

FORGOTTEN REALMS

CAMPAIGN EXPANSION

EMPIRES
of the Shining Sea



by Steven E. Schend and Dale Donovan

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LEVINWOOD

by Steven E. Schend and Dale Donovan

Advanced
Dungeons & Dragons®



Empires of the Shining Sea

by **Steven E. Schend**
and **Dale Donovan**

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Based on the original DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® rules created by E. Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson.

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Distributed to the book trade in the United States by Random House, Inc. and in Canada by Random House of Canada, Ltd.

Distributed to the hobby, toy, and comic trade in the United States and Canada by regional distributors.

Distributed worldwide by Wizards of the Coast, Inc. and regional distributors.

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9561XXX1501 1st Printing, August 1998

ISBN 0-7869-1237-5

U.S., CANADA,
ASIA, PACIFIC, & LATIN AMERICA
Wizards of the Coast, Inc.
P.O. Box 707
Renton, WA 98057-0707
800-324-6496



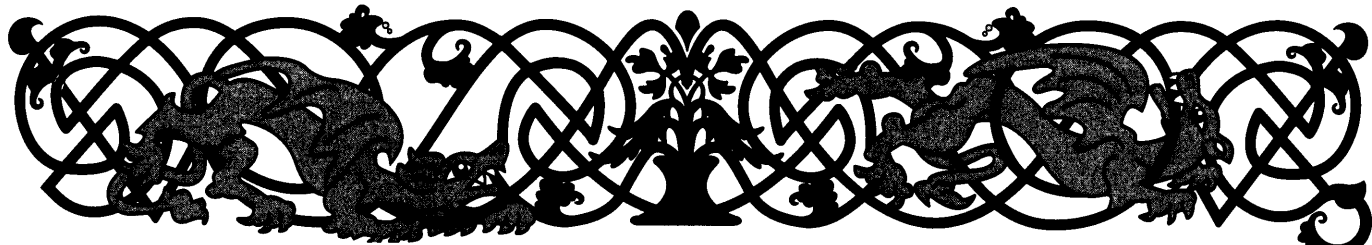
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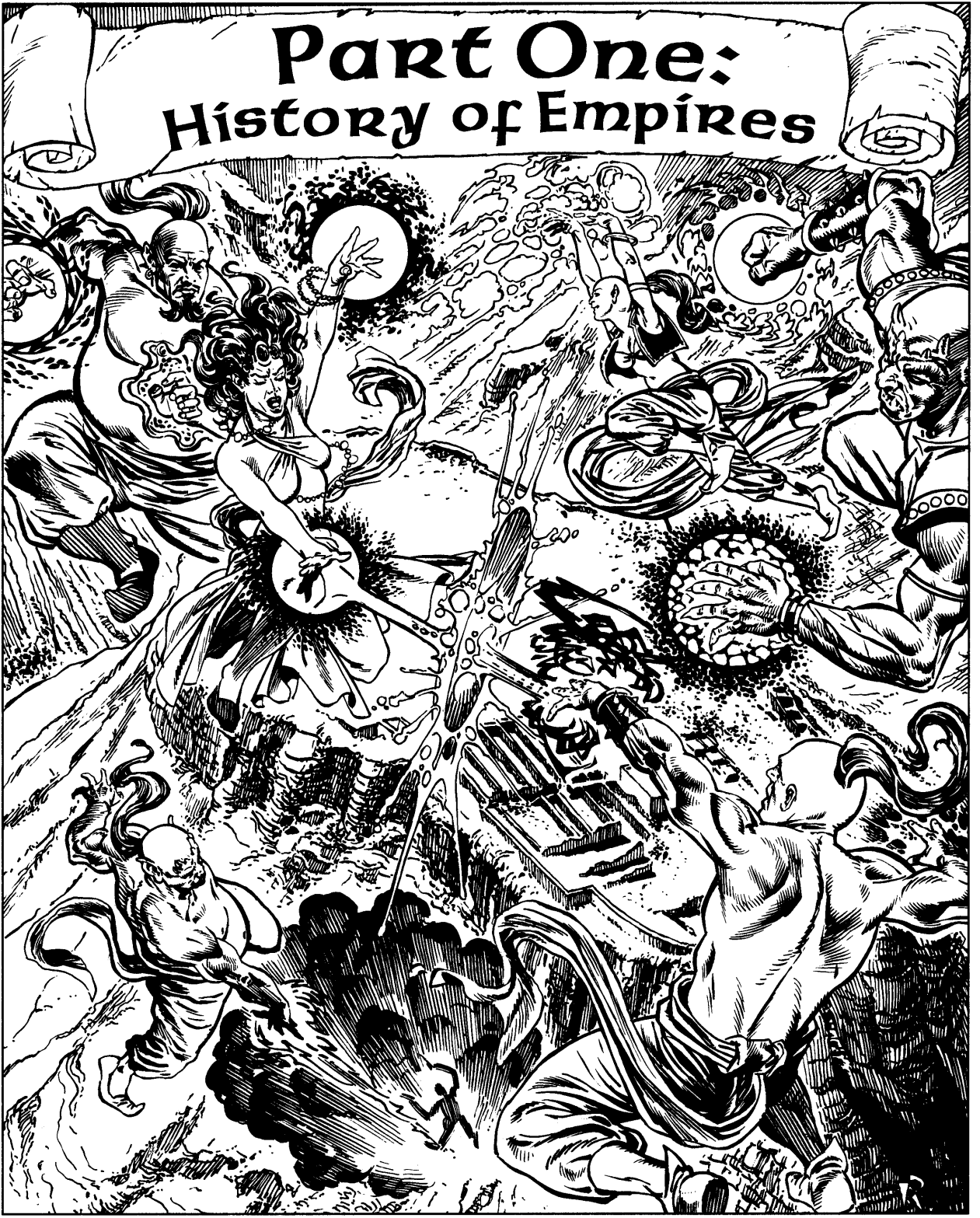
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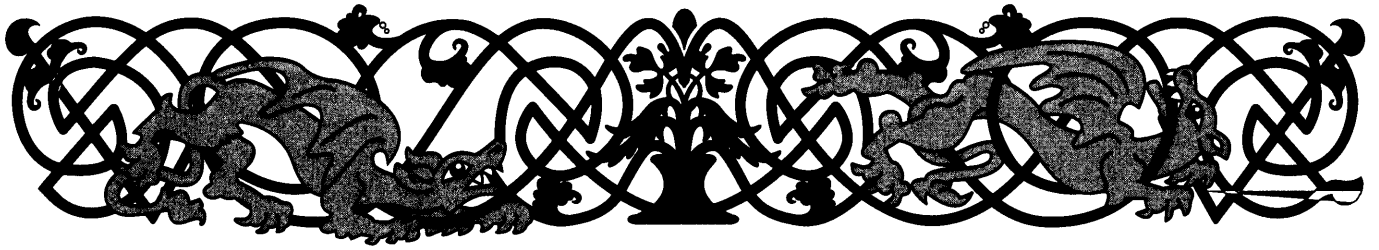
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Part One: History of Empires





Prologue

Though fiction to many, the Realms is all too real for many of us, and making it all up has never been an option. Thus I found myself waiting weeks for Elminster to bring lore for this project. Just as I'd given up hope of hearing anything on Calimshan or the Lake of Steam, I was awakened one night by a heavy bundle falling solidly onto my bed and me. Attached to the twine-bound oilcloth package was a tag of parchment in the Old Mage's unmistakable scrawl: "When next ye move 2,000 miles away from known locations, be so kind as to leave a forwarding address. Ye are not so easily found across two worlds, and I am an old man of middling patience. —E"

With letters from the Old Sage himself, no less than 16 massive tomes, over a dozen parchment or vellum scrolls, and other maps of obvious southern work as true sources, I got to work. It's difficult enough to work from Realmsian manuscripts, and the problems are compounded by Elminster's scribbles on everything. I warned Ed when he suggested giving the Old Mage sticky notes that it would only lead to trouble. Now every 400-year-old document is ragged with little yellow notes! Well, it beats the alternative—*magic mouth* spells activating when you open a tome to a particular page. Finally, Dale and I condensed the often long-winded texts and scattered sources into the work you have in your hands. Enjoy Elminster's more civil comments and the remaining materials culled from his sources.

"Within this packet, chronicler, ye shall find copies or originals of Tales to be Remembered; Elder Days of Amn; Empires of the Sands; The Phoenix Prophecies; A Slave's Life; Marches of the Calim; A Study of First Age Architecture; the treatise on Lamps, Genies, and the Works They Wrought; and excerpts I deemed appropriate for the work at hand. Ye have been made custodian of some of my rarer books and scrolls so that ye may educate thine folk about the southlands. Mind them well, for I shall expect their safe return anon. Respect these works, but believe them fully not, as ye and many find one actual truth in all histories and compendiums: the writers' or sponsors' agendas in creating the work. Even the monks in Candlekeep leave a mark of purpose that alters a story, be it an overflourished letter or the excisement of lore deemed too lascivious for readers' eyes. Glean what ye may and avoid more colorings of the facts overmuch."

—Elminster of Shadowdale, an author excised many a time

Before we proceed, let's be clear that Calimshan is *not* a nice place, and it holds many morally ill social attitudes. It actively supports slavery and sexism, amid a plethora of other unenlightened cultural traits. The reprehensible attitudes of Calimshan are recorded here to provide a fully detailed slaving state, of which there are many examples in many fantasy worlds. Hopefully those who read this material will learn to hate Calishite slavers enough to send heroes out of their ways to bring their full efforts against them.

Legends and Tales

"The Qysar Shoon would see his greatness reflected on the annals of history, and he would trust my humble hands to the task. May Oghma take my eyes if I am lacking in my duty to our mortal master who graces us with his noble rule and wisdom, for it is my wish only to serve and record."

"In the name of the most holy Great Scrivener, I declare my tales to be true. Under his compassionate guidance I can tell no lie nor can I always tell the truth. My quill rushes at the bidding of the past and the present, though some would stop it from recording things unpleasant or mournful. Nay, he who gives us knowledge and our ways to keep it demands these things be known as much as those that give us joy. Question it I do not, for I am but a humble scribe. The tale will be told, for it is not his will to allow knowledge to fall away from our minds in order to rot in the sun like spoiled dates fallen from a tree."

—Mualak yn Dulah yn Abbas, Scribe of the Qysar Amahl Shoon IV

The lands along the Shining Sea have been dominated for the last seven millennia by Calimshan. Even though the region around the Lake of Steam and its city-states are now independent, these areas are far easier to understand within the context of their long history under Calishite rule. Thus, history for the entire territory is broken down here by the dominant historical patterns established by Calimshan, which measure time in relation to the great Imperial Ages. These general overviews provide readers with the major aspects, achievements, and touchstones of each historical period and how it differed from the next. They also provide broad links between local happenings and other major events across Faerûn's history.

While Calimshan has had no fewer than five of its own distinct calendar systems tied to the various dynasties and empires of the past, all historical references are measured using Dalereckoning as a





The Nar'ysr

standard to facilitate cross-referencing times and events across the breadth of the Realms and between the past and the present.

The lands of the Shining Sea have myths and legends that color the cultural recollection of the times before recorded histories. Many of the current cultural and societal norms of Calimshan or the Lands of the Ljōns stem from the earliest of legends and oral stories repeated across eight millennia. Beyond the legends and the Phoenix Prophecies of the Abbalayar, the best collection of prehistoric legends of midwestern and southern Faerûn is *Tales to be Remembered* by Mualak yn Dulah yn Abbas, Imperial Scribe to the Court of His Imperial Majesty Lord High Qysar Amahl Shoon IV. There are only four complete copies of this work still in extant in the Realms. They are located in the great libraries of Candlekeep, the Vault of the Sages, Heralds' Holdfast, and the Great Caliph's Library in Calimport. This work is the basis for the legends recounted here, complete with the Phoenix Prophecies noted below.

Because the lands now referred to as the Empires of the Shining Sea and their peoples have been in flux since time immemorial, very little is known or provable about their earliest histories. Legendary tales, by their very nature, are not usually accurately maintained and drift in content and scope to incorporate or accommodate changes in society and traditions. The greatest obstacle in understanding Calimshan's history is separating fact from prophecy and legend. Much of the lore has lost what original fact it contained due to the exaggerations of storytellers or the lapsed memories of the elders who pass it down. Even the best southern historians littered their texts with half-heard truths and legends, and early prophecies considered to be of immense import were not recorded in paper for hundreds of years

after they were originally uttered. Thus, prophecy and those who practice it are discussed here first, to establish that history has grown both in spite of and in expectation of predestination. After this are recounted some of the earliest legends and tales about the lands of the Empires of the Shining Sea, to provide some background for that mythical time in history before the rise of the Calim.

The Phoenix Prophecies

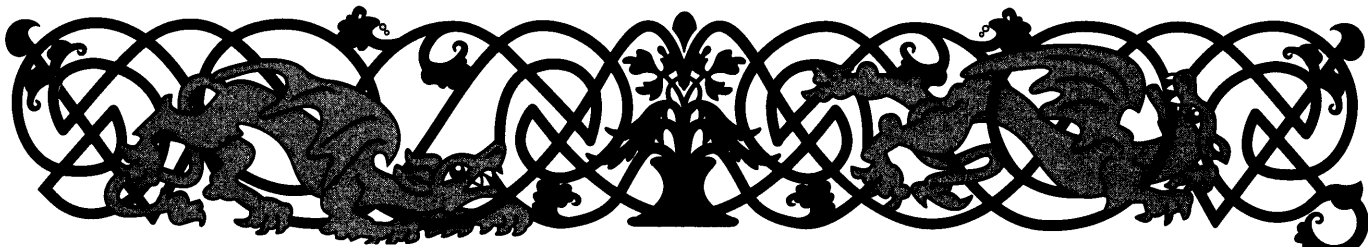
Centuries before the first cities ever rose in these lands, people were here, along with dragons, giants, elves, dwarves, and others whose ilk is long forgotten in the brightness of the current day. And even in these times, there were those of power who saw beyond the veil of time and the mortal world, speaking what became legends. Folk of the North speak highly of their Alaundo the Seer and his many prophecies, upon which they have built their calendar. Among the southern lands, oracles have rarely been lacking, and some had even greater sight than the fabled seer of Candlekeep. The arcane prophets of Calimshan are known as the Abbalayar, of which more can be gleaned in the "Wild Calimshan" chapter of Section Two of this work. Of immediate historical import, though, are the Phoenix Prophecies.

The greatest of Abbalayar seers is known only as the Nar'ysr, though to Northerners, he is far more famous as the Phoenix of Calimshan, from a loose translation of his name when the Herald Swordswreath recorded many of his prophecies over 400 years ago. The Nar'ysr was an uncommon man from all accounts, his skin reddish and his hair as gold as the morning sun. His parents, siblings, and immediate children exhibited no such unique marks at birth, though some descendants have gained some of them in the centuries since then. From all accounts verbal and written, the Nar'ysr spoke rarely, but when his eyes blazed with fire, he would speak of times past and times yet to be with enough force that his words are believed to have shaped Calimshan as much as genies, magic, and the toil of humankind.

While copies of the Herald Swordswreath's manuscript lie in libraries in Candlekeep, Calimport, Silverymoon, Waterdeep, and elsewhere, the original manuscript volumes entitled *The Phoenix Prophecies* lie safely at Heralds' Holdfast. This work is the first non-Calishite recording of the prophecies, though it is a work compiled both from a contemporary Abbalayar's memories and a number of small, now-lost sources that recorded earlier, slightly altered versions of the same prophecies. Still, for scholars across the Realms, the Phoenix Prophecies both instituted and predicted the great ages of Calimshan. In all, there are well over 8,000 separate Phoenix Prophecies recorded in the Herald Swordswreath's seven-volume manuscript, though, aside from the Caleph Auguries, most are of little interest to non-Calishites. Among the volumes are predictions on events great and small, including major events impacting no less than seven major religions: The Nar'ysr predicted the deaths of "three who would shake the world," and long afterward this was confirmed with the deaths of Bane, Bhaal, and Myrkul.

The Caleph Auguries

The Caleph Auguries are the most prominent and important prophecies made by the Nar'ysr, for they foretold (and continue to predict) the major schisms that established and later divided the so-called Empires of the Shining Sea. The Caleph Auguries roughly forecast the Nine Ages of Calimshan, and many of the titles for the



time periods within this history are derived from the Nar'ysr's predictions. While Swordsweath noted that the Nar'ysr placed no more importance to these events than on others, she was the one who gave the Caleph Auguries their name and their distinctiveness. The Auguries number 22 prophecies in all, 14 of which, based on popular interpretation, are said to have come true already. What many students of the Phoenix Prophecies await are the culmination of the remaining Auguries, which are among the most enigmatic prophecies ever seen. The unfulfilled Auguries are presented below, followed by comments or interpretations by the irascible Elminster.

Augury 12

A man shall enter where Gods Do Not Dare Tread with a keffiyeh of cloth, yet not of cloth. Upon his return, the keffiyeh shall rest upon the brow of the most worthy man, for with him shall come enlightenment.

Elminster: *Some have told me this could be a prophecy attributed to the prophet and caleph Alim yn Atsel al Dian. He was a man of import in Calimshan whose keffiyeh was actually a curious creature from the Burning Lands called a "vizier's turban" by the inhabitants of those land. However, having met him in my youth, the only enlightenment I saw that he sought or carried came from a bottle. I'm afraid that others will have to peel the layers of truth from this one.*

Augury 14

A woman with eyes of moonlit snow shall gaze upon the land and find it wanting. Pain will follow in time, for displeasing this lady shall always bear grave consequences. Her anger eclipses all others, darkening the day to night and lighting the night sky with her fury.

Elminster: *Did I not know better, this might describe milady fair of Aglarond. I trust ye do not believe this speaks of her, for the only solid clue ye have is the eye color. Of all the women I have known in my days, only six had eyes of this hue: Iraclea the Ice Queen, Synmara Eldenbow of Myth Drannor, Darthleene of Berdusk, the lovely yet deadly Dlatha Faenar of the Spirestars (or whatever the Beshabans call it), milady the Simbul of Aglarond, and Saranla Bhevik of Lheshayl. While I doubt any of these ladies means the Realms harm and others may also have such bewitching eyes, I think rather that some errant goddess' avatar whose eyes are lit with anger and divinity will see this prophecy fulfilled. But I hope not in this old man's lifetime, for I have danced with gods enow.*

Augury 16

The sun shall rise to guide the outcasts home to their fathers' houses to claim seats at table once more. This dawn brings prosperity for some, ruin for others, and while the sun is bright, the land lies swathed in darkness by another's hand.

Elminster: *Nicely vague, as all good prophecies should be. There be not enough here of distinctiveness to knit together a solid answer.*

Augury 17

The Penumbrannar in shadows work. The Penumbrannar in times grow and thrive. When three rings their homes find, they shall stalk the lands anew. Until the child of centuries faces fear itself and accepts it, the Penumbrannar shall bring ruin to elf and man.

Elminster: *Best not to worry about this today, lad. The Penumbrannar is a name used many times by Calishite raiders and thieves thinking themselves invincible. There have been no less than seven groups of madmen and avarice-riddled fools of this name in eight centuries. That's not to say there's nothing to the prophecy, just that there are those who would use knowledge for any gain and the consequences be damned.*

Augury 18

The sun shall rise upon the seas, and the seas' vengeance shall be made plain. Water eclipses earth as ignorance eclipses reason. Only with tears of love and songs of understanding shall the land and sea deter the wrath of both and survive the day until nightfall ends the tumult.

Elminster: *Oh, this one has annoyed me for nearly 200 years. I've long since realized this could stand for any of hundreds of rather monstrous floods Faerûn has seen across the millennia, including the Killing Wave that stole Jhaamdath from the shores of the Vilhon. Should it mean more, I'm afraid I've lost the patience for watching and starting at every shadow upon the sea.*

Augury 19

When Winter's Lion meets Summer's Scourge, two of and not of a kind shall pass from the land to be reborn as enemies ever.

Elminster: *Well, as I have said, the best prophecy is a cryptic one.*

Augury 21

Seven stars rise blue and ivory, three tears fall gold and royal, darkness among seven silver stars once more, and three above shall cry.

Elminster: *E'en a simpleton such as Manshoun might suggest the images tie to Mystra, Selûne, and Talona by their colors and symbols. For that very reason, I caution ye away from such conclusions—any answer simply found in an oracle's tale is oft the wrong one.*

Augury 22

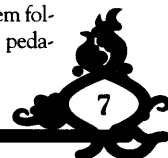
And he shall come from a great house of pain with hair of spun gold and eyes of the sea. He shall break the bonds that hold him, light the end of Oppression's Road for many, and free the tortured peoples from the evil grip of bondage.

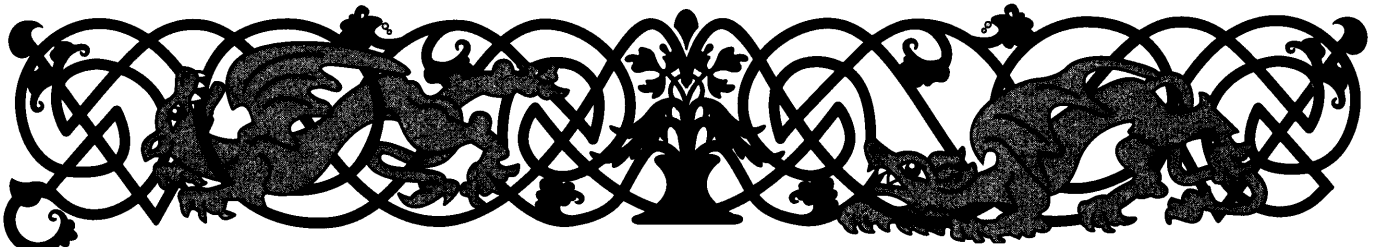
Elminster: *This prophecy in particular has kept the hopes of thousands of slaves alive for centuries. Many temples have embraced and adopted this prophecy as being fulfilled; they each speak of a deliverer fitting this description whom they hold dear. Mystra herself speaks of him for a day to come, but his sire's sire is not yet born. Still, this prophecy of good is nigh, and I hope to see its dawn within my years.*

Eclipses

Within the Caleph Auguries, the Nar'ysr saw the rise and fall of empires and powers. These are symbolized by the images of rising and setting suns, though sometimes changes of empires were portrayed with other images, such as rearing dragons or flying ravens. Among the lesser prophecies, his oracular symbology continued and has fairly accurately predicted many, but not all, major wars and battles in the south. Eclipses were the symbols that seemed to key most to wars.

"When strife eclipses the sun, only Bhaelros lights the consciousness of men" is an oft-repeated saying attributed to El Nar'ysr. However, it never appears in the Phoenix Prophecies, but only in an obscure collection of quotations by the Abbalayar prophet Kadh yn Ororm al Mjol, who lived in the Seventh Age. Still, among all the references to eclipses within the recorded Phoenix Prophecies, El Nar'ysr loosely predicted the Genie Wars, the Twelve Peak Wars, the Eye Tyrant Wars, no less than four wars during the Shoon Imperium, and even the Time of Troubles and the Tuigan Horde—though they had little impact on Calimshan itself. In all, the eclipse references cover nearly a third of El Nar'ysr's total prophecies, and over 300 of them follow the first eclipse prophecy (known as Eclipse Prophecy 1 to peda-





gogues and the Prophecy of the Dragon and the Stallion to the more poetically minded) wherein “The Dragon of the West and the Stallion of the East shall meet and the dust of their fury shall eclipse the skies.”

Note: At least 15 more eclipses are tucked in the final volume of Nar’ysr’s predictions as recorded by Herald Swordsweath, though Elminster withheld that final volume from me. His notes on the omission were more cryptic than usual: “Lest fear and suspense eclipse thine thoughts more than reason, ’tis best I keep these here with me in the Realms.”

Founding Stories

Much of Calimshan’s folklore is still preserved by storytelling, rather than being written down in books for scholars. There are stories that were told in this region for 10 generations before the first day ever dawned on a civilized land. These stories live on in the dreams of prophets and the oracular mutterings of lunatics touched by the divine powers. Still, the folkloric nature of these tales makes them no more or no less true in the eyes of Calishites than those events everyone sees for themselves or those that have been carefully tracked on paper. The Calishite attitude toward legend is displayed in one of their proverbs: “Never trust the storyteller, but always trust the story.” The accuracy and proof of these legends is in the mind of the listener, as is their veracity.

Nearly anyone in the lowest of markets or highest of palaces can recite some of the legends of Those Who Came from Mist to unleash dragons upon the land, or the tale of helpful Janna who aided a poor blind merchant by polishing and repairing all his lamps for sale while he slept. As in any culture, many of these stories are as true as they are false, and most are simply moral or cultural fables meant to teach lessons in principles or proper behavior to the listeners. Still, among the learned classes and some wizened elders, certain tales are designated the Founding Stories. Those of the Shining Sea region believe their origins and that of their lands lie within these tales. They are thought to be more true than false, though to test that truth is to insult the storyteller.

There are, of course, hundreds more stories and tales than are told below, but these meandering tales serve to show that many of the myths and legends of Calimshan’s earliest days (long before the Djen and the other immigrants) were as those from many lands—they sought to explain what they did not understand. Whether it is a modern foible of the peoples of the Shining Sea region to remember mostly the fables tied to money or whether the Calishites have been obsessed with money from the start is unknown.

The Tales of Terror

These are the oldest of stories, possibly culled from dragons’ tales or told around the campfires in the caves of early humankind. These early moral tales still serve to scare children into obedience and to teach them how harsh the world can be outside the tribe/house/family. These stories also build up the still closely held Calishite belief in the overwhelming importance of money and possessions.

Many tales teach that if you have influence over something (often by being wealthy), then it cannot harm you. This tenet is rooted in the simple premise that everything wishes to avoid harm and pursue profit. Theologians and scholars believe that this pragmatic and slightly cynical Calishite ideal has emerged from the prehistory of the original peoples of the region, who were probably

conquered and overrun by immigrants from other lands, worlds, or planes. Still others feel that this desire to have leverage or control over one’s enemies or environment emerges from the basic fact that long ago the region was incredibly dangerous for humans, since there were monsters everywhere, from where they slept in the mountains to where they hunted and foraged for food in the valleys. Beset from all sides, the humans’ only protector was fire, and they felt they had no control over their lives. Anything that gave them control, even the illusion of control, was prized.

Tales of this era and style have become fables and gradually have been sanitized for civilized ears. Still, they are known as the Tales of Terror both out of tradition and out of their effects on children. There are thousands of such tales and myths to mention, but some of the most common fables and what they teach Calishite children are:

- All animals with any smarts attack humans because they are jealous that we have gold and they do not; dumb animals who are not vicious are those who become food, for everything with intelligence wants or needs gold.
- All animals are afraid of fire even though it attracts them to itself, for they fear the pain Father Sky puts in fire for their daring to try and claim its gold.
- A gold and silver coin each on a dead person’s eyes keep that person in the grave, for with them that person can pay for passage to the Underworlds and still have wealth. Undead are the coinless dead who wander in anger of being sent on in poverty.
- Tigers have stripes because they forever lost some of their gold to the crafty First Trader of Calimshan.
- Bears climb trees to escape from the jackals who could steal any prize, such as golden honey.
- Plants grow toward the sun because they, like people, are reaching for the gold in the sun.
- The world is a precious jewel to Father Sky, and like a jewel, he puts the world in a box at night so it is safe and brings it out again at daybreak, which is why the night is dark, like the inside of a box.
- The safest places to be are in and on the rivers, where the cowardly jackal cannot reach, the crops grow, and many fish seeking the gold of the sun over the silver of the sea climb into our nets.
- A person’s skin is brown due to the First Trader touching the coins of Father Sky and becoming first golden- then silver- then copper-skinned upon touching his coins.

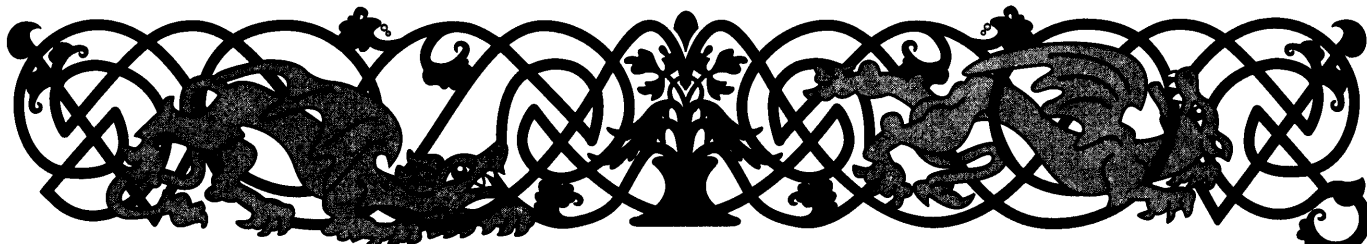
The Myth of the Birth of Coins

This myth illustrates the adventures of First Trader, the most popular figure of the Shining Sea region’s myths, the legendary founder of Calimshan, and a sort of Everyman.

When the First Trader became hungry, he went to the great hunter, the dragon. And the dragon would not give him any food, for he was a greedy dragon, as they are. The First Trader’s hunger grew, and Father Sky heard his stomach rumble. Father Sky could not give the First Trader the sun, so he put its color in metal and out of the sun fell seven suns of gold: golden coins. The First Trader gave the dragon a coin, the dragon gave him some food, and he ate.

Later, the First Trader grew tired and needed a place to rest. The dragon would not let him into its cave where it was warm, and he shivered in the cold winds out on the mountains. Sister Moon heard his teeth chatter and took pity on him, and she put her silver color in metal





and down fell seven silver coins. The First Trader woke the dragon, and the dragon marveled at the silver coin the First Trader showed him, and he let him into the cave to sleep in exchange for the coin.

The next day, the First Trader went to bathe and then take his leave. As he bathed, the dragon stole all his coins and laughed at the First Trader floundering in anger in the water. The First Trader wanted his coins back, for they were precious gifts from the gods. He looked down to find anything to give the dragon in trade for his coins, and he saw the sun shining on the water. Reaching toward the sun on the water, the First Trader's hands shattered the sun into hundreds of small suns, and when he raised his hands, they were filled with hundreds of coins, which he offered in exchange for his gods-given six gold and six silver coins. The dragon accepted these new smaller coins, knowing many was always better than few, and each went his separate way with his new wealth.

In this, we have learned that dragons covet all coins, for Father Sky grants them nothing but that which they may steal or gain from us. Dragons continue to amass many coins to this day, for they are still seeking the First Trader's remaining six gold and six silver coins of old. Finally, we have learned that our land's founder was granted wealth from sun, moon, and water, and as long as they endure, so shall we.

The Myth of the Four Rivers

Recorded only on one pair of ancient stone tablets, the Myth of Four Rivers was old long before the genies' reigned. The tablets have long since fallen to dust, though the dust of those tablets is believed to be held by Cyric's Faithful in Tethyr's Mountain of Skulls, in a golden chest shaped from the dragon Rivenaurigoth's skull. The tale itself is inscribed in an ancient tongue on the golden teeth of that skull, and only one of that temple's faithful is allowed to view it at once. Rivenaurigoth's skull is an item holy to the church because it is the gilded head of the most powerful of worshipers ever to have served Bane and the other evil gods. The inscribed myth on its teeth is one of the earliest myths attributed to any extant church today. Below is as literal a translation as is possible, for the zealous touches of the faithful have worn smooth some carved words, necessitating inserts from popular memory and other related myths.

It is said that the dawn rose one day, but it hid itself from all as it passed over the peak where gods fear to tread. The Four Who Are Ever Spoken of in Fear laughed to see the light hide its face. The eldest of the Four said, "Let us seek out the sun, for if we find where it hides, we can capture its power and use it to conquer our Father the Sky." The others nodded, and set out for the peak o'er which the sun hid itself from the world.

The Four Who Should Never be Named were all jealous of each other's power and ever greedy for more. They did not venture together, but traveled far separated from each other so that none of them could benefit from the others' efforts. All went to the Sea and sat on different rocks, waiting for the Sea to answer, for they needed her help to capture the sun without burning themselves. The Sea came to Those Who Bring Fear and heard each of their pleas. She allowed each of them to carry her with them so they might each capture the sun, their steps bringing water onto the land. Inwardly, the Sea laughed, since she knew the sun could not be had, and her laughter can be heard still in the dry conch shell.

The Four of Darkness each began their journeys to capture the sun. The One Who Breathed Cruelty walked from west to east, fighting anything in his path. When he saw the Mountain Where

Gods Tread Not, he leapt toward it, for he saw his brethren coming and he wished for the prize.

The Brother of True Fear walked a shorter path from south to north. As he approached the Mountain, he grew as tall as the hills, his legs making one stride where two once were. He saw his brother leap at the prize just as he stepped into the valley they both sought.

The Giver of Pain looked to sneak through the forest and come up on the hiding sun unawares. What he found among the trees, we dare not speak of, but One Who is Known in Terror met something that made him turn from his quest and return to the Sea in Defeat. The roars that come from the forest today are the echoes of that defeat.

The Warrior Whose Sword Drips Anger ran his race from south to north. When his brother the Paingiver cried out for aid, he gave it, but when they took up the quest for the prize again, the Warrior sent his brother along with a phantom chasing the wrong path through the forest. The Warrior reached the Mountain with his brethren close at hand—all but the Paingiver, who had been easily duped.

Three of the Four Who Shall Not be Named came together in the mountains at the foot of the Peak that the Gods Fear, and in that valley they fought. They looked at the Mountain that held their prize and, for once, the gods did not fear the Mountain. They clawed and blasted and screamed and lashed at its sides, but they could not find the sun. Mother Earth cried out for them to stop, but their savagery filled their ears with anger, and they heard her not.

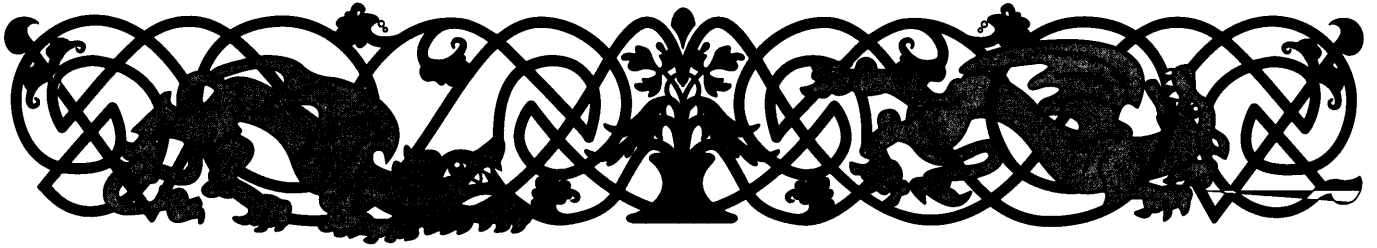
Father Sky heard the cries of Mother Earth, and looked down in despair at her pain. The Four Who Only Knew Wrath had given the Sea ways to wound Mother Earth, and now three of them caused her more pain. His anger grew more terrible than all the Four, and the skies darkened. To this day, his howls of rage are heard in the thunder, his wrath strikes out in lightning, and his tears flow as the rain. The rain flooded the valley before the Mountain Where No God Dwelt, four new rivers sprang forth, and the Three were washed out of the peaks. They and the Sea's trespasses were washed away with Father Sky's rain and Mother Earth's tears. And when their anger and pain had abated, the sun shone strongly again, and an arch of colors showed the love between Father Sky and Mother Earth.

The Sea gained from each of the Four of Fear a child as the price for her aid. These children of Fear and Sea would teach others to hold her in more respect and protect those who chose to be of her world rather than of her sister, the Earth. Thus the world gained four new rivers and four new gods.

Many theologians today who hear this tale believe it is a myth to explain rain and rainbows, which it is in part. It is also an attempt to explain the difference between fresh water (which came from love) and salt water (which harbored jealousy). Of course, only those who know that the Spider Swamp was once the delta of a large river long ago can see that it is also an origin story of the rivers of Calimshan.

The Banites, and now the Cyricists, keep this tale hushed up but never forgotten, for they believe that their dark god was the elder, the One Who Breathed Cruelty, though others suggest he was the defeated Giver of Pain. To make the Fearsome Ones seem foolish or weak in any way was to banish some of their power. When worshipers of Anachtyr slew Rivenaurigoth the Darkly Pious within his Marching Mountain lair in the Year of Lost Faith (-284 DR), they gilded the wynn's skull and carved the Myth of the Four Rivers on its teeth so the foolishness of the dark gods would not be forgotten. By the time of the Shoon, Banites had stolen the skull and hidden it in what was to be a succession of many different safeholds; the reason for keeping it hidden (to preserve the fearsomeness of their god) has become lost in the greed of merely keeping it.





The Ancient Past

“Trying to determine the exact truth of the events of the ancient past is often as accurate as predicting the future. You can never be totally certain of the facts, you’re never quite sure what you’ll find, and in the immediate scope of things, few people truly care enough to reward or even compliment you for your results—let alone the degree of effort required to obtain them.”

—Lord Maskar Wands of Waterdeep

Calimshan, moreso than any of the other civilized realms in Faerûn, has seen its glory rise and fall many times over the centuries. In terms of age, the lands of the pashas have been a center of civilization for more than 6,000 years, and their greatest eras were long gone when grand Cormyr raised its Purple Dragon banners high. Given the timespans covered by this country and its attendant empires, it is imperative we look at the broad view without getting too mired in particulars.

Eras of Past Glory

The eras of early human Calishite civilization have been romanticized and have become legends. The human tribes were barbaric at best, and technological leaps in weaponry consisted of switching from stones to clubs to sharp-edged rocks strapped to clubs to form axes. Human tribes warred constantly with each other over hunting rights and territory in the lush grasslands south of the mountains. In the western forests, they clashed with the small elf settlements therein; they were more afraid of the magic wielded by the elves than comforted by their companionship in the area, a situation the elves preferred.

Fourteen thousand years ago, the tribal barbarian clans lived in a world unrecognizable to any current native of the Shining Lands. The great forest Keltormir extended down from the Bowl of the Gods (an ancient name for the depressed areas between two mountain ranges, now known as Amn) all the way to the sea. It was interrupted only by tall, jagged peaks, known as the Godspires, that stabbed skyward and into the sea (now called the Starspires) and the intimidating and unforgiving Marching Mountains, then known as the Dragons’ Wall.

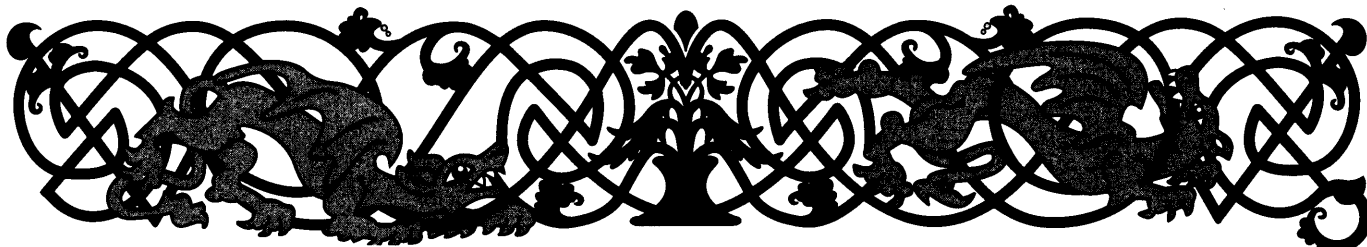
Within the forest lived elves and giants, who fought for domination over the wooded lands. Both races won empires to call their own. Unfortunately, their battles awoke the great evils who ruled from the skies—the dragons! While elves won many battles against their scaly foes, the forests did not, and trees burned like oil-soaked torches when battle rose. During all this time, humanity sought to find its place, and it found it—in hiding. The caves and tiny valleys among the mountains yielded shelter from all the monsters that could easily destroy humankind. But with the fires, human beings were forced to become bolder or die trapped in caves by raging firestorms with the air being scalded from their lungs.

While the elves and dragons and giants warred with each other or themselves for nearly four millennia, humanity learned either from them or from avoiding them. Some humans fell under the rule of such fell creatures as Xaxathart the Retributor, a red wyrm of immense power and proportion, only to be freed by dragon’s death at the hands of the elf Tethir Dragonslayer. The forests gave way in parts to clearings and meadows where humanity could build shelters in relative comfort and be able to see an enemy approaching, yet still be able to flee to safety in the caves or beyond the treeline when elves or giants or dragons attacked. Humankind learned to grow crops in these clearings, and the need to tend them gradually ended humans’ nomadic hunting and gathering existences.

To the east, elves and trees also dominated the landscape during these days. The great southern elf civilization of Ilythiir and its lesser contemporaries of Syðrpiir, Orishaar, Eielliûr, and Thearnytaar all settled the lands nestled around the Lake of Steam and the eastern bay of the Shining Sea. The raging destruction of the Crown Wars and the Descent of the Drow would see the ruination of all these realms and Keltormir as well.

About the same time as the Crown Wars, the dwarf realms were growing from their strongholds at Bhaerynden and expanding into colonial realms beneath the lands of southern Faerûn. By –8100 DR, the dwarf kings of eight of the deep realms had united to form the great empire of Shanatar under the rule of one king, seated on the Wymskull Throne at Brightaxe Hall (about a mile beneath Keltar).





Within 150 years, the dwarves and elves established trade between Shanatar and Tethir, Darthiir Wood, and Wyrnwood (the remnants of Keltormir). For centuries, the dwarves and elves lived in peace, for they remained apart in their underground holds and forest homes.

All during this time, the humans also lived peacefully with the other races, for they continued to avoid them. The other powers all outstripped them in power and knowledge, and the native humans' isolation was due in part to a fear of enslavement. In reality, human beings had little to fear from the demihuman races of the land in that matter, but their subjugation was just on the horizon, and it would sweep in with the coming of elemental beings seeking revenge for their own enslavement for millennia.

Time of the Genies

Historians may never be totally certain of the origin of the Djen or their reasons for coming to Faerûn, but when they came they left their mark forever on the continent. Approximately 7,800 years before the Standing Stone was erected in Cormanthor, a large force of genies and their servants and slaves arrived in the region of present-day Calimport. Histories have muddled the distinction of exactly who the name "Djen" belonged to, and now it collectively refers to the immigrants of the Great Arrival. While it leads to some confusion among those sages tracing the origins of humanity, the Djen are equally the djinn, the jann, a select few marids, and their halfling and human slaves. The fact that the ruling race of the burgeoning empire was the djinn might explain the derivative collective terminology used for them and those over whom they ruled.

It is uncertain whether the Djen came from the Elemental Plane of Air or some other interim location. Some theorists from the Burning Lands of Zakhara and learned scholars of the Herald's Holdfast posit that the Great Arrival may have been a temporal *gate* initiated from Zakhara. These conclusions are based on some evidence linking early Calishite clothing, architectural, and art styles to similar styles in Zakhara approximately 500 years ago. The Djen slaves were smaller than the tall, broad-shouldered natives of the Calimshan region, and their skintone was duskier than that of the native humans. These facts would also seem to support a migration from a place similar to Zakhara, many of whose natives share those ethnographic traits.

The reason for the Great Arrival has always been elusive. Calim the djinni never recorded the reasons he led his people here, nor did the other genies of the realm speak of it. A legend among the Djen slave classes spoke of other worlds they had walked. On these worlds the great djinni lord had broken himself and others of his kind out of their magical bondage to wizards and fled. In revenge for their servitude, the genies now enslaved mortals, though they seemed to restrict themselves to races weak in magic and weaponry. To prevent their own recapture, Calim led his genie folk away and used artifacts to cast great magics that led them to another world—Faerûn.

The arrival of the Djen signaled the end of human freedom among the native tribes and the beginning of what would grow into one of the greatest empires Faerûn would ever see. Within a few short months of their arrival, the Djen had constructed their first cities; the Calim Empire began before their first year on Faerûn had ended.

The Calim Empire

For a thousand years, the great djinni lord Calim drove his servant genies and mortal slaves forward, building the earliest primarily human civilization on the future Sword Coast. The genies swiftly established their empire's boundaries by clearing the lands south and west of the Marching Mountains of trees. This activity displaced many giants and a few dragons, forcing them all north or east, and the combination of further deforestation in the region and the entrance of more enemies into the elves' sovereign lands angered the Tel'Quessir. The dwarves remained neutral, but only because their territorial caverns were left alone by the genies' march to power.

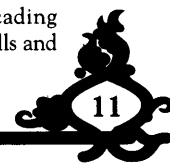
By -6690 DR, the djinni lord Calim reached an accord with the elves and dragons and fixed his borders where they then stood. It is not known exactly what forces or threats were brought to bear on the rampaging and seemingly unstoppable djinni lord, but they apparently were fearsome enough to halt his none-too-small ambitions. Many elf historians suspect the High Mages of Tethir or Darthiir Wood rallied High Magic against him, while dwarves of the Great Rift speak of fabulous dwarven artifacts crafted exclusively to fight the genies. Regardless of who halted Calim's march, the Calim Empire at that time reached from the southern shores of the present-day River Agis to the western slopes of the eastern mountains (the modern Alimir Mountains)—borders that are identical to Calimshan's modern territory.

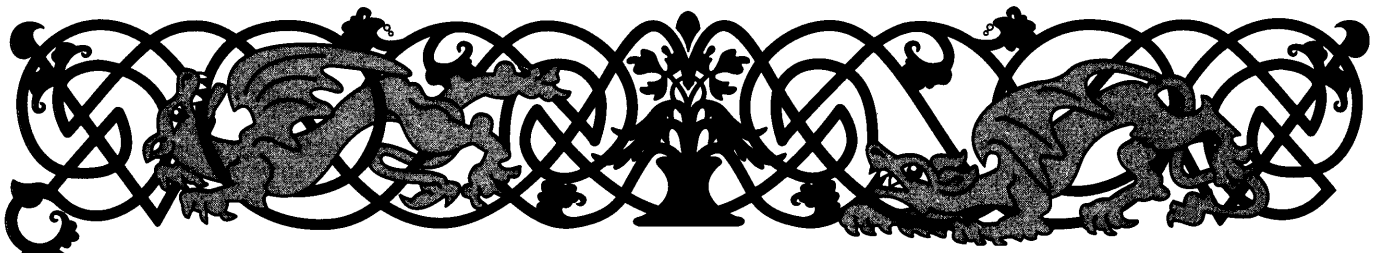
Soon after reaching détente with the elves and dwarves, Calim attempted to offset their lingering enmity by sending his armies into the mountains and clearing out every giant and slaying every dragon. While the elves and dwarves were pleased no dragons took roost in those mountains for another 6,000 years or so, the genies' military actions against the giants drove them into the elf and dwarf territories again. As a result, dwarves and giants in the region would war endlessly for about a thousand years, until one side finally claimed victory.

This sudden halt of Calim's expansionistic practices did not sit well among his more powerful genie allies, and a number of them broke off and tried to establish their own territories. The great marid Ajhuu and his followers claimed the lands on the east of the Calim Empire from the forest rivers' delta to the mountains east of the delta. For a short time, Calim was distracted by the war within the mountains against the giants and dragons and failed to notice Ajhuu's defection. By the time the great warlord djinni returned to his seat of power at Calimport, the city of Ajhuatal had been established at the coastal promontory above the river deltas on his eastern frontier. Calim was ashamed enough that his far-reaching empire-building had been stymied by other races that he was not going to stand for internal dissension and the loss of even more territory. He set out promptly to punish this affront by Ajhuu and reunite the entire area under his exclusive rule.

Wars of Air and Water

The Steam Clashes of Calim the djinni lord and Ajhuu the great marid and their respective armies lasted for only a few years, but their casualties and effects were monstrous. In the Alimir Mountains, the magical binding or slaying of two of Ajhuu's greater lieutenant marids, Haj and Luar, allegedly created the cascading mountain falls and river that bear their names: Hajluar's Falls and





the Maridflow. The river running from the Alimir Mountains has ever been the Maridflow, and Hajluar's Falls has today become, through long-corrupted pronunciation, the Azure Falls.

After six years of warfare between the armies of these elemental spirits of air and water, Calim's forces could still not approach and overrun the marid's capitol of Ajhuutal. Disliking the strife growing among his own slaves and allies due to the freedoms they saw enjoyed by Ajhuu's people, Calim risked everything on a final gambit. He unleashed his dao allies in concert with the artifacts that brought them to Faerûn to fuel a great magic to destroy his foes. As a result of this spell of true power, a massive earthquake started close to the base of the promontory where Ajhuutal stood and swept down on the city, shattering it and the cliff alike and tumbling all into the sea. But in Calim's zeal, he allowed the effects of this event, later referred to as the Shattering, to spread further than expected: While the shore once angled in a near-direct line from the mouth of the River of Ice to the Alimir Peaks, Calim's earthquake shattered the land for 30 or more miles inland along the rivers and brought the sea close to its current coastline. Thus, while he killed his foe and all those who stood with her, he also destroyed hundreds of miles of his own empire.

The Shattering caused the Shining Sea to rush in and fill to sea level the lands now exposed to its waters. Where it once the Maridflow emptied into a peaceful valley and meandered to the coast, it was now slashed to a third its previous length and emptied abruptly into a bay; a more southerly valley closer to the coast was also filled with sea water, which rushed in right to the foothills of the Alimir Mountains. Where the city of Ajhuutal once stood proudly overlooking the floodplains to the west, the sunken land and rivers were now over 20 miles closer to the sea, and the changes in the water table and the terrain-leveling effect of the quake turned the most fertile floodplain in either genie's domain into a swamp. Brackish and soon rendered utterly inhospitable all the way up to the forest's edge, this land gained the name the Spider Swamp and has been a foul and dangerous place ever since.

With the end of the Ajhuutal Mutiny (as Calim and his people were to remember it), the Calim Empire settled down to nearly 1,000 years of relative internal peace. The public works of this genie state included the building of many of the major cities of Calimshan, hundreds of monuments and statues, and the irrigated fields that allowed Calimshan's rivers to support far more fields and people than normal. A remarkably civilized realm despite its aggressive origins, the Calim Caliphates lived in peace while its leader continued to dread the day when he and his work would be discovered by those from the other planes that the Djen had fled.

Rise of Memnonnar

Calim's worst fears came to pass exactly 1,000 years to the day after the Great Arrival, though at the time he only knew from his scrying and sensing magics that a *gate* had opened onto this world to his north. This *gate* of indeterminate origin brought the great efreeti hunter Memnon and his forces to the lands just north of the River Agis. All Calim and his ruling class of genies could do was prepare for the worst, for the efreeti horde was crafty and hid for a time among the forests and hills, thus evading the scouting parties Calim sent to determine its nature and attempt to eliminate it as a threat. The Calim Caliphates took to guarding and securing its borders, waiting for the attack it knew was coming.

Over the next 400 years, the Great Pasha Memnon built a short-lived country called Memnonnar north of the River Agis. The efreeti armies, with their affinity for using fire and fire magic, cleared away yet more trees west of the mountains and began settling the land. All the earliest settlements at the current sites of Memnon, Myratma, and Shoonach date from this era. The capital of this empire overlapped the location of both the current cities of Memnon and Memnonnar, spanning the river within two centuries of the efreet's arrival.

At the capital and along the nearby length of the river it spanned, the efreeti and djinni empires began 200 years of skirmishes and tentative incursions against the native populations of escaped human slaves, elves, dwarves, giants, and other creatures that lay between them. They avoided major conflicts with each other, testing each other's strengths indirectly through observation of how the other side fared against the populace that lay between them and in the occasional glory raid, led by a minor commander whose actions could be excused as unauthorized. Both sides cautiously marshaled their forces in an escalating buildup of military power in order to have the upper hand against their instinctive blood enemies.

Era of Skyfire

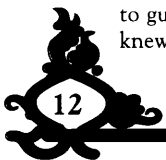
Finally, in the years known to the elves of Tethir as the Era of Skyfire, Memnon and Calim brought their forces to bear. Two hundred years of war amidst the mountains and plains saw a great many incidental elf and dwarf casualties, but few losses among the indigenous populations or their own forces seemed to bother either genie power enough to halt the hostilities.

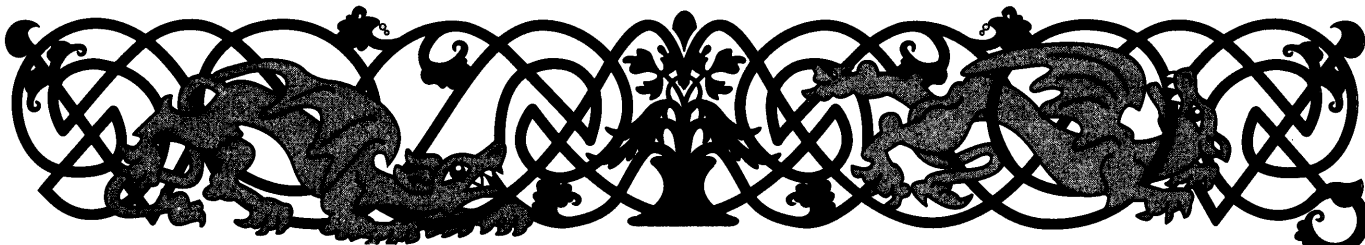
The thing many folk fail to understand is *why* the war lasted so long. Calim, Memnon, and many of their allies and officers saw themselves as visionaries and wanted everything they did to be perceived as the greatest or most spectacular action or decision that one could make. This thinking was coupled with a drive to always innovate rather than rely on the tried and true. That which had been done was not worth doing again, and if a theory had not come along on how to do it in a new way, then no effort was even made.

This peculiar attitude was reflected in the way Calim and Memnon treated their empires, preferring to leave ruined cities in ruins rather than repair them, and instead constructing new ones according to glorious new theories of city or building construction. When new theories had not emerged, they made do with the ruins. Likewise, Calim and Memnon's battle tactics had to be seen as new every time, despite the prudence of using age-old effective strategies.

Some speculate that the Era of Skyfire dragged on and caused so much damage because the genies were, quite frankly, bad generals. They were both strategic geniuses, but they each saw themselves as artists, and it took them a long time to create a new masterpiece of battle, so neither side could sustain a tactical advantage once it was gained. Strangely enough, the four centuries of their war contained no more than 22 entire battles—but the destruction left in the wake of each was beyond compare.

In the first century of war, the river port city that would later become Shoonach fell first, and the caravan city of Teshyll was destroyed within 10 years in retaliation. In the final trio of the war's battles, fought over a century (–6200 to –6100 DR), the djinn and efreet unleashed their full might against each other and destroyed much of their respective farmland, most of the cities that the





Elf High Magic brings about the Fall of the Genies and the creation of the Calimemnon Crystal.

Memnonnar Empire had built, and half those in Calim's lands. Finally, the elves of Tethir, Darthiir Wood, and Shilmista had had enough. Magically infiltrating the ruins of Teshyllal (in the region later known as the Teshyllal Wastes) and the cities of Memnon and Schamedar, elf High Mages began casting a powerful dwomeer collectively; they channeled power to their greatest member, the elf High Mage Pharos. In the cataclysmic Battle of Teshyllal Fields, Calim, Memnon, and their forces nearly laid the land bare to bedrock with their fury, and Pharos unleashed the High Magic spell upon the two genie rulers, an act that wrested their attention from each other for the first time in centuries.

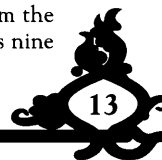
The elven spell sent more than half of the major genies from all across the lands rocketing toward the burning Teshyllal fields (later to become the Teshyllal Wastes). There, the genies all began fusing together, the howling and enraged Calim and Memnon held powerlessly back-to-back in the middle of the mass. Within hours, the genies were crushed together into a massive crystalline red gem that hovered 20 feet from the ground. Pharos imprisoned Calim and Memnon there last of all, but not before he split their minds and bodies, scattering Calim's consciousness into the four winds and Memnon's mind into the cracking soil beneath his feet. Thereafter, they became forever imprisoned in two places at once. Whichever one of their consciousnesses could somehow grasp the gem created by this spell would be reunited with his body, restored in mind, and augmented with all the power of his followers entrapped in the gem. Calim and Memnon fight the battle to claim the gem yet today, and their constant struggles to manipulate their own prisons is what created and maintains the Calim Desert.

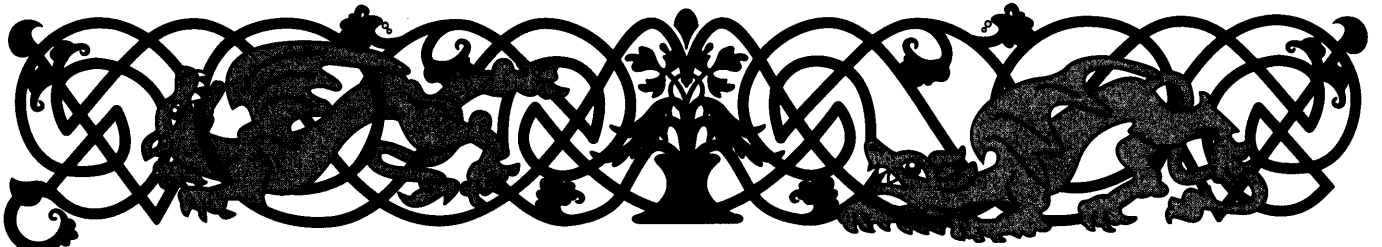
Coramshan

After the apparent deaths of their rulers in -6100 DR, Memnonnar and the Calim Caliphates had no ruling elite genies. The only genies who survived the wars were a few isolated jann and other minor genies scattered across hundreds of miles. Memnonnar's survivors soon fell prey to the warrior elves of Darthiir Wood, who were seeking retribution for the miles of wanton destruction visited upon their forest by the genies' battles. (They were not content to leave the end of things with the High Mages.) Within 30 years of the end of the Era of Skyfire, all traces of Memnonnar were in ruins.

Calim's lands fared better, but only from a human point of view. For 40 years, the few remaining minor geniekin tried to maintain the Caliphates on a city-by-city basis, and their desperation in clinging to their power made many of them sadistic and cruel. Eventually, former or escaped human slaves and servants struck an alliance with the dwarves of Shanatar to gain weapons to fight the few remaining genies struggling to stay in power. As a result, the rule of any djinni ended by -6060 DR. The leader who led the humans to victory now claimed the throne over the lands east of the Calim Desert and south of the Marching Mountains. For the first time on the Sword Coast, a human nation arose, and Coramshan was founded. It was named in homage to its leader, Coram the Warrior, and their Shanataran dwarf allies.

Within the first 50 years of Coramshan's founding, over 300 rulers and heirs were slain as a result of intrigues to claim the throne. Coram's own dynasty only lasted 32 years, and his nine





sons all killed each other in their attempts to grab the throne. Somehow, despite all this chaos, the cities of Calimport and Keltar were rebuilt, and the new cities of Almraiven and Manshaka were founded in -6000 and -5980 DR. Soon, however, the alliances with the dwarves of Shanatar ended, though not due to the humans' incessant greed for better weapons or armor. The dwarves abandoned them the Coramshan alliance because the rulers of Coramshan had turned to the worship of evil gods to maintain their power, and the priests were either controlling the rulers or had seated themselves as rulers. Partially because of breaking off their alliance and partially because of their uneasiness about the theocratic rulership developing in Coramshan, the dwarves founded High Shanatar in -5600 DR. It was located north of the Marching Mountains in the lands cleared by the genies' wars.

The rulers of Coramshan, who had once been the scribes, administrators, and bureaucrats for the genies during their rule, now forgot the lessons of their past and became despotic rulers of a kingdom maintained by slave labor. Each of the priestly rulers was called a *bakkal*, which translates as "he who rules from on high." Many interpreted their titles as a sign that they ruled not only in their gods' names but almost as demigods themselves because their control was nearly absolute over every living thing in their land.

The rule of the corrupt, but orderly, bakkals lasted for 13 dynasties and 47 bakkals from -5790 DR through -5300 DR. Who the bakkals' dark deities were has been lost. Apparently they were only spoken of in euphemism except within their hidden and secret temples, though many assume Bhaelros (Talos) was a major patron deity of some of them due to the many depictions of lightning among Coramshan's courtly finery. Other speculations name Shar, due to the faiths' secretive nature, demon or devil lords, and deities unknown in the modern Realms except as names on a page. Still, the bakkals' gods allowed them the ability to keep their servants under control to such an extent that the bakkals sought to expand their territory to the north or west, beyond the growing desert. Unfortunately, others had laid claim to the lands beyond Coramshan's boundaries in the time since the Era of Skyfire.

High Shanatar

Shanatar's dwarves built great cities among the ruins left by the efreeti armies at the modern locations of Memnon, Myratma, Zazesspur, Darromar (earlier Ithmong), and the ruins of Shoonach. Curiously, they scrupulously avoided the ruined half of the capital city north of the River Agis. Still, little evidence of these dwarf cities exists on the surface today, and only in the sewers and undercities might such historical proof remain intact and in use. No one today knows the cities' dwarf names, but much ruined dwarven stonework can still be found in the city ramparts of present-day Tethyr and in the roadways between these cities, as later civilizations tended to plunder the stones of former fallen cities.

Despite the far more civilized nature of the dwarves of High Shanatar in comparison to the barbaric and cruel bakkals of Coramshan, war finally broke out between the two countries over three gold urns and a hammer. Four dwarf miners caught a quintet of Coramshites looting the tomb of a simple dwarf merchant's wife on the northern slopes of Mount Kellarak, on the western end of the Marching Mountains. To a dwarf, there are fewer things more

sacrilegious and evil than tomb raiding. When the miners slew the young men in retaliation for their sacrilege, they unknowingly killed the eldest heir to the bakkal of Coramshan. Ultimately, this incident led to millennia of enmity between the dwarves and the humans, and it would eventually cost the dwarves the loss of the shining glory of High Shanatar and Deep Shanatar after long centuries of war.

Jhaamdath

Further east of either Coramshan or High Shanatar, a power was slowly growing in the areas known in the present day as the Vilhon Reach. Around -5800 DR, the few settlements north of the great forest now known as the Chondalwood united under the rule of the Dath Dynasty and its greatest warrior son, Jhaam. The country adopted the leader's name as its own, becoming Jhaamdath. The warlords of Jhaamdath soon sought greater challenges than mere rulership, for while they held dominion over the lands around the southwestern leg of the Inner Sea and in the Akanal, they wanted more: more wealth, more resources, and more land. One place that they tried to exploit or conquer was the great forest itself.

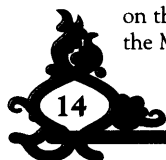
About 700 years before Jhaamdath came into being, a group of elves—mainly immigrants from Syðrpiir—resettled the great woods, calling their home Nikerymath, which translates as "the blades' place." The Jhaamdathans' forays into the great forest showed them why nonelf natives of the region came to call the place the Haunted Woods: The Jhaamdathans never saw more than three elves within the woods in 40 years of skirmishes and attempts to log it, yet the death toll among loggers and troops was astounding. With only one permanent city among the trees at Rucien Xan, the elves stayed mobile, living nomadically along the fringes of the wood, and kept the greedy humans at bay for the time being.

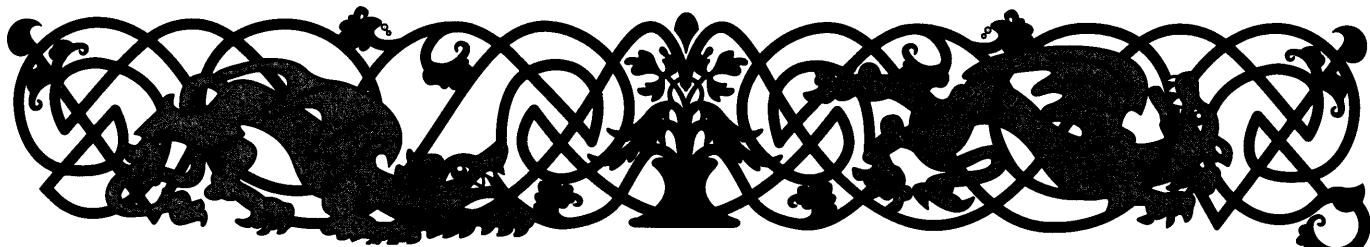
The First Age

Calishites recognize this time period as the first great age, when their people rose up from their humble beginnings and began their march toward the domination of the Shining Sea region and a large portion of Faerûn. The rule of the corrupt and decadent bakkals lightened, if only because the dark gods they served were being appeased by conquest rather than the oppression of slaves. This age marks Coramshan's greatest military maneuvers and its progress toward the great empire known as Calimshan. The First Age spans from -5300 DR to -3200 DR, though most historians do not begin counting the First Age until about -5000 DR, when the First Kingdom of Mir fused with Coramshan and became the Calimshan Empire. The First Age encompasses the reign of 92 distinct rulers, who are divided into 12 familial dynasties.

First Kingdom of Mir

In the earliest days of Coramshan, many important families and clans vied for the crown of the caleph (the title of the region's ruler as instituted by the djinni Calim). Those that lost their bids either died at assassins' hands or fled the country and headed north. There, many congregated and pursued a nomadic lifestyle in the western Darthiir Wood or the lower northern slopes of the Marching Mountains. About -5330 DR, these warlike humans were either killed or press-ganged into an army from Keltar that had marched through the desert and around the mountains. The





Murabir (“warlord”) Mir of Coramshan led his army of soldiers and ragtag barbarians across the river on rafts, and the army then conquered the dwarf city where Shoonach would later rise and fall. They called the city Iltakar.

With the dwarves of High Shanatar distracted by their greater wars against the giants to the north, el Murabir Mir and his army cut a bloody swath across southern High Shanatar and the Darthiir Wood. By –5300 DR, the territory west of the Darthiir Wood and south of the River Wurlur (the current River Ith) was conquered and garrisoned by the humans, who formed the Kingdom of Mir, more commonly referred to historically by an Alzhedo translation of its name, Monrativi Teshy Mir (First Kingdom of Mir). Within the next 100 years, the great murabirs of Monrativi Teshy Mir almost totally destroyed the elves of the region. Those few who survived fled into the Forest of Tethir or Nikerymath far to the east. While border wars were fought for centuries with the dwarves and the elves over this human-controlled area, the First Kingdom of Mir never gave up any territory, no matter who attacked from where—that is, until they angered the military powers in Jhaamdath.

In approximately –5270 DR, the aging, but still active, Murabir Mir launched an attack that would have massive consequences. With the full backing of an allied Coramshan, Mir’s armies moved eastward and slowly conquered more and more territory. Coramshan’s army protected the western lands from incursions while Mir’s army was pursuing conquest and sent troops to reinforce and supply Mir’s marching and garrisoned troops. By –5100 DR, all the areas south of the River Wurlur to the borders of Coramshan were claimed by the Kingdom of Mir. But while he was still allied to Murabir Mir and his army, the Coramshite bakkal was growing restless at the ascent and seemingly unstoppable might of this military regime.

As the armies slowly advanced, more and more lands became affiliated with Mir (and through it, Coramshan). The army built fortresses for garrisoned troops. Some garrisons were well placed and attracted people to them to form towns, such as the sites that would eventually become Saradush (near the Omlarandin Mountains) and Mintar and Saelmur (along the Lake of Steam). However, as they expanded along the shores of the Lake of Steam, the murabirs met their greatest foe, for Jhaamdath and its troops were also expanding by building cities along the lake’s shores. (At this time, Jhaamdath encompassed modern-day Sespech, Chondath, the Akanal, and the Naga Plains.). Within months, the two massive armies of Mir and Jhaamdath met on the plains north of a tiny fishing town called Ankhport. In –5032 DR, the forces of Mir were finally handed a grievous defeat by the army of Jhaamdath. The eastern power sensed a weak but arrogant enemy and for the next 25 years pursued and pushed back the army of Mir. While it did not sustain massive losses all at once, the Mir army was nonetheless eventually forced all the way back to its garrisons at Fort Saradush as it was gradually ground down and outmaneuvered.

Unification of Calimshan

With a vastly more aggressive and better armed force now threatening the eastern borders of both Coramshan and Mir, the long-allied but distinct realms had little choice strategically but to unite against this common foe. One rare footnote of this time period also suggests that the bakkal of Coramshan personally slew the failed head murabir and three of his generals, and that this action

was the heart of what is usually glossed over as “the negotiations which deemed unification a necessary gambit to ensure the survival of either realm.” At this point leadership of the two realms fell on one man’s shoulders—Bakkal and Murabir Ukhar IV.

Now fortified with far more magic due to Cormanshan’s numerous priests and its small cadre of loyal battle wizards, the forces of the unified realms counterattacked after a one-year siege on their eastern front. Fighting with savage intent as much as with weapons and spells, the Coramshite-Mirran army took the Jhaamdathan armies by surprise and in two short months forced them back to Saelmur. Another year of fighting and a further loss of territory for Jhaamdath led to a truce in –5005 DR. The conditions of the truce were such that both rulers would agree to peace between their peoples provided both abandoned any claims over the Lake of Steam.

Upon returning to his homelands in victory, Ukhar IV brought his people together amid great celebration to rename his lands. He would rule over a unified land, but under a new name others would respect, a name that evoked the fierce genies who once ruled the land—Calimshan. The name was adopted to strike legendary fear into their foes’ hearts, and it showed that Ukhar’s ambitions were no less grandiose than the djinni lord himself.

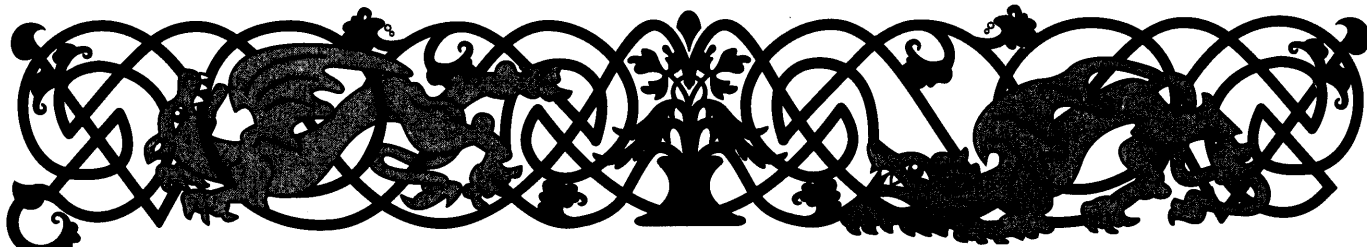
The next 1,300 years would be relatively peaceful for the fledgling Calimshan Empire. Other than internal coups and skirmishes with the dwarves of High Shanatar, the only dangers that the bakkal-murabirs (quickly once again referred to as just bakkals) faced were plagues. No less than 24 plagues ebbed and flowed across Calimshan within the latter seven centuries of that 1,300 years, and while they have never been proven, Calishite theories that the plagues were of Jhaamdathan origin ring true to many historians of the region.

The Second Age

The Second Great Age of Calimshan spanned 13 centuries from –3250 DR to –1900 DR. It was an age of much change. After nearly 18 centuries of peace in the region, wars flared up during the Tavahr Dynasty of this age that led to the end of the dwarf surface realm of Shanatar, the rise and fall of a hobgoblin empire, and the beginnings of millennia-long conflicts with the eye tyrants of Alimir. The rule of the bakkals continued through the Second Age, with a total of 79 bakkals portioned among six dynasties. With the fall of the distant eastern empire of the Imaskari in the twenty-sixth century before Dalereckoning, Netheril, Jhaamdath, and Calimshan were the preeminent powers on Faerûn during this era.

The bakkals of Calimshan sustained the Pahlemn Dynasty for an astonishing 421 years once they displaced the plague-slain Marehk Dynasty of the First Age, and while they held onto the territories of Mir, they furthered no aggressions against the dwarves during their reigns. The more warlike Tavahr Dynasty that succeeded them took the war to the dwarves; their conflict led to the end of the High Shanataran civilization by approximately –2600 DR. The final battle between the dwarves and the Tavahr Calishites occurred on the northern shores of the Sulduskoon River in Tethyr. A small band of 400 dwarves stubbornly held off 2,000 Calishite troops while their mates and children fled belowground. The escaping dwarves then sealed the last known surface entrance into Deep Shanatar on the plains.





The Tavihr rulers of Calimshan pursued empire-building first among all pursuits. They were the first Calishite rulers to adopt the simple reed boats of the coastal traders for military purposes. With bronze and iron weapons and armor stolen from the remnants of High Shanatar, the armies of Calimshan easily enslaved the lighter-skinned native humans to the north. The only impediments to their drive northward were the great forests—and the elves in them. Due to Tavihran efforts, the emirates of Tethyr and the Purple Hills became the newest subject territories of Calimshan, though they were to be considered hinterlands suitable only for hunting lodges for decades to come.

This same bullying dynasty refortified its garrisons in Iltkazar (the region around the Omlarandin Mountains, the Kuldin Peaks, and up the the intermittent mountain ranges northward through the Giant's Run Mountains, including most of modern Erkkazar) to the east for the first time since the war with Jhaamdath over 2,500 years before. The period prior to this refortification had seen the brief rise of monster states ruled by ogres and giants; these were merely kept at bay by the frontier patrols of the peaceful rulers of the Marekh and Pahlemn dynasties and the fortified garrisons of the Shanataran dwarves (many of which were occupied soon after their fall by Tavihr soldiers).

These newly strengthened eastern Tavihr Dynasty armies were witness to the fiery arrival of a plague of enemies that would haunt Calimshan for millennia. Three beholder colony ships fell out of the sky and crash-landed into the Alimir Mountains on a stormy night in Tarsakh in -2381 DR. While few believe even today that beholders came from beyond the sky, prevalent legends and myths of chariots in the air and monstrous flying bugs and birds lead some scholars to believe that spelljamming technology has existed for a long time indeed. The beholders that survived the crash flooded out of the mountains and overwhelmed the eastern Tavihr garrisons. To their credit, the armies of the Tavihr regime forced the beholders back into the mountains and saved Calimshan, though their reward was bittersweet—political enemies assassinated the bakkaal and his 12 heirs at his victory celebration.

After the expansionistic policies of the Tavihrs and their harsh rule, Calimshan was ready for a change. Starting in -2375 DR, the dynasties of Erehnir and Vahlen restored the long-abandoned respect and adoration of genies (often termed the worship of genies, but not really functioning as such, since genies are not deities). In architecture, clothing fashions, and many other fine and commercial arts, the rulers made the presence and images of genies popular. (Most folk had forgotten the excesses of 4,000 ago.) While the Erehnir worshiped genies exclusively, the Vahlen merged this adoration with the worship of deities associated with the sun and the sky.

The Vahlen Dynasty ruled Calimshan and its empire from -2100 DR until -1994 DR. In that century, the Vahlen bakkals maintained the expanded boundaries of the Calimshan Empire that had been established by the Tavihr wars, but pursued no great empire-building campaigns of their own.

While among the shorter of the Calishite dynasties, the dynastic names of Vahlen, Erehnir, and many of their scions are remembered still in Calimshan due to the many monuments and temples built during their eras. Both dynasties supported the arts more than their warlike predecessors, and between the two dynasties, more than 200 temples and shrines were built for their many deities, including those erected to serve their temporary worship of

geniekind. While most of the structures made for genie worship were subsumed by other religions in later ages, the numerous statues and monuments of the Vahlen and Erehnir dynasties remain to dot the Calishite landscape. The Eight Erehnirs—30-foot-high statues of the Pasha Nakkar IV carved out of mountain walls that flank the sole trade road leading into Volothamp—are the best examples of Old Kingdom (referring to the First through Third ages) statuary, though they are far from alone. In fact, the bulk of the surviving statuary that was not scavenged for building materials by later generations lies among the ruins within the Calim Desert, since the most opulent temples and religious monuments of the Vahlen and Erehnir eras were built out on the desert at the last battle site between humans and the genies in hopes of the genie “gods” better hearing their worshippers’ pleas from this locale.

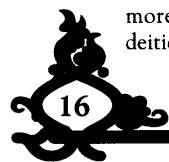
The Third Age

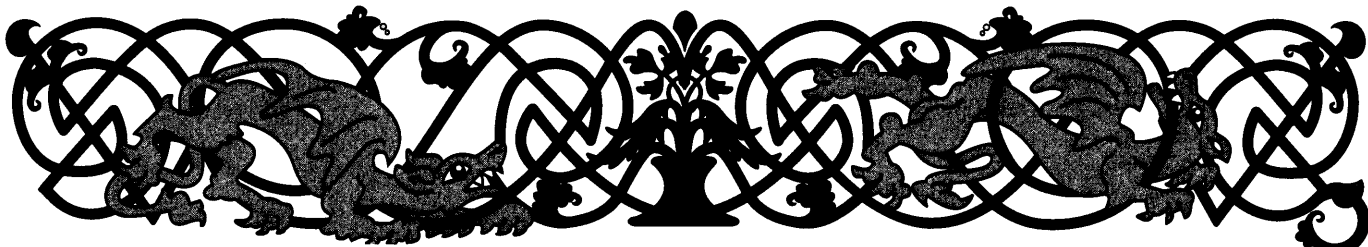
The Third Age of Calimshan is the last and weakest of the Old Kingdoms of Calimshan. Spanning from -1900 DR to -900 DR, the age saw the empire engulf and control Calimshan, Iltkazar to the east, Tethyr and Mir to the north, and the Calishar Emirates farther north in the lands that would become eastern Tethyr and Amn. While it was a time of almost constant conflict, the lifestyle the empire’s people enjoyed was great. The Third Age would produce only four dynasties with 27 rulers among them, but these leaders would usher in new eras of expansion and increased prosperity.

The first 200 years of the age saw the swift fall of the humans’ rule over Calimshan, as a massive red wyrm came down out of the Cloud Peaks to decimate the ranks of the Raor Dynasty (the first dynasty of the Third Age) and settle onto the bakkaal’s throne herself. Ylveraasahlisar the Rose Dragon held the throne for 112 years until she was driven off by human dragonslayers. The noble family who slew her, the Cajaan, then spent 18 years disputing among its members over who would hold the throne, but the rule of humankind in Calimshan was restored after 130 years of draconic and human despotism in -1708. In addition to reasserting human rule, the new Cajaan Dynasty of priest rulers was also the first Calishite ruling class to use the title of pasha for its supreme ruler.

Emulating the great Vahlen bakkals of four centuries before, the new rulers embraced the worship of the sun in various guises as a god of war; a deity of knowledge and the arts; a power of light, health, and vitality; and the foremost god of all the gods. While many religious scholars of today rightfully believe that this was a brief period of worship of the many deities extant at the time under one alias, others cling to the belief that there was a great sun god who is now lost and forgotten.

In addition to the beholders on the eastern border, the emir to the north in Tethyr—the Cajaan made this the traditional seat of power for the pasha’s third son—began warring with the elves of the Forest of Tethyr by -1700 DR. The common practice of hunting native humans and elves of the area for sport by bored Calishite nobles brought the elves out of their isolation and directed their ire against the emir’s forces. Since the armies of the Calimshan Empire were used to being better armed and armored than their foes, the elves and their long bows took a deadly toll until -1300 DR. The elves ultimately won, stopping the hunting of their people and the concomitant destruction of the forests by careless hunting parties and Calishite nobles seeking retribution





for elf-inflicted losses. Tethyr (and Calimshan, by association) won also, as a few captured elven bows led some Calishite craftsmen to the creation of a smaller version of the elven bow that they could fire effectively from chariots or horseback. The use of Calishite short bows became common among Calishite troops by the end of this period.

Unfortunately, the Cajaan Dynasty lost its forward-thinking focus on defending the empire and fell to infighting; the empire descended into civil war. The outlying emirate of Tethyr fought wars against the elves and internal slave revolts, many of the northern emirates attempted to break free of Calishite rule, and the eastern frontiers were under harassment from an old foe. From -1900 to -1400, the Caltazar Hills (today the highlands around Kzelter) frequently came under attack from the south by the beholder nations of the Lake of Steam. As a consequence of the fires that accompanied the beholder battles, the Forest of Mir's eastern expanse north of the Alimir mountains fell victim to beholder arson and was consumed by fire in -1550 DR; the forest was subsequently reduced to the borders it has maintained to the present day. However, by -1390 DR, the civil wars in the empires' frontiers were crushed, and everyone once again answered to the pasha ruling at Calimport.

Due to the intermittent nature of the skirmishes it had fought over five centuries, and the lack of experience or professional military training of its typical foes, Calimshan's army grew complacent and began to dismiss the capabilities of the small, unregimented bands of attackers out of hand. At this point, the beholders of the Alimir Hive came looking for revenge in full force, boiling out of the mountains that bore their name and driving a horde of goblins and ogres before them. Caught totally unprepared, the soldiers of Calimshan in every city of Calimshan and Iltkazar fell before the savage onslaught. It was the hope of the last Cajaan pasha, Violir IX, that the bright power of the "One Sun" would blind the beholders and their underlings, bringing the eye tyrants' power in the Alimir Peninsula to an end. He died as a petrified statue on the steps of his sun god's temple in Calimport when the beholders conquered his capital.

The eye tyrants ruled from -1428 to -1402 DR over the once-proud empire of djinn and humans. For the 26 years of their disputed rule, the lands of the Calim were covered in the blood and gore of beholders and humans alike. The Alimir beholders were finally removed from power by the rise of warrior priests of the Faerûnian gods more commonly recognized in the modern day. Due to strength of numbers and a stubborn refusal to allow themselves to be subjugated by nonhumans, the Drakhon priest-princes led Calimshan to victory and founded a new dynasty, and the beholders were once more forced back into their mountain lairs. (Ultimate victory was never an option for either side.) Of course, many historical military strategists point to the beholders' concurrent domination and subjugation of the Lake of Steam at this time as a more likely reason for the ease with which the Drakhon removed the beholders from Calimshan: The eye tyrants did not have the forces to contain a hostile state under their rule while still conquering terrain more than 500 miles to the east.

Despite the chaos and warfare, advancements were made across the empire. A tiny fishing town grew into the fortified port city of Zazesspur by -1570 DR. Trade roads connected Tethyr and Calimshan, as slaves finished the military troop road (whose use was almost immediately appropriated by merchants) from Zazesspur to

Memnon in -1320 DR. It took another 200 years for the more ambitious road heading east to be completed, but by -1130 DR, a gravel and log road stretched from Zazesspur on the Sea of Swords to the eastern garrison of Akkabel at the site of today's Ithal Pass.

When the beholders again erupted west from the Alimirs and the Lake of Steam to cause trouble for the Calimshan Empire, the army's timely adoption of short bows and war chariots gave them the strategic capabilities to far more easily defeat their intractable enemies. From -1280 until -1080 DR, war raged throughout the Almraiven region. Facing unexpected opposition to their efforts to reclaim what they saw as their rebellious territory, the beholder forces were reduced by half and chased out of Calimshan and Tethyr once more. In fact, the Calishite army seriously reduced the effectiveness of the Lake of Steam's beholder rulers and expanded the Calishite Empire's territory down the Alimir Peninsula around the Lake of Steam as far east as the city of Mintar.

Restoring the military use of boats that had been abandoned since the Tavahr dynasty, the Imperial Navy of Calimshan soon grew to dominate the Lake of Steam and the Shining Sea regions; this control of the waves started in -1150 DR and lasted for the next 700 years. The ability to transport troops by water far more quickly than over land through forced marches aided the military's battles against the beholders along the Lake of Steam and was ultimately crucial in their victory against the eye tyrants. By the end of the beholder conflicts, the Imperial Navy had conquered the Lake of Steam, and using both land and sea forces, Calimshan forced the last of the beholder city-states to fall. The eye tyrants were once again driven underground, though, as always, they were not obliterated.

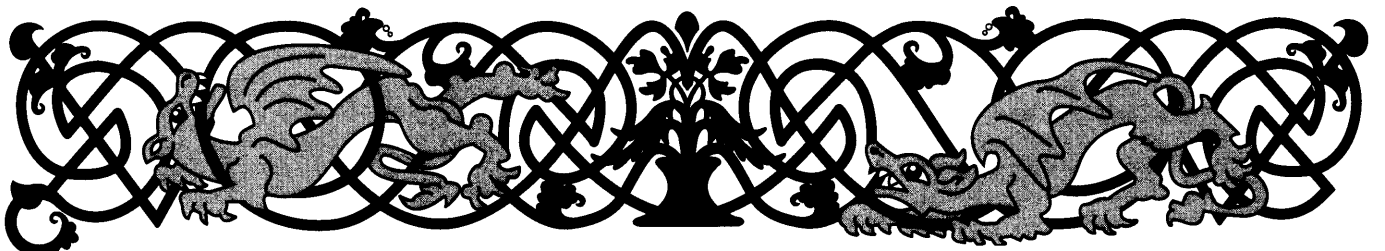
In their farthest northern frontier, Calimshan settled, built, and then later abandoned many garrisons among what it knew as the Ralamnish Ridings (later to become Amn) toward the end of this age. Despite the brilliance of the Calishite scouts' commander, Ralamn, difficulties with supply lines and the constant elf and goblin harassment made holding these lands far more difficult than easily fortified Tethyr. When the beholder uprisings began again in the south, the southern lands were deemed more important to the empire's future, and most of the frontier troops were pulled away for home-front duty. Still, whether tightly controlled or not, the Calimshan Empire's terrain at the end of the age stretched as far north as the southern foothills of the Troll Mountains and the eastern shores of Amn's great lake. It also extended as far east as the western half of the Lake of Steam.

Even in the victories against the beholders, there was a malaise in Calimshan that signaled the end of the Third Age. The strength of the military and the increasing political power of the growing merchant class led to civil unrest once again, and it helped little for two plagues to wipe out nearly 80% of the populations of forever-cursed Schamedar and the capital at Calimport within the age's last century. It also did not aid matters much that the pasha who ruled Calimshan was an eight-year-old boy with a military council for his regent that fed the wars and warriors, yet starved the people. With the military in control of the country and its ruler, the Third Age set and a new, more exciting age dawned.

The Fourth Age

The Fourth Age of Calimshan, also called the Middle Kingdoms by scholars (referring to its multiple dynasties), is one





of the shortest, running only 700 years, from –900 DR to –200 DR. With the expansion of Calishite naval power challenged by no one, the Calishite Empire rolled onward, easily hemming in its enemies and carving out new frontiers. This is the colonial era of Calimshan's Middle Kingdoms and only the Age of Shoon would dim its light as the greatest time of the empire.

Calimshan's ships—now beginning to be made with wooden hulls rather than reed bundles—began a relatively peaceful exploration of the Shining Sea coast. These treks led to the first major trade agreements between Calimshan and the Tashalar and Chult during this time, though in typical Calishite fashion the explorers and traders who hammered out the agreements also established many less-trustworthy alliances and agencies on those foreign shores. Other major technological advances in smithing and refining allowed the replacement of bronze in weapons and armor with iron in steadily increasing quantities. This allowed the Calishites to remain ahead of their neighbors in the tools of war, as bronze weapons were only now becoming common among less-civilized forces such as Tethyr's rebels.

The Night Wars

While given only a footnote in the historical record, the modern humans of Amn, Tethyr, Ilkazar, and all the Arnaden cities (the cities around the Lake of Steam) owe at least some of their independence from Calimshan's control to the drow. From –790 to –530 DR, drow incursions from the Underdark weakened the garrisons of eastern Tethyr and Ilkazar through their attacks on those forces in the course of raiding the towns for slaves. While tales speak of the "Night Wars against Those of Spiders," these incursions were not organized wars or battles, but simply large drow slaving parties. Still, even while Calimshan pushed its frontiers outward to colonize, its inner lands saw organized resistance against Calishite rule on the rise among dwarves and native humans. This restiveness grew in direct proportion to the number of drow raids that a region saw, and in them distractions for Calishite troops from maintaining iron control over the native population. By –650 DR, many areas around the Omlarandin Mountains and the Kuldin Peaks—the lands of Old Ilkazar—were free of Calishite control, though surrounded by Calishite-held territories. Though Calimshan's soldiers fought skirmishes against drow and escaped slaves or rebels within the mountains of Ilkazar, the lands did not fall under the pasha's control again until the Shoon Imperium.

The Colonies

Calimshan began colonizing every place to which it could induce people to move across the breadth of its empire and beyond. New cities sprang up along the western Lake of Steam starting in –680 DR, though these developments made little impact on the civilizations to their north. Within the vassal lands of Tethyr, more trails and roads were planned to arc further north into the growing northern emirates. (Some hints exist that Calimshan was founding colony cities near Berdusk and Beregost during this time, though few scholars are willing to accept such claims without more proof.) While some colonies like Ankhapur or Suldolphor thrived, many more disappeared under the pressures of hostile marauding beholders and drow, other political powers intent on expanding or maintaining their territories, or merely standard survival problems like starvation and sickness due to

droughts, floods, crop failures, and the whims of weather patterns to which they were unaccustomed. The lands and mountains around the Deepwash were colony sites, as well, starting around –400 DR. However, once the Calishites started colonizing the full eastern end of the Lake of Steam, they sent their colonists and military north to build roads and colonies along the Nagaflo. At the site of what is now modern Nagarr, Calimshan's forces encountered the forces of Jhaamdath, which had colonized the lands north and east of the Ankhwood. Brief battles and skirmishes were fought for a number of years, but Calimshan soon suffered other setbacks all across its empire that forced them to accede those lands to Jhaamdathan control rather than claim them.

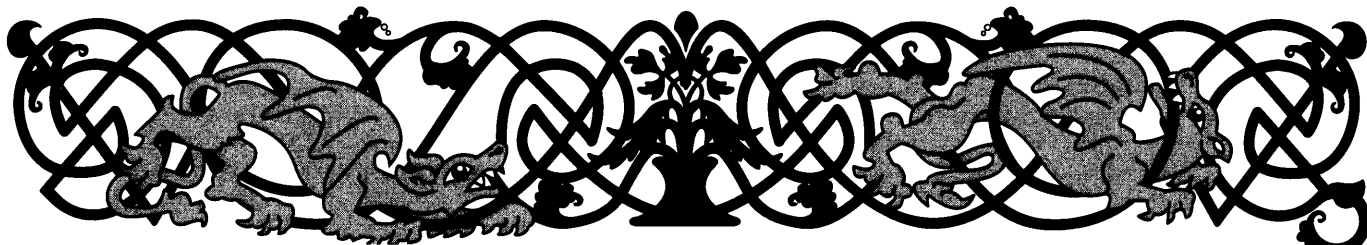
The Revolts

Taking heart from the rumors of strife and resistance in the east in the Ilkazar region, many enslaved humans escaped captivity in Calimshan in the centuries between –670 and –370 DR and fled north. Most either died while escaping or fell back into the hands of garrison troops after unsuccessfully hiding in frontier towns. Still, enough slaves fled toward the Dragon's Head Peninsula (now known as the Tethyr Peninsula or the Velen Peninsula) and the shelter of its forests that that land became the birthplace of Tethyr's people. Though the rebels and freedmen of Ilkazar and what would become the free country of Tethyr sacked and burned numerous Calishite holdings, including the city of Zazesspur, in what they considered great feats of rebellion and sharp blows against the slave-holding empire, they rarely destroyed something of major value from the pasha's perspective. The only thing the pasha wished restored was the peace, and since the worst offending rebels were in Tethyr, there his wrath fell.

Unfortunately for them, the Calishite soldiers the pasha sent could not easily fulfill their orders to annihilate the rebellious tribes, since they could not reach their foes. Hiding among the trees on the Dragon's Head Peninsula, the clans of early Tethyr were protected by nature and by the elves. At one point, the Pasha Khalid al Axash had his army attempt to build a wall across the peninsula's neck in the Year of Ebon Hawks (–378 DR). The project was only half finished four years later when it was abandoned—the army retreated from the constant onslaught of the elves' arrows and the human clansmen's axes.

The Empire Plague

In the Year of Clutching Dusk (–375 DR), another plague struck the southern Shining Coast, though this one spread farther faster than any other in history. The rat-laden Calishite trading ships aided the spread of a five-year plague that claimed over 30% of the total populations of the Tashalar, a few isolated ports in Chult, Calimshan, and the Lake of Steam. Among the fallen were more than 40% of Calimshan's ruling class—including the Pasha Khalid and his heirs. Victims of the Empire Plague were easily identified by the weeping purple sores on their bodies or their red eyes and bloodied tears. The Empire Plague spelled the end of Calimshan's total imperial control over the Calishar Emirates and the Lake of Steam colonies. Local rulers did maintain semblances of order, though until the plague settled, the entire empire was fragmented into city-states that had little traffic with outsiders until it was guaranteed they did not bear the plague with them.



The Tethyrian Rebellion

Starting with the first sacking of Old Zassspur in the Year of Shattered Walls (–387 DR), Tethyr's people fought for their freedom from Calimshan. While the rebels were often viewed as merely terrorists or rabble, their victories over the Calishite garrisons grew until they captured Myratma's garrison in the Year of Illuminated Vellums (–307 DR) and Calimaronn (a garrison town soon renamed Ithmong) a few years later. Though the clans of Tethyr fought constantly among themselves in regard to which clan would rule the others, all the clans unified against the Calishite threat. In the Year of Eight Lightnings (–288 DR), Calimshan's pasha granted the Tethyrians their independence rather than continue losing soldiers and materiel in battle with folk who could muster enough drive and passion to fight better trained and better equipped forces and win.

The 12 clan chiefs who led the Tethyrian people to freedom created the Council of Clans to rule over the lands of Tethyr, which at that time was bounded by the sites of modern Darromar (then Ithmong), Zassspur, and Myratma and included all lands between them. Despite the best intentions, the council fell apart within a decade as those warlords who freed the land from Calimshan grew feeble or died and younger, more brash chiefs began splitting the council into ineffectual factions. The clans fought amongst themselves for control of the lands and cities for 60 years, as one clan or alliance of clans attempted to gain control over all of Tethyr. Instead, their decades of internal strife only destroyed four clans and opened up the door for a new pasha and a renewed Calimshan to claim its errant colonial child.

In the Year of Loss (–230 DR), the Pasha Kalil, grandson of the pasha who released Tethyr from Calishite control, marched into and easily claimed Ithmong (now Darromar) and Myratma. For nine years, the towns stayed in Calishite hands, and working from them, Calimshan's soldiers began reclaiming more lands from the squabbling clans. Finally, the Clan Ithal led Tethyr's people—humans and elves allied together for the first time—in a war to regain control of Tethyr. The Ithmong Slaughter in the Year of Shambing Shadows (–221 DR) saw Clovis Ithal's death, but his 16-year-old son Darrom courageously rallied and led an enraged charge into the weakening city of Ithmong, which the Tethyrians had besieged. Darrom's Charge led to Calimshan's defeat at Ithmong and the death of the Pasha Kalil's four brothers, who led the armies occupying the town and trying to reclaim Tethyrian territory for Calimshan. When Darrom mounted the heads of the slain Calishites on their spears out on the Plains of Clovis south of Ithmong, he both drew a line of death never again crossed by a pasha of Calimshan and made an enemy whose hatred would be felt across generations. Tethyr ultimately managed to regain its freedom from Calimshan with the fall of Calishite Myratma in the Year of High Thrones (–212 DR).

Jhaamdath's Fall

Calimshan's rival among human powers to the east for the past millennia had been Jhaamdath, the militaristic land of xenophobic humans. For more than 4,000 years, Calimshan and Jhaamdath left each other alone in the military and political arenas, and the presence of the beholders of Alimir helped Calimshan a great deal to keep Jhaamdathan expansion at bay. Never totally enemies and certainly never allies, the two major empires respected each other's boundaries and took care never to disturb the détente established long centuries before.

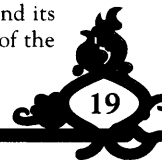
In the Year of Overflowing Casks (–276 DR), Jhaamdath's warlord and recently enthroned ruler (by military coup) called for an expansion of the country's territory and a stronger navy to sail out upon the Inner Sea and conquer more lands. This move, which immediately set axes to the trees of the elves of Nikerymath, sparked a firestorm of resistance from the elves and pitted Jhaamdath and Nikerymath squarely against each other. Within 20 years, Jhaamdath had built its fleet and pushed back the northern edges of the forest, but no one but the elves of Nikerymath felt the pains of the war. All but the Nikerymathan capital city of Rucien Xan had been destroyed, including a number of pacifistic temples where elves and humans had lived in harmony. The rulers of Rucien Xan set out for vengeance for their slaughtered people, for only one elf in 10 survived from before the war across the wood. Aside from the coronal and four High Mages, no other elves in Rucien Xan had even seen a full century of life. While the elves had begun fighting a war of honor for the forest and territorial sovereignty, they now began a war of retribution—blood for blood in payment for those generations slain, those priceless memories, skills, and experiences lost to Jhaamdathan ambitions.

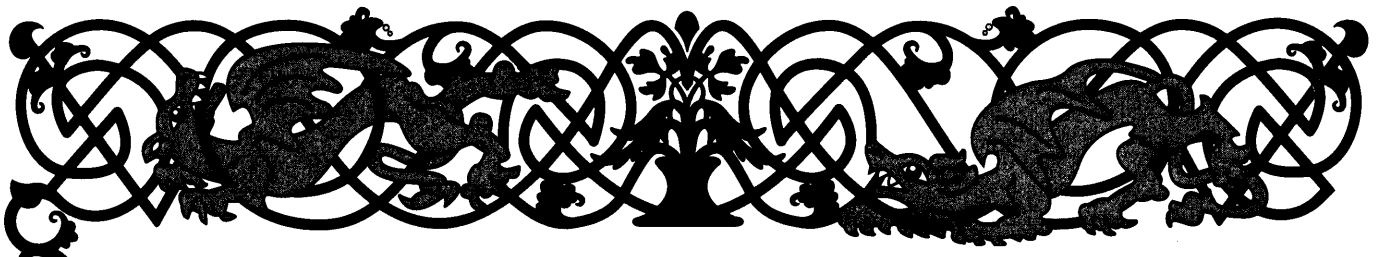
The four High Mages of Nikerymath put their plans into action on Midsummer Night of the Year of Furious Waves (–255 DR). Standing in two pairs atop the peaks at the mouth of Jhaamdath's Bay (the future Vilhon Reach), they summoned great magics unseen by more than a few since the mythical creation of Evermeet or the fall of Mieyritar. With little immediate disruption of the ports beyond Jhaamdath, the elves created and directed a gargantuan tidal wave that slammed through the bay with great precision and force. The crest of the wave came within yards of the mountain peaks upon which the elves stood and then it engulfed all the cities of the human kingdom. The wave widened the neck and sides of the bay, and the a shape very close to the current size and shape of the Vilhon Reach was the final effect. The Twelve Cities of Swords of Jhaamdath were gone, swept up by the waves and buried beneath the sea or shattered, smashed against the sheltering mountains, and strewn down their slopes and across the landscape in the return movement of the waters. More than 60,000 humans died with one blow from the angered elves, who paid for their retribution with their lives as the mountains upon which they stood collapsed into the rushing waters. All that remains of Jhaamdath's Fangs, the two peaks on which they stood, are two islands that now guard the mouth of the Vilhon Reach.

The survivors of this catastrophe were primarily prospectors and miners working high up in the mountains at Midsummer, or merchants and soldiers who were at sea in the Inner Sea and away from Jhaamdath. The survivors eventually collected themselves together and, after an abortive attempt to refound Jhaamdath became complicated by the elves who still sought the death of all Jhaamdathans, set out to colonize other lands. The mix of pragmatic prospectors, elf-hating soldiers, merchants, and a sprinkling of peaceful scholars and farmers eventually wandered or emigrated to the northern end of the Inner Sea, where their efforts and those of their descendants (among others) would found the Dalelands, Cormyr, Sembia, and some of the Vast.

The End of the Age

As the empire began to crumble after the successful rebellion of Tethyr, the Calishite military lost much of its prestige, and its control over the country ended swiftly. The Pasha Kalil, of the





ill-fated Evyrtan Dynasty that closed out the age, died as the result of 1,000 vipers erupting magically out of his sleeping silks and biting him, filling his body with so much poison that what blood marked his passing was as black as night and virulent still. While a number of Calishite power groups attempted to place the blame for the pasha's death on Tethyr, far too many knew this to be the culmination of numerous courtly intrigues. The pasha's poisoning marked the start of a new era for Calimshan and its empire. Whereas power had always been held tightly by the single person on the pasha's throne, the new conspirators looked to spread power around to both allow better and more localized control over the empire and to allow the country to remain operational and profitable no matter how the fortunes of war went and the ambitions of a single person fared. As the military's control began to slip, the merchants, priests, and a rising class of mages stepped in to grasp the reins of power, and the Middle Kingdoms gave way to the New Kingdoms ruled by magic, theology, commerce, trade, and politics.

The Fifth Age

Rulers of earlier ages looking upon the Fifth Age of Calimshan would count it a failure and low point for Calimshan in general. This era saw the ebbing of power out of the fairly centralized control of the pasha and the military. Instead, it flowed into the hands of a fledgling upper class of merchant and religious nobility. The meteoric rise of mercantile, religious, and magical powers was not a concerted, organized grab for control so much as a surge of desire to take what one could while the ruling grip seemed weak. Merchants now wanted political power, not just money; temples and faiths exhibited a nostalgia for better times under long-ago ecclesiastical rule and advocated a return to fundamentalism; and mages were becoming more prevalent and their craft more accessible to pursue, as evidenced in the construction of the first Calishite school of magic in Almraiven. For the first time, a pasha's rule was no longer absolute, and the new master of Calimshan proved to be greedy. The Fifth Age ran a short 183 years, from -200 to 27 DR, produced an astounding 52 rulers of the Calimshan Empire, and had more dynasties than any other: While the rulership stabilized during the first two decades of this age, the Throne Wars during the Year of Wrongful Martyrs (-188 DR) and the Year of Gilded Burials (-187 DR) resulted in the rise and fall of over 39 rulers (and over 300 family members of the same) in nearly as many ten-days.

Calimshan's reduction in status as Tethyr gained its full and unequivocal independence served as an abrupt reminder to the pasha and his court that the empire could not rest on its laurels and assume everyone would stay beneath the pasha's thumbs. Calimshan ruled what remained of its empire with an iron fist, and that same iron fist was velvet-gloved to slyly deal with the upstart country of Tethyr. Rather than merely lock down the borders (Tethyr's southern border rested on the southern shores of the newly named River Ith at this time) with fortresses or engage in further wars of reclamation, Calimshan took a long-term approach to reining in a political opponent: The pasha and his advisors sent many of their lesser children to marry into the royal and ruling circles of Tethyr. If military might would not return Tethyr to the fold, political marriages and a web of personal alliances just might.

