declared war on Elessar. Utilizing a mixture of pirate airships, armies of ildera, and magical prowess, Washu invaded the fields of their mainland neighbor and the First Empire Wars began. The nations of the world rushed to choose sides in the ensuing conflict, and Vavaire, Korvach, and Sorakov sided with Washu out of loyalty and a shared desire to undermine Tristan. The armies of the island stormed through the heartland of Elessar, and the fledgling Sky Dragons, growing uneasy with the sheer destruction wrought by the Washun, abandoned their hold on the Elish skies and fled northward. Washu's opposition rushed to Elessar to prevent the annihilation of the country, but they arrived too late, as Washu had opened arcane tears to the plane of Gloom. Shadow essence seeped into the very soil of the defiled nation and rendered Elessar a barren and dead land.

When the destruction of Elessar was revealed to her former allies, they betrayed Washu and turned their armies against hers. Washu was forced to sign the Zukiei Treaty, officially ending the First Empire Wars and dismantling Washu as a nation. The country lost all rights to self-governance and her military was forc-



ibly disbanded. The streets of Washu became occupied by Vavairen soldiers, and the nation's trade and diplomacy were brought to a crippling standstill. By the terms of the treaty, Washu was forced to pay enormous reparations to all of the nations involved. Washu's citizens were disheartened by these events, and revolts spread through major Washun cities like wildfire. Emperor Jaris of Vavaire moved to prevent these violent uprisings, and he loosened some of the policies that had been placed on the oppressed citizens. The Washun rejoiced in their newfound freedom, but this freedom was not meant to last.

The death of Emperor Jaris led to the rise of his second son, Aliskar. Emperor Aliskar reinstated the Vavairen occupation and placed a severely limiting trade embargo on Washu that threw the country's economy into a state of depression. The world paid little heed to Washu's plight, and the country was ignored further during the outbreak of the Second Empire Wars, which began with a mysterious magical explosion in western Tristan. Vavaire and Tristan blamed one another for the event and rushed to conflict. Unsurprisingly, Washu had little choice but to take the side of their oppressors, Vavaire. Washu signed the Sovereign Steel Pact alongside Cypress, Osept, and Vavaire, which ensured a united front against their enemies, and the island nation was once again permitted to oversee a military of their own. In the heart of the war and at the height of the fighting, Washu struck a significant blow against Sillirai in an airship raid of the kingdom's Eldric Reactors and airship docks. The Sillarian fleet was crippled, and the nation's transportation capabilities nearly destroyed.

With the outlook of the Second Empire Wars promising and Vavaire winning on nearly every front, a number of important Vavairen advisors were revealed to be Vandiels in disguise. The Exilarchy, as they called themselves, had infiltrated the various governments of the world's nations. With their secretive ploy over, the Exilarchy opened the Scar Tear portal in the depths of Valiance, Vavaire, and let loose hordes of devils and demons from the lower planes. These fiends—the Shattered Hand—mowed through the heart of Asarus, leaving a trail of destruction in their wake. Suddenly all alliances and agreements were null and void, and what was once a war for territorial control and petty political vengeance became the Darkest War, a global struggle for survival. Due to their unreliable military training and insufficient manpower, Washu fared poorly against the Shattered Hand, and despite their geographical solitude the country was among the nations who suffered the greatest losses at the hands of the fiends. By the time the remaining Vandiels returned through the Scar Tear and abandoned the Material Plane, the Washun were desolate and their morale destroyed.

After the Darkest War, the deaths of millions weighed upon the Washun. The nation lost half of her island territory and all Washun mainland holdings were abandoned. Unlike other nations, however, no Vandiels were destroyed on Washun soil, which has made it possible for the nation to begin resettling her fiend-infested territories. The complete loss of Vavaire during the war left the Washun Protectorate in the hands of Aurezia, who immediately instated zi'Zenggaung Chern as the leader of the nation. Chern attempted to instill peace and tranquility in his people in the hopes of quelling dissent and keeping himself in office. With little care

for the island's economy, Aurezia ordered Washu to pay additional reparations for the nation's alliance with Vavaire, now perceived as the perpetrator of the Darkest War. If the people of Washu were not already lost and defeated, these demands put the final nail in the country's financial coffin, and Washu sank into a deep post-war depression.

Washu's future has yet to be determined. In recent years Aurezia pulled a sizable portion of her troops from the nation, giving rise to two rival factions—the Imperial Blossoms and the Cobalt Reserves—competing for the positions of power left by the Aurezian forces. The Imperial Blossoms wish to return to the old ways and renounce the Zukiei Treaty in an effort to free Washu. They are working with the direct heir of the late Emperor, Empress Kogo zi'Kyozen, and supporting an underground movement to retake the nation under her terms. The Cobalt Reserves, on the other hand, hope to keep the country under Aurezian protection, and they wish to negotiate with the Council of Vathis and alter the Zukiei Treaty to improve Washu's political standing. The two groups often clash in the streets of Washu, but try to avoid involving innocent citizens in their volatile rivalry.

The Vavairen Empress and her advisors secretly support Empress Kogo zi'Kyozen and the Imperial Blossoms. Empress Kogo has been in talks with leaders of Tristan in hopes of restoring diplomatic relations between the two countries. Tristan has used their newfound good relations to covertly establish additional eldric facilities and eldric operations in Washu. Leyathar also supports sovereignty for the island nation, as an independent Washu would undermine Aurezia's power and strengthen their alliance with Vavaire. Washu hopes to reclaim territory lost during the Darkest War, and the elite are pushing the Council of Vathis for their approval in the endeavor. Due primarily to the Zukiei Treaty, the trade embargo, and the Darkest War, Washu is currently a desolate place with resolute people committed to becoming a world power once again.

ECONOMICS AND INDUSTRY

Exports: Airships, Exotic goods, Magical goods, Spices, Tobacco
Imports: Agriculture, Eldria, Livestock, Raw materials, Steel

Washu is a land of untouched resources waiting to be tapped. Unfortunately, the nation is held back from engaging in any substantial trade by forced blockades and sanctions. Some still consider Washu to be a formidable trade hub, however, as Washun goods are exotic, unique, and smuggled worldwide. During Washu's economic height, the nation's rivers ran gold with exports of spices, gold, silver, gemstones, and innovative ideas and technological advancements unfound in neighboring nations. The Washun economy was a powerhouse of wealth and might, and the country boasted a formidable professional army. The Washun have since been stripped of their financial power by endless warfare, forced alliances, and failed leadership. Three economies in particular keep Washu afloat in modern times: her spice trade, her sale of silk, and her many airship docks. Washun spices, such as cloves, nutmeg, pepper, cinnamon, mace, ginger, cumin, and vanilla, are found in abundance across the country and sought after by the rest of the world. Silk from Washu is also highly prized among the nobility of



western nations, particularly Cypress, Osept, Sillirai, and Vavaire.

Despite the current turmoil in Washu, a number of notable companies and figures have retained their status and power. The Nato Airyards are the nation's largest airship manufactures. The Zukiei Treaty has restricted the military of Washu from possessing a vast airship fleet, so many of these ships are exported and sold outside of the country. Rumor has it that zi'Kyozen Kogo and Trist emissaries have been working closely with the Nato Airyards to produce prototypes of incredible new airships, but this rumor is to date unproven. Also powerful in Washu are the Itochu Spicers, a coalition of various merchants working towards a common goal of increased profits, reopened trade routes, and spice availability across the entire nation. The Kaikawa Tobacco company holds similar goals: their tobacco is regarded as the best in the world, save for the new Vibrant strain heralding from Leyathar, and they control nearly all of the nation's tobacco plant plantations. Aurezia's embargo on Washu has outlawed the export of their product, but these restrictions have done nothing but move the sale and export of Washun tobacco from open markets to organized smuggling operations. A final Washun company of note, the Shuji Silk Trading Company, possesses the only known method of silk production in all of Washu. This organization is currently in the planning stages of regaining their production facilities on the continental mainland, but the Aurezian blockade prevents their operations from moving forward. Despite this, their clothes are extremely popular and worn by the heights of nobility in every country from coast to coast.

CULTURE AND CLIMATE

Currently Washu is in a condition of despair and humiliation on account of the restrictive tenants of the Zukiei Treaty and the faltering state of her economy. Her people wish for change, and would love to return to the greater glory that was once Washu, but the current Aurezian occupation leaves little room for change and evolution. Washu is home to an abundance of age-old arcane energies, and nearly every Washun citizen is trained in the arcane arts in one form or another. The habitual use of magic permeates their culture. Tieflings are a common sight in the country's streets, and so are freed ilder. The Washun are a patriotic people who are proud of their history, traditions, and way of life. Not all are so loyal, however, as a strict social caste system exists within Washu, denoting the status of her citizens based on birth, occupation, and education. Upward mobility through the social castes is difficult.

The Washun populace believes that becoming a tiefling is a symbol of power, and as a result, many Washun undergo the Ascension Transformation. Following the conclusion of the Darkest War (and the return of strong magic to the world) the number of participants in the Ascension Transformation has increased. The global organization which teaches arcane magic to Vathis, the Eldritch House, is housed in Zukiei and is one of Washu's greatest achievements. In general, the Washun are a magically talented, industrious, and honorable people attempting to raise their nation from the depth of dire straits. Her people live in squalor and are grateful for everything they have, while the Aurezian guards subjugating them live a life of luxury.

Washu is one of the warmest and wettest nations found on

Vathis. Humid and tropical, the island is home to vast jungles along her southern reaches, and plains and forests through the Washun heartland. Monsoons and typhoons ravage Washu during the summer and fall months. Only the country's mountainous regions and the far northern portions of her islands experience winter snowfall. This, in turn, has led to a vast diversity in Washu's flora and fauna, with the island nation boasting some of the rarest creatures in the known world.

As an island situated in a volcanically active region of Asarus, Washu experiences volcanic subterranean activity within the Ustan Mountains and on her southern islands. These active volcanoes instigate earthquakes, which plague the region with a frequency approaching monthly. Fortunately, the majority of these earthquakes deal no significant damage the country. Washu's Mount Rykan is the second largest mountain in the world, and it resides on the nation's east coast, with the Reklan Shrine built at its base. Washu once controlled lush rolling plains and deep forests on the mainland that contained all manner of rich natural resources, but these holdings were lost during the Darkest War, though the Washun still consider them their territories in spirit.

POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT

The ruler of Washu is zi'Zenggaung Chern, a sixty-six-year-old tiefling born on the same year as Elessar's fall. It is said that the purest demonic blood runs through his veins. Zi'Zenggaung is the figurehead for the Arcane Trust, the Washun council of mages determining the course of the country. He rose to power slowly, spending much of his life studying with the Eldritch House. Only mildly talented, Chern was taken in by the organization and groomed by their grand mages, who hoped to unlock the potential of his bloodline. Zi'Zenggaung Chern is open to the requests of the Council of Vathis, and he attempts to keep peace within his borders at all costs. Despite his bloodline he possesses no notable magical specialties and lacks natural talent in the arcane. He allows other members of the Arcane Trust to do most of the thinking, and tends to side with their popular opinion when making decisions. Some consider him a weak leader, but public opinion keeps him in office. Zi'Zenggaung Chern is fond of the Vathis Sentinel and Aurezian presence in his country, and he enjoys not worrying about overseeing a national military. He believes the deteriorating state of Washu is the country's rightful punishment, and that this punishment will only end when the Washun fully pay for their misdeeds. He holds no particular opinions for the world's organizations besides the Eldritch House, which Chern is understandably fond of. Zi'Zenggaung's family line is extensive, and he has a wife, sons, daughters, brothers, sisters, and a mother, but no living father.

The Arcane Trust, the council currently leading Washun politics, focuses primarily on appeasing the great powers of Aurezia and the Council of Vathis. They wish solely to maintain the status quo. The council actively oppresses the attempts of the lower class to unhinge their grip on the nation, sometimes with violent action. This group offers rewards to any and all who would reveal the stirrings of revolution in the streets, but so far few have come forward to turn in their brethren and claim their prize. Members of the Arcane Trust have deep connections to Aurezian leadership and the Vathis Sentinels, and both have assisted the Trust in quash-



ing the rebellious attitudes building in Washu.

The noble lines in Washu are some of the oldest in the known world. The legacies of their ancestors stretch back to the days of the Divine Sands Wars, and it was these ancestors who discovered the process known as the Ascension Transformation. The Ascension Transformation takes the bloodline of a powerful arcane user and imbues it with the power of the lower planes, transforming him or her into a glorious tiefling. The noble lines of present-day Washu follow two standards that are not mutually exclusive, the first and more numerous of the two being the Washun Starcalled dynasties. The second form of Washun nobility are the tiefling heritages of powerful arcane families. The tiefling dynasties are rarer and arguably the more powerful of the two noble standards, stretching back to the earliest days of Washu before the first Starcalling. Many tiefling families are also Starcalled, and those families wield the heaviest influence within Washu. The nobility of the country is obligated to protect the lower social castes and enact governmental decrees.

The current layout of Washu's government places the Arcane Trust as the sole governing party within Washu, ratifying laws and dictating the way of life to the average citizen. The members of the Arcane Trust are elected into power. When the election itself is finished by general consensus, the local Aurezian government decides if they also agree with the decision. Should Aurezia find this decision unfavorable, the candidate often finds a way out of the election, willingly or otherwise. The nobility of the nation enforce the laws enacted by the Arcane Trust throughout the various regions of Washu.

Freedoms and rights once cherished by the Washun have been stripped from them by the Aurezian occupation in the name of order and protection. The Aurezian government use the power granted by the Zukiei Treaty to enforce their will upon the Arcane Trust, allegedly for the safety and security of Washu. Harming any member of the Aurezian guard or Vathis Sentinels is punishable by death. The spread of any known rebellious action or attitude against Aurezia, whether propaganda or merely rumors, is punishable by an indeterminate jail sentence in accordance with the level of transgression committed. Citizens are widely encouraged by promise of a hefty reward to turn in those conspiring against Aurezia and the Arcane Trust to the appropriate officials. Washu has become a dangerous place to speak one's mind.

The ramifications of the Zukiei Treaty once prevented Washu from training armed forces, but this restriction was altered to allow the nation a small guard for the purpose of defense and order. The guard's numbers are limited to no more than fifty thousand trained soldiers who may never leave Washun borders. Rumor has it that the new leader of this force, Shigebonu Akomu, has no formal ties to the Arcane Trust and has begun to secretly train officers and airship teams in Tristan. The restrictions on the guard have forced Washu to recreate the samurai of old with advanced training and superior weaponry.

The transference of the Zukiei Treaty's obligations to Aurezia has fueled a fairly destructive relationship between Aurezia, Washu, and Aurezia's closest ally, Osept. However, the quest for Washu's independence is backed by the countries of Cypress, Tristan, and Vavaire. Erygis is split on the issue of Washun inde-

pendence, with half of the country supporting independence, while the other half wish for Washu's situation to remain unchanged. Darastrix, Mythrayne, Rancagesh, and Venoch are all wary of Washu's return, but are not actively moving against the nation. Sillirai is a unique case, as the amari to the west have not forgotten the attack on their Eldric Reactors perpetrated by Washu during the Second Empire Wars. Sillirai supports Washu's independence against Aurezia, under the stipulation that they pay recompense for the lost fleet and lives taken.

RELIGION AND TRADITIONS

The Washun recognize the major Deities of Vathis, but in a unique way. They believe in what they call the Shenami, a belief system that states all gods and spirits are part of a much larger divine whole. One piece of the pantheon cannot exist without the other. They do not pay homage to separate individual gods, but rather recognize and respect every god and goddess at once. When petitioning the gods for divine grace in their lives, the Washun understand that Zanon's hatred is as important as Astea's love. The Washun know that all things are part of one spiritual whole, including the gods themselves. They seek balance among the competing forces in their lives.

Washu's local traditions and holidays are wholly unique. It is common for the Washun to participate in cleansing rituals called Purification Rites in order to bring balance to one's life. There are different rites performed on a daily, weekly, and seasonal schedule, as well as on the Laniri. The annual Laniri celebration in Washu is revered as the day in which the past year becomes history and the year begins anew. Parades, purification rites, and feasts are commonplace on this day alongside the global tradition of colored lights and dancing. New construction throughout the country (including buildings, airships, ships, and bridges) are all blessed by Shenami priests to bring purity to the object in question. To celebrate the coming of spring, Washu engages in a giant three day celebration known as the Grand Conjunction. The Washun feel that this time of the year symbolizes birth and change, so mages come forth and summon decorated parades, structures, and creatures to awe onlookers. At the end of the festivities, there is one last summoning known as the Grand Conjunction itself. This summoning is usually a collaborative effort from the heads of local guilds determined to display their magical prowess.

Shrines that honor the Shenami are scattered across the island, and the rituals performed at these shrines compose a large portion of day-to-day life of the average Washun citizen. Purification Rites can only be performed at shrines in the presence of Shenami Priests. It is not unusual for advanced Washun cities to designate areas where nature is untouched for the sole purpose of having a space dedicated to Shenami. Washun architecture strives to integrate the local landscape wherever possible, creating a unique dichotomy between the naturally occurring and the manufactured. The largest shrine in Washu is known as the Reklan Shrine found at the base of Mount Ryukan on the eastern reaches of Washu. This location was once the private shrine of the Imperial Family, but was opened to the public when the former Emperor, Ho Zhou, was removed from power.



INFLUENTIAL PARTIES

Lawlessness has become the rule of the day following the Aurezian occupation and Washun blockade. Due to this unfortunate situation, Washu is one of the few nations in the world with an enormous number of active Vathis Sentinels stationed per citizen. They exist primarily to protect open trade routes, deter smuggling, and keep the tentative peace between Aurezian soldiers and Washun citizens. Another extremely influential party within Washu is CORE, whose operations on the island have expanded since the end of the First Empire Wars. Washu is rife with eldric technology, much to the dismay of the traditional portion of the country's population.

Washu's current predicament has opened the country's gates to all sorts of unsavory activities. Sky Dragons prowl the same streets as the Vathis Sentinels, using their extensive knowledge of the area and local people to support their covert smuggling operations. Their actions support dwindling local economies, and many merchants have come to rely on smugglers to distribute their goods to the international markets they once dominated. Outlaw membership in the nation has soared in recent years, and many cities boast entire districts dedicated to their unruly lifestyle.

ELDRITCH HOUSE: The Eldritch House is the most prestigious organization in all of Washu. Many sons and daughters of high and low birth alike aspire to be students of arcane study. The acceptance application is extremely strict, and requires either natural talent or the mind to handle rigorous studies. Many fall short of this tall order, including those with the financial means who would otherwise gild their way into acceptance. The current goal of the Eldritch House is to expand Washu's influence in the post-war world. They also keep a watchful eye for nefarious applications of magic, and deal with infractions. The influence of the Eldritch House on the day-to-day life of the average Washun citizen is undeniable and felt in the routine applications of their craft, such as heatless arcane fire and wisps of illusion entertaining children in the streets.

CHERRY GARDENS: The Bluemoon House has not operated in Washu since the Night of the Burning Moon, when all Washun Bluemoon locations were emptied in a single night. The workers of the Bluemoon establishments woke up aboard airships flying away from Washu, remembering nothing of how they arrived there. The party responsible for this act is still unknown. Instead, one might seek company and entertainment at the Cherry Gardens, an organization of women trained in the arts of dance and music. Workers of the Cherry Gardens consider the act of prostitution beneath them and they loathe the Bluemoon House for sullyng the reputation of women who entertain, as their elegant practice predates the founding of the Bluemoon organization by centuries. The Cherry Gardens work directly for the Imperial family and always have, and the information garnered by their trade is sold to those who wish to see Washu granted freedom.

ARCANE TRUST: The Arcane Trust was placed into power by the Council of Vathis shortly after the end of the First Empire Wars. As such, its membership is strictly limited to those who acquiesce to the Council's wishes. They are handpicked by the Aurezian Guard currently occupying Washu. For the most part, the Ar-

cane Trust remains untouchable and separate from the daily rabble of Washun life, and they are only seen publicly when enacting new laws and decrees. As for their primary orders, they have done an astounding job of keeping Washu under control, though their brokered peace is beginning to unravel at the seams.

VATHIS SENTINELS: The Vathis Sentinels originally created to deal with widespread unease and aggression toward the fledgling Sky Dragons after the First Empire Wars, and Washu was their original point of focus. This focus has remained throughout the years, and Washu houses a multitude of Vathis Sentinel outposts spread far and wide. No dock, shipyard, or airship goes unpatrolled in the island nation. However, gilded palms around Washun cities have allowed a vast smuggling network to thrive and circumvent the blockade, which remains outside of Vathis Sentinel jurisdiction. Many turn a blind eye to the actions of Sky Dragons in the area, so long as no harm is brought to the country's citizens.

CORE: CORE's operations within Washu are suffering at the hands of the Sky Dragons flooding the Washun market with illegally refined smuggled eldria. The increased availability of eldria has fueled a thriving market for eldric technology, however, and led to an increase of the technology's usage. The many airship docks of Washu also require large amounts of legal eldria to operate, and the airships of Aurezia that form the blockade must also be refueled frequently. As such, CORE does not wish for Washu to become free from Aurezian hold. The current situation is simply too lucrative for the organization.

LURIEN INDUSTRIES: Lurien Industries has moved into Washu to sell vaedric technology and expand the Essel Tournament. Washu rapidly assimilated the Essel Tournament into their culture, and noble families are now presenting skilled gladiators to the organization to compete for glory and prestige. Lurien Industries is also using Washu as a veil for their connections to the One Hundred and Seventeen Sky Dragons operating in the area. CORE is more concerned with the expansion of vaedric technology than with Lurien Industry's ties to the Sky Dragons, and the results of this odd dynamic remains unseen.

LEGION: In recent years Legion has gained a number of new Washun recruits. Among these are both Starcalled looking for a way out of the nation and Starcalled looking to enact a change within their beloved country. Members of Legion are researching both the effects of the massive tiefling conversions taking place throughout Washu, and the unusual origins of the practice, which are vague and misunderstood.

IMPERIAL BLOSSOMS: Formed in the years following the dissolution of the royal family, the Imperial Blossoms are a rogue group operating under the nose of the Arcane Trust. The Blossoms believe that the Emperor of Washu is a deific entity who has the capability to hear the wishes of the spirits of the world. The Emperor is a key member of the Shenami religion, and as such, the organization gained significant backing when the Aurezians initiated their occupation. Their members believe that a returned Emperor or Empress could lead Washu into prosperity. They are currently led by Empress Kogo, the eldest of the three surviving members of the royal family. They plan to remove the Arcane Trust from power.

COBALT RESERVES: The Cobalt Reserves of Washu fight on



the side of the Arcane Trust with the support of the powerful families who enjoy and profit from the current state of affairs. For the most part, they are the personal guard of the families involved, though it is not unusual for supporters from around the country to join the Cobalt Reserves. Their numbers have decreased in recent years. The Cobalt Reserves primarily patrol the streets of Washu, searching for any sign of the elusive Imperial Blossoms.

COPPER DRAGON SYNDICATE: The Washun branch of the Dragon Syndicate, known as the Copper Dragon Syndicate, have taken to importing and exporting smuggled Washun contraband. It is not unusual for members of the Arcane Trust and the Aurezian guard to be in the pockets of the Copper Dragon Syndicate. They handle many of the standard criminal trades such as theft, trafficking, racketeering, extortion, and laundering, employing the use of violence against those who would oppose them. Some believe that the Dragon Syndicate as a whole first began in Washu ages ago, but this is mere speculation.

CHURCH OF THE CRYSTAL WATCHER: Membership of the Church of the Crystal Watcher within Washu rose sharply following the First Empire Wars. Their numbers have only increased with time. Both the acceptance of outside faiths and Washu's fast eldric adaption have served to increase the Crystal Watcher's influence on the island. Members of the church tend to be ignored by the general populace, and their street preaching falls largely on deaf ears. Something specific has driven the Church of the Crystal Watcher to choose Washu as its largest home, but the cause remains unknown to those outside of the faith.

BLUEWIND COMPANY: Led by zi'Usshi Harima, the Washun branch of Bluewind Company has been used as the nation's lifeline to the outside world. Through newspapers and Bluewinds, this company brings news from the mainland to the people of Washu. It is rumored that hidden messages from supporters of the country's independence can be found in their publications, though this has never been confirmed. It is widely known that Harima supports Washun independence, however, so it would be no small step for the Imperial Blossoms to utilize their printings in this way.

EXPERIENCING WASHU

Washu is the only nation to not possess a Gilded Road, as they refuse to be in debt to Mythrayne for its construction, but traveling from one end of the island to the other is a breeze regardless. The island nation boasts a large amount of well-maintained roads and calm waterways. From caravans to farmers, all citizens utilize the nation's road network, with the Washun samurai acting as local guards of these routes. Travelers visiting Washu are often surprised to find that the country boasts state-sponsored airship travel between cities, which allows citizens the freedom to move easily between major locations. This is a holdover from the First Empire Wars, and is made even easier by Washu's airship construction industry. River and oceanic travel is common as well, with the majority of day-to-day travel taking place along rivers.

For the average traveler, Washu is as safe as safe can be. Given the island's small size and the scope of its current defensive forces, it is extremely well-protected. This perceived physical safety does not prevent one from becoming mixed up in the country's various internal machinations, however. A number of factions

work in both the forefront and underbelly of Washu, and it is easy to become embroiled in plots involving the Aurezian forces, Cobalt Reserves, and Imperial Blossoms. One unexpected benefit of visiting Washu is the few scattered Shattered Hand forces left on the island. The largest threat to the nation is actually natural: volcanoes, tsunamis, earthquakes, flooding, and monsoons all frequently wrack the island nation. The Washun mountains are also home to dangerous beasts, the likes of which are completely strange and unknown to explorers from the mainland.

The Washun generally avoid outsiders and in most cases outright ignore them. The only exceptions are allies of Trist and Vavairen origin, and traders who come offering valuable and sought-after wares. The Washun feel a strong sense of nationalism and are generally considered an isolated nation. They've held on to economic ties from the past with little interest in gaining new trade partners. Unaccepted outsiders are typically confined to Saida Isle, found within the borders of Sagakai city. This process began long ago, as it allows the Washun people to enjoy the company of foreigners while keeping the nation's cultural integrity and closely-guarded secrets. The citizens who want to hear stories and tales from the mainland all come to gather on Saida Isle. This locale has become something of a cultural hub for Washu, while the rest of the nation remains a safe and traditional place. The Washun are not known for racial prejudices or focused hatred, but they tend to feel disdain towards those who allowed their current situation to take place. They feel let down by the nations who stood idly by and even supported the forced occupation of their country.

Adventurers are sometimes exempt from the aloof attitudes of the Washun. They are the current lifeblood of the island, and without their presence Washu would have little to no contact or knowledge of the outside world. Adventurers and explorers are treated better than the average tourist, but many are still wary of their presence. They are expected to adhere to Washun customs to the best of their ability.

Despite their isolation, a number of notable parties are seeking adventurers of all nationalities and abilities to further their goals. The Imperial Blossoms are one such organization: they are currently hiring brave explorers to recover pillaged cultural artifacts and go undercover to discover plots against their members. Those looking to work against them would find employment with two different organizations, the Arcane Trust and the Cobalt Reserves. The Arcane Trust are beside themselves in their attempts to identify the leader of the Blossoms, and are driven to foster greater relations between Aurezia and Washu while quashing potential rebellion throughout the nation. The Reserves fear Washu falling under the sway of more extreme groups, and seek external aid in keeping the tentative peace. The Eldritch House, an entity concerned with the safety of Washu's secrets, also employ outsiders. They are hoping to retrieve the original copies of literature they were forced to gift to the other Eldritch Houses against their will. The Eldritch House of Washu is gravely unsettled by the loss of the Eldritch House in Tristan, which housed arcane information some would consider sensitive in nature.

MAJOR SETTLEMENTS



ZUKIEI*"City of Cherry Blossoms"***TYPE:** Primary Trade Capital City**POPULATION:** 722,295**LANGUAGES:** Washun, Vavalish**VATHIS SENTINEL SCORE:** 3**ECONOMY SCORE:** 6**IMPORTS:** Agriculture, Eldria, Horses, Iron, Ore, Wood**EXPORTS:** Airships, Coal, Exotic goods, Finished goods, Spices, Steel**ORGANIZATIONS:** Arcane Trust, Cherry Gardens, Cobalt Reserves, Imperial Blossoms, Legion, Vathis Sentinels**RELIGION:** Shenami

People worldwide consider Zukiei a city of exotic wonders, and it is said that any new experience can be bought here. The city itself houses the capital of Washu, and is undeniably the center of Washun culture. The floating mote that circles the city is the home of the Eldritch House and its center of learning. A quick step through the teleportation circle below will allow one to enter the Eldritch House and learn as they see fit. Soaring airship towers and buildings constructed in the Washun style catch the eyes of visitors, and people trickling into the city marvel at its wonders as they shop within Zukiei's extensive market district. Cobblestone roads and manned carts allow inhabitants and travelers alike to easily reach their chosen destinations. The city is the headquarters of the Cherry Blossoms, Washu's premier female entertainers. Sky Dragons here walk the street alongside Vathis Sentinels, both groups willingly setting aside their differences to maintain the city's peace.

The docks along the shore contain the city's market district and entrances into Washu proper. Beyond the docks and covered stalls lie the residential districts, their streets alight with a violet arcane fire. The streets are constantly occupied by various people traveling from one district to another to conduct their businesses, legitimate or otherwise, and whispers flow through the crowds that catch the ear of politicians and treasure hunters alike. Beyond the center of the city on a high hilltop sits the Castle of Violet Dragons, the capital building of Washu. The city of Zukiei is surrounded by high walls that separate it from the wooded basin in which it resides.

The Eldritch Circle of the family zi'Ezurin are the leading bloodline in Zukiei, and they rule the city from the Castle of Violet Dragons. The Arcane Trust also frequently meets in the castle to conduct business. With the aid of the council, various other bloodlines assist in governing the city as a whole, as Zukiei is divided into sections granted to the different nobles. The Vathis Sentinels and the Aurezian occupation seek only to maintain peace within the city and uphold the laws dictated by the Zukiei Treaty.

SHINATO*"Shipyards of Tomorrow"***TYPE:** Industrious Port City**POPULATION:** 161,654**LANGUAGES:** Washun, Vavalish**VATHIS SENTINEL SCORE:** 5**ECONOMY SCORE:** 5**IMPORTS:** Agriculture, Iron, Ores, Steel, Wood**EXPORTS:** Airships, Exotic goods, Spices, Ships, Weapons**ORGANIZATIONS:** Arcane Trust, Cobalt Reserves, Imperial Blossoms, Legion, One Hundred and Seventeen Sky Dragons, Vathis Sentinels**RELIGION:** Shenami

The sound of smithy hammers easily reach the ears of passersby as one walks through the streets. The city of Shinato has fully embraced the new decree of its Eldritch Circle, and both air and sea vessels are being built and sold faster than any other city in the world. The total output of Shinato alone rivals the rest of Washu. Even though Shinato has embraced their new industrious ambition, it remains a city of quaint homes and quintessential Washun culture. Whispers of an underground rebellion travel the streets of Shinato in hushed, delicate tones. Eldric fires light forges and streets, and airship docks number in the dozens. Sky Dragons share trade secrets with common folk along the paved roads of the city, passing Vathis Sentinels as they walk, but not a single cruel word is uttered by Sentinel or Sky Dragon alike. Shinato is a neutral ground for anyone willing to buy Washun goods. Smithies and workshops line the streets close to the waterfront, replacing the once-bustling marketplace. This marketplace has since moved back a few hundred yards and is surrounded by tenements for the workers who earn barely enough coin to scrape by.

Shinato's Eldritch Circle live on one of the floating motes above the city, constantly watching the production and progress of the shipyards below. The Vathis Sentinels also inhabit a floating mote, and with it ensure that none of their ships are being harmed during construction. Shinato's Violet Guard reside on a castle on the tall outer walls of the city and roam the streets in groups to keep the peace between rival factions.

CHIUSHI (Extensive Farming and Fishing Town, 31,238)*"The Colored Tiers"*

The town of Chiushi is built on the old ruins of castle Ushi. Its inhabitants have been sequestered in the walls left behind by the Darkest War, and now an extensive farming arrangement and large fishing fleet prosper here. Something below-ground rumbles, however, and villagers are frightened of what hides beneath.

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

HACHI: Once the center of inuzen activity in the area and a place of frequent plane-falls, the city of Hachi was destroyed by the Shattered Hand. Hachi has remained on the Material Plane since its untimely destruction.

REKLAN SHRINE: This beautiful shrine is an old sanctum devoted to the original teachings of the arcane. Legends tell of an ancient device that brought the arcane arts to the island city-states.



XUAN ZHANG: Once the mainland holding of the Chang Sky Dragons, Xuan Zhang was decimated by the Shattered Hand during the Darkest War, and the Changs were forcibly relocated to their floating motes. The airship construction yards of the city are believed to have remained intact.

WA LEE CHASM: The Wa Lee Chasm was once a thriving farmland community that fed the entire nation of Washu from her rich fields. Nobody knows what happened to Wa Lee's inhabitants. They simply disappeared sometime during the Darkest War, presumed to have been swallowed up with the rest of their town by a gaping pit that opened beneath their fields.

CI TALID CASTLE: This castle was the primary holding and protective housing for mainland Washu. It was destroyed during the Darkest War by a Vandiel and his armies. It is said that the dead guards here rise up once a year to wreak havoc on surrounding lands, but few witnesses survive to tell their tales. The formidable beginnings of an extensive wall can still be found stretching outward from Ci Talid Castle.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

- Whispers on the streets claim that a popular up-and-coming leader under the Imperial Blossoms is a revolutionary. What will happen if they gain enough of a following to assume control?
- A new and supposedly unsinkable airship is being built within Washu, and a running auction will sell the first model to the highest

bidder. Countless organizations and nations are sending delegates to represent their interests in the auction. Who is willing to risk the most to acquire the ship?

- Someone stole extremely important books from the Eldritch House, and they must be returned. What happens if they fall into the wrong hands?
- The various political factions of Washu are secretly fighting an underground war for control of an empire.
- Washun rebel factions are removing agents of Aurezia within the shadows. Who is behind these actions, and what are their goals?
- The airship docks and shipyards in Shinato are being set aflame and sabotaged by an unknown party. Many ships have been destroyed in the attacks. Which forces are working against Washu?
- Undead wearing the tabards of fallen Elessar have begun terrorizing outlying Washun villages. How did they arrive here and who sent them?
- Thousands of Washun inhabitants wish to undergo the Ascension Transformation. Why are so many people willing to undergo it, and who are they?
- The Vathis Sentinels are becoming more and more interested in this island nation. Beforehand they were a rare sight on Washun streets, choosing to stay within Shinato and the airship docks. Why are they so prevalent now, and what are they looking for?
- The Sky Dragons that frequent Zukiei have begun to fall ill to a mysterious sickness that does not seem to be affecting others. What is this illness, and who is responsible for its creation?





OTHER AREAS



ANGYLIS SEA

POPULATION PRE-DARKEST WAR: N/A

AREA CLAIMED BY: Erygis, Mythrayne, Osept, Vavaire, and Venoch

Located in central Asarus, the Angylis Sea separates the nations of Erygis, Mythrayne, Osept, Vavaire, and Venoch. It is the largest landlocked body of water on the continent. There are only two ways into the Angylis Sea. One is through Naugrix's Perch found in Mythrayne, the homeland of the dwarves. The second path is through the north, between the Shardlands and the Leyathar Forest. This prosperous body of water facilitated trade between the nations for hundreds of years before airship travel was even a dream. To this day, the Angylis Sea remains vital to the operations of nearby civilizations, acting as an important trade route and source of food.

In ancient days a multitude of nations were founded along the verdant, life-bearing shores of the Angylis Sea. The region has remained a bountiful pool of resources since, and until the First Empire Wars broke out, was considered a peaceful and tranquil region. It was the sinking of the Evangeline just off the coast of the Harrows, then known as Elessar, that truly started the war.

The sea itself became a battlefield in the First Empire Wars, and many ships were lost beneath the Angylis' ominous waves. This was the case yet again in the Second Empire Wars, another conflict of global scale that pitted nation against nation and brother against brother. In the Darkest War the Angylis Sea itself was not a target, but the nations along its shores were. The armies of the Shattered Hand utilized the sea to strike into Erygis and Osept.

While distinctly separate from the ocean, the Angylis Sea is one of the few places that someone farther from the ocean's coasts can find many types of fish and other delicacies. In addition, the Angylis Sea contains numerous species of flora and fauna found only within its waters. A prime example are the giant sea turtles who nest on the northern shores of the sea. Many theorize that tunnels at the bottom of the Angylis Sea connect the body of water to the ocean.

The Vathis Sentinels and Sky Dragons maintain an impressive presence in this area. The Sky Dragons use both the islands of the Angylis Sea and the floating motes above as makeshift strongholds. Formidable Vathis Sentinel naval forces dwell in this region, taking advantage of the seaside and coastal nations nearby. The Sky Dragons travel by the winds above the Angylis Sea, using their wiles and prowess to prey on unsuspecting Vathis Sentinel and CORE ships and transports. Though an uneasy truce exists be-



tween these organizations, they often poke and prod at one another, remaining mere steps away from open hostilities. The chance of conflict and interaction between the two groups is high due to proximity alone, and this spells potential trouble.

Legends state that all sorts of beasts live below the waves of the Angylis Sea, but her depths have been touched by few. Anglers claim to have witnessed colossal shadows lurking beneath their vessels, and sailors exchange frightful stories of ghost ships by fireside. Many agree that there may be a grain of truth hidden in their stories, however—dozens of ships have gone missing within the Angylis over the years, presumed sunk by battle, storm, or supernatural means. People from the surrounding nations are always seeking adventurers and hired help to cross the Angylis Sea by either water or air. Both forms of travel share the potential of danger, and when venturing across this body of water a sharp blade or quick wit can mean the difference between life and death.

