



The Vilhon Reach

Usable By Characters Of All Levels



Advanced
Dungeons & Dragons®



The Vilhon Reach
DUNGEON MASTER'S REFERENCE
by Jim Butler

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Introduction

All that is good and just in the world comes from the Reach, or at least so they teach at the Academy. Of course, they leave out the parts about the evil and wickedness that reside here. We're a literal paradise with pitfalls here.

—Dameron Keel, Merchant of Hlondeth



The Vilhon Reach is a large area just south of the Sea of Fallen Stars. While most citizens of Faerûn know it as the home of mercenaries and massed armies, there is much more to this humid land. It is rich with varied customs and beliefs.

The area gets its name from the sea that surrounds it, an immense body of water with cities nestled against its borders. These cities—and their warlike reputations—are what most northerners know about the Reach. For some, it is no more than a storehouse for mercenaries; for others, it is a place to sell their wares and make their living.

But the Reach is as rich and diverse as any area of Faerûn. It has its petty politicians and powerful wizards, but the heart of the Reach is its people. Nature is a powerful force, much more powerful than that wielded by power-seeking wizards or the strength of arms of the most renowned adventuring company.

Nature is more respected in the Reach than in other areas of Faerûn. This respect probably stems from the suffering felt by its residents. During the growth of its communities, the Reach felt the hand of the plague caress its lands on more than one occasion. The teachings learned were harsh but remembered. These lessons are reinforced from time to time by the Emerald Enclave, a powerful force of druids that maintain balance in the area.

That is not to say that the well-known forces of evil from the north—the Zhentarim and Red Wizards, for example—are unheard of in the Vilhon, it is just that their ability to interfere is drastically reduced by the activity of Enclave. “How do your actions aid nature?” is a common question to newcomers with grand ideas of expansion. Those with personal agendas to make fast money at nature’s expense are warned to look elsewhere.

About This Book

The Vilhon Reach is designed for the FORGOTTEN REALMS® Campaign Setting. The product is divided into two parts. This booklet is intended for the eyes of the DM only. If you’re a player, your information is found in the Player’s Guide to the Vilhon Reach.

Some of the information presented in the *Player’s Guide* is not detailed in this supplement. This information details some of the customs, festivals and rumors of the area, presented to the players by a knowledgeable scholar. The DM should read both the *Player’s Guide* and this supplement to gain a thorough knowledge of the Vilhon Reach.





Climate

The weather of the Vilhon Reach is sub-tropical and humid. While the temperature may fall as low as 35° F in the winter months, snowfalls are rare. The Turmish are fond of calling the climate “one with the Reach,” a not-so-subtle hint as to the humidity of the area.

Spring visits the Reach in early Mirtul. Spring’s arrival is heralded by the opening of the mierngras blossoms. These flowery shrubs of violet and gold bloom once during the spring and are known as “nature’s water-clocks” by the denizens of Chondalwood. The temperature may reach 80° F during the spring. Evening and early morning temperatures rarely drop below 60° F.

During early Eleasius, the druids of the Reach hold the Long Night, a festival of love and betrothal. The festival is typically held for two consecutive nights. Its conclusion signifies the beginning of summer. Temperatures can rise to as high as 110° F during these humid months, making full and field-plate armor virtually unheard of.

Late Marpenoth heralds the approach of fall. Crops are harvested and stored for the coming winter, and winter crops are planted in late Uktar. The high temperatures range from 80° F to 50°.

Winter brings heavy rains and slightly colder temperatures. Highs typically range from 50° F to 65°. It can get as cold as 35° F, and on rare occasions, snow descends upon the Reach.

History

The history of the Reach is a story of man’s struggle to coexist with nature. From early on in the story, nature had the upper hand.

-37 DR—Alaghôn Settled

The first recorded settlement in Alaghôn is registered in a trade journal dating back some 1,400 years ago, in -37 Dale Reckoning (DR). Long before there was a country of Turmish, the city of Alaghôn stood upon the shores of the Sea of Fallen Stars. It quickly became a trade center for the Inner Sea.

What was initially little more than a stopping point for ships on their way farther south suddenly became a major port that allowed goods to be sent inland to the nomadic tribes of the Shining Plains and the dwarves who resided in the Orsraun Mountains. Villages began

to spring up along the trade route, and the population of future Turmish swelled.

The success of Alaghôn in establishing itself as a port city convinced other sea traders to create a trade center within the Vilhon Reach itself. This center permitted them to establish trade with the elves of the Chondalwood and, eventually, allowed them easier access to the lands south.

20 DR—Year of the Fallen Fury

Iljak was the first major city established for the purpose of trade. The villages that had dotted the surrounding countryside quickly merged with the port in the hopes of raising their quality of life. Farmers who decided to raise crops outside of the city found themselves constantly pushed back by the ever-expanding population of Iljak. By the Year of the Fallen Fury, in 20 DR, few villages remained outside a 50-mile radius of Iljak.

50 DR—The Reach Grows

By 50 DR, other cities had grown up along the trade routes through the Reach. Hlondeth established itself as both a port city and a major landmark along the Turmway, a road built between Hlondeth and Alaghôn. The cities of Mussum, Samra, and Arrabar sprang up along the southeastern shores of the Vilhon. Daroush, Torl, and Asple were established on the northwestern shores of the Vilhon Reach.

75 DR—Year of the Clinging Death

The sudden increase in population created problems of its own, however. In the Year of the Clinging Death (75 DR), a plague tore through the Vilhon Reach, killing more than 50% of the total population in as little as 10 years. Sweeping changes were called for if the human population of the Reach was to survive.

Sages speculated that the disease was carried by rats and other vermin that infested the larger cities. Priests claimed it was divine wrath brought down on the people by their worship of gold. Fishermen claimed that the water of the Vilhon itself was to blame. Everyone, it seemed, had a different cause for the calamity that befell them.

Whatever the reason, the plague finally passed. Improvements in the cities’ water supplies by the druids of Eldath undoubtedly helped. Measures were taken to remove garbage and other waste from the cities. The plague now forgotten, the people of the Vilhon Reach went back to trade.



125 DR—Ormath Established

In 125 DR, the city of Ormath was established in the Shining Plains. Hlondeth's population surged, as a trade road—the Pikemen's Folly—was built between the two cities. Alaghôn found itself upstaged by a town it had helped create.

132 DR—A New Mayor in Alaghôn

In 132 DR, Dempster Turmish declared himself mayor of Alaghôn. For years, the young nobleman had been building up a mercenary army and selling its services to the highest bidder. Now, he used it for himself. He quickly sent his mercenaries against two other Alaghôn nobles. A brief, bloody civil war erupted in Alaghôn, and Dempster emerged as the undisputed leader. By 145 DR, Dempster expanded his control to include all of the lowlands up to the city of Hlondeth.

The city of Mimph rose to the west of Arrabar and, for a brief time, it looked like Arrabar would become a ghost town. Mimph's threat was ended when Arrabar's military forces wiped it out in 135 DR.

137 DR—Iljak at War

Iljak had a greater problem. Not only had other cities sprang up around it, but Samra and Mussum were vying for the same trade products. On the twelfth day of Flamerule in 137 DR, the army of Iljak engaged the forces of Mussum along the Sandshore, a beach outside of Mussum. The battle raged for a fortnight, with neither side capable of ending the confrontation.

The stalemate ended in early Eleasius, when Samra's army sacked the city of Iljak and then attacked Iljak's forces from its unprotected flank. The army surrendered, and the twin forces of Mussum and Samra enslaved the survivors. While Iljak burned, the survivors from the city were sold into slavery.

139 DR—Chondalwood Attacked

By 139 DR, the deforestation of the Chondalwood was in full swing. The city of Shamph was established along the path of the Emerald Corridor, a road stretching from Shamph to Arrabar. Shamph became a city of storage, caring for the lumber harvested from the Chondalwood. From there, goods were hauled by carts to the cities of Arrabar, Samra, and Mussum.

In 143 DR, the lumberjacks of what would become Chondath were halted in their progress by a large force of elves that prevented their tree-cutting labors. The

wild elves of the Chondalwood made their first appearance into the politics of the Vilhon Reach.

Lord Anthony Illistine (LN hm F12) had risen to great power in the Chondath area, and he intended to seize control of the entire southeastern shore of the Reach. With the elves barring further tree-cutting into the Chondalwood, Illistine took the opportunity to establish an alliance between the free cities of the region.

As winter rains fell upon the Chondalwood in early 144 DR, the allied might of the free cities came crashing into the forest. The closest city, Ariel-than, was burned to the ground, its few survivors sent scurrying deeper into the woods. According to elven histories, more than 2,000 elves lost their lives at the hands of the invaders. Those who survived reportedly fled to the capital city of Rucien-Xan, a mythical elven home deep in the Satyrwood that has yet to be discovered.

With the lumber source restored, Illistine was in a perfect position to take control of the entire area. Within six months of the victory of the Battle of the Elven Tears, Illistine was named Governor of Chondath. The city-states of Arrabar, Mussum, Samra, and Shamph were finally united under one leader.

145 DR—Hlondeth Besieged

Along the opposite shore, in 145 DR, Hlondeth was busy preparing for war. The advancing army of Dempster Turmish was marching down the Turmway, about as quiet as a hill giant at a belching convention. Unexpectedly, a small segment of the army turned up Lilit Pass, capturing the village of Daroush without so much as raising a single sword. The remainder of the army began to set up camp around the walled city of Hlondeth.

The ruler of Hlondeth, a human warlord by the name of Gestin, watched the approaching Turmish army with some amusement. He knew that a siege of the city would be meaningless unless they could control Churning Bay, the waters surrounding Hlondeth. Gestin was also determined not to lose a single man to something as wasteful as a war with Alaghôn.

Gestin warned many of the pirates he knew in the Sea of Fallen Stars that the Alaghôn navy would be sailing for Hlondeth. He further struck a bargain with many of the captains of those pirate vessels, promising them a safe port if they aided him in ending the threat to Hlondeth. A safe port for a pirate ship was no small promise; more than 60 ships flocked to Gestin's call.





The pirates and the Hlondeth fleet met the navy of Alaghôn in the Farshore Strait, a narrow passage between the isle of Ilighôn and the tip of the Aphrunn Mountains. The combined Hlondeth and pirate fleet managed to defeat the Alaghôn navy in a Pyrrhic victory that did nothing more than guarantee that Hlondeth would live or die by the actions of the armies of both powers.

Historians have long speculated that Gestin knew his fleet would be crippled by an encounter with the Alaghônian navy. His agreement with the pirates, they theorize, was simply an acceptance of the only recourse available to him. In essence, he gained the support of the pirates at no real cost to himself.

Rumors also surfaced that one of the Alaghôn vessels was carrying gold to establish a treasury for Hlondeth. Despite numerous attempts to locate *The Starcross*, its treasure remains unclaimed at the bottom of Farshore Strait.

The Alaghôn army that lay in siege around Hlondeth waited for more than a month before turning around and heading home. Unable to block the port—and the decision not to bring siege engines by Dempster—left few alternatives. Hlondeth was saved, this time.

Gestin's political power was unrivaled along the southern shores of the Vilhon. Trade, both legal and pirate, flourished in the area.

A powerful Hlondeth family that made its living by quarrying emerald-hued marble from the nearby Orsraun Mountains also profited by increased trade. The House Extaminos strove to place itself in a position that would allow it to seize control of the profitable city. Unfortunately, the success of Gestin in his war with Turmish prevented any political maneuvering.

146 DR—Hlondeth Besieged Again

In 146 DR, Lord Dempster led his army down to the city of Hlondeth but was again defeated, this time by both the city's high walls and a powerful barrage of magic from Rilition Mandleweave (LN hf Inv13), an invoker who studied under Charas of Winterwood. A daring attack by mercenaries, the Company of the Howling Harpoon, assured defeat when they delivered a strike against the flank of the army, destroying food, supplies, and siege equipment.

150 DR—The Calmwaters Begins

By 150 DR, Turmish had rebuilt its navy to the point where they could make another stab at the heart of Hlondeth. As the army massed for its march, however, Dempster Turmish died in his sleep. Rule passed to his

wife, Florentine Dempster, who immediately called off the attack and tried for a more peaceful solution.

Following Florentine's assassination in 154 DR, political rule of Turmish ebbed back and forth between the various merchant houses. No one, it seemed, was powerful enough to establish decisive control of the area. Internal politics allowed the remainder of the Vilhon to grow strong.

This 100-year gap in major events became known as The Calmwaters. Chondath established the city of Greymantle near the Nagawater to create a source of horses for his army. All the while, the lumberjacks of Chondath cut deeper toward the heart of the Chondalwood. Illistine died but was replaced by his son in a smooth transition of power.

Turmish villages grew and prospered, paying taxes to whatever noble house happened to be in control at tax time. Hlondeth's trade flourished, and the entire region began eyeing it as the crown jewel to their collection.

Ormath became a major stopping point for caravans and mercenaries along the Pikemen's Folly. The city of Lheshayl became another center of civilization for the Shining Plains, once again providing horses for the mercenary troops that were making Ormath their base of operations.

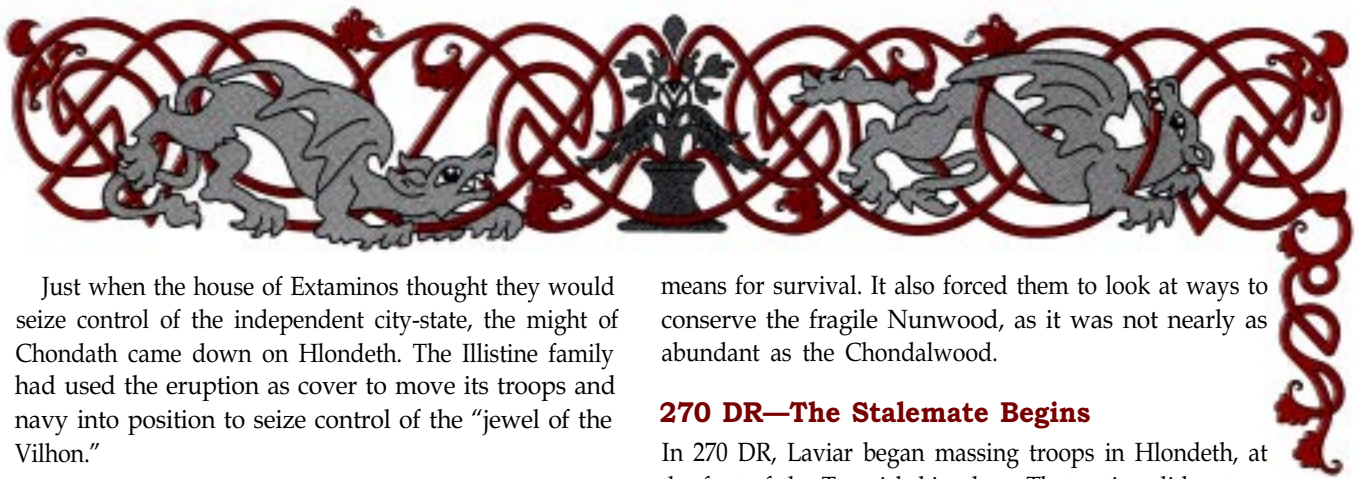
Deep in the Gulthmere Forest, the druidic enclave of Cedarsproke was established by the druids of Silvanus. It quickly became a popular place for initiates beginning their careers within the church.

In 227 DR, the Dwarves of Alaoreaum fought an epic battle with the red dragon Stormcrossing. While the costs of the victory were high, King Showaxe claimed the dragon's hoard as property of the dwarves. The smoke from the burning dwarven city of Deepgate alerted the human village of Swordslake Creek to the dwarves' presence in the mountains.

257 DR—Mount Ugruth Speaks

In 257 DR, the silence of The Calmwaters was shattered by the eruption of Mount Ugruth, a volcano near the city of Hlondeth. According to a druidic historian at Cedarsproke, the powerful eruption "blackened the skies for months, entwining our days and nights."

The eruption had other consequences as well. The Gestin family, which had ruled for more than 100 years, suddenly found itself out of power. The various churches that had supported their rule now decided that the gods were displeased. Change was demanded by the people.



Just when the house of Extaminos thought they would seize control of the independent city-state, the might of Chondath came down on Hlondeth. The Illistine family had used the eruption as cover to move its troops and navy into position to seize control of the “jewel of the Vilhon.”

260 DR—New Towns Established

In 260 DR, Chondath established two new frontier towns near the ever-decreasing border of the Satyrwood, Timindar and Orbech. Ariton Maliwick, Grand Druid of Gulthmere, issued a stern warning to the Illistine family regarding their continuing rape of the Satyrwood. That warning, and the others that followed, were ignored.

A gold and silver rush in the Deepwing Mountains served as the catalyst for yet another major town in the Vilhon. Lachom served as a land-locked port of call for the miners of that mountain range. Before the walls could be built around Lachom, the Chondath army swept in and took control.

267 DR—The Trees Are Avenged

In 267 DR, disaster struck the kingdom of Chondath. The logging towns of Timindar and Orbech were both destroyed by elves attacking from within the Chondalwood. The few survivors of the Battle of Fallen Trees retreated to Shamph with a message from the Satyrwood elves: “Advance no further into our homeland.”

Laviar Illistine, current king of Chondath, was outraged. He immediately assembled an army of 10,000, mainly various mercenary companies, to enter the Chondalwood and teach the elves a lesson. These mercenaries were allowed to keep any booty free of taxes as service to the crown. There was instruction to be dealt out, but it was the elves who were the teachers.

The two forces were engaged at the Crushed Helm Massacre, about 50 miles inside the Chondalwood. The Chondathian mercenaries met little resistance as they marched into the heart of the elf defenses. It was only when the wood giants closed off retreat that they knew they were in trouble. In less than a day, the forces of Chondath were reduced to nothing. Only about 200 men escaped.

With no way to effectively deal with the giants, Laviar was forced to concentrate on other trade matters. Many of the remaining lumberjacks moved north and established the city of Hlath near The Nunwood. While not as rich as the Chondalwood, it provided them with a

means for survival. It also forced them to look at ways to conserve the fragile Nunwood, as it was not nearly as abundant as the Chondalwood.

270 DR—The Stalemate Begins

In 270 DR, Laviar began massing troops in Hlondeth, at the foot of the Turmish kingdom. That action did not go unnoticed, and the merchant houses of Alaghôn united behind the rule of Alesam Mischwin. When Laviar marched his army northward, Turmish forces were waiting for him.

The encounter became known as the Stalemate, neither side getting enough of an upper hand to declare victory or consign defeat. The Turmish army fell back as far as the city of Xorhun and positioned itself between the opposing army and the rich Turmish countryside. The monetary expense of maintaining both armies was enormous, but Chondath blinked first. The loss of its woodcutting operations saved Turmish from an ongoing campaign.

277 DR—Gold Discovered

In 277 DR, the discovery of a gold deposit created the city of Aelor almost overnight. Unfortunately, the vein ran dry within five years and most of the prospectors ended up losing money. Within seven years, nothing was left of Aelor but a few abandoned buildings.

278 DR—Mercenary Trade Grows

The Chondathian population soared, and it became obvious to the Illistine family that food would have to be acquired from other sources if they were to retain control. If they couldn't find food locally, they would have to send their army into food-rich lands.

The surrounding nations and other independent city-states noticed this problem as well. The solution has helped to shape Chondath and the rest of the Reach to this day.

Since mercenary companies would do things that regular militia patrols would not, thousands of troops were “purchased” from Chondath to serve as private militias. Even the Turmish were not above selling their troops, and soon neighboring powers had discovered a way to keep the masses of the Vilhon Reach under control.

285 DR—Nimpeth Founded

The slave-nation of Nimpeth was founded in 285 DR, and it became the first city-state in the region to success-





fully withstand the might of Chondath. Numerous attempts to take it over militarily proved fruitless. As time progressed, the Illistine family of the Chondath Empire simply overlooked it and used it for what everyone else was using it for—slaves. Nimpeth provided many slavepens to hold slaves before their voyage north into the Sea of Fallen Stars and beyond. In addition, its own ruling families kept their own slaves to tend the growing vineyards. Nimpeth became the resort community of the Vilhon; rich, decadent, and powerful.

Arrabar was becoming powerful as well, but its power rested in the politics of the kingdom. The Illistine family was a shrewd lot, skillful enough in the art of politics to keep their enemies guessing as to their next move and fearful of their own positions. It was known as “Shining Arrabar” throughout the Vilhon, a center of learning and prestige. It quickly adopted Nimpeth’s taste for slaves.

300 DR—Academia Vilhonus Founded

In the year 300 DR, a bardic college called the Academia Vilhonus started a fashion craze that continues to this day. To separate the learned student from slaves and other “lesser” people, the college began marking its students with a single painted dot on their forehead. One dot indicated that the person could read, two that they could write, and three that they could use magic. This practice is an established custom today, no longer looked on as a fashion statement.

Of course, the simple act of drawing a dot on one’s forehead could be done by anyone, regardless of whether they possessed the ability that the marks would indicate. It became a practice—and continues as one to this day—for guards and nobles to stop people on the street and make them prove they are capable of reading, writing, or magic use. The inability to perform the tasks is an instant death sentence.

Chondath tried on two more occasions to take Turmish again, but gave up when it became obvious that a military confrontation with its neighbor was fruitless. Alexander Illistine, current patron of the ruling family, proposed a contest to satisfy the countries’ bloodlust while keeping the peace. He proposed that once every four years during Shieldmeet, the day after Midsummer night, the Turmish and Chondath forces meet at the Southsands, a beach southeast of Hlondeth. Each kingdom would bring 12 mercenary companies of 100 men each to engage in a mock war. The winner of the contest

would receive certain trading privileges and initial resource claims as well as a title of slaves.

320 DR—Training Centers Formed

The cities of Nleeth and Amah were founded in 320 DR to serve as training centers for the forces participating in the combat. Nleeth became the home base of the Turmish forces, but Chondath founded the city of Reth to train its own champions. Amah became the neutral city for other independent city-states to bring its warriors.

This form of “entertainment” became a very popular pastime for the citizens of all the kingdoms. It allowed them to sit back and watch in peace as the military units on each side fought for superiority. It also kept the population of the mercenary troops down, which increased the various city-states and countries’ internal security. It created a force of fighting elite who were specially trained in what would eventually become arena combat.

Of course, the number of men lost while fighting in these games was a very small portion of each kingdom’s army. In many ways, this event was seen as a way to keep appraised of enemy tactics.

326 DR—The Field of Tears

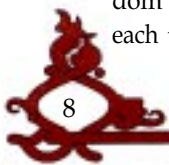
In the Shining Plains, the cities of Ormath and Lheshayl met on the Field of Tears in 326 DR to dispute the other’s claim on the area for its horses and grazing. The two forces of 25,000 men battled for more than a week before an outside force—the Tenpaw Tribe of the Wemics—drove both sides from the field of battle.

352 DR—Alaghan Burns

In 352 DR, a fire erupted in the city of Alaghôn, causing considerable damage to its granaries and shipyards. It took more than a decade to repair the damage, as each ruling family quarreled over who would pay for the extensive damages. During that 10-year time span, pirating flourished along the coast of Turmish.

374 DR—The House of Silvanus

The Isle of Ilighôn became home for the House of Silvanus at a ceremony during Midsummer Night in 374 DR. The house was established as a conclave for druids of 7th level and higher to meet (those who could *shape change* and fly over to the island). It also served as a way for the church of Silvanus to keep an eye on the amount of ship traffic in the area.





400 DR—The Year of the Blue Shield

The Year of the Blue Shield (400 DR) brought a cry for help from the traders that had established the cities of Chondathian and Chauncelgaunt (known now as Saerloon and Selgaunt of Sembia). Orc and goblin raids were battering the trade cities' defenses. Unless something was done to stop the threat, both cities would disappear.

Turmish was facing its own problems with goblinkind, so it was unable to send any aid to the fledgling city-states of the north. Chondath, looking both to extend its reach and occupy its forces, sent nearly half its army northward.

For 15 years the defenders of future Sembia battled the nonhuman hordes, driving them back into the nearby forests and mountains. The Thunder Peaks Routing finally drove the largest forces of goblinkind into the mountains, permitting the city-states to expand their logging operations.

The victory proved opportune for Chondath as well. The Illistines ordered their armies back into the fortified city-states of fledgling Sembia and had them take up defensive positions against another goblinkind attack.

472 DR—The Eve of the Panicked Plague

In the early spring of 472 DR, on a night known as the Eve of the Panicked Plague, another disaster struck the nation of Chondath. Mussum, one of the most popular port cities in the area, suffered a plague that wiped out more than 75% of the city's population in the course of a single night. The few survivors fled the city and made their way to the small village of Iljak. Mussum would remain forever empty. Even today, few venture forth into the ruins of Mussum. From time to time, vagabonds who have entered the crumbling remains have been found dead alongside the road, victims of the strange plague that turns the skin a light green, marring the body with welts and abscesses. Both magic and traditional remedies have proven ineffective against the deadly disease. Death walks the streets of Mussum.

512 DR—Battles with Orcs

The War of 512 pitted the defenders of Turmish against a horde of orcs of the Candlekairn clan of the Orsraun Mountains. The cities of Shaus, Marikor, and Dauntshield were destroyed; only Dauntshield was rebuilt. The orcs were finally routed in the waning summer months as they attempted to fortify their position in ruined Dauntshield.

517 DR—Mount Andrus Erupts

The eruption of Mount Andrus in the winter of 517 inflicted further punishment on the Candlekairn orcs, reportedly destroying their village and killing their leader. Survivors who were captured after fleeing from the mountains reported that their king's vast treasure from the War of 1512 had been lost, buried under volcanic ash.

522 DR—Protests Against Logging

In 522 DR, the druids of the Gulthmere sent a delegation to the capital of Turmish, Alaghôn, and requested that the Turmishans cease their lumber operations. The forest, they explained, could not revitalize itself as fast as the humans cut it down. They were joined in their request by 30 or so elves from the city of Xorhun.

Promising to consider the matter in an open forum, the ruler of Turmish, Arton Githsberry, called for a meeting of all the Lords of Turmish. This meeting was little more than a political facade to appease the druids of Silvanus; no promises were exchanged.

527 DR—Hlondeth Attacked

As the rhetoric of the druids increased and the Lords of Turmish bickered among themselves, the city of Hlondeth came under attack from an unexpected source—kobolds from the Tattered Cloth Legion. The Legion had always been a source of trouble for the traders in the area, but no one knew that they had amassed such numbers until they invaded through the sewer system at dusk during the Spring of 527. More than 1,000 people died at the hands of the kobolds in the first few hours of the attack. Burning wagons blocked the roads, and the palace of the governor burned like a beacon in the night. By dawn, the entire quarter of the city that housed the social elite lay in ruin, with the exception of the emerald-hued walls of Lord Shevron Extaminos (LG hm Pa112). All who ran to his gates were allowed in, from the simple peasants to the most powerful aristocrat.

Ever since he was a child, Shevron Extaminos had a particular affinity with reptiles. His compound included thousands of snakes that he kept in a secluded garden. When he desired quiet and peaceful contemplation, he went to his garden with his snakes.

By the end of the first week of the siege of the kobolds, Shevron was wondering how much longer he could hold out. The battle was waged according to the terms of the kobolds. All he did is sat in his walled compound and



repel the attacks. He needed something drastic to drive them away.

He prayed for hours to Ilmater, his patron, for inspiration and guidance. He found it in the snakes that slithered all around him.

As he emerged from his sanctuary, a teeming mass of snakes slithered behind him. As the kobolds rushed forward, Shevron ordered the gates opened and he charged them. Kobolds died at all sides of him as the snakes surged forward into the assembled host of evil creatures. The defenders of House Extaminos charged in behind the snakes.

The governing quarter of Hlondeth was freed from kobold control that night, but Shevron himself was killed in the battle. The snakes disappeared as well, but no defender of the house was reportedly killed by the serpents. Within days, the remainder of Hlondeth was cleared of kobolds.

The survivors of Hlondeth learned that the kobolds had been led by dark elves, the evil denizens of the deep earth. Their leader, Shilaris Shemwith, had reportedly hidden the treasury of Hlondeth below in the sewers and took the rest with her on her return trip below the earth. Neither the dark elf leader nor the treasure has ever been found.

The survivors of the kobold attack held a great hatred of Chondath for the lack of support during the raid. While the first few attempts to claim independence failed, Hlondeth finally claimed its independence in 614.

640 DR—The Year of the Fanged Beast

In 640, The Year of the Fanged Beast, the citizens of Ormath and Lheshayl found themselves under constant attack from saber-toothed tigers. Caravans were completely destroyed. Entire patrols disappeared in the Shining Plains. Three mercenary companies proved their mettle by providing protection against the fearsome beasts. Their actions secured the trade between the Shining Plains and Hlondeth.

680 DR—The Year of the Long March

Chondath found many of its mercenary forces involved in the battles that eventually led to the end of the second Untheric empire. By 680, known as The Year of the Long March, many Chondathian forces returned from Unther—this time for good. Chondath began to concentrate its efforts on fledgling Sembia—the city-states of Chondathan and Chauncelgaunt.

717 DR—The Year of the Druid's Wrath

The Year of the Druids' Wrath, 717 DR, brought the forces of Turmish in direct opposition with those of the druids of Silvanus, known now as the Emerald Enclave. The current leaders of Turmish, a conclave of wizards known as The Windlass, ordered part of their army to attack the druids in their sanctuary of Cedarsproke in the Gulthmere Forest. As the army marched through the Orsraun Mountains, they were attacked and routed by the Enclave and their giant allies. A naval force sent to the isle of Ilighôn met a similar fate at the hands of water elementals that rammed their ships into the surrounding reef.

The lost battles cost most of the wizards their heads, but it also established the Emerald Enclave as a powerful force in the region. In the years that passed, the Enclave established itself in the Chondalwood and Winterwood, making ecological demands on the surrounding nations that persist unto this day.

724 DR—Assault on Ilighôn

In 724 DR, two of the remaining wizards of The Windlass led an assault against the isle of Ilighôn, hoping to destroy the druidic presence there. It cost them their lives, but this time it was the spells of the druids that defeated them. The warriors who followed the mages—and were allowed to live to tell the tale—reported that their magical items and spells did not function. The magic of the druids proved more than effective, however.

900 DR—The Rotting War

Up until the year 900 DR, the nation of Chondath found itself involved in wars and skirmishes with the independent city states that tried to pop up around it. Ormpetarr tried more than six times to claim its independence, only succeeding when The Rotting War of 902 decimated Chondath, allowing the city to establish a military foothold of its own. Hlondeth withstood many attacks by Chondath. And, of course, the Emerald Enclave continued its militant activities in an effort to protect the interests of Silvanus.

The fast-growing city-states of future Sembia were having problems with the Cormanthor elves, who were resisting the humans' attempts to expand expansion northward into their forest. Chondathan and Chauncelgaunt, having established their own armies, finally received their independence as civil war tore Chondath asunder.



The start of the civil war in 900 DR began innocently enough, with the governors of Hlath and Reth taking more control of their cities. The ruler of Chondath, Neveris Bikou, sent his army marching north toward Hlath. Reth allied with Hlath and fought a bloody battle along the Emerald Corridor, south of the River Nun.

The armies of the warring cities faced each other on both land and sea, spilling the best blood from all sides in an effort to prove superiority. Reth turned against Hlath in the Spring of 901 DR, and Hlath's ruler, the Archmage Whinonas Ferentier, unleashed magic from the lost empire of Netheril to save the city from the advancing forces of both Reth and Chondath.

As powerful magic scorched the fields of battle, the warlords commanding the forces of Arrabar and Reth were forced into calling upon magic of their own. Archmages loyal to their current city-state joined the battle, adding the most potent lost magic from Netheril to an already blood-scarred confrontation.

In 902 DR, the bitter civil war earned its title of The Rotting War. Reth's army, sneaking through the foothills between the Nunwood and the Akanapeaks, attacked the engaged armies of Arrabar and Hlath in the Fields of Nun. The rulers of the cities, tired of the conflict and looking for a quick victory, ordered their wizards to release the most potent magic at their disposal, magic avoided since the fall of Netheril.

Necromantic magic poured into the battlefield, decimating all sides of the conflict. The magical influx poured over the gathered soldiers like waves along the beach, infecting all of them with afflictions both deadly and painful. Two-thirds of all of the men and women gathered on the Fields of Nun died within minutes.

The unfortunate remainder who survived the magical plague stumbled back to their home cities, only to be locked out from their homes by those they had sworn to protect. The surrounding villages and towns inland quickly fell victim to the plague. The civil war had ended, but Arrabar would never regain the control it once had. Chondath formally granted independence to Sembia, hoping to make up in trade what it had lost in control. All of the cities except Iljak declared their independence.

992 DR—The Year of the Flashing Eyes

In 992 DR, The Year of the Flashing Eyes, the various merchant factions finally lost control of Turmish. A

powerful war leader, Lord Saros, convinced the armed forces that Turmish needed to be ruled by a man who "knows what this country needs." That ruler, of course, was Lord Saros.

Saros immediately began shaping Turmish into one of the strongest naval powers in The Reach, establishing naval ports in the free cities of Hlath and Reth, as well as opening up relations with Hlondeth. Turmish became the guardian of the waterways.

1018 DR—Rage of Dragons

During the *Rage of Dragons* in 1018, Turmish's policing of the waterways allowed valuable goods to be easily transported with few run-ins with dragonkind. The Shining Plains were not so lucky, however. Mercenary companies of the Shining Plains killed four dragons that year, including the great worm Andraxis. Damage was extensive in the cities of Lheshayl and Ormath. The people spent most of that summer hiding in the basements of burned-out buildings.

1020 DR—Extaminos Rules Hlondeth

The Extaminos family finally gained control of Hlondeth in 1020 DR, beating back another house's claim on the right to rule after the heirless death of Wariton Minlow. Despite the tactics used by the other house, the people of Hlondeth saw only the glory of House Extaminos, a remnant of faith from the actions of their ancient relative Shevron Extaminos. The story of his sacrifice to save Hlondeth had been reinforced by a slow and steady transformation of Extaminos scions into yuan-ti.

1044 DR—The Year of the Singing Shards

On the last day of 1044, The Year of the Singing Shards, Mount Ugruth celebrated the coming year with a minor eruption that once again shook the city of Hlondeth. This time, however, its angry voice did little other than blacken the city's streets with ash. The citizens quietly cleaned up the mess, as once again they gazed north, into the mountains containing the angry volcano. Somewhat fearful of another "surprise liberation," Hlondeth's military went on full alert after the eruption, gazing across the still waters of the Vilhon for approaching Chondath vessels. But Chondath was still embroiled in political problems of its own.

So many cities had claimed their independence after the Rotting Wars that Chondath was now little more





than a band of loosely allied city-states. The tactics that were used to try and win their loyalty, such as sending armed bands and army units to harass traders, had done little to impress the rogue cities. These practices allowed other smaller cities, such as Lachom, the time they needed to arrange for their own defense.

1150 DR—Chondath Regains Power

By the mid 1100s, Chondath regained the city-state of Hlath that had been lost during the Rotting War. Once again, it controlled the lower half of the Reach. Instead of spreading out through military might, Chondath decided to lend its strength to foreign conflicts, most noticeably the internal struggle in Chessenta. All at a cost, of course.

Chondath became well known for its outstanding mercenary companies. Sespech, founded initially as a barony of Chondath but now its own nation, produced some outstanding cavalry companies.

The rule of Lord Saros, and those after him, provided the nation of Turmish with the security it needed to thrive and grow. The population of Turmish more than doubled over a course of 100 years, the rulers choosing tough negotiation with the druids of the Emerald Enclave over open warfare. In exchange for the rapport,

the druids provided magical services to keep the larger cities safe from most of the plagues and diseases that struck neighboring cities.

1220 DR—Assault on Ironfang

The peace within Turmish was not to last, however. The warlord Sjorn Sendreth started a military campaign against the dwarves of the Alaoreum in 1220 DR. For 20 years the dwarves fought back the human army, until finally, in 1241, they brought the mountain down upon their own city, hiding it from the gathered forces. Thus, the dwarven city of Ironfang removed itself from the conflict.

1297 DR—Ironfang Revealed

Ironfang suffered other problems in the 50 years it remained hidden from the surface world, most notably a bloody conflict with the dark dwarves. In 1297, when the city finally emerged from its self-imposed exile, the dwarves were even more dour toward the surface world. They had expected the humans to spend the time to dig through the mountain to reach their homeland. After all, certainly the human divinations would have revealed that the dwarves still lived under the mountain. However, the humans had run into their own problems.

1242 DR—Anaglathos Aroused

Lord Sendreth sent out what became known as “treasure parties” in the late 1230s. These companies were responsible for seeking the lost treasures of Turmish, supposedly buried within the mountains of the Orsraun. Each year, they set forth on their quest for lost gold, and most years they returned more than they cost. In late 1242, however, they stumbled upon the hoard of Anaglathos, a venerable blue dragon.

When the Company of the Sabred Tooth clamored into his lair, Anaglathos’s first impulse was to incinerate them with lightning. Instead, he decided on a more insidious approach. When the company emerged with unimagined wealth from the Orsraun Mountains, they headed immediately to the capital city of Alaghôn. Led by the human ranger Forier and his wolf Emerald, they marched a path through the very heart of Turmish, arriving at the city gates of the capital. They were given an immediate audience with Lord Sendreth, who wanted a complete detailing of their bounty. What the Lord of Turmish received was a quick death at the hands of





Anaglathos, who had polymorphed himself into the form of the wolf Emerald for the journey to the capital. After charming the members of the Sabred Tooth, he had led them through the cities of Turmish, charming the leaders of the towns or terrifying them into obedience. The reign of Anaglathos, blue dragon of the Orsraun, had begun.

Anaglathos was ruthless in his rule, utterly destroying anyone who opposed him. He began to hoard Turmish's wealth in his new lair in the capital. Shortly, trade dropped off to a fraction of what it had been. The people began to suffer, becoming little more than food or amusement for the dragon.

1247 DR—The Night of Redemption

By 1247, the people had suffered enough. A rebellion started brewing. Those that had served the dragon were burned at the stake for their crimes. The "Night of Redemption" had begun. A paladin by the name of Corwin Freas led a band of adventurers into a desperate melee with Anaglathos. As the hot summer sun beat down upon the lands of Turmish, the blue dragon perished at the hands of Corwin. The townspeople, finally freed from the claws of the dragon, made Corwin their liege.

The new Lord Freas wanted nothing to do with ruling Turmish, however. Within one year, after the country had once again regained its footing, Corwin abolished his own monarchy and set up the Assembly of Stars, a ruling council of free men that would see to the daily affairs of Turmish. Corwin then retired in Alaghôn, where he lived a quiet life until his assassination in The Year of Silent Steel (1254 DR).

1317 DR—The Plague of Dragons

The plague that swept through the Vilhon Reach in 1317 landed first at the shores of Alaghôn. It became known as the *Plague of Dragons* in the area due to its visible effect of causing the skin to flake and the madness brought onto its victims. Instead of seclusion and fear, the plague was greeted by reasoning and discovery. Priests of various faiths worked on a cure for those suffering as well as managed to restrict its spread. By 1323, the plague was virtually unheard of in the Vilhon.

1344 DR—The Elves Retreat

The call for the retreat of the elves from Cormanthor caused a huge commotion in the political circles of the Vilhon Reach. When word reached the rulers of Chondath and Sespech that the elves were in retreat to Ever-

meet, they immediately made plans to harvest the wood from the Chondalwood. Both countries were in for a shock, however.

The elves had not suddenly departed the Chondalwood. A volley of arrows met the first government-sponsored lumberjacks that entered the forest. Sespech's jaunt into Winterwood met with direct opposition from the Emerald Enclave. A circle of druids met the first foragers into the western forest and turned them back without bloodshed.

1358 DR—The Time of Troubles

During the Time of Troubles in 1358, when the gods walked the Realms, there were numerous avatar sightings reported. Malar attempted to enter the confines of the Gulthmere Forest—to destroy the druids there, if popular belief is true—but was challenged by Nobanion and driven north and west toward the Sword Coast. The druids called the battle *The Roar of Shadows*, and it is believed that some of the highest members of the Enclave aided Nobanion in his battle with Malar.

It is also reported that Silvanus roamed Winterwood and the heart of the Chondalwood. Locals reported seeing the power conversing with elves during moonlit nights and participating in the dances and songs of the fairy folk. He reportedly blessed the island of Ilighôn during the Long Night.

1370 DR—Current Times

The current political climate in the Reach is based on its past history. Chondath still dreams of regaining its former glory, Hlondeth still keeps a watchful eye on its independence. The Shining Plains are as wild a land as they ever have been, with wemics and other creatures establishing their own homes away from the trade roads that bring humans into the area in droves. Sespech continues to quarrel with Chondath, and everyone keeps a wary eye trained on the elves of the Chondalwood and the Emerald Enclave.

Forces at Work

While many of the countries of the Reach have long been a source of mercenary companies and small armies, they have also been the target of attention from many of the power groups of the Realms.





The Emerald Enclave

This force of druids controls the Vilhon with an iron grip, working their best to eliminate the presence of many of the other power groups detailed below. They are detailed further on page 26.

The Harpers

Those That Harp have had a difficult time operating in these southern lands. Although opposition from the Red Wizards and the Zhentarim have always been a concern for the Harpers, the Emerald Enclave has proven much more effective at thwarting the Harper cause.

It is widely held by the Harpers that the intention of the druids is to hold the Reach under one central authority, thereby making it easier to establish their political dominance of the area.

The Red Wizards

While very few of the “reds” have come down into this area, there have been numerous instances where lone Red Wizards found themselves on the receiving end of unwanted Enclave attention. As the matter of fact, it is very uncommon for anyone not wearing armor to dress in red. There are even some Reach catch-phrases emphasizing the point:

- A shard of red and you’re as good as dead.
- Emerald and red, they mix on the dead.
- Red on your breath brings death.

At least once every year a lone Red Wizard is slain under dubious circumstances. In 1365, two known Red Wizards were crushed while standing at the docks of Alaghôn. Another Red Wizard met his death when his residence was struck repeatedly by lightning bolts during a freak spring storm in the summer of 1366. The past two years have seen the death of three more Red Wizards—two by drinking poison and a third killed while emerging from an outhouse and running into an angry grizzly bear.

The Zhentarim

The destruction of Zhentil Keep and the return of Randal Morn to power in Daggerdale have left the Zhentarim with more than enough problems to occupy their time. As such, their presence in the Vilhon Reach has been reduced to a few ill-kept and poorly informed

agents. Of course, these agents suffer the same fate as a Harper or Red Wizard when they stick their noses into the politics of the Reach.

Pontar Elimon, a sage of Arrabar, is widely believed to be a spy for the Zhentarim. Although he keeps pretty much to his business of providing information to those who can pay, he has successfully survived a few unusual circumstances that would otherwise have meant the death of him.

Pontar Elimon, hm M7: AC 5 (*bracers of defense* AC 7, *cloak of the bat*); MV 12; hp 18; THAC0 18 (16 with *staff* or *darts*); #AT 1; Dmg 1d6+2 (*staff* +2) or 1d3+2 (*darts* +2); SZ M (5’7” tall); ML elite (14); AL NE; XP 2,000.

S 9, D 13, C 13, I 18, W 14, Ch 13

Personality: cautious, petty, tedious

Special Equipment: ring of mind shielding, ring of shooting stars.

Spells: 1st—alarm, burning hands*, color spray*, find familiar, identify, magic missile*, wizard mark; 2nd—detect good*, Melf’s acid arrow, mirror image*, stinking cloud, web*; 3rd—dispel magic*, flame arrow, slow; 4th—Evard’s black tentacles*, magic mirror, minor globe of invulnerability.

*Indicates favored spell.

Religion

There are nine gods known throughout the Vilhon Reach. While other gods are worshiped in the area as well, their faithful are typically poorly organized or in such small numbers as to be overlooked.

This is not to imply that other religions are persecuted; such is not the case. They are as accepted as they are elsewhere in the realms. However, the Reach does cater to the gods of war and nature.

Eldath (N)

In any war-torn or militant area like the Reach, the teachings of peace and inner contemplation are bound to attract attention. The Quiet One is certainly no exception, and her faithful have been noticed. Of course, this “notice” comes in the force of what many in the church refer to as “tests of faith.”

Malar has been the most notorious for inflicting these tests of faith, hunting down and destroying the followers of Eldath as opportunities present themselves. In the last four years, three high-ranking members of Eldath’s clergy have been killed by followers of Malar. These attacks have done nothing to change the church’s opinion regarding violence, however.



The current leader of the Goddess of the Singing Waters is Shemratha Callingowl. She rules the church quietly from its headquarters in Cedarsproke, deep within the Gulthmere Forest, seldom venturing out to preach the word of the church. "The peace that mankind seeks calls from within each one of us, it does not call out."