The Perry Accords

Fifty years after Tethyr gained its second independence, the trusted and highly placed Tethyrian diplomat Florian Perry entered the court of the pasha at Calimport to establish a lasting peace treaty with Calimshan. As a trusted friend and advisor of Tethyr's King Silvam and a known merchant power with associates and allies in Calimshan, Perry negotiated numerous trade agreements with Tethyr's ancient neighbor to the south. For most of the Year of Sickles (-172 DR), Tethyr's first ambassador spent his time entirely at the Pasha's Palace in Calimport. Midsummer of the following year saw the Perry Accords put in place amid much excitement on the part of both nations. The Accords reduced Calishite troop strengths along the border between Tethyr and Calimshan and gave Tethyr control of the trade roads from Calimshan that traveled through Tethyrian territory. Florian became the first count of Tethyr for his efforts. What none in Tethyr ever guessed was that he also covertly gained a vizar's rank among the pasha's secret advisors and friends: Florian Perry spent the rest of his life spying on Tethyr's royals for the pasha of Calimport.

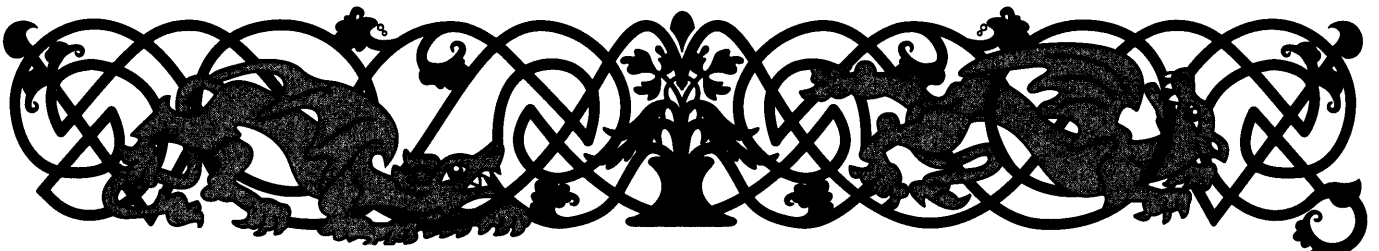
The grandson of a former slave, Florian had vowed to always control his own fate, but he succumbed too easily to greed. The Pehri family of Calimshan owned the largest shipbuilders in Almraiven and had the most profitable trade agreements with the Tashalar and Lapaliiya. The family was also the former owner of Florian's family founder, Halin Perry (thus the similar names, as the slave Ahaln adh Pehri became the Tethyrian freedman Halin Perry). Florian wished to destroy the Pehris for their abuses of his grandfather, and the pasha put this information to good use once he learned of it. The pasha, to whom the Pehri clan had been a growing political power and an enemy, orchestrated a meeting with and later the marriage of the Pehris eldest daughter and the diplomat. Once Florian's wife was safely out of harm's way, the pasha had everyone in the Pehri family slain. All of the family's wealth and holdings then fell directly into the lap of First Diplomat Florian Perry as the only remaining heir, thus cementing Florian's allegiance to the pasha forever.

While a hidden secret for centuries, those with the know-how can peruse the ancient pasha's court records to discover the steady transfer of titles, lands, money, and power to Florian Perry. While the Accords are still held up as a great example of cooperation among the two countries, at least a third of the trade agreements laid out in them between Calimshan and Tethyr were controlled clandestinely by Perry himself, to his profit. In Tethyr, the Perrys are still held in the highest regard as diplomats and honorable folk, but they are equally esteemed in Calimshan. Among the pasha's people, Florian Perry is regarded as "a true son of Calimshan who understood that the appearance of honor is a useful tool in a profitable deal."

The Orb Marches

Called the Eye Tyrant Wars by Tethyrian historians and the Deathsphere Battles by the dwarves, the Orb Marches were an all-out war against the last rising of the Alimir beholder hive. Starting in the Year of Many Eyes (-170 DR), the three contiguous territories of Calimshan, Tethyr, and the dwarf realm of Iltkazar united to fight off the beholders. Ever since the Empire Plague, Calimshan had slowly but surely lost its control over the Lake of Steam, and now it found trusted nazirs (officers of government) throwing off their cloaks of secrecy to reveal their true





allegiance to beholder cults and the eyes of death. The Alimir Hive and the Arnadar (inhabitants of the Arnaden region) cultists wanted to conquer areas to the north like the Om-larandin Mountains, the Kuldin Peaks, the High Peaks, or even the Forest of Mir—places where they could entrench themselves for decades to attack repeatedly at opportunistic times.

Calimshan's pasha allowed the alliance between his empire and the other two nations out of necessity, but he constantly kept watch on the armies, hoping they would reveal a weakness that would allow Calimshan to reclaim what it still saw as its rebellious territories. In fact, many of the strategies proposed and promoted by the Calishite generals were designed so the maximum casualties would be taken by the allied powers' forces, not their army, despite the Calishite soldiery accounting for half the combined force's troops. The beholders turned these divisive tactics and the inferior battle plans they produced to their advantage, and marched north into Iltkazar and west through the Almraiven region, into the swamp and forest, and thence into Calimshan. Early in the first year, the beholders conquered nearly all of southern Iltkazar and half of Calimshan.

Among the more celebrated battles of the Orb Marches are the following:

The Storming of the Qatarn Hills: With casualties of about 400 humans, this battle late in the Year of Sudden Kinship (–167 DR) saw a group of nine beholders and over 3,000 enthralled minions surround and attack the encampment of the Fourth Army. The army's leader, King Silvam of Tethyr, fought valiantly and led the allied troops to victory alongside courageous General Revaod, the Calishite forces' leader.

The Forest Fronts: Early in the war, the beholders conquered Almraiven, Suldolphor, and the southern half of the Forest of Mir, though they never managed to conquer the rest of the woods. The latter three years of the war saw the beholders invade and attempt to entrench themselves among the rest of the trees of the Forest of Mir three times. The Calishite forces within the forest gained unexpected allies in form of the drow of Dallnothax and the aranea of the Spider Swamp on the last two occasions, though once the beholders were gone, the allies immediately turned on each other. The mere hidden presence of Myth Dyraalis and its wizards in the northeastern forest saved the day against the beholders' first attacks in the northern Forest of Mir, as the wizards teleported the beholders deep under the earth and into the jaws of a shadow dragon lurking in Shanatar's ruins.

The Askar of Stone: While many believe this to be little more than a hallucination or fabricated story, it is certainly a grand tale. One Wythal the Vile, the erstwhile beholder ruler of Volothamp, was far crueler to his people than any other master across five millennia. He took to petrifying and shattering any who opposed him, though attackers who had been locked into particularly amusing poses he kept as a grotesquerie in his throne room. One of his statues, a Calishite soldier, came to life one night, though his skin and form remained as hard as stone. His eyes glowed a vibrant green, and many swear that the eyes of the Eight Erenhirs also glowed green that night. The animated askar (a rank of soldier) performed his expected duty: Despite having its arm shattered and head knocked off to the ground by the beholder, the stone askar moved with a steadfast purpose to slay the beholder. Wythal the Vile was killed while being nearly ripped in two by the askar plunging its arm and stump into its central eye. Once its purpose was fulfilled, the stone askar crumbled. A cry of joy, which echoed through Volothamp and the statues that guarded the town, issued from its stone lips when at last the stone askar found peace.

Rewards of a Kind

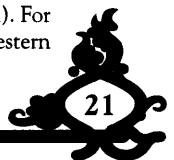
The Eye Tyrant Wars ended in the Year of Seven Loves Lost (–166 DR). After four years of steady fighting, the three human nations at last emerged victorious. While Tethyr's king tried to maintain the good diplomatic relations between Tethyr and its erstwhile allies, the need for the alliance was at an end for Calimshan, and therefore the Calishites made no effort to maintain the heightened level of relations. Calimshan remained polite but grew increasingly distant, and within five years of the wars' end, the countries were aligned only through trade.

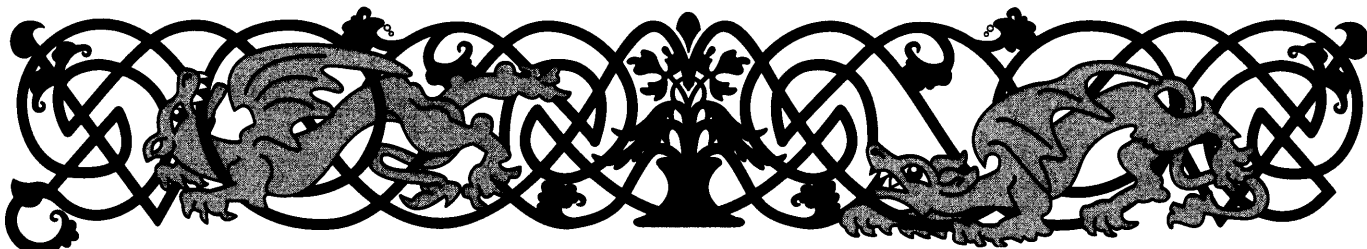
After rebuilding the cities and towns of eastern Calimshan, the pasha issued Tethyr a large grant of land in gratitude for its peoples' aid against the beholders. Along with the land, King Silvam was granted the title of raj over Ankaram, the lands west of the Forest of Mir and north of the River Memnon, including the garrisons south of Ithmong (modern Darromar) and Myratma. In essence, he was granted Monrativi Teshy Mir, the lands of Mir. This land grant advanced Tethyr's southern border to where it still sits today, and many point to this gift as an example of Calimshan's generosity.

Closer examination of the situation reveals a far more crafty reason for the land grant. The pasha had been hearing rumors of discontent about his alleged "lack of appreciation for the blood spilled by Tethyr's sons," and many of the Tethyrian nobles had begun intimating that a war to take Calimshan while it was weakened would be a good idea. In addition, with the pasha's and many folks' attentions on the rebuilding of eastern Calimshan, the raj of Mir had been building up his armed forces and fortifying the region's garrisons to either set himself up as the leader of an independent Mir or to usurp the pasha's rule, and claim all of Calimshan. With one apparent act of goodwill and generosity, the pasha nullified two dangers to his rule without even acknowledging the existence of any problems. Unfortunately, the pasha would soon encounter pitfalls that no amount of craftiness could circumvent.

Storms of Great Portent

Great sea storms erupted all along the Sword Coast and the Shining Sea in the spring of the Year of Silent Screams (–133 DR). For nearly a full month, these storms mercilessly pounded the western





coasts of Amn, Tethyr, and Calimshan and the southern coast of the latter. While a sea surge completely engulfed Velen on the Dragon's Head Peninsula on Midsummer Night, the unceasing storms only flooded the ports of Calimshan and damaged about 20 ships. Many pointed at the pasha's lack of respect toward Umberlee, whose church claimed she caused the storms. This charged was denied by Calimshan's leader. When angry sea storms returned again 50 years later in the Year of Bitter Fruit (-83 DR), they pounded the Tethyrian and western Calishite coasts furiously. The only major effect, though, was to wash away the rocky coast around Tethyr's palace of Ithalyr and render it an island.

A Helping Hand

In the Year of Leather Shields (-75 DR), King Garynor Ithal of Tethyr died suddenly while his grandnephew and sole heir was only four years old. After a brief political scuffle, Princess Rhynda, the boy's grandmother, took the throne as crown regent in an unprecedented move. While she was the twin sister of the dead king and had been court vizera for more than 50 years, none of the nobles of Tethyr were ready to accept her because a woman had never sat on Tethyr's throne in rulership. A colleague and student of hers, the Calishite wizard Akkabar Shoon, had just three years before married into the pasha of Calimshan's family and then slain them to gain the pasha's throne for himself. In a show of political force (and against his advisors' best judgments), the pasha backed his one-time tutor by arranging for the marriage of his youngest granddaughter to her grandson. Though Rhynda did not fully trust Akkabar or his motives, she saw no other suitable future queens among the daughters of Tethyr's clan's nobles, and she needed to strengthen legitimate ties between Tethyr and Calimshan. Thus, with the marriage promise of two four-year-olds binding them together, Tethyr and Calimshan were united in sustaining the Ithal Dynasty. Politically, this also forced the Tethyrian nobles to accept Rhynda's role as regent, for if they did not support what the pasha did, their trade moneys from Calimshan would suffer—as would their life expectancies.

In order to to prepare her for her upcoming role as the wife of a king, the beautiful Calishite girl Arhymeria grew up in Tethyr's court as a lady-in-waiting. Nishan Ithal II turned 15, the age of majority in Tethyr, in Ches of the Year of Gleaming Frost (-64 DR) and took his rightful throne. Married to the exquisite Arhymeria Shoon by late Kythorn, both king and country seemed stable and healthy. Even the Pasha Akkabar, normally not a welcome sight outside of Calimshan, seemed overjoyed with the match and the couple's happiness.

The Rise of the Shoon

Over the next few decades, Arhymeria had less and less to do with Calimshan, as ties between her, her grandfather, and her parents waned. Her only familial contact was her younger brother Amahl. He was unfortunately on his way to visit her upon the conclusion of a trade mission and was out of touch when the Tethyrian royal family was slaughtered during the king's birthday celebration in the Year of Scarlet Scourges (-6 DR). Arriving early in the Year of Feuds (-5 DR), Amahl was met amid much mourning, as he had been magically tracked by his grandfather Akkabar (but not told the news of Arhymeria's death). Much to his surprise, he was also met within days of his

arrival by an entire garrison of Calishite troops and a quintet of advisors and vizars.

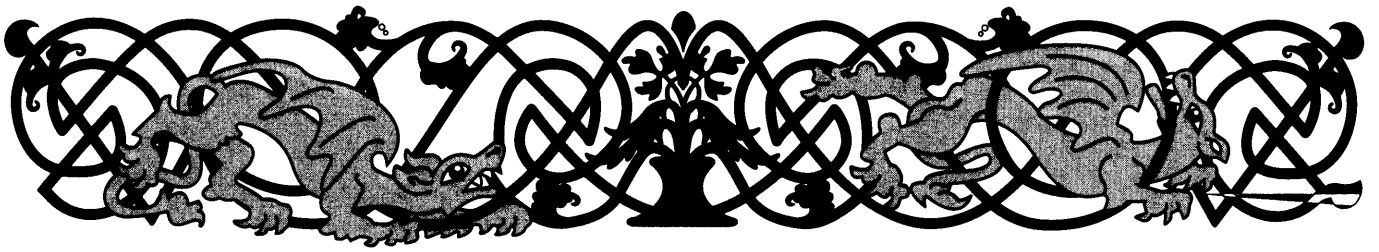
The advisors and troops were sent by Akkabar "to help restore stability to the clans and the country of Tethyr, and to protect my grandson Amahl." While Amahl and the Tethyrian lords knew better than to trust the pasha (for Amahl was as estranged from his grandfather as Arhymeria had become), there was no way to refuse the troops or advisors without provoking a war. Thus, despite his best efforts to derail his grandfather's plans, Amahl was King of Tethyr by year's end due to Akkabar's machinations.

The Tethyrian clans had no power to stop Amahl's ascension to the throne at the time. Evidence pointing toward regicide was mounted against Agaryn of Clan Ithal, thus keeping the remaining blood relative of the king from claiming the throne. And the Calishite advisors produced the now-apocryphal *Confessions of King Nishan*—which state that King Nishan intended to voluntarily abdicate the throne to Amahl should anything happen to his children—to legitimize Amahl's claim to Tethyr's crown. With Ithalyr in ruins, King Amahl established a new court and palace within the walls of Fort Karlag, which was soon returned to its older Calishite name of Zazesspur.

Amahl, from his grandfather's point of view, was an utter failure on the throne of Tethyr, for he bothered to care about the people over whom he ruled. The money and tribute the pasha expected from his grandson was not forthcoming, and the loyal Calishite troops were limited to Zazesspur, even though the pasha kept trying to reestablish garrisons of troops throughout Tethyr to, in his words, "better protect my allies." King Amahl did what he could to resist his grandfather's political and magical manipulations, for he would not sully his sister's trust by becoming his grandfather's puppet. He spent time and effort (and his grandfather's "due taxes and fealty") on restoring the long-ruined capitol of Mir, with the plan to eventually regarrison the foreign troops in Zazesspur there. Determined not to be outmaneuvered by his grandson's resistance to Tethyr becoming a puppet state of Calimshan, Akkabar supported the rebuilding of the city for other reasons.

Finding a more loyal pawn in his corrupt wizard great-grandson Amahl II, Akkabar sent the young mageling to court as Amahl's heir, a setup Amahl of Tethyr could not escape, being a childless bachelor king. When the first King Amahl died mysteriously soon after his arrival, Amahl II took up the crown of Tethyr and proclaimed the country's allegiance to the pasha of Calimshan, his Imperial Majesty Akkabar Shoon.

From the Year of Pacts (-4 DR) to the Year of Sunrise (1 DR), many changes moved power away from Tethyrian and into Calishite hands. Friends of the pasha and the new king soon controlled most of the clans and lands of Tethyr. Work continued on the restoration of the First Kingdom of Mir's capital, and the seat of Clan Ithal's power, Ithmong, was destroyed to prevent an uprising from taking root among the kin of the former rulers. The city of Ithmong was carted away stone by stone and sent south to be used in the restoration work on Mir's old capital, which the pasha now called Shoonach. Ithmong's inhabitants were also hauled away person by person, as they were, to the last soul, press-ganged into slavery. While it took 10 years to finish this first city of Shoonach and more years for it to reach its zenith, the separate ages of Tethyr and Calimshan were now over for hundreds of years to come. The Fifth Age was now done, and the Sixth Age, that of the Shoon Imperium, had begun.



Age of Shoon

The alternate names of the Ages of Calimshan are long forgotten to all but the most esoteric of historical scholars. Only the numbers and the basic breakdowns of the Old, Middle, and New Kingdoms remain, and even the “Kingdoms” divisions are an external invention of the Vault of the Sages in Silvermoon, a notation of ruling eras never used by Calishites and more useful for charting trends in the arts, architecture, and noble grants of titles. The only term still remembered by all is that of the original Empire of the Shining Sea—the Shoon Imperium of the Sixth Age of Calimshan.

The Sixth Age

Spanning four centuries from roughly the Year of Shadowed Blades (27 DR) to the Year of the Corrie Fist (450 DR), the Sixth Age of Calimshan has become known as the Age of Shoon or the Imperium Era. In the four short centuries of this age, the Imperium-controlled lands spread as far north as the River Chionthar; as far east as the Iltkazar range, the Chondalwood, and the Landrise; and as far south as the Tashalar on the Chultan Peninsula. (The Iltkazar range begins in the north with the Giant’s Run Mountains and stretches down through the Snowflake Mountains, the Kuldin Peaks, and the Om-larandin Mountains, ending in the Alimir Mountains. It is referred to in that fashion because beneath it lay—and probably still lies—the dwarf kingdom of Iltkazar.) The greatest empire ever seen before or since astonishingly came solely under the rule of one dynasty, the Shoon dynasty, and it featured only 14 rulers, who reigned from the Qysari Throne at Shoonach.

Rise of the Imperium

The Imperium began as an idea under the Pasha Akkabar Shoon the Elder, the grandfather of Tethyr’s Queen Arhymeria Ithal, though he died before bringing it to fruition. His grandson, also named Akkabar after him, was the elder brother of Arhymeria and Amahl I (the first puppet king of Tethyr), and due to the estrangement or death of his siblings, stood as sole heir to the pasha’s throne in Calimshan. Akkabar the Younger’s son Amahl II slew his traitorous uncle Amahl I and bowed his head in fealty to the Calishite syl-pasha and his heir, transforming Tethyr into a puppet state of Calimshan. Grandfather, grandson, and great-grandson plotted to fuse the two countries into one. From the Year of Gruesome Streams (–2 DR), Tethyr was ruled from the courts at Calimport. However, it was not until the deaths of Akkabar the Younger (by political assassination) in the Year of Shattered Relics (–1 DR) and the fall of King Amahl II in the Year of Glittering Glory (15 DR) that the Imperium became a reality in Calishite eyes. After this, Pasha Akkabar the Younger directly laid his hands on the reins of power over both countries that he had sought for decades.

The Shoon Dynasty

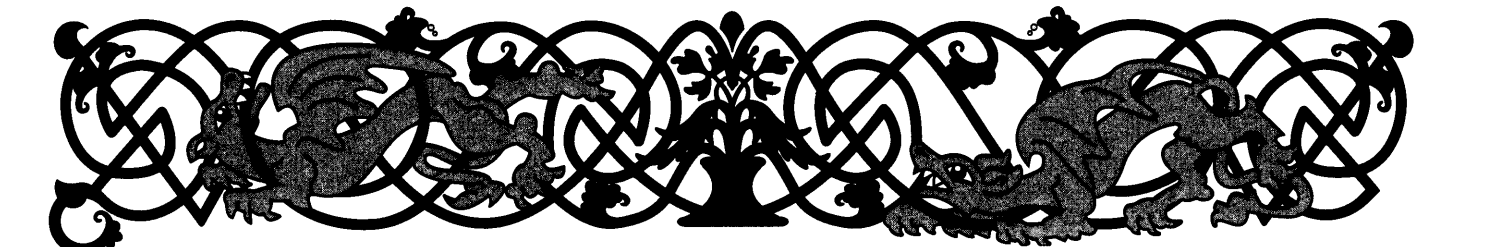
More is recorded of this dynasty of ruthless, talented rulers than most know or hear. Before they strode the world as conquerors, the greatest notoriety the Shoon name was as a bloodline seemingly well-suited to magical study. A family of well-placed vizars, sages, and scholars, the Shoons spread across Memnon and had a few members in the nearby Tethyrian city of Myratma. From Myratma came the first ruler of the dynasty, the ever-ambitious Akkabar el Shoon, a fourth son of the third sabbalad of Memnon of a relatively minor branch of the family, but one whose ambitions would outstrip those of his entire clan combined.

Pasha Akkabar Shoon

Born –110 DR; **Died** 27 DR; **Ruled** –77 DR – 27 (Calimshan); –2 – 27 (Tethyr)

It was in Myratma that the 16-year-old Akkabar Shoon met the Princess Rhynda Ithal of Tethyr and became her apprentice in the Year of Many Bats (–94 DR). He sought power, and she sought (by political and social means) to teach the ambitious and avaricious young man temperance and tolerance through magic. He left Rhynda’s tutelage after seven years and by the Year of the Gleaming (–78 DR), Akkabar had ingratiated himself into Calimportan society and married the fifth daughter of the syl-pasha. After magically protecting himself and his second wife in their home and his position as the syl-vizar of Memnon, Akkabar allowed political strife to destroy more than half of the other members of the syl-pasha’s family. He then subtly and quietly had the others assassinated so he could rise to the throne of Calimport





seven short months after his wedding. When the monarch of Tethyr died, leaving a child on the throne, Akkabar saw opportunity for long-term gain and arranged the marriage of his eldest son's daughter Arhymeria with the Tethyrian prince, Nishan. Arhymeria was sent to live at court in Tethyr for the rest of her life as the future queen. Originally, Akkabar thought to use the girl to steal magical secrets from his former tutor, but she proved too willful and a far closer student of Rhynda's than he ever was. Within 10 years, he knew he had lost any chance of controlling Arhymeria, and he waited for other opportunities.

All it finally cost the syl-pasha to gain control of an empire was, in his words, "the death of two insolent and traitorous grandchildren—and fortune's favor." After more than 80 years of ruling Calimshan and extending his life magically, the wizard-pasha ruled the budding new empire of the fused countries in its formative years while he simultaneously organized and taught a third generation how to rule with an iron fist. Having lost his loyal grandson and great-grandson to disease and intrigues while he yet lived on, the Syl-Pasha Akkabar Shoon fiercely protected the young King Amahl III of Tethyr by keeping the boy at his side for 12 years until Akkabar's mysterious death by magic in the Year of Shadowed Blades (27 DR). While much of what we know about the Syl-Pasha Akkabar is in relation to his ties with Tethyr, he was the first wizard ruler of Calimshan in centuries. The Calishite power brokers' and nobles' atrophied knowledge about how to shield their intrigues from magical scrying worked to his advantage, and the syl-pasha easily conquered any and all rivals, bringing all of Calimshan and its colonies into his iron grasp.

Qysar Amahl Shoon III

Born -14 DR; Died 50 DR; Ruled 27 - 50 DR

Tethyr's King Amahl III was the sole inheritor of his great-great-grandfather's throne in Calimshan as well as already holding the crown of Tethyr. He became (as planned) the sole ruler over two countries and their outlying territories. Crowning himself *qysar* (roughly, "overlord of kings" or "emperor"), Amahl officially began the Shoon Imperium, for his court sent out the first proclamations with such as the name for his domain. While not a wizard like his predecessor Amahl II of Tethyr, the Qysar Amahl was a shrewd and crafty man who trusted no one now that his mentor Akkabar was dead.

The early years of Qysar Amahl III's reign saw many political battles among the pashas and distant vizars of Calimshan. Amahl ruled from the beginnings of his great capital of Shoonach, on which construction had started right after the fall of Ithmong in the Year of Shattered Relics (-1 DR). Tethyr was now ruled by a puppet regime established almost off-handedly by the qysar under his brother-in-law Rahman Cormal, the husband of Amahl's youngest sister, yet Amahl chose to move his government to Shoonach, which was technically in Tethyr. He expected his vizars, sultans, and calephs, the cities' rulers in his stead, to attend court in Shoonach relatively frequently, and his seemingly random orders and abrupt summonings of the noble rulers to his courts kept his underlings off balance enough that they had little chance to foment dissent against him. Despite his confidence in his ability to keep his noble enemies jumping through the hoops he set for them, his ruling classes still had a message to send to him.

In the Year of Errant Arrows (32 DR), the powerful families of Calimshan sought to end the Imperium just as it began—or at least take its power for their own. Three families of vizars and pashas set up a duo of well-executed hunting accidents that were the murders of

the qysar's three eldest sons. In what would become a cruel hallmark of Shoon leadership, the qysar had everyone in both hunting parties slain in retribution for the deaths of his sons. His loyalists were in place almost immediately to take over the pashas' and vizars' seats made vacant by the qysar's justice, and this swift action prevented any further disruption of the Imperium.

In his 24 years as the qysar, Amahl Shoon was rarely sighted by his people unless they came to the qysar's sabban atop the Imperial Mount of Shoonach. His paranoia and his duties as qysar kept him hidden away and busy. However, the most famous act that Qysar Amahl Shoon III performed during his reign was the Casting of the Spear Imperious. In the Year of the Vow Manifest (44 DR), the Qysar Amahl III threw a spear off the Imperial Mount, and the gilded steel spear drove itself into the ground deeply. Qysar Amahl III then proclaimed: "From this point we shall spread our armies across the lands and all shall bow to Shoon or die. Around this spear, an empire shall grow in my name and in the name of my fathers." And grow the empire did, as Shoon forces swiftly spread east to reconquer the western cities around the Lake of Steam (the Arandaran cities) before the beholders' power rose in that region again.

Qysar Shoon I

Born 12 DR; Died 75 DR; Ruled 50 - 75 DR

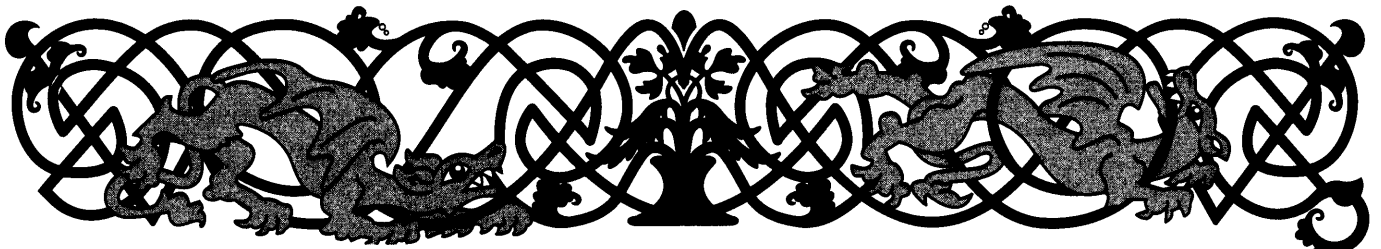
The sole surviving son of King and Qysar Amahl Shoon III, the man once called Aleph el Shoon sacrificed his own name in favor of his surname and was crowned Shoon I. All that is remembered of Shoon I personally is evident in some statues upon the Imperial Mount yet today: He was a vain and proud man who insisted that numerous statues of himself be constructed, along with a great many murals celebrating his excellence. A few of these statues and murals still survive to the present day. To all appearances, Shoon I's handsome features were offset by a cruel mouth and guarded eyes.

While there are few transitory events of major importance that occurred during his reign, Shoon I saw the road-building projects begun that would take decades to complete but would make the Imperium whole. The roads, while originally planned and executed as troop transportation arteries, would become the strength of the Imperium, since they allowed trade to move far more swiftly between markets than over rough terrain. Even through the violent storms and shifting landscape of the Calim Desert, the roads sped travel for all. Qysar Shoon I was also the ruler responsible for the Wizards' Consortiums that eventually led to today's Guilds Arcane.

Qysar Shoon II

Born 34 DR; Died 107 DR; Ruled 75 - 107 DR

Born a fraternal twin and the third son of the qysar, little was expected of young Aleph yn Aleph el Shoon for much of his youth. He and his twin brother shared a close bond, and the intrigues of the day also kept them allied against their elder brother, Qamar el Shoon. Few were surprised to hear of the early death of Qamar by drowning while he was yet a youth; he was a notorious drunkard who apparently fell into a fountain and failed to crawl out. Almost immediately after Qamar's death, Aleph's twin, Ksan, fell ill of a wasting fever that killed him slowly over the course of a tenday. During his fever, Ksan screamed of the ghost of Qamar haunting him, and no priest or healer could seem to either break the fever or cure Ksan's dementia. Aleph was at his twin's side when he died, and from then on, he harbored a great hatred of priests and their promises of healing and future happiness beyond death.



Aleph rose to the Qysari Throne upon his father's death, and was crowned Shoon II. Shortly after his coronation he began a campaign against numerous faiths, religious sites, and temples within the Imperium. Early on, he merely banished some religions from Shoon lands, forcing the pious to worship in secret, or kept the faiths from expanding or building new temples. Later, after the death of his beloved younger sister in childbirth (again, it seemed healing magics could not save her), the qysar rampaged through the Imperium, pillaging temples and shrines of the gold of their altars, reliquaries, and treasures for the Imperial coffers. The Atheist Qysar, oddly enough, was revered as a great hero among the tyrannical worshipers of Bane for his despotic practices, though he destroyed as many Banite temples as those of other faiths. He went to his grave cursing deities and their servants on the same day that his niece delivered his heir, his grandnephew Aleph yn Jadhhar el Shoon, whom he adopted as his son moments before he died.

Riqysar Hazamir al Aktorral

Born 68 DR; Died 123 DR;

Ruled 104 – 107 (Caleph of Calimshan);

107 – 123 DR (Regent Qysar)

Hazamir al Aktorral, the wizard caleph of Calimshan, on hand at the bedside of his qysar, semiofficially took the reins of power as a regent for the infant qysar after the death of Shoon II. Like Akkabar before him, the Riqysar Hazamir magically kept tabs on the worst of his enemies while remaining at the qysar's court in Shoonach. A relatively poor administrator and an even worse leader in terms of unifying the people, the riqysar kept to the palace and worked on his magical research for much of his reign. With the military and much of the ruling class left almost totally to their own devices, power slowly ebbed away from the qysar. It was during the Riqysar Regime that Amn's capital of Athkatla finally became a city, rather than just a caravan stop along the trade roads. Also during this period, the military continued pressing east along the Lake of Steam and south into the Shaar to conquer new lands. None of this was done for the riqysar or due to his guiding efforts, but for the glory of the coming qysar.

Qysar Shoon III

Born 107 DR; Died 130 DR; Ruled 123 – 130 DR

The infant qysar never lived one day of his life outside of opulence, splendor, or courtly intrigue. While his siblings played about the Imperial Mount, he was taught by his vizars and his mother not to trust his riqysar one whit, and the boy who became Qysar Shoon III began his regime with his regent's beheading. While he spent the rest of his eight years on the throne guarding against all outsiders, he forgot the most basic rule of Calishite family politics: "Never embrace, for it merely allows an easy strike to one's back." Expecting betrayal from his advisors but not his own kin, he was slain by the dagger of his own younger brother during a rare moment of relaxation in his harem.

Qysar Amahl Shoon IV

Born 110 DR; Died 142 DR; Ruled 130 – 142 DR

Refusing to be relegated to the lesser position of caleph of Calimshan beneath his elder brother's rule, the conniving Amahl IV slew his own qysar and brother in cold blood at a private banquet held in his brother's harem. For much of the next 12 years, the thoroughly underhanded Amahl Shoon IV assassinated nearly

anyone who crossed him, from slaves that dropped crumbs to the entire ruling class of Manshaka (a move that nearly drove that city into revolt). When great fires swept through the poorer wood-constructed sections of Shoonach, Calimport, Almraiven, Memnon, and Zazesspur in the Year of Sparks Flying (138 DR), the qysar (whose obligatory birthday pyrotechnics were most likely the causes of the fires) blamed a religious sect. The priests and faithful of Ilmater became the scapegoats, as the qysar insisted their bizarre attitude about ending suffering drove them to trying to burn and kill thousands to end their pain. (In the Imperium's crack-down on faiths, begun under the rule of Shoon II, the Ilmatari were persecuted especially harshly.) As the qysar descended into madness in the final two years of his reign, more than 200 highly placed advisors, sultans, and puppet rulers beneath him died due to his delusions and fears—some not wrongly placed.

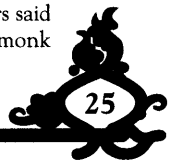
Qysar Amahl Shoon V

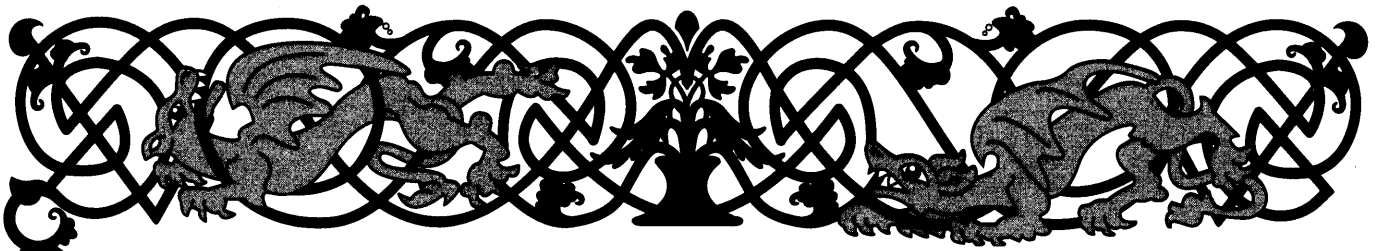
Born 112 DR; Died 204 DR; Ruled 142 – 204 DR

Amahl V, the youngest brother of the two previous qysars, had spent the previous 15 years wandering Faerûn learning the Art, and so he remained aloof from the political infighting and increasing chaos in the Imperium during all of Shoon III's reign and most of Amahl IV's reign. Returning to the Imperium after those 15 years abroad, Amahl of the Nine Whirlwinds (Amahl V) found his brother both insane and proudly guilty of fratricide. Amahl tried first to depose his brother but was forced to kill him (or he killed himself by a magical sword) by blowing him off the Imperial Mount, where he fell to his death into the harbor of Agis. The *Silver Scimitar of Amahl the Mad*, the sword Amahl Shoon IV had wielded, was never recovered, nor was the left hand of the dead qysar. Despite more than 11 decades of searching, it has yet to turn up, though it no doubt entered the water with the rest of the qysar's body, which was found and buried at Nykkar.

Qysar Amahl Shoon V was almost immediately crowned after his brother's confirmed death, and the wizard turned the Shoon Imperium into a well-ordered and peaceful empire. The qysar restored the rights and privileges of the temples of nearly all faiths, and he personally ended the persecution of Ilmater's church and faithful. The Shoon Imperium's greatest masterpieces of the fine arts were carved, painted, or built during Amahl V's reign, as he established a patronage system for the arts, especially as they contributed to the beautification of religious sites and structures. Many great holy sites, including the Edificant Library and the now-fallen Cathedral of the Moon, were constructed in part due to this qysar and his generosity, as were more than 10,000 statues, murals, and mosaics of both a religious and secular nature. Whereas his brother had earned the name of the Butcher Qysar, during his own lifetime, Amahl V was known as the Artist Qysar.

Many of Ilmater's faithful today revere Amahl Shoon V as a near-saint of the religion. When his only child, a daughter, lay dying of a head injury due to a fall from a horse in the Year of Screaming Sharn (173 DR), the kindly qysar frantically sought aid for her and found it in a hermit living along the shores of the River Agis in a tiny hut just within the treeline of the Forest of Mir. Still not trusting the regime's apparent change of heart after the long religious persecutions of the previous qysars, the Ilmatari brother demanded the child be brought to him rather than his entering Shoonach to treat her. However, when the young girl, whom court healers said would die from the head wound, was brought to him, the monk





healed her. She would later grow to bear five strong grandchildren and heirs for Amahl V.

Ecstatic and thankful beyond measure at her recovery, the qysar assembled his people at the Taraqin Arena in Shoonach and spoke to them of Ilmater and his benevolent priests. He then cast a spell, which sent pulses of crackling emerald energy out from him, stretching through the crowd and all across his lands while he spoke, and proclaimed: "This magic I work is solely a binding spell that would enforce our will. Hereafter, none shall raise a hand against a servant of the Crying God save if the servant attacks first. Harming a true Ilmatari, one of the Adorned of the god, will see such harm visited a hundredfold upon thee and thine. This curse, as some of you already believe it, is but an enforcement of our will: Ilmater's children shall be safe, as he and his made mine." For this act and his cessation of the prior persecutions, Ilmatari have debated for centuries whether or not to canonize Amahl Shoon V, a debate which will doubtless continue for centuries more.

Qysar Amahl Shoon VI

Born 180 DR; Died 205 DR; Ruled 204 – 205 DR

The third grandson of the previous qysar, Amahl VI lived a large part of his life amidst the luxurious trappings of the court, but he nearly gave up on ever inheriting the throne itself due to his grandfather's incredible longevity. With the peaceful passing of the Artist Qysar, Amahl became qysar and led the Imperium on a two-month-long period of mourning for the death of the much-beloved Amahl V. History remembers Amahl VI with not nearly the fondness that it recalls Amahl V. Amahl VI was a military man, a warrior with a history of strict but fair leadership among his officers and troops, whom he led in the eastern campaigns that pushed the boundaries of the Imperium around the Lake of Steam and into the Shaar.

On the Qysari Throne for a mere 15 months, Amahl Shoon VI is remembered only in statues on the Imperial Mount and for one event: the quelling of the Harakhti Uprisings. Determined to prove that the qysars were not all rulers from afar who did not sully their own hands with difficult work, the qysar led his troops himself. His military tactics were flawless, as they had been earlier in his days as a qayadin in the Ralamnish Ridings to the north (Amn). Qysar Amahl personally slew the fighting slave Harakhti himself, and by his order, over half the rebellious slaves of the Almraiven Peninsula and the western Lake of Steam region were staked out along the Imperium's trails and left to die slow and tortuous deaths. After returning to Shoonach in triumph to celebrate with two days of feasting, the qysar was dead of a particularly venomous species of scorpion's sting. Few needed to speculate on how the deadly creature found its way into the ruler's bed, for his brother's ambitions were commonly known.

Qysar Shoon IV

Born 183; Died 281 DR; Ruled 205 – 281 DR

The first necromancer qysar of the Imperium, Qysar Shoon IV is among its most infamous for his temper, power, arrogance, and the utter boldness with which he acted to decide the fates of the lands and people he ruled. Only one other qysar made more enemies and caused more evils to be unleashed across the empire than Shoon IV, though during his lifetime, Shoon IV was highly respected for the foresight of his domestic policies and his ability to second-guess foreign powers and outsiders.

During Shoon IV's reign, the Calishar Emirates became the loose confederation of city-states that would lead to Amn. The

Longwalker Dalagar became king of Andlath, east of the Iltkazar range, and Shoon IV either magically or politically forced Dalagar into creating a highly beneficial trade road stretching from Ormath to Athkatla. The two regents for the infant heir, Emyr of Tethyr, owed total loyalty to the qysar, and Emyr looked upon Shoon IV as his mentor and master rather than merely his liege lord. The shrewd manipulator that he was, Shoon IV forecast that if the Ralamnish Ridings were left to their own devices, rather than his forcing further development with an influx of Shoon nobles, they would develop interesting realms to exploit with little effort. His predictions came true via the rise of Tathtar and Meiritin, demihuman realms with unique products and ways of taming the land that the Shoon later appropriated.

The qysar's magical pursuits disturbed a few folk and panicked yet more. In order to give him every advantage possible if attacked, Shoon IV created a spell field about the entire apex of the Imperial Mount and the Qysar's Sabban that allowed only necromantic spells to function there. He also was responsible for the many necromantic spell fields and magically enchanted tombs and mausoleums of the tomb city of Debukker, within the greater city of Shoonach. His insistence on the use of undead in the ranks of the Imperium's armies angered many generals. They suddenly had to incorporate priests or wizards with no previous military experience into their senior officers, since the clerics and mages controlled the undead troops. Finally, after he slew the silver dragon Rhimnasarl the Shining and plundered her lair, the Qysar Shoon IV gained her magical research library, which allowed him and his court mages to construct many items and artifacts including the *Annuli Qysarus*, the *Fanged Shield of Shyk Korort*, *Ghazir the Desert's Edge*, and the infamous *Janhya's Tome*. The fact that he had added the accumulated knowledge of a dragon's lifetime to his own perturbed many wizards, priests, and military folk, who now saw his magical ability as running unchecked and unchallenged—and, frankly, unable to be challenged should he suffer mental instability like others of his line.

Qysara Shoon V

Born 264 DR; Died 300 DR; Ruled 281 – 300 DR

Shoon IV only had one child, who was born long before the necromancer ever rose to the Qysari Throne. That child continued the Shoon bloodline, and he and his three successive wives produced many heirs, and the heirs produced heirs. By the time Shoon IV neared his 100th year of life, his only living heir, due to political intrigues in Calimshan the qysar deemed beneath his notice, was the young woman Munaa yr Oma el Shoon, his great-granddaughter. He named her his heir despite the arguments of his councilors, who were horrified at the possibility that a female might rule outright rather than merely serve as a temporary regent. Shoon IV dismissed his councilors' arguments out of hand, as he was preparing to continue his rule in undeath as a lich and he viewed the naming of an heir as a mere formality. Despite his advanced skill and hoarded knowledge, however, Shoon IV did not survive the transformation process into lichdom. His death brought the first nonregent female ruler over Tethyr and Calimshan to her throne.

To her councilors' surprise, the Lady Munaa proved an apt and excellent ruler. Upon her coronation, she became Qysara Shoon V, and her former name was never again spoken during her lifetime. As she changed vizars to suit her ruling style better, wizards lost prestige during her reign, and the power of the Farisans (the elite special forces) and the Sadimmin (the regular army) rose meteorically.



Whereas the qysars often limited the imperial guard, the Qysaghanni, to a half dozen wizards and two dozen warriors, the qysara doubled the number of warriors and brought her personal guard up to 54. With the rise in military prestige, more soldiers flooded into the Sadimmin and the Nallojal (the navy), and this in turn helped give the Shoon Imperium the forces it needed to conquer the Shaar up to the Landrise and make further in-roads into the states on the coasts of the Shining Sea, especially those on the Chultan Peninsula.

An equally interesting project of her regime was an effort to colonize the isles west of Zazesspur (now known as the Nelanther), though it had no long-term effects. The effort fell apart largely due to the colonizing nobles' dislike of the climate. They complained bitterly of the constant cool winds and storms that were a result of living closer to the Trackless Sea than more sheltered and southerly Calimshan, and they used any excuse to move back south or take long vacations with most of their households at mainland villas, leaving their new estates supremely vulnerable to pillaging by ocean-going raiders, pirates, barbarians, brigands, and thieves.

Qysara Shoon V bore seven children, though only three lived to adulthood: her fourth son, Kahlar, and her second and third daughters (her sixth and seventh children), Selara and Nada. Only two of her children died of disease or childhood afflictions; the other three died of the usual grim court intrigues among Tethyrian and Calishite nobles. To avoid a similar fate, Kahlar was raised farther north, under the protection of trusted friends who taught the sickly boy magic so he might protect himself better. Nada and Selara were children of the Shoon court, and rather than throw the Imperium into total unrest (as threatened if she named a daughter heir), the qysara arranged suitable marriages for them to cement a better political situation for her heir, Kahlar. Nada was betrothed to King Karaj Tiraklar II of Tethyr in a loveless and ultimately childless marriage. Selara married the Caleph Arcane of Almraiven, Nadim el Jhotos, and they had 12 children over the next 20 years, nine of whom proved to be mighty in the Art.

The Qysara Shoon V died of a fever at age 36. Kahlar was summoned to her side at the beginning of her illness, and thanks to the loyal hydar (high commander) of her own Qysaghanni, Kahlar survived a trap- and assassin-laden gauntlet into the city and up the Imperial Mount to be with her as she died.

Qysar Shoon VI

Born 288 DR; Died 309 DR; Ruled 300 – 309 DR

Born Kahlar yn Jahar el Tavarn, the young wizard who left Shoonach a sickly boy returned a proud and catlike man with the confident bearing and skill of mages five times his age. None ever truly found the secrets and sources of the man's power, but once he donned the mantle of the qysar, all within the Qysar's Court felt that might. Taking the honored traditional imperial name and sacrificing his own, the Qysar Shoon VI focused much of his energy into developing the magical resources of the empire, leaving the armies that his mother honored to rule themselves. Like some of his wizard predecessors to the Qysar's Throne, Shoon VI ignored personally controlling the empire somewhat, though his choice of councilors and vizars proved exemplary, since the Imperium flourished and remained healthy during his reign despite his neglect.

While he expanded the scope of imperial intelligence-gathering to keep the Imperium together, Shoon VI's broad focus on external enemies of the Imperium kept him from spotting traitors close to



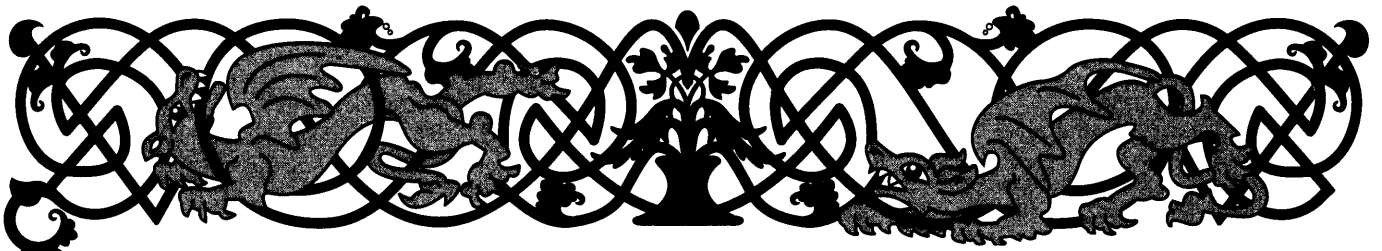
Qysar Shoon VII

him among his staff. Shoon VI died of 35 stab wounds made by his own Qysaghanni, who were then swiftly slain by the qysar's vengeful nephew, Kodos yn Nadim el Jhotos. Kodos had been assumed to be the next in line to be caleph arcane of Almraiven, but his the scope of his ambitions was much larger than that position: Evidence uncovered later revealed that the Qysaghanni were not angered over their loss of status. Rather, they were paid in magic and coin by Nadim and Kodos el Jhotos to assassinate the qysar. As the eldest surviving male related to the qysar by blood, the purple mantle of the qysar fell on Kodos, who eagerly took it up.

Qysar Shoon VII

Born 290 DR; Died 367 DR; Ruled 309 – 367 DR

The most infamous of the qysars started his reign with bloody assassination, and that was only a hint of what was to come. Like the present-day syl-pasha, who wishes to restore many things Shoon to Calimshan, Shoon VII kept himself in power by controlling nearly everything himself, and delegating little of importance to his underlings. The result was that his untimely death would have undone the Imperium rather than forward any ambitious noble lackey's or courtier's plans. Despite his cruel nature, Shoon VII had an uncanny knack for inspiring deep loyalty among his closest underlings, and his speeches and actions were awe-inspiring to his people. Many historians have assumed he used magic to control his people and inspire the crowds of screaming zealots his orations produced, but no evidence exists of his use of charm enchantments of such wide-scale effect. In truth, no charm beyond the force of his personality and drive was used.



Raised among the intrigues of the oldest guild arcane in Calimshan, Shoon VII developed an uncanny ability to win spell battles by almost perfectly predicting what magics his opponent would wield, how they would cast them, and what they stood to gain from each encounter. By the time he became the Qysar Shoon VII, the young man had slain more than a dozen archmages who, upon Shoon VI's death, vied for the position of qysar. Once he had the Qysari Throne, Shoon VII demanded a magical vow of loyalty from each of the calephs arcane. Those who acceded lived and gained great rewards for their orders and themselves; those who did not die, as did the ranks of their orders until either the guild's ranks were decimated and the qysar ruled as the guild's caleph arcane (as he did in Memnon) or a ruler willing to swear loyalty to the Imperium stepped forward.

Shoon VII had little patience for counterplotting with the underworld, as his harsh, but direct, methods proved. Amid complaints of increasing crime and violence and the rising threat that thieves held over the merchant class, the qysar had oil dumped into the sewers beneath every Shoon city and magically lit. The resulting Great Fires destroyed Calimport, Ankhapur, Innarlith, Memnon, and Ithmong and partially engulfed the other great imperial cities and towns. While the fires, which had been planned to be controlled burnings, raged almost unchecked and were responsible for the deaths of over 3,000,000 people, they did serve the qysar's immediate purpose and destroyed many criminal bases of operation, setting organized crime within the Imperium back decades. By the time the families who controlled the illegal trades recovered and reorganized, the qysar and his advisors had taken control of much of the illegal activities themselves. This belief that the ends justified the means, no matter what the cost, was typical among Shoon loyalists and embraced heartily by the qysar himself.

Shoon VI committed by far the worst atrocities of any qysar throughout the Imperium's history. Unicorns and elves alike were nearly driven to extinction in the Imperium due to his experiments and sanctioned hunts against them. The infamous *Staff of Shoon* and the *Tome of the Unicorn* were products of Shoon's magic and madness, and more than two dozen unicorns were slain merely to prepare the components of these artifacts. Other evils flowed from the qysar's combined fear of and obsession with destroying Iryklathagra, also known as Sharpfangs, the dragon who stole his *Staff of Shoon*.

In his drive to destroy Iryklathagra, maintain his hold on the Imperium, and endlessly increase his personal might, he created many awesome and terrible spells including *soulfire*, *Kodos' eruptive strike*, and the worst of all, *Shoon's villain volley*. *Soulfire* sacrificed lives to fuel arcane fires. *Kodo's eruptive strike* combined the worst effects of an earthquake and a volcanic eruption with a special *reverse gravity* that flung solid and molten rock up at foes—without concern for those beneath once the matter fell to the ground moments later. *Shoon's villain volley* transformed from one to 20 living beings into huge magic missiles under the caster's control; more than 500 peasants and slaves lost their lives in Shoon VII's later years to his use of this spell. All of these arcane inventions and many others like them showed a callous disregard for mortal life in general, and many of them also showed an almost sickening glee in twisting the flow of the mortal life force—especially one inclined toward good—into raw destructive energy.

After his final battle against Sharpfangs the dragon in the Year of Molten Anvils (366 DR), the qysar had lost his right leg and his

left arm was shattered and nearly ripped from his body. Contingency magics prepared years before kept him alive and relatively safe from the minor machinations of his court nobles and family while he recovered, but the Necroqysar—an insulting title he wore as a badge of honor—saw his near-death experience as a sign that he should put his ultimate plans into motion. Feigning almost-total incapacitation and weakness, Shoon VII placed his daughter on the throne as his heir apparent and began planning his transformation into an undead state. He took this opportunity to plan and have constructed his own tomb in the Tomb City of Debukkher within Shoonach; beneath it lay his hidden lair and much of his personal treasure. While he maintained the appearance of being seriously wounded through illusions, Shoon VII did in fact bear one real lasting badge of his encounter with Sharpfangs—he would ever after walk with a severe limp.

In the Year of Shying Eyes (367 DR), seven months after his fictional incapacitation, Shoon VII's daughter poisoned his soup and laughed triumphantly as her father apparently died. The Necroqysar himself merely wondered what had taken her and her advisors so long to try to seize the reins of power. Only temporarily paralyzed by the poison to which he was inured, Shoon VII freed himself from his deathlike state and, unnoticed by anyone else (through magic), placed a dead clone of himself in his place for embalming and interment. Three years later, the Necroqysar stepped beyond death as a lich, but the rule of his empire, meanwhile, had passed on to his heir. (For more information about of Shoon VII's activities after death, see the *Lands of Intrigue* and the *Calimport* campaign supplements.)

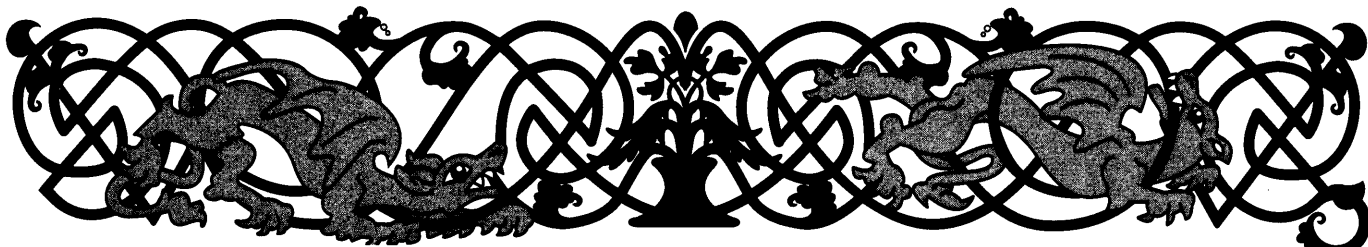
Qysara Shaani

Born 346 DR; Died 427 DR; Ruled 367 – 427 DR

An easily manipulated court princess who thought herself far more crafty than she truly was, the Qysara Shaani was a pawn on the Qysari Throne for the entirety of her reign. The magnificently beautiful woman had over 100 jhasinnar (male harem slaves) at her beck and call, and she rarely chose to abandon them over matters of rulership. All she cared about was being showered with gifts and attention, and she left the actual rulership to her advisors—those same women and men who convinced her to take her father's life.

For 60 years, the vain and tempestuous Shaani played at being the qysara while her puppetmasters pulled strings to change the face of the Imperium. While her father had left some subordinate duties to some of the same advisors, the central authority unmistakably always remained with him; all moneys and power stayed within his grasp even if he shared their use temporarily. Shaani, in her apathy, allowed her courtiers to effectively divide up the Imperium under their own rules. She also abandoned what she viewed as the tiresome bother of bringing all her subordinate nobles and generals to Shoonach twice a year for oaths of fealty. While tributes still came in from the farthest reaches of the Imperium, they were not in the amounts that had been levied. Regional leaders began taking control of their own locales again by funneling their money into buying the loyalty of Shoon generals and troops.

Shaani had only four children (by her most prominent generals), and while she doted on them, she worried little about them when they were gone and married off to political allies in places like Amn, Tethyr, the Tashalar, or the city-states of the Lake of Steam. By the



end of her reign, the Imperium had fallen to pieces in all but name, and despite her children's and grandchildren's prominent bloodline and later desperate attempts to patch the Imperium back together by force, the empire would fall after but one more qysar. By the last third of her reign, Shaani's generals and the rulers of the Imperium's subjugated foreign states barely paid lip service to the drunken and irresponsible Shaani, who retained only the ghost of her former beauty by this time.

Still, while the Qysara Shaani is largely responsible for the fall of the Shoon Imperium, she did manage one coup early in her reign that many still find astonishing: She bargained a peace for the Imperium from the dragon Sharpfangs, a feat her father never accomplished. When the dragon returned to Shoonach in the Year of Emerald Eyes (371 DR), her laughter over hearing of Shoon VII's death cracked the great dome atop the Qysar's Palace. Shaani, prepared for the dragon's visit, offered her a small hoard in gems and magic, including *Amahl's Mastering*, the *battleblade ring of Akkabar*, *Kuraltaar the Demonshield*, and two bottles containing a trapped efreeti and a djinni. Appeased, but also cleverly understanding that Shaani did not truly rule and could be easily manipulated, Iryklathagra parlayed the offering into a tribute due once each century.

Qysar Amahl Shoon VII

Born 398 DR; Died 450 DR; Ruled 427 – 450 DR

The youngest son of Shaani's youngest begotten child, Amahl yn Shaan yn Shoon of Ankhapur was well-hidden from the time of his birth until the death of his grandmother—and for good reason. Upon the death of the Qysara Shaani, numerous vizars and sultans in Shoonach scrambled to grab as much influence and land as they could get, and a bloodbath ensued across all the major power centers of the Imperium. After his grandmother's death, Amahl amassed a fleet of ships among the Arnaden city-states (those around the Lake of Steam), wrested power from the recurrent beholder cults of the Lake of Steam, and reasserted Shoon rule over the area. The Arnaden Fleet then invaded Calimport in Mirtul of the Year of Violet Fungi (427 DR) and swiftly reestablished order there after seven coups in four tendays had nearly destroyed the city. However, while Calimport was still the most important city in Calimshan, Amahl had conquered a hulk of a city all but destroyed by fires that had been set by the vying factions to isolate the fire-proofed calephs' sabbans from their enemies. By Highharvestide of the Year of Violet Fungi, Amahl marched victoriously into Shoonach as Qysar Amahl VII after his allies among the Qysaghanni and the army cleared out the last of the traitor vizars there.

Amahl's reign was dominated by constant military campaigns designed to reunite the fragmented Imperium and bring the local kingdoms and states beneath his rule again. However, his attempts at forcibly reasserting control only resulted in further resistance to Shoon presence and Shoon authority. Amahl's military and strategic genius failed him when it came to fighting magic, as he was equally afraid and jealous of wizards and their power. His strategy for preventing wizards from controlling the Imperium was to launch the Mage Purges, which cleared the Imperium of most openly practicing wizards within a few years—by killing them or driving them underground or out of the empire. While Amahl VII did not persecute religions and religious lands during his rule, he did tax them so heavily that the common goal of bringing down Shoon rule to relieve the tax burden even united Banites and

paladins of Helm for a short time in the distant lands in the region of the Cloud Peaks.

Other than his fighting prowess, Qysar Amahl VII's most outstanding trait was his capacity for duplicity and treachery. Remembered as a man totally without honor, he nonetheless shared his great-grandfather's gift for entrancing crowds and people with his speaking ability. Anything he said was believed to be sincere and truthful, no matter how much factual evidence there was available to refute it. Many lesser states stayed faithful to Shoon rule until the end of the Imperium simply due to the force of Amahl VII's projected personality.

Still, with so many factors aligned against him toward the final decades of his reign, Amahl's ultimate destiny was to be one of failure. He died at the hand of the returned King Strohm I of Tethyr, and the Imperium shattered. Despite all his prowess in battle and the military genius that brought him to the head of the greatest army on Faerûn, his regime fell before the passion and drive of the one-armed elf king who claimed as his victory prize liberty for Tethyr and all the states under the Shoon.

Major Events of the Imperium

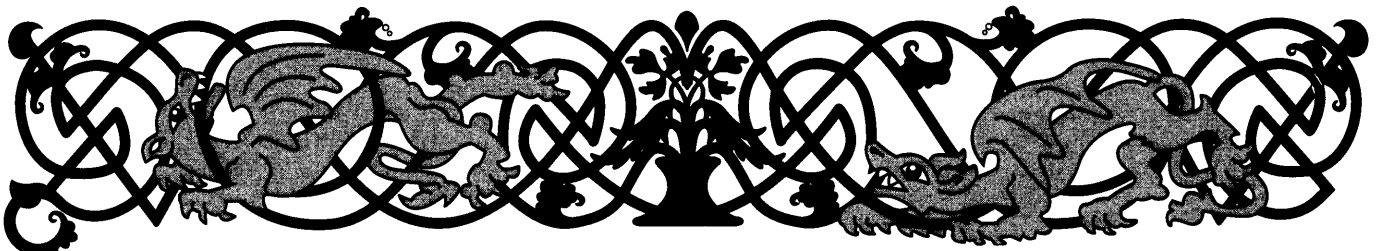
While innumerable events occurred during the roughly four and a half centuries the Imperium lasted, very few are remembered today save on a local basis. Very few folk even among the sages of the learned classes could speak with authority on the Lizard Wars of the Tashalar Campaigns, the founding and eventual fall of Namyth Khoal in the Firesteaps, or the Great Colony Fleet of the Qysara Shaani that sailed west into the Trackless Sea, never to be heard from again.

Still, there are a number of empire-spanning events that many still speak of in histories and whose echoes are even yet evident in tavern talk: In Amn, Calimshan, Tethyr, and in places among the Arnaden city-states, a slang term for rebellious or criminal activities is *harakh*, after the great rebel slave Harakhti. A *shaani* is a leader or ruler with no ability to lead. Giving someone "the white eye" suggests a curse or hex, though it traces back to a spell used by Shoon IV to compel truth from his courtiers that turned the qysar's eyes completely white, without apparent pupils or irises, when it was used. Below are some of the graver and more memorable events of a long and storied era.

The Vengeance Waves

As Calimshan did not feel the brunt of any tidal waves for more than a century, her people grew lulled into a false sense of security. Elderly soothsayers tried to warn the rulers of the Imperium of their folly to no avail. In the Year of Dark Venom (37 DR), exactly 170 years to the day after a great wave flooded the ports of Calimshan and destroyed Velen in Tethyr, five massive waves all struck at once at five different points across Calimshan. Like a great hand of scorned fury crushing the source of its anger, Umberlee's five fingers closed on Memnon, Teshburl, Calimport, Manshaka, and Almraiven and destroyed between a third to two-thirds of each city or town with massive floods. Since the reestablishment of the worship of Umberlee shortly after this, no coastal Calishite settlement has been built without at least two structures dedicated to the worship of the Bitch-Queen for fear the Vengeance Waves shall strike again.





The Harakhti Uprisings

On the Feast of the Moon in the Year of the Avarice (204 DR), the fighting slave Harakhti broke free from the minor fighting arena in Almraiven and built himself an army of disgruntled and impoverished freemen and embittered fellow slaves. Heading north into the hills and forests, Harakhti soon led an army of more than 25,000 souls, and the complacent border troops were hardly a match for either the seasoned gladiatorial slaves or the mobs of angry peasants and untrained slaves. Harakhti's army soon collectively freed more than 120,000 slaves and effectively was the largest army assembled in the eastern Shoon Imperium.

In the lands north and west of Ankhapur, the Qysar Amahl Shoon VI and Harakhti fought one another in a duel after their troops had mutually decimated each other, with more than 180,000 casualties staining the ground red with blood. Harakhti saw it as a victory in and of itself to be considered worthy to be slain personally by the qysar. Qysar Amahl VI considered Harakhti a mad dog to be put down, but he was forced to admit his opponent was a brilliant leader and swordfighter.

Still, the rebellion ended that the day of their duel with Harakhti's death in late Uktar of the Year of the Greenglass (205 DR). In the end, the Harakhti uprisings led to many folk being freed and remaining so, and a number of families among the nomads of the Land of the Lions speak reverently of Harakhti the Deliverer and his personal role in freeing their ancestors.

The Death Parade

Qysar Shoon IV had spent a dozen years trying to quell the minor but collectively disturbing rebellions and terrorist activities of certain Tethyrian factions in Ithmong and its outlying villages that had gone on between Ithmong and the capital city of the Imperium, Shoonach. In the Year of the Mist Dragon (231 DR), he lost his temper and his patience with the situation, and he unleashed a horde of undead skeletons, zombies, and wights upon his rebellious subjects. The horde was created from the mass graves of slain slaves from troubled Ithmong and those same upstart villages. The last night of Marpenoth was especially frightening to the Tethyrians, since they were attacked by their own dead.

When the horde, which started in the outlying charnel fields, finally reached Ithmong, the damage it inflicted was limited solely to members of the rebel groups and areas known to be hotbeds of rebel activity. However, while no damage was done to Shoon loyalists or their property, all who witnessed the Death Parade were paralyzed with fright. The horde collapsed with the rising dawn, but by then all known Ithmongan rebels lay dead in the streets. They could be distinguished from the collapsed forms of the Death Parade horde only by obviously having been only recently deceased, as opposed to in a state of advanced decay.

The Ilhundyl Gambit

During the reign of Shoon IV, disgruntled pashas and vizars among the Calishite and Arnadar lands hatched a plan by which they might bring an end to Shoon rule by disrupting the Imperium with another crazed mage as powerful as the qysar. With judicious payments of magical items and gold, a consortium of nine major Calishite families recruited the willing assistance of Ilhundyl of Volothamp. He agreed to try to disrupt the Imperium via magical conquest in exchange for payment in coin and magic. In the Year of Dark Dreams (223 DR), Ilhundyl took on the persona of the Mad

Mage, and his subsequent experiments and nightly rampages saw him banished from Volothamp; not so strangely, his rampages only damaged political enemies of his employers. He fostered a reputation for himself that he was mad for power and spread the word that he sought to conquer the Imperium.

In the following decade, Ilhundyl's reputation grew, though not so fast that it drew the attention of Shoon IV. The peaceful halfling realm of Meiritin, founded in the Year of the Raised Banner (227 DR) along the eastern shores of the great lake of the Ralamnish Ridings (now known as Lake Esmel), next felt the brunt of Ilhundyl's ambitions. By the fourth year of the realm's existence, the Mad Mage had conquered the halflings and begun planning to conquer all of the Shoon Imperium, starting with the Calishar Emirates.

By this point, the role that Ilhundyl had adopted had taken on a life of its own. Many of Ilhundyl's employers and conspirators had died of old age or intrigue, and their sons had either accepted their families' participation in the plan or died at Ilhundyl's wrathful hand when they refused to pay the annual tribute that their fathers had agreed on as his fee for his long-term efforts. Ilhundyl's arrogant role had gone to his head so much that he now actually wanted to fight and defeat the qysar, who had been savagely wounded in a battle against Iryklathagra the Blue in the Year of the Plague Clouds (236 DR). However, rather than battle the qysar, Ilhundyl met his doom at the hands of the young Elminster Aumar and Myrjala Dark-Eyes in the Year of Many Mushrooms (238 DR).

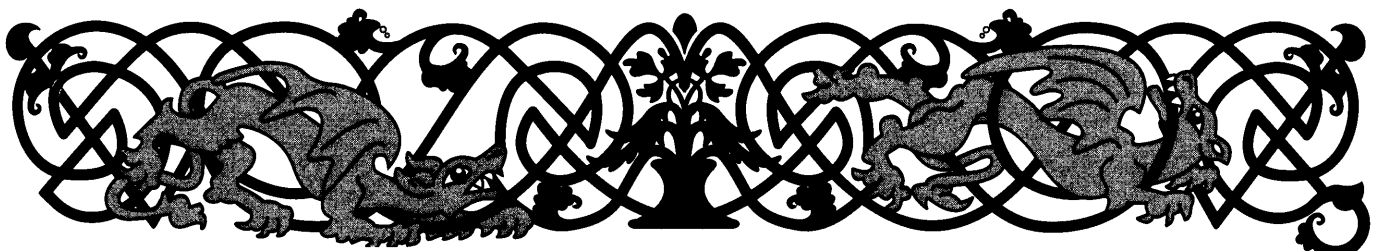
In the end, the legacy of the Ilhundyl Gambit only strengthened Shoon rule. After the Shoon reconquered Meiritin, they recovered records of the plan, including the names of the conspirators, and they and their families were all put to the sword for treason. More than two years after Ilhundyl's own death, 232 people lost their lives at the hands of the qysar's servants, treachery was weeded out, and the grip of the first necromancer qysar wrapped yet tighter around the Shoon Imperium.

The Sharpfangs Battles

Three times Shoon VII clashed with the draconic nemesis of the Shoon Dynasty, Iryklathagra "Sharpfangs," who sought reparations for Shoon IV's destruction of her rightful prey, the silver dragon Rhimnasarl the Shining, and the theft of her hoard, which the blue dragon considered hers as well. The first battle between the two grew from a failed attempt at negotiation after the dragon settled onto the Qysar's Square before the Imperial Palace and dared the qysar's attentions. However, after their initial encounter, which took place in northeastern Tethyr some time after the dragon landed before the palace, the fights between Shoon VII and Iryklathagra were epic in terms of the magic both of them wielded, the destruction they inflicted on each other and (mostly) their surroundings, and the utter unmitigated hatred displayed by them against each other.

While the earliest battle in the Year of Seven Scales (322 DR) resulted in little damage to either the qysar or the dragon, it destroyed four entire villages in the northeastern territories of Tethyr. Qysar Shoon VII claimed victory in the encounter because he had stolen numerous items of magic from the dragon's grasp.

Their next match occurred in the Year of Battle Talons (358 DR). This duel visited truly massive destruction on Tethyr—inflicted mainly as collateral damage by both combatants. However, even the Qysar's *soulfire* spell, which ripped the life out of dozens of peasants and nearby soldiers to fuel a massive conflagration, could not stop



Sharpfangs from stealing his prized *Staff of Shoon* and claiming victory in their second clash.

The duo's final match-up took place in the skies over Shoonach and among the streets of the slaves' city just outside the city center in the Year of Molten Anvils (366 DR). Both combatants possessed ancient magic, an all-consuming hatred for each other, and little regard for human life. They attacked with little thought as to their surroundings, and more than 75,000 slaves died as a result of the battle. Both qysar and dragon were rapidly sorely wounded, as Iryklathagra's wings were shredded and Shoon shattered an arm and a leg, but neither gave quarter. The soldiers and other wizards of the Imperium finally drove off the dragon and then tended to their leader, whose boastful oaths of victory rang hollow amidst the ravages done to his capital.

Soon after this, Shoon VII's successor poisoned him. Though not fatally injured, he faked his death and underwent the transformation into lichdom. Iryklathagra gained the last laugh, however, as Shoon VII's successors made an agreement with Sharpfangs to buy off her wrath that resulted in them paying tribute to her for centuries.

Valashar

Valashar was added to the Shoon Imperium in the Year of the Fearless King (361 DR). It stretched from the headwaters of the Sulduskoon to those of the Amstel River to the north, and its western border was flush with the halfling realm of Meiritin. This short-lived realm arose through the military efforts of the Tethyrian prince, Ashar Tornamn, the fourth nephew of King Karaj Tiiraklar II of Tethyr. Prince Ashar hoped that his conquests would gain him favor in the eyes of his qysar, Shoon VII. Ashar declared himself king of Valashar (though he remained a prince of Tethyr and was considered a nazir [a regional governor, or prefect] by the Imperium). Valashar grew slowly, but King Ashar steadily pushed the borders of the Shoon Imperium and his realm northward to the Troll Mountains and the Giant's Plain. Starting in the Year of the Woeful Resurrection (375 DR), Ashar's infamous 15-month march (Ashar's March) stretched the empire beyond the northern Troll Mountains and up to the High Moor by the Year of the Leaping Hare (376 DR).

Cormyr's Prince Azoun I—in response to the invasion of northern lands by King Ashar and Ashar's attempts to block and tax westbound caravans traveling through the wild territories that the Shoon Imperium had just declared belonged to it—led an army against Valashar, wielding the bloodstone-bedecked short sword called *Ilbratha, Mistress of Battles*. Cormyr's troops rallied around this symbol of power, and they fought well against the combined army of Shoon-led Tethyrian and Calishite forces. The first battles were on the western frontiers of Cormyr. From the battles that followed them, the Cormyrean army pushed the Shoon back to the Fields of the Dead and down through the Green Fields over the course of a year. Azoun then swiftly crushed Valashar's armies on the Giant's Plain in the Year of the Leaping Hare (376 DR), and he forged on through Amn, Valashar, and Tethyr. Azoun's forces destroyed numerous garrisons, and Azoun himself led his troops to the sacking of the city of Ithmong as a show of strength. While Azoun and his armies then swiftly abandoned this campaign, Valashar and its boastful king were destroyed. The Imperium's borders soon shrank back to the Giant's Run Mountains.

In truth, King Ashar was little more than a stalking horse to draw out the northern powers, especially the heir of Cormyr. This whole scheme was orchestrated by Qysar Shoon VII and his vizars as an attempt to conquer Cormyr by forcing Cormyr to stretch its military might thinly across the continent, allowing imperial forces to strike

from strength at a fragile line of troops while appearing to be weak. After the sacking of Ithmong, only the fortuitous emergence of troubles in the Cormyrean lands drew Azoun away from Tethyr and prevented his march onward to Shoonach, possibly to conquer and lay waste to the whole Shoon Imperium. Cormyr's army, by its own strict account of its military might and its guesses about the strength of those forces that would have faced it, believed it could have conquered the Imperium, but did not because orc hordes within Cormyr's own lands forced the army to march north. Shoon VII believed he had coaxed his enemy almost into a deadly trap only to have him turn back due to random chance. In short, both Cormyr and the Shoon Imperium flexed their muscles, showed their teeth, and then left each other alone, each believing their might or plots had the other stalemated.

The Eye Battles

As always, the Lake of Steam cities fought constant wars against beholder domination during the age of the Shoon Imperium. From the Year of High Eyes (409 DR) through the Year of the Floating Rock (430 DR), the Eye Battles raged across the lands of the Arnadar. Whether short skirmishes or long and drawn out conflicts between rebels and ruling eye tyrants and beholder cultists, these battles comprised the largest and longest inconclusive campaign against the beholders since their invasion of Calimshan centuries before. Most of the Arnaden states were freed from the beholder cults' domination by the actions of Amahl VII's troops while he was fighting his way back to Calimshan to claim the Qysari Throne. His fleet swept through all the ports on the Lake of Steam, destroying all beholders and cultists alike in the course of restoring the Arnaden city-states to Shoon rule. The Eye Battles continued after this point out among the Land of the Lions and south into the region around Almraiven for a few years until yet again no beholder maintained any rule over surface folk (at least, that folk knew about).

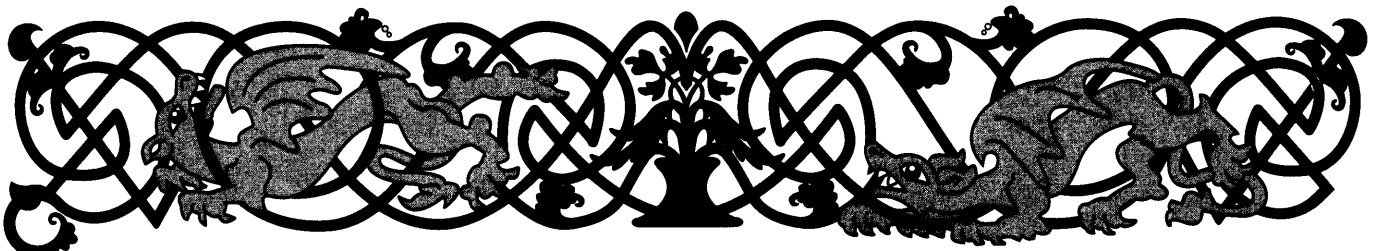
The Mage Purges

Among the first of the great campaigns of the last qysar, Amahl Shoon VII, the Mage Purges were less a military campaign and more a movement perpetuated by civilians and military forces alike. With Qysar Amahl's paranoia about wizards fueling the effort, anyone known to practice magic within the lands of the Imperium was hunted down and slain. The Mage Purges lasted from the Year of Violet Fungi through the Year of the One's Tears (427–428 DR), and every mage academy and guildhouse across Shoon lands was put to the torch. In the course of one year, more than 44,000 people—wizards or relatives and allies of them—fled Shoon lands and migrated north or east to safety. (Some theorize that this mage migration helped some of the eastern cities, such as Delthuntle and Laothkund, break free of Unther's control.) Those who could not escape in time died at the hands of Shoon soldiers and overwrought mobs.

More than 38,000 known or suspected wizards met an untimely end due to the Mage Purges. While the worst purges ended after the first year of Amahl's reign, no wizard was safe from persecution, culminating in death at the hand of Shoon soldiers, for the remainder of the Imperium's days.

The Seven Burnings

"A minor uprising in the furthest frontiers of the Imperium" was how this event was described in Shoon histories and even those of later Calishite historians. This uprising was in fact a precursor of the Im-



perium's fall and a serious and temporarily successful attempt by a subjugated state to resist Shoon rule. During the reign of Amahl Shoon VII, numerous towns along the River Shaar and Lake Lhespen rose up in revolt against the foreign Shoon puppet rulers and troop garrisons that oppressed them. They slaughtered their rulers and the Shoon soldiers. For a time during the Year of Steelscreaming and Year of Silver Holly (436 and 437 DR), no Shoon troops ruled over the central Shaar or the southern coastal city of Sheirtalar.

In response, the Qysar Amahl VII sent Qayadin Hakam yn Sarak el Sallah, his most merciless general, and 17 troop ships to quell the uprising. Sallah's answer to the revolt was utterly ruthless. During the course of two months, the Bloody Qayadin and his army marched upriver to Lake Lhespen and destroyed first the port city of Sheirtalar, then Kormul, and then five other towns, pillaging and destroying anything that crossed their path. Entering the port of Sheirtalar, he put the city to the torch and all of its citizens to the sword. Anyone bearing a weapon (and many who were not) was slain on sight. He then continued this mode of operations with the city of Kormul and the next five towns.

The extreme loss of life during this campaign was avoidable, especially since the rebels surrendered after the fall of Kormul, but Sallah ordered his army to carve a bloody swath onward to the heart of where the rebellion had begun. The senseless death and destruction of property that ensued he considered far less important than the lesson it taught about the consequences of rebellion to the natives and others who might consider revolting against the Imperium.

Remaining in the Shaar as its nazir (prefect), Sallah died an ignoble death in the Year of Unleashed Fears (451 DR). In that year, a mob of widows, emboldened by the news that the Imperium had fallen, ripped him limb from limb with their bare hands in revenge for the deaths of their husbands a decade before.

The Fall of the Shoon Imperium

While Amahl's initial rise to the throne helped stabilize the crumbling Imperium, he spent his entire reign trying to consolidate power again after six decades of lax rule. His draconian style and heavy reliance on martial law did not bring the local people in line by fear—it made them hate and resist Shoon rule even more. One by one, provinces had slipped through the grasp of the last three Shoon emperors, and the final blow, which fell during ill-fated Amahl VII's reign, was the Tethyrian War of Independence. The Shoon-supported Tornamn Dynasty of Tethyr had been secretly loyal to the native Tethyrian cause and had covertly supported the Tethyrian people's fight for freedom for more than nearly 60 years. Now, with the imminent return of a long-lost Ithal heir, King Priam Tornamn broke ties with Shoonach and the qysar in favor of supporting the claim of an elf to a human throne.

The son of a half-elf father and elf mother, Silvyr Ithal proved his direct line of descent from King Nishan II by drawing *Arhymeria's Dagger*, a magical blade that could only be drawn by a descendant of House Ithal. By the summer of the Year of Killing Ice (449 DR), Silvyr and his freedom fighters had slain more than 400 Shoon soldiers. Their march on Ithmong was, in the end, less an invasion than a victory parade, as the Tornamnian forces fought from inside the city's walls to take it from the imperial troops. On the 8th day of Eleint in the Year of Killing Ice, Silvyr took the

crown offered him by the abdicating King Priam and restored the rightful monarchy of Tethyr.

For the entire summer of the Year of Killing Ice (449 DR), Tethyr and Amn were wracked with war as the native peoples tried to throw off the Shoon rule. When King Silvyr fought his way to the gates of Shoonach in late Uktar, a reluctant truce was called by Qysar Amahl VII. The qysar requested a duel of honor to spare his great capital and his people the destruction that Silvyr's forces would bring upon them, and Silvyr agreed. On the Feast of the Moon, King Silvyr and Qysar Amahl Shoon VII met in single combat at the Taraqin Arena. Unarmed soldiers representative of both sides of the conflict filled the arena seats to witness history in the making. Despite all promises of an honorable fight, Qysar Amahl VII slew the king of Tethyr by poison. He and his forces immediately then broke the truce and butchered the amassed Tethyrian army. Qysar Amahl celebrated for a month, believing his Imperium secure and his enemies routed and demoralized.

Luckily for Tethyr, Prince Strohm, son of Silvyr, did not trust the word of the qysar and held many of Tethyr's forces in reserve. Missing a right arm since birth, Strohm still became a fearsome and strong warrior, and his troops called him the Left Hand of Vengeance. With the ignoble death of his father, Strohm vowed to the gods and his people that he would kill every Shoon loyalist his forces encountered until the Imperium fell. While Shoonach's inhabitants reveled at the death of the Imperium's enemy, Strohm's soldiers covertly infiltrated the city and hid until the word was given. Strohm, too noticeable as a one-armed elf among humans, waited outside the walls until the time was right.

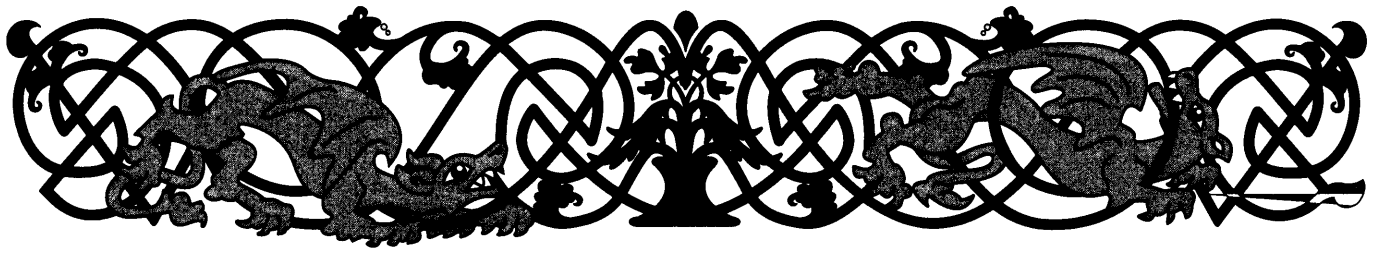
On the last day of Hammer, Strohm revealed his hand by sending Tethyrian divisions against Shoonach from all sides. His hidden forces boiled out of the sewers, out from among the slaves (with many a slave joining in revolt), and even from within the tomb city of Debukker. Strohm himself, with the assistance of an elite cadre of elves and humans, magically assaulted the Imperial Mount. No Shoon soldier survived the day, and this time when the ruler of free Tethyr and its former oppressor met in combat, no treachery saved Qysar Amahl VII from the retribution of the one-armed elf prince. Exactly at the turning of Midwinter, the qysar and the Shoon Imperium were dead. Midwinter is still commemorated today as the Day of Freedom in many areas of southern Faerûn once subjugated by the Shoon.

The Crumbling of Empire and the Destruction of Shoonach

With the death of the qysar, the Imperium swiftly fragmented. Local Shoon nazirs and military rulers held onto what territories they could, retitling themselves from prefects and generals into kings. (Amn's royalty stems from Shoon nazirs.) Many of the petty lordlings and vizars among the outer territories became tyrants nearly as bad as any qysar.

The most immediate and profound symbol of the Imperium's fall was the destruction of Shoonach. Rather than claim it as his new capital, King Strohm had it put to the torch. The Shoonach Conflagration consumed nearly the entire city, which contained more than 14 miles of wooden and mudbrick hovels that fueled a firestorm that raged inside the Imperial City's walls for more than two tendays. In the fourth day of the Conflagration, Iryklathagra the dragon appeared in the sky over Shoonach. After a brief talk with King Strohm, she destroyed and plundered many buildings upon the Imperial Mount above the city proper and claimed much hidden magic for her own. Since that time, Sharpfangs has been true to the vow she made to the little elf king, and she has never used Tethyr as a hunting ground.





The Post-Imperium Ages

"It is hard to witness history, for one never knows it is occurring everyday and everywhere. Were I to have watched and recorded the dizzying rush of years I have experienced believing myself to be privy to history all the while, I might have gone mad ere a scribe ever put pen to page to record the events. Live each day for what it is, and worry later about its significance. History is merely the lessons that events, upon later reflection, teach us—so that we do not make the same mistakes again."

—Elminster of Shadowdale

Compared to the events of the Shoon Imperium, those of successive ages hold much less glamour and glory. Rather than pick out with a fine brush each occurrence of the post-Imperium ages, the broad brushstrokes of the pageant of history color these pages. Brief discussions of the major themes and defining characteristics of the Seventh through Ninth ages are presented here, and further detail can be found through examination of other sage sources.

The Seventh Age

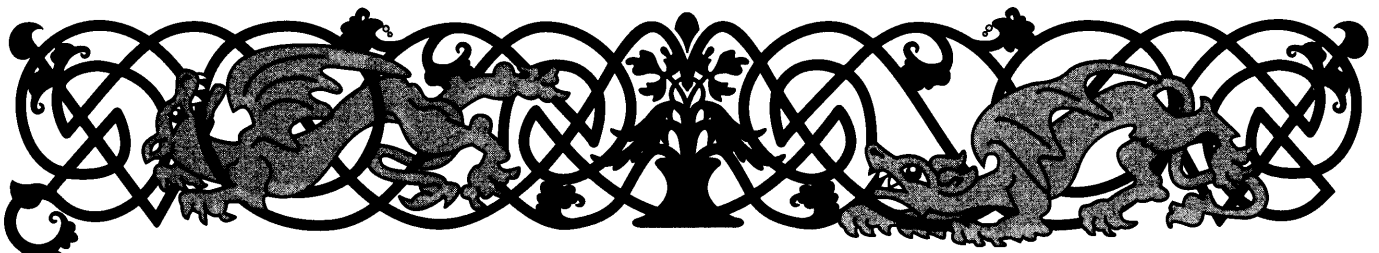
Spanning nearly 500 years, the Seventh Age of Calimshan begins with the Fall of the Shoon Imperium in 450 Dalereckoning and runs through 1018 Dalereckoning, ending with a Rage of Dragons. Calimshan and the Arnaden region (the Lake of Steam region) both began this age in chaos, as many factions fought bitterly and ruthlessly for the positions of power left vacant by the fall of the Shoon Imperium. The initial three pashas who seized power in Calimport after the death of Amahl Shoon VII practically destroyed the capital twice each in desperate attempts to either stay in power or rob their foes of victory.

The predominant event of the Seventh Age for Calimshan is the rise to rule of the mameluks—the slave-kings. Within 100 years of the dissolution of the empire, the huge numbers of slaves who had carried the running of the Shoon Imperium on their backs revolted in nearly every corner of the former imperial lands. During the Sixth Age, many nobles, unwilling to give up a plush lifestyle in their villas and palaces to serve in the military, paid to support the purchase and training of slaves used to fulfill the troop levies assessed to their families by the Imperium. The educated and highly trained slave soldiers, called the mameluks, served as strike troops and a functional lower to middle officer core in the Imperium's armies. Once the ability of the Imperium to maintain any sort of centralized authority and control of its military became endemic, the mameluks easily took control of Calimshan. Because mameluks had served loyally and without comment for centuries, the fact that they could think and plan on their own—and that they did not naturally want to be slaves—had been totally overlooked by the advisor class who aided the nobility in its intrigues. Shortly after the first mameluk consolidated his control of Calimshan, slavery was ended in the lands he governed, and land in the kingdom and positions of authority within its government were given to the new freed folk. Also during this era, wizards ceased to be generally hunted by the government, though they were hardly welcomed with open arms—the harsh rule of previous Shoon wizard qysars made many wary of mages in general.

While these basic facts are corroborated by other sources, many details about this era are missing due to the destruction of records and lore in the fires that swept repeatedly through Calimport. Remaining records tell us that three pashas (calephs of Calimshan) ruled before the rise of the mameluks. Twenty-nine mameluks reigned successively from the Manshaka, which was their new capital and seat of power, since Calimport would take more than four decades to rebuild itself after the destruction following the Fall of Shoon and the Three Pashas' War.

During this era, the Arnaden region endured a long stretch of civil strife. Former leaders, governors, kings, and princes fought to retain their positions without the centralized authority and military might of the Shoon Imperium to back them up. While the Arnaden city-states fended off the influence of beholders and their worshipers, they also fought to restore their native peoples to positions of power. After much internal warfare exhausted and decimated the cities and towns along the coast, peace was settled on. A few centuries of tranquillity and prosperity followed, and the relative stability of this time allowed many of the city-states to rebuild and to flourish. The reconstruction of the present-day Golden Road dates from this era.





The Eighth Age

The Eighth Age of Calimshan marked the end of mameluk rule. With the overthrow of the mameluks and the restoration of slavery under a rule of merchant kings, Calimshan rose to prominence again—after it recovered from the Rage of Dragons. This 200-year era was a time of chaos and frantic land-grabbing among the nobility, where individuals' bids for power, based on constantly shifting alliances, rose and fell over a matter of days. The Eighth Age was also the last era where Calimshan operated as a country, as the twilight of this age sees the pasha's land break up into city-states.

The Eighth Age began with the Rage of Dragons swooping down in its namesake year (1018 DR) and closed with the rumbling arrival of the Black Horde in the Year of the Black Horde (1235 DR). In this short span of time, there were 42 separate rulers in Calimport, though only 38 of them ruled over the whole country. Starting in the Year of the Gold Sash (1203 DR), as an aftermath of in 13 years of guild wars and trade wars, Calimshan's sultans, vizars, and other regional powers broke from the pasha of Calimport's rule, fragmenting the nation. Calimshan was no longer a country, as each of its cities became an independent city-state that established its own government, controlled its own military, regulated its own trade, and extended a sphere of influence over only its surrounding lands.

The Arnaden region was little affected by the changes that went on in Calimshan other than the reinstatement of slavery. Innarlith became the slavers' gate to the east for Calimshan and the Lake of Steam, as slaves regularly were shipped up the Golden Road to the Vilhon Reach and the Inner Sea (or beneath the land into the Underdark). Ankhapur briefly attempted to pull the city-states of Mintar, Saelmur, and itself together into a country but failed due to trade disagreements, defense difficulties, and the general preference for local government and independence of the Arnaden region.

With the shift in priority from unity and the collective good of the people to independence and self-reliance among the growing city-states, a breakdown of trust among settlements occurred, and information grew to be hoarded by city-states, not shared among them all. This allowed the Twisted Rune, a secret consortium of liches, a chance to infiltrate the region and manipulate numerous cities and people of authority. At the start of the age, the Rune was quite influential in Calimshan and Tethyr, and during this age, even with setbacks and internal strife in the Rune's ranks, the nine Runemasters accumulated even more power. Tragically, through agents far behind the scenes, the Twisted Rune's machinations provided the only unified regional plan of action and vision for the future for the former Empires of the Shining Sea.

In the Year of the Arcane Guise (1187 DR), the trade wars that had torn Calimshan's cities apart for the previous four decades stood to destroy all of them. The Almraivenar sabbalad (local governing official), Saban el Djenispool, who was also a secret caleph of enforcers and spies, took matters into his own hands and set about building an army. By Highharvestide of that year, he entered Calimport, where the most powerful and most troublesome pashas resided, and slaughtered any resistance he encountered. The message he sent was simple: "Accept me as syl-pasha (chief of pashas) over all the city-states of Calimshan, and peace and free trade will be restored. Resist, and feel the might of my army."

As a well-connected spymaster, Saban also knew of other, more subtle, ways to apply telling pressure to the remaining pashas, and between overt and covert coercion, he persuaded the other pashas to fall

into line. By year's end, Calimshan was at least unified in name, if not in fact. The Djenispool syl-pashas ruled over Calimshan and ensured unobstructed trade and relative peace in exchange for minor tributes and control over public works, defense, and certain other functions. Through the end of the Eighth Age, the Syl-Pasha Saban remained in power, though no less than 16 assassination attempts were thwarted in order for him to do so. (Those who sent assassins often found themselves betrayed by their own agents, who turned on them when offered a larger fee from the deeper pockets of the Djenispoos.)

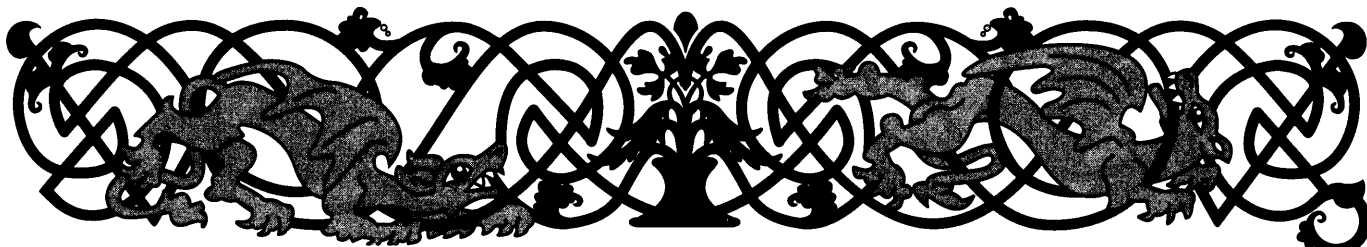
The end of the Eighth Age came by at the swords of the Black Horde of orcs. Until the Year of the Black Horde (1235 DR), orcs were an oddity and were rarely found south of the Far Hills and the Reaching Wood in more than ones and twos, and so the invasion of a horde was quite shocking to the Shining Sea region's inhabitants. When thousands upon thousands of orcs swarmed across the plains and hills of Amn, Tethyr, and Calimshan, soldiers and adventurers used to fighting goblin hordes found themselves struggling to stand against the simple ferocity of the orcs' attacks. The horde might have been easier to fight had many figures of authority been in the fortified cities where they were protected by walls, garrisons, and troops, but at the height of summer when the invasion occurred, many noble and influential folk were in their quaint summer villas in the foothills of the Marching Mountains and were thus easy targets. More than 43 major Calishite political and underworld figures lost their lives to the massed orcs, including the Syl-Pasha Saban. The sudden major power vacuum this slaughter created signaled the end of the age. (Since this time, orcs have been quite common in the region of Amn, Tethyr, and Calimshan, though still not as prevalent as goblins.)

The Ninth Age

Stretching from the end of the Year of the Black Horde (1235 DR) to the Year of Shadows (1358 DR) and the Time of Troubles, the Ninth Age of Calimshan might best be described as the second major age of the city-states, for Calimshan was hardly unified in practice under the Djenispoos, nor did it wish to be. This age saw a great deal of turmoil within the nations of the Empires of the Shining Sea and their neighbors to the north, Amn and Tethyr.

Power switched hands at lower levels far more frequently in this era in Calimshan than during any other period that did not involve war, but the dynasty of the Djenispoos remained a bulwark of stability. Kamar yn Saban el Djenispool took his father's throne and reigned over Calimport for 47 years, whereupon the mantle of syl-pasha passed to his nephew, Teladh yn Yusuf el Djenispool, who ruled for 56 years. When Syl-Pasha Teladh died without issue, the throne fell to his cousin, the wizard Rashid yn Kamal el Djenispool, in the Year of the Wanderer (1338 DR). Grandson of the first Djenispool syl-pasha, Rashid's youthful looks belied his 66 years of age, and he passed himself off as his own long-missing son. He also carried many magical items to disguise any use of wizard spells or abilities on his part. Only his wife and two vizars knew that the syl-pasha was a wizard rather than the rogue he claimed to be. His ruse worked through the end of the age.

Rashid's use of hidden magics allowed him to far more tightly control people than any of his subordinate pashas believed and consolidate his seat of power more firmly than the other pashas would have allowed had he acted overtly. He secretly set magical enchantments allowing him to control people's behavior and command their fealty. Unfortunately, the existence of these hidden controls allowed



the Twisted Rune to attach yet more hidden enchantments to these people, further warping their behavior in the direction of Rune's plans, and allowing the Rune to make significant inroads into controlling Calimshan's power structure.

There is no accurate count of the veritable flood of changing rulers throughout all of Calimshan's cities and towns or those along the shores of the Lake of Steam during this age. Figures such as the Pasha Abon Duum of Manshaka and Pasha Pook of Calimport wielded more power than they normally ought to have been able to merely by holding steady to what they did control and letting others come to them for favors and information. Simply by being among the few who could be counted on to be there, anchors of stability in a sea of change, these men and others accreted increased sovereignty by snatching unclaimed or untended authority and responsibility from the whirlpools that swirled around them and drowned their less capable, clever, or lucky enemies.

This was among the most tumultuous of ages for Calimshan and the Arnaden city-states' neighbors, and the events that affected them spilled over into the Empires of the Shining Sea to a lesser or greater degree. It was during this age that the Shadow Thieves, formerly of Waterdeep, entrenched their position among Calimshan's underworld powers. Tethyr collapsed into anarchy due to civil war, sending political refugees throughout the region. A few years later, the rest of the Realms dissolved into chaos when the gods walked the Realms during the Year of Shadows (1358 DR).

Countries rose and fell, and gods cast the rest of the world into disorder, but Calimshan moved doggedly onward, tied as it was to the earthly pursuit of money and the commitments of the marketplace. Expanded and unfettered trade had stabilized much in Calimshan in the past decades, and more modern ships allowed much quicker travel to and exchange of good with such far-off places as Zakhara and the northern Sword Coast ports of Luskan and Waterdeep. All that was needed for Calimshan to endure was a firm hand to keep political turmoil apart from economic commitments—and that was what the Syl-Pasha Rashid did. Still, a few of incidents and events of the age need further explanation.

Mulsparkh and the Battle of Nightflames

In the winter of the Year of the Striking Falcon (1333 DR), a number of wizards and their mercenary armies starting out from the Duchy of Teshyllal in Calimshan crossed the Memnon River just east of Shoonach's ruins and west of the Qian Hillfort and invaded Tethyr. This incursion and the attackers' establishment of the upstart realm of Mulsparkh was a secret ploy of the syl-pasha and King Alemander of Tethyr to rid themselves of the annoyingly lawful and good paladin, Prince Rythan of Tethyr. The prince, armed with the royal *Sword of Starlight*, led a small army against the invaders, but died in a failed charge against the monster- and mercenary-laden armies of Mulsparkh. He and his men fought valiantly, but treachery befell them and few survivors escaped the slaughter to bear the ugly tidings home. Unknown to the two primary conspirators, Syl-Pasha Rashid and King Alemander, the puppeteers who pulled *their* strings, the Runemasters of the Twisted Rune, had worked to initiate the invasion and Rythan's subsequent death in revenge for the loss of one of their own at the hands of Prince Rythan.

While Tethyr mourned the loss of the beloved Prince Rythan, Calimport's Syl-Pasha Rashid (and the Twisted Rune) stopped se-

cretly supporting the Mulsparkhan soldiers and their wizard leaders. The syl-pasha simply stopped disbursing money through covert channels to pay them, guaranteeing their desertion within a short period of time. A few minor rumors were spread in Memnon, and Mulsparkh was no more, due to unpaid mercenaries abandoning the cause and fresh troops from Memnon attacking to prevent Mulsparkh from choosing Memnon as its base further downriver.

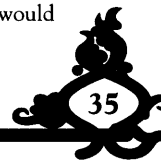
The Tethyrian Interregnum

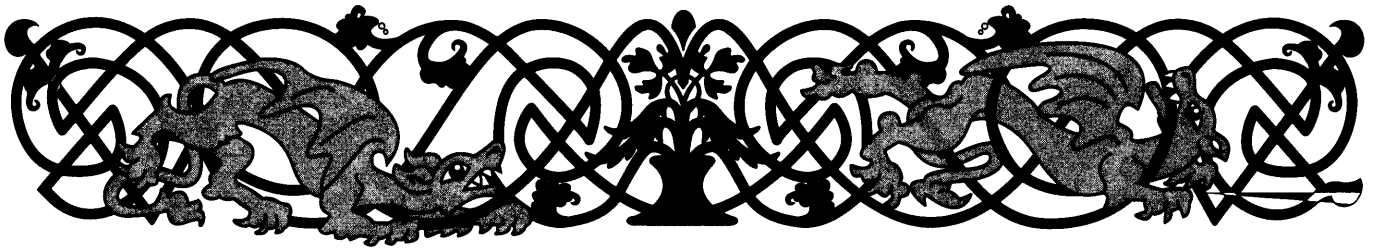
The Ten Black Days of Eleint—the 13th through the 22nd day of Eleint in the Year of the Bright Blade (1347 DR)—saw the assassination of seemingly the entire royal family and noble class of Calimshan's nearest neighbor, Tethyr. Few should have been happier with the results than the Syl-Pasha Rashid. His plan, hatched with General Sharboneth of Tethyr, had been to use a coup on the part of Tethyr's prince to deliver Tethyr into Calimshan's hands again, but things went strangely awry from the syl-pasha's original plans.

For more than seven years, copious amounts of money were transferred into the coffers of General Nashram Sharboneth, the head of Tethyr's military forces, from the Djenispool treasuries in exchange for his loyalty and the information he provided. He was to persuade the greedy Prince Alemander to plot a coup against his father's rule, vowing that he would use his forces to back the prince's claim to the throne. The prince was easily convinced, and the coup was staged for late in the summer. While waiting the weeks for the designated day to come, General Sharboneth confided in his lieutenants that he had a new plan to betray both king and prince and seize power for himself, and he promised duchies to his loyal soldiers if they would follow him. One soldier got the news to the syl-pasha: Rather than follow the original plan of destroying the monarchy and allowing Calimshan's armies to invade and take Castle Tethyr without incident, the general sought to play games with all parties involved, take power himself and keep it, and betray the crowns of two nations. This insult would be cost him dearly, as history has shown.

The syl-pasha summoned what covert aid he could to allow the coup to occur, yet thwart Sharboneth's treachery. He sent many of his own agents out among the populace of Tethyr to incite rioting and uprisings against the nobility, so that when Calimshan's armies marched upon Tethyr, they would be seen as peacekeepers rather than conquerors. To counter the General Sharboneth's personal efforts to take the throne, he summoned Nails of the Lady Dlatha Faenar of the Spires against the Stars to appear before him. The doommaster of Beshaba listened to the syl-pasha's plan with amusement and agreed to hex the general's exertions as the coup was born—as the syl-pasha demanded she do.