IMPORTANT LOCATIONS

THE ETHERGLOW STRAIT: The Etherglow Strait is located at the northernmost tip of the Angylis Sea, between the Shardlands and Leyathar. The latent magical energies from the Shardlands and lingering Vibrant seepage from Synethil's disappearance and return have caused some of the creatures in the water to grow large and aggressive. As the only waterway connecting the Angylis Sea to the Feyne Sea, the Etherglow Strait is an important trade route linking parts of the world to the nations of Darastrix and Tristan.

KEI ISLE: Kei Isle is a massive Sky Dragon fortress located on a floating mote far above the waves of the Angylis Sea. Primarily owned by the Kei Pirate family of the One Hundred and Seventeen Dragons, it is nearly impossible to gain access if not specifically invited. Kei Isle is home to one of the largest airship fleets in all of Vathis.

ISLE OF KERALAN: Found in the western region of the Angylis Sea, the Isle of Keralan is the remnant of a floating mote that is considered the original home of modern-day Vavaire. No one can travel to the island due to the large amounts of natural zodi'ite there. This site is considered holy for the Astrian Deities.

THE HAND OF KATO: Five volcanoes in close proximity north of the coast of Osept are known as the Hand of Kato. Their fiery depths are the home to countless primordial monsters and creatures. Dragonstone statues are also in abundance here, and theories run wild as to why this may be.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

- The Eyes of Vathis are hiring adventurers to retrieve artifacts from an ancient shipwreck at the bottom of the Angylis Sea.
- Ships are being attacked by a large creature during storms while out at sea. Certain ports are halting operations until someone investigates, but some merchants are still attempting to brave the dangerous waters.
- The party has been shipwrecked on a small uncharted island where things are not quite what they seem.
- Sailors have reported strange noises reminiscent of chanting coming from the Hand of Kato.

BLOODSCORCHED VALE

POPULATION PRE-DARKEST WAR: 242,176

AREA CLAIMED BY: Erygis

The Bloodscorched Vale is an aptly named and contested territory. The tropical forests and marshes that cover most of the Vale are host to a bevy of monstrous factions, and are rarely tread by civilized folk, lest they find trouble. Naga, lizardfolk, and other serpentine races call the Bloodscorched Vale home. The different races usually are not known to interact, with lizardfolk traditionally giving solitary or small groups of naga a wide berth, but recently the races have been seen intermingling. These races are the most well-known threat within the area, as they've been raiding the eastern edges of Erygis for years, with the intensity of their attacks increasing over time. The naga have peculiarly been gathering into a large tribe, flying the flag of Gologossa. Lizardfolk and other reptilians have been flocking to this tribe in great numbers, serving as guardians or servants of the snake-like aberrations. Gologossa is referred to as the naga queen, but those among the Outlaw elite may recall hearing that name in the company of pirates almost a century ago. No one is sure what Gologossa has done to unite these naga and their faithful servants, but their raids are more focused and their kidnapping of humanoids is leaving many wondering. Vae'rin are present in the area, albeit in numbers less than those surrounding Leyathar. Unfortunately, these vae'rin still pose a serious threat. The same large reptiles that call Sinafey and parts of Rancagesh home can be found here as well, though in fewer numbers, and more familiar amphibians and mammals also roam the region. A plethora of caves leading to the Evernight are littered through the wetlands of the Bloodscorched Vale. Centuries ago, Washu led several expeditions to venture to the mainland, establishing outposts and forts throughout the Vale. It did not take long for them to lose their holdings to the wilderness, and today the remains of these outposts can be found overgrown and overrun with natives.

Eldria has been spotted near the Wisp Mountains and is now spreading south into the Glowlight Marsh. CORE is secretly using this area to experiment with the spread and harvest operations of eldria. The guard of Erygis and Aviemore do nothing to stop this, and may even have something to gain from their presence. CORE has indirectly created an increase of contracts to clear out these areas under the guise of mapping, securing resources, or discovering the potential spread of eldria, though their intentions are contrary to what they state publicly. Semi-civilized humanoids actually do reside within the Vale, but in small numbers. To the surprise of many, a handful of the old Washun settlements were able to flourish. They do not keep contact with the outside world, and remain vehemently unwelcoming of outsiders, wishing to live their lives in the marshlands in peace. Some barbaric folk have even integrated into the native tribes, but those are a rare sight indeed. Many natural hazards occur throughout the Bloodscorched Vale if one is not careful to avoid them: sinkholes and swamps that seem to swallow people whole are the most common, while floods, water spouts, and monsoons follow as a close second. Sometimes the fog in the region is so dense and thick that one cannot see farther than a few feet at a time.



IMPORTANT LOCATIONS:

ALTERAN BAY: This bay is one of the few civilized locations in the Vale. It was established as a port city for the long trip between Washu and the nations of the west prior to the advent of airships, but this port is still used by Erygis and Washu. The town of Alteran resides in the bay and is occupied by dock workers, hunters, and trappers. This small port city is frequently assailed by the Crimson Serpent tribe of lizardfolk.

THE ENDLESS STAIRWAY: The Endless Stairway is a long path extending miles down into the Evernight. Washun forces used this passage to hide supplies and resources when they occupied the area, but when they discovered the true depth of the Stairway they were set upon by vae'rin and their lizardfolk slaves, who still occupy the tunnels to this day. Races of the underground convene and trade here, and it was the base of operations for the reptilian armies that besieged Elessar long ago.

AVIEMORE: Aviemore is the passageway between the Wisp Mountains. Guarded by forces from Erygis, most consider this location Erygis' last defense against the Bloodscorched Vale. Aviemore is built upon the Salskyn dwarves' greatest wall. Holdings within the mountains allow forces here to see miles into the Vale and spot threats long before they arrive.

SAPPHIRE FALLS: Sapphire Falls is a waterfall located on the southernmost tip of the Vale. Its crystal clear waters shine a bright and brilliant blue, and are said to have healing properties. A naturally occurring tunnel system runs through the mountains nearby, housing thousands of rare and precious gems.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

- The party is traversing the Bloodscorched Vale and falls through a sinkhole into the remains of a Washun fort filled with the dead. They must find a way to the surface before the local beasts find them.
- The leader of Alteran is hiring adventurers to travel to Sapphire Falls, as the mountains nearby are rumored to contain a near-endless number of precious blue gems. The way is treacherous and rife with massive reptiles, but the reward is high.
- An agent of CORE was found dead in Aviemore, seemingly murdered. If the guard are all allies of the organization, then who committed the crime?
- A Washun airship was brought down by a mysterious attack. It landed somewhere near the Endless Stairway, and a search and rescue mission is underway.
- Golgossa's tribe of reptilian humanoids have been kidnapping the few civilized hermits living in the Vale. Aviemore received word of these kidnappings and is asking for help in rescuing the victims.
- A massive temple-city was discovered half-sunken in the Glowlight Marsh. It appears to have been constructed for creatures who do not use stairs.
- A number of vae'rin have been spotted fleeing from their fortress of Analauc north along the river.



BORDERLANDS

POPULATION PRE-DARKEST WAR: 654,654

AREA CLAIMED BY: Aurezia and Vavaire

The Borderlands are located in western Asarus between the nations of Aurezia and Vavaire, north of the even more dangerous Plains of Fear. The Borderlands was once a sought-after piece of territory that has since become a terrifying wasteland filled with carnivorous creatures and monsters. The landscape drastically switches back and forth from lush to barren with no rhyme or reason. Travelers are advised to seek airship passage over the area, or find another way around the Borderlands, as few caravans and escorts willingly travel through the region on foot.

Long before becoming the horrifying place it is now, the Borderlands was actually a fertile expanse of life and prosperity. In their prime the halfling race called the Borderlands home, founding the cities of Littleship and Lakewood. They thrived off of the lush land and were eventually integrated with the Vavairen Empire, where they continued to prosper. During the Borderlands Wars, the halflings were driven from their homes by the vicious fighting; Vavaire and Aurezia warred all throughout the territory, and their combat stripped the land of its many natural resources. This war inadvertently destroyed most of the halfling civilization. Though at one point reclamation efforts were considered, the fate of the Borderlands was sealed during the Darkest War as the negative energies of the Shattered Hand left a lasting influence on the landscape rendering stretches of the once fertile lands barren and lifeless.

Those who do find themselves in the Borderlands can expect to experience more than a few dangerous encounters as they attempt to cross the untamed wastes. Exotic creatures and monsters that have been twisted by the Shattered Hand run in great packs across the desolate plains. Many of these beasts are giant or dire versions of common wild animals, such as bears, wolves, badgers, ants, and rats. What was once the lush seaside of the Borderlands is now dominated primarily by the Jing Chao Swamp. Saturated by Vile magic and latent energies, the Jing Chao Swamp gives birth to horrific creatures and threats that roam the region.

Rockskip Lake, the lake upon which Littleship and Lakewood were founded, is now a festering pool of fetid water, and living oozes born in the swamp muck through the rolling plains of the southern reaches. A troglodyte tribe who worship the Vile energies now call the Jing Chao Swamp home. It is widely believed that they were once halflings warped and tainted by the Shattered Hand's foul presence. The greatest threat that travelers are sure to encounter in the Borderlands, however, are the remnants of the Shattered Hand. Roaming bands of fiends of all shapes and sizes scour these barren lands, searching for blood. When the opportunity presents itself the lingering Shattered Hand will even organize their efforts and launch attacks on surrounding civilizations, furthering the threat of the Borderlands to those living on the edges of Aurezia and Vavaire.



IMPORTANT LOCATIONS

HOPE AND THE FIELDS OF WHITE GRAIN: This location is famous for being the site of a major battle in the Darkest War. It is also one of Bastion's holy sites. Worldfall magic gone awry causes the battle to repeat itself over and over in a world-fall that resets at the end of each twenty-fourth hour. The spirits of battle can often be seen or heard at the fields, hinting at what happened here.

JING CHAO SWAMP: Jing Chao Swamp is saturated with latent Vandiel energy. The majority of the landscape has been warped from a lush forest to a diseased and toxic swamp. The flora and fauna mutated with the land, creating a bog full of horrifying monsters and poisonous plants. The water from this swamp has run into other river systems in the Borderlands, making it unpotable.

THE FRINGE WALL: The Fringe Wall is the southern pass between the Borderlands and the Plains of Fear. A formidable wall runs between the two territories, dividing them in a relatively neat fashion. The Dark Knights initially constructed the Fringe Wall and the three fortresses located along it to protect the civilized nations from the horrors venturing forth from the Plains of Fear. Their forces remained stationed at these fortresses, and their elite troops are some of the only individuals in Vathis who willingly traverse the Borderlands. The Fringe Wall hosts the largest concentrated number of Dark Knights, second only to Dragon Citadel, despite being far from full strength. Influential members of the Dark Knights are currently requesting additional support and manpower at the Fringe Wall.

THE HALFLING RUINS: The ruins of the cities of Littleship and Lakewood are all that remain of the once great halfling civilization. Remnants of towns and artifacts can still be found as reminders to their settlements, but they stand in complete and utter ruin.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

- The Eyes of Vathis are searching for halfling artifacts and people brave enough to travel to the ruined city of Lakewood to retrieve them.
- The party's airship crashed somewhere in the heart of the Borderlands, and they need to find their way out of the wilds.
- The party has been propositioned by a provisioner of the Dark Knights to help transport a caravan of goods to the Fringe Wall. The offer is more gold than they have ever seen offered for a caravan guard.
- Scouts have spotted a contingent of Shattered Hand remnants heading to the edge of the Borderlands, and the party has been asked to stop them before they reach civilization.
- Strange lights are coming from the Jing Chao Swamp, accompanied by sightings of large gelatinous creatures roaming through the muck.
- A group of halflings intend to stake a claim of land on the edge of the Borderlands in an attempt to reclaim their homeland. Without help, it is unlikely that they'll survive even a month.

CORSICA ISLE

POPULATION PRE-DARKEST WAR: 2,659,491

AREA CLAIMED BY: Vavaire

The two primary regions of Corsica Isle are separated by Hanad's Wall. The Corsica Isle territory is specifically the area north of the wall. The Isle of Corsica is located in the Sea of Frostorm, east of Isild and north of Aurezia. This region of the world is rainy, heavily forested, and covered in a near-constant fog, making airship reconnaissance extremely difficult. For this reason alone, most travelers find the island tough to traverse.

The majority of the island is covered by a dense forest known as the Forest of Arden. Shrouded in mystery, it is said to boast strange ties to the Zodiacs. Within the forest live hosts of barbarians who worship the Astrian pantheon and the Zodiacs fervently. Oddly enough, they worship the entire pantheon as a whole, and not as individual gods and goddesses. They understand that every aspect must exist for the balance of the world to be maintained. They will often bring warfare to the wall in an attempt to reclaim their lost holy site, though they have not attacked Hanad's Wall since the end of the Darkest War. Rumor has it that their newfound peaceful nature can be attributed to a new mage leader among their people.

Corsica Isle also boasts a large population of inuzen, further enforcing the idea that the island is somehow tied to the Zodiacs. In addition, Corsica sees an abnormally large number of Starcalled gracing its northern regions. In combination with Asgard Keep, Corsica Isle is believed to be a significant place and holds some sort of connection to the stars above. What this connection is, and why it is stronger on the island, remains to be seen.

IMPORTANT LOCATIONS

ASGARD KEEP: Asgard Keep predates modern civilization by an untold number of years. It is believed to run into the mountains, as if it was swallowed up by their majesty. The Zodiac Prophecy was first found engraved into the stone walls of Asgard Keep.

STARFALL MOUNTAINS: The spirit of a powerful oracle is said to either reside or appear within the Starfall Mountains. Once a year, people from south of the wall venture forth to seek out the wisdom of the oracle and have her answer a single question. Aevalyn zi'Wisla visited the Starfall Mountains in her early years on Vathis. There exists a series of trials before one is granted an audience with the oracle, and barbarians north of the wall will even escort pilgrims to her on occasion, provided they treat the barbarians with respect.

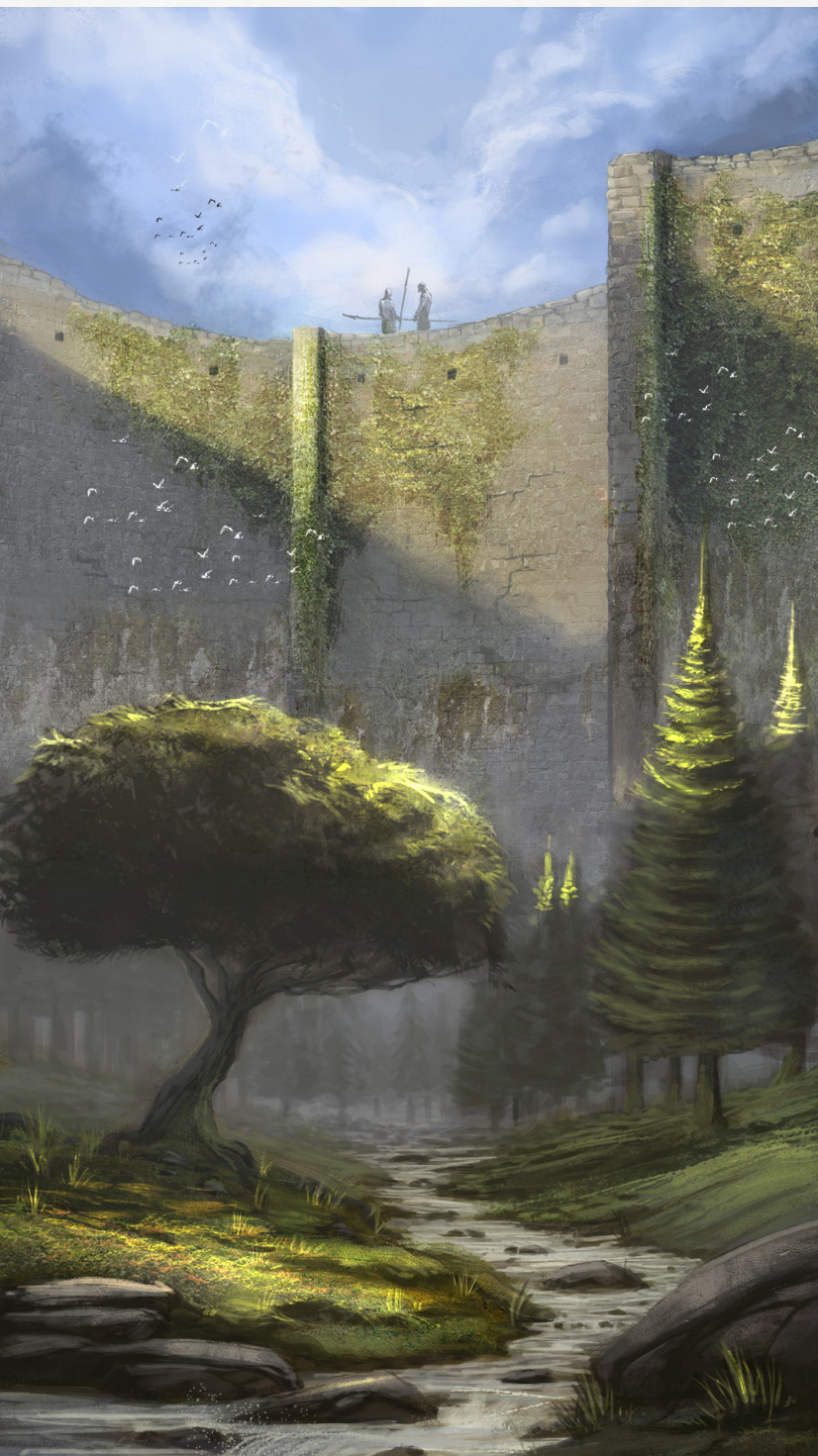
LELOCORSA: Lelocorsa is a hidden inuzen city that appears fairly often on the Material Plane. The inuzen here possess strong ties to the tribes of Corsica Isle, as they both share reverence for the Zodiacs.

FREYA'S MEADOW: Freya's Meadow is named after a former leader of Lelocorsa, who is said to be the first inuzen to make contact with the barbarian tribes on the island. This meadow is said to be close to the city of Lelocorsa, but the settlement remains difficult to find due to concealing magic used by Freya to forever hide the city from uninvited or prying eyes.



ADVENTURE HOOKS

- You are sent on an important mission to find the oracle of Corsica Isle. She is the only one who can tell you how to save your village from certain doom.
- The barbarian tribes to the north seek the party's help to cure a disease that is ravaging their people.
- Through luck and possibly fate, the party has stumbled across the city of Lelocorsa. However, the inuzen here are less than accepting of this happenstance.
- A cave in the Starfall Mountains is rumored to be the home of an ancient Zodiac relic.



- One of the barbarian tribes in the north is mobilizing with the goal of attacking Hanad's Wall. The other tribes are attempting to stop their brethren, but they require an envoy to aid their diplomatic attempts.

COVITAR

POPULATION PRE-DARKEST WAR: 326,684

AREA CLAIMED BY: Considered a Holy Land, Covitar is unclaimed by all countries out of respect.

Covitar is located west of Darastrix and east of Aurezia on the eastern shores of the uncharacteristically warm Solar Sea. It is well-known for rolling golden plains surrounded by the immense Frostfire Mountains. The region is largely uninhabited, containing only four distant settlements. A single mountain sits on the coast of the Solar Sea, dwarfing the holy city of Armeria. The area is breathtaking, and considered near-perfect by all who visit the region. Covitar's shores are constantly warm due to its location on the Solar Sea, and snow accumulation only takes place in the coldest of winters. Warm waters, lush lands, and natural tranquility bring a great many to the shores of Covitar, but few stay for long periods due to an agreement between the nations stating that none will create permanent national settlements in the region.

Covitar is known as the birthplace of the gods. Here they forsook their divine forms and came to Vathis as mortals to defeat the Anuald in present-day Osept. As the Deities took mortal form in Covitar, thousands flocked to them, bringing its population to the massive size of one million. The Deities used Covitar as a staging ground for their eventual assault on Osept, collecting large numbers of willing soldiers and followers to join them in their holy crusade. The Free Companies Treaty was first signed at the Grand Cathedral of Armeria, and its location remains important to the original Free Companies to this day. As the Divine Sands Wars drew to a close and the Deities departed the mortal realm, most inhabitants of Covitar relocated to other lands, leaving the majority of the area empty and forgotten.

In the centuries following, Covitar remained a holy place to every religion across Vathis regardless of denomination or pantheon. The surviving nations declared Covitar holy ground and came to the mutual agreement that none would create permanent settlements nearby. The cities of the region have always brought faithful to Covitar in the manner of pilgrimages, but few chose to relocate here permanently until the dwarves of Mythrayne uncovered Amorika Castle in the land's northern reaches. From Amorika the dwarves sought to reclaim the riches of Winsor Valley, bringing them into conflict with the nation of Darastrix.

Armeria, Covitar's Grand Cathedral and Great Library, went mostly devoid of inhabitants until recently. Armeria started to draw Outlaws to the city, as well as members of the one Hundred and Seventeen Sky Dragons, who are free to move about to the area since it belongs to no one. Constantine Vanguard brought droves of ilderu into the city, and they quickly outnumbered the humanoids residing and on pilgrimage to the region. While things have remained peaceful in the city of Armeria, the ilderu who now maintain the Great Library have not stated their overall goal, be-



sides creating a new permanent home for their race. Ildera flock here to be among their own kind.

IMPORTANT LOCATIONS:

ARMERIA: Armeria is a well-preserved and maintained city, but large portions of it are uninhabited. The Grand Cathedral in Armeria is an eighteen-pointed star. Seventeen points are devoted to each of the Deities, with the remaining one pointed at the door. The Grand Library can be found in this city as well. It is the largest library in the world, and possesses all of the knowledge that one might ever wish to seek.

AMORIKA CASTLE: This castle is the capital of a forgotten dwarven empire. Recently reclaimed by the dwarves of Mythrayne, they wish to harvest the riches of their ancient kin within Winsor Valley.

THE LIFE MIRROR: The Life Mirror is a cliffside made of some type of crystal or glass. When one touches the cliff and thinks of a departed loved one, they appear and can communicate. The gaps between the life and afterlife are thin here. There is no way to be entirely sure if the apparition is simply a memory, a spirit, or a combination of both. The Life Mirror is set into the side of a cliff within Armeria facing north. A long beach stretches below, and in recent years ildera have created a passageway from the Grand Cathedral that leads down to the cliff.

UIKVEN: Uikven is a Sky Dragon stronghold that was destroyed

by the Vathis Sentinels during the Darkest War in a surprise attack. There were no survivors, and the Sentinels refuse to admit that they were the responsible party, allowing the pirates to believe that the Shattered Hand is accountable for the devastation at Uikven. Uikven looked out over a huge harbor contained by the Frostfire Mountains and the four islands of Uik. Hundreds of ships reside in this harbor, seeking lost treasure and riches.

CAESIN: A lost dwarven city built into a natural valley along the main trade route, Caesin is no longer inhabited and looks as though it's been ransacked dozens of times. While there appears to be nothing of true value in the ruins of the city, a few ancient dwarven temples remain standing that may hold secrets yet undiscovered.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

- While ildera have been flooding Armeria, the total number of their kind here is not increasing. Where are the ildera going?
- Movement within Uikven is found not to be explorers, but rather dangerous creatures eating scouts and would-be looters.
- Ghosts of Caesin have been spotted traveling along the road.
- Songs of unknown origin can be heard all across the plains of Covitar.
- Rumbling in the area gives notice to the volcanic activity of the Frostfire Mountains. An eruption could spell disaster for much of the region.



DRAKOSTIGAT

POPULATION PRE-DARKEST WAR: 26,648,241

AREA CLAIMED BY: Tristan

Drakostigat rests on the western edge of the northern isle of Neviah. This unforgiving stretch of land, now wild and dangerous, was once the cradle of civilization in the otherwise hostile north. In its southern reaches one can find rolling open plains and fertile land, made possible by warm air currents originating from the balmy waters of the Solar Sea. Drakostigat's northern expanse touches Glaycian's southern reaches, though the two regions are separated by the natural barrier of the Icerim Mountains. The west of Drakostigat is covered in the endless pines of the Moroz Forest, and the dark depths of the Shadowstreams River cuts through the region's center, dispersing in the Dragon's Claws found west of Ravenssgrad. In the wake of the Darkest War, Drakostigat has become a place of open hostility. Pockmarked and cratered by the arcane powers that ravaged the land, much of this once-beautiful expanse has become unrecognizable to those who called Drakostigat home.

Drakostigat was once the seat of power for the northern nation of Torisia, who joined Tristan in the later years of the First Empire Wars. Long considered the heartland of Tristan, this region held most of the Trisviet Union's arable land and population centers. Dealt relentless blows during the Darkest War, Drakostigat became a bloodied land for most of the Second Empire Wars and Darkest War, and suffered the greatest destruction and desolation in all of Asarus. These rolling plains once housed nearly half of

Tristan's population, but very few made a successful escape into the remaining Trist lands.

Every piece of civilization found in Drakostigat, down to the smallest village, was destroyed in the Darkest War. What remains of the great western reach of Tristan now sits in rubble and desolation. Remains of the Shattered Hand roam the western ruins preying on unwary travelers, explorers, and adventurers alike. Tristan has a large stake in reclaiming the lost territory, and their government frequently sends expeditions to scour the land for threats and lost artifacts. As of yet the Trists have not attempted to resettle or recolonize the area. Many of the abandoned castles and fortifications found in this region have become home to the remaining forces of the Shattered Hand or local raiding groups and brigands.

A significant number of Drakostigat's CORE facilities, government buildings, and military outposts were abandoned in the Darkest War. If their interiors have not yet been ransacked, it can be assumed that a great deal of treasure remains behind in their blood-soaked halls. The Cloister of the Erudite have focused their keen eye on the area, though they have not told anyone what exactly they are searching for. Rumors claim that invaluable magical research was hidden in Drakostigat. The Abbey of the Nightlotus frequently conducts search and rescue operations for Trists lost within the area, and to date they have returned just shy of five hundred people to Trist holdings. Unsurprisingly, CORE is interested in reclaiming their facilities in the area, but so far they have refrained from sending their members north. Some of their more clandestine operations took place in these abandoned facilities,



and the current leadership of CORE is unsure of who to trust with that knowledge.

IMPORTANT LOCATIONS

RAVNESSGRAD: Known as the Great Barrier, Ravnessgrad stood as the first line of defense against incursions into Tristan. Inside the great walls of the city's extensive fortifications, someone is calling out to the region's Shattered Hand survivors.

VERIYA: Once hailed as the future of CORE, Veriya was Alear's sister city and a main holding for CORE. A mysterious green aura surrounds the ruin, and so far all attempts to reach it have failed.

KONSTANTINOV: The Jewel of the North, Konstantinov was once a famous center of the Nightmother's worship and was named after one of her greatest priestesses. The Abbey of the Nightlotus would love to reclaim the enormous church at its center.

MARTIRALM: Even during Drakostigat's height Martiralm was off of the beaten path. Very few Trists can accurately state where the city lies, or who originally lived there. All that is known is that the Cloister of the Erudite has expressed significant interest in the city.

ASHA: Asha sat on the western reaches of Drakostigat and functioned as a safe haven for Sky Dragons and Outlaws alike, until it was struck by a massive zodi'ite shower. What remains of this port city is unknown, but some Outlaws speak of a secret airship that was being designed there.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

- The water of the Shadowstreams River pours foul and thick into the Dragon's Claw, though it runs clear at Uryllgrad. What force could be corrupting the lifeblood of Tristan?
- A warlord known as the Dark Prince has claimed Lyentor as his own. From where does he hail, and who does he answer to?
- Expeditions into Konstantinov left few survivors, and those who survived were not of sound mind and body. Whispered ramblings by those who have returned speak of the city as if it were alive and well, with citizens moving through their daily lives as if the Dark-

est War never happened. What has possessed this city?

- Scouts from Foundation speak of ghostly airships taking post around the fallen city of Zerinsk. Are these ships figments of the deranged, or something far more sinister?
- Refugees from Drakostigat are falling ill with a serious plague that seems to only affect the region's former inhabitants. Why is this plague surfacing now, years after the end of the war, and why is it only affecting those who escaped from Drakostigat?

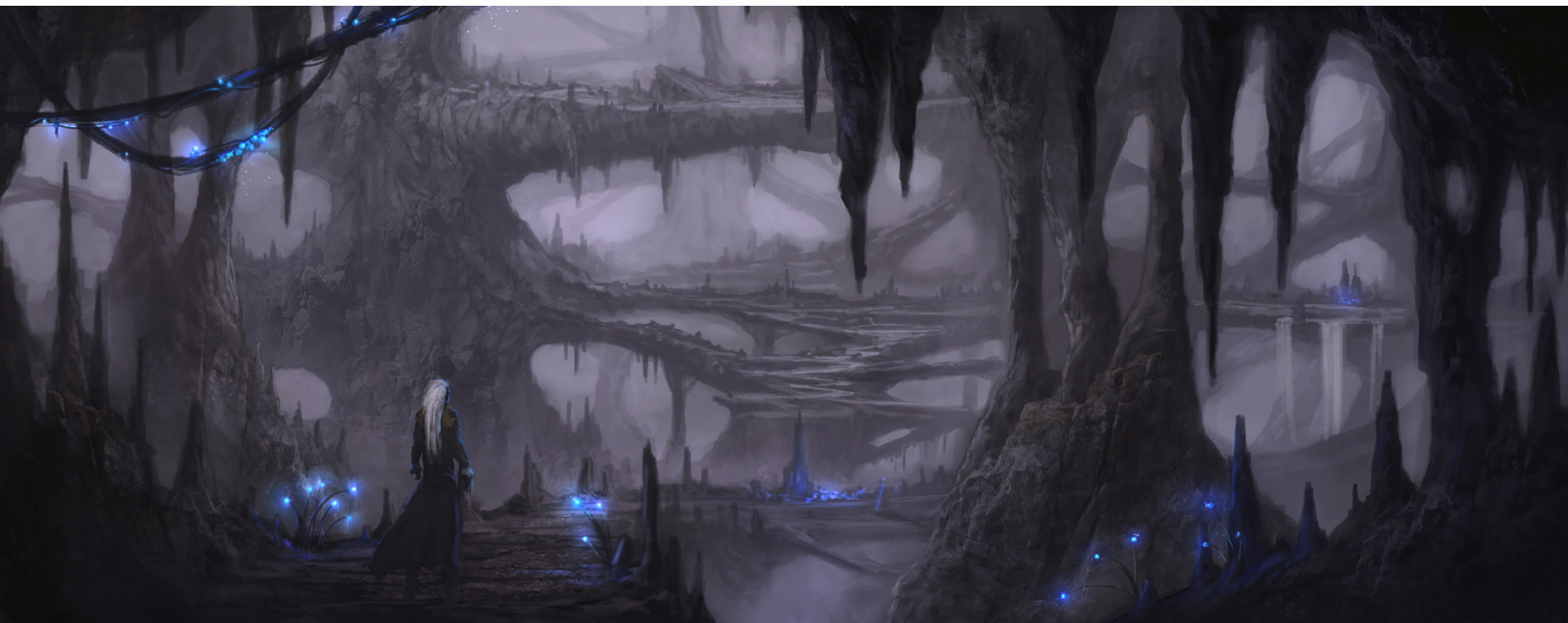
EVERNIGHT

POPULATION PRE-DARKEST WAR: Unknown
AREA CLAIMED BY: Denizens of the Evernight

The Evernight exists beneath the surface of Vathis. It consists of an endless series of twisting tunnels, bottomless chasms, vast caverns, and subterranean rivers. It is a lightless place where the sun will never shine. Passageways and openings within the Evernight go on for miles below the surface, ever downward, ever darker, ever deeper. There are precious few openings aboveground where one can access the world below. Most of these entrances are found accidentally and may not last forever, as tectonics and magic repeatedly change the face of the Evernight.

Beneath the eastern side of Asarus lies the Great Vault, which the vae'rin call home. This massive cavern is supported by hundreds of huge, naturally occurring stone pillars that stretch on and on for miles. Some of the greatest evils and blackest hearts stake out a living in these vaulted depths, though thankfully most are content with warring among themselves, rarely turning their eyes to the world above. The vae'rin are no exception to this, but they remain the biggest threat to the world above, as their plots are extremely sophisticated and long-reaching.

The Evernight's origin is believed to be scarring brought about by the world's creation or some large-scale cosmic event. Its deepest reaches are unknown to the surface world, and only the first few miles of tunnels beneath the surface have attempted to be mapped or explored. Many believe its actual existence to be



mere myth, with impressive legends of the Evernight's Great Vault and dark elves pure absurdity. Long ago, a great host of vae'rin invaded the surface of the Leyarin Empire, decimating its holdings and forcing its capital city, Synethil, onto the Vibrant to escape destruction. The vae'rin host could not keep their surface holdings due to interparty conflict. Undone by their own hand, the vae'rin returned to the Evernight to continue warring with one another in the depths they hail from.

Until recently, activity coming from the Evernight has been largely overlooked and quite sparse, with only a few raiding parties attacking outlying villages in various parts of the world. The return of Synethil and the subsequent revival of Leyathar has once again sparked the Great Vault's interest, and some families within seek to bring desolation back to the surface in a significant show of force. Large numbers of oozes and gelatinous creatures have been seen on the northern edge of the Great Vault, and the vae'rin in the area cannot explain why. Vae'rin have stolen components of eldria refinement, and many believe that a type of eldria uniquely native to the Evernight exists. What the vae'rin plan to do with eldria is largely unknown, because as far as the surface is concerned, the vae'rin do not possess industrial power.

Leyathar and Venoch are keeping a close eye on connections to the Evernight in the hopes of preventing the vae'rin from acquiring a larger foothold on the surface. The vae'rin do possess one above-ground holding, called Isotaur, but neither Venoch nor Leyathar seem keen or able to take Isotaur with force at the moment. Venoch cares little for the situation as a whole, and simply seeks to keep a war from occurring in the region out of concern for their own political stability. Mythrayne has always kept a standing guard to prevent incursions from the Evernight, and relics of clockwork golems from lost dwarven cities roam ancient parts of the dark world below. Washu in particular has lost a significant number of their mainland territories, such as the region housing the Endless Stairway, to the dark abyss. Even Darastrix, a nation of floating motes, has clashed with threats from the Evernight on many prior occasions, as menaces from beneath the surface threaten the vasar's land-based holdings. Winsor Valley in particular has drawn the attention of the vae'rin. This movement is not all one-sided, however—a large number of Serena's worshippers flock to the Evernight to revel in the creation of their goddess.

IMPORTANT LOCATIONS

THE WYRM VAULT: The Wyrms Vault is found in the city of Vizkryn, the largest settlement within the Great Vault. In the center of the vault stands a humongous hatched obsidian dragon egg. Within the opened egg are additional crystalline stone dragon eggs, similar in appearance to glimmering geodes.

AURORA: Aurora is an ancient city predating modern civilization. Rumored to be the birthplace of the vasar, it remains locked away in Winsor Valley. All attempts to dig into or around Aurora have failed, and until recently none were able to enter the city.

VIZKRYN: This settlement is the largest city within the Great Vault and the seat of power of Serena's organized church. Positioned at the very edge of the Great Vault, Vizkryn is found in an extremely advantageous position in terms of defense and accessi-



bility to local water sources.

KERSTYSFAER: Kerstysfaer is a prominent city on the far northern edge of the Great Vault. What the average vae'rin of the city do not know, however, is that members of the leading noble house do not worship Serena, and are not of pure vae'rin blood.

FREZHALONN: Once the home of many vae'rin cities, the lost cavern of Frezhalonn is currently frozen over. No one knows what remains of its former inhabitants or the cities they left behind.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

- Eggs in the Wyrms Vault are beginning to crack.
- Agents of Leyathar have stopped scouting Isotaur entirely, and they are not offering an official reason for their sudden retreat.
- Something deep inside the Endless Stairways is growling incessantly. The noises are becoming louder as time goes on, and the mysterious beast sounds more vicious than ever...
- Aurora, the lost city beneath Winsor Valley, has been opened for the first time.



GLAYCIAN

POPULATION PRE-DARKEST WAR: 35,665

AREA CLAIMED BY: Tristan

Glacyian, found north of Tristan, is the northernmost point of Asarus. This frigid region is a tundra of unforgiving ice and snow. Evergreens are the only plant life to be seen, and even they thin as one travels further north. The icy wastes are home to unknown terrors such as worms, frost giants, and creatures composed of the ice itself. The weather worsens as one ventures deep into Glacyian, and the already-formidable beasts double or triple in size. Within this area there is an informal point of no return, from which no travelers have resurfaced. It is rumored that the only person to ever successfully explore the northern reaches of Glacyian is a woman, appropriately dubbed the "Ice Witch," who dwells in Castle Snow.

In the southern reaches of Glacyian, nomadic tribes manage to survive by hunting woolly mammoths and other exotic creatures. They desperately eke out a living off of what little the Zimaria Forest provides. These tribes trade the furs of rarer creatures for much-needed supplies, and elsewhere these furs and skins fetch a high price. Members sometimes offer their expertise in the form of guides or escort for travelers venturing northward, as those unaccustomed to Glacyian's fickle weather patterns and hostile beasts frequently find themselves in a world of trouble.

The Darkest War wiped out several Glacyian tribes, making their nomadic kind fewer and farther between than ever before. Several fortresses in the region previously held by Tristan were ei-

ther decimated or abandoned during the Darkest War, as they held no strategic purpose against the Shattered Hand. Most of these fortresses still stand to this day, and could be easily reclaimed by Trist forces.

IMPORTANT LOCATIONS

ZIMARIA FOREST: The Zimaria Forest is a vast evergreen forest that covers the southern stretch of Glacyian. Mammoths, snow leopards, and other cold-dwelling animals roam the area. All of Glacyian's nomadic tribes call the Zimaria Forest their home.

FROZENHEART: Frozenheart is a port city on the western coast of Glacyian, inhabited by world-class hunters and trappers who make fortunes taking down the exotic animals of the region. This quaint city houses the only airship tower in all of Glacyian.