Not surprisingly, there are few major temples of Eldath. Cedarsproke's temple is called The Grove by the faithful, and the only other temple is Surkh, overlooking The Deepwash. Eldath has numerous small shrines scattered throughout the Reach, located in Sapra, Hlath, Hlondeth, Ormpetarr, and "wherever water gathers."

Helm (LN)

Many folk in the Reach believe that Helm watched over them during the Time of Troubles, guarding their shores against the chaos that was visited upon some of the northern lands. It has helped Helm that his actions during the Time of Troubles are looked upon so favorably by the citizens of the Reach.

In fact, many scholars have speculated that it is the steadfast devotion from his followers in the Vilhon that has permitted Helm to remain an intermediate power. When his following dropped in the northern lands, it rose in the south. When the invasion of Maztica began to draw off the faithful to those lands, a high priest of Helm, Tonorak Winthrax, reminded the faithful that it was their place to guard and protect, not to engage in a distant war.

Tonorak has since risen to great prominence in the area, guiding the policies of the church of Helm from his home in Iljak. While perhaps not the leader of the entire church of Helm, Tonorak's opinions are viewed as law by the faithful of Helm.

Helm has five major temples in the region: in Alaghôn, Hlondeth, Iljak, Lheshayl, and Reth. He also has shrines in many of the outlying areas, including Cedarsproke, Lachom, Mimph, Ormpetarr, Surkh, Telpir, and the dwarven city of Ironfang. A popular response to the question "Where are there shrines to Helm?" is: "Wherever there is a cause for watching."

Watcher Tonorak Winthrax, hm P13 (Helm): AC 0 (full plate mail & shield); MV 12; THAC0 12 (8 with *mace* +3); hp 72; #AT 2; Dmg 1d6+5 (*mace* +3); SZ M (5'11"); ML elite (14); AL LG; XP 8,000.
S 17, D 12, C 16, I 15, W 18, Ch 16

Personality: commanding, sincere

SA: +2 bonus on surprise rolls; short-term *glyph of warding* once/day; can cast *sentry of Helm** or *wyvern watch* once/day; can cast *mace of Odo** or *exaltation* once/day; can cast *seeking sword* once/day and *summon spectator* once/tenday; can attack twice per round.

Special Equipment: ring of truth, ring of protection +2, rod of resurrection (24), four potions of healing, candle of invocation.

Spheres: MAJOR: All, Astral, Combat, Divination, Guardian. MINOR: Creation, Elemental, Healing, War.

Spells: 1st – *analyze balance*, *courage*, *cure light wounds* (x2), *detect evil*, *detect magic*, *sentry of Helm**, *speak with astral traveler*; 2nd – *create holy symbol*, *dust devil*, *emotion perception*, *heat metal* (x2), *know alignment*, *silence 15' radius*, *spiritual hammer*; 3rd – *astral window*, *exaltation**, *forceward**, *glyph of warding*, *mace of Odo**, *meld into stone*, *water walk*; 4th – *join with astral traveler*, *reflecting pool*, *seeking sword** (x2), *tongues*; 5th – *flame strike*, *plane shift*; 6th – *blade barrier*, *spiritual wrath*.

*These spells are described in *Faiths & Avatars*.

Bold-italics spells are listed in the *Tome of Magic*.

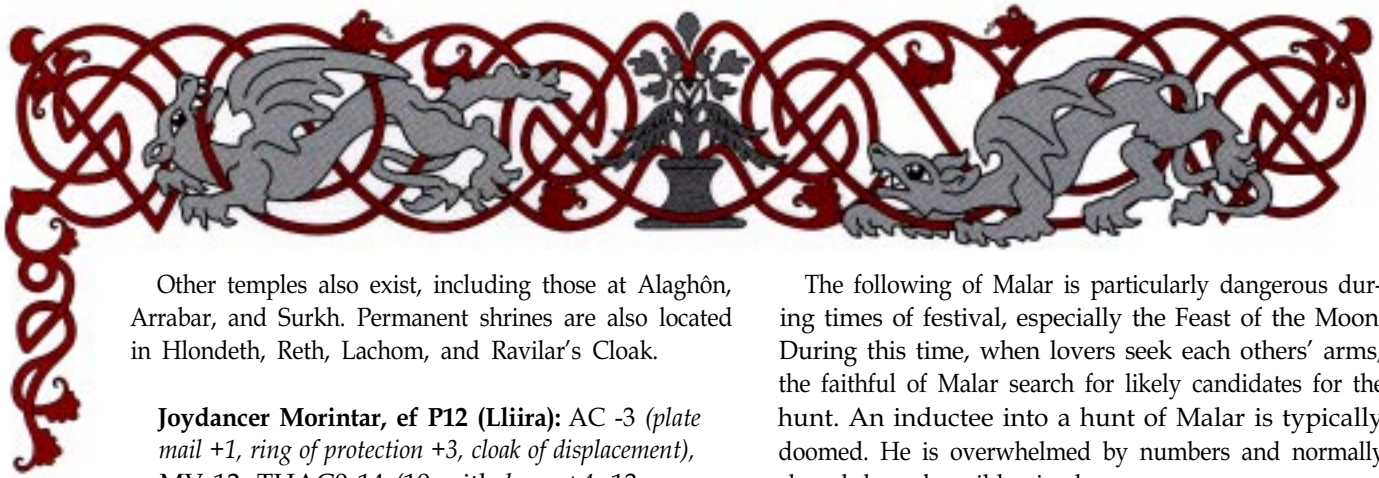
Lliira (CG)

Our Lady of Joy has grown in popularity in the Reach since the fall of Waukeen. Worship among the merchants of Turmish has vastly increased her wealth in this area, and she was always a popular patron around festival times anyway. Considering the number of merchants in the Reach area, it is not surprising that Lliira's following has grown since the Time of Troubles.

Such was not always the case, however, and some still view Lliira and those who worship her as men and women more interested in the joy of the festival and of life than the serious business at hand. The rapid influx of businessmen has done wonders for the church's reputation in social circles, but there is still a light aura of impropriety that surrounds the church.

Lliira was also worshipped extensively by the elves of the Satyrwood. Since the official retreat of the Elves to Evermeet, open worship of Lliira has diminished. Not surprisingly, worship of Our Lady of Joy is virtually unheard of in the dwarven city of Ironfang.

The current clerical leader in the area is the Lady Morintar, who rules the temple at Gildenglade in Turmish. She rose to regional prominence through her quick actions after the Time of Troubles, which drew many of the wealthy merchants to Lliira's calling. As such, her temple in Gildenglade is one of the wealthiest in the region.



Other temples also exist, including those at Alaghôn, Arrabar, and Surkh. Permanent shrines are also located in Hlondeth, Reth, Lachom, and Ravilar's Cloak.

Joydancer Morintar, ef P12 (Lliira): AC -3 (*plate mail +1, ring of protection +3, cloak of displacement*), MV 12, THAC0 14 (10 with *lasso +4, 13 mace +1*), hp 64, #AT 1; Dmg nil (*lasso*) or 1d6+2 (*mace*), SZ M (4'9" tall), ML elite (14), AL CG, XP 5,000.

S 11, D 14, Co 15, I15, W 17, C 17

Personality: quiet, decisive, meek

SA: can utter a *soothing word* once/day; unarmed combat bonuses: attackers are reduced to a +1 attack/damage bonus, +3 on attacks using unarmed combat and +2 on damage, +2 chart bonus for determining effects. Refer to *Faiths & Avatars* for a complete description. Can cast *bliss* or *unseen servant* and *hold person* or *sleep* once/day. Can cast *deadly dance** twice/day and *candle of calm** once/day.

Special Equipment: *staff of curing* (14), *wand of paralyzation* (33). *Spheres:* MAJOR: All, Animal, Charm, Creation, Elemental, Healing, Necromantic, Protection, Sun, Travelers, Weather. MINOR: Divination, Plant, Summoning, Thought, Time.

Spells: 1st – *bliss, command, cure light wounds, entangle, invisibility to undead, light, protection from evil, sanctuary*; 2nd – *bliss*, charm person or mammal, dust devil, heat metal, hold person, music of the spheres, withdraw*; 3rd – *choose future, cure blindness or deafness, cure disease, magical vestment, meld into stone, negative plane protection*; 4th – *cure serious wounds, free action, neutralize poison*; 5th – *cloud of purification, raise dead*; 6th – *heal, wall of thorns*.

*These spells are described in *Faiths & Avatars*.

Bold-italic spells are listed in the *Tome of Magic*.

Malar (CE)

Malar is known as the Stalker in the Vilhon Reach, a name he has earned over the years by his relentless pursuit of the druids of Eldath. Even the nonhuman tribes of the goblins, orcs, and kobolds serve this fell power.

The Reach has always been a wild and dangerous place—the perfect hunting grounds for a power such as the Stalker. When caravans travel through the lands of the Reach, it is Malar whom they fear is watching them under the night sky. Wolves, giants, and goblinkind are all his servants.

Although the Stalker primarily draws his power from the nonhuman tribes of the area, he does have a few pockets of loyal human followers. The Company of the Hunt, a ragtag collection of more than 50 outlaws, makes its home in The Winterwood, striking out at neighboring Sespech as opportunities present themselves. They are led by huntmaster Jaras Silverblood, an outlaw wanted in Turmish for the murder of an Assemblyman.

The following of Malar is particularly dangerous during times of festival, especially the Feast of the Moon. During this time, when lovers seek each others' arms, the faithful of Malar search for likely candidates for the hunt. An inductee into a hunt of Malar is typically doomed. He is overwhelmed by numbers and normally chased down by wild animals.

Jaras Silverblood, hm, F13: AC -1 (*chain mail +3, shield +3*), MV 24 (boots of speed), hp 97, THAC0 8, (6 with gauntlets, 2 with *long sword +3, 7 with long bow +2*), #AT 5/2 or 2; Dmg 1d8+11 (*long sword specialist*) or 1d8 (*sheaf arrows*), SZ M (6'6" tall), ML champion (16), AL CE, XP 10,000. S 17 (18/00 with *gauntlets of ogre power*), D 12, C 17, I 16, W 14, C 15.

Personality: cold, calculating, overbearing.

Special Equipment: four vials of poison (type M), *ring of regeneration, helm of brilliance, hat of disguise*.

Nobanion (N)

The Lion God of Gulthmere is the guardian of the Reach, or so the stories go. During the Time of Troubles, an epic battle was fought between Nobanion and Malar, when the latter tried to enter the Reach. Nobanion, as well as a handful of druids, drove Malar back into the north.

Despite the stories, most sages believe that Nobanion draws his power from the wild animals of the area, especially the great cats that roam the Shining Plains. Stories abound of a great tribe of Wemics that serve Nobanion.

Of course, Gulthmere, is the home of Nobanion, and a group of faithful live in the village of Gurnth, deep within the forest. These cultists live the "life of the cats" according to one observer who visited the village. The old are left to die, and medicinal herbs and salves are virtually unheard of. Just as in nature itself, only the strong survive.

If there is a temple or holy place to Nobanion, it is the Machran Spire, a mountainous outcropping of granite near the village of Gurnth. There are two big religious observances each year for Nobanion. They are always exactly three and one-half months apart, representing the gestation period of the lion. The Festival of the Pride normally takes place during the first week of Ches. Similar to the local observance of the Feast of the Moon, this festival is a time for frolicking and lovemaking. Religious belief promises that a child/cub conceived this



night will go on to become ruler of the pride/church. The Newborn Celebration always takes place during the third week of Kythorn. This represents the rebirth of Nobanion and the prominence of the lions in the Reach.

Not surprisingly, shrines to the Lion God of the Gulthmere are difficult to locate. Carried by nomads or by tribes of wemics, the locations are difficult to ascertain, which makes it all the more difficult for Malar to seek vengeance against Nobanion for defeating him in the Gulthmere.

Silvanus (TN)

The plagues that devastated the Vilhon Reach in its past are vivid in the memory of its people. The suffering and pain these diseases inflicted becomes more severe with each retelling. Silvanus is seen as the god who stood by the people of the Reach when the other gods fled.

Of course, this is by no means true, but it is an opinion shared by many in the Reach. Every major city and town has at least a small temple to Silvanus, and the druids and clerics of his church still advise the rulers as to ways to prevent a future outbreak of disease. The spellcasters of Silvanus also provide magical support free of charge to the cities in which they reside, keeping the waters clean and the sewers as free of disease as possible.

Silvanus is also the patron of the Emerald Enclave, the band of druids that seeks to keep the entire Vilhon Reach area ecologically sound. That group's violence and ruthlessness are as legendary as the plagues that swept through the Vilhon. But the relationship between the Enclave and Silvanus is anything but apparent. Not all priests of Silvanus are members of the Enclave, so an effective strike against religious leaders by angry politicians can only serve to anger the Church, most likely causing them to cease "clean-up" operations within the town or city. In addition, the townspeople who serve Silvanus don't necessarily associate the Emerald Enclave with the clergy of Silvanus. The teachings of the church of Silvanus dictate that those who serve the Enclave do so with Silvanus's approval. If that approval did not exist, those druids would lose their spellcasting abilities.

And the clergy of Silvanus cares little for the well-being of a particular government or political ruler. All they look at is the big picture; for them, that view encompasses the entirety of the Vilhon Reach. Should a partic-

ular country rise or fall is irrelevant in the grand scheme of things. As long as nature survives, the balance remains.

The current political powerhouse of the church is also the leader of the Emerald Enclave. Shinthala Deepcrest, a human female of about 50 winters, has led the Enclave for more than 15 years, serving as both spiritual and political guardian for the interests of Silvanus.

The most prominent temple in the region is located on the isle of Ilghôn. This stone and wood structure is known as the Oakenhall among the faithful. Other large temples are located in Alaghôn, Hlondeth, Ormath, Lachom, Ormpetarr, Arrabar, and Reth. Shrines are found in groves and small villages throughout the Reach, but specifically in the towns of Iljak, Hlath, Nun, Urml, Ulver's Lance, Banathar, Dauntshield, and Swordslake Creek.

Talos (CE)

When the Great Fires of 1355 raged across the Shining Plains, the followers of the Destroyer took credit for its destruction. Four years later, when a brutal kobold attack claimed the lives of four assemblymen from Alaghôn, the faithful of Talos again claimed responsibility. As each disaster rears its ugly head, the followers of Talos make sure that they are there to revel in its aftermath.

This desire to be present whenever there is death and destruction has somewhat wronged the followers of Talos the Destroyer, but only slightly. While the church has been accused of horrific actions (such as the "cleansing" of a startup community in Chondalwood in 1362, which was actually performed by the Emerald Enclave), they are guilty of some horrific actions of their own. As a result, open worship of Talos tends to be frowned upon. In some places, worship is outlawed (such as Alaghôn); in other places, it is given tacit approval (such as Hlondeth).

Not surprisingly, the most prominent temple to Talos has been built at the foot of Mount Ugruth, a semi-active volcano in the region. Each burst of ash or steam brings the followers of the Destroyer to the volcano like a moth to flame. A common musing in the streets of Hlondeth is that the best thing that could happen would be for Ugruth to smoke for a few weeks before a major eruption, thereby allowing as many of the faithful of Talos as possible to arrive at the scene.

In fact, the blowing of smoke or steam from any volcano is considered a favorable sign to the faithful of





Talos. Likewise, the appearance of a water spout, funnel cloud, forest fire, or severe storm draws the faithful to the area. Wherever there is a chance for a natural disaster, the followers of Talos are present. Some cities have been known to watch for large gatherings of Talos followers so as to be warned about upcoming natural disasters.

Stormlord Marsalas Endrvin leads the most powerful wing of the church from his stronghold at Mt. Ugruth. He considers his *stormlands* — the area under his control—to include the Aphrunn Mountains to the East and the Orsraun Mountains north until the Wetwoods, including the city of Hlondeth itself. He lives in Hlondeth but his whereabouts at any given time are unknown.

Talos has no known temples except the one in Hlondeth. All other temples are secret, to avoid the undue scrutiny of religious and political leaders. Shrines vary wildly in location and are normally found wherever a disaster has recently occurred. For example, a stone shrine still stands in the Shining Plains, in celebration of the Great Fires.

Stormlord Marsalas Endrvin, hm P14 (Talos):

AC -2 (*bracers of defense AC 2, ring of protection +3*), MV 12, hp 82, THAC0 12 (9 with *javelin +3, 10 with morning star +2*), #AT 1, Dmg 1d6+3 (*javelin*) or 2d4+2 (*morning star*), SZ M (6' tall), ML champion (15), AL CE, XP 10,000.

S 15, D 15, C 15, I 14, W 17, Ch 14.

Personality: ruthless, brutal, vindictive.

SD: Immune to normal fire and cold and both magical and mundane lightning/electrical attacks.

SA: Can cast *shocking grasp* and *control weather* (but only to make weather conditions worse) once/day. Can cast *call lightning* or *ride the wind* once/day. Marsalas can *water walk* at will and also cast *lightning bolt* three times/day (but only if not in metal armor).

Special Equipment: ring of human influence, necklace of missiles (one 6d, two 4d, two 2d), rod of beguiling (22), staff of the serpent (20).

Spheres: MAJOR: All, Animal, Astral, Chaos, Combat, Elemental, Healing, Necromantic, Summoning, Sun, War, Weather. MINOR: Creation, Divination, Protection, Time.

Spells: 1st — *cause light wounds, darkness, detect good, detect magic, faerie fire, mistaken missile, protection from good, putrefy food & drink*; 2nd — *charm person or mammal, chill metal, dissension's feast, emotion perception, fire trap, nap, wind lash**, withdraw; 3rd — *continual darkness, dispel magic, hold animal, miscast magic, random casualty, speak with dead, storm shield**; 4th — *animal summoning I, cause serious wounds, chaotic combat, neutralize poison, weather stasis*; 5th — *chaotic commands, flame strike, slay living*; 6th — *Sol's searing orb, word of recall*; 7th — *creeping doom*.

*These spells are described in *Faiths & Avatars*.

Bold-italic spells are listed in the *Tome of Magic*.





Tempus (CN)

The Foehammer has seen his share of worshipers rise and fall in the fertile Reach over the years. While there has always been more than enough worshipers, his following was greatly reduced at the conclusion of the Rotting War. It has since risen to a high level, though it has never surpassed the point just before that fell war.

Surprisingly, the stories written by the Bards of Nun in 902 DR detail a singular vision of the Lord of Battles. The three bards, each attached with a different army involved in the conflict, wrote that Tempus appeared to them riding a skeletal steed that oozed blood upon the battlefield. Unfortunately, each general of the army took this to mean that Tempus rode a white horse and that the battlegrounds were going to run with the blood of his enemies.

Chondath, Hlondeth, and Sespech are probably the most prized kingdoms in the Vilhon Reach for Tempus. Chondath and Sespech frequently stand poised on the brink of war, and it is not uncommon for patrols from the opposing kingdoms to attack one another. Hlondeth has always been a target for military occupation, and its army stands ready to defend. For years, Tempus has favored the City of Serpents by his absence, but many faithful wonder how much longer the Yuan-ti city will be spared.

Current church politics have two powerful clergymen driving their faithful into a battle frenzy against each other. General Vandemar Cordwin of Arrabar has been pounding his shield in rage against the ruler of Sespech, Baron Thuragar Foeshmasher of Ormpetarr. Such sabre-rattling is done with the full support of the ruling family of Arrabar, but the reasons behind such public displays of hostility are unknown.

Of course, Arrabar is not the only city responsible for the delicate state of political affairs between the two kingdoms. General Clas Denwith has been referring to the ruling house of Arrabar as "decadent, evil, and corrupt" as well as referring to the military in the city as "under-trained and woefully inadequate for the battle they wish to wage against mighty Sespech." Such is the meat and drink of church politics; praise Tempus!

Besides the major temples in both Arrabar and Ormpetarr, the seat of power for Tempus unquestionably resides in the small town of Nun (near the site of the bloody conclusion of the Rotting War). Temples also reside in Alaghôn, Ormath, Lheshayl, and Nimpeth.

par, and Sapra.

General Vandemar Cordwin, hm P (Tempus) 15:

AC 0 (plate mail & shield, *cloak of protection* +2), MV 12, hp 88, THAC0 12 (8 with *mace* +3 *strength bonus*), #AT 2, Dmg 1d6+7, SZ M (6'2" tall), ML fanatic (19), AL CN, XP 9,000.

S 17, D 12, C 15, I 14, W 18, Ch 14.

Personality: willful, energetic, zealous.

SA: Can incite a battle rage that provides +2 on all attacks, damage, and saving throw rolls; +1 on attack and damage rolls with his *chosen weapon* (*mace* +3); receives Constitution bonus as a warrior; can automatically determine the workmanship and magical properties of weapons; can cast *create food & water* once/day; can cast *prayer* once/day with a casting time of 1; can cast *create campsite* or *break campsite* once/day; can cast *heroes' feast* once ever three days; can attack twice per round.

Special Equipment: *rod of passage* (27), *ring of spell turning*, *scarab versus golems* (Iron).

Spheres: MAJOR: Animal, Chaos, Combat, Divination, Elemental, Healing, Necromantic, Protection, War, Weather. MINOR: All, Guardian, Summoning, Sun, Wards.

Spells: 1st – *courage*, *detect evil*, *detect magic*, *detect poison*, *invisibility to undead*, *morale*, *protection from evil*, *sanctuary*; 2nd – *emotion perception*, *heat metal*, *messenger*, *rally*, *resist fire*, *snake charm*, *spiritual hammer*, *zone of truth*; 3rd – *adaptation*, *call lightning*, *caltrops*, *dispel magic*, *holy flail**, *negative plane protection*, *summon insects*; 4th – *chaotic combat*, *cure serious wounds*, *neutralize poison*, *protection from lightning*, *repel insects*, *reveal**, *spell immunity*; 5th – *flame strike*, *insect plague*, *raise dead*, *true seeing*; 6th – *dance of the fallen**, *disguise*; 7th – *holy word*.

*These spells are described in *Faiths & Avatars*.

Bold-italic spells are listed in the *Tome of Magic*.

General Clas Denwith, hm P16 (Tempus): AC

-7 (*full plate* +2, *shield* +2, *cloak of protection* +3), MV 24 (*boots of speed*), hp 99, THAC0 10 (*flail*), #AT 1, Dmg 1d6+7 (*flail*, *strength bonus*), SZ M (6'4" tall), ML fanatic (19), AL CN, XP 11,000.

S 14 (18/00 with *gauntlets of ogre power*), D 12, C 16, I 14, W 18, Ch 15.

Personality: dedicated, earnest, excitable.

SA: Can incite a battle rage that provides +2 on all attacks, damage, and saving throw rolls; +1 on attack and damage rolls with his *chosen weapon* (*mace* +3); receives Constitution bonus as a warrior; can automatically determine the workmanship and magical properties of weapons; can cast *create food & water* once/day; can cast *prayer* once/day with a casting time of 1; can cast *create campsite* or *break campsite* once/day; can cast *heroes' feast* once ever three days; can attack twice per round.

Special Equipment: *ring of invisibility*, *ring of the ram* (20), *incense of meditation* (2), *helm of underwater action*.

Spheres: MAJOR: Animal, Chaos, Combat, Divination, Elemental, Healing, Necromantic, Protection, War, Weather. MINOR: All, Guardian, Summoning, Sun, Wards.

Spells: 1st – *bless*, *detect evil*, *detect magic*, *detect poison*, *invisibility to undead*, *mistaken missile*, *morale*, *protection from evil*, *sanctuary*; 2nd – *chant*, *draw upon holy might*, *heat metal* (x2), *rally*, *resist fire*, *snake charm*, *spiritual hammer*, *zone of truth*;



3rd – *adaptation*, *call lightning*, *caltrops*, *dispel magic* (x2), *holy flail**, *negative plane protection*, *summon insects*; 4th – *chaotic combat*, *cure serious wounds*, *neutralize poison*, *protection from lightning*, *repel insects*, *reveal**, *spell immunity*; 5th – *flame strike*, *insect plague*, *raise dead*, *true seeing*; 6th – *dance of the fallen**, *heal*, *weather summoning*; 7th – *control weather*.

*These spells are described in *Faiths & Avatars*.
Bold-italic spells are listed in the *Tome of Magic*.

Tyr (LG)

Perhaps no place else in Faerûn is the concept of justice so skewed against the patron god of that ideal. It is perhaps fortunate that the faithful of Tyr do not seek equality; justice is a journey in itself.

The current focus for the church of Tyr is centered around delivering justice to the followers of Malar, whose foul and brutal actions have caught Tyr's attention. Currently, a group of paladins loyal to Tyr are striving to bring Jaras Silverblood to justice in Alaghôn.

Of course, the faithful of Tyr are also searching to bring out other hidden enclaves of the Stalker, hoping to weaken that dark power's effectiveness once it has been exposed for what it truly is. This action has brought the attention of Malar and his followers, but the followers of Blind Tyr only look at this attention as a suffering they must endure to achieve the justice they seek.

The Time of Troubles neither helped nor harmed Tyr in the Reach. His following is about as strong as it ever was. If anything, the fall of some of the darker powers has allowed lesser evils to rise in power, thereby gaining the attention of Tyr the Even-Handed.

Alaghôn is home to the most vocal and fervent priest of Tyr, Denton Crimsguard. Producing fiery speeches for the masses every week, Denton is also the one responsible for sending out paladins to bring back Jaras Silverblood so that he may stand trial in Alaghôn. He's also been quite vocal concerning the leader of the "cult" of Malar, Marsalas Endravin.

Major temples to Tyr exist in Alaghôn, Lheshayl, Ormpetarr, and Hlath. Shrines are easily found in Nun, Nimpeth, Ulver's Lance, and Bistal's Bottom.

Denton Crimsguard, hm P 13 (Tyr): AC -3 (plate mail & shield), *ring of protection* +3, *cloak of displacement*, MV 12, hp 72, THAC0 12 (8 with mace +4), #AT 2, Dmg 1d6+5, SZ M (5'11" tall), ML elite (14), AL LG, XP 7,000.

S 15, D 13, C 15, I 14, W 17, Ch 16.

Personality: determined, self-sacrificing.

SA: Understands legal laws and codes in Turmish and Chon-

dath; can cast *holy word*, *hold person*, and *strength of one* once/day; can cast *memory read* once every three days; can impose *impeding permission* on another once every tenday; can *detect lie* and *detect invisibility* at will; can impose legal thoughts on another once a day; can attack twice per round.

Specialty Equipment: *ring of mind shielding*, *staff of curing* (14), *horn of blasting*.

Spheres: MAJOR: All, Astral, Charm, Combat, Creation, Divination, Guardian, Healing, Law, Necromantic, Protection, Summoning, Sun, War, Wards. MINOR: Elemental

Spells: 1st – *call upon faith*, *command*, *detect evil*, *detect magic*, *invisibility to undead*, *light*, *protection from evil*, *sanctuary*; 2nd – *calm chaos*, *create holy symbol*, *dust devil*, *heat metal*, *hold person* (x2), *spiritual hammer*, *wolfjaws**; 3rd – *dispel magic*, *meld into stone*, *negative plane protection*, *remove curse*, *rigid thinking*, *speak with dead*, *strength of one*; 4th – *compulsive order*, *cure serious wounds*, *defensive harmony*, *neutralize poison*; 5th – *dispel evil*, *hammer of justice**; 6th – *heal*, *sword and hammer**.

*These spells are described in *Faiths & Avatars*.

Bold-italic spells are listed in the *Tome of Magic*.

Nonhumans

Only a handful of areas in the Reach contain a significant amount of nonhumans. Some gatherings of nonhumans exist only in legend, while others are known to exist and contribute to the economy of the area.

The Dwarves

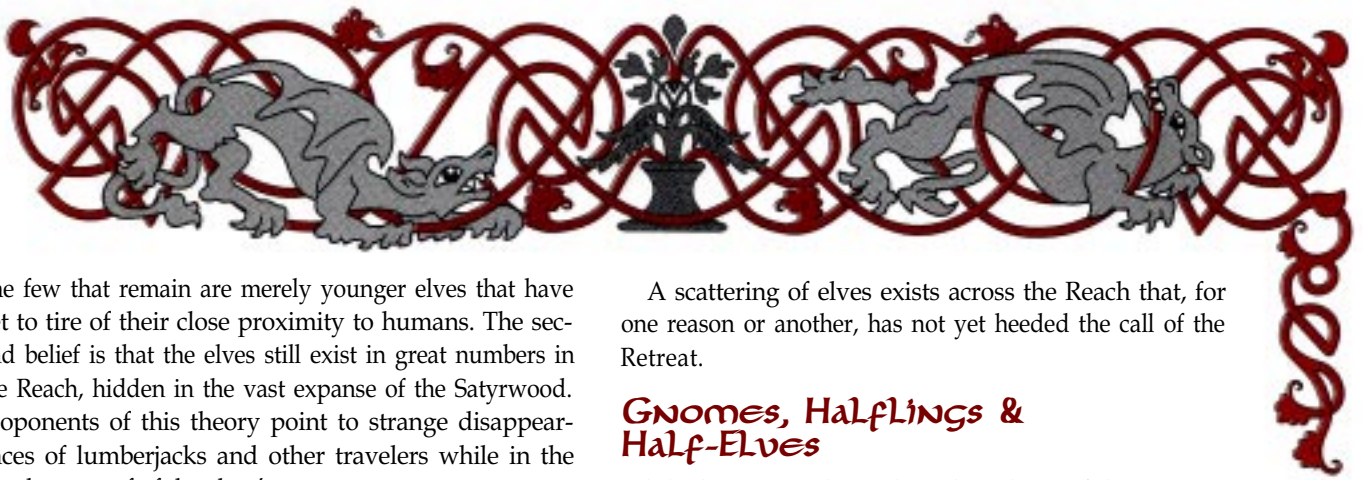
The dwarves keep to themselves for the most part, residing in their mountain city of Ironfang, in the Alaoreum Mountains. They are a proud people, and their past dealings with the humans of the Reach have left them somewhat cynical of human motives. Many still remember the war against the Turmish army. Still, the dwarves conduct a great deal of trade within the Vilhon, purchasing primarily Turmish goods in exchange for some of their precious metals and minerals.

Many dwarves refer to their city as the "kingdom of Ironfang, ruled by the most wise and humble King Anthrus Strongarms." The city functions as an independent kingdom in any case, as was demonstrated during both the Turmish War of 1220 and the Campaign of Darkness (the conflict with the dark dwarves).

Gildenglade and Ravilar's Cloak also contain a larger than normal population of dwarves. However, most dwarves prefer to live in Ironfang.

The Elves

Two beliefs regarding elves hold sway in the Reach. The first, and most popular, belief is that most elves have joined their brethren on the great Retreat to Evermeet.



The few that remain are merely younger elves that have yet to tire of their close proximity to humans. The second belief is that the elves still exist in great numbers in the Reach, hidden in the vast expanse of the Satyrwood. Proponents of this theory point to strange disappearances of lumberjacks and other travelers while in the woods as proof of the elves' presence.

The legend of the mythical elf city of Rucien-Xan is known throughout the Reach. When mothers tell stories to their children in the dark hours of the night, stories of the elves typically end with, "And the elves went back to the elf lord's hall of Rucien-Xan to wait for future invaders."

Cynics point out that adventuring companies have searched for Rucien-Xan for many years, and they have found nothing. Supporters point out that the adventurers haven't even been successful at finding the elves' presence before the Retreat. Others believe that the elves were never within the Chondalwood in the first place.

The only known gathering of elves is in the city of Xorhun. The elves seem to thrive there. They believe there is some natural force that increases their fertility, providing more offspring, more often.

A scattering of elves exists across the Reach that, for one reason or another, has not yet heeded the call of the Retreat.

Gnomes, Halflings & Half-Elves

While these races do not have kingdoms of their own, a few strongholds exist for them in Turmish. They also exist in small numbers in other areas of the Reach.

Gnomes are found in great numbers in the city of Nonthal and Xorhun. Xorhun is a favored locale due to its legendary ability to increase the fertility rate among nonhumans.

Halflings are virtually unseen outside of Turmish. Even within the Reach, they tend to only gather in small communities within the major cities. Hlondeth, Gildenglade, and Alaghôn all have a small halfling element to them.

The half-elves are more abundant in the Reach, living both within Turmish and in Chondath and Sespech. They live openly with the elves in Gildenglade but tend to avoid the city of Xorhun.





The Eyes of Silvanus

I'd rather face a fleet of pirates from the Sea of Fallen Stars than sail my cargo through the eyes of Silvanus. At least I understand the motives of the pirates.

— Captain Anton "Quicksails" Morsen, lumber merchant



The eyes of Silvanus are two major islands that guard the entry into the heart of the Vilhon Reach, called Ilighôn and Wavecrest. Collectively they are known as the "eyes" because of the havoc raised with compasses when trying to navigate through them. A reef guards both islands, making navigation a difficult task. The Emerald Enclave further complicates matters by guarding the passage through the reef on Ilighôn with creatures from the Elemental Plane of Water. Wavecrest does not have a safe passage at all, and only row boats and similar small craft can freely navigate the area.

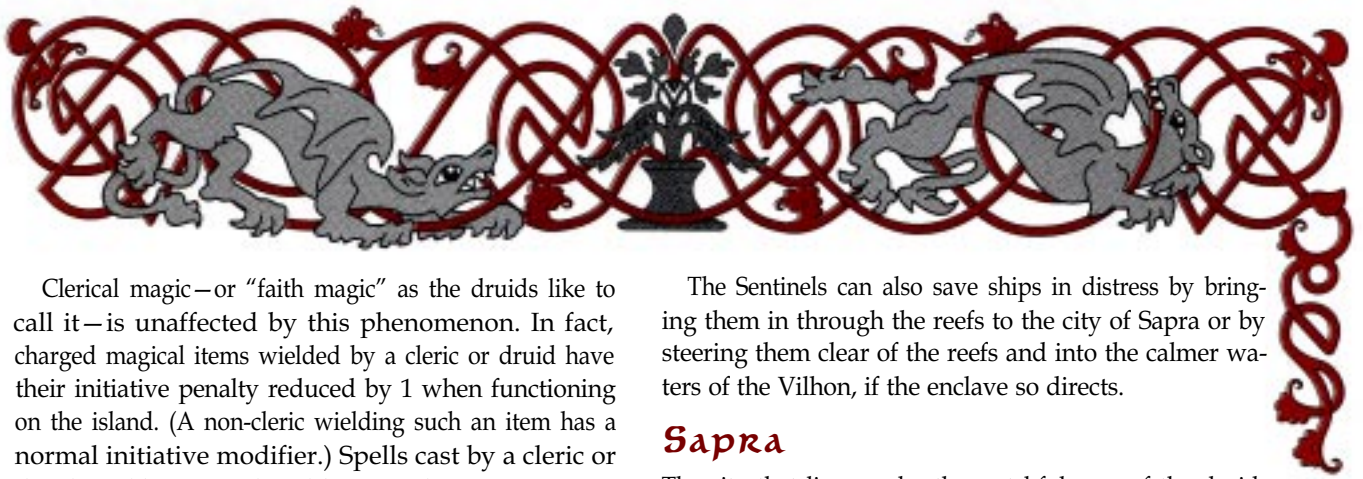
Entrance into the Reach by boat must be accomplished in one of two ways. First, a captain can navigate the Farshore Straits. This narrow expanse of waterway is a favorite choice for smaller craft, especially those seeking to outrun military vessels intent on their capture. The second and more popular choice is to sail "between the eyes of Silvanus." This course takes a ship directly between the islands of Ilighôn and Wavecrest and then directly into the heart of the Reach. Larger ships, unless piloted by particularly brave or foolish captains, take this course. Once past the twin islands, all a captain needs to worry about is the island of Ixinos, home to a group of amazons. If he can keep from running into it, he is home free.

The narrow strait between the island of Wavecrest and the mainland is known as the Paddle Straits and is unsuitable for any large craft. Hunks of jagged rock break through the surface of the water at various points, making navigation extremely difficult. It is also frequently covered in a heavy fog, making this area even more dangerous to traverse.

Ilighôn

The isle of Ilighôn is best known for its most famous inhabitants, the Emerald Enclave. This band of druids, dedicated to the ecological stability of the Vilhon, established itself on the island in 374 DR and has remained since, despite military excursions to root them out. A structure dedicated to Silvanus was completed a few years later and was christened the House of Silvanus.

One of the most qualities of the island is that it negates wizard magic. In all locations on the island, and up to a radius of one mile around it, wizard magic does not function. This includes charged items such as rods, staves, and wands as well as enchanted items such as scrolls, and permanent magical effects such as *stoneskin* or even *contingency*. Cast spells likewise fizzle and are expended.



Clerical magic—or “faith magic” as the druids like to call it—is unaffected by this phenomenon. In fact, charged magical items wielded by a cleric or druid have their initiative penalty reduced by 1 when functioning on the island. (A non-cleric wielding such an item has a normal initiative modifier.) Spells cast by a cleric or druid are likewise reduced by 1 on their casting time, subject to a maximum reduction to 1.

This special area of magic, called a *faith-magic zone*, is said to be a special gift to Silvanus from the goddess Mystra. While the reasons behind such a gift are shrouded in legend—ranging from a favor for Silvanus aiding Mystra in a long-ago battle against Bane to a reward to Silvanus for teaching Mystra how magic can be used to help the land—the fact that it remains to this day is not in question. All attempts to dispel or negate the effects, even temporarily, have proven utterly ineffective.

Entrance to the island itself is gained through a quarter-mile breach in the reef. This opening is always guarded by the Seven Sentinels of Silvanus, who heed the bidding of the Emerald Enclave.

Water Elementals (4): AC 2; MV 6, HD 16; hp 122, 112, 100, 94; THAC0 7; #AT 1; Dmg 5d6; SA under ships; SD +2 or better weapons to hit; MR only affected by clerical magic and cannot be controlled or forcibly returned to own plane; SZ H (16' tall); ML (fanatic) 17; XP 10,000

Notes: SA can overturn ships up to 16 tons in size. In addition they can prevent ships from moving if their current hit point number is greater than or equal to the number of tons the ship weighs. For example, if the SA has 70 hit points, it can prevent ships that weigh 70 tons or less from moving.

Air Elementals (3): AC 2; MV Fl 36 (A); HD 16; THAC0 5; #AT 1; Dmg 2d10; SA aerial combat, *whirlwind*; SD +2 or better weapon to hit; MR only affected by clerical magic and cannot be controlled or forcibly returned to own plane; SZ H (16' tall); ML (fanatic) 17; XP 11,000.

Notes: SA gain +1 to hit and +4 on damage while, in combat over the ground, can form a whirlwind standing 80' tall that kills all creatures of 3HD or less. It takes one full turn to form and dissipate this cone.

A favorite tactic of the Sentinels is to have water elementals hold vessels in place while air elementals form *whirlwinds* and blow the ships into one another. The *whirlwinds* are normally deadly enough to kill even the most skilled crew. They never chase ships away from the island, nor are they visible upon approach to Ilighôn.

The Sentinels can also save ships in distress by bringing them in through the reefs to the city of Sapra or by steering them clear of the reefs and into the calmer waters of the Vilhon, if the enclave so directs.

Sapra

The city that lives under the watchful eyes of the druids is neither an invited guest nor an intruder upon the isle of Ilighôn. For more than 200 years, the city has existed, never railing against the actions or policies of the Emerald Enclave.

Over time, Sapra has become a haven for those men and women who seek to be free of the tyranny of wizards who abuse their magic. There are even a few “retired” Red Wizards here, successfully shielded against the magic of those who would find them with divinations.

Sapra produces little to export except some food and herbs, so trade is very light. The city is normally a quiet port that sees a trading vessel only a few times a month.

One of the problems facing Sapra is its population. By order of the Enclave, Sapra cannot expand its borders. The city of 2,000 has grown as large as possible under the druids' edict, but now property values and lodging costs are rising.

Sapra is ruled by a six-person council of elders. The elder positions are not full-time jobs. The council is currently led by Mayor Thomas Flagcain, the town blacksmith. The council meets as needed, normally once every month or so.

House of Silvanus

Located at a plateau high atop the Elder Spires, the stronghold of the druids sits in harmony with nature. The House of Silvanus is an open structure composed of wood and granite surrounded by water.

The water here rolls off the edges of the plateau in three areas, creating the three rivers of the Calling, Elder, and Springbrook in spectacular waterfalls that boil mist around the House.

Access to the House of Silvanus is gained by a series of stepping stones. Many followers of Silvanus, especially the old, pray at the banks of the House. A water elemental, similar to that which guards the entrance through Eldath's Ring, also guards the stepping stones from intrusion.

There has never been an incident where the water elemental guarding the stones has attacked a pilgrim. Whatever divination guides the creature is beyond mankind's understanding.





Other Areas of Interest

While the island of Ilighôn is mostly uninhabited, there are numerous areas of interest, particularly to the faithful of any of the nature gods (Eldath, Mielikki, and Silvanus). Travel through the heartlands of Ilighôn is fairly safe and free of monsters.

Archentree

Archentree is not a city as much as it is a gathering place for treants. Many of the treants of Archentree are extremely old—and prone to ignore the calls and pleas of humans seeking aid or wisdom. Waving a burning torch around is a sure way to get their attention, but not in a manner conducive to continued breathing.

Calling River

In ages past, the druids of the Reach made a pilgrimage to the island of Ilighôn to heed a calling from Silvanus. When they arrived, they followed the Calling to its source and built the House of Silvanus.

Druidhome

More a collection of groves than an actual village, the Druidhome serves as a community of old druids, priests, and rangers who are serving out their final years of service to one of the three nature powers.

While most of the residents simply wish to be left alone, they are still devout in their faith to their gods. Should an attack occur against the House of Silvanus, or even against the island itself, these followers would most certainly be on the front lines.

Eldath's Ring

Eldath, Goddess of the Singing Waters, serves as the protector of Ilighôn, shielding it from direct naval attack. In addition, the faith-magic zone extends two miles from the ring on all sides.

Elder River

Religious stories claim that the eldest druid on the island walked to its northernmost point to stare across the vastness of the Inner Sea during the founding of the Emerald Enclave. He fasted and prayed for a fortnight before returning to the future home of the House of Silvanus with a plan to protect the Vilhon Reach and the nature within it. The river has been known as the Elder ever since.

Farshore Straits

This narrow strip of water serves as an alternative entrance and exit from the Reach. While most ships choose to go through the eyes of Silvanus, a few ships try to navigate the Farshore.

The Aphrunn Mountains can be seen from the shores of Ilighôn near the Farshore Straits. This area is frequently used in tracking shipping traffic.

Grandlore Forest

This forest is the largest on the island, dedicated to the first recorded Grand Druid of the area, Antonius "lore-master" Mistwind. It covers more than half the island and is divided by the Elder River to the north and the Calling River to the south.

Great Forest

This forest is the smallest of Ilighôn, stopping at the Calling River to the west and the Hierophant Trail to the east.

Hierophant Trail

Virtually all of the overland activity of Ilighôn is confined to this small trail. The druids have taken a dim view on the establishment of any other trails into the area. It is used primarily by those who wish to pray at the House of Silvanus.