However, one should never wish for the attentions of ill luck, since it often bites the hand that feeds it, as Dlatha made clear in a mocking letter later to the syl-pasha: "For daring to presume that you might control the Maid of Misrule or her servants, you and yours shall never see yourselves on Tethyr's throne either. That is my voice for Beshaba's will." Thus, while the coup failed and both the avaricious prince and general died in the fires of Castle Tethyr, the syl-pasha never profited by his efforts save to see Tethyr fall to ruins. Beshaba's curse held true throughout the Interregnum, for despite having the means and the opportunity to attempt to take over Tethyr, Calimshan was too beset with problems of its own to take advantage of Tethyr's weakness, and the Djenispools would never rule there.





The Modern Age

"More changes have come to all aspects of life in Calimshan in the past decade than have occurred there in living memory, and nearly every change is personally attributable to the Syl-Pasha Pesarkhal. Even his enemies, few though they are now, concede that his work has benefited Calimshan as a whole much more it has injured a few loud opponents of his actions. The newest age of Calimshan promises either to be its most prosperous in millenia or its most infamous since the rule of the Necroqysar himself."

—Sammereza Sulphontis to the Lords of Waterdeep, circa 1368 DR

The Tenth Age of Calimshan began in the Year of Shadows (1358 DR) after the Time of Troubles, and continues yet today. Little has happened in the past dozen years to help define what the Tenth Age will be remembered for. Here are the significant events and happenings within Calimshan and the Lake of Steam that have thus far shown themselves to be notable in the modern age.

The Darkstalker Wars

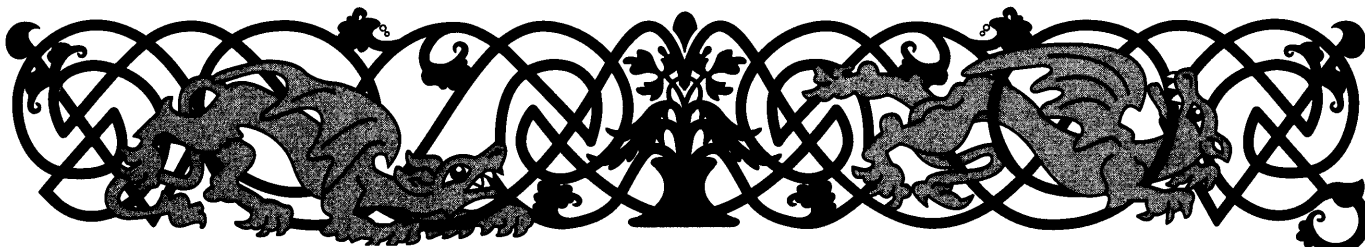
The Darkstalker Wars resulted from a change of events set in motion by the sudden power vacuum created within the echelons of the Shadow Thieves, due to the massive and sudden deaths of all Bhaal-worshipping assassins during the Time of Troubles in the Year of Shadows (1358 DR). For years under the Djenispools, the Shadow Thieves were allowed to control Calimshan's underworld because their exclusive status gave the syl-pasha only one enemy to fight rather than dozens. With the internal strife following the deaths of so many members in the Bhaal Death, the Shadow Thieves closed ranks and withdrew from exercising direct authority over illegal operations in Calimshan while they reorganized. Abruptly, the Calishite underworld was again free of external control, and many small affiliations of thieves and assassins tried to grab as much power as possible as quickly as they could. Blood flowed freely as many sought to profit for themselves where they had once toiled only for their hidden masters, the Shadow Thieves. Within a few months, Calimshan's many criminal ventures were controlled by no fewer than nine differing factions including the Dark Dagger, the Rundeen, and four lesser factions unwittingly acting in the best interests of the Twisted Rune. For nearly two years after the Bhaal Death, the underworld maintained a tense détente, and all illegal activities were shared by these nine groups. In the Year of the Serpent (1359 DR), other powers among the governing councils of Calimshan tried to horn in on underworld, disrupting the delicate balance and instigating the Darkstalker Wars.

The Darkstalker Wars were fought among the criminal element, and the battles for supremacy in the rich Calishite underworld cost many lives. Hardest hit were the remnants of the Shadow Thieves, whose loss of leadership from the godly sacrifice of all Bhaal-worshippers led to the extreme fragmentation of their once magnificently ordered criminal organization. The Dark Dagger, a drow-dominated consortium of thieves and assassins, made a play to take over but was nearly killed off for its efforts. As greedy as the Calishite underworld was, its members would rather work with each other than submit to the drow, and all the surface-based groups banded together and destroyed nearly every dark elf member of the Dark Dagger. While the majority of the battles of the Darkstalker Wars were restricted to the lawless classes, many folk took advantage of the chaos and hid their own agendas and assassinations among those of the Darkstalker slayings. One such figure was Ralan el Pesarkhal.

The Rise of El Pesarkhal

For some years, Ralan el Pesarkhal had spent much effort and coin to worm his way into the good graces of Syl-Pasha Rashid el Djenispool. As a lesser vizar under one of the sultans of Abon Duum, he watched and listened and waited and garnered favors. With the disappearance of Abon Duum in the previous year, Manshaka's throne lay vacant for a time while fighting filled the streets. Soon a puppet vizar was put on the throne by a merchants' and wizards' council that held the true power in Manshaka. During all this, Ralan el Pesarkhal waited, as he had learned to do under Abon Duum. He waited until he could slay every opponent at once while throwing the least amount of suspicion of himself. Late in Nightal of the Year





of Shadows, the opportunity presented by another's attempt to slay rival councilors and a slight bit of drugged wine allowed him to accomplish his goal. With one brazier "accidentally" knocked over during the scuffles among the councilors and their bodyguards, the tapestry-laden Hall of the Mameluks became a choking inferno that killed all the councilors, ending their rule within a year of their claiming power. This left the reins of power in the hands of Ralan el Pesarkhal as sole ruler and self-proclaimed sultan of Manshaka.

Continuing his rise to power, el Pesarkhal first took control of the chaotic underworld of Manshaka and then used it to help stabilize the relationships among the many rival underworld power groups throughout Calimshan. By protecting certain figures and aiding others, el Pesarkhal kept alive those families and groups he could control or manipulate, and allowed the others to fall prey to their rivals and his assassins. Under the noses of others but without their notice (other than that of the Twisted Rune, which was amused by his strategy), he consolidated more and more power by acting to ensure his gain in the long term even if it appeared to weaken him in the present, while others merely worried about maintaining the status quo. After much more maneuvering and numerous assassinations conveniently blamed on criminal elements he "knew nothing about" (actually performed by rivals of his own criminal forces, and thus easily sacrificed), the sultan from Manshaka soon sat by the right hand of Calimshan's ruler and was the syl-pasha's spymaster and informant on the Darkstalker Wars.

Unknown to most, el Pesarkhal had a secret ally in the syl-pasha's court: the favored jhasina (female harem slave) Malira adh Rashid, who had fallen in love with Ralan. In the Year of the Serpent (1359 DR), she slew the syl-pasha for her lover after listening to his honeyed promises that she would become his third wife and rise to power and prominence with him. To her dismay (and not unexpectedly, given el Pesarkhal's previous actions), el Pesarkhal delivered on none of his promises. She was publicly accused of her crimes, el Pesarkhal denied before the assembled pashas of the court that he had anything to do with her, and for her betrayal of the syl-pasha she was beheaded.

As expected, mourning was short for Syl-Pasha Djenispool, and celebrations began in Calimport to welcome the return of Punjor el Djenispool, the new syl-pasha, from a trading mission to Almraiven. Ralan el Pesarkhal had the food and drink at the welcoming party held on the *Merry Marid*, the flagship of the young Djenispool heir, poisoned as it sailed back to Calimport, killing the heir and his entire court. Ralan's agents, dressed in a fashion that would obviously identify them as working for two annoying lesser pashas, were seen skulking about the storage facilities that held the party provisions before they were loaded on the ship. A trail of bribes, payoffs, and receipts had been previously constructed pointing to the pashas, and poisoned wine and food packaged identically to that used on the ship had been "hidden" in the pashas' villas. At a highly publicized trial, the two conspiring pashas were tried and found guilty of more than 30 murders. While they tried to plead for the court's mercy by saying they had no hand in the murders, el Pesarkhal's planted evidence linked them to the poison, and their motives were readily apparent in the (forged) documents that had been seized as evidence—documents that described their plans for dividing up the rule of Calimshan between them. El Pesarkhal, utilizing his gifts of rhetoric and spellbinding charisma, constructed and prosecuted a devastating case that got his last remaining rivals convicted and executed for crimes they might have dreamed of but had not the means to execute—means and methods that he had aplenty.



Syl-Pasha Ralan el Pesarkhal

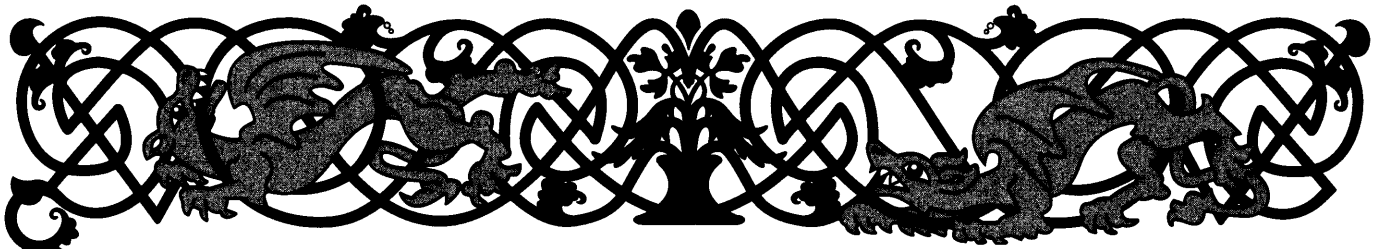
Through popular support after his charismatic conduct at the trial and because no other political figures would dare lift a hand in public to stop him in the face of his obvious willingness to use utterly ruthless tactics, Ralan el Pesarkhal rose to the throne of the calephs in Calimport and proclaimed that a new age had begun for Calimshan. He promised a new era of prosperity and peace, and vowed to crack down on the violence and chaos that had ruled Calimshan during the Darkstalker Wars. As he secretly controlled many criminal elements in the cities, events conformed to his promises, and the fighting among the criminal element was reduced to occasional local skirmishes and hidden intrigues.

Syl-Pasha Pesarkhal cemented his position on the throne with political and criminal alliances secured by marriages between his allies and his children and by hefty bribes. He vowed that Calimshan under his regime would become a country again, seeing in his nation a proud land that would force the rest of Faerûn to once again recognize its greatness. To his critics, he declared: "While some say I am taking power from them as local rulers, I say I am raising these leaders up under my flag to far greater and more powerful things than their local interests encompass. History shall prove me right." For the time being, the Pesarkhal Unification of Calimshan proceeds successfully.

External Events

Many happenings throughout Faerûn during the Tenth Age had no direct bearings on Calimshan or the rise of el Pesarkhal but had indirect effects on the country as a whole.





The Tuigan Horde (1360 DR): The encroaching Tuigan barbarian horde had little direct influence on either Calimshan or the Lake of Steam region. However, the Tuigan Invasion forced the formation of Azoun's Crusade. Many warrior and wizard mercenaries and clergy whose religious beliefs aligned with Azoun's ideals or the concept of protection joined this cause, leaving the southern lands to rely solely on their native mercenary populations for defense and straining the clerical resources of some churches. As a result, many pashas and lesser power players across the Empires of the Shining Sea fell from power and were replaced by Pesarkhal clan members or allied families.

The Discovery of Maztica: By the end of the Year of Maidens (1361 DR), word trickled into the ports of Tethyr and Calimshan that a new land had been discovered to the far west, beyond the Nelanther and even Evermeet. The Syl-Pasha Pesarkhal did not immediately leap to action based on this news. The promise of fortunes to be made in rich exotic goods saw a number of pashas leap into ill-considered shipbuilding and westward bound fleets, but these ships never returned or arrived badly damaged back in Memnon to tell of fierce Amnian resistance to any other nation plying the waters westward to Maztica. The syl-pasha watched and learned. A few years later, sufficient bribes and some Calishite concessions in trade agreements between Calimshan and Amn that governed the spice trade saw some loose alliances form between the Council of Six in Amn and the syl-pasha's court in Calimport for the purpose of exploiting the riches of the Maztican lands.

The Council Schisms of Amn: In the Year of the Helm (1362 DR), the Council Schism in Amn resulted in the deaths of half of

Amn's Council of Six. The passing of the Meisarch Thayze Selemchant cost the syl-pasha one of his strongest foreign allies. With the pair of them controlling Amn and Calimshan respectively, they had begun planning the conquest and apportionment of Tethyr's rich and relatively unguarded farmland and timberland. On the surface, the Schism and subsequent changes in who held power in Amn had little direct impact on Calimshan, but in Calimport's halls of power, the syl-pasha fumed for months over his loss of influence in Amn and its impact of on his future bottom line.

The Living Gem War

The strangest internal struggles to engulf Calimshan in centuries came from the work of the wizard Shond Tharovin and the machinations of an enemy long believed to be dead. Beginning the Year of the Prince (1357 DR), Shond Tharovin, a Calishite wizard from Schamedar, stole the Shoon-crafted *Tome of the Unicorn* from the Green Room of Ruathym in the Year of the Prince (1357 DR). Over the course of the following year, he learned to master its secrets and even survived an initial meeting with the demilich Shoon VII, whose essence was trapped in the *Tome*. Tharovin trapped creatures and presented them to the former qysar in exchange for Shoon revealing to him the location of the *Living Gem*, a glowing, faceted ruby as large as a human's head that is a great artifact of unimaginable power. (For more on the *Tome of the Unicorn* and the current status of Shoon VII, see the *Lands of Intrigue* campaign supplement. For more on the *Living Gem*, see *Volo's Guide to All Things Magical*.)

Of course, knowing the location of the *Gem* and knowing how to reach the artifact were not one and the same, and it took Shond Tharovin over 10 years to uncover the way to reach what Shoon described as "a long-lost temple to the Great Slug, Ghaunadaur, beneath the roots of the Murabir's Woods." The long-blocked cave leading down to the temple of Ghaunadaur beneath the Forest of Mir lay about 20 miles southwest of the Vorpall Tower, a ruined mage's tower therein. Within lay the *Living Gem* and the culmination of all of Shond Tharovin's dreams of power.

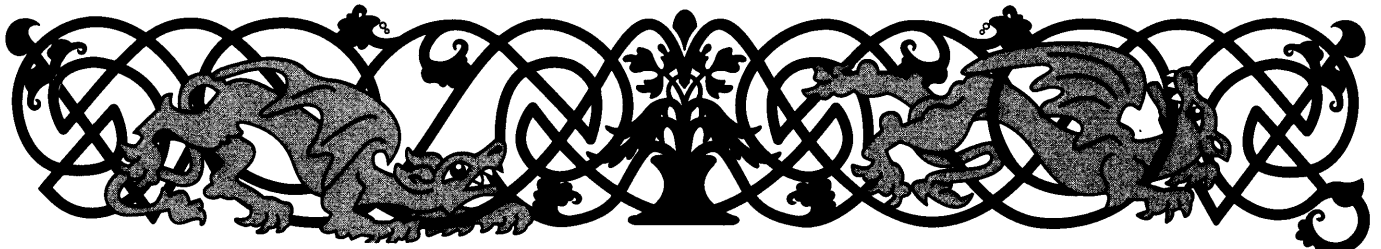
By Kythorn in the Year of the Shield (1367 DR), Tharovin had taken control of Schamedar using the power of the *Living Gem* and crowned himself syl-vizar and caleph of Schamedar. The *Living Gem* proved capable of scrying out great secrets, which Tharovin used to his advantage, and it also allowed the storage of spells that it could unleash with deadly accuracy against enemy troops. However, the *Gem* also quickly became an obsession of Shond Tharovin, who saw it as a living thing, and his warped view of what he perceived as its desires forced him to create a cult to worship it. Shond Tharovin was subsequently soon brought low thanks to the archmage Yoond Shalshymmyr's sacrifice of his life to power a *curse* that reduced Shond to a gibbering moulder of gargantuan proportions. By year's end, Tharovin was forced out of Schamedar and drifted lazily out to sea, vowing vengeance from dozens of mouths.

While Shond Tharovin's direct control of Schamedar ended, the Cult of the *Living Gem* tenaciously held onto the reins of power in the city into the Year of the Banner (1368 DR). Its members were eventually driven, along with the *Living Gem*, out of the city and into hiding by an army raised up from rebellious



Shond Tharovin





locals by a group of people calling themselves the Seven Satraps. The current location of the *Living Gem* and its few surviving cultists are unknown, though the Seven Satraps, who now rule in Schamedar, keep fearful ears and eyes open for any hints of the malevolent artifact's return. Batras yn Faruk el Beza (LE hm F5), Daud el Akiil (NE hm T3), and Saibh el Moadyph (CE hm F2/T5 [dual class]), who number themselves among the Seven Satraps, control the leaders of Schamedar for the Kahmir family; the other four "satraps" cannot unify to oppose the three due to previous obligations to the criminal underworld or merely an inability to work well with others.

Tethyr Restored

From the Year of the Shield (1367 DR) through the start of the Year of the Gauntlet (1369 DR), forces in Tethyr worked to restore the monarchy under the hidden son of the last king and the mercenary woman who unified the country. While Calimshan was interested in the outcome of the Reclamation, the syl-pasha had little time to meddle in the events surrounding the reinstatement of Tethyr's monarchy as he was still putting his own house in order. He respectfully attended the marriage of Lady Zaranda Star to Crown Prince Haedrak Rhindaun in Kythorn of the Year of the Gauntlet (1369 DR) and returned to Tethyr later in the year to witness the couple's coronation as Queen-Monarch Zaranda and King Haedrak III of Tethyr.

While many in Calimshan wondered about the syl-pasha's sudden conciliatory attitude toward Tethyr, el Pesarkhal kept his own counsel. For the first time in centuries, Tethyr and Calimshan had a chance to establish peaceful relations, and the syl-pasha used this opportunity to his advantage. While not necessarily friendly with or trusting of the new royals, el Pesarkhal nevertheless made numerous trade concessions as lavish wedding and coronation gifts and as a sign of his and Calimshan's goodwill. He gained, through the giving, two different audiences with the royal couple. With but the two meetings he has had, already the syl-pasha has discovered ways he can manipulate the powers that reign in Tethyr: The great libraries of Calimshan, if opened to the Scholar King, Haedrak, could garner for el Pesarkhal many profitable favors, beneficial trade agreements, and sources of new opportunities for profit gleaned through the sharing of long-hidden knowledge. Likewise, the queen made one entreaty of el Pesarkhal that opened up her personality to him: She asked for the extradition of the woman Safana Aldhanek, an evil wizard guilty of war crimes during the Reclamation. By giving over Safana to Queen-Monarch Zaranda, he could gain a great deal of leverage with her.

Currently, however, the syl-pasha has been contemplating with great caution Queen-Monarch Zaranda's request. Safana lies under the protection of the Vyndahla family in Almraiven, and the syl-pasha is loathe to strain his relations with that family by asking it to rescind its protection and betray the evil shape-shifting sorceress. For now, the syl-pasha has promised very little but given the royal couple the impression that there is much common ground upon which to build relations between the two countries. In truth, the syl-pasha is thoroughly convinced that once he unifies Calimshan, it will be a simple matter to annex Tethyr and restore the Imperium from Shoonach, for his overall impression of Tethyr is one of overreaching ambition without the clout to back it up.

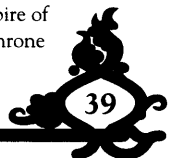
Rise of the Knights of the Black Gauntlet

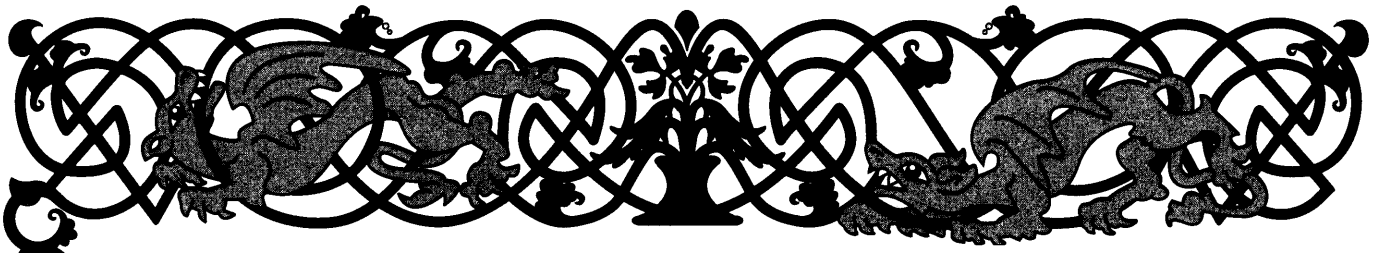
In the Year of the Helm (1362 DR), the mad priest Teldorn Darkhope, leader of the Knights of Black Gauntlet, an Banite religious military order of crusaders and helmed horrors, brutally slew the ruling family of Mintar and took over the town "in the name of the great and terrible Bane," even though that god had been destroyed years earlier in the Time of Troubles. In Uktar of the Year of the Gauntlet (1369 DR), Darkhope had amassed sufficient military forces to put into motion his master plan: to conquer the region for Bane by claiming the great legendary cache of magical weaponry beneath Kzelter. While Tethyr and Calimshan both reinforced their eastern borders in response to the leaked information that the Knights of the Black Gauntlet were on the move, intelligence reports later showed little activity among the massed forces within Mintar. Only the coming year would tell what the mad priest's plans truly were.

A Timeline of the Empires of the Shining Sea

All dates in the timeline of the history of the Empires of the Shining Sea are given in Dalereckoning (DR).

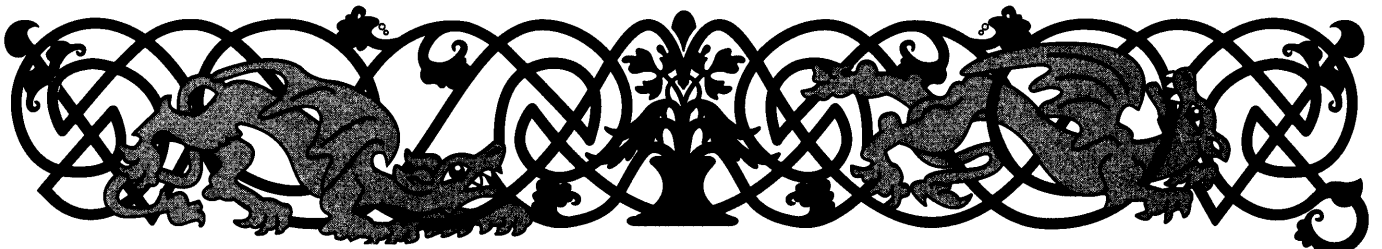
- c.–20,000 The elf realms of Thearnytaar, Eiellûr, Syðrpiir, and Orishaar are established in the forests around the Lake of Steam by this time. Orishaar and the southern dark elf nation of Ilythiir begin skirmishes that continue on and off for the next seven millennia.
- c.–17,800 Keltormir is established in the great forest that stretches from the Bowl of the Gods (present-day Amn) down to the shores of the Shining Sea.
- c.–14,000 Tribal barbarian clans of humans roam Keltormir, hiding and hunting in the great forests and avoiding the greater races of elves, giants, and dragons.
- c.–12,000 The Crown Wars of the elves begin.
- c.–11,700 The elf dragonslayer Tethir slays Xaxathart the Retributer. Humanity slowly builds in the clearings created over time by the dragon fires.
- c.–11,200 The elf realms of Thearnytaar, Eiellûr, Syðrpiir, and Orishaar around the Lake of Steam are by this time all destroyed by Ilythiir. The Ilythiiri dark elves move on toward Keltormir.
- c.–11,000 Dwarves from the great stronghold of Bhaerynden begin to establish the first holds of what will be Deep Shanatar in the southern Underdark (modern-day Alimir Mountains, Lake of Steam).
- c.–10,000 Descent of the drow.
- c.–9000 The Crown Wars end and Keltormir is one of two elf realms to remain with its civilization relatively intact.
- c.–8500 Keltormir's forests break into three distinct woods and elf realms after centuries of fires and deforestation.
- c.–8100 Eight dwarf deep realms unite and form the great empire of Shanatar. The empire is ruled from the Wyrmskull Throne





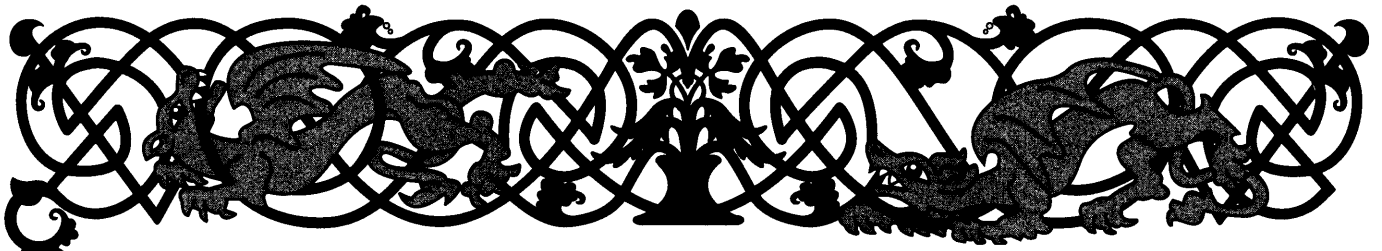
- in Alatorin's Brightaxe Hall. Within 150 years, trade is underway with surface elves.
- 7800 The Djen arrive in the area of present-day Calimport. Within a few short months, they build their first city. Within a year, the Calim Empire has begun.
- 7790 Calimport falls before a flight of dragons. Calim begins a campaign against the dragons of the Marching Mountains and succeeds in either eradicating them or driving them north from the peaks.
- 7690 The djinni noble Calim reaches an accord with the elves and dwarves and the borders of his empire halt at the southern banks of the River Agis and encompass all the lands south and east to the western slopes of the present-day Alimir Mountains. Calim continues warring with the giants and dragons of the Marching Mountains.
- 7687 Ajhuu, a greater marid, breaks away and establishes a realm within Calim's lands while the noble djinni is away. On Calim's return, the Steam Clashes begin between them. Creation of the Maridflow and Hajluar's Falls in the Alimir Mountains.
- 7684 The Shattering. With this event, the Steam Clashes end and Ajhuu and his rebels are destroyed. The coastline between the mouth of the River of Ice and the southern tip of the Alimir range is forever changed and the Spider Swamp comes into being.
- 6800 The great efreeti hunter, Memnon, arrives with his forces just north of the River Agis. He begins building the country of Memnonnar.
- 6600 The capital of Memnonnar, Memnon, named after the great efreeti, spans both banks of the River Agis where the two present-day cities of Memnon and ruined Memnonnar stand.
- c.-6500 A group of elves, mainly immigrants from Syðrpiir, settle the great forest now known as the Chondalwood and name their new home Nikerymath. The elf city among the trees, Rucien Xan, is founded.
- 6500 Era of Skyfire. Memnon and Calim bring their forces to bear one against the other in 22 cataclysmic battles over the next four centuries.
- 6100 Era of Skyfire ends at the Battle of Teshyllal Fields as elf High Magic binds Memnon and Calim in eternal struggle and creates the Calim Desert.
- 6060 The last djinni despots are ousted by humans in alliance with the dwarves of Shanatar. These lands become the human nation of Coramshan. Within 50 years, 300 rulers and their heirs are slain in fighting for the throne of the new nation. During this time, Calimport and Keltar are rebuilt.
- 6000 Almraiven is founded in eastern Coramshan.
- 5980 Manshaka founded along the coast of Coramshan.
- 5960 High Shanatar founded by the dwarves along the River Agis.
- c.-5800 The nation of Jhaamdath is founded with a few settlements north of the great forest Nikerymath (now known as the Chondalwood).
- c.-5790 The rule of the bakkals in Coramshan begins. It follows religiously rather than secular laws for a time.
- c.-5330 Murabir Mir of Coramshan leads an army in conquest taking the dwarf city of Iltakar (present-day ruins of Shoonach) north of the River Agis.
- c.-5300 Murabir Mir of Coramshan secures the First Kingdom of Mir (Monrativi Teshy Mir) out of southern High Shanatar and the Darthiir Wood. Over the next 100 years, many elves of Darthiir are killed by Mir's soldiers, and the few survivors flee to the Forest of Tethyr or Nikerymath. First Age of Calimshan begins, though the nation is not yet named Calimshan.
- c.-5270 Mir forces begin conquests to the east in alliance with Coramshan.
- c.-5100 The First Kingdom of Mir controls all areas south of the River Wurlur to the borders of Coramshan. Over the next six decades, the cities of Saradush, Mintar, and Saelmur form from fortresses built by Mir's forces as they spread east.
- 5032 The forces of Mir and Jhaamdath clash north of the small fishing town of Ankhport, and Mir is dealt a crushing defeat. For the next 25 years, Jhaamdath pursues and pushes the army of Mir back all the way to Saradush.
- 5007 The two kingdoms of Coramshan and Mir are united under the rulership of Ukhar IV in response to the threat from Jhaamdath.
- 5006 Coramshan successfully counterattacks, pushing Jhaamdath back to Saelmur.
- 5005 Truce ends the war between Coramshan and Jhaamdath, and both countries abandon claims over the Lake of Steam. Mirabir Ukhar IV unifies his lands with Mir and forms the nation of Calimshan.
- 3200 The First Age of Calimshan ends and the Second Age begins.
- c.-2600 The last known dwarves of High Shanatar fall on the northern slopes of the Sulduskoon River in battle against the Tavahr Dynasty of Calimshan. The dwarves seal the last known surface entrance to Deep Shanatar.
- 2381 Three beholder colony ships crash in the Alimir Mountains. The beholders overwhelm the eastern garrisons of Calimshan, but are soon pushed back into the mountains. The Tavahr dynasty ends with the bakkal's assassination. The Erehnir Dynasty comes to power in Calimshan.
- 2375 The worship of genies becomes prominent under the Erehnir bakkals.
- 1900 The Second Age of Calimshan ends and the Third Age begins. The Calimshan Empire consists of Calimshan, Tethyr, Iltkazar, and Mir, and spreads as far north as the Snowflake Mountains.
- The Caltazar Hills come under regular attack from the beholder nations from around and beneath the Lake of Steam.
- 1838 The Raor Dynasty of Calimshan is destroyed by the great red wurm Ylveraasahlisar the Rose Dragon, who then rules the nation.
- 1726 The Rose Dragon is killed by members of the Cajaan noble family. The Cajaan feud amongst themselves over the next 18 years, continually fighting and scheming for the throne of Calimshan.
- 1708 The Cajaan Dynasty stabilizes and the supreme ruler's title becomes pasha rather than bakkal. The worship of a "great sun god" arises in Calimshan.
- 1700 The pasha of Calimshan's third son becomes the emir of Tethyr and this post becomes a tradition for lesser sons. Calishite nobles begin hunting elves in the northern forests as a pastime.





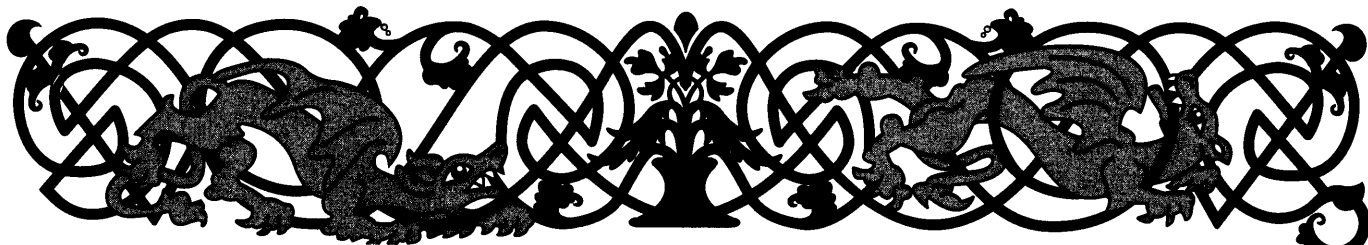
- 1570 Zazesspur, a simple fishing town, becomes a fortified city and the seat of the emir of Tethyr's rule.
- 1550 The eastern expanse of Darthiir Wood is consumed by fire from the beholder battles in the Caltazar Hills. The forest's boundaries become that which the Forest of Mir today inhabits.
- 1428 The beholders of the Alimirs swarm out of the mountains and conquer every city in Calimshan and Iltkazar. The last Cajaan pasha, Violir IX, dies resisting the beholders.
- 1402 The Drakhon priest-princes lead the nation of Calimshan to freedom from the beholders. They free the cities and the nation as a whole, though beholders still hold sway in some border areas.
- 1400 Attacks on the Caltazar Hills by the beholders of the Lake of Steam end.
- 1399 By this year, the beholders in Calimshan's border regions are crushed; all formerly held regions answer to the pasha in Calimport once again.
- 1320 Slaves complete the road from Zazesspur to Memnon.
- 1280 War with the beholder nations of the Lake of Steam begins in earnest with Calimshan along the Alimir Peninsula.
- c. -1150 The Imperial Navy of Calimshan begins to take control of the Shining Sea and the Lake of Steam. It rules the waves within a century.
- 1130 The road from Zazesspur to Akkabbel (modern Ithal Pass) is completed.
- 1080 The beholders' influence is reduced to only the Lake of Steam region. Calimshan's rule spreads as far east as Mintar.
- c. -1050 The Lake of Steam beholders are slowly driven underground again by Calimshan's navy between this time and -680 DR.
- 990 Calimport succumbs to a year-long plague that kills nearly 60% of the city's population and isolates many within the city in their homes.
- 943 The Cats' Plague slays many mysteriously and turns their eyes into cats' eyes in death. This magical plague kills nearly 90% of the people of Schamedar, Manshaka, and the outlying areas.
- 900 The Third Age of Calimshan ends. The Fourth Age begins with an eight year-old pasha upon the throne and the military in control of his regency council.
- 790 The Night Wars begin. Drow begin attacking the outlying reaches of the Calimshan Empire.
- 680 *Year of Creeping Thieves*
Calimshan begins to colonize the Lake of Steam for the first time in centuries.
- 670 *Year of Unfurled Sails*
Enslaved humans of Tethyr and Calimshan begin to escape their captivity from this time until -370 DR.
- 650 *Year of Flames Rising*
Due to drow attacks on Calimshan, the dwarves and humans around the Omlarandin Mountains and the Kuldin Peaks become independent of Calimshan's control.
- 599 *Year of Hasty Messengers*
The Spider Plagues ravage Calimshan.
- 530 *Year of Meager Means*
The Night Wars between the drow and Calimshan end.
- c.-450 Calimshan's dominance of the Lake of Steam and the Shining Sea comes to an end.
- c.-400 Calimshan begins colonizing the land around the Deepwash.
- 387 *Year of Shattered Walls*
Calishite-controlled Zazesspur is sacked in a surprise attack by Tethyrian barbarians. Two of the pasha's sons are slain and 10 years of massive retaliations by the Calishites begin. The First Age of Tethyr begins. Zazessvertan falls to the united Tethyrian clan armies and is looted shortly before Zazesspur is sacked and burned.
- 378 *Year of Ebon Hawks*
Calishite soldiers begin to build a wall (Khalid's Wall) across the Tethyr Peninsula's neck to pen the natives in.
- 375 *Year of Clutching Dusk*
The Empire Plague strikes the southern Shining Coast and lasts for five decimating years. Pasha Khalid of Calimshan dies.
- 374 *Year of Shattering*
Khalid's Wall is abandoned and never completed due to elf attacks on its builders.
- 307 *Year of Illuminated Vellum*
The Tethyrian clans conquer Calishite-controlled Myratma, which they rename Artrimmar.
- 293 *Year of the Tyrant Hawks*
Calimaronn falls to the Tethyrians after a one-month siege. The town is renamed Ithmong.
- 288 *Year of Eight Lightnings*
Calimshan grants independence to Tethyr and its people.
- 284 *Year of Lost Faith*
Rivenaurigoth the Darkly Pious, a great wyrm, is slain by worshippers of Anachtyr in the wyrm's Marching Mountain lair.
- 276 *Year of Overflowing Casks*
Jhaamdath begins to build a navy upon the Inner Sea and the logging of the forest of Nikerymath (Chondalwood) brings Jhaamdath into conflict with the elves. Within 20 years, only the city of Rucien Xan survives within Nikerymath, and nine out of every 10 elves is slain.
- 255 *Year of Furious Waves*
Jhaamdath falls to elf High Magic as a great wave is summoned to scour the southern inlet of the Inner Sea, leaving the coastline at the dimensions of the present-day Vilhon Reach. The survivors flee north and settle the lands of present-day Cormyr, Sembia, the Dalelands, and the Vast.
- 230 *Year of Loss*
Ithmong and Myratma (Artrimmar) are retaken by Calimshan.
- 221 *Year of Shambling Shadows*
The Ithmong Slaughter. Chief Clovis Ithal II leads an assault with the elves against Ithmong, but dies in the attack. His son, Darrom, rallies the clans to take the city and slay all Calishites within two miles of it. Darrom Ithal begins to unite the clans under his leadership.
- 212 *Year of High Thrones*
Battle of the Purple Marches. Myratma falls to the clans and forces the second Calishite surrender of Tethyr. Darrom Ithal is crowned king of Tethyr. The founding year of Tethyreckoning.
- 200 *Year of Stonerising*
The Fourth Age of Calimshan ends. The Fifth Age begins with the end of Calimshan's military rule, the start of a





- decentralization of power, and an upsurge among the mercantile and religious powers.
- 188 *Year of Wrongful Martyrs*
The Throne Wars begin in Calimshan as Pasha Malik yn Asraf el Majizar is assassinated and many factions war among themselves for the caleph's throne. By year's end, 15 people rise to the throne and all but one die.
- 187 *Year of Gilded Burials*
After the death of 27 other rulers, the Throne Wars of Calimshan end on the 16th day of Hammer with the ascension of Tasyn el Tarshaj yi Manshaka to pasha.
- 172 *Year of Sickles*
Over the next year, Ambassador Perry negotiates the Perry Accords, which turn the trade road north of Calimshan over to Tethyr's control and reduce Calishite military presence west of the Forest of Mir. Perry is named the first count of Tethyr and given lands within the duchy controlled by Clan Rivarrow.
- 170 *Year of Many Eyes*
The Eye Tyrant Wars begin.
- 167 *Year of Sudden Kinship*
Storming of the Qatarn Hills.
- 166 *Year of Seven Loves Lost*
The Eye Tyrant Wars end, and the human nations claim victory.
- 161 *Year of the Emerald Mage*
The alliance of Tethyr, Calimshan, and Iltkazar degenerates into little more than a few trade alliances by this time.
- 150 *Year of Recompense*
After rebuilding the eastern cities and towns of Calimshan, King Silvam of Tethyr is given custody of the region known as Ankaram by Calimshan for his help in the Eye Tyrant Wars. Tethyr's still-current southern borders are set at this time by this move.
- 133 *Year of Silent Screams*
Great sea storms erupt along the Sword Coast. A huge tidal wave envelops the city of Velen in Tethyr, decimating its population.
- 110 *Year of Shadowed Glances*
Birth of Akkabar Shoon.
- 94 *Year of Many Bats*
Akkabar Shoon, a wizard, becomes the apprentice of Princess Rhynda of Tethyr.
- 88 *Year of Hostile Hails*
Akkabar el Shoon leaves the tutelage of Princess Rhynda of Tethyr and begins moving among Calishite businesses and society as a wizard-for-hire.
- 78 *Year of the Gleaming*
Akkabar Shoon marries Munaa yr Shunnari el Tarshaj, the fifth daughter of the syl-pasha, and becomes the syl-vizar and ruler of Memnon.
- 77 *Year of Flaming Stones*
Akkabar Shoon rises to the throne of Calimshan seven months after his wedding due to his assassinations of the his wife's entire family.
- 64 *Year of Gleaming Frost*
Nishan Ithal II reaches his majority and becomes king of Tethyr. He marries the granddaughter of the pasha of Calimshan, Arhymeria Shoon.
- 14 *Year of the Cloaker*
Birth of Amahl Shoon III, great-grandson of Syl-Pasha Akkabar and grand-nephew of Queen Arhymeria.
- 6 *Year of Scarlet Scourges*
King Nishan II and all but four of the royals of Tethyr die as Ithalyr falls under siege and is nearly destroyed.
- 5 *Year of Feuds*
Amahl Shoon arrives in Tethyr and is proclaimed king within a month of Ithalyr's fall due to the manipulations of Calishite vizars sent by his grandfather the syl-pasha. Fort Karlag is renamed Zazesspur and becomes the center of power as Ithalyr is abandoned.
- 3 *Year of Ruins*
King Amahl I of Tethyr dies of poison. His nephew, Amahl II, becomes king. A scourging of Ithal clan lands begins.
- 2 *Year of Gruesome Steams*
By the end of this year, Clan Ithal of Tethyr is nearly extinct due to its slaughter by Calishite soldiers. Three young members of Clan Ithal escape into the Forest of Tethir.
- King Amahl II of Tethyr swears fealty to the pasha of Calimshan, and the nation effectively becomes ruled from the Pasha's Court at Calimport.
- 1 *Year of Shattered Relics*
Akkabar the Younger, elder brother of Amahl and Arhymeria and heir of Syl-Pasha Akkabar, is assassinated. Ithmong is destroyed and carted away piece by piece by slaves to the south for the building of Shoonach.
- 12 *Year of Wistful Looks*
Birth of Aleph el Shoon (Shoon I).
- 15 *Year of Glittering Glory*
King Amahl II of Tethyr dies, and Syl-Pasha Akkabar of Calimshan brings his newest heir, Amahl III, to his side.
- 27 *Year of Shadowed Blades*
The Fifth Age ends when Pasha Akkabar Shoon dies mysteriously, and Amahl III rules both Calimshan and Tethyr. Abandoning the old titles, Amahl becomes qysar over both. The Shoon Imperium and the Sixth Age begin.
- 32 *Year of Errant Arrows*
Hunting accidents result in the deaths of Amahl III's three eldest sons. The qysar has everyone in the hunting parties slain in retribution.
- 34 *Year of Purloined Power*
Birth of Aleph yn Aleph el Shoon (Shoon II).
- 37 *Year of Dark Venom*
The Vengeance Waves. Five tidal waves strike Calimshan, damaging each of the five port cities of the nation.
- 44 *Year of the Vow Manifest*
Casting of the Spear Imperious. Amahl Shoon III throws a spear from the Imperial Mount of Shoonach and declares its landing spot the starting point from which the Shoon Imperium will grow.
- 50 *Year of the Barbed Wind*
Death of Amahl Shoon III; ascension of Qysar Shoon I.
- 75 *Year of Clinging Death*
Shoon I dies and Shoon II rules the Imperium. Soon after his coronation, the new qysar begins a campaign against numerous religious faiths.



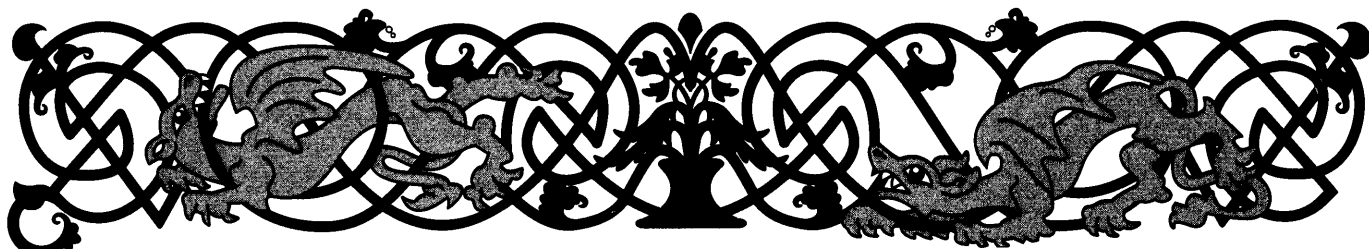


- 107 *Year of the Fledglings*
Birth of Aleph yn Jadh ar el Shoon (Shoon III) on the same day as the death of Shoon II. Moments before the qysar's death, he names the infant his heir. Hazamir al Aktorraal is made regent.
- 110 *Year of the Quirt*
Birth of Amahl Shoon IV, younger brother of Shoon III.
- 112 *Year of the Tusk*
Birth of Amahl of the Nine Whirlwinds (Amahl Shoon V), younger brother of Shoon III and Amahl Shoon IV.
- 123 *Year of the Icy Axe*
Shoon III begins his reign over the Imperium with the beheading of his regent, Riqysar Hazamir al Aktorraal.
- 130 *Year of the Dwarven Twins*
Amahl Shoon IV kills his brother, Shoon III, at a private banquet in his harem, becoming qysar.
- 138 *Year of Sparks Flying*
Amahl Shoon IV blames Ilmater's priests for the great fires in five Imperium cities.
- 140 *Year of the Executioner*
Amahl Shoon IV descends into madness, leading to the deaths of more than 200 highly placed advisors, sultans, and lesser rulers over the next two years.
- 142 *Year of the Prowling Naga*
Amahl of the Nine Whirlwinds returns home to Shoonach after 15 years abroad to face and ultimately slay his insane brother. He is crowned Qysar Amahl Shoon V.
- 173 *Year of Screaming Sharn*
After the daughter of Amahl Shoon V is saved by a priest of Ilmater, the qysar casts a great curse against anyone harming a servant of the Crying God.
- 180 *Year of Leaning Pillars*
Birth of Amahl Shoon VI.
- 183 *Year of the Murrning Dead*
Birth of Shoon IV, brother of Amahl Shoon VI.
- 204 *Year of the Avarice*
Upon the peaceful passing of Amahl Shoon V, his grandson Amahl Shoon VI becomes qysar of the Imperium. The slave Harakhti breaks free in Almraiven and begins building his army of rebellion.
- 205 *Year of the Greengrass*
Qysar Amahl Shoon VI kills Harakhti in personal combat and quells the rebellion. Two days after his return to Shoonach, he is found dead of a scorpion sting, and Shoon IV takes the throne as the first necromancer qysar.
- 223 *Year of Dark Dreams*
Ilhundyl of Volothamp becomes the Mad Mage and is soon banished from the city.
- 227 *Year of the Raised Banner*
The halfling realm of Meiritin is founded on the eastern shores of what is now known as Lake Esmel.
- 231 *Year of the Mist Dragon*
The Death Parade. Shoon IV loses his temper with rebellious activities around Ithmong and lets loose a horde of undead created from the rebel towns' own graves. The Mad Mage Ilhundyl conquers the halflings of Meiritin and declares himself ruler of the Calishar Emirates.

- 236 *Year of the Plague Clouds*
Qysar Shoon IV is seriously injured while battling the dragon Iryklathagra "Sharpfangs."
- 238 *Year of Many Mushrooms*
Ilhundyl meets his demise at the hands of Elminster Aumar and Myrjala Dark-Eyes.
- 241 *Year of the Hippogriff's Folly*
More than two years after Ilhundyl's death, unearthed records implicating his supporters within the Shoon Imperium cost 232 people their lives due to their families' collusion with the Mad Mage.
- 264 *Year of the Vanishing Cat*
Birth of Munaa yr Oma el Shoon (Qysara Shoon V), great-granddaughter of Shoon IV.
- 281 *Year of the Weeping Flail*
Qysar Shoon IV fails to survive the transformation to lichdom, and Qysara Shoon V becomes the first female nonregent ruler over the Imperium.
- 288 *Year of the Xorn's Yearning*
Birth of Kahlar yn Jahar el Tavarn (Shoon VI), son of Qysara Shoon V.
- 290 *Year of Full Cribs*
Birth of Kodos yn Nadim el Jhotos (Shoon VII), nephew of Shoon VI.
- 300 *Year of the Late Sun*
Qysara Shoon V dies of fever, and her son and heir Kahlar becomes Qysar Shoon VI of the Shoon Imperium.

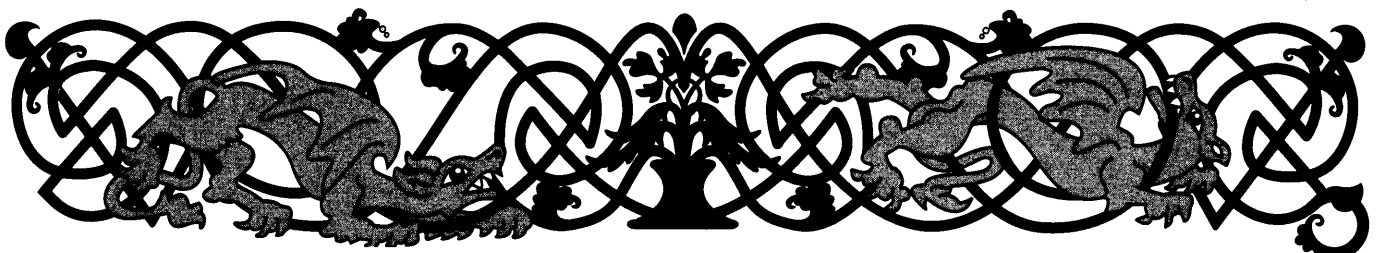


The Fall of Amahl Shoon IV

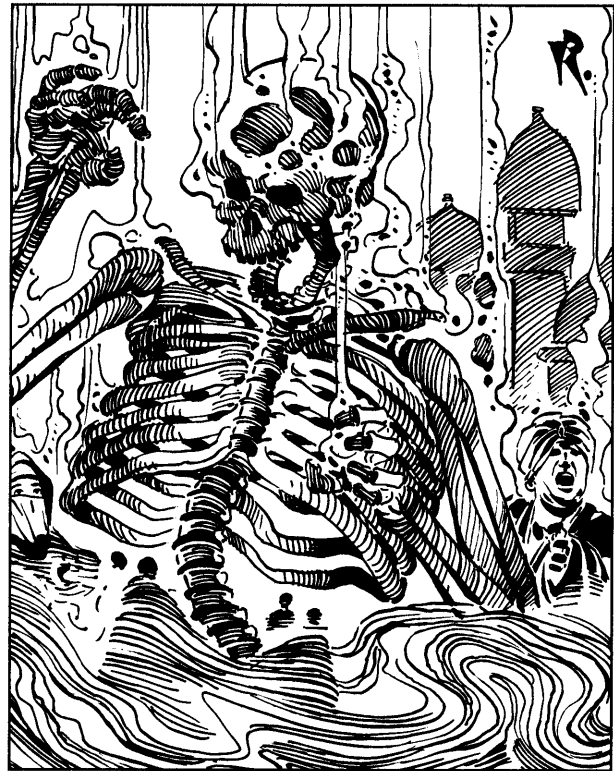


- 309 *Year of the Cascade*
Qysar Shoon VI dies under the blades of his imperial guard. His nephew Shoon VII assumes the mantle of qysar.
- 322 *Year of Seven Scales*
The first battle between Sharpfangs and Qysar Shoon VII destroys four villages in Tethyr.
- 346 *Year of Blushing Stars*
Birth of Shaani, daughter and heir of Qysar Shoon VII.
- 358 *Year of the Battle Talons*
Sharpfangs steals the *Staff of Shoon* during her clash with Qysar Shoon VII.
- 361 *Year of the Fearless King*
Prince Ashar Tornamn declares himself king of Valashar, adding the land he conquers to the Imperium.
- 366 *Year of Molten Anvils*
The final battle between Qysar Shoon VII and Sharpfangs kills 75,000 slaves of Shoonach, costs Shoon VII his right leg, and shatters his left arm.
- 367 *Year of Shying Eyes*
Shoon VII feigns incapacity, placing Qysara Shaani on the throne. Seven months later, he is poisoned and believed slain by Shaani.
- 370 *Year of Sleeping Dangers*
Shoon VII secretly becomes a lich.
- 371 *Year of Emerald Eyes*
Qysara Shaani bargains a peace for the Imperium with the dragon Sharpfangs.
- 375 *Year of the Woeful Resurrection*
Ashar's March. Ashar of Valashar begins a 15-month march north along the Sword Coast and into the Western Heartlands.
- 376 *Year of the Leaping Hare*
Ashar extends the borders of the Shoon Imperium to the High Moor by summer. Crown Prince Azoun I of Cormyr leads his army against Ashar, driving Shoonite forces back through Amn, Tethyr, and Valashar before sacking Ithmong and returning to Cormyr.
- 398 *Year of the Warning Ghost*
Birth of Amahl yn Shaan yn Shoon yi Ankhapur (Amahl Shoon VII), grandson of the Qysara.
- 409 *Year of High Eyes*
The Eye Battles begin in the Arnaden lands.
- 427 *Year of Violet Fungi*
Qysara Shaani dies, throwing the Imperium into an uproar. Amahl Shoon VII amasses the Arnaden Fleet and wrests power from the beholder cults of the Lake of Steam before invading Calimport in Mirtul. After reestablishing order there, he marches to Shoonach as qysar. The new qysar begins a two-year campaign known as the Mage Purges, killing or forcing into exile over 60,000 mages and their associates.
- 430 *Year of the Floating Rock*
The Eye Battles draw to an end.
- 436 *Year of Steelscreaming*
Towns along the River Shaar and Lake Lhespen revolt against Shoonite rule and are free from the Imperium's rule for the next two years.
- 437 *Year of Silver Holly*
Amahl VII sends Qayadin Sallah to regain control over the rebels of the Lake Lhespen towns. The general burns seven towns, with an extreme loss of life.
- 449 *Year of Killing Ice*
Silvyr Ithal marches to Ithmong and takes the crown as the rightful king of Tethyr, sparking rebellion in Tethyr and Amn. After fighting his way to Shoonach, Silvyr is killed in combat by Qysar Amahl VII, whose forces then destroy the attending Tethyrian army.
- 450 *Year of the Corrie Fist*
Qysar Amahl VII is killed by Silvyr's son, Prince Strohm, shattering the Shoon Imperium and ending the Age of Shoon. The Seventh Age of Calimshan begins. In Sheirtalar, Qayadin Sallah is torn apart by a mob when word of the fall of the Imperium reaches the Shaar.
- 533 *Year of the Shattered Manacles*
Mameluk slave warriors revolt in all Calishite cities and establish a free country without slavery. The mameluk rulers abandon Calimport, taking the caleph's throne to Manshaka.
- 864 *Year of Broken Branch*
Rysellan the Dark founds the Twisted Rune. One of the Rune's earliest lairs lies deep beneath Calimport in what was once an ancient drow temple.
- 907 *Year of Waiting*
Calimport is resettled by other mameluks shut out of the power circles of Manshaka. At the secret urgings of the Twisted Rune, they seek to reclaim the ruined greater city beyond the walls of the port.
- 911 *Year of Ruins Reborn*
At Midsummer, Vizar Bollus el Kahdan proclaims himself syl-pasha of Calimport.
- 1018 *Year of the Dracorage*
The Seventh Age of Calimshan ends with a Rage of Dragons, and the Eighth Age begins. Sapphiraktar the Blue comes from the Calim Desert and destroys Calimport and Keltar in Kythorn and Flamerule of the year.
- 1187 *Year of the Arcane Guise*
Saban el Djenispool leads his army into Calimport and slaughters many pashas before claiming the title of syl-pasha.
- 1203 *Year of the Gold Sash*
After 13 years of guild wars and trade wars, Calimshan's regional rulers break away from the pasha of Calimport and established independent city-states.
- 1235 *Year of the Black Horde*
A mighty orc horde sweeps across Amn, Tethyr, and Calimshan, killing 43 major Calishite figures including Syl-Pasha Saban. He is succeeded by his son Kamar yn Saban el Djenispool, but the vast change in power ends the Eighth Age. The Ninth Age of Calimshan begins.
- 1291 *Year of the Hooded Falcon*
Teldh yn Yusuf el Djenispool becomes syl-pasha upon his uncle's death.
- 1333 *Year of the Striking Falcon*
Wizards and mercenaries establish the realm of Mulsparkh in eastern Tethyr.
- 1334 *Year of the Blazing Brand*
Mulsparkh falls this year, though its hordes claim the life of the Paladin Prince Rythan of Tethyr.
- 1338 *Year of the Wanderer*
Saban's grandson Rashid yn Kamal el Djenispool becomes syl-pasha.





- 1347 *Year of the Bright Blade*
After years of planning, the Syl-Pasha Rashid's plans for a coup in Tethyr fail due to the betrayal of his agents, and Tethyr falls into civil war.
- 1357 *Year of the Prince*
Shond Tharovin steals the *Tome of the Unicorn* from Ruathym's Green Room.
- 1358 *Year of Shadows*
The Time of Troubles consumes Bhaal-worshipping assassins and, as a result, the Shadow Thieves' decades-long dominance of the Calishite underworld ends. Late in Nightal, a blaze in the Hall of Mameluks leaves Ralan el Pesarkhal as sultan and ruler of Manshaka.
- 1359 *Year of the Serpent*
Powers among the Calishite governments attempt to get involved in underworld politics and spark the Darkstalker Wars. Syl-Pasha Rashid is assassinated by his favored consort, and Punjor el Djenispool is poisoned on the way to Calimport. Ralan el Pesarkhal becomes syl-pasha.
- 1360 *Year of the Turret*
The formation of King Azoun IV's crusade draws many mercenaries to the north.
- 1362 *Year of the Helm*
The death of Amn's Meisarch Thayze Selemchant, an ally of the syl-pasha, stalls Persakhal's plan to conquer Tethyr. Teldom Darkhope, leader of the Knights of Black Gauntlet, slays the rulers of Mintar and takes over the town.
- 1367 *Year of the Shield*
Shond Tharovin uses the *Living Gem* to conquer Schamedar. Through a *curse* that costs him his life, the wizard Yoond Shalshymmyr turns Tharovin into a gibbering moulder.
- 1368 *Year of the Banner*
The Cult of the Living Gem members are driven from Schamedar by the Seven Satraps.
- 1369 *Year of the Gauntlet*
Syl-Pasha Persakhal attends the coronation of Queen-Monarch Zaranda and King Haedrak III of Tethyr. Teldom Darkhope reportedly amasses enough military force to attempt to conquer the region around Mintar.
- 1370 *Year of the Tankard*
The current year.



The Bottlemist Plague begins.

- Against the orders of the caleph arcane, who wanted them kept as unopened as evidence for the syl-pasha's perusal, the suspected *djinni bottles* are opened by curious amlakkar (members of the city guard/police) a few days after their impounding. The opened bottles emit a strange malodorous mist that expands quickly and clings thickly to any warm living person or thing. While no djinni come out of the bottles, one of the amlakkar panics because the tendrils of mist seem to claw at his armor and are "as cold as ice." All the amlakkar throw their bottles away, shattering them against the wall of the amlakkar's minaret. The olive green mists suddenly billow and fill the tower, then waft through the city of Almraiven, to little effect other than causing passersby slight chills from contact with them.
- The Great Games take place in Manshaka's Blood Arenas, attracting more patrons than ever before. Over the course of the last tenday of the month, more than 3,000 gladiatorial slaves and 5,000 wild animals die to entertain the masses. However, an alleged Harper (though more likely one of the Nadhari [a group of freedom fighters against slavery] or a Janessari [a member of a group of paladins]) disguised as a slave casts spells that dissolve the walls in part of the arena, allowing a pack of dire wolves to, in his words, "feast on the oppressors who take entertainment from pain and slavery." The wizard is quickly slain by archers.

Calimshan Today

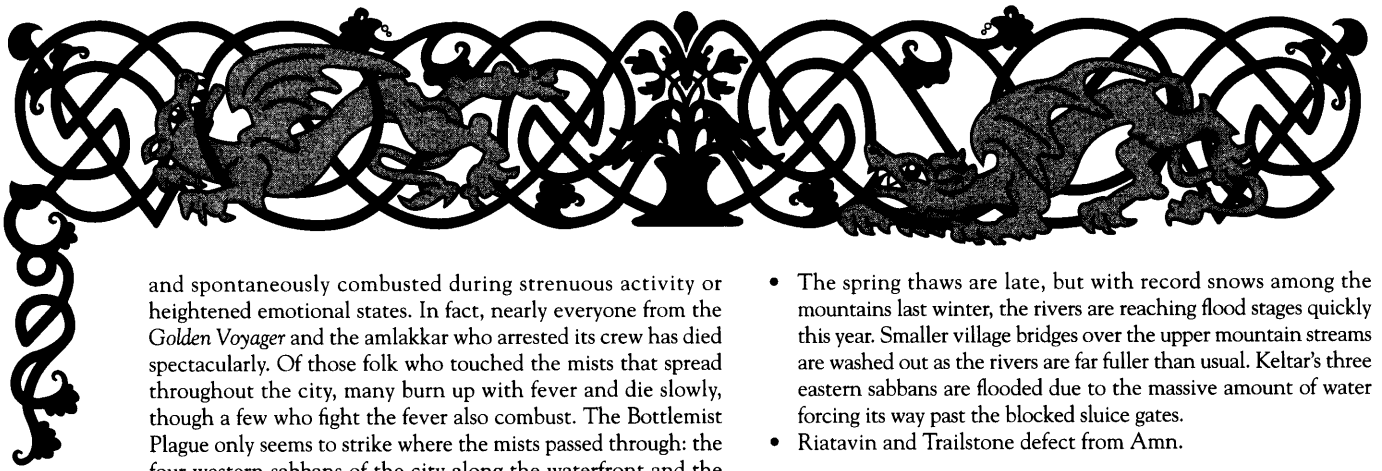
The following events all take place during the Year of the Tankard (1370 DR). Bear in mind that these are hardly the only events occurring in Calimshan during this time, but rather those of interest and concern to the syl-pasha's courtiers and other people of influence in Calimshan.

Hammer

- The arrival of merchant ships from Zakhara inspires a frenzy of activity in the marketplaces and bazaars of Almraiven. Contributing to the normal chaos of a rare arrival from the Burning World are rumors that *djinni bottles* have been smuggled into Calimshan with the shipment of rare carpets and metalwork. Thus, the Guild Arcane and its caleph impound the entire cargo of the *Golden Voyager* and have its crew arrested. The matter is to be saved for the syl-pasha's judgment at his visit later next month.

Alturiak

- For the past three weeks, those who had contact with the olive green mists from the bottles from Zakhara have mysteriously



and spontaneously combusted during strenuous activity or heightened emotional states. In fact, nearly everyone from the *Golden Voyager* and the amlakkar who arrested its crew has died spectacularly. Of those folk who touched the mists that spread throughout the city, many burn up with fever and die slowly, though a few who fight the fever also combust. The Bottlemist Plague only seems to strike where the mists passed through: the four western sabbans of the city along the waterfront and the lower sections of town. Nevertheless, many begin to abandon the city for fear of catching the Burning Plague (its other, more prominent, name).

- The Syl-Pasha Pesarkhal, en route to Almraiven by sea, receives news of the Burning Plague and puts in at Volothamp instead. He sends a messenger to Almraiven to request the presence of the caleph arcane, at whom many point fingers as trying to use this known plague to assassinate the pasha. While el Pesarkhal has few doubts as to the caleph arcane's loyalty, he believes that one among her staff is more than likely responsible and is merely shuffling the blame onto the caleph arcane as the more prominent person—a tactic the pasha knows well.
- Mysterious murders are occurring within the town of Keltar. Beheaded bodies are turning up sitting in chairs or propped up in an allies holding baskets containing their heads. While one murder under these odd circumstances occurred last month, few thought much of the beheaded body. Now during each of the nights of the full moon, a new beheading occurs. All victims have no other marks on them, and the blow that severs each victim's neck has been strong and true—one blow ended each victim's life. There seems to be no correlation or connection between the victims, nor have the victims been subjected to other crimes than their murders. Two of the victims were even left with bulging coin purses at their belts!

Ches

- Rumors begin to spread among the guilds arcane of great powers to be found within the shards of the long-broken and long-lost *Lamp of Vykaenos*. Long sought since the great battle mage Vykaenos's fall some centuries past, the *lamp* now consists only of some pieces of twisted metal found within a collapsed cavern among the Marching Mountains. Reports say that if the pieces are all found and reassembled, the bearer of the item will gain power unimaginable. The syl-pasha's main rival has three of the five pieces, the syl-pasha has one—the handle of a genie's lamp—and the final piece—the top of the lamp—is in unknown hands. (Truthfully, if the pieces are reassembled, there is a 10% chance that whomever holds the lamp is absorbed into it as if she or he were a genie, and she or he gains the powers and abilities of a djinni. There is a 30% chance that a genie of some kind [equal chances of a djinni, marid, efreet, or dao] is tied to the bottle and becomes the bearer's servant for 1,001 days. There is a 60% chance that the lamp is useless save for its metal content.)
- By this month, more than 4,000 people die of the Burning Plague, and Almraiven is nearly deserted due to the dangers it presents. Apparently the disease is spread by contact, and those unaffected have fled to their summer villas months before the heat of summer. Now only clergy and lay members of Ilmater's faith, on missions to alleviate the suffering and attempt to end the plague, travel to Almraiven.

- The spring thaws are late, but with record snows among the mountains last winter, the rivers are reaching flood stages quickly this year. Smaller village bridges over the upper mountain streams are washed out as the rivers are far fuller than usual. Keltar's three eastern sabbans are flooded due to the massive amount of water forcing its way past the blocked sluice gates.
- Riatavin and Trailstone defect from Amn.

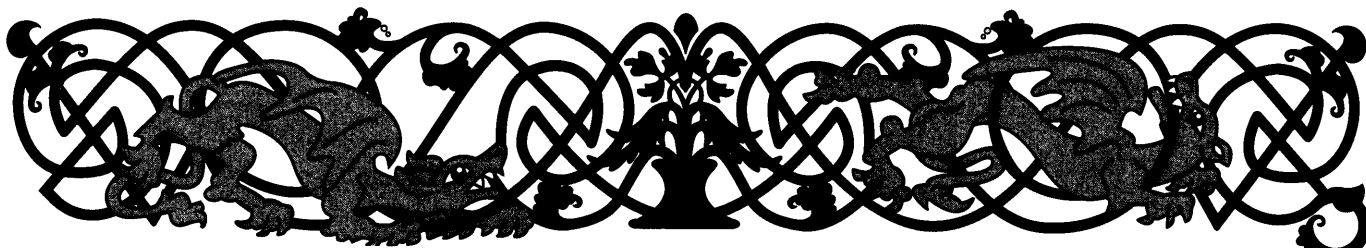
Tarsakh

- Almraiven's Burning Plague seems spent, though the city bears its scars for years to come. Many folk early this month and late last month quite literally burn up in their homes, and their homes burn up with them. Large sections of the docks and lower sabbans of Almraiven suffer great fires. Of those stricken by the plague's fever, only a few manage to survive. Their survival is thanks to the aid of the Ilmatari priests, who seem oddly immune to the plague's touch. Brother Amahd of St. Fanal's sends word to the authorities in Almraiven and Calimport that he has conducted his own investigations and discovered that the plague was created within the School of Hands Arcane. The report does not identify the creator of the plague, as further investigation is warranted once the plague is fully ended.
- The Basketman Murders continue in Keltar, though two important clues have come forth about the victims: Either they or their parents were adventurers, and they all had traveled through the Haunted Halls of Eveningstar in Cormyr. The amlakkar do not know what bearing this has on the case, but it is the only lead they have. Those in Keltar or Calimport with more information on the Haunted Halls are promised a reward for any new information they might provide.
- Queen Zaranda officially recognizes Riatavin and Trailstone as Tethyrian settlements and tentatively moves the border of Tethyr from the Tethir Road to the southern foothills of the Tejarn Hills and east to Shilmista (the Forest of Shadows).

Mirtul

- Lord Knight Imperceptor of the Dark Lord Teldorn Darkhope (LE hm P9 of "Bane" [really Iyachtu Xvim]; an aulhim, but thinks he is a dreadmaster), the Dark Tyrant of Mintar, attacks Kzelter and easily conquers its small garrison in a three-day siege. The Tethyrian troops rout and flee north while the Knights of the Black Gauntlet conquer and occupy Kzelter.
- Mysterious lights begin appearing above Ruler's Ridge among the Marching Mountains. With the thaws up in the mountains all but over and greenery covering the slopes, many note and point out the nightly lights above the shattered mountain. Some say they see the glint of metal, while others allegedly see figures moving about on the peak. None of these stories are taken seriously, though some folk are planning expeditions into the Marching Mountains to investigate the peak. While some hope that someone has found a way to reach and plunder the rich tombs in the mountain, others plan to make the same journey to ensure the integrity and sanctity of the tombs.
- Brother Amahd is found dead and partially consumed by fire within a ruined wing of the School of Hands Arcane in Almraiven. Before his death, he uncovered and revealed to other monks that the creator of the plague was Tara yr Meriel el Vilam (NE hf M11), the second daughter of the veiled caleph ar-





cane. She has been noticeably absent for more than a tenday, and a country-wide search is on for her, as Amahd found that she had planned for her mists and the plague they generate to destroy the syl-pasha and many of his court to allow the creation of a magocracy in Calimshan.

Kythorn

- Refugee Xvim worshipers from Almraiven arrive in Kzelter and are accepted among the senior staff of Teldorn Darkhope. While they continue to support Darkhope's masquerade of conquest in Bane's name, their leader, Khalas el Doalmin (CE hm P7 of Xvim), begins to slowly assert much influence over Teldorn Darkhope.
- A slave uprising on some of the northern plantations west of Keltar sees the destruction of two plantations and many crops needed to feed Keltar's people. The Nadhari takes responsibility for the destruction and recruits more than 300 members from slavery, sending more than 1,000 slaves north into the mountains to freedom.
- Word drifts out that fire has totally destroyed the wooden encampment of St. Faelar's Cloisters, though what caused the blaze is unknown. Most of the brethren are safe and have been relocated among the other monasteries in Calimshan, though three of monks died in the fire. Father Jamad (LG hm P8 of Ilmater) insists that the fire was set by a *burning sphere* controlled by a heavily cloaked wizard who laughed at the clergy members' misfortune while they tried to put the fires out. Popular theory makes this wizard Tara el Viilam, who is already becoming known as Tara of the Burning Mists, though the priest could not identify the wizard conclusively.

Flamerale

- This summer in Calimshan is one of the hottest ever recorded. Droughts follow the spring floods in some areas, and most folk trapped in the cities suffer much from the blistering heat. Many of the great leaders of the country retreat into their mountain villas and estates to avoid the worst of the heat, but the nation reports record monster populations among the Marching Mountains this year, requiring more mercenary guards than normal. (Calishites count freed and escaped slaves as part of the monster population.)
- Members of the elite special forces (the Farisans) of Memnon who travel within the Calim Desert note serious changes in the normal weather patterns of the desert this year. While the summer's heat has had its normal minimal effect on the desert, the desert is more stable, as if the efreeti Memnon's mind's presence, which normally creates the biggest heat surges, were dormant or at least less active. The areas of the salt flat desert that have turned to sand because of Memnon's manifestations, which cause the soil to fuse, crack, craze, and shatter, are breaking down into finer grains and taking on a lighter, near-white, pale tan hue quite different from the normal coarse dark brown, sepia, and blackish sand that Memno has normally created. The winds of the desert are also performing oddly, and tornadoes of sand and whirlwinds of variable size are whipping up unseasonably out of nowhere to catch travelers unawares. As the Farisans are soldiers trained only to observe and report, they are reluctant to draw any conclusions about these changes.
- Two thousand additional troops fortify the Tethyrian village of Ithal Pass in preparation for attacks from Mintar.

- Triplets are born to Queen-Monarch Zaranda and King Hae-drak III. The royal couple is ecstatic of the birth of their heirs.

Eleasias

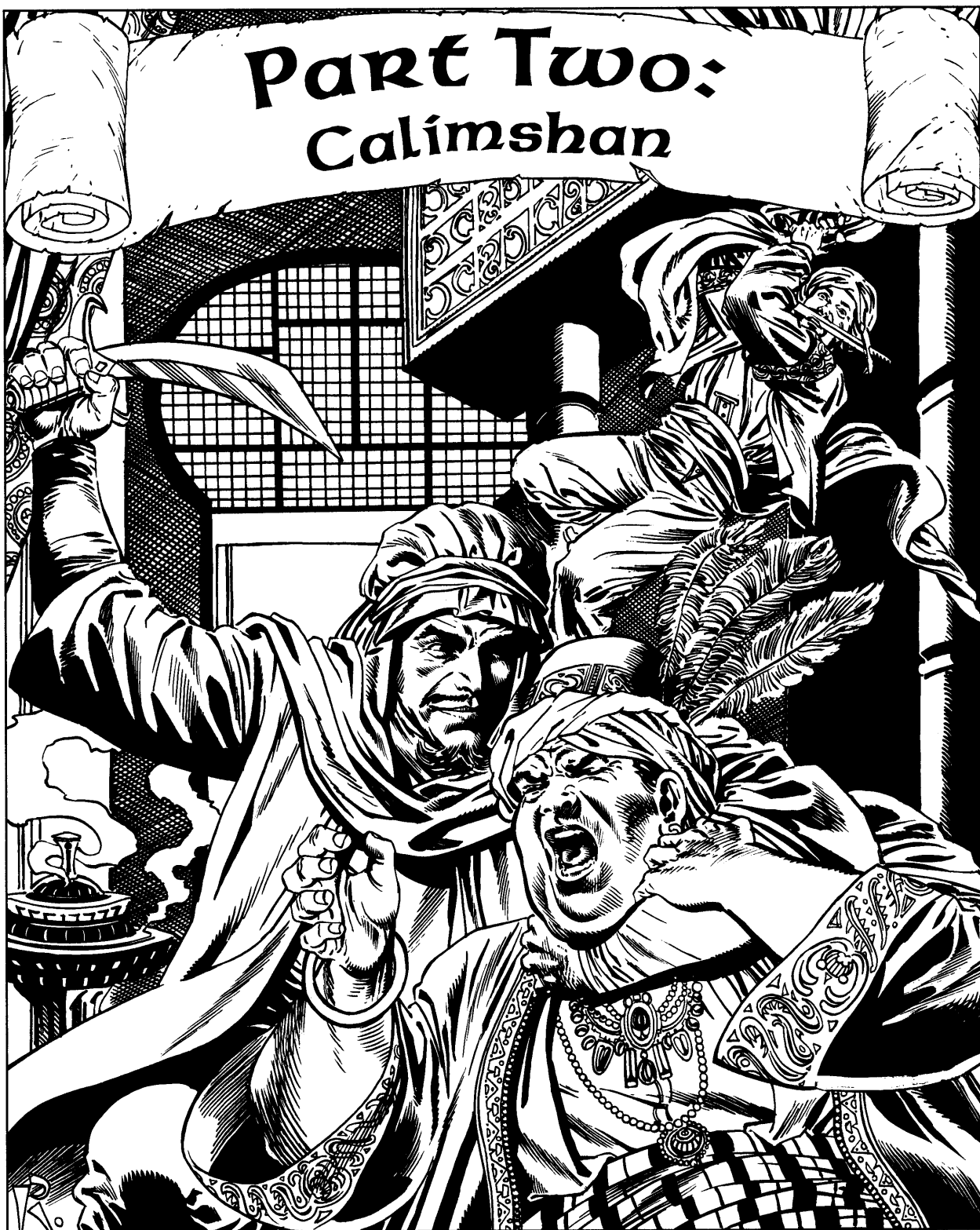
- Rumors of beholder activity crop up in tavern talk, as they always do in the autumn. Seasonal wild stories of the eye tyrants commanding and organizing a kobold and goblin horde among the Alimir Mountains are so commonplace that they are laughed off despite some credible witnesses to much troop activity within the interior peaks.
- Ogres, orcs, goblins, and other goblinkin overwhelm Amn and conquer Imnescar, Trademeet, and Esmeltaran swiftly in the name of the Sythillisian Empire. The ogre mage that leads the army vows to lay siege to Murann by month's end and succeeds easily in that promise.

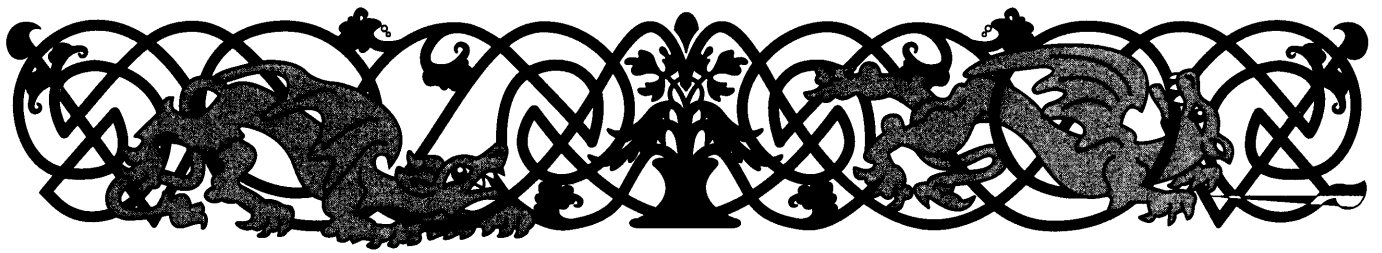
Eleínt

- The syl-pasha sends word to Tethyr's court of the birth of his newest granddaughter, along with a bold proposal: "In the spirit of newfound trusts and to defuse long-held mistrust among our people of common origins, I would propose an alliance of your son his Highness Prince Coram with my little Sarya yr Kadila yr Pesarkhal el Thamal. Their marriage shall be proof of the new unity and prosperity our countries can achieve together rather than continue the enmity of past centuries." The syl-pasha further reports to the court that Calimshan has taken steps to "alleviate the problems you face in your beleaguered town of Kzelter."
- The syl-pasha sends a token force to retake Kzelter from Teldorn Darkhope's Knights of the Black Gauntlet. Whether Kzelter is freed or not is irrelevant; Tethyr will be in his debt in any case. If his troops should happen to free the city, they are to search for the legendary lost armory of Kzelter before turning the town over to authorities.
- A mysterious wizard—again many suggest it is Tara of the Burning Mists—flies over Volothamp, casting unknown and unidentifiable magics. Soon, all the copper in the city liquefies and starts to run. The magic does not heat the metal, but makes it flow like quicksilver. As few chests or vaults or coinpurses hold liquids well, the copper flows along the streets like a river. The effect lasts for a few hours, during which the copper content of the upper sabbans creates metalfalls of liquid copper down the cliffs above the middle and lower sabbans. The metal instantly returns to solid form with the expiration of the magic, creating what some quickly call the Copper Cliffs of Volothamp, and the main ramps down from the higher sabbans also remain copper-covered. Despite the relatively low value of copper compared to other precious metals, the amount of metal lost and now unrecoverable causes serious financial troubles for some families, though the poor folk whose primary coin is copper smartly collected buckets of copper while it flowed and now are living much better than ever before.
- The Basketman Murders of Keltar continue this month with three more homicides. A *speak with dead* spell reveals only that the murderer wields a great scythe, is utterly silent, and is clad all in white. While many take the murderer's description to be that of a zealous priest of Kelemvor, others speak of a vengeful ghost wandering down from Cormyr to take revenge for some wrong done it in life.



Part Two: Calimshan





Calimshan Overview

Chronicler,

Once again, ye have finagled materials out of my library by your gracious barter of ales, cheeses unheard of in my Realms, and fine cigars. Ye requested lore on the ever-shifting land of the ever-arrogant pashas known to ye as Calimshan, and here it be for good or ill.

I saw thy manuscripts on the Lands of Intrigue, cobbled together from King Haedrak's and Count Gamalon's papers, and ye seem to have a good grasp of how these lands all interact. Now ye face the daunting task of winnowing truth from the amusingly biased annals of the syl-pasha's court and more balanced and knowledgeable travelers' notes. Best of luck, young scribe.

Aye, ye shall find the various tomes and travelers' notes on Calimshan and its environs informative, diverting, and somewhat sobering at times. I shall await your drafts and commentary from the Greenwood ere we trust this knowledge into the hands of waiting students of Faerûn. And do take care to have more of that surprisingly tasty string cheese on hand when next I visit. The Simbul likes its texture, and we should not deny her her due, eh?

—Elminster, gourmand and sage

When many think of Calimshan, they think of sand and silks, jewels and genies, slaves and slain rivals, and *heat*. The Land of the Three Rivers (one of Calimshan's many long-unused titles) is all these things and more. It is a land steeped equally in culture and corruption, in history and greed. Calimshan embraces a world of contrasts, as its rich are affluent beyond measure just as its poor are destitute beyond belief. It is another world who inhabitants embrace magic and education but jealously guard them from those they deem unworthy. While confusing to outsiders, Calimshan and its people accept these seemingly contradictory values as life, and it is the outsider's place to learn how to adapt to the Land of the Pashas rather than the alternative.

Political Boundaries

Calimshan's borders are the same as they have been since the fall of the Shoon Imperium nearly 1,000 years ago. The western border of Calimshan is the Sea of Swords (which the Calishites most often call the Trackless Sea). The Shining Sea hems in the pashas' land to the south. The River Agis and the Marching Mountains define the northern boundaries of the syl-pasha's direct control, while the eastern borders are effectively set by the Alimir Mountains and the western Lake of Steam. Knowing that his ancestors once ruled an empire as far ranging as the River Chionthar to the north and the Landrise that splits the Shaar to the east, the ruler of Calimshan bristles at his country's seeming—smallness—during the past millennia.

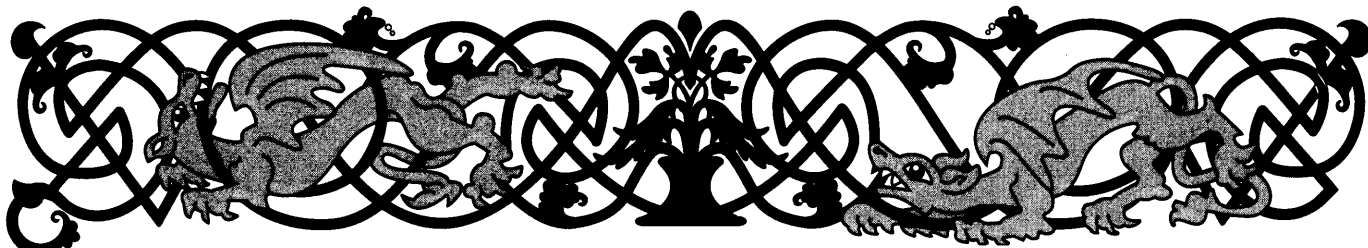
Desiring to conquer but lacking the wherewithal, the syl-pasha of Calimport continues tentative political maneuvers to expand his borders. A point of contention between Calimshan and its northern neighbor, Tethyr, is the ruins of Shoonach and the lands that once formed the Kingdom of Mir. While he never stationed troops in either area, the pasha covets these lands and sees the recent billeting of Tethyrian troops there as an affront to what he sees as Calimshan's latent sovereignty over the region. He is also casting an opportunistic eye eastward toward troubled Kzelter and Mintar.

Climate

The Calishite climate is temperate, though it is warmer year-round than Tethyr or Amn due to its more southerly location, the warming effects of the Shining Sea to the south, and the volcanic activity that affects the Lake of Steam. The average precipitation during the year is about 15 inches of rainfall in the lowlands and 25 inches in the mountains and farther to the east. Most of Calimshan's crops are grown on the flood plains along its rivers, and the rest of the land barely supports grazing. The western half of the country, trapped in the grip of the magical weather patterns of the Calim Desert, rarely sees more than 10 inches of precipitation year-round.

Given the combination of the heat and humidity from the bordering oceans, summers are oppressive all across the country. Since the Shining Sea is a relatively calm gulf and the worst of the storms from the Trackless Sea break up on the Singing Rocks, Calimshan's port cities do not receive the same sea





breezes as port cities farther north. Winters are brief and only produce snow in the upper elevations among the Alimir Mountains and Marching Mountains. To most of Calimshan, winter means long periods of rain through the months of Hammer and Alturiak, and spring arrives in Tarsakh with the annual floods that continues through Mirtul. By the end of Kythorn, the heat of summer descends, and it remains until just before the end of Uktar. Most outsiders can hardly distinguish a change in the seasons at all, but to natives, the any slight change in humidity or temperature is noticed and is always welcomed after the long summer's heat.

Population Types and Dispersion

Humans dominate the Calishite racial mix and have for more than 6,000 years. They account for 90% of the country's known adult population (and 95% of its actual population). Seven out of 10 Calishites live in urban areas, unlike nearly any other country in the Realms, and the remaining rural folk live mainly along the rivers. This proportion only takes into account the upper and merchant classes, however, as the slaves and the rural poor are beneath the notice of the census-takers. In practice, unless folk maintain a presence within the cities, they are not counted among Calimshan's populace. The last figures, collected over a decade ago, estimate that Calimshan has nearly four million citizens overall, though these numbers are always suspect. The syl-pasha collects taxes from each of the city rulers based upon their cities' estimated populations, so there is a major incentive for the syl-pasha's tax collectors to inflate the census estimates. If every living being were to be counted, regardless of location or social class within the country, population figures would climb as high as six million. Calishite social biases, however, result in only about one to two million residents being thought of as worth recording the existence of, so reported population figures can vary widely, depending on the criteria of the reporter.

Human Races

Present-day Calishite humans come from several racial stocks, as the nation has seen immigrants from more places than nearly any other civilized land across Toril. The original native human ethnicity is long lost as a result of interbreeding with immigrant races, the first and largest influx of which was the Djen, who were brought here in bondage under the genies. After centuries of immigrants from the Vilhon Reach, the Old Empires of Chessenta and Mulhorand, Lantan, the Shaar, and Chult have settled in or been brought to Calimshan to mix their bloodlines with those of the people already in the region, a variety of dusky-skinned humans are all considered the natives of Calimshan.

Most humans in Calimshan descend from the remnants of the original native humans of the area. While no pure natives survive, since they all interbred with the Djen long ago, those whose appearance hearkens back to the original natives are distinctive looking enough for Calishite society to separate them out from the ruling classes of the "pure" Djen. Called Tethans by the Mulhorandi and other cultures, they are taller and broader in build than the Djen, and their skin is lighter in hue than the Djen, though still dusky in comparison with that of pale northerners. While Tethans comprise nearly 50% of the true total population, the upward mobility of people of Tethan lineage is restricted by society to

no greater than the status of tradesfolk or merchants. More than 70% of those of Tethan blood in Calimshan are either indentured servants (30%) or slaves (70%, or roughly 2,400,000 people).

Only 30% of the humans of Calimshan can directly trace their lineage back to the Djen, but these people form the ruling class, the nobility of Calimshan since the end of genie domination. In general, those of Djen blood are slightly shorter and of a slighter build than the average Faerûnian. Their skin is a dark brown, and their hair and eyes are most commonly of that shade also. If intermingled with other human or elf ethnicities, Djen features tend to dominate, resulting in dusky half-elves or darker-skinned Tethans. A child of Djen parentage born with light-colored eyes (blue or green) or hair (red or lighter) is considered blessed by the gods and is spoiled and deferred to.

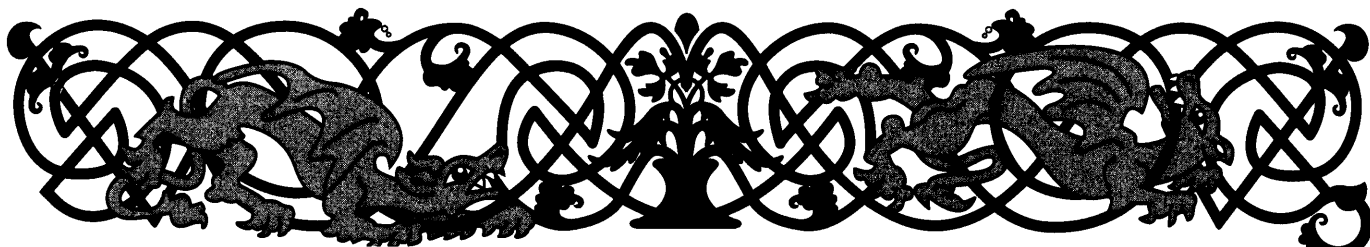
The remaining human ethnicities in Calimshan are immigrants from beyond Calimshan's borders who settled here recently or moved from Chult, Lantan, or the Shaar during the eras when Calimshan ruled an extensive empire.. Chultans are built similar to the Tethans, though they are darker still than the Djen and their hair is always tightly curled. The Lantanna are sallow-skinned and smaller than the other human ethnicities, while Shaarans seem to come in a variety of skintone, though a light reddish tone is most common. Because these non-Djen humans descend from former trading partners or the inhabitants of old colonies of Calimshan, only about 20% of these people are enslaved. These people of foreign descent have almost totally embraced Calishite cultural mores as their own. Despite the fact that Calimshan has obviously enslaved some people of their ancestry, free members of the immigrant races usually belong to the merchant or upper class, and their reliance on the slavery system outweighs any moral outrage some might expect them to display.

Demihuman Races

A very low percentage of Calimshan's total populations is composed of demihumans. Fairly close estimates peg the overall percentage at 7%. Most demihumans, with the exception of some half-breeds (half-orcs), are slaves.

Dwarves: Dwarves have been scarce all across Calimshan since the fall of Shanatar 4,000 years ago, though few humans penetrate deep within the Marching Mountains to uncover any hidden dwarf enclaves that might reside there. Given their natural talents with metalwork and mining, dwarves are very popular among members of the Calishite upper classes and are treated with as much respect and kindness as they laud on anyone not of their immediate social rank. The dwarves, for the most part, have long abandoned the holds of the Axemarch clan in the Marching Mountains, and most of the dwarves still found in Calimshan are therefore outcasts from the tribes under Tethyr and Erkkazar. Few dwarves live outside the cities, where they are at least accepted by others for their skills, though a smattering of dwarf enclaves exist elsewhere.

Elves: Elves are equally nonexistent in the lands south of the Marching Mountains ever since the genies caused the destruction of the southern woodlands of Keltormir more than five millennia past. Like the dwarves, a few outcasts or wanderers are found within the cities, but the only elf communities within or near Calimshan are drow (see the Monster Races section). While the drow outnumber the elves in, around, and under Calimshan by nearly 5 to 1, the all elves, including drow, barely account for 0.5% of the true population of the country. The few elves in Calimshan usually take care not to be noticed, as they are distrusted because of the



history of animosity between Calimshan and many elf nations. They are both envied and respected for their innate elf magical abilities, which the magic-crazed rulers of the country cannot duplicate—abilities such as High Magic, being able to cast spells while wearing armor, and the ability to construct elven chain mail. They are so envied that most of them are enslaved soon after being discovered, since any given pasha both wants their secrets and does not want any other pasha to use them against him.

Half-Orcs: “Half-breeds” are the largest percentage of demihumans found among the cities of Calimshan, and the bulk of them are half-orcs (1.5% of the total populace). The number of half-orcs has become notable only in the past 130 years, but even so, Calimshan, above all other countries in the Realms, accepts half-orcs as a normal part of society. While the majority of them work at menial positions suited to their strengths (dockhands, thugs, etc.), they are not exclusively limited to such activities as they are in Purskul and elsewhere. In fact, a number of half-orcs occupy positions of power among the mercantile classes; a few are even politicians and rulers! About half the half-orcs in Calimshan are enslaved, and most of those work as gladiators in the arenas due to their strength and ferocity.

Half-Elves: Half-elves in Calimshan are much rarer than half-orcs, and they often hide their elf heritage, finding it far safer to be considered a pale human from the northern lands. With the scarcity of elves in Calimshan, discovered half-elves are treated much like elves: They are envied, distrusted, and enslaved.

Halfings: Halfings are the great lost race of Calimshan. Their original homelands in the west of this region were first subsumed by the Djen and their djinn rulers, and later by the humans and the Calim Desert. For centuries, halfings migrated north when possible, with the result that Amn and Tethyr have more halfing inhabitants than other Sword Coast lands. Though it was previously reported that halfings are not happy with the hot weather in Calimshan, the truth is that nearly every halfing within Calimshan is a slave, and they account for about 2% of the total population. Few halfing slaves are kept within the urban areas, which explains why many people might have thought halfings do not live as Calimshan—those folk never left the cities.

Most halfings are kept as plantation slaves north and east of Manshaka and Schamedar. A few hidden shires of halfings dot high plateaus in the Marching Mountains and hide among the hills north of Almraiven, and these halfings have spent the last few centuries trying to free their brethren. Given their years of persecution, Calishite halfings are nearly as cynical and paranoid as the stereotypical dwarf, and their insular nature prevents them from obtaining aid from their kin to the north, though they accept it from others.

Gnomes: Gnomes are rare curiosities within the Empires of the Shining Sea. Long ago, gnomes were the most numerous slave race of the Netherese, so they carry a distaste for slavery to this day. Thus, the only gnomes usually encountered in Calimshan are adventurers wandering through the greater cities. Beyond the cities, some tiny gnome hamlets are thought to lie hidden in the high valleys of the Marching Mountains. They have remained undiscovered due more to their isolation than any magic.

Monster Races

Due to the relative laxness of patrols beyond the trade routes, the farms, and the city perimeters, more monsters dwell within Calimshan than demihumans. Farmers, ranchers, and rural plantation



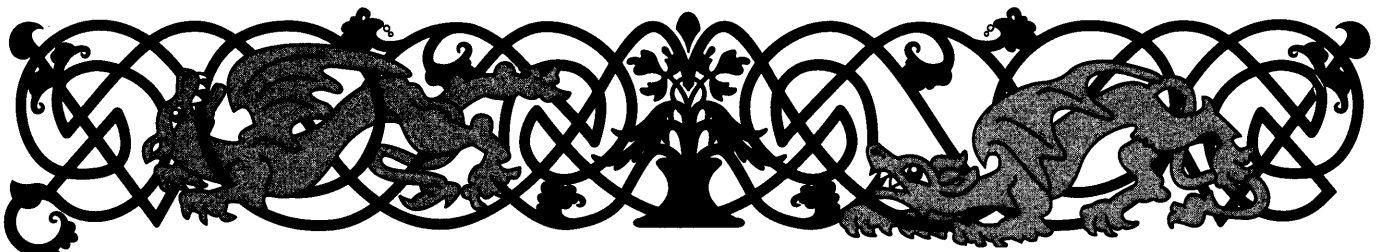
Calishites give genies a wide berth.

slaves all speak more of gnoll bands and goblin raiders than nearly any other threat. A wide range of other less-mundane monsters also live within Calimshan, especially hidden within the craggy uplands of the Marching Mountains and the Alimir Peninsula. Known creatures native to Calimshan include harpies, manticores, displacer beasts, rocs, and ogres in the mountains. Off the coast lurk scraggs, sahuagin, kraken, and others. In the desert wastelands live even more frightening creatures, from sphinxes to rare draciforms unheard of elsewhere in the Realms. However, few species are present in such numbers that they are noticeable within the population figures. The ones who do reside in Calimshan in large enough quantities to be significant—or whose presence would be significant in any quantity—are mentioned here.

Dragons: Precious few dragons live on the surface within the boundaries of Calimshan for one simple reason: The undead dracolich Sapphiraktar the Blue does not allow their presence unless he can control them. At present, Sapphiraktar is the lone draciform (dragon, dragonlike, or partially draconic being) within the pashas' domains, though another dragon has recently established its territory in the Alimir Mountains.

Drow: In recent centuries, drow activity has risen both in and under Calimshan, and drow are starting to have some direct impact on the underworlds of the cities. The major drow enclaves in the south are the three heretical settlements of Vhaeraun worshippers in the Forest of Mir.

Genies: While many outsiders believe that genies are as plentiful in Calimshan as fat slaveowners, the truth is quite the opposite. In comparison to the Heartlands of the Realms, Calimshan



has far more genies, but they are rare and wondrous creatures that are both coveted and feared, especially by the country's rulers. Many of the genies found here are bound to servitude by bottle or by rings and have thus been enslaved for as long as many other races. For more, see *The Genies' Impact on Modern Calimshan* section in the "Society and Customs" chapter.

Gnolls: Gnolls dominate the grasslands of the eastern highlands. Before the Ten Black Days in Tethyr, the garrisons at Kzelter kept these tribes at bay and minimized their growth. Now Kzelter is a besieged ruin nigh-abandoned by a Tethyrian leadership concerned with protecting the center of the country and its northern borders. The gnolls have subsequently become a power to be reckoned with in the hills east of the forest and north of Almraiven.

Goblins: Goblins are the perennial horde-forming nuisance humanoid race of the region. They spring up again and again like weedgrass. The goblins have taken advantage of Tethyr's decades of instability and Calimshan's lack of wilderness patrols to rebuild a great goblin stronghold among the western and central Marching Mountains. For the most part, the goblins survive by raiding those caravans skirting the harsh Calim Desert and by following alongside the River Agis. The goblin king, Kurot, is wily enough to know not to increase his activity beyond the occasional raid and thus draw more attention to his growing kingdom. His troops have unsuccessfully tried to steal magic from the great ruined city of Shoonach for years, and they continue to their attempts to gain great weapons with an annual pilgrimage into the ruins. Once Kurot and his warriors have weapons of magic, Kurot believes his people will be strong enough to draw together the other goblin tribes in the Marching Mountains and conquer the rich cities to the south.

Spiders and Spider Creatures: The Spider Swamp earned through its reputation as a perfect habitat for arachnids of all kinds. The rare werespiders of Mir, a misnomer bestowed by early explorers who first encountered the aranaea, inhabit and dominate both the Spider Swamp and the lower Forest of Mir. The panicky Calishite explorers who incorrectly identified the aranaea are the same people who started a scare over 80,000 drow living in the forest over 20 years ago. Many folk who heard the tales they spread expected their lands to swiftly fall to the dark elves. When the attacks never came, people chose to ignore the reports as false, though they never actually ventured into the forest to double-check.

Attire and Armaments

What immediately strikes those not from the Empires of the Shining Sea or places further south is the distinctive manner in which those from Calimshan dress. While this clothing style is widely known and caricatured in the northern lands as the standard for all lands south of Iriaebor, it is in actuality unique to Calimshan. Only the natives of Calimshan adopt a style of dress reminiscent of both their far-off ancestors in Zakhara and the genies that brought them here.

Calishite clothing is always loose and airy for comfort in the general heat of the region, but the choice of what specific garments one wears depends entirely on wealth and social position. A keffiyeh is a traditional headcloth worn by nearly everyone across the Empires. It covers the head and hangs down the neck. It protects the face, head, and hair from desert winds and the sun. It is

secured on the head with a set of cords, a skullcap (covered by a turban), or turban wrap. In some cases, a turban alone is worn, by itself or over a skullcap. Among the higher classes, turbans are often secured by an ornate brooch. Slaves, however, are often denied even the simplest of head coverings.

Many members of the lower classes wear simple cotton or light wool trousers and light muslin or linen shirts or tunics, if any shirt is worn at all. Also standard is a vest worn open over a shirt, and the more embroidery one can afford to decorate the vest, the better. Women, enslaved or free, when allowed outside, are usually robed completely in a cotton caftan and a veil or in a chador—a full-body robe with a hood and face-covering. Underneath, they wear trousers, tunics, blouses, and sometimes vests, or they wear caftans. Many women wear anklets. Outer wear worn by either sex to protect against inclement weather is a light fabric robe that hangs down to the feet, called an aba; in more chilly winter months, a heavier aba, called a jellaba, replaces the aba—for those who can afford it.

The moneyed classes wear similar types of clothes to those worn by the lower classes, but the apparel of those with coin is made of finer cloth: silk, fine cotton, and linen. The wealthy dye their clothes (often in rare dyes and unique shades), have fantastic patterns embroidered upon them in silk or precious metal thread, or have metallic thread-of-gold or thread-of-silver woven into silk cloth that is used to make keffiyehs and robes. While sashes are worn by nearly anyone within the Empires, only those of the ruling class are allowed to wear sashes of a golden color or containing golden thread.

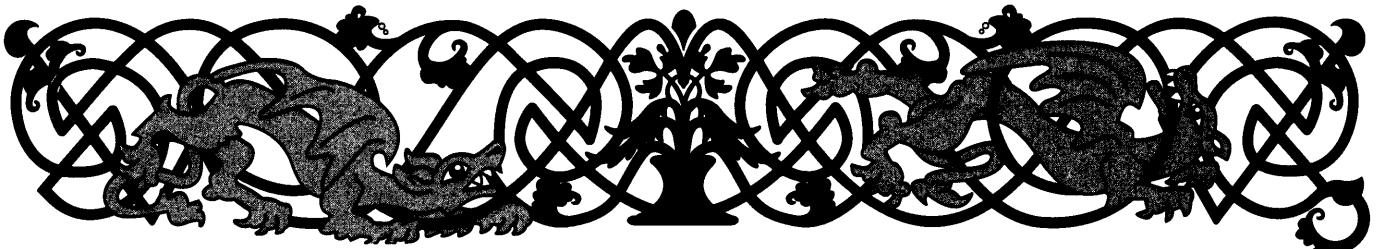
Both men and women of the poor and lower classes go barefoot, though the slightly wealthier among them wear primitive sandals. Supple sandals and light embroidered slippers are reserved for those of the middle or upper class. Few folk wear boots, due to the heat, and their use is limited almost exclusively to military men, since high boots protect one's legs better (though Calishite boots are of lighter leather than the northern norm).

Given the general heat of the region, armor is only worn if a person is expecting trouble. Those who wear armor prefer a light chain mail employed with a shield. Standard armor worn in more northern climes can be worn here as well, but without some method of cooling oneself off, a person's Strength is reduced during the day due to the sapping effects of the heat. Armor-wearing characters lose 1 point of Strength per hour when wearing leather armor, 2 points per hour in mail, and 3 points per hour in any style of plate. Many bodyguards wear *Calishite mail* (see Appendix III: Magic) or other magical protections that allow them to operate in the southern heat without sacrificing the protection of some sort of armor.

In general, however, armor crafted in Calimshan is more ostentatious and has more excessive detailing and decoration than most warriors are used to finding on armor outside of that of royalty or imperial generals. As a result, Calishite arm is also more costly. (Add 20% to the *DUNGEON MASTER® Guide* rulebook's minimum costs.) Hagglng for armor in Calimshan may see a person spend twice as much on armor than in any other land if she or he is a poor negotiator!