CASTLE SNOW: Castle Snow is the home of the woman known only as the "Ice Witch." Once a Trist stronghold, the castle was abandoned and taken over by the mysterious witch. The parts of the castle destroyed during the Darkest War have since been repaired using snow and ice. Travelers and nomads avoid the castle, as fierce ice monsters have been spotted nearby.

THE POINT OF NO RETURN: Aptly called "The Point of No Return," this is farthest northern point ever recorded as reached by a living creature. The Ice Witch is the only person to ever return from beyond the Point. No one who dares to cross this point in their travels ever returns.



ADVENTURE HOOKS

- The party is offered spots on a lucrative hunting expedition in Frozenheart. Unfortunately, this expedition is taking place just as some nomadic tribes are beginning to act hostile.
- A wanted criminal from Tristan had fled north and will surely perish to the elements. However, he has valuable information that you need.
- A mysterious oasis of tropical warmth and life has appeared in the tundra.
- A member of the Trist government is hiring someone to scout out one of the abandoned keeps in Glaycian to see if it's fit for reclamation.
- A rare white mammoth had sparked the interests of hunters from all over the world who seek to capture the prize for themselves, by any means necessary.

THE HARROWS

POPULATION PRE-DARKEST WAR: 0

AREA CLAIMED BY: Elessar, Leyarin Empire

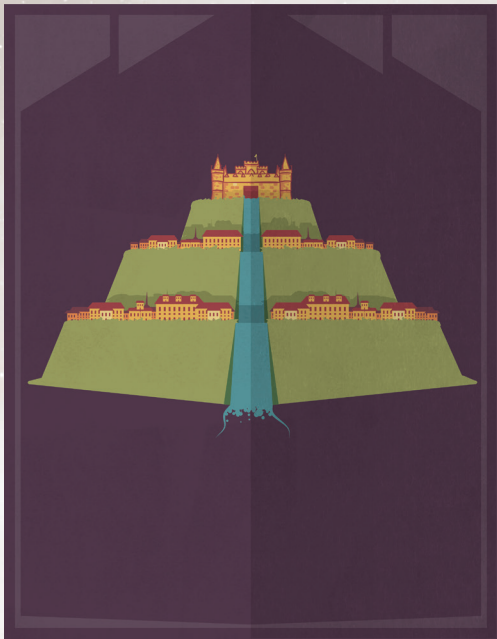
Located northeast of Erygis and west of Mythrayne sits the dark shadow of Elessar known as The Harrows. This peninsula is stuck in a perpetual state of gloom and darkness. Colors here are muted, fog is prevalent, and the skies are always dark and overcast. Travelers are wary of traversing the area due to the unsettling sounds often heard by those who make camp, which tend to be accom-

panied by the sight of shadows flitting within the corner of one's vision. Nights in The Harrows are particularly dark, and even magical light is dimmed by the innate aura pervading the region. This area is covered in deep forests flanked by high mountains. The Enzeru Crests in particular are visible throughout the vast majority of The Harrows. Here the rivers run a dark, inky black, and the wild fauna appears quiet and reserved.

Though now known solely as The Harrows, this region housed the great nation of Elessar for centuries. Elessar benefited from the warm winds of the Angylis Sea and the many harbors lining the sea's shores. This nation was a powerful trading force and a beloved member of the Leyarin Empire, remaining so until the Empire broke apart. In Elessar's prime the nation maintained a great many alliances and was renowned for their varied knowledge and culture. The nation suffered as the Leyarin Empire crumbled from within, and it did not recover until the discovery of eldria many years later.

Alongside Tristan, the nation of Elessar was one of the original adopters of eldria. Their largest airship, known as the Evangeline, was sunk in the Shadow Seas War by the coalition of Washu and the fledgling One Hundred and Seventeen Sky Dragons. The Shadow Sea Wars led to the First Empire Wars, which Elessar entered armed with eldric technology and a formidable fleet of airships, a novel technology at the time. As the war dragged on, Elessar found themselves beset by enemies on all sides. The magics of a rampant Washu, intermingled with an overlooked Shard of Nocturne in Elessar, thrust the nation into the Gloom, warping the





ELESSAR

"Tomorrow's future, today."

COLORS: Purple, Gold, Green

BANNER: Karcies, The Tiered City

PRE-HARROWS POPULATION: 19,035,768

CAPITAL: Karcies

GOVERNMENT: Constitutional Monarchy

LEADER(S): Alexander zi'Ades

LANGUAGES: Elish, Vavalish, Mythric, Leyarish

NOTABLE EXPORTS: Airships, Eldria, Eldric technology, Fish, Raw materials

DEMONYM: Elish

LITERACY RATE: 91%

once-great nation into The Harrows as they are known today. The majority of Elessar's citizens perished in the event, and the few remaining survivors were scattered across Vathis as refugees and immigrants.

Unbeknownst to the rest of Vathis, a significant number of the nation's elite survived being cast into the Gloom. They did not perish while exposed to the plane of shadow, but instead rose up as intelligent undead who call themselves the Pale. The Pale are led by a figure known as "The High Maestro," a former Elish prince. The High Maestro surrounds himself with sixteen other Maestros, who utilize a Shard of Nocturne to restore the fallen souls of old Elessar. They've taken up refuge in the fallen capital city of Karcies, but have avoided detection by other nations thus far. The Pale seemed to be focused on subtly locating the remaining Shards of Nocturne. Their end goal is to rebuild the old kingdom of Elessar, placing them in a position of power as an eternal nation. The area is plagued by swaths of undead and mysterious shadow creatures, which drive most would-be explorers away. Nearly all who attempt to travel through The Harrows are never heard from again.

IMPORTANT LOCATIONS

KARCIES: As Elessar's old seat of power, the extremely defensible city of Karcies contained a vast array of eldric technology and the largest airship construction yards in the known world. The Evangeline was originally constructed here. Built on three tiers of cliffs, Karcies was both beautiful and functional. A natural spring provides water to the city.

ERASTIN: Erastin sits on a peninsula, wholly unaffected by the usual maladies of The Harrows. A large stone wall separates it from the mainland. Erastin now acts as an outpost used mainly by the One Hundred and Seventeen Sky Dragons, who attack settlements along the Angylis Sea from this makeshift headquarters.

TAKRIN KEEP: An ancient dwarven keep lost with the fall of Elessar, Takrin Keep, is now full of undead dwarves and prowling ancient clockwork golems. All scouting parties that somehow managed to survive the journey to Takrin Keep and back declared it a lost cause. This structure is viewed by most archaeologists and explorative organizations as irreclaimable.

GRAREVIS MARSH: These swamps are a constantly changing landscape, though these changes never happen before one's eyes. Within this marsh lives a huge coven of witches. The witches constantly shift and alter the appearance of the marsh to protect their home from outsiders.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

- The party discovers a Shard of Nocturne and is hunted by agents of the Pale. They know not where these enemies hail from, or what they're truly after.
- A large horde of undead is headed towards civilization and the party is sent to dispatch them.
- A shadow dragon has been seen flying over Grarevis Marsh.
- Ghost airships are engaging travelers over the sky space of the Harrows. Whispers hint that even the Evangeline has been seen.
- Strange black-crystaled ildera are seen leaving The Harrows.
- An unnerving chanting coming from a coven of witches has been heard off of the coast of The Harrows.
- The aqueducts of the tiered city of Karcies, which have long been dry, have started flowing again.
- An airship belonging to the Sky Dragons hailing from Erastin has returned with a cache of cursed Elish gold. A mysterious illness has befallen the entire crew and all who have touched the treasure since.



JUNGLES OF SINAFEY

POPULATION PRE-DARKEST WAR: N/A

AREA CLAIMED BY: None

The Jungles of Sinafey are a controversial territory. At one point in time, ages ago, it was a powerful extension of the now long-gone great orc empires. This empire of Sinafey was said to have possessed unrivaled control over the Primal magics, and the legends state that they were revered as the guardians of the world. While the rancar who now live in Rancagesh were frequently in conflict with other empires, those in Sinafey were extremely isolated, as they could only be reached by sea or traversing the dangerous Snunrith mountain range. According to the legends of the rancar, this empire faded away during the Age of Black Frost, and there are no records of these peoples existing within the Jungles of Sinafey since. The only proof that an empire even resided in the jungles are the remains of their temples and cities found on the territory's edge. Less than a dozen old settlements have actually been discovered, and one such ruin of note is Podun, found on the southern coast of Sinafey.

Today's Jungles of Sinafey are renowned as a treacherous location. Massive reptiles roam the harsh landscape, some carnivorous and feasting on smaller creatures. The flora of the region is nothing to trifle with either, as living plants have been discovered that will poison, kill, and sometimes devour unlucky travelers. The jungle is so thick that staying on course is nigh impossible. Winding, violent, and rushing rivers cross the jungle, often host to flash

floods that wash away everything in their wake. Currently, traversing the area is forbidden without express permission. Sometimes the Eyes of Vathis send their agents to explore the jungles and the map their depths, but they've had little luck and only small to moderate measures of success. Expeditions from the Snunrith Mountains have been attempted by many, but none have been fruitful, as the trip itself is simply too long and too perilous.

Those who venture into the depths of Sinafey have reported sightings and encounters with orc tribes, marauding undead, and twisted aberrations. Flying overhead by airship has helped to discover some locations, but the tree line is so tall and thick in most areas that it totally obscures the landscape below. The thick emergent layer of the rainforests is rife with large flying creatures not found elsewhere. The truth of the region is darker than what common folk might assume: through some form of unknown magic, either ritualistic or a side-effect from the event that created the Plains of Fear, the orcish empire that resided in Sinafey did not die off or disappear. They remain there today, in a state of undeath. The unliving druids and shamans of these ancient peoples continue to stand as guardians to their temples and holy sites found far within the jungles. Some of these temples may contain planar seepage, relics, and knowledge quite valuable to any who would discover them, be it the Eyes of Vathis, the Eldritch House, or Arkmother Jedekka of Rancagesh herself. The Magra, as they are called, challenge any who cross their path as enemies of the world. They believe they are the only ones capable of defending the natural world and that all others are destroyers. They have no



care or concern for what goes on outside of Sinafey and only wish to banish those who intrude. They command their own primal undead servants, and have even tainted the local flora and fauna to serve their ends. Their only rivals are the horrors that traverse to their lands from the Plains of Fear, which they believe is all that is left of Asarus elsewhere.

IMPORTANT LOCATIONS

ALPHA: Cypress founded the port town of Alpha on the western coast of the Jungles of Sinafey. The Cyprean have begun to covertly establish mining operations within the jungle in the hopes of turning a profit from the relics and natural resources found within. Alpha was originally used by pirates as a place to reside in safety outside of the established nations, but as Rancagesh established itself as a prominent entity, the elite navy of Cypress took the town for themselves. Avernus zi'Drakos, a gnomish Cyprean noble, acts as the mayor of the town.

LAST HOME: The Jungles of Sinafey are forbidden to the rancar, save the port of Last Home. Secretly, Jedekka and the dock master at Last Home have an arrangement which allows them to send specific expeditions into the jungles. Jedekka is extremely interested in what lies beyond the outer edges, and she wishes to discover what her people left behind all those years ago. The trip between Last Home and Rancagesh is short, so ships traveling to and fro to collect resources are common. An Erygan benefactor has helped boost trade operations involved with Last Home, so the settlement is constantly expanding.

PODUN: Podun is a temple site claimed to be historical in nature and preserved and guarded by the Eyes of Vathis. This structure is covered in murals and paintings, with relics left strewn about. Underneath Podun is a sprawling cave system only barely explored. Evidence of the Magra still being alive lies in the area beneath, should anyone discover and decipher the caves for what they are.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

- Arkmother Jedekka requests that a force of warriors perform a reconnaissance mission into Sinafey. They are sent to find a temple along the river near Jandsdesh and retrieve a Magra relic.
- Cypress is funding an ambitious mining expedition upriver from Alpha. The adventurers are asked to guard caravans on their return, but it seems that some beasts from the Plains of Fear have been lurking in the region.
- The passages beneath Podun have been opened, and the Eyes of Vathis do not possess the manpower necessary to search below. They're offering a reward to adventurers who will survey the caves.
- Hunters are discovering that many of the beasts they normally hunt are turning up undead. What is the cause of this?
- A new Magra ruin has been discovered near the southern coast east of Alpha. The Eyes of Vathis were not alerted, but Avernus is asking adventurers to map the area and bring back anything interesting they may find.
- An airship crashed in the northern reaches of Sinafey. The adventurers were on the ship and need to make it to civilization, or are hired for the search and rescue mission.

- An eccentric noble is rewarding adventurers for bringing him exotic creatures from Sinafey.

RIMELAN

POPULATION PRE-DARKEST WAR: 30,013,707

AREA CLAIMED BY: Aurezia and Cypress

Located south of Aurezia and north of Cypress sits the icy expanse known as the Rimelan. This frigid tundra, once a green and open plain, has been warped by the latent energies left by the death throes of the Vandiel Zenshir in the Darkest War. His Aspect's death occurred at the city of Rime, and the transformation of the nearby region was nearly instantaneous. The icy waste has been slowly expanding since.

The Rimelan is full of monsters, shifting ice, glaciers, and lost cities quite literally frozen in time. The south side of the Rimelan bore witness to the majority of the Cyprean losses during the Darkest War. Additionally, Lurien Industries lost an extremely important industrial center in the city of Rime. While the sea to the west remains clear, the weather is always cold and the Vathis Sentinels no longer travel to the region by sea or air. In addition to Rimesteel and vast tracks of snow, the Rimelan is home to a tainted, ice-like material called bloodfrost. Bloodfrost is ice infused with latent Vandiel energy. It is extremely unstable, and can have unpredictable effects on living creatures that more often than not lead to a painful and untimely death.

While the spread of the Rimelan is ever a concern for Aurezia and Cypress, some good has come from the birth of the tundra. Rimesteel is naturally found here and mined by Lurien Industries. The Rimelan has started to provide the neighboring nations of Cypress and Aurezia with the resource of ice, which fetches a high price in warmer markets. The Rimelan has also formed a natural barrier between Cypress and Aurezia, who've long suffered from grudges and political tension. Until the Rimelan is, if ever, returned to its previous state, Aurezia and Cypress have little to no way or mobilizing against one another by land.

IMPORTANT LOCATIONS

RIME: The epicenter of the Rimelan is the city of Rime. This city was frozen in time—people and all. Frigid temperatures and untamed magical energies make this an extremely difficult place to survive, even before one factors in the giant ice monsters roaming the landscape.

KIZZAR: Kizzar is a port city on the western edge of the Rimelan that acts as a Sky Dragon stronghold. Being just outside of Vathis Sentinel jurisdiction makes Kizzar a prime holding location on the western side of the continent. A rough city in general, Kizzar is made even more volatile and unpredictable by the nearby dangers of the Rimelan.

ELOERED CAVERNS: The Eloered Caverns are an abandoned vein of mines that was once heavily occupied by Lurien Industries. They've since become a breeding ground for various ice monsters and other creatures. Large amounts of vaedra make expeditions to these caverns lucrative, should one survive the journey—but the monsters here make the expedition just as dangerous as it is



profitable.

ASILE FOREST: When Zenshir fell and the Rimelan was formed, Asile Forest was instantly frozen. The animals and other lifeforms have been slowly mutated by the bloodfrost and became the majority of the ice creatures that travelers recognize roaming the Rimelan. More ice creatures can be found in Asile Forest than anywhere else in the region, making it particularly hazardous to traverse.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

- A man with information you seek is hiding out in the city of Kizar. Getting there by air or boat may be difficult, but so is crossing the icy wastes...
- Lurien Industries is seeking volunteers to set out to the city of Rime to retrieve important documents from an abandoned facility there.
- The Church of the Crystal Watcher has been seen heading towards the Eloered Caverns. Rumors say they're up to no good...
- A huge snowstorm appears to be building over the Rimelan, but does not move with the regular weather patterns. All scouts sent to investigate have yet to return.
- Something big has come forth from the Rimelan and is stalking the nearby countryside. It leaves a trail of ice and destruction in its wake.
- A dragon that appears to be composed of bloodfrost is circling above Rime.

SHARDLANDS

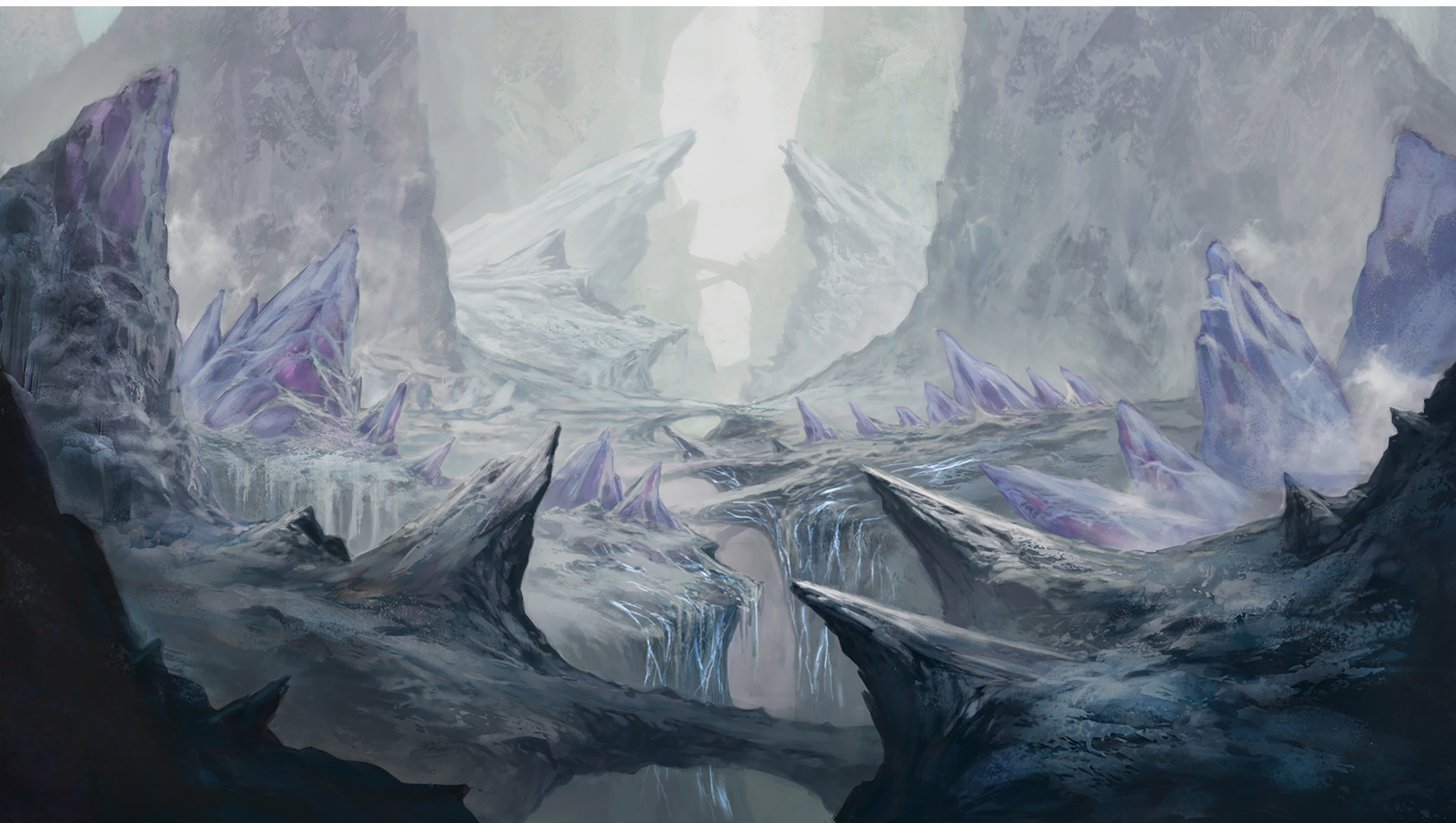
POPULATION PRE-DARKEST WAR: 20,365,654

AREA CLAIMED BY: Vavaire

The Shardlands are located northeast of Vavaire and just east of Darastrix. Full of natural, unrefined eldria, this vast spread of land was the home of Vastua and the northern reaches of Vavaire. In the past, the Shardlands were the original springboard for eldria, and a large number of CORE facilities and research centers operated out of the region. This area was completely decimated during Operation Eldric Crash, when the Shattered Hand forced floating mote refinement facilities to fall to the ground below, saturating the entire region with volatile eldria that rapidly spread and consumed all in its path.

Eldrilyths—creatures who share powerful adaptations through eldric emanations—have claimed most of the Shardlands as their own, but they've largely kept to themselves. Little enters or leaves the Shardlands, save for a number of newly created ilder that've been venturing forth from the tainted plains and joining civilization. The landscape is mostly covered by eldria, and almost all of the flora and fauna of the region have either adapted or perished. Few pockets of natural life remain in the Shardlands. Eldria deposits swallowed up the cities and villages once found here, turning them into ghost towns.

Strange magical effects such as ether storms occur frequently in the Shardlands, and for this reason alone travel into and out of the region has been strictly prohibited. Since the end of the Darkest War no attempt has been made to map or reclaim the re-



gion. The western spread of eldria towards Vavaire is a constant threat to the nation, but the Vavairen military built a large dragonstone wall to prevent the Shardland's expansion. As the only thing separating unrefined eldria from the Vavairen people, the maintenance of this wall is of the utmost importance.

IMPORTANT LOCATIONS

SILVERWALLS: Though technically a Vavairen fortress, Silverwalls is responsible for maintaining the great wall of dragonstone separating Vavaire from the spread of eldria. Silverwalls also remains the easiest access point to the Shardlands.

THE HEART CRATER: The Heart Crater is a massive crater that formed near the center of the Shardlands after Operation Eldric Crash. It contains the largest cluster of unrefined eldria in the world. CORE is actively searching for ways to safely travel to the site and extract something from its center, but no one knows the specifics of what they seek.

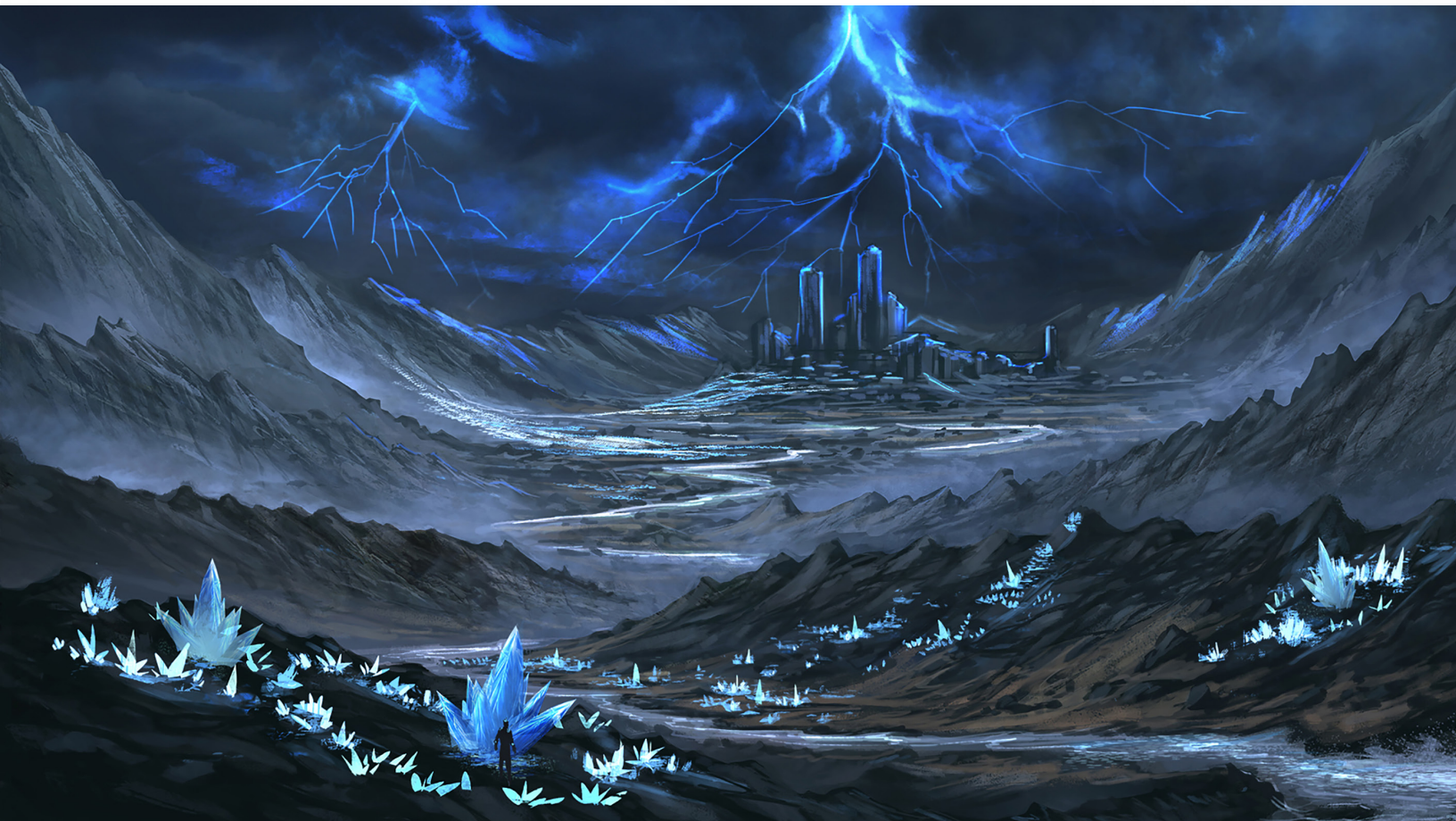
SOLITARY: Solitary is one of the few places in the Shardlands that has managed to stay relatively clear of eldria. Due to its geographic positioning on a high point of the Shardlands, the closest eldria field is still a couple dozen miles out, though this gap is closing rapidly as the crystals continue to expand. This city is primarily abandoned, but CORE agents have been seen traveling to the city of Solitary by sea.

BANISHED CASTLE: Sitting on the northernmost tip of the Shardlands, Banished Castle is the region's closest point to Leyathar. Long ago, this castle was inhabited by the people of Vavaire, and the bridge that connects the castle to Faxenia ush-

ered in many travelers. The castle is currently boarded up and reinforced with the goal of holding the unrefined eldria at bay. In recent years the bridge connecting the two landmasses was converted into an extremely long barrier. The only people who travel here are researchers from Synethil who hope to develop more effective ways of ensuring that the eldria remains far from the lush lands of Leyathar.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

- A number of eldrilyths are making their way to the edge of the Shardlands. They are headed straight towards civilization, and must be dealt with.
- A ship was seen capsizing during a storm and is presumed to have washed up on a clean shore off the coast of the Shardlands. They can still be rescued, but time is running out.
- A group of newly-formed ildera have ventured forth from the Shardlands, and they're acting strange.
- CORE is hiring ildera to venture into the Shardlands.
- The walls of Silverwalls have suffered greatly after an Eldrilyth attack. The city is seeking the supplies to repair them sooner.
- Rumors have arisen claiming that the Eldritch House built a secret library, experimentation lab, and research facility in Howl.
- Sailors have spotted an impossibly large eldria spire crystal that has yet to shatter.
- Sky whales are congregating above the Shardlands, and no one knows why.





MINOR AREAS

MANASTORM CHAIN

Before the Darkest War, the land north of Mythrayne and east of Leyathar was frequently used by both nations for much-needed resources and farmland. In periods of earlier history this area was a significant part of the Leyarin Empire. Near the end of the Darkest War, the combined forces of Leyathar, Mythrayne, Tristan, and Venoch pushed back the Vandiel Karwytren and his forces away from their nations, eventually destroying his Aspect. The ensuing death knell caused the land to fracture and sink, and the ocean swallowed a sizable portion of the landmass. Miles and miles of this once lush farmland now lie under the cold waters of the Sekois Ocean. The remaining disjointed islands are referred to as the Manastorm Chain, and are a hollow, warped reflection of what they once were. This region is occupied by strange and twisted versions of mundane plants and animals, and random storms of pure ether rain down havoc, warping the already twisted land further. The remains of Feldil Tower, an ancient Leyarish tower built of dragonstone, is the only structure that managed to weather the blasts of Karwytren's death knell. Sages and agents of both the Eldritch House and Eyes of Vathis travel here to study the area, hoping to discover a way to reverse the devastation, but their research bears no fruit. The warped creatures that reside here have slowly been spreading along the chain of islands, and marine life is now beginning to show side effects of the corruption as well. Extra or augmented limbs and appendages, deformed flesh, enhanced plant growth, and oozing orifices are just some examples of the magical corruption reported on the flora and fauna here. Recently, dwarven expeditions have been spotted in the region attempting to chart the islands.

STRAIT OF DESPAIR

The history of the Strait of Despair is relatively unremarkable. Originally a land bridge that connected Sillirai to the mainland, Castle Venure was constructed at its center as a strategic staging ground. A sizable Sillarian host has always been kept at the castle guarding Sillirai's only land-based connection to the mainland. During the four Jewel Wars the military of Sillirai was amassed at Castle Venure and marched over the land bridge. The city of Brigantes, found at the end of the bridge, bore the brunt of the endless brutal wars between Aurezia and Sillirai. Eventually Brigantes was claimed and kept by Aurezia, and Sillirai ceased their imperialistic movements. Castle Venure remained manned and fortified by the Sillarian as a show of strength, but the region played next to no role in the world's ensuing conflicts until the Darkest War.

During the war, Sillirai's holdings were pushed inward by the forces of the Shattered Hand, and Castle Venure was lost to the Aspect of the Vandiel Rumoriskar. His presence prevented Sillirai from using the land bridge for their own ends, and forced Sillarian troops to travel across the Auntershai Ocean, where they were

frequently ambushed upon landing on the shore of the mainland. His Aspect was eventually slain at Castle Venure, and the ensuing death knell created the Strait of Despair as it is known today. The Redreamers are now headquartered in the Castle, allowing themselves to become warped and tainted by the latent Vandiel energy left by the death knell of their master.

The stretches of ocean surrounding the Strait of Despair are home to a host of nightmarish horrors. Few who travel close to the Strait return sane enough to recant their experiences, and many never return at all, joining an untold number of ships now lost in the maddening sea. Those who gaze upon the waters of the Strait observe a relatively calm sea framed by dark storm clouds illuminated by constant strikes of lightning. Thunder booms from the direction of the storm clouds, sometimes resembling the forlorn whistles and calls of great sea beasts. Sailors who dare to venture into the Strait of Despair tend to do so with great apprehension and fear, which manifests in the open water as unearthly, hostile creatures. Only those already touched by madness can traverse the sea with no ill effects.

BUYANEI

Buyanei, the large island east of Tristan and north of Mythrayne, has been a contested region for ages. For as long as civilization has been seafaring, the wind and snow-swept tundra of Buyanei has been a destination for explorers of all types. All known history calls Buyanei a frigid waste of untold wonder, and so the barely hospitable tip of the region became a small settlement of ambitious pioneers hoping to travel further across the island. Sitting at the bottom of a frozen river, Icefyre was occupied by an constantly rotating cast of agents of the Eyes of Vathis and adventurers desperate for coin. They fished for what little food they could find, and usually froze or starved to death as they ventured further inland.

At the end of the Darkest War came a development that changed everything about Buyanei as it was known. Shortly after Karwytren was destroyed and the ether storms of the Manastorm Chain began to wrack the islands, the surface of Buyanei started to thaw and change. The weather settled, and the snow on the southern tip of the island melted away. Since then, Icefyre has seen an influx of ambitious explorers rushing to her shores in hopes of to making a name for themselves by traversing Buyanei and revealing what may be hidden underneath the ice. Reports have noted icy spirits, predatory dragons, and ghosts made of cold fire lurking in the shadows and instilling fear into the hearts of these pioneers. The few locations successfully unearthed from beneath the ice have all been primitive cities of enormous structures far too large for modern-day humanoids to inhabit. These perfectly preserved cities have kept their secrets well-hidden. Expeditions to Buyanei grow in frequency as time goes on, and most agree that it is only a matter of time before someone discovers what truly lies within Buyanei's remaining tundra.



PLAINS OF FEAR

Looking south from the Fringe Wall shows a land of rolling hills covered by ominous black clouds and a thick fog. Flashes of brilliant light, shadows of vast armies, and cityscapes far off in the distance can sometimes be seen as the fog momentarily parts. Cloying mists surround the area and an airship EDS quickly fails while above the Plains of Fear, making airship travel over or through impossible. What actually resides in this region is entirely unknown. Explorers tell tales of magnificent cities and advanced magical technology wielded by an expansive civilization within. They also talk of experiencing points in time that are not current, and claim to have witnessed past events. Adventurers who travel here either never return, return immediately, or return many years later with no true memories of what lies within. Magic in or near the Plains of Fear does not function properly, and any attempts to magically discern or map the area automatically fail. No known intelligent creatures live within, but wild beasts venture forth from time to time. It is believed that the Plains of Fear house vast quantities of zodi'ite, but all attempts to venture into the Plains and scout for it lead to disaster.

The Plains of Fear were created when the Vandiel Severence called down the zodi'ite shower that brought forth the Age of Black Frost. The area never recovered from the impact and became a land of wild magical emanations and effects. The Plains have always remained dangerous and unexplored. The Fringe Wall in the Borderlands and the stronghold of Tarth, Cypress, were constructed to protect the civilized nations of the world against the monstrous creatures that roam within the Plains of Fear.

MOTES OF THE OUTER SEAS

The motes of the outer seas are inhabited almost exclusively by Outlaws and the One Hundred and Seventeen Sky Dragons. Traveling here as a Vathis Sentinel is a fool's errand. The terrain of these motes vary, as there are dozens of them. Some of the most notable of these motes include:

DRAGON'S LAIR: The Dragon's Lair is the seat of power for the One Hundred and Seventeen Sky Dragons. It is a series of one hundred and seventeen floating motes, one devoted to each Sky Dragon family. These motes are held together by the roots of the laris tree once bonded to Commodore Adeiu's late wife.

WANDERING STAR: This mote is considered the Outlaw capital of the world. It is located on the western shores of Vathis, but its exact location is indeterminable.

FROZEN KEEP: This cold weather mote is inhabited by Outlaws and contains a castle composed entirely of rimesteel. Frozen Keep is often shrouded in mist, and is usually mistaken as a passing cloud. Nobody knows who built the rimesteel keep.





RESOURCE SCALE

- 1:** Very small, a few hundred gold, the resources of a few knights.
- 2:** Relatively small, presence in one or two cities, nearly a thousand gold or similar assets.
- 3:** Small, presence in a few cities, over a few thousand gold or assets.
- 4:** Medium sized, presence in some cities and villages, nearly ten thousand gold or similar assets.
- 5:** Large sized, influence and presence in cities across the nation, over ten thousand gold or similar assets.
- 6:** Holdings in a number of important locations across the nation, a couple thousand gold or similar assets.
- 7:** Notable in a good number of cities and villages across the nation, a few thousand gold or similar assets.
- 8:** Holdings in a good portion of the organization's home nation, presence in quite a number of cities and villages, over fifty thousand gold or similar assets.
- 9:** Holdings in most of a nation, presence in many cities and villages within a nation, nearing a hundred thousand gold or similar assets.
- 10:** Holdings all across an entire nation, presence in nearly every city and village within that nation, a hundred thousand gold or similar assets, very influential within that nation.
- 11:** Holdings in a few nations over a decent area, influence in some cities outside of the origin nation, two hundred thousand gold or similar assets.
- 12:** Regional holdings in a large area containing multiple nations, influence in the largest cities outside of the origin nation, three hundred thousand gold or similar assets.
- 13:** Some holdings in most nations, presence in quite a number of cities outside of the origin nation, a four hundred thousand gold or similar assets.
- 14:** Holdings in most nations and a presence in some cities and a few villages, five hundred thousand gold or more or resources.
- 15:** Notable presence in many nations, holdings in most cities and some villages, multiple hundreds of thousands of gold available or similar assets.
- 16:** Vast presence in multiple nations outside of their home, nearly a million gold or resources, massive wealth of knowledge and influence, presence in nearly every city and village.
- 17:** Controls most of a continent, very influential with nearly the entire continent of control, a hand in all matters, millions of gold or similar resources. Akin to Vavaire at its height.
- 18:** Influence over an entire continent, unquestionable leadership, tens of millions of gold available or similar assets.
- 19:** Spans multiple continents with influence in all matters, hundreds of millions of gold on hand or similar assets.
- 20:** Worldwide influence and nearly limitless assets.

POPULATION SIZE

TINY	1-500
MINOR	501-2,000
STANDARD	2,001-5,000
EXPANSIVE	5,001-25,000
EXTENSIVE	25,001-100,000
IMMENSE	100,001-200,000
COLOSSAL	200,001+

While nations are the body of society, organizations are the heart. In many cases they are just as powerful and have just as much influence as the governments of the nations. While some of them operate in the shadows or are known enemies of the Council of Vathis, others are endorsed by the Council and function openly in all countries for the betterment of society. Organizations are a way for individuals to propel themselves to social and economic standings that they might not have been able to achieve otherwise. They are full of the heroes and villains and everyone in between. Joining an organization can be easy, but rising through the ranks of one can be exceedingly difficult. Once someone has an organization behind them, however, they can access an invaluable network of allies, contacts and support. With one for each of the Deities, the organizations are primarily dominated by the Free Companies.



CORPORATE OPERATIONS FOR THE REFINEMENT OF ELDRIA (CORE)

"A brighter future for a darker age."