Lake Bluesprings

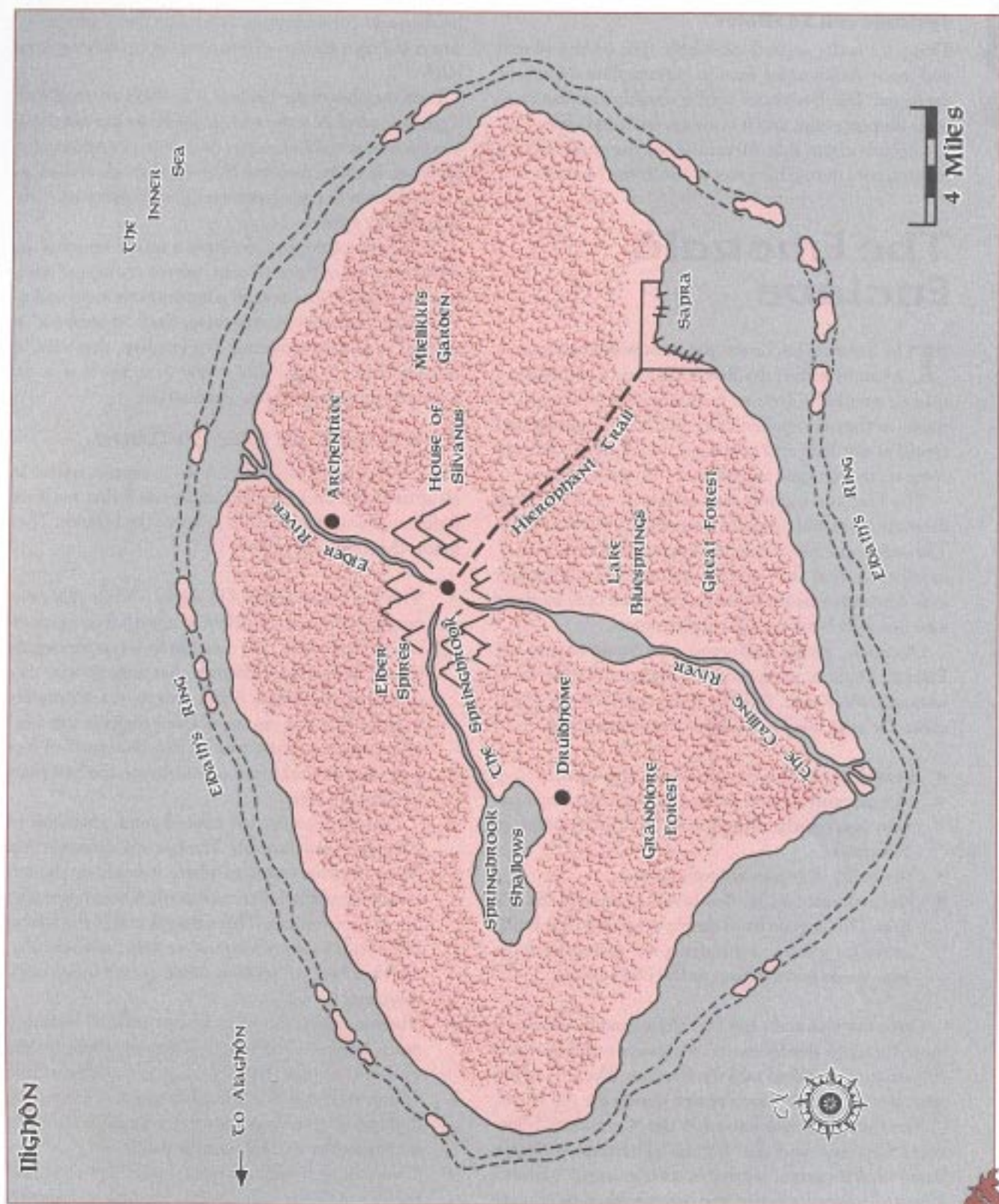
Few of the residents of Sapra ever make it farther west than the shores of the Bluesprings. Lake Bluesprings itself is a popular getaway for the residents, but the areas beyond the lake are wild and untamed.

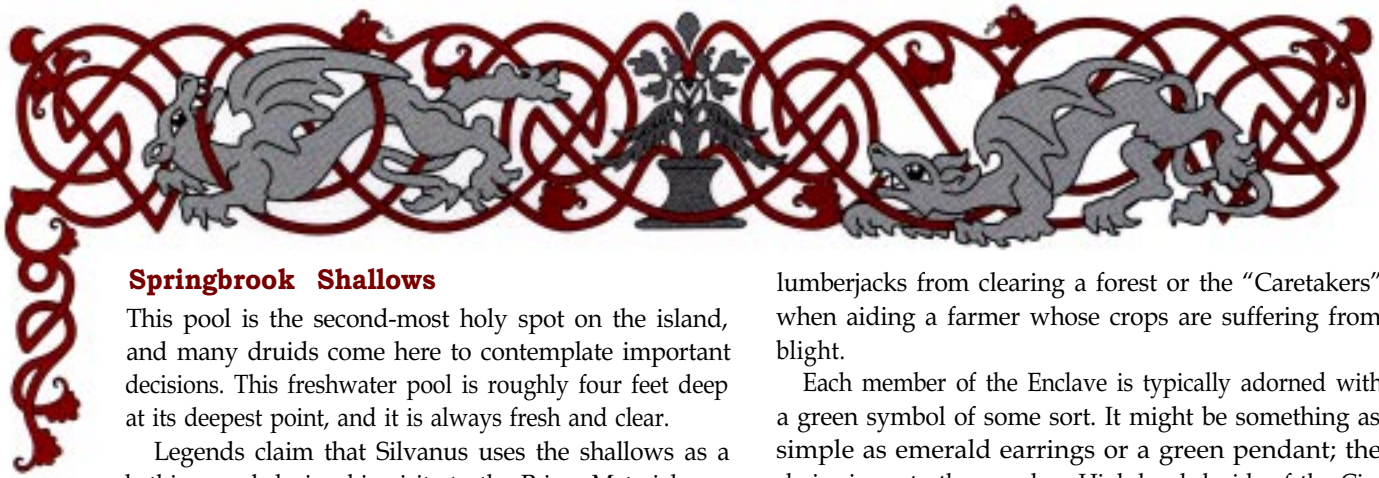
Mielikki's Garden

Many of the oaks that grow on the island are contained within Mielikki's Garden. Whether this has to do with the presence of the treants in Archentree is subject to much speculation, but sages are quick to point out that the treants could have made their home in the garden because of the oaks.

Springbrook River

This river is one of three that are fed from the pool surrounding the House of Silvanus. Roaring down the Elder Spires, it empties into the Springbrook Shallows.





Springbrook Shallows

This pool is the second-most holy spot on the island, and many druids come here to contemplate important decisions. This freshwater pool is roughly four feet deep at its deepest point, and it is always fresh and clear.

Legends claim that Silvanus uses the shallows as a bathing pool during his visits to the Prime Material.

The Emerald Enclave

The Emerald Enclave is the most well-known organization within the Reach. Stories of its deeds are told to small children to both comfort and frighten them, or they are spoken of at political gatherings and retold at the bars and taverns. Like all tales, they become more grandiose and bloated with each telling.

The Enclave is composed primarily of druids, but there are bards and others of neutral bent who also serve. The only requirement that the Enclave enforces upon its members is that they not be inclined toward good or evil. Theirs is a narrow road best traveled only by those who can walk between light and darkness.

Of course, player characters may desire to join the Emerald Enclave, promoting this organization's brand of justice in the Reach. In order to be considered, a player character must meet the following requirements.

- Lawful, chaotic, or true neutral in alignment.
- Not currently in the service of any other organization (except the churches of Eldath, Mielikki, or Silvanus).
- Not guilty of crimes against nature.
- Has performed an act that benefits nature in the Vilhon. This act can be as simple as serving in a druid's grove for a time to thwarting the actions of those who would harm nature, at the DM's option.

Once the character has met these qualifications, he must travel to the House of Silvanus on the island of Ilighôn to be initiated into the Enclave. The rites of initiation are performed each month during the full moon.

The Enclave is also known as the "Caretakers," "Nature's Chosen," and the "Circle." The term is chosen based on the current situation, such as using "Nature's Chosen" when discussing the actions taken to prevent

lumberjacks from clearing a forest or the "Caretakers" when aiding a farmer whose crops are suffering from blight.

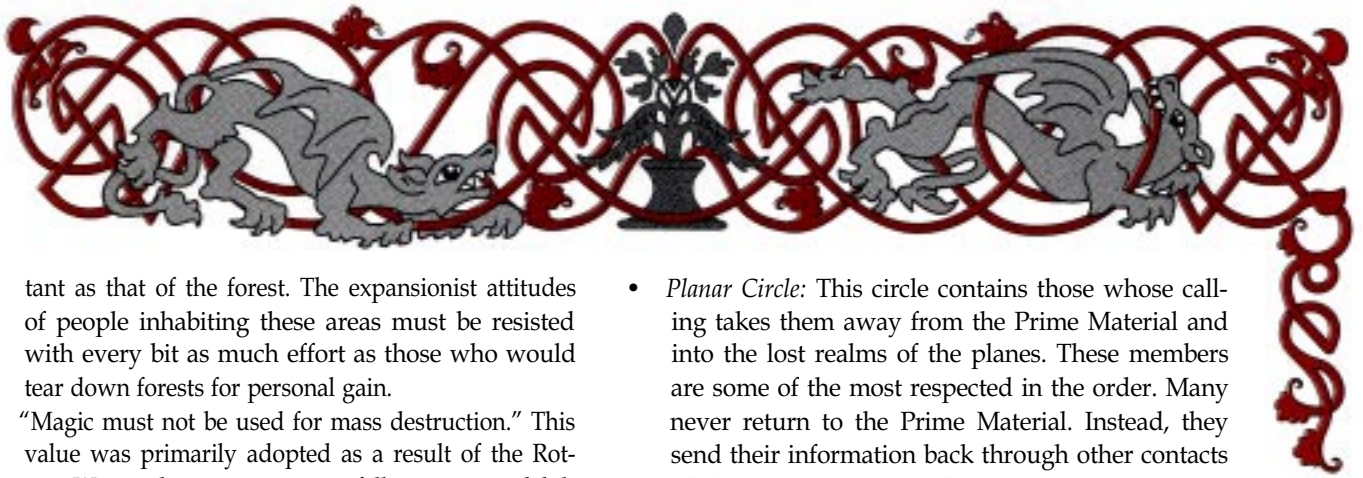
Each member of the Enclave is typically adorned with a green symbol of some sort. It might be something as simple as emerald earrings or a green pendant; the choice is up to the member. High-level druids of the Circle are known to have green eyes that shimmer with Silvanus's holy symbol.

The druids of the Enclave have a special language resembling that of thieves' cant, where ecological references are tossed into normal conversations as an indicator of the organization they serve. Such "druidspeak" is difficult to pick up, counting as a language that must be learned over the course of a year or more. It is never taught to those outside the organization.

The Goals of The Enclave

The Chosen of Silvanus are sworn to protect nature in all of its forms. Each member understands that his life is forfeit at any time in order to preserve the balance. They follow the following values:

- "Preserve nature in all of its forms." While this value may imply that the Enclave is against logging interests in the Reach, that conclusion is not necessarily true. The Enclave demands that anyone who cuts down trees to make a living does so in a responsible manner. Planting new trees is not the only step necessary to avoid their wrath. The "business" of logging must also take into consideration the best place to cut down trees.
- This philosophy has caused some problems in Chondath and Turmish. The Enclave demands that tree cutters harvest from where it would do the forest the most good, not necessarily where harvesting is most convenient. This demand makes the jobs of lumberjacks more expensive and cumbersome, which is bad for business albeit good for the environment.
- "Human expansion must be controlled." Nature is not a never-ending supply of raw materials for the ever-increasing number of creatures that reside within it. Roads don't need to connect every city, and not every farm needs to plant more food so a nearby city's population can expand.
- "Everything in nature has its place." The ecological balance of the mountains and plains is just as impor-



tant as that of the forest. The expansionist attitudes of people inhabiting these areas must be resisted with every bit as much effort as those who would tear down forests for personal gain.

- “Magic must not be used for mass destruction.” This value was primarily adopted as a result of the Rotting Wars, where entire armies fell victim to a debilitating and deadly plague. This value has further developed into a justification for keeping close tabs on wizards, especially those of the Zhentarim and the Red Wizards of Thay.
- The Enclave firmly believes that any attempt to perform magic on a “grand scale” is just an accident waiting to happen. They point out that the Reach got lucky with the disease created at the conclusion of the Rotting Wars — it could have lasted for generations instead of just a few years.
- “The Chosen of Silvanus must always work from a united front.” Even if a particular member of the Enclave disagrees with a decision made by the leaders of the organization, such disagreement is never to be aired outside of the House of Silvanus. To do so is to both weaken the order and show disrespect to the Elders.

Organization

The Enclave is organized in seven circles. As a member rises in prominence within the Enclave, he can move from one circle to another, perhaps rising as far as the Elder Circle of Three, the top-most level of the organization. The seven circles include the following:

- *Circle of Initiates:* The newest members of the Enclave belong to this circle.
- *Circle of Earth:* Once a member has proven his loyalty, he is promoted to the ranks of this circle.
- *Circle of Air:* Druids of the Enclave typically become members of this circle after achieving their shape change ability at 7th level. Other members can be promoted to this circle after performing an outstanding service for the Enclave. From the Circle of Air, a member can join one of three circles:
- *Eldath’s Circle:* While not everyone in this circle worships Eldath, the members of this circle share the duty of sailing the waterways of Toril, searching for information that could benefit the Enclave.
- *Planar Circle:* This circle contains those whose calling takes them away from the Prime Material and into the lost realms of the planes. These members are some of the most respected in the order. Many never return to the Prime Material. Instead, they send their information back through other contacts while continuing to watch.
- *Circle of Earth:* Members who walk through the lands of Faerûn belong to this circle. Most limit their travels to the lands of the Vilhon Reach. Those that walk elsewhere typically serve as look-outs on the activities of other, expansionist organizations or governments.
- *The Elder Circle:* This circle is the upper-most of the Emerald Enclave, containing its three most powerful members. These three leaders, led by the Grand Cabal of the Enclave, guide the other members through their wisdom and actions.

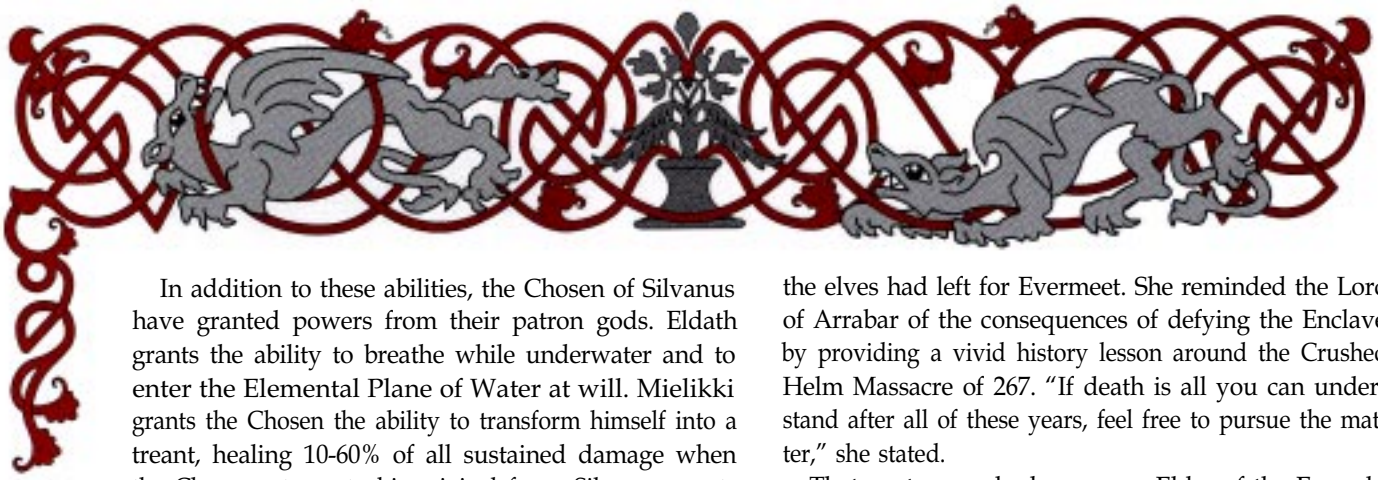
The Elder Circle

The three people who lead the Chosen of Silvanus are some of the most powerful religious leaders in the area, especially in druidic circles. They are also some of the most sought-after personages in the area, hunted by both those who seek their knowledge and advice and those who seek to remove the Enclave from the Reach.

Similar to the Chosen of Mystra and the Harpers, the Elder Circle is imbued with certain gifts that can aid them in times of crisis. These include:

- Continual emanation of the *nondetection* spell, preventing their location from being discerned through any sort of scrying device.
- Immunity from mind-controlling *magic* such as *charm person*, *domination*, etc. This immunity includes psionic powers that duplicate such effects.
- The aging process drastically slows but does not stop. An Elder ages one year for every ten years of actual time. In addition, the Chosen of Silvanus only need to sleep one day out of ten (or eight hours of sleep over a ten-day period). However, they must still meditate for spells
- Immunity to normal or magical forms of disease and cursed afflictions such as lycanthropy, the *contagion* or *cause disease* spell, or even the plague.





In addition to these abilities, the Chosen of Silvanus have granted powers from their patron gods. Eldath grants the ability to breathe while underwater and to enter the Elemental Plane of Water at will. Mielikki grants the Chosen the ability to transform himself into a treant, healing 10-60% of all sustained damage when the Chosen returns to his original form. Silvanus grants the Chosen the ability to *meld into stone* and transport to the Elemental Plane of Earth once each day.

All Elders also have a special power, unique to that individual. This power is detailed under their description.

Shinthala Deepcrest

Grand Cabal of the Emerald Enclave

Shinthala was born in 1320, in the village of Cedar-sproke deep in the Gulthmere Forest. From an early age, she learned the way of the druids and lived with those who followed the Emerald Enclave. She chose to become a druid at the age of 7 and was finally accepted into the ranks at age 12.

By the age of 18, Shinthala had established herself as an up-and-coming druid of Silvanus by rooting out a source of Malar's followers near the grove of her master. Before her 19th birthday, she was a member of the Emerald Enclave.

Within eight years, Shinthala had worked her way up through the hierarchy to the station of Great Druid of the Vilhon. Her actions as Great Druid earned her a great deal of respect by other druids. The Grand Druid named her as his replacement two years after she took the Great Druid post.

She served as the Grand Druid for "five grueling years," fervently searching for a replacement. Her duties as the Grand Druid of Toril taught her "the importance of preserving nature throughout Faerûn." At the age of 33, she stepped down from the hierarchy to pursue her faith as a hierophant druid.

Shinthala decided to return to her roots and went back to the Gulthmere to safeguard it against the forces of Malar and others. She attacked his strongholds with a religious zeal and fervor that drew other druids to her grove. She was still a member of the Emerald Enclave though, and those duties took her to the Chondalwood.

At 36, Shinthala was one of the most powerful women of the Reach. She walked into "Shining Arrabar" and informed the ruling house that there would be no expansion into the Chondalwood, regardless of whether

the elves had left for Evermeet. She reminded the Lord of Arrabar of the consequences of defying the Enclave by providing a vivid history lesson around the Crushed Helm Massacre of 267. "If death is all you can understand after all of these years, feel free to pursue the matter," she stated.

That next year, she became an Elder of the Emerald Enclave. In two more years, at the tender age of 39, she became the Grand Cabal, a position she has held for the last 11 years.

Shinthala is a human female in her late forties, with dark brown hair and blazing emerald eyes. She stands slightly more than six feet tall, and this has led to speculation that she was really born on Ixinos, home of the tribe of amazons. Some of the men who have had to deal with her on a political level have given her the nickname "Amazon Queen of Illhôn."

The Grand Cabal has a weakness for children and frequently makes it a point to stop and speak with youngsters when she visits a town.

Silvanus's Granted Powers: Shinthala has tremendous control over the forces of nature, should she choose to use it. She can *call lightning* from a clear sky once each day with no preparation time and can summon a 16-HD elemental from any elemental plane once per day. She has a natural ability to *control weather* at will—this ability totally negates opposing *control weather* spells. She is always shielded with a *protection from good/evil* spell.

Shinthala Deepcrest, Grand Cabal of the Enclave, hf D30 (Silvanus):

AC -6 (*bracers of defense* AC 2, *ring of protection* +4, *cloak of displacement*, Dex. bonus); MV 12; hp 97; THAC0 8 (5 with *scimitar of speed* +3, 5 with *darts* +3); #AT 1 or 3; Dmg 1d8+3 (*scimitar*) or 1d3+3 (*darts*); SA Silvanus's granted powers; SD immune to *cause fear*, *charm person*, *command*, *forget*, *friends*, *hold person*, *hypnotism*, *ray of enfeeblement*, *scare*; SZ M (6'2" tall); ML fearless (20); AL TN; XP 32,000.

S 15, D 16, C 16, I 16, W 20, Ch 16

Personality: self-assured, cautious, demanding.

SA: As druid.

Special Equipment: *ring of spell turning*, *cowl of warding*, *staff of the woodlands* +1, *rod of absorption* (40), *scarab of protection* (6).

Spheres: MAJOR: All, Animal, Elemental, Healing, Plant, Sun, Time, Wards, Weather. MINOR: Divination, Travelers.

Spells: 1st – *animal friendship*, *bles*, *cure light wounds* (x2), *detect evil*, *detect magic*, *entangle*, *light*, *purify food & drink*; 2nd – *charm person or mammal*, *chill metal*, *dust devil*, *goodberry*, *heat metal*,



obscurement, *nap*, warp wood, zone of truth; 3rd – *accelerate healing*, call lightning, *choose future*, continual light, locate object, meld into stone, plant growth, snare, starshine, summon insects; 4th – briartangle*, call woodland beings, faith-magic zone, hallucinatory forest, neutralize poison, oakheart*, smoke ghost*, sticks to snakes, thorn spray*; 5th – atonement, *cloud of purification*, fireward*, mulch*, rainbow, transmute rock to mud, *undead ward*, wall of fire; 6th – antianimal shell, fire seeds, stone tell, heal, *Sol's searing orb*, turn wood, wall of thorns, weather summoning; 7th – creeping doom, death chariot*, earthquake, fire storm, sunray.

*These spells are described in *Faiths & Avatars*.
Bold-italic spells are listed in the *Tome of Magic*.

Lady Shadowmoon

Hierophant of the Emerald Enclave

The Lady Shadowmoon is something of an enigma in the Vilhon, indeed, in all of Faerûn. She has been called the “Guardian of the Chondalwood” and the “Specter of the Past” by those who have visited with her. She seldom speaks, but her words are held in high regard by all members of the Enclave, especially Shinthala.

Shadowmoon is an elf with copper-hued skin, around five feet tall, with emerald eyes and jet-black hair. Her

features are gently sculpted and she seems quite thin and fragile. She appears as a very young elf, similar to a human female in her early 20s.

The elf’s appearance as a powerful druid has stymied the most renown sages of Faerûn; there is no other instance of an elf druid in recorded history. Her mysterious appearance is the source of her “Specter of the Past” nickname.

While she does not speak of how she came to be an elf, the truth is that she was a human druid. While serving in the Chondalwood, she fell in love with an elf named Freiwin Crystalembers. Freiwin made the decision to escort his parents to Evermeet, and Shadowmoon planned to accompany them as far as possible. As they were leaving the Winterwood, however, they were attacked by goblins. Shadowmoon was killed in the resulting melee.

She awoke in Evermeet, resurrected by order of the Queen herself. Apparently, the Queen had magically watched the battle and was impressed with how selflessly Shadowmoon had given her life to protect the family of her lover. So impressed, in fact, that Shadowmoon awoke as a wild elf.





Whatever magic was used to revive Shadowmoon was unlike anything known by humankind. She stayed in Evermeet for a brief time and then returned to the Vilhon to “safeguard the Retreat of the elves” from the area.

While Shadowmoon realizes that she was once human, she accepts that she is now an elf in service to the Queen. She feels that this service is best performed in her role as an Elder of the Emerald Enclave. From her current station, she does her best to make sure that the elves who leave on the Retreat do so because they feel it is time to go, not because they are forced out by humans.

Silvanus’s Granted Powers: Shadowmoon can *plane shift* and cast *astral spell* once each day. In addition, she can use any body of water as a scrying pool, with the same effects as that of a *crystal ball* with *ESP* and *clairaudience*. The visual power can be negated if the person being scried upon is not standing on the earth or in the water, in which case normal scrying counter-measures are effective. In other words, Shadowmoon can always at least hear what’s going on.

Lady Shadowmoon Crystalembers, ef D22 (Silvanus): AC -2 (*bracers of defense* AC3, *ring of protection* +3, *cloak of displacement*); MV 12; hp 85; THAC0 8 (4 with *quarterstaff* +4, 5 with *sling* +3); #AT 1; Dmg 1d6+4 or 1d4+1 (*sling*); SA Silvanus’s granted powers; SD immune to *cause fear*, *charm person*, *command*, *friends*, *hypnotism*; SZ M (4’11” tall); ML Fanatic (19); AL TN; XP 25,000.
S 14, D 14, C 16, I 18, W 19, Ch 17.

Personality: reserved, quiet
SA: as druid.

Special Equipment: *luckstone*, *ring of regeneration*, *boots of elvenkind*, *staff of swarming insects* (20), *amulet versus undead* (8th level), *rope of entanglement*.

Spheres: MAJOR: All, Animal, Elemental, Healing, Plant, Sun, Time, Wards, Weather. MINOR: Divination, Travelers.

Spells: 1st – *analyze balance*, *bless*, *combine*, *create water*, *cure light wounds*, *detect evil*, *detect magic*, *detect snares & pits*, *entangle*; 2nd – *augury*, *charm person or mammal*, *dust devil*, *goodberry*, *heat metal*, *lighten load*, *nap*, *speak with animals*, *warp wood*; 3rd – *call lightning*, *choose future*, *continual light*, *detect lie*, *hold animal*, *meld into stone*, *protection from fire*, *starshine*, *summon insects*; 4th – *briartangle**, *cure serious wounds*, *neutralize poison*, *oakheart**, *produce fire*, *repel insects*, *re-target*, *smokeghost**, *thorn spray**; 5th – *antiplant shell*, *cure critical wounds*, *fireward**, *mulch**, *pass plant*, *rainbow*, *time pool*, *wall of fire*; 6th – *animal summoning III*, *heal*, *fire seeds*, *Sol’s searing orb*, *turn wood*, *wall of thorns*; 7th – *chariot of sustarre*, *earthquake*, *sunray*.

*These spells are described in *Faiths & Avatars*.

Bold-italic spells are listed in the *Tome of Magic*.

Ashenford Torinbow

Elder of the Enclave

In years past, Ashenford was known for his relationship with the Harpers in the Shadowdale area. Forty years ago, however, his participation in the Harpers came to a dramatic close. In 1328, *The Year of the Adder*, Ashenford was captured by the Zhentarim while on a mission in Daggerdale.

He was eventually rescued by Harper agents, but the torture he suffered at the hands of the Zhentarim apparently took away his interest in the Harpers. He left the Harpers and began traveling south, away from the Dales—as far away from the Zhentarim as he could find.

Ashenford chose to wander the lands and search for new songs and legends to add to his bardic collection. He traveled east through Cormyr, pausing only long enough to collect supplies before continuing east to Waterdeep, a journey that took him more than five years to complete.

He proved very popular in Waterdeep and soon was a favored attraction at many of the local taverns. He became wealthy by singing and teaching the histories he had learned in his travels.

The Zhentarim learned of his activities and began sending assassins to root him out. Innocent people died around him, the victims of assassins’ poisons, daggers, and magic. Ashenford left Waterdeep and traveled south. He eventually ended up in the city of Nathlekh, west of the Gulthmere Forest.

He became interested in the activities of the druids of the Emerald Enclave as they instructed the loggers on issues of forest reclamation and ecological responsibility. He moved to the city of Cedarsproke to learn all he could from them.

For more than 20 years, Ashenford stayed in the Reach, aiding the Enclave as he could and teaching their ecological principles to all who would listen. He became a fiery orator, a mouthpiece for the political views of the Enclave. He traveled from city to city, from town to town, from village to village in an effort to show the people their crimes against nature. He had finally found his calling.

He also discovered that he had more respect for the druids of the Enclave than he did for the Master Harpers. The Enclave wasted little time in political rhetoric. They gave one warning before they acted decisively on any issue.





He became an Elder only seven years ago, and he continues to make his tour of the Vilhon on a yearly basis to promote the activities of the Enclave.

Ashenford is a half-elf male around 60 winters old, with pale blue eyes and gold skin. He is 5'8" tall and of light build with long, curly brown hair.

Silvanus's Granted Powers: Ashenford's two gifts have been strengthened by Silvanus, granting him the power of *speech* and *music*. His fiery oratory skills enable him to *enthrall* (as the spell) an audience of up to 500 people, his voice filling his listeners' minds. Unlike the *enthrall* spell, however, a successful saving throw does not induce jeering and an attack on the audience does not direct any undue attention on Ashenford.

The bard's most potent ability is *spell-song*. When Ashenford begins to sing, all creatures within 500 feet immediately stop and listen for 2d4 rounds (no saving throw). Resistances to *charm* are nullified and even deaf creatures are affected by the singing for the full 2d4 rounds, as are any creatures entering the area of effect. Ashenford can implant a *suggestion* in his audience at the conclusion of the second round, but standard saving throws apply.

Finally, Ashenford's wizardly magic is unaffected by the *faith-magic zones* or similar spells.

Ashenford Torinbow, hem B24: AC -2 (*elven chain* +3, Dex. bonus); MV 12; hp 94; THAC0 9 (5 with *girdle*, 4 with *long sword of sharpness*, 3 with *long bow* +4); #AT 1 or 2; Dmg 1d8 (+10) or 1d8 (sheaf arrows); (*long sword*), Silvanus's granted powers; SZ M (5'8" tall); ML fanatic (19); XP 27,000.

S 16 (21 with *girdle of frost giant strength*), D 18, C 17, I 16, W 15; Ch 15.

Personality: Vigorous, warm, outgoing.

SA: As bard.

Special Equipment: *arrows of slaying* (3 undead, 2 mages), *ring of vampiric regeneration*, *ring of invisibility*, *cloak of the bat*, *boots of striding and springing*.

Memorized Spells: 1st – *color spray*, *feather fall*, *magic missile*, *protection from evil*, *wall of fog*; 2nd – *continual light*, *detect invisibility*, *invisibility*, *Maximilian's earthen grasp*, *web*; 3rd – *dispel magic*, *hold person*, *lightning bolt*, *minor malison*, *wraithform*; 4th – *confusion*, *dimension door*, *Evard's black tentacles*, *ice storm*, *stoneskin*; 5th – *cone of cold*, *hold monster*, *lower resistance*, *wall of force*; 6th – *death spell*, *disintegrate*, *globe of invulnerability*, *true seeing*.

Bold-italic spells are listed in the *Tome of Magic*.

New Spells

The following spells are granted to those clerics, specialty priests, and druids who serve one of the three patrons of the Enclave. These spells are typically not available to priests that are not concerned with nature, but the final decision is left to the DM.

Regardless of the actual spheres to which a god has access, those who join the Enclave have access to the following spells.

4th-Level Spells

Faith-Magic Zone (Abjuration)

Sphere: Protection, Wards

Range: 60 yards

Components: V, S, M

Duration: 1d4 turns

Casting Time: 7

Area of Effect: 60-yard

Saving Throw: None

Diameter: sphere

This spell causes all non-clerical magic in the area of effect to be slowed down, resulting in a +3 penalty to initiative. Magical items which call on non-clerical spells are likewise penalized by a +3 reaction penalty.

The penalty to casting times takes effect the moment the spell is completed, even if the opposing spell was being cast while the *faith-magic zone* spell was being cast.

There is no visible effect to the spell other than a silver radiance that emanates from the priest that cast the spell. Note that since the priest is not necessarily the center of the spell's effect, there is no sure way for observers to know where the limits of the spell's effects are located.

Creatures within the zone gain a +3 bonus on all saving throws versus wizard spells while the *faith-magic zone* remains in effect. It can be dispelled normally.

The material components for this spell are the priest's holy symbol and a vial of honey collected from a bees' nest.

Re-Target (Metamagic)

Sphere: Combat, Protection

Range: 40 yards

Components: V, S, M

Duration: 2 rounds/level

Casting Time: 7

Area of Effect: 1 spell

Saving Throw: None

This spell allows the caster to choose any spell cast during the *re-target's* duration and turn it back on any creature within spell range. For example, if a wizard were to



cast *magic missile* at the priest who has cast *re-target*, the priest could choose a different target for the spell, including the wizard who initially cast it.

This spell does not infer any knowledge of the spell that has been cast, so a cleric who decides to redirect a ball of fire that emerges from a wizard's hand might be re-targeting a *fireball* spell or might be altering the target for a *flaming spheres* spell. If the priest redirects the spell to a point out of range for the initial caster, the spell is negated.

The material components for this spell are the priest's holy symbol and a silver mirror. The mirror is consumed upon casting.

Windlance (Alteration)

Sphere: Elemental (Air)

Range: 0

Duration: 1 round

Area of Effect: Priest

Components: V

Casting Time: 1

Saving Throw: None

This spell is primarily used by druids and other shape-shifters as a method of escape. The moment the spell is cast, a powerful burst of air launches the spellcaster (and any other creature unfortunate enough to be in the same 10-foot square) skyward from 120-600 feet, as chosen by the priest.



No damage is sustained in the initial blast, but creatures unable to change shape, fly, or use magic for a soft landing suffer normal falling damage when they strike the ground.

Windlance activates any creature's natural *shape change* ability, allowing the creature to both cast the spell and change form in the same round. Creatures in the 10-foot cube at the time the spell is cast are not so imbued.

Ixinos

The island of Ixinos is most known for its population of amazons. It is a community that savors its solitude from the rest of the Reach, only trading with select ships captained by females. The most renowned group from Ixinos is The She-Wolves. This mercenary band is composed of more than 250 strong women who seek out military excursions within the Reach and patrol the shores of Ixinos, securing it from any pirate excursions.

Little is known of the island other than its port city, Tazixor, and ruler, Queen Elissa Tarixon. The island does not permit visitors—even diplomatic envoys—from neighboring countries.

There are a few men on Ixinos, but they are reportedly treated as slaves by the matriarchal society that exists on the island. They are considered highly valuable property, but captives nonetheless.

Wavecrest

The eastern "eye of Silvanus" is essentially a jungle island populated by fierce beasts and an assortment of dangerous monsters. It has never been thoroughly explored or mapped, and little is known of its specific geographic features.

The Emerald Enclave reportedly uses the island as a ground for druids seeking survivalist training. Whatever the enclave knows of the island has not been shared with other travelers, however.

Ships that have passed close to Wavecrest report seeing a huge bipedal creature peering back at them from the trees. A few eyewitness reports (if such can be believed) describe the creature as "fiendish with glowing coals for eyes." Whether the creature exists on Wavecrest or merely in the minds of terrified sailors is best left to the skillful hands of an adventuring company.





Turmish

"The measure of a man's worth can be seen in the cut of his beard."

—Old Turmish Saying



he kingdom of Turmish is known throughout the Sea of Fallen Stars as the "heartland of the Reach" due to its peaceful nature and concentration on commerce over warfare. Its capital, Alaghôn, serves as the most popular port-of-call along the southern fringes of the Inner Sea.

The people of Turmish are tall, mahogany-skinned, and generally well-educated, especially in business and agriculture. Custom dictates that the male merchants of Turmish have square, neatly trimmed beards. This custom has given rise to the phrase "as square as a Turmishan's beard," used to indicate a fair deal throughout the Reach.

The warriors and mercenaries of Turmish pride themselves on their intricately crafted armor. From the most prominent noble to the least known militiaman, fighters of Turmish keep their armor in exquisite condition and frequently adorn them with embellishments. Such embellishments are usually expensive additions, such as gold inlay or gems. To the people of Turmish, the armor is a status symbol. Valuing one's armor as much as one's beard is quite common.

Politics

Officially, Turmish is ruled by the Assembly of Stars, a group of freely elected men and women chosen from the everyday population of the region. Each serves a term of three years before another election brings a fresh group of Turmishans into political life. This keeps "professional politicians" to a bare minimum, since the decision to run for office is not a personal choice to make, but rather the decision of one's peers. (That is not to say that the decision to elect someone to public office cannot be political.)

The job of an assemblyman is not easy. Long hours and extensive travel throughout the Reach is normal. By getting a successful merchant elected to the Assembly, a competitor vastly increases his chances to expand his own wealth.

From the ranks of the Assembly, one member is elected to the position of Lord of Turmish. The lord's responsibilities include protecting the country from invasion, securing the waterways against piracy, and generally making sure that Turmish continues to thrive as a nation of merchants.

Lord Herengar is currently the ruler of Turmish, a post he has held for more than nine years. Before his popular election, he controlled a large force of mercenaries that performed odd jobs around the region for the highest bidder. He is still the official leader of the Call of Arms company, but he has little to do with their activities anymore.

The individual cities of Turmish are free to govern themselves as they see fit so long as they pay their share of taxes to Alaghôn. They are also expected to follow the dictates of the Assembly, but for the most part they are given plenty of space. The Assembly concentrates on national interests and allows the cities to handle their own problems.





Customs

A visitor in Turmish is expected to have a grasp of local customs and traditions. This expectation is especially true for merchants and businessmen trying to ply their wares in the kingdom.

It has been a long-standing custom for a visitor to another's home to bring an exotic dish to share. These dishes are called "greetings gifts" and are used to express gratitude for the host's hospitality. Greeting gifts can range anywhere from vintage Nimpeth wine to a skull full of snails (called a skullcap treat in Turmish). Of course, the value of the gift should reflect the stature of the guest—peasants are hardly expected to bring expensive wine.

Burying a sacrifice of one's gold and gems has also been a long-standing tradition in Turmish. By seeding the earth with your wealth, it is believed that your bounty will be returned to you "tenfold." By and large, this tradition is a personal ritual, performed at a time that is important to the individual. It might be during a wedding anniversary, a birthday, the anniversary of an owner's first day of business, or even upon the birth of a loved one.

Of course, this custom has led to some treasure-seeking by unscrupulous individuals. However, the act of digging up a gift to the earth is heavily frowned upon in Turmish to say the least. Officially it is a crime punishable by one or more years of hard labor. Unofficially, the act of digging up an offering is considered thievery, and many thieves have died at the hands of angry merchants. Regional superstition holds that a stolen treasure bodes ill fortune for the coming year (-2 penalty to all saving throws or skills based on luck, such as gambling, at the DM's option).

Most Turmishans set aside one day out of every nine to "chase the sun." This day is reserved for pursuing personal interests such as learning the harp, practicing spells, spending time with the family, or other pursuits. When a Turmishan says he will get to something "on the ninth day," it typically means "when he has time."

Guesthouses are the most popular of Turmish customs. These guesthouses are small cabins built alongside trails and roads to provide shelter for travelers. They are free for all to use. The only requirement of using the house is that you replenish what you use. Local militia patrols check on guesthouses regularly and use the cabins themselves when a sudden storm arises. Some guesthouses even have a roofed-over hay pen for stabling

horses, but most are simply small structures capable of providing shelter for up to six travelers.

Except for the ornamentation of the armor, most folk in Turmish care little for fashion. Clothes that may very well be the rave in Arrabar are just as likely to be laughed at in Alaghôn. Fashions are very slow to change in Turmish.

Festivals

There are two major Turmishan festivals: the Feast of the Moon and the Reign of Misrule. During these times, businesses and most government offices close. All of Turmish celebrates.

Feast of The Moon

During Highsummer, one night after Midsummer, the men and women of Turmish gather for a night of drinking, dancing, and debauched revelry. This is the Feast of the Moon, also known as the "Festival of Lovers." While many who participate in the feast are married, this is the time of year that many choose to consummate new marriages. Needless to say, the week leading up to the Feast of the Moon is rife with marriages. Some even choose to marry on this night.

Lovers are required to seek each other out in places that are strange to them. Agreeing on a specific meeting place, lovers take different routes to their rendezvous. Some of the more popular rendezvous spots are the Lake of Drifting Stars, Evenstar Vale, Starfall Stream Pool, and Bare Bones Hill.

In the years since the Time of Troubles, militia patrols have had to be increased due to the prevalence of the cult of Malar, who hunts down lovers as the opportunities present themselves. Indeed, it is not uncommon for lovers to be carrying weapons for their own protection.

Reign of Misrule

Ten days after Highharvestide, the Reign of Misrule begins. This festival allows Turmish natives to break the oaths of their guild or faith so long as they don't cause death or destruction. Non-natives of the Reach are never excused for their actions during the Reign.

During the Reign of Misrule, it is not uncommon to see rude paladins involved in knock-down, drag-out barroom brawls, monks of various faiths talking and laughing freely with others (breaking their vow of silence), and other shocking sights.



The Reign of Misrule normally lasts only a day, but the memories it provides are everlasting. It is a crime in Turmish to discuss anyone's actions during the Reign, and the custom is so ingrained in the culture that even children understand the rules of the Reign of Misrule.

Cities

There are many cities, towns, and villages throughout Turmish—many more than can possibly be detailed in a single supplement. The areas below discuss some of the more interesting and frequently traveled areas of Turmish.

Alaghôn

The capital of Turmish is an ancient city that has seen its share of trials and tribulations over the years, ranging from terrible fires to occupation by the blue dragon Anaglathos during the Reign of the Wyrms. Throughout all of this, Alaghôn survived as a trade center known as the "throne of Turmish."

There have been numerous stonemasons involved in the creation of the stone buildings, vaults, houses, and drains that comprise Alaghôn. This construction has created "a thousand thousand" hiding places. This fact is especially true where the works of a human stonemason cover up the older workings of a dwarven craftsman. The secret passages and cubby holes created by such overlapping workmanship are popular places for children to play. Sometimes, the children run into monsters—never again to run through the city streets of Alaghôn. When a child is missing, adventuring companies are sent to investigate. However, more often than not, they play happily for years, leaving a trail of used toys and adventuring supplies behind them.

Sometimes, children have come across long-forgotten vaults that most likely once belonged to ancient rulers of Turmish. While it is rare for a child to come out from the maze of tunnels with a gold coin hundreds of years old, it is not unheard of. Recently, a young child came stumbling from the catacombs that run through the government sector of the city, carrying a silver coin from the time of Dempster Turmish. The child feverishly related a story of walking into a huge chamber filled with gems and coins and meeting "an old woman with glowing red eyes." No sooner had he spoken these words when he slipped into a deep sleep and never recovered, so the rest of his story goes untold. However the truth is revealed for the DM here.

During the time of Anaglathos, the blue dragon allowed a lich queen from Unther to reside below the palace. When Anaglathos died during the revolution, the lich queen continued to live quietly below the city. She cast a spell on the child when she found him wandering around her domain, sending him back to the surface so she could see through his eyes. The spell finally consumed the lad, but the lich queen did get a glimpse of the surface world again (in which she had only passing interest).

Alaghôn is divided up into city districts. The Military District is north of the city and includes the naval shipyards and ports reserved for their ships. To the south lies the Merchant District, and to the east lies the Assembly, or Government, District. Houses continue out from Alaghôn farther west.

Adventurers seeking employment to investigate lost ruins and ancient cities are normally referred to Chondath "or one of those other cities within the Vilhon," by the harbormaster of Alaghôn. There is a common belief in Alaghôn (and Turmish) that the monsters are elsewhere, which is not always the case.

Like elsewhere in Turmish, mercenary companies perform many of the jobs normally associated with a local militia. They are hired out to perform odd scouting jobs and patrols along the more "wild" areas of Turmish. Oc-





asionally they run into a powerful monster they can't overcome, but more often than not they chase off whatever it is they come across.

A strong elf presence exists in Alaghôn, as many of them have decided, for one reason or another, not to follow the rest on the Retreat. There is not a segregated population of elves within the city, however, for they live comfortably around humans.

Ironcloak

From time to time, the Turmishans have had run-ins with the Emerald Enclave. Ironcloak was the site of one such occurrence. Shortly after the Assembly of Stars was founded, a rich Turmish merchant by the name of Lord Ironcloak persuaded the new government to give him lumbering rights around his town of Ironcloak. Despite the protests of some assemblymen, permission was granted and the matter forgotten.

Shortly after he began operations, however, Lord Ironcloak was visited by a druid from the Enclave, who ordered him to stop immediately. Like all petty and short-sighted men, he did the first thing that came to mind. He killed the messenger. Worse, this message was not the first warning to Lord Ironcloak. He had been warned earlier that simply dumping his garbage into the nearby river was not acceptable. He ignored those warnings as well.

Two days after the death of the druid, a message was posted by the Enclave. It warned that the village of Ironcloak would be destroyed at first light the following day. Ironcloak laughed and sent his men into the dwindling forests. The laughter died when earth elementals pushed their way up through the forest floor and started killing everyone in their sight. The laughter changed to horror when the river itself rose up and rushed through the town. Ironcloak disappeared from the face of Turmish.

From time to time, adventuring companies come across the ruins of Ironcloak, but nothing of interest has ever been found. Stories claim that Lord Ironcloak's fortune was swept back into a river, awaiting discovery by those brave enough to venture into the druids' element to recover it.

Morningstar Hollows

Morningstar Hollows was once a small village of farmers and craftsmen who quietly made their livings. But the nearby Alaoreum river continued to flood its banks year after year, so they finally left the village and

moved to nearby Velorn's Valor. The floods have continued for many years, creating a bog in the former community.

Lately, reports have surfaced that seem to indicate that a reptilian race has taken over the abandoned town: lizard men. These creatures are primarily fishermen and gatherers. There have not been any reports of strange abductions or disappearances—not yet anyway.

Lizard men (35): AC 5; MV 6; HD 2+1; hp 12 each; THAC0 19; #AT 3; Dmg 1-2/1-2/1d6 (claw/claw/bite); SZ M (7' tall); ML elite (14); Int low (6); AL N; XP 65.