All of the weaponry available in the northern Realms (and listed in the *DMG*) is here in the Empires of the Shining Sea, though some kinds of weapons much easier to locate here than others, due to their regional popularity. Scimitars are the standard bladed weapon for warriors in these parts, and only the lowliest of





slaves can be found without a dagger (or club, for those leery of shedding blood). Other weapons relatively exclusive to the area are the jambiya, a curved dagger, and the katar, a punch dagger as wide as one's knuckles. (A jambiya costs 4 gp, weighs 1 lb., and is Size S, Type P/S, Speed 3, and inflicts 1d4 points of damage to any size of creature. A katar costs 3 gp, weighs 1 lb., and is Size S, Type P, Speed 2, and inflicts 1d3+1 points of damage to small-to-man-sized creatures and 1d3 points of damage to larger-than-man-sized creatures.) Like Calishite armor, weaponry made here is also highly decorated and consequently more expensive. (Twenty percent should be added to normal DMG prices.)

Languages

Nearly any language spoken in the Realms is heard in Calimshan's markets. Most merchants and traders know the Realms common tongue, for to not learn it is to lose potential customers to the north—barbarians though they may be. Other prevalent foreign languages include the languages of Chult, Lantan, and the Shaar, though these are primarily used by people of Chultan, Lantanna, or Shaaran descent rather than for business or social discourse. The most important language in Calimshan, though, is the native Alzhedo.

Alzhedo is a language beautiful to the ears of most native Faerûnians. It is the closest any human tongue comes to the melodic nature of the elf language. It is difficult for outsiders to learn, though many do learn it to prevent being taken advantage of in important Calishite markets. Its linguistic roots lie far away

on the Elemental Plane of Air, as the genie rulers of earliest Calimshan brought Alzhedo with them and taught it to their slaves. Were a djinni or another denizen of the Plane of Air to arrive in modern Calimshan, she or he would consider the native spoken language to be a guttural pidgin form of his or her native tongue mixed with elements of common, elvish, and dwarvish.

Alzhedo is the language used by members of the ruling class, at the court of the syl-pasha, and in all official documents, from those written by the druzirs on up to the syl-pasha. Of course, members of the ruling class can speak in common to those who do not know Alzhedo, but only if they must. In general, everyone in Calimshan attempts to speak Alzhedo, but the subtle differences in meaning it conveys by inflection and tone are difficult to master, even for one who has learned the language from birth. In truth, only elves and creatures native to the Elemental Planes learn Alzhedo easily.

Calishites are exceedingly proud of their language, as they are about many things. They are usually honored by outsiders who learn and use even a smattering of Alzhedo. However, while the upper classes might sneer at doing business with one who does not know Alzhedo, most others do not. They see profit as the ultimate goal, and having to speak common as merely a trifling inconvenience, and adapt accordingly.

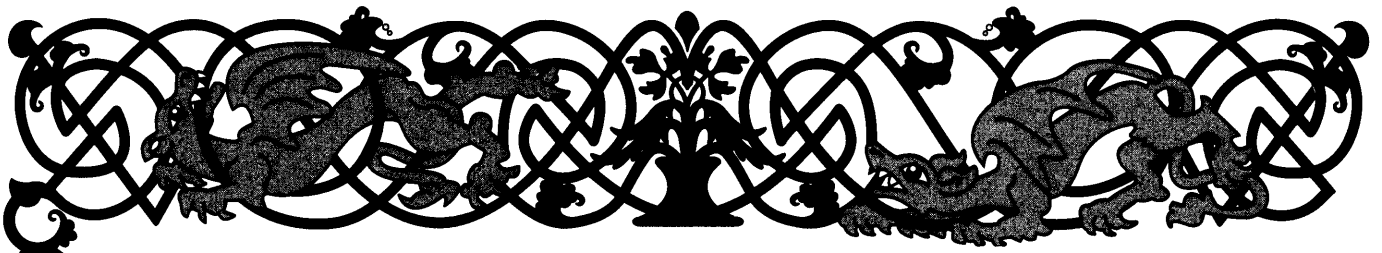
Calishite Names

"Contrary to the barbarians of the northern lands, we of Calimshan take great pride in our families and clan. A person is worthless without the identity gained by his name and that of his family. We of Calimshan



Nobles of Calimshan at a banquet in Calimport.





are not so lax as to allow folk to name themselves or hide from their fate or that of their family."

—Pasha Amid yn Bhalar el Mjoal of Manshaka

Calishite names follow a fairly rigid format in general. First comes a person's title or titles, then his personal name, then the name of his parent and his house. Daughters are always identified in relation to their mothers by the word *yr* linking their names. Sons are identified in relation to their fathers, unless their mothers are more well known and liked. The word *yn* links a son's name to that of his father. The word *el* or *al* links a person's name and parent's name to the family name. Slaves are often allowed to keep their own personal names but have the name of the family or person that owns them added to their own with the word *adh*.

Example: Ariana yr Tora el Bakran is the daughter of Tora in the Bakran family.

Example: Chawal Kalil yn Nur el Jibril is a lieutenant (chawal) in the military first and foremost, after which he is the son of Nur of House Jibril.

Example: Tagar the wanderer from Westgate is captured and taken to Calimport, sold to Chawal Kalil above, and his name in Calimshan becomes Tagar adh Kalil (if kept as a personal slave) or Tagar adh Jibril (if used as a general house or estate slave by the family).

Many examples exist of people from Calimshan whose names do not conform to this format. There are a number of reasons for this problem, the largest of which is, as the above pasha put it, the "innate addle-pated nature of the barbarian scribes of the North, which does not allow them to accurately recall a name that has more than two syllables or even to tell a tale more than a minute in length without a serious error." Other names used by a Calishite might not follow this format might because she or he is trying to remain incognito and giving a false name. The final reason for apparent name inconsistencies derives from a person's estrangement from his or her parents or family. When such a falling out occurs, a person often follows his or her personal name with just the family name (Fatim al Bajidh) or merely adopts the name of his or her birthplace or residence linked to his or her personal name with a word meaning "from" (Fatim yi Almraiven).

Many devout priests change their surnames to those of their gods when ordained into their priesthoods. In doing this, they do not dishonor their families, but rather they honor their deities. This practice is almost exclusively limited to Calishite clergy.

Common Calishite Names (Female): Abiya, Adiva, Amber, Ara, Asfora, Baraka, Bitisib, Catahra, Fadila, Farija, Hala, Iamar, Kadila, Mariam, Melek, Meriel, Munaa, Nada, Nureh, Oma, Rabi, Sabira, Saida, Samar, Sarsora, Shunnari, Tarub, Thuravya, Zahrah, and Zenobia.

Common Calishite Names (Male): Aban, Abbakar, Abbas, Abon, Amun, Asraf, Bollus, Butrys, Daud, Fahd, Faruk, Hakiim, Harun, Hassan, Jabal, Jafar, Kadar, Kalil, Kharyi, Malik, Maryn, Muham, Nadim, Nur, Rahimat, Saibh, Sarsor, Tahyr, Tasyin, and Yusuf.

Religion

With the fall of the genie powers in ancient Calimshan, the mortal races of the land could embrace and worship gods other than Calim and his extraplanar compatriots. Many of the rising humans of influence embraced angry, vengeful gods in order to gain quick power and stamp out every last influence the genies

might have left behind. For more than seven millennia, the dark gods have had a foothold in the hearts and minds of many Calishites. Since the fall of the Shoon Imperium, which enforced the worship of the ruling emperor's favored gods, there have been no state-mandated religions within Calimshan.

Whereas other lands shun certain gods due to their evil natures while claiming tolerance for all, in reality only embracing the benevolent powers, Calimshan sees itself as the greatest land on Faerûn because it accepts all creeds and religions—though it gives much more weight to its own creeds above all others. With a cultural imperative to have the biggest and best—or at least most civilized—of everything, the country has contained major temples to the lion's share of deities ever worshiped in the Realms. Many of the major or large temples in the cities have been standing for well over 2,000 years, a fact that is often brought up when a religious discussion begins in Calimshan. (However, some of these ancient churches were consecrated to *other* gods before their current patron deities.) And given the Calishite cultural mandate to avoid offending others (especially those more important and powerful than yourself), no evil temple in Calimshan has ever been destroyed except by the actions of the temple's own clergy or its ecclesiastical enemies.

Calimshan's temple priests often reflect the age of their houses of worship and the Calishite love of custom by adhering to antiquated traditions, even though this marks them as out of step with more progressive sects of their faiths. In fact, the liturgies of the new gods since the Time of Troubles would be recognizable to ancient worshippers of Jergal or Mystryl, even though they now invoke Cyric, Kelemvor, or the new Mystra. Many of the rites of worship have been carved into stone both in Calishite temples and Calishite minds—Calishites are highly resistant to sudden change.

As in Amn, nearly every god is paid lip service to in Calimshan. Most are invoked often without much ceremony, and day-to-day divine reverence is performed in much the same fashion as living up to the letter, but not the spirit, of a business contract. Thus, sea traders mutter prayers to Umberlee, Valkur, and Tymora whenever leaving port; slaves silently pray to Ilmater or Tyr for deliverance; and greedy pashas mutter only barely pious prayers to Waukeen, Lliira, and other gods responsible for success while counting their coins. If more profound worship is deemed necessary, a shrine or temple for nearly every minor and major power can be found in most Calishite communities—even the lesser demigods have places of worship within Calimport and the other Calishite cities.

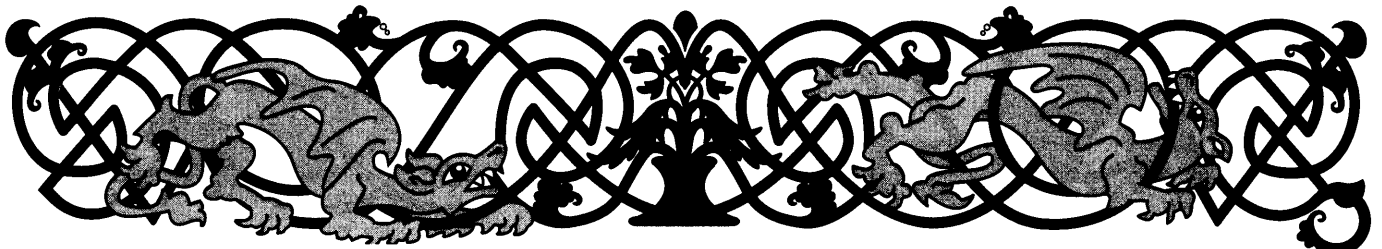
Below, presented in order of prominence and influence, are the powers worshiped by large sectors of the Calishite population (not just its rulers):



Azuth: Azuth, lawful neutral patron of wizards, is a major power by virtue of the great interest in magic use here in Calimshan. Azuth's largest temple in Calimshan, the Spell-Lord's House, lies in Calimport. No city or town within Calimshan does not have a shrine or temple to the Lord of Spells, though his prominence came about as a result

of social pressure rather than any work of the governing powers. People of all classes and alignments worship Azuth fervently, and not in his usual status as a servant of Mystra. While most other nations revere Mystra over Azuth, in Calimshan, Azuth's temples receive much of the worship that goes to Mystra in other lands.



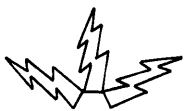


Calishites are less concerned with magic as a force than as a commodity that is controllable through its practitioners. And legends and stories, not the least of which are tales of the two deaths of the goddess of magic (at the fall of Netheril and during the Time of Troubles), promote Azuth's stature among Calimshan's populace—he has never allowed magic to unravel or proved himself unstable or unreliable.



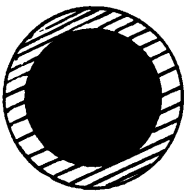
Ilmater: Ilmater, the lawful good god of suffering and martyrdom, is one of the most worshiped gods in Calimshan. He is extremely popular among the lower classes and the slaves. Nearly every settlement, large or small, has a shrine to the Crying God, whether maintained as a formal structure or held as a sacred corner of the people's hearts.

Numerous Ilmatari abbeys, hostels, and seminaries dot the landscape outside the cities, providing rest for the weary, education for the ignorant, and salvation for the tortured or persecuted. The largest temple complex in Faerûn dedicated to Ilmater, the House of the Broken God, rests in Keltar. Unlike Tethyrian traditions of Ilmater, wherein the god promises release from bondage and slavery, Calishite Ilmatari doctrine advocates that Ilmater provides release from pain if a person's exertions lead him or her toward the Calishite cultural ideal of an idle life.



Talos: Talos, the chaotic evil god of storms and destruction, is called Bhaelros here in Calimshan. Calishites claim that the existence of Talos is merely the northern barbarians' ignorant misrepresentation of Bhaelros. Long-standing Calishite myths suggest that Bhaelros may have once existed as a separate power of destruction, and the fact that a number of Bhaelros's shrines and temples in Calimshan predate Talos's worship (under the name Talos) anywhere else in the Realms weakly support this. Stronger evidence, though also circumstantial, lies in the fact that the three lightning bolts of Bhaelros are even found in cave paintings of great antiquity high up in caves among the Omlarandin Mountains of Tethyr and the Marching Mountains north of Calimshan. The separate god Bhaelros (if he ever existed at all) was subsumed into Talos and Talos's faith within the last two millennia, and Calimshan's worship of Talos now only differs from other places by his name.

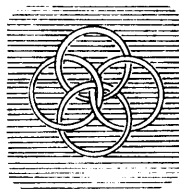
Shar: Shar is the goddess of darkness, night, and forgetfulness, and Calimshan is one of the strongholds of her worship (ignoring the power she collects by posing as Ibrandul, see below). This neutral evil goddess accepts only those ruthless and evil enough to embrace her darkness and shun the light, and Calimshan is filled with many who fit the that description. Shar's oldest and most opulent temple in the Realms is a subterranean complex dominating much of the area beneath eastern Calimport. Some of Shar's faithful have argued quite vehemently that this holy site is the oldest organized temple still extant in the Realms. Most other religions are willing to allow them that conceit only when it is backed up by the club of a Calishite nightcloak (specialty priest of Shar).



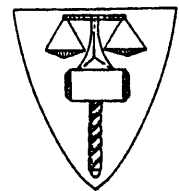
Sharess: Sharess, the chaotic good goddess of lust and abandon, is a revitalized power here in the pasha's domains. In the centuries before the Time of Troubles, the Lady of Festhalls had fallen under the influence of the Mistress of the Night, Shar, and her worship suffered, becoming more dark and mysterious than it was beautiful and full of life. During the Godsfall, Sharess inhabited the body of the syl-pasha's favored concubine in Calimport, waiting out the struggle of the gods in decadence and indulgence. Shar's attempts to slay her during this time were thwarted by Sune's restoration of Sharess's original bright, life-loving aspect.

Now, the religion of Sharess is radiant for the first time in this millennium. The zeal with which her worshipers, many of whom work in or frequent festhalls, embrace the goddess is heady. The restored Festhall of Eternal Delight on Calimport's waterfront, the center of Sharess's restored faith, is a phenomenally extravagant site, both in its lavish decor and the frenetic activities of its occupants. Of course, the Lady Iamar yr Sharess, the pasha's former concubine and a sensate of Sharess, is now among the clergy at this temple. Sharess forced her former master to free her in one of her last acts before returning to godhood at the end of the Time of Troubles.

Ibrandul: Ibrandul, the chaotic neutral deity of caverns, dungeons, and the Underdark, is among the more notable of the Calishite powers, even though his worship is almost unheard of north of the River Chionthar. The great lizard protects his worshipers from danger while exploring dark places, especially the Underdark. While not the most powerful deity on the region, this is the Skulking God's broadest area of worship in terms of land mass and the variety of his worshipers here, who include escaped slaves, skulks, and a number of adventuring or underworld-affiliated humans. The Lurker in Darkness's largest single group of worshipers is the skulks living among the ruins of the Shanataran domains beneath Amn, Tethyr, and Calimshan. Unknown to all his worshipers, Ibrandul was slain during the Time of Troubles by Shar, and all of his worshipers' reverence is now received by the Mistress of the Night, who also tends to his faithful's prayers.

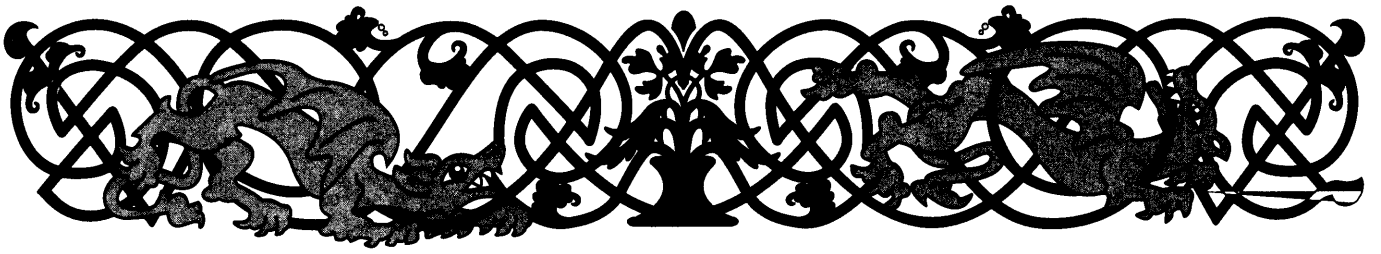


Tyr: Tyr is the lawful good power of justice. In Calimshan, he is known as Anachtyr. While he is not highly regarded in Calimshan, many adventurers and members of Calimshan's military keep his faith alive in this land devoid of much justice. The young and idealistic embrace Anachtyr's faith, believing its teachings will grant them the experience and wisdom they desire to perform their duties.



Anachtyr's name, worship, and temples in the Empires of the Shining Sea seem to be far older than the rest of the Tyrran religion. Similar to the situation between Bhaelros and Talos, Anachtyr might be the name of a previous god of justice worshiped within Realmspace. Legends among the faithful say that at the end of each millennium Anachtyr voluntarily gives his powers to a successor, and some speculate that Anachtyr granted his portfolio to a Tyr upon Tyr's more recent arrival among Toril's powers. The moral of this tale for Anachtyr's faithful is that justice is eternally vigilant and ever-vital in renewed forms.





Society and Customs

Calishite culture is a highly stratified system of expectations and customs erected over the course of five millennia of immigration, warfare, and empire-building. Many of the nuances of proper social behavior are lost on adventurers wandering down from the north, and Calishites of all classes see no reason to enlighten muddle-headed barbarians as to the intricacies of their society. Only if one seeks to do business with outsiders is it in one's best interests to somewhat educate one's future partners or customers in the ways of the Calishite world. But before one delves into Calishite culture, it is best, when one is an outsider, to learn how Calishites see those from beyond their culture and in what ways this view colors what they teach outsiders.

View of Outsiders

As one of the oldest surviving cultures on Faerûn, Calimshan takes a rather supercilious view of the rest of the inhabitants of the Sword Coast and the Shining Sea region. When Calimshan was at its peak, the great, civilized places of the North, such as Waterdeep, Cormyr, Moonshae, and Sembia, were little more than places where (in Calishite words) "your ancestors beat on each other with rocks and sticks." Calishites cannot see how "barbarian cultures" have changed much in 4,000 years. While their attitude might seem to be pointlessly arrogant and conceited to others, Calishites honestly believe their land is the only bastion of civilization and culture on the Sword Coast and Shining Sea, if not the entire surface world and the Underdark of Faerûn.

The arrogance of a Calishite is among the most ingrained of social attitudes, and one which never wavers, no matter how many wonders may be found beyond the pasha's lands. Some Calishites can recognize the accomplishments of other cultures, including those of fallen Netheril or ruined Myth Drannor. However, they swiftly point out that Calimshan endures while those places do not. Calimshan's true greatness lies in its long life and apparent invulnerability to the follies of mortals. In a Calishite's opinion, his ways have endured for centuries longer than yours and will remain long after you and your civilization are dust beneath his sandals. Why should he treat outsiders and their cultures as other than, at best, quaint but ephemeral, or at worst, irrelevant, misleading, corruptive, and dead wrong?

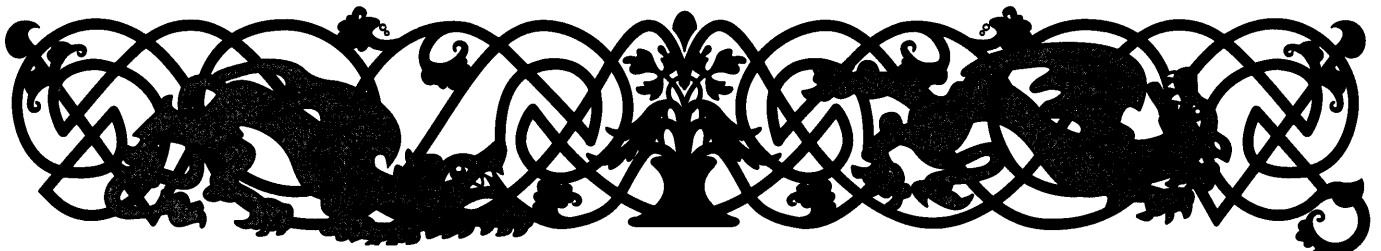
The most glaring point of frequent conflict between Calishites and people from most other cultures is that Calishites do not accept women as equals. Calishite men, who hold the reigns of power, adore women, admiring them for their beauty and spirit, but they do not accept them in positions of authority without great difficulty. They allow women in what they see as traditional male roles as rogues or warriors only in extreme situations, such as in the criminal underworld or as slave gladiators in the fighting arenas. To male Calishites, women are to be ignored, treated as decorations, relegated to the role of cleaning or serving help, or kept as amusing physical or mental diversions for when the constant stresses of serious business have proved too taxing. For women to be as competent as men is simply a totally foreign concept.

View of Money

Many folk see Calishite society as a culture of avarice, in which the acquisition of money is the primary motivator. While this may be true of Amn, it is too simplistic an assertion in the case of Calimshan. In Amn, money is coveted and sought after for money's sake, and the most important things are a deal and its profits. In Calimshan, the true purpose of wealth is to acquire the luxuries and amenities that money affords. The pursuit of money is only acceptable in order to reach a level of comfort where a person does not have to work hard ever again at anything she or he does not want to do. In other words, Calishites labor until they are rich and no longer have to work for money.

The lifestyle of the idle rich is the ultimate Calishite goal. Laziness is not the goal or the motivation behind this quest for inactivity. Pampered idleness is the dream to achieve at the end of work. To actually live a life where one does not have to exert oneself at all and every need is catered to by servants is equally important to the pursuit of such a life: Those proving the dream is possible serve as examples of success and role models for up-and-comers.





Calishites appreciate industry and initiative, but only when it is focused on the direct goal. They frown upon those who do more than is necessary or those who fritter away their efforts at needless tasks. "He does what he does not have to" is a well-known Calishite insult. It conveys that the person spoken of does not understand what is important and is wasting time, effort, and money for no good reason.

But those who believe that the life of luxury is nothing but sugared dates and scented baths have not learned the whole lesson during their arduous journey to the top. The life of luxury is a reward, but it requires a razor-sharp mind and at least a modicum of effort every day to maintain. Keeping track of one's money is not always a simple task, especially with so many others seeking ways to divert such riches into their pockets so that they too can join the upper crust in their cool hillside villas in the summer. To maintain such a life, the rich and the noble have to work at staying rich: They divert funds into their own coffers through legitimate deals or illegitimate ones, negotiate and maintain preferential trade statuses and taxation rights, bribe the right people, keep the right connections open through throwing lavish parties, come up with new schemes to make their money grow, and thwart the plans of their enemies (who are all trying to make none of these efforts work). While the dream of an idle life is all soft pillows and silk-clad sirens, the reality is actually a lamia in fashionable clothes that devours as many as it supports.

Social Classes in Calimshan

Calishite society is divided into classes. The class system in the pashas' domains is pervasive yet few natives speak of it or dwell upon it, as it is learned from birth. The unconscious knowledge of what Calishite social class one belongs to allows most Calishites to live out their lives in the manner that society expects them to without question. Many class distinctions are lost on outsiders, but native Calishites stray beyond the boundaries of accepted interclass behavior exceedingly rarely for fear of immediate enslavement or death.

Slaves

The lowest class is comprised of the slaves. They retain no rights. They are given no respect except for what has been agreed upon between them and their fellow slaves. They are treated like animals. Cattle are often treated better than slaves for the simple reason that cattle can be raised and sold for a higher price than most slaves.

Nonetheless, even in this lowest of classes, there is stratification. Slave owners and the slaves themselves recognize at least four substrata of slaves: labor slaves, personal slaves, house slaves, and harem slaves. Labor slaves are the lowest of the low, and their lives are given only to toil at the meanest of tasks. Personal slaves are the body servants and attendants of the upper classes, and their status is higher because they are responsible for caring for an upper-class person: keeping him or her clean, well groomed, and well dressed. House slaves work as general servants, cooks, and administrative staff of an owner's home, though this general stratum also includes the slave staff of temples or other organizations and buildings. Harem slaves hold the highest status among the slaves,

both for the amenities they enjoy in their lifestyles and the attentions they both give and receive from their masters.

The Labor Class

Next up on the social scale, though still not high enough on it to be counted as people in the eyes of the ruling class, are the destitute and the working poor. This class includes a wide variety of occupations, from highly placed palace servants and concubines to dung sweepers. At the upper end of this class of laborer are those who act as taskmasters over those of the same class, such as plantation overseers. What separates members of this class from slaves operating at the same tasks is freedom. Those of the labor class steadfastly cling to their free status as a point of pride, even though slaves in their occupations might be better fed or housed in better facilities than they themselves can afford. The primary distinction between this class and the one beneath it and higher classes is that the lower classes earn only due to their own toil and often not for their own immediate gain, while those of higher class profit from the work of others as well as their own work.

The Skilled Labor Class

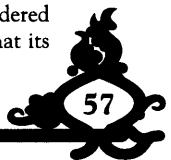
Next up the scale and at the low end of the middle class are the skilled laborers and rank-and-file military. Artisans, craftsfolk, and scribes are members of the skilled labor class, as many of cannot pick and choose from whom their pay comes or pursue their crafts purely for their own enlightenment. Until their abilities are proven and have impressed those of higher station, many among the skilled labor class are treated as mere laborers. Still, their skills make them more valuable than laborers, and they can sometimes even be seen at lesser social functions—often being shown off by an upper class patron.

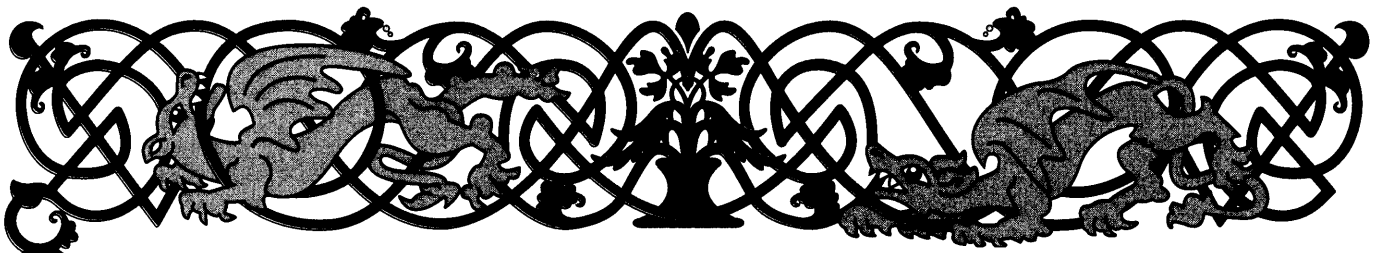
The Merchant Class

The class whose members comprise the biggest part of the Calishite middle class covers the broadest range of people and occupations, though the majority are merchants. On the lowest end of the spectrum are shopkeepers. They are treated as little better than skilled laborers until they prove their financial success and own at least two buildings or have at least three notable clients of whom they can brag. The high end of this class of people is occupied by the guildmasters, or as they are most commonly known in Calimshan, the pashas. In fact, pashas are so highly regarded that they hold status as part of the upper class, having surpassed the middle class due to their positions as leaders. Between these two extremes lie landowners (but not farmers who farm their own land, who are laborers), apothecaries and medical practitioners, and priests of all sects (though among the clergy, Azuth's priests hold greater status than others).

The Military

The military (or rather, military officers) are equal in social standing to the merchant class. However, the military is afforded a slightly higher regard than the merchant class by the ruling class because of the military's aid in supporting ruling regimes. The military no longer recruits slaves into its ranks due to the long-ago *mameluk* uprisings; soldiers are only recruited among free men and women. Officers in the military hold the highest status among the nonruling classes, but in practice, the military is often considered equal in status to the merchant class only due to the fact that its





members are armed far better than most people. Many outsiders mistake villa guards and personal bodyguards for members of the military class; more often than not, such militia are armed and trained house slaves loyal only to their owner. Their loyalty of the military lies with the ruling regime: the *druzirs*, *vizars*, and *sultans*.

Within the military itself, there are two divisions, though both are considered equal in social standing. The ground troops and cavalry are one group, while the pasha's navy is a far newer but no less important military unit. Some merchants and *sultans* perceive a greater value (and corresponding social importance) in the navy if their financial security and standing is more dependent on sea trade than overland caravans or internal trade. While the navy was once the greatest strength of the early Calishite empires, it fell apart long ago. Only in the past two decades has it been restored to a considerable size. In fact, the navy is now sizable enough to at least worry the powers of the Heartlands and the North.

Merchants are given far greater respect among the people than the military. Both classes' upper ranks (the *pashas*, the *balak*, and the *qayadin*) are considered members of the upper class, though the bulk of the military is middle to lower class. This comes as a result of the long-standing practice among the upper classes of placing lesser sons (*nonheirs*) as military officers, both to give them a useful role and to keep commoners from controlling the military and upsetting the status quo.

The Advisor Class

This upper class of Calishite society is nearly a phantom class since so many of its members also belong to other classes and have worked or finagled their way into a position of power. In effect, anyone of the skilled labor class up through the military class who has the ear of a ruler can be considered to belong to the advisor class. To determine the proper degree of deference to afford a member of the advisor class, those in the social know closely track the ups and downs of advisors, as there is little permanence in this status. People come and go from the advisor class swiftly unless appointed officially into it with a title.

The appointed and official advisors (lesser rulers) of the ruling class are those who rule sectors of a city or larger rural areas. *Druzirs*, or precinct bosses, are the lowest official government posts of the advisory class; people appointed *druzir* are often elder military men or *pashas*. The *sabbalads* (mayors) command three or more *druzirs*, and they report to the *vizars*, and sometimes also to the *sultans*. (For a further discussion of *sabbalads* and *druzirs*, see the "Politics and Power" chapter.)

During the Shoon Imperium and at other times in Calimshan's past, there were far more titles among the advisory class. Of those commonly considered officially of the advisor class, the highest titles are now commonly those of *yshah* and *ynamalik*. *Yshahs* and *ynamalikkar* rule the rural lands beyond the cities and keep them in line with the will of the urban rulers. *Sultans*, who are princes firmly of the upper and ruling class, and *vizars*, who can be considered of the lower classes or upper classes, are also considered to be part of the advisor class in addition to their other social class. This odd dual situation holds true because they function as go-betweens or advisors to others in authority.

The Ruling Class

The ruling class is the uppermost Calishite social class. It is comprised of the true rulers of Calimshan, including the *yshahs*, the

ynamalikkar, the *vizars*, the *sultans*, and the greatest ruler of all, the *caleph* of Calimshan. While the current social and governmental structure has been placed in its current form for the past 200 years, most Calishites point to earlier similar governments to fool the ignorant into believing the current state of affairs has existed for millennia. Among the ruling class, the *vizars* (chancellors) serve the *sultans* (princes) and the *caleph* (king) as go-betweens to the *pashas* and the merchants, and oversee the urban *sabbalads* (mayors) and *druzirs*. The *sultans*, often the elder children of the *caleph*, oversee the military of the cities and the nation and are often nearly as revered as the *caleph* of Calimshan himself. The rural *yshahs* (dukes) are often commoners who have risen to the height of controlling large plantations and tracts of grazing land; they are often former merchants. *Ynamalikkar* (landed gentry/lesser princes) are the younger scions of the *caleph*; they are often absentee rulers over large, thinly populated, rural areas. Despite their control over vast amounts of territory, *ynamalikkar* are often seen as of lesser political status than the *sultans* since they rule fewer people and are removed from the social mainstream of life in Calimshan's city-states. (For a further discussion of *sultans*, *vizars*, *ynamalikkar*, and *yshahs*, see the "Politics and Power" chapter.)

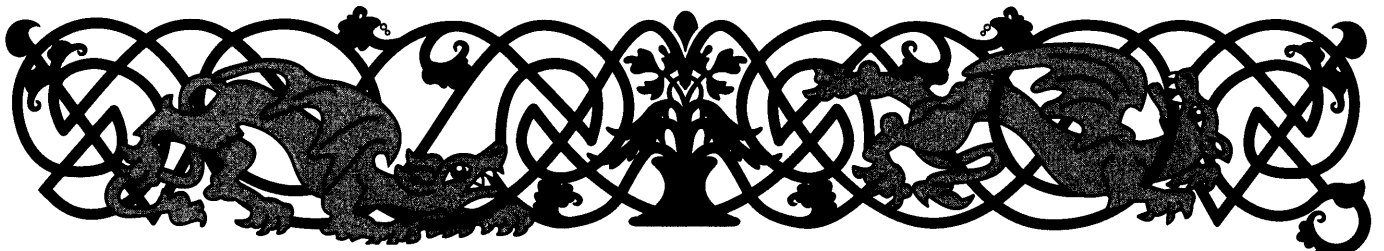
The *caleph* of Calimshan is the ultimate ruler of Calimshan, his *vizars* and *sultans*, and all they survey. There is nothing or no one beyond the reach of the *caleph* within Calimshan's borders, and his word is the ultimate law. However, this authority rests at the top of a conniving and shifting pyramid of power, and everyone below the *caleph* is vying with everyone against everyone to move up closer to the top. Thus, the *caleph* must by necessity be the craftiest of souls among the greedy—or at least be advised by those who fit such a bill. The *caleph* is also called most commonly the *pasha*, which confuses many outsiders, given the titles' lower rank and status. This usage is explained by the idiosyncrasies of Calishite titling.

Titles in Calimshan

Numerous titles are granted, inherited, and earned in Calimshan. Intrafamily titles for parents and grandparents do not factor in as major social titles; they serve mainly for personal identification and respect among one's relations. Lower class titles, while placing their bearers above common laborers and slaves, identify a person by his primary function in society. The proper titling for the upper classes and nobility, however, always starts from the lowest title of a person's social rank, whether he or she actually functions at that title or not. While the tribal chiefs' title of "syl" has long fallen from use as a standalone title, it is used as a prefix in applicable titles. It denotes that a person is the overlord of said type of title-holder (though it is often only used in writing rather than speech). Thus, higher-ranked people of the nobility have incredibly long and complex titles that astound folk of the northern lands. Many theorize correctly that this affectation is one of the few holdovers from the times when the arrogant *geniekind* ruled these lands and peoples.

Titles and Ranks

Titles in the below table are listed from the lowest title to the highest. They are noted as bureaucratic and governmental (B),



military (M) or naval military (MN), or noble (N) in origin. The table also provides a comparison title more familiar to the rest of Faerûn's natives. The initial subset of eight titles are lower-class titles for the military, while the 19 others are held by those in the upper class, the nobility, and military officers. Sandwiched between the lower- and upper-class titles are the vizar and pasha titles. Since vizars and pashas are both lower- and upper-class positions, depending on the title-holder's abilities and influences, these titles are considered of both classes.

Italicized titles are those dating from the Shoon Imperium or earlier Coramshan. Many of these titles have long since been dropped from use in Calimshan and the other areas ruled by the Shoon, though their presence in histories and ruins make them noteworthy.

Calishite

Title	Type	Relative Rank/Title
—Lower Class—		
Askar	M	Soldier (any)
Musar	M	Sergeant
Djawal	N	Knight, noble soldier
Chawal	M	Lieutenant
Saref	M	Centurion
Amhir	MN	Commander
Yuzas	M	Captain
Shyk	M	Major
—Lower and Upper Class—		
Vizar	B	Chancellor
Pasha	B	Guildmaster, business/clan leader
—Upper Class—		
Rysal	MN	Ship captain
Syl	N	Chief, leader
Druzir	N	Precinct leader
Enhir	M	Tribune
Mumijn	M	Lt. colonel
Sabbalad	B	Mayor, local governing official
Balak	M	Colonel
Ralbahr	MN	Admiral
Qayadin	M	General
Nazir	B	Prefect
Satriap	B	Provincial governor
Hakkam	B	Governor
Massatyr	N	Baron
Ruâis	N	Count
Yshah	N	Duke
Ynamalik	N	Lesser prince (nonheir)
Sultan	N	Prince
Caleph	N	King
Qysar	N	Emperor

Examples: The ruler of Calimshan is commonly called the pasha of Calimport, since that is his seat of power. When there is a need to recite his full title, he is known as Syl-Pasha of All Pashas, Syl-Sabbalad of Sabbalads, Syl-Ralbahr of the Navy, Syl-Qayadin of the Armies, Syl-Ynamalik of the Lands of Three Rivers, Syl-Sultan of the Cities, and Caleph of Our People, His Majesty, Ralan al Pesarkhal of Calimshan. A lesser example is Vizar Santad al Khalen, the syl-pasha's court advisor, whose full title is merely Syl-Vizar of Vizars Santad al Khalen.

The Annuu

One facet of the proper observation of Calishite titling that is barely recognized by foreigners is the *annuu*, a hand gesture which is far more important among the upper classes than has been previously noted. Upper-class Calishites have attached to them all the titles of those beneath them as part of their own title, but to refer to all of those titles in conversation or in less-than-official court documents would be wasteful of paper and time. When a Calishite of the same class refers to a nobleman of lengthy titles, she or he can dispense with them by using the *annuu* to show the proper respect. Verbally, the speaker most often uses the first title, but can show equal respect through the use of the highest title. Then, using his or her left hand, all fingertips touching together, the speaker rotates that hand toward his or her heart as many times as the referred person has titles in addition to the one named. In other words, a vizar speaking of the caleph's first son could call him "sultan," but then would have to quickly perform four *annuvs* because the sultan has influence and title over the qayadin, the balak, the sabbalad, and the druzir titles. To perform fewer *annuvs* than is proper is a mark of disrespect that can have grave consequences for the speaker.

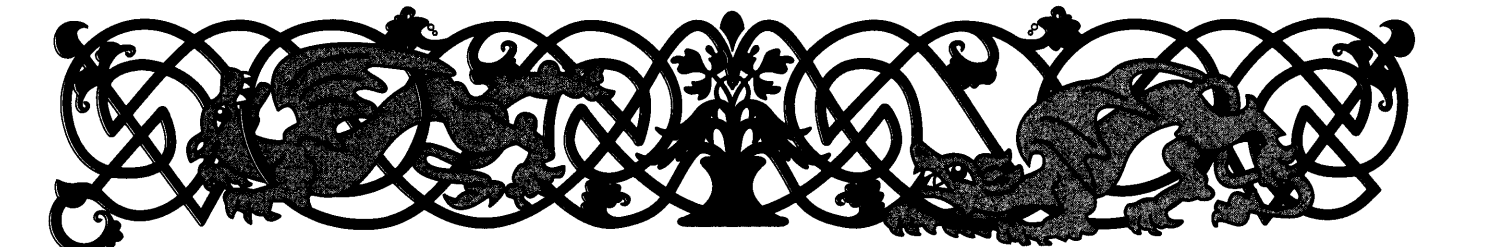
When shortening titles in print, the calligrapher or scribe has two options. The modern scribe places a "syl-" before the title and adds lines beneath the prefix to denote the *annuvs*. However, this method is considered by old-school traditionalists to be lazy and too informal. A more practiced, elegant, and antiquated method used by Shoon Imperium scribes and those courting a more formal tone places small tildes before the title, stacking them from the baseline on up along the left of the title. This creates a fringe effect for the title, as if tiny flags waved to celebrate the exalted nature of the person noted.

Commoner Titles and Terms

When addressing someone unknown to the speaker, the person being spoken to is often given the generic title of *tabarif* (male) or *tabarifa* (female), both of which translate as *honorable stranger*, if the one being addressed is of obviously greater status and wealth than the speaker. *Rafayam* (male) and *rafayar* (female) denote a greater respect for the subject from a speaker of a lower station, and translate as *exalted sir/madam*. Variant generic titles used across the Empires of the Shining Sea also include honorifics such as *alimarif* (*learned stranger*) for a wizard or *sadidrif* (*powerful/strong stranger*) for a fighter if the person addressed appears to be such a person. The only barely respectable title of *gharab* (*foreigner*) is saved for those obviously not of Calishite descent and perhaps not worthy of any respect at all. *Dahyarif* (*misplaced stranger*) is moderately better, but it is used to convey that someone is obviously out of place in a certain setting and perhaps is to be pitied. *Musadhyar* (*hapless strangers*) are folk pointed out by the form of address used to speak of them as obvious targets for thievery or plots. In fact, an indirect way of accusing someone of being a thief is to call him or her a *muzha-dahyarif* (*shady person who does not belong*) or a *tamramujah* (*greedy intruder*), rather than using the common and direct word *sharakh*, or *lowly thief*. Many of these forms of address are obviously not titles of distinction or particular courtesy, and used on the wrong persons they could spell the death of the speakers.

Calishite people should always be identified by at least their titles, personal names, and the name of their family when they are spoken to. If known, one should always attempt to honor the person





by naming the same sex parent and grandparent in addition. For more details, see the section on Calishite Names in the “Calimshan Overview” chapter.

Customs and Traditions

The true culture of Calimshan is only barely scratched by discussing its social classes and the titles of its people. The distinctiveness of Calishite culture is most evident in its customs and traditions, which have been preserved in its society for hundreds of years.

Face and Pride

Few others in the Realms as proud as Calishites are, and to many it is their only defining feature. Saving face and bolstering one's pride are of great importance in this society. Calishites must be treated as their title demands and as their public face deserves. Even though people might be the cruelest slave lords or the most loathsome peddlers of poisons and drugs, if they present themselves as honest businessmen with only the kindest of intentions, that is how they must be treated in Calimshan. Face is both a bit of roleplaying and a protection to keep one's enemies from knowing too much. No matter what one might know of a person's private affairs, they must politely remain private and cannot be brought to light unless the person herself or himself brings them up. Often, nearly everyone knows something hidden about someone else, but they cannot publicly acknowledge any of it. It is considered the ultimate act of rudeness to point out when the truth does not match the public face put forth. Thus, an extravagant party could be attended by numerous potential trading partners all lauding their host with compliments on his largesse and good fortune, while all also know that the host has spent every last centarche on the party in hope of restoring his business. His friends know to quietly establish new deals with and for him, while his enemies will revel in the ability to take advantage of their host's staged generosity and not strike alliances to help him recoup his losses.

Personal pride and pride in one's family and work are the main reasons for the Calishites maintaining face. In a society where every social move is scrutinized by one's enemies and everyone outside one's family is an enemy, sometimes all a person has is his or her pride. Once people lose face, they also lose status. If the fall is great enough, they may be relegated to a lower social class, where the climb to restore both wealth and position is far steeper and more difficult. While many outsiders look at the custom of the public face and see it as preening arrogance coupled with bald-faced lies, Calishites see it for what it is: an attempt to merely maintain one's social position at all costs.

Privacy is the most precious commodity in Calimshan, for it allows the abandonment of face and the ability to do whatever it takes to further one's goals. The best way to manipulate and destroy foes in Calimshan is to dig out the secrets behind their public faces and reveal them through untraceable agents. This is a potentially devastating maneuver to oneself, though, for if the information is tracked back to its origin, Calishite societal customs demand equal ruin of both the ones doing the spying and the targets of the spying: the spies for daring to break face, and the targets for failing to live up to it. In addition, the one who revealed the secrets would face

the revenge plots of his or her ruined targets and anyone associated with them.

The Family

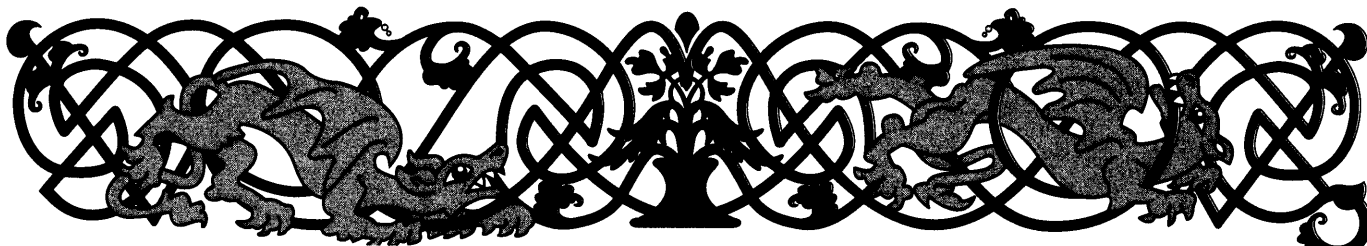
One's immediate family—spouse and children—is the most important asset of all to a Calishite. The male and female roles in the Calishite family are adhered to religiously, as is the role of the children.

The father is responsible for the purchase and upkeep of a home and for maintaining the standard of living for his wife and children. If one's business takes a downturn, the children are those first deprived of luxuries, then the spouse, and lastly oneself. The reason for this is to maintain a healthy appearance within the social circles one travels and to thereby allow the failure to swiftly be recouped by new deals among the members of that circle. Of course, the lack of opulence displayed by a person's family is a dead giveaway to someone's poor financial state for those who note such things, but propriety demands it never be mentioned to someone's face.

The female head of a household (the mother and wife) maintains the cleanliness and opulence of the home, raises the heirs of the house, and manages the funds for said heirs and house. Of course, women of higher social classes have staffs of servants who perform the actual chores, but the wife is ultimately responsible for the servants' performance in those duties. Within her role, a woman can easily manipulate both the course of her husband's and their children's social and financial livelihoods, and to insult one's wife is to invite disaster upon one's house. A great many pashas and sultans have been brought down by the activities of their slighted wives, whether the ruin came through a loss of finances (the wife embezzled all the husband's money), blood feuds (she turned his sons or brothers against her him), or the intrigues of romance (the slighted wife's harem slave killed for his mistress).

The children's roles within a household are as anything from pawns, to be used and discarded, to fully educated and loyal heirs whose duty is to sustain their parents' house. Unlike many egalitarian countries across Faerûn, Calishite law only recognizes the passing of an estate through male heirs. Thus, a Calishite sees his sons as heirs and his daughters as links to marriage alliances with future trading partners. Until the age of majority (15 years), a Calishite child must obey every command and request of either parent, though socially more weight is placed on the requests of mothers to daughters and fathers to sons than the opposite. To openly (or even secretly) disobey one's parent is a shameful act that, depending on the age of the transgressor, could lead to serious punishments.

Children are always educated at home unless their aptitude for magic allows them to be schooled in magecraft. All children receive a basic education at home, but that can range anywhere from learning to speak common and *Azghedo* to an education equal to a ruler. The parents are not always the educators, and if they can afford it, they will hire tutors or vizars to educate their sons and daughters. Upon reaching the age of majority, a child has five years in which to secure an alliance of marriage with a mate of at least equal social class; women can marry those of greater social status, as they are rarely allowed to better their positions through business. In that five-year span, men must also establish themselves in a trade acceptable to the parents and earn enough to afford their own houses. Those who fail to either marry or establish themselves



may linger in their parents' house in a state of disgrace, living there at their parents' mercy in a condition of shameful charity—or they may be ejected from the household into the streets, sent away to foreign lands, or simply disowned and treated as if they did not exist.

The Host

If a person wants to be able to speak on equal terms with anyone of any social class, the best way to do so (without penalty of beheading for trivializing others' titles) is to be their host. As the host, a person can and must speak with every guest as if they were equals; this, of course, does not apply to speaking to slaves either of one's house or those slaves of a guest. Accepting an invitation to someone's house or party ties a person's hands against doing any harm to said host, the host's house, or family. None of these changes are considered breaks in the social norm, for to receive such a grant of someone's company carries a heavy burden of responsibility (especially if an upper-class patron is deigning to answer the invitation of a host of a lower class than he is).

Hosts have numerous customary expectations placed upon them that are enforced even more strongly than many of the pasha's laws. In the interest of keeping face, a host must always set as elaborate and expensive a table as he can provide. If a host is of a lower class than his greatest guest, the host's generosity must make up for the social difference between them, thus paying for the privilege of traveling even on the fringes of a higher social circle. Hosts must protect their guests from all harm, for any injuries suffered by a guest are attributed to the host as if he had done the harm directly. A host must provide for any travel expenses all guests incur to attend a function he sponsors, and many hosts send carriages (or magic carpets, if they can afford them) to their guests' homes and have them escorted. Finally, any harm visited upon a guest in transit is also attributed to the host; many a rising merchant has fallen because his guests were assassinated by rivals. Still, despite all these dangers, the privileges and responsibilities of guests and hosts have survived for thousands of years and have helped make Calimshan what it is today.

A reverse form of this custom applies to patrons of a shop or business, even though the shopowner could technically be regarded as a host of sorts. Anyone who crosses the threshold of a store (or tavern, inn, warehouse, etc.) cannot do the business, business employees, or the owners any harm. For their part, employees and owners must provide as much or as little assistance as the customer desires. Calishite thieves never enter any place of business through the door, most often entering via windows or chimneys or breaking holes in the roof; they thus avoid breaking this social taboo.

Food and Meals

Meals are celebrations of life and prosperity to the average Calishite. No matter how high or low in station a person is, everyone in Calimshan who can afford one or find one gets at least a high-sun meal. The meal always consists of at least one beverage (from water to the finest of wines), one piece of bread (ranging from a dry heel the size of a fist to huge loaves of rich, honeyed bread), and one piece of fruit (often a dried date or equally plentiful staple up to the best cherries, plums, or apples imported from the northern lands). This fare has formed the minimal meal for all since the days of the Calim, and it provides at least subsistence living for the

poor. Many of the kinder temples provide the poor's highsun meal if they cannot afford it, while nearby pashas and sultans feast on dove's hearts and other delicacies to supplement their basic diets.

Eating is always done with the right hand, whether using a utensil or not. Serving food or merely taking food from a server is always done with the left hand. To refuse food when it is offered is a great affront against one's host.

Certain messages can be communicated to a guest through food without overt affront, but the messages are nevertheless clear for being unspoken. Serving a guest red wine before any other food or drink is a sign of trust and acceptance, whereas providing food without even a drop of water tells a guest that his or her stay here will be concluded upon end of business. Ale or beer served to a guest communicates a desire to strengthen business or social ties. If it is served in a glass rather than crockery or metal goblets, it tells the imbiber that the person who serves the drink is the agent of said ties (often a daughter to be given in marriage or a house slave in trade for business).

Poisoning a person's food or wine is not as common as it once was in Calimshan. In fact, the reasoning behind the strong custom of not harming a guest is a reaction to the many poisoning deaths common during the First and Fifth ages. If hosts could not harm guests while they were in or on their way to the hosts' homes, they had to develop new strategies to remove their enemies. In Calimshan, only Talona's priests from the temples in Memnon or Almariven can provide traceless food poisons that take months to work but see a person eventually dead of internal disease unless the poison is specifically sought out and neutralized.

Magic

Magic is so predominant in Calimshan that even the lowest of slaves is unimpressed by simple magics. Calishites seem jaded compared to the rest of the Realms' natives, since it takes spectacular, or at least unique, magic to excite them. Their views of magic stem from their use of it to make everyday life easier for them; it has become mundane through being used to perform common activities like serving wine or cleaning the home.

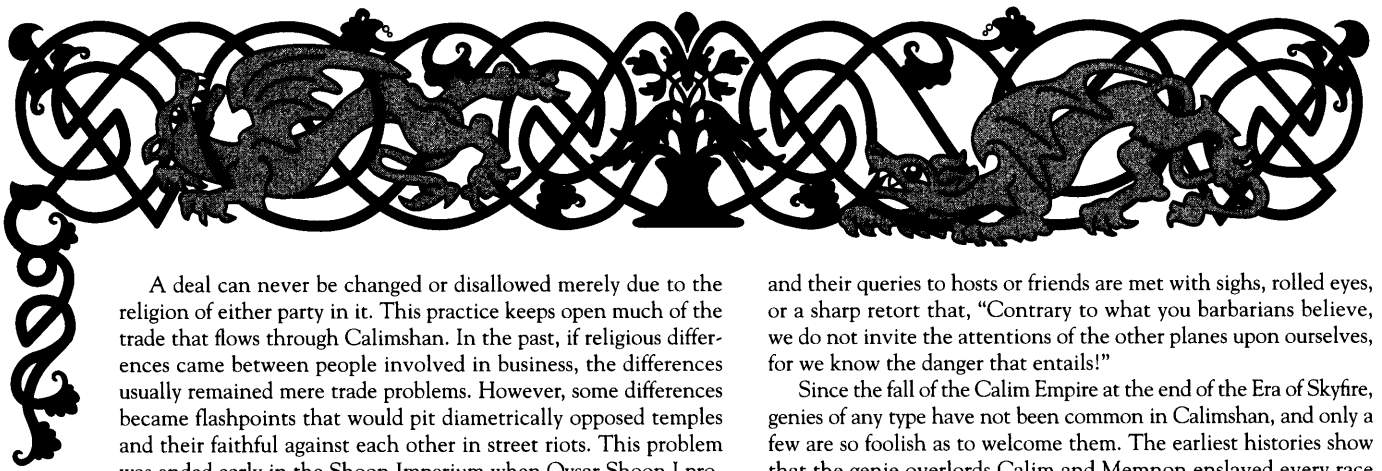
This does not mean that magic is not important to Calishites, but that they deal with magic as a skill. If of common birth, magic's practitioners are ranked among the skilled labor or military classes. Since knowledge of magic is just another skill, wizards are apt to be looked upon as sages or mercenaries, either trading their knowledge or their skills for money or position.

As wielders of magic grow in experience and influence, they are afforded greater social status and often manipulate themselves into vizar positions with little effort. While advisors and rulers who are wizards are still quite common, only during the time of the Shoon was magic a prerequisite for maintaining one's social position within the Imperium (just as it was under the rule of Calim and the djinn). With the collapse of the Shoon Imperium, but not of many of its practices, the average Calishite still assumes that the nobility wields magical power equal to that of great wizards.

Religion

Religion provides motivation and purpose for Calishites to the same degree that it does for any Faerûnian. There are only two traditions within the pasha's domain that apply to religion: One's faith cannot affect one's trade relations, and temples or clergy are not barred from secular offices.





A deal can never be changed or disallowed merely due to the religion of either party in it. This practice keeps open much of the trade that flows through Calimshan. In the past, if religious differences came between people involved in business, the differences usually remained mere trade problems. However, some differences became flashpoints that would pit diametrically opposed temples and their faithful against each other in street riots. This problem was ended early in the Shoon Imperium when Qysar Shoon I proclaimed that any temple interfering with a trade matter not instigated by direct agents of that temple would pay for any deaths or disturbances caused by their interference with their priests' monies and lives. While the law itself has been nearly forgotten, a number of pashas and sultans have invoked it over the years to prevent interference or for revenge.

Many places throughout the Realms shy away from allowing officers and ranking priests of a temple to hold concurrent secular offices in the same city or settlement. Calimshan does not bar anyone from seeking such positions, and thus many of the temples hold political power and their clergy hold secular office among Calimshan's cities. Temples in Calimshan sponsor and openly own various businesses, the proceeds of which aid the temples and their priests. In fact, a religious life has always been another suitable place to which those of higher birth have sent their nonheir children, so that they could still be of use in business for the family. Outsider priests of any religion who object to these practices are reminded that the money earned by the priests or the temple ventures goes to raising popular awareness of the god (through opulence in the temples and the garb and lifestyle of the temple's priests), in addition to funding projects in the interest of a god's tenets.

The Harem

The oddest of social conventions in Calimshan (at least from many northerners' points of view) is the harem, a collection of male or female slaves and servants dedicated to only two purposes: the pleasure of guests and family, and the guaranteed succession of male heirs for the house.

Jhasin and *jhasina* are the words in Alzhedo for what are often merely called harem slaves. The words loosely translate to *handsome* and *beauty*, and a striking personal appearance is the most obvious characteristic that separates them from other slaves. In fact, the *jhasinnar* and *jhasinni* have a higher station than other slaves and arguably sit higher socially than many among the labor class. The education of a harem slave makes the best of them equal in social value to those the skilled labor class, for they are versed in song, music, dance, art, the recitation of great literature, the art of massage, and other duties. If an owner has two harems, the *jhasinni* and *jhasinnar* are kept communally by gender in quarters on opposite sides of the owner's house or estate.

Genies and Modern Calimshan

Many folk who visit Calimshan for the first time expect to see genies and wondrous creatures from the Elemental Planes all around the cities. These people are often disappointed,

and their queries to hosts or friends are met with sighs, rolled eyes, or a sharp retort that, "Contrary to what you barbarians believe, we do not invite the attentions of the other planes upon ourselves, for we know the danger that entails!"

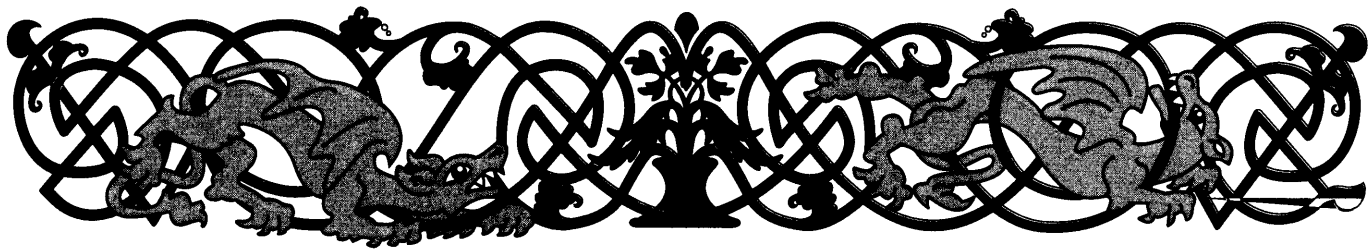
Since the fall of the Calim Empire at the end of the Era of Skyfire, genies of any type have not been common in Calimshan, and only a few are so foolish as to welcome them. The earliest histories show that the genie overlords Calim and Memnon enslaved every race they encountered in these lands. The atrocities and evils visited upon humanity and the other races by the genies are a matter of common record in Calishite histories and tales told by bards at campfire. With the cultural history of abusive genies, many here fear them, seeing them as waiting to enter Calimshan and conquer it anew.

How Calimshan has historically viewed genies is evident in much of the architecture of the early ages. Like the gargoyles of northern cathedrals, ghoulishly exaggerated djinn and efreet (and some marids and dao) are often carved in stone and placed at roof corners. Most simply, they act as drainspouts for water during the few times when there is enough rain to require such runoff. In times of war, these genies can be used to spew boiling oil down upon attackers. The superstitious, however, have attached legends to the genie gargoyles and believe that they alternately scare away evil spirits from a place or that the evil spirits become trapped in the carved lamps beneath the feet of the stone djinn. Tales say that if the stone lamp of a roof djinn is broken, all the evil spirits trapped within will form an awful, vengeful djinni that will seek out and destroy that which harmed it.

Other Calishite legends tell of awful things that have befallen those who met genies without the benefit of magically binding the creatures. Those same tales have scared many out of dabbling with other magics related to the summoning of genies. While they are theoretically capable of doing so, Calishite wizards tend to shy away from summoning monsters, creating *gates* or portals, or spells and items that involve altering spatial or planar boundaries. Simple folk in Calimshan grow deathly afraid of anyone using or subjecting someone to a size-changing spell, since that ability is a standard one granted to genies in folk tales.

In short, a general concern over genies and the Elemental Planes has imposed some social limits on those trained in the Art within Calimshan. Calimshan schools few elemental mages, and the rarest spells in a Calishite spellbook are teleportation and planar magics. Many believe that these self-imposed limits are why Calishite and southern mages developed such items as *flying carpets* or *horseshoes of the zephyr*.





Politics and Power

"What is true power and where is it found? Is true power the ability to manipulate others to do tasks as you see fit? Is it the ability to control money and thereby influence others through greed? Is it inherent in a government title, with people at one's beck and call because of the system? In Calimshan, power is all and none of these. True might in these lands comes from seeing the grand game of intrigue and using each of the players to nullify the other until you are the sole power-holder left unchecked."

— Ralan el Pesarkhal, personal papers

Outsiders are often confused by Calimshan. The apparent incongruities in its titles, its power structures, and how authority is organized and obtained make little sense to them. Indeed, the webs of intrigue spun by all of the power groups and influential folk within the cities of Calimshan are so intricate and interwoven that few insiders, let alone those not of Calimshan, can fathom even half of what is in play at any given time. The two major points of confusion (among other lesser ones) lie in the inconsistencies between the titles bandied about by traveling Calishite businessmen and those who actually wield authority, and the constant changes in leadership and government.

Titles and Sovereignty

"It is fortunate for many under the glaring eye of the sun that our lord of lords is a kind master who calmly abides the many trespasses on his patience and titles. Many have claimed to be calephs within their own territories, but only those who overstepped their bounds and usurped the rightful power of our overlord have been staked out for the vultures of Calim."

— Vizir Abbas yn Akkabar el Quahl yi Manshaka

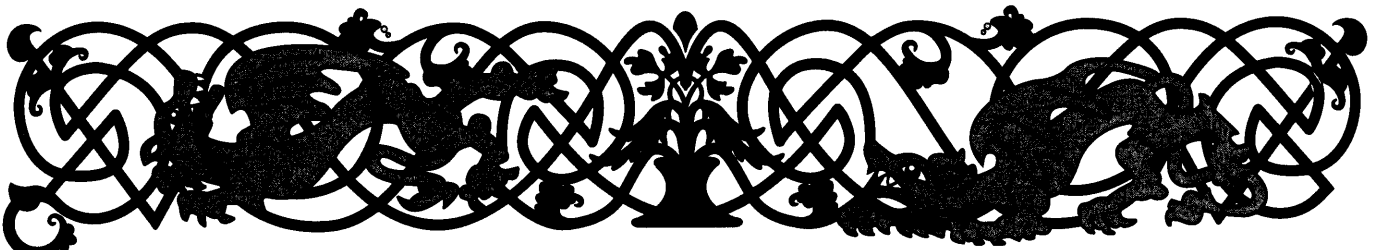
In a land where egos are large and arrogance is vast, titles mean all and nothing to those in control. Within Calishite society, one's name and title are closely linked with one's honor, and they are equally important to one's social standing. Still, since Calimshan (until very recently) was more a series of allied city-states than a unified nation, the importance of one's titles within the walls of one's home city could and did differ greatly from their importance within the court of Calimport.

The ability to wield actual authority is all, and what a person chooses to call himself matters little to the ones holding greater influence over him—provided that person does not actively challenge the capacity or jurisdiction of his betters. Since the fall of the Shoon Imperium, strict obeisance and the observance of exact hierarchies and grants of title has fallen lax among the ruling classes. Rulers and nobility adopt whatever titles suit their fancy, and can even enforce the use of adopted titles within their own territories. However, unless said titles are recognized and ratified at Calimport's court by the syl-pasha, the titles are impressive but meaningless. It is simple for a city ruler to decide he wishes to be the caleph of that city; it is another matter entirely for him to be recognized by the rulers in Calimport or another city as little more than one of that city's sultans.

Nobles of Cormyr, Tethyr, and other countries would never dream of calling themselves kings without having gained the throne, but pride and a love for pomp and pageantry seem to grant free rein to the excessive and inflated titling of Calishite nobles. All in Calimshan understand that a title, whether unjustly adopted or rightfully gained, commands respect. Among their peers, the titles and honorifics of the upper classes become almost a game, as a person's social standing can easily be gauged by how many others of his rank choose to employ his preferred title or the one that conveys the actual standing of said person against the court of Calimport. An unjustly adopted title can be disputed publicly among the upper classes without breaking the tradition of face, but for someone to do so openly reveals his contempt and scorn for a rival, which often leads to feuds, assassinations, and other retaliations.

This problematic laxness about titles is slowly changing with the ascension of Syl-Pasha Ralan el Pesarkhal of Calimport. In his overt negotiations to solidify his power base throughout the country (rather than just in Calimport), he is also slyly hinting to those around him that a return to the formal and strictly upheld hierarchy of titles of the Shoon Imperium is on his mind. As he stated upon taking the





pasha's throne: "It is not so much that we misunderstand our place in society, within our own circles, and need to change our system to have the titles fit our functions. Rather, a clear structure of titles would send a strong message to our simpleminded neighbors to the north. If they can begin to understand how our country works and see it as a unified nation, they will honor us with the respect and admiration due a state of our grandeur and historical lineage. With that respect comes stronger trade agreements, a dependence on our goods and services, and less interference with our purely private internal matters—such as their bothersome whining against slavery, without which our grand society would cease to function. They would stand in awe of the new Calimshan, the strong Calimshan, the great Calimshan that was and shall be again!"

The Ruling Powers

Since Syl-Pasha Ralan el Pesarkhal is still relatively new to the throne, the ruling class is in a bit of disarray. He has proposed or enacted a great many changes in the structure of the country and its government, and Calimshan is resistant to swift change. Still, change is in the wind, and Pasha Pesarkhal has moved to consolidate his authority through careful manipulation of both the old system and his new system based on ancient ideals.

In the old system, the vizars and other advisors were the true rulers, not the pasha. The alleged ruler had no direct control over the component cities and territories of the country. Ralan el Pesarkhal used his influence and authority as the syl-vizar of Calimport to fuel a slow and methodical coup throughout the late 1350s. Operating in secret, Ralan engineered the assassinations of no less than 87 sultans, vizars, and titular city rulers, from the entire Council of Manshaka to many of the other controlling vizars, in less than 10 years. Those who investigated the incidents could lay blame only at the feet of others than el Pesarkhal. Of all the current members of the ruling class above the druzir level, fewer than a dozen have been in those positions of power for more than 10 years due to the bloody path the syl-pasha trod to secure his position.

Even after engineering the deaths of the entire Djenispool family, all of its syl-vizars, and other loyalists by his command or as collateral victims of the Darkstalker Wars of the Year of the Serpent (1359 DR), el Pesarkhal managed to avoid overt blame (though many suspect him). The new syl-pasha began to slowly reshape how Calimshan's cities interact each other and how the ruling class as a whole organizes its operations and implements its authority. He has made no secret that he would like to see the rise of Calimshan again as a major imperial power. But to make this happen would require a return to the stratified power structure of the Age of Shoon. This notion has earned the syl-pasha the enmity of the rulers of many other city-states and the adulation of the druzirs and sabbalads, whose power is almost entirely titular: A return to older systems would see more control and authority returned to them.

The Pasha of Calimport

The caleph of Calimshan rules over all of its people and has no fewer than seven official titles (and accompanying annuvs): Syl-Pasha of All Pashas, Syl-Sabbalad of Sabbalads, Syl-Ralbahar of the Navy, Syl-Qayadin of the Armies, Syl-Ynamalik of the Lands of Three Rivers, Syl-Sultan of the Cities, and Caleph of Our People.

Colloquially across all Faerûn, he is known as the pasha of Calimport, after his seat of power and the recognized largest city on the continent. Most Calishites tend to refer to him as the syl-pasha, rather than the pasha of Calimport, to avoid any implied insult in reference to the superiority of his position.

While most outsiders assume the syl-pasha's rule is absolute (as they presume the rule of those before him was), in reality el Pesarkhal is the only man to come close to this potential in well over six centuries. Before now, *syl-pasha* was mainly an honorary title, and much of the true power was held in the hands of the syl-pasha's vizars and the pashas below them. Many other positions within the ruling class were also merely titular. They made convenient places to tuck the pasha's useless offspring into so that they did not interfere with the true power players, even though such positions commanded a higher social status than those actually in control had.

This situation has changed in modern-day Calimport, Memnon, and Alraiven. Here the syl-pasha and his children now hold the highest positions both in title and in the real authority they wield. The governmental restructurings that have made this situation a reality have not gone smoothly, for they disrupt a centuries-old status quo. They have happened, however, and most expect that similar changes will pull together the other cities of Calimshan within the next decade. If they do not, either a new pasha's dynasty will begin or the veiled threats from Calimport will become more obvious and more deadly for those who stand between Pasha Pesarkhal and absolute rule.

El Pesarkhal has spent the past decade reinforcing his rule by appointing or marrying his sons and daughters into positions of authority in Calimport and all the other cities of Calimshan. Given the surprising and unusual loyalty shown to Ralan by his children, for at least the duration of his life, authority in Calimshan is becoming centralized once more. And with one steadfast will driving the nation, it may actually become the world power it once was again.

The Advisors

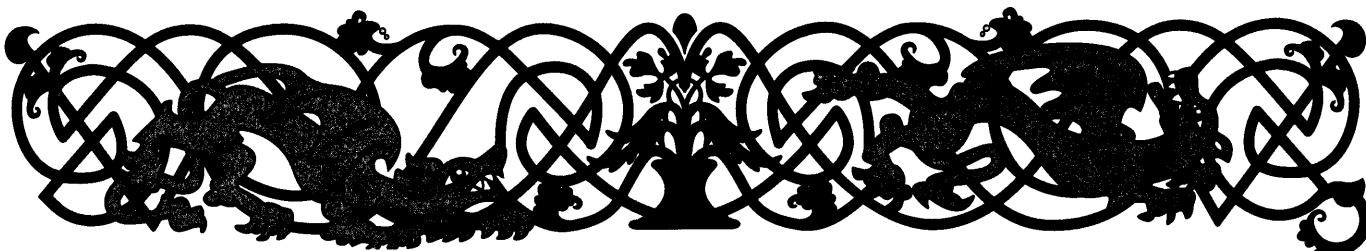
Those who belong to both the ruling class and the advisor class hold the most immediate titles and positions ranged beneath the caleph. Advisors previously held and, in many cases, still hold the actual power in the governmental hierarchy. From the highest to the lowest social rank, the advisor rulers are sultans, ynamalikkar, yshahs, vizars, sabbalads, and druzirs. The truth of which title wields more power is fluid and complex. Suffice it to say that it is among these titles and their holders where many of the major battles for control of Calimshan are waged.

This situation is as the syl-pasha would have it. All of these advisors must be loyal to him, but their infighting ensures that only the strongest and most capable ones remain in place for long. The syl-pasha also recognizes the need to watch these advisors closely, for just as he pulled together supreme authority from his position among the vizars, so can another. Thus, the current caleph regularly spies on those beneath him through independent agents or those who are known spies (like his children).

The Sultans

As they are presented to foreigners, sultans are princes of the realm. Whether they are blood kin of the syl-pasha or merely good friends and allies, they hold the first social rank below the caleph/syl-pasha. They often vie for the greatest authority in the caleph's court with his syl-vizar, though they each have their





personal areas of influence and control. Most sultans also hold other lesser titles, though they are most often military ranks of far less social or political weight as the sultan's title—until they need the support of the military in a coup.

The sultans of Calimshan are all city dwellers, all the better to be close to their leader. Their primary role is to direct the military forces of their cities and the army and navy of Calimshan in general. They also oversee, though to a much lesser degree, the sabbalads of their cities. While the syl-pasha keeps direct command of some personal troops and his palace guard in Calimport, all other military personnel answer to the sultans.

The current syl-pasha has dominated the ranks of the sultans in all the major cities of Calimshan through the placement of his own kin in these positions. Thirteen of his 21 older sons and two grown and loyal nephews are all sultans in Calimport, Almraiven, and Memnon. While most assume that he places his blood around him to support his rule (which he does), he also has set his sons against each other to see which one is ruthless enough to deserve his throne upon his demise.

The Vizars

The vizars are the most active agents at all levels of government. They hold together the government for the syl-pasha and their own interests, serving as intermediaries between the caleph, the sultans, the sabbalads, and the druzirs, who hold political and military power, and the pashas and the merchants, who wield economic clout. While socially the most prominent vizars are considered to be barely a step above the druzirs, and therefore located near the bottom of the upper class, their pervasive reach and easy access to people of power at all levels make them invaluable and irreplaceable advisors.

Vizars can have wildly different levels of social and political influence. Some vizars oversee but one sabbalad in a city. In Calimport and Almraiven, other vizars do not directly oversee any lessers but are syl-vizars over their fellows, allowing them to fulfill the Calishite dream of the greatest profit and ascendancy for the least effort—their subservient vizars handle the duties of overseeing the sabbalads and druzirs. The priceless and precarious position of Syl-Pasha Pesarkhal's court advisor is held by Vizar Santad el Khalen. His full title, syl-vizar of vizars ("advisor over all advisors"), is the envy of those who pursue the Calishite ideal of minimal effort cunningly applied to achieve a pleasurable end.

As sultans are seen as military princes under the syl-pasha, vizars are often viewed as classic merchant princes, since all their influence is tied to money and knowledge. Their political power is tied to their jobs as overseers of the sabbalads and their local militias and to their loose function as trade negotiators between the pashas (guildmasters) and the sultans and caleph. Secondly, most vizars must also act as proxies and messengers for their social superiors or as go-betweens for the syl-pasha when he wishes to visit the lower classes. The vizars are no longer afforded enough direct power to allow a coup such as the one that brought el Pesarkhal to the pasha's throne, something which greatly chafes at the more ambitious among them.

The Ynamalikkar

The ynamalikkar are the social equals of the sultans and the wealthy landed nobility (lesser princes) of realms outside of Calimshan. Even though they are social equals of the urban sultans,

they lose a certain amount of political influence since they operate outside the cities and are thus removed from the major arenas of political influence. An ynamalik often only carries two titles: syl-yshah of two or more shanates (land divisions ruled by yshahs) and ynamalik of whatever broader region is his home. While the territories they oversee are often more than 10 times the size of cities watched over by the sultans, they rarely have half the population under their influence that a city does. The rural areas they rule are sparsely populated by any save slaves.

The ynamalikkar's responsibilities include the protection of the rural plantations along the rivers, where much of Calimshan's produce is grown. They also must maintain patrols of armed warriors to police and protect the trade roads. When the ynamalikkar must leave their villas and venture into the cities, they either do business directly with the pashas or report to their only superiors: a syl-sultan in charge over a city region or the syl-pasha of Calimport himself. In all, there are no fewer than 30 ynamalikkar ruling over approximately two or three yshahs each in Calimshan.

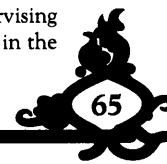
The Yshahs

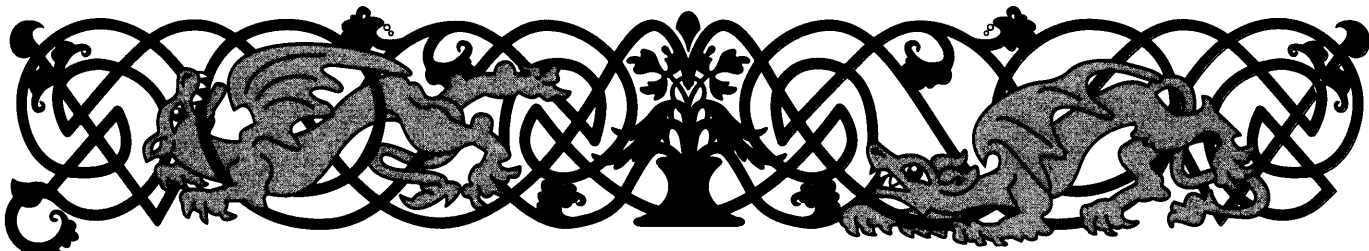
A yshah is the subordinate of an ynamalik in Calimshan. While in literal hierarchy he is similar to a duke in other lands, in actual clout he is more like a count, baron, or even a mere lord. The yshahs are the overseers and masters of the plantations and other enterprises that dot the rural landscape outside the cities and along the rivers. Politically rather low in influence (less than their social lessers, the pashas), the yshahs rarely venture into the cities where their relative insignificance in relation to the urban upper class is underlined. In fact, yshahs are often looked at as country squires who, while seemingly enjoying the Calishite ideal life of leisure built on the labor of others, have not made truly earned their position, for they have not conquered the cutthroat business world inside the cities. Rather than be snubbed, yshahs take on the responsibility of hosting at least three lavish parties on their plantations each winter to preserve their face.

The yshahs each rule a shanate, a land division of a minimum of roughly 2,000 acres, but often more. The largest of the shanates are 5,000 acres in size and consist of two plantations. While the majority of the shanates are granted over farming territory along the rivers and the floodplains, a few isolated areas in northern Calimshan have yshahs who oversee a mine or mines for their ynamalikkar. In all, Calimshan has at least 100 yshahs and corresponding plantations, villas, and areas where an assortment of natural resources are being tapped.

Yshahs are responsible for food production on their own and their ynamalik's plantations. They are also expected to take on the costs of bringing produce to market within the cities, though of late there is some movement to see the pashas and guilds absorb these costs, or to even have guild representatives travel to the plantations and village markets to trade (since they can cut better deals without as much competition for the goods there). On average only six to eight shanates are scattered around or near each city; those yshahs closer to the cities have greater political pull with both their ynamalikkar and contacts within the cities.

Yshahs and ynamalikkar must balance their desire to be close to the cities, for increased social standing, and their desire to be wealthy. Given the importance of social status in Calimshan, few Calishites are willing to take on the additional work of supervising mining operations or directing the collection of wild spices in the





foothills or in the desert. These activities, while fiscally sound and often more profitable than farming overtaxed land, constitute working too hard, a social sin in the pasha's domain. Because of this, the northern river plains and the mountains possess a great many natural resources that have barely been touched, let alone exploited to their full potential, and there are only a few working mines within the Marching Mountains.

The Sabbalads

Sabbalad was a far more important title during the Age of Shoon; only in recent years have the sabbalads regained some of their old influence and authority. For centuries, their official responsibility to oversee at least three druzirs and their drudachs was largely ceremonial, and the post of sabbalad was often the best place for the slovenly and shiftless sons of the syl-pasha. With el Pesarkhal's rise to power, the sabbalads are once more being expected to foster insightful and profitable government and are being given the authority to make effective contributions.

Sabbalads are, in the eyes of outsiders, either mayors of inner city areas or whole towns—or they are crimelords using their official governmental posts to protect and further their underworld activities. In truth, both definitions are correct. Sabbalads always have jurisdiction over three to five druzirs and their activities. Sabbalads are also the most common links between Calimshan's government and the truly criminal dealings of the country's underworld. In contrast to the traditional and sinister figure of the urban sabbalad, however, a sabbalad can also be the mayor of a village located in a shanate that is not directly part of a yshah's plantation. Many of these villages provide services and resources that allow them to maintain their independence, and their sabbalads protect that autonomy jealously or they lose their positions and become mere suboverseers under a yshah.

The Druzirs

The prestige and clout of druzirs, who hold the lowest of the official government positions in Calimshan, also suffered with the fall of the Shoon Imperium. Soon their titles became mere words with little attached authority. At best, they were the pashas' errand boys or the vizars' scapegoats. With Syl-Pasha Pesarkhal's new mandates, druzirs are now restored to their original rights and responsibilities—they are to rule their drudachs as the pasha rules over all Calimshan.

A drudach is like one of the wards (or precincts) of more northerly large cities. Each Calishite city or town has from one to a structured system of over 100 drudachs. The size of these drudachs varies by location, but the general rule is that a drudach contains at least 500 persons of lower class or above and no fewer than 10 buildings. Some of the smaller villages among the rural shanates are no larger than a drudach, and thus some are ruled by druzirs while others are ruled by sabbalads (though a sabbalad often tries to impose his rule over a number of these small villages in the same general area).

Within each drudach, the druzir is responsible for overseeing the smooth operation of trade, the safety of the public (at least, all those who *count*), and the prosperity of the drudach's citizens (well, again, those who count). A druzir cannot command troops of greater standing than the local amlakkar allotted by his sabbalad or greater superior. Druzirs must also collect taxes and tariffs within each drudach for their sabbalads, who eventually deliver said taxes to the vizars or sultans for conveyance to the syl-pasha.

Nearly 500 druzirs hold appointment across Calimshan, with over 100 druzirs ruling drudachs in Calimport alone. Few druzirs are merely druzirs, however. Many are also pashas or military officers or shadier figures in the criminal underworld. As long as a druzir does not appear to supplant the authority of his sabbalad or those higher up the sociopolitical chain of command, most authorities have no problem with a druzir taking on additional areas of influence.

The Pashas

The pashas of Calimshan are often seen as the true movers and shakers of the realm. This is true. This most flexible of titles carries the most variable grant of powers, since pashas are rarely tied down by particular bureaucratic requirements and government dictates and so can focus on profit—and political and social advancement at any cost. Pashas control the guilds and businesses, and with them they control much more than mere coin. While more prominent titles allow folk to call themselves upper class and officially rule over the urban landscape, the pashas and their money are what truly drives Calimshan. In fact, since they are not tied down to a specific territory like a druzir or sabbalad, pashas often wield far more power than either of their superiors because their guilds' concerns cross many drudachs, cities, and shanates.

When the governmental structure of the cities was erected during the Shoon Imperium, all the pashas operating within a certain drudach reported directly to its druzir. This is currently the case only with those pashas limited to one particular drudach, and these are few and far between. Many pashas operate across multiple druzirs or even among multiple cities. If their influence is broad, they often function as part of the advisor class, stepping past the druzirs and sabbalads to report directly to a sultan or vizar. In many cases, the local rulers have no influence whatsoever over the pashas unless they themselves are pashas.

Pashas often use their trades and the commodities they monopolize to gain political favors from more senior governmental officials. Their guilds or businesses—many are caravan coster organizers and owners or ship owners—provide them with their own mercenary troops, if need be, to enforce their will, and their contacts with outside trade and criminal interests keep them among the most informed people in Calimshan. Their subordinates, their goods, their information, and their continued loyalty are all commodities that pashas use to their best advantage in the continual intrigues of Calimshan.

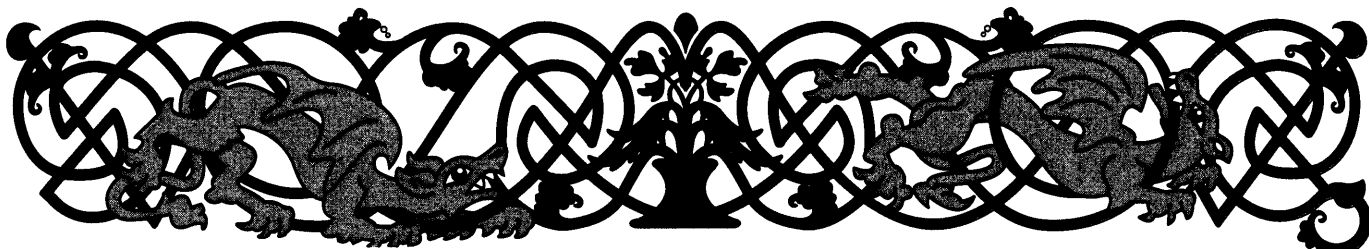
Even with the new mandates and the census that Syl-Pasha Pesarkhal instituted nearly five years ago, no accurate count of how many pashas there are within Calimshan exists. At best guess, more than 5,000 Calishites claim to be pashas. All of them maintain different levels of sovereign control over certain trades, guilds, and businesses, from an owner of a mere five smithies in Memnon to the former ruler of the city of Manshaka.

Lesser Powers

The military and the guilds are the lesser powers among the rulers of Calimshan. While both are further discussed in their own contexts later in this chapter, their place within the ruling hierarchy of Calimshan should be noted.

High-ranking military officers often wield as much power as their superiors in the advisor class. Indeed, they are usually the only ones who are heavily armed when they are thrust into in a





dangerous situation, so they can best deal swiftly with certain situations, such as armed assaults or insurrections and assassination attempts, with finality. Still, for more than a millennia, there have been no militarily driven coups against the syl-pasha.

The guilds also command enormous amounts of social and political power, but their influence is felt more on the street level among the middle and lower classes rather than among the sultans or vizars. Guild wars are waged relatively frequently in the streets of the cities of Calimshan, as competing guilds vie for dominance in a particular market or strive to expand their pasha's reach into another drudach, with its attendant marketplace. The guilds are primarily concerned with producing and selling services and manufactured goods. The sale and control of raw goods is the province of the yshahs and ynamalikkar.

The most common political maneuver among the lesser powers is often a benefit only visited upon the skilled labor class. The skilled practitioner obtains a personal commission to practice his or her craft for a social superior. The tradesperson then uses that patron's name to vault through the ranks of a guild or beyond into a pasha's seat. In practical terms, if a vintner impresses a sultan enough with a wine from his vineyards, he might gain the sultan's aid in eliminating (or merely moving past) the 23 people ahead of him in seniority in the Vintner's Guild to become its new master and pasha.

Law and Order

Compared to other realms where order and law are forces for good, Calimshan is a cesspool of corruption, graft, and greed. Its so-called laws support this structure. All the forces of law and order in Calimshan are organized to maintain the status quo of the syl-pasha's rule and the slave state. While not totally immoral or unfair, Calishite laws and those who enforce them are harsh and unforgiving. Similar to the state of affairs in Zhentil Keep before its fall, individuals with any influence have a virtual army of folk to defend them from each other and from their foreign and hidden enemies.

The Enforcers

There are so many groups of enforcers and strong-arm thugs throughout Calimshan that it is impossible to identify but a fraction of them. Everyone with something to protect or hide—from the lowliest member of the merchant class with a shop to protect to the highest of vizars shrouding the secrets of a thousand intrigues beneath the shine of a threatened blade—employs enforcers, whether they are related sons, hired mercenaries, or well-trained slaves. Often, only the locals or those who make a specific practice of studying their enemies can identify a particular band of well-armed legbreakers. However, nearly everyone within Calimshan has heard of the following three major groups of enforcers, though few outside of Calimport's upper-class drudachs could identify the groups on sight.

El Pajabbar: This elite cadre of 25 bodyguards is unique in that all of its members are minotaurs. Their group's name translates as *those of the horns*. El Pajabbar is the personal guard for the eldest son of the syl-pasha, Sultan Fahd yn Ralan el Pesarkhal. The fame of el Pajabbar has spread across Calimshan because Sultan Fahd has been traveling to the far reaches of his father's domains to ensure their loyalty. The sight of his massive bull-headed guards has achieved the desired effects of fear and respect.

El Sikaena: *The knife* is the literal translation of this group's name, and throughout Calishite history that name has struck terror into the hearts of even the most unflappable beings. El Sikaena is a trained cadre of assassins working for the syl-pasha. An assassin of el Sikaena is only deployed when a warning from el Ghadabaan (see below) has been ignored and the hints for proper conduct its members delivered were not followed. El Sikaena assassins always allow their prey a chance to throw themselves upon the pasha's mercy after they slay all of their target's personal bodyguards. Few have ever begged for mercy; most choose to die on the assassins' blades by attacking them. Such behavior is less a matter of foolish gallantry or suicide than a way of saving face rather than lowering oneself to beg. Indeed, anyone who attracts the attentions of el Sikaena can only restore the name and honor of his family by dying at its hands.

El Ghadabaan: El Ghadabaan, whose name translates as *the anger*, is the organization to which the strongarm tacticians and thugs of the syl-pasha belong. They "adjust the attitudes" of those they visit toward a stance el Pesarkhal favors by breaking bones and destroying property. In other words, el Ghadabaan enforcers are the legbreakers who are dispatched by the syl-pasha to warn a victim that his actions have displeased him. The actions of el Ghadabaan are fully sanctioned by the syl-pasha, who protects their lives against reprisals. The hulking Tethan slaves who comprise the bulk of el Ghadabaan especially enjoy their job (and execute it far more bloodily) when they are assigned to pay visits upon former masters.

Military Ranks and Orders

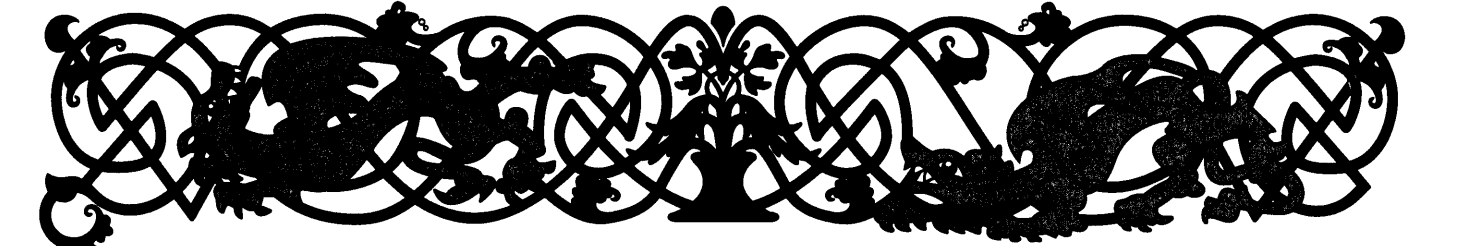
The sultans of Calimshan each command a military order or group within their cities, and these sultans often accept the honorary rank of general or admiral in these organizations, though they have underlings with actual military knowledge and rank who do the real work. Five military groups maintain the peace across all of Calimshan's cities and territories. Each of four of those branches has at least one sultan commanding it in every city, necessitating at least four sultans for each city to control each separate part of the military machine. (The fifth branch, the Qysaghanni, is led only by the syl-pasha.) This apparent redundancy serves to make united military insurrections exceedingly difficult to organize and maintain, and it has effectively prevented them altogether for centuries.

To maintain the loyalty of the armed forces to their sultans and to the syl-pasha, when military officers reach the rank of balak (colonel), qayadin (general), and ralbahr (admiral), they are always given grand houses or villas on the syl-pasha's estate. The increased social status inherent in this gift makes it a fabulous offer that can never be refused, but hidden within this situation lies the ultimate control that the syl-pasha wields over his military. Should officers stray from loyalty, their wives and families are within easy reach of his retribution. While the officer's families *seem* to be guests of the pasha on his estate, the separate nature of the military villas allows the syl-pasha to bypass the custom of the host. If an officer goes rogue, his family pays the fatal price.

The five branches of the Calishite armed forces are:

The Amlakkar: These indentured servants and slaves all answer to a sultan in each city, like the other arms of the military, but their branch of the armed forces has the lowest status. The amlakkar serve as the police within each of the drudachs. Each drudach is assigned





at least a dozen amlakkar under a captain and his lieutenant. The captain is usually the only amlak that reports directly to superiors. Most often, he reports to the sultan or the sultan's vizars. He also, by nature of the governmental structure, reports to the local druzir, who reports to one of the city's vizars. Since their first loyalty is to their sultans, amlak captains are often instructed as to how to alter their reports to the druzirs in order to keep the druzirs and their vizar masters out of the sultan's way. While an amlak's primary duty is to keep the peace and enforce the pasha's laws within each drudach, el amlakkar are often pulled out of their drudachs when the sultans need an army to deal with more pressing internal problems. During such times, only hefty bribes by the druzirs will allow a token force to be left behind to defend the drudach.

The Farisans: The defenders of the caleph's peace take their name from Faris, the most loyal soldier ever to serve a pasha. These members of the elite special forces are the couriers, scouts, spies, and military intelligence operatives within both the Nallojal (navy) and the Sadimmin (regular army).

As a subgroup within two other branches of the military, the Farisans are commanded by a sultan who in turn is subordinate to the two senior sultans who command the Sadimmin and the Nallojal. While some see this position as lesser command, those who hold the post would disagree: Those who possess information possess the root of all power. The Farisan sultans of each city conspire together to acquire and control knowledge and increase their power without drawing the attention of the syl-pasha.

The Farisans have risen in social standing during el Pesarkhal's reign. Often mere threats from a Farisan scout to expose one's secrets to one's enemies allow such Farisans greater respect and freedom to act within the military (whether such a scout actually knows any secrets or not). It has not gone unnoticed that when Syl-Pasha Ralan el Pesarkhal needs the military's aid in a task, he goes first to the sultans who control the Farisans.

El Qysaghanni: Pasha Pesarkhal's fascination with the era of the Shoon Imperium has been noted by many, as has his inclination to revive the customs and organizations of that period. Thus, his resurrection of the imperial guard, the Qysaghanni, took few by surprise. For the past nine centuries, the syl-pashas had been guarded by elite amlakkar or Farisans. Now, the syl-pasha's personal guards are once again comprised of a force of defenders with no other commanders beyond himself and his one designated officer among them, whose title is *hydar* (lion).

Unlike the Shoon Qysaghanni, half of the 50 members of the modern imperial guard are wizards (of various levels), while the others are burly warriors. All the Qysaghanni wield magical weapons and wear magical armor or protective items of some sort. The *hydar* of el Qysaghanni usually wields more powerful magical armor and weapons than the others.

El Nallojal: Rebuilt only a little over a decade ago, el Nallojal, the Calishite navy, was the former pasha's (Pasha Djenis-pool's) pride and joy. Syl-Pasha Pesarkhal sees it as simply a tool to be used to consolidate Calimshan's power throughout the Shining Sea and the Sword Coast regions. The cities with large naval forces are Almraiven and Teshburl, but all of the port cities have specially designated naval piers and wharves. There are always at least 12 ships in any Calishite or nearby allied port and no fewer than 30 moored in Almraiven, Calimport, Memnon, and Teshburl.

El Sadimmin: The rank and file army's name, el Sadimmin, translates literally as *the powerful swords*. El Sadimmin is beginning to live up to its name for the first time in a century. Syl-Pasha Pesarkhal increased military pay slightly and has made it a priority to improve military barracks across the country in all the cities. This has generated increased interest in a career in el Sadimmin for people who are interested in becoming soldiers to escape poverty.

While life is hardly easy in the army, one does not starve or live without a roof over one's head. The increased pay, training, and slightly higher social status el Pesarkhal has arranged for el Sadimmin have raised the average soldier's morale above that of his recent predecessors. Thus, the army is once again a military force rather than a collected band of bullies and thugs.

The Pasha's Laws

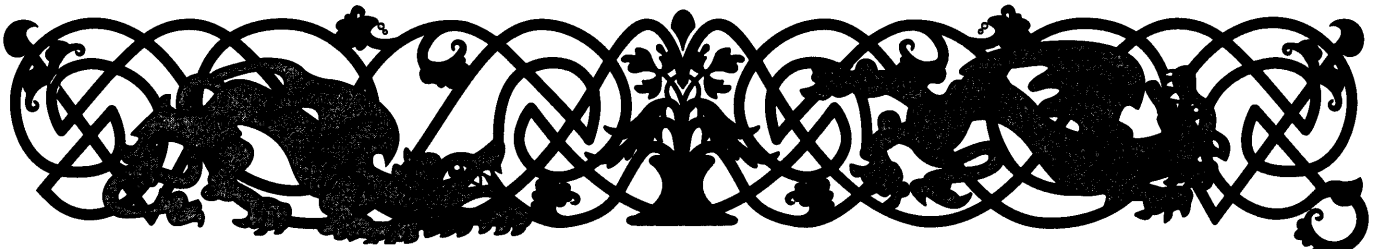
The laws of Calimshan are few, and most are unwritten. For more than five millennia, the syl-pasha's will (or that of a sultan or vizar) was deemed lawful enough to decide what was a crime and what was appropriate punishment for it. Despite the lack of a uniform legal code, the amount of overt crime is far smaller in Calimshan than most outsiders anticipate. Calishites maintain that this is because of the deterrent value of Calishite punishment: All penalties are harsh, and they always have been. Even the theft of a loaf of bread in the market can see personal justice legally enacted by the owner of the baked goods stand, who is entitled take anywhere from a finger to the whole hand of the person who stole from him. Typical penalties range from brandings and whippings performed in private (never publicly, to save face) to the amputation of limbs to executions by beheading.

Corporal punishments are usually carried out by the wronged party, or by an amlak upon those of the lower or middle classes, or by either a member or officer of the other armed forces upon those of the upper class. Sometimes a professional member of a guild of executioners and torturers is employed. Such people's fees must be paid by the lawbreaker or his estate.

Imprisonment only occurs if a person's death for a crime would lead to great unrest or political chaos. While there are no true jails in Calimshan, each drudach has at least four cells in the cellars beneath its amlakkhan, the guard house for the local amlakkar. Persons of greater station might be taken to a druzir's, sabbalad's, or sultan's house, where they would still be kept prisoner, though usually under better conditions. (Prisoners are not considered guests, and thus their captors are not held to the customs and responsibilities of being a host.)

Crime and Punishment through Foreign Eyes

For the most part, a Calishite penal code does not exist. Objective and fair laws, if they were decreed or enacted at all, have not been adequately enforced since the days of the Shoon Imperium. Many rangers and Harpers have noted that in Calimshan, as in the wilderness, the law is really quite simple: The strong prey on the weak; might makes right; and you are only safe as long as you respect your foe's territory and do not attempt to take what is claimed by a stronger opponent. Even paladins, who wish to uphold and honor all laws, recognize the laxness and subjective nature of law in Calimshan and, while they rarely flout or flagrantly disobey what laws they can discern, are not confounded when



trapped by agents of the government in a frame or extortion. Still, Harpers and many others often give advice to those traveling into the pasha's domains. This advice breaks down into some straightforward instructions to avoid trouble:

- Never make direct eye contact with someone above your social rank. If an adventurer stares into the eyes of a pasha, she is insulting the pasha by placing herself at his level. While some Calishites laugh at the audacity of outsiders in such an instance, the more typical reaction is to call for their immediate death for the insult. To make eye contact with another's spouse without their leave is as scandalous as having an affair. Many duels of honor have been fought over this point by confused wanderers and enraged husbands.
- Never publicly contradict any *amlak* (member of the watch), soldier, sailor, or person of a pasha's social stature or above unless you wish to be thrown in a cell or executed on trumped-up charges. Such folk watch for outsiders to bully, and they do so often. They trust that legitimate merchants and folk worthy of doing business with in Calimshan have already been told by their partners or associates where to go and what to do both before and after dark. Anyone who is obviously not Calishite and is doing something unusual or inappropriate or who is just in the wrong place at the wrong time becomes as much a target of much mischief as a suspect of the same.
- Failure to meet a debt, theft of someone's property, or bearing false witness to authorities are all crimes with punishments that vary, depending on the people involved and where the crime occurs. Among the lower classes and in the seedier city areas, restitution takes the form of indentured servitude, full enslavement, the severing of the offending limb (common targets are tongues, fingers, hands, and feet), or a duel of honor against the wronged party. The accused always has the choice of weapons, but the wronged party chooses the time. Thus, duels of honor can often be ambushes and traps perpetrated on a "criminal" later as much as they are immediate battles to first blood or death. In fact, only when members of the upper class (whose members place more stake in honor and saving face than their lives) are involved will anything resembling a fair or straightforward duel occur.

Folk of the upper classes who have been wronged sometimes demand monetary restitution in place or in addition to the punishments outlined above. They can ask for three to 10 times the value of stolen property or a fine whose amount is decided by a *vizar*, sultan, or the *syl*-pasha.

- Revealing apparently criminal activities to the authorities should not be done out of hand. The line between illegal and legal activities in Calimshan is so blurred that many foreigners assume they are one and the same. They are not, but revealing criminal activities to the authorities can lead to any number of woes. Often, such honest folk become celebrated friends of the authority for a very short time—just long enough for those they reported to identify them and set up their revenge. Should the authorities have a stake in said illegal activities, those who expose the illegal activities are often killed. At other times, lesser figures in such activities use the opportunity provided them by such revelations to be rid of annoying partners and enemies, masking their coups as upholding the law. Sometimes, particularly cunning folk might be in-

vited to join an ongoing illegal operation or to assume a position of authority as the result of their diligent effort. Most likely, though, they will be used as expendable stalking horses or decoys to sacrifice to the enemy.

- If all else fails, leave the city that has branded you an outlaw. What few outsiders remember about Calimshan is the myopic focus its inhabitants have on the urban areas over all other places in the nation. If criminals flee into the Spider Swamp or the Marching Mountains to avoid capture, they have merely commuted their death sentences to a danger-riddled life among the repulsive and deadly creatures therein, in the opinion of city folk. Such people then automatically assume fled criminals to be dead and do not pursue them or even report their activities to other cities. Unless the criminals return to the same city and encounter people who remember them, they have little chance of being caught.

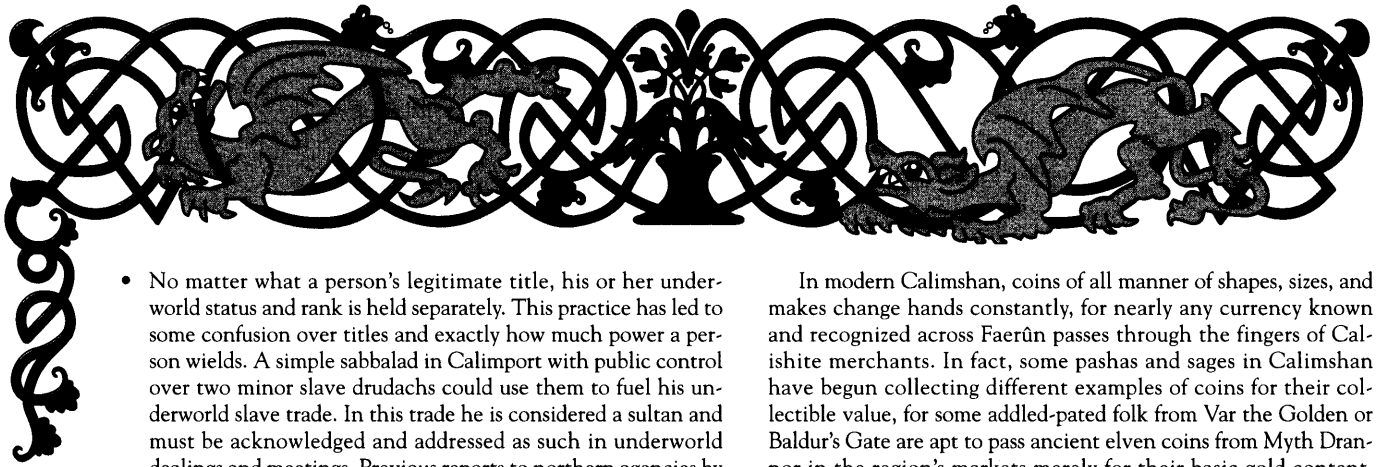
DMs should bear in mind that being a non-Calishite does not always make a player character a target. Badgering heroes with too many obstacles robs the game of its fun. In broad terms and in most respects, law enforcement agents, criminals, and criminal organizations behave similarly in Calimshan to those of other lands, even though Calishite corruption runs quite deep. What may make foreigners into targets are their roles, actions, and attitudes. If they make no attempts to blend in, and they wear their weapons openly and wield them and their magical skills with abandon, PCs are begging for trouble. The only things all Calishites respect are money, magic, and cunning, not bravado or muscle—though these last may help out among equals, such as other adventurers or rogues.