TYPE: Eldria Refinement and Innovations

MEMBERS: 49,659

SYMBOL: Six crystals

RESOURCES: 18

ALIGNMENT: Neutral

RELIGION: None

HEADQUARTERS: Alear, Tristan

SCOPE: Global

STRUCTURE: Rigid Corporate Structure

LEADER: Vice Filarn

HISTORY: CORE traces its history back to Elaria Filarn and her initial discovery of the eldria crystal in 3689 AG. She was tragically murdered by a rival researcher, but her son, Vice, continued her work and eventually unlocked the secrets of the eldric lattice. From there he discovered the eldria refinement process, and with the help of wealthy Trist investors, Vice then established CORE. His innovations brought forth a new age, and eldric technologies started to fill the gap of conveniences that the ebbing power of magic once filled. Eldric Reactors were invented, allowing eldria to take on various new forms such as eldricsteel, and with eldricsteel, the ability to artificially create the ilderera. As eldric technologies spread from coast to coast the demand for eldria grew, and CORE expanded into new territories and foreign nations. Things changed again for CORE in 3694 AG, as a researcher discovered a revolutionary interplanar technology, allowing the innovators of the world to use the Ether as a method of transportation. The Ether Drive system, or EDS, was created by their work. Shortly after the first airships rose above the skies of Vathis, the demand for eldria rose even faster than before. CORE entered into a partnership with the centralized nation of Elessar, and there the company established a number of facilities and research outposts. Elessar became the home of eldric technology, and the nation rapidly rose to political prominence.

With wealth came greed, with greed came jealousy, and with jealousy came theft. The airship pirates, who were bitter with CORE, began to harry CORE's transport lanes. Their coordinated strikes continued for years, until CORE convinced a group of pirates to become the personal protectors of the organization and paid their kind a fair sum for their aid in moving CORE's products. This agreement lasted for decades, but good relations eventually gave way to hostility when the leader of the pirates, Commodore Adeiu, met with the rulers of Washu and realized how enslaved his brethren were to the company. With large armies of ilderera and the aid of the yet unorganized One Hundred and Seventeen Sky Dragons, Washu then led an attack on Elessar. The fledgling One

Hundred and Seventeen Sky Dragons annihilated the Elish air defense and captured dozens of CORE's moted refinement facilities before fleeing to the winds with their lucrative bounty. With the airship pirates gone, Washu completely destroyed Elessar when their skilled mages opened tears to the plane of Gloom, rendering the entire country uninhabitable. Though too late to save Elessar, CORE banded together with a coalition of countries to enact retribution on Washu on behalf of the countless Elish lives lost.

The Council of Vathis was formed at the end of this war as a means to ensure that destruction on this scale could never happen again. The Council forced CORE to become a Free Company and officially sever ties with the nation of Tristan. The Vathis Sentinels were created by the ratification of the Vathis Accords as well, with CORE as a key financial supporter. The ilderera were set free, and continued creation of the race was paid for by the Council of Vathis. Many were offered wages and an honest living by CORE, and those who had few qualms with the organization in the first place remained as a loyal workforce.

CORE is currently threatened by Lurien Industries and their understanding of vaedric technology. Vaedra has the power to largely outstrip elarian eldria's usage, but CORE's research into perfecting vaedric refinement and harnessing the crystal for themselves is a slow-going process. The elite of CORE are also stumped by the recurrence of eldricsteel and vaedricsteel, which continues to appear on the markets of the world even though the Eldric Reactors were destroyed in the Darkest War.

GOALS: CORE's main directive is to expand eldria's influence across the world. They also seek to recover any remaining Eldric Reactors or learn how to create additional Reactors for themselves. They aim to prevent the misuse and abuse of eldria, and the organization boasts entire teams devoted to preventing misuse and researching safe applications of eldric technology.

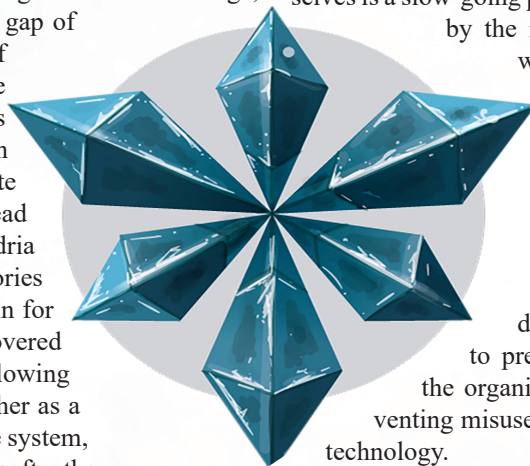
LOCATIONS: CORE's presence is felt worldwide, even in nations lacking refinement facilities.

ALEAR: The headquarters of CORE is located in Alear, Tristan. The building is an immense complex composed of pure eldricsteel. Most would describe the organization's headquarters as sleek and modern.

ELDRIA'S WAKE: Eldria's Wake, the birthplace of CORE and the location where the crystal was discovered, remains important to the organization. This sentimental place can be found in the Eldritch Wood, where Elaria Filarn first made her revolutionary discovery.

ATHEL: The city of Athel, Cypress, houses a large CORE presence. They are stationed here to work in tandem with Lurien Industries, who mines and refines vaedra eldria in the Furcata Mountains. The Essel Tournament also draws CORE to the region, as eldric technology is rampant in the event.

AUREZ CITY: CORE is an enormous supporter of the Vathis Sentinels. As such, members of this organization can be found in



droves in Aurez City, the headquarters of the world's police force. This city is the second largest in the world, making it a wealth of opportunity for CORE.

STRUCTURE: Vicice Filarn is the CEO of CORE, and arguably the most important person in the organization. Underneath him are his PR Director, Director of Internal Affairs, Chief Safety Officer, Head of Research and Development, Director of Refinement, Consumer Director, and Historical Director. Beneath CORE's senior members and department divisions are lower management and average employees.

MEMBERSHIP: CORE employs a number of positions, and the requirements to join the organization vary drastically.

REQUIREMENTS: Each individual position requires certain skill sets, proficiencies, and knowledges.

BENEFITS: The benefits of being employed by CORE are mainly monetary. Others feel satisfaction in their role improving the lives of Vathis citizens and advancing the world's technological state.

NOTABLE MEMBERS:

Vicice Filarn
Cain zi'Zenorin
Zakhariy Chuchunovich

THE DARK SIDE

All appears normal at first glance, but two departments in particular house sensitive secrets. The first would be the Department of Safety, who secretly acts as CORE's militarized force. The second department, known as the Special Projects Team, does not exist on paper. The Chief Officer of Special Projects exists and is known to the elite of CORE, but he and his department are non-existent on official CORE documents and unknown to the Council of Vathis. However, all departments are subject to some level of secrecy and require clearance. Teams under the Historical Director actively seek out ancient eldria artifacts, which they keep secret from prying eyes. The PR division of the company keeps these actions well-hidden and covered. On the outside, CORE is white lab coats and people exploring the potential of eldria. In truth, CORE is secrets wrapped in enigmas, with rampant slavery found in the collection and refinement process. The organization is backed by expertly trained, eldria-equipped soldiers and a stellar relations team who keep these secrets secure.

DARK KNIGHTS OF LODDOSS

"We're outnumbered five to one? Sounds like bad odds...for them."

TYPE: Religious Elite Mercenary Free Company

MEMBERS: 22,317

SYMBOL: Junon's holy symbol with the colors reversed

RESOURCES: 13

ALIGNMENT: Lawful Neutral

RELIGION: Junon

HEADQUARTERS: Dragonstone Citadel, Isild

SCOPE: Holdings in western Asarus, global reach

STRUCTURE: Independent companies led by a Templar, jobs sent from headquarters

LEADER: Dark Baron Vontis, Touched of Junon

HISTORY: Legend states that the Dark Knights were led by a human female named Junon to overthrow the dragon overseers of the age. Regardless of their true origin, the Dark Knights did originally train under a human called Junon. She compiled her teachings into a book she titled "The Art of War." The Dark Knights rose as a powerful entity under her leadership, and they've persevered throughout history as a formidable military force unaligned to any central leadership besides themselves. After Junon's rise to deityhood, membership of the Dark Knights continued to swell. Fierce warriors from across the land rushed to join the organization's ranks, despite their unforgiving training regime. The Dark Knights were heavily utilized by Aurezia during the Jewel Wars with Sillirai to great effect. In the early days of the Vavairen Empire they were also used successfully to secure outlying holdings, expand borders, and aid Darastrix in the Bloodscale Wars. With the rise of the Vavairen Empire and the subsequent unification of Aurezia, Cypress, Darastrix, and Isild, the Dark Knights continued to grow, and they were paid handsomely to protect the land of Vavaire. The Dark Knights spread globally, with membership reaching nearly one hundred thousand hired for various mercenary positions all over the world, despite remaining impartial to the politics and alliances of the world's leaders.

It was not until the beginning of the Darkest War that their numbers dwindled, as the Dark Knights refused to take part in the Vavairen Empire's religious cleansing and extraplanar corruption. The Dark Knights proved a difficult foe for the fiends of the Shattered Hand, but also they suffered innumerable casualties and grave losses. Their remaining numbers are all that is left of the once mighty force, but they continue to stand proudly, ready at a moment's notice to protect the world from nefarious hidden dangers.

GOALS: The Dark Knights hope to maintain the various fortifications they've built to stand against the tides of darkness that threaten the world. In order to fund their operations they hire out companies of their soldiers for paid mercenary work. They tend to scrutinize the jobs they are offered and pick their contracts carefully. Different groups within the Dark Knights are assigned to jobs of their choosing. Overall, this elite organization primarily works to defend the world against new threats and expand Junon's



influence from coast to coast. During these jobs, the Dark Knights uphold the Tenets of the Loddoss Code to the letter and will refuse to break them, lest they be threatened with expulsion and dishonor branding.

9 TENETS OF THE LODDOSS CODE

- Obey all higher ranking members of the Order, unless doing so would result in breaking an oath.
- Smite all those who stand and work against the Order.
- Hold true to all agreements you make.
- Protect those who are willing to protect themselves, unless they stand against the Order.
- Never allow your personal agendas to interfere with the Order, unless not acting would break an oath.
- Never take a life when it can be avoided.
- Show respect for your enemy and all ranking members of the Order. Show courtesy to all others.
- Remain loyal to Loddoss and be vigilant for those who have swayed. Never work against the Order.
- Oaths before Loddoss, Loddoss before mission, mission before death.

LOCATIONS: The Dark Knights have constructed numerous fortifications designed to stem the flow of abnormal threats into the world. They also build holy sites devoted to Junon and her practices. The more notable locations related to the Dark Knights are as follows:

DRAGONSTONE CITADEL: This fortification is constructed entirely of dragonstone, which offers significant protection at the end of the neck in northern Isild. The citadel was originally designed to protect the civilized nations of the world from the frozen menaces wandering within the region. Dragonstone Citadel has since become the seat of power for the Dark Knights, and is considered their capital. Constructed by the original Dark Knights and expanded year upon year, utilizing the local dragonstone, the Citadel could be considered a city in its own right. Some estimate that it could house up to 300,000 people comfortably, but this has never been tested. Expansive rooms and unique architecture grace its halls. Considered nigh impenetrable and positioned between two large mountainsides along the coast, Dragonstone Citadel is sectioned off and surrounded by multiple layers of thick dragonstone walls that reach to both sides of the valley.

THE FRINGE WALL: The Fringe Wall is one of the most renowned fortifications in the world. Separating the mundane world of nations and soldiers from the horrific and otherworldly Plains of Fear, the Fringe Wall is a wall composed of dragonstone over two hundred miles in length. Three fortresses resembling smaller versions of the Dragonstone Citadel named Wall, Bulwark, and Rampart were commissioned during the height of the Vavairen Empire in order to protect the trade routes leading to the western half of the nation. The three fortifications house the largest concentration of Dark Knight activity outside of Dragonstone Citadel, and as such, is one of the most well-defended regions in the area. However, one's safety beyond their walls is not guaranteed. Due to the harsh nature of the assignment and the surrounding land, long-term placement at Fringe Wall is strictly prohibited.



SILVERWALLS KEEP: Situated on Vavaire's northeastern front, Silverwalls Keep was once a city named Silverwalls. The Keep was originally constructed to protect the eastern expanse of Vavaire from outside threats. During the Darkest War the Keep was held by the Shattered Hand, and it was eventually captured by the Dark Knights during the later years of the war. The current purpose of Silverwalls Keep is to contain the strange remnants of eldric creatures within the ruined land of Vastua. The Dark Knights share housing of Silverwalls Keep with a variety of other organizations, including but not limited to the Secret Astrian Soldiers, Vathis Sentinels, and various major religious organizations. Silverwalls Keep is assaulted by strange eldric creatures almost weekly, and supplying the Keep has become somewhat problematic.

JUNON'S REST: Built into the top of a cliff, Junon's Rest is located on the northern tip of Isild and looks into the Whitecrest Sea. Junon's Rest was a holy site constructed thousands of years ago when the human Junon perished in the early days of the Dark Knights, and it is said she is interred there. Built out of the natural rock of the surrounding area, Junon's Rest serves as the holiest site devoted to the goddess Junon. Due to the high winds and the sheer cliffs of the location, the only way to access Junon's Rest is by a long trek over land. The path is fraught with danger in the form of natural beasts and the winds of the north itself. A long pilgrimage to Junon's Rest must be undertaken by each aspiring member of the Dark Knights who wish to join their ranks. The trek must be undergone alone, with whatever gear the Dark Knight deems necessary. A good portion of the candidates do not survive the journey. It is believed that those who succeed the perilous journey learn focus, devotion, and solidarity against even the greatest odds, all attributes prized by the Dark Knights.

STRUCTURE: The ranks within the Dark Knights are highly regimented and structured, creating clear paths of leadership



throughout the organization. Moving up through the ranks is as easy as proving oneself and having a higher ranked patron vouch for another's loyalty. In total there are nine ranks within the Dark Knights, each significantly more influential than the rank below.

DARK BARON(NESS): This rank is currently held by none other than Dark Baron Vontis. The Dark Baron is the supreme leader of the Dark Knights and is believed to have the ear of Junon herself. He leads the organization with Junon's divine guidance. Dark Baron Vontis has held this position for a little over sixty years, ascending to Dark Baron when he was merely twenty-eight years old. He established himself early on as a master tactician able to effortlessly place the organization in the best possible position within the tumultuous politics of the world. His natural skills quickly ascended him through their ranks, and upon the death of the last Dark Baroness, Aeirlyer, he was unanimously promoted to Dark Baron by the Dark Templar. His greatest achievement to date is the recovery of the Art of War from the vaults of Vavaire thirty-seven years ago. Dark Baron Vontis is an eighty-nine-year-old human who looks significantly younger than many of the Templars who surround him. He is a devout worshipper of Junon, and it is rumored that his impressive vitality is directly linked to Junon's grace. There are few people in the world who do not vie for his attention. He hand picks his new recruits, as the Dark Knights keep their numbers few, but fierce.

DARK PRINCE(SS): The Dark Prince is generally a title held by a lead Templar as a second in command and advisor to the Dark Baron. The position is also reserved as the next in line for succession should the Dark Baron cease his leadership. Generally the Dark Prince handles the day to day interaction with the world's nations and their various representatives. This position is currently empty, as Wawith zi'Dishurey perished last year during Dark Knight operations in Leyathar.

DARK TEMPLAR: Surrounding the Dark Baron are seventeen Dark Templar. The Dark Templar are considered to be the true leadership of the Dark Knights, and they possess their own spheres of influence. The Dark Templar are currently the only members of the organization able to veto the plans put forth by the Dark Baron, but they must do so by way of a majority-rules vote. The Dark Templar are placed in charge of specific territories, with each typically handling diplomacy with one country or large swath of land, and they deal directly with the representatives of their territories. Many of the current Dark Templar are long-standing members of the organization, though one of the seats remains open after the death of Wawith zi'Dishurey.

DARK REAVER: The Dark Reaver position is held by company leaders. Each are in charge of their own operations and contingent of Dark Knights. Smaller organizations and individuals petitioning to hire the Dark Knights would do so to a Dark Reaver, who reports to an assigned Dark Templar and fulfills their requests. The number of Reavers is dictated by the needs of the countries of their operation, and some larger nations house many Dark Reavers, with large metropolitan cities such as Aurez City, Synethil, and Valiance boasting multiple.

LOWER RANKS: Below the Dark Reavers there are a total of five ranks, each used for standard non-leadership roles. These ranks denote skill, valor, actions, and length of time served.

The rank below Dark Reaver is Dark Hand, a title typically reserved for elite members of the organization who work directly under the Dark Reavers on missions of importance. Underneath the Dark Hand is the Dark Sentry. Dark Sentries are either decorated soldiers or long-standing members of the Order who behave as intermediary leadership between Reavers and Knights. They usually act as mentors to younger members. Sentries show promise to excel in their role and ambition to rise within the organization. Below the Sentries are the Dark Knights, full-fledged members of the organization. They are the trained hands and swords that handle the majority of the day-to-day operations of the Dark Knights. They no longer perform grunt work and act as mentors to aspiring members of the order. Below their role are Dark Knight-errants, who have undergone the required basic training and are waiting to perform their Junon's Rest Pilgrimage to become full-fledged members. They perform the grunt work required to keep the group running smoothly. The last rank are the Dark Knightlings, aspiring members currently undergoing the organization's famed harsh training. They are required to perform only their training, and are not subjected to grunt work due to its ability to distract from the teachings of the Dark Knights.

MEMBERSHIP: The benefits of joining the Dark Knights are immense. However, this elite organization adheres to strict membership requirements met by few. Even so, hopefuls continue to flock to their banner.

REQUIREMENTS: In order to join the Dark Knights one must prove themselves worthy of their cause, and accordingly, applicants are put through brutal training in order to gain some of the skills required to ensure survivability. Due to the nature of this training many enter the Dark Knight program at a young age, and some are even born into the Dark Knights. It is not uncommon for applicants to be children from poor families looking for stable work, or children from wealthy families seeking to secure honor for their house. Worship of Junon is a must, and proof of piety is typically magically determined. Candidates are required to undergo training until they reach the age of adulthood. At such a time the Dark Knightlings complete their training and briefly become Dark Knight-errants until they undergo a religious pilgrimage alone to Junon's Rest from Dragonstone Citadel. Items are placed in set locations along the path that the applicant must retrieve and return to their superiors in order to pass. A successful candidate becomes an official member of the Dark Knights after a graduation ceremony. Their skills are then assessed and an assignment is granted. Absolute adherence to the Loddoss Code is a must, and the punishment for breaking the code is severe. Upon joining the Dark Knights, each member is tattooed with the Order's symbol on the right wrist. As the member gains ranks within the Dark Knights, additions are made to the tattoo denoting the promotions and any exemplary services.

BENEFITS: The Dark Knights are one of the strongest organized groups in the world. The advantages granted to members of this Free Company are immense, despite the apparent danger of the position. Many Dark Knights are given freedom to choose their own station and contingent, and it is only during important events that they are called back to Dragonstone Citadel.



Many Dark Knights form their own companies and bands within the organization, working toward shared goals. Those who rise far enough in the ranks by proving their leadership capability and solidarity are given the option to work as a lone agent. Most end up taking leadership positions, however, or opt for assignments on special projects. The Dark Knights have access to an incredible amount of resources, as nearly every nation, city, and major player in the world are in debt to the Order for the completion of previous contracts. Being a Dark Knight is considered one of the most honorable positions across all of Asarus. Their forces are granted a high level of respect from almost everyone regardless of social station or walk of life. Upon retiring honorably from the Dark Knights, a member's tattoo is altered and finalized with his rank and service record. He or she must swear never to train others in the Dark Knight ways without authorization. Should a member ever be dishonorably discharged or train someone without appropriate authorization, the member's face is magically branded in a ritual of dishonor. This magical brand is visible to everyone and nigh impossible to remove.

NOTABLE MEMBERS:

Dark Baron: Vontis

Dark Templars: Negwar zi'Bere, Zeph zi'Llamos, Brant zi'Terdreme, Vyrnn zi'Githonel, Kelosia zi'Asmo, Cassitas zi'Stroh, Nordrom zi'Kesem

Dark Reavers: Shar, Vithonel zi'Fraes

DRAGON SYNDICATE

"Like dragon's fire, we spread and ignite."

TYPE: Organized Crime Syndicate

MEMBERS: 73,654

SYMBOL: Dragon claw holding a colored orb

RESOURCES: 12

ALIGNMENT: Chaotic Evil

RELIGION: None

HEADQUARTERS: Kamtyrow, Erygis

SCOPE: Global

STRUCTURE: Criminal sects controlled by one head sect

LEADER: Great Elder Gold Wyrm Salivus Rhys

HISTORY: The Dragon Syndicate began as separate criminal enterprises operating out of Osept, Washu, Venoch, and the areas that would later become Erygis and Rancagesh. These various sects of criminals were all opposed to the oppression set forth by the Antares Templar. These early members of the Dragon Syndicate would often steal Templar wares and cause trouble for the organization, including carrying out multiple prison breaks. The various bands of criminals were finally brought together when an Elish half-elf of the Golden Dragon Syndicate named Salivus Rhys united the Syndicate underneath his leadership. Together they executed the largest jail break the world had ever seen, in which numerous facilities in modern-day Erygis were targeted and their inmates liberated. This night would be remembered as the Night of Dragon's Fire, and it started the series of revolutions that led to

the official founding of Erygis. The Dragon Syndicate remained united following the heist. Overwhelmed by their great success, the Dragon Syndicate quickly spread their members far and wide, utilizing the distracting chaos of the Second Empire Wars to establish themselves on a global scale. Their aggressive tactics enforced their fierce reputation, and in a short time the Dragon Syndicate expanded to every corner of Vathis, all under the careful guide of Salivus Rhys. Some local governments were surprisingly warm and welcoming to their presence, as the Dragon Syndicate dispatched rogue and unwieldy criminals and set forth a predictable, standard enterprise of crime.

During the Darkest War the Dragon Syndicate survived by any means necessary. They also utilized their network of infrastructure and high-level contacts to ferry survivors to and from safe havens and ensure secure retreats from compromised territories. Members of the Dragon Syndicates willingly sent and received messages for survivors, and they freely offered their food, shelter, and supplies to those in need. The Vathis Sentinels even pardoned the criminals who volunteered for military service and fought on the front lines of the war. At present, however, the Dragon Syndicate and Vathis Sentinels are at odds. They are tolerated by some local governments, but all branches of the Dragon Syndicate are actively hunted by the guards and police of the world's nations. Most average citizens admire the Syndicate for their humanitarian work in time of crisis. The majority of the heists pulled off by the Syndicate targets those with wealth and status, and disenfranchised commoners look up to the criminals with respect.

GOALS: Many local governments are failing, lax, and corrupt in the aftermath of the Darkest War. The various Dragon Syndicates wish to take advantage of this chaos and establish complete control over the world's local criminal activity. This is a realistic goal for Syndicate members, who already possesses a good reputation with the citizens of Vathis. The branches of the Dragon Syndicate that suffered during the Darkest War are solely focusing on maintaining their operations.

RULES OF THE DRAGON SYNDICATE

-Pay respect to those ranking above you and do as you're asked

-Treat those ranking below you fairly but punish them fairly as well

-Enemies of the Syndicate rank lower than rats and are guilty of opposing us

-Pay your dues when asked

-Do your duties when asked

-Steal when asked

-Fight when asked

-Everything is for the Syndicate, our law is the only law.



LOCATIONS:

THE GOLDEN DEN: Located in Kamtyrow, the Golden Den is a rumored den of Gold Syndicate members. Said to be the home of Salivus himself, some claim that the den never remains in one building for longer than a month.

THE SCALED DOCKS: The Scaled Docks are an expansive hidden cove found in the islands around Washu. This location acts as the main base of operations for the Copper Dragon Syndicate and a launching point for those who smuggle Washun goods.

BRIGANTES: Though it is unknown to the public, the Blue Dragon Syndicate had a firm hand in the reconstruction of the city of Brigantes, found in Aurezia. The Blue Dragon Syndicate is close to completely controlling the criminal activity in the metropolitan city.

STRUCTURE: Each branch of the Dragon Syndicate operates in different areas denoted by a dragon color. Members of each color refers to themselves and one another as broodmates. Each brood typically specializes in a certain type of crime, though they dabble in many. They tend to keep their operations a tightly kept secret, and most local law enforcements actually prefer to have them around, as they put the uncivilized criminals and criminal organizations out of business.

Aurezia - Blue Dragon
 Cypress - Silver Dragon
 Darastrix - Black Dragon
 Erygis - Gold Dragon
 Isild - White Dragon
 Mythrayne - Brass Dragon
 Osept - Bronze Dragon
 Rancagesh - Green Dragon
 Sillirai - Violet Dragon
 Tristan - Shadow Dragon
 Vavaire - Red Dragon
 Venoch - Sea Dragon
 Washu - Copper Dragon

The ranks of each brood are clearly defined, with lower ranks reporting to those above. The one exception to this even hierarchy is the Gold Dragon Syndicate of Erygis. Members of the Gold Syndicate rank above all other Syndicate members of their respective rank, but not above higher ranking members.

Hatchling, Wyrmling, Wyrm, Elder Wyrm, Great Wyrm, Great Elder Wyrm

MEMBERSHIP: Most members of the Dragon Syndicates are career criminals. The majority of recruits in recent years have come from different criminal organizations that were absorbed by the Dragon Syndicate.

REQUIREMENTS: One does not seek out membership with the Dragon Syndicate. The Syndicate typically finds lone criminals, or those with valuable skills, to recruit into their brood. Potential members are watched for a period of time.

BENEFITS: Members of a brood are given access to one of the largest networks of resources and information in the world. With contacts located in all countries, a member of the Dragon Syndicate will never find themselves wanting...so long as they pay their dues, and do as they're told.

NOTABLE MEMBERS:

Salivus Rhys, Great Gold Wyrm
 Perelian Farishan, Great Sea Wyrm
 Ebonghost, Great Black Wyrm
 Unknown, Great Blue Wyrm
 Aetrix Dynirn, Great Silver Wyrm
 Ggulan Maryd, Great White Wyrm
 Hallmund Garddorr, Great Brass Wyrm
 Surhetu zi'Ara, Great Bronze Wyrm
 Eilis Niailin, Great Violet Wyrm
 Weimac, Great Green Wyrm
 Lord Zlako, Great Shadow Wyrm
 Narduell, Great Red Wyrm
 Ando Zaehyera, Great Copper Wyrm



EAST ANGYLIS COMPANY

“By coffin or by coffer.”

TYPE: Mythrene Debt Collectors and Criminal Syndicate

MEMBERS: 91,112

SYMBOL: Pickaxe and shovel

RESOURCES: 15

ALIGNMENT: Lawful Neutral

RELIGION: Naugrix

HEADQUARTERS: Naugrix’s Perch, Mythrayne

SCOPE: Global

STRUCTURE: Clear chain of command with specific duties and jobs

LEADER: Asger zi’Eirik



HISTORY: In ages past, the dwarves of Mythrayne were charged with constructing an extensive continental road network for the Leyarin Empire. They paved the road with dragonstone, a remarkable substance immune to the trappings of time. For fifty years the dwarves worked tirelessly to construct the Gilded Road, known as the Gullevein by the dwarven people. When the road was complete the creditors of Mythrayne came to collect the money they were due, plus compensation for the lives lost in the grueling labor. Only Sillirai, an ally of Mythrayne, paid them back in full upon completion. The rest of the world found themselves in debt to the dwarves for a large sum of money. Time passed, rulers changed, and history progressed. The structured payments made by the various nations of the world began to cease. In response, the leaders of Mythrayne created an organization tasked with collecting their rightful dues.

The East Angylis Company, as this group was named, started their mafioso ways slowly. Originally they were the remnants of the company tasked with construction of the Gilded Road. After suffering through years of lapsed payments, they recruited ruffians and criminals into their numbers to help retrieve what they were owed. Throughout the fifty years of construction the dwarves made connections in all corners of the world, when nations now prosperous were merely beginning to grow. These influential contacts provided the dwarves with solid lines of communication in the darkest of shadows, as well as in the highest ranks of society. Many of the captains and backers of this company lived long lives after the construction, gaining positions of power elsewhere. When their purpose was solidified as debt collectors, they almost singularly focused their efforts on building a formidable organization. The thugs, thieves, bandits, and scoundrels of Mythrayne and other nations now had a place where they were welcomed. The EAC operates by forming protection rackets, smuggling goods, extorting and blackmailing important individuals, and occasionally committing straightforward theft. They prefer to act subtly or silently, always choosing words and trickery over force and violence, but there is no shortage of those who would perform violent acts within their ranks.

The East Angylis Company endeavors to stay away from the coffers of the nations who no longer owe them, such as Erygis, Leyathar, Rancagesh, Sillirai, Vavaire, Venoeh, and Washu. Aure-

zia, Cypress, Darastrix, Isild, Osept, and Tristan, however, are not so fortunate. The EAC has no issue working with agents of other organizations to get what they want, even entering full alliances with others and splitting their garnered profits. In the past some of these alliances have been forged with the likes of the Black Hand, mages of the Eldritch House, the knights of Aurez, spies in Sillirai, Sky Dragons, and more. Even organizations such as the Blood Syndicate give the East Angylis Company a wide berth. They have made friends of Outlaws, Sky Dragons, and assassins alike. They operate everywhere, and they will get what is owed to Mythrayne. When Mythrayne signed the Articles of Vathis, however, they were forced to brand the EAC an Outlaw company. Mythrayne claims to have no official contact with the organization. This is widely known to be false, but none can prove the remaining ties between the government of the nation and the EAC for certain.

GOALS: The primary goal of the EAC is to replenish their gold stores by collecting on debts owed to Mythrayne by the remaining six nations. Secondly, the EAC aids Mythrayne on an as-needed basis, whether or not the nation wants to accept or admit it.

TENETS OF THE EAST ANGYLIS COMPANY

Despite their harsh reputation and true nature, the East Angylis Company has established a firm code of conduct. Members of the EAC are forbidden to kill one of their own, and they must always be loyal to one another and the dwarven people first. They are only to speak the truth when among their brethren. Interaction with Vathis Sentinels or relation to Sentinels is forbidden. Lastly, they are to never appropriate wealth or resources belonging to the dwarven people or those who are not in debt to Mythrayne or the EAC. Members are expected to act honorably in all affairs, regardless of the nature of their tasks. Violation of these tenets is taken seriously, with some breaches resulting in injury, exile, or even death.

LOCATION:

NAUGRIX’S PERCH: The East Angylis Company has occupied many cities over the years, but with Naugrix’s Perch having such a recent influx of travel by air, sea and land, as well as being the bridge between the Angylis Sea and the Sekois Ocean, the Perch is



a much more convenient location. Along with its access and traffic, the many different races and nationalities passing through Naugrix's Perch give the EAC more targets—or allies, depending on the individual. It is here where the Gramir Asger zi'Eirik officially resides. This is also where they bring newly inducted Rekkrs, and where they hold ceremonies for advancement of Sinnirs and Uvermaats. The EAC occupies a considerable compound within the underground of the city, supposedly secured by a deal with the Delvers. The compound is a luxurious affair bedecked in gold and lined with gems. It is framed by a sculpture of Naugrix's coiled form and guarded by trusted enforcers of the EAC.

HOARDER'S COVE: Hoarder's Cove, another base belonging to the EAC, lies within the southern port city of Sythal in Cypress. The cove is connected to the actual ship docks, and is littered with interweaving tunnels carved into small alcoves running up and down the rock walls, earning the nickname of "the Hive." Within the lower layers of the Hive are tunnels connecting to several larger chambers occupied by agents of the East Angylis Company, some of which lead out to a covert harbor for their personal use. The House of Shadow sometimes uses the Cove for activities, and it is whispered that the two occasionally have use for one another, which has only increased Vathis Sentinel attention on the area. Sinnir Rufus zi'Kilvert uses Hoarder's Cove as his main residence when not at sea, and he only reports to one Uvermaat, which allows him to act more freely than other Sinnirs around the continent.

STARFALL VAULT: Deep in the Starfall mountains, extending out into the Sea of Frostorm, lies the third of the three primary EAC headquarters. This location is within an old mine of Svartgrond dwarven origin. A series of tunnels lead out to the sea, while others lead inland to Corsica Isle. At the center is a massive chamber of ancient dwarven style, featuring homes carved into the rock walls and runes etched into their arches telling tales of the Age of Black Frost. A rotund forge sits at the center, but gets little use, while the vaults have been expanded to house more wealth, and adjacent tunnels are collapsed or excavated in preparation for an infiltration. This base was originally in the Frostfire Mountains, but during the Darkest War the formation of the Ixen Caldera forced the EAC to relocate. This base is one of their biggest stores of wealth outside of Mythrayne. It grants the EAC easy access to the shores of Aurezia and Isild, as well as reasonable proximity to Darastrix and the Borderlands. Sinnir Thea zi'Copliet works out of this location, leading a brigade of thieves and beguilers in operations within the western nations, while three different Uvermaats oversee everything within the headquarters.

STRUCTURE:

SWAIN: Swains are initiates that have not yet proven themselves. They are in a trial period and cannot be trusted with any real work. Swain also refers to people outside of the organization who are known to aid members of the EAC in jobs.

REKKR: The Rekkrs are newly full-fledged members. They run errands, handle deliveries, and generally try to make a name for themselves by doing dirty work for the Sinnir.

SINNIR: Sinnirs are the lowest members able to give commands. They receive orders from the Uvermaat and lead the Rekkrs in their duties. When Rekkrs fail, the Sinnir are held respon-

sible.

UVERMAAT: There are only a handful of Uvermaats, and they are second-in-command to the Gramir. One Uvermaat will stay with the Gramir while the others issue his commands or lead in place of a Sinnir, if necessary. Uvermaats are typically the hand of discipline and punishment.

GRAMIR: The Gramir is the absolute head of the organization, and his decisions are to be followed without question. There is only one, and only the Uvermaat report to him directly.

MEMBERSHIP: Members of the EAC are usually dwarves, but exceptions are occasionally made.

REQUIREMENTS: The EAC originally recruited volunteers, but soon closed their doors to outsiders, save for soliciting those they chose. They tend to choose those that can fund their own efforts and bring in profits for the company.

BENEFITS: Members of the EAC believe it a great honor to restore the glory of the dwarven people and take back what they are owed. They experience a life of privilege, where none stand in their way.

NOTABLE MEMBERS:

Gramir Asger zi'Eirik
Sinnir Rufus zi'Kilvert
Sinnir Thea zi'Copliet

ELDRITCH HOUSE

"Masters of the Ether."

TYPE: Magical Education and Safeguard

MEMBERS: 32,547

SYMBOL: Seven-pointed star

RESOURCES: 16

ALIGNMENT: Neutral

RELIGION: Any, with primary Aleydra

HEADQUARTERS: Arcadia, above Aurez City

SCOPE: Global

STRUCTURE: Organized based on school of magic and studies

LEADER: Head Magister zi'Len Gu

HISTORY: Originally based in Washu, the Eldritch House is the oldest magic school in the world. With almost five centuries worth of knowledge, books, and alumni, this organization boasts the largest gathering of arcane knowledge in all of Vathis. It was first founded as a school dedicated to the ancient mages of old that the Washun sought to emulate. The Eldritch House focuses on magical training and perfecting the Ascension Transformation, which brings the Washun physically closer to the kami of their faith. This transformation has always been a focus of Washun culture, and undergoing the transformation is a goal of many of the organization's Master Mages. The Eldritch House works closely with the Vathis Sentinels and most of the world's nations, as all arcane casters must be registered with the Eldritch House. This organization was spared from the restrictions placed on Washu following the Shadow Sea Wars between Elessar and Washu, as the



Eldritch House took no formal part in the war and forbade their members from doing so. Membership grew dramatically during the Darkest War and has only increased since. Some high-ranking members carefully study demonic entities, which some abhor, but this sensitive research was vital in the Darkest War, as the Master Mages provided intimate knowledge of the fiends to the armies of Vathis. The Master Mages also agreed to devote some of their talented members to Legion. The arcane knowledge amassed by the Eldritch House is surpassed only by the ele'rin of Synethil. The Eldritch House boasts positive relations with Legion and Synethil, but the flying city's newly-established universities have become their largest competition, much to their dismay.

GOALS: The Eldritch House wishes to further the world's understanding of arcane casters and magic as a whole. They hope to improve the world through the use of magic, and dispel the various taboos surrounding various aspects of the arcane. Under the stipulations of the Vathis Accords, the Eldritch House is obligated to regulate the use of magic and prevent its abuse. Certain members of the House are seeking lost, powerful secrets and ancient magical artifacts, though they tend to do so covertly so as to avoid attracting unwanted attention. Lastly, though perhaps most importantly, the Eldritch House wishes to expand Washu's influence in the post-war world. Their headquarters was moved to Aurez City, but regardless of distance, the organization remains Washun at heart.

LOCATIONS: Eldritch Houses are found in all of the world's major cities, as they are required by the Vathis Accords to document the citizens who dabble in the arcane. The notable exception is the northern nation of Tristan, whose Eldritch House was destroyed in the Battle of Uryllgrad. The Eldritch House wishes to rebuild this location, but the leaders of Tristan are stonewalling their attempts.

ARCADIA: The floating mote Arcadia is the headquarters of the Eldritch House. Found in Aurez City, Aurezia, this school is the largest of its kind on the western seaboard.

VALIANCE: The capital of Vavaire functions as the organization's secondary headquarters. This headquarters was once a floating mote, but the mote was lost in the tumult of the Darkest War and is now referred to as the Lost University. At present, the Vavairen branch resides in a manor located in the capital city of Valiance.

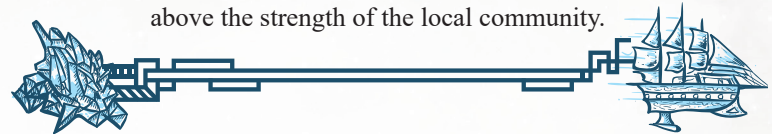
WASHU: Washu is the birthplace of the Eldritch House. Though the Aurezians have moved their Headquarters and keep a close watch on the organization, their influence is still widely felt on the island, and their remaining Washun schools and outposts bustle with activity.

OSEPT: Osept is home to a branch of the Eldritch House operating only as a research facility. This locale studies enigmatic artifacts and texts, but is not used for training and schooling. They seek to emulate the effects of these old magics in new and modern arcane applications.