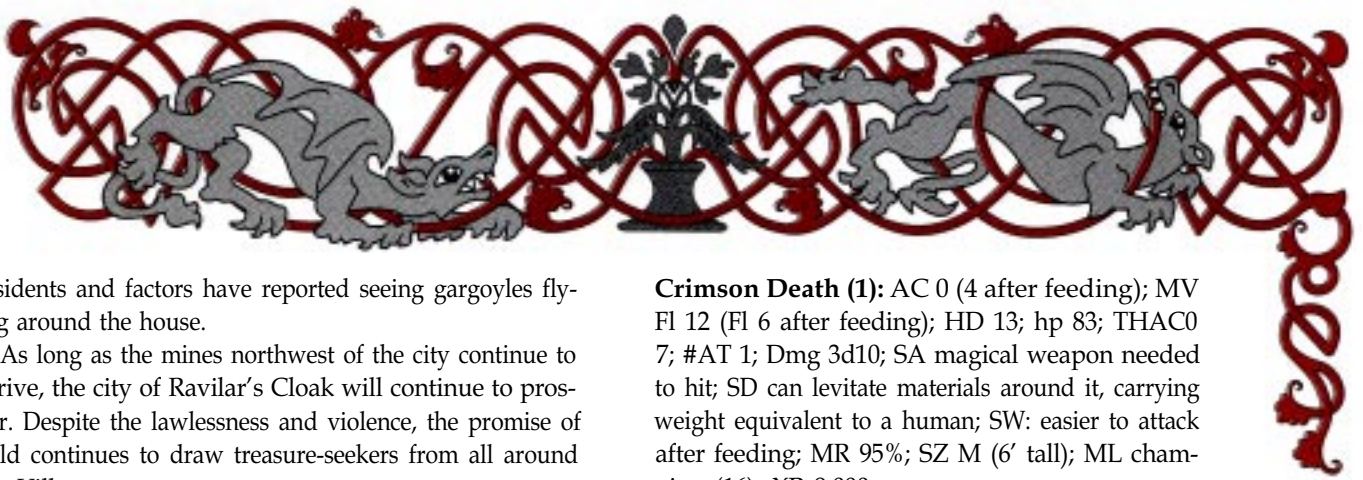
Ravilar's Cloak

Antonio Ravilar was a ranger who earned his namesake by protecting the village from bugbears and lawlessness during its infancy. Since his death more than 100 years ago, Ravilar's Cloak has become a rough-and-tumble town filled with lawless, ruthless men. "The Cloak," as it is popularly referred to, is a favorite haunt for miners searching for wealth in the nearby Orsraun Mountains. Two taverns, The Dog and Bone and The Griffon, are the life of the town.

Ravilar's Cloak is patrolled by the "factors," independent groups of warriors who try to keep murders to a minimum while lining their own pockets with bribes and protection money. Of course, the factors have their rivals as well, and this situation leads to armed confrontations on the streets of the Cloak. These battles between factors have led to the disappearance of an awful lot of money over the years. This situation, in turn, has led to an awful lot of speculation regarding where the money has disappeared to.

One such story revolves around *the flying helm*, a magical helmet said to be infused with the souls of dead warriors. Serving as a normal helm until its owner's death, this magical item flies around the streets of Ravilar's Cloak, "seeking dropped coppers." Locals firmly believe that the helm can pick up small, unattended things.

A bag of emeralds worth more than 600,000 gold pieces was recently found in a drained cesspool. The mass of wealth is rumored to belong to one Alataz Thrindol, a bald merchant from Telflamm who went on a journey more than seven years ago and who has not yet returned. Rastar of the Blades, a rogue from Calimshan, has taken possession of Thrindol's home, and numerous



residents and factors have reported seeing gargoyles flying around the house.

As long as the mines northwest of the city continue to thrive, the city of Ravilar's Cloak will continue to prosper. Despite the lawlessness and violence, the promise of gold continues to draw treasure-seekers from all around the Vilhon.

Gildenglade

This city is the second-largest within Turmish, composed of dwarves, elves, and half-elves living together in harmony. Its economy is based upon woodcutting and mining.

Gildenglade is ruled by the elves of the community, who handle all of the negotiations with the Emerald Enclave. The elves are skilled enough in forestry and preservation that they probably have the best rapport with the Enclave of any city in the Reach.

The dwarf population of the city concentrates on mining the unusually pure veins of gold that honeycomb the earth below Gildenglade. The half-elves primarily serve as the physical labor for the lumbering efforts, but they enjoy their work and are treated as equals by both the elves and dwarves of the community.

Given the amount of wealth that Gildenglade has, it is not surprising that many tales concerning "lost wealth" have arisen over the years. A few have actually been given credence by unfortunate happenstance. The most recent occurrence of a tale coming to life occurred when a visitor followed the ghostly image of a human phantom as it glided across the streets with sacks of gold. It turned out to be a crimson death, and the tourist quickly became a meal to the ravenous beast. Since that time, other crimson deaths have been discovered roaming the area around Gildenglade.

There is some concern in the community that there is some sinister intelligence directing these mist-creatures to violence. Others insist that these creatures are merely following their instinct and preying on mortal greed within the city. Until an adventuring company can investigate the matter, the true answer will probably never be known. In any event, no more than one crimson death has ever been seen at a time.

Crimson Death (1): AC 0 (4 after feeding); MV Fl 12 (Fl 6 after feeding); HD 13; hp 83; THAC0 7; #AT 1; Dmg 3d10; SA magical weapon needed to hit; SD can levitate materials around it, carrying weight equivalent to a human; SW: easier to attack after feeding; MR 95%; SZ M (6' tall); ML champion (16); XP 9,000.

Note: SA—Before feeding, the creature is immaterial, requiring +2 weapons in order to hit it. After feeding, it can be struck by any magical weapon for six turns and its AC becomes 4.

Centaur Bridge

This town is named for the stone bridge located nearby that traverses a large pond. Located within the Dancing Forest, it is surrounded by a thick white mist that seems to be ever-present.

Centaur Bridge is also referred to as "Stone Village" due to the stone construction of its homes. Creepers and green moss cover most of these homes. Wooden constructions rot so quickly that they are totally unused within Centaur Bridge.

There are two main reasons adventurers decide to stop by the forest city. The first is a legend of the vanished mansion. At the east end of Centaur Bridge, just off the Halondar, is an open cellar. The clearing is easily visible from the road on a day when the mists are not extremely thick, but it is always easy to find if one knows where to look, or pays a local guide. Legends claim that the mansion which once lay there was owned by Torst Habilar, a merchant from Alaghôn, more than 200 years ago. The same legend speaks of fabulous wealth in the form of statuary from the wars of Unther and Mulhorand, gold, silver, and gems.

Although the mansion itself is gone, consumed in either an unrecorded fire or an equally unheard of magical conflagration, the vaults below the mansion remain. From time to time, adventuring companies used to descend into its depths to unearth these treasures. Four years ago, the Company of the Shining Stars arranged for a financial backer from Sembia to back their search of the mansion's vaults. That same company is also blamed with disturbing a "great evil" that consumed all but the party's rogue, Emanuel Foreister. According to Emanuel, a creature resembling a deepspawn—a creature that gives birth to a variety of other monsters that it has eaten—attacked his party while they were opening a large stone sarcophagus. They fought a costly retreat as the party tried to make its way back to the entrance. Ul-





timately, the party's priest, a holy man of Tymora, held off the deepspawn while Emanuel escaped.

Emanuel has since quit adventuring and moved to the city of Nimpeth. Once each year, on the anniversary of his friends' deaths, he returns to Centaur Bridge to pay his respects. He also freely gives advice to other adventuring parties that seek to avenge his friends' deaths, but he refuses to go back into the vaults.

The second local feature of great interest to adventurers is the Sylvan Geyser. It has been a local attraction for years, and many travelers stop and admire it today. Each hour, the geyser sends a blast of scalding water skyward.

The geyser is also a holy place to those who worship Eldath, and many priests of that faith stop by to spend a day or two admiring the show of their goddess. The reason for the sudden rise of interest in the geyser has a more solid base than religious, however. Treasure—gold, gems, and magical items—have lately been spewing out of the Sylvan Geyser. From time to time—once every two or three weeks—the geyser launches a foreign object skyward. Magical rings, gold pieces, platinum pieces, and even a few gems have been seen in the spout of water.

This has led to speculation that another treasure vault lies below the geyser.

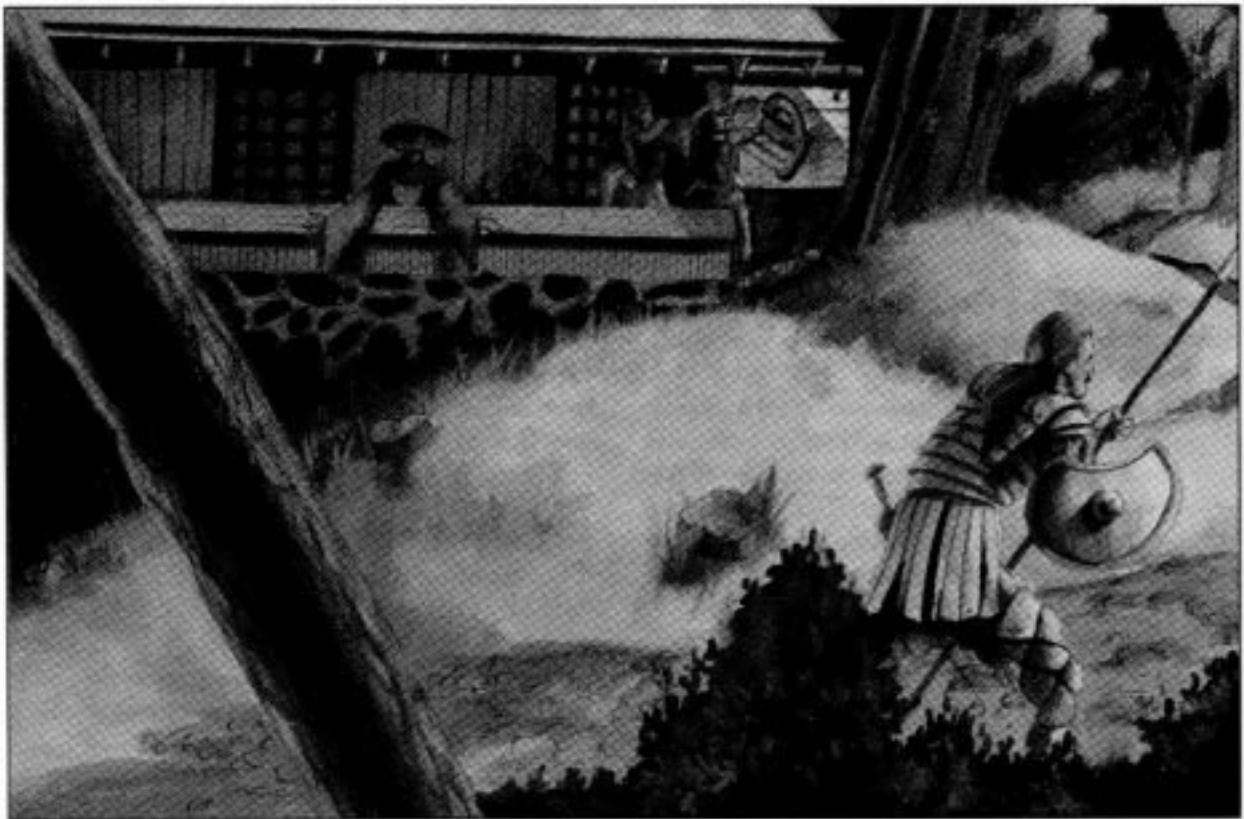
Magical sight into the geyser has been blocked, and the use of divination magic has likewise yielded no results. A wizard who cast *wraithform* in an effort to explore the geyser found his leg quite solid and stuck in the geyser's mouth. The next eruption freed him, but he was seriously burned in the eruption.

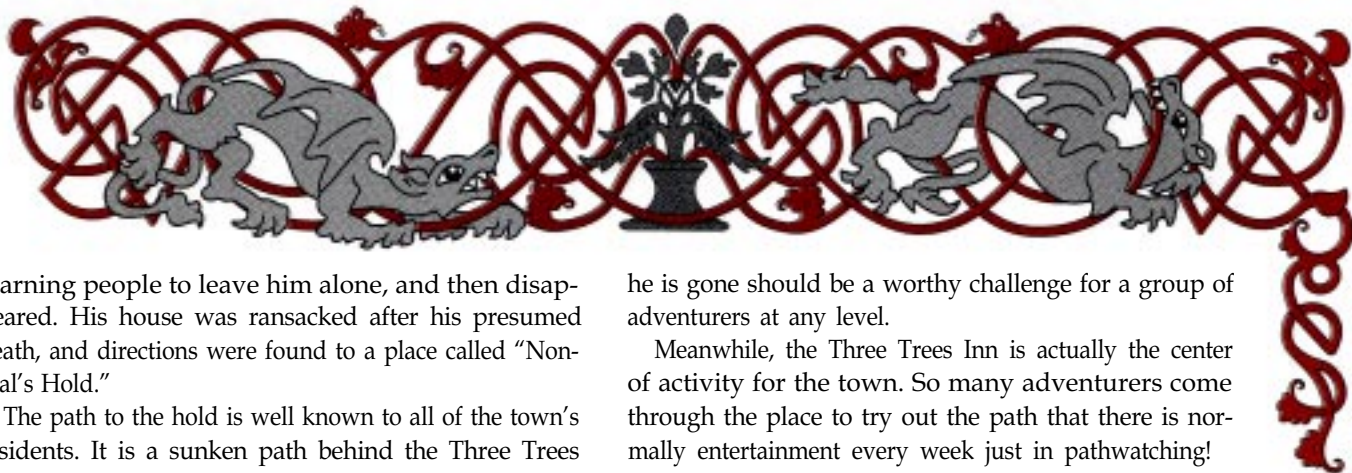
What lies at the heart of the geyser continues to cause rampant speculation. Most believe that it has something to do with the vanished mansion; many more believe that whatever lives below the town should be left alone.

Nonthal

The smell of manure mixes with that of slaughterhouses and tanneries to provide an unforgettable odiferous experience for visitors to this small town. Still, like other places within the Vilhon, the lure of gold draws the curious to its streets and inns.

Nonthal was named after a local wizard who set up shop in the small town more than 100 years ago. He built a small cottage behind a local inn, set up signs





warning people to leave him alone, and then disappeared. His house was ransacked after his presumed death, and directions were found to a place called “Nonthal’s Hold.”

The path to the hold is well known to all of the town’s residents. It is a sunken path behind the Three Trees Inn. The entire inn has been rebuilt in the intervening years to give a grand view of the lane for the patrons so they can watch and bet on the fate of adventurers as they traverse the dangerous path. Every third step or so of the path is littered with magical traps that open up gates to other Faerûn locales. Anyone walking along the path when one of these gates is opened is sucked through them to the other side. A password, uttered at the correct time, negates the trap from activating. But each trap has a different password.

A player who does some successful research into Nonthal’s past can correctly determine that the path is set up along the theme of the “13 Gates of Magic,” an ancient book of magecraft from the time of Netheril. This fact means that 13 different passwords are required. The different traps *teleport without error* the pathwalker to:

1. Yliyl, a small oasis in the heart of Anauroch.
2. The cold and windswept mountain peak west of Whitehorn in the lands north of Thar.
3. Dlathilvaer, a forest island near Evermeet.
4. A snake-infested hill of rocks deep in the jungles of Chult.
5. A little-known mountain valley in the heart of Lhairghal peaks or West Wall of the Sorcerers’ realm of Halruaa, near Zoundar.
6. The Underdark of southern Faerûn.
7. The deepest known level of Undermountain.
8. The outskirts of the Ruins of Myth Drannor.
9. Gildengloop, the abandoned city of the snirfneblin.
10. Novularond, on the Great Glacier.
11. Ilighôn, home of the Emerald Enclave. Note that since wizard magic doesn’t work here, the pathwalker appears three miles above the surface, plummeting earthward at an alarming rate of speed.
12. The Tears of Selune.
13. Into Nonthal’s Hold.

The discovery of the passwords to get past the magical traps can be an epic quest composed of many different adventures. Tracking a dead wizard’s clues centuries after

he is gone should be a worthy challenge for a group of adventurers at any level.

Meanwhile, the Three Trees Inn is actually the center of activity for the town. So many adventurers come through the place to try out the path that there is normally entertainment every week just in pathwatching!

Nonthal is comprised primarily of humans, half-elves, and gnomes—and the gnomes especially take great delight in watching people go down the path. A few of the gnomes are illusionists as well and delight in making sparkling lights, loud noises, or any other distraction they can think of.

Jathrin’s Jump

This town is one of many along the “smugglers’ road Gildenglade,” serving as a stop-off point for all sorts of shady characters. It has been said that if you’re on the run, you will find yourself at the Jump before too long.

This backwoods settlement got its name from the execution of an outlaw who was thrown from the top of a cliff to the rocks far below. That, according to the locals, is why “a person’s gotta be smarter than your average Jathrin.”

Anyone looking to fence stolen goods can probably find a broker in Jathrin’s Jump. The town crawls with the lawless, both residents and those on their way to more “peaceful” lands. Anyone looking for goods that would probably get them arrested by merely mentioning them in more respectable cities will probably find them sitting out in the open for sale at the Jump. “As straight as a deal in the Jump” is a common catchword for activities involving more than a slight degree of danger. The catch-phrase has grown in popularity and is now used throughout the Vilhon.

An old tomb complex somewhere below the Jump has recently claimed the life of one noted adventurer, Irgul of Telflamm. His comrades report that he was torn apart by a stone golem. Strangely enough, he was killed in the main chamber of the tomb, a place that, up until Irgul’s death, was frequently used by smugglers seeking to hide contraband from the authorities.

The golems are more than just automatons, though. They are under control of Aragath Taltar, a lichlike undead that still serves Talos as a priest. His temple used to stand above the current tomb before it was destroyed by priests of Lathander. Aragath still retains the powers of a 17th-level priest, but he exists as a wraithlike flying head and torso whose hands have a *chill touch* power (as



the spell), inflicting only 1d4 points of damage but causing a permanent 1-point loss of Strength unless a successful saving throw vs. spell is made. Inside his tomb, Aragath cannot be turned; if disrupted or “destroyed,” he reforms in 1d10 days, seeking his destroyer with a vengeance.

After the destruction of Talos’s temple, a thief managed to find Aragath’s diary. He sold it to the Uluuthin family, who spread words about Aragath’s plans to become undead all over the city some 60 winters ago. They were killed while adventuring—Aragath’s still upset at not being able to kill the blabbermouths himself—and the book has not been seen since.

The six golems have each been constructed with secret compartments that hold Aragath’s wealth. Each golem holds:

- gems worth 25,000 gold pieces
- 9 magical rings (DM’s choice)
- 5,000 gold coins
- a scroll of 7 clerical spells
- 5,000 platinum coins
- a wand of wonder (20 charges)
- a scarab of death

Aragath can only be killed if a band of adventurers goes into the complex and destroys his bones. Once they’ve



managed to find them, the party needs to reduce his bones to dust and immerse them in holy water or burn them to ash. Of course, he certainly will not stand idly by as the party prepares his bones for destruction!

As if Aragath was not enough of a threat, travelers have reported seeing a ghost haunt the cliff from which Jathrin was hurled. It appears as a slim human male wearing tattered leather armor and carrying a torch.

This apparition is actually the spirit of Jathrin, haunting the spot of his death and guarding the treasure he hid before he was executed. Jathrin cares not a whit for “justice” or “proper burial;” he’s here to make sure that the living continue to pay for their crimes against him. He never talks to his prey unless it is to his best advantage, and he never attacks an entire party of adventurers. Instead, Jathrin prefers to waylay small bands of travelers. If faced with a foe that can actually harm him, Jathrin leaves the scene, confident that the magical aging he inflicts by his sight is sufficient punishment until a future opportunity lets him finish the job he started.

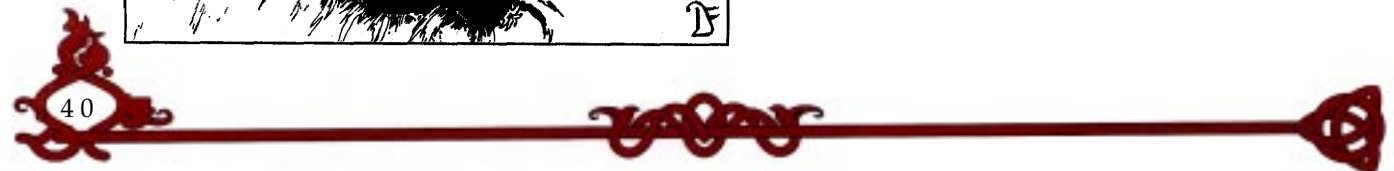
Jathrin, ghost (1): AC 0 (8 if attacking), MV 9, HD 10, hp 62, THAC0 11, #AT 1, Dmg age 10-40 winters, SA *magic jar*, SD spellcasters must be ethereal to cast spells at Jathrin, silver or magical weapons needed to hit (but only possible when he becomes corporeal and attacks); SW can be turned; SZ M (5’6” tall), ML n/a, Int high; AL LE, XP 7,000.

Xorhun

Located at the edge of the Halondar Valley, Xorhun serves as the garden spot of the nonhuman population, especially elves. The city has been nicknamed “Correlon’s Cradle” and “Lifeblood Falls” by the residents.

Xorhun has an unusual effect on elves and gnomes, increasing their fertility rate. Children are born at a rate two to three times the norm for their race. One must live in the area for five years before the fertility effects begin to show.

Other than this unusual property, Xorhun serves primarily as a stopping point along the Halondar, the road that connects Hlondeh to the south and Alaghôn to the north. It is populated primarily by craftsmen and merchants.





Geography

Turmish is probably one of the most well-defended nations in the Reach, protected on all sides by some force of geography. Mountains surround it on every side but the seashore. Any advancing army would find it difficult to get itself into a good strategic position.

Mountains of The Alaoreum

Named after the dwarves of Ironfang, the northernmost mountains of the Orsraun chain nestle up against the Gulthmere Forest. They are separated from the rest of the Orsraun by Treefall Pass, a narrow path through the mountains.

Mount Andrus is a semi-active volcano that has only erupted ash and steam throughout recorded history. Rumors of an evil power residing in the volcano itself cause worshipers of Talos to flock to the area.

The Ironfang dwarves are known for the high-quality gems and gold that they mine from the Alaoreum. They have grown distrustful of the humans to their south, especially since the bitter Campaign of Darkness that ended with the dwarves battling their dark brothers for 50 years.

That war is still far from over. Skirmishes between the two races are still common, and Ironfang Keep is always on guard against a surprise attack from the duergar.

King Anthrus Strongarms (LG dm F12) has ruled the Ironfang dwarves for more than 50 years. He is a veteran of the Campaign of Darkness, and that bitter battle has made him much more distrustful of the duergar than of the humans.

Orsraun Mountains

The largest mountain range in the Reach, the Orsrauns are a well-known abode for all sorts of evil creatures, ranging from the common nuisances of orcs and goblins to the monstrous variety of red dragons. It is a wild place, virtually untouched by the civilized lands of Turmish.

Two dragons are known to live within the rugged mountains. The first, Emberspeak, is an adult red dragon that, so far, has been content with raiding caravans and such in the Shining Plains. The second is Anglaspark, a child of the blue wyrm Anaglathos who ruled Turmish more than 100 years ago. Whether Anglaspark seeks a grand rulership of Turmish, retribution for the death of his father, or is simply content with living in Anaglathos's former lair is unknown. Anglaspark has thus far been content with consuming cows from the

fertile fields of Turmish, along with infrequent raids near the Orbrekh.

The northern reaches of the Orsrauns are the territory of the Onusclan, a group of orcs held together by the fairly competent rule of King Highstead. They make infrequent forays into the territories of both the Tattered Cloth tribe of Kobolds to the south and the Ancient Ax goblins to the east.

The southern Orsrauns are home to the Tattered Cloth clan of kobolds. Despite their heavy losses in Hlondeth and their heavier losses from the erupting volcano, the Tattered Cloth Legion has once again grown to the point where it could pose a problem to the surrounding cities. However, battles with the Onusclan have kept the kobolds occupied, so far.

The Ancient Ax goblins have waged a near-eternal war against the Alaoreum dwarves of Ironfang. They have been soundly defeated during every attempt to take over the dwarven city and now find themselves fighting the Onusclan orcs. The battles with the orcs prevent them from making an effective push into the dwarf kingdom.

The Orbrekh

This slim branch of the Orsrauns is probably the safest in the region, at least for travelers. The main reason for this is the presence of the "community of the high brows," a tribe of mountain giants. The tribe is led by Oogle, the shaman of the community. The giants have expressed only a desire to be left alone in peace and have decimated the Onusclan orcs when those creatures have crossed into their territory. There are between 30 and 35 giants in the community.

A strange relationship exists between the giants and the Emerald Enclave. Its nature is unknown, but druids are common visitors to the giant residences.

Aphrunn Mountains

These mountains have served as a shield of stone between the kingdom of Turmish and the many small towns that have grown up along the shores of the Vilhon. Like other mountain ranges, they have a power structure of their own among their inhabitants.

Most travelers are familiar with Mount Kolimnis, called Eversmoke due to its volcanic activity. The city of Gildenglade is even more familiar with the volcano. Ten years ago, the city was concerned that Eversmoke might eventually erupt and destroy their town. With that in mind, they hired a wizard to research a spell that would



silence the volcano forever. Danirro of Alaghôn stepped forward to conquer the mountain.

For two years, Danirro researched a spell that would silence the volcano. On a hot summer day in 1360, he climbed up to the lip of Mt. Kolimnus and began casting his spell. Whether or not he would have been successful will never be known. Agents of the Emerald Enclave shapeshifted on either side of him and pushed the spell-casting mage into the heart of the volcano. Danirro's *ring of feather fall* was said to activate, but it only served to offer him a slow death as he floated slowly down into the magma.

Danirro's cottage—and all of his research notes—were destroyed in a fire that occurred at just about the same time as Danirro's dip into the volcano. The city of Gildenglade received a warning from the Enclave not to try to meddle with forces it didn't understand, nor to try to hire those who thought they did understand. Hence, Eversmoke continues to spew forth steam, but it has yet to erupt.

The Scything Claw band of kobolds also call the Aphrunn their home. This group makes infrequent raids into Turmish, providing the roving militia with a focus for their attention.



Lilit Pass

This narrow chasm has occasionally provided a quick path for merchants and miners heading for Daroush, a dwarven mine located within the Aphrunn. The mine has run dry, and the dwarves have returned to their homeland in the Alaoreum. Human miners sometimes fight for the scraps of ore that were left behind. Daroush is only a ghost town now, except for those few miners who have remained, convinced there is more gold to find within the ancient tunnels of Daroush.

Lately, however, the miners have been reluctant to enter the mine. Reports of dark dwarves wandering the gloomy corridors have chased off most of them. Those that have remained only explore the mine in groups. A call for adventurers willing to work for a fee has been sent, but no group has gone to the ghost town as of yet.

Aelor is another nearby city that survived on the graces of Daroush's gold mine. When the mine ran dry, the entire city was deserted, its residents moving to the city of Amah to the south.

Torl remains as a port city, though the gold that drew the traders to its ports is now mostly gone. There are reports surfacing that another mine has been opened in the Aphrunn, but no significant amount of gold is flowing through Torl's ports. Once it does, Torl will probably be the site of a new gold rush.

Asple is primarily a fishing community, although a stone quarry there is also popular throughout the Reach. Adventurers looking for sunken ships could do worse than to ask the knowledgeable fisherman about the locations of various shipwrecks. (Serving as a guide pays much better than fishing anyway.)

Nleeth and Amah still serve as training centers for visiting armies, although the bloodshed is not nearly as pronounced as it was nearly 1,000 years ago. Known now as the Southsands Games, the opposing forces meet to prove their mettle in combat and tactical skills. Death is still a regular occurrence at the games, even though it is no longer the goal to totally decimate the opposing forces. Accidents happen.

Turmish no longer supports the slave trade, but it does put forward goods and money. When Turmish wins, it frees the slaves. Chondath, Sespech, and Nimpeth still have a thriving slave trade.

Hlondeth hardly ever participates in the Southsands Games, preferring instead its role as host city for the games. From a strictly commercial standpoint, that is the best thing they could do, as the game draws tens of thousands of people to the city.



The Shining Plains

The Shining Plains are many things, lad, but a “kingdom” ain’t one of them. If you can imagine grasslands as far as your eyes can see – with just a few cities scattered around for good measure – then you’ve got a pretty good idea of The Shining Plains. Aye, and they’ve got horses too.

– Miritol Kran, Sage of Alaghôn

The Shining Plains are more of a geographic commonality than a consolidation of city-states. Named for the shimmering effect that they have when struck by the rays of the sun, these plains have been described as the “largest area of no-man’s land” within the Reach. If it belongs to anyone, it is probably owned by the wildlife that resides within it.

The Ten-Paw tribe of wemics is probably the largest and most-organized entity on the plains. They are a peaceful people for the most part and freely share their home with the humans, thri-kreen, and centaurs.

Wildlife abounds within the Shining Plains, and its horses are renown throughout the reach for their speed and endurance. Owning a “Plainsteed” is a mark of some importance even outside of the Reach. Such steeds typically have one extra Hit Die than normal horses. (For example, a light war Plainsteed has 3 Hit Dice.) They also gain a +1 bonus on all attack and damage rolls. Such magnificent steeds sell for either 75 gold pieces more than a normal horse of their kind or for as much as the next better horse would cost. For example, a light war Plainsteed costs as much as a medium war horse (225 gp), while a medium war Plainsteed costs as much as a heavy war horse (400 gp).

Herds of wild animals also abound, such as bison, elk, mammoths, and others. Predators are also prevalent on the plains, keeping the population of the more passive animals down by culling the weak from the herds.

Hunting is a popular sport on the plains, and the cities of Ormath, Lheshayl, and Assam attract hunters in great numbers during “official” hunting seasons which are regulated by the druidic faiths and enforced by the Emerald Enclave. Those people caught hunting outside of the allowed season frequently find themselves being hunted, by both the druids and the various nonhuman tribes of the area. The hunting season is primarily limited to the late summer and fall months; the months of Eleint, Marpenoth, and Uktar being the busiest. Depending upon the severity of the winter, sometimes a special season for a particular herd animal is designated in the spring. This practice insures that no animal group grows so large as to threaten the welfare of others.

The Shining Plains officially end north, near the city of Nathlekh, and south, outside the city of Surkh. “When you can see the Spines of the Serpent (meaning the Spines of Surkh mountain range), then you’ve crossed into a new land” is a popular saying for travelers.





Politics

The Shining Plains is not ruled by any one force, though the Emerald Enclave does watch over the large number of animals that call the Shining Plains home. The cities are independent but band together in times of need. Those that live within the cities have learned that it is better to have a symbiotic relationship with the surrounding land than to fight the various herds of sentient creatures such as wemics, centaurs, and thri-kreen.

Each year during Tarsakh, the leaders of the Three Free Cities of the Shining Plains meet at the Hill of Memories. This hill is the site of a battle with the wemics (the Field of Tears of 326 DR), and each city meets here to show respect for those who died and to make sure that their folly is never again repeated. The wemics, centaurs, and thri-kreen also send a delegate to the Hill, as does the Emerald Enclave. Once everyone has gathered, the leaders discuss any problems that have developed over the past winter. For example, if a particular monster is ravaging the countryside, they make plans to deal with it themselves or hire a band of adventurers.

Customs

With the great amount of attention that the people of the Shining Plains direct toward wildlife, it is not unusual that hunting is an important part of their lives. From an early age, the young of the various communities are taught a respect for life, and with this respect comes instruction on what creatures to hunt—and what creatures not to hunt. This culture has also created a tradition of keeping pets, especially dogs and wolves. Such animals are normally quite well trained and very protective of their masters. It is not uncommon for a plainsman to have a number of animals in his company, especially dogs used for tracking.

Homes on the Shining Plains are built without baths. Instead, communal bath houses are built in every city, normally over a hot spring, if one can be found. Bathing with your peers is an important social activity, and those who refuse, or build a private bath, are looked upon with suspicion. Separate baths exist for males and females.

Women in Society

Women of the Shining Plains are responsible for the traditional duties of womanhood—such as raising the children, cleaning the house, and making dinner—but they are also free to pursue careers in business, horsemanship, hunting, scouting, and others. The only career that they are not currently allowed to pursue is one in politics; that is a station reserved for men. Marriages are typically an even partnership.

Still, women are a powerful force in politics. After all, the wives of politicians have direct access to their husbands. This has led to a rising call across the plains to allow women into politics. Within a few years, sages speculate that women will make their entrance into the politics of the Shining Plains.

Festivals

The residents of the Shining Plains recognize two important festivals during the year. These are the Festival of the Hunt, honoring a person's ascension to adulthood, and the Sun Festival, honoring those outside the city for important contributions. Both are quite important to the plainsmen, and many residents of the cities who happen to be traveling abroad make a point to return to their home cities during these times.

Festival of The Hunt

During each summer, just before the start of the normal hunting season, young adults (male and female) are taken on the Festival of the Hunt. This is a time for them to prove to their peers that they are adults by demonstrating their proficiency with the bow and their skill in tracking. The goal is to hunt down a specific herd animal (chosen by random lot before the Hunt begins) and kill it with a single arrow. Once the animal has been felled, the hunter must also perform the skinning and cleaning. It is a goal of most plainsmen to waste as little of the animal as possible. Of course, killing an animal—even a herd animal—is difficult with only one shot. Sometimes the animal is mortally wounded but still runs away into the plains. This is another chance for the student to test his tracking skills.

A momento from the beast is kept by the initiate. This might be anything from a tooth to a piece of an antler. The momento is then normally worn on a necklace or anklet by the successful hunter.



The evening following the Hunt is known as the Night of Feasting. The successful hunters return their bounty to the cities and enjoy a night of dancing and eating. Even those who were not successful in the Hunt attend.

Sun Festival

From time to time, an outsider makes an important contribution to the people of the Shining Plains. Such contributions range anywhere from a single man hunting down a dangerous predator (such as any of the many saber-toothed cats in the area) or to an entire adventuring company hunting down a dangerous monster. The plainsfolk strongly believe in honoring heroes among them.

The Sun Festival is held during the last day of Eleasias, known as the Highsun among the Shining Plains. The heroes of the plains are made members of the community during a night of feasting and dancing. Each honoree cuts his hand, letting the blood spill onto the ground. Typically, a female wraps his hand with bandages and the hero spends the rest of the evening shaking hands (with his good hand, of course).

Cities

There are three major cities of humans on the Shining Plains, but there are also important areas of habitation for the other sentient races. The nonhumans are highly nomadic for the most part, moving from plain to plain year round.

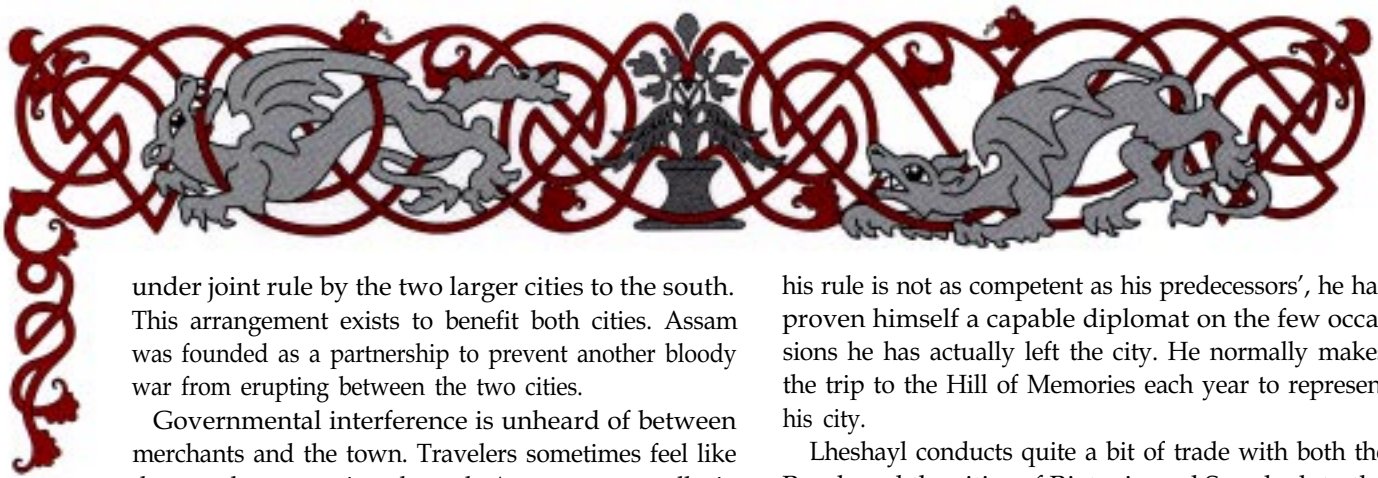
Assam

This city is the northernmost of the Shining Plains, serving as a stop-over point for those traveling from Gulthmere or even boating south along the Wetriver. For those leaving the Shining Plains, it is the last vestige of civilization before Nathlekh or communities farther north.

Assam is a home of merchants and traders. Many caravans use Assam as a resting place before moving further into the Reach. A common sight that greets visitors is that of caravans, wagons, and herds of animals circling Assam like a waiting army.

The government of Assam is a conglomeration of representatives from Lheshayl and Ormath. It is a city





under joint rule by the two larger cities to the south. This arrangement exists to benefit both cities. Assam was founded as a partnership to prevent another bloody war from erupting between the two cities.

Governmental interference is unheard of between merchants and the town. Travelers sometimes feel like the merchants coming through Assam are actually in charge of the city, as they are given virtually free run of the place. This freedom is one of the biggest reasons for Assam's popularity among merchants. That is not to say that Assam is lawless. Quite the contrary, a very strong militia presence keeps fights and other violence to a bare minimum. The judicial system, a trio of judges appointed from Lheshayl and Ormath, provides quick decisions should any major dispute erupt. (The most common dispute occurs when herds of cattle outside the city wander too close to each other and end up invariably mixed together.)

The current mayor of Assam is a man appointed to the position with, of course, the blessings of both Lheshayl and Ormath. Honlinear Tempest (LN hm F5) is a master politician, and he keeps things running smoothly to avoid any problems between Assam and the two cities. As long as the money flows unobstructed between Assam and the south, his job is secure.

Unfortunately, one of the caravans he recently sent south was ambushed by bandits and the money it was carrying stolen. Now, Tempest has to make excuses to Ormath and Lheshayl until he can find the bandits and bring them to justice. He is currently looking for adventurers to fill the role of trackers, since his own militia is far too busy to be troubled with such matters.

Lheshayl

This easternmost city of the Shining Plains is home to most of the Plainsteeds. While Ormath and Assam both train and raise horses in their cities, the two together cannot compare with the sheer numbers produced in Lheshayl. They are the undisputed equestrian capital of the Reach.

Likewise, Lheshayl's military is composed primarily of cavalry. This tendency has been a drawback from time to time, when the city's cavalry was unhorsed and forced to fight hand to hand. Such combat is very rare in the open plains, however, and the forces of Lheshayl can justifiably pride themselves in their riding skills.

Lheshayl is ruled by Chief Entawanata (CN hm F4), son of a long-standing line of chiefs of the city. While

his rule is not as competent as his predecessors', he has proven himself a capable diplomat on the few occasions he has actually left the city. He normally makes the trip to the Hill of Memories each year to represent his city.

Lheshayl conducts quite a bit of trade with both the Reach and the cities of Riatavin and Saradush to the east. This trade consists primarily of horses, but the city also has some outlying farms that grow wheat and rice.

Ormath

Of the three cities of the Shining Plains, Ormath is the one most likely to go to war over the slightest insult. Trapped between the thriving trade centers of Hlondeth to the west and Lheshayl to the east, the economic heartbeat of Ormath is paced only by travel along the Pikemen's Folly.

"Ormath on the warpath" is a phrase frequently used to describe the city-state. In its distant past, it sought to conquer the "gem of the Vilhon," Hlondeth. Now, it seems content to snare what mercantile traffic it can. Ormath does have resources of its own, however, and the city is known for the bison herds that surround it. Many in the city make a living by producing salted bison meat for hungry travelers.

Ormath is ruled by Lord Quwen (LN hm F9), a mountain of a man who is a true warrior at heart. He frequently leads patrols outside the walled city, keeping the roads to both east and west as clear of bandits as possible.

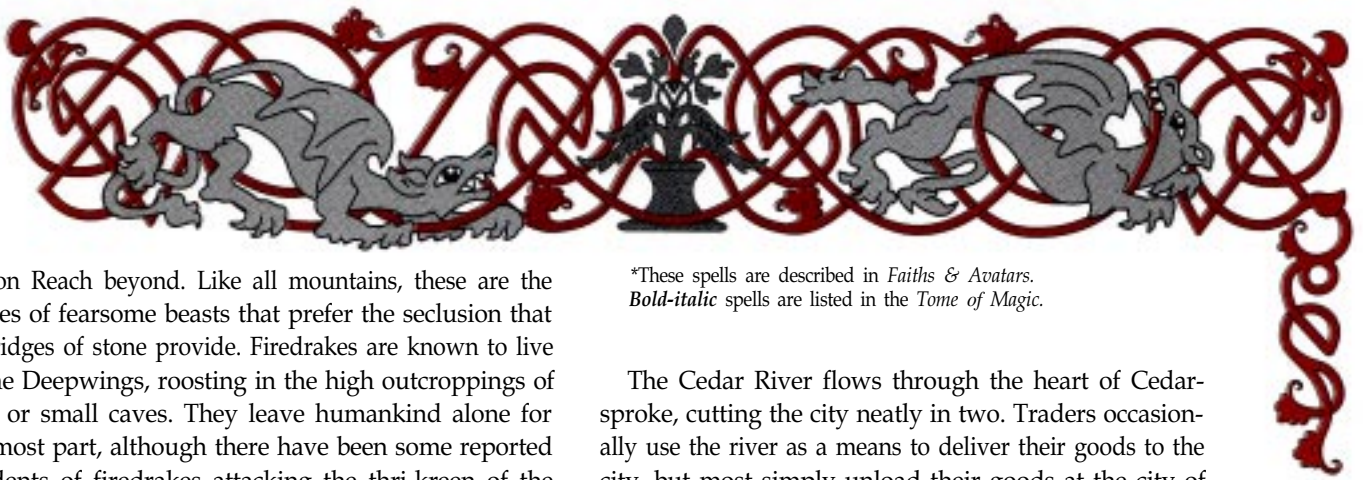
Lord Quwen is concerned about reports he's heard from the Wetwoods concerning lizard men. He has sent a few squads into the Wetwoods, but none of them have returned. He is currently looking for some adventurers to investigate the bog and report their findings to him.

Geography

The Shining Plains have been described as "one big battlefield" by the residents of the Plains. Fortunately, the only battles that have been fought on the plains have been those between the warring city-states of the region and not an invading army from nearby Amn or Tethyr.

Deepwing Mountains

These jagged peaks mark the boundary of the Shining Plains, their tall spires shielding the grasslands from the



Vilhon Reach beyond. Like all mountains, these are the homes of fearsome beasts that prefer the seclusion that the ridges of stone provide. Firedrakes are known to live in the Deepwings, roosting in the high outcroppings of rock or small caves. They leave humankind alone for the most part, although there have been some reported incidents of firedrakes attacking the thri-kreen of the Rushing Hills.

Gulthmere Forest

The great northern forest of the Vilhon is most known for its patron and protector, Nobanion, the Lion God of Gulthmere. It is known throughout the Reach as the “seat of power” of the druids.

The only major city within Gulthmere is that of Cedarsproke, the druidic stronghold. This independent city is ruled by the undisputed word of the grand druid, Zalaznar Crinios. Cedarsproke also houses some of the most complete histories of the Reach and surrounding lands. It has never been occupied by an invading force.

While a druidic stronghold, Cedarsproke goes to great lengths to make for certain that it does not appear to be part of the Emerald Enclave. While Zalaznar does not always agree with the activities of the hierophants, he realizes that to show open dissent would only serve to weaken the religion. Instead, he retains his neutral outlook, never commenting one way or the other on Enclave activities.

Zalaznar Crinios, hm D (Eldath) 15: AC 0 (*leather armor +4, wooden shield +3 missile deflector*); MV 12; hp 64; THAC0 12 (10 with *net +2*); Dmg nil; SZ M (6'1" tall); ML elite (14); AL TN; XP 9,000.

S 14, D 12, C 15, I 16, W 19, Ch 15.

Personality: quiet, holy, reserved.

SA: as druid.

Special Equipment: *net of entrapment, net of snaring; two packs dust of disappearance, staff of the woodlands +1 (18).*

Spheres: MAJOR: All, Animal, Creation, Elemental, Healing, Plant, Time, Wards, Weather. MINOR: Divination, Travelers.

Spells: 1st – *analyze balance, animal friendship, bless, create water, cure light wounds, entangle, purify food & drink, shillelagh*; 2nd – *charm person or mammal, chill metal, dust devil, goodberry, messenger, nap, speak with animals, trip*; 3rd – *lame shield*, greenwood*, mold touch*, protection from fire, summon insects, tree, water walk*; 4th – *age plant, hallucinatory forest, hold plant, plant door, protection from lightning, speak with plants, sticks to snakes, weather stasis*; 5th – *atonement, animal summoning II, pass plant, water of Eldath**; 6th – *blade barrier, spring mastery**; 7th – *control weather*. Zalaznar also gains six bonus spell levels that are available for memorization.