The Underworld's Code of Behavior

Given that so many of the government's leaders have ties to or participate in the Calishite underworld, it is not surprising that the nature and tone of the underworld's code of behavior is similar to the nation's laws. In fact, the underworld code is slightly more forgiving than the law, along with being more clearly defined. Some of the primary tenets of the underworld code are:

- A person's family is beyond harm unless family members are involved in the business at hand. To harm innocents only results in seeing nearly everyone rise up against you and destroy you. In the underworld far more than in national politics, maintaining the established balance of power is paramount. This tenet is in decided contrast to the veiled threat that hangs over the head of most military commanders, whose families live under the eye and blade of the *syl*-pasha.
- Meetings between opposing groups are only secure if held within temples or holy places. Lies cannot be told on holy ground (unless in a temple of *Leira*), and equal donations to a holy meeting place must be made by all parties involved in a conference for the privilege of allowing peaceful negotiations. Of course, underworld groups perform an insane amount of maneuvering and politicking to decide which temple or piece of holy ground will be a the meeting place, for to favor certain deities favors certain groups over others. So far, this has led to a general trend toward meetings occurring more frequently in temples that serve neutral deities.





- No matter what a person's legitimate title, his or her underworld status and rank is held separately. This practice has led to some confusion over titles and exactly how much power a person wields. A simple sabbalad in Calimport with public control over two minor slave drudachs could use them to fuel his underworld slave trade. In this trade he is considered a sultan and must be acknowledged and addressed as such in underworld dealings and meetings. Previous reports to northern agencies by outland spies may have mixed up legitmate (in underworld slang, *upworld*) and underworld titles because such folk could not distinguish the division between the two.
- All criminal activities are discussed either at night, below ground, or in specific rooms of someone's home designated solely for that purpose during the day. If underworld figures are caught openly discussing illegal business in inappropriate settings, their superiors in the underworld brand or tattoo them to remind them of the clandestine nature of their businesses. Anyone who crosses this line more than once or twice is soon unmistakable as a criminal—and a loose-lipped one at that.

This code of "silence save in darkness" both keeps underworld business and intrigues separate from normal dealings and protects the underworld from casual or accidental discovery. After all, if one upworld political enemy discovers another plotting a slaving run to Waterdeep and exposes it merely to ruin his enemy, it threatens the livelihood of many underworld figures and operations, not just the life and livelihood of the one exposed.
- Women are equal to men in the underworld. In fact, many Calishite underworld powerbrokers go nearly unnoticed in the surface scheme of things because they are women. Historically, some of the strongest and most devious crimelords came from the syl-pasha's harem. This led to a common saying in the underworld: "Better to seem a slave than to seem to rule."

Money and Coins

Since time immemorial, money has served as a symbol of power among the tents, bazaars, and khanduqs of Calimshan. There have been more coins minted within the boundaries of modern Calimshan across the past 6,000 years than currently exist in the collective treasuries of all the civilized lands of northern Faerûn (excluding the hoards of the dragons, whose ancient piles of coin make others pale in greed).

During the Shoon Imperium, any coin was a *dey*, and multiple coins were *deen*. The types of coins were identified through prefixes to those root words, and thus the Imperial coins that spread across much of Faerûn were *cardey/cardeen* (cp), *argendey/argendeen* (sp), *tardey/tardeen* (ep), *aurdey/aurdeen* (gp), and *nirdey/nirdeen* (pp). These flat, square coins were always struck with the Imperial Seal of Shoon on one side and the profile of the current *qysar* on the other. (The Imperial Seal of Shoon is a black-bladed scimitar and a silver scimitar crossed and bound together at the handles by a cobra, which rears upward between the two blades, facing the viewer. The black blade drips three drops of blood from its point, and three stars fall from the tip of the silver sword.) One side of the coin was always notched, so blind beggars and traders could easily identify the type of coin they received. *Cardeen* had one notch, *argendeen* had two, and the number of notches increased on up to the five-notched *nirdeen*.

In modern Calimshan, coins of all manner of shapes, sizes, and makes change hands constantly, for nearly any currency known and recognized across Faerûn passes through the fingers of Calishite merchants. In fact, some pashas and sages in Calimshan have begun collecting different examples of coins for their collectible value, for some addled-pated folk from Var the Golden or Baldur's Gate are apt to pass ancient elven coins from Myth Drannor in the region's markets merely for their basic gold content. These numismatists have begun a small business among the learned classes within Calimshan and outside it in the trade of rare coins and moneys. While Shoonite *aurdeen* and *nirdeen* are common in Calimshan, they are rare curiosities to collectors farther north, whose Cormanthan *shimael*s and *ruendils* are eagerly traded for the square imperial coins.

The worth of coins sold or traded as collectibles depends on the buyer and the rarity of said coins in their region. Some sages who seek more information about the old Shoon Imperium also eagerly collect as many imperial *deen* as they can because of old legends that nobles of the Imperium often sent hidden magical messages to each other embedded in coins.

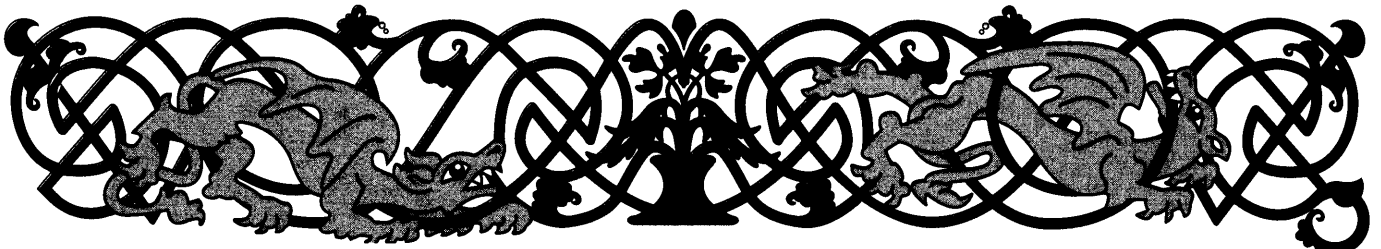
Modern Calishite coins are minted separately to different designs and called by different names in all the major cities of Calimshan. This practice is a remnant of the rule of the city-states that gripped most of the country until recently. However, the growing adoption of similar slang terms for coins of like kind, based on those being issued from Calimport, has shown evidence of some unity of terminology evolving at least on a traders' level. While el Pesarkhal wants to return to the Shoonite names and forms of coinage, he has met with much resistance from his vizars and pashas on the matter. For now, the *syl-pasha* has at least managed to standardize the coins in shape such that copper and silver coins are triangular, gold and electrum coins are circular, and platinum coins are square. This change was simple to enact, since all the cities minting coins had those molds and merely changed which coins were struck in which.

Moneylending and Moneychanging

Lenders of coin have been conducting business in Calimshan since the early Third Age, and they are among the most highly placed and influential of citizens. In fact, finding a moneylender who is not at least a *druzir* (if not a *pasha*) is a give-away that this person is newly established and is still building his clientele and stature. Changing one currency to another is the bread-and-butter trade of Calishite moneylenders. There is no lack of foreign currency within Calimshan, but few Calishite traders and businesses do not accept such coins. However, folk often need specific types of currency in large quantities or denominations. Moneylenders clear a flat 20% profit from these transactions, though if the desired denomination or coin is rare, the *fee* may go as high as 30% of the exchange amount. Moneylenders also often have their fingers in the Cloak Societies (see "Appendix I: Power Groups") and the information trade, since their client connections often make them privy to interesting facts, and such facts are usually salable.

As in Amn and Tethyr, trade bars and jewelry are the currency of choice when purchases are made in sums far larger than would be feasible in coin. It is extremely simple for folk to wrap a layer of gold or silver around an ingot of pig iron and call it a trade bar, and the ability to create seemingly real gems from glass or paste has be-





Coins of Calimshan

Worth	Stamped in/ Used in	Coin Name	Slang
1 cp	Almraiven	Rada	River
1 cp	Calimport	Unarche	River
1 cp	Keltar	Unarche	Rassine
1 cp	Manshaka	Djenayin	Spanner
1 cp	Memnon	Aanth	Hatchling
1 cp	Schamedar	Djenayin	Lamp
1 cp	Teshburl	Niften	River
1 cp	Volothamp	Rada	Jade
1 sp	Almraiven	Espedrille	Moon
1 sp	Calimport	Decarche	Moon
1 sp	Keltar	Decarche	Messine
1 sp	Manshaka	Djenarba	Marid
1 sp	Memnon	Pranth	Red worm
1 sp	Schamedar	Djenarba	Marid
1 sp	Teshburl	Sefen	Moon
1 sp	Volothamp	Espedrille	Topaz
1 ep	Almraiven	Tazo	Tear
1 ep	Calimport	Centarche	Tear
1 ep	Keltar	Centarche	Dolcene
1 ep	Manshaka	Djendive	Djinn
1 ep	Memnon	Zonth	Red wing
1 ep	Schamedar	Djendive	Djinn
1 ep	Teshburl	Talaen	Tear
1 ep	Volothamp	Tazo	Amber
1 gp	Almraiven	Rekatik	Sun
1 gp	Calimport	Bicenta	Sun
1 gp	Keltar	Bicenta	Narcene
1 gp	Manshaka	Djenanya	Memnon
1 gp	Memnon	Yimth	Great wing
1 gp	Schamedar	Djenanya	Memnon
1 gp	Teshburl	Pulon	Sun
1 gp	Volothamp	Rekatik	Beryl
1 pp	Almraiven	Mandrille	Star
1 pp	Calimport	Kilarche	Star
1 pp	Keltar	Kilarche	Redolene
1 pp	Manshaka	Djendjen	Calim
1 pp	Memnon	Wynth	Great worm
1 pp	Schamedar	Djendjen	Calim
1 pp	Teshburl	Khasan	Star
1 pp	Volothamp	Mandrille	Pearl

come an art form. Because of this, few accept gems or trade bars as payment without a writ from one of the Calishite agencies that guarantee the authenticity of trade bars, jewelry, and gems. The Moneylenders' Guild and the Pasha's Khanduq in Calimport are the only parties who guarantee the purity of trade bars and certify their denominations. The Gemcutters' Guild certifies the value and authenticity of gems. Of course, for the bold criminal, such documents of authenticity can be forged. Thus, most folk endure the 10% additional surcharge on moneychanging to trade bars or

gems through moneylenders who are members of the guild or appointed by the syl-pasha to guarantee they have their money's worth (for a total of 40%—maximum rate plus guild fees).

Charity and the Poor

Generosity is expected by all levels of Calishite society, but donating to or accepting charity is not considered anything less than deplorable by any except the most destitute. While Amnians and Sembians (members of the other great merchant societies) use munificence to enhance their social standing and their public images, Calishites see giving to charity for the most part to be only a waste of money. After all, if one wishes to rise out of poverty, one must *work* to earn money. There is never a lack of work opportunities in any of the cities, villages, or plantations throughout Calimshan, for someone is always looking for more dockhands, sewer workers, house servants, or people to perform menial jobs. So poor folk are lacking in industry and character, and should be ashamed to ask for money without working for it. Every right-minded person is busy pursuing his fortune, and such folk cannot be bothered to help those who have not the drive to help themselves.

Rogue Powers

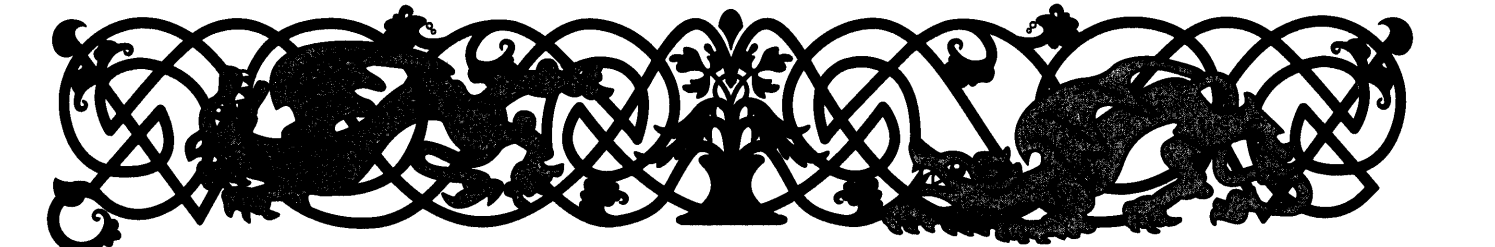
After the chaos and bloodshed of the Darkstalker Wars, Calimshan's great families were decimated. Power fell into the hands of only a small number of houses, many of which gained much of their influence through their illegal activities. When el Pesarkhal seized his rule as syl-pasha, he eliminated a number of the surviving families who had strong illegal ties and enterprises to better control the rogue powers. The syl-pasha currently controls the other powerful houses or stymies their efforts to such a degree that he has nearly unified the Calishite underworld, a major step in unifying the upworld cities.

Below are described the houses that control the majority of illegal activity that goes on in Calimshan's city-states. While the houses are colloquially known as *families*, the illegal trades they operate and control are euphemistically called *guilds*.

The Four Families of Calimshan

During the Djenispool regime of the Ninth Age, there were more than 12 major crime families within Calimshan's city-states, though only those within Calimport mattered or were monitored by the syl-pasha. Of those dozen houses, six of them were wholly controlled by the Rundeen powers to the south. (Unwittingly, nearly all in turn were controlled subtly by the Twisted Rune, as well.) Now whittled down to three major families beneath the house of the syl-pasha, Calimshan's underworld activities can easily be manipulated by only four people.

The Pesarkhals: The Pesarkhals hold sway over all the other families because el Pesarkhal sits upon the caleph's throne in Calimport. El Pesarkhal has used his children to build alliances by marrying many of them off to the other three underworld families and their lesser houses. There they rule for him—or at least influence their husbands and those they work with to do as the pasha desires. The Pesarkhal seat of power is in Calimport, though there is at least one Pesarkhal brother, son, or daughter in every city and town in Calimshan, making the syl-pasha's reach long indeed. The Pesarkhals control the criminal efforts in Calimport, Keltar, Memnon, and Teshburl, though the syl-pasha never takes a public hand



in such activities. The Pesarkhals directly control the Ahimars, the Kahmirs, and the Vyndahlas.

The Kahmirs: The Kahmirs were the former leaders among the criminal houses of Calimshan, and they held that position since the time of the mameluk pashas. The Darkstalker Wars robbed them of more than a dozen subordinate families and nearly destroyed the Kahmir line itself. Having built their strength through gambling, the slave trade, and extortion, plus the legitimate trades of mercenary training and the distribution of goods, the Kahmirs once controlled more than half of the other crime families. Their mercenary forces kept them in power. The Kahmirs still control the Ostok, Akil, and Moadyph families, and indirectly control the Beza family through the Moadyphs.

Now a weakened but still influential clan, the Kahmir leader—the aging “Wednazel” Nur el Kahmir—works with the syl-pasha willingly, since he knows what happens to those families who cross el Pesarkhal. The only force that el Kahmir hates more than the syl-pasha, who blocked his own rise to power, is the Rundeen. El Kahmir and el Pesarkhal plot together to prevent any further interference by this Tashalan merchant consortium.

The Kahmir center of power was once Calimport, but while the family still maintains many holdings there, their current seat of power is in Manshaka. The Kahmirs oversee the underworlds of Manshaka and Schamedar for the syl-pasha.

The Vyndahla Clan: The Vyndahla clan has long been a Rundeen puppet, and the other families of Calimshan know this. Like the Kahmirs, the Vyndahlas had sought to rule Calimshan from below until the Darkstalker Wars shattered much of their power.

The Vyndahlas have been relegated to the position of the third largest underworld family. The Vyndahlas control the Eradsari and Tamoah families, and indirectly control the Efead and Haedi families through the Tamoahs. They control illegal activities in only Alraiven and Volothamp. They have been attempting to restore more power and prestige to their house. They plot with the Rundeen to loosen or break the hold el Pesarkhal has on Calimshan.

The syl-pasha is biding his time until his allies and forces are optimally aligned. He will then eliminate the entire clan and much of the Rundeen power structure, thus teaching the Vyndahla “the lesson they have begged for for years.”

The Ahimar Clan: Relatively speaking, the Ahimar clan is a young upstart house that rose to prominence during the recent Darkstalker Wars. Its members are known for their ferocity in claiming and defending their interests and for their secrecy. In fact, most Calishites refer to “the three families” when speaking of the Calishite underworld; the Ahimars are believed a lost house. However, the Ahimars control the Skahil family.

The Ahimars are almost totally indebted to el Pesarkhal for his aid, which allowed them to claw their way up from obscurity during the Darkstalker Wars to the privileged position they now occupy and yet secures their anonymity and secrecy. The Ahimars are not a major house that dominates the city or town in which they reside. Their central seat of power lies in Keltar, where they act as subordinate supervisors for el Pesarkhal.

The Rogue Guilds

The rogue guilds are the illicit concerns overseen by the four crime families. Of course, many more criminal activities exist than are specified below; activities not mentioned by name fall under the purview of the closest related criminal activity. (For instance, gam-

bling and prostitution fall within the scope of the black marketeers.) Like the families themselves, the rogue guilds have central seats from which they are ruled. The power that governs a guild at its seat holds the sway in how its influence is wielded.

Assassins: All the families have interests among the assassins. In fact, this is the hardest guild to monopolize due to the simple fact that it is most used often to kill those who might gain total control of it. The infamous killer Artemis Entreri was once a major player among the assassins, and he might have ruled the assassins of all Calimshan if he had not mysteriously vanished. The assassins’ central headquarters is in Memnon.

Black Marketeers: For a number of years late in the Ninth and early in the Tenth Age, the crafty drow Jarlaxle of Menzoberranzan controlled the black market of Calimport, the central seat of illegal trade goods. His secondary concern as the agent for the Matron Mothers of Menzoberranzan in that Underdark city later drew him away and freed up control of the black markets of Calimshan again. Now, the current dominant force among in the black market is Voraya, a lamia noble of some power, who seized control of the guild and has slain any opposition put forward against her by the four families. This is the only criminal endeavor that is not totally under the control of the four families.

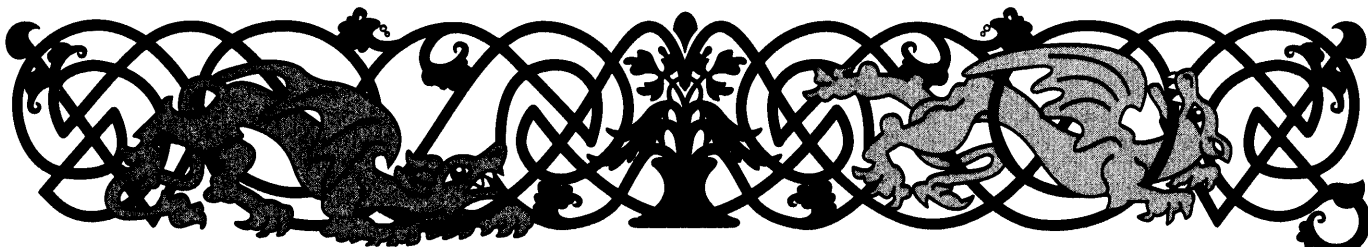
Burglars and Thieves: The Manshaka-based thieves’ and burglars’ (and beggars’, pickpockets’, etc.) guild is primarily staffed and controlled by the Kahmir clan. The Thieves’ Wars that raged for a time after the end of the Darkstalker conflicts only served to weed out weaker and less capable thieves and warriors from the ranks of this guild.

Enforcers and Thugs: While most expect the seat of this guild to be Manshaka, the enforcers’ headquarters is situated in the unlikely city of Keltar, under the noses of the Ilmatari priests who alleviate the suffering that these people excel in dealing out. Once a far more vicious group with little influence among the major underworld guilds, the enforcers’ job within the numerous guilds is to provide support for their actions with violent muscle. They can also be hired to strongly suggest a course of action to more (or less) lawful citizens. The syl-pasha controls this guild but parlays his domination into additional support for his position and activities by making this guild’s members readily available to those houses who wish to use their skills.

Pirates and Smugglers: The Vyndahla clan and their Rundeen allies have a chokehold on this concern. Centered in Alraiven, with major links to Teshburl and Memnon, the piracy and smuggling factions are kept under enough control that they do not totally disrupt or discourage shipping and trade into or out of Calimshan.

Slavers: Syl-Pasha Pesarkhal holds the most recognized authority among the slaving concern. He and his clan own or support more than 40% of the entire slave trade through numerous cover khanduqs and costers. The central seat of the slave trade is in Calimport, and so little happens in the slave trade that does not reach the ears of the syl-pasha (or his resident opponents). While slavery is legal in Calimshan and many southern areas of Faerûn, the underworld slaving factions open up new markets not officially recognized by the public authorities, such as among the drow and illithids (but never with beholders).

Spies: Utilizing remnants of the Shadow Thieves’ organization and proven espionage methods, the Silver Spider, Bellaq yn Effen (LE hm T18), keeps tabs on everyone and every activity in each of



the cities of Calimshan. Seemingly an independent concern, he has been brought under the personal control of the syl-pasha, since his guild belonged to no other major family.

Bellaq gained the nickname of *the Silver Spider* from the permanent mark his silver-threaded magical whip leaves at its point of impact on his victims. His enemies have learned to be wary of the whip. They say it has a life and mind of its own and that it slithers about, spying in dark corners for its master or lashing out from Bellaq's belt, independent of his control, to entangle assassins.

The spy guild's information is expensive to purchase, but it is reliable. Prudent folk have learned to pay extra to make sure the information brought to them goes to none of their rivals for at least a tenday. The Twisted Rune gains its information for free, as the Silver Spider is enamored with Jymahna of the Rune and lusts after the power he believes she will give him. (Between Jymahna's connections to Bellaq and Voraya the lamia's intelligence gathering, there is very little occurring within and around Calimport and the other major cities that the Rune does not know about immediately.)

Hidden Powers of Calimshan

The two largest and most influential power groups that rule Calimshan serve no direct roles within either the public government or underworld criminal hierarchies. Their manipulation of events and people is so insidious that not even 5% of the popu-

lace of Calimshan knows they exist. Their ability to finesse no fewer than three levels of government to take any action they desire has not been equaled since the era of the Shoon, when the city-states of Calimshan were united into an empire. These powers choose not to work to unify the country into a more coordinated political entity because changing the status quo might draw attention to themselves, and they have learned it is better to rule in shadow than in the light of day, where you are defined as a target and every greedy man's enemy.

The two true powers that control Calimshan's destiny from within are the Twisted Rune and the Rundeen. Both of these groups are detailed further in "Appendix I: Power Groups," but here are the avenues through which they control the fates of nearly everyone across Calimshan.

The Twisted Rune

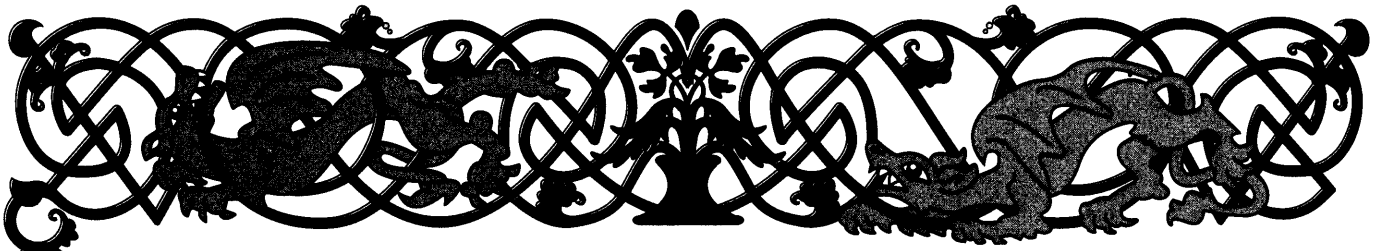
Nearly all the members of the Rune Council of the Twisted Rune have their undead fingers wrapped firmly around the reins of power in Calimshan. For more than 400 years, the Rune has plucked and twisted the intricate Calishite webs of power, and more than any group the Rune can make the country do its will merely by using Calimshan's own social structures and its pawns within them. The Runemasters have never allowed more than half of Calimshan's most prominent families to remain outside of their control, and they only allow the region that much freedom to make the game of control more engaging and less predictable.

First and foremost, the Runemasters use their control to avoid detection. Second, they work to acquire more magic, which



Twisted Rune Runemasters (L to R): Shyressa, Sapphiraktar the Blue, Shangalar the Black, Jymahna, and Rhanganu.





expands their resource pool and also further cements their behind-the-scenes grip on people and events. While the Runemasters are limited in their movements, humans and others are not, so after a century of subtle *charm* spells and magical *suggestions*, the old Shoonite fascination with magic has reasserted itself even more strongly in Calishite society. With great numbers of people being magically persuaded to bring new spells and magical items to Calimshan to apparently amuse or amaze fat pashas, the Runemasters can now easily get a hold of new magic to further cement their control. In addition, the news they wrangle from their traveling puppets keeps them apprised of developments in the Realms and prevents any major disruptions of their activities.

Some of the more prominent Runemasters and their methods of acquiring and cementing control in Calimshan are:

Rhangaun: Rhangaun has numerous charmed and hapless spies at court: the four eldest sons of the pasha, 32 of the pasha's body servants and harem slaves, and the pasha's syl-vizar. Much of his control is exercised through wizards serving in the Qysaghanni whom he has charmed, controlled through a variety of aliases, or manipulates anonymously. An example of one of his methods is to grant someone a 700-year-old book of spells to increase his power, and then to ask that wizard to keep an eye on things and report back to the Rune via one of the new spells he has learned. A mage who might not do so willingly may discover that his book is magically equipped to transmit images and sounds around it to the Rune, or that the new spell he has learned has certain properties that he does not understand—which allow it to transmit information to Rhangaun. Among the other houses (aside from el Pesarkhal) under Rhangaun's or his agents' control are el Haedi and el Eradsari.

Shangalar the Black: Shangalar the Black controls no fewer than seven sabbalads (and the 32 druzirs beneath them) and 12 additional druzirs throughout Calimport. His control is exerted through the Apothecarist's Guild, where his agents sell potions and rare drugs that are highly addictive in addition to their expected effects. Shangalar pulls the strings of his addicted puppets quite effectively, and his efforts also serve to give him near total control over minor families in Volothamp, Almraiven, and Calimport, including el Synabbat, el Beza, and el Ostak.

Shyressa: Shyressa has, over the past 300 years, created more than seven Calishite vampires who stalk the undercorridors of Calimport and its environs. Some even operate above ground, albeit with difficulty. No fewer than two vizars of Schamedar and Manshaka are also vampires bent to Shyressa's will. Any slave vampires they make are hers to control as well, and the vizars' sabbalads and other vizars they control grant her nearly total autonomy over Schamedar's major powers and almost half of Manshaka's. In effect, she has near total control of the Kahmir family through more than half of its major members. Her most highly prized agent is a young jhasin of the syl-pasha's second (and most trusted) wife, through whom she hears of many of the goings-on in the palace and some scattered scraps about el Pesarkhal's intrigues.

Sapphiraktar the Blue: Sapphiraktar, the blue dracolich of the Calim Desert, controls illusory agents that are really magical disguises and projections nearly a third of all the government officials and underworld figures of importance in Memnon, Teshburl, and Keltar. One of his illusionary disguises (a corrupt baelnorn restricted to only moving underneath Memnon) is the undisputed leader over the trade in corpses and necromantic supplies throughout Calimshan. The 100 agents of the baelnorn have their belief

in the disguise reinforced by the various minor elven items with which their master pays them. Sapphiraktar's other masterful guise is as the phantom of the wife of Vizar Duncan el Ashnarti of Keltar, a half-elf who rules the city well but succumbs to Sapphiraktar's whims. When Duncan discusses his plans and events in the city with his dead wife, in reality he is consulting with the dracolich.

Jymahna: Jymahna, an undead enchanter, has observed the goings-on and power plays among the spy network of Calimshan's underworld for nearly a full century. Using subtle magical enchantments and well-placed personal agents, Jymahna maneuvered one of her most loyal people into the spymaster's seat in the spy guild of Calimshan's underworld. The Silver Spider, the head of the most powerful intelligence-gathering network in Calimshan, provides her with nearly as much information and influence as the hundreds of other agents built up by the other Runemasters.

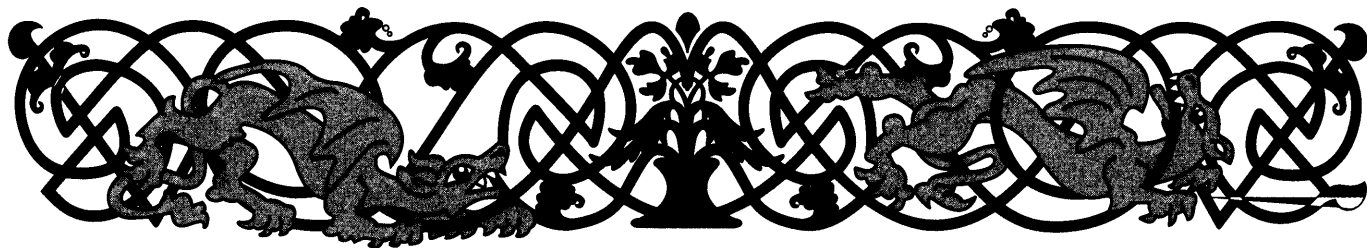
The Runden

The Runden exerts far less subtle control than the Twisted Rune, but their domination is more direct and thus more immediately rewarding to them both fiscally and politically. The Runden does not wish to rule Calimshan, for that only invites difficulties in the form of having to exert effort in ruling the land. Its members merely want control of Calimshan's ports and a fair share of Calishite trade across two seas. At various levels through numerous agents, the Yrshelem of the Runden have these hooks into the powers of Calimshan:

- Half the shipbuilders in Almraiven are Runden-sponsored or Runden-owned. The shipbuilders thus get cheaper lumber and labor from the Shaar, Lapaliya, and the Tashalar. In return, the Runden gets priority in acquiring and outfitting ships—even over the syl-pasha, who is often too busy to notice other ships in production other than his.
- The guildmasters of Schamedar's and Almraiven's coopers, farriers, moneylenders, shipwrights, and saddlers are all full members of the Runden. The taxes and fees they must pay to their local governments are instead paid by the Runden in order to create more solid ties with the vizars in those cities. This contact and attendant personal bribes to the vizars gain Runden members optimum rates and opportunities for purchasing and selling goods and encourage the patronage of Runden-run concerns.
- Runden slaving concerns manage much of the Shaaran and Tashalan trade in slaves, a run that is too dangerous for Calimshan's navy or regular merchant houses to make—due to the heavy Runden-sponsored piracy running interference.

Syl-Pasha Pesarkhal has done business with the Runden in the past and is well aware of where it exerts control and influence in his country. Until his power base is unshakable, he and his sons will do nothing to disturb Runden interests. However, should el Pesarkhal find a way to break the Runden stranglehold and reestablish Calishite dominance of sea trade in the Shining Sea, he will do so only if it will put the Runden either out of business or under his thumb. The syl-pasha does not harbor ill will against the Runden—in fact, he is impressed by their organization and its activities—but he cannot abide knowing a power other than his own controls the fate of his ports, and through them, his country.





Wild Calimshan

"A Calishite cannot begin to tell you about the natural wonders of his land, for any place without walls is an aberration in his mind. Most Calishites are predisposed to urban life because that is where the riches are, in their opinions. They cannot see the wonders, beauties, and riches that abound in their homeland, as they live blinded by the glint of gold. While some do manage to understand the wealth that is knowledge, most squander it to gain gold and a scented bath. Would that other deities held sway in this land aside from those of money, trade, and indulgence."

—Taymar Kullin, monk of Oghma



Calimshan is far more than just its rich cities and merchants, though this is not what you normally hear from its inhabitants. The many natural and supernatural wonders that exist outside the cities and away from the trade roads are well worth taking the risk of adventuring south of Tethyr. Herein is a broad view of the country, its geography, its wilderness, and some of the secrets of its wild places that few natives could tell.

The Alimir Mountains

These peaks, long the lair of beholders and other monsters, form the eastern boundary of Calimshan today. The mountains are steep and jagged, filled with many ravines and dead-end passes. In general, they form the final leg of the Iltkazar range that starts with the Troll Mountains and Giants' Run Mountains far to the north. The foothills of the Alimirs are not as broad or gradual as the Tethyrian Highlands, and the Alimir peaks seem almost to launch out of the ground. Only the lower few thousands of feet of the mountains are covered with small forests, and many peaks give way to bare rock halfway up their steep slopes. More than half of the peaks measure over 6,000 feet above sea level tall, though most level off around 4,000 feet or so. The exceptions are Mount Kahdas and Mount Phevos, the central peaks that overlook the Maridflow headwaters. These two peaks are respectively 7,800 and 8,500 feet high. They would stand out from the rest of the range even without the Eye Tyrant Cliffs.

Monster Lairs

Very few surface-dwelling monsters live in the Alimirs. The normal wildlife consists of many cats large and small, including a number of displacer beast prides that have spread down from the Omlarandin Mountains to the north. These creatures, along with panthers and pumas, stick to the lower slopes and foothills on all sides of the mountains. The standard assortment of mountain-dwelling creatures, including goats and galeb duhr, are also found in the mountains. All of these creatures seek out the shallow caves dotting the mountainsides to shelter in.

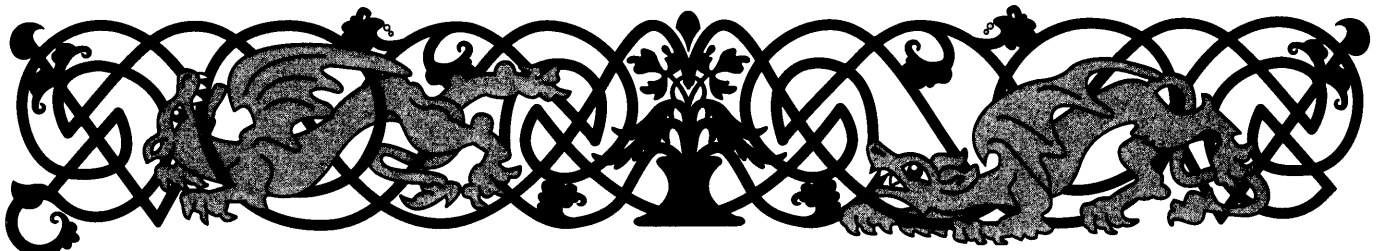
Once travelers penetrate the caverns within and beneath the mountains, they enter far more dangerous terrain. Long dominated by the Alimir Hive of beholders, the caverns are alive with servitor creatures and slaves whose only wish is to please the beholders by capturing wanderers and taking them deeper for interrogation. The beholders are always starved for news of the Realms above.

Despite the large number of monsters around, there are few distinct and identifiable monster lairs for adventurers to seek. Every few centuries, dragons roost among the southern peaks. Few stay of them stay longer than to build other than a temporary lair and partial hoard, however. The beholders simply make the area too dangerous to allow creatures to find safe lairs.

Mount Kahdas and Mount Phevos: The Eye Tyrant Cliffs

Once a traveler wanders more than 50 miles out of Almraiven toward the Alimir Mountains, peculiar patterns and carvings hundreds of feet high start coming into view along the ridges of the mountains. The sheared sides of Mount Kahdas and Mount Phevos still show signs of the massive battles fought on or near them against the then-beholder rulers of Calimshan. (During these altercations, human mages sent earthquakes through the peaks to seal some of the many links between parts of the subterranean Alimir Hive.) After their victory in that battle, the beholders used human and beholder artisans to carve





huge depictions of the battle (from their point of view) on the relatively flat cliffs of the two adjoining mountains. Despite attempts in the later Fifth and Eighth ages to eradicate the works, the massive 100-foot-tall carved beholders on the northern Kahdas cliffs still blast away at hundreds of panicked and fleeing stick-figure humans on Mount Phevos. Since the humans were carved at life size, the three beholders on the opposing peak look gargantuan.

Only when an observer approaches within a few dozen yards of the carvings are any details on the humans discernible: The people are not stick figures; they are intricately carved and near-skeletal figures with horrifyingly real faces. Some even bear whip scars, are missing digits or limbs, or exhibit other signs of cruel abuse as beholder slaves. Along the sunken edges of the carvings are tiny carved messages in old Alzhedo. From these messages, we learn that the beholders' rule led to the deaths of thousands each month merely due to beholder temper tantrums and object lessons. The runes also record the names of hundreds of carvers and thousands of vows to destroy any beholders when given the chance.

Of greatest interest to the observer are the dozen or so flying humans carved into Mount Phevos. Carved to depict the few wizards that fought with the rebel armies, these figures are very detailed and depict even the wizards' jewelry. Legend has it that if a person finds Mystra's mark on a ring or medallion on these figures and touches it while saying her name, Mystra sends him or her to a place of safety. The truth of that legend is that a secret door is hidden behind the southwesternmost flier; its opening trigger is its amulet. The figure is about 200 feet from the trail beneath the carvings and 130 feet from the cliff's edge above it. The secret door opens from the cliff into a series of caverns high inside Mount Phevos that once sheltered escaped slaves and rebels.

Trails and Byways

There are no simple or direct pathways through the Alimirs for the simple reason that there has never been a great need to travel through them. The cities on the eastern side of the mountains are more easily reached via boats out of Mintar, and the mineral wealth of the Alimirs has always been poor, so miners have not demanded roads to transport ore. Another reason there are few trails through or among these mountains is their steepness. Unlike the rolling hills and mountains of the more northerly portions of the Itkazar range, the crags and ravines among the Alimir Mountains are dangerous at best, and triply so when the winds whip through the peaks. Despite all these drawbacks, a few locations such as the Pevadaas Trail and the Echoing Canyons of Kush generate blood-thirsty tavern tales that warn of the deaths awaiting folk there.

The Calim Desert

Of all the lands in Faerûn, the Calim Desert probably has the most misinformation attributed to it, mostly due to a lack of firsthand knowledge by authors and tale-tellers, who rely on local legends as their information source. Thus, much of what folk know about the Calim Desert is actually hearsay, rumor, and guesses based on what others tell them. Those rugged few who live within the desert take great glee in spinning tall tales about what it is "truly" like within the desert, and thus more lies are perpetuated.

When unaffected by the powers raging above and within it, the desert is a relatively stable salt flat. On a day-to-day basis, though, the desert is a constantly shifting, unstable, and barren region

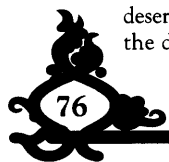
dominated by magic, the raw power of elemental beings, and the seething hatred of its two prisoners. The Calim is not a naturally occurring desert, as one could surmise from the fact that it is surrounded on all sides by rivers and the ocean. It is the result of terrific magical events still at play more than seven millennia after they were set in motion. The origin of the desert is more fully discussed below and in "The Ancient Past" chapter, but the truth is this: The magical binding of two great genie lords to their battlefield created this wasteland. As their captors intended, the destruction visited by the two on the landscape was deemed less offensive than what might have occurred had Calim and Memnon been allowed to remain free. Since so few people are willing to brave the dangers of the inner desert to ferret out its mysteries, only a rare few realize that the genie overlords Calim and Memnon live on in a transmuted form to this very day, and their effect of their ongoing rage at their situation is evident throughout the desert. For details on the effects they have and their imprisonment, see Calim's Breath and Memnon's Rumble below.

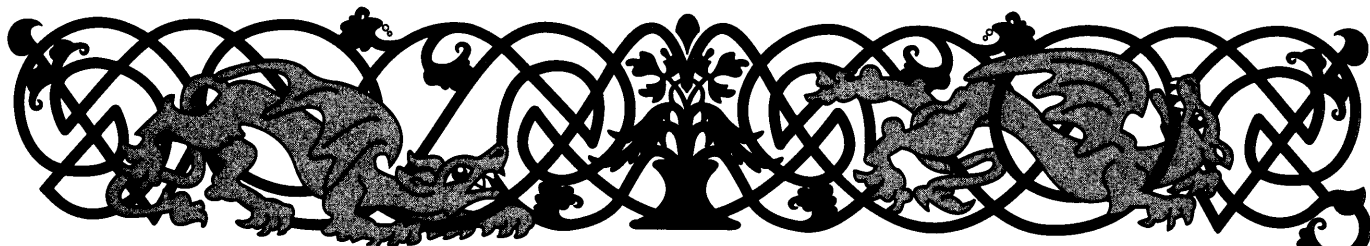
In general, most folk who travel this wasteland describe it either as a flat and barren plain for miles upon miles or as a rolling desert of sand awl with dust and sand storms. In truth, it is both, depending on where a traveler stands and when. Wildlife lives here, despite the inconsistencies of terrain and climate, though it is almost all small rodents and reptiles that have adapted to the conditions: They live among the ruined cities where the terrain is more constant or sense through experience when the sands will resolidify to baked clay-and-salt flats in order to escape their subterranean lairs. Larger monstrous predators or visitors are noted in the Monster Lairs and Nomads of the Wastes sections below.

One notable plant has adapted to the Calim Desert. The Calim cactus, as it is known, is a prickly plant that rarely grows taller than four inches high. However, the plant and its roots are incredibly broad. The roots run three times wider than the plant itself, and it has enough mobility to temporarily raise its roots up to absorb water and shove them deep within the ground to prevent the loss of moisture. Calim cacti are the primary food source of many creatures of the Calim. They are also the only things not harmed by the shifts Memnon's presence brings (unless intentionally targeted).

Calim's Breath: Calim's voice is always heard in Calimshan, just as it was when he long ago ruled, though now it is often only a low, mournful tone echoing across the desert. The presence of Calim's essence, referred to as Calim's Breath, is noted in the Calim Desert simply by an abrupt shift in wind—either the wind abruptly stills or picks up. On the rare occasions when he manifests himself, Calim appears as a massive, 50-foot-tall genie formed from dust and a heat mirage rising from the sand. Most often, Calim is invisible and is only heard, his voice ranging from a whisper of a breeze when he seeks to manipulate or inform to the level of booming thunder when he is angered. It takes an extraordinary amount of will for Calim to visibly manifest himself, thus he is most often observed within the clouds that accompany him, which shape themselves into hints of his true form. Calim would do anything to be able to fully touch something physically, but the most solid manifestation he can manage is as wind, buffeting things in its grasp.

Calim's powers are limited to the manipulation of his airy prison, though the abilities he now has are more powerful than his previous abilities in solid form in many ways. Calim no longer pos-





esses a solid form; he is trapped in a gaseous state. His resistance to magic is heightened greatly, and he is 50% resistant to all spells and effects aside from the magic that binds him thus, and that which protects the Spinning Keep (see The Spinning Keep of Siri'wadjen section). Attacking him is as fruitless as attacking the air around oneself, since that is what he is when he is within an area. He can *create water*, which appears as microbursts of rain. Within the one mile he inhabits/occupies, he casts *advanced illusion* (visual, audio, olfactory, and thermal components) and *gust of wind* at will; in fact, there is at least one *gust* active at all times somewhere within Calim's "body." Calim can cast *control weather* twice daily, and he can change the weather conditions by two steps per *control weather* spell cast (see the 6th-level wizard spell *control weather* in the *Player's Handbook*), though he can never drop wind conditions to calm because his very presence causes a mild atmospheric disturbance. Calim communicates via *whispering wind* spells at will, but if ignored or insulted, he can cast *shout* up to three times per day at those whose attention he demands. He can cause up to 20 humanoid figures to *wind walk* once a day, and he boxes in those he wishes to influence with *wind wall* at will. (All spell-like effects he produces are as a 30th-level caster.)

Calim's greatest weapon, aside from whipping up raging storms to tear apart his sandy and eternal foe Memnon, is his whirlwind. This wind funnel is 50 feet across at the base, 150 feet at the top, and varies from 150 to 250 feet high. Calim summons or disperses the whirlwind in 1d4 rounds, though a whirlwind lasts as long as he wishes within his one mile of direct influence. Nonaerial creatures of fewer than 5 Hit Dice are destroyed outright by the force

of the winds, while others suffer 5d6 points of damage. If Calim wishes a group of people to be moved elsewhere, he can direct the whirlwind to carry 25 human-sized creatures at MV 24 (C) without harming them with its winds. If Calim uses his whirlwind to grab the sand and rock of the desert below and throw the matter around, he can generate sandstorms and duststorms that inflict 1 point of damage per round of exposure and blind folk for 1d6 turns if their eyes are exposed to the storm for more than 1d4+2 rounds.

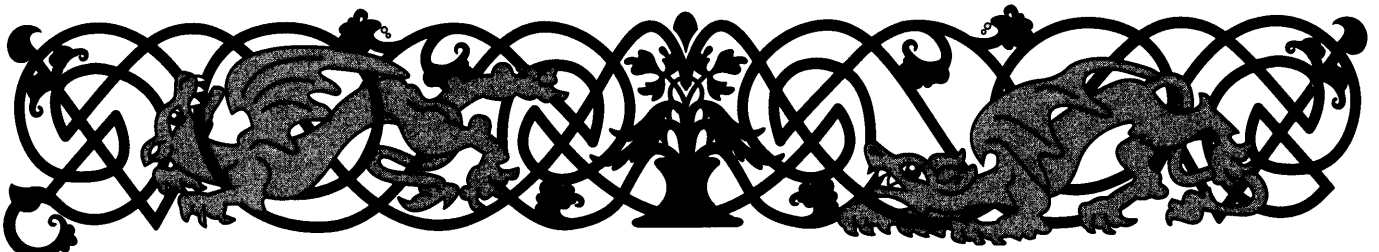
Memnon's Crackle: The presence of Memnon's spirit is hard to detect, as he exists only as an invisible entity bound into the ground. However, his company is more apt to be noticed than Calim's, as the temperature in an area rises quite quickly and the ground calcifies and crackles upon Memnon's approach because he heats up the land through which he travels. In general, he is dispersed across an area one mile in diameter. If he chooses to speak directly to folk, his most focused form is a 50-foot-diameter circular area of blazingly hot crystallized sand. Somewhere within the circle is a flame that snaps and surges with Memnon's voice. Alternatively, he can focus his essence and create a 20-foot-high and 70-foot-base-diameter sand dune with the barest hint of a face. He speaks softly through this face with the sound of shifting sand.

The few locals who understand the desert know that when the temperature rises and the ground beneath one's feet starts crackling, the blisteringly angry Memnon is coming. Even if he is only present in an area for a few minutes, the ground beneath and around him in a one-mile-radius crackles and turns to a dark crystalline sand within the course of 1d6 rounds. It takes a like number of days before the ground resolidifies into salt-encrusted barren



Memnon's Crackle in action.





ground. If Memnon wishes to take someone by surprise, he ambushes them by not traveling across the desert floor surface but moving through the earth below it. When he manifests from below, he suddenly creates a hot area of ground similar to quicksand in a 40-foot-circle that crystallizes into sand instantly from underneath. (This effect is similar to a *transmute rock to mud* cast on those caught within it, except that its area of effect is circular and it descends essentially to whatever depth Memnon wants—usually 40 feet.) Like Calim, Memnon no longer has a physical body. Because of this, he is immune to nearly all attacks save those that might *disintegrate* large amounts of matter that he inhabits. He travels along the top of or through crystallized ground at MV 12, Br 12, though he only moves at Br 6 through solid earth (which swiftly becomes sand in his wake and for 200 feet to either side of his core spirit).

Still a powerful warrior and strategist, Memnon has learned to manipulate the land and his remaining fire-based powers to great effect within the one-mile region within which his essences is normally dispersed. What galls him the most is that he cannot directly attack his eternal enemy, Calim, in the air above. Like Calim, he can cast *advanced illusion* (visual, audio, olfactory, and thermal components) at will. Tied to the earth itself, Memnon can cast *transmute rock to sand* (same general effect as *transmute rock to mud*, though with sand) at will, though only upon objects on or within 10 feet of the desert floor and less than 20 feet in diameter (which explains why some ruins still survive in the desert). Memnon can also cast *dig*, *wall of stone*, and *wall of fire* no fewer than five times daily, and he retains his efreet abilities of *produce flame* and *pyrotechnics* at will. He has 75% magic resistance, but this does not allow him to penetrate the minarets' magical fields that protect the Trade Road, to defeat the magic holding him in his current form, or to gain access to the Spinning Keep (see The Spinning Keep of Siri'wadjen section). He can create a *cloudkill* effect four times daily by engulfing areas in thick smoke. While he is no longer an efreet, Memnon remains immune to all fire and flame attacks, both normal and magical. Memnon's worst attack is his *earthquake* ability, which shatters the ground in a 100-foot-diameter area of effect, a power he can only use once per tenday since it damages him slightly, too.

Unlike Calim, Memnon can fairly easily affect physical objects. When he chooses, his voice erupts from the ground as a *stonetell* spell. He can grasp or manipulate things twice per day by creating a sandstone *Bigby's hand* with only half the normal spell duration. (When the effect expires, the hand crumbles into a pile of sand.) If he manifests to speak without focusing his essence, rocks or the ground near those spoken to become a large face not unlike those of galeb duhr, though with a more sinister appearance. (All Memnon's spell-like abilities, unless otherwise specified, are executed as a 20th-level caster.)

Nomads of the Wastes: Despite the harsh conditions and the unforgiving land, some people choose to live within the desert's confines. Sometimes called raiders (for their infrequent attacks on the equally infrequent caravans along the Trade Way), the nomads of the wastes migrate and live life similar to the nomads of the Land of the Lions. They are tribes of people who have banded together to ensure their independence from oppression and still eke out a decent life. They partially support themselves by recovering items and lost curios from the desert ruins of more than a dozen lost cities, selling them to others, or bartering them for items they

need. Few of these items are magical, and those that are the nomads keep. All the recovered items are, however, noteworthy to sages of history, architecture, or metalwork.

No fewer than 500 nomads, divided into three tribes, dwell among the desert wastes, though panicked caravan owners insist they number in the thousands! Aside from the noisy and disorienting battle cries they use when they ride down the dunes to attack the Trade Way or the Coast Trail, they are a quiet people. Even while trading with the markets of Teshburl, it is rare to hear a nomad speak more than five words in succession during haggling. Due to their laconic tendencies, of all of the families and clans among the tribes, only one family name is known: Jhannivvar. The Jhannivvars are a large family whose name and descendants long ago spread across Tethyr and Calimshan. Evidently one small family of Jhannivvars within the nomads sheltered the so-called Pretender Prince Yusuf Jhannivvar until he could make his unsuccessful bid for Tethyr's throne in the Year of the Banner and the Year of the Gauntlet (1368 and 1369 DR).

The syl-pasha wants the desert nomads either brought under his control or destroyed. Since a titular head cannot be discovered through whom the nomads can be controlled, the military is currently under orders to root out and destroy any nomads found in the desert unless they surrender. These orders are in addition to the ongoing orders to repair of the Trade Way minarets, starting from Calimport, a job that el Sadimmin is carrying out slowly but thoroughly.

Calimban Knoll

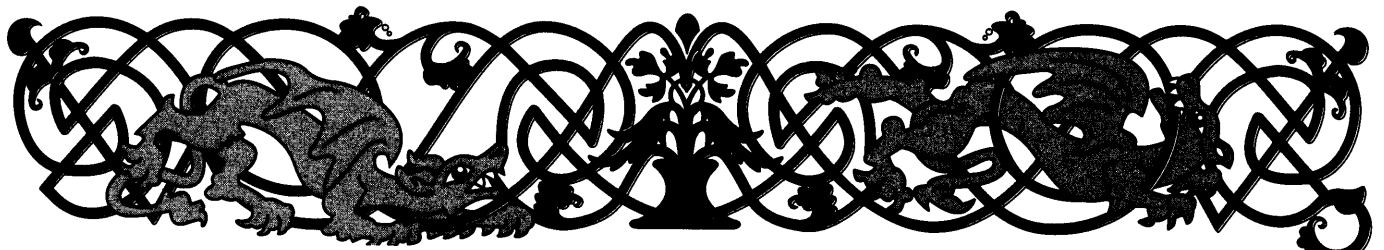
This stone circle is the site where a small force of escaping slaves held off a whole legion of Calishite soldiers toward the end of the Fourth Age of Calimshan. The circle used to be called Calim's Bane, after the thwarted attack. The circle is 700 yards in diameter and has 21 standing stones, seven of which have fallen over. The menhirs are centered around a tiny mound that lies within the accepted boundaries of the Calim Desert 25 miles southeast of Memnon. Depending on the prevailing conditions, this site is either a rough hillock with standing stones ranged round it, or it is a large dune with surrounded by half-buried massive stones. Memnon's passage ought to disturb the stones when the ground goes sandy beneath them, but some force holds them in place against him. Only those standing stones that fell for other reasons lie in the dust.

Monster Lairs

Despite the constant threat of the Trapped Terrors, Calim and Memnon, quite a few creatures live in the wastelands of the Calim. All manner of desert-dwelling creatures are found here, though few keep permanent lairs save in places where the warring presences of the genies cannot dislodge them (in other words, the Trade Road, the ruined cities, etc.). Innumerable lizards, arachnids, insects both poisonous and harmless, rodents, rabbits, weasels, toads, and snakes call this land their home. The largest nonreptilian surface creatures rarely grow to more than nine inches in length, and vultures—and the occasional hawk near the desert's fringes—are the largest birds.

Desert Purple Worms: Beneath the sands and salt flats of the Calim are where the largest of its inhabitants are found. There are three distinct groups of purple worms, each containing 1d4+1 individuals, that burrow beneath the desert floor. This variety of





purple worm is similar to the thunderherder worm in its habitat and its predilection for traveling in groups. (Normal purple worms are solitary.) It also excretes sand like a thunderherder. However, these worms are exactly like normal purple worms in their size, diet, and mode of attack. (See the worm entry in the *MONSTROUS MANUAL™* tome.) They generally follow in Memnon's wake, since his passing loosens the soil, but they must move on once the ground begins hardening again in 1d6 days. They, like Memnon, sense their prey through vibrations on the surface far above, and anything mobile that weighs more than 10 lbs. is detected by them within 1d12 hours. Whatever magic protects the Trade Road also keeps the purple worms from disturbing it as well, as no worm has ever tunneled up under the stone road.

Ruins of Dashadjen

Dashadjen was one of the military fortress cities of the Calim Caliphates. It was the primary garrison of Calim's armies before and during the Era of Skyfire. Its buildings have been destroyed, the ruins rebroken, and the rubble repulverized time and again across the centuries because it is one of the flashpoints where Calim and Memnon still clash. Only rubble, sand, and fractured and fallen monuments remain of its sturdy defenses. However, a single edifice at the city's center is untouched by the sands and the worst of the destruction: the Altar of the Air, a shrine to Akadi, the elemental power of the air.

El Sadhara: El Sadhara, which translates as *the desert flower*, is the long-held pseudonym of High Whirlwind Fida'ya yr Iamar (LE hf mummy P14 of Akadi). This airwalker (specialty priest) of Akadi from the Eighth Age of Calimshan was mummified to protect the sanctity of the shrine in the ruined city of Dashadjen and to continue her worship of Akadi. (Before the Time of Troubles, she was a cleric of Akadi.) She has deluded herself for years that Calim's presence is actually Akadi's manifestation on Faerûn. El Sadhara still has her priest powers, and she regards Calim as her lover. Calim has guaranteed that if he is ever restored to his physical form, el Sadhara will be granted unimaginable power in return for her faithfulness. Some power, whether it be Akadi or another, protects her still, and she has been collecting magic and treasure unimaginable within her shrine and its crypts below for centuries, preparing either for Akadi to come or Calim's restoration.

Ruins of Teshyll

The city of Teshyll provided a centralized farmer's market for the fertile farms of the Teshyllal Fields and was a caravan hub for the Calim Caliphates. Imports from the genies' other territories and exports from the farms of Teshyllal Fields passed through its gates. Teshyll also contained the palace for Calim's harem of 2,000 jann and human jhasin and jhasina, which was one of the greatest feats of gravity-defying architecture ever seen. After the city's destruction early in the Era of Skyfire, the Harem Palace and the other buildings housed thieves, raiders, and monsters at various times over the next 8,000 years. All that remains of Teshyll now is a few building corners and remnants of walls that are occupied by the wildlife (particularly lizards) that chooses to nestle among and under the rocks.

The Teshyllal Wastes

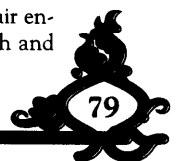
The Teshyllal Wastes are the central wastes of the Calim Desert. It was here that the Era of Skyfire ended in a flurry of elf High Magic

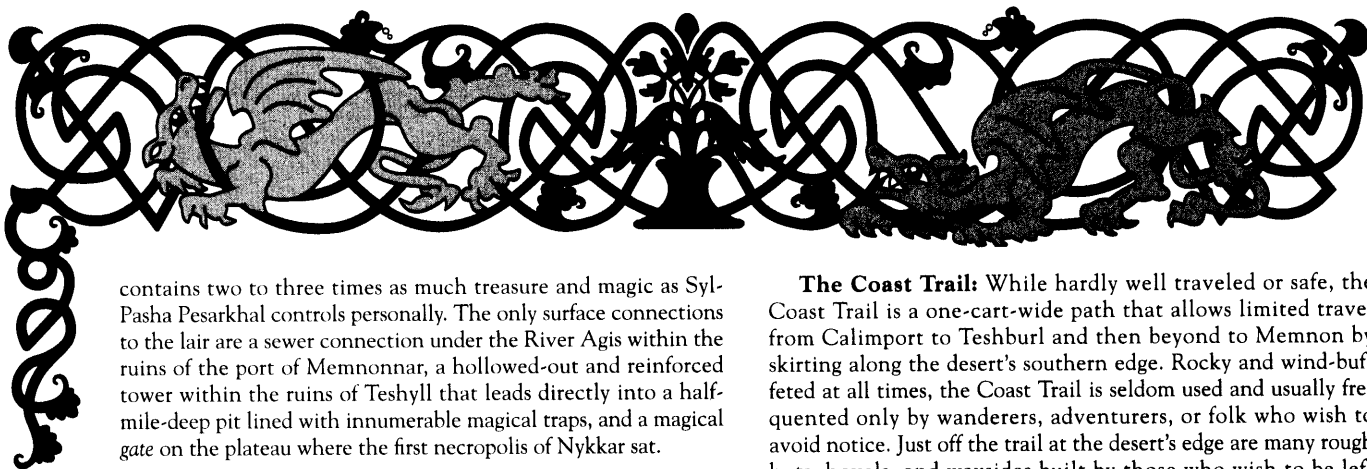


El Sadhara

and the binding of the genies. Local legends tell that on the night of Binding (traditionally held to be the 4th day of Ches), the night winds in the wastes echo with the howls of the spirits of the genies of ancient times as they remember being dragged from the long-ago cities and bound here. In truth, these wastes do feature haunting sounds that reverberate across the barren lands and sound like howls, but they do not occur only on that one night a year. Most likely they are noises made by the Trapped Terrors, Calim and Memnon. Because the wastes form the center of the desert, were the site of the Terrors' doom, and contain their salvation, Calim, Memnon, or both spirits can nearly always be found somewhere in this area, searching for a way to free themselves.

Sapphiraktar's Lair: Deep beneath the parched plains of the Teshyllal Wastes are a series of caverns that comprise the long-hidden lair of Sapphiraktar the Blue, dracolich and Runemaster of the Twisted Rune. Magically shielded to resist the changes wrought by Memnon's passing, the tunnels and caverns stretch south from Memnon for about 50 miles, out to the east to the undercity of Keltar, and to the west to within 10 miles of Teshburl. Sapphiraktar's primary lair is an ancient amphitheater and arena within a massive cavern that was once part of the central realm of Alatorin in the empire of Deep Shanatar. (The dracolich has severed all connections between this lair and the rest of Deep Shanatar due to the presence of an enemy deep dragon or shadow dragon within the Rift of Dhalnadar, which shares this same cavern.) Containing over 400 individual caverns and tunnels that the dracolich himself can fit into and over 1,000 that he cannot, Sapphiraktar's lair encompasses as much territory as Erlkazar on the Deepwash and





contains two to three times as much treasure and magic as Syl-Pasha Pesarkhal controls personally. The only surface connections to the lair are a sewer connection under the River Agis within the ruins of the port of Memnonnar, a hollowed-out and reinforced tower within the ruins of Teshyll that leads directly into a half-mile-deep pit lined with innumerable magical traps, and a magical gate on the plateau where the first necropolis of Nykkar sat.

The Spinning Keep of Sirī'wadjen

Hovering over 40 feet above the desert floor, this unique structure holds many secrets within its 12-sided shell made of a crystalline stone. The shell's pearly translucence obscures exactly what lies inside, but legends say that it holds (or is) the *Calimmemnon Crystal*. Measuring 70 feet in diameter, the Spinning Keep of Sirī'wadjen is surrounded by a protective magical energy field 10 feet from its entire surface. The field repels all nonliving magical or mundane matter and all elves, dwarves, and humans; reflects or absorbs all spells in contact with it; is immune to all weather effects; prevents teleportation beyond it or into the structure it surrounds; and resists all scrying through it completely. If the ground should shift beneath the Keep, it adjusts its own height to remain no closer or farther than 44 feet away from the ground at its bottom-most point or side. In other words, Memnon cannot rise up to the Spinning Keep through the earth using pillars of stone, and Calim's airy structure cannot penetrate the field.

Inside the Spinning Keep is a hollow area without any apparent gravity. Any being who penetrates the outer field and can find and activate one of the three secret doors on the Spinning Keep's shell can step or fall into the Keep's interior. (The triggers to the magical secret doors are exceptionally difficult to puzzle out. DMs may invent their own arcane door lock puzzles for players to role-play unlocking or require a successful Intelligence ability check with a penalty of -6 to open them. It is recommended that at least two spells or magical effects must be cast or invoked in order to activate the opening trigger. Successfully unlocking a door renders its panel immaterial for one round.) Once inside, any intruder floats placidly around the only item held within the shell walls: the *Calimmemnon Crystal*. One long-hidden account by a gnome prospector and illusionist describes the *Crystal* and the fact that the time she spent exposed to the *Crystal* temporarily gave her genie-like abilities. What is maddening to the syl-pasha, whose library contains the scroll (as does Elminster's), is that the gnome did not provide details as to how she penetrated the Spinning Keep's defenses. (For further details on the *Crystal*, see "Appendix D: Magic.")

DM's Note: If either Calim or Memnon gains entry to the Spinning Keep, merely touching the *Crystal* would restore the djinni or efreeti to his original form and abilities, with the addition of all the combined power and capabilities of the other absorbed genies, including the reconstituted genie's nemesis. In the event of this unlikely scenario, the Calim Desert would either gradually disappear—a process that would take a mere 800 to 1,000 years—or expand as part of the vengeance of the reborn power-mad genie.

Trails and Byways

Few discernible trails cross the Calim Desert, since the constantly shifting terrain destroys standard paths. However, there are two roads that surmount the challenges of the Calim, albeit using different strategies.

The Coast Trail: While hardly well traveled or safe, the Coast Trail is a one-cart-wide path that allows limited travel from Calimport to Teshburl and then beyond to Memnon by skirting along the desert's southern edge. Rocky and wind-buffed at all times, the Coast Trail is seldom used and usually frequented only by wanderers, adventurers, or folk who wish to avoid notice. Just off the trail at the desert's edge are many rough huts, hovels, and waysides built by those who wish to be left alone, be they crazed or inspired hermits, wizards, or smugglers. None of these humble structures are visible from the Coast Trail. They must be sought out by traveling no less than a mile into the desert to areas that have been untouched by Memnon's sandy clutches for at least a decade.

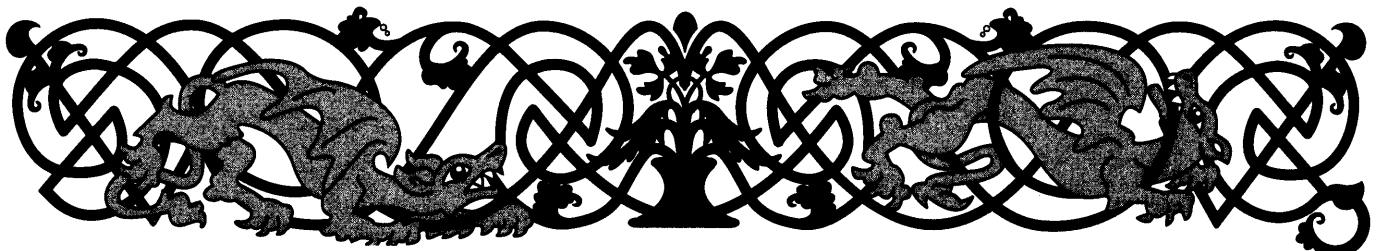
The Trade Way: The Trade Way across the desert was once a fully paved stone road capable of allowing three carts or six horses to travel abreast. While sections of the pavement are buried in the sands or broken, the Trade Way still sees some brave traffic taking the shorter, but by no means safer, land route to Memnon and points farther north. Some basic magical protections and tricks of construction built into the road during the Shoon Imperium are still extant, and these prevent the road's destruction from beneath by desert purple worms or Memnon's granulating corruption. Of course, naturally occurring sinkholes and erosion ground beneath the stone-paved road have broken the road and its enchantments in places, but it is far more intact than many travelers would expect after millennia of desert abuse.

Pairs of minaret towers constructed during the Shoon Imperium still flank the road every two miles, though the bases (and entrances) of many are partially obscured by sand and rocky debris. The tops of these slim towers feature open parapets surmounted by pointed roofs no longer gilded and glistening in the sun held up by misleadingly delicate-looking arches. However, while the archways appear to be open apertures, many of them have old spells in place that bar the passage of anything more solid than air into a tower's top.

If a group works to clear the entryway at the bottom of one of these 40-foot-tall towers and braves the crumbling tower steps, they can take shelter in the compact barracks within the tower or the rooftop lookout post. On the rooftop parapet of the lookout post rests a brass brazier set into the stone and visible through the archways from outside (if a person flies or levitates upward enough to see inside). Lighting one of the braziers is not difficult, despite the constant breezes, and within a minute after a brazier is lit, crystals set at the peak of the minaret above the brazier heat up and glow a dazzling blue.

While lighting one rooftop brazier has little effect, lighting the braziers in an adjacent pair of towers so as to illuminate and heat the crystals cloaks the road in a translucent blue magical field. This field extends away from the towers, up and down the road, for 1,500 yards. The braziers were constantly lit, and thus the field constantly in use, during the Shoon Imperium. The field keeps blowing sand off the road, reduces the force of the wind traveling over the road up to 100 yards by half (including halving all wind damage), and screens out much of the bright glare off the salt flats and sand during the day.

The syl-pasha is currently looking for a mage or mages to help him use the minarets to their full potential by magically permanently lighting and heating the braziers and rigging them to be usable as signal fires. In the meantime, he has assigned special patrols



and engineering crews of el Sadimmin to clear and repair the minarets and then garrison them once they are fixed. Beginning from Calimport, thus far they have completed work on two pairs of towers. When the protection of the minarets is restored and boosted by new magic, use of the Trade Way will explode, and travel times across Calimshan will drop, aiding the syl-pasha in his efforts to unify Calimshan.

Unbeknownst to the syl-pasha and most folk, more than a third of the crystals once set in the minarets have been pried out across the centuries and sold for a great many gold coins in Memnon and Calimport. The crystals are mined (as far as anyone knows) only in the Omlarandin Mountains of Tethyr, and replacement fist-sized gems of the proper quality could take years to locate and install, considerably extending the period of time before the desert road is finally and fully safe.

The Walking Oasis

Since the formation of the Calim Desert seven millennia ago, rare oases have formed at select points across the desert. Never more than 20 feet wide or 60 feet long, each oasis appears as if from nowhere and contains a rich plethora of plantlife and a small spring of fresh water. Within such an oasis's boundaries, Calim's winds and Memnon's heat are mitigated and kept from harming anything or anyone in the oasis. Only one oasis exists at a time, and each winter it browns and recedes into the ground to pop up again next spring hundreds of yards away from its previous location. The Walking Oasis gain its name from its footprintlike shape and the fact that it seems to be traveling from the center of the desert toward the southwest. Some postulate that the migratory spring and its attendant greenery are the last remnants of the elf High Mage who struck the two genie lords down, and that he has been traveling one annual step at a time toward Teshburl since then. Others put forth different theories as to the oasis's origin involving deities from Chauntea to Silvanus to a bizarre pact between Kossuth the Lord of Flames and Istishia the Water Lord. Regardless its origins, all who find the Walking Oasis are grateful for the respite from the desert it provides.

Calimshan's Coasts

Calimshan once had the most placid and serene coastlines and beaches of any Sword Coast or Shining Coast land, but the Calim Empire's destruction of Ajhuatal shattered the southeastern coast, transforming it into a rough and rocky mixture of beauty and danger that amazes many sailors, no matter how many times they have seen the cliffs of Calimshan. While difficult to discern or portray on maps, the ruggedness of Calimshan's coast is only exceeded by the cliffs of the Sword Coast that extend north from Baldur's Gate.

Calimshan's western and southwestern shores are relatively smooth and unremarkable, though the coastline bordering the Calim Desert is a slight 100 feet higher than the desert itself, an incline barely noticeable across the 10 miles or so from the desert's edge to the sea. Once folk travel east of Manshaka, the coast becomes far more irregular and rises in elevation. The rise is gradual and dips down again for about 50 miles around the floodplains of the River of Ice, then rises rapidly thereafter. The port city of

Volothamp's main protection is that the bluffs looming hundreds of feet above its western and northern walls are broken by only one pass down into the city by land. The ridge that shelters the City of Gems (Volothamp) extends only another 20 miles east along the coast, sloping down to terminate in the Spider Swamp. The cliffs return abruptly at the eastern end of the bay the swamp empties into, and 200-foot precipices line the coast until just before Almraiven. Ten miles southwest of Almraiven, the coastal cliffs decrease in height and finally slope down to the port city and its sheltering bay. Along the remaining coastline from the mouth of the Maridflow around the Alimir Peninsula to the sea straits of the Lake of Steam, the coastal cliffs rise to heights of no less than 140 feet, peaking in 1,000-foot-tall precipices along the mountains.

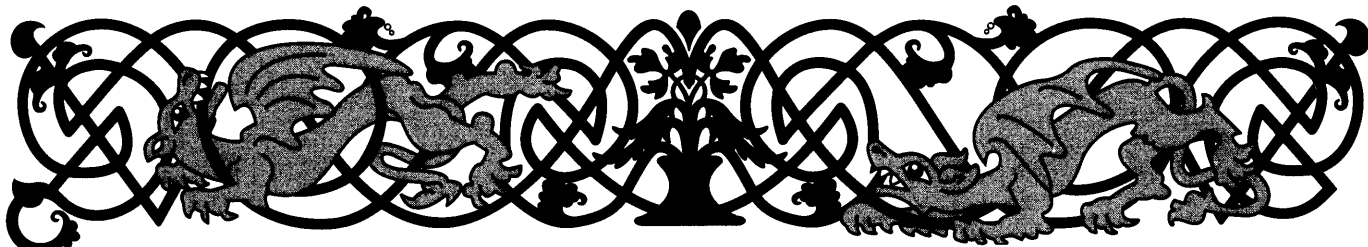
The Forest of Mir (Sarenestar)

The Forest of Mir (known to the elves as Sarenestar) has been a source of paranoia to Calimshan for millennia. With Tethyr guarding the northern half of the great coniferous forest, pashas for centuries have worried that it would be used for cover by an invading army that could strike swiftly from cover to take Volothamp and Almraiven. This fear ignores the basic tactical challenge of the forest: its nature. The Forest of Mir is so dense with monsters, natural dangers, and rough, hilly terrain that taking six people through it, let alone a small army of 600, is extremely difficult.

The Forest of Mir has always been a monster-riddled thicket far more dangerous than the more placid and stately Forest of Tethir (Wealdath) to the north. Its dense stands of pines and other evergreens are interwoven with heavy underbrush, seedlings, and saplings. The seedcones from generation upon generation of trees could be used as makeshift sling ammunition and the not-infrequent giant seedcones could even provide catapult ammunition. Everything from ogres to giants, goblins, and other creatures has lived and ruled here. With the increase in monster populations during the Tethyrian Interregnum due to the lack of any organized opposition to their growth, the creatures are becoming a major problem for Calimshan and Tethyr alike.

Goblins, ogres, and gnolls are the most populous humanoids in the woods. The bizarre creatures known as fomorians and mongrelmen also dwell among the trees, though they stick mostly to the forested slopes of the Marching Mountains on the western edges of the forest. Aranea have spread into the southern forest from the Spider Swamp, though they have claimed only minimal territory to avoid detection from without. Illithids and alhoon, neogi, hydrae, black and green dragons, and many other creatures native to the Realms can be found under the shade of the forest; so many monsters live in it that some Calishite sages refer to it as the *Khalahmjiri*, or *place of deadly teeth*. Because they are reluctant to explore the forest, the Calishites do not know the forest also holds less malevolent sylvan beings such as korred, satyrs, dryads, brownies, leprechauns, and gnomes.

Small rodents, such as voles and mice, weasels, foxes, and small woodland songbirds live throughout the forest. Black and gray squirrels and a number of owl species (all of normal to amazing sizes) live in the northern and northeastern woods. The southern woods are home to panthers and other cats that are also found in



the eastern mountains, as well. Snakes of many shapes, sizes, and species occupy the woods south of the Marching Mountains, growing more and more plentiful near the Spider Swamp. Wild boars predominate within the forest's eastern and southern reaches, especially along the southern borders near the Spider Swamps. The forest boars root up and eat insects, grubs, and various small ground-crawling creatures and thereby aerate the soil. The wild boar populations are led by wereboars, who seem oddly content to merely rule over their clans of small family groups.

Argentor

A legend of King Strohm III of Tethyr says that he and his army met a force of drow around Argentor, one of the easternmost foothills of the Marching Mountains located just within the forest's edge southwest of Ithal Pass. Here he fought for two days, during which the sky was black because the sun's light was blocked by the moon. Atop this low hill's crown, the king and his general alone killed thousands of drow—or so the story goes. Today, this low hill is a standard sentry post for guards that patrol just outside of Ithal Pass, and it has been the site of many a duel as well. No evidence has ever been uncovered that supports the veracity of the tale of "King Strohm and the Felled Five Thousand."

Dallnothax, Iskasshyoll, and Holldaybim

These three drow settlements—Dallnothax, Iskasshyoll, and Holldaybim—are all that survives of four or more larger settlements and cities of displaced drow within the Forest of Mir. Tethyr's forces and their elf allies brought down the former drow capital, Allsihwann, the ruined enclave closest to Ithal Pass. All three sites are located among the foothills of the Marching Mountains that lie beneath the tree cover of the forest (north, northeast, and east of the eastern end of the range respectively), and the caverns that lie beneath them were once the Clan Velm lands of Deep Shanatar. Now only a few buildings dot the surface at these three settlements to provide access to the deep realms below and to stable some small, swift ponies upon which those exiting can easily reach Ithal Pass, Kzelter, or other cities in the area.

Of all the hundreds of drow among the settlers in the three cities, more than 70% are ardent Vhaeraun worshipers, while the others are atheists or worship darker gods still. If these religious heresies were not enough to mandate their exile, the northern two sites of Dallnothax and Iskasshyoll are patriarchal societies, while Holldaybim is an egalitarian city of female and male rule. The major Faerûnian temples to Vhaeraun exist within these settlements, and that is the primary reason they have not been more successful at conquering the surrounding area: The zealous priestesses of Lolth from Guallidurth, below the settlements, have been battling for centuries to exterminate the Vhaeraunian heretics. Thus, when Lolth demands a crusade against them each decade or so, the drow of these three settlements grow fewer in number as Lolth-worshiping drow pry open the connecting tunnels the Mir drow have sealed and kill as many Vhaeraun worshipers as possible. Some of the Vhaeraunian drow of Mir are abandoning these sites and forming minor alliances with the Alimir Hive of beholders in exchange for more defensible abodes in the Alimir Mountains, but the majority of the Mir drow want to hold onto their temples and homes in the caverns below the forest.

Eyesvale and Uller's Hill

This small glen along the Pass Ride between Ithal Pass and besieged Kzelter is unremarkable now, with only the famed Uller's Hill near its southern end to mark it as one of the great battle sites of the Eye Tyrant Wars. The Battle at Eyesvale is immortalized in the "Song of Silvam," and most of the nearby villagers are able to recite at least bit parts of it. Well, the villagers would if they still lived in Eyesvale; they abandoned this tiny vale west of the road and barely outside the forest when Kzelter fell.

The Uller's Hill itself is lopsided, with a steep slope along its western side. When gazing upon it, one can almost hear the local guide who used to tell the tale for a few coppers: "Ayup, that's where the last beholder disintegrated the ground beneath King Silvam before he killed it dead." What many braver folk of Tethyr and Calimshan alike learned slowly over the centuries since the Eye Tyrant Wars was that the hill is lopsided due to the large number of petrified beholder corpses and the skeletal remains of the soldiers who destroyed them buried on one side of the hill.

Magis Tor

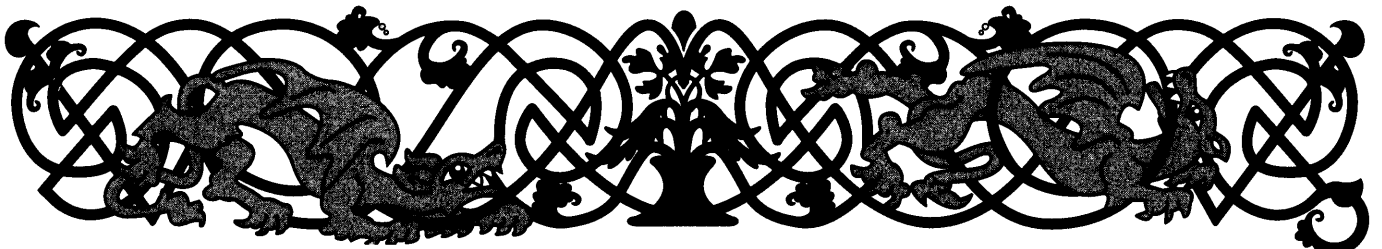
This mysterious structure composed of five towers lies within the northeastern portion of the Forest of Mir. Covered archways arc from each of its corner towers to a central tower whose base rests 30 feet above the ground, connecting all the towers as one. This doorless, windowless set of towers was home to the members of Tethyr's adventuring wizards, the Magis Mir, who were secretly sworn foes of undead beings and would have become a threat to the Twisted Rune had they remained active. They mysteriously disappeared seven months after their spectacular defeat of Runecount Akasi during the Ten Black Days of Eleint that started Tethyr's Interregnum. They have not been seen since. Apparently, a person could enter Magis Tor while wearing a special ring, none of which can be found in the absence of any members of the Magis Mir.

Monster Lairs

An unseemly number of monstrous races live within the forest. Surprisingly, few of them have permanent lairs. Most of them merely have staked out general hunting territories in which they roam. They maintain their claims to these ranges only as long as they triumph in the struggle for the survival of the fittest.

Wereboar Colony: A wereboar colony has burrowed into the southern region of the forest that abuts the expanding aranea territories near the Spider Swamp. The wereboars and their lesser cousins have taken over small hill caves or dug burrows to make defensible lairs along the banks of the upper streams that feed the Spider Swamp. The wereboars are led by a former slave from a nearby plantation who fled into the forest. He became a lycanthrope after an attack by the boars. Aided by his driving hatred of being subordinate and his massive frame, Adhavox the Render (NE hm wereboar F2) soon fought and killed the former leader to become master, not slave, for the first time in his life. He is organizing the wereboars to a higher degree than is usual for such creatures, and eventually they may raid some local plantations or caravans. For now, Adhavox bides his time and revels in the freedom he has won.

Myth Dyraalis: The "Phantom City of Drollus" is a legend that many slaves hold dear to their hearts. This mystical hideaway for escaped slaves is supposedly hidden among the trees of Mir.



Since the dream of fleeing to such a land holds out hope to them, many slaves head to the forest, despite its dangers. If runaway slaves find the Myth Dyraalis, the mythal-cloaked and peaceful city of gnomes, elves, and others at the heart of this legend, they tend to stay for life, and thus confirmation of the city's existence remains elusive and the subject of tavern talk. (The phantom city of Myth Dyraalis is detailed in the *Lands of Intrigue* campaign supplement boxed set, in *Book One: Tethyr*, in the section on the Duchy of Suretmarch.)

Trails and Byways

Other than some logging trails along the southern fringes of the forest, rapidly shifting game trails that lead (or led) to ponds and streams, and the treetop trails used by many of the forest's inhabitants, no discernible trails penetrate the forest. For millennia, the inhabitants of this forest have enjoyed the relative safety of its fearsome depths, for without the trails that normally wind through so many great woods, the inner forest has remained undisturbed since the Orb Marches centuries back.

The Marching Mountains

The Marching Mountains have been called many things across the centuries. As the Spine of Empires, they were said to represent the strength and invulnerability of the Shoon Imperium. As the Shield of the South, they defended Calimshan and her people, forming a barrier to invading forces from the north rather than leave a 200-mile-long frontier in need of defense. They have been called the Marching Mountains for the past seven millennia, since the dedication of the Axemarch Stone and the march of the dwarves out onto the plains of High Shanatar. Now the marches they were named for tend to be those of ogres and orcs pouring out of the mountains in small hordes every few summers.

While these peaks are not generally as steep and jagged as the nearby Alimir Mountains, they vary widely in elevation. The broad foothills and outer mountains are cooler than the southern lowland plains and are dotted with the manor houses and estates of many of Calimshan's wealthiest citizens, who retire to them from the cities during the summer's heat. The mountains and foothills conceal many tiny vales, some of which, due to their inaccessibility, have gone untouched by human feet since Calimshan's founding. The outer mountain peaks are broad and rise to an average of 4,000 or 5,000 feet above sea level. The interior mountains, however, include such inaccessible peaks as Mount Abbalayat, Mount Sarengard, Ruler's Ridge, and the range's highest peak, Mount Gommat, which features the famous Axemarch Stone set near its summit. The interior peaks all along the range rise to no lower than 6,500 feet in elevation, and Mount Gommat climbs to 8,500 feet.

While some maps of Calimshan depict the Marching Mountains as barren peaks, the range is almost completely forested with conifers, and only Mount Gommat's slopes above 7,200 feet are bare of tree cover. In winter, the tops of the mountains are often covered in snow. The lowest the snow line normally descends toward the warm Calishite plains is 6,600 feet. It does so only about once a century during the harshest of winters.

Once dwarven causeways and arching bridges spanned the valleys and ravines between the inner mountains, but the long wars

with Shanatar saw these shattered by both humans and dwarves. While some broken remnants of the stone spans linger, rickety wooden suspension bridges are the modern, though risky, method by which people travel through the peaks. Many ogre tribes (and other large humanoids and giantkin) like to settle near these precarious spans and charge passage fees, but their use is unavoidable since valley travel along the lower slopes is treacherous due to the danger of rock slides, monster attacks, and merely becoming lost.

Winds whip through the range and make it extremely dangerous (though not impossible) for those without natural wings to fly through the peaks. Despite the obstacles to magical flight through the area, avian life flourishes, and the Marching Mountains are filled with thousands of hawks, falcons, and other birds of prey of all shapes and sizes. One species indigenous only to these mountains is the Calishite green kestrel, a hawk prized by many falconers as a deadly hunting bird. Herds of magnificent chestnut pegasi once lived among these peaks, but overhunting during the Shoon Imperium caused their extinction. Some folk still speak of seeing an occasional pegasus in the area, but most believe that the native herds have died and that these sightings are due to folk spotting transient pegasi and adventurers' or nobles' mounts.

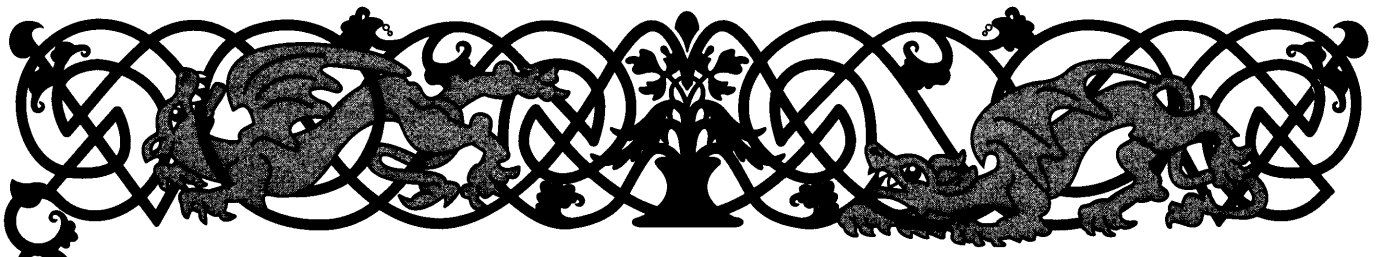
Faeressar, Khanall, and Rutawwa: Enclaves of the Janessar

The lawless rogues against whom pashas and vizars rail are the Janessar, small groups of paladins and crusaders out to right the injustices done to the majority of Calimshan's people, especially the slaves. Janessar do their work in the name of the Triad (Tyr, Torm, and Ilmater). Janessaran strongholds are scattered among the foothills of the Marching Mountains. The Janessar have managed to avoid detection for centuries through the use of sound tactics and memory-altering magic, and by defeating any who pursue them to their hideaways. While full details are not given here about the structure and layout of the Janessaran enclaves in the Marching Mountains, they are all military strongholds with all persons within them answerable both to the gods of the Triad and to a senior captain or lord, who is often a priest of one of the Triad. Most of the people in these enclaves are escaped slaves, as those rescued by the Janessar often join up to help bring others into freedom. Each enclave is nearly self-sufficient, though the enclaves trade amongst themselves for variety.

Faeressar: Faeressar is the westernmost of the enclaves. It looms on a cliff's edge overlooking the southward bend of the Calim River and the city of Keltar more than 40 miles to the south. Approachable only along one narrow ravine pass, Faeressar is the most militaristic and least religiously driven of the Janessaran enclaves. It has 150 inhabitants, 25 of whom are paladins. The paladins of Faeressar often ally with certain tribes among the desert raiders against the pashas' slave caravans heading along the Trade Way, and because of this, they know the desert and some of its secrets.

At least once a year, a group of Janessar enter the desert from Faeressar to seek the Endurance Rock—a holy site within the Teshyllal Wastes where (reputedly) the first slave under the djinni Calim cried out in supplication to Ilmater and the god answered his cries. The rock, which allegedly holds healing properties, has long been buried in the sands of the desert. Despite the dangers of the desert, the Janessar want to found a church over the rock.





Khanall: Khanall is the oldest and most important of the enclaves. It is also the largest and houses approximately 300 souls, 75 of whom are priests or paladins. It is the site where Janessar leaders convene and organize their many forces. Khanall lies due east of the Qian Hillfort and technically rests inside Tethyr's borders among the northern foothills of the Marching Mountains. An ancient curtain wall surrounds the small hilltop fortress, and its age and extremely weathered appearance make many passing within 100 yards of it believe it is merely an exposed stone wall that is naturally part of the hill. The enclave is not visible above the wall, for the hill itself has a depression at its peak, and the one- and two-story buildings within the wall all stay well hidden. The Tower of the Three, at the center of the enclave, is its largest two-story building. This stone tower is both the home of the Janessar leaders and three shrines to Tyr, Torm, and Ilmater, the patron deities of the Janessar.

Rutawwa: Rutawwa is not defended by stone or mountains like the other enclaves. This small community of 80 people, including 15 priests and paladins, is a tree village high up among the branches of the forest that covers the easternmost foothills of the mountains. Cannily constructed by elves and rangers, this enclave is nearly impossible to detect unless one travels or climbs more than 15 feet above the ground among the branches. The closest rope bridges or buildings attached to or within the trees are 25 feet from the ground, and only select whistle calls cause the inhabitants to lower a rope or vine to allow a Janessari to enter. While they are equally committed to the Triad's worship, the citizens of this enclave also honor Mielikki, the rangers' goddess, for "her aid in finding a home for justice in this land."

First Necropolis of Nykkan

This long-abandoned site is where Necroppar (morticians/clergy of the dead) prepared the Cormanshite and Calishite royalty and nobility for burial in Calim's See (now Ruler's Ridge) in the days of the Calim Caliphates and the realm of Coramshan. It rests in the foothills that lie in the shadows of the westernmost peaks of the Marching Mountains. Now, all that remains of the necropolis of preparation chambers, necromantic laboratories, shrines, and crypts of advisors, minor nobles, and priests is a wind-blasted plateau where necromantic magic lingers. The only thing that distinguishes the plateau from the surrounding terrain is a large, wind-eroded stone slab set upright at its far eastern edge. Most of the carving on the slab is illegible, but the letters or word "KAR" is visible at the bottom if weeds, dirt, debris are cleared away. The corpses of people who die on this plateau walk as revenants or return as ghosts or phantoms until a proper burial, in the religion they espoused in life, is conducted for them.

Hin Holds

More than a dozen tiny halfling towns and villages dot the interior and northern slopes of the Marching Mountains. Set primarily upon high plateaus reached easily only by the halflings' goat mounts, these villages are composed of aboveground storage sheds and structures that are both surface cottages and subterranean burrows. The inhabitants of the hin holds (an antiquated name for halflings and their homes) live placid lives removed from the evils of the lands below them. Lines of communications among the communities are kept open by pigeons and other domesticated messenger birds. Few of these hin holds bother to name them-

selves, as the inhabitants simply refer to their own village as "home."

Rarely, a halfling leaves the safety of one of these bucolic communities to experience on a life of adventure, but she or he is always careful to take precautions to prevent his or her home from being discovered, such as taking a roundabout route or confusing his or her tracks. The halflings' ultimate strategy to prevent themselves from being enslaved or conquered by the main Calishite society is simple but effective. At the first hint of any hostile force, they abandon their hold and establish a new one elsewhere. This leads to the impossibility of pinpointing the holds on a map, since they are frequently relocated.

Monster Lairs

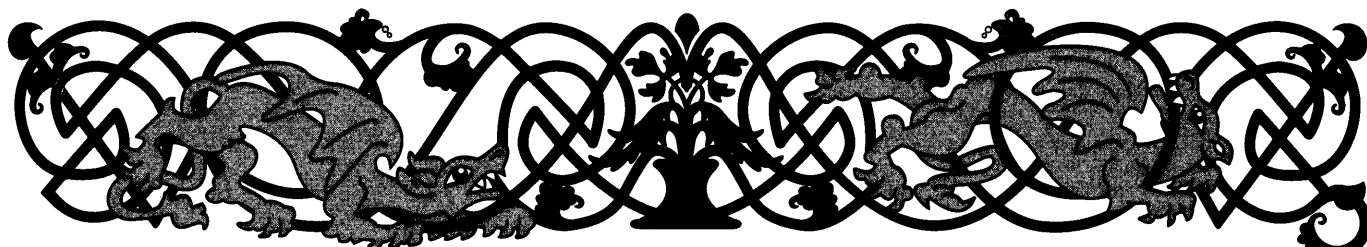
Everything from mountain goats and birds to wyverns (which live among the interior peaks) can be found in the Marching Mountains. Given the grand scale and spread of the mountains and foothills and the tree cover throughout them, more monsters live in these mountains than in any in nearby Tethyr. Most monsters are small scavengers and typical forest inhabitants, such as kobolds, goblins, and the usual sylvan peoples. Many of the more horrific and gruesome creatures live closer to, if not in, the Forest of Mir, and these include mongrelmen, fomorian giants, and deepspawn. With Tethyr's recent attempts at culling the monstrous population in its eastern Highlands, many formerly Tethyrian monsters are fleeing into the Forest of Mir and the Marching Mountains. Unless the humanoid and other sentient populations wage a war amongst themselves for territory, some of them may rumble out of the peaks and into the civilized lands due to lack of space (and to plunder and experience the only stress relief understandable to goblin hordes). Two major monster lairs in the mountains are still inhabited, and one other long abandoned is also of note.

Xiimonraavir the Devourer: Xiimonraavir the Devourer, the beholder of Minthrux Vale, is one of the Twisted Rune's peripheral agents, though he does not know it. His lair, a minor hive, is situated in a tiny dell among the mountains that coincidentally blocks the passes and the easiest access to Shangalar the Black's fortress. Beneath the vale is a massive subterranean complex occupied by eight other young beholders under Xiimonraavir's control and a number of enslaved human and halfling servitors.

Shangalar's Pyramid: Shangalar's Pyramid hovers languidly among the eastern peaks 200 feet above the plateau between Minthrux Vale and Mount Sarengard. Despite its great height and massive size, the pyramid is magically cloaked in such a way that it is not visible if one is more than 1,000 feet away. This prevents most flying creatures from bothering Shangalar the Black, who lairs in the pyramid. Any beings who approach within 300 yards of the pyramid are subject to the effects of Shangalar's many magical and physical defenses. The only beings allowed to access the pyramid enter at the will of its master, who opens the nadir of the downward-pointing pyramid. A visible *levitation* effect then draws the person or persons up into the unique structure. (For more on Shangalar, see "Appendix I: Power Groups" under the information on the Twisted Rune.)

The Yawning Cavern of Rhimnasarl the Shining: The Yawning Cavern of Rhimnasarl the Shining was once the home of the silver wyrm Rhimnasarl. During the Shoon Imperium, Qysar Shoon IV hunted and slew the silver dragon and escaped with his





treasure hoard of magic and gold only days before the dragon's nemesis, the blue dragon Iryklagathra (also known as Sharpfangs), arrived for a formal duel to the death. Angered both by the lost chance to battle her great foe once more and the loss of his hoard, Iryklagathra became a constant threat to the Imperium's qysars for the rest of their days. The cavern where the great silver wyrm lived, which is directly between the Qian Hillfort of Tethyr and the Janessaran enclave of Faeressar, still lies empty and abandoned, as anything that attempts to live there is soon slain by Iryklagathra. Whoever finally slays Sharpfangs can claim this cavern and her nearby treasure caches.

Mount Abbalayat

Mount Abbalayat has long been seen as a holy place. The mountain is riddled with caverns that were useful for providing shelter to early settlers. In those caverns live a people whose the tribal name is long lost (even among elves) and whose native human bloodline has shown a remarkable aptitude for prophecy. Modern folk only know these people as the Abbalayar (after their mountain home). Across the centuries, the Abbalayar have seen things that make kings cower and cause dragons to turn tail and flee. No one knows what the tribe's founders did to gain such oracular powers, but rumors persist of djinni mates and pacts with both fell and virtuous powers.

Mount Abbalayat is an isolated peak along the western ridges of the Marching Mountains. It is surrounded by no fewer than two peaks of a higher elevation than itself on all sides and an expanse of razor-sharp rocks and ice shards between itself and them. It can only be reached by climbing the surrounding peaks and finding a way to pass over the three-mile-wide moat of shards. The mountain itself is almost a sheer megalith. Its lower slopes are steep cliffs with few places that allow purchase for climbing. Only near its eternally cloud-shrouded summit does there seem to be any moderation of the severity of its incline. Intrepid mountaineers must also withstand the region's dangerous downdrafts and wind shifts, not to mention the magical fields and protections of Ul'sahab, City of Seers.

Ul'sahab, the City of Seers: The legendary City of the Oracles is the home of the Abbalayar on Mount Abbalayat. It is a mystical city whose marvels have been unparalleled since the fall of Myth Drannor. Myths say that only the worthy are able to find it and that those who can locate it find knowledge, peace, and love within. The Tunnel of Uladvir, a tunnel spanning from the gate of the city to the eastern peak of an adjoining mountain, is the singular safe entrance into and exit from the city. Of course, the tunnel and all those in it are invisible to the naked eye, while those inside the tunnel can see the floor that is hidden from all others.

The Abbalayar: The Abbalayar have always wielded mystical powers, and they use them to protect themselves and their kin from exploitation. When the djinn ruled the lands around the Marching Mountains, the Abbalayar were given sovereignty over Mount Abbalayat. With the fall of the djinn, the Abbalayar hid their home from the eyes of mortals, and only rarely have any recognized Abbalayar ventured from it since then. Alternately lauded and feared for their abilities, the Abbalayar swiftly learned to hide themselves, or at least their true natures. Many in past centuries have posed as Abbalayar or agents of the same, but the legends that have grown up around the Abbalayar paint them as so mighty in prophetic and divinatory Art that few pretenders can hope to measure up to popular expectations. In the mind of the average person from the southern Sword Coast or Shining Sea nations, the

Abbalayar Oracle Sight

In AD&D® game terms, the Abbalayar's oracle sight is no more than innate spell-like abilities. As these are natural powers for anyone of the Abbalayar race, and Abbalayar of any character class gain them in addition to or despite of character class abilities or restrictions. Like all spell-like abilities, they have a casting time of 3 to use, rather than the normal casting time of the spell they resemble. The abilities that an Abbalaya has are not dependent on character level but rather on the number of experience points the Abbalaya has accumulated, as noted in the table below. Abbalayar NPCs can choose one of the lesser powers they passed up at earlier experience stages rather than take the power noted at their experience point level; they cannot choose powers beyond their experience point level.

Example: An Abbalaya bard who has just gained 400,000 experience points already has selected the abilities to *detect magic* twice per day, use *ESP* twice per day, *identify* once per tenday, and use *tongues* once per day. She decides that she really wants to also be able to use *clairvoyance* once per day, so she picks that as her 400,000 experience-point selection rather than choosing between *detect scrying* and *wizard eye*.

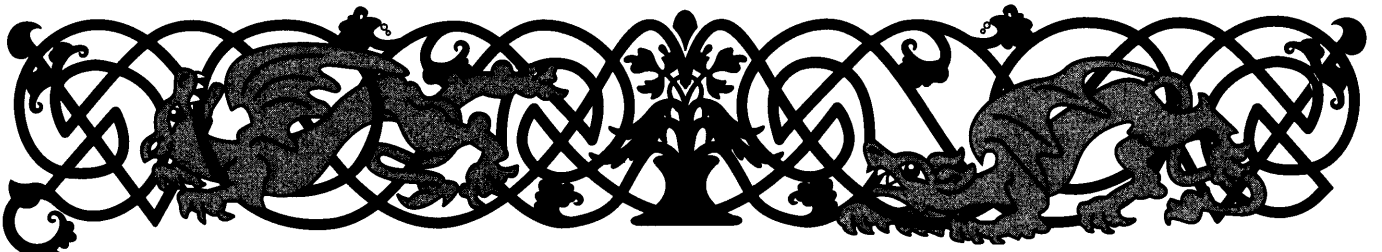
Oracle Sight

NPC XP	Spell-like Ability or Abilities
1,000	<i>Comprehend languages</i> or <i>detect magic</i> or <i>detect undead</i> twice per day
5,000	<i>Detect invisibility</i> or <i>ESP</i> or <i>locate object</i> twice per day
25,000	<i>Identify</i> once per tenday
100,000	<i>Clairaudience</i> or <i>clairvoyance</i> or <i>tongues</i> once per day
400,000	<i>Detect scrying</i> twice per day or <i>wizard eye</i> once per three days
1,200,000	<i>Dream</i> once per three days or <i>false vision</i> once per day or <i>sending</i> once per three days
3,600,000	<i>Legend lore</i> once per tenday

Use of these natural powers temporarily weakens the NPC, whose Strength score drops by the spell level and hit points drop by twice the spell level of the ability tapped. (In other words, a *detect undead* costs 1 Strength point and 2 hit points for an Abbalaya to use naturally. The lost Strength comes back at a rate of 1 point per hour, and the lost hit points return at a rate of 2 per hour or are completely restored after four hours of solid rest (though Strength points still require an hour each to recover). The social drawbacks of being an Abbalayar are most evident in Calimshan: If someone notices the distinguishing physical characteristics of an Abbalaya, that NPC becomes one of the most hunted and sought-after people in the country. Nearly every power group and lowly pasha wants to enslave an Abbalaya to learn his or her secrets—from how the Abbalayar get their power to how to find the City of Seers. Some, like the syl-pasha, merely want them dead to prevent their disturbance of the status quo.

Abbalayar are as mighty as Mystra's Chosen and are also the actual children of the gods. In truth, those of the Abbalayar bloodline are quite mortal and far less powerful than the superstitious would be-





lieve. They make no effort to refute the wild claims that common folk make about them, since the fear of retribution keeps all but the most earnest or greedy of seekers off Mount Abbalayat's slopes.

True Abbalayar are easily identified by the following distinctive features, which they all share: four joints in every finger and three in each of their thumbs, a skin tone close to the pale skin of the northern peoples, but with a reddish tint; a metallic sheen or undertone to their hair; and a unique transparent inner eyelid, similar to an owl's, that slips over their eyes and is barely noticeable unless an observer is specifically watching for it. The extra finger joints they possess allow them a particularly graceful somatic spellcasting capability, but they are not so obvious that they cannot be concealed to a large degree by gloves. Their metallic hair is also easily misperceived unless closely observed, with the gold, silver, and copper tints registering to most observers as blond, white, or Auburn.

The most distinctive Abbalayar physical feature, the inner eyelid, helps prevent the Abbalayar from being blinded, dazzled, or hypnotized (granting a +2 bonus on saving throws vs. any blinding effects and those that dazzle, hypnotize or stun through visual means). It also renders them immune to gaze attacks, heat mirages, and blindness induced from glare, such as from off of a large snow field or sand dunes.

The reason most folk desire (or fear) the legendary Abbalayar is that they possess "the sight." All Abbalayar have some innate touch of magic in themselves passed down in their blood from their genie progenitors, and while a few manifest massive physical powers similar to dao, the majority gain the oracles' sight. (See the Abbalayar Oracle Sight sidebar.)

All Abbalayar come from Ul'sahab. Because they Abbalayar remain hidden and isolated in their city, most people believe they are naught but myths. Few people know that no fewer than seven males and seven females of each generation are chosen to become the Gifted and are allowed to leave the City of Seers in order to secretly teach others the wisdom of the Abbalayar. The Gifted are chosen and sent out into the world every 20 years, and they return to Ul'sahab by the next Time of the Gifted if at all possible. The duty of the Gifted is to covertly share their prophecies and those of their elders with those who need hear them, to spread their magic and learn that of others, and to always return to Ul'sahab with trustworthy mates to preserve the Abbalayar bloodline and way of life. On average, only four Abbalayar of each gender survive to return to the fold and live out their old age in Ul'sahab, but when the time to return comes, no Abbalayar ever fails to do so.