STRUCTURE: The structure of the Eldritch House is rather straightforward. The first three ranks are Associates, Apprentices, and Journeymen. The higher ranks include the likes of fully-educated individuals such as Magicians, Mages, Master Mages, and Arch-Mages. The organization itself is currently led by the Head Magister, zi'Len Gu, a master of divination. The Silencers are a sub-sect of the Eldritch House, but an independent organization in their own right.



An independent entity from the Eldritch House and the Vathis Sentinels, the Silencers operate worldwide, handling destructive magic and rogue mages. Each major city is patrolled by a dozen or so members. The Silencers intervene when a magical threat is far above the strength of the local community.



MEMBERSHIP: Any and all arcane magic users must register with the Eldritch House. This registration includes personal details such as one's current address and operating range. Interestingly, tuition for true-born sons and daughters of Vavaire is primarily paid for by the state in an effort to foster relations between Vavaire and Washu. Empress Ravenne herself has a vested interest in the well-being of the Eldritch House, as she wishes to increase the number of Vavaire's magical holdings.

REQUIREMENTS: Schooling with the Eldritch House lasts at least ten years, and the price for tuition varies. Aurezian tuition is expensive and far beyond the reach of the lower class. The Washun are able to attend for free, and Vavairen pricing is inexpensive as well, but this is a recent development as Empress Ravenne personally bears the brunt of the cost required to educate her people. The cost for other foreign attendees fluctuates slightly, but remains rather expensive. Natural talent is a necessity, and even



those with the means to gild their way into university find themselves expelled quickly should they not live up to the Master Mages' high standards.

BENEFITS: Members of the Eldritch House are granted access to vast amounts of knowledge both arcane and ancient. They are also given influence, power, and status. The Eldritch House is a respected institution in nearly every country in the world, and members of the organization are treated with the sort of reverence one would expect.

NOTABLE MEMBERS:

Head Magister zi'Len Gu
Master Mage zi'Sakurai Tokuhei
Master Mage Shorsha zi'Macduibh

EYES OF VATHIS

"Finding our past to find our future."

TYPE: Sanctioned Explorers Organization

MEMBERS: 42,643

SYMBOL: Open eye

RESOURCES: 12

ALIGNMENT: Lawful Neutral

RELIGION: Any, with primary Teiris, Aleydra, and Astea

HEADQUARTERS: The White Citadel of Aurez City

SCOPE: Global

STRUCTURE: Independent cells

LEADER: High Curator Mazyd zi'Veshnore

HISTORY: The Eyes of Vathis were originally created as a sister organization to the Vathis Sentinels. The Eyes are a fairly widespread group that issues adventuring contracts, maps, letters of marque, and supplies for adventuring. They have divisions of adventurers who they send into the field to scout and catalogue the world, and they also hire explorers on occasion, facilitating the requests of citizens to venture into the unknown. They exist so that no exploring group may stumble upon ancient powerful relics without their knowledge. Delving into ruins and mapping locations without their express approval is considered illegal by all means. They issue adventuring permits which allow groups to enter and explore ruins, and they also issues letters of marque to track down specific items of worth. This organization also acts as a third party between adventuring requests and adventuring parties. All citizens in adventuring parties are to be registered with the Eyes of Vathis. They are a quality source of information and resources for most traveling groups. The Eyes tax and catalogue all discovered items. If an item is found by an adventuring party that the Eyes of Vathis would like to keep, they reserve the right to confiscate the object and compensate the finders accordingly. Their laws and rules generally do not apply to Outlaws, save for the occasional odd circumstance, and those who become Outlaws forfeit their ability to reach out to the Eyes as a source of information. Most agents of the Eyes of Vathis will refuse to work with Sky Dragons or Outlaws on principle alone. In truth, the Eyes rarely confiscate items. They pride themselves on maintaining a good relationship

with the brave explorers of the world, and they tend to be in the business solely to obtain the wealth of knowledge rather than the wealth of items. They also handle airship registration, granting said information to the registries of the Vathis Sentinels.



GOALS: The Eyes of Vathis long to recover ancient artifacts and discover unmapped locations. They protect rare and dangerous items from falling into the wrong hands, and they aim to preserve items of great prestige or historical value. Their skilled agents are able to discern history and secrets from found items.

LOCATIONS: The Eyes of Vathis maintain outposts in most of the world's major cities.

WHITE CITADEL: The White Citadel in Aurez City is the home of both the Vathis Sentinels and the headquarters of the Eyes of Vathis. The Citadel itself is a floating mote that circles the Sapphire Spire. Here the Eyes of Vathis work closely with the Vathis Sentinels. The flagship museum of the Eyes of Vathis is located in Aurez City below, and it is rumored that a private collection of rare magical items can be found within the White Citadel. The largest concentration of Scouts are trained in the Citadel, where the first level of training is completed.

THE REPOSITORY: The Repository was the headquarters of the Eyes of Vathis before they moved to the White Citadel. Located in Eiliept, Osept, the Repository now serves as an additional training ground for those out of their first year of service. The labs and libraries of this location are utilized for study and research. The building itself is an old temple devoted to the goddess Teiris that was destroyed before being rediscovered and re-purposed by the Eyes of Vathis. The museum of the Repository houses a vault guarded night and day by high-ranking Vathis Sentinels.

STRUCTURE: The structure of the Eyes of Vathis adventuring teams are relatively simple. The lowest ranks are Scouts, who are usually promoted to Explorers after a period of time. Explorers make up the bulk of the Eyes of Vathis field force. The next rank are Pioneers, seasoned members of the Eyes who lead their own expeditions and take both Explorers and Scouts under their wing. Curators are agents of the Eyes with an impressive track record,



often going on to work in museums, or show exceptional talent with the upper crust of society who possess rare magical wares. The structure of the bureaucratic side of the organization is quite different, with a team of Collectors working with the Curators of the adventuring teams to catalogue items and interact with the Vathis Sentinels and other adventuring groups. Some individuals are also granted titles specific to their line of work and contribution to the organization, such as Quartermaster Britius zi'Winior.

MEMBERSHIP: Anyone can sign up for the Eyes of Vathis. They are subject to basic training, but this training is not exceptionally rigorous. The high amount of travel and life-risking is seen as a downside to being a member of the Eyes of Vathis, but many not suited for the wilds of the outdoors land bureaucratic jobs in the organization cataloging items, processing paperwork, and interacting as middlemen between wealthy individuals and adventuring parties.

REQUIREMENTS: The Eyes of Vathis do little physical training. They study history, languages, and survival skills, and must have a base understanding of these things before joining.

BENEFITS: Members in the Eyes of Vathis are fortunate enough to travel the world with others who share their passion for the unknown. Their explorers are paid by commission, but this tends to work in their favor. Their required commitment to the Eyes is lenient, and many move on from the organization after some time to settle down and take a respite from the dangers of delving into ruins.

NOTABLE MEMBERS:

High Curator Mazyd zi'Veshnore
 Quartermaster Britius zi'Winior
 Pioneers Emmi and Brin Kalirriph

LEGION

"We are all children of the stars."

TYPE: Starcalled Organization

MEMBERS: 16,224

SYMBOL: Dragon head constellation

RESOURCES: 9

ALIGNMENT: Chaotic Neutral

RELIGION: Any

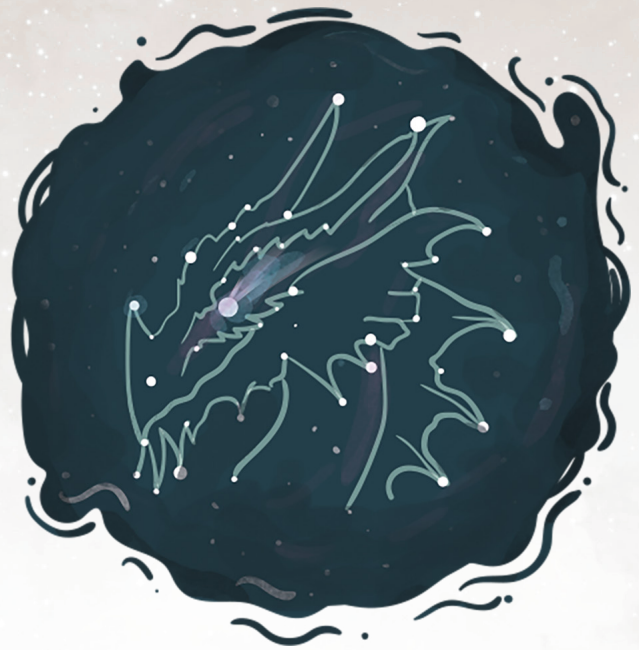
HEADQUARTERS: Adora, Vavaire

SCOPE: Global

STRUCTURE: Individual cells linked to the central operating core of the organization.

LEADER: Vasily zi'Saitev

HISTORY: Legion was formed during the Darkest War by a group of Starcalled individuals in response to the rampant noir infiltration of high-ranking political positions of the various governments of the world. Their early membership included important members of the exiled Vavairen government, envoys of Sillirai, Erishti, Hanad, and the reincarnation of the goddess Astea herself, a mortal named Aevalyn. This group captured a noir and discov-



ered the underlying psionic network shared by the face-changers and the leaders of the Shattered Hand. With assistance from the archaeologists of Osept, Legion created a device capable of severing the psionic link between noir and master temporarily within a limited distance. This allowed Legion to begin Operation Twilight, an event where members captured and gathered noir together for humane research purposes.

Aevalyn created the first worldfall in Ardor. This planar instance spared the city from utter annihilation at the hands of fiends, and it was here that Legion continued their research directly underneath the nose of the rampaging Vandiel. Aevalyn also created the second worldfall in the city of Whiterose, and members moved the captured noir to this location, protecting their kind until they could be saved from their possession. It was only then, with a solid plan of action, that Legion began actively recruiting Starcalled individuals across the world.

Still desperate for reliable allies and wary of the world's corrupted governments, Legion contacted the city of Synethil using undisclosed magical means. Trapped on the Vibrant plane, the agents of Legion assisted Synethil in achieving plane-fall back to the Material Plane. Upon arrival of the city, Synethil's leaders were met by a Starcalled amari named Evie. She befriended the Archfaer of Synethil, and the two joined Legion when the organization's envoys finally arrived. He agreed to assist Legion in defending the Material Plane from the rampant armies of fiends, and his ele'rin, altered by their extended stay on the Vibrant, shared their magical prowess with those willing to utilize the arcane on the field of battle.

Legion, in conjunction with Synethil, created a portable city shield that protected specific areas and made it possible to contain Shattered Hand incursions. The organization also successfully severed a noir from the control of their fiendish masters. Sharaun, as the first noir named herself, remembered everything about her operations, including the Shattered Hand's covert missions, positions, and even details pertaining to the specific Vandiel involved. Her unique insight gave Legion and the nations allied with the



organization significant advantages over the Shattered Hand. From their base in Cypress they also developed a new weapons system called vaedricarms based on the instability of the vaedra eldria crystals found high in the Furcata Mountains.

Members of Legion traveled with Aevalyn's 1000 to Valiance hoping to end the Darkest War once and for all. They were successful, and their heroic actions created Aevalyn's Wall and cut off the fiends from their masters, sending Feliroz back through the Scar Tear portal. Their efforts also led to a series of events that culminated in the eventual cessation of Aevalyn's Wall, which led to the dissolution of the Etherward and the return of the dragons.

Legion came out fully to the Council of Vathis after the end of the Darkest War, though the history of the organization remains clouded. The Council of Vathis granted Legion their support. With the blessing of the world's great leaders, members of Legion moved to gather, train, and defend Starcalled across Asarus. The organization's clandestine activities still take place, but they've moved their secret operations to secure locations. Legion aims to be prepared for future global disasters and further fiendish incursions, should the Shattered Hand return or a catastrophe of its magnitude ever happen again.

GOALS: Legion seeks to educate and protect the Starcalled of Vathis. They identify and recruit new Starcalled individuals into their ranks, and teach them how to appropriately harness their gifted abilities and handle their newfound status. Overall, Legion exists to protect the world from insurmountable threats.

LOCATIONS: Legion runs outposts across all of Asarus.

ADORA: Adora is the home base of Legion. Their headquarters is an old manor that was originally constructed in the city as a vacation home for Vavairen royalty. Rife with secret passages and ornate decorations galore, the manor is the easily the grandest building in the city.

SYNETHIL: The headquarters of Legion in the Leyarish region of the world is found in the returned city of Synethil. Within the city resides a tower constructed by the Archfaer. This tower is the sister building to the castle of Sanctuary, though it is much taller and slimmer. Archfaer Kernaroth himself is often found here directing operations and meeting with members of the organization.

CENIRIEN: Sillirai played an extremely important role in the Darkest War, as the noir were unable to take the form of the amari. With the help of Evie and other Sillarian members, Legion constructed a regional headquarters in a laris tree near Cenirien.

STRUCTURE: Members of Legion join or form individual autonomous cells. These cells communicate with the central operating core of the organization through coded Bluewind messages. Each cell has a specific goal or mission, conducts their own research, and oversees potential threats arising within their region.

MEMBERSHIP: Members of Legion are extremely varied.

REQUIREMENTS: The necessary requirements to join Legion are fairly simple. One must be Starcalled and wish to change the world for the better. Loyalty to the whole of the world must reign higher than one's loyalty to any outside party. One must

be self-reliant and resourceful, though both traits are taught during training. All knowledge learned within the organization must remain within the organization. Sharing Legion's secrets or committing treason against the organization are dealt with justly.

BENEFITS: Those who join Legion are immediately removed from the squabbling of lesser-minded folk. New members of Legion are surrounded by equals on all sides who often share traits and even sigils. Legion is an extremely resourceful organization, and members come to one another's aid whenever possible. Members are typically granted access to items and materials unobtainable by others, such as vaedricsteel, which is only granted to members of Legion and those close to Constantine Vanguard. Members of Legion are given the opportunity to make a difference in the world, unravel the secrets of the multiverse, and leave their mundane lives behind.

NOTABLE MEMBERS:

Vasily zi'Saitev
Sharaun
Voltaire



LURIEN INDUSTRIES

"Our future is at hand."

TYPE: International Mining and Gladiatorial Company

MEMBERS: 8,746

SYMBOL: A vaedra L and red name

RESOURCES: 14

ALIGNMENT: Neutral

RELIGION: None

HEADQUARTERS: Inyl, Cypress

SCOPE: Global, presence in most populated cities.

STRUCTURE: Loose Corporate Structure

LEADER: Miloskro zi'Lurien

HISTORY: Lurien Industries was founded as a mining company in Cypress. Laborers in the region accidentally stumbled upon the first Essel Arena hidden in the jungles of the nation, and Lurien Industries learned everything they could about the technology and established the first Essel Tournament using the arena. They later discovered vaedra eldria, escalating both their prestige and their status in the world economy. With the help of Legion, Lurien Industries learned how to refine the volatile red crystal. A weapons system taking advantage of vaedra's violent properties was invented and made popular by Lurien Industries. This company also pi-



oneered many technologies found useful during the Darkest War. They continue to host Essel Tournaments and research vaedra, hoping to secure further applications of the red eldria.

GOALS: Lurien Industries seeks to expand vaedra eldria's influence. They fund multiple research teams devoted to uncovering further uses of the eldria, and they maintain good relations with CORE for mutual benefit, though tensions between the organizations run high. They are always searching for ancient technology related to the Essel Arenas, and they hope to expand the Essel Tournaments to every major city in the world. The organization tends to choose exotic, interesting locales to house their arenas.

LOCATIONS: Lurien Industries is based in Cypress, though they operate headquarters and satellite offices on a global scale.

INYL: Inyl, located in Cypress near the Furcata Mountains, is where Lurien Industries discovered their first Essel Arena. The organization manufactures additional Essel Arenas here.

LANZBEI: Lanzbei, Cypress, is close to where the miners of Lurien Industries first discovered vaedra eldria. They perform a number of high-profile operations in the region.

STRUCTURE: Lurien Industries is divided into three branches. The vaedra branch is the newest and most secretive of the three, followed by the largest branch—mining—and then the Essel branch, which is perhaps the most well-known.

VAEDRA: The vaedra division of Lurien Industries oversees the mining, refinement, and development of vaedra eldria. They are primarily localized in the Cyprean region.

MINING: The mining branch of Lurien Industries is spread worldwide. They have holdings in many nations, with a notable absence in Mythrayne and limited presence in Sillirai.

ESSEL: The Essel Tournament is known and revered worldwide. Essel Arenas can be found in the largest of the world's cities, and people listen to reports of the Tournaments by Bluewind relays, allowing the games to be enjoyed by even the average citizens of Vathis.

MEMBERSHIP: Membership in Lurien Industries is varied. The loose corporate structure of the company lends to a firm hierarchy employing all sorts of individuals from all walks of life.

REQUIREMENTS: Lurien Industries only hire the brightest of researchers. The physical protection of the elite of the company and their facilities is provided by ex-gladiators of the Essel Tournament, and those with a vested interest in the well-being of the company. Miners and laborers of Lurien Industries are often average citizens native to the area.

BENEFITS: Members of this organization can freely travel across national borders between locations belonging to the company. They are commonly granted firsthand experience with vaedra technology and weapons, and those with more physical prowess can compete in the Essel Tournament free of the required sponsorship. Those with a taste for adventure are sometimes hired on contract for expeditions funded by Lurien Industries as they search for lost technology and strategic locations to build arenas.

NOTABLE MEMBERS:

Miloskro zi'Lurien
Moyoluch Gaakt
Vaedra



ONE HUNDRED AND SEVENTEEN SKY DRAGONS

"Our skies are free."

TYPE: Federation of Pirate Families

MEMBERS: 1,213,512

SYMBOL: Dragon skull and crossed swords

RESOURCES: 19

ALIGNMENT: Chaotic Neutral

RELIGION: All

HEADQUARTERS: Dragon's Lair

SCOPE: Global presence, as well as outlying motes and unprotected airspace

STRUCTURE: One hundred and seventeen centrally organized independent pirate houses

LEADER: Grand Commodore Adeiu Skydragon

HISTORY: Airship pirates rose to prominence in response to the introduction of eldria and airships to the world. They were spurned by CORE and assisted Washu in the Shadow Seas War, which eventually became the First Empire Wars and led to the utter annihilation of the nation Elessar. The separate one hundred and seventeen pirate families banded together for protection in the wake of the founding of the Vathis Sentinels, whom the Sky Dragons consider glorified prison wardens. The Sentinels are their one and only enemy, and two groups have shared a century of warfare, conflicts, and rivalry, broken only by a tentative peace truce brokered during the Darkest War for the betterment of all mankind. During the war, the Sky Dragons, with their massive airship fleets,



rushed entire cities worth of citizens to safety. Millions of the world's inhabitants owe their lives, and the lives of their friends and family, to the One Hundred and Seventeen Sky Dragons. For the most part, however, the pirates tend to ignore the day-to-day lives of standard citizens, and prey only upon merchants who utilize Vathis Sentinel airspace and support CORE. Their most common method of harassing these merchants is by hijacking their ship, stranding their crew, and stealing their cargo. The One Hundred and Seventeen Dragons currently hold a tenuous truce with the Vathis Sentinels, but they will destroy Sentinel ships that venture within Sky Dragon territory. The Sky Dragons and Outlaws work closely sometimes, as they share similar lifestyles and virtues.

GOALS: The Sky Dragons are currently seeking to reclaim assets lost in the Darkest War, including almost one hundred lost floating motes. The united front of the One Hundred and Seventeen Sky Dragons is stronger than ever due to the skilled leadership of Grand Commodore Adeiu. Their greatest overarching goal is to somehow cripple the Vathis Sentinels and CORE, so that eldria can be freely mined and enjoyed openly without the restrictions of the Vathis Accords.

LOCATIONS: The One Hundred and Seventeen Sky Dragons are active on a global scale.

DRAGON'S LAIR: The Dragon's Lair is a floating mote found above the Vaethrian Sea. This location acts as the primary meeting place and base of operations for the pirates.

RAYNE: A floating mote above the Feyne Sea serves as the base of operations for the northern disposition of Sky Dragons.

CHANG HOLD: Chang Hold is a mote north of Washu that handles all of the eastern ambitions for zi'Chang Xu's recently united Sky Dragon family.

KEI CASTLE: This Washun castle is one of the few land-based holdings belonging to the One Hundred and Seventeen Sky Dragons. Kei Castle serves as the meeting place between the water-based pirates of Kei and the Sky Dragons, and the two groups meet here to discuss the affairs of the Angylis Sea.

STRUCTURE: The One Hundred and Seventeen Sky Dragons are a federation of pirate families who banded together under Grand Commodore Adeiu for mutual survival. When a family dies, they can be replaced, but this has only happened a handful of times in the organization's history. One may act as an independent noble line, but they would report to a higher family. Once every four months the families meet on the Dragon's Lair to discuss their ongoing operations.

MEMBERSHIP: Loyalty is extremely important to the One Hundred and Seventeen Dragons, and they only truly accept those born into the organization, and those who have proven their loyalty to the pirate lifestyle. Individuals who betray their brethren or shame what it means to be a Sky Dragon are often abandoned on a floating mote and their worldly possessions are given to those they've harmed and dishonored. This is rare, however, as strife between the Sky Dragons is unusual.

REQUIREMENTS: Pirates are required to either give up their former lifestyle and adopt the pirate life, or be born into the organization.

BENEFITS: The One Hundred and Seventeen Sky Dragons grant their members a freedom and brotherhood unknown to the citizens of the world. For Sky Dragons, the grace of the skies is limitless. Most consider the One Hundred and Seventeen Sky Dragons to be like their own small country instead of a formal organization.

NOTABLE MEMBERS:

Grand Commodore Adeiu Skydragon
zi'Chang Xu
Padrig zi'Delyth

VATHIS SENTINELS

"To Protect. To Serve. To Prosper."

TYPE: Global Peace Keeper

MEMBERS: 213,897

SYMBOL: Vathis Sentinel shield

RESOURCES: 16

ALIGNMENT: Lawful Neutral

RELIGION: Any, with primary Vangal, Junon, and Astea

HEADQUARTERS: The White Citadel of Aurez City

SCOPE: Global

STRUCTURE: Four branches: Air, Land, Sea, and Outrider

LEADER: Director of Defense, Kallen zi'Telloxian

Commander of the Air, Mirielis zi'Alesone

Commander of the Land, Athelina zi'Whiterose

Commander of the Sea, Rykker Steelband

Commander of the Outrider, the Sentinel

HISTORY: The Vathis Sentinels were established after the fall of Elessar in the First Empire Wars as a militarized response to the amassing airship pirates. They were created when the nations of Asarus signed the Articles of Vathis, a treaty which established a standard of international law and order. The Vathis Sentinel doctrine granted the organization the responsibility of facilitating trade and harmony between the nations of the world while simultaneously protecting the nations and their citizens from pirate attacks. Though the Sentinels now have many directives, their primary purpose has always been to ensure that destruction on the scale of Elessar can never happen again by monitoring Sky Dragon activity. In the early years of the organization their numbers swelled with tens of thousands of volunteer enlistments. The Vathis Sentinels are financially supported by taxes collected from the nations they protect, and additional funds are generated by means of a global eldric tax placed upon CORE. The Vathis Sentinels are highly trained and utilize a variety of tactics adopted by the various nations they hail from, focusing their efforts against the formidable Sky Dragon threat facing the civilized world. In the early years of the Vathis Sentinels their members were granted almost limitless power over citizens, but their rights were scaled back after high-ranking members of the organization were found



to be abusing their power. CORE created the Sentinel Armlets the organization now uses, which denote rank, jurisdiction and level of ability. The Vathis Sentinels were then separated into four branches: Air, Land, Sea, and Outrider. Once under firm leadership with an established structure facilitated in part by the Armlets, the Sentinels became a force to be reckoned with, and brought a dozen prominent Sky Dragon families to justice in their first decade of existence. During the Darkest War, the Sentinels operated primarily as search and rescue, rearguard, and specialists. They evacuated thousands of people from ravaged lands and saved countless lives at the cost of many of their own. The Vathis Sentinels in the post-war world are a global force protecting citizens across the entire breadth of Asarus, with members stationed in nearly every city, hamlet, village, and metropolis.



GOALS: The main purpose of the Vathis Sentinels is to uphold the Vathis Accords and protect the nations of the world from the unsavory influence of pirates and Outlaws. In the post-war world they are also putting forth a great humanitarian effort and helping the nations of the world rebuild. They are seen as a symbol of strength and order, and the Sentinels believe it their duty to provide citizens with a sense of structure and routine in the chaotic post-war world. The Tenets of the Vathis Sentinels are to simply adhere to the doctrines set forth in the Articles of Vathis.

LOCATIONS: The Vathis Sentinels possess at least a small outpost in the majority of the world's villages and cities. They have built larger fortifications, however, to house their training operations and occupational forces of the four Vathis Sentinel branches.

WHITE CITADEL: The White Citadel, located in Aurez City, is the main headquarters of the land division of the Vathis Sentinels, as well as the seat of the organization as a whole. This Citadel is a large floating mote that circles the Sapphire Spire. The main occupational force for the Sentinels is housed here, and more of the organization's force is stationed in Aurez City than anywhere else in the world. There are a number of connected towers atop the mote, each with their own airship docks and mustering yard in the center.

SEAFOAM PORT: Located in Erretis in the southwest of Venoch, Seafoam Port is the headquarters of the Sea branch of the Vathis Sentinels. This location acts a launching port for the Sentinel voyages circling the Angylis Sea. The headquarters is a large

fort constructed within the sea connected to land by a half-mile long bridge. Numerous docks branch out from the fort, which boasts seventeen towers atop the main fortification.

SILVER WHARF: The headquarters for the Air division of the Vathis Sentinels is the Silver Wharf found in Alear, Tristan. The Silver Wharf is a series of eight airship docks set in a ring surrounding the city of Alear in a circular formation. The Air branch of the Vathis Sentinels work closely with the organizations of CORE and Dirizh to construct world famous state-of-the-art airships.

JUSTICE: The headquarters of the Vathis Sentinel Outriders branch is a floating mote called Justice. Its current location is unknown. The Outriders work in the regions of the world not under the jurisdiction of any one kingdom, and they tend to have little interaction with the citizens of Vathis.

STRUCTURE: The Vathis Sentinels are divided into the Air, Sea, Land, and Outrider branches. The Air, Sea, and Land branches function in a similar fashion, protecting their respective trade routes and policing towns and cities. The Outriders, however, are the only branch of the Vathis Sentinels who do not patrol the established routes of the world. They operate in areas of Vathis lying outside of the jurisdiction of any single kingdom or entity. They chase bounties, explore ruins, and dispatch fiends and beasts threatening the civil order. The details of their operations are generally private, and they may sometimes operate without the standard Sentinel gear when not interacting with citizens or within claimed territory.

The ranks of the Vathis Sentinels are highly regimented and organized. They are titled alongside their division or station. Examples of this would be "Private of the Land," "Major of the Sky," or "General of Aurezia." The hierarchy of ranks are as follows:

Private, Corporal, Sergeant, Warrant Officer, Lieutenant, Captain, Major, Lieutenant Colonel, Colonel, Brigadier General, Major General, Lieutenant General, General, General of the North, General of the South, General of the East, General of the West, Commander of the Ground, Commander of the Sea, Commander of the Outrider, Director of Defense.

MEMBERSHIP: The ranks of the Vathis Sentinels are composed of volunteer citizen recruits who undergo a rigorous training process. Only those in peak physical and mental condition are accepted by the organization. A Vathis Sentinel does not serve for terms, but rather for life, or until their retirement is earned. One's



retirement is determined by a number of factors such as length of service, decorations, and injuries. The organization reserves the right to re-deputize a retired Sentinel at any moment, though, should the world have need of their service. The elder Vathis Sentinels who are not offered a retirement or reject their offer tend to be placed in instructional positions. All Vathis Sentinels can deputize non-Sentinel citizens for reasonable duty.

REQUIREMENTS: All Vathis Sentinels are citizens. They must swear allegiance to the Council of Vathis and attune themselves to their Armlets. All Vathis Sentinels must undergo four years of training before they are able to operate on their own.

BENEFITS: There are numerous benefits to becoming a Vathis Sentinel. For one, it provides steady pay and consistent work. It also gives one reign over the citizens of Vathis, within reason, and provides a member with the means of seeing the world. All of the weaponry, armor, and uniforms worn by the Vathis Sentinels are provided by the organization. Becoming a high-ranking Sentinel is also a great way for a citizen to earn prestige, glory, and respect for their family name.

NOTABLE MEMBERS:

Director of Defense, Kallen zi'Telloxian
 Commander of the Air, Mirielis zi'Alesone
 Commander of the Land, Athelina zi'Whiterose
 Commander of the Sea, Rykker Steelband
 Commander of the Outrider, the Sentinel

OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

ANTARES TEMPLAR

"Building the city of gold."

TYPE: Global Banking System

MEMBERS: 10,235

SYMBOL: Golden sword

ALIGNMENT: Lawful Neutral

RELIGION: None

LEADER: Aralu zi'Rivisvul

HISTORY, OPERATIONS, AND GOALS: At the end of the Divine Sands War, the Antares Templar were charged with the task of containing and controlling the Anuald in the Eternal Rest. They then became wardens of prisoners sent from a variety of nations to their land as a form of punishment. Slightly before the freeing of Erygis, the Antares Templar were replaced by the Vathis Sentinels as law-keepers, and the Sentinels ultimately failed. Using their immense wealth, the Antares Templar formed a banking system in Erygis, which was adopted by the Council of Vathis as a whole. On the outside, they are bankers, but they secretly hold true to their original purpose, which is to keep an eye on the Anuald and any threats to break their containment. Their primary

holdings are in the Templar Tower in Aurez City. The current goals of the Antares Templar are to create financial infrastructure, fund projects to ensure world safety, and monitor their age-old charge over the Anuald. They are well-known for taking down currency counterfeiters, and they work closely with the Bluewind Company and Council of Vathis.

BLOOD SYNDICATE

"The touch of night."

TYPE: Organized Crime Syndicate

MEMBERS: 57,946

SYMBOL: Blood drop

ALIGNMENT: Neutral Evil

RELIGION: Uryll

LEADER: Arina zi'Nikitovna

HISTORY, OPERATIONS, AND GOALS: The Blood Syndicate exists to protect Tristan, though they operate with a global scope. They primarily deal in assassinations and keep track of all of the active vampires in the world. They ensure that their secret is kept by all means necessary, while also taking sensitive contracts for notoriety and wealth. Very few are aware that vampires even exist, and this is due to the actions of the Blood Syndicate. Anyone who comes close to revealing their existence is dealt with accordingly. The upper echelons of the organization are all active vampires.

BLUEWIND COMPANY

"One wind uniting Vathis."

TYPE: Messaging Service and Media Outlet

MEMBERS: 4,750

SYMBOL: Blue envelope

ALIGNMENT: True Neutral

RELIGION: None specifically

LEADER: Tahris Fel

HISTORY, OPERATIONS, AND GOALS: The Bluewind Company was originally a secret project undertaken by the Vathis Sentinels to quickly send messages from one outpost to another. Sadly, the floating mote where the experiments were being conducted was destroyed during the later years of the First Empire Wars. The Bluewind's current leader, Tahris Fel, was the mote's sole survivor. He became obsessed with perfecting the experiments, and eventually found his way to Valiance, Vavaire. Tahris was given an audience with some major investors interested in his work. These wealthy investors provided him the necessary tools to allow his dream to become a reality, and within one year he created the first pair of Bluewind Messaging Stations. Once his invention became known, governments around the world moved to secure stations for themselves, and by the end of the year Bluewind Messaging Stations could be found in almost every major settlement around the world, allowing near-instant communications over vast distances. They served a major role in the survival of the world's nations during the Darkest War.



Now, Bluewind Messaging Stations can be found throughout the world and are widely used by nearly every citizen who wishes to have contact with individuals outside of their respective home cities. The Bluewind Company even offers a play-by-play update service for the Essel Tournament, spreading its glory throughout the world. Tahris is well-liked, but many say that he fell into opportunity instead of truly working for his success. Bluewind operates closely with many major newspapers. They even publish their own, known as the Asarun, a globally distributed newspaper that prints weekly articles on current global events and the numbers of the stock exchange.

FAE'LANORE

"From the light comes shadow."

TYPE: Leyarish Restoration Organization

MEMBERS: 649

SYMBOL: Silhouette of Synethil

ALIGNMENT: Chaotic Neutral

RELIGION: Major Irilynshae with minor Aleydra and Astea

LEADER: Ayrious zi'Faelant

HISTORY, OPERATIONS, AND GOALS: The Fae'ranore was established shortly before Synethil's return to the Material Plane for the purpose of restoring Leyathar and revitalizing the Leyarin Empire. They operate out of Synethil as the primary exploratory force and protection service for Synethil's leadership. The organization's goals are to recover lost Leyarin artifacts and knowledge, as well as protect the nation's citizens from outside threats.

FUTUREPERFECT

"What we are, what we were, who we will be."

TYPE: Noir Support Group

MEMBERS: 6,798

SYMBOL: Black mask

ALIGNMENT: Neutral

RELIGION: None

LEADER: Sharaun

HISTORY, OPERATIONS, AND GOALS: Futureperfect is a coalition of noir from around the world who have banded together to survive. They gather information and hire themselves out as private investigators and anti-spies. They will also take on resource-gathering jobs. The main goal of Futureperfect is to band all noir together for the betterment and restoration of their race. Their base of operations is located in Vavaire, and they are seen more as an activist group than as an actual organization, which tends to work in their benefit.

JORDENSÅNG

"The songs of the earth flow through you."

TYPE: Mythrayne Bardic College and Cultural Institution

MEMBERS: 65,984

SYMBOL: Two crossed horns inscribed with runes for "Gift of the Gods"

ALIGNMENT: Neutral Good

RELIGION: Major Naugrix and Astea

LEADER: Cyaga Zi'Gloskvild

HISTORY, OPERATIONS, AND GOALS: In ages long past, the dwarves of Mythrayne discovered bardic magic. This magic born of song is believed to be a gift bestowed on the dwarves from Astea and Naugrix, and as such, they perfected their art and spread it to the dwarven clans around the world. The dwarves called this bardic magic Jordensång, or Earthsong. From then on, all dwarven legends, poems, and stories were transcribed into Jordensång art. Jordensång persevered as dwarven empires rose and fell, and stories have been passed down in the bardic tongue from the Age of Dragons and the Age of Black Frost into modern day. It is an art understood by all dwarves, and it is the cornerstone of the culture that unifies the race. These days, the main college of Jordensång is located in Konungardra, and the college teaches thousands of dwarves the bardic art, in addition to members of other races ambitious and worthy enough to learn. Bards of Jordensång seek to establish a new official residence, recruit new members, and work with their peers to uncover scriptures lost in ruined Mythrene cities. With magic returning to a strength once thought to be lost forever, many bards are clamoring to achieve new levels of song. The rest of the world considers the bards of Jordensång to be the world's historians.

MENTIS OCULUM

"Look within, and see the lightened path."

TYPE: Monastery for Aleydra

MEMBERS: 10,579

SYMBOL: Eye emitting rays

ALIGNMENT: Neutral Good

RELIGION: Aleydra

LEADER: Elyda D'xandras

HISTORY, OPERATIONS, AND GOAL: The Mentis Oculum is an order of priests, sages, and monks seeking to attain a higher sense of knowing and being through the grace of Aleydra. The organization is based in Aleydhaven, Sillirai, but has a number of monasteries located in other nations. The Mentis Oculum is a demanding group, accepting only those deemed worthy of their goddesses' acceptance into their ranks. They claim no affiliation with any nation or race, and abstain from becoming involved in world affairs. The Mentis Oculum is led by Elyda D'xandras, an amari woman who never leaves the monastery because her life-force is tied to it. The primary goal of the Mentis Oculum is to help others unlock psionic aptitude and protect the Living Eye, an artifact important to the organization.

Long ago, before the fall of the ancient nations, Aleydra's worship was just branching out to the various races. One such human arcanist among Aleydra's wisest worshippers took it upon himself to spread her word. He amassed a following of monks, wizards, and priests, and they traveled far and wide attempting to



learn all they could about the Ether. After experiencing a number of prophetic visions, the arcanist took his closest followers and ventured to Sillirai to live among the amari worshippers of Aleydra. There he and his followers trained for years, and the arcanist eventually married one of the native amari. Together they officially formed the Mentis Oculum, an order dedicated to unlocking the secrets of the mind. They ran this order for hundreds of years before falling to enemies of the kingdom. The Mentis Oculum was left to their only daughter, Elyda D'xandras. Knowing he would fall, her father sacrificed himself to create the Living Eye, a relic capable of serving the Oculum in times of dire need. Elyda has survived for thousands of years in their Grand Temple, kept alive by magic. She has not been seen outside of the temple in a millennia, but can still communicate from within its inner chambers where she silently guards the Eye.

NOTEKEEPER'S COLLEGE

"History is the music of time, and we are its conductors."

TYPE: Bardic College and Official Notary

MEMBERS: 13,981

SYMBOL: Lute and quill

ALIGNMENT: True Neutral

RELIGION: All, with major Teiris

LEADER: Alfar zi'Gulsvig

HISTORY, OPERATIONS, AND GOALS: The Notekeeper's College was founded as a bardic college located in present-day Cypress. Even in the nation's infancy, Cypress utilized bards to officiate events and validate important documentation. Cyprean leadership eventually pushed the Council of Vathis to implement this practice worldwide as a method of fighting corruption and forgery. Bards have been considered notaries as well as performers ever since, and major cities from coast to coast have established small bardic colleges to house local Notekeepers. The Notekeeper's College aspires to expand their role as officiators, and uncover ancient and lost works of music and theater to use in their bardic performances.

THE ORDER OF THE MIDNIGHT AMETHYST

"A dream of unity. A dream of peace."