*These spells are described in *Faiths & Avatars*.

Bold-italic spells are listed in the *Tome of Magic*.

The Cedar River flows through the heart of Cedarsproke, cutting the city neatly in two. Traders occasionally use the river as a means to deliver their goods to the city, but most simply unload their goods at the city of Starmantle and continue on their way.

Those that live in Cedarsproke are typically druids or folk looking for a simple way of life. There are seldom any “exciting” events that occur in Cedarsproke, unless one considers the lectures by the Earthome College to be of particular interest. Still, the religious significance of Cedarsproke draws a great deal of pilgrims each year, and many adventurers seek knowledge contained in some dusty tome at the College. This travel has given rise to half a dozen inns, ranging in comfort from The Hoe, a seedy tavern near the lakefront, to the Silver Scythe, a high-quality inn near the temple of Silvanus.

Rushing Hills

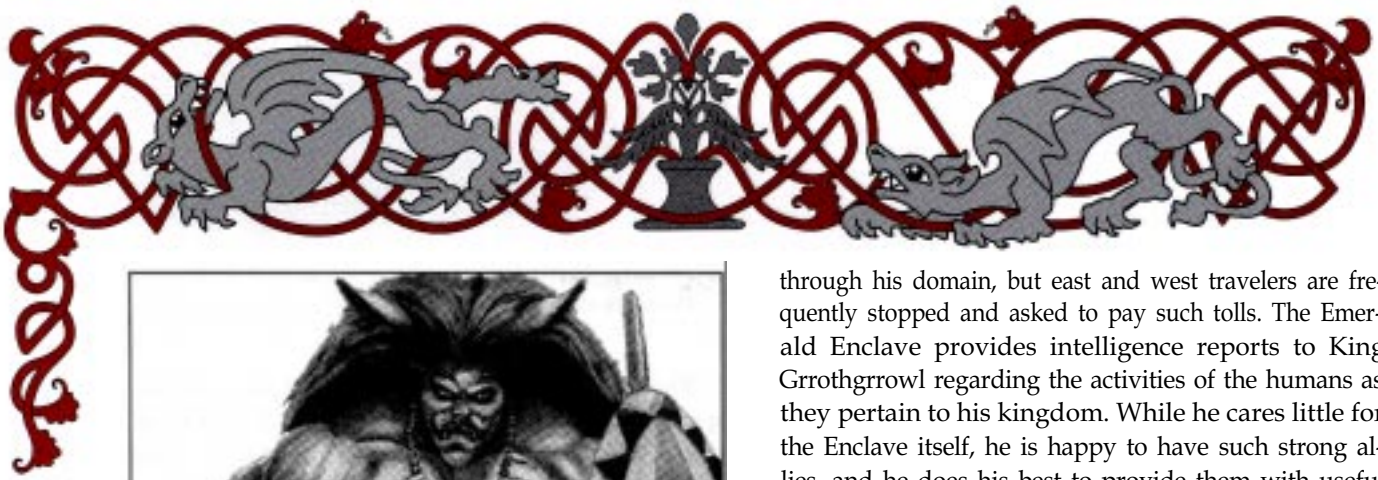
The hills southeast of the city of Lheshayl are more than just natural outcroppings of rock that thwart planting efforts. This area is the home of the Krakk't tribe of the thri-kreen. Their territory stretches from the hills, southwest into the plains outside the city of Surkh. The mantis warriors normally hunt rabbits, Plainsteeds, and other herd animals that stray into their domain.

About 10 years ago, the residents of Lheshayl decided to try to drive the thri-kreen from the hills by making sure that no animals ever wandered into the Rushing Hills. This tact only drove the thri-kreen farther north, attacking travelers along the road. This incident has established a semi-official policy of driving some animals into the hills to make sure the mantis warriors do not scare off any merchants that would plan to do business in Lheshayl.

There are only about 50 thri-kreen in the hills. They roam from place to place, never establishing a permanent home. Non-insectoid travelers actually refer to the mantis warriors as the “tri-kreen,” referring to the three distinct packs that roam the hills.

The Tenpaw Tribe

The Tenpaw tribe of wemics is the most powerful force upon the plains; some would claim they are even



more powerful than the Emerald Enclave. Others remember their ferocity during the battle on the Field of Tears in 326 DR, where the cities of Lheshayl and Ormath battled for supremacy and fled before the wemics.

There are three tribes that live in the area, although the Tenpaw could easily be called a nation of wemics. The Tenpaw tribe contains more than 12,000 nomadic members, traveling from place to place within the Shining Plains. The remaining two tribes contain nearly 1,000 members each.

The Tenpaw are led by King Grrothgrowl. He has eight chieftain assistants that aid him in running the tribe. In addition, an advisor to the Emerald Enclave also lives with the wemics. Grrothgrowl cares little for the humans so long as they do not invade his territory. He makes it a point not to request tolls from the various trading caravans that head south and north

through his domain, but east and west travelers are frequently stopped and asked to pay such tolls. The Emerald Enclave provides intelligence reports to King Grrothgrowl regarding the activities of the humans as they pertain to his kingdom. While he cares little for the Enclave itself, he is happy to have such strong allies, and he does his best to provide them with useful information.

King Grrothgrowl, wemic king: AC 0 (*shield* +3); MV 12; HD 9; hp 70; THAC0 11 (6 with *war hammer* +3); #AT 3; Dmg 1d8/1d8/1d4+4 (*war hammer*); SA +2 on all attacks with handheld weapons; SD -2 bonus on all initiative rolls; SZ L (7' tall); ML elite (14); Int. high; AL N; XP 975.

The Wetwoods

This vast area is both swamp and bog. The swamp covers about two-thirds of the southern reaches of the area where the Wetriver feeds the forest. It is an area frequently covered in thick fog, and the limbs of trees are covered with sheets of fungus, blocking the view.

Over the years, a community of grippli have gathered to create the city of Urml at the far eastern end of the Wetwoods. This small village of 200 omnivores tries to keep itself out of the affairs of the other humanoids as much as possible.

Urml is led by tribe mother Oluusious, an elderly grippli nearly 400 winters old. She is fearful of humanoid excursions into the Wetwoods since she believes that the humans will want to expand their territory to include her small village.

Oluusious; Tribe Mother of Urml, grippli female: AC 7; MV 9, leap 15; HD 3; hp 17; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6+1; SA musk cloud, opponents suffer a -3 on surprise rolls; SZ S (2' tall); ML elite (13); Int high; AL N; XP 270

Notes: SA musk cloud has the effects of a *stinking cloud* spell.



Free Cities

Political boundaries are best set by the people within those boundaries, not by mapmakers intent on molding Toril into the image of their own mind's eye. Mapmakers seldom pay for their errors; adventurers pick up the tab all too often. But if that's your idea of adventuring. . .

– Elminius Daresulk, Bard of Chondath

The southern reaches of the Vilhon contain most of the city-states. These independent nations owe their autonomy, in part, to the Rotting War that tore Chondath from its glory in 902 DR. Many of these city-states maintain an unsteady peace with Chondath, fearing that Arrabar will rise from the ashes to reclaim them. This fear is not entirely unwarranted.

Hlondeth and Surkh are probably the only two cities in the region that do not fear a Chondathian resurgence. Surkh is too far from Arrabar to be adequately controlled, and Hlondeth is sheltered by the Vilhon Reach and has a ready military at its disposal. Of course, Hlondeth has already been stung once by the bravado of Chondath and works diligently to make sure that the remaining city-states continue as a thorn in Chondath's side.

Politics

While the city-states do not belong to an official alliance, each realizes that it is in their best interests to ensure that none of the others fall to Chondath. The practice of keeping Arrabar off-balance is a long-standing tradition among the cities; each realizes that every step Chondath takes toward reclaiming lost power is a step toward Arrabar reclaiming dominance in the Reach. Still, the city-states of the Reach have their own petty squabbles, though few send their armies to prove who is right. More often, they send political thugs to prove their point or flex their diplomatic muscle, shouting and threatening one another with boycotts and import taxes. Violence is a personal greeting reserved for the enemies of the city.

The city of Surkh is an enigma. Sheltered by the Deepwing Mountains from the remainder of the Reach, the "City of Lizards" is left alone by the other city-states. Lachom has semi-cordial relations with Surkh for trading but otherwise the two have no common interests. Elupar, while closer than Lachom, has an irrational fear of the lizard men and gives the city and its inhabitants a wide berth.

Lachom has refused all ties—both diplomatic and economic—with its former master, Chondath. By contrast, Nimpeth is almost casual in its relations with Chondath, remembering the "glory days" when it was the slave market for the Vilhon. While it still does a thriving slave business, the city-state now concentrates more on its vineyards.

Reth has built a strong navy since its freedom. The walled city seems well-prepared to withstand any assault from Arrabar. It also maintains strong economic ties with Hlath, which is marginally under the control of Arrabar.





Customs

Two customs are shared by the various city-states: slavery and military service.

All of the city-states make extensive use of slaves, many of which are descendants from generations of slaves. Nimpeth is a thriving slave port, accepting large numbers of the unfortunates with no questions asked. Slaves are considered the personal property of their masters. Some masters treat these poor souls worse than their material property—others make sure they live comfortably. A few even marry their slaves. A man having many wives is not an uncommon occurrence.

When a boy reaches adulthood, he is expected to serve in the militia of his city-state. While some of the richer families can ensure a four-year tour in the diplomatic corps for their children, most must serve in the army. Slaves are considered too lowly to be considered for military service, except in times of crisis.

Festivals

One common festival shared by the city-states and Sespech is the Rotting Dance, the celebration of their freedom from Chondath. While the exact date of liberation is unknown (autonomy came from a gradual loss of control from Chondath), the celebration occurs on Higharvestide.

Some cities celebrate with wild parties (Nimpeth and Elupar) while others have a somber ceremony marking the anniversary of their freedom. In all cases, this is a recognized holiday. Most businesses close down.

Cities

All of the cities accept currency from the others, but not letters of credit. There is generous religious tolerance, but preaching against slavery in Nimpeth is still sure to cause some problems for anyone that foolish.

Hlondeth

Known as the “City of Serpents” and the “Jewel of the Vilhon,” Hlondeth is one of the busiest port cities in the Reach. It accepts goods for transport into the lower half of Turmish and for caravans heading west into the Shining Plains. It is a very organized and efficient city-state.

The architecture of the city sets Hlondeth apart from the other cities in the Reach. Its tall, graceful arches and coils of emerald-hued stone give the city a look unlike anywhere else. At night, its large stone buildings are illuminated by a combination of natural elements and magical lighting, causing the city’s skyline to reflect off the calm waters of the Vilhon. Hlondeth has no stairs in its architecture; ramps and poles allow the yuan-ti easier access to the buildings.

Hlondeth is ruled by an evil family of serpents: the yuan-ti house of Extaminos. The current ruler is Dediana Extaminos. However, her rule is light, and merchants seldom complain about the laws. Dediana’s son, Dmetrio, is currently courting the daughter of Baron Foeshmasher of Sespech, Glisena. Dmetrio is a pureblood, meaning he appears to be human. The baron has some problems with the boy’s reptilian heritage—fearful that his grandchildren might look like snakes. He has interfered as much as possible with the budding romance between the two youngsters. However, he is starting to realize that his efforts to stop them are doomed.

Hlondeth currently has absolutely no plans for expanding its kingdom to include the surrounding city-states of Nleeth, Amah, or Aelor. Dediana is content to run Hlondeth as efficiently as possible, bringing wealth and fame to her family. If her son marries Baron Foeshmasher’s daughter, she will take those possibilities into consideration as they occur.

Dediana Extaminos, LE yuan-ti female: AC 4/0; MV 12, slither 9; HD 9; hp 60; THAC0 11 (7 with long sword +4 with defender); #AT 2 or 1; Dmg 1d8+4/1d8+4 (long sword) or 1d4 (tail constriction); SA spells, psionic use; MR 20%; SZ L (10’ long); ML elite (14); XP 7,000.

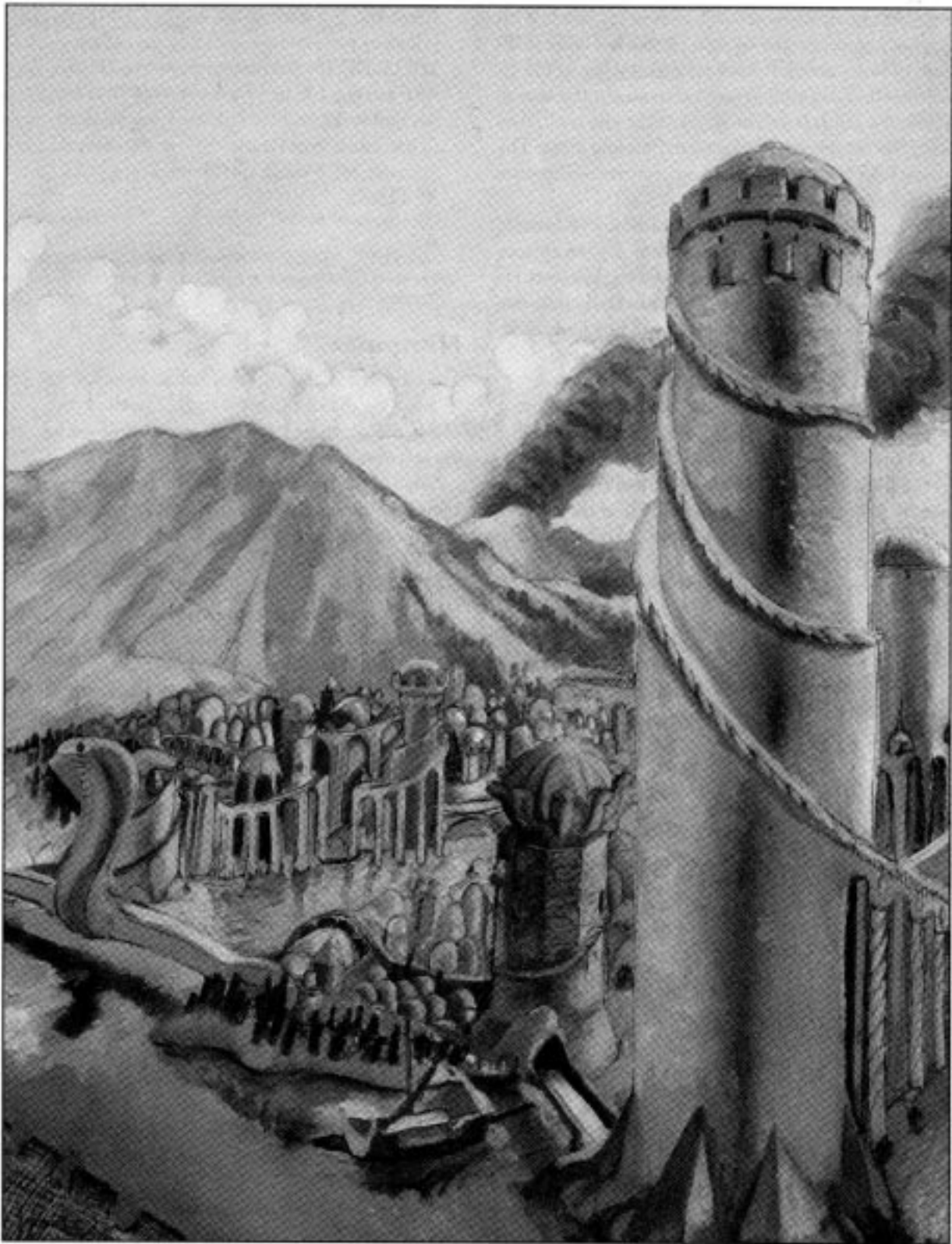
Notes: SA—can cast the following spells once each day: *cause fear*, *darkness 15’ radius*, *snake charm*, *sticks to snakes*, *neutralize poison*, *suggestion*, *polymorph other*. Psionics as selected by the DM.

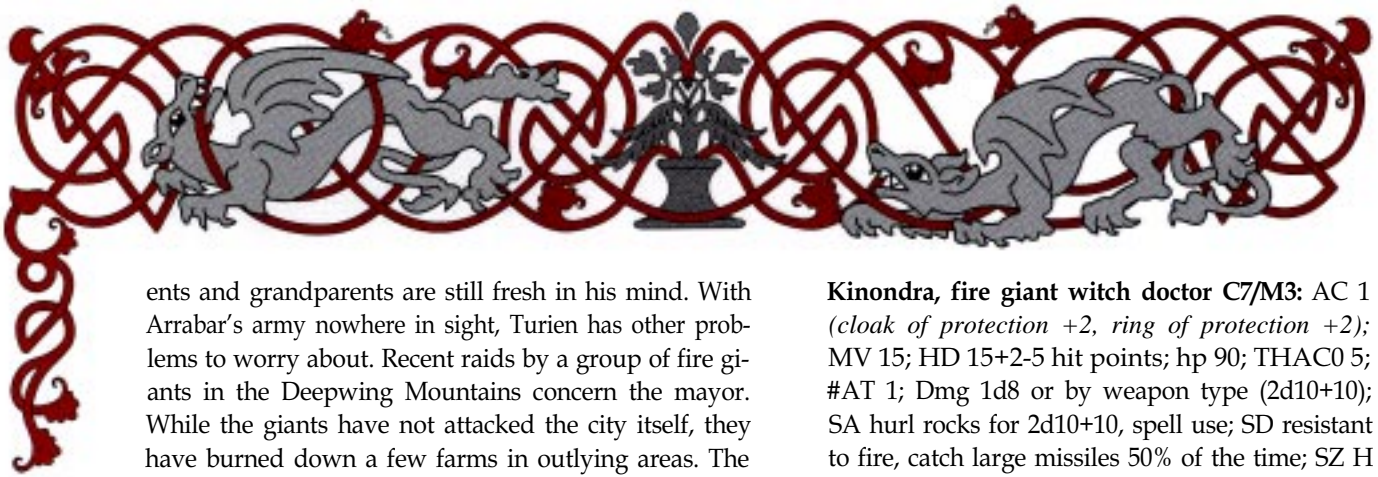
Lachom

The agricultural community of Lachom tends the fields in the valley between the Deepwing Mountains to the north and the Cloven Mountains to the south. The community is peaceful and tries to stay out of the political affairs of the rest of the Reach.

The mayor of Lachom is an old dwarf by the name of Turien Battlewake (LG dm F7). He remembers the suffering of the city better than most. The stories of his par-







ents and grandparents are still fresh in his mind. With Arrabar's army nowhere in sight, Turien has other problems to worry about. Recent raids by a group of fire giants in the Deepwing Mountains concern the mayor. While the giants have not attacked the city itself, they have burned down a few farms in outlying areas. The mayor is looking for a group of adventurers to eliminate the giant threat.

The giants work for Lord Simon Dessino of Arrabar. He is trying to weaken the city's resistance to an alliance by creating threats they cannot handle on their own. He feels that as soon as the city has suffered a few humiliating defeats at the hands of the giants, it will be willing to accept an offer of aid from Chondath.

Fire giants (16): AC -1; MV 12; HD 15+2-5 hit points; hp 114, 112, 107, 99, 94, 88, 84, 80, 78, 72; THAC0 5; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 or by weapon (2d10+10); SA hurl rocks for 2d10+10; SD resistant to fire, catch large missiles 50% of the time; SZ H (18' tall); ML champion (15), Int. low; AL LE; XP 8,000.

Notes: SD—Fire-based attacks inflict one hit point less of damage per die.



Kinondra, fire giant witch doctor C7/M3: AC 1 (*cloak of protection* +2, *ring of protection* +2); MV 15; HD 15+2-5 hit points; hp 90; THAC0 5; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 or by weapon type (2d10+10); SA hurl rocks for 2d10+10, spell use; SD resistant to fire, catch large missiles 50% of the time; SZ H (18' tall); ML champion (15); Int. average; AL LE; XP 12,000.

SD—Fire-based attacks inflict one hit point less damage per die.

Spells (4/3/2/1—wizard; 2/1—priest): As selected by the DM. Fire giants typically only memorize spells to detect and thwart intruders.

Nimpeth

The slave city of the Vilhon is known more recently for its fine wine than for its slave trade. The slave trade still exists, though there have been few wars in the area to provide fresh slaves.

Many of the structures within Nimpeth owe their existence to the slaves of the city. The Citadel of Carifar, the governing palace of Nimpeth, was built by the strong backs of slaves nearly 400 years ago. However, the most notable slave achievement lies outside the city. North of Nimpeth in the rugged Broken Hills lies the Woren Vineyards, an agricultural wonder. The hills have been molded into a sprawling vineyard.

Lord Woren (NE hm M12) is both owner of the Woren Vineyards and lord of Nimpeth. His power rests both in his wealth—brought in from his profitable vineyards—and his slave tradings. He is, unquestionably, the most powerful man in Nimpeth. Woren realizes that a war would be bad for his business. With that in mind, he strives to keep the peace between Nimpeth and Arrabar. To this end, he keeps Lord Dessino of Arrabar apprised as to the actions of Lachom and the other city-states. Of course, Woren only passes on information that makes Nimpeth shine in a more friendly light than the others.

Other nobles within the city are concerned about Nimpeth's security as well. Woren's second in command, the portly Duke Folkwain (CN hm F8), oversees the various mercenary companies that perform militia duties both in and out of the city. In addition, Duke Folkwain commands the Company of the Crushed Grapes, a special force containing more than 250 foot soldiers and 150 mounted cavalry.

Nimpeth also commands a small fleet of about 20 naval vessels. These forces do everything from patrol the





waterways outside of Nimpeth to escort slave galleons from the Eyes of Silvanus. Commanded by Admiral Taramont (NE hm T15) aboard the *Wine & Song*, the navy ensures that traders seeking Nimpeth arrive without incident.

Nun

This village is more appropriately referred to as a shrine. It is an outpost of priests of varying faiths that make their home upon the site of the Battle of Nun in 902 DR that heralded a deadly end to the Rotting War. It is a calm and peaceful place, unspoiled by the politics of the area.

Reth

This former gladiatorial stronghold of the Chondath empire is now a solidly independent city-state. Located at the far north end of the Chondathian coastline, Reth is known as the First City of the Vilhon Reach. It is an exporter of fish, lumber, and minerals. In the past, Reth was a training center for the Southsands Games. It broke free from Chondath's control during the Rotting Wars and has seen little benefits in dealing with its former master.

The past has left its mark on the city. The great gladiatorial arena—the Northshire Coliseum—is still a popular social locale in the region. The Northshire now holds gladiatorial combats twice a week to a sold-out crowd. Working as a gladiator at the Northshire is a life-long ambition for some people within Reth. Recognized gladiators live a life of luxury and earn hundreds of times the wages of prominent nobles. Gambling with life is dangerous, but profitable.

Recently, Reth has had a few problems with the Emerald Enclave. The conflicts have centered around the lumbering of Nunwood. Reth has limited its activities within the wood in an effort to move on to more profitable matters, but tension between Reth and the Enclave still exists.

Reth is ruled by a freely elected Mayor who performs a variety of ceremonial duties and caters to current public opinion. He has no real power—the Seven Senators of Reth hold the power in the city. Each senator is in charge of a particular aspect of the city such as Public Works, Defense, Trade, Games, Economy, Justice, and Relations. All other matters are decided by all of the senators.

Surkh

The City of Serpents is perhaps one of the most bizarre cities in the Reach. While Surkh has cordial relations with a few other city-states such as Lachom, Lheshayl, and Nimpeth, its distance gives it a wide degree of latitude in its internal dealing. In general, it keeps to itself and ignores the other city-states.

Surkh is the largest community of lizard men known to exist on Faerûn, containing more than 15,000 members. They live on a diet of fish from the nearby Deepwash. Still, humans have good reason to fear Surkh. A humanoid convicted of a serious crime is normally sentenced to death and then served as a meal to the king or other dignitary.

The lizard men have a profitable gladiatorial arena in Surkh, and humanoid gladiators can make more money here than they can in Reth, assuming they do not wind up on a lizard man's plate. King Griss'tok rules the small nation of lizard men. He has the same statistics as a normal lizardman king except his alignment is chaotic neutral. The king seldom sees outside visitors, since you must be able to speak lizard man to request an audience. There are schools within the city that teach the language for those humanoids brave enough to stay more than two years.

The lizard men of Surkh do not celebrate any of the festivals or follow any of the customs of the other city-states. Their culture provides an abundance of exotic practices and beliefs that a learned human can discover on his own.

Elupar

This small fishing village lives in fear of the city of Surkh. Although there is little basis for this fear other than stories of what the lizard men do to humans, the city retains its distrust of the lizard men. Every story of a traveler being "sentenced to dinner" finds its way to Elupar.

Elupar does not have its own militia; it is merely a loose-knit band of fisherman living under the shadow of the other city-states. It makes a point to hire a "sheriff" to keep the town peaceful, but that position is frequently open. Elupar is an unexciting place for a lawman.



Geography

The following geographic areas are located near the cities of the Vilhon Reach.

Cloven Mountains

The northern-most tip of these mountains rests to the east of the Deepwash and to the south of the free city of Lachom. It is a wild and dangerous land, containing an assortment of goblinoid tribes that constantly war with their surrounding clans. These mountains are also rumored to be the home of a creature thought to be from Athas—the Kirre. This great cat has only hunted down the goblinoids within its own area so far and has not yet emerged from the mountains to threaten Lachom or Elupar.

The Deepwash

This fresh-water lake is the largest in the Reach. It teems with trout and other fish and is thought to be one of the best fishing lakes in the entire region.

The Deepwash is very deep. While many divers have tried to swim to the bottom, none have ever succeeded. It is also home to an immense dragon turtle that is respected to the point of worship in Surkh. In fact, some sects of the city believe it an honor to be slain and eaten by the beast.



Dragon Turtle (1): AC 0; MV 3, Sw 9; HD 14; hp 95; THAC0 7; #AT 3; Dmg 2d6/2d6/4d8; SA breath weapon, capsize ships; SZ G (30' diameter shell); ML fanatic (17); Int. very; AL N; XP 12,000.

Notes: SA—cloud of scalding steam 60' long, 40' wide, and 40' high that inflicts 20d6 points of damage (save for half), can capsize ships under 20' in length 95% of the time, ships 20–60' long 50% of the time, and ships over 60' in length only 20% of the time.

The Nunwood

The smallest forest in the Reach, the Nunwood serves the northern Chondath area as a source for lumber and hunting. It is a relatively peaceful forest since most of the predators have been chased eastward into the Akanapeaks.

The one group of predators that has not been chased away is the snakes. The Nunwood has an abundant number of spitting snakes that have killed more than a few lumberjacks over the years.

The Winterwood

This vast forest of pines and oaks is the darkest in the region. Its tall trees and thick foliage block out the sunlight, and a cool, white mist is commonly seen clinging to the ground. The white mist looks like new-fallen snow, especially on the fringes of the forest when the morning light strikes the fog. Hence the name: Winterwood.

The secluded location of the Winterwood has also allowed a tribe of mold men to establish a territory in the northern reaches of the forest. The vegepygmies claim their territory includes everything south to the Wintercloak river. This claim has caused the tribe to remain at odds with the orcs of the White Hand. This band consists of a conglomeration of around 250 members whose village of Shen is four miles north of the river, in the very heart of the Winterwood. The ongoing war between these two forces has made the Winterwood a dangerous place to visit. South of the Wintercloak river is much more hospitable, but rumors persist of a green dragon by the name of Foilsunder lairing 20 miles or so south of the Wintercloak river.



Sespech

If it's possible for a Lord of Arrabar to put a price on a kingdom's downfall, Sespech would serve as a good example. Those that support a free Sespech had best watch themselves closely should Baron Foemasher fall. They'll be the next to feel the gentle caress of Arrabar.

– Shiala Torthren, Historian at Cedarspoke



sespech was a barony of Chondath before the Rotting War freed it from the control of Arrabar. Now, the sprawling barony seeks to maintain its independence from the threat of a reviving Chondath.

The people of Sespech are tall and olive-skinned, much like their Chondathian brothers to the east. Their hair is kept short and they shave regularly. This custom has given them the reputation as being a “nation of smooth-faced children.” The warriors of Sespech are skilled horsemen, and Ormpetarr’s cavalry is second in the area only behind that of Lheshayl. Due to the constant sense of danger, from Chondath, young men enter military service for a period of six years instead of the normal four. Baron Foemasher needs all the good men he can get.

Politics

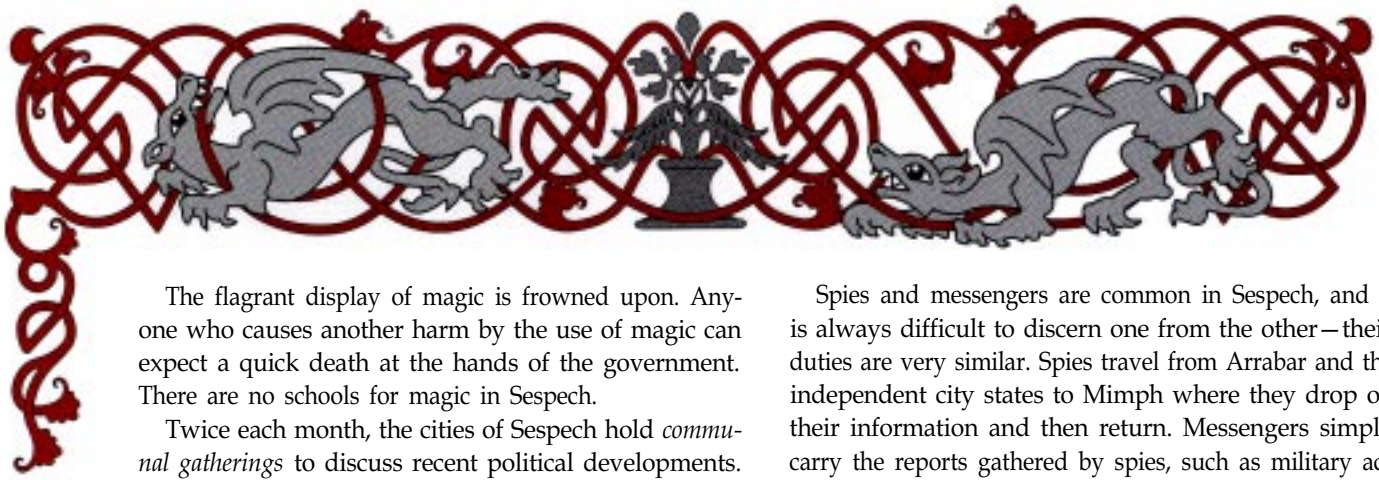
The political air of Sespech is tense. All eyes watch the northeast where the armies of Chondath await to reclaim their former barony. This danger has led to Sespech opening relations with city-states and kingdoms with which it would not otherwise deal. Sespech needs all of the allies it can find. One such ally has been the city-state of Hlondeth, home to the evil yuan-ti. While Baron Thuragar Foemasher would just as soon keep his dealings with Hlondeth on a strictly trade level, political realities have dictated otherwise. He needs Hlondeth’s support to create a navy based at Mimph. He has even allowed his daughter Glisena to continue dating Dmetrio Extaminos, son of Dediana Extaminos, the yuan-ti ruler of Hlondeth. Foemasher has also suppressed his desire to wipe Nimpeth from the face of the Vilhon. Though he considers Lord Woren to be a worm and “slick to the touch,” he realizes that Nimpeth is only looking out for its own interests.

Baron Foemasher came to power through a series of bloody assassinations that culminated in 1364, when he assumed the title of Baron and ordered the former Baron of Sespech, Ricjolo Tomrase, back to Arrabar. A brief battle ensued at Arranford when Chondath tried to send a “peace-keeping” force to Ormpetarr. Thuragar immediately established Fort Arran, an outpost of nearly 1,000 soldiers, to guard against future “peace-keeping” measures on the part of the Lord of Arrabar. While many claim that Foemasher was responsible for the bloodletting that led to his rise to power, his rule has been just. His primary concern has centered around keeping Sespech free of Chondathian control.

Customs

Sespech recognizes the terms of military service and the use of slaves like the other city-states. In addition, it has a few traditions of its own.





The flagrant display of magic is frowned upon. Anyone who causes another harm by the use of magic can expect a quick death at the hands of the government. There are no schools for magic in Sespech.

Twice each month, the cities of Sespech hold *communal gatherings* to discuss recent political developments. This gathering is the only time politics are discussed in public. This gathering is for both men and women to voice their concerns. The gatherings are attended by a member of Lord Foesmasher's court, called a minister, or in rare cases, by Lord Foesmasher himself. The ministers report the general view of the populace concerning the baron's recent decisions. Public opinion has always been very important in Sespech. If the previous baron had remembered that, he might still be in power.

Festivals

For the last few years, the citizens of Sespech have celebrated the Feast of Purple Majesty in Ormpetarr. This three-day long celebration takes place during the closing days of Alturiak and marks Baron Foesmasher's rise to power. It is a time of drinking, dancing, swordplay and horsemanship.

The first day of the Feast is the Dawn of Equines. Jousting, mounted combat, and racing are held this day. The winner of each competition earns a seat at the Baron's table that evening. Day two is the Flight of Dawn. Archery, sling-throwing, and dart-hurling are held this day. Again, the winner of these events is likewise given a chair at the Baron's table. The final day of the competition is known as the Swordfest. The best swordsmen of the land test their skills against one another in non-lethal combat. Additionally, there is a martial skills competition.

The people of Sespech also celebrate the Feast of the Moon (from Turmish) and the various festivals celebrated by the independent city-states. Baron Thuragar Foesmasher takes great delight in celebrating the Rotting Dance with the men at Fort Arran.

Cities

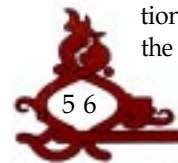
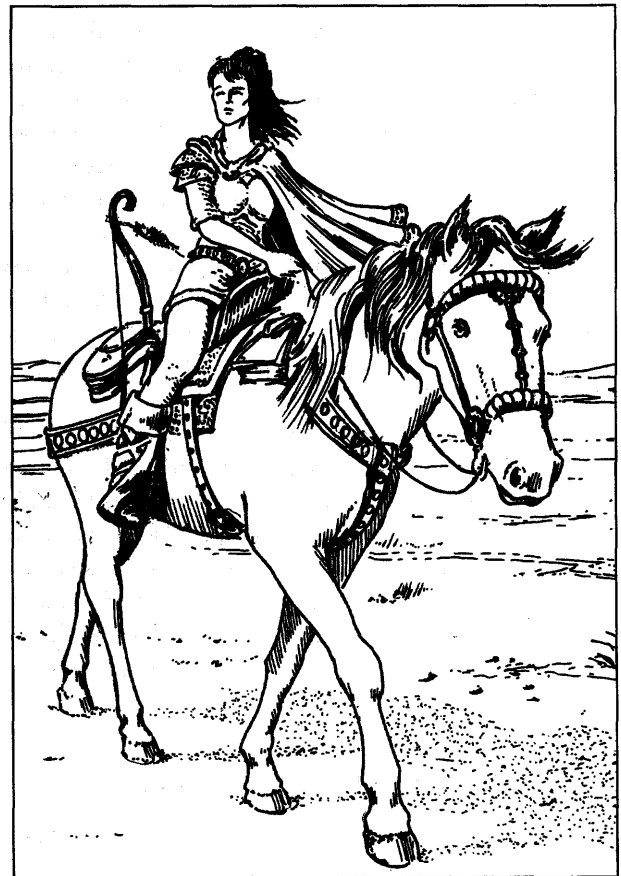
The kingdom of Sespech consists of three cities, ranging from the southern city of Elbulder to the northern port city of Mimph. This geographical separation has caused problems in communications between the cities with which the Baron has had to deal.

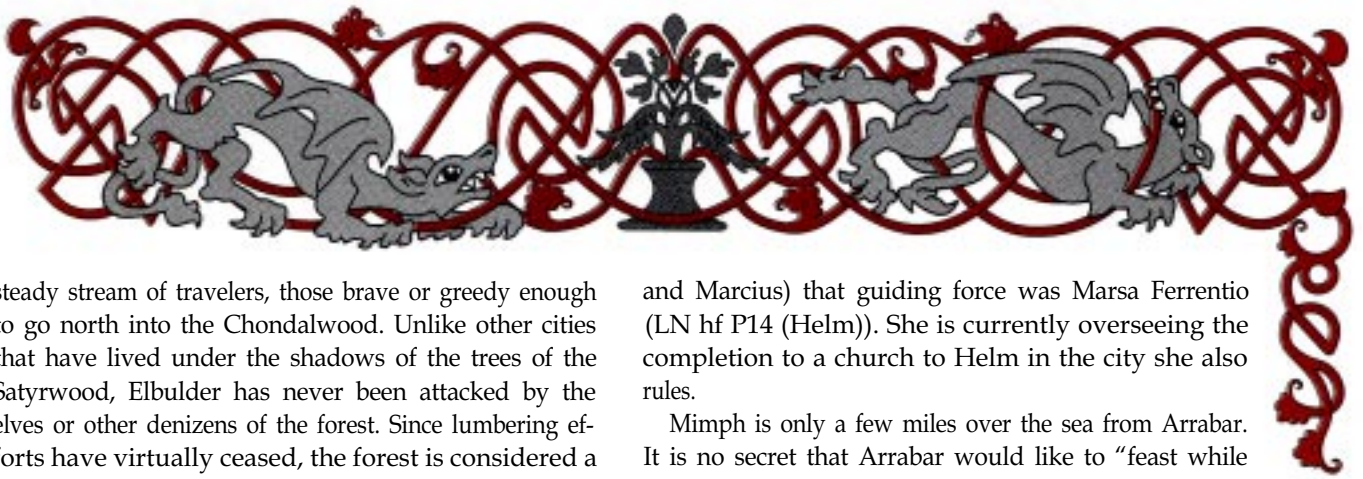
Spies and messengers are common in Sespech, and it is always difficult to discern one from the other—their duties are very similar. Spies travel from Arrabar and the independent city states to Mimph where they drop off their information and then return. Messengers simply carry the reports gathered by spies, such as military activity, general news, important trade deals, and so on, to the nearest city. In Mimph, reports generally go to Fort Arran or Ormpetarr.

Elbulder

Hundreds of years ago, the city of Elbulder was a thriving logging town. It harvested the surrounding woods, sending lumber up the Arran river with magical boats. The Rotting War and the activity of the Enclave has eliminated most of their lumbering activities. Magic is better received here than in the northern cities of Sespech and Chondath.

Elbulder is currently a small trading city along the banks of the Arran. The Old Road leading north into Chondath and south to the city of Torsch provides a





steady stream of travelers, those brave or greedy enough to go north into the Chondalwood. Unlike other cities that have lived under the shadows of the trees of the Satyrwood, Elbulder has never been attacked by the elves or other denizens of the forest. Since lumbering efforts have virtually ceased, the forest is considered a place for hunting, recreation, and solitude. The citizens of the town still listen to the wild stories of travelers who come from the north through the Chondalwood, but they just smile and dismiss them as the active imaginations of bored travelers. Living within the gaze of a legendary forest seems to have desensitized them to the rampant stories.

The mayor of Elbulder is a slim man of thirty or so winters named Gavilon Jostins (NG hm Inv 14). He was part of an adventuring company that operated from Ormpetarr many years ago. He left the adventuring life five years ago, living comfortably in a small manor until Baron Foeshasher took control of Sespech and asked him to rule Elbulder. Gavilon is known to be a wizard. He has had to demonstrate his magical prowess more times than he cares to remember. Right after he took control of Elbulder, the lord of Arrabar sent a contingent of men to take Elbulder. Gavilon cast *fireballs* and *lightning bolts* that drove the Chondathians north back to their homes.

Fort Arran

This outpost guards the road south into the heart of Sespech and keeps a wary eye toward Chondath. If a war is to be fought, Fort Arran will be the site of first battle. The men here understand their role if such a battle should occur. They must slow down and harass the attacking force while messengers rush to Mimph, Elbulder, and Ormpetarr with a warning. Serving at Fort Arran is considered to be a great honor for a warrior, and few ever turn down such an appointment.

The 1,000 men who call the fort home are led by general Marcius Stonehall (LG dm F9). Rumors abound that Marcius served with Gavilon and Thuragar during their adventuring days many years ago. Such rumors are actually true, but none of the men discuss their adventures in public.

Mimph

No adventuring company would be complete without spiritual guidance, and for the Band of Iron (the adventuring company that included Baron Thuragar, Gavilon,

and Marcius) that guiding force was Marsa Ferrentio (LN hf P14 (Helm)). She is currently overseeing the completion to a church to Helm in the city she also rules.

Mimph is only a few miles over the sea from Arrabar. It is no secret that Arrabar would like to “feast while Mimph burns.” There is no love lost between these two cities. Traders normally conduct trade with one or the other, seldom both.

Baron Foeshasher has been establishing a navy at Mimph to both protect the city and patrol the sea. Currently, Arrabar ships, from time to time, board vessels known to be bound for Mimph and confiscate their cargo. This activity has led to a variety of employment opportunities in Mimph for both adventuring companies and independent vessels. Adventuring companies are often hired to serve as guards for the return trip out of the Reach, and independent vessels are frequently hired to provide safe passage to rich merchants.

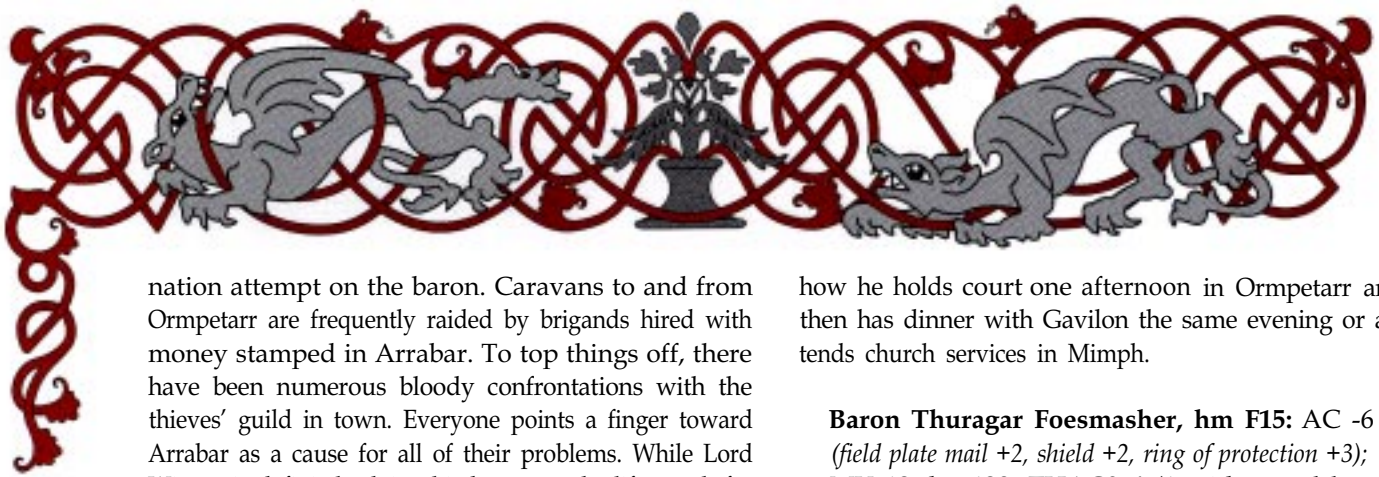
Ormpetarr

The capitol of Sespech, Ormpetarr, houses most of the nation’s military and the Baron himself, Thuragar Foeshasher. It is an ancient, walled city that rests along the Nagawater. Fertile fields surround it. Ormpetarr still conducts trade with many vessels that brave the Nagawater to do business from Nimpeth. This business consists primarily of the trading of grain and wine between the two cities.

Ormpetarr used to be a barony of Chondath before the Rotting War allowed it to break away from the failing empire. Since that time, a series of powerful rulers, lucky adventurers, or malleable puppets from Chondath have ruled the city. It is now a city—and nation—yearning for stability. The people seem to have discovered that stability in their new baron, Thuragar Foeshasher. Military units wear a purple feather on their helmets to signify their loyalty to the baron. The rumor that his trusted friends are now in control of the remaining free cities of Sespech has strengthened the people’s faith in Thuragar’s rule. For once, Sespech believes it has a chance at peace. The merchants are the strongest economic force that supports the new baron. Constant changes in leaders is bad for business, and the traders and businessmen of Sespech are committed to making sure the nation remains stable.

Of course, the city is always plagued by small problems. From time to time, there is an unsuccessful assassi-





nation attempt on the baron. Caravans to and from Ormpetarr are frequently raided by brigands hired with money stamped in Arrabar. To top things off, there have been numerous bloody confrontations with the thieves' guild in town. Everyone points a finger toward Arrabar as a cause for all of their problems. While Lord Wianar is definitely doing his best to make life tough for the baron, he is not the only one responsible for the nation's woes.