Mount Sarengard

Mount Sarengard is noteworthy as one of the higher peaks of the eastern Marching Mountains, but it otherwise strikes most folk as unimportant. However, the lower slopes of Mount Sarengard conceal the entrance to a hidden subterranean drow temple that lies a mile below the mountain. This temple is the most important holy site of Vhaeraun. The Masked Lord's expansive cathedral city nestles within a massive cave once among the ruling caverns of Ul-toksamrin, the richest of the kingdoms of Deep Shanatar. Known as the Vault of Cloaked Midnight, the temple and its altar occupy no less than a third of the 1,000-foot-high cavern. With the addition of the Vault's ecclesiastical support buildings, this hallowed enclave claims just over half of the entire cave. The drow that support the temple live within the dwarf-worked stalagmites and stalactites clustered around it and in the grotto walls.

Nykkar, the City of Sorrow

The almost-obliterated ruins of four huge temples (only a few stones from walls and pillars remain) and a great deal of weathered rubble and scrub-covered hummocks are all that remain to mark the location of the second necropolis of Nykkar, the City of Sorrow. As the Erehnir family rose to power in the Second Age, the Bakkal Aqar al Erehnir's fascination and reverence for djinn brought their worship back into vogue within the empire. Since the first necropolis of Nykkar had long fallen into disrepair and had been occupied by ogre tribes, Nykkar, the City of Sorrow, was established in the foothills north of the River of Ice's headwaters. The four largest of the major temples here were each dedicated to one of the major types of geniekind. They offered burial ceremonies by air (exposure and disposal by raptors and scavengers), fire (cremation), earth (interment), or water (burial at sea).

Within the second necropolis of Nykkar's cavernous undertombs are the remains of more than 500,000 rulers, nobles, and folk of all classes from the Second through Fifth ages, interred there at the request of the deceased. While robbers have plundered more than 400 sites within the undertombs, guardian creatures and traps aplenty still protect the thousands of remaining graves and tombs.

Ruler's Ridge

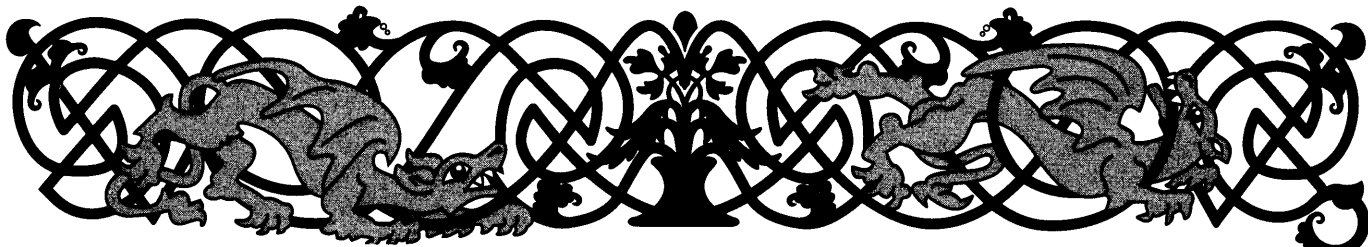
The peak formerly known as Calim's See was once about 500 feet higher at its crest, but a long-ago genie war shattered both the summit and the mountain, cleaving the peak and opening a now-weathered crevasse that separated the base of the mountain from its neighbors. Ruler's Ridge, as it is now known, recalls an echo of the events that shaped it in its appellation, but no living souls recall why it is so named (see below). The avalanche that turned a large, conical, weathered, and eroded mountain into a jagged peak covered the golden tombs of approximately the first 20 dynasties of Coramshan and Calimshan. Since that time, centuries ago, no human hand has touched the crypts. Most believe either that the gold and riches remain there still or that the dwarves of Deep Shanatar plundered the tombs long ago from below.

A recent rumor about Ruler's Ridge speaks of an aurumvorax that lives there. The golden gorgon has reputedly grown to the size of a dragon due to its voracious eating. While the gossip about the beast might well be false, hearing it might exist has sent a number of heroes into the mountains seeking its solid gold pelt and any other treasure lying about its lair.

The Tombs of the Bakkals: Because they inherited much of the rich spoils of the Calim and Memnon regimes, the bakkals of Coramshan lived in luxury and subsequently were buried in splendor and wealth. They believed a rich burial would earn them a greater position in the afterlife. It would provide them with an generous offering to the god of the dead to ensure their position among the nobles of the afterlife and then allow them to maintain the rich lifestyle in death to which they were accustomed in life.

All of Coramshan's bakkals and those of Calimshan's first seven dynasties, along with all their wealth, were buried in tombs within Calim's See in rich sarcophagi and gold-filled crypts after a 90-day ritual of mummification in the First Necropolis of Nykkar (see that entry). After preparation, the noble dead were carted up a narrow road that wound about the steep mountain to a single pair of access doors, and they were thence placed in physically and magically trapped tombs. The golden doors in the cliff face glistened marvelously in the light of the setting sun, and it was said the re-





flected light was a favorable blessing or sign from the bakkals, who were now among the gods.

Thieves, treasure hunters, and sages alike would doubtless love to visit Ruler's Ridge, but those tombs are long since hidden beneath rubble. In -1990 DR, a consortium of no less than seven djinn, efreet, and dao battled among the Marching Mountains, and their final showdown took place upon Calim's See. When the dust settled from their months-long conflict, the face of Ruler's Ridge had been forever altered. A huge cleft severed the mountain, and much of the peak had been obliterated by the furious storm of power and magic. The western face, where the golden doors had led into the tombs, now lay covered in an avalanche of rock and debris, deeply burying the royal graves. The winding road that led up the mountain was lost under numerous rockslides. If that were not enough, the death of a noble dao in the final clash opened a huge crevasse and separated the base of the mountain from its neighbors.

As might be guessed, countless treasure hunters have tried all manner of mundane and magical methods to reach, find, and plunder the rich crypts for centuries, all to no avail. Unless the dwarves of Shanatar or the drow of Guallidurth have tunneled in from below, the untold riches of all those rulers still lies beneath the forbidding face of the ridge.

Waterways of Calimshan

Most of Calimshan's rivers flood during the spring, fed by the tremendous runoff from the melting snows of the Marching Mountains. The arable silt they leave behind them when they recede significantly aids crop production. Thus, most of Calimshan's farm country clusters along the rivers' edges.

Within the past 200 years, Calishite farms and plantations have more than quintupled in size and productivity due to the development of progressive agricultural techniques. Irrigation ditches that redirect river water and trap it in reservoirs when the rivers are at flood stages have allowed plantations to grow broader and wider than ever before and to raise more bountiful crops within an artificially slightly lengthened growing season. These efforts do not assuage the starving in Calimport, however. They merely allow more produce to be exported, to the betterment of the landowners and traders.

Azure Falls

Though the destruction of the genies occurred more than 7,000 years ago, its aftermath is still evident in the rocks around Mount Ulaarn, especially the deep crevice seemingly hewn into the rock that is now known as Azure Falls. The two marids slain there—Haj and Luar—were immortalized when the spot where they died was named *Haj-luar's Falls*, but the name has become corrupted and the cleft and its watery cargo became *Azure Falls* over the passage of centuries.

The falls flow out of the mountains to form the Maridflow, and the water's descent has worn a deep mountain pool at their base. This pool is a favorite watering hole for many animals. Hunters often hole up in the small grottoes behind and beside the falls to gain a good shot at game that approaches the pool to drink.

Bakkal's Creek

The western stream that rolls peacefully out of the northern hills to join with Two Falls Creek at the Cold Eyes and form the River

of Ice is called Bakkal's Creek. The banks of this creek formerly held a temple of great importance in the Old Kingdoms. Each bakkal, as part of his coronation, would travel to this creek and its temple to an unknown god before ascending to the throne. After performing ritual ablutions and immersing himself fully in its icy flow, the ruler-to-be was considered purified and ready to place the coiled crown of the bakkal on his brow. The temple stood until the Third Age. Its ruins were decimated by the beholder occupation during the Orb Marches.

Bottle Falls and Two Falls River

The source of the bracing Two Falls River, which later joins with Bakkal's Creek to form the River of Ice, springs forth high up among the central peaks of the Marching Mountains to quickly descend in a massive waterfall 500 feet tall. The river empties between two tall cliffs, which hem it in, increasing its velocity, and the water's cascade sends up its familiar roar for miles around. It is the base of the falls that is unique, however. Rather than descending into an open pool that becomes a river, Bottle Falls drops into the remnants of a lava tube. The falls look like a massive river being poured into a tall bottle made of rock.

Closer inspection and an understanding of subterranean waterflows reveal that the lava "bottle" is not just collecting the water and creating a strange hollow whistling sound—it is redirecting it. If not for the lava tube construction at the bottom of the falls, the water would likely form a lake among the hills. Instead, about 600 yards southwest of Bottle Falls erupts an amazing sight: The river, pressurized by the falls and forced through the tightening lava tube, rockets out of the side of a hill and splashes into its riverbed over 20 yards from the hill. It is possible to walk under the river itself at the base of the hill, but those who would attempt this should be careful. This area is constantly aglow with stunning rainbows, and the vista presented by such a jaunt is breathtaking, but the slick and muddy slope beneath the river's arc has claimed many lives. Its muck is now inhabited by mudmen who guard treasures that have fallen into the mud.

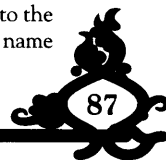
Calim River

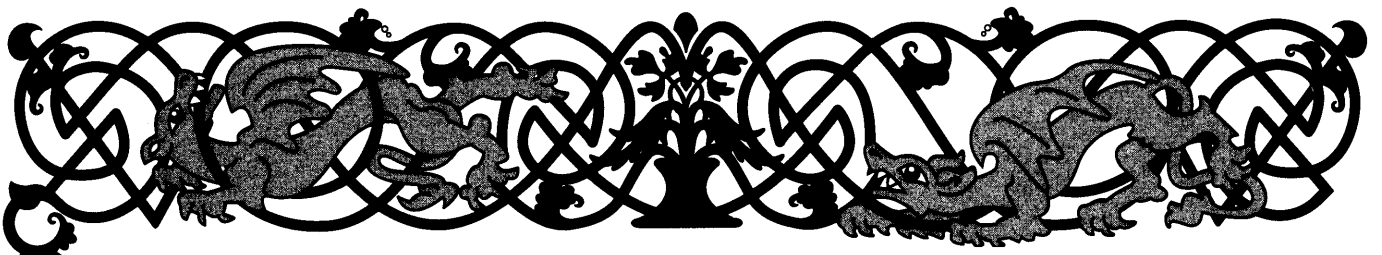
The Calim River is the river around which life first clustered and thrived within Calimshan. It is a curious body of water: superficially placid, wide, and deep, yet with an incredibly strong current hiding just beneath its surface. Fish abound along its length, and fisherfolk employed or enslaved in the plantations north and east of Keltar net many fish from it to provide cheap food for slaves.

The Calim River's annual flood enriches its southern delta with minerals and fertile silt. The level to which the Calim rises each year is peculiar. If its high cresting point were merely an effect of melting snow in the upper peaks of the Marching Mountains, all the rivers of Calimshan—or at least the River Agis—would flood to a much greater degree each year. While no explanation has ever been found for its abundant flood pattern, the Calim's banks are flanked by the best agricultural land in all Calimshan. The richest irrigated lands are those directly east of Keltar, as the plantations there benefit from the dogleg course of the river as it flows and floods them from two sides simultaneously.

The Cold Eyes

The confluence of Bakkal's Creek and the Two Falls River into the River of Ice is locally called the Cold Eyes. It has gained this name





from the bluish marble stone face carved out of the low cliff formed on the eastern side of the promontory that overlooks the merging rivers. The carving shows only the eyes and the bridge of the nose of an expressionless face above the waters.

While many assume the carving continues beneath the turbulent waters, no one has ever proven this. In fact, many have died within the whirling, powerful flow trying to seek out the face's mysteries. Those who have climbed over the cliff's edge to touch the carving and check for secret passages note only that the stone is as cold as ice, no matter how high the ambient temperature of the air around it.

Natives of both Manshaka and Schamedar have argued for centuries over the Cold Eyes' gaze in their southwesterly direction. Both cities claim the carving is of religious significance to them and that it shows the divine powers that they revere watching over them.

The Maridflow

The source of the Maridflow springs from between a cleft in the rocks on Mount Ulaarn to form a cascading waterfall known as the Azure Falls. Strangely enough, while there have never been many fish or shellfish that live in this river, its waters wash many minerals and metals out of the rocks from which it springs. Panning its depths for gems and precious metals could provide great wealth—but only to someone with the patience and the will to work hard to gain it. (Such a person is rare in Calimshan.) What increases the difficulty of such efforts are the shimmering and highly reflective stones along the river bed. When sunlight streams through the shallow water, these rocks make picking out fruitful-looking patches of river bed to pan difficult; they throw off glimmers and gleams that look promising but lead only to dross. Such patches shine brightly all day and for no less than an hour after sunset.

Quag River and Volomir River

These two slow-moving rivers wind through the Spider Swamp. They are almost identical in nature, as they meander through similar terrain at a near identical snail's pace. They once merged further south in a portion of the coast that was absorbed by the Shining Sea when the Shattering smote Ajhuutal long centuries ago. The events of the Shattering exacerbated the already poor drainage of the area, leading to the development of the Spider Swamp.

The rivers so blend with the marshy terrain of the fen that they are difficult to distinguish from the swamp even when a person is staring right at them. The only true way to know one travels a river within the marsh is by the presence of a slight current and the relative freshness of the water compared to the brackish, stagnant water of the wetlands.

River Agis/River Memnon

This wide and lazy river has formed the boundary between Calimshan and Tethyr ever since the culmination of the Eye Tyrant Wars. Its calm nature and ample breadth, combined with just enough depth to accommodate craft with shallow drafts without grounding on sandbars, make it excellent for floating cargo downriver. Its placid waters carry lumber from the forest down to Memnon and allow adventuresome folk to pole upriver to investigate the long-haunted port of Agis in the ruins of Shoonach. While some villagers irrigate fields on the southern banks of the Agis, this river, unlike many of the others in Calimshan, does not flood annually to replenish the topsoil, so such irrigation efforts are less productive than similar ones elsewhere.

River of Ice

The River of Ice rumbles out of the Marching Mountains at extreme speed and thunders through gorges and over waterfalls on its way out of the foothills and down to the Shining Sea. The two northern rivers that feed into it are the Two Falls River and Bakkal's Creek. These two tributaries carve deep canyons along their banks as they rush south, but about 10 miles below the Cold Eyes (the local name for the rivers' confluence) the River of Ice slows down, allowing fishing and travel along its length. During the final 50 miles of its length, the river travels through a 70-foot-deep ravine that straddles it on both banks. This ravine floods to the brim each spring.

Many wanderers, adventurers, and slavers pitch camps along the River of Ice's banks and fish its trout-laden waters during the spring and summer. Many also pan for or simply fish out the raw gems the raging river carries down from the mountains—many a slave has found a ruby in its clear waters that allowed him or her to purchase freedom. Local myths purport that anyone who finds two large rubies and allows the gems to flash sunlight into his or her eyes shall either gain great riches or an oracle's sight.

Surrounding Seas

Not much about the two oceans that border Calimshan impinges on the Calishite consciousness beyond their use as a transport medium for the shipping trade and the pasha's navy. However, whether the average Calishite is aware of them or not, wonders that many could profit from abound in the seas—if only their minds wandered beyond their stacked coins.

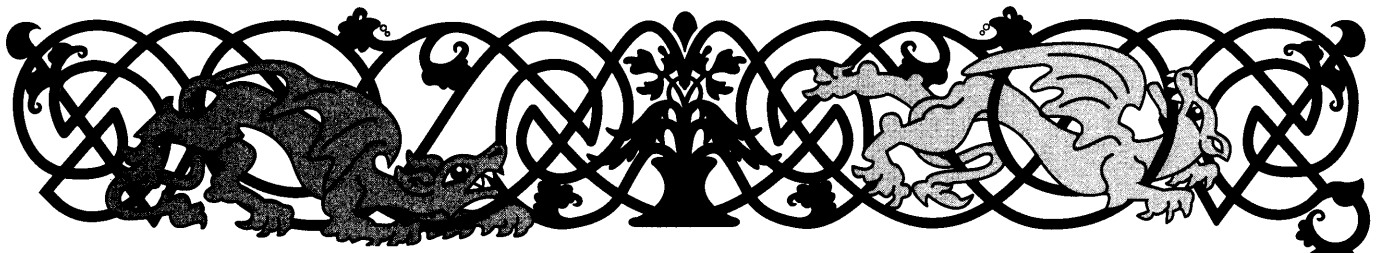
The Shining Sea

The Shining Sea is the most placid of the major oceans, as much of it is contained within a wide gulf that bridges from Calimshan to the Chultan Peninsula. The gulf has widened on its northern and eastern coasts across the centuries, but only due to major earthquakes and other disasters, not the unyielding erosion that gnaws at the cliffs along the Sword Coast. Nearly every kind of sea-dwelling creature can be found within and under the waves of the Shining Sea, though most of the hostile ones have not approached the shores of Calimshan in more than a millennia.

Ajhuutal: More than 30 miles due south of Almraven lies one of Calimshan's greatest lost secrets. The true lost city of Ajhuutal (incorrectly thought by most to lie within the Spider Swamp) rests, long shattered, more than 300 feet beneath the waves of the Shining Sea. However, most of the city center and its structures remain intact, though they are now encrusted with coral and weeds and are inhabited by aquatic beings. The majority of the city's populace are merfolk, though a few sea elves also dwell here. Amazingly, the city's inhabitants have learned to tap into some of the lost magic of the genies sealed within the city. With them, they have created a mythal-like field that envelops much of Ajhuutal and allows its inhabitants some magical control over the waters around and within the city.

Kraken: A kraken, unspotted for centuries but recently awakened, lives off the coast of Calimshan somewhere between Calimport and Manshaka. Its attack on the *Pasha's Palace* (see below) was the first and last hint of its existence to the lands above





the sea. Below the waves, the good folk of the seas near the Velen Peninsula in Tethyr and Ajhuatal (see above) have been worried for years. The kraken has been biding its time for decades and surrounding itself with scrags, merrow, and sahuagin forces that it works with as allies, wields as an attack force, or employs as bodyguards. While the merfolk and sea elves have been left in relative peace here in the south, the kraken and its troops have been more active out to the west among the Singing Rocks and the Nelanther. There they have either been destroying undersea settlements or press-ganging their inhabitants into the armed forces under the kraken's control. Few know the ultimate goals of the kraken, and every undersea creature equally fears both the mystery and its final resolution.

Wreck of the Pasha's Palace: The infamous *Pasha's Palace* lies on the sea bottom about 20 miles west of Ajhuatal and roughly 90 miles southeast of Volothamp, where it has lain since its tragic sinking on its maiden voyage in the Year of the Turret (1360 DR). The ship was to be Pasha Djenispool's terror on the seas (though he did not live to see it launched), and it was heavily loaded with magical dweomers and items, weaponry, and a near-army of sailors to keep it functioning. The hull and the decks were all warded against any mundane and magical attacks that Calimshan's enemies might normally use against the vessel. However, the shipbuilders had not counted on the size of the ship attracting far greater foes than ever expected. The ship, at approximately 1,000 feet in length and with a beam (width) of 100 feet, presented an easy target for an even greater foe, as less than five hours into its first voyage three massive tentacles grappled the ship, punched easily through the steel-reinforced hull, and dragged it and all its complement to a watery grave.

Now its hull has been stripped clean of its magically water-resistant metals by the merfolk of Ajhuatal and the sea elves off the Velen Peninsula to the north. These races are thrilled to have acquired the better building materials presented by the hull plates, and the steel long swords (magically treated to resist rust) that they scavenged from the ship's stores are the best weapons beneath the sea. While the ship's armaments and the personal treasure of most of its inhabitants were split between the inhabitants of Ajhuatal and the undersea Dragon's Head Peninsula region, much of the golden ornamentation on the ship was either taken by the kraken or by scavenging sahuagin while the merfolk and elves were occupied confiscating the far-more-important weapons. All that remains of the *Pasha's Palace* at this time are the remnants of its wooden keel, hull, decks, and masts, creating a 900-foot-long and 100-foot-high reef of coral encrustations, sea plants, and crevices in which crabs, sea urchins, fish, sponges, and eels dwell.

The Singing Rocks

The Singing Rocks are a tiny island chain set in the Trackless Sea whose northernmost isles officially demarcate the north-south boundary between Calimshan's and Tethyr's sovereign waters. In earlier times, the Singing Rocks also played an important role in preventing sea captains from drifting too far west of the safer coastal waters.

The Singing Rocks gained their name from a curious phenomenon noticed by many sailors of the southern Sea of Swords. Hauntingly beautiful singing seems to erupt over the waves from the Rocks, though it does not carry the usual danger inherent in siren or harpy song, and sailors who hear it are not charmed to their dooms. Those who have come within 150 feet of the isles

that seemed to be the source of the singing never found any living things emitting the songs. When they came this close, the sound stopped as well. No magical or mundane reason has ever been found for these lyrical episodes.

Shond Tharovin: Currently, however, the Singing Rocks contain a major threat to anyone who comes within hailing distance of them. The former wizard and vizar Shond Tharovin of Schamedar lives on any or all of the Singing Rocks and may even have a lair on the southern shores of Thordentor among the Nelanther Isles to the north. Cursed into the form of a monstrous gibbering moulder due to his failed power gambit using the *Living Gem*, Shond Tharovin fled his enemies in Schamedar and drifted westward on the ocean to take up residence on the Singing Rocks. He can spread his monstrous form across all of the northern isles in the chain by stretching his amorphous body through the ocean depths. Few undersea predators disturb Tharovin's form due to natural chemicals his body emits that cause them to believe he is poisonous to eat.

Tharovin is omniconsciously aware of all areas of his bodily mass, no matter what form he wears, and he can speak out of any of his mouths. Thus, he may have had some contact with the undersea kraken (or krakens) manipulating the evil undersea forces between Ajhuatal and the Velen Peninsula. He may also be aware of some undead whale skeletons defending an undersea lair near Thordentor (which he does not know belongs to the Twisted Rune).

When he wants to, Shond Tharovin can pull his moulder form together to either dominate more than three square miles of one of the islands or temporarily regain his human shape for spellcasting. As he can *shape shift* three times per day, he can easily cross miles of sea or land by stretching his moulder form to full extension (over 12 miles long), taking to human shape at that extension, and then returning to moulder form. He repeats this tactic in series to make swift getaways.

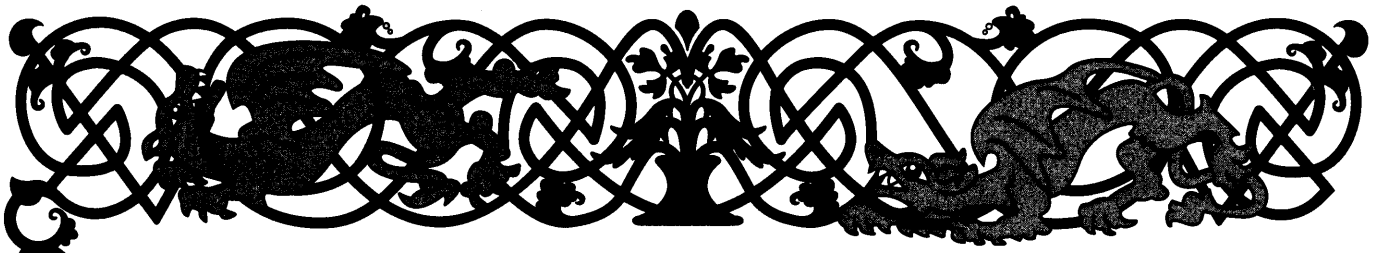
None can truly say exactly what powers Shond now wields, as his exposure to the *Living Gem* radically altered him from the 13th-level wizard he was a few short years ago. Many suspect he studies the Art still and practices spells using only verbal components to allow him to retain his spellcasting ability and his most powerful form at the same time. He has also maintained a formidable arsenal of magical items, though he has lost the *Gem* to its cultists on the Calishite mainland. For its theft, atop all their other transgressions, Shond Tharovin patiently and maliciously plans the eventual tortuous end of all the members of the Cult of the Living Gem.

The Trackless Sea

The Trackless Sea of the Sword Coast is far colder, rougher, and more vital to Calimshan in many ways than the Shining Sea. The Trackless Sea's pirate-riddled waters *must* be traversed to keep shipping flowing, and Calimshan *needs* its northern trade to maintain its current living standards. The long treks north by sea were the main motivation for a strong navy in the past, but el Nallojal still has not completely recovered from the loss of the *Pasha's Palace* a decade ago.

As in the Shining Sea, a great many aquatic races live within the depths of this ocean. A great many unnatural and monstrous creatures also abide here. Undead whale skeletons patrol the sunken lairs of the Twisted Rune near Thordentor in the Nelanther, sailors tell tales of giant clams the size of cities creating pearls the size of a caravel, and even the simplest of children know more shipwrecks dot the seabed off the western coasts of Tethyr and Calimshan than there are currently active ships sailing the oceans.





Since the Amnian discovery of Maztica nearly a decade ago, Calimshan has attempted to start its own colonies across the sea. However, Calimshan's previous lack of true central authority worked against the organization or implementation of any major forays into uncharted lands. While spies among the Amnian lands are making headway for the syl-pasha, no fewer than six ships a year have been sent west into the lands south of those claimed by the Amnians since the rise of el Pesarkhal. Although the syl-pasha gave the ships' captains until the Year of the Unstrung Harp (1371 DR) to report back with news of success and much gold or not to report back at all, none of them have made contact. (Perhaps they could not report success and are taking the second option.) While many speculate that the ships were destroyed en route to the new lands, others believe that Calimshan's luck may soon change.

The Spider Swamp

The Spider Swamp, or the Venommire, as some have taken to calling it in recent years, is a hot, fetid swamp that is far more dangerous than any mere marsh or quagmire in northern Faerûn. Fed by many springs and two small and sluggish rivers that once merged to drain the area, the marshland developed after the fall of the marid Ajhuu into the fen known today. The Calishite heat and the area's slow-draining moisture combine to create one of the singularly most uncomfortable places known to humanity on Faerûn.

The waters of the Spider Swamp are choked with life and death both. The area is literally clogged with massive amounts of vegetation, lichens, and mosses, which in both living and rotting support a cornucopia of life forms that, in turn, contribute to the teeming life and death of the ecosystem. The northern half of the swamp and those areas directly abutting the major streams through it contain fresh water, as do some smaller oases where springs provide clear cooler patches of potable water. The rest of the central and southern swamp holds brackish water because the area's elevation dips to near or below sea level, allowing the seepage or backflow of sea water. Those undersea races that can survive breathing fresh water often flee into the lower swamp from the Shining Sea to avoid pursuit by sahuagin. Only the semiaquatic races, such as bullywugs and lizard men, have settled the swamp's interior, though.

Trees and their long-ranging low branches and roots provide much of the support for the few patches of solid ground throughout the swamp. However, proximity to a tree does not always guarantee safety either, due to the large numbers of carnivorous plants or animals that either look like or lurk in trees. Other dangers include quicksand, the unbelievable swarms of biting flies and mosquitoes, leeches, giant slugs, or even sudden explosive expulsions of superheated swamp gases guaranteed to set even the waterlogged trees of the swamp aflame for short periods.

The moss- and vine-covered trees, waters, and fens are equally infested with more mobile dangers. Amphibious lizard men and bullywugs have established a few small villages within the swamp in its near-impenetrable core, and at least one group of lizard men is reported to have muckdweller servitors. Mudmen who are equal parts native and land inhabit at least seven areas throughout the swamp, but they rarely number more than 10 in a given patch. Other less-numerous creatures include darktentacles (see *MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM Annual, Volume Two* or the *Ruins of*

Undermountain boxed set), will-o'-wisps and nishruu, giant insects (wasps, mosquitoes, and ants), crocodiles of variable sizes, and, of course, spiders of all sorts. In addition, the swamp's most notable inhabitants are the "werespiders"—the aranea.

The Aranea: While not all historians and sages of zoology accept the following as canon, here is the widely accepted Calishite origin of the "werespiders" (they are not lycanthropes) that inhabit the Spider Swamp: During the long-ago Night Wars against the drow, the rulers of Calimshan had their court wizards create creatures loyal to them that could infiltrate the drow and destroy their organization from within. These early aranea had the ability to shift between a massive spider form and a humanoid drow form. These shapechanging creatures aided Calimshan immensely, but once the immediate troubles with the drow faded, the aranea were discarded by the Calishite authorities and forced into the Spider Swamp—if not killed outright.

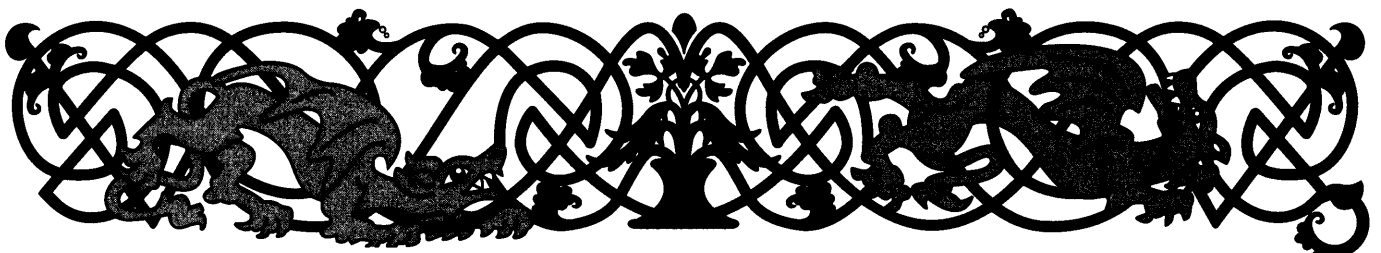
Within a few centuries, the aranea developed a relatively neutral culture. Their commerce with humankind in silk (silk worm and spider types), herbs, and poisons was often conducted through intermediaries to avoid the detection of their inhumanity. They even traded in Volothamp in their illusion-cloaked humanoid forms. However, some accidents and rumors eventually led to their exposure as spider people, or werespiders, as they also were called. While not trusted or even much liked, their access to rare herbs found only in the swamp and exquisitely fine silks made them useful, and so they were grudgingly tolerated.

Then Qysara Shoon V, seeking a scapegoat for a plague accidentally unleashed upon Almraiven in the Year of Full Cribs (290 DR), conveniently found blame in the aranea. She set upon the swamp and its previously peaceful denizens with her legions. The military attacks and the backlash of the inhabitants of Volothamp against the "plague carriers" nearly saw the aranea completely destroyed. Many remaining aranea, especially those who shared blood ties with humans (and had the *shape change* forms of half-elves and Calishite-looking humans), were broken in spirit. A few of the pureblood aranea turned to harsh foreign sources of power to retaliate for the harm that the Calishites had visited upon them. They embraced the dark power of Zanassu, a spider being whom they summoned from the Lower Planes to avenge their fallen.

Zanassu took the battle to Shoon V in the Year of Frostfires (292 DR). Despite Qysara Shoon's inability to personally wield magic through spellcasting, she commanded an arsenal of magical items and loyal guards, and these sent Zanassu screaming back to the Abyss. (Unknown to the aranea, Zanassu was later defeated by and subsumed into the drow god Selvetarm, and this is the being they worship to this day.) Still, while uneasy about allowing the aranea to live, the Qysara's troops found it increasingly difficult to locate and slay them and eventually abandoned the purges altogether.

Since the early Fourth Century Dalereckoning, the aranea have lived within the forest peacefully. The militant priests of Zanassu the Demon Spider, while chaotic in the worship of their forceful demon god, are content to serve him and the community by craftily defending the temple. They only use their fighting prowess and priest magic against encroaching denizens of the northern forest, such as the wereboars of Adhavox the Render (see Wereboar Colony under the Monster Lairs subsection of the Forest of Mir section). The aranea, in their human changeforms, have infiltrated and set up small trading agreements with Volothamp and Almraiven again, though their identities are hidden beneath the





cover of the Silverstars Trading Coster out of Saradush, where an allied human and aranea pair manage the money and wagons that bring the goods to the Calishite towns.

Aranea (base): AC 7; MV 18, Wb 12; HD 3 (base); THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (bite); SA spell use in any form, poison bite; SD shapechanging powers, 60' infravision; SZ M (6' diameter); ML steady (11–12); Int high (13–14); AL N; XP 650; MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM *Annual, Volume Three*.

Poison Bite: Three times per day, aranea can inject poison with their bites while in either spider or hybrid form. If a saving throw vs. poison is failed, the poison inflicts 1d4 points of damage each round for 1d4 rounds on a successfully attacked victim.

Spellcasting: Aranea can learn to cast wizard or priest spells by taking on character classes just like normal humanoids can, though they are limited to the level restrictions of half-elves. They prefer illusions and charm-type spells and can specialize as enchanters, illusionists, and transmuters. They can never learn necromancy school spells unless they are also available to another wizard school, and they tend to avoid the use of fire-based spells.

Shape Change (Humanoid Form): All aranea can shape change into humanoid forms (of their own gender) that are set at birth. While most shift into human or half-elf forms and are identical in all ways to Calishites of the same racial mix, a few aranea within the Spider Swamp can change their forms into those of drow. Shapechanged aranea of any of these types are undetectable from racial norms save by *true seeing* and similar magical means, and they have all the attendant abilities of the race and class they mimic. It takes one round for them to change from their natural spider forms to their hybrid forms. Use of their *shape change* abilities does not allow them to heal damage in any form, and they do not change form when killed.

Shape Change (Hybrid Form): Aranea have a form that is equal part spider and humanoid. It is humanoid shape with spider fangs, spinnerets in the palms of the hands, four eyes (the second pair higher on the temples), and an extra joint in all fingers and toes. Additional changes to the base hybrid form (for each is distinct) might include spider's limbs at the sides of the torso (no more than eight limbs total) or a satyrlike form with spiders' legs instead of humanoid legs. Statistics for the hybrids either equal base humanoid or base aranea statistics for each characteristic, depending on what would fit the characteristic (for instance, fangs would use the spider form's bite damage if used to attack with). It takes one round for aranea to change from their hybrid form to spider or to humanoid form. (Two rounds total to go from humanoid to spider form.) Their hybrid forms can use weapons.

Webbing: Each day an aranea can generate up to 30 feet of webbing while in hybrid or spider form. Each strand is equal to 50 feet of silken rope that can support 500 pounds of weight. A strand is one-quarter inch in diameter and can be severed by 2 points if slashing damage or a successful open doors roll. Aranea often wait in trees for invaders to pass beneath them, lower themselves on webbing, and attack with spells. Creatures attacked in this manner suffer a -1 penalty to surprise checks. An aranea can throw his or her own webbing as a lasso to entangle opponents. When spun around an opponent, 20 feet of webbing immobilizes a man-sized creature and half that a small creature. Large creatures can only be hindered by webbing.

Lost Ajhuatal

The ruined city that rises up out of the northern part of the Spider Swamp has been called Lost Ajhuatal for millennia because its location is close to the former Maridlands and the swamp itself was one of the results of the clash between Calim and Ajhuu. However, the ruins are actually those of Fifth Age dissidents who wanted to avoid the rule of the bakkals and pashas. In its heyday, the swamp city was hardly larger than a small town containing the

basic services available in most such communities. However, the vaulted stone construction and the magic that keeps the swamp at bay from the ruins give the modern impression that they are those of a greater place than the town really was. The whole of the town rose more than 20 feet above the swamp, raising the community above even the worst of the spring floods, and the engineering works of its undercity allowed for indoor plumbing and pumped in fresh water from deep springs far beneath the city.

Sometime after the Night Wars, the aranea moved into the area and overwhelmed the human population, sharing the city for a time but leading to the extinction of the purely human culture. The aranea were adopted into this isolationist culture and interbred with its inhabitants, bringing about the changes seen in the aranea species in the modern day. While most of the modern-day aranea inhabitants of the town are pacifistic and do not want to fight invaders, they are rarely allowed the option of discourse over combat because of the innate fear most folk have of spiders. The spider folk defend their homes quite passionately and have become quite paranoid of any nonaranea arrivals. In all, at least 240 aranea of various ages live in Ajhuatal at all times, and another two dozen lurk about the swamp and the forest, patrolling the city's outskirts to warn of impending attackers.

Over the course of time, numerous wars have repeatedly destroyed parts of the town, and the aranea have rarely had the wherewithal to rebuild it. Thus, only the undercity, which is magically sealed against the surrounding waters of the swamp, survives virtually intact. It is this that the aranea now count as their city.

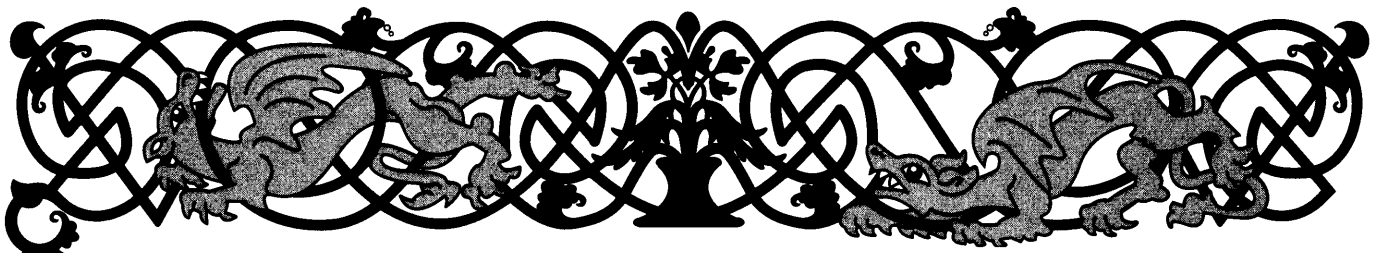
Atop the swamp lie numerous fallen buildings, statues, and ruined walls of former imposing structures. In the Seventh Age, an explorer of the swamp wrongly designated this site as Lost Ajhuatal with no evidence other than not knowing of any other ancient city in the general vicinity. Since that time, despite many attempts to clear up the misconception, increasing numbers of folk have come to believe this to be the ruined city of marids, pointing to such happenstances as the fountains of fresh water (tapping into deep springs) as an example of surviving marid magic. The primary reason folk want to believe that this is the City of Maridsorrow is the legendary treasure lost with Ajhuatal's fall: Folk still cling to a hope of recovering it, and they cannot do that if they do not really know where it rests. The greatest treasure rumored to lie buried in Ajhuatal is the lost *scepter of Calim*, the clublike golden rod of metallic fire that apparently fueled the Shattering (as the event of Ajhuatal's fall is called).

One of the few buildings within the city that has remained relatively whole is a temple with a massive stone spider forming its central dome and stone webs spreading out to the four minarets flanking it at the corners. This is the temple of Zanassu, the Spider that Waits. His priests and followers number fewer than 100, and unlike their noncombative fellow aranea, wait impatiently for chances to defend the city, to hunt, or to even—in their nascent dreams—fight a war. The followers of Zanassu (really Selvetarm, who subsumed him) are neutral evil in alignment, rather than the neutral of the other aranea. The more extremist views of Zanassu's aranea are tolerated because their protective martial abilities help their race survive.

Monster Lairs

There are no fewer than seven dragons' lairs among the southern trees of the Forest of Mir and the hummocks of the Spider Swamp. Most have been long abandoned due to the cullings performed by





the red dragons Charvekannathor and Balagos to enforce their alleged rule over these lands.

Sablaxaahl Three-Horns: As Charvekannathor's and Balagos's last culling took place over 20 years ago, one young black dragon has been able to move into the Spider Swamp. He knows he either has to move away from his current lair or eventually face the ancient wyrms who claim this land as theirs. The young Sablaxaahl Three-Horns, so named for the short, extraneous third horn he has between his normal foreswept horns, lives at the eastern edge of the swamp where the hills rise above the muck. His lair is a hill cave reached only through a submerged tunnel entrance that is totally unnoticeable from without. (Sablaxaahl might never have found it if he had not been born there.)

The young dragon has survived a few fights with lesser beholders in the Alimir Mountains to the east. From them, he has won a certain amount of treasure, but he knows he must either find greater magic to challenge the red wyrms of the land or relinquish his lair and life to them. Of late, he has conversed with a brave adventurer who penetrated his lair and gave him a powerful magical staff merely to be allowed to live and talk to him. Sablaxaahl believes he is craftily robbing this woman, the Lady Mage Shunnari al Ynstar, of her potent magic. He intends to allow her to live as his pawn so long as she continues to enrich his might through gifting him with knowledge and magic. (The dracolich Sapphiraktar the Blue lets him continue to believe that, as Shunnari is an agent acting on his behalf.)

The Tethyrian Borders

Calimshan's eastern boundaries are in flux due to the siege on Kzelter by Teldorn Darkhope and his zealous "Banites." But ever since they broke away from Calishite control as slaves, Tethyr's people have jealously guarded their freedoms and their borders. Calimshan's territorial borders with Tethyr end with the River Agis, and Tethyr is firmly set on having them stay there. Socially and ideologically, Calimshan claims the old imperial lands of Mir and Shoonach and merely waits for Tethyr to politely accede these lands (as it has waited for decades). Due to the constant threat posed by Memnon, a major Calishite city directly over the border, Tethyr defends its southwestern perimeter with great zeal and numerous garrisons.

The Calimmon Garrisons

There are four primary garrisons—Fort Agis, Fort Tufenk, the Iltakar Garrison, and Fort Calim—dotting the frontiers of County Calimmon in Duchy Ankaram in Tethyr. They act as the primary defensive posts along the northwest borders of the River Agis against Calishite incursion. These old stone fortresses have withstood the tests of time and battle. In general, all of the forts are huge stone-walled enclosures 10 to 15 feet thick and 20 feet high. Most are set on small hills with trenches dug around their bases to add an additional 10 to 15 feet to the distance a ladder or siege tower erected by a besieging enemy would have to bridge. While stolid and unimaginative in construction, the garrisons' design has been proved sound by enduring for over six centuries. Each garrison has a complement of 200 troops under the command of 10 junior officers and one commander of captain's rank or above. Any distinctions among the forts are noted below:

Fort Agis/The Memnonnar Citadel: This garrison is located two miles north of Calishite Memnon on the north-central edge of the ruins of Memnonnar. As the garrison is posted closest to Calimshan and is located next to ruins, with all their attendant troubles, its complement is higher than that of the other fortresses. It houses 300 soldiers and 15 officers under its commander.

Fort Tufenk/The Fortress of Fire: This fort rests on a high ridge along a former trail leading east toward Shoonach. The ridge was allegedly a firebreak dug by the jann during the djinn wars against the Army of Fire in Tethyr's prehistory.

The Iltakar Garrison/The Katar Garrison: The southeasternmost garrison along the western foothills of the Marching Mountains and the northern shore of the river comes under frequent attack by the raiders out of the Calim Desert. Its nickname comes from the commander's preference for training his soldiers to fight with a Calishite katar (a punch dagger) along with the more traditional scimitar or long sword. This garrison fell to the wizards of Mulsparkh decades ago, but it was later reclaimed and refortified by Tethyr.

Fort Calim/Shoonach's Sunset: This fort was built over the dwarven foundation of a long-lost fortress. The garrison's close proximity to the eastern edge of Calimmon County and the westernmost edge of some of the Shoonach ruins makes its force as much a major defender against Shoonach as Calimshan.

Fort Teqlar

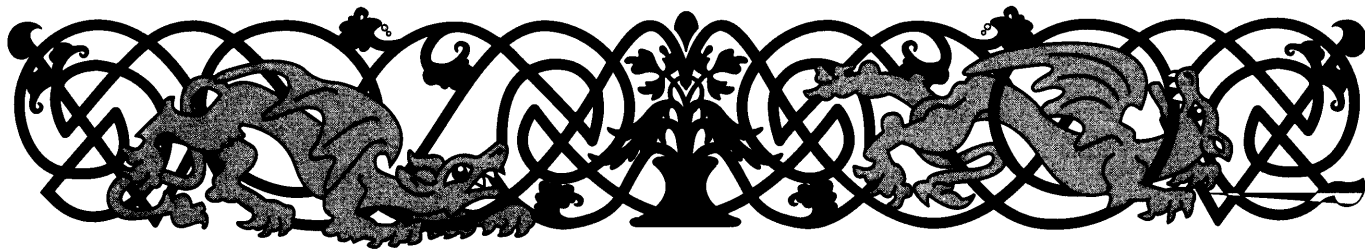
This garrison is in County Monteshi in Duchy Ankaram in Tethyr. It was restored and manned to guard the ruins of Shoonach and prevent the Tethyrian capital from being attacked by anything escaping from it. It holds 150 troops, along with people to man the patrols of 25 soldiers (one during the day and two at night) that ride out from it. It is commanded by Count Oxsal Keeneyes (NG halfm P7 of Arvoreen).

Monrativi Teshy Mir

Calimshan's cartographers and the syl-pasha are constantly aggravated by the Tethyrian assertion that the territory of the former First Kingdom of Mir belongs to their nation. Though they have not held lands north of the river since the aborted and sacrificial Mulsparkh invasion, Calishites see the lands around Shoonach and east of the River Agis into the foothills of the Marching Mountains as their sovereign territory. Here was where the Calishite empire first grew strong, and the lands of Mir *must* one day be occupied by Calishites again—just ask any Calishite pasha or soldier, and he will tell you so. The lands of Monrativi Teshy Mir that the two nations dispute are little more now than rock-strewn grasslands and hills beginning to be overgrown by light tree cover spreading from the Forest of Mir. They hold little in the way of strategic resources. However, when the ownership of a territory becomes a point of national pride, it is often less the prize that is the point than the contest.

Qian Hillfort

The Qian Hillfort is in Duchy Ankaram but lies outside the boundaries of any Tethyrian county among the foothills of the western Marching Mountains. Its forces defend against Calishite incursions, and its commanders keep their troops in high readiness with constant drills. They are known for using specially bred mountain ponies for cavalry attacks in the foothills.



Civilized Calimshan

"There is always more to a country than its cities, but in a land's communities is where one can see both its achievements and its morals at work. In Calimshan, folk believe the world begins and ends at their city's walls. Viewing each city as a world unto itself is not an inappropriate way of looking at the pasha's domains. Each city is relatively self-sufficient, and any goods or services it lacks are accounted for in its trade relations. The only reason Calimshan is still perceived as a country at all is that each city's citizens possess an equal hatred—or at least contempt—of non-Calishites that causes folk to see the area as a united realm."

—Mintiper Moonsilver, bard and Harper, circa the Year of the Tired Treant (1318 DR)



While many are unconvinced that Calimshan is civilized at all, given its fundamental support of slavery, its peoples' abilities to control their environment and surroundings are all that is needed to prove otherwise. While its cities and towns are few and far between, Calimshan's civilization has been one of the longest-lived societies on Faerûn. Over the past 7,000 years, many things, both great and small, have become intrinsic parts of Calishite civilization. Below are the many things that make Calimshan great, from its buildings and architecture to its monasteries and settlements.

Architecture

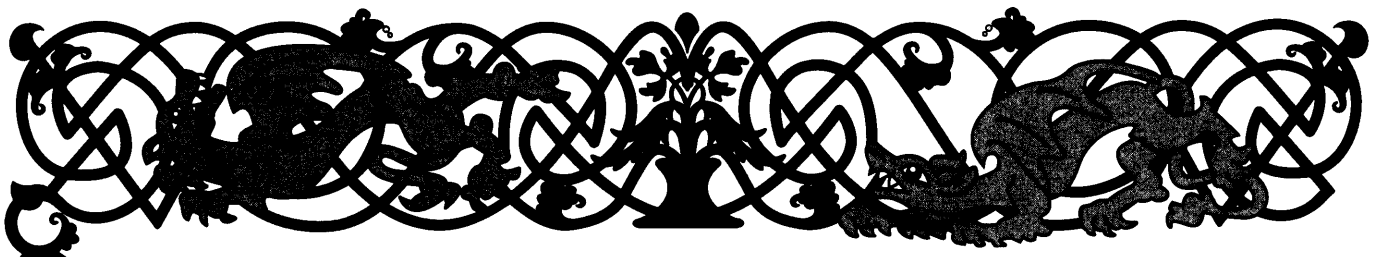
Many striking features of Calishite architecture are unique in the Sword Coast lands. In general, people throughout Faerûn think of Calishite architecture as being comprised of lots of domes, skinny towers, and arches everywhere. To the casual observer, this is correct. There is, however, more to find if one looks.

Calishite brickwork is often very stylized and decorative, whether the masonry is stone, mud brick, or more expensive and treasured glazed tile or stone. Unlike utilitarian northern structures, many Calishite buildings have stood for a very long time, and in as a part of their upkeep, they have been ornamented and their stonework enhanced (if it was not decorative to start with). Ornamental masonry uses massive bricks and forms patterns constituting a whole wall or places a decorative brickwork façade over a structural brick core. Decorative bricks set at varying depths to create striking textural effects with light and shadow in the unyielding sun, the simplest of which is to alternate inset and not-inset bricks to create small recesses along a wall or to lay groupings or single bricks in different planes perpendicular or angled to each other. Some bricks are even specially shaped to mimic calligraphic designs.

Very little paint or additional color ornament is used in Calishite architecture because of the wide use of advanced glazing techniques using exotic and wondrous colors on stone and tile. The knowledge of how to mix glazes of certain colors, apply them, and fire them to a particular pattern on certain materials is a skilled trade in and of itself. Such glazers can reproduce nearly any color found in nature, though the larger the job or rarer the color, the more expensive the work becomes, and the production of certain tones and rippling changes in color remain particular artists' trade secrets. Thus, many a pasha's villa has peacock-blue roof tiles or phoenix-tail-red minarets, as the colors and brilliance of one's home are further indications of one's status. Mixing different colors of specially shaped glazed tiles in patterns along domes or walls is not only accepted, but encouraged, though some northerners joke that the frequently garish results of the practice prove that all Calishites are colorblind.

Another reason paint or other decorative touches are not used is the prevalence of openwork or pierced screens in Calishite architecture, such as in windows. Given the hot climate, Calishite buildings are constructed to promote air circulation for cooling purposes, and the screens both support the high arched windows and gates and allow many breezes (but few of flying creatures or foes) to easily waft through the high-ceilinged halls. Screens are often laid out in intricate, seemingly woven patterns, and can be cunningly constructed of brick, carved stone, or even worked metals. They can even be seen as intricately carved parts of a wall if the openings within the framework are cloaked by illusory stone. Depending on the general size of a screen and its placement, holes range from no larger than a wand's width to 8-inch-wide apertures. Screens also make great defensive tools, as archers can easily fire out of a screen's holes while the screen offers some limited protection (a +1 bonus to Armor Class). Screens can





even be magically enhanced with other properties, such as allowing certain folk to pass through unhindered as if the screens did not exist, to glow white-hot under the touch of a thief touching their exteriors, or merely perfuming the air as it flows through them.

Domed buildings were among the key architectural features of Calimshan long before the rise of Netheril from its savage beginnings. The earliest domes were simple pyramids rising from walls to cap off buildings, though they quickly grew more complex and elaborate. The typical modern form adds load-bearing corner *akkhani* so the dome can rest on an octagonal, rather than rectangular, base. Some sites transform this interior octagon to other shapes via a facade or other special brickwork to achieve unique visual effects for viewers inside (or outside) the dome. For example, the dome of the ancient temple to Mystra in Almraiven has an everglowing brazier hovering at the center of a seven-pointed base. Elongated and additional underbracing allow for the odd-sided base, which is shaped like Mystra's ancient star symbol. The crystalline dome glows with the light of the brazier, and viewers flying over the dome can see Mystra's star. In the past two ages, magical and engineering advancements have prompted a threefold increase in gilded or magically created domes to brighten the skies of Calimshan.

Arches and pillars are prevalent in all but the most basic of Calishite architecture. The high ceilings of most buildings allow the heat to rise and not become trapped at the level of most inhabitants or guests, and high vaultings and arches provide the necessary air circulation to make life in Calimshan moderately comfortable. Pillars often support the arches, since there are fewer interior walls to bear the structural load within Calishite buildings, as they cut down on air flow. Both arches and pillars can range from smooth to elaborately decorative in shape or ornament. Some palaces even have halls of pillars and arches shaped like natural caverns with merged stalactites and stalagmites, and other pillars are grotesque beasts that bristle with fangs and claws, which comprise the arches the "beasts" support.

Minarets are everywhere one looks across the country. These tall, slim towers sport few windows but always feature a number of jutting or inset parapets through which air and light can pass (and escape can be effected). They make great watchtowers, which is their primary function within cities and out along the trade roads. In the days of genie rule over these lands, minarets were the pulpits from which the genies and their priests sent their commandments to the people. They later fell into military use, a practice which continues today. Minarets also serve as homes, shops, shrines, or, frankly, in almost any purpose that a structure can. Originally four-sided and limited to six stories, minarets were octagonal towers by the Third Age, and had smoothed further to transform into the slim, cylindrical form common in modern-day Calimshan by the Fourth Age. Millennia of spell development have reinforced many a minaret across Calimshan—enough to teach all but the most foolhardy that seeing an open parapet often means it is spell-trapped rather than an easy accessway.

From the late Third Age through the present, genies have become features of Calishite architecture, adorning the corners and cornices of thousands of buildings much like the gargoyles on northern buildings. Stone genies of all kinds act as waterspouts and the *ersatz* spirit guardians of properties. Guardian *dao* sculptures line stone stairwells and corbels supporting the ceilings, while the rare indoor plumbing fixtures often incorporate marids, and few braziers lack an *efreeti*. *Djinn* are most often worked into carved screens or serve as rooftop decorations and guardians. And just as many gargoyles are

enchanted or alive in some sense, many of these carved genie automatons and magical constructs can also come alive to do the bidding of their masters.

Mosaics are Calishite decoration at its most refined, elegant, and splendid. Few interior floors or walls do not feature mosaics in abstract patterns or forming representative pictures of great grace and lush color. Not a few external garden paths, pools, and fountains are also adorned with the multicolored stone-chip decorations. Long held as a trade secret among Calishite mages, many mosaics of certain styles, patterns, and materials can be enchanted with effects as widely disparate as the mosaics themselves. The largest mosaic pattern in Calimshan is the floor of the Pasha's Palace in *Manshaka*. If seen from above, one notes a dragon's tail in the courtyard and twisting throughout much of the first floor, its elongated body reaching into every room, and its head cocked as if listening in on the pasha's throne room. This single mosaic creature covers nearly an entire mile!

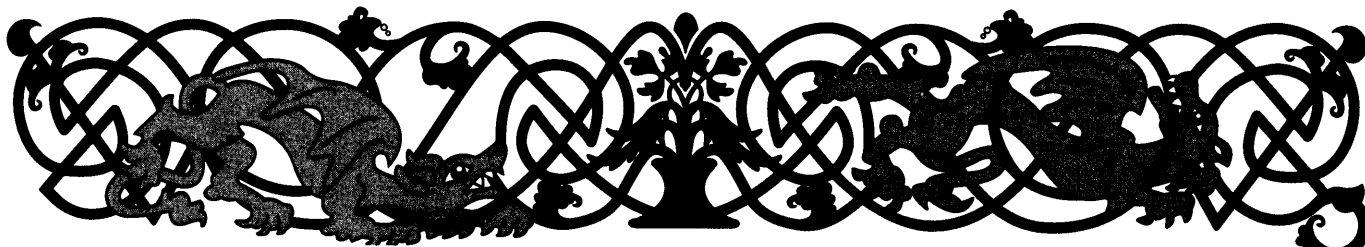
Cemetery Architecture

The majority of grave sites in Calimshan are mass graves with few markers, for the resting places of slaves are usually inconsequential to all in Calimshan but the worms that feed upon them. These sites do not feature any architecture whatsoever, though they can be contained within standard cemeteries if it is more trouble to transport the dead slaves to a mass grave outside of a city.

Cemeteries follow unique architectural rules all their own. Cemeteries are always walled enclosures with interior walkways raised at least five feet above ground level—the level of the actual graves and tombs. Gates into a cemetery are always flanked by stone statues of cats, creatures often seen as guardians of the dead in Calishite legends. City cemeteries are also usually the homes of hundreds of cats at all times, and harming a cat within the walls of a cemetery carries heavy penalties of superstition if an *amlak* or a *vizar* does not declare it a crime of law.

Common *markhouts* (tombs) are single-level mud-brick buildings with a glazed tile or stone frieze at the base of their single small domes and a screened doorway that faces east (but does not open since it is sealed after the interment of the deceased in his or her sarcophagus). The color and brightness of the glazing reveals the status of the deceased, from dullish brown for a low-ranked military officer to the purple of a *caleph*, and the dome often features a silver holy symbol atop it of the deity most revered by the deceased. The *markhout* is then further sealed by being enclosed in a 5-foot-high solid wall, the 6-inch-wide to 5-foot-wide top of which becomes part of the maze of cemetery walkways. Only thieves, mourners, cats, and the dead walk on the same level as the tombs.

While the richest of Calimshan's dead are interred in private *khamarkhas* (mausoleums) that rival their palatial residences in life, the fortresslike tombs for prosperous families adhere to many of the same rules for cemetery *markhouts*. The only difference between a *markhout* and a *khamarkha*, other than the size and opulence of the latter, is that the 8-foot-high mourning wall that surrounds the structure has an opening. This doorway is never guarded save by magical guardians, and it is only used when mourners enter the *khamarkha* to sing prayers for the dead or to inter yet another of the family in the *khamarkha*. Out of superstition and custom, most grave thieves climb the walls of a *khamarkha* and enter from the sides rather than using the doorway, as dire curses are said to fall upon those who disregard the traditions surrounding a tomb—including that the thief



should walk as one of the undead upon his or her death. Again, like so many other things in Calimshan, the opulence of a family's khamarkha was another sign of its greatness, and many say that if a family's khamarkha were to fall to ruin, so would the family.

Caravanserais

Given the crisscrossing trade routes that still span Faerûn, it is not hard to imagine earlier days when those same trails were mercilessly dangerous. Calimshan was among the first powers whose traders ventured into unknown lands. What made the roads safe and kept trade stable for all the years of battling dwarves, giants, genies, and the like were the rural caravanserais.

Out on the road, the toughest time was the night, when everyone in a caravan was at risk from bandits, predators, or other dangers in the darkness. Other hardships for traders on the fledgling trade roads to endure were inclement weather, a lack of available fresh water (especially for those in the Calim Desert), and the absence of recognizable shrines for all to use for prayers to their deities. Beginning simply as walled enclosures within which caravans could make stops for the night, caravanserais grew to take additional roles and fill some of these needs. Some folk concurrently abandoned the harsh life on the road to tend to the growing importance of these rest stops. The standard format of a caravanserai took form during the Second Age, and it has changed little since that time. While some caravanserais still exist intact, most remain only as ruins or abandoned structures or have been converted into khanduqs or structures of another purpose, such as abbeys, monasteries, or schools.

From the outside, caravanserais looked like fortresses, and they were built nearly as strongly as some of them. The external walls and at least half of the interior of any caravanserai were always constructed of stone or mud brick for defense and durability, while a caravanserai's upper floors and interior courtyard facades were made of carved wood as often as stone. The walls (glazing and decoration conspicuously absent) were never less than eight feet thick, and the singular gate leading inside often had a double or triple portcullis to prevent its capture. The gate's arch always rose higher than the walls, but never as high as the minarets.

Each caravanserai had from one to four minaret towers of no less than four stories in height, so caravans could be seen from far away and receptions could be prepared by those who watched for them in the towers. These minarets also saw use as pulpits for priests to preach to a caravan's merchants and guards.

The standard caravanserai building structure involved a broad rectangular or square building made of four smaller buildings joined by a singular external wall, with an open courtyard at the center. Roofs extended over the main buildings, but left the central pool and courtyard open. Most caravanserais had two stories, though numerous examples exist of opulent three- and four-story caravanserais, some of which disguised their heights by building in natural depressions or into the slopes of hills.

The ground levels of a caravanserai contained the stables and warehouses for caravan goods, which either remained in the wagons for further travel or were unloaded for sale to passing merchants. The upper stories were the living quarters, guest rooms, dining areas, and taprooms.

The central courtyard was almost always alive with activity at any time of day or night. The central pools and walls made a natural place to gather, though rarely when the blazing highsun heat beat di-

rectly down from overhead. The pools provided water for animals and humans alike, and formed the heart and soul of a caravanserai.

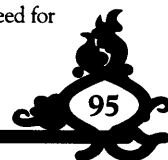
Many caravanserais provided special services to travelers to lure them to a particular site rather than that of a rival (demonstrating that all roads were not traveled solely due to geography or their topographical features). Some caravanserais made their own ales and wines, others provided entertainment of a wide variety, and still others took up early manufacturing efforts, turning raw materials into more salable goods.

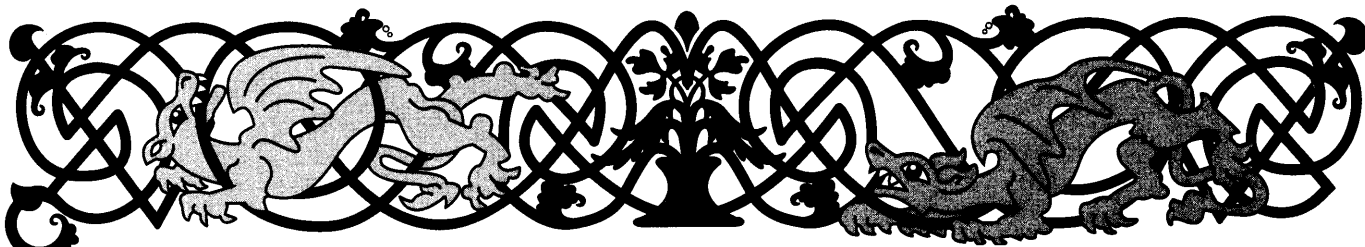
If caravanserais were particularly rich or large, they would often have multiple wings within the elongated rectangular form, all with their own courtyards. As Calimshan grew richer, these multiwinged caravanserais stabled animals in the outer courtyard, provided rooms and service for the caravan hands and those of lesser station in the secondary yard (with slaves kept in stables therein), and pampered the caravan owners and their families in the richest and most affluent quarters in the third courtyard. Often, the clean lines of a caravanserai were disrupted as each successive wing was constructed to be one story taller than its neighbor, though this feature was indicative only of Fourth- and Fifth-Age caravanserais.

Khanduqs

Early in Calimshan's history, the genies of the Calim Caliphates and Memnonnar cared little for trade or travel, for whatever they wanted or needed danced into existence upon their magical fingertips. By the height of the First Age of Calimshan, however, caravanserais dotted the hills and plains of the Shining Sea region. As intertribal trade started ending humanity's isolation in its safeholds, more and more folk began settling near or around the caravanserais, and villages and towns rose around the former rest stops. At this time (and to this day), caravanserais developed a great many advanced amenities as standard features within their large enclosures: numerous warehouses for goods and raw materials, stables, inns, shrines, and even impromptu markets when multiple caravans met. The importance of the market in Calishite society to this day stems from its origins in the caravanserais.

Once caravanserais and settlements came together to create new cities and towns, the trading post and inn took on new forms and functions. Within the walls of a city or town, these areas commercial warehouse/stable/market/travel amenities areas became known as khanduqs. The urban location of the enclosed and organized khanduqs resulted in a number of changes in the functions and features of the old caravanserai template. The minarets no longer were necessary for defense, as the community itself provided the security, and they became largely decorative homes for the khanduq owner or full temples of a particular deity. A second gate often pierced the wall opposite the main gate, allowing a free flow of traffic through the khanduq and into the city around it. Stabling animals became a lesser function, while the space devoted to the warehousing of goods rose. The khanduq provided cheap temporary housing and meals near one's important goods, but the stables, taverns, and entertainment enterprises moved into the community rather than remain an intrinsic part of the khanduq. Moneychangers took up residence inside or set up stands nearby to serve the need to exchange coins of different types that the increasing number of traders for other cities and lands had. In addition, khanduqs provided a concealed and wall-defended safehold for concentrated valuables—as the trade in gems and jewelry grew, so did the need for heightened security, especially when away from one's home.





In both caravanserais or *khanduqs*, wizards eventually began building *gates* and portals to important trade sites. The advent of magical ways to traverse the miles directly to a desired market rapidly made some such locales famous and just as quickly rendered them destroyed or deserted, their trade site destroyed. The heyday of magical *gates* within the archways of caravan stops was the Fifth Age, and while the Shoon Imperium made great use of *gates* for military purposes, it frowned on their use to move trade goods and aided many folk in destroying the unfair advantage of magic within the caravan trade that portals and *gates* in such locations provided.

Markets

As could be expected, the *khanduqs* and caravanserais gave way to modern markets that Calishites know today. Open-air tent and cart markets at first collected at the fringes of the professional and permanent *khanduqs* or caravanserais and were a hodgepodge of vendors and goods. Modern Calishite markets in larger cities and even in many smaller towns are strictly regulated, and there are certain protocols and rules that are followed.

Foodstuffs are almost without fail sold from open-air carts, not booths enclosed by ceilings or tents. Calimshan birthed the bazaar, a structure wherein goods of a certain type are sold in proximity to each other on particular streets (even the impromptu streets of tent markets), leading to the leather bazaar, the metalwork bazaar, the sages' bazaar, and so forth. Bazaars always abut *khanduqs* or caravanserais in a webwork of streets that grow in set patterns. Closest to and often flanking the primary gate of the permanent commercial structure (the *khanduq* or caravanserai) are the foodstuffs; followed on either side by spice merchants and vintners; then leatherworkers, weavers, and tailors; then armorers and weaponsmiths—which are strategically kept away from the gates of the *khanduq*.

These street bazaars radiate out from their permanent core structures, and encircling them all are lesser commercial goods and services, from mercenaries seeking employment and sages dispensing advice, to lamp and equipment sellers or scribes looking for books to copy for fees. Bear in mind that, while candles and incense might be sold from a bazaar next to a temple and the booksellers near them peddle scholarly wares, the items of greatest value from both common groups are bought and sold within the permanent markets of the *khanduq*. Common clothes and textiles are found among their bazaars, but furs, rare silks, and precious fabrics would be sold within the safer, more expensive, and more exclusive *khanduq* courtyard markets (if not through a direct deal with some particular *khanduq's* vizar).

Haggling and one hand on one's purse are the keys to surviving in the markets. Calishites, like the Amnians whom they taught, never begin a trade at less than 300% of what they are willing to accept as a price, and anyone who pays initially declared rates in a Calishite market is likely branded a fool and also swarmed upon as an easy mark; "he pays first offer" is a polite Calishite phrase that suggests the subject is foolish or naïve.

Monasteries of Ilmater

Ever since a monk of Ilmater saved the life of the sole heir of the Qysar Shoon IV (the girl who would become the Empress

Shoon V), the priesthood of Ilmater has been free from persecution by order of the qysar. No other Calishite ruler has dared to disturb the priests, though many rulers have countermanded other decrees of those who preceded them. What still lends this mandate an air of support is the legend that Shoon IV cast a curse far and wide across all the lands he controlled, that anyone who consciously did harm to a priest of Ilmater would have the same harm visited upon him a thousandfold. Likewise, those the Adorned (the priests of Ilmater) protected within their own houses and abbeys were untouchable—the priests' sanctuary from persecution extended to those they embraced. This has allowed many priests of the Crying God to help free slaves and get them safely out of Calimshan. When asked of the whereabouts of those others may suspect they are harboring, the Ilmatari priests merely nod, wryly smile, and then continue on with their work.

Abbeys and monasteries of Ilmater dot the landscape in Calimshan just as they do in Tethyr. The priests of Ilmater—with their focus on diligent work and helping others for the sake of doing so, not for money, fame, or power—are a curiosity and a conundrum to Calishites, whose focus is on working to one end only: that of eventually not having to work. Many believe the Ilmatari priests, with their religion of tolerance, perseverance, and help for the poor and abused, are mad. This belief, however, does not stop the wealthy and the nobles from joining the oppressed in traveling to the abbeys when in need of medical or other help.

Monasteries: Forest of Mír

There are two Ilmatari monasteries among the trees of this dangerous woods. These are better fortified than most monasteries, for the monasteries of the forest are not intimidated by the threat of an ancient curse they have never heard of.

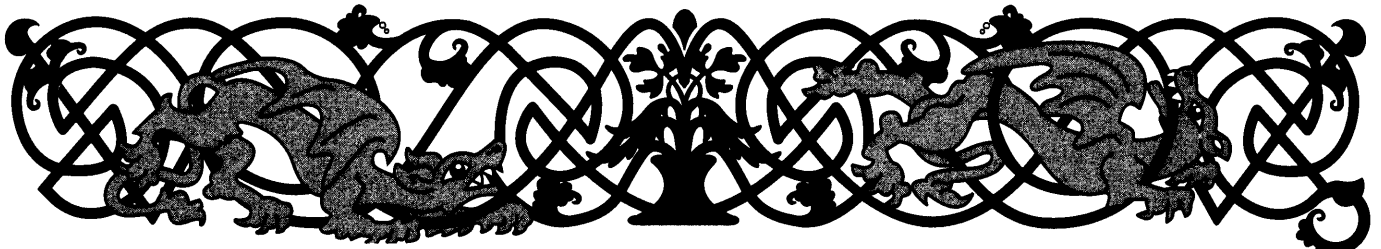
The Hospice of St. Mariam: This is a pharmacy/herbalist's shop and hospital named after one of the female saints of Ilmater whose original birthplace was in the slave markets of Calimport. The faithful here grow, collect, and dry herbs and roots for trade with many of the other abbeys across Calimshan and Tethyr.

The Monastery of St. Aban: This five-building complex is the linchpin of the Nadhari and the efforts to free slaves within Calimshan. Hidden among the trees northeast of the werebear colony and the aranea of the Spider Swamp, St. Aban's is a place of peace and the restoration of life and faith. While many of the monks do not know (though their superiors are aware of the situation), some of the lay brethren and two priests are lawful neutral aranea in their humanoid forms. St. Aban, a Calishite saint who lived more than 200 years ago, was a warrior and former slave of the Arenas of Blood in Manshaka. In fact, his old slave's manacle from the Arenas of Blood is a holy relic—especially since the skull on it magically transformed itself into Ilmater's holy symbol of a pair of bound hands upon Aban's death. The manacle is clasped on the right wrist of St. Aban's statue inside the main temple.

Cloisters: Marching Mountains

There are three mountainside abbeys and cloisters dedicated to Ilmater within the Marching Mountains. These Ilmatari sites are the among the most active in protecting and freeing slaves, since they are effectively beyond the reach of the syl-pasha, if not the rest of the Calishite nobility.

St. Dobra's Abbey: This abbey is actually the fourth-oldest site in Calimshan dedicated to Ilmater, and its primarily female clergy



have made it one of the most populous. Dobra, a jhasina during the First Age, was publicly beaten to death by her master, but her spirit allegedly keeps safe those women who resist the oppressive state in which they live. Her abbey, which is not as militant as some outsiders expect it to be, preaches equality and coexistence, not matriarchal rule and revenge. St. Dobra's is one of the few places in Calimshan that women can pursue better lives and an education, and where they openly wield some influence (without, of course, turning to positions in the underworld). "As pure as Dobra's dancers" is an insulting phrase hinting at the corruption of virtue and decency, used against paladins and like heroes by base folk; it plays to a crude mindset that attributes the jhasinni origins of the order to its current members and misinterprets the actual nature of the abbey's activities in typical Calishite fashion.

St. Faelar's Cloisters: This single rustic stone-and-log building houses a dedicated group of monks and rangers (12 in all) who teach escaped slaves (or other folk) how to survive in the mountains, how to climb rock and trees, and other skills that might help them escape into the safer lands to the north.

The School of St. Rucir: Ilmater's monks at this three-building villa high in the mountains are scholars, engineers, and stonemasons. Their notoriety has even attracted a number of dwarf converts. Their philosophy, in the words of their patron saint when he turned to the service of the Martyred One, is that "we suffer with the stone and its cracks, but we shall reduce suffering by looking to the stone's strength and designing better defenses for cities." Over the five centuries since its founding, St. Rucir's also has begun an artistic program that teaches stone carving and sculpture. The artistic products of this program are quite popular in the markets of Keltar.

Abbeys: Alimír Mountains

The lonely holy sites of Ilmater's faith within the hostile peaks of the Alimír Mountains are centers of scholarly learning and repositories of knowledge that is particularly accessible to those not of high station. In this fashion they hope to ease the burden of the oppressed by making available to them knowledge to help them expand their horizons and capabilities in ways that would not normally be open to them. These monasteries pursue education, scholarship, and art, though they all have other activities which sometimes overshadow such pursuits.

Monastery of St. Fanal: This library and scribes' school focuses on training scribes in objective observation and investigation for their true callings as historians. St. Fanal believed that knowledge of the past would alleviate the sufferings of the present, and made it his cause to learn, teach, and preserve history. Many monks and lay students of this school graduate to working at Candlekeep or the Vault of the Sages further north, or obtain work with the Heralds. A slight majority are attracted to traveling to Spirit Soaring, where First Scrivener Cadderly seeks to restore the glory of the Edificant Library.

St. Wityn's Hospice: This sanctuary, while capable of healing and caring for any injured folk who find their way to this isolated and walled-in mountain plateau, does not allow any but patients whose afflictions are of the type it specializes in to enter its walls. St. Wityn's cares for outcasts with incurable diseases, from lepers to cursed beings suffering from mummy rot or lycanthropy. The aging abbot, Revered Father Tahlis el Jhagnar (LG hm P7 of Ilmater), is an infected werebear lycanthrope who has, through 30 years of prayer, learned to control his affliction. He can teach others to control their lycanthropic changes or to adjust to life with their curses.

Monasteries: Calim Desert

The hardest and least accessible of the Ilmatari monasteries, these two outposts hide amongst the arid wilderness. There they provide hope to those who seek out new lives in its unforgiving desert landscape.

The Friary of St. Amahl: This safehouse rests along the Trade Way about 75 miles out of Memnon, where a caravanserai should be. The lonely caravanserai-turned-temple is one of the few sites within the desert protected against Memnon's heat and destruction. The brothers merely go inside the heavily shuttered buildings of the friary to resist Calim's wrathful gales. The community's well has never dried up and will not "while St. Amahl watches over us." The friary is named for the Ilmatari saint of nomads (and almost exclusively those who roam the deserts).

St. Noradnar's Hermitage: One of the few Ilmatari saints that ever preached an alternative to passive resistance and submission, the former slave driver Noradnar took Ilmater's teaching to heart late in life. He sought to instruct his followers as to how they might honor their god without totally abandoning any defense. The monks of St. Noradnar's learn a peaceful fighting technique that disarms, disables, and dismays foes so that they abandon plans of harm and that uses attackers' own moves against them. ("*'Tis similar to the aikido of the world of the Greenwood.*"—E.)

Other Monasteries and Abbeys

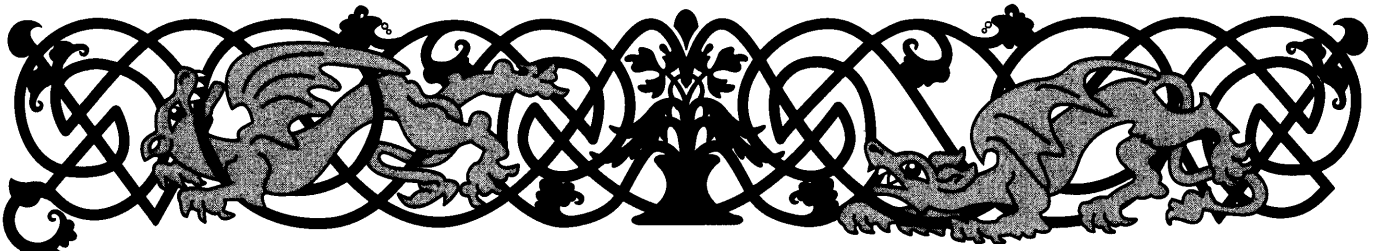
Other monasteries and abbeys to Ilmater or the Triad are sprinkled across Calimshan, though these are not as commonly spoken of:

House of St. Liwan's Blessings: Nestled high along the northern Coast Trail, the House of St. Liwan's Blessings is often first noticed by travelers due to the smell of good food drifting out from it on the salty ocean breezes and the dry desert winds. Another former caravanserai, this monastery has become a school for cooks, teaching all methods of cooking, from ship-board to trail to gourmet, and providing good training for those headed for or from Teshburl. "Hunger is one of the great trials," the corpulent abbot, Revered Father Akkabar el Souvlak (LG hm P4 of Ilmater), quotes from his patron saint, "and Ilmater's way teaches us to save others from suffering." Liwan's teachings insist that food and good diet are the end of suffering, and teaching the appreciation of food is more apt to concretely preach the peace of Ilmater, "For who can war on a full stomach when the body itself suggests peace?"

St. Saril's Priory: St. Saril's Priory is located just beyond the northeast corner of the Calim Desert. The monks of St. Saril's act almost like local rulers in tending to the needs of the few folk struggling to survive trapped between the foothills of the Marching Mountains and the desert. The monks and the people they shepherd are free from the rule of both Calimshan and Tethyr—for now. The prior, Revered Father Hamash el Saril el Ilmater (LG hm P6 of Ilmater), has taken to thinking of the local folk as his flock to direct and govern, and he resists any interference with that status quo, no matter what the reason.

St. Taril's (or St. Kealn's) Monastery: The recently canonized Taril el Kealn's former villa lies north of Schamedar. Here the rich former merchant and vizar used his money and influence to improve living conditions for many slaves throughout Calimshan 100 years ago. The villa's current occupants teach educational fundamentals (reading, writing, basic mathematics, and history of Calimshan and its neighbors) and theology to students who petition to study here. The villa-turned-monastery also is the resting place of a number of





holy relics. The bones of no fewer than seven holy men of Ilmater rest under the flagstones of the main temple area, and Ilmatari temples across Faerûn are still debating these wise folks' worthiness to become saints of the faith. The monastery is currently in an uproar, as the recent disinterment of St. Taril's bones to transfer them to an elaborately ornamented donated reliquary revealed that something has disturbed the temple crypts from below and plundered the coffins, elaborate reliquaries, and funerary items of the dead therein.

Seminary of St. Ihrvyn: This religious art school preaches a gospel of peaceful understanding through the arts of painting, poetry, song, and sculpture. It is a rich seminary, as a former lay acolyte and pasha was left heirless due to guild wars and bequeathed the site and his money to Ilmater's church. The school's collection of numerous erehnir statuettes and old Calishite statues provide the art students with examples to work from, though many pupils can be found huddled on the cliff opposite Volothamp, staring right at the heads of four of the Eight Erehnirs of that town, which face toward the rising sun.

Nykar, Isle of Memory

For time beyond reckoning there has been a necropolis by the name of Nykar in the land that eventually became Calimshan. Some suggest either that Nykar was the name of a long-lost god of the dead or that she or he was a mortal servant of such a god and as such was the first to conduct a formal funeral ceremony. In any event, Nykar, Isle of Memory is where nearly every modern Calishite goes (if she or he can afford it) for funeral preparations.

Nykar is never marked on any Calishite map, "as the dead know their way there, and they guide the living to it." Most people do know, either by word of mouth or written direction, how to get to there, however. (Some irreverent Harpers and other northerners have even mapped its location.)

After the fall of the Shoon Imperium and Debukker (its city of the dead within the walls of Shoonach), the mameluk rulers established a new necropolis. Since they did not want to allocate any of the precious mainland to the mortuary city (and risk angering the new nobility), they designated an island at the mouth of the River of Ice as the new site.

This third necropolis of Nykar, the one still in use today, is the home of an impressive library that holds records of the burial practices, ancient and modern, of all sentient races across Faerûn. While its decoration, ceremonies, and purpose strike some as maudlin, it is in fact a city of great learning and scholarly knowledge, and the riches entombed in the Mausoleum Districts or below in the Lower Crypts make it the site of many thieves' ambitions (and undoing, for the militant Hand of the Necropar is swift and brutal in its vengeance and zeal). The Necropar, the morticians who run the city and maintain the library, carefully guard the secrets of the mortician craft and the layout of the necropolis to prevent tomb robbers from using it to plunder the dead. Temples and religions of all creeds are present among the Necropar, and there are no conflicts either among religious representatives or between the secular and religious members.

There is little surviving information on the earliest practices of funeral rites among the people of the southwestern Realms, but it's believed that the genie rulers and their powers played prominent parts in

them. The only evidence of burial tradition from those days lies in a few tiny caves that contain mummies (that are not undead), a few offerings, and crude paintings of genies on the walls. Coramshan's culture defied its genie progenitors after the Era of Skyfire and allowed no homage to the otherworldly creatures in its people's death rites. Instead, the primary focus of a funeral was on celebrating the dead person and the life she or he led. Considerably more is known of modern-day Calishite funeral beliefs and rituals on the Isle of Memory.

While only Calishite rulers are actually buried on Nykar, funerals can be held there for anyone who can afford the services. There is a charge of 200 gold pieces per corpse and attendant to travel there, and another 1,000 gold pieces (or more, depending on the ceremony and preparations) to prepare the body for its final rest elsewhere. One Necropari is assigned to oversee the interment, wherever it may be. The Necropar treat any deceased and his or her living attendants as clients, and they have been known to travel as far as Waterdeep to oversee and orchestrate burial rituals in styles from ancient to modern.

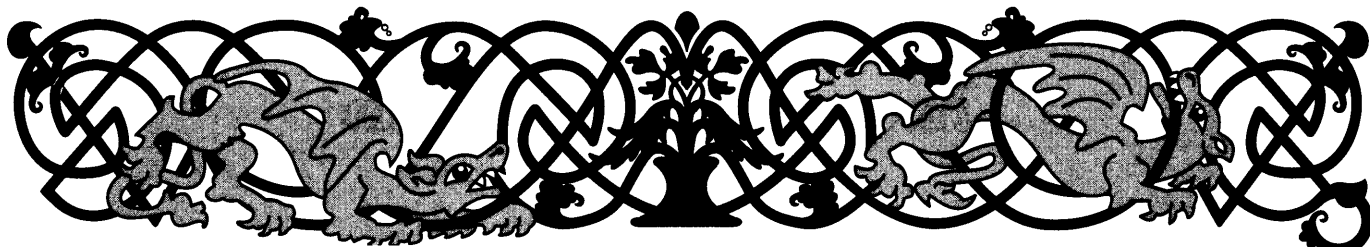
On Nykar, a ceremony growing more popular due to the sylpasha's nostalgic sentiments toward the Shoon Era involves a burial form not used since the conflagration engulfed the walls of Debukker. A person's corpse is left exposed to desiccate (either in the desert or high up in the mountains), though it is usually warded by minor spells to prevent it from being consumed by scavengers. Once dried, it is brought to Nykar. The dried remains are ground into dust and then dispersed from the parapets of the Seven-Skulled Tower on the Isle of Memory. Originally, this method allegedly sent the deceased to the Elemental Planes, where they were believed to become the equals of their former djinni and efreeti masters. Now it is merely the only way a nonruler can be buried on Nykar, and it is also the only method used by the Necropar to bury their own.

Stone Circles

Once a common site on the plains and hills of Amn, Tethyr, Calimshan, and all across the Land of the Lions, stone circles were some of the earliest of all religious sites on Faerûn. Most of them succumbed to the march of ages and are long forgotten, while a noble few lie in ruins and as shadows of their former glorious selves. The majority of over 300 stone circles fell victim to the greed and the dreams of the Shoon, as the stone megaliths were plundered to be cut into massive paving blocks for the roads that still angle across the Realms in this region. Two notable surviving stone circles are:

Allyn's Anvil: Hidden high among the Alimir Mountains just east of St. Wityn's Hospice, a fallen pair of megaliths lie nestled one atop the other amid scrubby patches of nettles. Surrounding them, but half-buried among the grasses and brambles, are a semicircle of stone boulders, all apparently shattered long ago by some great explosion. The top stone of the pair is black with marbled white streaks throughout, and this alone makes it unique, since no stone like it has ever been found within the Iltkazar Range. Legend has it that numerous artifacts have been forged against the exposed black slab at the center of the circle. The faiths who value justice, especially the church of Tyr, hold this place to be a sacred site.

The Dancing Dwarves: Four square granite blocks still stand (well, lean precariously) on the plain at a cliff's edge south of the Seminary of St. Ihrvyn, just south of the Spider Swamp. The Dancing Dwarves got their name from the squat figures carved into the sides of the blocks, though no lettering or discernible pattern aids observers in



understanding why the stones were placed here. Oddly, if anyone tries to mark the menhirs now with a hammer and chisel (as was so often done during the Shoon Imperium), the stone remains unscathed and the wielder of the hammer take an injury equal to the force of his or her blow that looks as if someone had struck him or her with the weapon or implement wielded. (DMs should adjudicate this as appropriate.)

Cities and Towns

Calimshan's cities are all distinct and individual in nature. Unlike their northern cousins, the cities and settlements of Calimshan all follow certain structural basics. While some villages fall outside this rule, nearly every settlement in Calimshan is walled and fortified. Inside the walls, their shapes might be different, but they are all organized the same.

Calimshan's way of differentiating a city from a town has less to do with population numbers and more to do with the amount of money generated by the settlement. Thus, while their sizes and populations could rival the larger cities of the Savage Frontier, Calishite towns like Manshaka and Keltar are treated as lesser communities in Calimshan. Changes of fortune and influxes of trade raise can and do change the status of a community, and thus many towns have been cities and vice-versa, though Calimport has been a city from its first founding by the djinni noble, Calim.

Internal City Organization: Every city, town, village, and settlement of more than a dozen buildings shares the precinct structure established during the genies' rule, though it is better known among Calishites as the drudach system. From above, Calishite towns and cities look like puzzles pieced together, with the boundaries of many miniature towns—the drudachs—interconnecting into a larger whole.

Depending on the size and opulence of a settlement, it can contain anywhere from one to over 100 drudachs. Unless a village consists of only one drudach, the community is divided up by the clearly demarcated boundaries of its drudachs, which could be anything from a low row of stones or a wooden fence (in small rural towns and villages) to the city standard of 3-foot-high and 6-foot-wide mud-brick walls. While the physical size of a drudach is rarely an issue, drudachs all must contain at least one religious area (shrine, temple, or other holy site), one place for refreshment (well or fountain, tavern, inn, or festhall), living quarters for those dependent on the sites within the drudach, and either a marketplace (tent market or khanduq) or an administrative building for the greater settlement plus one other service building (blacksmith, armorer, guildhouse, etc.). At least one site must also be allowed for the quartering of the amlakkar, the drudach's individual watch of 13 to 25 persons (all a minimum of 2nd-level fighters, with 1d6 being 3rd to 8th level [2+1d6]). In general terms, though, most drudachs within the cities average about four or five clusters of 16 to 25 individual buildings in the corners of the drudach. These edifices use the low walls of the drudach for additional structural support. The center of a drudach is often either its most affluent site or an open courtyard with a temporary market or well at its center. A drudach also contains the abode of its druzir. (While some smaller towns have one common city watch answering to a single authority, the largest cities of Calimshan have amlakkar and reinforcing units of soldiers [see below] that restrict their duties to a single drudach or one to three sabbans. They care little of what happens beyond the boundaries of their jurisdiction.)

Being looked down upon is a literal thing in Calimshan. It is interesting to note that the nobles, the wealthy, and those of the Calishite upper classes never walk on the ground of a drudach. Even when the drudach walls are pierced by gates to allow travel at ground level, small arching bridges across these gates keep the upper crust literally above it all. The low walls of the drudachs and the sabbans form a roadway all their own, and should someone have to step down from this lofty path, his retainers often carry rugs so that their master's feet are not soiled by the less-than-exalted ground. (Some northern sages knowledgeable in social conventions theorize that the reason many rich Calishites travel in litters borne upon the shoulders of servants when outside of Calishite cities is to simulate their normal position elevated above the common rabble.)

While drudachs are the smallest precincts of a settlement, sabbans are the wards of a city and are comprised of three to five drudachs, depending on the overall size of the drudachs. Each sabban's boundary is marked by a low mud-brick wall similar to those surrounding the drudachs, but a sabban's boundary is actually paved with an additional few inches of stone (from four to 12 inches) like a miniature rampart atop the normal brick boundaries. No matter what else might lie within a sabban, there is always at least one permanent khanduq therein in addition to the temporary markets and bazaars set up among the drudachs. A sabban must also be able to provide at least one public source of water for all its drudachs. Each sabban also contains the house of the sabbalad, which is often located quite near the minaret or minarets of the sabban's defenders.

Sabbans provide an additional security to the precinct system. A minaret rises at the intersection of each three sabbans, and these mark the quarters of either two dozen additional amlakkar or an equal number of soldiers of el Sadimmin, all sworn to watch over and defend their sabban (under the rule of their sultan and officers first and their sabbalad second). Which sabban falls under their watch is noted by where the ground-level entrance to the minaret opens out. Each tower's four or more levels contain at least a small armory, a barracks, lookout parapets with signal bells, and jail cells or dungeons for the use of the sabban's amlakkar and soldiers.

Population Figures: The following statement by Vizir Achmed el Imnt, census-taker of Calimport, conveys some of the difficulties inherent in obtaining accurate censuses in Calimshan both in the past and the present:

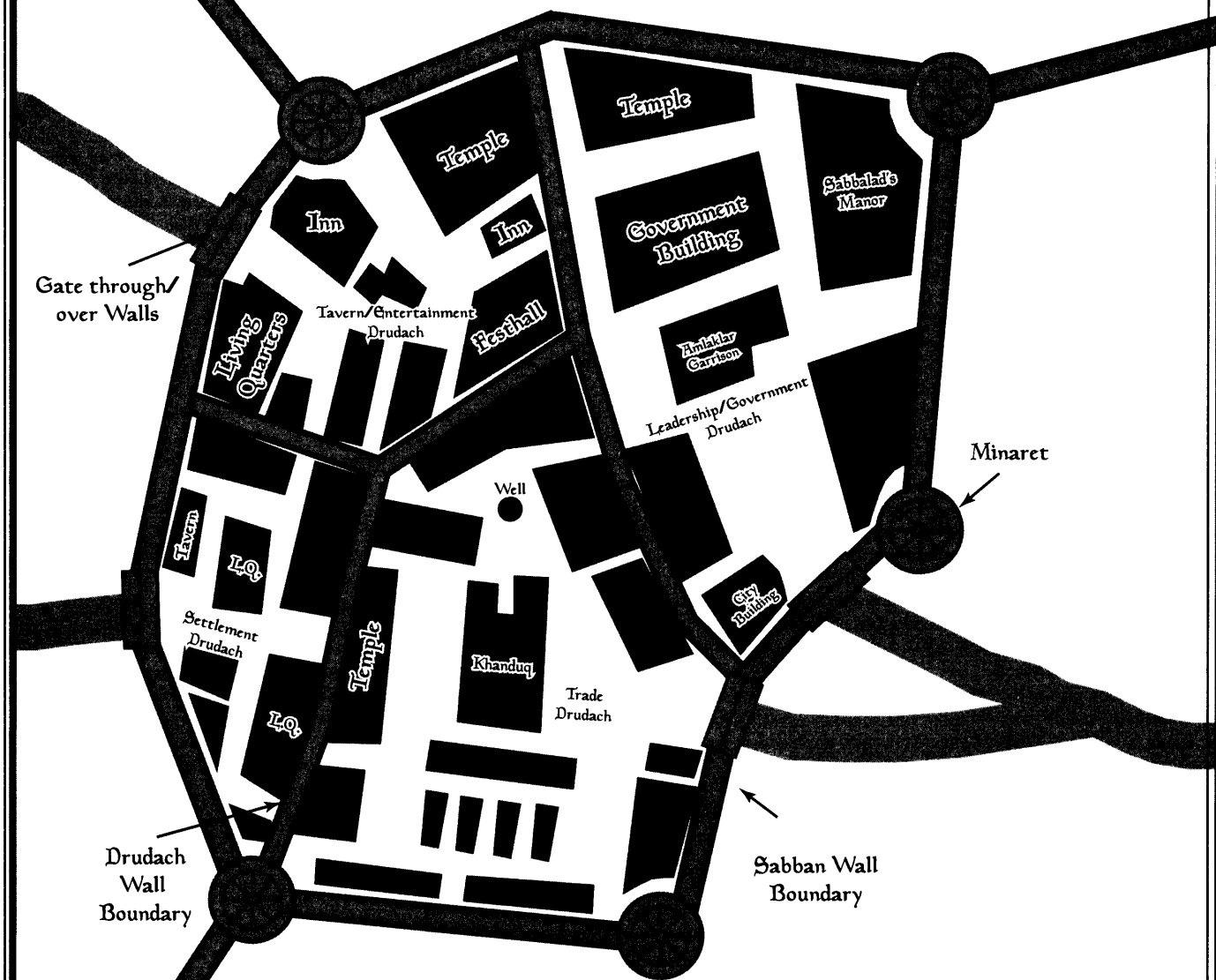
"Previous reports on the populations living within the syl-pasha's lands were altered ridiculously. As his honorable majesty Syl-Pasha Pesarkhal has deemed it, we have now restored the sensible methods of the Shoon Imperium in counting our people. Whereas before all slaves and dependent rural families were counted among a city's population, we now only consider and count those citizens of worth within a city. The previous corrupt administrations of the Djenispools used those inflated census numbers to excessively tax (and vex) the lesser pashas, vizars, and calephs. The enlightened nature of el Pesarkhal allows us all to witness the true nature of Calimshan unclouded by the irrelevancies of the worthless the rabble."

While often unmentioned among the population figures given within the city and town breakdowns, here are the general figures for the number of slaves and indigent poor within and around all the settlements of Calimshan:

- Within the cities, one to two slaves per citizen is the norm. This average factors in the large numbers of urban poor against those with dozens of slaves. Realistically, the number

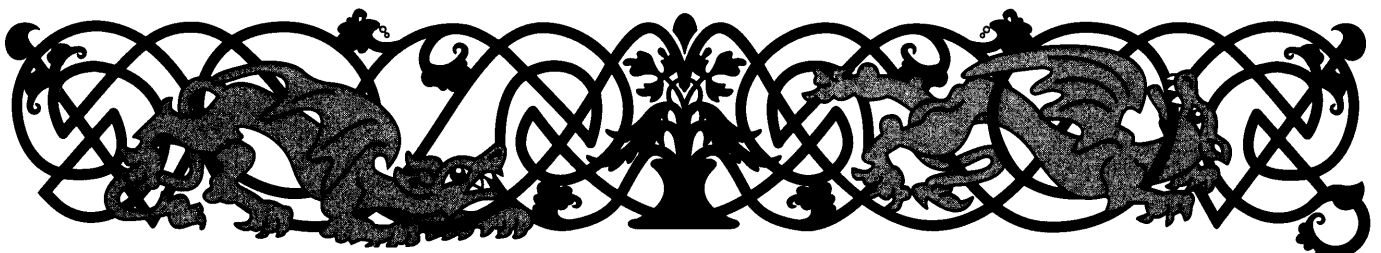


Average/Model Sabban



Each sabban is relatively self-sustaining within the context of the city or town as a whole. Over time, each drudach within a sabban (especially under a powerful or charismatic sabbalad) develops key functions for the sabban and sabbalad. Each drudach adopts responsibility for much of its own trade, leadership, housing, and entertainment, though the exact mix varies. The shown sabban does not use a mandatory organization, and many sabbans break down along different lines entirely, such as by religion or types of trade or income.

Scale
0 Feet 30



of people living within a city could be double or more of what is noted below.

- Outside of a city or town, people too poor to live within the settlement tend to congregate near it for safety. These farmers, peddlers, and beggars add an additional 20% to many population figures.
- The inhabitants of the shanates and their plantations might triple the population figures of all the settlements combined if they were added in to the urban population figures. Eight-five percent of the people in these rural areas are slaves, another 13% are indentured servants, and the remaining 2% are the owners and overseers of all of them.

Rogue Powers and the Cities: Unlike other countries where the underworld agencies are rogues working against the system, in Calimshan they nearly equal—if not totally subsume—the governmental system in the cities. Thus, the Thieves' Guilds and Rogues section of a the three cities' entries below, each city has the major rogue power groups and the family/clan/group that controls it noted. This provides DMs with the basic information of which groups are in charge of what activities; DMs can then work in new NPCs of their own creation through which player characters can interact with these powerful crime bosses.

Wizards and the Cities: Contrary to other lands, the mages' guilds almost totally rule and regulate the wizards of Calimshan. Given the high instance of mercenary mages at the courts of various pashas and other heads of state, a need for standard hiring fees, enchantment costs, and the like arose quickly during the Sixth Age, and the Shoon qysars enacted the Wizards' Consortiums, which eventually became the five Guilds Arcane.

The Guilds Arcane are the primary groups from which Calishite wizards learn magic. They were established in stages during the Shoon Era, and ranked by their seniority in order of establishment are: Almraiven, Calimport, Volothamp, Keltar, and Memnon. The benefits of Guild Arcane membership are simple: In a land where a secret is always worth coin, Guild members share materials (spell components, minor magical items) and secrets (spells and lore) for far cheaper fees with fellow guild members and those of the other Guilds Arcane than they would part with such information to outsiders. When one is in need of magical assistance, the guilds charge standard fees of 25 gp per day plus meals, plus escalating fees for spells cast during a mage's employment. While a *detect magic* spell might cost an employer 10 gp per casting, *identify* spells cost far more, since their effects provide more than just the immediate result in information and tax the health of the caster, and combat spells cost more than that. In general, spells that provide information cost 2d6 gp per spell level, illusions and various enchantments cost 2d8 per level, combat spells cost 2d12 per level, and any enchantments, permanent spells, or spells above 4th level cost 20 to 100 times the previously noted fees.

While independent mages do operate in Calimshan, they are frowned upon in Calimport and thus are socially less than welcome. Secretly, the syl-pasha dislikes independents, who cannot be easily accounted for or manipulated through a hierarchy like the unified and controlled Guilds Arcane. Also, through certain concessions and long-established connections (via the Twisted Rune's agents), the syl-pasha has an unwritten alliance with the Guilds Arcane and their implicit support against any and all other employers should their aid become necessary (though calling in this favor would seriously drain even the syl-pasha's influence reserves). Each of the five cities has a caleph arcane who rules its Guild Arcane, and who is thus

the most influential and powerful wizard in that area (politically, if not in magical skill). The silver-bricked Minargents (from the argent minarets that are their trademarks) are the headquarters of the Guilds in their respective cities.

Calimshan and the Arnaden City-States: As Syl-Pasha Pesarkhal forges ahead with his plans to unite Calimshan under his sole rule, he has changed a few things about Calimshan's dealings with Suldolphor, Tulmon, and Yeshpek. The three sites have long fought for complete independence from Calishite rule, and in fact share with Calimshan few of the structures inherent in its society and government. During his slow rise to power, el Pesarkhal independently bargained with the powers of these three settlements and secured a solid alliance: In exchange for political support and token taxes for the purpose of preserving face, the new syl-pasha would effectively leave them to their own devices and rule. Thus, in the short years since the Time of Troubles, these three have surged ahead in political influence and mercantile clout on the Lake of Steam, while their backing helps the syl-pasha cement his stance within the more traditionally Calishite lands. (Of course, once he has unified the cities to the west, the syl-pasha believes it will be a simple matter to once again fold these communities once more under his wing, a move the leaders of the Arnaden city-states await with some trepidation.) Consequently, Suldolphor, Tulmon, and Yeshpek are discussed in the "Cities of the Arnaden" chapter because their structure is much different at this time than that of the rest of Calimshan.

Almraiven (City)

Almraiven is the thriving port city that plays host to the largest shipbuilding facilities in Calimshan, though the wharves and docks do not dominate Almraivenar life. The city is a constant whirlwind of mercantile and guild activity, from sea trade and ships to textiles, carpet weaving, and magical item production. Almraiven's siren's song, however, is its preeminence in the minds of many a mage, as this was the first and remains the premier center for magical studies within Calimshan, as it has been for over 3,000 years.

Who Rules: Vizar Majel el Arpooristan (NE hm F0) sits upon the ruler's seat here, placed there equally by his own ambitions and those to whom he owes favors (and thus whose bidding he follows).

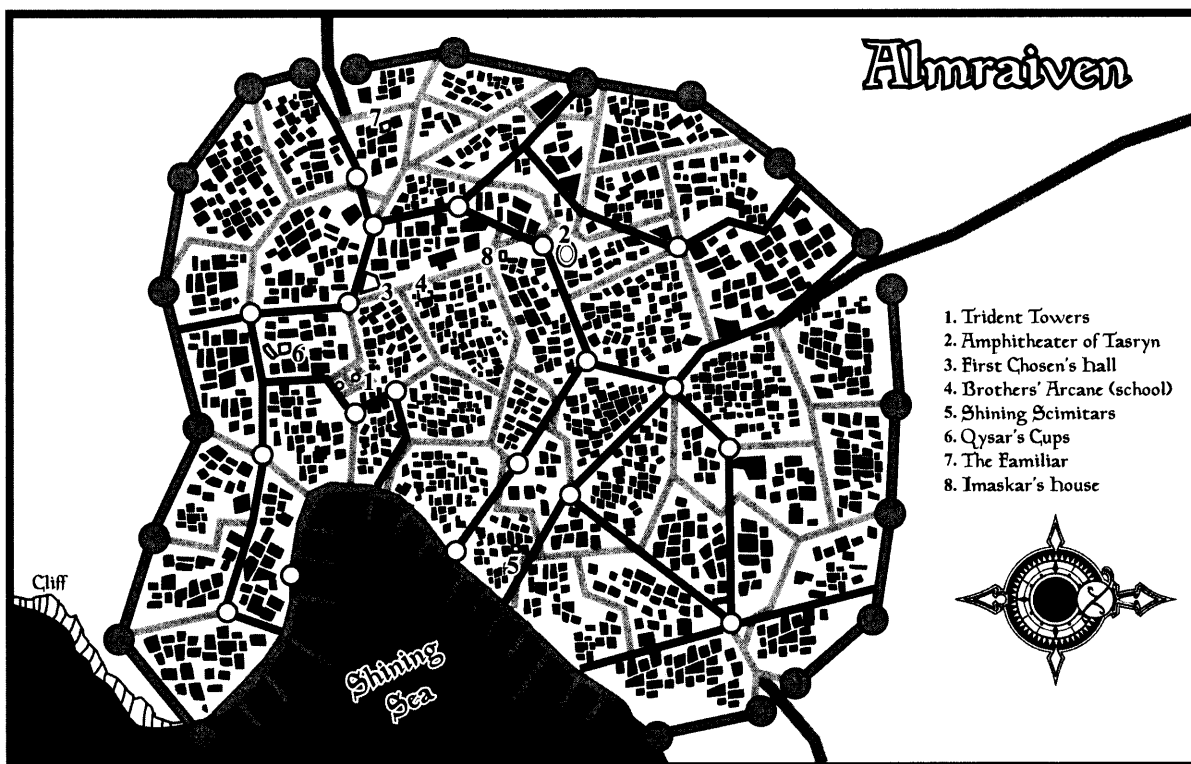
Who Really Rules: Fifteen pashas truly pull the strings of the vizar and this city. However, Fatima yr Catahra yr Pesarkhal el Galsah (LE hf F0), the eldest daughter of the syl-pasha, easily crows all others among the pashas, including her own husband. It is through Fatima (and eight other loyal pashas) that the syl-pasha controls nearly every aspect of Almraiven's government and trade and significant portions of the city's underworld (though the Vyndahla clan runs the Almraivenar underworld). The caleph arcane also wields considerable influence within the city and among the pashas, and she is an old and loyal friend of el Pesarkhal and his family.