TYPE: Secret Sillirian Protective Services

MEMBERS: 107

SYMBOL: Amethyst Surai

ALIGNMENT: Chaotic Neutral

RELIGION: Major Aleydra

LEADER: Queen-Empress Evie Jaeress

HISTORY, OPERATIONS, AND GOALS: The Order of the Midnight Amethyst is an ancient organization led for thousands of years by the first Empress of Sillirai. Very little is known about the early days of the Order, but the organization's secretive protective services were effectively halted some eight-hundred years ago when the Empress went into seclusion. She no

longer held regular meetings with the Order, but sent instructions to members in their dreamscapes. Most fulfilled their duties and went their separate ways, but some stayed in contact with one another while waiting for her return. The many who were given long-standing orders such as guarding specific books or protecting particular locations remained steadfast in their duties for the rest of their lives. Only a small number of these members live on, though many of the deceased bequeathed their mandates to their children upon death, and in the process created a second-generation organization who had only heard tales of the Empress and her glory. It was not until the Darkest War that the Order rose again, led by the newly titled Queen-Empress Evie Jaeress, daughter of the former Empress.

The Order is a small and tight-knit organization. Their current operations consist of ridding the world of the dream disease known as the Waking Nightmare. Once an affliction that only affected amari, the Waking Nightmare spread to other races upon the destruction of Rumoriskar. The Order's ultimate goal is to protect the kingdom of Sillirai through intelligence gathering.

Two sub-sects of the Order exist: the Amethyst Guard, and the Serene Warriors. The sole purpose of the Amethyst Guard is to protect the Queen-Empress from harm. They are considered her closest confidantes and friends, and are entrusted with powerful psionic weapons known as the Surai. The Queen-Empress has also been creating newer, less-powerful Surai for the Serene Warriors, a psionic warrior force recently established and dispatched globally to rid other nations of the Waking Nightmare.

ORDER OF THE ZODIACS

"The will of those beyond the sky governs those who gaze upon the stars."

TYPE: Semi-Religious Monastic Order

MEMBERS: 4,523

SYMBOL: Silhouette of a meditating monk

ALIGNMENT: True Neutral

RELIGION: Reveres the Zodiacs above all others.

LEADER: Chang Ka Zhou

HISTORY, OPERATIONS, AND GOALS: The Order of the Zodiacs is one of the oldest organizations in Asarus. They began as what some might consider to be a religious organization. When Zodiac sigils began to appear on humanoids, people had many theories as to what they were, why they were granted, and what they meant. During this time a man named Xia Ro Kei was granted the sigil of the Sage. While many used their sigils to gain power and wealth, Xia Ro Kei was curious about learning more about the sigils. He began to gather like-minded individuals who wanted to research the strange marks and the Zodiacs above. Xia Ro Kei sought to escape from those longing to use the sigils for their own personal gain, or to alter the course of history. He led his followers to a mountain peak in modern-day Washu and founded his first Monastery. Over the following years Xia Ro Kei and his disciples meditated in an attempt to make contact with the divine beings above. He sent his disciples to other parts of the world to seek out more who wished to know about the Zodiacs. Soon small monasteries were founded all over Vathis. In addition



to philosophy and theories of the Zodiacs, the Order began to teach discipline and control over one's body, their belief being that one must be able to fully understand one's self before they could even begin to comprehend a being such as a Zodiac. Even after their masters passed away, the monks of the Order continued their spiritual quest to reach out to the Zodiacs.

The monks are known to be capable individuals. While the Order itself remains neutral in worldly affairs, disciples are free to do whatever they wish and help causes they find worthy. Because of this stance the Order has remained untouched throughout time, unbothered by wars or border disputes. Most nations consider a monastery of the Order neutral ground on which no blood is to be spilled. The monks and members of the Order lead relatively simple lives and stick to their ways.

The one exception to the Order's stance of neutrality was the Darkest War. The Order recognized the threat that the Shattered Hand posed to the entire world and stepped up to help. Though they were few in number, most members were involved in the war directly. Many fought on the front lines alongside trained and hardened soldiers. Perhaps their biggest contribution was guiding refugees to various safe havens, such as their temples or hidden areas, all places where the Shattered Hand would not attack. In the aftermath of the war the Order has experienced increased interest from the people of Vathis. The monks hope that by contacting the Zodiacs directly they can prevent a tragedy such as the Darkest War from ever happening again.

The Order seeks but one thing, which is to become one with the Zodiacs who will reveal to them true knowledge and the meaning of existence itself. They know that this goal is inherently flawed and probably impossible to accomplish. For this reason, they practice strict discipline of body and mind so that they might better learn the philosophies and techniques of older members of the order. Other than following the teachings of those who have come before them. There are few goals of the organization as a whole. They make little to no effort to convert others to their cause, but allow individuals to find their way to them instead. The only time the Order would mobilize would be if someone threatened their way of life and their pursuit of knowledge. Even so, such a mobilization would be purely in self-defense.

WHISPER

"Silence our weapon, deception our shield."

TYPE: Counterspy and Assassin Organization

MEMBERS: 414

SYMBOL: Shadow dagger

ALIGNMENT: Chaotic Good

RELIGION: Aleydra

LEADER: Aisha Whisper

HISTORY, OPERATIONS, AND GOALS: The Whispers first came into being shortly after the end of the Fourth Jewel Wars when Aurezia became part of the Vavairen Empire. Vavaire and Sillirai created the organization as part of a joining and co-settlement process designed to bring the two previously warring countries into peace. The Whispers were designed to pro-

tect heads of state and royalty of both nations from outside threats and interference. All members give up any previous life they may have had in order to provide protection around the clock. Members of the Whisper have had all previous ties to their old life stripped from them, and their faces remain hidden behind an enchanted veil of shadow to protect their old families from threats. The organization itself has been quite efficient, and has prevented multiple attempts on their charges' lives. Their loyalty is absolute and unwavering, and their minds are psionically linked to one another, allowing round the clock communication across vast distances. At the end of the Darkest War, with Vavaire fallen, the Whispers looked to outside contracts and worked closely with Hanad zi'Whisperose aiming to restore Vavaire. In order to do so Hanad needed to find the prophesied true heir to Emperor Jaris, which would allow Vavaire to reclaim her former glory. Though Whisper lost most of their weaponry and resources in the fall of Vavaire, the assistance provided by the SAS allowed them to succeed. The heir of Vavaire, Ravenne zi'Stardragon, was found directly linked to their ranks, hidden in the SAS by her grandmother Aisha Whisper. Whisper's new directive—the restoration of Vavaire and the protection of Ravenne—allowed Ravenne the time she needed to march to Valiance and eventually restore her country. Currently, Whisper is back to where it was before the Second Empire Wars, acting as protection for the elite of Sillirai and Vavaire. The motives of Whisper these days are fairly straightforward and they work in tandem with the SAS to reestablish Vavaire and recover the lost world-fallen city of Whiterose.



The original seventeen Free Companies of Vathis were consecrated in the Grand Cathedral of Armeria in the year 1 AG by the mortal forms of the Deities of that time. The Deities composed the Free Company Treaty as a method of protecting their chosen warriors against the trappings of man. The treaty has survived the ages until this very day within the city of Armeria. The Free Companies and the Outlaws that arose around the Free Company Treaty are protected by the laws of the gods themselves. The original seventeen were each charged with a singular artifact that housed the power of their respective god or goddess, but many of these have been lost to the ages.

THE BLACK HAND

"To indulge, to corrupt, and to seek vengeance against all who oppose."

TYPE: Religious Free Company

MEMBERS: 11,351

SYMBOL: Black hand

ALIGNMENT: Neutral Evil

RELIGION: Zanon

LEADER: Guidbrand zi'Kallicka



HISTORY, OPERATIONS, AND GOALS: The Black Hand is the Free Company devoted to Zanon, nicknamed "The Corruptors." The Corruptors travel in groups, and are known for being clad in black at all times. Mages and priests in the service of Zanon compose most of their number, and they use powers of control and domination to sow chaos and confusion within their enemies. They are even known to occasionally force their allies to do their nefarious bidding. The Black Hand merged with the church of Zanon shortly after the Divine Sands War, and this Free Company acts as the sword and protectors of his clergy. The Corruptors are currently involved in the slave trade of Osept, as Osept is their base of operations. They seek only to protect the church and expand Zanon's influence across the world.

THE BLUEMOON HOUSE

"We'll lend an ear."

TYPE: Religious Free Company

MEMBERS: 16,847

SYMBOL: Farilis

ALIGNMENT: Chaotic Good

RELIGION: Circe

LEADER: Matron Surreal zi'Wellstar

HISTORY, OPERATIONS, AND GOALS: The Bluemoon House was originally called the Bluemoon Coalition, and the Free Company of Circe dealt in information, making a living discovering secrets and selling them. In recent years they've constructed a vast network of pleasure houses and escort services that are standard throughout the world. Due to prostitution being legal and commonplace, the Bluemoon House has risen as a place of notoriety among the merchants of Vathis. Their operations are found in most major cities within all nations, save Washu. They primarily peddle in information and focus on networking with important individuals. Their headquarters is on the Outlaw mote called the Wandering Star.

THE DELVERS

"One must dig deep to uncover the truth of the stars."

TYPE: Religious Free Company

MEMBERS: 2,487

SYMBOL: Chest of various coins

ALIGNMENT: Lawful Neutral

RELIGION: Naugrix

LEADER: Mahdi zi'Obrecht

HISTORY, OPERATIONS, AND GOALS: As the Free Company of Naugrix, the Delvers spend most of their time hunting for ancient dragon hoards and documenting the location of the dragon statues. Unfortunately for the Delvers, a large portion of their history was lost before the Age of Black Frost, when they dealt with living dragons. Members of this organization are currently miners and prospectors. The Delvers spend a large portion of their time detailing the Evernight, and they fund their escapades by selling the locations of mineral deposits to large corporations.

With the return of the dragons, this Free Company has become more prominent. The Delvers have one sect in Mythrayne and one sect in Darastrix, and they are frequently hired to discover new lodes and mineral deposits in dangerous areas.

DREAD TEMPEST

"By maw, flame and claw, scorch the earth."

TYPE: Religious Free Company

MEMBERS: 6,068

SYMBOL: Fire cyclone

ALIGNMENT: Chaotic Evil

RELIGION: Kato

LEADER: Halvar Windhand

HISTORY, OPERATIONS, AND GOALS: The Dread Tempests of Kato are easily the most discordant of the original Free Companies. Comprised of barbarian berserkers, werewolf and savage druids, the Tempests were known for arriving first on the field of battle and leaving last, with only the scorched earth as evidence that they were ever there. Kato blessed his champions with power over beasts and fire during ancient times, and this power that was their strength also became their downfall. They cared not for others, and were wholly selfish. The Tempests focused only on the war at hand, and followed their whims elsewhere. Defending their natural world was paramount. After the wars finished, most of the Dread Tempests simply went their own ways, usually back into the wild from whence they came, descending into many of the feral barbarian tribes and dark druid circles of today. There is a small tribe of remaining faithful hidden away in the deep, dark recesses of the world who still retain their powers.

THE FACELESS

"Identity is weakness."

TYPE: Religious Free Company

MEMBERS: 19,870

SYMBOL: Blank mask

ALIGNMENT: Neutral

RELIGION: Keindrinas

LEADER: Yperkun Xaycatl

HISTORY, OPERATIONS, AND GOALS: The Faceless is a Free Company devoted to Keindrinas and headquartered in Erygis. They began as a force of interrogators, enchanters, and infiltrators during the Divine Sands Wars. For ages afterward, the Faceless was employed in wars on losing sides as a last resort. They had a hand in the fall of several nations by turning on those who hired them to pay homage to their god's thirst for betrayal. In recent centuries, this Free Company has seen a slight shift in behavior. They have operated strongly within Erygis for the past hundred years or so, planting seeds of deceit in the gardens of noble families and aiding a handful of the families they favor for coin. The Faceless is currently employed as the supplemental guard and standing military for Sinusur and the northwestern half of Erygis. To the public eye they are a changed order, and their leader, Yper-



kun Xaycatl, is a reformed war veteran.

THE FALLEN

“You have entered our home. Here shall you rest.”

TYPE: Religious Free Company

MEMBERS: 4,375

SYMBOL: Broken wings

ALIGNMENT: Lawful Good

RELIGION: Valshathe

LEADER: Cvitko zi’Lenart

HISTORY, OPERATIONS, AND GOALS: The Fallen are a group of hunters dedicated to destroying outsiders. They were established during the Divine Sands War as a Free Company devoted to Valshathe with the goal of destroying creatures summoned by the Anuald and performing various tasks for the Deities in their mortal forms. After the end of the Divine Sands Wars, a large contingent of angelic beings was left behind in Osept to look after the nation for the Deities, so that the Anuald would not rise again. These angels turned to zealotry and crusades, and began to strike down everyone they deemed unworthy. The Fallen started to kill these angels, who then fled to the islands of the Angylis Sea. The Fallen pursued in an attempt to locate the remaining angels and destroy other outsiders they encountered along the way. They were active during the Darkest War, and hunted down key figures within the Shattered Hand. They are a global force, and work in independent cells spread throughout Vathis. They have three citadels to their name: one in the Borderlands, one in Drakostigat, and one in Leyathar. With the rebel angels dead, they are hunting down the remaining forces of the Shattered Hand.

FROST CRESCENT

“To walk freely and know peace.”

TYPE: Religious Free Company

MEMBERS: 1,489

SYMBOL: Ice scimitar

ALIGNMENT: Chaotic Good

RELIGION: Irilynshae

LEADER: Caleries zi’Nightleaf

HISTORY, OPERATIONS, AND GOALS: Irilynshae’s Free Company, Frost Crescent, travels through the deep reaches of the world looking for those who have strayed from the path, both literally and metaphorically. They enter areas of trackless lands to remove threats to the natural order of the world, and move openly against Serena and her worshippers. They seek to avoid confrontation when possible, but they are deadly when forced. Frost Crescent members keep close tabs on all vae’rin sightings. The headquarters of Frost Crescent is located in Leyathar. Upon Synethil’s move to the Vibrant, Frost Crescent almost ceased to exist, but the organization was revived with the city’s return to the Material Plane. Their current goal is to grasp the extent of the damage done to Leyathar, and do their part in restoring the Leyarin Empire.

THE GREY COMPANY

“Give us your weary, your weak, your dying, your dead, your living again.”

TYPE: Religious Free Company

MEMBERS: 754

SYMBOL: Tattered rags

ALIGNMENT: Neutral Evil

RELIGION: Tesiline

LEADER: The Risen

HISTORY, OPERATIONS, AND GOALS: The Grey Company is the Free Company of Tesiline. They are a group mainly composed of necromancers and undead. The Grey Company offers the completion of any task, but with one catch: the price of one’s bones and body at the time of their death. They use the traded corpses to transfer the souls of their members into the newly deceased. Their numbers have grown significantly in recent years, thanks to the number of unclaimed bodies left on the fields of battle at the end of the Darkest War. They have proven themselves to be quite capable of achieving their goals, and saved northern Erygis from complete annihilation during the Darkest War by using hordes of undead as fodder. The Grey Company operates primarily in the southeastern region of Asarus. Their headquarters is a well-kept secret location within The Harrows. The Grey Company’s only goal is to perfect the creation of intelligent undead.

GUARDIAN FORCE

“Survival. Guaranteed.”

TYPE: Religious Free Company

MEMBERS: 8,369

SYMBOL: White dragon

ALIGNMENT: Lawful Good

RELIGION: Vangal

LEADER: Tuesirth zi’Varioth

HISTORY, OPERATIONS, AND GOALS: Guardian Force is a decently-sized Free Company that operates out of large cities. They offer personal protection, skilled bodyguards, warding spells, trainers, strategists, and mercenary services, all primarily focused on the defense of a specific location or object. While the Dark Knights are an elite mercenary force capable of extensive wartime effort, Guardian Force is focused on surviving long-term sieges and persevering through assaults. In recent times, members of Guardian Force were dispatched to Osept to protect a well-known trade caravan, and found themselves involved in the Tretolan independence wars. After the war’s success, they returned to Isild. They are the Free Company of the dragon god Vangal.



HARBINGER*“Heresy must be purged.”***TYPE:** Religious Free Company**MEMBERS:** 2,958**SYMBOL:** Black flag**ALIGNMENT:** Chaotic Evil**RELIGION:** Serena**LEADER:** Auscal zi'Elorshi

HISTORY, OPERATIONS, AND GOALS: Harbinger is the Free Company devoted to the goddess Serena. Known as one of the most destructive and dangerous Free Companies in the world, the organization is composed of professional conquerors, soldiers, and marauders. Behind them is a swath of ruin stretching back millennia. Composed solely of worshippers of Serena, members of Harbinger believe that she is the one true god, and that everything standing in her way must be destroyed. Their numbers have fluctuated drastically throughout the years. At one point in time Harbinger was composed of as few as ten members, but now the company's membership swells into the thousands. They have three active cells in the world: one in the north, one in the east, and one in the west. The contingent once located in Vavaire has not been seen since the end of the Darkest War. Any means to an end is accepted within Harbinger. Leadership and loyalty are important, and one member will never turn against others, which is distinctly odd, as such behavior is not consistent with Serena's teachings. Their home base is located in Osept. Harbinger's current goals are to subvert the influence of the many false gods and destroy Serena's enemies.

THE INQUISITORS*“Discerning the unfound truth.”***TYPE:** Religious Free Company**MEMBERS:** 2,658**SYMBOL:** Hourglass**ALIGNMENT:** Neutral**RELIGION:** Aleydra**LEADER:** Kvintus zi'Katusi

HISTORY, OPERATIONS, AND GOALS: The Free Company of Aleydra known as the Inquisitors are a group of adventurers, historians, and detectives who seek to unravel the mysteries of the world. They track down magical items and explore locations touched by the arcane or divine, and they can be found wherever there are rumors of the unexplained. They run an impressive museum of rare items, ancient artifacts, and tomes of long-forgotten tales. The Inquisitors have a healthy respect and rivalry with the Eyes of Vathis, and they complicate the lives of the Vathis Sentinels whenever their members become involved in unusual cases, as they often do. All of their number are worshippers of Aleydra who seek to uncover knowledge and magic of all kinds. Their services can be contracted for a modest fee, so long as they are able to take confidential notes on the case, or catalogue the item they were sent to retrieve. The museum that functions as

their headquarters is located in Spinel, Sillirai, though they have members scattered across the world, and special collection exhibits in many prominent museums across Vathis. The Inquisitors are currently focused on locating missing individuals and lost information from the Darkest War.

THE BROKEN SWORDS*“By my blood, may my brothers rest.”***TYPE:** Religious Free Company**MEMBERS:** 5,384**SYMBOL:** Broken sword**ALIGNMENT:** Neutral Good**RELIGION:** Bastion**LEADER:** Arcadius zi'Nikas

HISTORY, OPERATIONS, AND GOALS: The Broken Swords are a Free Company of veteran soldiers with nothing to lose. They are fearless fighters who undertake difficult and dangerous tasks so those with family and loved ones remain safe. Their ranks more than doubled in recent years, a result of the widespread death and destruction from the Darkest War. They have no official headquarters. During the Darkest War their ranks served on the front lines whenever they could, and they were almost entirely annihilated. However, their membership began to explode as they found new members who lost their family and homes to the Shattered Hand. Their current goal is to find other veterans from the Darkest War to recruit, as well as establish a home base in light of their newly increased membership.

LIGHTWARDENS*“Preserve her creation.”***TYPE:** Religious Free Company**MEMBERS:** 24,158**SYMBOL:** Ankh sword**ALIGNMENT:** Neutral Good**RELIGION:** Astea**LEADER:** Vivienne zi'Amiel

HISTORY, OPERATIONS, AND GOALS: The Lightwardens were the first Free Company ever created, existing ages before the Divine Sands War as Astea's personal protectors during her various rebirths. They have continued the tradition for countless generations, surviving wars, plagues, ice ages, dragons, and all manner of turmoil—including failed internal rebellions. When she is not on the Material Plane they seek out and protect her holdings, preach at her churches, and build monuments at the various locations where she was reborn. They scour the world for Astea artifacts and knowledge, and are one of the more active Free Companies. They were a larger organization before the Darkest War, but many of the Lightwardens volunteered for early front line positions and valiantly gave their lives to allow others to escape the onslaught of the Shattered Hand. The Lightwardens are headquartered in Aurez City.



RELIC STAR

"Chase the Horizon."

TYPE: Religious Free Company

MEMBERS: 1,321

SYMBOL: Compass star

ALIGNMENT: Chaotic Neutral

RELIGION: Teiris

LEADER: Ryfon Ninleyn

HISTORY, OPERATIONS, AND GOALS: Relic Star was originally a group of Teirins intent on exploring the world, and they were transformed into a Free Company during the Divine Sands War. Originally simple explorers and travelers, the organization was reformed during the Age of Legacy and given the task of exploring, discovering, and documenting the entire world. They are composed of airship captains, cartographers, and explorers, and they are proudly the largest transportation group in the world. They trade heavily in information and seek to spread Teiris' influence and mantra of freedom. Relic Star has three main headquarters located in Valiance, Aurez City, and Kamtyrow. They often hire adventurers and like-minded individuals to assist them with their various endeavors.

SERENITY

"By her grace we all pass."

TYPE: Religious Free Company

MEMBERS: 1,248

SYMBOL: Triquetra

ALIGNMENT: Neutral

RELIGION: Mileen

LEADER: Caelius zi'Lovinus

HISTORY, OPERATIONS, AND GOALS: Serenity is a Free Company devoted to hunting the undead, as well as beings that defy the natural order of life and death. They serve Mileen and are known to be fanatical, but they do not kill without reason. Their base of operations is found in northern Erygis. Serenity's current goals are to round up the souls lost during the Darkest War and shepherd them to the afterlife. They perform last rites for the deceased from the Darkest War who died but never left the earth. They often visit battlefields and places where death and destruction were recent.

SHADOWLOTUS

"Under the petals."

TYPE: Religious Free Company

MEMBERS: 217

SYMBOL: Lotus made of shadow

ALIGNMENT: Chaotic Evil

RELIGION: Uryll

LEADER: Lillith

HISTORY, OPERATIONS, AND GOALS: Created as the original company of warriors during the Divine Sands

War, members of the Shadowlotus were given the Gift of Night by Uryll for their brave actions. They were merciless and ruthless killers, and became widely feared. They followed Uryll north at the end of the war, and were never seen or heard from again. In reality, they began to operate under the guise of the leadership of the city-state of Vanya, and the organization has continued in the shadows ever since, ensuring the dominance of Uryll in the regions surrounding their headquarters. Agents of the Shadowlotus are primarily members of a much larger organization known as the Blood Syndicate.

Nearly all members of the Shadowlotus are vampires, and many of these members hold key positions in Tristan, unbeknownst to their fellows. They adhere to a very distinct uniform that allows them to operate quickly and quietly in the shadows to glean information, spread discord, and further Uryll's cause. Members of the Shadowlotus are wholly secretive. Knowledge of the organization is primarily rumor and legend, and no definitive proof of the organization's existence has ever been found. It is believed that the Blood Syndicate splintered off of this organization five hundred years ago. Their base of operations is in Uryllgrad, and they act as an organization of assassins that can only be contacted indirectly through a secret ritual.

11TH HOUR

"Cleansing by the sword."

TYPE: Demon Hunters Free Company

MEMBERS: 4,569

SYMBOL: The number 11

ALIGNMENT: Lawful Good

RELIGION: No central religion, mainly Astrian

LEADER: Retribution

HISTORY, OPERATIONS, AND GOALS: The 11th Hour was formed after the fall of Vavaire during the Darkest War by a leaderless military company. Their primary directive is to hunt down surviving members of the Shattered Hand. They often assist rural communities in reclaiming territories lost during the Darkest War, and they make it a point to protect those who cannot protect themselves.

HOUSE OF SHADOW

"Carve your own path, bow for no man."

TYPE: Thieves Guild

MEMBERS: 47,546

SYMBOL: A crudely drawn X between two eyes

ALIGNMENT: Chaotic Neutral

RELIGION: Teiris

LEADER: The Philosopher

HISTORY, OPERATIONS, AND GOALS: The House of Shadow is a far-reaching group of thieves and infiltrators working throughout the empires located on the western coast of Asarus. They have safehouses everywhere, but they are currently based out of a ruined island in Aurez City. Whispers in darkened alleys and shadowmarks on the steps of homes are the only evi-



dence of the group's existence. The Cyprian faction of the House of Shadow is said to be led by a figure known only as The Philosopher. Their activities in Cypress include trying to hinder CORE and Lurien Industries, neither of which they would like to have influence over the other. The House of Shadow has members attempting to infiltrate the two organizations, in the hopes of stealing their secrets and robbing them of technology. They are also known to blackmail members of the government close to lawmakers and influential people, and they foster illegal trade between civilian and Outlaw markets.

MIDNIGHT SYNDICATE

"It is known."

TYPE: Organized Crime Syndicate

MEMBERS: 514

SYMBOL: Crystal flower

ALIGNMENT: Chaotic Neutral

RELIGION: Aleydra

LEADER: Zachariah zi'Mirshann and Dark zi'Mirshann

HISTORY, OPERATIONS, AND GOALS: The Midnight Syndicate was originally founded by remnants of the Order of the Midnight Amethyst, the secret protectors of Empress Jaeress of Sillirai. They are master information gatherers and deal solely in the trade of information. They keep a loose connection to Commodore Adieu of the One Hundred and Seventeen Sky Dragons and operate out of Sanctuary, Vavaire, and various holdings in Aurezia. The Midnight Syndicate has recently come under a sort of schism, as two brothers vie for control of the organization. One wishes to start delving into assassination, and the other wishes to keep the old, honorable way. Psionic spies, primarily amari and a smattering of other races, compose this group. During the Darkest War they gathered intelligence for Legion.

FREE COMPANIES ITEM LIST

Deity	Name	Item
Aleydra	Inquisitors	Eyes
Astea	Lightwardens	Armor
Bastion	Broken Swords	Cloak
Circe	Bluemoon House	Amulet
Irilynshaee	Frost Crescent	Horn
Junon	Dark Knights	Junon's Art of War (Book)
Kato	Dread Tempests	Sword
Keindrinas	Faceless	Mask
Mileen	Serenity	Ring
Naugrix	Delvers	Satchel
Serena	Harbinger	Banner
Teiris	Relic Star	Books
Tesiline	Grey Company	Ring
Uryll	Shadowlotus	Belt
Valshathe	The Fallen	Staff
Vangal	Guardian Force	Shield
Zanon	The Black Hand	Gauntlets

A large number of these items are unnamed and undescribed, giving GM the ability to suit the items and their abilities to their respective campaigns.



RULES FOR THE PATHFINDER ROLEPLAYING GAME



AMARI RACIAL TRAITS

+2 INTELLIGENCE, +2 CHARISMA, -2 STRENGTH:

Amari are not a physically powerful race, but would rather focus their energies towards the abilities of their mind.

HUMANOID (AMARI): Amari are humanoids with the amari subtype.

MEDIUM: Amari are Medium creatures and receive no bonuses or penalties due to their size.

NORMAL SPEED: Amari have a base speed of 30 feet.

NATURALLY PSIONIC: Amari gain the *Wild Talent* feat as a bonus feat at 1st level. If an amari takes levels in a psionic class, she instead gains the Psionic Talent feat. If you are not using Psionic rules, an amari gains the *Iron Will* feat and the ability to cast *charm person* once per day, using their character level as their spell casting level and Charisma as their spell-casting modifier.

NATURAL EMPATHY: Amari have the ability to sense base emotions and gain the psi-like ability to manifest *empathy* at will as long as the amari has psionic focus. Ignore this ability if you are not using psionic rules.

BASTION OF THOUGHT(SU): An amari has the ability to enter into a meditative state in an instant where they can physically rearrange their thoughts. This ability grants them the following effects. 1/day an amari can add 1d6 to any d20 roll they make after the result has been made, or 1d8 if they choose to use this ability before the roll has been made. Due to the psychic walls all amari possess, they gain a +1 bonus to Will saving throws and can easily fend off most mental assaults.

CACHING (SU): Amari can, as a move action, store an item in their possession into a psychic storage space. Storing an item in this manner creates a ball of psychic energy that revolves six inches above the amari's head at a range of one foot. Over the course of an hour, all of the balls of energy coalesce into one. An amari can have an item they have cached taken from them by simply grabbing the ball of light (sleight of hand check required). If the amari is aware, a Steal combat maneuver is required. Retrieving an item from the cache is also a move action, and the item immediately appears in an open hand. An amari can cache a total weight of items equal to 5 lbs per level plus their intelligence score. Thus, a level 3 amari with an intelligence score of 16 can store a total weight of 31 pounds of gear. You must be able to hold the item off the ground in two hands to be able to cache it.

MINOR TELEPATHY (SU): Amari can communicate telepathically with any creature within 25 feet, just as if he was speaking to him or her aloud. The amari can only speak and listen to one person at a time, and he must share a common language with the person or creature he speaks to telepathically or the telepathic link fails.

DREAM STATE: Rather than sleep, amari enter a form of med-

itation known as a Dream State, in which the psionic link between all amari is reinforced in a dream world. In this dream world, amari can visualize whatever surroundings they wish and interact with objects as if they were physically there by tapping into their own subconscious and borrowing from their life experiences and memories. Dream State does not allow communication between amari. An amari needs to spend 4 hours in this state to gain the same benefits other races gain from taking a 8 hour rest. While in the dream state, she is fully aware of her surroundings and notices approaching enemies and other events as normal. Amari casters who take time to prepare their spells must still rest for the time denoted by their class.

PSIONIC APTITUDE: When an amari takes a level in a favored class, he can choose to gain an additional power point instead of a hit point or skill point.

LANGUAGES: Amari begin play speaking Vavalish and Sillarian. Amari with high Intelligence scores can choose any bonus languages they want (except secret languages, such as Druidic).

ILDERA RACIAL TRAITS

+2 INTELLIGENCE, -2 CHA: Ildera pick up new information quickly but have a hard time relating to others.

HUMANOID (LIVING ELDRIA): Ildera are humanoids with the living eldria subtype.

MEDIUM: Ildera are Medium creatures and receive no bonuses or penalties due to size.

NORMAL SPEED: Ildera have a base speed of 30 feet.

ELDRIA GIFTS: Due to the inclusion of eldria in the composition of their bodies ildera gain significant benefits and drawbacks. Ildera possess the ability to detect natural eldria within 30 feet as per the *detect evil* spell; this ability just reveals the presence or absence of natural eldria and its type.

ELDRICSTEEL SKIN: Ildera gain a +1 bonus to natural armor due to the material they are constructed out of.

ARMOR CRYSTAL: Ildera possess the ability to grow a set of armor out of eldricsteel based on what specific Armor Crystal they embed into the slot on their chest. The armor grows at a certain rate and is removed at a rate that is located on the table for Armor Crystals. The armor crystals themselves are enchantable just as a normal suit of armor.

UNTIRING: An ildera's speed is not affected by carrying a medium or heavy load.

LANGUAGES: Ildera begin play speaking Vavalish. Ildera with high Intelligence scores can choose any bonus languages they want (except secret languages, such as Druidic).

LIVING ELDRIA: Ildera possess all the traits of living eldria.

LIVING ELDRIA SUBTYPE: Creatures of the living eldria subtype are a mix of metal and crystal lattice given life by Eldria's



latent magic. The living eldria subtype can be applied to any creature type. The exact process for creatures being born of eldria is unknown, but both natural and artificial creatures of living eldria are known to exist. Living eldria have immunity to poison, sleep effects, paralysis, disease, nausea, fatigue, exhaustion, effects that cause the sickened condition, and the negative effects of natural eldria. Living eldria does not need to eat, sleep, or breathe, though they can still benefit from consumable spells, magic items, and potions. Living eldria has Energy Vulnerability (Sonic) and takes double damage from attacks of that energy type. Living eldria is affected by spells that target creatures, as well as by those that target constructs. Living eldria does not heal naturally except in places of natural eldria. Living eldria responds differently from other living creatures when reduced to 0 hit points. Living eldria with 0 hit points is disabled, just like a living creature. It can only take a single move action or standard action in each round, but strenuous activity does not risk further injury. When its hit points are less than 0 and greater than -10, a living eldria creature is inert. It is unconscious and helpless and it cannot perform any actions. However, a living eldria creature that is inert does not lose additional hit points unless more damage is dealt to it, as with a living creature that is stable. A living eldria creature cannot make constitution checks to become stable except in an area with natural eldria. Creatures of living eldria, due to their makeup of eldria and metal, can be repaired by a special repair kit. Users of the kit can make a Craft (armorsmithing, blacksmithing, or gemcutting) check over the course of eight hours and the creature will heal a number of HP equal to the result minus 10.

INUZEN RACIAL TRAITS

+2 WISDOM, +2 CHARISMA, -2 CONSTITUTION: Inuzen are deeply connected to the natural world and beautiful to behold with quick tongues, but their bodies are frailer than humans.

FEY (SHAPECHANGER): Inuzen are fey with the shapechanger subtype.

MEDIUM: Inuzen are Medium creatures and receive no bonuses or penalties due to their size.

SWIFT SPEED: Inuzen have a base speed of 40 feet.

WOLF-SHAPE: The connection to nature that inuzen possess gives them the special ability to turn into a medium sized wolf. Changing form (to wolf or back) is a standard action and does not provoke attacks of opportunity. While in wolf form, an inuzen cannot speak but can use Leylights to communicate. Her gear melds with her new form, becoming inaccessible while in wolf form, but she retains any magical effects granted by that gear. She loses the ability to attack with her weapons but gains a bite attack. This is a primary natural attack that deals 1d4 points of damage. Speed, ability scores, and movement types remain unchanged while in wolf form. An inuzen in wolf form cannot cast spells with verbal components but she retains all of the benefits of armor and shield bonuses while in wolf form.

SENSITIVE HEARING: Inuzen possess extremely sensitive ears that easily pick up sound and feeling in words. Most people find it difficult to get away with lying to an inuzen. Inuzen gain

a +1 racial bonus to perception and sense motive checks. These skills are always considered class skills for inuzen.

LEYLIGHTS: Inuzen possess the ability to create what are known as leylights. Using this ability is a free action that can be used at will. This ability functions as *dancing lights*, except as noted. This spell has a range of 250 feet, and at night the lights can be seen from that distance. Inuzen can rapidly change the color of the lights, which they use to denote a form a sign language to each other. An inuzen can have up to six lights at a time. The lights can only take the form of glowing spheres.

SCENT: Inuzen have the scent ability.

WILD HUNTER: Inuzen receive a +4 racial bonus on Constitution checks and Fortitude saves to avoid fatigue and exhaustion, as well as any other ill effects from running, forced marches, starvation, thirst, and hot or cold environments.

WEAPON FAMILIARITY: Inuzen are proficient with longbows (including composite longbows) and shortbows (including composite shortbows).

LOW-LIGHT VISION: Inuzen can see twice as far as humans in conditions of dim light.

LANGUAGES: Inuzen begin play speaking Vavalish, Farlish, and Leylights. Inuzen with high Intelligence scores can choose any bonus languages they want (except secret languages, such as Druidic).

NOIR RACIAL TRAITS

+2 DEXTERITY, +2 CHARISMA, -2 WISDOM: Noir are quick and socially agile, but are disjointed from the world.

NATIVE OUTSIDER: Noir are outsiders with the native subtype.

MEDIUM: Noir are Medium creatures and receive no bonuses or penalties due to their size.

NORMAL SPEED: Noir have a base speed of 30 feet.

FACECHANGER: Noir were gifted with a unique ability among all of the races of Vathis—to change his or her body and face in an endless array of forms. Noir can assume the appearance of a Small or Medium humanoid as if by the *alter self* spell. This is purely a cosmetic appearance change and the noir gains none of the abilities of the race, just the appearance. Noir will revert to their natural forms when killed. Noir cannot assume the appearance of inuzen and ilderda due to their subtypes.

MEMORIES FROM BEFORE: From the endless incarnations of previous lives, Noir have some remnant of memory from their past lives. Noir retain enough memory of past incarnations to speak and understand multiple languages and knowledge they have previously gained. Newly incarnated noir pick two Knowledge skills. Noir gain a +2 racial bonus on both of these skills, and those skills are treated as class skills.

INSTILLED WILL: Due to remnant Vandiel control, Noir gain a +2 bonus to Will savings throws.

DEEP SECRETS: One of the few abilities the Vandiels instilled into the Noir was the benefit of remaining undetectable by magical means. Noir gain of the benefit of a *non-detection* spell as a constant effect on themselves.

VANDIEL BLOOD: Noir are always treated as an Evil outsider



for the purposes of spells and effects. If they are banished, they return to the last place they reincarnated.

ENDLESS INCARNATIONS: When a noir dies, his or her spirit is returned to the Material Plane in a new adult body. Their newly created body will appear in a place that they haven't visited in a prior life. When reincarnating in this manner a noir will not remember anything from their previous life. If a player controlled noir dies, that player should roll up a new character.

LANGUAGES: Noir begin play speaking Vavalish plus three others. Noir with high Intelligence scores can choose any bonus languages they want, including secret languages.

VASAR RACIAL TRAITS

Vasar possess the ability to fly. This can provide them a situational advantage that makes them more powerful in certain situations. Keep this in mind when allowing vasar to be used in your games.

+2 STRENGTH, +2 CHARISMA, -2 DEXTERITY:

Though sometimes impeded by their form, Vasar are strong and have a naturally commanding presence.

HUMANOID (DRAGON): Vasar are humanoids with the dragon subtype.

MEDIUM: Vasar are Medium creatures and receive no bonuses or penalties due to their size.

NORMAL SPEED: Vasar have a base speed of 30 feet, and a fly speed of 30 feet.

PREHENSILE TAIL: All Vasar have a tail that they have learned to use when their hands are full. They cannot wield weapons with their tails, but they can retrieve small, stowed objects carried on their persons as a swift action.

DRACONIC EYES: The eyes of the Vasar are particularly keen, granting them better perception and sight in low light conditions, a trait passed down from their ancestors. Vasar gain +1 racial bonus to perception and appraise, and can see twice as far as humans in conditions of dim light.