The thieves' guild is rebelling against the rigid laws imposed by the new baron. The current guildmaster, Haskar Corintis (LE hm T17) is behind many of the assassination attempts. Of course, he uses money stamped in Arrabar to pay his hired thugs. As far as he is concerned, the battle with Foeshmasher has just begun.

Baron Thuragar holds court each day in Ormpetarr. Such court sessions are heavily guarded, but the people respect Thuragar for holding his court sessions publicly. Too much went on behind closed doors during the past administration. The baron often shows up in both Mimph and Elbulder unexpectedly. Stories abound at

how he holds court one afternoon in Ormpetarr and then has dinner with Gavilon the same evening or attends church services in Mimph.

Baron Thuragar Foeshmasher, hm F15: AC -6 (*field plate mail* +2, *shield* +2, *ring of protection* +3); MV 12; hp 129; THAC0 6 (1 with *vorpal long sword*, 4 with *long bow* +2); #AT 5/2 (*long sword*) or 2 (*long bow*); Dmg 1d8+9 (*long sword*) or 1d8+3 (*long bow*); SZ M (6'4" tall); ML champion (16); AL LN; XP 11,000.

S 18/77, D 13, C 18, I 16, W 14, Ch 14

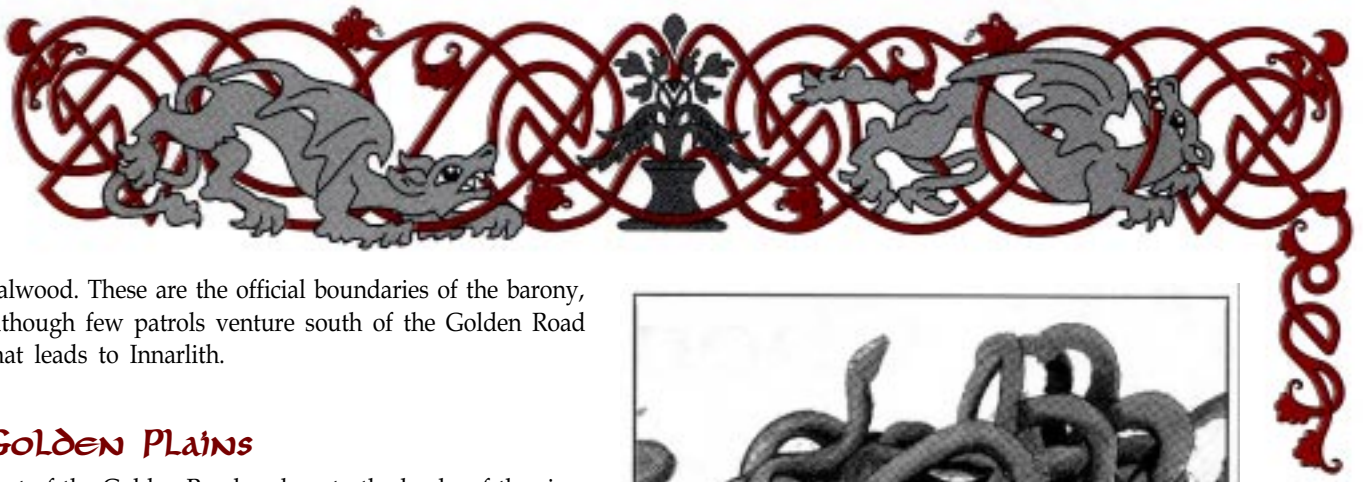
Personality: Cautious, forceful, committed

Special Equipment: *helm of teleportation without error* (with a large purple feather in it), *ring of mind shielding*, *scarab of protection* (2), *rod of lordly might* (14).

Geography

The lands surrounding Sespech are primarily grasslands that stretch north to the Vilhon Reach and south to the Nagaflow as it winds its way into the Chon-





dalwood. These are the official boundaries of the barony, although few patrols venture south of the Golden Road that leads to Innarlith.

Golden Plains

East of the Golden Road and up to the banks of the river Arran lie the Golden Plains. Named for the tall, golden strands of grass that rise from the ground, the Golden Plains blanket Sespech.

Naga Plains

Nestled between the Golden Road and the Nagawater, this strip of tall grass is the rumored home of either a guardian naga or a dark naga—it depends on which stories one believes. Travelers avoid these plains, even though no attack has ever been reported by such a creature.

The Nagaflow

This river pours in from the Vilhon and travels south past the free city of Nimpeth to the Nagawater itself. Most consider it nothing more than a barrier that keeps out kingdoms that would otherwise march in and claim the cities of Nimpeth, Lachom, and Elupar.

The southern end of the Nagaflow is the birthplace of the river's name. Naga who are born in the Nagawater frequently follow the river into the Chondalwood where they make their home in the dense forest.

Nagawater

The Nagawater is a large, fresh-water lake bordered by the Slithering Plains to the west and the Naga Plains to the east. The lake's name comes from the nagas that dwell in the southern portion of the lake.

The presence of the nagas does have a positive effect for the fishermen of Ormpetarr, since the creatures drive fish into the northern waters. A series of large buoys imbued with a *continual light* spell are secured to the lake floor about half way down the lake. This boundary serves to mark the territory of the nagas so fisherman do not accidentally stray too far south. No one is sure just how many of the water nagas live in the southern waters, but no more than six have ever been counted at one time. Since its virtually impossible to tell them apart—and no one is going to ask—their exact number will probably remain a mystery.



Serpents' Holding

West of the Nagawater lie the grasslands known as the Serpents' Holding. The area is known to contain a variety of spitting serpents that make safe travel through the area difficult. Player characters that travel through the grasslands encounter spitting snakes on a roll of 1 or 2 on a d8. Checks should be made every hour.

Spitting Snakes (1d4): AC 5; MV 12; HD 4+2; hp 28, 22, 18, 14; #AT 2; Dmg 1-3; SA spit poison; SZ M (8' long); ML average (9); Int. animal (1); AL N; XP 270.

Notes: SA—creature must make a successful saving throw versus poison at -1 or be incapacitated for 1d4 days.





Chondath

“Shining Arrabar is more than the nickname for the city of Arrabar, it is an attitude shared by its people. But those who crave to control other nations are most assuredly doomed to repeat their past mistakes.”

– Mitrol Kran, Sage of Alaghôn

Of all the nations in the Reach, Chondath is the most feared. Its current ruler, Lord Eles Wianar, has made his plans of expansion abundantly clear over the years. His political maneuverings have managed to keep the city-states of Hlath and Iljak under his control.

Chondath used to be much larger than it is today, not just in terms of controlling Sespech but in its reach south toward the Chondalwood. The cities of Timindar, Orbech, and Shamph used to be thriving centers of trade. Numerous battles with the Emerald Enclave, the elves, and giants of the Chondalwood have reduced Chondath to a glimmer of its former self. It is a matter that the current lord of Arrabar plans to remedy.

Politics

Lord Eles Wianar rules the kingdom of Chondath through power, deceit, and treachery. While the major cities are ruled by warlords of their own, Wianar keeps them at odds with one another through petty disputes, long-standing feuds, and trickery. He continues to receive their taxes and in turn provides them with fresh mercenary troops (to wage small battles against each other) and the permission to run their cities as they see fit.

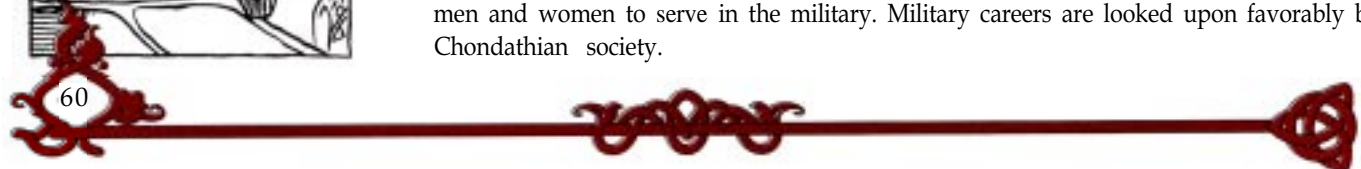
Arrabar is the capitol of Chondath. Many refer to it as “Shining Arrabar,” drawing forth memories of its past glory. Other city-states and nations refer to “Shining Arrabar” to signify a danger on the horizon. It is best to keep the two distinctions in mind when in polite company. Chondath is ruled by brute force. Currently, no one in the city has as much force at his command than Lord Wianar. His militia of more than 25,000 soldiers and cavalry controls the city of Arrabar. While many have referred to Arrabar as a sleepy town, these comments are again associated with its past glory. Today, Arrabar is a popular stop along the Reach.

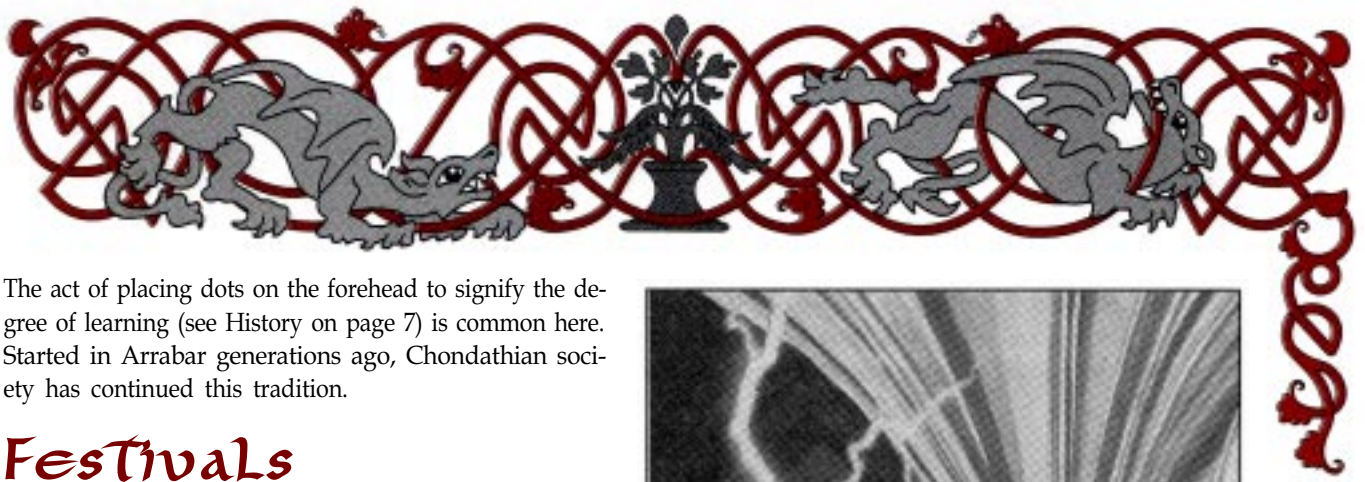
Eles has plans to control virtually all of the cities that Chondath lost after the Rotting War. The Emerald Enclave is a constant threat he has not yet figured out, but the remaining nations and city-states of the Reach are in known locations and easy to strike.

Customs

Magic is feared in Chondath. This belief is the result of the magic used during the Rotting War that killed hundreds on both sides. Executions of wizards are not uncommon in Arrabar and the other city-states of Chondath.

Similar to the military service in the city-states, Chondath requires its able-bodied men and women to serve in the military. Military careers are looked upon favorably by Chondathian society.





The act of placing dots on the forehead to signify the degree of learning (see History on page 7) is common here. Started in Arrabar generations ago, Chondathian society has continued this tradition.

Festivals

Nobles and other wealthy folk are expected to make a stop at the governor's palace in Arrabar whenever they come to the city. Wianar values his contacts with prominent people of the Reach and frequently bestows titles and honorarium upon them. Anything the Lord of Arrabar can do to make their stay comfortable is readily arranged.

In addition, Wianar throws a gala ball each year for the wealthy and politically important. He makes it a point to invite political enemies, such as Baron Thurgar Foeshmasher of Sespech and the rulers of the independent city-states. Most adversaries do not attend, but a few arrive unexpectedly and are treated as honored guests by the Lord of Chondath. Outsiders refer to this party as the "Night of Ghosts," since guests are terrified throughout the evening by actors costumed as ghosts and monsters. There have been some unfortunate "accidents" during the feast—more than one "honored guest" has lost his footing on the high parapets of the castle, plummeting to his death. Eles says he regrets these incidents, but accidents will happen.

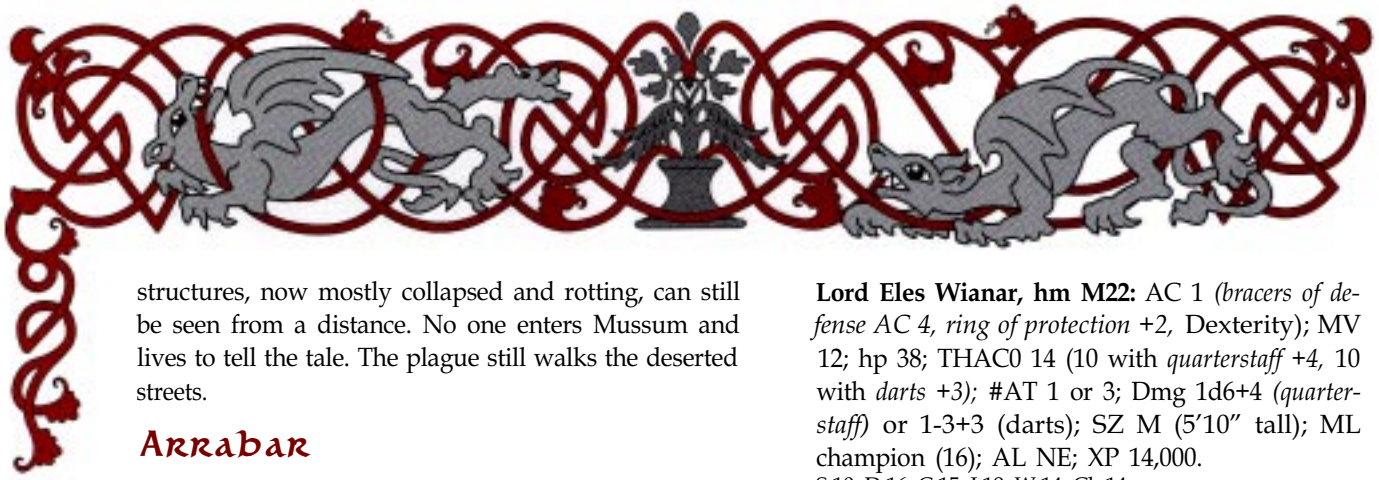
In addition to the Reign of Misrule, the citizens of Chondath celebrate the Night of Dancing. This festival, held during the dark hours of the first half of Flamerule, celebrates the new moon. It celebrates the darkness before the dawn and the return of Chondath to its former glory.

Cities

Many claim there are more settlements in Chondath's history than its present or future. The cities of both Orbech and Timindar were destroyed by the elves centuries ago. Only a few stone buildings are still standing and the ruins are generally avoided by all except the most desperate of adventurers. The ruins have been picked over by generations of treasure-seekers, and the rumors of ghosts walking the ruins have more than a legend behind them.

Mussum's buildings have decayed over the passing of time, but some magic still clings to the city. Wooden





structures, now mostly collapsed and rotting, can still be seen from a distance. No one enters Mussum and lives to tell the tale. The plague still walks the deserted streets.

Arrabar

The ancient capitol of Chondath is a sprawling port city neatly divided into various guild districts. To the west is the Port District, the north is the Warehouse District, the south is the Merchants District, the center is the Governor District, and the east is the Living District. Despite its age, Arrabar is well-maintained and clean.

The Generon is the ruling palace of the Lord of Arrabar, Eles Wianar. It is still a resplendent sight, gold and silver glittering off its domed rooftops. Unfortunately, it is the only thing left in Arrabar that still shines like in the past. Surrounding the Generon are the armed forces of the city, lying in wait like an angry mob or a faithful dog. The palace of the lord of the city is well defended. Along the outer walls of the city lie the various noble houses, their own armies protecting them. Six major houses still remain but none are powerful enough to challenge Wianar. The civil war that would erupt if such an attempt was made would tear Arrabar apart.

A few bars near the waterfront are of note. The first is the Seaside, an expensive and ritzy tavern that caters primarily to the rich and well-to-do. It is rumored to be owned by Eles Wianar, but no one knows this for certain. The Crying Claw is another establishment along the waterfront. It caters to the middle class, especially officers on ships and adventurers. It is run by a Jenis Glowarm, a half-elf female who is actually a Harper spy. She has only been living in the city a year but has done much to improve the quality of the Claw.

Lord Wianar is currently involved in a political chess game of sorts with the local Merchants Guild. This game exists in a variety of forms, but its motivation lies with the fact that Wianar is trying to install his son as the Guildmaster of Merchants in the city. The guild has always considered itself independent and is fighting like a banshee to name its own successor to head the guild.

Lord Eles Wianar, hm M22: AC 1 (*bracers of defense* AC 4, *ring of protection* +2, *Dexterity*); MV 12; hp 38; THAC0 14 (10 with *quarterstaff* +4, 10 with *darts* +3); #AT 1 or 3; Dmg 1d6+4 (*quarterstaff*) or 1-3+3 (*darts*); SZ M (5'10" tall); ML champion (16); AL NE; XP 14,000.

S 10, D 16, C 15, I 19, W 14, Ch 14.

Personality: Cold, calculating, devious.

Special Equipment: *ring of free action*, *robe of the archmagi*, *staff of thunder & lightning* (14 charges), *staff of the magi* (14 charges), two packs of *dust of disappearance*.

Memorized Spells: 1st – *burning hands*, *color spray*, *feather fall*, *magic missile*, *shield*; 2nd – *invisibility*, *Melf's acid arrow*, *mirror image*, *stinking cloud*, *web*; 3rd – *flame arrow*, *gust of wind*, *Melf's minute meteors*, *nondetection*, *slow*; 4th – *contagion*, *Evard's black tentacles*, *fire shield*, *ice storm*, *stoneskin*; 5th – *cone of cold*, *hold monster*, *monster summoning III*, *summon shadow*, *wall of force*; 6th – *chain lightning*, *death spell*, *guards & wards*, *flesh to stone*, *true seeing*; 7th – *power word stun*, *prismatic spray*, *teleport without error*; 8th – *maze*, *prismatic wall*, *symbol*, *trap the soul*; 9th – *meteor swarm*, *power word kill*, *time stop*.

Hlath

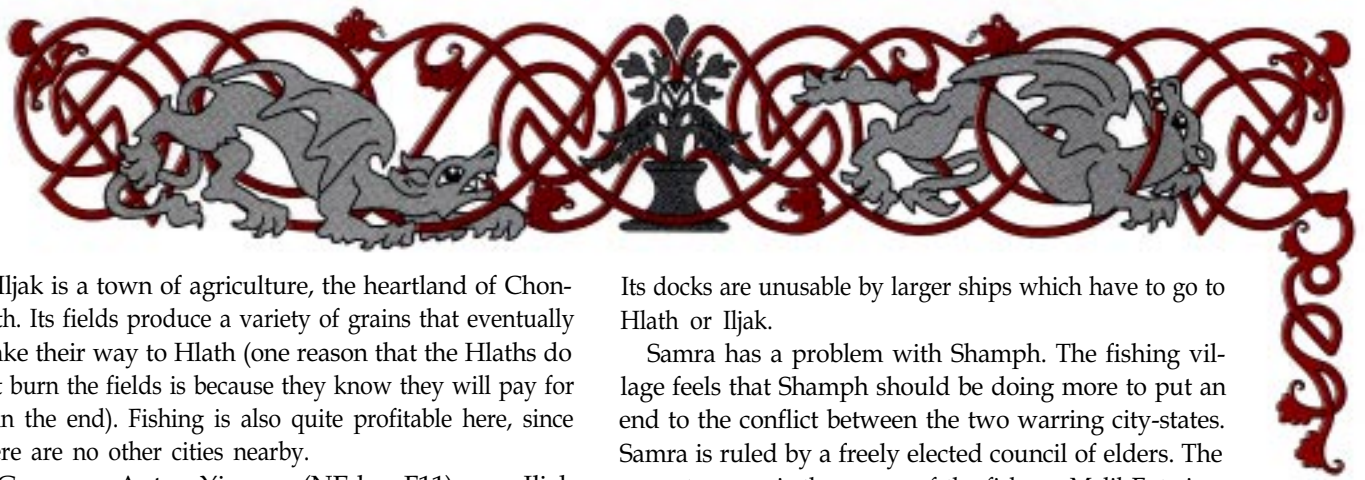
This northern-most city is ruled by Lord Darvis Shennelm (CN hm F12). It is a thriving port city that subsists off the goods produced from the Nunwood and the meager catches of its fishermen.

Hlath is currently involved in a series of raids against the city of Iljak. Both cities feel like the other is strangling the trade. Hlath would prefer that those who follow the Old Road from the south travel north to trade with them rather than east to visit the Iljakians. This bitter rivalry currently has patrols from both sides engaging in small-scale wars along the Emerald Corridor, the main trade road through Chondath. This war has done nothing but help Arrabar and Shamph, so both cities have stayed out of the conflict.

Hlath is a walled city, but the wall is in dire need of repair and chunks of mortar and rock have fallen outside the walls at various points. At one time there were signs that warned of falling rock, but Lord Shennelm ordered them taken down because he did not want to advertise that the city was falling apart.

Iljak

Once crippled and burned to the ground by competing cities, Iljak takes the conflict with Hlath very seriously. It watches the surrounding cities of Shamph and Samra with caution; it has no intention of getting caught unprepared a second time.



Iljak is a town of agriculture, the heartland of Chondath. Its fields produce a variety of grains that eventually make their way to Hlath (one reason that the Hlaths do not burn the fields is because they know they will pay for it in the end). Fishing is also quite profitable here, since there are no other cities nearby.

Governor Anton Yinoran (NE hm F11) runs Iljak from the Cascade, a building of white marble that serves as palace. His rule has been rather light as far as dictators go. Many in town believe him to be the unwilling puppet of Arrabar, an accusation he vehemently denies. Still, everything he tries to do to break away from Arrabar seems to strengthen the capitol's grasp on his city-state. He continues to pay taxes at this point because he cannot afford to fight a two-front war with Hlath on the north and Arrabar on the south.

Samra

This city has been described by more than one sage as "living on the good graces of Iljak." The unwallled city of Samra is nothing more than a small fishing community.

Its docks are unusable by larger ships which have to go to Hlath or Iljak.

Samra has a problem with Shamph. The fishing village feels that Shamph should be doing more to put an end to the conflict between the two warring city-states. Samra is ruled by a freely elected council of elders. The current mayor is the owner of the fishery, Malil Entwine. He's a quiet man, more prone to caustic comments than action, and he makes sure that Samra's tax money makes it to Arrabar at regularly scheduled times.

Shamph

The "Crossroads City" is in the best position of all the city-states. It completed its shield wall a few years ago, and trade from the Old Road and the Emerald Corridor continue to help the town to thrive.

Of course, Mayor Tian Redwon (LN hm T9) knows why the city is doing so well economically. The warring city-states convince many traders to do business with Shamph instead of traveling into the war zone. He likes the current situation between the city-states and would like to make certain the war continues.





Shamph has been plagued by sightings of spirits walking the Old Road. These stories are bad for business in Redwon's eyes, and he has sent groups of adventurers to scout the Old Road. So far nothing has turned up. Either they are just stories, or something is removing his investigators.

Geography

The waters of the Vilhon Reach hold a geography of their own. Many residents of Chondath have heard rumors of sunken galleys, lost gold, and sea monsters that roam the waterways. Such wrecks are said to be scattered throughout the Reach, buried by both time and water.

The Chondalwood

The Satyrwood forest is known to contain many different intelligent races who share only one common interest: keeping the humans out. As has been proven throughout the Reach's history, these forces have banded together to face a human threat. The retreat of the elves to Evermeet has changed things. The hidden city of Rucien-Xan is an unknown factor in this equation. The giants, centaurs, and other creatures cannot rely on a mythical group of elves to protect them. As a result, the wood giants and centaurs have banded together to keep an eye on the humans. Should an incursion occur, they will be ready.

The satyrs control the northern sections of the Chondalwood, keeping their distance from the human settlements and ruins of the north. They also patrol the Old Road, making sure that caravans do not pause too long on the roadway by scaring them away with ghoulish sounds, the pounding of hooves during the night, and other non-violent actions.

The giants to the south have only the small village of Elbulder to contend with. While they watch Elbulder closely, it seems there is at least one human city that understands its role in the environment. Still, the races of the forest watch and wait. They know the day is coming when the Enclave will have its own well-being to look after. When that happens, they will be ready.



The Vilhon Reach

Player's Guide

by Jim Butler

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INTRODUCTION

The wars of the Vilhon Reach have taught both man and elf the fortune and folly of conflict. They have also taught grand Faerûn that the cost of war exceeds the blood spilled on the battlefield.

— Miritol Kran, Sage of Alaghôn



It's a welcome day when adventurers take the time to investigate the history behind the ancient ruins and old cities they plan to visit. Stumbling from one tomb to the next may make for some interesting stories, but those tales are only written by those whom Tymora favors most. Most ill-prepared explorers simply wind up in the stomach of some fierce beast, locked away in a small town, or served as the main dish in the City of Serpents.

Like other areas in the northlands, the Vilhon Reach is a land rich in history. The regional wars, plagues, and natural disasters in the Reach helped shape its people. Understanding these events allows adventurers to better relate to people they meet along roads and in the cities—grizzled old traders and slick politicians that always seem to have the information you need.

Of course, you're more than welcome to run around the countryside without learning the customs of the Reach. You might get lucky and become the next Shinthala Deepcrest or Miritol Kran. Of course, you might just as easily find yourself in the clutches of an evil monster that a more learned person would have avoided.

About This Book

This is the player's reference for adventuring in the Vilhon. It contains information about the vast area south of the Sea of Fallen Stars. This reference is also intended for the Dungeon Master. Some information presented in this reference may be completely false, and DMs are encouraged to twist the material presented to fit their own campaigns.

For more information on the Vilhon Reach, see the following resources:

- For information on Turmish, see the *Everwinking Eye* columns in *POLYHEDRON® Newszine* (issues 96, 98, 101, 103-107)
- For information on various mercenary companies in the Reach, refer to *Gold & Glory* (FR15)
- For details on past wars in the region, see *Swords of the Iron Legion* (I 14)
- For a general overview of the Reach, see the *FORGOTTEN REALMS® Campaign Setting*

This book is divided into sections outlining the religions, the people, the political forces, the countries and the independent city-states of the region.





Forces at Work

No major activity within the Reach goes on without at least the tacit approval of the Emerald Enclave. That group of green-thumbed peace keepers is the biggest threat to business and well-being that exists in the Reach. Not that I, personally, mind them, of course.

– Erixal the Black, Wizard of Alaghôn



ot all of the forces at work in the Reach are organizations like the Harpers. My studies of this land showed me the nature of power in the Vilhon. Political power is held in the usual places as well as in the hands of religious forces.

By now I suppose you're sitting back in your chair wondering who I am. My name is Adamar Session. I'm a bard from Starmantle. I live close enough to the Reach to know something about it, but not close enough to compromise my views. I began my adventuring career when I was only 16. Now I'm 29 and teach history at the college in Starmantle. Adventuring was good while it lasted, but I grew tired of running from powerful monsters and watching friends die from their injuries or some strange disease. In those 12 years of adventuring, I traveled through virtually every part of the Vilhon.

Weather

If you're looking for snow-swept peaks or valleys glittering with frost on early mornings, you've come to the wrong place. Snow is rare here, though not unheard of. Most of the time the temperature stays in a comfortable range, only getting close to freezing in the deep of winter. The humidity is high but not as unbearable as the Jungles of Chult to the south.

The high humidity makes wearing full and field-plate armor unbearable. The only ones I've seen wear that sort of finery are priests of Tempus. They must be running on pure faith to be able to stand the heat. I don't think I need to discuss how quickly metal armor rusts if not properly cared for in this weather.

The Eyes of Silvanus

The first thing that greets travelers in the Vilhon are the twin islands of Ilighôn and Wavecrest, known as the "Eyes of Silvanus." Ship captains sail between them through the Strait of Silvanus to enter the heart of the Vilhon. Entering the Vilhon through Farshore Straits south of Ilighôn or the Paddle Straits south of Wavecrest is virtually unheard of. Few, except the most desperate of captains, traverse those dangerous, rock-filled waters.

The isle of Wavecrest is nothing but jungle. When I first heard about it, I tried to assemble my friends to go exploring. It took me a long time to convince them there was a reason for us to go there. Everyone we met warned us of an evil creature that roamed the island, slaying animals and men.





I've never been to the Jungles of Chult, but I'd guess that Wavecrest is pretty similar. We arrived in early summer. Insects swarmed around us in a haze. The mosquitoes were the size of stirges. We hacked through the dense forest for more than two days, receiving for our efforts little more than insect stings. I hate to stress the mosquito problem, but I believe those little pests drew more blood from me than all the swords in all the fights I've ever fought.

Each evening, our small band of five built a fire and I told them the stories of Captain Hanshet, the pirate captain rumored to have buried his treasure on the island near a large grove of petrified briars. If the legends are true, he buried more than 1,000 bars of gold on the island. We didn't find more than a handful of copper for our efforts on Wavecrest. But we did find more trouble than we could handle.

As we drew close to the center of the island, we found a large cave made from broken trees and shrubs. Inside, we found some copper trinkets. As we examined our find, we heard a low growling behind us. Anathet, our fighter, drew his sword to block the first savage attack of the jaguar-like creature that leapt at him. It was nearly seven feet tall at the shoulder. Its green-black skin shimmered in the half-light of jungle. One savage claw knocked Anathet to the ground. Blood poured from a gash on his head and we began to worry about our friend.

We circled away from the cave to our comrade. The creature backed into its home. Emerald eyes watched us leave from the darkness. We stumbled through the forest for hours until we reached our row boat. We paddled into the night, as Dwin, a priest of Tymora, ministered to Anathet. I cursed myself for bringing my friends into danger, but no one blamed me for what had happened. "Fortune favors the bold," commented Dwin. There was little fortune that day.

Ilighôn was nothing like Wavecrest. From a distance, the forests of Ilighôn rose majestically from the surface of the island. Light fell easily through its trees. This island was a bright, sunny place. Getting to the island was no easy task. A dangerous reef called Eldath's Ring circles Ilighôn, allowing entrance in only one spot. The currents are dangerous and the captain told us that many ships had been lost coming into the port city of Sapra.

No sooner had the captain spoken those words when a strong current grabbed the ship. The captain barked

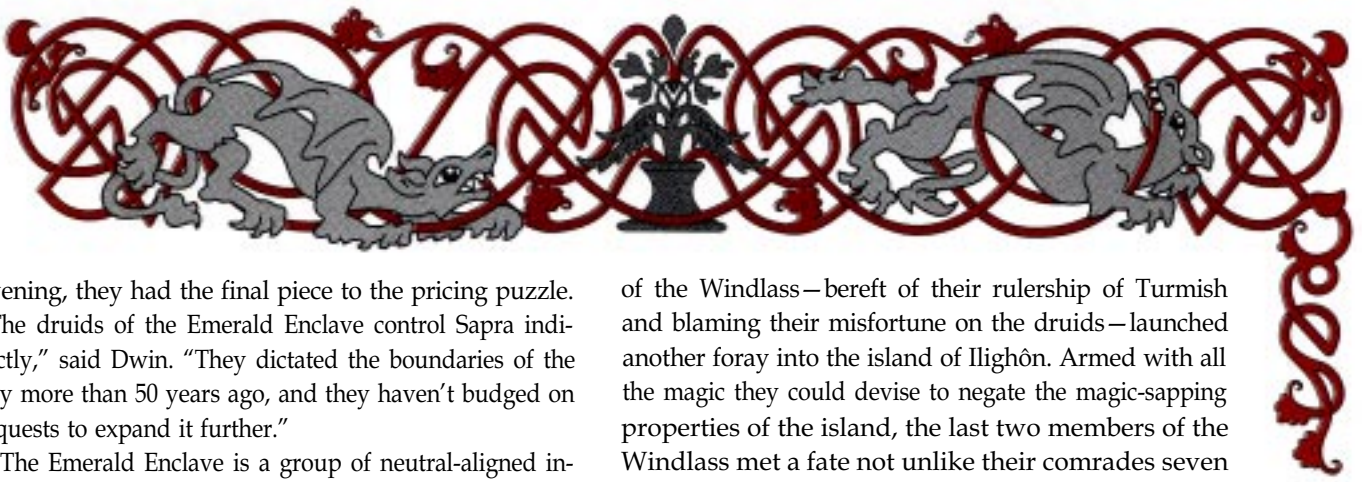
orders, trimming the sail, desperately trying to stop the ship from slamming into the reef. The ship responded sluggishly. I was sure we were doomed. I glanced across the water, wondering if I could swim to the shore. It was a few miles away, but the waters were calm. Suddenly, the ship stopped, dead in the water. Then it reversed its course, slowly moving through the opening. No one was at the helm. I looked at the captain and he smiled. "Eldath's my first mate," he said sincerely. He walked over, took the wheel, and steered us into the city of Sapra.

Dwin later told me the source of our luck at the reef. "Elementals," she said, "seized the ship and took us through the channel. I've never seen anything like it." I wasn't sure if she contributed our luck to the aid of Tymora or some other power, but I was sure that the gods were watching us that day.

Sapra is the cleanest town I've ever seen—and the most expensive. The inn where we stayed, a very nice tavern by the name of the Dazzling Dolphin, charged ten times the normal rate. And I noticed the patrons didn't tip any better for my music than those back in Starmantle. During the day, I noticed a lot of trading in the city. Anything that couldn't be grown on Ilighôn was in high demand. I also overheard some bartering for someone's house. The price they offered was so outrageous that I followed the owner back to his home to take a look at this mansion.

The man's house was nice, but quite small, probably less than 1,000 square feet. I couldn't imagine anyone paying that much for a house. Certainly the rich man from Alaghôn who made the offer could build his own, even if he had to hire a ship to bring wood. I decided to do some investigating. The first place I looked was the city hall. What I found there was shocking—virtually every home sold in the last ten years had gone for outlandish prices. I also found the cause—no new building permits had been issued for that same amount of time. But, I still wondered why.

Part of the puzzle was solved when Sarun, our wizard, told us he wanted to leave the island and never return. I dragged him into a nearby bar and bought him a drink to get some information out of him. "None of my magic works!" he said in a hushed whisper. "I'm powerless here, and I feel like people are watching me," he continued. I was powerless to stop him from taking the next ship bound for Alaghôn. When I rejoined the others that



evening, they had the final piece to the pricing puzzle. “The druids of the Emerald Enclave control Sapra indirectly,” said Dwin. “They dictated the boundaries of the city more than 50 years ago, and they haven’t budged on requests to expand it further.”

The Emerald Enclave is a group of neutral-aligned individuals who seek to protect the environment of the Vilhon Reach. Over the years, they’ve proven they are very effective. I’ve made it a point to learn everything I can about them.

In 374 DR, the church of Silvanus built a shrine: the House of Silvanus, also known as the Oakenhome. The church was worried about the large amount of ship traffic coming into and out of the Vilhon. They waited and watched. In 717 DR, known as the Year of the Druids’ Wrath, the forces of Silvanus joined to form the Emerald Enclave. They threw themselves at the mightiest nation in the area, Turmish. At this point Turmish was ruled by a governing body of wizards known as the Windlass. But the Enclave didn’t go after them in Alaghôn. The druids attacked them where they were strong and the wizards weak.

Woodcutting camps, cities that dumped their waste into the rivers, wizards that polluted nearby lakes and pools with their foul magic while researching new spells—these were the targets of the Enclave. Each strike by the druids was precise and deadly. The Windlass responded by ordering the Turmish army to descend on the druids’ strongholds in the Gulthmere Forest and on Ilighôn. This attack was a terrible mistake for the Windlass. The army that headed north into the Gulthmere met a waiting force of druids and giants. They were routed and headed back home.

The force that went to Ilighôn was better prepared. A force of 500 men—more than 25 times the number of druids on the island—led an assault against the leaders of the Enclave. The wizards learned too late that their magic was useless; even their powerful *contingency* spells failed them. The army that marched with them saw the power of the druidic magic as the wizards leading them were killed.

The attack against Cedarsproke convinced the church of Silvanus to remove themselves from the affairs of the Enclave. A powerful hierophant took up leadership of the Enclave and established its headquarters on Ilighôn. Seven years later, the two remaining members

of the Windlass—bereft of their rulership of Turmish and blaming their misfortune on the druids—launched another foray into the island of Ilighôn. Armed with all the magic they could devise to negate the magic-sapping properties of the island, the last two members of the Windlass met a fate not unlike their comrades seven years earlier. Their magical counter-spells proved totally ineffective.

The Emerald Enclave has established a simple pattern to their actions. First, they issue a warning to those responsible for acts against the environment. If this warning is refused or ignored, the Enclave acts to remedy the situation on its own, using any means possible. One example of this enforcement is Ironcloak. Hundreds of years ago, this Turmish settlement was a thriving hub of lumber activity. Lord Ironcloak, a powerful noble and ruler of the city, had been ruthless with nature, chopping down trees at an alarming rate and generally doing as he wished to make his fortune.

The druids sent an emissary to the lord to warn him to cease his activities or face retribution from the Enclave. Lord Ironcloak killed the messenger and hired a large





band of mercenaries to guard his city. The druids sent a message to Ironcloak—this time in the form of numerous arrows with attached messages—stating that the town would be destroyed at first light of the following day. The lord laughed at the druids' threats and waited. When morning arrived, he chuckled, thinking he had won. Suddenly, earth elementals rose from the earth and started killing everyone in sight. As the lord rushed to join the battle, the river itself rose up from its banks and rushed over the city, sweeping up buildings and men. Ironcloak and his fortune disappeared from Turmish.

From time to time, adventuring companies have come across the ruins of Ironcloak, but no one has ever found the lord's cache of gold, silver, and gems. Some say it lies hidden within the nearby Alaoreum River; others think Silvanus claimed it as a sacrifice. I certainly never found it and I looked.

During my research of the Enclave, I've discovered the members are more than just druids. Fighters, bards, thieves, and even wizards serve the Enclave. There aren't any special powers mystically gained by becoming a member. In fact, most would say that joining is more of a burden than a boon. In order to join the Enclave, you must perform a duty that proves your commitment to preserving nature. The Enclave checks all candidates thoroughly before acceptance. Sometimes, they assign small tasks to a candidate before allowing them to join.

Little is known about how the Enclave is organized. The leaders are known as the Elder Circle. This group consists of three powerful individuals who direct the Enclave's activities and deal with powerful opposition. The head of the Elder Circle is Shinthala Deepcrest, a human female of about 40 winters (I'm sure she's much older than this, but she looks about 40). Many years ago, she lead the church of Silvanus as its Grand Druid. I had the opportunity to visit Cedarsproke and look through the archives concerning her tenure as Grand Druid. I found the following entry, written by Shinthala:

I find it ironic that the people of the Vilhon continue to poison their own farms, streams, and air for the sake of profit. The destruction caused by these people goes far beyond the borders of the Vilhon, but this is my home. I find my actions limited by my status of Grand Druid, and look forward to the time when I can find a suitable replacement. Then, I will finally be able to make a difference.

Shinthala is the grand cabal of the Enclave, the highest-ranking position in the organization. She's assisted by two very powerful people: the Lady Shadowmoon and Ashenford Torinbow.

Lady Shadowmoon is the most mysterious member of the Elder Circle. She is very reclusive—even more so than Shinthala. This shyness might have something to do with the fact that she's an elf and a hierophant druid. I'm not aware of an elfish druid appearing anywhere in Toril's history before now. It's rumored that Lady Shadowmoon resides in the Chondalwood as its guardian. While there's no proof that she's some faerie creature sent to guard the woods, it's difficult to discount the fact that she's an enigma in Faerûn.

The final member of the Elder Circle is Ashenford Torinbow. He is the most vocal and easy to find member of the Enclave, serving as its mouthpiece and diplomatic envoy to the various Vilhon Reach nations. Ashenford is a half-elf male of about 60 winters. I've heard rumors that he was formerly a Harper agent, serving in the Daggersdale area before his reassignment to the Reach. Ashenford is adamant in claiming that he is not associated with the Harpers, but not everyone believes him. Some think that since he's a bard, he must be a Harper. Hrrmph—I'm a bard, and I'm not a Harper.

Many priestly members of the Enclave have spells that thwart or manipulate the spells of wizards. Attempts to use these spells by other faiths—even from scrolls—have proven fruitless. These special blessings are reserved for the churches of Eldath and Silvanus.

Other Organizations

Of course, the Emerald Enclave is not the only force in the Reach, even if it is the most far-reaching. I've heard talk of Red Wizards, Zhentarim spies, and even Harpers. Most of the stories I've heard center around members of those groups who were killed by the Enclave because of their activities. Still, I'm sure there are agents from these organizations operating in the various cities and city-states. They must walk very softly and keep in mind that the squirrel watching them from the nearby branch might be a shape-changed druid from the Enclave. Identifying yourself as a Harper will surely incur the wrath of the Enclave as if you were a Red Wizard in Shadowdale.





Religion

I've seen a variety of religions practiced in the Reach, from the wizards of Azuth to the fanatics of Umberlee. All religions exist in the Reach to one extent or another, if you know where to look. If you're looking for a priestess of Umberlee, you should probably start on the docks of a major shipping port. Likewise, if you're looking for a priest of Azuth, it would not be wise to ask the superstitious folk of Chondath if they've seen a wizard wandering around.

Many travelers ask me if the religious outlook in the Reach is, in general, good or evil. The answer I give is neither good nor evil. The Reach has elements of both. Like the Enclave, most folk in the Reach are neither fanatical do-gooders nor tyrannical servants of evil. There are nine major faiths found throughout the Reach. This Circle of Nine has temples and shrines throughout the Vilhon. Like all things, it's just a matter of knowing where to look.

Eldath

I've always considered Eldath to be somewhat out of place in the Reach. Teaching your followers to shy away from violence—to the point of not defending yourself when attacked—is suicide in the warlike atmosphere of most countries. Still, many people have grown tired of the constant fighting and bickering between the various nations and city-states. It is from these people that the Goddess of the Shining Waters draws her faithful.

I've always been somewhat inquisitive when it comes to religion, dabbling in this and that to see what I liked and disliked. So, when I was in the area, I visited Eldath's main temple in Cedarsproke. The temple was certainly not what I expected. At first I thought I had gone to a simple shrine instead of the main temple. The temple was open on all sides with a roof composed mostly of glass. At the far end of the temple, in front of a bubbling pool of water, stood the leader of the church, Shemratha Callingowl. Her voice rang out across the temple as she preached of nonviolence and self-awareness. At the close of the services, Shemratha called for those who had made peace with themselves to come forward and dispose of their weapons in the pool. Those who did so received a wooden holy symbol of the

church. I left with my weapons, deciding that Eldath was not the right church for me.

Helm

Most of the scholarly papers I've read on Helm indicate that he has lost power since the Time of Troubles. Certainly, those who write such dribble have not visited the Reach in some time. Most of Helm's temples and shrines lie on the outskirts of the Reach. Temples are found in Alaghôn, Reth and Lheshayl. Shrines are found in Surkh, the dwarven city of Ironfang, and Telpir. Where are the other shrines and temples, you ask? Wherever there is a reason to watch.

Lliira

One of the strangest phenomenon in the Reach is the new interest in Lliira, Our Lady of Joy. While Lliira was always popular in the Reach due to her tie with festivals, the death of Waukeen during the Time of Troubles truly revitalized her religion, especially in Turmish. Recently,





the wealthy merchants of Turmish have been turning to Lliira. This attention has done a great deal of good for her church, both in increasing its coffers and in providing the church with a foundation of acceptance by others within the Reach. There are still those who view Lliira and her followers as nothing but partiers and fools. It will probably be many years before she is truly accepted as a legitimate religion, but she is well on her way to acceptance.

The main temple of the Lliira religion in Turmish is in Gildenglade. The church is led by the Lady Morintar, an elf who has not yet followed her brothers and sisters to Evermeet. Additional temples exist in Arrabar and Alaghôn and there are rumors of one in Surkh.

Malar

While some visitors to the Reach know Malar by his more formal name, the locals simply call him "the Stalker." He's the regional lord of a variety of goblinoid tribes, especially those in the Orsraun Mountains. A popular insult is calling someone as "corrupt as the Stalker." This is a common curse between merchants.



The followers of the Stalker are most dangerous during the times of festival, especially during the Feast of the Moon. This festival is a time when lovers meet in secluded hideaways and many newly married couples consummate their marriages. This opportunity is the sort of thing that Malar loves. His followers hunt down and kill couples during these festivals. This gruesome practice has led militias to patrol the countryside, hunting the followers of the Stalker. Festivals are not nearly the care-free events that they once were.