Population: 48,000 citizens (91% human, 2% half-elf, 7% other), with an additional 14,000 dwelling within the outlying rural farming shanates. During the winter months, population figures rise 20% due to some discounted trading and a rise in shipbuilding. Surprising to outsiders, but not natives, no less than 3% of Almraiven's populace is comprised of wizards of some sort, a much higher percentage figure than is the norm in the rest of Faerûn.

Sabbans/Drudachs: 12/49.

Major Products: Ships and ship supplies; magical items (minor items, not more powerful than wands, potions, or lesser frivolities); mercenary sailors, soldiers, and wizards; and rare herbs.





Armed Forces: 1,050 amlakkar and 75 officers throughout the drudachs plus a total contingent of 400 soldiers with 30 junior and senior officers. There are also nearly 600 officers and sailors on hand in Almraiven among the navy's ships and in its support services.

Important Features: As the site of the first mages' school of Calimshan, Almraiven has always had a reputation as a place of power, though many simply regard this distinction as a manifestation of typical Calishite arrogance rather than any special quality of the Weave in the area. The largest sabban of Almraiven encompasses seven drudachs at the center of the city and is generally referred to as the Mage's Quarter. Within that area, there are no fewer than four major schools of magic and 17 personal tutors for those skilled of Art. Of these, only one school and five tutors are not affiliated with the Guild Arcane. Wielding magic is still a major component for acquiring and holding power in the city of any sort, and even visiting outlander wizards gain some measure of respect here given Almraiven's long history with the Art.

Equipment Shops: Full (all items in PHB/DMG lists of 500 gp or less). While often difficult to obtain and expensive, there are limited quantities of any raw spellcasting components to be found among the city's apothecaries, herbalists, or black marketeers.

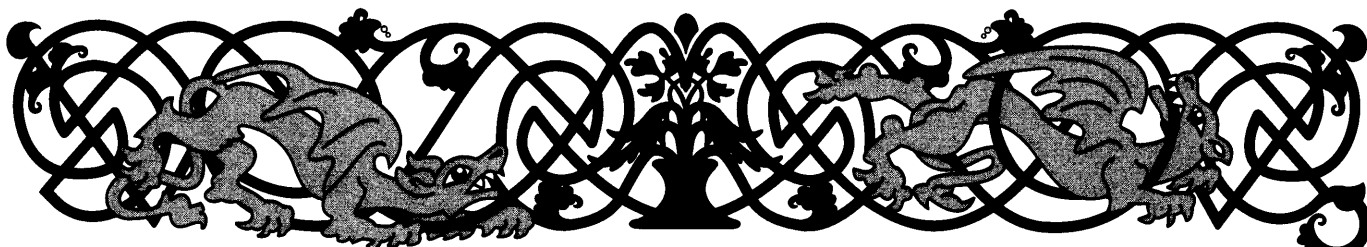
Adventurers' Quarters: At least 600 each of taverns, festhalls, and inns lie within Almraiven's walls, but due to old Shoonite statutes, no wizards can own or work within any of these entertainment places for fear they might dominate all aspects of life in the city. Thus, while many expect many magically enhanced taprooms and other amenities, Almraiven's night life is actually quite tame.

- The Shining Scimitars. This adventurer-owned and -operated tavern has a loyal clientele of freebooters, smugglers, rogues, and adventurers from all manner of ports, all sharing intense hatreds (and tall tales) of things Underdark. *Quality/Price:* Poor/Moderate.
- The Qysar's Cups. Low prices and the ancient Shoonite dress worn by all staff members attract many folk to this tavern and festhall. Most who come, though, are outsiders who do not know to avoid this place, as it has a reputation for selling drunken patrons into slavery. *Quality/Price:* Excellent/Cheap.
- The Familiar. The patrons of this massage and dining house (festhall) located in the Mage's Quarter are exclusively wizards. The proprietor stocks an excellent selection of wines, ales, and smokeweed of all sorts, including some of the Nexalan tobacco from Maztica. *Quality/Price:* Excellent/Expensive.
- Imaskar's House. This decor of this festhall and inn is elegant, though somewhat frayed around the edges, bespeaking a more prosperous past. Pillows, silks, and velvets with gilt and golden accents predominate. Overnight patrons always receive a good night's rest, however, or their money back. *Quality/Price:* Moderate/Good.

Notable Mages and Sages

The Guild Arcane of Almraiven established the School of Arcane Hands more than three millennia ago, and it has ruled the mystic side of Almraiven (and much of Calimshan) since that time. Its caleph arcane is the mysterious Veiled Caleph, the aged Lady Meriel yr Zahyra el Viilam (N hf M21), who gained her post through her political and magical skill despite Calishite prejudices against women and holds onto that position with the aid of her seven sons and four





daughters. She remains loyal to the syl-pasha and his plans, as she expects to become the Syl-caleph arcane when he eventually unties Calimshan under former Shoonite forms. Other wizards of the city include:

- Achem el Zalath (NG hm M11), an independent wizard and shipbuilding heir whose family operates under a Rundeen partnership. His current notoriety arises from the new concept of a waterwalking ship of which he has drawn diagrams. (“Ye’d call this a hydrofoil, methinks.”—E.)
- Kadar el Gehrim (LN hm M21), the master of the new Guild-affiliated Brothers Arcane wizards’ school. He is one of the few teaching wizards who propounds moderation and the conservative use of magic, rather than advocating the mercenary attitude of most wizards within Calimshan’s circles of power. This opinion has made him a great many enemies.
- Asfora Eyes-Ice (NE hf Inv8) is the youngest daughter of the caleph arcane. She is notable for three things: her nearly ice-white eyes with silver pupils, her blazing temper that belies her preferred darkness-creating and ice spells, and her unusually short height. She is only as tall as a young child, yet she is as mature and nubile as a jhasina.

Notable Clergy and Churches

There are nearly twice as many churches and temples in Almraiven as there are drudachs, and the majority of them are dedicated to deities of the sea and magic. Those temples and shrines worthy of notice are:

- The Trident Towers, a large two-story temple to Umberlee surrounded by seven minarets, all with glazed turquoise trident mosaics stretching three stories high on their external faces. The temple was once a villa that belonged to a rich merchant whose personal seal was a trident, and his last heir—the Waveservant Sarsor yn Tahir el Bhirax (CE hm P7 of Umberlee)—converted this estate into a temple.
- The Amphitheater of Tasryn, a huge imposing amphitheater where plays are performed for the masses, near the city’s center. The amphitheater’s floor mosaics and the shape of the theater shell (that of a rolling wave about to crest) tell viewers that this structure was originally a place of worship for Istishia, god of water. The 342-year-old theater has no church-designated clergy, though there is a current priest (and actor of plays) collecting to restore the temple that once adjoined the theater—the bald and gangly, yet charismatic, Abbas el Erispar (NG hm P4 of Istishia).
- The First Chosen’s Hall, a former garrison long since covered by glazed blue bricks and the symbol of the hand of Azuth that serves as the monastery and temple to the god of wizards. The temple is adjacent to the grounds of the Brothers’ Arcane School of magic, where Master Nur el Duram (LE hm M5/P11 of Azuth) teaches both the secular and ecclesiastical magic of the High One and impresses upon students their responsibilities to the Weave, not just the power they gain from it.

Notable Rogues and Thieves’ Guilds

The controller of Almraiven’s underworld is not of one of the families listed below. Pasha Jafar el Limiz (NE hm F0), whose only official claim to power is his majority control of the largest non-Rundeen shipbuilders’ business, rules the underworld forces in Almraiven through his cunning and his illicit relationship with Fatima el Galsah, the syl-pasha’s daughter (which is only enhances his status as a risk-



Asfora Eyes-Ice

taker). Through numerous alliances and a shrewd sense of timing, Jafar has maneuvered into the position of ally, master, or respected-and-unbeatable enemy of each of the heads of the families below:

- *Assassins*: El Tamoah. Ynamalik Ritan el Tamoah (NE hm T9) operates his guild from his shanate east of Almraiven along the coast.
- *Black Marketeers*: El Moadyph. Vizar and Pasha Kharyi yn Tyvic el Moadyph (CE hm F0) heads this guild. His contacts in the underworld and his cronies on the pashas’ council at the city’s head keep him in power.
- *Burglars and Thieves*: El Ahimar. Vizar Achmed el Wahid (NE hm T2) officially oversees Almraiven’s khanduqs and sits on the pashas’ council. He cannot be directly traced to his leadership of el Ahimar as all outsiders who knew he was adopted by the now-dead Cadas el Ahimar have been exterminated. He runs the thieves subtly through three lieutenants.
- *Enforcers and Thugs*: El Beza family. Nur el Beza of the Three Fingers, whose rough-and-tumble youth lost him two fingers but gained him a ruthless reputation, runs this guild with a heavy fist.
- *Pirates and Smugglers*: El Efead. Runij el Efead (LE hm T8), the son-in-law of Kyahj el Haedi, recently claimed control of this guild and has allied it tentatively with el Haedi to lead it to greater profits (and possibly enough control to claim that family or at least gain by spying on them).
- *Slavers*: El Haedi. Kyahj el Haedi (CN hm F0) is a prominent Rundeen shipowner and trader who is among the few resisting the syl-pasha (but expecting much protection from his foreign benefactors in the Rundeen).

- *Spies*: El Skahil. Elat el Skahil (NE hm T6) is only known outside the family as “Ali Faram,” a mysterious young man with many unknown connections but infallible information.

Calimport (Capital City)

Inarguably the largest city in Faerûn, Calimport is often viewed by outsiders as a tangled canvas of squalor and poverty enlivened by shining examples of opulence and wealth. Like all Calishite cities, it is fortified, but the outer walls are rarely staffed and guarded, and many folk have built additional buildings onto the interior and exterior of the walls, obscuring them and their original purpose as fortifications. In addition, tents, nomads, and caravans constantly camp around the city's outskirts, putting a further layer of humanity between the outside world and Calimport. As the city itself is more than a few miles per side, the task of conquering it or surrounding it with conventional armies is next to impossible, and none of the important city sites are within 200 yards of its closest “edge.” Wide, rambling, home to a million wonders and mysteries, and a study in contrasts, Calimport is the City of Glory to its citizens—but to those assigned less than a citizen's status, this is the City of Slaves.

Who Rules: Syl-Pasha Ralan el Pesarkhal rules this city on so many levels and with so many contingency plans that to murder him might actually destroy the city. He has made sure all of his enemies and most of his allies know this, to help maintain the status quo.

Look to the “The Modern Age” chapter for details on the fall of the Djenispool regime and the rise of Syl-Pasha Pesarkhal. More information on Calimport is forthcoming in the *Calimport* supplement.

Who Really Rules: Syl-Pasha Ralan el Pesarkhal.

Population: 212,000 citizens (95% human, 2% halfling, 3% other) of note, plus nearly 1,300,000 slaves and various foreign visitors and traders at any given time of year. With the coming of spring and summer, the citizenry rolls double, as many traders add to Calimport's populace. Winter sees the ynamalikkar and the yshahs come to town from their rural plantations for the social season, adding 16,000 persons with their entourages and other visitors.

Sabbans/Drudachs: 52/166. Unlike other Calishite cities, Calimport's lower drudach walls among the outer quarters of the city have long since been trampled into common mud (though buildings using them for support still stand and maintain in their wall structures small pieces of them). The drudach boundaries are marked by small plinths every five yards. In these outer areas, sabban markers are likewise placed at ground level as stepping stones every three feet to allow folk to avoid stepping in the filth of the streets. Within the richer areas of town around the temples and pashas' holdings, the standard drudach and sabban boundaries and structures exist at their usual heights; some are even improved by stone brick and glazework to make them as much a showcase of local wealth as the nearby buildings.

Major Products: Anything and everything is available in Calimport in more abundance, though at higher prices, than is seen in Waterdeep to the north. Anything that exists on Toril can be purchased here, though all things come with a proportional price—some of which are higher than many folk's lives are worth to them. In addition, while the black market is still technically illegal, there is a system of wandering night markets that (given the blind eye of the amlakkar) use many of the bazaars to sell wares normally not available, such as drow artwork, poisons, weapons, and the like.

Armed Forces: There are a total of 12,000 amlakkar and officers within the capital, a figure averaging almost twice the normal amount per city sabban. However, they number only half as many as

are most likely needed to maintain order in a crisis or keep up with the many duties the crush of humanity in the city creates. The primary legions of the syl-pasha's army quarter here within the city and in nearby outlying garrisons. They number 7,500 standing soldiers and officers, and there are up to 2,000 sailors and support staff and officers of el Nallojal (the navy) within Calimport as well. Private guards and mercenaries also protect the syl-pasha, his estates, and nearly anyone else with money within Calimport, bringing in another 12,000 to 15,000 armed troops.

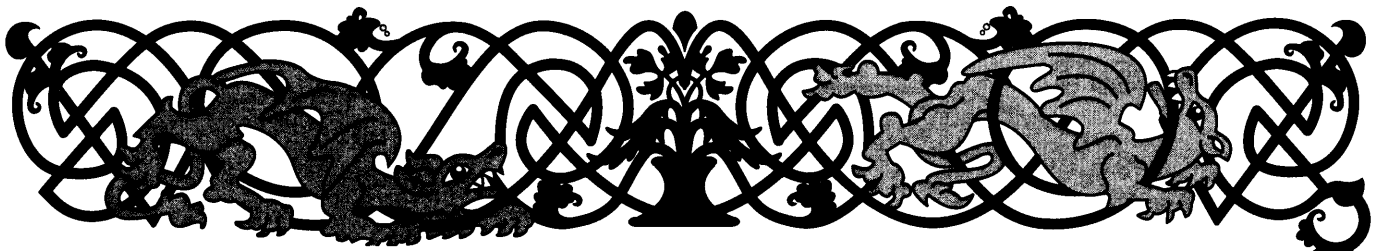
Important Features: Since this is one of the oldest remaining continuously populated cities on Faerûn, many of its original buildings have either fallen, been replaced, or been built over. Indeed, with the millennia of its existence and the many fires that have raged across and destroyed much of the city 12 times, many long-forgotten buildings, chambers, and causeways are now part of other structures. Some of the important features in Calimshan include the Djen Arenas, the Palace of the Murabirs, the Qysaghanni Fortress, the undercity, and the Golden Sands breweries.

The Djen Arenas are the two major arenas within Calimport. Both are dedicated to the entertainment of the masses and the rulers. Both arenas are within the same sabban in the northern sector of town. The westernmost arena is the largest, housing a chariot track, while the easternmost, nicknamed the Efreutum by the Qysar Shoon II, after its many entry pillars carved like flames, provides gladiatorial combat against captive monsters and other slaves. People of all classes attend the Efreutum, as admission is free, while the Sabam (the racing arena) charges anywhere from 2 cp to 10 gp for seating, depending on one's choice of seats and mandatory wagers. The four-story size of both arenas allows them to be seen easily from the sabban walks up to three sabbans away, and their skyline presence is only slightly less prominent than some temples to Tempus and Bhaelos surrounding them.

One of the greatest examples of Second Age Calishite architecture still extant is the Palace of the Murabirs. This palace is a high-walled estate of four three-story domed buildings set at the cardinal compass points, with all four of their main entrances facing east. Within the Forest House of the palace, the entire ground floor is naught but arched pillars carved, glazed, and inlaid to appear as if a forest grew out of the stone and to support the rest of the building. The Forest House has traditionally been the residence of the ruler's greatest warlord and his family, while the other three buildings are for the warlord's two primary lieutenants, the armory, and the stables.

The Qysaghanni Fortress abuts the Pasha's Sabban within the city and quarters all 500 of the personal guards of the syl-pasha. It is notable for its central minaret, which seems to be made wholly of transparent blue crystal, although no one and nothing on the inside is visible from without; however, the walls and towers opposite the viewer on the other side of the tower are visible. From the Lambent Minaret, the Qysaghanni launch many *flying carpets* and patrol the areas around the Pasha's Sabban.

The undercity of Calimport is more than just a series of sewers and waterways. It contains whole streets, buildings, and areas long-buried, forgotten, and built over after great destructive events swept through the city. Since it encompasses the sewers and areas beneath them, the undercity ranges from six feet to nearly a half-mile beneath Calimport's streets. The Temple of Old Night dominates the majority of the extant subterranean buildings and streets, and its faithful and clergy patrol the dark corridors as a veritable army. Still, hidden libraries, crypts, armories, and even old arenas in the undercity have not felt the step of an adventurer in centuries.



The Golden Sands breweries dominate two entire drudachs in western Calimport, though little odor permeates the areas, unlike around most breweries. Brewing, malting, some distilling, and other preparations are done in cellars below ground, where the cooler temperatures allow the brewers to create their trade-secret bubbly lagers that have recently begun shipping northward via Aurora's Wholesalers (only by magical transport does the product survive a journey of more than a tenday). The greedy but fair-minded sab-balad who oversees the Golden Sands Drudachs (and two other inconsequential drudachs) is also the owner of the brewery and the pasha of the Brewers' Guild, Sabbalad Tasyn el Effyd (LN hm F0).

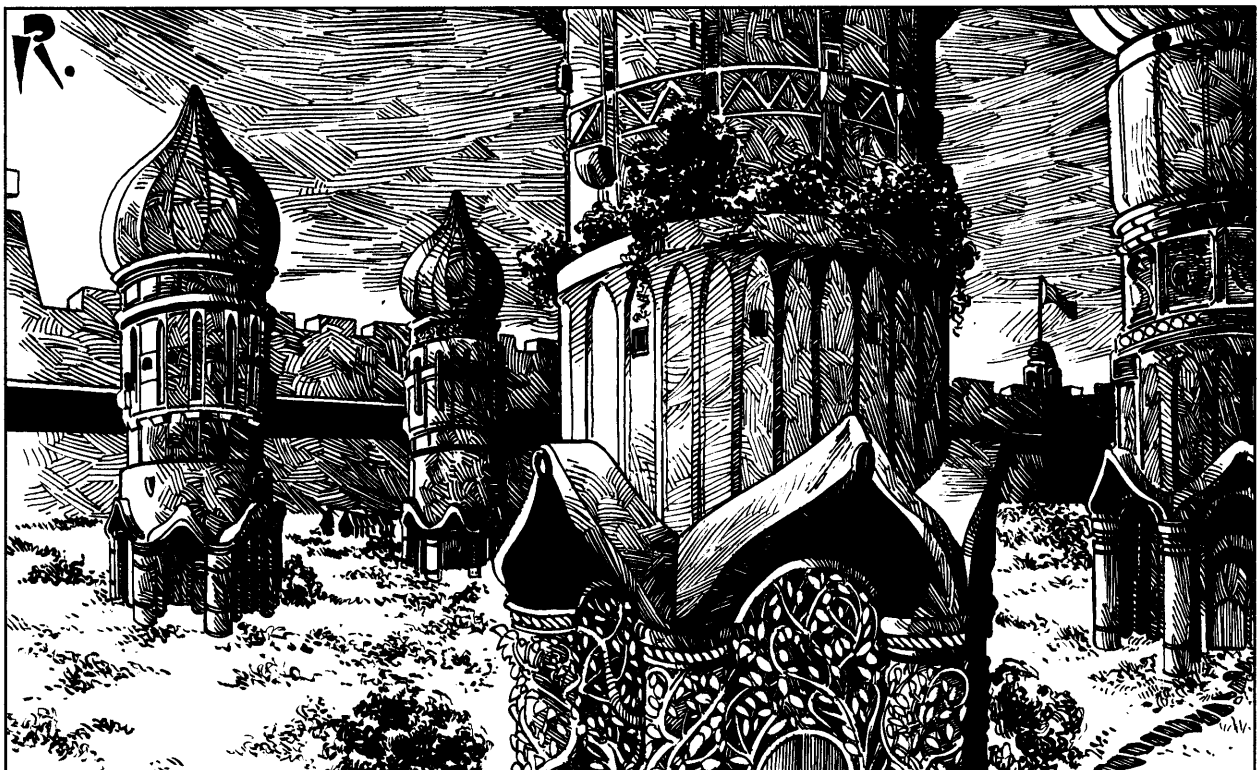
Equipment Shops: Full (all items in *PHB/DMG* lists of 500 gp or less). Illegal goods such as poisons, slaves, or those goods normally restricted to the Underdark are available through the black markets here as well, at steep prices.

Adventurers' Quarters: Finding a drudach within Calimport that has less than one tavern, festhall, and inn is a rarity, and the numbers of such structures in a drudach climb with proximity to either the docks or to the moneyed classes. Expect a third of the buildings within each sabban around the docks and the nobles' quarters to be festhalls, another third to be shops with living quarters above them, and the final third to be a random assortment of temples, taverns, city buildings, and living quarters for citizens or military personnel. Among the more notable of taverns and festhalls are:

- The Veiled Lamia. This inn and festhall caters to caravan drovers and traders. The Lamia's most interesting feature is the petrified-stone lamia noble at the center of its taproom that is sometimes unceremoniously used as a cloak rack. It is kept by the

barkeep as a souvenir of his adventuring forays into Shoonach. *Quality/Price:* Good/Cheap.

- Seven Dancing Jhasinni. Once one of the more opulent festhalls within Calimport years ago, the jhasinni of this tavern and inn became priestesses of Sharess after an alleged visitation by the goddess herself to all of the staff. The stone façade and the roominess of the building remain to tell of the structure's history, and the seven carved pillars of voluptuous jhasinni in various stages of dress serve as the sign for on this place, which lies directly opposite the Festhall of Eternal Delight. *Quality/Price:* Fair/Expensive.
- The Courtyard of the Jet Jambiya. This open air tavern provides a meeting place from sundown to sunup that is noted for its safety from treachery. Should any other weapons (beyond those of the staff) flash free of their scabbards or sheaths, the magical dark-colored jambiya that hovers over the center of the court flashes toward that weapon and absorbs it without fail. Legend has it that the jambiya has no substance and is a *portable hole* with some modicum of intelligence. It has swallowed such mighty weapons as the *Beljureled Blade of Nazir Rabir*, *Samark the Staff of Screams*, the *Four Daggers of Delvenahr*, and even *Giisan the White Lash of Loviatar's Purity*. *Quality/Price:* Fair/Moderate.
- The Festhall of Eternal Delight. This festhall is more properly the greatest temple to Sharess, but most indulgents that arrive here have less than holy thoughts in mind. The only pious figures are among the staff members, who are dedicated to sybaritic excess and hedonism in the name of their goddess. *Quality/Price:* Excellent/Expensive.



The Palace of the Murabirs

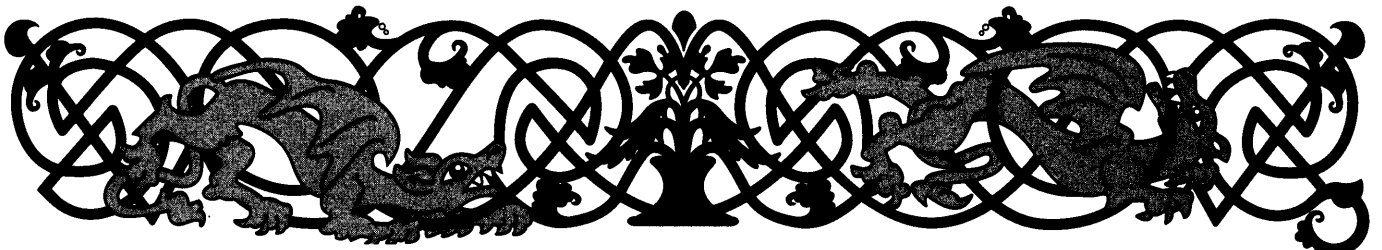


Calimport



1. Plaza of Divine Truth
2. Temple of Old Night
3. Khanduq of the Coinmother
4. The Veiled Lamia
5. Feshhall of Eternal Delight

6. Seven Dancing Jhasinas
7. The Syl-Pasha's Palace
8. Qysaghanni Fortress
9. Palace of the Murabirs
10. The Golden Bands "Saban" (3 drudachs in Sahar Saban)
11. The Auret (and Digh One's Library)
12. Courtyard of the Jet Jambiya
13. Djen Arenas



Important Characters

- Fahd yn Ralan el Pesarkhal, sultan of Armada Ward and sabbalad of Makista Sabban (NE hm F11), is the eldest son of Syl-Pasha Pesarkhal at 39 years old. Many of his 12 surviving brothers would covet his sultan's crown, but Fahd's ambitions drove him to take control of all the armed forces save the Qysaghanni (who answer only to his father) and led to his attendant responsibilities never granting him a moment's peace. As the syl-sultan of the Nallojal (navy), the Sadimmin (army), and the Farisans (elite forces), Fahd el Pesarkhal spends much of his time touring Calimshan and reminding the outer pashas and scheming sultans of Almraiven and Memnon (as well as other foreign ports) that the syl-pasha is a force not to be crossed.
- Janar yn Janar el Vyrstatr (NE hem P8 of Shar) is many things, including sultan of Jewel Ward, druzir of the Octel Drudach, and the third-highest-ranked member of the Kindly Order of Silver-smiths. Most important to him, he is darklord of the Temple of Old Night and one of three who sits at the side of Irtemara, the Dancer before Dawn and the head of Shar's temple in the Muzad.
- The twelfth son of the syl-pasha, Faruk yn Ralan el Pesarkhal, Sultan of Trades Ward (LE hm C4 of Shar; INT 17) stands apart from his brothers due to his astonishing rise to power. A mere 18 years of age, Faruk has already conquered two guilds and a large part of the illicit trade in the Muzad, and he sits as the sultan of one of the more profitable (if not prestigious) wards of the city.
- Pasha Kadan el Vyndahla (CE hm T9) leads the Mighty Guild of Bouncers, Laborers, and Sellswords. He has effectively merged this legitimate guild with his less-than-ethical enforcers and protection rackets, though he carefully maintains the distinction between the two so that he can claim to be a legitimate businessman who provides a strong arm where needed.
- The Qysaghanni's senior wizard is a withered old man named Sarsor yn Rogir el Maqaav, or Sarsor the Legless (N hm M14). Sarsor lost his legs just above the knees years ago in an early spell battle, but he has never lost a duel since. Sarsor has a custom-made *flying carpet* to move about on that he controls by mental commands. Sarsor acts as the primary commander of the Qysaghanni wizards and is their primary tutor in spell battle tactics.
- Khiber yn Makal el Wisynn (LE hm vampire F8) is the nighttime head of the Great Bazaar's guard forces. A former gladiatorial slave from Manshaka and mercenary for the Pasha Sufontis for more than a decade, Khiber has the trust of the old pasha (and thus the enmity of the pasha's young wife and older sons). They would trust him even less if they realized he had become a vampire more than two years ago.
- The drunken and temperamental druzir of Rogues Drudach and sabbalad of Sholeh Sabban, Nur yn Aban el Esarn (CE hm T4) was once a sneak thief under the Pasha Pook long ago. While a shut-in drunkard all the time now, he knows enough of others' secrets to maintain his position of power.
- The deaf Druzir Pecal el Saiduwm (NG hm P11 of Waukeen) only hears the voice of the goddess within him now, though he still reigns as the (spell-less) high priest of the Khanduq of the Coinmother. (He may soon be hearing more if the events of *For Duty and Deity* are utilized in your campaign.)
- The zealous Tethyrian priest Brother Dolmas (LG hm P3 of Ilmater) has left his order in Saradush and moved to Dock Ward to act in the name of the newly hailed (but not officially canonized) St. Asref, the patron saint of the Nadhari "free slave" movement

in Calimshan. Brother Dolmas secretly looks for ways to help slaves escape to freedom, but he is fast out of available funds, having spent his savings sending four slaves to freedom on ships bound for Waterdeep.

Notable Mages and Sages

While there are more private libraries in Calimport than any other city across Faerûn, only one—the High One's Library within the Guild Arcane's gold-topped silver spire known as the Auret (rather than the normal Minargent of other Guilds Arcane)—exclusively contains books of magical knowledge. Only senior guild members have access to the library and the library is enspelled such that only knowledge, not copies or the books themselves, can leave its chambers. While there are many notable mages among Calimport's splendor and squalor, the most important and most curious are:

- The caleph arcane of Calimport is the bald and tattooed Eli yn Adnan el Beza (N hm M19), the younger brother of Nur el Beza of Almraiven. His travels through Thay gave him a fascination for magical tattoos and the drive to claim the high seat in this Guild.
- The Sable Sorcerers are a trio of mysterious black-cloaked and black-masked mages, all relatively recent members of the Guild Arcane. They are assassins for hire who each specialize in illusions, charms, and invocations to get their jobs done.
- A much-hunted and much-feared woman known only as Sayednara the Fiery Lady has appeared several times. Sayednara's independent status is not nearly as distressing as her alleged partnership with an unbound djinni (a capital offense in Calimshan) or her habit of stealing slaves from their rightful owners. (Her suspected statistics are CG hf Ele10 [Air]; her true ones are unknown.)
- Pasha Daud el Vehmet (LE hem Enc10) has a spice trade that is not nearly as profitable as his trade in magical components and potions. His oily fingers seem to be able to acquire even the most exotic ingredients and elixirs—for a great many coins.

Notable Clergy and Churches

There are more than 300 churches, temples, shrines, and holy places within the confines of Calimport, and only the truly remarkable places stand out in this crowd:

- The Plaza of Divine Truth is among the largest of Calimport's temples. This fortified complex provides nearly a dozen small shrines and one major temple to Bhaeltos for the faithful.
- The Temple of Old Night is among the oldest worship sites of Shar in Faerûn. Its subterranean structure disguises the goddess' importance to Calimport: The tiny shrine through which one enters the temple below seems insignificant, though the true temple covers nearly one-quarter of Calimport's eastern undercity. The temple also controls much of Calimport's black market and enforcer guilds, since the high priestess, Irtemara el Eradsari (NE hf P15 of Shar), easily manipulates her grandson and son-in-law through the power of her temple.
- The Khanduq of the Coinmother is a marketplace and holy site for the worshipers of Waukeen, though this permanent market is only set apart from the city's other khanduq's by the 10-foot-diameter golden disk and holy symbol at its center (which thieves have unsuccessfully tried to steal for 323 years) and its druzir and high priest, the deaf (and spell-less) Pecal el Saiduwm (NG hm P11 of Waukeen).





Irtemara el Eradsari

- A long-neglected bazaar and street on the eastern edge of the city has quickly gained notoriety in past months among caravan drivers as a pilgrimage site for Shaundakul's faithful (though none of Shaundakul's true priests have learned of this as yet). They say that driving a wagon and oxen from south to north along the "Wind-Rider's Way" restores health to travelers and animals, ripens or freshens green or spoiled produce, and blesses a caravan's journey as the road takes it out of the city.

Notable Rogues and Thieves' Guilds

The syl-pasha, through selective assassinations six to ten years ago, tore control of the entire Calishite underworld from the three senior clans Vyndahla, Kahmir, and Pasawal. He slew the three senior members of every underworld family and offered all remaining members their choice: Submit to his rule or die. While the Pasawals resisted and were destroyed utterly, most clans accepted and have prospered without the normal governmental interferences suffered under the Djenispool regime.

- **Assassins:** El Kahmir. Butak yn Butak el Kahmir (LE hm T7), the gullible yet vengeful first son of el Kahmir, rules the assassins, though he has many rivals whose blades are stayed only by their fear of his father's power.
- **Black Marketeers:** El Vyndahla. Amun el Eradsari (CN hm P3 of Shar), the youngest surviving nephew of the Octopus, Kadan el Vyndahla, is the pride and joy of his grandmother, Irtemara el Eradsari. Amun rose from grifter to the head of the black market far too swiftly to learn it well (and thus, this guild is also actually controlled by Kadan).

- **Burglars and Thieves:** El Kahmir. This sneak thief turned thieves' guildmaster is the 15-year-old Faruk yn Khamas el Kahmir (CE hm T4), or el Zelyn (*the shadow's son*). His ambitions outstrip even those of his father, the head of the spies guild.
- **Enforcers and Thugs:** El Vyndahla. Kadan el Vyndahla (CE hm T9), the eldest surviving member of the clan, is called the Octopus, as he is both the head of the "many-armed" enforcers in Calimport and has his hands in nearly everything illegal in Calimport. He still harbors many grudges against el Pesarkhal for his subjugation and consolidation of the rogue powers under the syl-pasha's thumb.
- **Pirates and Smugglers:** El Synabbat (El Pesarkhal). Due to the recent shocking deaths of Pasha Bajir el Synabbat and his two elder sons at the hands of unknown assassins, the surviving Synabbat male heir—the weak, craven Harun yn Bajir el Synabbat (NE hm F0)—places much of his decision-making in the hands of his far more crafty and forceful wife, Saida yr Oma yr Pesarkhal el Synabbat (LE hf F0).
- **Slavers:** El Pesarkhal. Rysal Tamal yn Ralan el Pesarkhal (LE hm F6) is the fifth son of the syl-pasha. He is an accomplished sea captain and the commander of a small flotilla in the navy—and, of course, the head of slaving operations into and out of Calimport.
- **Spies:** El Kahmir. Once a proud and untouchable man due to his alliances and friends, "Wednazel" Nur yn Jafar el Kahmir (NE hm C8 of Cyric) saw his protections die during the Darkstalker Wars. While he could not prove who did it, the Ear of the Shadows (Wednazel) soon found out that the syl-pasha was not one to be crossed. El Kahmir is the strongest of the rogue powers not led directly by the syl-pasha, and he is still one to be feared. El Kahmir has slowly been trying to uncover any secrets he can on his new overlord, el Pesarkhal.

Keltar (Town)

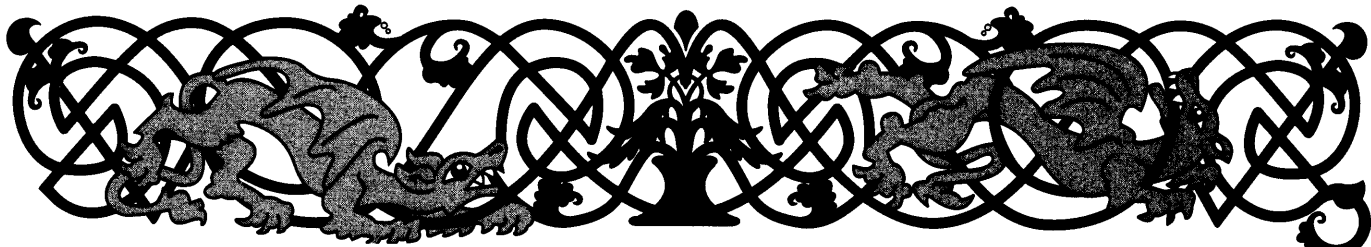
This town, sometimes called the Edge of the Desert, is the least political town in Calimshan since more than half of the living things within its confines are cattle. Keltar's western walls brush up against some tendrils of sand and cracked mud at the utmost extent of Memnon's spirit presence. The town straddles the Calim River at its deepest and swiftest point, and some of its streets are actually canals of water diverted from their course for driving waterwheels to mill grain into flour or power the newest inventions that all Keltarans love: the great windmills that blow the stench of the pens and the slaughterhouses out of the city.

Who Rules: Sultan Duncan el Ashnarti (LE hm F0), ruler of Keltar, often drops the middle article from his name in an effort to seem more like a northerner and thus make business easier in some circles. He takes pride in the relative peacefulness of his town, both in its productivity due to said peace and in his profits, since the peace is maintained because he holds control over all trade—legal and illegal—within Keltar.

Who Really Rules: The sultan allows much input from his local land-holding vizars and merchant powers, but he still maintains a solid hold on the reins of power.

Population: Approximately 24,000 persons live in Keltar (90% human, 3% halfling, 2% elf and half-elf, 5% other).

Sabbans/Drudachs: 8/14. Unlike most cities and towns which individually name their sabbans after famous rulers or figures from history, Keltarans efficiently refer to the sabbans roughly by compass



points; while not perfectly broken down by straight boundaries or even divisions, the sabbans are all easily known as Sabbans North, Northwest, West, Southwest, South, Southeast, East, and Northeast.

Major Products: Leather goods, cattle, processed grains, and flour.

Armed Forces: Approximately 300 amlakkar and another 45 officers keep the peace in Keltar, while a small garrison of 50 soldiers ride the ranges to keep order out among the grazing lands around the town. The amlakkar are all human F2 to F5s armed with small shields, scimitars, and spears. All can swim and maneuver a boat and have been known to dive into the canals in pursuit of their targets. Despite the lower numbers of defenders, this is one of the most peaceful towns in Calimshan due to the lack of conflicting powers and the presence of Ilmatari priests.

Important Features: While a moderately sized town, Keltar is older even than Waterdeep. Its age and wonders are found in many unexpected places. The most impressive sight within the boundaries of Keltar is the millennia-old Steps of Istishia. With a massive sluice gate diverting some of the Calim River under the walls of the town rather than around the eastern side, these sluiced waters are in turn moved by hidden screws and pumps up into the stone monolith set in the North Sabban. The water bubbles out the top of the monolith and flows along stone pathways long-vanished from wear, though their magical fields still move the water down in four staircaselike patterns from each corner into a wide reflecting pool set around the monolith. The water is apparently also pumped out the bottom of the pool and back into the Calim River magically twice a day, preventing it from stagnating or becoming permanently fouled.

The canals of Keltar run through the Northeast, East, Southeast, and South sabbans. Waterwheels dominate the waterways in the Northeast Sabban, and the speed and force of the river drives many grindstones for processing grains into flour or meal so that it becomes more efficient to transport. Once the canals widen starting in East Sabban, the water slows enough to allow safe passage for barges, travel by gondola for the rich, swimming and bathing for the masses (though social graces would suggest the South Sabban bathhouses are a better site for those ablutions), and more. Fishing from the canals is a pastime only pursued by the Ilmatari monks (for fish oils to use in their medicines and food) and a few select tavern owners who want to offer different fare beyond beef, bread, and ale.

Equipment Shops: Partial (all items in *PHB/DMG* lists of 300 gp or less). Cattle and the industries revolving around caring for them, moving them, penning them, slaughtering them, skinning them, and tanning the hides drive Keltar; needless to say, leather goods are in ample supply, resulting in a 10% discount for nearly anything made primarily of leather.

Adventurers' Quarters: Considering the prosaic, cattle-oriented bent of the town, not many adventurers are attracted to it. Consequently, competition has not created many outstanding service facilities.

- The Ringed Nose tavern is among the seedier of dives among the slaughterhouses in East Sabban. Here the half-orc staff just barely contains the nightly brawls of all the butchers. While the smell of good food from its kitchen is rarely enough to disguise the permeating odor of offal and blood from the slaughterhouses around it, the Ringed Nose is a place to secretly trade information, since the barkeeps are prudent and the clientele rarely sober enough to remember they were there themselves, let alone anyone else. *Quality/Price:* Poor/Cheap.



“Wednazel” Nur el Kahmir

Important Characters

- The “Amlak Arcane” Xaros Tenseal (LN em F5/M4) is a rare Calishite elf and rarer still an amlak officer actually interested in serving and defending the public over lining his pockets with the money of the more ruthless cattle barons.
- The Ynamalik Uras yn Aban el Ihak (LN hm F4) is the closest thing to a political threat to the sultan of Keltar, since his herds of cattle dominate the shanate surrounding Keltar and fuel the town’s economy. Luckily, the pair have been friends for decades, and their partnership has helped maintain Keltar’s peace. Unfortunately, Uras’s health turned poor at the start of the year, and all can see his son waits not for his recovery but his death, as Jafar yn Uras el Ihak (CE hm T5) has always been greedy and wants far more than his father has desired in the rule of Keltar. The sultan believes the ambitious ideas the boy has are less his own than those of the sultan’s old rivals, the Kahmir clan of Calimport.
- The Tenassar Saddleworks are allied with the Ihak family of cattle ranchers. The Saddleworks is the primary purchaser of tanned cowhides (tanned by the sultan’s tanneries). A Tenassar saddle costs twice the normal asking price, but the social prestige of its make and the quality of work in the saddle is unmatched. Asraf el Tenassar (NG hm F0) has said he can make saddles for any mount from as small as a rabbit or dog to as large as a dragon—though he has yet to fit a dragon for a saddle in his 35 years in the trade.
- A lesser but still important trade in Keltar is horse breeding and training. The Laamil clan is reputedly the greatest at this. Amhir



Revered Father Adhan el Ilmater

Rabi el Lammil (LG hm F3) is the best horseman within 50 miles around, and he is also one of the most sought-after bachelors among Keltar's amlakkar for his family fortunes as well as his military station and personal honor. His brother, Jamal, cares little for the family business and is a spendthrift, leaving his sister, Sadhyra, to manage the family fortunes secretly for Rabi. Rabi would disown his dishonorable brother if not for Jamal's friendship with both Kalil el Tenassar and Jafar el Ihak, two who would swiftly use Jamal to seize control of his family's herds and business by making false charges through him. For now, Rabi keeps the peace within the city and on the range.

Notable Mages and Sages

- The Seminarcane is the complex that houses the mages' school and Guild Arcane headquarters. Built in the Seventh Age, the brickwork is far simpler on the external walls than it is anywhere in the building. Mosaics dominate nearly every interior surface of five of the six buildings, including the Minargent, which houses the actual Guild business headquarters. The students' dormitory is unadorned by decoration (or other distractions that an acolyte needs not). Also contained within the walls is an exclusive shrine to Azuth usable only by Guild Arcane members and students of the school. The shrine is said to have kneeling-stone mosaics that allow the penitent to more easily commune with Azuth, but no outsiders have ever tested these theories and no members ever speak of them.

Notable Clergy and Churches

- The site that made Keltar famous is a hospital and monastery dedicated to Ilmater. The House of the Broken God actually encompasses all three drudachs of the entire Northwest Sabban, though its sabban wall actually abuts a 12-foot-high perimeter wall rising eight to nine feet above the walkway. Beds of herbs and medicinal plants dominate the gardens all over the walled monastery complex, and these cultivated fields spread out well beyond the normal bounds of the town. At the end of the gardens, farthest from the town, are dormitories for incurable patients and a sanitarium. The one major temple and two lesser shrines (to local saints), plus a school, cloister, pharmacy, and hospital are all scattered about the walled area, along with two wells and a smattering of small inns for the comfort of any companions of patients in the hospital. The entire complex is run by the kindly and wise Revered Father Adhan el Ilmater (NG hm P9 of Ilmater), whose balding gray-haired pate and smiling face are often seen working hands-on among his charges.

Notable Rogues and Thieves' Guilds

Most underworld activities in this town are run by the Ahimar family for el Pesarkhal. Only one such guild is of note:

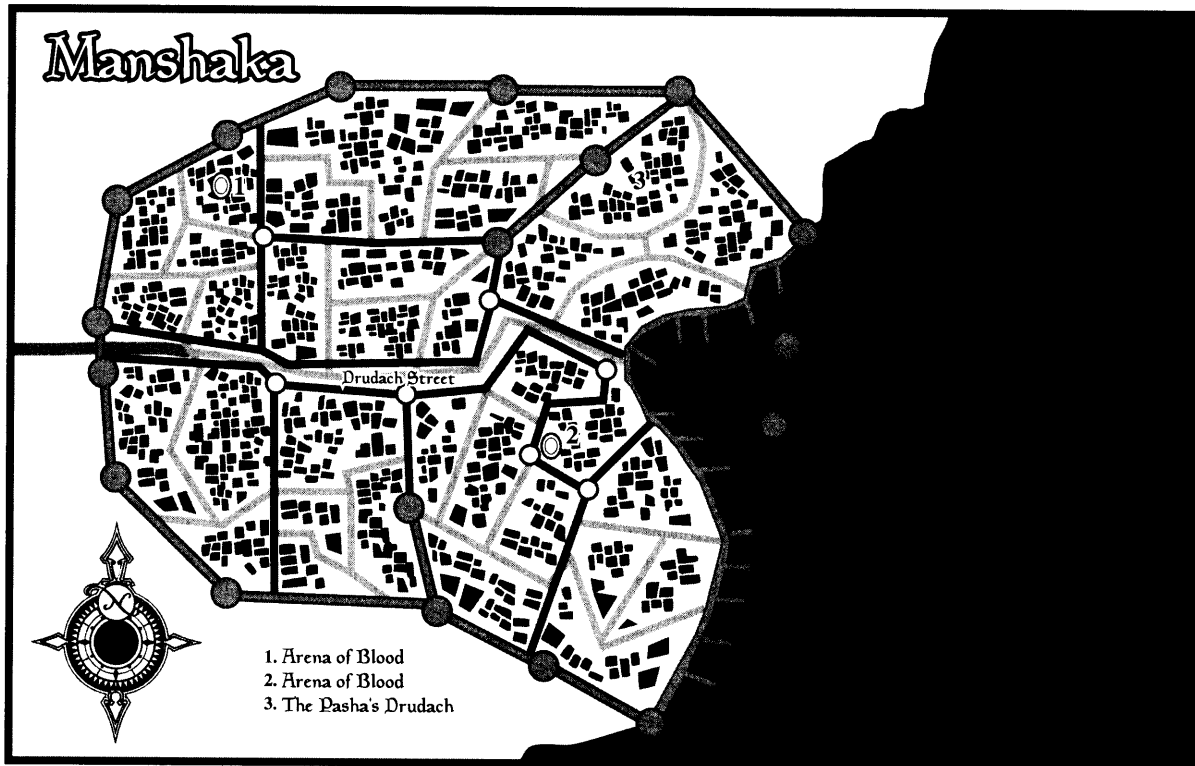
- *Enforcers and Thugs*: El Ashnarti (el Ahimar for el Pesarkhal). Sultan Duncan el Ashnarti (LE hm F0), the ruler of Keltar, is also a nephew by marriage of the Ahimar clan. The headquarters of this guild is located in Keltar. While the guild maintains a very low-key presence, having the enforcers under his thumb is yet another reason why Duncan's power is unmatched in Keltar.

Manshaka (Town)

More euphemisms have been coined for this town than any other site in Calimshan: Tymora's Town, for its wavering favors; City of Sin, as a haven for smugglers and those at odds with the law of other lands; or even Schamedar's Shame, as the more judgmental temple priests there refer to their closest neighbor. This is the gamblers' and smugglers' town, a place almost designed for those looking for a fight. There are few laws and equally few protections. Stepping on the wrong person's toes gets one thrown into the arenas or (if the person offended is merciful) killed instantly. Few native mages live here, and the few that visit learn to watch their backs and expect attacks from many a fighter who resents their magic, or they leave Manshaka—often feet first in a gravedigger's cart. Finally, Manshaka is the place where slavery is most obvious and most abusive in Calimshan; that notoriety filters north in the legends of the Manshakan Blood Arenas and their fighting slaves.

The Pasha Abon Duum ruled this city with an autocratic iron fist for more than 50 years, but he disappeared mysteriously in 1357 DR. Numerous rumors sprang up of a plot by his most famous of escaped slaves—Vajra Valmeyjar—to kill him, but others say his own ambitions and actions ended his life when he attempted to claim the power of the gods. Had he waited but another year, he might have succeeded like the mortals Cyric and Midnight, but Duum is now lost among the planes, his fate unknown to Faerûn.

Who Rules: No one currently sits on the throne in the Pasha's Palace in Manshaka. Since his ascension to the syl-pasha's throne in Calimport, Ralan el Pesarkhal has purposefully left the throne vacant to draw out his enemies and check on who would test his rising power (and try to divert his attention from Calimport).



Who Really Rules: Syl-Pasha Ralan el Pesarkhal (NE hm dual M7/T12) of Calimport controls Manshaka through his many agents, especially Pasha Jhiavor (see below).

Population: 37,000 people (97% human, 3% other) call Manshaka home, though it used to be home to nearly twice as many folk before the Drudach Fires of the Year of the Gauntlet (1369 DR).

Sabbans/Drudachs: 8/36.

Major Products: Moneylending, mercenaries, livestock, information, weapons, and armor.

Armed Forces: There are about 700 amlakkar and 200 soldiers (for guarding the Arenas of Blood) of F1 to F8 within the town, but Manshaka's version of peacekeeping is suspect at best, and the amlakkar are merely better organized slavers or thieves, depending on one's perspective.

Important Features: The Red Minarets of Manshaka are fully glazed, red-brick towers looming above the sabban walls. Their garrisoned amlakkar and soldiers more often shoot arrows and crossbows from the parapets at the sight of disturbances rather than investigate and resolve the source of the problem. Legends say the towers once gleamed white and pure, but the blood of the slaves of Manshaka has stained the walls of all the towers forevermore.

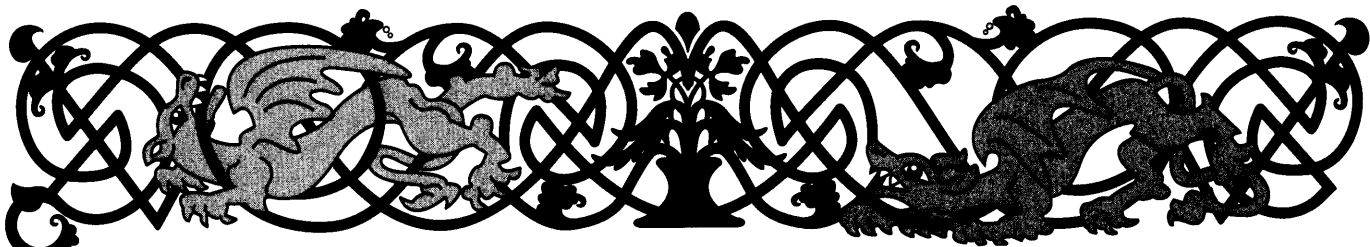
The external walls of Manshaka bristle along the outside with shards of metal and stone designed to keep out invaders and deter any sneak thieves. They also have a dedicated soldier garrison within the town for them that provides full-time protection from internal and external threats.

The Arenas of Blood are, of course, the places most folks have heard of and seek out when they arrive in Manshaka. Identical in all ways save their placement at opposite ends of the town, the Arenas hold over 30 monsters and never fewer than 50 (and up to 100) hu-

manoid fighting slaves. There are three shows per day of monsters vs. humanoids, and two shows of gladiatorial combat, though no humanoid gladiator ever fights more than twice in one day. Admission to the games is 3 cp per show or 1 sp for the whole day. With an average daily attendance of over 10,000 persons (and a wintertime average of 14,000), the Blood Arenas easily support themselves, their staff, and an ever-needing-to-be-resupplied armory of weapons and armor for the gladiators. Games are always to the death unless a special combat duel is set up to settle a political matter. All events in the Arenas, no matter their outcomes or motives, create wagers, and the oddskeepers of Manshaka have the largest thriving gambling business outside of Calimport.

Slave revolts never occur in the Blood Arenas as no slave (other than Vajra Valmeyjar and Jalarn) has ever escaped from of the twisted maze of corridors beneath the Arenas. The guards stationed below are often more numerous and treacherous than the potential escapees.

The Pasha's Palace is a massive fortress that encompasses a whole drudach in itself and is more heavily fortified (militarily and magically) than even the syl-pasha's estate in Calimport. This is where Rajan el Pesarkhal built the power base that he used to vault to the syl-pasha's seat in Calimport. Curiously, the palace lies empty and apparently unguarded after more than a year. However, el Pesarkhal's enemies are finally coming out of the woodwork to invade the Palace—only to find their dooms through deadly or subtle magic and the actions of carefully hidden allies el Pesarkhal has among Manshaka's social circles. Strangely enough, the rumors of great treasures hidden in the Pasha's Palace by the syl-pasha are true. Jewels, magical items and lore, and many long-buried secrets lie in a vault more than a mile beneath the estate, though they are only reachable by Ralan el Pesarkhal or his heir (who wears a certain magical ring).



Equipment Shops: Partial (all items in *PHB/DMG* lists of 300 gp or less).

Adventurer's Quarters: While Manshaka has an average number of inns, tavern, and festhalls for a town of its size, none of them are particularly notable. The handful of minor distinction burned down in the Drudach Fires and have not been rebuilt.

Important Characters

- Pasha Jhiavor the Ripper (LN hom F9; INT 15, STR 18/35) is the syl-pasha's main agent here in Manshaka. He is known for his fearsome reputation as an enforcer. Secretly, he serves as el Pesarkhal's spy and one of his many accountants. (Accounting was a talent Jhiavor wished to use for years, but his opponents and comrades alike had little use for his memory of and knack for details and numbers.)

Notable Mages and Sages

- Vizar Mohad el Fisar (LE hm M5) is the true hidden slave lord of Manshaka, as he uses Pasha Ladan (see below) as a puppet under his complete control. Mohad willingly serves that which taught him his magic, the lich Starskull (of the Twisted Rune). He is also a close personal friend of the syl-pasha, and he finds little difficulty in serving two masters in order to get the power he wants (though he is more likely to betray Starskull before the syl-pasha).

Notable Clergy and Churches

- Jhalam (NG hm F8/P1 of Tempus) was a gladiator in the eastern Arena of Blood for more than seven years. His devotion to battle and a recent near-death experience and inexplicable recovery have seen him become a self-taught priest of Tempus. That sudden piety and power is what gave him his freedom by leading him out of the maze beneath the Arena. He is now on the run in central Calimshan and has no fewer than 20 bounty hunters after him.

Notable Rogues and Thieves' Guilds

Most underworld activities in this town are run by the Kahmir family for el Pesarkhal. Only two such guilds are of note:

- *Burglars and Thieves:* El Kahmir. The 35-year-old Khamas yn Kur el Kahmir (NE hm T9) runs the Manshakan headquarters of the thieves guild for his father, "Wednazel" Nur el Kahmir. Though experienced, Khamas is fairly dull-witted and compliant to his father's wishes.
- *Slavers:* El Viscek. Pasha Ladan el Viscek (NE hm F0) is the apparent head of slaving operations within the city. (See Vizar Mohad el Fisar for the real leader.) His primary customers are the two Blood Arenas and Pasha Jhiavor.

Memnon (City)

The City of Soldiers, the Scarlet City, the Desert's Gateway, and the Garrison City are all titles long held by Memnon since its founding by the Army of Fire and the great efreeti pasha, Memnon. But for 6,000 years, the city has been ruled by mortals, and they want to ensure that it remains so. Despite the focus on the military in the city, Memnon is also a good fishing port and an important trade stop. It is the last Calishite port before heading north, the first port for trade goods from the north coming south to reach, and the secondary port for the syl-pasha's navy. The last major task that always falls to the loyal guards at Memnon is their watch over the ruins of Memnonnar,

the former city center during the genies' reign and once a part of this city. Many evils are buried within it, and no one in Calimshan wants to see them escape to terrorize folk again.

Who Rules: Sultan Arin yn Kahar el Sujil (N hm T3) is an arrogant, paranoid, easily frightened man who sits as a sultan due to the political and trade alliances arranged by his father. This petty scarecrow of a man could easily be removed by any of those he lords it over, but his vizar has recommended that they leave him in place for appearance's sake. While he technically controls the city through four of its major trades (fishing, shipwrights, tavernkeepers, and wheelwrights), the vizars and pashas beneath him merely go about their business as if he were not there, trusting that Anders, his vizar, will steer the sultan's attentions away from any real business.

Who Really Rules: The Vizar Anders el Gnurlbrach (LN hom F4) is the even-handed and diplomatic adviser, confidante, and right hand of the sultan. He plays the game well enough that the sultan little realizes that his vizar runs the show. Indeed, the sultan only knows what Anders tells him, so Sultan el Sujil has assumed that all the changes and improvements in city life that have recently taken place have been his ideas, rather than Anders's ideas (or those of Anders' true benefactor and friend, the syl-pasha). Anders's half-orc nature is hardly noticed nowadays due to his practiced social graces and a large but meticulously trimmed beard that almost totally hides his lower tusks.

The syl-pasha's nephews, Asraf (LG hm F2) and Kadar, (NE hm F3) are lesser vizars to the sultan, but their true purpose (which Anders knows well) is to spy on both the sultan and Vizar Anders (and their cousins, the sultans in command of the army and navy personnel garrisoned here).

Population: 31,300 persons (90% human, 2% halfling, 2% elf, 4% half-orc, 2% other) live in this city as civilians. There are the additional 3,500 troops for both the pasha's army and navy (see *Armed Forces*).

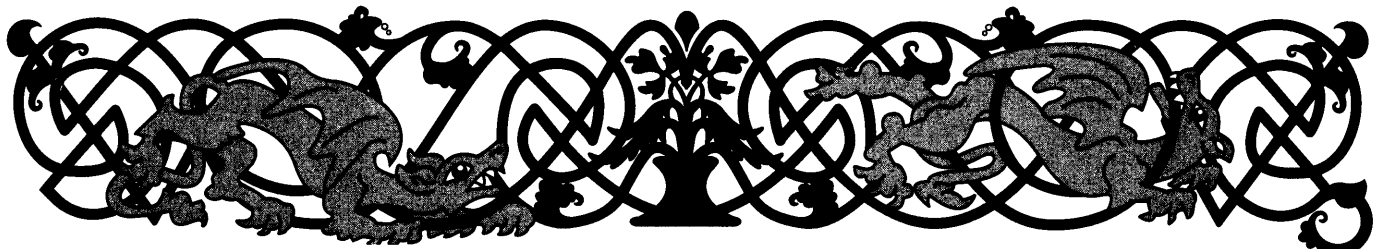
Sabbans/Drudachs: 7/26.

Major Products: Fish, pottery, caravan services (including wagon-building or repairs, equipment, etc.), shipwrights, and mercenaries.

Armed Forces: The 750 amlakkar and their officers are among the most heavily armed police within Calimshan, though their armaments pale in comparison to the bristling armor and shining weapons of the 2,000 garrisoned soldiers within the Defenders' Drudach. Likewise, the 35 ships of the navy are tended by roughly 700 folk both on-board ship and off in addition to their assigned crews. While the soldiers could easily conquer this city, they are far more occupied with the maintaining a defensive posture for the syl-pasha against the monsters and dangers that might erupt unexpectedly from ruined Memnonnar across the waters of the River Agis.

Important Features: Memnon's most recognizable feature is easily spotted from leagues off along the Trade Way or out on the seas: The rich red clay and mud of the area lends a striking color to much of the city. When baked into bricks, the red in the clay and mud actually brightens to scarlet. Memnonnar and some of the Calimmon Garrisons of Tethyr also use these bright tiles, though their hue is often muted by paints or other decoration to distract from the scarlet tint. The use of imported tiles and stone from other areas of Calimshan and the Sword Coast in one's home or place or business raise a person's social status, as such folk can afford not to live within the glow of "commoners' red."





Memnon's Naval Sabban encloses the naval yards, docks, shipwrights, and barracks for the sailors. The sabban walk does not exist around this area, as the wall rises to 10 feet in height with only north and south gates as the entrances into the official naval areas, aside from the waterways on the west. While much of Memnon's money is tied to either fishing or the navy, sailors rarely range farther than the drudachs surrounding the Naval Sabban, where their needs and wants are catered to, leaving the central and eastern city to caravan travelers and local nobility.

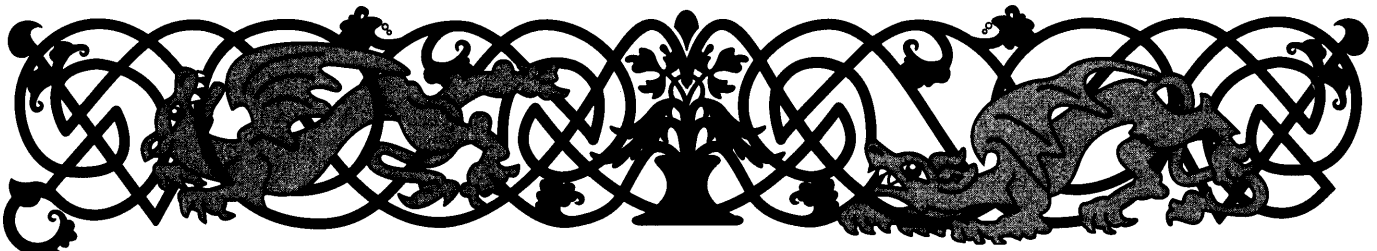
Very few palaces still remain from the old city, but the external city walls are intact from the Era of Skyfire. They, unlike the standard red mud-brick of the rest of the city, are made of a dark smooth rock that seems totally immune to heat and wear—they shine and are cool to the touch no matter what the surrounding conditions. The large block tower over the main northeastern gate and the gate itself are made of the same material, and these have withstood dragons' breath and fireballs without any damage whatsoever. Despite the best efforts of armorers, weaponsmiths, and mages alike to preserve this heat resistance, the dark shale-like rock loses its special properties once separated from the walls or gate and becomes common coal.

Equipment Shops: Partial (all items in PHB/DMG lists of 300 gp or less).

Adventurers' Quarters: While Memnon is fair and accommodating in many other ways, the city's taverns, inns, and festhalls tend to rely on supply and demand for setting prices. In other words, prices are higher than the norm even for the rudest of accommodations. Visiting Memnon on a tight budget will show a traveler many a hayloft for a bed and a handmeal once a day at best. Still, among the city's 600 or so taverns, inns, and festhalls are:

- The Black Flagon. This is edifice is a crowded, smoky, low-lit classic tavern of the battered-but-massive-wooden-furniture, low-beamed-ceiling sort. Drinks are overpriced but served swiftly by an energetic and ample staff of sprites. Few folk know that the bold, no-longer-shy-of-others family of sprites own the tavern, but many have learned that to tease, harm, or mock a sprite is to be shut out of the Flagon forever—by means (if need be) of several concealed magical items of formidable blasting power and the professional efforts of a hired band of adventurers, the Flagon Five. Privacy and quiet are unknown in the Flagon, but it is the favored meeting place of many. *Quality/Price:* Good/Expensive.
- The Fine Gold Chain. This club is easily found, since it is a northern-style fairy-tale castle building of sandstone with slender turrets, little round balconies, frankly perilous flying bridges, and little grinning carved gargoyles everywhere (much used as hat pegs). Open to adventurers (and to those who wish to see, talk to, and dally with adventurers), it serves as the site of ongoing revelry night and day. It also hosts feasts of strange monster meats and recruitment sessions for adventuring companies or for caravan owners desiring to hire established adventuring bands, mercenaries, or just individual daring folk for various private tasks, the most common of which is caravan guard duty through the desert. The tales told here are of legendary color, out-of-work adventurers often put on weapons-feat demonstrations or model for painters or lovers of live tableaux, weapon and armor appraisers and swift-repair craftsfolk are on staff, and the food and drink are first-rate. *Quality/Price:* Excellent/Expensive.
- The Brazen Behir. Named for the lifelike statue that curls up into the air to form its front gate, this large, well-lit but rather impersonal inn is the usual stopping place for caravans and large





groups of travelers, thanks to its prodigious size and excellent stables and walled goods storage compound. It boasts all-hours communal baths, a wide menu that includes dishes usually found only in distant lands (such as the noodle baskets favored in Var and the roast boar of the Sword Coast North), and a few six- and seven-room suites. *Quality/Price*: Good/Expensive.

- Tulbusker's Safe Haven. This inn is a cozily shabby, once-grand but friendly place where almost everything is mended or in need of repair. The staff is cheerful, thoughtful, and always available, and the fees reasonable (a rarity in Memnon). The Safe Haven is the favored accommodation of many visitors, even now that its jovial founder, the legendarily loud and fat ex-adventurer Tulbusker, has died and his former servants have taken over. Telda, lady of the kitchens, is famous for her thick, smoky-flavored mushroom stews, and the inn maintains a separate dining room for citizens who just want to eat at the Haven and not stay overnight. *Quality/Price*: Good/Moderate.

Important Characters

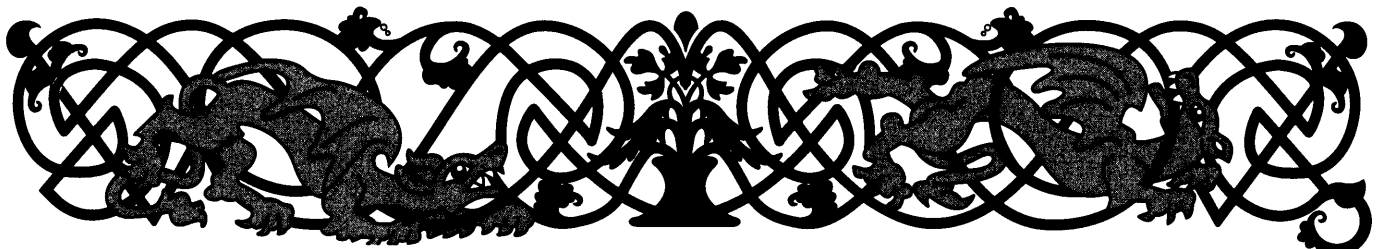
- Jalavaerra Ishtra, the "Fine Gold Chain" (CG hf F7), a tall, willowy, much-loved blonde of sleek shape and famously beautiful large, dark-purple eyes is a retired adventurer from Westgate who owns and operates the adventurers' club that bears her nickname. She has been called "everyone's friend and every adventurers' mother" and is a shrewd investor and arranger-of-deals. Her nickname was bestowed upon her because she once stole almost a mile of fine gold chain from a dragon's hoard and carried it off by winding it around and around herself, inches thick, to form a strange sort of armor.
- Shieldlord Hastor el Khafar (LG hem P9 of Tempus) has tended the shrine of Tempus within Memnon for more than a decade and has tutored many a youth in the ways of battle as a way to maintain the shrine's upkeep without doing mercenary work. His current student is the sea elf fighter-mage Vyaalis, whom he tutors in secret in the basics of fighting with a long sword (as the youthful elf is more used to a trident). Hastor is finding this as educational as his student, since he has never before met any sea elves. The latter part of their studies will take Hastor beneath the waves to both learn how to fight underwater and then to adapt his teachings so Vyaalis can pass them on in turn. Hastor sees this whole opportunity not as a threat of fostering a sea elf uprising but as a holy mission to spread Tempus' divine words and tactics beneath the waves.
- Among the most beloved and politically powerful people in Memnon is the gray-haired Darkas the Storyteller, (NG hef B13), whose single eye has not diminished her observations and whose memories of her century-and-some-odd years in Memnon (and all the secrets she knows) become the veiled verses of her songs.
- Talimar the Honest (LG hm Pal4) is an amlak chawal in one of the dock drudachs. Originally from Waterdeep, he has given himself the task of reforming many of the corrupt amlakkar within Memnon and turning them into a true fighting force, rather than a pack of rabble separated from pirates only by their soiled uniforms. He was made an officer merely to distract him from his investigations into the illegal black markets, and his superiors often send him on blind leads to keep him out of their business or set him onto their enemies' activities to give him some sense of accomplishment.

Notable Mages and Sages

As the site of the last Guild Arcane founding, which took place here more than 500 years ago, Memnon has always been friendly to wizards. Many mages are inducted into the navy or at least brought on-board for use as added navigational aids (through their magical scrying abilities) or powerful and unconventional defenses against pirates. Still, as Memnon is a far less urbane city than some of Calimshan's others, wizardry is less ostentatious here, and thus Memnon seems less obsessive and fawning about magic than other cities. Among Memnon's wizard denizens are:

- Essren el Rarathar (CN hm M7) is a young, fair-haired, secretive but enthusiastic adventurer-mage for hire who goes off on forays armed with three secrets. He straps vials full of *potions of healing* to his limbs beneath his clothing; he wears an anklet that has the same powers as a *ring of protection +3*; and he has a twin sister, Elarautha el Rarathar (NG hf M6) who can stand in for him (they have practiced using spells and pitching their voices and altering their mannerisms so as to appear as alike as possible). Elarautha will rescue Essren from mortal peril by whisking him home by means of a magical item that can safely teleport either Essren or Elarautha back to itself from afar (any distance on the same plane) when the distant person signals or when a farscrying wielder of the item activates it to function. Judicious use of this item has snatched Essren away from many dooms but has left a few surviving clients viewing him as an untrustworthy coward.
- The short, portly caleph arcane of Memnon is Hajii yn Atsu el Bakran (NE hm M19), an excitable and seemingly oblivious man more interested in feasts than spells. Many foes have thus underestimated the crafty caleph, and few have survived to tell of the multitude of wands he wears in the voluminous folds of his robes and flesh. The syl-pasha is currently discussing the reestablishment of the protective minaret enchantments along the Trade Way through the desert with Caleph Arcane Bakran and his counterpart in Calimport. The two guildmasters have remained at an impasse, however, over the amount and apportionment of the fees for the job and the responsibilities of maintaining the work once done.
- A figure virtually unknown within the city but famous beneath the waves, the sea elf Vyaalis (LN em F5/M5) is the son of aquatic elves from the Coral Kingdom near Evermeet. He is wandering the seas in search of a place where he belongs. He is something of a celebrity in the seas around Calimshan and Tethyr, as he is one of very few sea elf mages. Of late, he has found himself fascinated with exploring surface cultures and is preoccupied with finding a teacher suited to imparting to him the finer points of using a steel long sword, such as those the local elves scavenged from the sunken *Pasha's Palace* far to the east. He has found that tutor in Hastor el Khafar.
- Without question, the chief assassin in Memnon is the Night Arrow, a female spellcaster whose notorious black magic missiles shoot out of nowhere to destroy her foes with deadly accuracy. In truth, she is Ariana yr Tora el Bakran (LE hf M12), the daughter of the caleph arcane and her father's child in all manner of craftiness. Her unique *magic missile* spell confuses many as it arcs out to the full extent of its range and takes a wild and winding path toward its target, rarely identifying her as its caster. As per her father's urgings, she has risen in influence among the rogue powers, but while she could seize the reins of the assassins' guild, she chooses to bide her time as the lover and right-hand of its leader. Both of them know either could slay the





other swiftly, and this fuels some odd passions in them as well as a twisted loyalty to guard each other's back (if only to allow them to slay each other later).

- Dakhim el Yndhar (NG hm Enc22) is among the most powerful of the wizards in Calimshan, though his long-ago abdication of the caleph arcane's seat in Almraiven at one time might have ended his career. Now residing in Memnon, Dakhim has created numerous variants on both *portable holes* and *flying carpets* that adventurers with coin enough can purchase *flying carpets* with incredible mobility and hidden storage capacity within their weave. The syl-pasha has tried to bribe Dakhim into moving to his court in Calimport, but Dakhim lives a simple life in a lone unadorned (but not magically unprotected) minaret in a northern sabban of Memnon, wishing only to have company when invited or needed and wanting no interference from politics.

Notable Clergy and Churches

As the secondary naval port city of Calimshan, one would expect a multitude of water deities' temples here, but there are no more than in an inland city. Memnon's clergy is well distributed across all faiths, and there are temples to nearly all powers, though few are major complexes like those in Keltar and Calimport.

- The Theater of All Faiths is an ancient stadium and theater from the days of the early Calim Empire under the genies. While once merely a theater, it is now used as a temple for any and all faiths. The city dung sweepers and amlakkar are responsible for its upkeep and defense, and they do a remarkable job. Most often, it is used for important ceremonies whose crowds would exceed a temple's capacity. The unique nature of the theater, though, involves its seats. If people begin to sing, the stone slab benches beneath them reverberate with the notes, slightly echoing them. After five minutes of singing, the seats pulse and sparkle with unknown magic and then the seated singers are levitated about three feet above their seats and maintain that elevation until the singing stops. Raising the volume of the song does not change the elevation, and singers *feather fall* back to their seats upon the conclusion of the song. Only singing produces this effect, and few can find the true source of the enchantments (as the whole theater glows from ancient magic when divinations are performed).
- The Golden Grove is a small garden grove in the southeastern sabban of the city. It seems as out of place as an illithid under the highsun orb, because while the majority of the trees in Calimshan are date palms, frond palms, and smaller scrub pines, there are no fewer than 20 oaks and shadowtops within the Golden Grove. A holy grove of Silvanus, this place has a long and storied past that its druid keeper loves to recount. Son of Rysal Arib el Nayet and a former runaway adventurer who traveled in his youth to the fabled ruins of Myth Drannor, Kurush yn Arib el Nayet (N hm F3/D8 of Silvanus) found his true calling among the green leaves of the northern lands and wished to share both the beauty of lush nature and the word of his newfound god to his people. Returning home, he entered the faux garden on his grandfather's villa and his touch changed the golden carved trees into real living trees with leaves of gold! The trees produce seedcones and acorns of solid gold; if they are planted, more of these trees grow—in nearly any soil or climate. While few faithful actually stay to learn of the druids' life, Kurush satisfies himself with the many curiosity-seekers who wish to see the gold-leafed trees (and among whom Kurush hopes to find more acolytes for Silvanus).

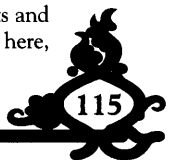
- The Protectors' House is a small but splendid two-story temple carved of distinctive emerald marble from the Deepwing Mountains north of the Vilhon Reach. Its four caryatid columns along its front colonnade depict the protective gods revered therein: Valkur, Shaundakul, Selûne, and Ibrandul. A great barrel-chested bearded figure of a ship's captain stands for Valkur, his three lightning bolts used as a cloak clasp. A shielding hand across his brow as if to peer across the city, the seemingly windswept male figure with long hair and traveler's garb stands for Shaundakul, his holy symbol carved into the base upon which he stands. The regal and lovely form of Selûne stands proud, though her carved stone form is clad only in carved mists and sparkles that emulate her holy symbol all around her body. The final column is that of a monstrous fire lizard, its long body and tail coiled beneath it, and while many outsiders consider it curious, Calishites merely shrug at this representation of Ibrandul.

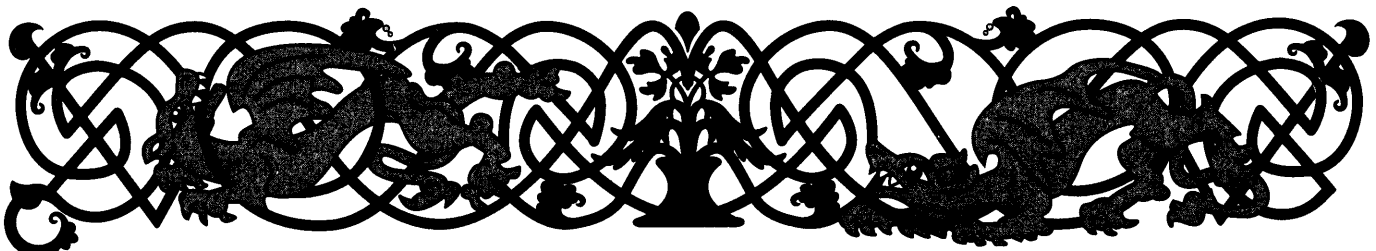
The four shrines within the marble temple are all in separate areas; all are decorated in the most orthodox methods of their respective faiths. The top floor of the temple is taken up by the shrine to Selûne, Valkur's and Shaundakul's shrines split the main floor, and Ibrandul is worshiped in the lowest of two cellars beneath the temple. While the original shell of the building is more than 1,000 years old, the caryatid columns of the Four Protectors replaced those of Bhaal (as this was once an assassins' temple and guildhouse) more than 130 years ago. Now, this is among the more popular of religious sites to visit in Memnon; its gods promise protection for caravans using all modes of travel to nearly every region.

Notable Rogues and Thieves' Guilds

The syl-pasha's youngest brother (whom he raised almost as a son) once held a webwork of blackmail threats, hostages, and other coercions over the other underworld powers in Memnon. With the rise of Ralan to the syl-pasha's throne (not to mention his and his brother's slayings of more than 100 people among the legal and illegal powers at the same time), Nasim yn Feroz el Pesarkhal (LE hm T12) grew in notoriety and power as a loyal subject of his brother. Now, while he still holds all the former dirt on his enemies, the self-proclaimed "Dark Caleph" Nasim has many more folk struggling to garner favor with him than fighting to expand their fortunes within the Pesarkhal regime. In a few short years, the leadership of the rogue powers of Memnon consolidated under two people—Nasim and el Kahmir's chosen lieutenant for Memnon, the young but loyal Basad yn Malik el Ostak (LE hm F5). El Kahmir has sworn an oath of loyalty to the syl-pasha, and his subordinate families and lieutenants cannot not forswear his word without all losing face and honor.

- **Assassins:** El Kahmir. The bald, moon-faced skinny man known as Rahim el Ormadas (LE hm F10) does not seem like much of a threat, and that is the thought with which most die as Rahim is among the most cold-blooded of killers Faerûn has ever seen. He leads the assassins with one simple rule: "The why of killing is irrelevant. The how of killing must always be clean and artful to be true assassins' work rather than a butcher's mark." As much as he wants to kill Nasim due to old grudges and Nasim's arrogant attitude, the pasha of assassins has been Basad's lifelong friend and will not betray his oaths and those of his betters to satisfy his own personal vendetta.
- **Black Marketeers:** El Pesarkhal. Nasim directly oversees the black-market operations and has actually increased profits and the flow of goods by more than 50% in his few short years here,





including acquiring and selling more goods from the Underdark than ever before.

- **Burglars and Thieves:** El Kahmir. Basad's younger brother Ottad yn Malik el Ostak (NE hm T9) rules over the thieves by his connections first and his skills second, a similar condition to that which led to the death of the previous thieves' guildmaster in a duel of honor. Ottad's control is weak but stable, given the current situation and the horrible losses during the Darkstalker Wars a decade ago. Many of thieves independently work for Nasim or others, and Ottad is too drunk with the power of his position to begin to notice (though Nasim's wife Nureh is slowly using the boy's distraction to her advantage).
- **Enforcers and Thugs:** El Pesarkhal. Nasim chooses to directly lead and attend to the activities of this faction, as it allows him a therapeutic way of releasing his anger without shattering the careful political webs in place around him.
- **Pirates and Smugglers and Slavers:** El Kahmir. Rahlbar Halus yn Melek el Duramij (NE hm F4) is an aging admiral of the secondary fleet here whose ships have been running contraband goods secretly for years. His high position assures that no local naval officers can object to his illegal dealings, since many of them are either in key positions of these operations or have been moved to other posts outside of Memnon's naval yard.
- **Spies:** El Pesarkhal. Nasim's young wife, Nureh yr Catahra el Pesarkhal (CN hef Enc7), has proven the most adept spymaster either he or his brother has ever seen (or so the syl-pasha says). The raven-haired beauty has winnowed out an extraordinary number secrets by using a small cadre of thieves, jhasinni and jhasinnar, and three various identities of her own (a jhasina, a bard, and a barmaid in various parts of town), all of whom have their own friends and informants and ways to gain information.

Schamedar (Town)

Long ignored as a city cursed by its now-extinct overlords, Schamedar was a ghost town for millennia, save for the occasional monstrous inhabitant, due to a genie's curse: "No one shall live here among the stones that slew us. For as many scores of years as each of you slew, this city shall haunt your dreams, and should you be fool enou to face them, turn you into a dream as well." Only since the Ninth Age has Schamedar successfully returned to life and been considered once more part of Calimshan. Its new life as the pilgrimage spot in Calimshan for so many faiths further distances it from its days as the City of the Janns' Vengeance.

Who Rules: Since the chaos of Shond Tharovin's *Living Gem* gambit in the Year of the Shield (1367 DR; see the revised FORGOTTEN REALMS® *Campaign Setting* boxed set), the Council of Vizars that once ruled the city disappeared under mysterious circumstances. After a few tendays, the people turned to age and wisdom to guide them, choosing Vatarin Wahrim (NG em P12 of Labelas Enoreth) to lead them as the city's syl-vizar. He has since restored the Council of Vizars from among the remaining powerful folk, mostly temple high priests, and religion rules in Schamedar.

Who Really Rules: Syl-Vizar Wahrim.

Population: There are 17,700 people within Schamedar, and more than 3,000 of them are devout priests (88% human, 6% half-elf, 6% other). More than 70% of the populace has direct ties to the temples of Schamedar.

Sabbans/Drudachs: 4/11. The four sabbans of Schamedar are the Bakkal's Sabban (north), the Dark Sabban (west), the Azure

Sabban (east; also called the Temple Sabban), and the Scimitar Sabban (south). The Bakkal's Sabban is where the ruling classes live and the richest temples are located; the Dark Sabban is a still-cursed area frequented by thieves or wizards seeking privacy; and the Scimitar Sabban is the main garrison area for soldiers and mercenaries, with the town's smithies, armorers, and arenas being located here as well.

Major Products: Fishing, temple blessings, bookbinding, writing, and moneylending.

Armed Forces: The 250 amlakkar of Schamedar and their officers are allegedly neutral and independent. Their choice of gods merely alters their posts within the town's drudachs.

Important Features: The Genies' Quarter is a dangerous area to be after dark on the nights of the new moon. From this area—once the noble janns' living areas—many genies tried to resist the elf High Magic that destroyed so many of their fellows. Their hasty magical workings bound them here to avoid the fate of the others who were fused into the *Calimmemnon Crystal*, but they found themselves both noncorporeal and tied to this town and place. Only in near-total darkness do the haunting jann have any power, and the torchlit wall around the Genies' Quarter keeps most of the danger at bay. Few would ever dare to enter the area, but the bound genies generate a magical ward similar to a mythal that prevents location or scrying magic from working on anyone within its walls. Thus, folk who do not wish to be found flee here and either find salvation from their pursuers, madness, or death.

The Graveyard of Mealhad abuts the walls of the Genies' Quarter and is equally dangerous to travel in after nightfall. The presence of an inner-city graveyard is common in older cities, though this one is odd for because is it not located near either an affiliated temple or any of the necropolises of Nykkar. The graveyard is named for the noble clan that tried to reclaim Schamedar during the Shoon Imperium, all of whom save one went mad and died (and were then buried within the mausoleums that were supposed to have been their mansions). Since that time, rumors have persisted of ghosts and spirit voices coming from the graveyard and long-lost treasure buried with the mad Mealhads.

Equipment Shops: Partial (all items in *PHB/DMG* lists of 300 gp or less).

Adventurers' Quarters: Schamedar is very small for a Calishite community. While it has inns, taverns, and festhalls, none of distinction have risen above the others. The location has not drawn enough adventurer visitors to require such places, since its purportedly treasure-laden locales are both haunted and overly danger-ridden.

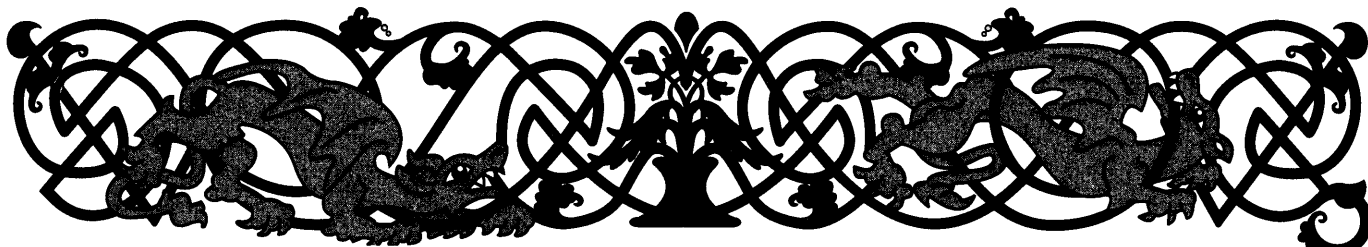
Important Characters

- Vizar Butrys el Nadhpasha (LN halfm T1) is the former halfling slave of a former vizar and pasha on the town council. Now, he is free, the richest moneylender in town, and is the sole member of the Council of Vizars who is not religious.
- Guttar el Nadhpasha (N hojn F5) was also once a slave of the same master as Butrys, and the half-orc shows his gratitude for the freedom that the halfling gained him by acting as his bodyguard and companion. Butrys goes nowhere without the massive shadow of Guttar looming over him protectively.

Notable Mages and Sages

- One of the least ornamented buildings in Schamedar, the Builder's Tower is a stark, chalk-white minaret without a door. Home to Muham el Israhah (NE hm M20), the tower often





thunders internally with magic and experiments, but few suspect Muham's true task: He is out to create an elemental golem of all four classic elements with which he can crush his personal enemies and conquer the town.

- Maaram el Nohdyll (LN hm M11) is a wizard of great power, and he is among the many reasons the normal criminal element stays away from Schamedar. Maaram uncovered assassins within the city, and his disposal of them as polymorphed hares via a pack of hunting dogs sent his message loud and clear. He sees himself as Schamedar's protector, and he is taking steps to join (rather than one-up) the amlakkar of Schamedar. However, his political fortunes have been soured by his poor relations with the priests of Mystra within the city, who resent his less-than-pious approach to magic and his lack of convention.

Notable Clergy and Churches

Nearly any place of interest in Schamedar is a temple or former palace turned temple. More than half the buildings in town are monasteries, temples, or shrines.

- The Temple of Fireyes was long ago dedicated to a draconic god of some sort and now stands as a testament to Kossuth. The temple is a tower with flying buttresses in the shape of a red dragon with backswept wings resting on the ground as the rest of the body seeks flight. (The wings are the buttresses.) Whenever the faithful of the temple begin and end a ceremony, flames gout from the dragon's snout five floors about the ground.
- A simple pyramidal temple with a surrounding promenade of statues of all the gods of Mulhorand is one of the most stunning temples in town, though it hosts few servants or faithful. It was built as part of a failed attempt at settlement by Mulhorandi dissidents after the Age of Shoon, and while they either all fled the city or died in madness, their works remain, of which this was their most impressive.
- A trio of two-story minarets are joined by platforms among their top balconies to support a large blue marble statue of Angarradh, the elf goddess who is reputed to be the amalgamation of three other goddesses of the pantheon. The newest of the shrines in Schamedar, this odd structure has sparked curiosity in those interested in learning about this little-known goddess and others equally intrigued with the construction of the statue and towers.

Notable Rogues and Thieves' Guilds

Most underworld activities in this town are run by the Kahmir family for el Pesarkhal. Though all of the rogue guilds have some minor activities in this town, none of them or their leaders are notable.

- Akim (CE hm T6) is an amoral thief just arrived in town with a secret hoard of stolen gems and a dragon in pursuit looking for them. Akim fled into the Genies' Quarter and is hiding out there. He feels safer there than he would be facing Sablaxaahl Three-Horns, the black dragon of the Spider Swamp from whom he stole the gems.

Teshburl (Town)

Isolated from all other cities in Calimshan by the harsh Calim Desert, Teshburl nonetheless performs key functions for Calimshan as its secondary shipbuilding port and the primary mooring point for the Nallojal (navy) of the syl-pasha. While respectful of military titles and other traditions, this seaside port has little time or patience for the usual pomp and preening of Calishite titles. "Why, their guild-

masters do not even bother to claim their rightful pasha's titles, if you can imagine!" exclaimed one visiting Almraivenar socialite. For all intents and purposes, this town is controlled by the Nallojal, and everyone and everything in it is focused on the sea and the navy.

Who Rules: Ralbahar and Sultan Mond el Vitendi (LE hm F7) is a stern, unforgiving taskmaster and admiral of the fleet. Titled the sultan of Teshburl and syl-ralbahar of the fleet by his friend and master the syl-pasha of Calimport, Mond el Vitendi has always remained more focused on whipping the navy into shape than running the town around him. Of course, he and his friends among the Pesarkhal clan have understandings about the Nallojal quietly turning a blind eye to the practices of other "business partners," and Vitendi grows quite fat and rich on the fees paid by the slavers, smugglers, and black marketeers who freely use his port.

Who Really Rules: The ralbahar's primary advisor and right hand is Vizar Apu el Jhodan (LE hm F0), and this loyal toady—once the sultan's cabin boy long ago—effectively rules Teshburl for the sultan. While selfish with power and responsibility, Vizar Apu is quite effective at managing the city coffers and the amlakkar. Amazingly enough, he does not delegate many of his duties, and works far harder than the average Calishite. Even more amazingly, he seems content in his position and does not look to steal the sultan's throne.

Population: The 21,800 hearty souls that live in Teshburl are all humans, and only one out of 12 folk are not involved in the sea trade in some way. There are precious few outlying farms or villages, and thus very few folk other than the desert nomads, an occasional caravan and its drivers, a few crazed adventurers, and those coming in from the sea ever visit Teshburl. Unlike most other Calishite towns and cities, the ratio of slaves to citizens is lower here. Only the senior officers and a few rich merchants keep slaves in Teshburl, as most of the populace eke out a meager but satisfying living in the sea trades.

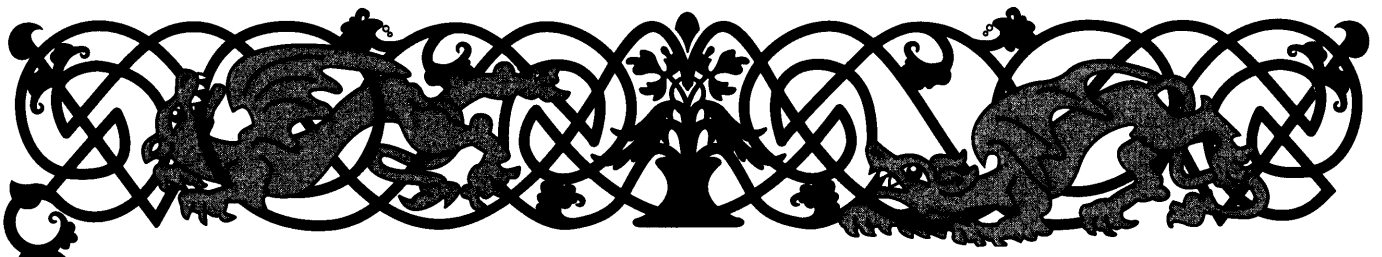
Sabbans/Drudachs: 6/19.

Major Products: Fish, ships, shipwrights, nets, cords and ropes, and ships' equipment.

Armed Forces: There are 320 amlakkar and officers to keep the peace and to ward off any attacks from the desert, while the navy keeps no less than 35 ships and nearly 1,000 officers and sailors here as a mustering point for ships sailing out onto the Sea of Swords. When all of Teshburl's garrisoned ships are in port, there are 64 ships moored in the Nallojal docks (fulfilling an order from the Syl-Pasha Pesarkhal of that the navy keep afloat a total fleet of 150 ships or more) and more than 3,000 Nallojal personnel wandering Teshburl's streets.

Important Features: The Nallojal Sabban covers the westernmost arc of the city and dominates more than half of the waterfront and docks. Since the expulsion of the Vizar Adsaahl el Madhaem 15 years ago, the ratio of nonnaval buildings to those of the Nallojal has shrunk, and nearly every building in this sabban is owned by or caters specifically to the navy and its personnel. In fact, military personnel have started buying out some of the other buildings abutting this sabban, and if the growth continues at this same pace, the adjoining Kadhatarna Sabban will also become a Nallojal-dominated sabban within another five years. Some shopowners, while technically still the owners, are public suppliers of goods directly to the Nallojal, and they thrive on stipends from the Ralbahar and Sultan Vitendi to support this system. All taverns and inns within the sabban are owned and operated by retired sailors and naval officers. While nonnaval personnel are not banned from this sabban, they do attract far more attention from the amlakkar and others here than in other parts of town.





The Yanatralbahr, or *admiral's estate* is the centuries-old palatial estate of the Ralbahar Mond el Vitendi and his family. Its gleaming marble walls rise above the sabban walks and its six buildings dominate the skyline of the northern Qeldan Sabban. The five buildings within are all made of white marble that glitters brightly under the highsun light, but its trace mineral content stains the marble with reddish streaks, rendering some walls a rosy pink. Popular rumors from long ago suggest the dark deeds of Marak yn Kahdan el Vitendi, a known crony of the Qysara Shoon V, stained the marble of this estate with the blood of his deeds, and it carries the mark of his dishonor to this day. The Ralbahar Vitendi executes any who dare even hint about such connections these days.

Since the Year of the Harp (1355 DR), the Penitent's House, a two-story white marble building once used as the Vitendi family's private shrine to their gods, has also served as the seat of government for Teshburl. The Ralbahar Vitendi has ruled this town for all that time. Over the past 10 years, a small retaining wall has been erected around the Penitent's House to shield the rest of the estate from the goings-on herein.

The Mourning Mast rests on the cliff's edge at the southeastern end of town. This spot is the traditional site where the wives of deceased sailors and sea captains mourn their lost mates. A ship's mast is set directly into the ground here, and within its crows' nest is the statue of a lookout peering anxiously out over the sea. This memorial was built in the late Eighth Age after storms at sea destroyed more than half of the ships that hailed from Teshburl. A more recent addition is the petrified form of an anguished woman a few paces from the base of the mast. The unknown woman received word that her husband had died as she stood watching the seas for him. Her heart-rending cry to the gods echoed over the city, and her grief was so great that she turned to stone on the spot. Her hair and silken dress frozen billowing in the wind and tears still streaking her face, the Lonely Widow kneels beneath the Mourning Mast, her face a legacy of the suffering shared by so many over the years.

Equipment Shops: Partial (all items in PHB/DMG lists of 300 gp or less).

Adventurers' Quarters: The taverns of Teshburl provide most of its entertainment and hospitality. Two of note are Bold Jhyak's and the Roving Rune.

- **Bold Jhyak's.** This tavern is the closest thing to a northern roadhouse to be found in the region. The establishment's flagstone floor and low-beamed ceiling lend it a deliberately rustic look, which is heightened by its perpetually dim lighting, a boar or other large animal always turning on a spit in the hearth (no fewer than six wheeled spit racks are kept in the smokehouse, so a succession of beasts can be cooked and the hearth is never left empty), and a collection of massive, battered furniture. This is a place where groups of patrons really can dance on a single table if they want to—and if they are very short! Its premises are favored by adventurers and folk who want to pretend they are having a bold adventure. Jhyak, an ex-adventurer himself, is very old now, but he has hired two much-scared mercenaries to spin wildly embroidered tales of their days of daring to any patron who cares to listen. When real adventurers stop by, the yarns can be truly spell-binding. *Quality/Price:* Good/Moderate.
- **The Roving Rune.** A former wizards' tower and school, this tavern and inn in a four-story minaret provides some of the best food and entertainment found in Teshburl, and many folk frequent it as it is a diversion from the nautical themes of all other life in this

town. The cellar is the largest room, and this taproom acts as the communal area. The first floor is the brewery for the tavern, the second and third floors are private rooms for rent by the hour or night, and the top floor holds the rooms of the owner, Atiq el Catahras (LG hm F0) and his family. Nephew and sole heir of the last wizard to adorn this tower, Atiq inherited the tower and moved here from Memnon to claim it but has always been unclear about many of its secrets. His wife and daughter, Raisa (LG hf M6) and Oma (NG hf M1), have discovered a magically hidden sixth level below the taproom that they use with Atiq's blessing in Oma's arcane education. The women keep quiet their skill in magic, just as Raisa's mother secretly taught her, but Oma is anxious to complete her training and venture out of Calimshan on adventures.

The tavern gets its name from a wandering magic within the mosaics that cover every surface of the tower's interior. The stone chips shift and weave at times, though the movement is only seen out of the corner of one's eye rather than when the patterns are looked at straight on. When a glowing blue-green rune appears and someone touches it, that person is bathed in turquoise faerie fire for an hour. There seems to be one other effect to the roving rune: Those persons touched by the rune brighten considerably in spirits, and any malaise or grief they have suffered fades. For this reason, many farewells to departed friends or family occur in the tavern the hopes of some relief for the grieving. *Quality/Price:* Good/Moderate.

Important Characters

- **Samahl's Cords** is a rope and netmaker's shop that is also the current informal meeting place of the Guild of Cordwainers and Netmakers since the dock fires that claimed its headquarters building and 17 others early this summer. Samahl el Cahrad (LN hm F3), the proprietor, is a laid-back former rysal of the Nallojal who retired rather than continue to serve a syl-pasha he could not respect. Samahl has a deep-seated hatred of Manshakans that often gets him into tavern brawls with far younger (but less hardy) sailors hailing from that eastern town.

Notable Mages and Sages

No mages or sages of distinction have lived in Teshburl for some time. The focus of the town on naval and seagoing trades leads to a certain transient mage population that specializes in naval combat magic, navigational scrying, or weather magic, but no wizards of power or significant status have chosen this location to dwell in (at least openly), partially due to its social isolation.

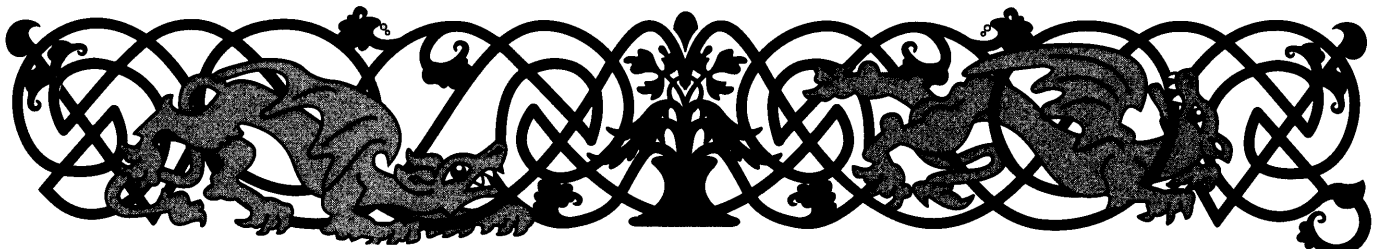
Notable Clergy and Churches

While the town maintains small shrines to most water and ocean deities, they are tended by the amlakkar on a day-to-day basis with occasional services being held by priests who are serving members of the Nallojal. Most other temples previously located in the town have been destroyed by the town's populace when the Red Rysal (see below) revealed they were stealing the townspeople's children for nefarious purposes.

Notable Rogues and Thieves' Guilds

Most underworld activities in this town are run by el Pesarkhal through intermediaries. Only one such guild is of note, though several other rogues are of independent distinction.





- *Burglars and Thieves*: Nominally, el Vitendi/el Gahrat. A trusted nephew and unofficial vizier of Sultan Vitendi, the clever young Edif el Gahrat (LE hm T2/M7) from Calimport has used his street smarts and wizard training to weasel his way into many levels of power. Using the wizard skills he learned in Silvermoon, Edif has unified the oft-scattered thieves and pickpockets of Teshburl into a thieves' guild under his control. With them as his eyes and ears (and hands), he gains far more money and information than many others in town, and he uses this all to his best political advantage. While the sultan seems amused each time Edif manages to trip up any rivals looking to tear down the Vitendi power base, he is naively unaware that Edif is merely biding his time until he can garner the favor of the syl-pasha and take the sultan's seat for himself.
- The Red Rysal is a local rogue and legend who has plagued the town for more than 45 years, making fools of the more corrupt Nallojal personnel and avenging indignities to the civilians of Teshburl. He has slashed the sails of slaving ships allowed into port, exposed key sailors and officers as pirates to foreign powers, keel-hauled abusive shipmasters, burned warehouses holding contraband goods, and revealed the existence of evil cults stealing Teshburl's children from their cribs, leading to the destruction of such dark temples as those to Bane, Bhaal, Cyric, and the like in the town. In this land of magic, many believe the Red Rysal is a genie or a fighting mage.

In truth, the Ehrat family of the Anvil Sabban has either been or supported the Red Rysal in secret for decades. The first Red Rysal was Rysal Dumahl el Ehrat, a naval officer whose ideals and dreams turned to ashes due to the machinations of a corrupt ralbahr. Since that time, the Ehrats—on the surface, a simple family of blacksmiths and weaponsmiths—have trained their sons to foment dissent against corruption, expose the wrongdoings and abuses of power among the ruling class, and generally restore the dignity of those upon whose backs so many feet have trod.

There have been 16 Red Rysals, and half of them have been wizards, lending the air of mystery and power to the legends of the red-leather-clad rogue who haunts Teshburl's fog-bound streets. The current Red Rysal is the massive and clumsy Kanar yn Baral el Ehrat (CG hm T7; Str 17, Dex 16), or the Ox, as many of his friends call him. His clumsiness is an act, as he is nearly as graceful as he is strong, and the death of his father in the role of the Red Rysal did not lessen his commitment to his legacy.

As there are no other males of age in his family and there have always been two active Red Rysals operating in and around Teshburl, he is pondering whether to draw his best friend Oadif el Wajin into his confidence. He would prefer to find a wizard he trusted for the role, but his discussions with the amlak tell him he has a ready ally for the asking.

- Amhir Oadif el Wajin (CG hem T6) has been many things and played many roles in his young life. Oadif is a former jhasin who long ago escaped the harem of an aged and bitter pasha's wife in Volothamp, where his name was Kamal adh Nadjar. Now an amlak officer in Teshburl, he wishes to make his town happy and safe (which it is, relative to other places in Calimshan) but believes himself powerless to stop much of the Nallojal corruption embraced and supported by the sultan. Still, having once been an abused victim of the slave system, he wishes he could do more to save the others he sees suffering this fate.

Volothamp (Town)

The Gem City of Calimshan is a medium-sized town set along the southern cliffs that mark the shores of the Shining Sea between Almraiven and the twin cities of Manshaka and Schamedar. With the mines rising around and tunneling beneath the town, there is almost as much mineral wealth in this tiny cliffside town as is found in Calimport. The standard of living is high here as many folk are rich from the mines, and even the mineworkers themselves (although they are slaves and indentured folk) share some of that wealth in the amenities found throughout the town (or at least have a bejeweled slave's manacle to wear—which is handy to sell to fund a new life for an escaped slave).