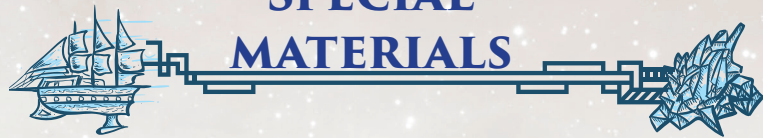
NATURAL ARMOR: The tough scales of Vasar grant them a +1 natural armor bonus to their armor class.

LIFE LESSONS: Vasar have a deep appreciation for history, and make it a point to share it with their youths. They also teach them basic survival skills at a young age. Vasar gain a +2 racial bonus to History and Survival.

DRACONIC ANCESTRY: Vasar come from draconic lineage, which, though diluted, grants them resistance to sleep and paralysis effects in the form of a +2 racial bonus to saving throws against sleep and paralysis.

LANGUAGES: Vasar begin play speaking Draconic and Vavalish. Vasar with high Intelligence scores can choose any bonus languages they want (except secret languages, such as Druidic).

SPECIAL MATERIALS



ASTRIUM

Astrium is a steel-like substance forged from zodi'ite. Many old, powerful artifacts are made up of it. It is an extremely rare substance and the forging and creation process has been lost to the sands of time.

HP/INCH: 50 (weapons and armor normally made of steel that are made of astrium have one-half more hit points than normal).

HARDNESS: 25

COST: Astrium is incredibly rare, and many people loathe to get rid of it. As such, it does not possess a price and is treated as artifact level.

WEIGHT: 3/4 normal; An item made from astrium weighs three-quarters as much as the same item made from other metals. In the case of weapons, this lighter weight does not change a weapon's size category or the ease with which it can be wielded (whether it is light, one-handed, or two-handed).

ARMOR	WEAPON
Items themselves are impossible to find through divination spells; this effect is not granted to the wearer.	Items themselves are impossible to find through divination spells; this effect is not granted to the wielder.
+2 bonus per tier on Will saves vs all divination spells and effects.	Overcomes all material based damage reduction; cold iron, silver, adamantine, etc. Treated as a magic weapon for purposes of overcoming DR.
Spell failure chances for armors and shields made from astrium are decreased by 10% per tier.	Adamantine does not ignore hardness of astrium.
Maximum Dexterity bonuses are increased by 1.	Ignores hardness less than 25.
Armor check penalties are decreased by 2.	+1 damage per damage die.
Wearer gains DR 3/per armor tier, up to 9.	
Functions normally in places of wild, dead, or anti magic.	Functions normally in places of wild, no, or anti magic.

RIMESTEEL

A special version of ice found within deep glaciers in the coldest of places, forged under a special process into a steel-like substance that exudes cold.

HP/INCH: as steel

HARDNESS: as steel

COST: Rimesteel is so costly that weapons and armor made from it are always of masterwork quality; the masterwork cost is



included in the prices given on the table below.

WEIGHT: 1/2 normal; An item made from rimesteel weighs half as much as the same item made from other metals. In the case of weapons, this lighter weight does not change a weapon's size category or the ease with which it can be wielded (whether it is light, one-handed, or two-handed).

ARMOR	WEAPON
One category lighter than normal for purposes of movement and other limitations, so that medium armor counts as light armor and heavy armor counts as medium.	All damage dealt by the weapon is cold damage.
No spell failure chance for spells with the cold descriptor.	+1 cold damage. In areas below freezing, this damage increases to +1d4, and in areas below zero degrees Fahrenheit, this damage increases to +1d6.
Maximum Dexterity bonuses are increased by 1.	Grants wielder cold resistance 2 that stacks with any other source.
Armor check penalties are decreased by 2.	
In areas below freezing, DCs for cold spells increase by +1. In areas below zero, the wearer casts spells with the cold descriptor as if her caster level was one higher.	

TYPE OF ITEM	COST MODIFIER
Ammunition	+50 gp per missile
Light armor	+2,000 gp
Medium armor	+5,000 gp
Heavy armor	+10,000 gp
Shield	+500 gp
Weapon	+1,000 gp
Other	+250 gp per pound

ELDRICSTEEL

Steel alloyed with eldria produces eldricsteel, a grey steel laced with blue veins of eldria.

HP/INCH: as steel

HARDNESS: 15

COST: Eldricsteel is so costly that weapons and armor made from it are always of masterwork quality; the masterwork cost is included in the prices given on the table below.

WEIGHT: 1/2 normal; An item made from eldricsteel weighs half as much as the same item made from other metals. In the case of weapons, this lighter weight does not change a weapon's size category or the ease with which it can be wielded (whether it is light, one-handed, or two-handed). Ildera are made of eldricsteel. It is too heavy to use in airship design.

ARMOR	WEAPON
Heals itself at the rate of 1/hp per hour.	Heals itself at the rate of 1/hp per hour.
Counts as magic.	Counts as magic.
Half of the base AC granted by the armor is considered force, for purposes of incorporeal attacks.	Harder than steel.
-5% arcane spell failure per tier.	Expend spell slot for +1d4 damage per spell level on next hit.
Harder than steel.	50gp per pound.
50gp per pound.	

VAEDRICSTEEL

Following the same process as eldricsteel, a grey steel laced with red veins of vaedra eldria.

HP/INCH: as steel

HARDNESS: 15

COST: Vaedricsteel is so costly that weapons and armor made from it are always of masterwork quality; the masterwork cost is included in the prices given on the table below.

WEIGHT: 1/2 normal; An item made from vaedricsteel weighs half as much as the same item made from other metals. In the case of weapons, this lighter weight does not change a weapon's size category or the ease with which it can be wielded (whether it is light, one-handed, or two-handed).

ARMOR	WEAPON
Heals itself at the rate of 2/hp per hour	Heals itself at the rate of 2/hp per hour.
Counts as magic.	Counts as magic.
Maximum Dexterity bonuses are increased by + 1.	Grants wielder cold resistance 2 that stacks with any other source.
Half of the base AC granted by the armor is considered force, for purposes of incorporeal attacks.	Harder than steel.
+1 bonus to Spellcraft checks per tier	
-10% arcane spell failure per tier.	Expend spell slot for +1d8 damage per spell level on next hit.
Half weight	Half weight



Harder than steel	500 gp per pound.
500 gp per pound	

ILDERA ARMOR CRYSTALS

Type	Cost	Armor Bonus	Max Dex Bonus	Armor Check Penalty	Arcane Spell Failure Chance	Weight	Don Time
Light	30 gp	+3	+5	-1	5%	20lbs	1 minute
Medium	400 gp	+6	+3	-4	15%	30lbs	3 minutes
Heavy	1500 gp	+9	+1	-6	25%	50lbs	5 minutes

VAEDRICARMS

Vaedricarms	Cost	Dmg (S)	Dmg (M)	Critical	Range	Misfire	Capacity	Weight	Type	Action	Reload Action
Vaedric Pistol	800 gp	1d6	1d8	x4	20 ft.	1 (5 ft.)	1	4 lbs	B and P	Break	Move
Bullets (10)	2 gp										
Vaedric Rifle	4,000 gp	1d8	1d10	x4	80 ft.	1	1	12 lbs	B and P	Bolt-Action	Move
Bullets (10)	2 gp										

ELDRIA RULES

When a character comes within 50 feet of unrefined elarian eldria, deposit or otherwise, the character is infused with latent eldria energy and must make a Fortitude save with a DC = 14 + one half character level. If the character fails, the GM rolls 1d6 to determine the level of effect (minimum 1), and rolls a 1d6 to determine how many uses of the effect the character has. A character can willingly forgo this save.

For each time the character uses their newfound abilities they must make a Fortitude save against a DC = 14 + one half character level + level of effect. If this save is failed, the character takes hit point damage equal to the effect's spell level times two. If the character passes the save, the character instead takes no damage. For instance, if Jerry was granted four uses of levitate by eldria, every time he used one use he would take 4 damage on a failed save, or none on a passed save.

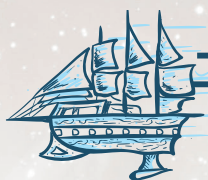
After a period of one hour, the influx of energy violently leaves the character's body if they have not used up all of their effect uses. At this time the character must make a Fortitude save = 14 + one half character level + level of effect. If this save is failed, the character takes hit point damage equal to the effect's spell level times four, per use they have remaining. If the character passes the save, the character instead takes only half damage. For instance, if Jerry was granted four uses of levitate by eldria, but had not used any of them by the time one hour passed, he would take 64 damage on a failed save, or 32 on a passed save.

EFFECT SPELL LEVEL	USES
1	1d6
2	1d6-1
3	1d6-2
4	1d6-3
5	1d6-4
6	1

EFFECTS: GM chooses a spell off of a spell list that is equal to the effect level. The character gains the ability to use that spell a number of times equal to the Uses roll result.



SIGIL RULES FOR THE PATHFINDER ROLEPLAYING GAME



Below are the powers granted to the Starcalled who possesses a sigil. Denoted below each sigil are the recommended powers for each sigil. These powers are not static; a GM may choose different abilities in the same theme for each sigil. A character chooses a sigil at level 1. If a character would not like a sigil, they automatically gain the Starcalled Influenced abilities instead. A character can gain a sigil at a later time as justified by their GM, but loses all of the abilities of Starcalled Influenced at the moment he gains one. Unless stated otherwise, every ability is utilized using your character level as your caster level and utilizes your highest ability modifier as the casting modifier. The DC for abilities utilized from a sigil are $10 + \frac{1}{2}$ Character Level + Highest Ability Modifier. These abilities are all considered Spell like Abilities, and unless otherwise stated, require a standard action to use. Some abilities granted are vague to allow for GM interpretation.

GENRAE: EARTH, SIGIL OF THE WILD

Level 1	Know Area and Direction	You know the general geographical layout of the land within 1 mile per level of you, as if you had looked at a map. This includes the common names of major landmarks and ideal traveling routes.
Level 4	Earth Strider	You ignore difficult terrain and gain a burrow speed equal to half your movement speed.
Level 7	Plant Growth	Each day you can cast any spell from the spell list below a number of times equal to half your level. The spell cannot be of a level higher than half your character level, maximum 9th. • <i>Animate plants, command plants, control plants, diminish plants, entangle, plant growth, spike growth, thorny entanglement, wall of thorns.</i>
Level 10	Tremorsense	You know the location of all creatures within 5ft per level as long as they are in contact with the ground. This ability functions as the <i>Tremorsense</i> ability.
Level 13	Shape/Create Earth	Once per day, you may shape your environment as if by the <i>move earth</i> spell with the added ability to affect stone.
Level 16	Stone Body	By using a swift action, your body can become like stone for a number of rounds each day equal to your level. For the duration, you gain DR 10/astrium. The rounds do not need to be consecutive.
Level 20	Become Earth Elemental	Once per day, for a number of minutes equal to your level, you can take on the form of a earth elemental. This functions as the spell <i>elemental body IV</i> , but is limited to earth elementals.

ERMIN: AIR, SIGIL OF THE VEIL

Level 1	Secret Pockets	You can create one extradimensional space on your person that cannot be found except by <i>true seeing</i> . This space can hold up to 10lbs per level of nonliving material. You can only have one such space at a time.
Level 4	Detect Secret	You may roll twice and use the higher result whenever you make a Perception or Sense Motive check.
Level 7	Glean	You learn one secret about one creature or object once per day. You may use this ability a number of times per day equal to your level. This secret is determined by your GM.
Level 10	Read Thoughts	You can read the thoughts of others, functioning as the spell <i>detect thoughts</i> at will.
Level 13	Shroud Knowledge	Once per day, you may use one of the abilities below to affect an object, area or creature. A successful Will save prevents these effects. You may end this ability at any time you choose. -A creature forgets a piece of information you want them to forget. You must know the information. -Creatures that interact with a chosen object see it as unimportant and ignore it. -An area in a 10 foot radius per level affected by this ability can be made to look as if nothing occurred there and everything is normal.
Level 16	Invisibility	3 times per day, you can turn invisible as per the spell <i>greater invisibility</i> .
Level 20	Alter Memory	Once per week you may alter one memory of one creature permanently. This memory can only be of one event. The subject can prevent this with a Will save.



KAIJIN: WATER, SIGIL OF THE SAGE

Level 1	Increased Cognition	Downtime activities such as research, retraining, and learning of skills, languages and related curriculum have their minimum times halved. You gain a +2 bonus on checks involving all Knowledge skills.
Level 4	Telepathy	You create a telepathic bond between you and one ally per level. As long as they remain within 10ft per level, you can communicate telepathically.
Level 7	Photographic Memory	You can instantly recall one event that you personally experienced as clearly as if it were presently happening. You may do this once per day.
Level 10	Speak All Languages	You can speak, read and write in all living languages. At level 20 this includes all dead and secret languages. This does not allow you to break ciphers.
Level 13	Know History	Once per day, you can learn the history of an object or your immediate vicinity by touching it/standing in it and concentrating. You learn more the longer you concentrate.
Level 16	Insight	You commune with the forces of destiny. Once per week, you may ask your GM a number of yes or no questions equal to half your level, and they must answer as truthfully as possible. Alternatively, you may ask one question more complicated than yes or no and the GM must answer truthfully, but may answer cryptically.
Level 20	Return to Memory	Once per week, you may return to a memory of a willing creature you touch. You witness the memory in absolute detail as a passive observer and you may even move around unharmed. You may, in turn, get to witness the event and learn information that the original creature was incapable of discerning. You may remain in the memory for as long as you can hold concentration.

ENOLAR: FIRE, SIGIL OF THE STOIC

Level 1	Summon Force Horse	Once per day, you can summon a number of war horses equal to your level. These horses are only partially tangible, as they are made of pure force energy. They cannot attack or be attacked and only take commands from the rider they were created for. At level 13 they gain the ability to fly with a speed of 60 ft. These war horses last for one day.
Level 4	Carrying Capacity	Your carrying capacity increases by 100lbs per level.
Level 7	Sunder	When using the sunder action or breaking an object, you ignore hardness and deal max damage.
Level 10	Force Push	A number of times per day equal to half your level, you can force push enemies and objects of your choosing within ten feet of you. Targets must succeed on a Fortitude save or be pushed 5 ft/level straight in a direction away from you. Objects are pushed in the same fashion, but their weight cannot exceed your carrying capacity.
Level 13	Knockback	When you successfully hit a creature with a physical attack, you may force them back and they must make a Fortitude save or be pushed 5ft per 2 levels away from you.
Level 16	Telekinesis	You can move one unattended object weighing no more than your light load with telekinesis up to 500ft per round as a standard action.
Level 20	Immovable	You or one creature or object of your choice are frozen in place and cannot be moved or move by any means for a number of rounds equal to your level each day. The creature can otherwise act as normal. The rounds do not need to be consecutive.

ATASHIN: EARTH, SIGIL OF THE WATCHER

Level 1	Far Vision	You suffer no increment penalties when firing a ranged weapon up to its maximum range increment. The distance penalty for Perception checks is halved for you.
Level 4	Know Weakness	A number of times per day equal to your level, you can discern one creature's resistances, vulnerabilities, or immunities using a move action. If it does not possess any, you gain a +2 bonus on your next attack roll against it.
Level 7	X-ray Vision	A number of times per day equal to half your level, you can see through 1 foot of material per level. This lasts for a number of minutes equal to your level.
Level 10	Share Sight	Once per day, for up to one hour per level, you and up to 8 willing creatures can share their sense of sight. All creatures can see the surroundings of any of the others affected, as if they were there themselves.
Level 13	Perfect Vision	You no longer suffer any penalties on skill checks involving sight.
Level 16	Blindsense	You now have blindsense out to 20ft. This is a constant effect. At level 20 this upgrades to blindsight.
Level 20	See Past	While concentrating and taking no other actions, you can view past events that transpired at your current location. You view them in real time, and stop viewing them when you lose concentration. What these visions entail is at the GM's discretion. You may see into the past a number of years equal to your level.



LORTON: AIR, SIGIL OF THE SEER

Level 1	Weather Sense	You are able to accurately predict the weather up to one day per level from the current day. Also, your vision is unaffected by weather conditions such as fog or rain that would give you penalties to your vision.
Level 4	Control Winds	You can create a light wind at will. You can also do one of the two following things once per four levels each day: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replicate the spell <i>gust of wind</i> • Create an area of strong wind centered on yourself out to a radius of 20ft per level. The strong wind continuously travels in a circle around you and affects enemy ranged attacks and creatures in its area.
Level 7	Breathe Anywhere	You and up to one willing creature per level that you are touching can breathe in any condition.
Level 10	Wind Blade	Your reach with all melee weapons increases by 5 ft. Ranged attacks you make ignore all types of cover for purposes of attacking, as long as you have line of effect to the target.
Level 13	Flight	You gain a fly speed equal to your base movement speed with a maneuverability of average. If you already possess the ability to fly, your speed doubles and your maneuverability goes up one tier.
Level 16	Weather Control	This functions as <i>control weather</i> ; except changes are instantaneous and the user can choose anything from the given tables when changing the weather.
Level 20	Become Air Elemental	Once per day for a number of minutes equal to your level, you can take on the form of an air elemental. This functions as the spell <i>elemental body IV</i> , but is limited to air elementals.

EYRTASERI: WATER, SIGIL OF THE FOOL

Level 1	Fast Movement	The speed of all modes of movement you possess are increased by 10 ft. Apply this bonus before modifying your speed due to any armor worn or load carried.
Level 4	Determine Origin	You know the origin of one object that you touch, including where it was made and how long ago. You can do this 3 times per day.
Level 7	Age Object	One object or material of your choosing no larger than a 10 ft. cube is reduced to 1 hp. Magical or enchanted objects or materials are not affected. You can do this 3 times per day.
Level 10	Slow	3 times per day you may slow enemies within 30 feet of you. This functions as the spell <i>slow</i> , except the targets do not need to be within 30 ft. of each other.
Level 13	Incite Chaos	You incite chaos among your enemies. This functions as the spell <i>confusion</i> cast at a caster level equal to your character level. You can choose who is and who is not affected. You may use this ability a number of times per day equal to half your level.
Level 16	Kinetic Riposte	Each day, a number of times equal to half your level, you can channel your damage to someone else within range. As an immediate action after an enemy successfully hits you with a physical attack, choose a target within 60 ft. This target receives the damage you would have taken. You can only use this ability once per round.
Level 20	Destroy Object	Once per day, one object no larger than a 10 ft cube of your choosing is destroyed. Magical items and items held by a creature may make a Fortitude save to negate the effect. Artifacts are not affected.



OLATH: FIRE, SIGIL OF THE CURATOR

Level 1	Opening Ploy	You can never be surprised. You and all allies within 30 feet have a +2 bonus to initiative. The rest of your party can still be surprised, unless they also possess this sigil.
Level 4	Lifesense	Lifesense functions as <i>detect magic</i> except you detect the auras of living creatures in the same manner instead, as well as any poisons or diseases they are afflicted with. You may use this ability a number of minutes per day equal to your level times ten. You may break uses of this ability up into five minute increments.
Level 7	Lifelink	You and up to one willing creature per level are lifelinked. You know any status effects afflicting them, diseases they may have, their current state of emotions, current hit point totals, and where they are. This link must be established with a touch and can be canceled by either party at any time. All parties are aware of the presence of the link, only the sigil user gains the benefit of the knowledge granted by the link.
Level 10	Hivemind	You and up to 1 willing creature per level are psionically linked. Within 1 mile per level, you and all linked creatures are aware of what the other linked creatures are aware of. All creatures linked by this ability cannot be surprised. You and all linked creatures may perform Perception checks using the skill bonus of any of the linked creatures if you so choose. You and all linked creatures can telepathically communicate at all times.
Level 13	Soulwalk	A number of times equal to your level each day, you can teleport to any creature with a soul that you can see as a move action. You appear adjacent to them, though they are not necessarily aware that you teleported through them.
Level 16	Lifelink Swap	Any creatures who are linked through your <i>lifelink</i> can swap places or teleport adjacent to one another as a move action.
Level 20	Meld Into One	You and a number of willing creatures up to your level meld into one. You use the highest values and ability scores out of all the characters melded this way for every skill check, saving throw, attack roll, or any other numerical value that factors into a roll. Your hit points are equal to the total of all characters melded together. When you are unmelded, divide the remaining hp equally among the characters. The melded characters act on the turn of the sigil bearer and has access to any of the melded characters' abilities, powers, spells etc. There is no limit to the duration or frequency of the use of this ability.

ASSARIA: AIR, SIGIL OF THE WEAVER

Level 1	Negate Fall Damage	You and one creature you are touching are able to avoid taking fall damage. This is a constant effect.
Level 4	Levitation	You can <i>levitate</i> at will, as the spell, but the range is personal.
Level 7	Change Weight	You can multiply or divide the weight of one object by a factor of up to your level for up to 24 hours. You can do this once per day. The size of the effected object does not change.
Level 10	Collapse Object	You can increase or decrease the size of one object by one size category for every 2 levels you possess for 24 hours. The size cannot be any smaller than fine or larger than colossal. You can do this once per day. The weight of the effected object does not change.
Level 13	Center of Gravity	Creatures of your choosing within 10 ft per level are instantly pulled 5 ft per level toward you and must make a Fortitude save to halve the distance. You can use this ability 3 times per day.
Level 16	Stop Movement	One per day for a number of rounds equal to your level enemies within 5ft per level of you must make a Fortitude save or all their movement speeds become 0 until the ability ends.
Level 20	Reverse Gravity	This ability functions as the spell <i>reverse gravity</i> and can be used 3 times per day.



ISTO: EARTH, SIGIL OF THE SHADOW

Level 1	Mold Shadow	You can create a shadow servant that functions as an <i>unseen servant</i> indefinitely. Once per level each day, you can dispel your shadow servant to use one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shadow Shield- Functions as the spell <i>shield</i>, but it appears as if made of shadow. • Make Darkness- You create a globe of darkness, as per the spell <i>darkness</i>. You need to spend one minute recreating your shadow servant to use it again.
Level 4	Shadowwalk	You teleport from one adjacent shadow to another within your movement speed as a move action. The shadows you teleport to and from cannot be smaller than your size, meaning a medium creature with this sigil can use another medium creature's shadow as a point of arrival. You can use this ability twice per level per day.
Level 7	Hide in Plain Sight	As long as you are within 10 feet of an area of dim light, you can attempt to hide yourself from view in the open without anything to actually hide behind. You cannot, however, hide in your own shadow. The range is expanded by 10 ft every 5 levels to a max of 30ft at level 17.
Level 10	Superior Darkvision	You can see through both magical and non-magical darkness up to a range of 100ft.
Level 13	Insubstantial	Your body and your carried items become incorporeal and resemble shadows. This grants you all the qualities that come with the Incorporeal subtype and incorporeal special quality. You can enter this incorporeal form for a number of rounds per day equal to twice your level. These rounds do not need to be consecutive.
Level 16	Shroud	Each day, you can turn invisible for a number of rounds equal to twice your level as long as you're within 20 feet of dim light or darkness. You remain invisible even if you take a hostile action and remain within 20 feet of dim light or darkness. These rounds do not need to be consecutive.
Level 20	Gloom Form	You can plane shift as per the spell <i>plane shift</i> , but only between the Gloom and Material Plane. You also gain constant Fast healing 1 in dim light or darker.

ZERUTU: WATER, SIGIL OF THE GUARDIAN

Level 1	Detect Emotion	As <i>detect magic</i> as a constant effect, except you are able to discern the emotional state of one creature that you can see within 10 feet per level. You learn a general summary of the target's current disposition, as well as its attitude toward any other creatures within 30 feet of it. Objects do not have emotion auras, except intelligent weapons and sentient oddities.
Level 4	Protect	As an immediate action you can do one of the following: Impose a -2 penalty on the next attack one creature you can see makes, or grant a +2 bonus on the next saving throw one creature you can see makes. You can use this ability a number of times equal to your level each day.
Level 7	Instigate	Choose one creature within 60ft. That target must make a Will save or be forced to attack one other target within range of your choosing, to the best of its ability. This effect lasts for one round. You can use this ability a number of times equal to your level per day.
Level 10	Devastate	One creature of your choice within 60ft becomes emotionally devastated. Their movement speed is halved and at the beginning of each of their turns they must make a Will save. On a failed save, the creature does nothing on their turn and receives a -2 penalty to their AC and on all saving throws until the beginning of their next turn. This lasts a number of rounds equal to your level. You may use this ability a number of times equal to your level per day.
Level 13	Berserk	You fill a target within 60ft with a relentless bloodlust. It must attempt a Will save. On a success, the target calms down, thus ending the ability. On a failure, the target may only spend its turn making a melee attack against a random creature within range, or if no creatures are in range, moving to the closest creature. The target may make a new saving throw at the end of its turn, anytime it is struck in combat, or if it cannot attack a target on its turn. This lasts a number of rounds equal to your level. You may use this ability a number of times equal to your level each day.
Level 16	Murder	You choose a target creature. If the subject has current hit points equal to 5 times your level or fewer, it dies instantly. Otherwise, the ability has no effect. You may use this ability once per day.
Level 20	Infatuation	One creature that you can see must pass a Will save or become completely and utterly infatuated with one other creature or object you choose. The infatuated subject can take no hostile actions against the chosen creature or object and will take hostile actions against any creature that harms the chosen creature or object. You may only have one creature infatuated with a chosen creature or object at a time. The infatuation lasts until you choose a new creature to infatuate or you decide to end the infatuation.



HEZIN: FIRE, SIGIL OF THE NOBLE

Level 1	Detect Heat	This ability functions the same as <i>detect magic</i> , but instead of magic, the user detects heat sources. Heat sources and their auras appear as varying degrees of yellow to bright red.
Level 4	Fire Cloak	You are immune to damage from a natural fire source, but magical fire affects you normally. You may cloak yourself in fire for a number of rounds equal to your level. When a creature hits you with a melee attack while this effect is active, they take 1d6 + 1/ level fire damage.
Level 7	Heat Touch	You can invoke an effect that works as the spell <i>heat metal</i> , except that it affects any object. Flammable objects can ignite. You can use this only once per level per day.
Level 10	Firewalk	Your base movement speed is increased by 10 ft. You can teleport between two sources of natural fire that you can see as a move action. You must be adjacent to one of the sources to use this ability, and you are not harmed by it for this action.
Level 13	Smoke	For a number of minutes equal to your level per day, you can become a cloud of smoke as per the spell <i>gaseous form</i> , but living creatures are unable to breathe safely within the cloud. The full duration does not need to be used all at once and can be used in increments of one minute if desired.
Level 16	Become Fire Elemental	Once per day, for a number of minutes equal to your level, you can take on the form of a fire elemental. This functions as the spell <i>elemental body III</i> , but is limited to fire elementals.
Level 20	Control Fire	Once per day per level you can cast any one spell that deals fire damage as a 9th level spell as long as you have a source of natural fire nearby. This can be used for minor effects outside of combat at the GM's discretion.

SRINAX: EARTH, SIGIL OF THE HEALER

Level 1	Provide	Once per day, you are able to conjure enough food for 20 people per level to be sustained for 24 hours.
Level 4	Rejuvenate	A number of times each day equal to half your level, you can cause one creature you touch to heal a number of hit points equal to your level times two, as a free action once per turn.
Level 7	Calm Emotions	3 times per day, you can cause your enemies to back down from a fight. When you use this ability, hostile creatures within 10 ft per level must succeed on a Will save or become indifferent to you and your allies. This is not an enchantment with a duration, it simply changes their attitude towards the party to indifferent.
Level 10	Become Friend	This ability functions as <i>charm monster</i> but has a duration of 24 hours, and the creature does not know it was charmed.
Level 13	Halt Death	As a swift action, you may prevent a creature from dying. When a creature within 5ft per level has 0 or less hit points and is dying, you cause them to become stable at one HP. You may use this ability a number of times equal to your level each day.
Level 16	Pacifism	You create an area not larger than 10ft per level in which creatures are unable to take hostile actions. You can use this once per day, and it lasts for a number of minutes equal to your level.
Level 20	Restore Life	This ability functions as <i>true resurrection</i> , except the subject could have died from anything, including old age. The subject is restored to life at an age you or the spirit choose. It must be an age they experienced. You can use this only once per year, and the power returns only on the Laniri.

GARAHN: AIR, SIGIL OF THE BARD

Level 1	Select Hearing	While maintaining concentration, you are able to block out all extraneous noise in an area and focus on one source of sound that you have line of effect to. You can hear as if you are in the targeted area. You do not take penalties to Perception based on surrounding noise.
Level 4	Throw Voice	You can recreate any sound that you are familiar with at one designated point within 10ft per level. You can do this a number of times equal to your level per day.
Level 7	Mimicry	You perfectly mimic the voice of a creature or a sound you are familiar with. This grants a +10 bonus to disguise checks when trying to fool a listener.
Level 10	Silence	A total number of times per day equal to half your level you can perform either of the following two abilities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cast the spell <i>silence</i> on a fixed location with a radius of up to 10 ft per level. • Cast the spell <i>zone of silence</i> on a fixed location with a radius of up to 10 ft per level.
Level 13	Echolocation	You can maintain concentration to gain blindsight out to 60ft. You cannot use this ability if you are deafened or unable to speak. If you are not concentrating you always have blindsight out to 5ft.
Level 16	Shatter	Three times per day, you can cast the spell <i>greater shout</i> .
Level 20	Sonic Boom	Once per day, you can emit a terrible sound that devastates the surrounding area. All creatures within a 100 ft radius of you take 50 sonic damage, are pushed 10 ft away from you and are knocked prone. Objects in the affected area take 100 sonic damage instead. Creatures can attempt a fortitude save to halve the damage and avoid being knocked prone.



ARRLIS: WATER, SIGIL OF THE FROST

Level 1	Water Affinity	You gain Resist 3 Cold, which increased by 3 per level until 10. You can create water at the rate of 5 gallons per round. You can freeze water within 30 feet up to a 10ft cube per round.
Level 4	Frostwalk	Water under your feet freezes instantly to support your weight allowing you to walk across it as if it was solid ground. You may choose not to use this ability. You do not suffer the penalties of difficult terrain for ice and snow.
Level 7	Frost Blast	Once per day per half level, you can utilize this ability to create a 10ft radius cloud of frost within 100ft. Creatures in the area suffer 1d4 points of damage per level and can attempt to pass a Fortitude save for half damage. The area affected becomes difficult terrain for 10 minutes.
Level 10	Amphibious	You gain the ability to breathe underwater. You also gain a swim speed equal to your base land speed. You also become immune to cold damage.
Level 13	Froststrike	Whenever you make a successful melee, ranged, or spell attack against a target, the target is frozen in place unable to move for one round. You may use this ability a number of times per day equal to your level.
Level 16	Become Water Elemental	Once per day, for a number of minutes equal to your level, you can take on the form of a water elemental. This functions as the spell <i>elemental body III</i> , but is limited to water elementals.
Level 20	Control Water	As long as you have a source of water or frost nearby, you can cast a single spell that produces water or deals cold damage as if it were cast using a 9th level spell slot. This ability can be used a number of times per day equal to your level. This can be used for minor effects outside of combat at the GM's discretion.

MENKI: FIRE, SIGIL OF THE SEEKER

Level 1	Brighten	A number of times per day equal to your level, you may create an area of natural light up to 10 ft/level within 100 ft. This light lasts for one hour and destroys magical darkness of a caster level lower than your character level.
Level 4	Lightbridge	This ability creates a bridge of pure light up to 20 square ft per level in size. The bridge has no weight limit. This can be used 3 times per day.
Level 7	Blinding Defense	As an immediate action, whenever an adjacent creature successfully hits you with a melee attack the creature must make a Fortitude save or become stunned for one round. You may use this ability a number of times per day equal to half your level.
Level 10	Vision	You summon a magical sensor that can perceive the world around you. This ability functions as the spell <i>arcane eye</i> , except it needs no concentration. You can use this ability a number of times per day equal to your level.
Level 13	Focus Beams	You focus light in the area around you towards an object or creature within 100 feet. The target suffers 1d10 points of damage per level and gets a Reflex Save for half damage. The target of the spell is illuminated as if by <i>faerie fire</i> . You may use this ability a number of times per day equal to half of your level.
Level 16	Screen	Once per day you may use <i>screen</i> as a spell like ability. The DC to overcome the effects is five higher than normal.
Level 20	Teleport	You can teleport a distance equal to your base speed at will. Once per day, you can teleport any distance and bring your party with you.

DISCLAIMER:

Due to the powerful nature of the Winyt sigils, we suggest they be used with GM discretion. The Sigil of the Lord has historically only manifested on those of the Stardragon bloodline (Vavairen royalty). Those possessing the Sigil of the Sovereign are incredibly rare, and the sigil has only manifested on humanoids a handful of times in all of recorded history.



WINYT: SIGIL OF THE LORD

Level 1	Scribe	You are able to read and write all languages, read pages of text instantaneously, and can craft scrolls twice as fast.
Level 4	Ethersight	This functions as <i>detect magic</i> except you immediately gain the knowledge you would normally receive after 3 rounds. You do not need to roll to determine the school of magic for each effect. At level 10, you can determine the exact spells, if any, that are in effect.
Level 7	Enhance	Once per day you may choose one creature and one ability score. This creature gains a +2 bonus on all d20 rolls that benefit from the chosen ability score for 24 hours or until you choose a new creature.
Level 10	Etherbolts	You fire a bolt of pure Ether energy at a target within 100ft. The target takes 1d6+1 points of damage per two levels. The bolt ignores resistances of any kind. You may use this ability a number of times per day equal to half your level.
Level 13	Ether Barrier	Once per day when you are targeted by an attack, effect, or spell, you may choose to nullify the incoming attack as an immediate action. You become immune to any hostile effects until the beginning of your next turn.
Level 16	Ether Creation	You are able to instantly create any mundane object no larger than a 20 ft cube in size. Any object created this way disappears after 24 hours. You can only have one created object at a time. You are also able to manually craft any magical item or non-magical item with the proper materials and the requisite workspace in one quarter of the required time.
Level 20	Control Ether	You have learned to bend the Ether to your will in three ways, as follows: -With a short ritual lasting one hour, you can restore an area of corrupt Ether to normalcy. -With a short ritual lasting one hour, you can restore Ether to an area of dead magic. -With a long ritual lasting one day, you can drain the Ether from the surrounding area, rendering it a dead magic zone with no more than a one mile radius. In addition, your magic functions normally in areas of corrupt, wild, and dead magic.

WINYT: SIGIL OF THE SOVEREIGN

Level 1	Enigma To Time	You cease showing signs of aging and your natural lifespan effectively never ends. Your character neither suffers the negative effects of nor dies from old age.
Level 4	Faster Movement	You can gain an extra move action on your turn, but it can only be used to move up to your base speed. This move action is separate from your original move action, and can grant attacks of opportunity as normal.
Level 7	Speed Up Time	You can cast <i>haste</i> as the spell a number of times per day equal to half your level. <i>Haste</i> cast with this ability lasts for one minute.
Level 10	Adjust Time	3 times per day, you can take an additional standard action.
Level 13	See Past	Once per month, you may return to an event that happened at any point since humanoids began manifesting sigils. You witness it as if you were a passive observer and can move around unharmed.
Level 16	Rewind	3 times per day, when you or another creature makes an attack roll, saving throw, or ability check, you can choose to have that dice rolled again. The second result must be kept.
Level 20	Futuresight	You can glimpse into moments of the future as current events would play out and if nothing drastically changes. Once per month, you may witness a future event as if you were a passive observer. This event is chosen by you, based on current events, and may be no further in the future than one month. Separate from this, you may witness glimpses of far future events at the GM's discretion. These are usually fleeting and you may not have the ability to passively interact.

STARCALLED INFLUENCED

Level 1	Tenacity	Whenever you gain a new level, add an additional 1 to your maximum hp. After every 8 or 24 hour rest you regain twice as much hp as normal.
Level 4	Persistent	While dying, you do not suffer a penalty due to negative hit points for the Constitution check to become stable.
Level 7	Inspired Soul	Any time a d20 is rolled you may immediately ask for it to be rerolled before the result is determined. The roller must use the second result, even if it's lower. You may use this ability three times per day. You may use this ability on the GM as well.
Level 10	Paradigm Shift	At the beginning of each day, choose a skill. You are treated as if you had the maximum number of skill ranks in that skill. You treat the chosen skill as if it was a class skill. If the skill is already a class skill, you gain an additional +3.
Level 13	Deus Ex Machina	Three times per day, you may choose to pass a saving throw you otherwise would have failed.
Level 16	Extra Attunement	Choose one magic item slot, you may wear an additional magical item in that slot. You may only have one extra slot at a time, but may change what slot you choose at the beginning of every day. You gain the benefits of both items, or all three in the case of rings.
Level 20	Pinnacle of Fate	You gain 6 fate points to place in any ability score you wish. The ability scores you choose are increased permanently. A fate bonus may not exceed +5 for a single ability score.



RULES FOR FIFTH EDITION



AMARI RACIAL TRAITS

+2 INTELLIGENCE, +1 CHARISMA: Amari prefer to focus their energies towards the abilities of their mind.

MEDIUM: Amari are Medium creatures and receive no bonuses or penalties due to their size.

NORMAL SPEED: Amari have a base speed of 30 feet.

CACHING (SU): Amari can, as a move action, store an item in their possession into a psychic storage space. Storing an item in this manner creates a ball of psychic energy that revolves six inches above the amari's head at a range of one foot. Over the course of an hour, all of the balls of energy coalesce into one. An amari can have an item that they have cached taken from them by simply grabbing the ball of light (sleight of hand check required). If the amari is aware, a Sleight of Hand check is required. Retrieving an item from the cache is also a move action, and the item immediately appears in an open hand. An amari can cache a total weight of items equal to 5 plus their intelligence score in pounds. Thus, a level 3 amari with an intelligence score of 16 can store a total weight of 31 pounds of gear. You must be able to hold the item off the ground in two hands to be able to cache it.