A ragtag collection of humans, known as the Company of the Hunt, serve Malar in the Winterwood. This band of outlaws is led by a cold and calculating human named Jaras Silverblood. He's wanted for murder in the city of Alaghôn. Last time I checked, there was a reward of 10,000 gold pieces for his capture, dead or alive.

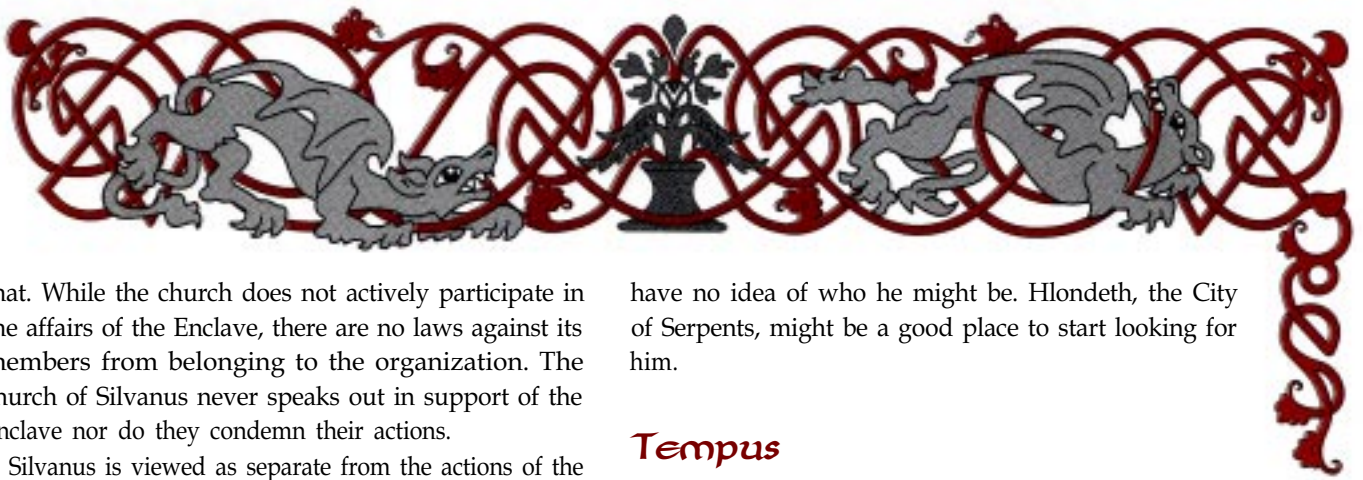
Nobanion

The Lion God of Gulthmere has become something of a regional legend since the Time of Troubles. Stories claim the Emerald Enclave stood by him during his battle with Malar, driving that fell power from the area. Worship of Nobanion is scattered in the Reach. I'm convinced he draws his power from the various animals that exist here. Perhaps that's why the Emerald Enclave is against over-hunting. In any event, I've heard tales of a village named Gurnth deep within the Gulthmere forest. The people there are said to live like wild animals, subject to the "only the strong survive" law of nature laid down long ago. Near this village is the Machran Spire, a rumored holy place of the Nobanion religion.

If you're interested in the religion of the Lion God of Gulthmere, I recommend paying the wemics of the Shining Plains a visit. I'm sure they are somehow connected with Nobanion. Good luck.

Silvanus

Hundreds of years ago, the utterance of the name of Silvanus brought up images of the activity of the Emerald Enclave. Today, that is no longer the case. Any priest of the religion will clearly inform you that the hierophants of the Enclave are totally outside of the control of the church. Of course, anyone who researches deeper into this matter will discover that it's not quite as simple as



that. While the church does not actively participate in the affairs of the Enclave, there are no laws against its members from belonging to the organization. The church of Silvanus never speaks out in support of the Enclave nor do they condemn their actions.

Silvanus is viewed as separate from the actions of the Emerald Enclave in the Reach. His priests can be found in virtually every city and town, serving as advisors to the local government on how to prevent outbreaks of plague. They are an integral part of the government in many areas. Some priests hold a great deal of political clout. The most prominent temple in the region is the Oakenhall, also known as the House of Silvanus, on the island of Ilighôn. Nearly every major city in the Reach has a temple to Silvanus, and shrines exist everywhere. If you're trying to escape the influence of Silvanus, I recommend Anauroch or perhaps the Jungles of Chult.

Talos

At the heart of every disaster in the Reach, there's a follower of Talos celebrating—or perhaps causing it. The Destroyer's name is cursed each time misfortune rears its head. Ironically, the followers of Talos are responsible for very few of the major disasters that have rocked the Reach. The eruption of a volcano could more easily be blamed on Silvanus than Talos, but the followers of the Destroyer are always the first to claim responsibility for such an occurrence. Needless to say, this habit has done little to endear them to the general population.

Just as some nations believe that crossing the path of a black cat or breaking a mirror brings bad luck, the people of the Reach believe a follower of Talos heralds doom and destruction. It's not uncommon for a mob to form and chase a follower of Talos out of a town or village. Open worship of Talos is frowned upon. After all, if a worshiper of Talos is bad luck, who knows what cataclysm would strike if you had an entire congregation of them. As a result, the number of temples dedicated to the Destroyer is small. Hlondeth has a temple, but the government of the city takes great delight in tormenting them. The temple is located on the slopes of Mount Ugruth, the semi-active volcano near Hlondeth.

I've heard rumors that a powerful Stormlord runs the religion from the temple at Mount Ugruth, but I

have no idea of who he might be. Hlondeth, the City of Serpents, might be a good place to start looking for him.

Tempus

Just as Silvanus is the patron of the common man, Tempus is the patron of warriors. His following is strong in the southern areas of the Reach, particularly the nations of Chondath and Sespech.

Tempus's influence can be seen in Arrabar and Sespech where the generals in each city have been trying to incite their people to war. I've heard rumors that general Vandemar Cordwin of Arrabar wants revenge from Baron Thuragar Foesmasher of Sespech. Apparently the baron's daughter refused the advances of his eldest son, Ridimere. General Clas Denwith, who runs the church in Ormpetarr in Sespech, has responded to the verbal assaults from Vandemar with some saber-rattling of his own. No confrontations have occurred yet, but the sweet smell of battle is in the air.

Tyr

The followers of the god of justice have their hands full in the Reach. Between the brutal actions of Malar and the atrocities of Talos, those that serve Tyr find themselves on a journey with no end in sight.

Numerous paladins have been sent to track down and bring Jaras Silverblood to justice, but so far none have been successful. Instead, the broken bodies of the paladins have been delivered to the church's main temple at Alaghôn. It's rumored that the church has worked to increase the reward offered by the government for Jaras's capture, but the church is silent about any affairs it might have with the government of Turmish. Fortunately, the church has a true crusader leading it against the forces of darkness. Denton Crimsguard, a determined and self-sacrificing man, has continued to send adventuring parties out to bring Jaras to justice. He even asked our group to search out Jaras when we were there, but I had better things to do than work for the church. I sat through one of Denton's services in Alaghôn. I noted, with some amusement, that Denton always referred to the followers of Talos and Malar as "cultists" and their leaders as "cheap puppets."



Nonhumans

Visitors to the Reach are always amazed by how few nonhumans they see. As I've said before, this is simply a matter of knowing where to look. Elves, gnomes, dwarves, halflings, and half-elves all exist in the Vilhon.

Dwarves

The only real stronghold of dwarves in the Reach is the sheltered city of Ironfang in the mountains of the Alaoreum. They have reason to be distrustful of the humans of the area. In 1220 DR, the warlord who controlled Turmish, Sjorn Sendrith, launched a military campaign against the dwarves in an attempt to take their stockpile of gold and weapons. For 20 years, dwarves and humans battled against each other. Finally, the dwarves brought the mountain over their stronghold down upon themselves, sealing out the humans. Unfortunately, that signaled the beginning of the Campaign of Darkness, the dwarven war against

the duergar. For 50 years, the dwarves battled their dark cousins, finally driving them back. The losses of the dwarves were hard-felt. They resented the actions of the humans, blaming them for the loss of so many of their people.

Today, the dwarves have an established trade with Turmish and a few other traders who travel from Telpir. They are still distrustful of humans; many of the dwarves still remember the bloody conflicts with Turmish. Conflicts with both the duergar and orcs are not uncommon.

The Elves

Turmish is home to most of the elves in the Reach. I have heard rumors that elves still live in the mythical city of Rucien-Xan, but if that city exists, my friends and I never found it—and we looked for months.

Xorhun and Gildenglade are popular spots for the elves. Because of its strange effect on increasing the birth rate among some races, Xorhun is a community composed almost entirely of elves. I'm still convinced the elves in the Reach will tire of humans and join the rest of their race at Evermeet. Still, stories continue to surface regarding that mythical city of elves living deep within the Chondalwood. If the elves are there, I wonder what they're doing.

The Other Folk

The gnomes, halflings, and half-elves of the Vilhon don't have a home of their own, but they're common enough in the larger cities of Turmish.

Nonthal and Xorhun have significant numbers of gnomes; Hlondeth, Gildenglade, and Alaghôn have a number of halflings; and half-elves can be found in most cities.





Turmish

The hordes of Turmish are as numerous as the waves upon the Inner Sea.

– Popular Starmantle Saying



any folk refer to the “hordes of Turmish” when talking about large numbers of people. Turmish certainly has a lot of people, both at home and abroad. There are a lot of mercenary companies that call Turmish home, but the real business of Turmish is business. The government of Turmish concentrates on the economy and its self-defense; it hasn’t waged war in hundreds of years.

Alaghôn was the first city established in the Reach around -37 DR. Alaghôn quickly evolved into a major trading center on the Inner Sea. Long before there was a nation of Turmish, Alaghôn stood on the shores of the Sea of Fallen Stars. It wasn’t until 132 DR, when Dempster Turmish declared himself the mayor of Alaghôn, that the nation of Turmish began to take shape. Dempster commanded a large force of mercenaries whose services he sold to the highest bidder. Thus, when he declared himself mayor, his forces were quite prepared for the brief civil war that erupted. By 145 DR, Dempster Turmish had taken control of the smaller cities and villages in Alaghôn. Then he reached the city of Hlondeth.

Although a capable military leader, the city of Hlondeth proved outside of Dempster’s grasp. Year after year, he led his army to its gates, and year after year, he was turned back. Hlondeth never fell to the Alaghônian army. In 150 DR, Dempster Turmish died in his sleep. His wife, Florentine Turmish, was much more interested in profit than engaging her forces on some distant battlefield. Unfortunately, she was assassinated in 154 DR. Her death led to an internal struggle for control of Turmish that lasted for more than 100 years.

The merchant houses of Alaghôn united behind the rule of Alesam Mischwin just in time to face an attacking force from Chondath in 270 DR. The encounter between the two armies became known as the Stalemate because neither side could gather enough strength to defeat the other. In 352 DR, a great fire swept through the shipyards and granaries of Alaghôn, crippling its naval capabilities and causing widespread famine. The noble houses argued over who would pay for the damages. Pirating activities flourished in the Inner Sea.

Around 400 DR, Turmish found itself fighting small bands of orcs and goblins that were trying to establish territories within Turmish’s borders. This surge in fighting foreshadowed the horrible War of 1512, when orcs from the Candlekairn clan attacked from the Orsraun Mountains, destroying three cities.

The orcs had reportedly taken great amounts of treasure to their home in the Orsraun, but the eruption of Mt. Andrus in 517 made any treasure impossible to recover. To this day, no one knows what happened to that gold.

The nation of Turmish started to have problems with the Emerald Enclave in 552. These confrontations erupted into a full-scale armed conflict in 717 DR, the Year of the Druids’ Wrath. Turmish, now governed by a group of wizards known as the Windlass, hurled its army at the Enclave. They were completely destroyed. For the next 200 years, the various merchant houses ruled Turmish.





In 992 DR, a powerful military leader took control of Turmish and built it into a regional power, in both naval and military strength. This concentration on military strength allowed Turmish to flourish during the Rage of Dragons in 1018. The population of Turmish began to rise sharply. In 1220, Warlord Sjorn Sendreth began a war against the dwarves of Ironfang. This 20 year battle sapped the countries resources. Sjorn Sendreth sent out treasure parties to add more funds to the country's coffers.

One such treasure party brought back mountains of gold to the capital city. Unfortunately, it also brought back the venerable blue dragon Anaglathos, who killed Sendreth and established his own rule of Turmish. All who opposed the blue wyrm were killed or charmed into obedience—much more of the former than the latter. It became the Time of the Wyrms.

Turmish's rebellion was led by a young paladin by the name of Corwin Freas, who fought Anaglathos to the death in the city of Alaghôn. The people wanted Corwin to become their ruler, but the paladin only ruled for one year before turning over control of the country to the Assembly of Stars. He quietly stepped into oblivion, living the quiet and sheltered life of a hero until his assassination in 1254, the Year of the Silent Steel.

The Plague of Dragons arrived at Alaghôn in 1317, but it was a short-lived plague that killed relatively few people. It seemed that Turmish had finally evolved into a democracy that could effectively rule and protect its citizens.

Politics

The current ruler of Turmish is Lord Herengar. He is a tall man who was in his early 30s at the time we met, broad-shouldered and willful. He seemed a very likable sort, but most successful politicians are. I've always considered the politics in Turmish to be somewhat unique. I would never have considered getting an enemy elected into the Assembly of Stars as an effective business tactic. In Turmish, that sort of thing happens all the time.

My friends and I were traveling through Turmish a few months before a big election. Never before have I

seen so many compliments bestowed upon so many men. It seemed to be a sort of reverse popularity contest, with one man's charismatic nature serving to get another elected to a post he did not want.

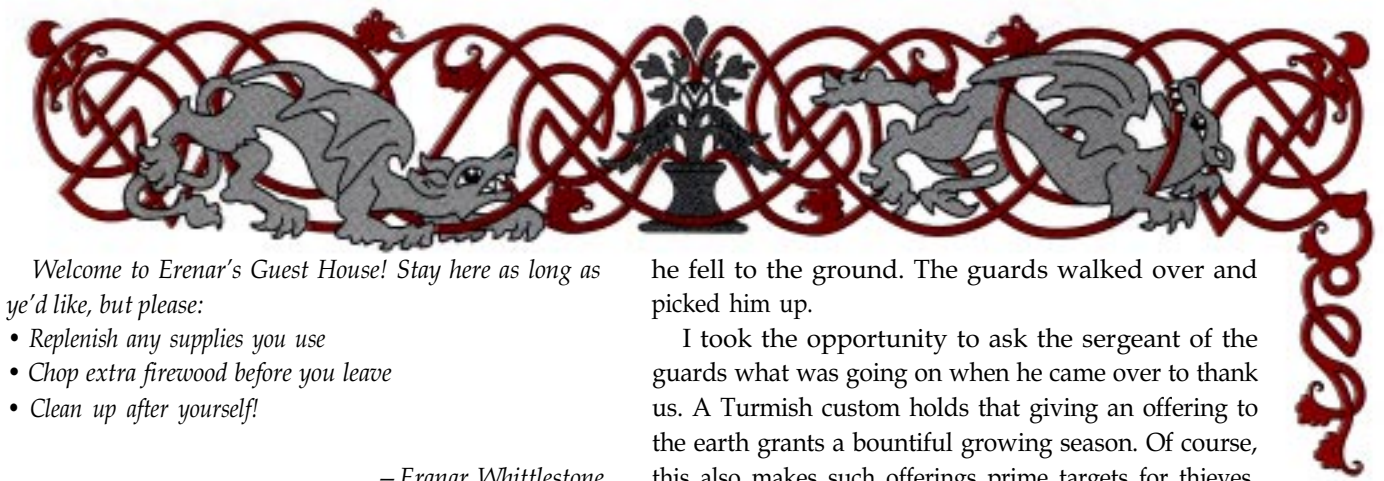
There isn't a separate election for the lord of Turmish. That position is decided by the Assembly of Stars. Lord Herengar is elected by the Assembly each term. It's the strangest, most unorthodox political system I've ever seen.

Customs

I learned years ago that knowing what to do and what not to do can save you a great deal of grief. For example, the people of Turmish, and in all of the Reach, wear dots on their foreheads to indicate the degree of learning they've obtained. One dot means you can read, two means you can write, and three that you practice magic.

When my friends and I arrived in Turmish I wondered why merchants spoke so slowly and loudly to me. I figured that I'd just had the misfortune to keep running into Turmish's rudest merchants. I was admiring a new wineskin at the local bazaar when the shop owner approached me. "Two silver," he said loudly, one hand holding up two fingers and the other pointing to a silvered tooth. "You give me two silver, and I give you the wineskin." I resisted the urge to strike him, not knowing what the penalty was for striking a merchant in Alaghôn. He noticed my angry look and a smile stretched across his face. He started laughing. "You're not from around here, are you?" he asked. Then he told me the custom of the dots, selling me some colored inks so I could paint my forehead.

You'll also find that lodging in Turmish is more pleasant than other areas. The Turmish have a custom of building guest houses on their properties. These little cabins are equipped with wood and food and are generally well maintained by their owners. We stumbled across one in the middle of a blinding rain storm. The trail we were following had turned into a river of mud, and we were drenched to our breeches in the cold fall shower. As we ran up to the porch of a cabin to ask for shelter from the storm, I noticed a sign:



Welcome to Erenar's Guest House! Stay here as long as ye'd like, but please:

- Replenish any supplies you use
- Chop extra firewood before you leave
- Clean up after yourself!

—Erenar Whittlestone

As we continued our travels through Turmish, we started looking for these guest houses. We were never disappointed. Typically, we passed three or four a day. They became our favorite rest stops. One time, we came across one of the owners and helped him repair some damages a previous tenant had caused. Arshen, the owner, was an older man who was happy to take advantage of our assistance. We worked late that night, listening to him tell us stories about Turmish guest houses.

"Vandals are always a problem," grumbled Arshen as he laid a fresh coat of paint along the door frame we'd just erected. "But a guest house is the sign of a man's good nature in Turmish, so I can't let it get run down." I was amazed at some of the hard work put into this guest house. Wood carvings, brass ornaments for the bells and lamps, stonework fireplaces—Arshen's guesthouse was one of the best we had seen. It had the look and feel of a house that someone actually lived in. I felt welcome here.

The next day, we came across a young man in leathers working the ground furiously with a shovel. He glanced up briefly at us before going back to work. Curious, Dwin and I paused to watch the man's efforts. He suddenly stooped down and broke up the earth with his hands, drawing forth a large ruby that must have been worth at least 500 gold pieces. Just as I was getting ready to start digging, I heard an unmistakable sound—the click of a crossbow bolt.

Armed men emerged from the nearby bushes, wearing the red and blue colors of Turmish. The man with the shovel made a run toward the only opening he saw: through Dwin and me. The crossbow bolt flew across the clearing. The man raised his shovel in the nick of time, neatly deflecting the bolt. I might have been truly awed by the improvised shield had I not seen the look of fear and terror on the young man's face. He was lucky, not skillful. Dwin had begun casting the moment the young man had started to flee. Her spell caught him just as he reached the clearing. His body became rigid, and

he fell to the ground. The guards walked over and picked him up.

I took the opportunity to ask the sergeant of the guards what was going on when he came over to thank us. A Turmish custom holds that giving an offering to the earth grants a bountiful growing season. Of course, this also makes such offerings prime targets for thieves, such as the one we had helped to capture. Digging up the offerings to the earth is considered bad luck. From what the sergeant told me, the thief was lucky the guards had captured him instead of the landowner. It's not unusual for thieves to be killed by those who made the offering. The government considers such measures as "acts of self-defense." No one is ever put in prison or executed for defending an offering.

There's enough unusual customs in Turmish to fill a book, so I'll move on to one of the more interesting aspects of life in Turmish. Festivals seem to come to mind.





Festivals

Two major festivals are held in Turmish. The first is the Feast of the Moon. The second is the Reign of Misrule. I travel to Alaghôn each year for the Feast, but I've made it a point to be home in Starmantle before the Reign of Misrule begins.

Feast of The Moon

This grand festival occurs during Highsummer throughout the Vilhon. It is a time for friends to gather together to dance and sing. It's also a time for closer friends to gather for some intimate moments underneath the glittering Turmish skies.

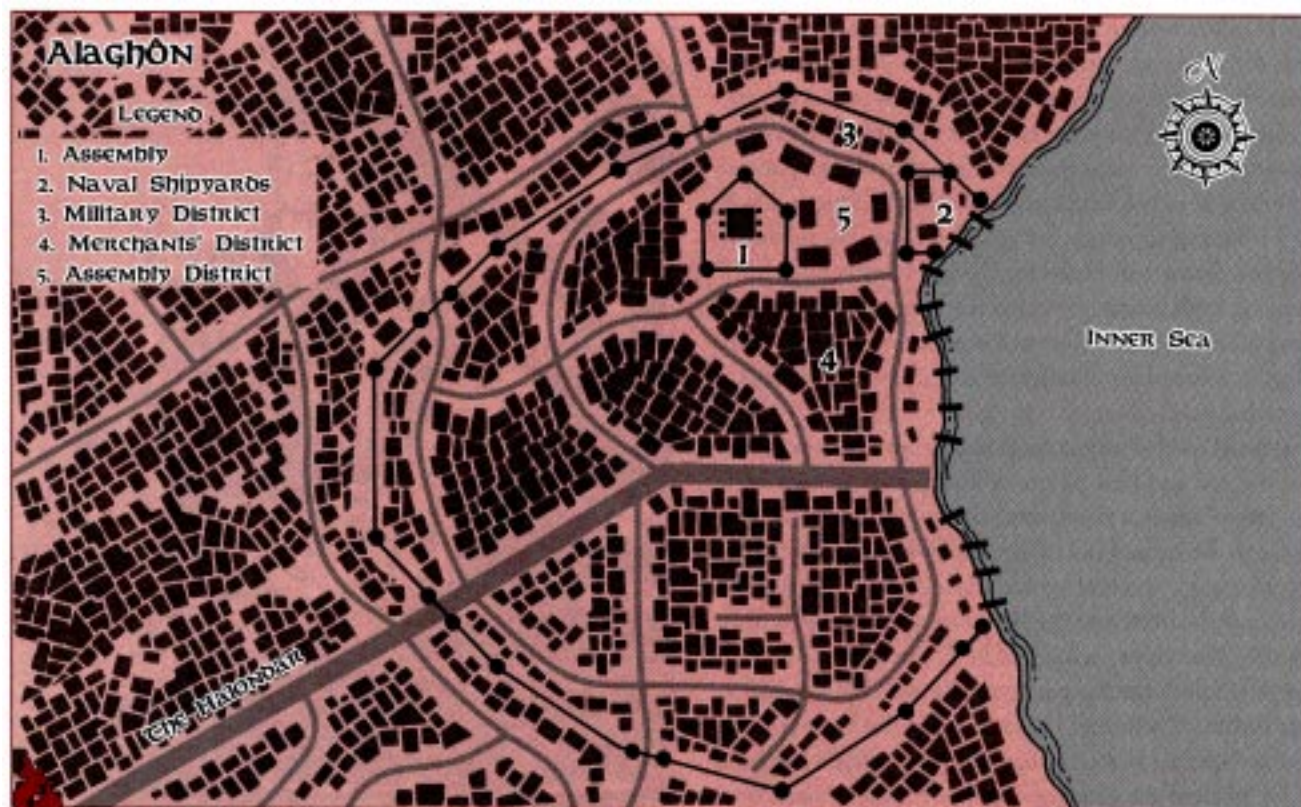
While I won't detail my personal experiences during the Feast, I'd strongly encourage young men and women to participate. As I've previously warned, be sure to watch out for the followers of Malar; you want to enjoy the Feast, not run from a bunch of madmen.

Reign of Misrule

I'd always given Sarun, our party's serious wizard, a hard time throughout our travels. Whenever his head got a little too big for that wizard's cap, I made it a point to remind him of the magic-proof isle of Ilighôn. We had a sort of love-hate relationship.

We were still roaming the streets of Alaghôn ten days after Highharvestide when the Reign of Misrule began. The streets suddenly became a battle zone of words, broken furniture, and shattered glass. I shouldn't have been surprised when one of the locals that had befriended Sarun approached me with a wicked gleam in his eyes. I managed a quick glance over at a grinning Sarun just before the gorilla threw himself at me.

Again, I won't detail the drubbing I got, but I'm sure you can see why I avoid that festival. It is a time when Turmish natives can break the vows of their guild or faith as long they do not cause death or serious destruction. However, non-Turmishans are not invited to do the same. If you're the target of a Turmishan's reveleries during the Reign, you're liable for any damage you cause.





Also, it is illegal to speak about the way any person acted during the Reign of Misrule. Doing so can get you thrown in jail.

Cities

There are dozens of cities, towns, and villages in Turmish. Few cities exist near the foothills of the mountains due to a fear of orcs, kobolds, and other goblinoids. After you've visited Turmish, you'll know why people commonly refer to the "hordes of Turmish."

Alaghôn

Most people think of the nation's capital, Alaghôn, when they think of Turmish. Virtually all of Turmish's trade funnels across its docks. It is a popular port for ships heading further south into the Reach and those on their way as far south as Mulhorand.

One of the most interesting things about Alaghôn is the architecture. Human stonemasons have built over structures left by dwarven craftsmen, creating a series of secret passageways, lost tunnels, and hidden passages that wind through the capital.

When some children reported getting chased from the passages by a large, lumbering creature, we took the city guards up on their offer to work in an "official capacity" for Turmish. Our group went on an investigation of one of the upper mazes figuring this might give us a little excitement.

The corridors were dark and musty, but the children's tracks were simple to follow. We might not have been quite so confident if we had known what creature lay at the end of those tracks. As we rounded a corner, we saw a cloth-wrapped creature more than eight feet tall. Anathet was immediately knocked off his feet by a blow from this creature's fist. As the rest of us rushed to hack at it with our weapons, Dwin began praying to Tymora, hoping to drive the creature away. Sarun cast a *magic missile* spell that fizzled as it neared the monstrosity. A blow from its fist hit me so hard I can still remember the humming inside my helm. Our sword blows weren't having any effect. We retreated into the maze, hoping to find our way out. The creature followed us briefly, then disappeared. I ran until I blacked out, waking up in my room at the Timekeeper Tavern on the waterfront.

Dwin's healing magic could not help Anathet or me. We languished for nearly two weeks, nursing our wounds and wondering what we had run into. When the master of the guards interviewed us, he seemed doubtful of our story. I told him that if he doubted me I could lead him back into the tunnels to see the creature first-hand. He declined, telling me to get some rest and remember that "monsters don't live in Turmish."

Nonthal

There's much more to Turmish than its capital city, and one of the more interesting is Nonthal's Hold. I've heard rumors that this area holds a cache of magical items, gems, and coins, hidden at the end of Nonthal's Path in the city of Nonthal. I've heard stories of this place as far away as Starmantle.

More than 100 years ago, a wizard built a small cottage in the city, then promptly disappeared. One of the items in his home—now posted on the wall of the Three Trees Inn—was a map detailing the location of his horde of wealth and magic. It lay at the end of a path behind the inn; all one had to do was walk to the end of the path and enter his hold. It sounded easy enough. Unfortunately, the path is littered with magical traps that transport the walker to the farthest reaches of Faerûn. I heard that the first one takes you to Anauroch, so bring extra water if you plan to traverse the path.

There's more to the path than simply overcoming the teleports, though. I saw a high-level wizard walk along the path with some type of spell that stopped the path's magic. When he got to the end of the path and dispelled his protective spell, he was instantly teleported to Anauroch. Apparently, the various traps are keyed together; only by overcoming all of them can one get into Nonthal's Hold and obtain the treasures it holds.

That wizard who walked that path is known as Fern, and he can normally be found sitting at the Three Trees watching others go down the path. Nonthal's Hold draws a lot of foolish adventures, like a flame attracts a moth. Keep that in mind if you decide to go for a stroll down that path.

Ravilar's Cloak

In the wilds of Turmish lies the raucous city of Ravilar's Cloak. If you can imagine a mining town run by the



roughest and seediest characters imaginable, you can imagine Ravilar's Cloak.

The city is patrolled by groups called "factors." I'm guessing that factor is some strange Turmish slang word for thug, but I could be mistaken. In any event, numerous factors exist in Ravilar, and the one that is in charge varies day to day. Avoiding trouble—especially a confrontation with the factors—is very important. I saw two factors, who were about to attack each other, go after an adventuring company that was passing through the area. The rogue of that group had made a remark to one of his companions and the factors took offense. Anything that winds up missing in Ravilar's Cloak is blamed on a flying helmet, a magical helm that haunts the city, picking up loose coins, lost tips for barmaids, daggers, the occasional bag of gold dust, and so on.

Gildenglade

Tales of lost wealth brought us to the second-largest city in Turmish, Gildenglade. The first thing I noticed about Gildenglade was the large amount of nonhumans living here. Dwarves, half-elves, and elves exist here in surpris-



ing numbers. The dwarves are responsible for the mining beneath the city. The elves serve as the primary political force, running the city. The half-elves do a variety of other jobs, many merchant-related.

Following the lure of gold to Gildenglade can be a dangerous business. There are stories of ghosts leading treasure-seekers to both treasure and death, but that has done little to discourage people from following lights flickering in the night. One of the more interesting sites near Gildenglade is the smoking volcano, Mount Kolimnus, also known as Eversmoke. I heard that the city hired a wizard to quiet the volcano years ago, but the Emerald Enclave put an end to that.

Xorhun

If it was possible for a human to go back in time and see what it must have been like in ancient elven cities, Xorhun might be a good mirror of such times. Never before have I seen so many elves gathered together in one place. The stories claim that living here increases the birth rate in some races. Having been there, I can't deny it. Elven children are commonly seen playing in the streets and gardens. Gnomes also seem to benefit from the city's power.

I saw human couples here as well, but didn't notice an unusual number of human children. Xorhun is primarily an elf and gnome community.

Geography

We investigated the threat of kobolds in the southern reaches of the Orsraun as we left Xorhun. Years ago, large numbers of the creatures sacked the city of Hlondeth. Since that attack, the cities have taken any increase in kobold activity very seriously. I'd also heard stories about the child of the blue dragon Anaglathos lairing in these mountains. I made a mental note to avoid large caves—even if piles of treasure lay right in the doorway. We spent more than a week searching for kobolds through the roughest areas of the Orsraun. We fought more than half a dozen orc, kobold, and goblin patrols. However, we never ran across any large communities of the creatures, so we continued west to the Shining Plains.





The Shining Plains

Pride is a dangerous thing anywhere, but when a native of the Plains talks about pride being dangerous, he's probably referring to one of the prides of wemics that rule the plains. Prides have their own laws, and a visitor to their land had best keep that in mind.

— Miritol Kran, Sage of Alaghôn

The Shining Plains refers to the collection of city-states that occupy the vast stretch of grasslands. Ormath was founded in 125 DR. Its sister city, Lheshayl, rose from the ground in 177 DR. In 326 DR, these cities faced each other on the Field of Tears, vying for control of the Shining Plains. What neither city-state expected was the intervention of an outside force in their conflict. Both cities were confident that the remainder of the Vilhon was consumed with problems of their own. The unexpected trump card was the Tenpaw tribe of wemics that led an overwhelming force against both human armies in an attempt to stop the conflict.

Some sages speculate that the wemics were doing the cities a favor by stopping their ugly little war, but most believe that the Tenpaw were more interested in preserving what they saw as their nation, the Shining Plains.

It was more than 300 years before an uneasy peace finally settled between the two cities. Ormath concentrated on its trade with Hlondeth: Lheshayl entered the horse trade with its fine Plainsteeds. This uneasy truce helped them for the challenges that laid in wait in the Year of the Fanged Beast in 640. A sudden influx of saber-toothed tigers made living on the plains a deadly gamble. It also made keeping trade routes open difficult. For the two cities to survive, they had to work together. They survived and discovered that they were stronger together than alone.

That's not to say that the people of the cities learned all of their lessons easily. They founded the city of Assam in 715 with only minor difficulties. The three cities spent the next 300 years in minor battles and skirmishes with the centaurs and thri-kreen of the Shining Plains. In 1018, the cities of the Shining Plains were attacked by forces their walls couldn't stop; the Rage of Dragons had begun. For more than 15 years, the citizens of the three cities watched helplessly as dragons flew over the Shining Plains. Sometimes the dragons would swing down to raise havoc in a city. Other times they would simply fly away. When Mt. Ugruth erupted in 1044, the wemics saw it as a sign of doom and prepared to defend themselves against another wave of dragon attacks. The human cities prepared for an attack by the wemics. Slowly, tensions died down and things returned to normal on the plains.

Today, life is pretty quiet on the plains. Monsters are seen from time to time, but are normally chased away from the vicinity by the wemics. Of course, this does lead the monsters to the dark gates of the cities of the Shining Plains.





Politics

Little has changed politically in the Shining Plains over the last few hundred years. The major cities of Lheshayl and Ormath are still ruled by chiefs of a long-standing blood line. While not royalty, these families have directed the actions of the twin cities of the Shining Plains for as far back as most people can recall. Assam is just a satellite of Ormath and Lheshayl under joint rule.

The only event that the cities jointly attend is the annual gathering of the tribes of the plains at the Hill of Memories, site of their battle with the wemics in 326. Anyone who is interested may attend the gathering, so I went along with a few hundred others to watch. We gathered into a large circle to listen to the leaders speak. It was interesting to hear the rulers of the various tribes speak their mind. There were some tense moments between the city of Lheshayl's ruler, chief Entawanata, and the mantis warrior representative Kissikit'a. More often than not, the leaders talked about reports of monsters, trade routes of the season, and other such necessities.

The wemic King, Grrothgrowl, was very impressive. He was huge, even for a wemic. I saw a human with him, a slim woman in brown robes who wore the holy symbol of Silvanus. From time to time, she'd whisper into the wemic king's ear. Everyone was determined to congratulate Grrothgrowl on the birth of his son, Throthgrowl. The new prince of the Shining Plains is probably an adult by now.

Customs

The adults of the plains value two things. The first is children, and the second is horses. Endangering either is likely to get you into more trouble than stealing the crown jewels of King Azoun of Cormyr.

Children play an important part in plains society. It is not uncommon to see parents deeply involved in their children's education and training. This involvement reaches its peak during the Festival of the Hunt. This festival recognizes the ascension of a child into the ranks of adulthood. The children gather with their parents and a village elder to go hunting for bison, elk, or other

game. When a child kills an animal with one shot from a bow, they have earned the right to be considered an adult of the tribe.

After you've witnessed this festival, some of the ornamentation of the natives gains meaning. I was at first confused by the necklaces of polished antlers or fanged teeth worn by the plainsmen until I witnessed the Festival. Each child takes a piece of the animal they slew to achieve adulthood. They keep this ornament with them at all times. Some of the most respected men and women of the cities are those who wear the fangs of a saber-toothed tiger. These fierce beasts are uncommon on the plains and their appearance draws the immediate attention of the cities.

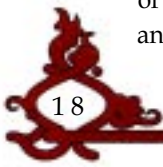
Lheshayl—and Ormath to a smaller extent—raises magnificent horses. Called "Plainsteeds," these horses are the stoutest and swiftest I've seen. They're expensive, but if you've got some coins to drop, I'd recommend purchasing one as a mount. The Plainsteeds are kept in small herds outside the city. These herds are tended by the trainers, who also protect the horses from predators and keep them from combining with other herds. Stealing a Plainsteed is probably the surest way to get yourself killed in the Shining Plains.

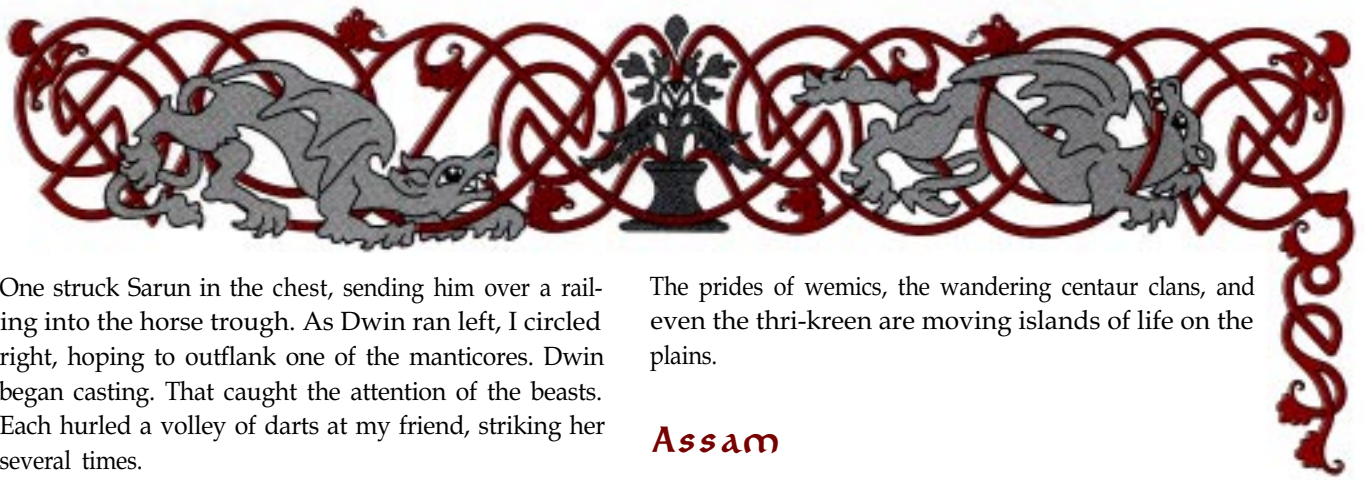
The nearby Rushing Hills are home to the thri-kreen who consider the horses a delicacy. A shepherd who sees a mantis warrior eyeing a Plainsteed can be fairly certain that the animal is not being admired for its strength and beauty.

Festivals

In addition to the Festival of the Hunt, the plainsmen celebrate the Sun Festival. I was invited to the festival after defending myself from an unexpected attack from some winged horrors known as manticores.

Dwin, Sarun, Anathet, and I were lounging in a local tavern known as the Thunderhoof Lodge. As we enjoyed a drink together, we heard a loud crash across the street. We rushed outside to investigate. We saw three fearsome manticores attacking a militia unit, caught off-guard. Anathet threw himself into the fray. His long sword sliced deeply one of the beasts. It roared and turned on him. Another monster flicked its tail at us, sending a barrage of spikes into our party and the lodge.





One struck Sarun in the chest, sending him over a railing into the horse trough. As Dwin ran left, I circled right, hoping to outflank one of the manticores. Dwin began casting. That caught the attention of the beasts. Each hurled a volley of darts at my friend, striking her several times.

While they were distracted, I started casting my own spell, hurling a handful of *magic missiles* into the leader's body. Roaring, all three launched into the air. Anathet took one more swing before they were airborne.

Sarun dragged himself out of the trough, glaring at the manticores. Sarun, Dwin, and I began casting more spells while Anathet took out his bow and tried to distract them.

The leader of the beasts loosed a volley of darts at me from his tail. Most scattered harmlessly around me, but one struck me squarely in the shoulder. Lightning tore through the dusk sky from Sarun's spell, catching the leader full in the chest and grazing another of the manticores behind him. The leader fell lifeless to the ground; the other two monsters retreated into the darkness. As they turned, Dwin caught one with a *flame strike* spell. It crashed to the ground, still on fire.

The Thunderhoof gave us free lodging that night. The next day we were invited into the home of one of the elders who invited us back for the Sun Festival that was held the last week of Eleasius. Honored by the invitation, we told him we would return. When the day arrived, we were warmly greeted by the owner of the Thunderhoof, who again gave us free lodging. As night approached, the city became calm and quiet, almost eerie. It turned out to be a somewhat painful experience. We were brought into a large circle of plainsmen where we ceremoniously cut our hands to become bonded with the city. We had become honorary citizens. The rest of the night we laughed, told jokes, made up tall tales about our past adventures, danced, drank, and otherwise made merry. It was over all too soon.

Cities

Most people only think of Ormath, Lheshayl, and Assam when you speak of the Shining Plains. But it's important to remember that the Shining Plains are composed of more than just the human settlements.

The prides of wemics, the wandering centaur clans, and even the thri-kreen are moving islands of life on the plains.

Assam

Assam is the only city on the Shining Plains that is not walled. Ormath and Lheshayl built walls hundreds of years ago before going to war with one another.

When I first came across this "oasis in the plains" my first impulse was to keep riding. There had to be a more hospitable town farther north. But I had been farther and knew the only city that lay between Assam and civilization was Nathlekh. The city was surrounded by hordes of herd animals, circling the city like sharks. Caravans huddled against themselves in the vast openness of the plains, but no marauding force was to be seen. Instead, each caravan seemed to be watching the others.

Assam smells of tanneries and slaughterhouses. Within Assam, everything is geared toward the caravans, from the largest general store to the smallest tavern that sells ale by the drum.

Living in Starmantle, I'd heard rumors about the city of Assam being lawless and wild. The streets are pretty rough, though nowhere near as rough as Ravilar's Cloak in Turmish. The lawmen in town give many of the merchants and their men a wide berth. They want to make money, and they won't make much if they drive away their only source of revenue. Most decisions made by judges favor the merchants—regardless of whether the merchant was in the right or not. To make matters worse, the city is actually run under a discrete partnership between the cities of Ormath and Lheshayl. Holinar Tempest, a fiery-tempered man that can spew political rhetoric as easily as a priest of Loviatar can crack a whip, keeps things running smoothly as mayor of the town. A bartender told me that he also influences judicial decisions, but I never got that deeply involved in politics to discover the truth for myself.

If you're looking for some hunting practice on bigger game, like saber-toothed tigers, Assam is a good place to start. The nearby Wetwoods also offers a variety of hunting opportunities, though you just may find something in there deciding to hunt you.





Lheshayl

Just as Assam caters to the merchants, Lheshayl is home to those whose first love is the horse trade. The mighty Plainsteeds of the Shining Plains can be found here in large numbers. Of course, like all good merchant cities, these steeds are always available to those with extra coins to spare. These horses travel east and west along the Pikemen's Folly to both Hlondeth and the far western city of Riatavin. The farther they travel from Lheshayl, the more expensive they become.

Recently, I've heard rumors that Lheshayl has been plagued by a variety of crimes lately, including horse-stealing and kidnapping travelers to sell them as slaves in Nimpeth. I received a letter from Chief Entawanata requesting that I return, if possible, to help them solve the horse-stealings. Apparently, they can live with the kidnappings. Both the Bit & Bridle and the Saddle of the Plains are good inns to stay at while in the city. The Sugarcane is a seedy little bar near the lower-class neighborhoods. The Chief's Rest is the most expensive inn in town, though they cater to your heart's desire.

Ormath

Of the cities in the Shining Plains, Ormath is the most militaristic. Patrols walk the street, arresting people who commit crimes no matter how small. This attitude has given rise to the phrase "Ormath on the warpath," used to indicate taking offense at the smallest transgression. There aren't any unusual laws that Ormath enforces, though the punishment of such crimes can be quite shocking (in a monetary sense, anyway). Lord Quwen is a warrior-ruler with a hands-on philosophy on a government. He frequently leads patrols, metes out justice, and handles vast amounts of day-to-day journal-entries and official paperwork. This practice keeps the amount of bureaucratic red tape to a minimum.

The lord of Ormath is currently looking for adventurers to investigate what has been happening to his gold shipments from Assam. It seems that someone has been hijacking the wagon laden with his gold, and he's not very happy about it.

Geography

It's easy to think of the Shining Plains as just one big grassland with clearly defined geographic borders. North of the Gulthmere and south of the Serpent City of Surkh are easily seen boundaries. Always remember that the cities, tribes, and other sentient creatures of the Shining Plains patrol what they think of as their personal space. Just because you're standing across the Wetriver doesn't necessarily mean that you're free of the wemics, who may consider the Wetriver a bathing pool in the heart of their territory.

Deepwing Mountains

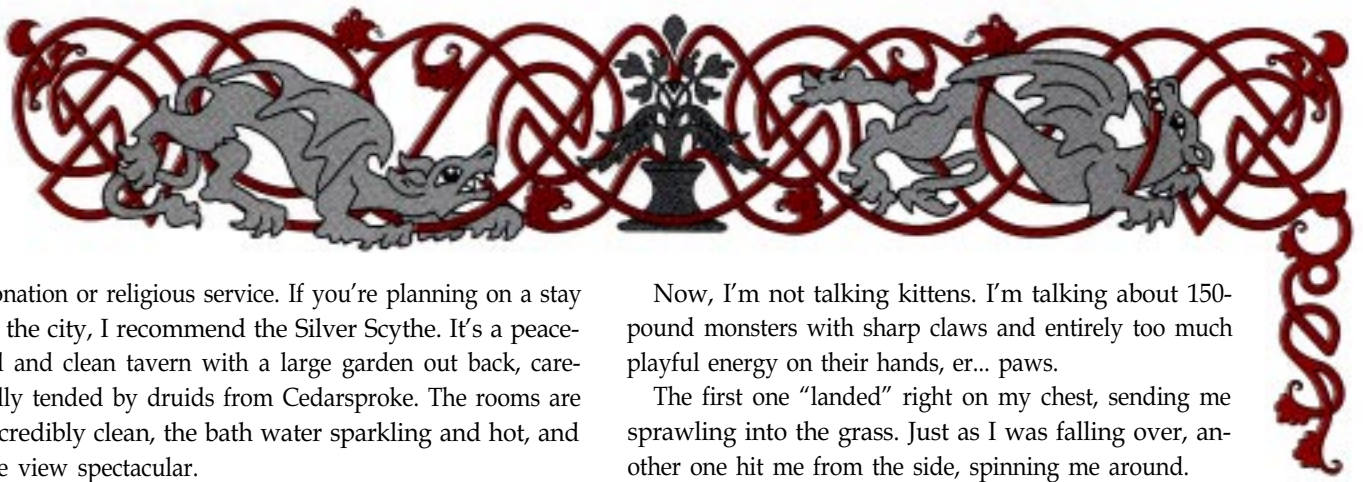
Each time I've ventured south into the Deepwings, I've seen firedrakes flying around, scouring the grasslands and rocky Rushing Hills for food. I've never had one attack me, but I've never been foolish enough to try and track one to its lair or fire an arrow at it to see what it does, either. Other travelers haven't been as wise, but you never get a chance to hear their stories.

I've heard reports of a dragon somewhere in the Deepwings, but, dragon's lairs are favorites of gossiping stories in every major town. Numerous adventuring companies have ventured into those rugged mountains, but none have emerged with anything I'd call a dragon's treasure. There's a valley in the heart of the Deepwing Mountains into which the Vilhon flows. This valley, known as the Valley of the Eye, is said to be the home of beholders. Not a place that "eyed" like to visit.

Gulthmere Forest

While living in Gulthmere, I had many opportunities to explore the northern reaches of these woods. I didn't make any startling discoveries, but the Gulthmere is certainly large enough to hide its secrets from me.

I've spent quite a bit of time in Cedarsproke, the druidic stronghold and religious site. If you're a faithful of Eldath or Silvanus, I'd strongly recommend visiting the city. With that said, I should warn you that the city is ruled by the Grand Druid. His word is law, which means that if you have some reservations about the Eldathian religion, you'd best keep them to yourself. The vast libraries of the Cedarsproke are open for the proper



donation or religious service. If you're planning on a stay in the city, I recommend the Silver Scythe. It's a peaceful and clean tavern with a large garden out back, carefully tended by druids from Cedarsproke. The rooms are incredibly clean, the bath water sparkling and hot, and the view spectacular.

Of course, the city has its problems as well. Eldath is currently waged in a "pacifistic" war against the forces of Malar. While the church itself refuses to raise a hand except in self-defense, Grand Druid Zalaznar Crinios has hired adventuring companies to search out the followers of Malar in the Gulthmere and bring them back for judgment. The question in my mind is: "How hard a sentence is it to water the daisies in Cedarsproke?" While I doubt a druid of Eldath is going to order the execution of anyone, I hold no such reservations about the Emerald Enclave. I'm certain that if the church actually manages to capture any of the faithful of Malar, the Enclave will act quickly and effectively to administer their own brand of justice.

Rushing Hills

About the only thing one really needs to worry about in these rough hills are the thri-kreen that live here. While they seldom attack travelers, having an elf in the party does increase the chance that you will be "welcomed" by a hunting party of mantis warriors. I still hear rumors that these hills shelter liches and other undead. Some townsmen in Lheshayl speculate that the thri-kreen are magically controlled by such undead. I've never found anything to substantiate these claims, but I've never looked either.

The Wemic Tribes

I came across a half-dozen wemic cubs playing in a field northwest of Ormath. Actually, it was more like the little creatures were lying in wait for me.

I enjoy walking the fields in quiet contemplation, gazing out across the plains or up into the heavens. It provides me time to think about what I should do with my life, how much I really do enjoy adventuring, and how much I value my friends. I was totally absorbed in my own thoughts when the first cub landed on me.

Now, I'm not talking kittens. I'm talking about 150-pound monsters with sharp claws and entirely too much playful energy on their hands, er... paws.

The first one "landed" right on my chest, sending me sprawling into the grass. Just as I was falling over, another one hit me from the side, spinning me around. A juvenile growl erupted from somewhere near me. "I got ta' humin firrrst," a cub said haughtily and with just a hint of arrogance.

"Deed not!" growled another, and then an assortment of growls and arguing erupted from all around me. I figured that they must be wemic cubs; I'd heard they were quite playful, and I also figured I'd already be dead if it was a saber-toothed tiger.

I rose to me knees just in time to see the one sight I was fearing; a wemic female pounding forward. She didn't look to be incredibly fast, but I doubted if I could sprint all the way back to Ormath before she caught me.

She took one look at me and let out a leonine burst of laughter that still rings in my ears to this day. "Humin make sooch poor hoonting," she chided as she padded up. Judging my look of fear in my eyes, she let forth a gush that I could only consider to be wemic humor.

"Wemics arrren't bearrs," she growled. "We don't eat ourr cubs' playthings."

She never did tell me her name, but she walked with me for a while chatting about this and that and keeping me safe from the droves of playful cubs that were hiding in the fields. I'm sure each of them was waiting for their chance to pounce on me, and I'm sure the female knew it. She led me along a circuitous path that left me near the fields surrounding Ormath.

That's about as much contact as I've really had with the wemics, and the centaurs have avoided all contact with humans on the Shining Plains. My advice: Remember that the wemics have a rough sense of humor.

The Wetwoods

I'm not a big fan of swamps, so I've avoided the Wetwoods in my travels. I've heard that lizard men roam the bog, and a reclusive race of unknown creatures have a village at the eastern end near the mountains. If you ever find out what's really in there, let me know.





Free Cities

The relative success of an independent city can be gauged in the interest it generates from Arrabar. The more success, the more interest. The more interest, the more danger.

– Shalthrin Hlastin, Merchant of Alaghôn

Every city upon the Reach has a unique history that sets it apart. Whether you're talking about the wondrous architecture of Hlondeth or the fabulous coliseum of Reth, it's important to remember that each city is distinctly different. To say they are the same is like assuming all northmen are from Waterdeep.

The independent city-states are those cities with a standing army that could repel an attack launched against it. Cities such as Asple and Torl retain their independence simply because no one has bothered to send an occupying force. The current peace within the Vilhon Reach allows these smaller cities to quietly build their city walls and train a militia. The Five Free Cities of the Vilhon Reach are Hlondeth, Lachom, Nimpeth, Reth, and Surkh. All except Surkh share a common history with Chondath. They were once part of the massive Chondathian Empire that fragmented after the Rotting War of 902 DR. Surkh has been left alone over the years because of fear and superstition. Few human armies want to attack a city of lizardmen known to feast on human flesh.

Hlondeth has gone through many different rulers as it struggled to retain its independence. The city was established around 50 DR to allow goods in and out of the southern half of Turmish. As the cities of Ormath and Lheshayl sprang up on the western plains, Hlondeth found itself a center of activity for trade and commerce. Alaghôn suddenly began to view the city as the crown jewel of its collection. By 145 DR, an Alaghôn army was outside the gates of the city. Alaghôn was never successful in taking Hlondeth. As the years rolled by, Turmish military interest in Hlondeth gradually faded away, replaced by a commercial partnership with the free city. Turmish was much stronger with Hlondeth as an ally and friend. The constant, bloody war had only served to distract Turmish from its own problems with raiders, pirates, and goblinoid attacks.

The eruption of Mount Ugruth in 257 DR brought about the most change in Hlondeth. The ruling house of Gestin, which had so successfully stopped the advance of Turmish forces, found its rule threatened by the volcanic eruption which was viewed as an omen of change. Just as House Extaminos was ready to seize control of the city, the army of Chondath landed and sacked the city. For nearly 700 years, Chondath pulled the strings of Hlondeth. That's not to say that everything became calm and peaceful again once the forces of Chondath took control. Quite to the contrary. The Chondathian forces looked at this as an opportunity to travel north into Turmish and claim even more land for their ever-expanding empire.





Turmish fought back against the aggressions of the Chondathians and managed to keep Turmish a separate nation. In 527 DR, the turning point for House Extaminos occurred when kobolds from the Tattered Cloth Legion emerged from the sewers and began ransacking the city. Chondath provided no assistance. Lord Shevron Extaminos opened his gates to the survivors of the city and offered shelter from the ravaging kobolds. As the stories go, only House Extaminos still stood by the dawn of the second day of the siege. If you want to listen to some interesting stories about the battle, ask about it in the Slithering Serpent, one of the nicer bars near the waterfront.

In 614, Hlondeth received its independence from Chondath. In 1020, House Extaminos took control of Hlondeth, where their reign continues to this day. A mystical transformation had occurred to the citizens of Hlondeth—especially the members of House Extaminos. Their bodies had slowly taken on snake-like properties until now some of them resembled yuan-ti. Still, the people were unshakable in their support of the House.

Hlondeth released all of the minor cities along the southern stretch of the Vilhon that Chondath had controlled. House Extaminos had no desire to rule anything other than Hlondeth. The terms of freedom were clear; those cities were on their own in dealing with Chondath.

The weaving, circular architecture of Hlondeth is known throughout the region, and its emerald-hued skyline glows in the darkness, providing light for the citizens through some magic the people call the “blessings of Shevron.” It is a wondrous and mystical city, even if many of its citizens are yuan-ti.

Politics

As expected, each city has individual rulers who shape the actions and policies of the cities in matters of trade, military strength, and other concerns. It’s unusual to have rulers who answer to other powers, but there have been rumors for years that Arrabar controls many of the city-states of the Reach.

Hlondeth is ruled by Dediana Extaminos, an efficient administrator who seems to know just how far she can

push before merchants and other visitors to the city will rebel. Her rule makes Hlondeth a pleasant place to visit, and humans aren’t treated any differently than other visitors to the yuan-ti city. One somewhat humorous development in Hlondeth politics revolves around Dediana’s son, Dmetrio. The young prince of Hlondeth is currently courting Glisena Foesmasher, daughter of Thuragar Foesmasher, ruler of Sespech. Thuragar is reportedly upset that his daughter could be attracted to a “snake” like Dmetrio. Still, the relationship continues, and the baron has made no real serious attempt to stop the affair.

Lachom is the most reclusive of the cities after Surkh. It’s ruled by an old dwarf named Turien Battlewake, a man with plenty of bitter memories as well as a good reason to still hate Arrabar’s overtures toward his city.

After Hlondeth, Nimpeth is the city most secure from an attack by Chondath. Ruled by Lord Woren, the city frequently funnels slaves and information concerning the other city-states to Arrabar.

Reth is in a much less secure position than the other cities. Situated on the northernmost end of Chondath’s new kingdom, Reth fights a constant political struggle against Arrabar’s overtures at “peace and reconciliation.” Reth is ruled by the Seven Senators and a figure-head mayor.

I know that Surkh is ruled by a lizard-man king, but I have little idea of what else makes the city run.

Customs

Most of the city-states participate in a process of **M**conscription, where young adults are forced to serve in the militia for a minimum of four years. Most citizens accept this as a way of life, although there are always a few that stand in the public square and lecture about how wrong it is. Of course, talk like that could lead to life in Nimpeth as a slave, so it’s a good idea to keep your opinion of the military to yourself.

Slaves are a popular commodity in the Reach. Nimpeth is the heartbeat of such trade, supplying slaves to all other areas of the Reach with no questions asked. I’ve heard reports from sea captains who’ve seen entire crews of a conquered ship sold into slavery once the victorious pirate ship reached Nimpeth.





Festivals

If you've never seen the Rotting Dance, I'd recommend stopping into the city of Lachom during Higharvestide. All of the cities celebrate the Rotting Dance, but Lachom seems to put more energy into it.

When I attended, I sat and watched, amazed that people would spend so much time just in preparation for a dance. The men and women of Lachom formed a ring around a large bonfire. The sound of drums began to reverberate in the moist summer air. Everyone was stone-faced serious. As the dance began, each of the townspeople held up a wooden chip painted blood red. As the music continued, each of the dancers threw their chip, symbolizing Chondath, into the flames. The chips were soaked in oils before the ceremony and quickly burst into flames amid the burning logs of the bonfire. The dancers hurled rotten tomatoes, eggs, and other food into the fire. Then the celebration truly got under way. Wine, mead, and ale ran freely all night long and fresh fruit and vegetables were available in vast quantities. I learned that it is considered bad luck to throw fresh fruit or vegetables into the fire. The residents say the festival "reminds Chondath of what they're missing."

Cities

Travel between any of the Five Free Cities is not always a safe venture. While most of the cities patrol the lands directly around them, few send patrols onto the roads that lead to them. Hlondeth is known for its extensive patrols, and Reth patrols down to the River Nun, but none of the other city-states seem too concerned about life outside their immediate vicinity.

Hlondeth

Anyone who travels the Vilhon Reach should visit here at least once, twice if you have the time. Despite its dark and evil reputation as the "home of the yuan-ti," Hlondeth is a city that prospers on its trade with surrounding nations. Of course, I can't recommend the Slithering Serpent Inn enough—their black adder stew is delicious.

If you're looking for adventuring opportunities, Hlondeth is always looking for experienced adventurers to

serve as caravan guards for travel both west into the Shining Plains and east to the various cities along the Reach and into Turmish itself. There's also a group of freedom fighters that are striving to free Hlondeth from the "chokehold of the evil yuan-ti." This group wages skirmishes with Hlondeth troops both inside and outside the city. They have yet not proven effective at striking House Extaminos directly. So far, all their actions have managed to get them a price on their heads. House Extaminos has a standing offer of 500 gp for each member of the Serpent's Secession. There's a 10,000 gp reward for the capture of Gonthril Astinar, the leader of the group.

Lachom

Watching the actions of Arrabar is a pastime in Lachom, since the citizens are constantly worried that Chondath is about to rise and swallow them again. They're currently looking for some experienced military leaders that are free from the contamination of Chondath to lead their militia.

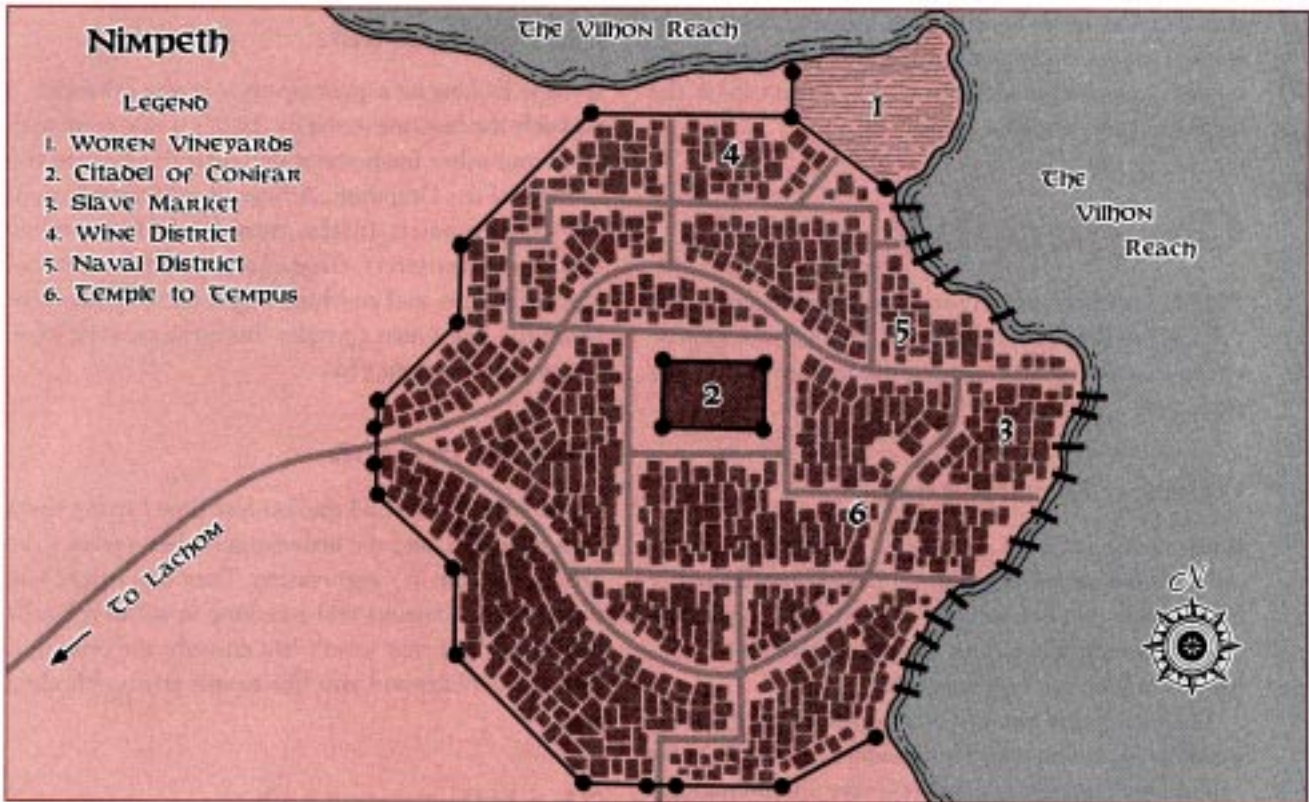
Lachom has other problems as well. Giants from the nearby Cloven Mountains are making forays into farms, killing the farmers and stealing grain. Mayor Battlewake wants the attacks stopped, but he's too old to go running off into the mountains, and no one else in the town has enough experience to take on a group of hill giants. Lachom would also like to try to open up trade with the lizard-man city of Surkh. In Battlewake's eyes, he'd rather trade with the lizard-men than Arrabar.

Nimpeth

I can still taste the sweet wine from Nimpeth, and the vintages from the Woren Vineyards is known throughout the Reach as the finest available. The farther one travels from Nimpeth, the more valuable its wine becomes. The Woren Vineyards are a marvel of landscaping and of slave labor. The entire vineyard is tooled out of the rough Broken Hills where the vineyard thrives. While I disagree with the methods of construction, I'm still amazed at the extent of the landscaping accomplished.

Slaves are a facet of life I could never get used to in Nimpeth. They're everywhere. Frequently you can find them for sale in the main marketplace of the city. Nimpeth previously only held slave auctions once a week,





but I've heard they're having two or three auctions a week now. I've also heard that the Harpers have been trying to find out who has been bringing in the extra slaves, but no Harpers would be caught acting openly in the Reach. I also find it hard to believe that one person is responsible for the increase in slave activity. I'd guess it's probably a consortium of pirate captains.

Reth

If you're a fan of blood sports, you will enjoy the arena in Reth. Initially, the city was established to train Chondathian troops for the Southshore Games near Hlondeth. Since its independence, the city has worked on entertaining its own citizens. Of course, visitors to Reth play an important role in its economy. Alaghônian merchants are common spectators at Northshire Coliseum, and nobles from as far south as Nimpeth make regular voyages to Reth. Adventurers can make some money by participating in arena combat, but be warned that many of these battles are fatal. Most professional gladiators don't want to face an opponent more than once.

There has been some recent rumblings between the city and the Enclave. While Reth eventually decided to back down from its harvesting of trees from the Nunwood, the Enclave has retained an open presence within the city. The little tree harvesting the city has done lately has been complicated by reports of monsters in the Nunwood. No one knows what these creatures are. They attack under cover of darkness and cause great confusion before retreating into the forest. The Emerald Enclave has remained silent, but many suspect they're behind the recent altercations.

Surkh

I've never been to Surkh, and in all honesty, I've no intention of ever setting foot in that city. I've heard reports of adventurers being "sentenced to dinner," meaning that they end up being the main course on the king's table. There's a conflict of interest when the judges of your trial gain a meal from a guilty verdict.

I've heard there's a king that rules the lizard men down there, but he refuses to speak to anyone unless





they can first speak his language. Oh, one more thing, magical means of communication aren't allowed. If you request an audience with the king and can't speak the language, guess who's for supper?

Geography

The independent city-states comprise a large area of the Reach, so it shouldn't be much of a surprise to see that the nearby geographic regions are widely separated.

Cloven Mountains

If you want to clobber goblins, I'd recommend a vacation to these rugged mountains. I haven't heard a rumor of a dragon—but you can't be too sure with those creatures. There is more than enough of the lesser goblin-kind to keep you busy for weeks.

I've also heard rumors of a panther-like creature roaming the mountains. This creature reportedly hunts goblins, but I somehow doubt it is very discriminating.



The Deepwash

If you're looking for a quiet fishing spot, the Deepwash is probably the best one in the Reach. Its waters teem with trout and other fresh-water delights. But beware the monster of the Deepwash. A huge dragon turtle lives in the southern waters. It takes great delight in chomping up ships, adventurers, siege engines, kegs of ale, fine Nimpeth wine, and anything else it gets close to. I've heard the lizard men consider this creature to be some sort of avatar of their god.

The Nunwood

I hate snakes. I've had the hardest time hitting them with my sword, and the little buggers always seem to be able to bite me. It's aggravating. They don't fight fair. Surrounding someone and attacking in waves is hardly fair odds. As if that wasn't bad enough, the ones that live in the Nunwood also like to spit at you, blinding you.

The Winterwood

The Winterwood is a vast, dark forest composed of pine and oak trees. It's normally covered in a thick layer of white fog. It's not unusual to find yourself blinded within its confines.

The northern sections of the forest are under control of the vegpepygmies and the orcs of the White Hand. This isn't a cooperative effort; the two opposing forces attack each other's patrols constantly. If you happen to be in the wrong part of the forest, they might consider you an opposing patrol.

I've heard rumors that the cultists of Malar and Talos have both taken refuge in the Winterwood and are using it as a base of operations. The Malarians take great joy in chasing someone through the mist-filled woods in one of their hunts. The Talosians are probably praying for a volcano to emerge from the ground. I've also heard that a green dragon has taken up residence somewhere south of the orc encampment. While I would certainly be the last to recommend starting a dragon hunt, I've heard that this particular beast is both ancient and wealthy.





Sespech

There are two things to remember in Sespech. The first is the distance to your nearest enemy. The second is your loyalty to the Baron. Never forget either.

– Captain Kanisar Melinwir

This nation has changed from a conglomeration of cities to a barony under control of Chondath, to its present form: an independent nation that despises Chondath. In many ways, it possesses the same views as the city of Lachom with one small exception: The citizens of Sespech know that they are first in line to be attacked by a rising Chondath.

The nation of Sespech first took shape in 92 DR when the city of Mimph sprouted along the shores of the Vilhon Reach. Its rapid rise to power posed a threat to Arrabar and it was quickly destroyed. In 135, Mimph was seen burning on the same shores against which it had once so majestically stood. A few years later, Ormpetarr was built at the Nagawater.

Ormpetarr became known as the City on the Plains as it established itself as an important trading center to the kingdoms and cities of the south. It spent most of its resources—and a great deal of time—establishing the Golden Road. This road led from “Golden Arrabar” south through Ormpetarr and finally to the city of Innarlith in the far south. However, Ormpetarr was defenseless, and the mayor of the town began to rely on Chondath for support. As the years rolled by, the village of Elbulder rose up and even Mimph quietly rebuilt itself. This time, Arrabar, capital of the growing Chondathian Empire, established the Barony of Sespech and brought the three communities in line with the rest of their empire. It didn’t take long for the Sespechians to tire of Chondathian rule, but they were not in a position to break free. Time after time, the barony tried to break away, and time after time, Chondath marched into the city of Ormpetarr and set up a new leader. When the Rotting War finally tore Chondath apart in 902 DR, the barony of Sespech relinquished its ties to the crumbling nation. It became known as Sespech and began molding itself into a nation that would be respected in the Reach. Many dictators rose and fell, many more were found to be puppets for Chondath and were lynched in the streets.

A few years ago, Sespech found a man it could believe in. Thuragar Foesmasher, a powerful noble, finally tired of the influence of Chondath. In a popular uprising that stunned Chondath, he ousted Ricjolo Tomrase, a Chondathian lackey, and took control. His flamboyant style and open nature concerning politics made him an instant hero. Almost the very moment that he ousted Tomrase, Chondath sent a “peace-keeping” force toward Ormpetarr. Foesmasher was ready. His forces waited for the Chondath army at the Arranford. The brief confrontation that ensued secured Sespech a chance to thrive.

The new baron has been forced to deal with people he’d rather ignore, such as the city-states of Nimpeth and Hlondeth. To build his allies, Thuragar has found some strange political partnerships with Lord Woren from Nimpeth and Dediana Extaminos of Hlondeth.

I’ve heard that he’s none too happy about the prospect of having snakes for in-laws, but he’s resigned himself to worry about the nation first and his personal life later. I’m sure he also realizes the benefit of having in-laws who can help Sespech establish a naval presence at Mimph.





Customs

Baron Foemasher is concerned about two things. The first is the new nation's security, and the second is its belief in the government. In the last few years, the kingdom has established two measures to ensure its future.

First, Sespech expects all able-bodied adults to serve six years in the military to ward off any future move by Chondath. While this met with some disapproval, it was certainly better than having Arrabar send some troops to "protect" Ormpetarr like in ages past.

Second, Thuragar encourages the communal gatherings, outlawed under the previous duke. By allowing people to talk, he gets to hear what they want from him through his ministers, men he sends to attend such gatherings. These gatherings are held twice each month.

Festivals

This Feast of the Purple Majesty is actually only a few years old, but its memory will be with me forever. It is a time of camaraderie, testing your skills, and testing your steadfastness to the baron. It's the most popular festival of the year, attracting men and women from all over the Reach. They've even had people from as far north as Shadowdale attend. As Alturiak comes to a close, the Feast of the Purple Majesty begins. This three-day event is the focal point of the month, and virtually all other activities lead up to it. The entire month is filled with mini-tournaments during which people can practice for the coming Feast.

The first day of the Feast of Purple Majesty is the Dawn of Equines. If you've never seen Plainsteeds in all their armored glory, I'd recommend this day of jousting, racing, and mounted combat. The Flight of the Dawn is the second day of fun and festivities. Competitions for archery and other missile sports are held. Swordfest brings the best swordsmen of Faerûn to the parade grounds. The competition is nonlethal combat like an advanced fencing demonstration. Many people walk away with bruises and cuts, but there are seldom any serious injuries. The winners of each day's events get to sit with the baron at his table. It's not uncommon for him to request their assistance in guarding Sespech from any advances from Chondath.

Cities

If there was ever a kingdom more spread out than Sespech, I'd like to visit it. Perhaps I could sell the information on how they keep informed to the baron; it's one of his primary concerns.

Elbulder

When we searched the Chondalwood for lost treasures and missing elven cities, we emerged at the city of Elbulder. It is a small, quiet community, sheltered on all sides by the River Arran. It's also one of the most direct links to Chondath. Any who wish to travel from Chondath to Elbulder must traverse the Old Road that passes through the Chondalwood. There have been some strange reports of flickering lights, ghostly images, and bandits riding that road, and few use it any more.

I noticed that Elbulder seems much more at peace with itself than other communities living near the forest. The people have finally made a home for themselves with nature instead of in spite of it.

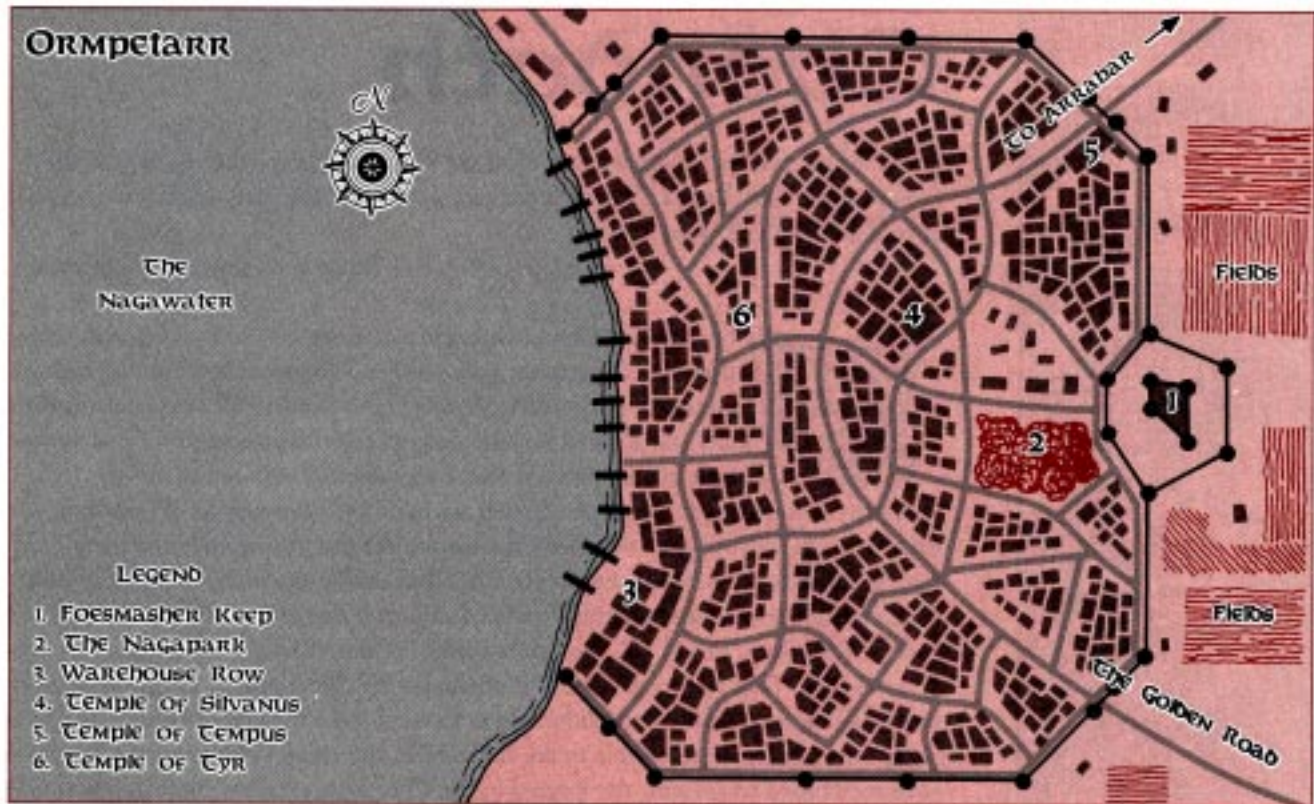
Fort Arran

This fort is the baron's first line of defense against an attack launched from Arrabar. It's served him well over the years, forcing Chondath send troops across the river at inconvenient locations where accidents are commonplace.

Trusted adventuring companies are hired to enter the city of Arrabar and report anything unusual, especially troop movements and extra supplies coming in at the port.

Mimph

The growing port city of Mimph offers a variety of adventuring opportunities, much like Hlondeth across the bay. Mimph is looking for adventurers who have their own vessels to patrol the waterways into the port since some vessels have been mysteriously lost while on their way to Mimph. Additional adventurers are normally hired as dock and warehouse guards. Marsa Ferrentio guards these areas to prevent terrorist activity.



Ormpetarr

The capital city of Sespech is plagued with problems normally associated with larger cities. There have been assassination attempts on the baron, guild problems, trading problems, caravans attacked on their way into the city, and even the thieves' guild is bucking the new rules set forth by the baron.

Last I heard, the baron was trying to find an adventuring company to find the root of these problems.

Geography

I don't need to talk about the Serpent's Holding. If you can't figure out there are snakes there—and haven't noticed my distaste for the slithering creatures—you deserve to get what comes to you.

The Golden Plains

As you walk along the Golden Road, you'll notice there is a distinct difference between the grasses on the east side of the road and those on the west. To the east, the grasses are rich and golden. To the west, they are dark green.

Nagastuff

There are three areas near the Golden Plains that deal with the same race of creatures: the nagas.

The Nagawater River flows from the Vilhon Reach itself past the city of Nimpeth, emptying into the Nagawater before finally flowing into the heart of the Chondalwood. The Nagawater really is filled with nagas.





Chondath

To see the successes of Chondath, walk along the Vilhon to Mussum and see its dead streets. Look to grand Timindar and Orbrech for the cost of always setting one's sights on the next hill-top. To see its failures, go to Arrabar.

– Turien Battlewake, Mayor of Lachom



he nation of Chondath began as a single city-state allied with others that shared a singular goal: survival. No sooner had Arrabar been established than a powerful ruler began to merge all of the independent city-states into a singular nation under his own control. This was the start of manipulation that continues in Chondath to this day.

As city-state battled city-state, Arrabar sat back and grew strong. When Iljak was sacked in 137 DR, Arrabar was there to congratulate the victors and provide military support for their cities. Slowly but surely, Chondath was born. Arrabar funded the Emerald Corridor, the road leading from Arrabar to Shamp that eventually stretched all the way north to Reth. In 144 DR, the “united cities” of the Vilhon attacked the elven city of Ariel-than. That victory gave birth to the nation of Chondath. In 257 DR, the eruption of a volcano allowed the Chondathian forces to take the city of Hlondeth, something Turmish had been unable to do. In 260 DR, the cities of Orbech and Timindar were established to aid with the logging in the Chondalwood. Even though both cities were destroyed by the elves in 267, the expansion of Chondath continued. While Chondath faced its share of defeats, it had more than enough victories to keep it a tremendous power in the Vilhon region. For hundreds of years, the city of Arrabar and the nation of Chondath represented the most powerful force in the Reach. The two names became synonymous with power and manipulation.

Chondath's fall didn't begin until 898 DR, when the independent city-states that had formed Chondath began trying to secede. After the Rotting War, the bloody magical confrontation that unleashed magic best left to the lower planes, Chondath fell in a matter of hours. Everything along the southern plains of the Vilhon used to belong to Chondath, from the small fishing village of Elupar to the might city-state of Reth. Chondath lost it all, and now it seeks to retrieve what it has lost.

Politics

It's unusual for a country paranoid about the use of magic to have a practicing magician as a ruler. I guess this just goes to show you that most nations would rather have something they don't quite understand dictating the future course of their country. Personally, I find it quite frightening, considering Chondath's past history with magic. I'm also reasonably certain that the current ruler, Eles Wianar, would release the ancient magic if the need arose. Perhaps this time he could pollute the entire Vilhon where his predecessors only destroyed armies.





Eles Wianar rules from "Shining Arrabar," still the most powerful force of evil in Chondath. He keeps the other city-states in line by manipulating them against one another. So far, no one's caught him. I can't imagine the city-states will put up with it for long, though.

Customs

Like all of the Vilhon, the practice of painting dots on one's head to signify how learned you are continues in Chondath. If anything, the tradition is even more ingrained here because it is one of the few cultural traits that Chondath can claim as its own. Magic is frowned upon in Chondath, especially the flagrant display of it. While most people seem to accept priestly magic, wizards are often strung up from a yard arm or chased from the city.

Festivals

While Chondath celebrates a variety of different festivals similar to other countries in the Reach,

it conducts a special festival during the first half of Flamerule. This midnight dance is conducted under the new moon. It symbolizes the darkness before the dawn and the return of Chondath to its former glory.

Cities

There are a variety of interesting cities to visit that are under the control of Chondath. At the same time, there are some ruins that I'd recommend that you shy away from. To visit Mussum is to invite death, and both Orbrech and Timindar have reports of ghosts and phantoms walking the ruined streets. Of course, as adventurers you know that half the joy of adventuring is uncovering secrets that most folk would rather leave covered.

Arrabar

The Generon is the ruling palace, the home of Eles Wianar. The Generon is perhaps the most phenomenal piece of architecture within the city. It's by no means as resplendent as the structures of Hlondeth, but it is un-



doubtedly one of the very best along the southern shores of the Vilhon. From its gold and silver-capped rooftops issue forth the decrees that once directed an empire.

I've haven't spent much time in Arrabar, but I did explore the Academia Vilhonus, the college that started the dot-drawing fashion craze hundreds of years ago. Its library is complete with a variety of historical tomes, but I question the authenticity of some of them; they seem to have been tainted by political influences from Chondath's past.

The Seaside is a very nice tavern, and most of the patrons tipped very well for my music. I heard rumors that Eles Wianar owned the tavern, but I never saw him during my stay. The Crying Claw is also near the waterfront and is a good spot to go if you're looking for a captain or first-mate to book passage out of Arrabar. It attracts an assortment of scoundrels and well-to-do vagabonds.

Hlath

Stating that you're adventurers looking for work is most likely going to earn you a discourse on the continuing war between Hlath and Iljak. If you're a fan of skirmishes between major cities, you might enjoy your visit to this city under siege.

Hlath is doing little more than strangling its own trade right now. Most merchants are too fearful to approach the city by land, and most would prefer to do business with the city of Shamph anyway.

Iljak

If there's a heartland to Chondath, it belongs to Iljak. Its agriculture supplies food to the cities of Reth, Arrabar, and even Hlath. Iljak attacks Hlath from a position of superiority. While Hlath could hurt Iljak by razing its fields, it doesn't dare do so. Hlath needs the food grown here to survive, or face paying steep prices from Turmish for imported goods.

The Emerald Dolphin is a nice bar near the warehouse district, and the Elmrock can provide all sorts of supplies at fairly good prices.

Samra

Huddled close to Iljak, this tiny port town could easily become a suburb outside the city walls. It's primarily a

fishing village that has found itself strangled by the war between Hlath and Iljak.

Samra is very upset with Shamph, a city they believe (rightfully so) to be profiting by the war between the two city-states. I doubt if either of these small cities has the resources to go to war with the other, however, so the only sparring likely to occur here is verbal.

Shamph

This is the city at the crossroads. To the south lies the Old Road that winds its way through the Chondalwood to the city of Elbulder. Shamph is in the perfect position to reap the benefits from the war between Hlath and Iljak.

Geography

The dark and swift waters of the Vilhon Reach certainly hold vast treasures from forgotten voyages. The history books in Cedarspoke, and perhaps Arrabar, can show you where they are hidden.

The Chondalwood

Our adventuring company searched through the Chondalwood for the mythical elven city of Rucien-Xan. After six months of searching, we found nothing. However, we could have easily missed it considering the sheer size of the forest.

We did come across a band of wood giants in our travels. They were a gentle folk who did not seem to care that we were in the forest. Apparently, they saw we weren't part of an expeditionary force and let us go on our way. Some satyrs attacked us a few times—apparently we were straying too close to their homes. I recommend caution while in the satyr's area of the wood.

That's it, my friend. Good luck in your travels, and remember to always look before you leap. Sorry to borrow such an old phrase, but you can avoid so many problems if you just look first to discover what it is you're about to get into.

Until Swords Part,

—Adamar Session

Lake of
the Snake

Giant's
RUN
MOUNTAINS

Lake of the LONG ARM

Gulthm

Nathiekh

THE
SUNNY
RIVER

Assam

THE SHINING PLAINS





Starmantle

Starmantle Bay

Thmere Forest

Cebarspokes

North Cedar River

South Cedar River

The Orbrekh Mountains

MI. AN

ORSRAUN MOUNTAINS

The Wetwoods

URMI



Bay

Celpir

AMRY

Wham
Isles

Mountains
of the
Alaoreum

IRONFANG Keep

Alaoreum River

Starfall
Stream Pool

Swordslake
Creek

MORNINGSTAR
Hollows

IRONCLOAK

Alaghôn

MT. ANORUS

EVENSTAR
Lake

Ravilar's Cloak

TURMISH

Nonthal

OBERINER'S Well

Dauntshield

Willowwood

CENTAUR
Bridge

Jathrin's Jump

Regalia

The Lake of
DRIFTING STARS

Quorngar

Merrybell

Glibenglobe

The Five
LIONS

Ulver's
Lance

Banathar

MT. KOLL

Xorhun

The
Aphrunn Mountains

Bare

BONES Hill

HAONDAR

Lill

Whamite Isles



	Mountains		Bridge
	Foothills		Villages & Towns
	Volcano		City
	Clear		Independent City-State
	Plains & Grasslands		Capitol
	Forest		Ruins
	Swamp		Road
	River		Trail

Scale: One Inch = 30 miles





ORMATH

L. heshai

Rushing
Hills

Deepwing Mo

Spines

of
Surkh

Surkh

Shalane Lake

The Deepwash

The Cloven



Mt. Ug

The Pike-men's Folly

Hlonb

Mountains

Nimpeth

Mimph

Lachom

kh

Elupar

Mountains

The Winterwood

The Nagartow

Sespe

The Wintercloak River

Serpents' Holding

Nagamwater



Mt. Ugruth

Lilit Pass

Aclor

Daroush

Amah

Hionbeth

Nkeeth

The Vilhon Reach

Samra

Ijak

Shamph

Museum

Arranbar

Timindar

Arranford

Fort Arran

Sespech

Ormpetarr

The Golden Road

Naga Plains

Golden Plains

River Arran

The Old Road

Elbulber



Chondath

NUN

RIVER
NUN

Fields
OF
NUN

Orbrech

The Chondalwood
(Satorwood)

Akanalpeaks

Coletro

Zutria

Sumbria

Kircenzie

Trevi
River

Lomatra

Lotoll

The Blade
Kingdoms



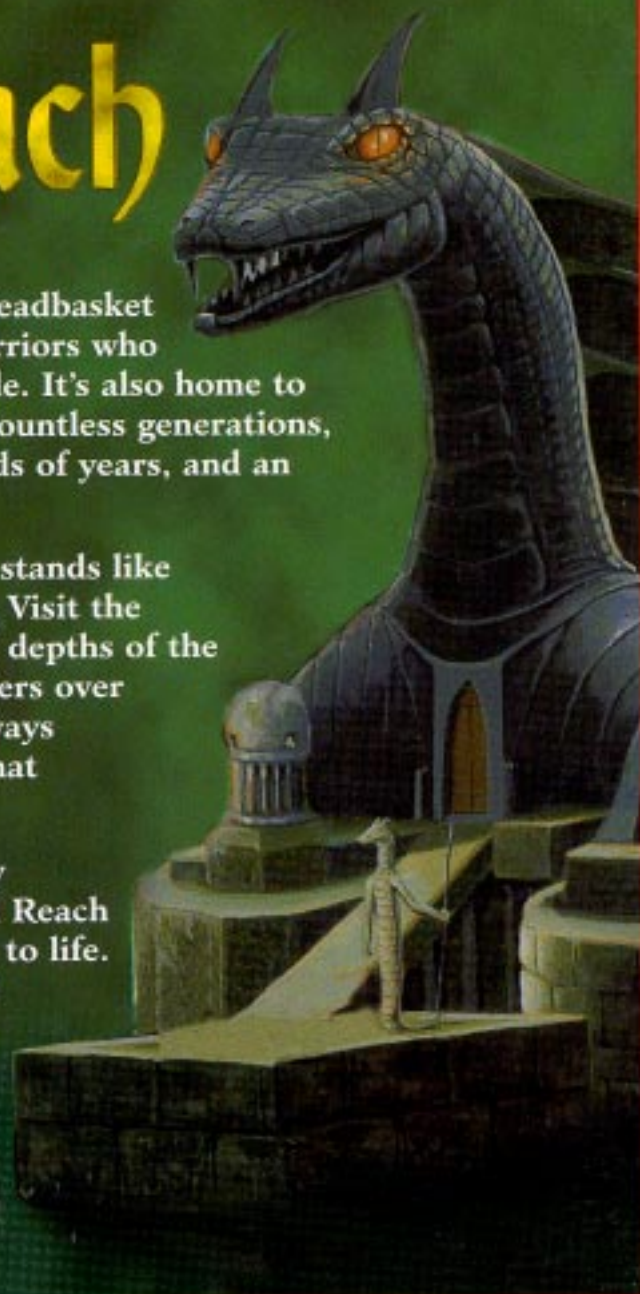
The Vilhon Reach

by Jim Butler

The Reach has always been considered the breadbasket of the Realms, the birthplace of countless warriors who have shed their lifeblood on the fields of battle. It's also home to noble families that have ruled kingdoms for countless generations, lizardman cities that have existed for hundreds of years, and an ancient plague that still haunts the land.

Take a trip to Hlondeth, the yuan-ti city that stands like an emerald beacon over the waters of Vilhon. Visit the gladiatorial arena of Hlath or plunge into the depths of the Deepwash. Feel the political tension that hovers over Shining Arrabar like a poised dagger. But always remember that in the Reach, as in all lands that adventurers tread, not all is as it appears.

This FORGOTTEN REALMS® campaign accessory contains a full-color poster map of the Vilhon Reach as well as new artwork that brings the Reach to life. A 64-page accessory for the Dungeon Master details the lengthy history of the Vilhon, as well as providing current information on the various countries and city-states. A 32-page travelogue provides background for players whose characters would try their hand at adventuring in the Vilhon Reach.



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