MINOR TELEPATHY (SU): Amari can communicate telepathically with any creature within 25 feet, just as if he was speaking to him or her aloud. The amari can only speak and listen to one person at a time, and he must share a common language with the person or creature he speaks to telepathically or the telepathic link fails.

DREAM STATE: Rather than sleep, amari enter a form of meditation known as a Dream State, in which the psionic link between all amari is reinforced in a dream world. In this dream world, amari can visualize whatever surroundings they wish and interact with objects as if they were physically there by tapping into their own subconscious and borrowing from their life experiences and memories for reference. Dream State does not allow communication between amari. You need to spend 4 hours in this state to gain the same benefits other races gain from taking a 8 hour rest. While in the dream state you are fully aware of your surroundings and notice approaching enemies and other events as normal.

SMOOTH TONGUE: Amari are proficient with persuasion.

LANGUAGES: Amari possess the ability to read and write Vavalish and Sillarian.

ILDERA RACIAL TRAITS

+2 INTELLIGENCE: Ildera pick up new information quickly
MEDIUM: Ildera are Medium creatures and receive no bonuses or penalties due to size.

NORMAL SPEED: Ildera have a base speed of 30 feet.

LIVING ELDRIA: Ildera possess the traits of living eldria.

ELDRIA GIFTS: Due to the inclusion of eldria in the composition of their bodies, ildera gain significant benefits and drawbacks. Ildera gain an additional +1 AC against any spell attacks. This bonus increases to +2 at 8th level and +3 at 16th level. Ildera also possess the ability to detect natural eldria within 30 feet as per the *detect magic* spell; this ability just reveals the presence or absence of natural eldria and its type.

ELDRICSTEEL SKIN: Ildera gain a +1 natural armor bonus to their AC due to the material they are constructed out of.

ARMOR CRYSTAL: Ildera possess the ability to grow a set of armor out of eldricsteel based on what specific Armor Crystal they embed into the slot on their chest. The armor grows at a certain rate and is removed at a rate that is located on the table for Armor Crystals. The armor crystals themselves are enchant-able just as a normal suit of armor.

UNTIRING: An ildera's push, carry, and lift capacity does not incur the standard movement penalty. If using the Encumbrance Variant, Ildera take no penalties to movement while encumbered or heavily encumbered. When Ildera would suffer from exhaustion, they are treated as having the level of exhaustion one step lower than they currently have. Due to this, they can never die from exhaustion.

REPAIRING: Ildera do not benefit from natural healing during a short or long rest. During a short rest, an ildera must be conscious to repair itself. It spends Hit Dice as normal characters would to repair itself and heal damage. During a long rest an ildera can fully restore their body, regaining all hit points. The character also regains spent Hit Dice, up to a number of dice equal to half of the character's maximum number of Hit Dice (minimum of one die). An ildera can't benefit from more than one long rest in a 24-hour period, and an ildera must have at least 1 hit point and be conscious at the start of the rest to gain its benefits.

LIVING ELDRIA TRAITS: Creatures of living eldria are immune to the effects of poison, disease and the negative effects of natural eldria. Such creatures do not possess the need to eat, sleep or breathe. Living eldria responds differently when brought to zero HP or lower. They cannot make death saving throws. The only way they suffer a failed death saving throw is by suffering additional damage. Living eldria can be stabilized as normal.

LANGUAGES: Ildera possess the ability to read and write Vavalish and one other language.



INUZEN RACIAL TRAITS

+2 WISDOM, +1 CHARISMA: Inuzen are deeply connected to the natural world and are beautiful to behold with quick tongues.

MEDIUM: Inuzen are Medium creatures and receive no bonuses or penalties due to their size.

SWIFT SPEED: Inuzen have a base speed of 40 feet.

WOLF-SHAPE: The connection to nature that inuzen possess gives them the special ability to turn into a medium sized wolf. Changing form (to wolf or back) is an action that does provoke attacks of opportunity. While in wolf form, an inuzen cannot speak but can use Leylights to communicate. Her gear melds with her new form, thus becoming inaccessible while in wolf form, but she retains any magical effects granted by that gear. She loses the ability to attack with her weapons but gains a melee bite attack that deals 1d4 damage. Speed, ability scores, and movement types remain unchanged while in wolf form. An inuzen in wolf form cannot cast spells with verbal components but she retains all of the benefits of armor and shield bonuses while in wolf form.

SENSITIVE HEARING: Inuzen possess extremely sensitive ears that easily pick up sound and feeling in words. Most people find it difficult to get away with lying to an inuzen. Inuzen gain a proficiency in Insight.

LEYLIGHTS: Inuzen possess the ability to create what are known as leylights. Using this ability is a free action that can be used at will. This ability functions as *dancing lights*, except as noted. This spell has a range of 250 feet, and at night the lights can be seen from that distance. Inuzen can rapidly change the color of the four lights, which they use to denote a form a sign language to each other. An inuzen can have up to six lights at a time. The lights can only take the form of glowing spheres.

WILD HUNTER: Inuzen receive advantage on Constitution checks to avoid exhaustion, as well as any other ill effects from running, starvation, thirst, and hot or cold environments.

WEAPON FAMILIARITY: Inuzen are proficient with longbows and shortbows.

DARKVISION: Inuzen possess darkvision up to 60ft.

LANGUAGES: Inuzen possess the ability to read and write Vavalish and Farlish.

NOIR RACIAL TRAITS

+2 CHARISMA: Noir are quick and socially agile.

MEDIUM: Noir are Medium creatures and receive no bonuses or penalties due to their size.

NORMAL SPEED: Noir have a base speed of 30 feet.

FACECHANGER: Noir were gifted with an ability unique among all of the races of Vathis, to change his or her body and face in an endless array of forms. Noir can assume the appearance of a Small or Medium humanoid as the *alter self* spell, being used to change appearance. Noir will revert to their natural forms when killed. Noir cannot assume the appearance of inuzen and ildera.

MEMORIES FROM BEFORE: From endless incarnations of previous lives, noir have some remnant of memory from their past lives. Noir retains enough memory of past incarnations to speak

and understand multiple languages and knowledge they have previously gained. Once per day a noir may treat a skill that they normally wouldn't have proficiency with as if they were proficient with that skill. This ability cannot be used again until the completion of a long rest.

INSTILLED WILL: Due to the remnant Vandiel control, noir gain proficiency in Wisdom saves.

LANGUAGES OF THE SPIES: The noir have a gift with learning languages and the intricacies of the spoken and written word. Noir gain an additional two languages during character creation.

THE GIFT OF VOICE: In order to become one with the people they were gathering information on, their Vandiel Lords gave them the gift of the voice. Noir gain a +1 bonus on Persuasion and Deception checks.

UNDETECTABLE: A noir's alignment is unable to be detected by any means.

ENDLESS INCARNATIONS: When a noir dies, his or her spirit is returned to the material plane in a new adult body. Typically their body will return in a place that hasn't been visited by them in a previous life. When reincarnating in this manner a noir will not remember anything from their previous life. If a player controlled noir dies, that player should roll up a new character.

LANGUAGES: Noir possess the ability to read and write Vavalish and two other languages.

VASAR RACIAL TRAITS

Vasar possess the ability to fly. This can provide a situational advantage to them that makes them more powerful in certain situations. Keep this in mind when allowing vasar to be used in your games.

+2 STRENGTH, +1 CHARISMA: Though impeded by their form, vasar are strong and have a naturally commanding presence.

MEDIUM: Vasar are medium sized creatures

SPEED: Vasar have a base speed of 30 ft, and their wings grant them a fly speed of 30 ft. All vasar are born with wings that grant them some flying ability. Though they have adapted more to life on the ground, the wings still function well enough for life among the floating motes of Darastrix.

PREHENSILE TAIL: All vasar have a tail that they have learned to use when their hands are full. They cannot wield weapons with their tails, but they can retrieve small, stowed objects carried on their persons as a Bonus action.

DRACONIC EYES: The eyes of the vasar are particularly keen, granting them proficiency in perception and Darkvision up to 60 ft.

NATURAL ARMOR: Vasar gain a +1 bonus to their Armor Class.

FEARLESS: Vasar gain a +2 racial bonus on all saving throws against fear effects.

LANGUAGES: Vasar possess the ability to read and write Vavalish and Draconic.



ILDERA ARMOR CRYSTALS

Rating	Cost	Armor Class	Strength	Stealth
Light	45 gp	12 + Dex	-	-
Medium	400 gp	14 + Dex (max 2)	-	-
Heavy	1500 gp	18	13	Disadvantage

VAEDRICARMS

Vaedricarms (Martial ranged weapons)	Cost	Dmg	Weight	Properties
Vaedric Pistol	800 gp	1d8	4 lbs	Ammunition (range 20/40), loading
Bullets (10)	2 gp			
Vaedric Rifle	4,000 gp	1d10	12 lbs	Ammunition (range 80/160), loading, Two Handed
Bullets (10)	2 gp		2 lbs	

ELDRIA RULES

When a character comes within 50 feet of unrefined elarian eldria, deposit or otherwise, the character is infused with latent eldria energy and must make a Constitution save with a DC = 10 + one half character level. If the character fails, the GM rolls 1d6 to determine the level of effect (minimum 1), and rolls a 1d6 to determine how many uses of the effect the character has. A character can willingly forgo this save. The effects of vaedra on life are unknown as of yet, as it kills almost everyone who comes in unprotected contact with unrefined vaedra eldria.

For each time the character uses their newfound abilities they must make a Constitution save against a DC = 10 + one half character level + level of effect. If this save is failed, the character takes hit point damage equal to the effect's spell level times two. If the character passes the save, the character instead takes no damage. For instance, if Jerry was granted four uses of levitate by eldria, every time he used one use he would take 4 damage on a failed save, or none on a passed save.

After a period of one hour, the influx of energy violently leaves the character's body if they have not used up all of their effect uses. At this time the character must make a Constitution save = 10 + one half character level + level of effect. If this save is failed, the character takes hit point damage equal to the effect's spell level times four, per use they have remaining. If the character passes the save, the character instead takes only half damage. For instance, if Jerry was granted four uses of levitate by eldria, but had not used any of them by the time one hour passed, he would take 64 damage on a failed save, or 32 on a passed save.

EFFECT SPELL LEVEL	USES
1	1d6
2	1d6-1
3	1d6-2
4	1d6-3
5	1d6-4
6	1

EFFECTS: GM chooses a spell off of a spell list that is equal to the effect level. The character gains the ability to use that spell a number of times equal to the Uses roll result.



SIGILS

Below are the powers granted to the Starcalled who possesses a sigil. Denoted below each sigil are the recommended powers for each sigil. These powers are not static; a GM may choose different abilities in the same theme for each sigil. A character chooses a sigil at level 1. If a character would not like a sigil, they automatically gain the Starcalled Influenced abilities instead. A character can gain a sigil at a later time as justified by their GM, but loses all of the abilities of Starcalled Influenced at the moment he gains one. Unless stated otherwise, every ability is utilized using your character level as your caster level and utilizes your highest ability modifier as the casting modifier. The DC for abilities utilized from a sigil are 8 + proficiency bonus + highest Ability Modifier. Unless stated otherwise, these abilities require an action to use in combat. Some abilities granted are vague to allow for GM interpretation.

GENRAE: EARTH, SIGIL OF THE WILD

Level 1	Know Area and Direction	You know the general geographical layout of the land within 1 mile per level of you, as if you had looked at a map. This includes the common names of major landmarks and ideal traveling routes.
Level 4	Earth Strider	You ignore difficult terrain and gain a burrow speed equal to half your movement speed.
Level 7	Plant Growth	Once per two levels per long rest you can cast any spell from the spell list below a number of times equal to half your level. The spell cannot be cast at a level higher than half your character level, maximum 9th. • <i>Entangle, plant growth, spike growth, wall of thorns.</i>
Level 10	Tremorsense	You know the location of any creature within 5 ft per level as long as they are in contact with the ground. This only reveals the creature's location and gives you no other advantages against it.
Level 13	Shape/Create Earth	Once per long rest, you may shape your environment as <i>move earth</i> except it also effects stone.
Level 16	Stone Body	You gain resistance to all damage types except thunder or psychic, lasting for a number of rounds equal to your level. This ability may be used once per long rest.
Level 20	Become Earth Elemental	Once per long rest for a number of rounds equal to your level, you can take on the form of an earth elemental. Taking this form is a move action. You gain <i>earthglide</i> and <i>siege monster</i> , as per <i>earth elemental</i> stats, and resistances that an <i>earth elemental</i> has. You receive advantage on saving throws against spells or magical effects. You also gain the following attack: • <i>Earthen Slam Attack: +Str and Proficiency bonus, Melee or Ranged attack 60ft, one target.. Hit: (3d8+Str) bludgeoning damage</i>

ERMIN: AIR, SIGIL OF THE VEIL

Level 1	Secret Pocket	You gain an extradimensional space on your person that cannot be found except by true seeing. This space can hold up to 10lbs per level.
Level 4	Detect Secret	You have advantage on all Investigation and Insight checks.
Level 7	Glean	You learn one secret about one creature or object once per day. You may use this ability a number of times per day equal to your level. This secret is determined by your GM.
Level 10	Read Thoughts	You can read the thoughts of others, functioning as the spell <i>detect thoughts</i> at will.
Level 13	Shroud Knowledge	This ability can affect an object, area or creature. A successful Wisdom save prevents these effects. You may end this ability at any time you choose. -A creature forgets a piece of information you want them to forget. You must know the information. A will save prevents this. -Creatures that interact with a chosen object see it as unimportant and ignore it. -An area affected by this ability can be made to look as if nothing occurred there and everything is normal. You may use ability once per long rest. You can end these affects at any time you choose.
Level 16	Invisibility	Once per short rest, you may cast the spell <i>greater invisibility</i> targeting only yourself.
Level 20	Alter Memory	Once per week you may alter one memory of one creature permanently. This memory can only be of one event. The subject can prevent this with a successful Wisdom save.



KAIJIN: WATER, SIGIL OF THE SAGE

Level 1	Increased Cognition	Automatically gain advantage on any Arcana, History, Nature or Religion check. You may do this a number of times equal to your level per short rest. Research times and comparable activities are always halved.
Level 4	Telepathy	You create a telepathic bond between you and one ally per level. As long as they remain within 10 ft per level of you, you can communicate telepathically.
Level 7	Photographic Memory	You can instantly recall one event that you personally experienced as clearly as if it were presently happening. You may do this once per long rest.
Level 10	Speak All Languages	You can speak, read and write in all living languages. At level 20 this includes all dead and secret languages. This does not allow you to break ciphers.
Level 13	Know History	Once per long rest, you can learn the history of an object or your immediate vicinity by touching it/standing in it and concentrating. You learn more the longer you concentrate.
Level 16	Insight	You commune with the force of destiny. Once per week, you may ask your GM a number of yes or no questions equal to half your level, and they must answer as truthfully as possible. Alternatively, you may ask one question more complicated than yes or no and the GM must answer truthfully, but may answer cryptically.
Level 20	Return to Memory	Once per week, you may return to a memory of a creature you touch. You witness the memory in absolute detail as a passive observer and you may move around unharmed. You may witness the event and learn information that the original creature was incapable of discerning. You may remain in the memory for as long as you can hold concentration.

ENOLAR: FIRE, SIGIL OF THE STOIC

Level 1	Summon Force Horse	Once per long rest, you can summon a number of war horses equal to your level. These horses are only partially tangible, as they are made of pure force energy. They cannot attack or be attacked and only take commands from the rider they were created for. At level 13 they gain the ability to fly with a speed of 60 ft. They last for 24 hours.
Level 4	Carrying Capacity	Your carrying capacity increases by 100lbs per level.
Level 7	Sunder	You ignore Armor Class and deal max damage when attacking objects.
Level 10	Force Push	A number of times per long rest equal to your level, you can force push all creatures within 10 ft a distance equal to 5ft per level. The creatures get a Strength saving throw to reduce this distance by half.
Level 13	Knockback	When you successfully hit a creature with a physical attack, they must make a Strength save or be pushed 5 ft per 2 levels away from you. You can use this a number of times per short rest equal to your level.
Level 16	Telekinesis	You can move one unattended object weighing no more than your light load with telekinesis up to 500 ft per round.
Level 20	Immovable	You or one creature or object of your choice are paralyzed for a number of rounds equal to your level. You may end this at any time.

ATASHIN: EARTH, SIGIL OF THE WATCHER

Level 1	Far Vision	You do not have disadvantage when firing a ranged weapon at its max range or below.
Level 4	Know Weakness	Once per short rest you can discern one creature's resistances, vulnerabilities, and immunities. If it has none you gain advantage on your next attack against that creature.
Level 7	X-ray Vision	Once per short rest you can see through 1 foot of material per level. This lasts for a number of minutes equal to your level.
Level 10	Share Sight	You and up to eight willing creatures can see what each of the other creatures affected by this ability see for up to 1 hour once per long rest.
Level 13	Perfect Vision	You do not take disadvantage on any rolls involving sight.
Level 16	Blindsense	You now have rogue's <i>blindsense</i> out to 20 ft.
Level 20	See Past	While concentrating and taking no other actions, you can view past events that transpired at your current location. You view them in real time, and stop viewing them when you lose concentration. What these visions entail is at the GM's discretion.



LORTON: AIR, SIGIL OF THE SEER

Level 1	Weather Sense	You are able to accurately predict the weather out to one day per level. Your vision is unaffected by weather conditions such as fog, or rain that would give you disadvantage on perception checks.
Level 4	Control Winds	You can create a light wind at will. You can also do one of the two following things once per four levels per long rest: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replicate the spell <i>gust of wind</i> • Create an area of strong wind centered on your self out to a radius of 20ft per level. The strong wind continuously travels in a circle around you and may affect ranged attacks and creatures in its area.
Level 7	Breathe Anywhere	You and up to one willing creature per level that you are touching can breathe in any condition.
Level 10	Wind Blade	Your reach with all melee weapons increases by 5 ft. Ranged attacks you make can ignore all types of cover for purposes of attacking.
Level 13	Flight	You gain a fly speed of equal to your base movement speed. If you already possess the ability to fly, your fly speed doubles.
Level 16	Weather Control	This functions as <i>control weather</i> , except changes are instantaneous and the user can choose anything from the given tables when changing the weather.
Level 20	Become Air Elemental	Once per day for a number of minutes equal to your level, you can take on the form of an air elemental. You gain <i>air form</i> as per the <i>air elemental</i> stats, the resistances of an <i>air elemental</i> , and a flight speed of 90 (hover). You gain <i>whirlwind</i> as per the <i>air elemental</i> , minus recharge. Taking this form is a movie action.

EYRTASERI: WATER, SIGIL OF THE FOOL

Level 1	Fast Movement	The speed of all modes of movement you possess are increased by 10 ft. Apply this bonus before modifying your speed due to any armor worn or load carried.
Level 4	Determine Origin	You know the origin of one object that you touch, including where it was made and how long ago. You can do this once per short rest.
Level 7	Age Object	Once per short rest an object or material of your choosing no larger than a 10 ft. cube is reduced to 1 hp. Magical or enchanted objects or materials are not affected.
Level 10	Slow	Once per short rest you may slow enemies around you. This functions as the spell <i>slow</i> without concentration and no limit on the number of targets.
Level 13	Incite Chaos	You incite chaos among your enemies once per long rest. This functions as the spell <i>confusion</i> cast at a 9th level spell. You can choose who is and who is not affected.
Level 16	Kinetic Riposte	A number of times equal to half your level per long rest you can channel your damage to someone else within range. As a reaction to an enemy's successful non-spell attack, choose a target within 60 ft. This target receives the damage you would have taken.
Level 20	Destroy Object	Once per long rest, one object no larger than a 10 ft cube of your choosing is destroyed. Artifacts are not affected.

OLATH: FIRE, SIGIL OF THE CURATOR

Level 1	Opening Ploy	You can never be surprised. You and all allies within 30 ft have advantage on initiative rolls.
Level 4	Detect Life, Disease	As <i>detect magic</i> , except with living creatures as well as any poisons or diseases they are afflicted with. You may use this ability a number of minutes per day equal to your level times ten. You may use this ability in increments of five minutes.
Level 7	Lifelink	You and up to one willing creature per level are linked. You know any status effects afflicting them, diseases they may have, their current state of emotions, current hit point totals, and where they are. This link must be established with a touch and can be canceled by either party at any time. All parties are aware of the presence of the link, but only the sigil user gains the benefit of the knowledge granted by the link.
Level 10	Hivemind	You and up to 1 willing creature per level are telepathically linked within 1 mile per level. You and all linked creatures are aware of what your links are aware of. Linked creatures cannot be surprised. You and all linked creatures can telepathically communicate at all times. You can perform Perception checks using the scores of other linked members.
Level 13	Soulwalk	Once per level per short rest you can teleport to any creature with a soul that you can see. You appear adjacent to them. They are not necessarily aware that you teleported to them.
Level 16	Lifelink Swap	Anyone who is linked through your lifelink ability can swap places or teleport adjacent to one another as a move action.
Level 20	Meld Into One	You and a number of willing creatures up to your level meld into one. You use the highest values and ability scores out of all the characters melded this way for every check, save, and roll. Your hit points are equal to the total of all characters melded together. When you are unmelded divide the remaining hp equally among the characters. The melded characters act on the turn of the sigil bearer and has access to any of the melded characters' abilities, powers, spells etc.



ASSARIA: AIR, SIGIL OF THE WEAVER

Level 1	Negate Fall Damage	You and up to one creature you are touching are immune to falling damage. This is a constant effect.
Level 4	Levitation	You can <i>levitate</i> at will, as the spell, but the range is personal.
Level 7	Change Weight	You can multiply or divide the weight of one object by a factor of up to your level for up to 24 hours. You can do this once per long rest. The size of the effected object does not change.
Level 10	Collapse Object	One object touched either grows or shrinks eight times the objects normal size for up to 24 hours. You can do this once per long rest. The weight of the effected object does not change.
Level 13	Center of Gravity	Creatures of your choosing within 10 ft per level are pulled 5 ft per level toward you. You can use this once per short rest. A successful Strength save by the creatures causes the creatures to be pulled half the distance instead.
Level 16	Stop Movement	When you utilize this ability, creatures within 5 ft per level must make a Strength save or be restrained. You may use this ability once per short rest
Level 20	Reverse Gravity	This ability functions as the spell <i>reverse gravity</i> , but without concentration, and can be used once per short rest.

ISTO: EARTH, SIGIL OF THE SHADOW

Level 1	Mold Shadow	You can create a shadow servant. Once per level per long rest, you can dispel your shadow servant to use one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shadow Shield- Functions as the spell <i>shield</i>, but it appears as if made of shadow. • Make Darkness- You create a globe of darkness, as per the spell <i>darkness</i>. • Shadow Servant- As the spell <i>unseen servant</i>.
Level 4	Shadowwalk	You may teleport from a shadow to another shadow within your movement range once per level per short rest as a move action. The shadows you teleport to and from cannot be smaller than your size, meaning a medium creature with this sigil can use another medium creature's shadow as a point of arrival.
Level 7	Hide in Plain Sight	As long as you are within 10 ft of an area of dim light, you can attempt to hide yourself from view in the open without anything to actually hide behind. You cannot, however, hide in your own shadow. The range is expanded by 10 ft every 5 levels to a max of 30 ft at level 17.
Level 10	Darkvision	You can see through magical and non-magical darkness up to a range of 100 ft.
Level 13	Insubstantial	Your body and your carried items become insubstantial like a shadow. You gain resistance to fire, cold, thunder, lightning, acid, psychic and damage from non-magical weapons. You may pass through openings that are no smaller than one inch wide or larger with no penalties. You may use this ability a number of rounds per long rest equal to twice your level. These rounds do not need to be consecutive. Using this ability is a move action.
Level 16	Shroud	You can turn invisible for a number of rounds equal to twice your level as long as you're within 20 ft of dim light or darkness. You remain invisible even if you take a hostile action and remain within 20 ft of dim light or darkness. These rounds do not need to be consecutive. Using this ability is a move action.
Level 20	Gloom Form	You may plane shift once per long rest, but only to or from the Gloom or the Material Plane. You gain fast healing and recover 1 hp per round in dim light or darker.



ZERUTU: WATER, SIGIL OF THE GUARDIAN

Level 1	Detect Emotion	As <i>detect magic</i> , as a constant effect, except you are able to discern the emotional state of one creature that you can see within 10 ft per level. You learn a general summary of the target's current disposition, as well as its attitude toward any other creatures within 30 ft of it. Objects do not have emotion auras, except intelligent weapons and similar sentient oddities.
Level 4	Protect	As a reaction you can do one of the following: Impose disadvantage on the next attack one creature you can see makes, or grant advantage on the next saving throw one creature you can see makes. You can use this ability a number of times equal to your level per long rest.
Level 7	Instigate	Choose one creature within 60 ft. The target must make a Wisdom saving throw or must attack one other target within range of your choosing to the best of its ability. You can use this a number of times equal to your level per long rest.
Level 10	Devastate	One creature of your choice within 60 ft becomes emotionally devastated. Their movement speed is halved and at the beginning of each of their turns they must make a Wisdom save. On a failed save, the creature does nothing on their turn and receive a -2 penalty to their AC and on all saving throws until the beginning of their next turn. . This lasts a number of rounds equal to your level. You may use this ability a number of times equal to your level per long rest.
Level 13	Berserk	You fill a target within 60 ft with a relentless bloodlust. It must attempt a Charisma saving throw, and on a success the target calms down, ending the ability. On a failure the target may only spend its following turns making a melee attack against a random creature within range, or if no creatures are in range, moving to the closest creature. The target may make a new saving throw anytime it is struck in combat, or if it cannot attack a target on its turn. This lasts a number of rounds equal to your level. You may use this ability a number of times equal to your level per long rest.
Level 16	Murder	You choose a target creature. If the creature you choose has hit points equal to 5 times your level or fewer, it dies. Otherwise, the ability has no effect. You may use this ability once per long rest.
Level 20	Infatuation	Target creature that you can see must pass on a Charisma save or become completely and utterly infatuated with a creature or object you choose. It can take no hostile actions against the chosen creature or object and will take hostile actions against any creature that harms the chosen creature or object. You may only have one creature infatuated with a chosen creature or object at a time. The infatuation lasts until you choose a new creature to infatuate or you decide to end the infatuation.

HEZIN: FIRE, SIGIL OF THE NOBLE

Level 1	Detect Heat	This ability functions the same as <i>detect magic</i> , but instead of magic, the user detects heat sources. Heat sources and their auras appear as varying degrees of yellow to bright red.
Level 4	Fire Cloak	You are immune to damage from natural fire source, but magical fire affects you normally. You may cloak yourself in fire for a number of rounds equal to your level. When a creature hits you with a melee attack while this effect is active, they take 1d6 + 1/ level fire damage.
Level 7	Heat Touch	Once per level per long rest you can invoke an effect that works as the spell <i>heat metal</i> , except that it affects any object. Flammable objects can ignite.
Level 10	Firewalk	Your base movement speed is increased by 10 ft. As a move action you can teleport between two sources of natural fire that you can see as a move action. You must be adjacent to one of the sources to use this ability, and you are not harmed by it for this action.
Level 13	Smoke	As <i>gaseous form</i> for a number of minutes equal to your level per long rest. Living creatures are unable to breathe within the cloud. The full duration does not need to be used all at once and can be used in increments of one minute if desired.
Level 16	Become Fire Elemental	Once per long rest, for a number of rounds equal to your level, you can take on the form of a fire elemental. You gain <i>fire form</i> , <i>illumination</i> , and <i>water susceptibility</i> , as per the <i>fire elemental</i> stats, as well as fire immunity. Taking this form is a move action.
Level 20	Control Fire	Once per short rest you can cast any one spell that deals fire damage as a 9th level spell as long as you have a source of natural fire nearby. This can be used for minor effects out of combat at GM discretion.



SRINAX: EARTH, SIGIL OF THE HEALER

Level 1	Provide	You are able to provide enough food for 20 people per level to sustain them for one day once per long rest.
Level 4	Rejuvenate	You may have one target use a hit die to heal as an action without expending a hit die from their pool on their turn. You may do this a number of times equal to your level. You regain all uses of this feature after a long rest.
Level 7	Calm Emotions	3 times per day, you can cause your enemies to back down from a fight. When you use this ability, hostile creatures within 10 ft per level must succeed on a Will save or become indifferent to you and your allies. This is not an enchantment with a duration, it simply changes their attitude towards the party to indifferent. The overall result of this ability is up to GM discretion.
Level 10	Become Friend	As <i>charm person</i> , except it has a duration of 24 hours, can affect any creature, and the creature does not know it was charmed.
Level 13	Halt Death	As a bonus action, you may stabilize a creature within 5 ft per level. You may do this a number of times equal to your level per long rest.
Level 16	Pacifism	Once per long rest you create an area of 10ft per level in which creatures are unable to take hostile actions. This lasts for a number of minutes equal to your level.
Level 20	Restore Life	This ability functions as <i>true resurrection</i> except the subject could have died from anything, including old age. The subject is restored to life at an age you or the spirit choose. It must be an age they experienced. You can use this only once per year, and the power returns only on the Laniri.

GARAHN: AIR, SIGIL OF THE BARD

Level 1	Select Hearing	While concentrating you are able to block out all extraneous noise in an area and focus in on one source of sound. You always have advantage on Perception checks related to hearing.
Level 4	Throw Voice	Once per level per long rest you can create any sound you've ever heard originating any point within 10ft per level.
Level 7	Mimicry	You can perfectly mimic the voice of a creature you have heard. When impersonating someone using their voice you gain advantage on Deception checks.
Level 10	Silence	For one minute per level you can perform either of the following two abilities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cast the spell <i>silence</i> on a fixed location with a radius of up to 10 ft per level. • As above, except within the radius sound is not hindered, but still cannot pass in or out of the radius.
Level 13	Sonar	For as long as you're concentrating you gain blindsight with a range of 60ft. You are unable to use this ability if you are unable to speak, or deafened. If you are not concentrating you always have blindsight with a range of 5ft.
Level 16	Shatter	As <i>shatter</i> cast as a level 8 spell (9d8), except the area is 5ft per 2 levels. You may use this ability once per short rest.
Level 20	Sonic Boom	You deal 50 damage to every creature and object in a 100ft radius. Creatures are knocked prone and pushed back 10 ft. Creatures can attempt a Constitution save to take half damage and avoid being knocked prone. You may use this ability three times and regain all uses of this ability after a short or long rest.

ARRLIS: WATER, SIGIL OF THE FROST

Level 1	Water Affinity	You gain Resistance to Cold damage. You can create water at the rate of 5 gallons per round. You can freeze water within 30 feet up to a 10ft cube per round.
Level 4	Frostwalk	Water under your feet freezes instantly to support your weight allowing you to walk across it as if it was solid ground. You may choose not to use this ability. You do not suffer the penalties of difficult terrain for ice and snow.
Level 7	Frost Blast	Once per short rest you can utilize this ability to create a 10ft radius cloud of frost within 100ft. Creatures in the area suffer 1d4 points of damage per level and can attempt to pass a Constitution save for half damage. The area affected becomes difficult terrain for 10 minutes.
Level 10	Amphibious	You gain the ability to breathe underwater. You also gain a swim speed equal to your base land speed. You also become immune to cold damage.
Level 13	Froststrike	Whenever you make a successful melee, ranged, or spell attack against a target, the target is frozen in place unable to move for one round. You may use this ability a number of times equal to your level per long rest.
Level 16	Become Water Elemental	Once per long rest, for a number of rounds equal to your level, you can take on the form of a water elemental. You gain <i>waterform</i> and <i>freeze</i> , as per the <i>water elemental</i> stats, and gain the resistances of a <i>water elemental</i> . Taking this form is a move action.
Level 20	Control Water	As long as you have a source of water or frost nearby, you can cast a single spell that produces water or deals cold damage as if it were a 9th level spell. This can be used for minor effects outside of combat at the GM's discretion. Once per short rest.



MENKI: FIRE, SIGIL OF THE SEEKER

Level 1	Brighten	You make an area of natural light with a 5ft radius per level with a duration of one hour. This destroys magical darkness. You can use this ability a number of times equal to your level per long rest.
Level 4	Lightbridge	Once per short rest you may create a bridge of light that covers up to 20 square feet per level and has no weight limit. This bridge lasts for up to 1 minute per level.
Level 7	Blind	Once per short rest, when an adjacent creature declares an attack on you, you may attempt to blind them as a reaction. They must make a Constitution save to avoid being blinded, or it ends after 1 minute. If the attacker is successfully blinded they receive disadvantage on any attack if they did not already have it.
Level 10	Vision	Once per long rest you may use this ability as the spell <i>arcane eye</i> , except it doesn't require concentration.
Level 13	Focus Beams	You focus light in the area around you towards an object or creature within 100ft. The target suffers 1d10 points of damage per level and half as much if they succeed on a Dexterity saving throw. The target of the spell is illuminated as if by the <i>faerie fire</i> spell. You may use this ability a number of times equal to half your level.
Level 16	Illusion	You can use this ability a number of times per long rest equal to half your level to create an elaborate illusion, with a maximum size of 5 ft per level as <i>major image</i> .
Level 20	Teleport	You can teleport a distance equal to your base speed as a move action, any number of times per day. Once per day, you can teleport any distance and bring a number of creatures equal to your level with you.

DISCLAIMER:

Due to the powerful nature of the Winyt sigils, we suggest they be used with GM discretion. The Sigil of the Lord has historically only manifested on those of the Stardragon bloodline (Vavairen royalty). Those possessing the Sigil of the Sovereign are incredibly rare, and the sigil has only manifested on humanoids a handful of times in all of recorded history.

WINYT: SIGIL OF THE LORD

Level 1	Scribe	You are able to read and write all languages, read pages of text instantaneously, and can craft scrolls in one day.
Level 4	Ethersight	This functions as <i>detect magic</i> , and is cast immediately at full power. You know the spell school, and know the spell at level 10.
Level 7	Enhance	Once per long rest you may choose one creature and one ability score. This creature gains advantage on all d20 rolls that benefit from the chosen ability score, for 24 hours or until you choose a new creature.
Level 10	Etherbolts	You fire a bolt of pure Ether energy at a target within 100ft. The target takes 1d6+1 points of damage per two levels. The bolt ignores resistances of any kind. You may use this ability a number of times per long rest equal to half your level, per short rest.
Level 13	Ether Barrier	You nullify any incoming attack as a reaction and are immune to hostile effects until the beginning of your next turn. You may use this ability once per long rest.
Level 16	Ether Creation	You can create any mundane object that fits into a 20ft cube, but any object created this way disappears after 24 hours. You now craft any magical items or non-magical items with materials and the requisite workspace in one quarter of the required time.
Level 20	Control Ether	You have learned to bend the Ether to your will in three ways, as follows: -With a short ritual lasting one hour, you can restore an area of corrupt Ether to normalcy. -With a short ritual lasting one hour, you can restore Ether to an area of dead magic. -With a long ritual lasting one day, You can drain the Ether from the surrounding area, rendering it a dead magic zone within no more than a one mile radius. In addition, your magic functions normally in areas of corrupt, wild, and dead magic.



WINYT: SIGIL OF THE SOVEREIGN

Level 1	Enigma To Time	You cease showing signs of aging and your natural lifespan effectively never ends. Your character neither suffers negative effects of nor dies from old age.
Level 4	Faster Movement	You can use the dash action as a bonus action.
Level 7	Speed Up Time	You can cast <i>haste</i> as the spell a number of times per long rest equal to half your level. <i>Haste</i> cast with this ability lasts for one minute and does not require concentration.
Level 10	Adjust Time	Once per short rest, you may take an additional action.
Level 13	See Past	Once per month you return to an event that happened since humanoids began manifesting sigils. You witness it as if you were a passive observer and can move around unharmed.
Level 16	Rewind	Three times per short rest as a reaction, when you or a creature makes an attack roll, saving throw, or ability check, it must remake the roll and use the new result.
Level 20	Futuresight	You may glimpse moments of the future as if current events would play out and nothing drastically changes. Once per month you may witness a future event as if you were a passive observer. This event is chosen by you, based on current events, and may be no further in the future than one month. Separate from this, you may witness glimpses of far future events chosen by your GM. These are usually fleeting and you may not have the ability to passively interact.

STARCALLED INFLUENCED

Level 1	Tenacity	Your hit point maximum is increased by one for every level you possess. After every long rest you gain an extra hit dice for your hit dice pool. This ability may allow you to exceed your maximum hit dice by one.
Level 4	Persistent	Everything not a 1 on a death saving throw is considered a success.
Level 7	Inspired Soul	You now possess two slots for inspiration.
Level 10	Paradigm Shift	After any long rest, choose a skill you are not proficient in. You are now proficient in that skill. You may change your choice after any long rest. You cannot gain proficiency in more than one skill using this ability.
Level 13	Deus Ex Machina	Once per short rest, you may choose to pass a saving throw you otherwise had failed.
Level 16	Extra Attunement	You may attune one additional magical item.
Level 20	Pinnacle of Fate	Your ability scores can exceed 20. Two ability scores increase by 2.



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THE REALM OF VATHIS, HAVING JUST SURVIVED THE DARKEST WAR, IS A WORLD IN AN AGE OF EARLY INDUSTRIALIZATION WHERE THE LINE BETWEEN MAGIC AND TECHNOLOGY IS OBSCURE AT BEST, AND OFTENTIMES INDISTINGUISHABLE. RICH IN HISTORY AND LORE, ADVENTURERS ROAM LANDS DOTTED WITH SPRAWLING EMPIRES, DEVIUS HIDDEN CULTS, AND RUINS SHROUDED IN DARKNESS. WHILE REVERED HEROES MARCH HEADLONG INTO BATTLE, AIRSHIPS HAVE TAKEN FLIGHT, TRANSFORMING BOTH LAND AND SKY INTO BATTLEFIELDS. GRITTY REALISM AND HIGH FANTASY COME TOGETHER IN ZODIAC EMPIRES, A WORLD BUILT ON THE MEMORY OF GREAT WARS, POLITICAL INTRIGUE, AND IMPERIALISM.

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