Volothamp lies on at least three separate plateaus, leading to many referring to the upper, middle, and lower sabbans of the town. The upper section contains five sabbans, the center section three, and the lowest section is a single sabban encompassing the docks and the seashore. With the constant winds whipping through the streets and the two lower sabbans almost constantly choked by fog from dusk until dawn, it is nearly impossible to light lanterns and keep them lit for more than a few hours. Thus, Volothamp almost entirely shuts down at night in the middle and lower sabbans, since missteps in the dark could see one's death over a cliff. The upper sabbans remain lit and active as much as any town's sabbans are in Calimshan at night, and the mines around Volothamp operate day and night.

Who Rules: The indulgent, grossly obese Pasha Samaz el Galanar (LE hm F0) is the perfect puppet for those in his city, as he wishes merely to maintain his lifestyle and cares little for who controls the underworld. He accepts his role as a comfortable cover ruler for the Gem Caleph, though numerous agencies may soon assassinate him to prevent the consolidation of more power under el Huzal.

Who Really Rules: The "Gem Caleph" Adnan el Huzal (NE hm F0) took control of the city after the chaos of the Darkstalker Wars, which tore the town apart. Abandoning the shipbuilding interests that were never a highlight of the town's trade, el Huzal used his money (as a splinter family from the Ahimar clans of Almraiven, to whom he still owes some obeisance) to buy pasha's seats on numerous guilds. From there he eliminated (or simply outlasted) rivals and became the most powerful pasha among pashas in Volothamp. He personally controls the Miners' Guild and the Pear Divers' Guild with an iron fist, though he has never managed to wrangle total control (only political alliance) of the Whitesmiths' and Jewelers' Guild, Gemcutters' Guild, and the Blacksmiths' Guild.

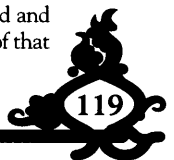
Population: 36,640 (92% human, 8% other). The population rises only slightly during the summer trading months, especially during the Festival of Pearls.

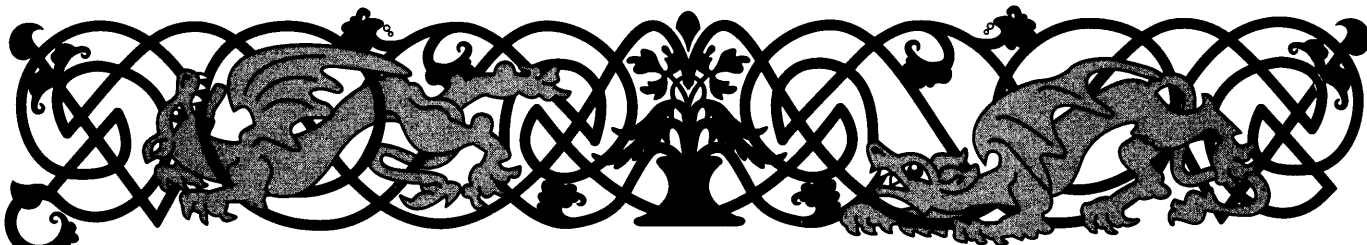
Sabbans/Drudachs: 9/34. Each of the sabbans is named for a gem or precious stone, whether the gems are available in Volothamp or not. The upper sabbans are the Metal Sabbans. They are (from west to east) Copper, Silver, Gold, Electrum, and Platinum sabbans. The middle sabbans are the Gem Sabbans, and they are Ruby, Emerald, and Diamond sabbans. The dock sabban of Volothamp is appropriately called Pearl Sabban.

Major Products: Gems (raw and cut), pearls, jewelry, appraisals, and sailmaking.

Armed Forces: 300 amlakkar and 100 soldiers of F3 to F6.

Important Features: The sabban walls of Volothamp are far more ornamented and opulent than those of other cities and towns. The plinths and plaques that mark streets and roads are carved and hammered steel with an inlaid border of the namesake material of that





The Eight Erehnirs of Volothamp

sabban (gold, platinum, pearl, etc.). The theft or attempted theft of these signs (or any part of them) is punishable by enslavement in the mines, with very few exceptions. Volothanni take pride in their city and its luxuries, and every citizen takes personal offense at such greedy vandalism.

The Cliffs of Dainar are the diving cliffs that are reached along a treacherous and small path carved along the cliffs west of the Pearl Sabban. About 100 yards outside the harbor, the path widens and a small cave opens up on the cliffside, forming a natural diving platform 60 feet from the surf. The path also stops moving upward at the cave but winds down the cliffs to a set of lower plateaus slightly west of the cave at a height of about 40 and 10 feet or less from the crashing waves. Many have lost their lives diving from these high rocks when strong winds have seized such divers and thrown them against the rocks, but that does not diminish the stream of thrillseekers and daredevils who dive from all heights. The lowest plateau is a standard swimming spot for Volothamp's youths and is relatively safe; a calmer tidal pool spreads out behind the sheltering rock.

The Eight Erehnirs are 30-foot-high statues of the Pasha Nakkar IV, the fifth ruler of the Erehnir Dynasty of the Third Age. Carved from the mountainsides to flank the road that winds its way down the surrounding cliffs and into the town, the statues show the pasha as warrior, priest, ruler, and in a representative form of each of the primary gods of his rule—as a marid, a djinni, an efreeti, a dao, and as a fiery sun god. While other statues exist from the Old Kingdom period, these are the best preserved from erosion, despite the howling winds that blast through the pass each spring and autumn. They were carved merely to commemorate the town's importance as the pasha's birthplace.

The Vaults of Volothamp are reputed to be the most heavily guarded and magically defended safeholds in all Faerûn. There are four Vaults located, respectively, within the khanduqs of the Gold, Platinum, Ruby, and Diamond sabbans. Their magical defenses have kept the jeweled wares of Volothamp's gem appraisers, gemcutters, and gem merchants safe for more than eight centuries. While rumors abound among wizards as to the types of protections that grace the Vaults, none have ever guessed the truth that tasked genies and other guardian creatures are embedded in multilayered *wardmist* spells around them, along with sparkling fogs that act as *mirrors of opposition*, using the invaders' strengths against themselves. Each Vault is unique, and only the vizar of each sabban or the nazir of Volothamp has the keys that open the Vaults and negate their defenses. Guarded by elite amlakkar of the nazir's personal forces, the Vaults are protected during the day and night, and this regard for the safety of its gems has given Volothamp the reputation for security. "Safer than the Vaults of Volothamp" is a phrase oft-used to suggest privacy and security when Calishites share secrets.

Equipment Shops: Partial (all items in PHB/DMG lists of 300 gp or less).

Adventurers' Quarters: Volothamp does not encourage rowdiness or roistering, and adventurers who get out of hand face a stern penalty: enslavement in the mines. Nevertheless, the town does not by any means lack for amenities, and its taverns, inns, and festhalls can be counted among those. The establishment most folk rate a "must-see" in Volothamp is Madame Ahaara's.

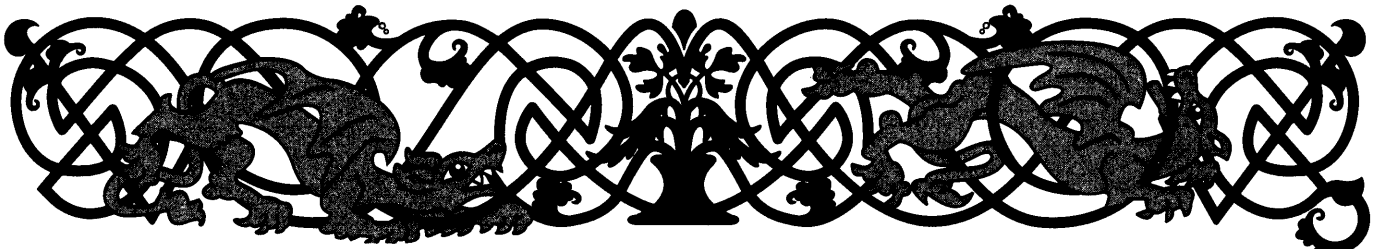
- Madame Ahaara's. The most well-known establishment in Volothamp is oddly located in one of the poorest sections of town, near the mines in the Copper Sabban. Madame Ahaara's is a former pasha's palace that was converted into a festhall and inn after the previous owner was stoned to death by his overworked miners. The widow Ahaara used her husband's money to create an entertaining place for both workers and nobles alike. Effectively four buildings connected via small halls to a central fifth building (with all five all encircled by a low wall), Madame Ahaara's has a bright-blue glazed roof that rests atop gleaming blue marble walls which are in stark contrast to the darker and dirtier surroundings of the drudach around them.

Public baths and private massage rooms dominate the eastern and northern buildings; the taproom, dining room, and ballroom fill the central building; and the southern building provides private rooms by the day or tenday. The western building is the kitchens and staff quarters, and it is linked by the hall to the taproom and by hidden tunnels to secret entrances into all four other buildings. The food and service are impeccable, as is the performance of the staff members, who hail from all parts of Faerûn and are skilled at the preparation of nearly any meal imaginable. All goods and services must be prepaid for upon entry, with the doortender or Madame Ahaara herself taking the orders of those who enter. Patrons are encouraged to tip heavily to ensure continued or additional service, and those who think to skip out on a bill for additional services find themselves pursued quite swiftly by the amlakkar. *Quality/Price:* Excellent/Moderate.

Important Characters

- Tulmon el Uabar (LN hm F2) is the owner of the largest pearl beds in Volothamp's waters, and he holds the record for the deepest dive off the Cliffs of Dainar west of town. A prideful and





vain man, the aging Tulmon worries that his physique is softening even though he still dives every day and does not overindulge in eating (much to the worry of his wife, who thinks it a sign of poverty to not have an expansive belly). He built his pearl beds more than 20 years ago after apprenticing under other pearl growers in the Lake of Steam, and his family rose from being indentured servants of the rich to having slaves itself, though Tulmon still keeps an active hand in his business.

Notable Mages and Sages

- The Vizar and Pasha Palep el Ytayan (CE hm M9) is the master of the Carters' and Wagoneers' Guild and the right hand of the Gem Caleph. A native Volothanni, he bristles under the rule of this outsider, though he admires his adept manipulation of power and people. Palep has uncovered el Huzal's biggest secret: the financial purse-strings of el Ahimar of Almraiven, which threaten to strangle him if the Ahimars are now cut out of the profits. With this information in hand, he bides his time for the opportunity to act. Should the Ahimars attempt to move further into Volothamp, Palep will pull in his favors and assemble his allies among the guilds and oust the Gem Caleph in favor of himself to prevent the underworld family from another city stealing power away from the native powerbrokers. For now, though, Palep collects as much power and money as possible with the least possible risk to his own neck.

Notable Clergy and Churches

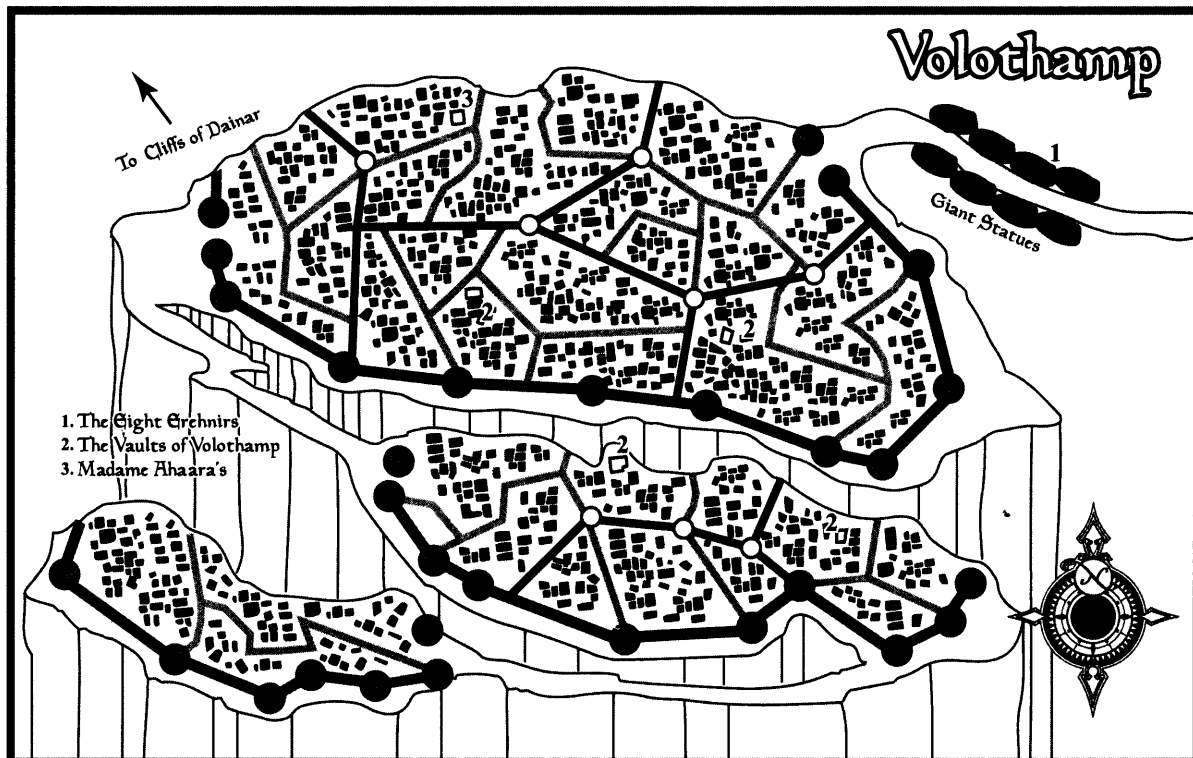
- The largest mine owner and one of the richest of the rich in Volothamp is the Pasha Nadan yn Hiras el Ovam (LG hem P3 of Ilmater). In the last 10 years since he rose to seniority in his

family, Nadan has softened his father's draconic and abusive treatment of the family's mineworkers and freed his slaves to indentured servitude. The pious and kindly (but no less crafty and politically skilled, as some who underestimate him find out) pasha is one of the most beloved figures in the middle sabbans for his generosity and sincere concern for those in his employ. He rarely parlays that goodwill for political purposes, but merely the knowledge that such support is there cows many of his political rivals into submission lest their power fall away due to an unfortunate clash with the Emerald Sabban's "Smiling Pasha."

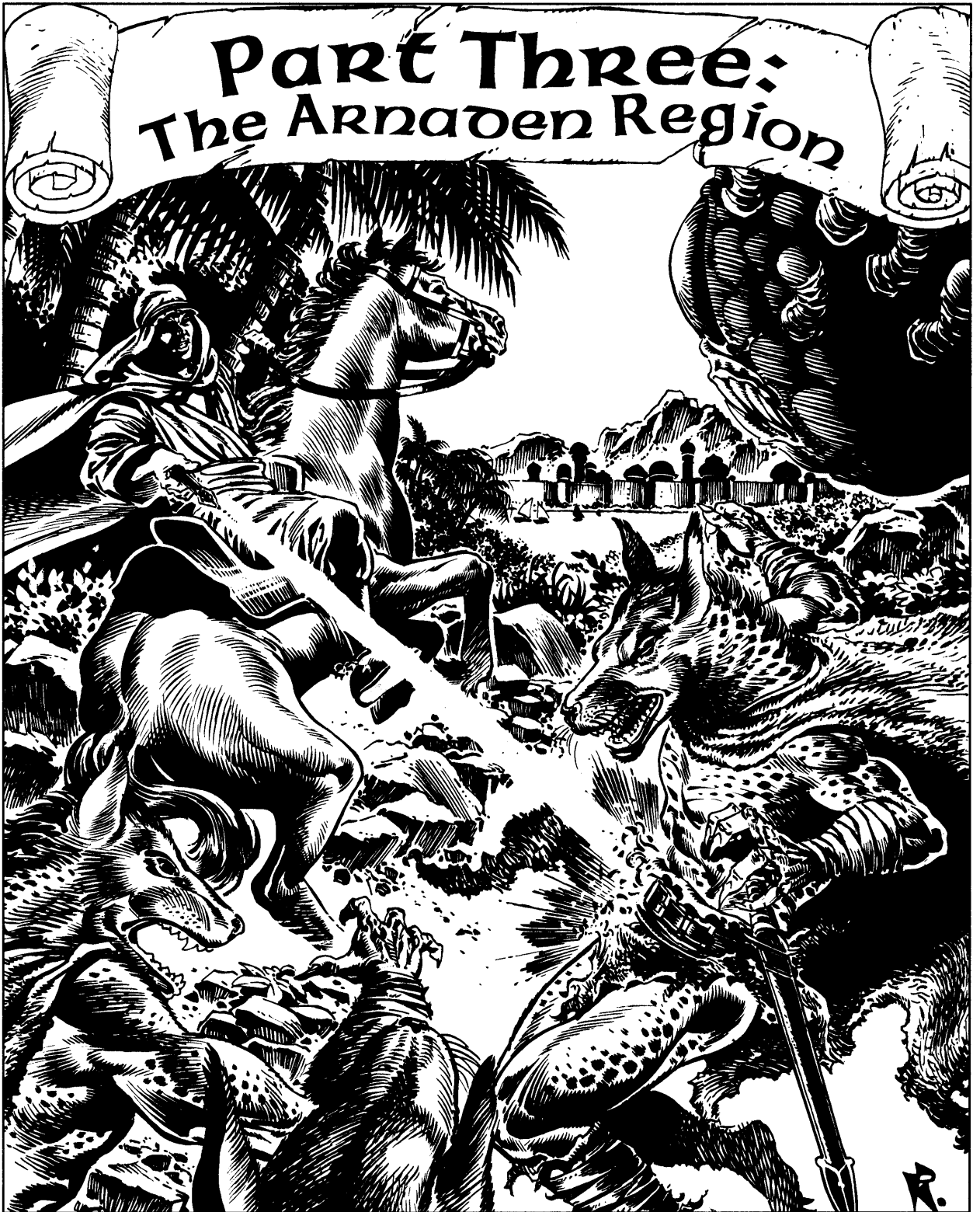
Notable Rogues and Thieves' Guilds

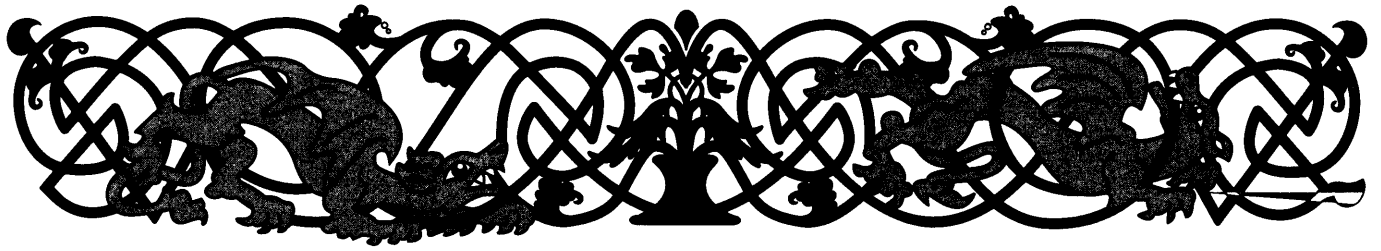
Most underworld activities in this town are run for el Pesarkhal by the Vyndahla family or, through the Gem Caleph's connections, by members of the Ahimar clan. Though all of the rogue guilds have activities in this town, none of them or their leaders are notable apart from the Gem Caleph himself. One independent, however, is:

- Konal of the Cats' Eye (LE hm T10) is a jewel thief from Saradush who has been in Volothamp posing as "Makad el Danadaf," a fighter amlak, for more than a year. He still has his original plan to attempt to breach the security of one of the Vaults, but he is daunted by the legendary security and figures his best chance to succeed at a heist is to rise to a position in the elite guards who watch the Vaults during the day. He owes a great deal of money to the Kahmirs of Calimport, and he has only another three months before the payment will be his life, so he may make his robbery soon or merely catch a ship to more northerly ports of call.



Part Three: The Arraden Region





Land of the Lions and the Arnaden City-States

"Ahh yes, the aptly named Land of the Lions. Northerners and other foreigners may surmise that the appellation derives solely from the sleek, majestic beasts that roam the region's rough terrain, but those outsiders would be only partially correct. This land is also named for its inhabitants: the fiercely proud nomadic tribes that wrest their livelihoods from the land with their mounts, herds, and determination. It also includes the city-states along the shores of the fog-cloaked Arnaden, or Lake of Steam, as also it is known. Over the centuries, many of these folk fought their way here to build a life far from the slave pens of Calimshan. These people are not the sort to lightly suffer a threat to their freedom, their sovereignty, their liberty.

"This Land of the Lions truly stands as a region where every outstretched hand may conceal very sharp claws indeed."

—Ordil Harauntan, Royal Sage to the court of Janol I, King of Ankhapur

The Land of the Lions stretches north from the Lake of Steam, east of the Omlarandin and Kuldin mountains, south of the Cloven Mountains and the Wintercloak River, and west of the Nagawater and the Nagaflow. Over the rough, rocky, hilly terrain north of the cities of the Arnaden (the regional term for the Lake of Steam) roam four nomadic tribes called the Lions, horse riders who prefer the simple, rustic life, lived from the saddle. Along the northern shore of the lake are the cities of the Arnaden (the inhabitants of the Arnaden cities): Mintar, Saelmur, Ankhapur, Innarlith, and the bustling village of Yhep, along with the nearby communities of Kzelter, Nagarr, and Kurrsh. Along the southwestern shore rest former Calishite towns and cities who now share more similarities with the diverse Arnaden cities than Calimshan: Sul-dolphor, Tulmon, and Yeshpek.

Country and Climate

The land is arid, though steady breezes from across the bubbling Arnaden bring some moisture to the northern coastline. Only the annual spring floods bring much-needed water and sediment down from the northern mountains and forest springs to allow for large-scale crop growth.

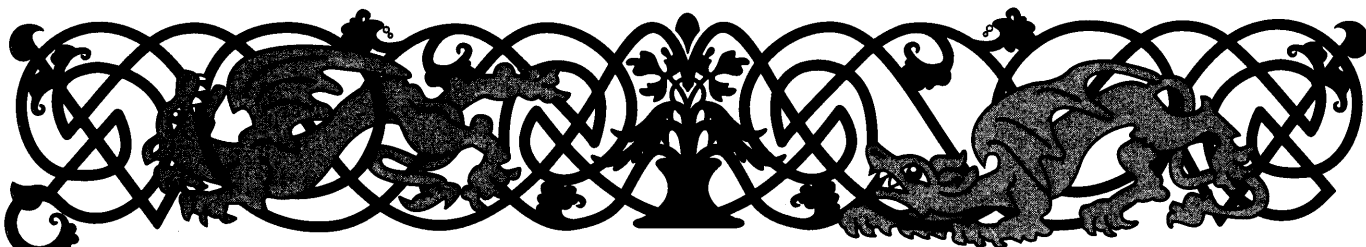
The soil is often rocky and poor, and many of the food plants of the northern lands will not grow here. No fields of corn or wheat are sown in the Land of the Lions. Instead, those farmers fortunate to enough own (or rent) land near water grow citrus fruits, grapes, tomatoes, dates, olives, and tubers such as potatoes. Those less fortunate or more distant from the rivers and the Arnaden make do with the hardier root vegetables (such as the radish, onion, and carrot) and herding goats or rugged mountain sheep.

The Land of the Lions benefits from the normal cycle of four seasons, as does much of Faerûn. Spring is warm, with much rain which tapers off as summer approaches. Summer (known to many outsiders as "the sodden season") lies hot and humid as a wet blanket on the Land of the Lions, with little rain to provide relief; this effect is marginally lessened the farther north one ventures from the northern coast of the Arnaden. Autumn brings cooler temperatures on the breezes from the south but precious little precipitation. The cool winter seldom brings a freeze, but it does deliver vital rains to the parched soil, and it drops snow in the mountains to the north.

The Land of the Lions itself is rolling and rocky. Each of the cities of the Arnaden is built atop the highest hills nearest the shore. As one moves north from the Arnaden, the ground gradually rises, the hills become steeper, the rivers faster, and the soil rockier. Lush green grasses grow two feet high where the soil is rich enough to support the growth. Thorny scrub bushes and the occasional wind-carved rock-face or tor comprise more barren patches of the ground. Caves in or near the eroded riverbanks are common, as they are in the foothills to the north. Pine trees thrive in the warmth and rocky soil, although cedars, calantra, duskwood, suth, and vundwood also grow to maturity in the forests.

Insects and small creatures of all varieties thrive in the warm temperatures and the ample hidey-holes the rough terrain provides. Snakes, lizards, scorpions, and spiders all feast upon the immense number of





insects on the ground while vast flocks of starlings and jays search the air for a daylight airborne meal, only to be replaced by nighthawks and hordes of bats once the sun sets. Many rare insect-eating birds (among them the lovely voiced blue-throated southern pine warbler) are trapped here and sold to wealthy bird fanciers in the courts of Calimshan and points beyond. Green-hued gulls known as calathra are indigenous to this region. Born white and gray as normal gulls, these birds gain their green tinge from bobbing for hours in the rich and teeming waters of the Arnaden.

The land is home to larger animals as well. The tribes of nomadic Lions who dwell north of the cities husband a magnificent breed of strong horses. Also native to the territory are the fleet-footed, zebra-striped antelope called the verrick and the antic, comedic lyndar, the local species of prairie dogs. Of course, the Land of the Lions appropriately has more than its share of big cats too. Though less populous than they once were due to hunting, nearly every species of large cat stalks prey somewhere in the region. Lynxes (both normal and giant sizes), great dappled or striped forest beasts, tawny mountain cats, and even a few prides of lions roam the vast tracts of open space.

Society at First Glance

Two distinct cultures claim a home in the Land of the Lions: the *Arnadar*, called such because they dwell in cities around and on the Arnaden, and the nomad *Lions*, who ride the open ranges to the north.

The Arnadar

The cities on the northern shore of the Arnaden are filled with tall, many-spired, crowded, walled homes for the thousands of peoples who found Calimshan not to their liking and made their ways to these new homes. The Arnadar do not subscribe to the class-ridden, decadent lifestyle of Calimshan, but their cultures still reflect that nation from whence they came. Even though all the cities along the Lake of Steam's north shoreline were originally military posts and settlements of the ancient Jhaamdathan Empire, more than six millennia ago, only Ankhapur remained continuously settled throughout the ages. Meanwhile, the other city-states were settled by Calishite settlers, explorers, military expeditions, and escaping slaves starting around -680 DR, and they brought a great deal of Calimshan with them.

The wealthy Arnadar especially tend to cling to Calishite ways. Various familiar indulgences include a hunger for magical novelties and time-saving devices, racial and class bigotries, and a general sense of superiority to all those around them, especially outsiders. Also like Calishite society, those families receiving the highest marks of prestige tend to be the wealthiest (noble) in each city, with each group allegedly able to trace its lineage back to some centuries-dead Calishite pasha, sultan, or bakkal. However, the even the high society of the Arnadar is less class conscious, more tolerant, and much more businesslike than that of Calimshan.

In terms of social values and laws, slavery, racism, debt-servitude, and similar Calishite conventions certainly do exist in the region, but they are far from universally supported. Most of the independent-minded Arnadar believe every man and woman should pursue his fate or her destiny without interference. They reject the

very-Calishite notion that a person taken as a slave was fated to become one simply because he could not resist the four (or six or eight) slavers that clapped him in irons. (Similarly, the nomadic tribes of the Lions, north of the cities, are known for slaughtering to a man every slaving caravan they come across, mostly because they are so often targets of the very same slavers and raiders.)

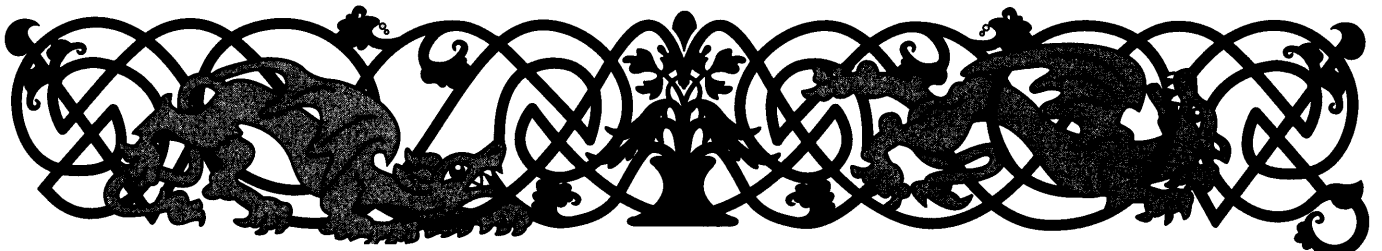
Within the last 50 years or so, a new class of aristocrat has arisen in the Arnaden region. This is the newly rich, or *ke'aran*, (in the Calishite language, Alzhedo). The majority of these folk have accumulated their money as merchants, risking their lives plying the trade routes from Arnaden to the Vilhon Reach, the Shining Sea, and Calimshan. While not of noble blood, the *ke'aran* have made their presence and their formidable financial clout felt around the Arnaden. One of the most successful families of the *ke'aran* is the Harauntan clan, which has managed to arrange marriages with virtually every noble family in the region. The old nobility is divided into two groups regarding these young upstarts: One group (typically the older members of the oldest noble families) feels quite threatened by the *ke'aran*, fearing either for its own financial well-being or its treasured place in society. The other group, most common among the younger or less-wealthy families, observes the lessons learned from the *ke'aran* in order to improve its lot or that of its families.

The city of Ankhapur stands alone in the Arnaden in several ways. Of all the cities of the Arnaden, only it was not completely resettled by expatriate Calishites. Ankhapur was a colony of the fallen empire of Jhaamdath, founded around -5,000 DR; all the Arnaden cities were similarly founded in this era, but few have retained their Jhaamdathan roots, save Ankhapur, to the current day. In many ways, Ankhapur is more like a city of the reunited Tethyr or the Vilhon Reach. The city seems to thrive under its new ruler, King Janol I, last surviving son of Manferic the Mad, who embraced undeath as a means to continue his rule of Ankhapur the White.

The Lions

The second distinct culture in the Land of the Lions either gave the region its name or took their name from it, depending upon whom you ask: the nomadic, tribal Lions. These people, who live to the north of the Arnaden, stress self-reliance as a way of life. In a harsh land such as theirs, even the slightest weakness can doom more than just the frail. Hence, survival skills are developed right from birth. By the time Lion children reach their teens, they are ready to walk into the wilderness and live alone for a tenday as a rite of passage, with no mount, food, or water. Not only must the teens survive, but they also must track and relocate their tribes, which wander across the territory without pause. Those who survive and catch up with their tribes are hailed as adults and warriors, worthy of their own small herd of goats or mountain sheep and a mount to help guard and keep them together. Those lost to the wilds are not fit to breed.

Despite this seeming lack of care for their own, the tribes of the Lions stand resolutely together whenever hardship threatens. The tribes, regardless of feuds or moral and ethical differences (alignments), have never failed to unite whenever common adversaries or mutual difficulties have arisen. Nor would a member of one tribe betray a member of another. Even the most despicable, corrupt Lion tribe member firmly believes that to betray any the tribes is a curse not only upon himself but all his family and descendants yet to come. Treachery means ostracism from the tribe and instant,



bloody death should a member of any tribe cross the path of the outcast. Again, this may seem harsh, but the value placed upon honor is so culturally ingrained that treachery is virtually unheard of. This allows the Lions to form the deepest bonds of trust, rarely or never broken, so they may seem even more caring of each other than most societies.

Races Appearing

As is common throughout this region of Faerûn, humans dominate the populations of the Land of the Lions. The Arnadar, regardless of their ancestors' migrations from Calimshan, old Chondath, the Vilhon Reach, the Border Kingdoms, Chult, or the Shaar, mix, mingle, and marry across all cultures and creeds, resulting in a people sharing elements of all the migratory diversity of the past. Some traits still remain evident to those with the observational skills to mark them. Descendants of the Calishite immigrants tend to be olive-skinned and darkly attractive, with thick, black hair. Those descended of the ancient Tethan people are of lighter skin and hair, though any significant time spent under the hot sun of the area darkens their skin and lightens their hair. Some Chultans, and descendants of that blood, also reside in the region, and they possess a beautiful deep-brown skin and tightly twisted, curly dark hair. Of course, the intermingling of these races produces hybrid combinations of all these traits.

Meanwhile, the Lion tribes are descended of an ancient people who migrated from the Shaar. (Some elements of this migration continued onward, later settling the Shining Plains, explaining some of the cultural links these peoples still share.) They typically have ruddy, red-brown skin and slightly almond-shaped, deep brown eyes.

Halflings

Also known as the *hin*, halflings are the second-most-populous race in the region, having made homes and lives for themselves in all the cities of the Arnaden, mingling freely with the humans rather than settling in areas all their own. The highest proportion of *hin* in a population lies in Ankhapur, however, as that city has Chondathan roots and so culturally is not steeped in a tradition of using halflings as a slave race, like Calimshan has for centuries. Although the Calishite cities of the Arnaden do not allow residents to own slaves of any type, they do allow citizens from Calimshan proper to bring their slaves—many of which are halflings—into the cities. More than one freeborn *hin* in a city of the Arnaden has had to prove her or his identity and freedom from some overzealous or avaricious Calishite who claims the *hin* is an escaped slave. Those *hin* who have managed to escape their masters in Calimshan often seek refuge in the more open atmosphere of the Arnaden. Rumored to exist in the cities of the region is a network to help enslaved *hin* escape their owners, liberate those who are wrongfully recaptured as escapees (usually by slavers looking to make a quick profit or round out a shipment), or aid those who wish to begin the journey south to Luiren, the *hin* homeland.

Elves

This region has suffered the loss of most of its resident elves over the decades since the declaration of the Retreat to Evermeet, but moon and some gold elves continue to dwell in the cities of the Arnaden. Gold elves seem to less appreciate the climate, whereas the

moon elves seem to revel in the change from their native Cormanthyr. Many urban moon elves even have adopted the traditional Calishite apparel of abas or dolmans and keffiyehs or turbans. Meanwhile, sylvan elves are the predominant breed living in the pine forests of the Thornwood, Ankhwood, and Winterwood.

Dwarves

These people have not been a common sight in the area since the fall of Shanatar. Those who remain tend to gather into neighborhoods of their own within the cities. Again, given the history of Calimshan and its tradition of taking demihuman slaves, more dwarves dwell within the walls of King Janol's Ankhapur than in any of the Calishite cities. Also, there appears to be a slow but active migration of the Arnaden dwarves to Ankhapur, leaving the other cities with a deficit of highly skilled dwarf craftsmen.

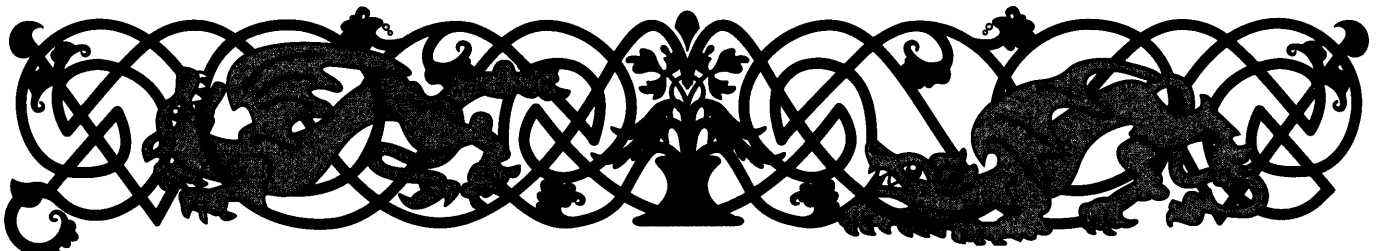
Gnomes

These short creatures are very rare in the region and are cause for excited whispers and gawking by the otherwise-reserved and tolerant peoples of the cities. The climate does not seem to be to their liking, nor does the slave trade encourage the gnomes to settle down here. The few that are seen are usually merchants, gem dealers, and jewelers moving through the area as part of a caravan or the crew of a merchant vessel stopping at an Arnaden port of call, most often to deal for the rare magical metal *zardazil* or the precious, colored pearls unique to the Arnaden.



A Shadi'ar Ala-min woman on her giant lynx mount.





Half-breeds

Half-elves and half-orcs are quite common in the region, as again many of them sought to escape either the class-bound structure of Calimshan's culture, where bigotry often prevented them from success, or outright slavery or debt-servitude to some wealthy Calishite. Half-elves are treated little differently than humans in the cities and are accorded respect like the elves themselves by the tribes of the Lions. Half-orcs are also common in the region, and the open nature of the cities allows them to blend in without too much difficulty. The Lions, in contrast, do not share the Arnadar's tolerance regarding half-orcs, or *sons of the tusks*, which is what their term for half-orcs translates to. (Indeed, the term *son-of-a-tusk* is used as an insult by many members of the tribes.) This distaste for the orcish parentage of such individuals can be understood, perhaps, considering how the Lions must periodically drive off orc clans seeking to move down from the more remote mountains and forests that ring the Lions' territories.

Monsters

Besides the orc clans mentioned above, the Lands of the Lion are also plagued with numerous monstrous threats. With no unified, large-scale efforts to rid the region of such creatures (as are now taking place in the reunified Tethyr), both the tribes of the Lions and guards of the Arnaden cities must constantly be vigilant. On the plains north of the Arnaden, bands of centaurs (some friendly to the Lion tribes, some not), gnolls, bugbears, and ogres, and orcs from the mountains are common. In the more barren areas of the plains or at sites of ruins, displacer beasts, manscorpions, thri-kreen, and an occasional dragonne is spotted. For some unknown reason, many giant versions of normal animals also make their homes in the region. Some of these beasts include giant snakes, spiders, scorpions, and the famed giant lynxes that one of the Lion tribes uses as mounts for its elite cavalry warriors (see the Shadi'ar Ala-min subsection of The Four Tribes section, in the "Nomadic Traditions" chapter). The warm pine forests of the region hold all of the above mentioned threats as well as naga that have migrated westward from the region of the Nagawater. Though rare, dragons are known to hunt or lair in the Land of the Lions, as determined by the dragon's type, alignment, and climatic preference.

The Arnaden's waters hide many dangers to sailors and swimmers alike. Not only does swallowing the brackish water of the lake bring a sickness that can last weeks, and is occasionally fatal to unfortunates who fall overboard, but sharks, giant predatory fish, a rarely appearing dragon turtle, and other demons of the depths lurk beneath the green waters of the Arnaden. While not normally dangerous, giant otters that feed on huge shellfish and the proliferating seaweed can wreak havoc with smaller craft while attempting to play with them.

None of these dangers, though, grip the heart of an Arnadar, and even the bravest Lion warrior, in the paralyzing grasp of terror as does the mention of a creature that has plagued the region for centuries: the beholder. Just as Calimshan's people fear and loathe the thought of domination by genies, so do the Arnadar and Lions fear beholders. The Eye Tyrant Wars have ravaged the territory, and rumors of vile cults that still revere the evil orbs never quite die. If there is a horrifying threat that lurks in the backs of the Arnadars' and Lions' hearts and souls, that threat is of beholder-led armies streaming forth from the many ruins in the region, overwhelming whole tribes and cities. They will all live forever in fear of entire

populations in chains, trudging to the ruins and the Underdark warrens that sheltered the eye tyrants across the centuries. While the beholders have not made a comeback in decades, few among the Lake cities will rest easy until there is proof that the Alimir Hive, and any other beholders in the south, are extinct.

Languages

The common trade tongue is the prevalent language used in the Land of the Lions, especially in the cities of the Arnaden and most certainly when business issues are at hand. Only in Ankhapur is common the language spoken exclusively by the human community. In the Calishite cities, Alzhedo (more specifically, the degraded form of Old Alzhedo [the common tongue of the Plane of Elemental Air] called Calishite Alzhedo) is spoken among the residents. Many of the people in these cities, conversant in both common and Alzhedo, construct a sort of pidgin language, combining the two tongues during a conversation or even a single sentence if the speaker feels one language better expresses her intent than the other. The city dwellers do not do this to be difficult or to put outsiders off (despite the rumors to the contrary); such is merely a common occurrence for a bilingual society.

The nomadic tribes of the Lions to the north speak Alzhedo almost without exception. Members of all four tribes exist who understand and speak common, but they will not offer to converse in that tongue unless they are engaging another (in this case, an outsider they assume is unlikely to know Alzhedo) in a conversation or for a challenge.

Those immigrants from the Shaar and Chult also speak the tongues of their native lands among themselves or in the areas of the cities dominated by these immigrants.

Religion

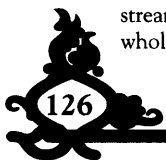
The religious climate of Calimshan has always been open and tolerant—at least publicly so. The same is true in the cities of the Arnaden. All faiths are permitted in the cities, though many of the evil, destructive faiths pay heavy taxes of all sorts, both as an insurance policy against damage their worshipers may cause and as a subtle hint to the leaders of these faiths, that they are constantly observed by city officials. Such vigilance is not a guarantee of safety, however. Witness the fate of the population of Mintar, now crushed in the deadly grasp of the Banite Knights of the Black Gauntlet and their leader Teldorn Darkhope (LE hm P9 of "Bane" [really Iyachtu Xvim; a dreadmaster who thinks he is an autilim]).

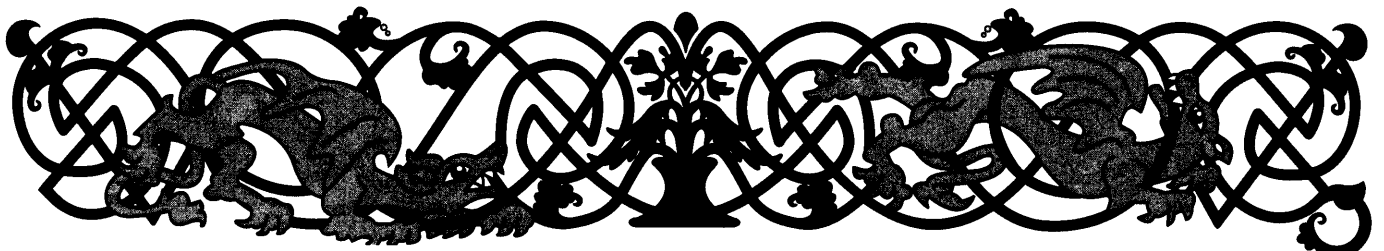
Open conflict between faiths is not only forbidden, it is considered the height of rude behavior, resulting in a loss of face and honor for all involved. Even moreso than in most cities, religion is very much a matter of politics to the Arnadar, and these people have a political saying that translates as, "Violence is the last resort of incompetent fools."

Powers of the Arnadar

As independent as the Arnadar are, they revere a wide variety of gods in the temples of their cities.

- With a population as fascinated by magic as that of the Calimshan region, one would expect a high degree of reverence for the goddess Mystra. However, in this region the worship of Azuth, the patron of mages, rather than magic itself (and she





who presides over it) is much more popular. While temples to Mystra exist, Azuthian congregations are far larger; here, it seems, the folk are more concerned with those who make magic available to them on a personal basis rather than the esoteric study of the force itself.

- As the cities of the Arnaden are ports with a great number of sailors and merchants who ply the Arnaden and the Shining Sea beyond, all of them feature temples to both Istishia and Umberlee. Prayers and sacrifices are common when vessels are about to begin a voyage or business venture upon the water. In many cases, the offerings are poured or dropped directly into the water after the vessel leaves port.
- Another common power, especially for the merchants of the area, is Lliira. With the absence of Waukeen since the Time of Troubles, Lliira has assumed proprietorship over many of Waukeen's holdings and temples and has been answering the Waukeenars' pleas for spells for years. (Those campaigns that have incorporated the *For Duty & Deity* adventure module will find that the Merchant's Friend is once again the object of worship at these temples.)
- The triad of Tyr, Torm, and Ilmater has many combined temples in the cities of the Arnaden. This trio of lawful powers (and their clergy) do much to keep injustice and the worst of Calimshan's bad habits to a minimum in the region.
- Tymora and Seluné claim large followings in the cities, especially among the poorer residents. After all, when one is fallen on hard times, the most fervent desire often is for a simple change of luck. Also, many a servant or slave spends wakeful nights anticipating some midnight service they will be called to perform, and while awaiting the bell or bellow that calls him to duty, the slave or servant has no company but the night sky and the bright moon to keep him company.
- With Lliira's assumption of the mercantile Waukeen's role, many worshipers of Lliira's other aspects have become disillusioned. In Calimshan (and the Arnaden cities in particular), the goddess Sharess has risen to prominence among the pleasure-seekers in the region. Indeed, Sharess—also linked to cats—enjoys much popularity, from the owners of the tressym in the cities to the noble Lion tribes on the plains to the north. Sune's faith has suffered from the emergence of Sharess, though less so than Lliira's.
- In Ankhapur, the recent surge in the faith of Lathander the Morninglord has much to do with King Janol I's assumption of the throne. Rumors say that the king's crippled right hand is the Morninglord's mark. This mark means one of two things, depending on whom you ask: Either it is a sure sign that King Janol holds some special place in Lathander's glorious plan, or that the Morninglord crippled the King as punishment for the man's past (unspecified) sins. In either case, the common story is that Lathander's brilliant light leapt from Janol as the young man was threatened by his then-undead father, "King" Manferic, revealing that whatever secrets his past might hold, King Janol I is currently in the Morninglord's favor.
- With the new importance of the Lathanderian faith in Ankhapur, the worship of the Red Knight, the former patron of Ankhapur's royal family, has suffered a blow. Referred to as the Red Lord or Red Lady locally, the master (or mistress) of strategy's church has taken the slight in stride. The priests have taken the long view, knowing that the volatile region they re-

side in will, soon enough, bring King Janol back to them for long-term, strategic advice on how best to administer the city.

Powers of the Lions

The Lion tribes are also a highly religious people, with all the tribes venerating (to varying degree) the lion lord Nobanion. While this power's primary worshipers live farther to north, on the Shining Plains and within the Gulthmere forest, the Lion nomads have adopted his worship over the centuries. Nobanion's worship is the primary factor in the lives of many Lion tribe members. Further, both Nobanion and Sharess share a connection with cats, so obviously these creatures play a significant role in the region. (Nobanion is more reserved than Sharess, though, and at times finds her playfulness annoying.)

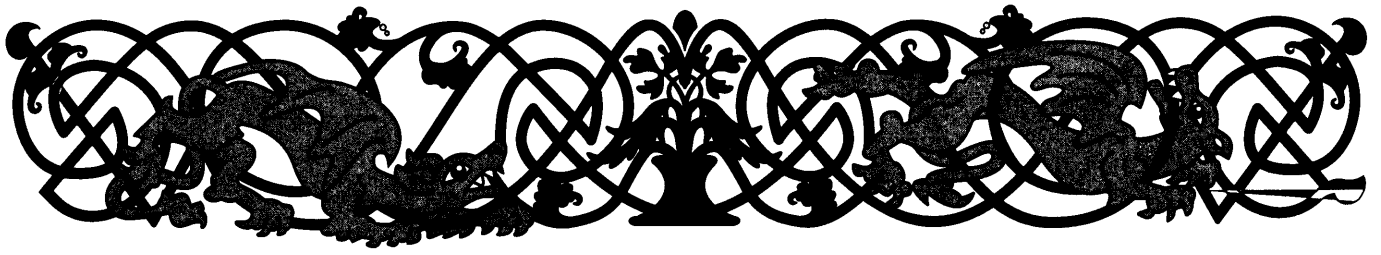
- Many individuals in the tribes hold reverence not only for Nobanion and Sharess but the triad of Tyr, Torm, and Ilmater, and Akadi. All the Lion tribes fear and respect the power of Bhaelros (Talos), but only the corrupted Sala-min tribe (see the Shadi'ar Sala-min subsection of The Four Tribes section, in the "Nomadic Traditions" chapter), which makes its home among the ruins of Tathtar, actively worships that evil deity, along with homage paid by many of this tribe either to Malar the Beastlord or Garagos the Reaver.
- One unique fixture of the Lion tribe culture cannot be traced to any known power or god. Spread across the steep hills and waving grasses of the plains, some stone cairns occasionally appear. Atop each small cairn (about the size of a human grave) stands a simple yet striking carved stone. Each stone is carved to depict a great leader or warrior (male or female), usually in battle garb. From the evidence gathered at some of these sites, sages (including Ordil Harauntan of Ankhapur, the acknowledged expert on all things related to the Lion tribes) believe the tribes erect these cairns—or *soul statues*, as the Alzhedo term for them translates—on the sites of great, ancient battles. Whether these carved stones depict Lion tribe leaders who fell in the battle or (as Ordil feels) these actually depict great, honorable and, powerful *foes* of the Lions is unknown.

All of these soul statues are ancient; none has been found that is less than 500 years old. The Lion tribes themselves acknowledge these cairns as the work of their ancestors but steadfastly (and occasionally violently) refuse to discuss the matter further under any conditions. Also, any Lion tribe member gladly dies to protect the soul statue or the cairn beneath from disturbance.

Cults of the Eye

As enigmatic as the soul statues are, by far the most mysterious (and certainly the most dangerous) religious element in the region is that of the dreaded beholder cults of the Eye Tyrant Wars. In the past, beholders *charmed* or terrified whole populations of the region into serving, worshiping, and fighting for the evil orbs. Although the eye tyrants never had the power to grant spells to their worshipers, they ruled the region as theocracies, with each beholder being treated as a god-king above the mere humans and other bipeds. Fortunately, the good peoples of the region eventually rose in revolt, killing those who had collaborated with the evil orbs, and drove off or killed the eye tyrants that could not escape.





Nomadic Traditions

The Ala-min, Brada-min, Talu-min, and the Sala-min are the four tribes of nomadic horsemen who collectively refer to themselves as the *Shadi'ar*. Known to others as the Lions, these fierce and proud people have claimed the rugged hills north of the Arnaden as theirs since -500 DR. They are peoples of many long-standing traditions, many of which are discussed here. One notable difference between them and the inhabitants of Calimshan is seen in their regard for the women of their tribes, who they hold as equals.

Each of the four tribes considers itself to be a single family group, with blood or marital relationships linking every member. Within each tribe is a number of extended families or clans. Each tribe has nearly one dozen major families, and the largest of them boasts almost twice that number. Of course, smaller families also exist within each tribe, but most eventually marry into or ally themselves with another, larger clan. (Some of them remain independent, however, and fiercely proud of their specific family identity.) Each tribe roams its loosely defined territory north of the cities of the Arnaden, moving with its herds to the relative shelter of the foothill caves and forest verges in the winter, and wandering the length and breadth of the land during fairer weather, sleeping in tents or under the stars on the hottest of summer nights.

These people survive in the rocky, hilly country by herding goats and hardy mountain sheep, making use of their milk, meat, and wool. They also gather vegetables and tubers that grow in the rocky soil, collecting and carrying what they harvest as they roam the land. They add spice to their simple foods with herbs, barks, olives, dates, honey, and they brew a very potent, unobvious beverage made from grapes, dates, and several kinds of tree bark. To this beverage, called *hadii*, they usually add goat's milk (which tends to curdle almost instantly), water, or—for a few of the oldest, most tradition-bound *Shadi'ar*—small amounts of goat or sheep's blood.

For those items the *Shadi'ar* do not produce themselves (the majority of their metallic tools and weapons, and leather goods, for example), the *Shadi'ar* visit the cities of the Arnaden, typically in the spring. There they buy such goods as they need, visit any city-dwelling, distant relatives, revel in the soft life of the city, or sell a few colts. (*Shadi'ar* horses are highly prized steeds throughout the region, commanding up to 150% of the normal price for such an animal.)

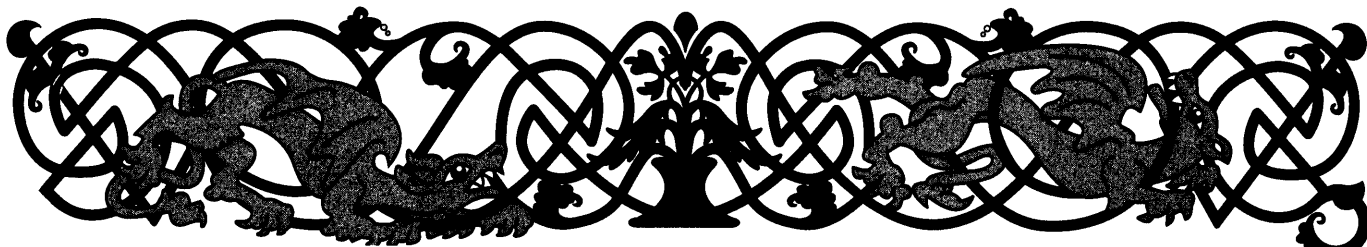
Legendary Horses

The *Shadi'ar* ride and breed small, strong, sure-footed horses that thrive on nothing more than the tall grasses of the region (though many are spoiled with the occasional carrot, radish, or kohlrabi). These horses are equivalent to light war horses (see the *MONSTROUS MANUAL* tome) but are harder than normal (giving each +3 hit points on each Hit Die). They are trained to carry their riders into battle and are difficult to spook. These noble beasts of burden are more than stock to the tribes, however. They are an integral part of the culture, deeply loved and intertwined with the nomads' history and lore. For example, one *Shadi'ar* legend tells of a great horse trainer and warrior who was putting a young stallion through it paces near the Nagaflo north of Yhep. A band of slavers, some eight men strong, saw the lone rider and attempted to capture both the brave warrior and his steed. Atop his magnificent horse, the near-invulnerable *Shadi'ar* slew five of the men with his bow and lance but was eventually wrested from his saddle by the remaining three.

The warrior's steed did not bolt, however, despite its youth and the pungent smell of spilled blood all about. With an almost human rage in its large, liquid brown eyes, the stallion turned on the slavers, killing one with a forehoof to the head and shattering another's spine with a tremendous kick from its rear hooves. Finally, the warrior dispatched the last fighting slavemonger and then ended the miserable life of the crippled one.

That night, the warrior returned to his camp with eight new horses, a pouch full of the slavers' gold, and eight human heads dangling from the end of his lance. The warrior hailed his steed for saving his life, and the young stallion carried the warrior to many victories in its life, and it sired dozens of foals as brave and fierce as itself. From this story, young riders of the tribes (and outsiders who hear it) learn that any enemy who dares to confront a *Shadi'ar* warrior mounted on a horse faces not one lethal foe but two.





Customs

The Shadi'ar tribes are a social, friendly people if one is lucky—and honorable—enough to gain their trust. Few friends will stand beside one as resolutely, and even ferociously if need be, as a Shadi'ar warrior. However, it is important to understand and observe their customs if one is to gain that trust and friendship.

Common Style of Dress

The Shadi'ar—males and females—dress in loose, baggy trousers or flowing tunics, called *abas*, of light colors, and most wear white *keffiyehs* to keep the scorching summer sun off their necks and heads—the last sight many an orc, goblin, or bugbear raiding party sees is an array of white-topped warriors, charging over the hills like the foam on the curl of a deadly Arnaden wave. The favored weapons vary by tribe, but short bows, light lances, and scimitars are common choices for the horse warriors. Armor, if any, is light; studded leather and a small shield are typically the heaviest protection a Shadi'ar wears for any period of time.

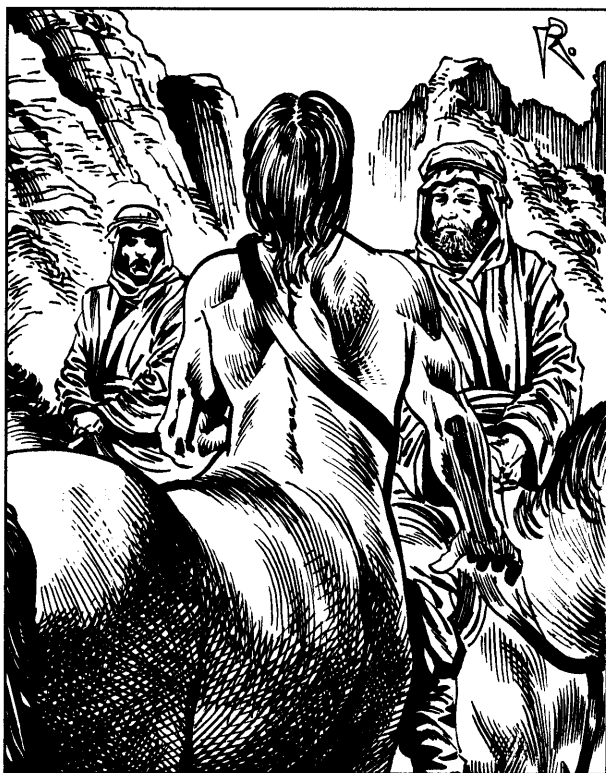
Leadership

The Lions certainly are not strangers to one another. The four tribes wander on their own, traditional territories, and each is ruled independently of the others, but each tribe's ruler, the *elder caliyim*, meets with his or her three counterparts on a seasonal basis. (The place of each such gathering, called the *Caliymate*, is determined during the previous meeting.) At such gatherings, they discuss the movements of humanoid tribes or monsters in the region, births, deaths, battles fought, trade goods offered or needed, and many astounding tales of each tribe's history, rich with epic battles and even more epic poetry. Horses, goats, and sheep are traded, and many a young person searches for an evening's diversion or a life's love from among the gathered throngs. Despite the tribes' differences, the time of the *Caliymate* is when all such trifles are put aside and the tribes come together as the single race they consider themselves to be.

Role of the Host

A Shadi'ar, regardless of tribe, welcomes any and all members of other tribes he encounters and invites them to join the camp and enjoy the hospitality of the tribe. When a family, clan, or tribe hosts members of another tribe, these guests are treated royally. Animals are slaughtered for a great feast cooked over a roaring bonfire, rare spices are rubbed into the meat or thrown onto the fire to enhance the flavor, sweets made from congealed honey are widely consumed, and much *hadii* and other beverages are drunk. Tales are told, poems are recited, and songs of valor and honor of both tribes are sung late into the night. This is done not only to ensure the guests are well treated but also to impress said guests with the plenty and generosity of the hosts. In other words, such revelries are subtle games of oneupsmanship. Such is one of the few ways in which the tribes compete with each other, but in this case generosity equals honor.

When meeting outsiders in the Lions' territory, the tribe members first ascertain the trespassers' purpose for traveling through the Land of the Lions as well as their ultimate destination. If the Lions are satisfied with the answers given, the travelers are usually allowed to go on their way, though they are



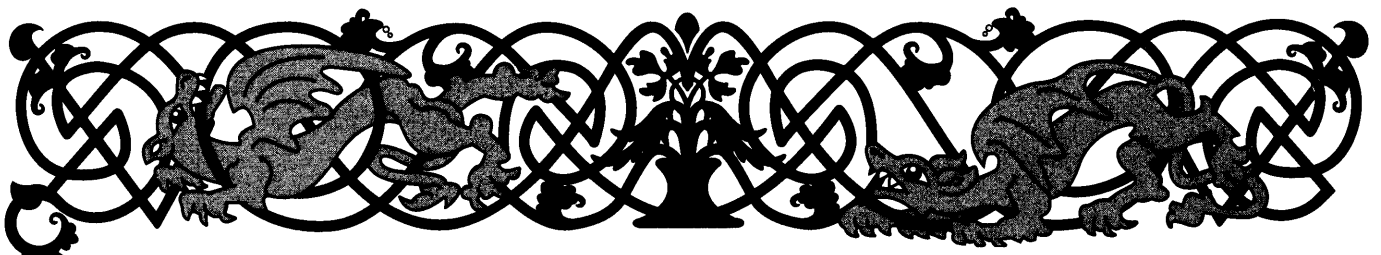
Shadi'ar patrol meets a centaur patrol.

warned that the lands are dangerous to those who are not wise and wary. Only those friends and allies of long association or valorous deed are treated to banquets and festivities, as the Lions do for one other. Such is possibly the highest honor an outsider can be paid by the Shadi'ar tribes.

If travelers are rude or antagonistic, the Lion warriors usually just ride off, giving the outsiders the benefit of the doubt with regard to honor. To do otherwise requires a great show of aggression on the part of the outsiders. From this circumstance a duel may develop, or the outsiders may be told they are not welcome on tribal lands. They then are given a reasonable time to take the most direct course to leave the tribe's territory, even if this means the outsiders must return whence they came.

Unless the outsiders are slavers, other known enemies of the tribes, or they bare steel first, the Lions are hesitant to enter a battle. The reason is simple: Once an armed conflict begins, honor demands certain rules be followed, which may result in long-term resolution. (See the "Justice and Honor" section, below.) If through other means the Shadi'ar can deal with the outsiders, honor is usually not called into consideration. This explains why many travelers through the Land of the Lions feel as though the tribes are ignoring them after first contact. If the Shadi'ar avoid outsiders, they also avoid becoming indebted to those outsiders in some matter of honor.

If the Lion warriors come across outsiders in need of aid of any type, they are obliged to offer that aid. See the fable of Amraan above for the possible extent that aid, once offered, can be driven to by the proud, honorable hearts of the Shadi'ar people.



Should any outsiders (say, disguised slavers) manage to fool the Lion warriors, be allowed to remain, and subsequently betray the Lions' trust or hospitality, the tribe's honor demands that any recompense, even the death of all the betrayers, be freely sought by the dishonored tribe. If for some reason redress is impossible, the betrayers earn lifelong foes of all the tribes in the Land of the Lions, as the dishonored tribe will report the affront at the next Caliyamate. The outsiders' unanswered transgression places a stain upon the honor on all tribes, and any tribe that finds and redresses the dishonor removes the stain from all the tribes.

Role of Gifts

Closely following the rules of the host for the Shadi'ar is the role that giving and receiving gifts plays in the nomadic culture. Within and between tribes, gifts are freely given and happily accepted for occasions such as days of birth, betrothal, holy days, and many other times both major and minor. From one Lion warrior to another, a gift incurs a debt of honor gladly shouldered.

Outside such special days as those mentioned above, the most common cause for the giving of a gift is when tribe members meet. Just as the host has responsibilities, the guest too has obligations. In particular, the guest honors the host by presenting gifts. These need not be of significant monetary value, but they are always given up to the limit of the guest's means. While the host throws as lavish a banquet as lies within his means, the guest most commonly reciprocates with the most precious gift possible.

As is a frequent occurrence with the Lion warriors, a different set of rules applies in the matter of gifts where outsiders are concerned. As noted above, gifts bring with them a debt of honor, and while the Shadi'ar do not always extend their honor code to outsiders, accepting the gift of an outsider carries with it bonds of honor that no Lion warrior dares ignore. Simply put, if a tribe member accepts any form of gift, aid, or assistance from an outsider, that Shadi'ar—and hence his tribe, and all the tribes—are indebted to that outsider.

Another fable told to Shadi'ar children, illustrating this point, involves a Lion warrior who was wounded in an attack upon her tribe by a band of Zhentish outsiders. From atop a steep hill, the outsiders' mages caused a rock slide to hamper the Shadi'ar warriors' ascent and counterattack. One Lion warrior was trapped beneath a boulder, and Zhentish magic carried the day for the evil ones, leaving only the trapped warrior alive at the battle's end.

One of the Zhent mages suggested they adopt the Shadi'ar tradition of leaving one foe alive to tell the tale. Rather than allow herself to be freed by the evil outsiders, and thus owe them an incredible debt of honor, the Lion warrior took her own life while lying trapped beneath the bloodstained stone. She knew, as do all true Shadi'ar, that a debt of honor to one (or many) who are without honor is a double offense and must be suffered under no circumstances.

Role of Religion

It strikes many outsiders as odd that the brusque and honor-bound Shadi'ar remain so open to others' religious choices. The Lions themselves revere several powers of varying philosophies, yet the corrupted Sala-min tribe's worship of Bhaelros, Malar, and Garagos does not interfere with its interaction with other

Shadi'ar during the seasonal Caliyamates and at other times. Perhaps with relatives such as these, it becomes easier to understand how the Lion tribes can separate one's honor from one's chosen deity or power.

The sole aspect of religious thought that remains baffling to the Shadi'ar is atheism. Even a self-reliant people such as the Lion tribes know all too well the miracles and wonders the powers of Toril grant to keep them safe, honorable, and challenged. To refute the existence of divinity is incomprehensible to most Lion warriors. Perhaps such is simply part of existing not only in a polytheistic culture but in one where the powers so regularly seem to become involved in mortal affairs. To deny the evidence that such beings exist is akin to blinding oneself to the marvels of the world. Such a being is doomed to wander, lost, until some great beast ends his miserable existence.

View of Outsiders

Much of the Shadi'ar's attitudes toward outsiders has been detailed above. In summary, the Lion tribes do not expect outsiders to understand, much less live up to the tribes' standards of honor. While they do not automatically consider outsiders to be evil or dishonorable, they reserve judgment. In short, the Shadi'ar expect nothing from outsiders but a lack of honor.

If an outsider learns of the Shadi'ar codes and follows them or is naturally honorable, the Lion warriors are surprised though not outwardly. They understand that in the soft world the outsiders likely come from, life is easy and honor can be safely discarded—they detest such an idea, but they acknowledge it exists. Hence the discovery of an outsider with a true sense of honor is a pleasant surprise and one they are pleased to reward and appreciate.

The Four Tribes

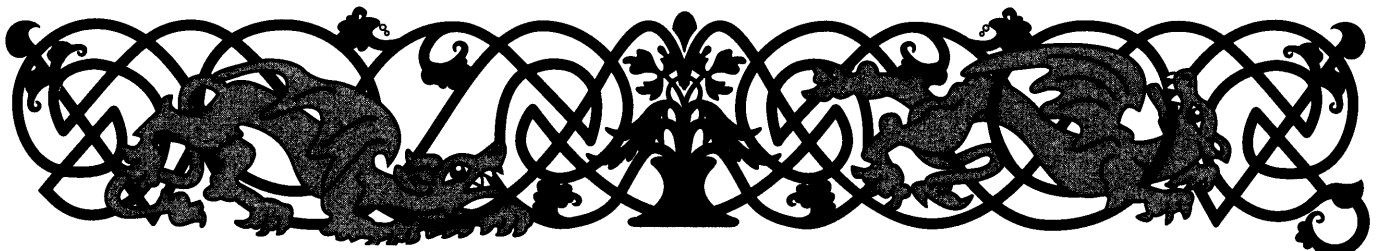
The commonalties introduced above lead to a frequent assumption that the Lions are all alike, or that they are all members of a single culture that simply spreads itself out in order to facilitate survival in a harsh climate. To a certain extent, they are content to be considered so by outsiders because they hope the perception of greater numbers will dissuade potential adversaries from troubling them. (Besides, they do not care much what outsiders think in general.) The four tribes that comprise this culture are quite a diverse lot, however.

Shadi'ar Ala-min

The Ala-min (which translates as *silk blades*) follow the leadership of Faerladeeyn (NG hm F13), son of Zalaster, recently deceased. This westernmost tribe claims as the boundaries of its territory the southeastern slopes of the Omlarandin peaks, the western Cloven Mountains and the southern verge of Thornwood, the west bank of the Thornwash, and the cities of Mintar and Saelmur. The Ala-min maintain and fight for the general cause of goodness though distant relations with the lands of Erkkazar, the elves of the Thornwood, and the city of Saelmur. (In the years since Mintar fell to the forces of Bane, the Ala-min have studiously avoided that city.) This tribe secures their keffiyehs with golden cords.

The Ala-min are the largest tribe of the Shadi'ar, with 23 major clans making up the majority of the 8,000 or so members. The Ala-min follow Faerladeeyn loyally, as they did his father.





These people are the most open and tolerant of all the tribes, due in part to their leadership and in part to their relatively frequent contact with other civilizations. The Ala-min are respected (and a little feared) by the people of Erkazar, respected and admired by the remaining elves in the region, and are earnestly sought allies of the forces within Saelmur, who preach that war with Mintar now will save lives in the long run. (See “The Cities of the Arnaden” chapter for more about Mintar’s woes and the Alamins’ good reasons to avoid that city.) The Ala-min are aloof as all Shadi’ar when among strangers but can be downright gregarious when at ease among friends and respected, honorable allies.

In one sense, the Ala-min are responsible for one of the best-known stereotypes regarding the Lion tribes. Many think that entire tribes of these nomads ride giant lynxes as mounts. However, such is not the case, as feeding hundreds of those carnivores would simply be impossible. The caliyim of the Ala-min tribe can call upon the tribe’s elite cavalry of six to 24 warriors, strapped atop these giant cats, however. In times of war, this elite troop rides with the caliyim (or rather, vice versa). In all cases, keeping a respectable distance between the huge cats and the tribe’s horses is important, more to keep the cats’ minds on their duties than any other factor. The Ala-min trade with the elves of the Forest of Mir when lynx cubs are needed for training (or when the adult cats, difficult to breed in any case, do not produce large enough litters). On the rare occasions of exceptionally large litters, some cubs are even traded or gifted back to the elves.

The Ala-min tribe primarily worships Nobanion, although the goddess Sharess is becoming quite popular among the younger members of the tribe. Faerladeeyn also pays homage to the triad of Tyr, Torm, and Ilmater. His personal ethics and the tribe’s proximity to Tethyr and Erkazar, where worship of the triad is very common, do much to explain the young caliyim’s attraction to these deities. Faerladeeyn is noted among his people for his feats in his younger, adventuring days; they absolutely love to brag about how he once defeated 14 opponents in a tavern brawl.

Unknown to Faerladeeyn and the rest of the Ala-min, the Banites of Mintar are responsible for the death of the previous caliyim, Zalaster, less than two years ago. Disguised as mere bandits or slavers, a troop of Banites on wide patrol beyond Mintar encountered a small group of Ala-min, foraging too close to the city, and attacked. While the battle raged, Zalaster and his personal guard came upon the scene. They drove the “bandits” off, killing several and taking their heads, but the Ala-min lost their caliyim to the evil ones’ blades. As they were disguised, the Ala-min did not connect the bandits with the forces of Mintar itself; bandits and raiding parties attacking the Shadi’ar is far from an uncommon occurrence. Faerladeeyn, were he to learn this fact, would set aside the tribe’s careful avoidance of Mintar up to this point, and likely ally himself and his people with the forces of good gathering in and near Saelmur, as he is not afraid to confront his foes.

Several years ago, for example, then-Prince Faerladeeyn declared war against the Zhentarim after a particularly ruthless attack against the Shadi’ar. While the Zhents were initially amused by the primitive warrior’s threat, the cause was taken up by all the Shadi’ar tribes, many Zhent caravans disappeared in the rugged hill country, and many “superior” Zhent were left headless, bleeding from their severed necks onto the dark green grasses of the hills. Since then, the Zhents have moved most of their commerce to waterborne routes.

Faerladeeyn is a ruggedly handsome man, though his life of fighting against superior numbers and powers has left him scarred and aged beyond his years, despite his prowess. His deep black eyes are piercing and frightening to strangers. Deep, healed-over cuts run with and against the natural creases of his dark-skinned face and sinewy body. His large hands and long fingers easily grip the mane of his horse, allowing him to guide the mount with the precision of a veteran wrangler, though he rides without a bridle. His legs are similarly long and muscular, so he could easily ride bareback, but his ornate saddle is a symbol of status and he sits proudly in it.

Shadi’ar Brada-min

The Brada-min (which translates as *silent swords*) are led by Ibrym (N hm M8), son of Talduth. This tribe lives to the east of the Ala-min, roaming the lands from the eastern bank of the Thornwash, along the southern and eastern edges of the Winterwood, to the south bank of the Wintercloak River and shores of the Nagawater in the north, and the western bank of the River Ankhapur and the verges of the Ankhwood in the south. This tribe uses red cords to hold their keffiyehs in place.

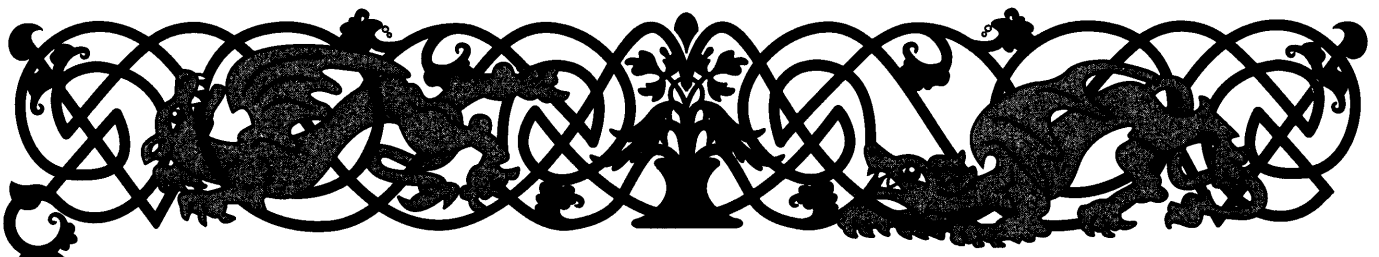
The Brada-min is the smallest of the nonevil Lion tribes, numbering at only some 5,000 among 13 major clans and numerous smaller family groups. Although they make their home directly between two other Lion tribes, share a common border with the third, and also live north and east of the open city of Ankhapur, the Brada-min are the most self-reliant and standoffish of the nonevil Lion tribes. Brusque toward all outsiders, this tribe of Lions takes their personal, clan, and tribe honor more seriously than any other. Duels within the tribe are relatively common, and Ibrym is often called in to settle feuds before they boil over into bloodshed—or at times, any further bloodshed.

The Brada-min maintain distant but cordial relations with all other Lion tribes, as their borders contact those of the other three. Of all the tribes, the Brada-min have the most contact with the Sala-min tribe of evil Lions that dwells to the north, in the southernmost ruins of the lost nation of Tathtar. The Brada-min and Sala-min trade many goods throughout the course of a year, as the Sala-min do not possess easy access to the Arnaden’s cities to the south. The dealings between these two tribes are always honest as well, for neither tribe would cheat the other, putting its own honor in question.

The power worshiped foremost among the Brada-min is the elemental lord of the air, Akadi. An aloof deity to say the least, the choice of her as the primary point of worship among the standoffish Brada-min seems a perfect match. As a result, this Lion tribe pays much attention to the sky above and the wind’s presence, speed, and direction. When praying to Akadi, members of this tribe often turn to face the wind—“facing the goddess,” as they refer to the practice. Other powers may be worshiped by individuals of the Brada-min but without an organized structure beyond a close-knit group meeting to pray to the power together.

Known for his energy, Ibrym takes as much joy in caring for the tribe as he does in dealing with his three wives and seventeen children. Mages are rare among the Lions, but the wise Talduth apprenticed Ibrym to a Saelmurran wizard after his son repeatedly showed a distinct skill in successfully dowsing for freshwater springs beneath the rocky soil. Ibrym confirmed his





future role of leader within the tribe when he dispatched a small flail of displacer beasts that were attacking the tribe's herds.

Ibrym is a middle-aged man with a bald pate, a rolling tummy, and huge, bushy brows and mustache. His father still lives but is retired and grows fatter by the day, attended by his dozens of children and grandchildren. The last of Talduth's wives, Ibrym's mother, died in childbirth while Ibrym was a lad.

Shadi'ar Talu-min

The Talu-min (which translates as *grass blades* or *blades of the grasses*) are led by Ramiira (CN hf F14), daughter of Shoul. This easternmost tribe of Shadi'ar warriors ranges from the eastern shore of the River Ankhapur and the eastern verges of the Ankhwood, east to the Golden Road and north to the Nagawater. Midnight blue cords wrap about the black keffiyehs of this tribe.

The second largest of the tribes, the Talu-min number something over 6,000 members, with 17 major clans dominating the list of families. Under Ramiira's capable but unpredictable leadership, the Talu-min carry the most dangerous reputation of all the nonevil Lion tribes. If the tribe is in need, Ramiira is not above raiding a caravan to two to get what is needed—or at least to get enough valuables to trade for what is needed. If one were to choose which tribe of Shadi'ar warriors was most likely to unexpectedly draw steel, the choice might be the Talu-min. What one Talu-min warrior might consider a terrific jest, another might regard as vile insult. The Talu-min are chaotic and unpredictable at times, but not evil.

These chaotic Lions maintain cool relations with most other races in the area. The Talu-min get along well the other tribes, despite their chaotic nature, and also maintain affable relations with one of the two centaur nations that roam the land to the east of the Golden Road. The Talu-min and the southern centaurs, who call themselves the Golden Hooves, agree that the southern Nagaflow determines the boundaries between their lands. Hence, they get along well, meeting each year to trade, drink, tell tales, and test the speed of the Shadi'ar's horses versus that of the fleetest of centaurs. Conversely, the northern nation of centaurs, the Plainswalkers, contend that the Talu-min's land west of the Golden Road belonged to them in Toril's past. They have long sought its return, but the chaotic Talu-min have flatly refused.

The Talu-min are fairly selective about cities with which they are willing to trade. While they will enter Innarlith for brief periods, they dislike the bustle and cramped conditions of that trading city (not to mention the smell such a large city generates, especially in summer). When the tribe wishes to visit a settlement to trade, they usually go either to the town of Yhep or the village of Nagarr, depending upon the time of year. Ramiira has developed quite a taste for seafood over the last few years, so she tends to extend the tribe's stay, camped outside Yhep a little longer each year. As such, the Talu-min are becoming more accustomed to the life those townspeople live, and the chaos that might be expected to ensue from a large number of disorderly, proud warriors in a foreign environment has actually lessened over the last few years.

They totally avoid the village north of Innarlith, called Kursh, as a long-standing feud exists between the Talu-min and the mercenaries hired by the village's mayor to protect it. The

Talu-min vastly outnumber the mercenaries, called the Black-as-Blood Riders, but Ramiira has restrained her more vociferous warriors from riding into the village and slaughtering the riders to a man. Such an act, the elder caliyim warns, would rouse the villagers to the defense of their homes, and the simple farmers are not the tribe's target. Ramiira also secretly suspects that some evil beyond the mercenaries has worked its way into the heart of that village. But until such time as that evil actively threatens her tribe, Ramiira feels the village is not her concern.

As the tribe is chaotic in nature (though they faithfully follow the leadership of Ramiira), so too are their religious tendencies. Ramiira exhibits no particular preference for one power over another, praying to whichever deity she feels can best handle her request. The tribe seems to favor the chaotic Sharess and Bhaelros, lord of the chaos of storms.

Ramiira is the oldest of the elder caliyms, though only she knows her exact age; when those rude enough to intrude upon the topic ask, she always responds but with a different number each time. To look at her, she might be 50 and she might be 500 years old. (When dealing with strangers, she usually keeps her face hidden within her keffiyeh, which makes it even more difficult to guess her age. Steely gray shocks of hair slip down from the black cloth and brush over her forehead, yet her golden-brown eyes are bright and hard, and there is still great beauty in them. She is not lithe, but neither is she chubby—*solid* would be the best description; even the burly men of her tribe flinch involuntarily if she moves in their direction when she is angry.)

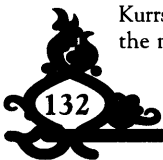
Shadi'ar Sala-min

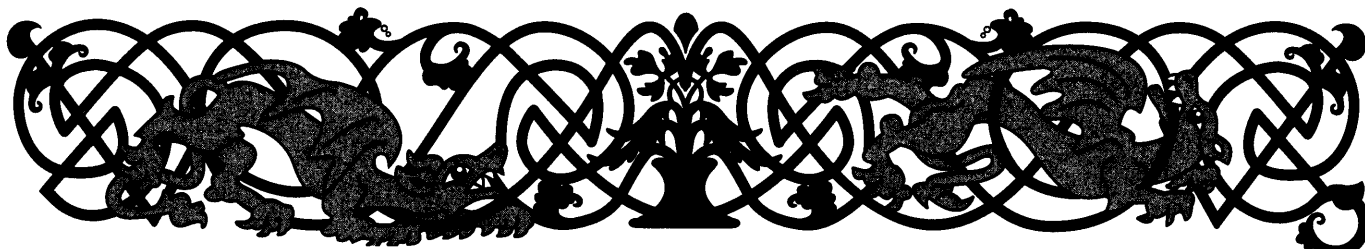
The elder caliyim of the Sala-min (which translates as *bloodied blades*) is Orblan (CE hm F17), son of Mashra. The Sala-min range is the pocket of land formed by the Cloven Mountains and Deepwash to the north, the Thornwood to the south, and the Winterwood to the east. This tribe binds their keffiyehs with black cords.

The tribe numbers a mere 3,000 members, and the plentiful mountain-fed rivers of their territory give them plenty to eat, drink, and they even irrigate small tracts of land for the cultivation of crops. The terrain isolates them from much contact with others; only the Brada-min tribe makes regular contact with them. Each year's meeting is convivial, despite the differing viewpoints of the tribes, for one does not squabble within one's family, even when the bloodlines are distant.

The story of the Sala-min tribe is a tragic one, one that brings tears to the eyes of many members of the other tribes even to this day: The Sala-min have fallen from honor, corrupted by the bloodlust of the demipower Garagos.

Centuries ago, the Sala-min tribe was beset by many enemies that had invaded their homeland from north of the Cloven Mountains. Undead and creatures of bizarre and warped magical powers occupied some of the ancient ruins that dot the land, and these creatures used the ruins as bases from which to wage war on the Sala-min. The time was high summer, and the other Shadi'ar tribes were spread across the expanse of their lands, too scattered and too distant to come to the aid of the Sala-min in time. The evil creatures' magic tore through the ranks of the Lion warriors atop their swift mounts, and vile necromancers raised the fallen Lions to turn and attack their own families. The tribe's caliyim at the time, one Sala bin Min, became





desperate under the evil onslaught. Her people were being slaughtered, wiped out by the twisted creatures and their evil magic while the other tribes would be too late to do anything but avenge the loss of Sala's tribe.

After one particularly costly battle, Sala wandered off to consider her options. The tribe was losing its battles, but she could not bring herself to order her warriors to flee and withdraw to safer lands. (The Shadi'ar consider abandoning one's home to enemies a great stain to honor, and Sala knew her riders would sooner die than flee.) As she pondered her tribe's fate, she entered a small vale with more ruins, perhaps of an old temple. From out of these fallen stones, an unearthly, powerful voice spoke to Sala. Though she was not to learn until it was far too late, the voice was that of Garagos the Reaver, the god of battle and bloodlust. The voice of the Reaver whispered to Sala of power, might, and victory over her tribe's foes. It whispered that he could save her tribe from extinction, that it could make her name live forever in the history of the tribe, of all the Shadi'ar tribes. The voice promised victory and more, if Sala would just trust it, give the tribe's trust to it. The voice promised to fill the Lion warriors with a spirit of strength and ferocity that would shame even the other Shadi'ar. Seeing no course for her tribe but death, Sala unwisely accepted the voice's offer and sealed the tribe's fate, cutting her hand and letting the blood drip on the stones of what had once been an altar. Then Sala left the vale and returned with her warriors as further instructed; they journeyed with her to the vale and all cut themselves as she had done, bleeding onto the stones.

The next day, when the tribe rose to do battle with their foes, they were instructed that, with each kill they made, they should shout out the name of their new benefactor, Garagos. As the day wore on, and more blood spilled in the Reaver's name, Garagos touched his worshippers with the power of bloodlust. As the battle wore on, the warriors rallied, then overwhelmed and drove their enemies creatures away or deep underground. In the heat of victory, the tribe renamed itself the Sala-min, after the woman who had brought them victory.

Garagos kept his promises, and so have the Sala-min, but much to their eternal loss. Since that summer so long ago, Garagos has held the Sala-min in his grip, preaching unrelenting and uncompromising war against all the tribe's enemies. The tribe has survived and defeated many who would see the Lion warriors destroyed, but that dominance has come at the cost of the tribe's collective soul. As a result, the Sala-min are both fierce and tragic figures. They gave their worship, honor, and even their souls to defeat a powerful enemy, but they now know the deal they made was not with an honorable party. However, they sealed the deal with their blood and their honor, and these both demand that the bargain be kept, regardless of price.

All the tribes of Shadi'ar value honor, and some of them praise the Sala-min for upholding the bargain they made so long ago, despite the cost—such is *true* honor, these warriors say. Not all the Lion nomads feel this way, though. Some simply pity the Sala-min for the price they have paid, though none would suggest breaking the bargain, for such would be a dishonor almost beyond comprehension.

Outsiders must bear in mind that the Sala-min are truly fierce and violent warriors. The tribe's code of honorable conduct applies strictly—and only—to members of the Shadi'ar. No

act against outsiders is considered dishonorable, no matter how cruel or unfair, and the slightest dishonor given by outsiders must be avenged in blood—so Garagos demands. Perhaps the Land of the Lions is fortunate that such bloodthirsty warriors are so secluded from the cities of the Arnaden and the soft peoples who reside there.

Orblan is a tall, thin, and quick man who cunningly manipulates the dissenters in his tribe into following his commands. His seemingly frail body belies the strength in his limbs, more so because his lightning reflexes and masterful physical maneuvers allow him to strike his enemies with precision and pain. He tends to narrow his eyes and glance about in a conspiratorial manner when he speaks, making him appear suspicious and wary at all times. He also tends to stare coldly for a moment before he speaks, as if he knows something you do not, which is probably why he is so successful at changing minds.

Justice and Honor

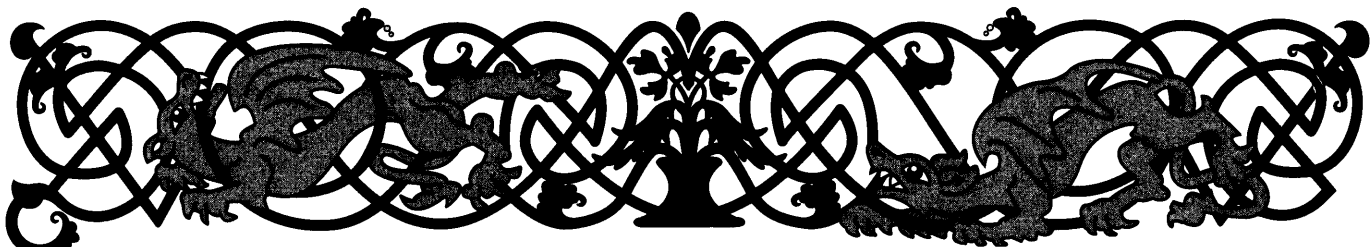
Most matters of justice and honor are handled within the individual tribe. Only those issues that cannot be resolved by any other means, and those that cross tribal lines, are referred to the seasonal Caliyate. A *rule of peace* prevents even the Sala-min from taking direct, violent action to redress wrongs that are brought before the elder caliyms. When parties cannot agree how to honorably settle a dispute, the Caliyate comes into play.

The only exception to the enforced nonviolence dictated by the Caliyate's rule of peace is whenever intertribal disputes and blood feuds need to be resolved. The elder caliyms sit in judgment and render verdicts on matters that the principals have been unable to resolve themselves. Such judgments are simple but often harsh. In one case, a Shadi'ar who was proven to have stolen from another family had one finger removed, with a dagger, for each of the four items he stole. Each finger was removed (as well as kept and worn about the neck on a thong as a warning to potential thieves) by a different member of the victimized clan. Duels are not uncommon, either, and since the crime or dishonor that brings the duel about is severe enough to merit the attention of the elder caliyms, most such duels are to the death.

To all the Shadi'ar, two things are all-important: family and honor. Perhaps the most important of these two ideals is the family, for there can be matters of honor that do not involve the family, but rare is the family matter that is not inextricably bound to honor. Furthermore, any event—good or bad, honorable or dishonorable—that affects one member of the tribe affects every member. This is largely because the family—including aunts, uncles, in-laws, and innumerable cousins—provides a support net that all Shadi'ar can depend upon. Strangers are more dangerous to the nomad than to the settler, so the ability to trust and depend upon family becomes even more crucial. This rule of life is so pervasive to the Lions that it extends across tribal lines. Any Shadi'ar, even those engaged in a death duel, with both tribes' honor at stake, will turn and fight side-by-side if set upon by others—even well-meaning guards, constables, or other outsiders who intend only to end the duel before either combatant is killed.

To acknowledge the importance of family is not to diminish the importance of honor, however. To a nomad, a word of honor





is an unbreakable bond. For a Lion, it is a bond no less important than his or her very life! If a Shadi'ar swears that she will guide you through every danger between you and your destination, she will do so even if it means carrying you on her back or sacrificing her life to insure that you reach your goal.

As every Shadi'ar knows, each tribe member's personal honor is that of his family, clan, tribe, and that of all Shadi'ar. This means that any offense a Shadi'ar commits (either against another tribe member or an outsider—honor does not recognize such distinctions) reflects upon the honor of not only the individual but the tribe as a whole. If, for example, a young lothario seduces a married woman, both of them Shadi'ar, both families are dishonored. If the members of the lothario's family were to learn of his indiscretion before the woman's husband or other family, they would cast the man out from the tribe, making him a pariah and marking his forehead with tribe or family's iron that is used to mark the herds—either that or the lothario's family might be merciful and simply kill the man. Similarly, the woman's family might force a divorce upon the woman and her husband, cast her out as described above, or kill her outright. Honor plays no favorites and must forever be satisfied. Neither family would relish the acts they must take to restore their respective honor, but both would do what must be done or risk the same punishment for them all.

One fable told to Shadi'ar children, to teach them the meaning of honor, goes as follows. A band of Shadi'ar warriors came across an encampment of travelers on the tribe's territory. The outsiders quickly offered to pay generously for the right to stay just one night. Because the wayfarers were polite and apologetic, the lead Lion warrior Amraan accepted their offer and pledged the safety of the camp, offering as a token a spare keffiyeh cord he bore.

Unknown to both, a bloodthirsty band of slavers was in the area as well. After Amraan's riders moved off, the slavers attacked the travelers' camp in the darkness. The vile purveyors of human lives slaughtered the elderly and raped the women. The survivors were taken away and the camp was set afire.

Amraan's band of warriors saw the blaze lighting the nighttime sky and returned to the scene. Upon discovering the carnage, Amraan declared that honor demanded those who had done this heinous act must die, as he had sworn to the travelers' safety. The band immediately began tracking the slavers—child's play even at night, for the slavers took no caution to cover their tracks. Just after dawn, the Lions found the slavers and charged the caravan, even though they were outnumbered almost three to one. To make things worse, among the slavers was a minor mage, and his powers took a heavy toll on the Lion warriors.

By the battle's end, only Amraan and the chief of the slavers' lived. Seeing only death in the eyes that faced his, the vile coward threw himself to the ground in surrender, begging for mercy. Though Amraan's blood boiled in rage at what these slavers, these beasts, had done, his honor demanded the acceptance of an adversary's capitulation and surrender. Amraan disarmed the man, gathered the surviving travelers about him, and turned the last slaver over to them, explaining that his honor prevented him from executing the prisoner.

Amraan then gave the survivors what aid he and his warriors had carried on their mounts: water, food, and a few healing poultices. As he presented these things, he wept for the losses the

travelers had suffered and offered all six of the Shadi'ar horses, all of his own personal property, the eternal guidance and protection of his entire tribe within its territory, and even his life to satisfy the debt of honor he owed the travelers.

As the tale concludes, these honorable outsiders took only the slain Lions' horses, promising that the Shadi'ar who had given their lives to rescue them would be honored and that the animals and their descendants would serve as reminders of the warriors' valor and honor forever. Grateful and dignified, Amraan mounted his horse, bade the travelers a second and final farewell, and rode off into the morning sun. Amraan allowed himself only the slightest of smiles as he heard the chief slaver first plea for mercy, then scream as the travelers meted out his punishment.

This fable teaches that one's word, once given, is honored regardless of cost. Further, while honor dictates certain actions at times—such as the acceptance of even a dishonorable foe's honorable surrender—honor is not to be manipulated by those who invoke it only to seek an advantage. Honor is not so common, so base a concept as to be sullied by those who do not live by its true tenets.

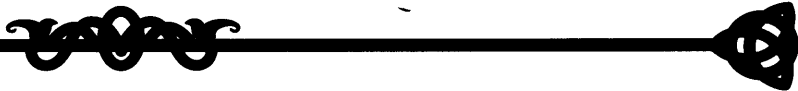
Outsiders are seldom held to the same rigorous standards as the Shadi'ar hold themselves. Until such time as the Shadi'ar come to trust an outsider, the tribe members almost expect him to behave without honor, if not dishonorably. If a Shadi'ar takes issue with a particularly inept or belligerent outsider, in most cases the Lion warrior informs the outsider of the reason for the outrage and challenges the offender to apologize (or make redress in another, more suitable manner) or face the Shadi'ar in a duel of honor. Such duels are not usually to the death, and the terms of these duels are worked out beforehand by the principals and a mutually agreed-upon third party.

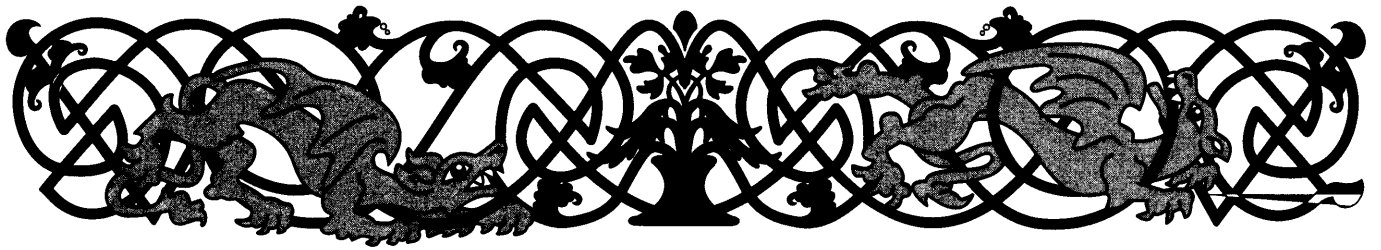
A Shadi'ar warrior notes her desire for a duel by removing her keffiyeh and throwing it at the offender's feet. This motion often accompanies a shouted list of the offenses committed and an invitation to cross blades if redress is not offered.

Money, Coins, and Barter

The Shadi'ar use the Calimshan system of currency (cp=unarches, sp=decarches, ep=centaurs, gp=dantars, and pp=kilarches) as a default when dealing with Calishites or the Arnadar of the cities south of their territory. All the cities of the Arnaden mint their own coins as well as accept the Calishite money, though exchange rates widely vary. Between themselves, and even between tribes, the Lion warriors tend to barter goods. The currency of such exchanges may be herd animals, horses, foods or spices, goods purchased in the cities of the Arnaden, or any combination that the involved parties can agree upon.

Honor plays a role here as well, as it does in all aspects of the Lion tribes' lives. The Shadi'ar do not cheat each other, or anyone, when trading. Likewise, those with wisdom do not attempt to cheat the Lion warriors, for they then risk not only the Shadi'ar's ire but also a reputation among the tribes as a dishonest, dishonorable merchant who is not to be dealt with in the future.





Wilderness of the Shadi'ar

"The Land of the Lions is as ruggedly beautiful and tumultuous as the peoples who reside there."

—Ordil Harauntan, Royal Sage of the Court of Janol I, King of Ankhapur

The Land of the Lions' unofficial and unmarked boundaries are the Arnaden to the south, the nation of Erilkazar and the Omlarandin Mountains to the west, the shores of the Deepwash and Wintercloak rivers to the north, and the Golden Plains (specifically, the Golden Road that bisects the area) to the east. The region is uniform in only one aspect: its lack of uniformity. Hilly, rocky, uneven terrain dominates the area, from the shores of the Arnaden to the foothills of the Cloven Mountains in the north and the Firesteap Mountains, south of Innarlith. Even the Golden Plains rise and fall gently, like the surface of the ocean as it undulates beneath one's boat on a peaceful day. The hills are less precipitous but no less high nearer to the shores of the Arnaden, but they grow steeper as one moves north. If the Golden Plains is a calm sea, the land 100 miles north of the Arnaden is a sea-tossed tempest. Occasional bare rock faces, tors, and buttes lend a stark beauty to the northern lands. This rugged terrain may be attributed to the relatively common seismic activity in the region. Sage Ordil Harauntan has termed the region to be "restlessly volcanic." The Arnrock volcano's last major eruption occurred 70 years ago, and rumbles deep in the earth and plumes of smoke or steam rise from the crater irregularly but often enough to worry a few. The Arnaden itself bubbles forth gases to the surface in many locations, and mud pits, hot springs, and gas-spewing fumaroles are common throughout the region. The Lion tribes have identified many of the springs that are dangerous to drink from due to high mineral levels, and they avoid the sulfurous stink pots with a caution bordering on superstition. Minor *rumples*, or earthquakes, occur often enough that most residents do not take much notice. This nonchalant attitude could have something to do with the fact that no major quake has rattled the area in over two centuries.

The foremost natural feature any traveler through the Land of the Lions must watch for is the tribes of nomadic humans that call this region their home. They live in harmony with the land, so they might be considered a natural feature, but as humans they quite naturally are the most dangerous of all. One must recall that these men and women are not all of one tribe, though they consider themselves to be of one race, so they often react in strikingly different ways to trespassers or other outsiders. (See The Four Tribes section of the "Nomadic Traditions" chapter for more details.)

Turning to more basic natural features, the terrain is steep, the rivers fast and deep, and fords are rare and difficult to navigate with large, heavily loaded caravan wagons. Most of the trails that exist in the two-foot-high grass are only wide enough for a single horse. (The Lions travel in single file unless they are herding their flocks of sheep and mountain goats to a fresh pasture.) When blazing a trail through the deep green liongrass, it is wise to wrap horses' lower legs and fetlocks in layers of light cloth to prevent cuts and possible infection. Some mounts balk at having such material wrapped about their legs, but the alternative is worse: reduced speed, weakness, potential lameness or infection, and a blood trail on the grass that any of the region's hungry predators can pick up and follow with ease.

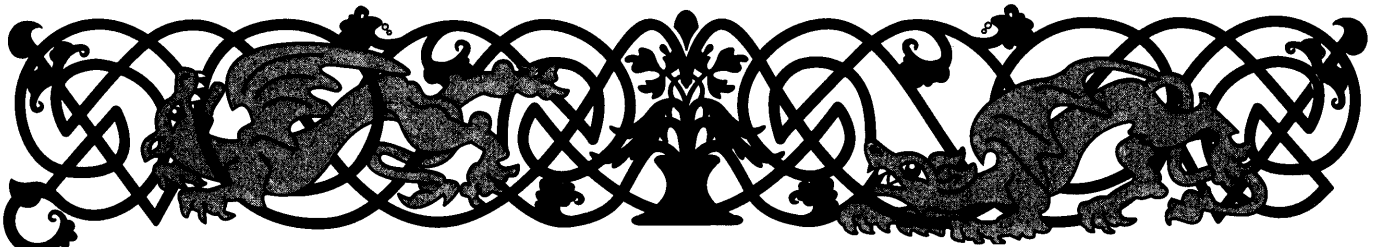
Outside the forests, firewood is scarce. Many caravans take along their own supplies of this vital commodity, though this decreases the amount of cargo they can transport. The Lion tribes overcome this shortage by cutting the tall grass with small, razor-sharp scythes (that inflict damage as a dagger if used in combat), twisting bundles of the grass together, and allowing them to dry for a few days before being tossed onto an evening's fire. The tribes' older children also gather horse dung for drying and burning.

Travelers need to be careful what pools and springs they drink from in this land, as some of the water that reaches the surface has high mineral contents that will indeed sicken or kill both man and beast if enough is ingested. If the water bears a strange color or smell, or if the ground near the water is discolored, do not drink or let mounts or pack animals partake.

The Ankhwood

One may wonder why this patch of woodland still exists. It was once part of the Winterwood, to the north, but time has separated it from its larger cousin. Isolation is not all that sets the





Ankwood apart, however. Somewhere within this isolated patch of forest rests a pair of wild and dead magic zones, the cause of which is unknown. A likely cause is the events of the Time of Troubles, but some elf legends speak of spell failures and warped magical results long before the days when the gods trod upon the soils of Faerûn. Though the green and moon elves of the forest will not comment, some human sages hint that a warped or failed mythal could be the cause. Others' bandy the idea that some elf High Magic casting went awry or was perverted by the beholders during the Eye Tyrant Wars.

Whatever the cause, these zones are unique in that they are not fixed or stationary. They seem to rotate and orbit each other around a common point as they drift through the Ankwood. Accurate measurements have been most difficult to record, but each zone seems to be about three-quarters to one mile in diameter. They are, according to these same reports, circular or spherical, and the distance between their nearest points remains a constant one-quarter mile. The zones meander without aim or purpose, at a pace roughly equal to a human's brisk walk. The zones have never been known to leave the forest but instead recoil from the woods' borders as a child's ball does when striking a wall.

The weird magic zones' mobility is not the end of the strangeness within the forest. The zones—or some other source—have oddly affected the natural life in the forest. Trees grow warped and twisted, fruits grow already rotten on the branches, birds are unable to sing or are born with two sets of wings, insects do not buzz but screech and scream through the air, and larger animals may give birth to albinos or not at all. The elves and other sentient life seem untouched by this peculiarity, this curse, but the elves are frantically searching for the cause of both the weird magic zones and the strange effects they seem to have on the forest itself.

Some sages speculate that the river Ankhapur and the Lake of Steam itself may be similarly effected, either now or in the future.

The Chondalwood

Also known as the Saytrwood, the present-day Chondalwood once encompassed what are known today as the Winterwood, the Thornwood, and the Ankwood forests. Over the centuries however, fires, climatic changes, and the burgeoning population of humans—with their insatiable desire to harvest firewood and timber for homes, and to clear land for crop cultivation or grazing land—has shrunk the forest to its present size. Even so, the Chondalwood's boundaries have remained stable for the last few centuries due to the presence of the elves within the forest. Sylvan elves comprise the majority of the elf population in the Chondalwood, though gold and moon elves also make homes there. Since the infamous Retreat to Evermeet, the number of elves has dwindled, particularly in the last few decades. Most of the gold and moon elves have gone on to Evermeet, yet some of the most stubborn of the elves, such as the sylvan elves, remain to this day, reluctant to leave their ancestral forest home. Only time will reveal when these elves also succumb to the call of the Retreat.

Even when the last of the green elves leaves the greensward, the Chondalwood will not be without protectors. Satyrs, centaurs, giants, faeries, and many other sylvan races also call the

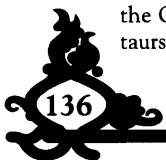
Satyrs' Wood home. Without the powerful elves to fall back on, these races—especially the satyrs, centaurs, dryads, and the few treants in wood—consider themselves the backbone of the forest's defenses. In particular, the centaurs and the small number of wood giants have formed a loose alliance to drive off any large encroaching forces. Fortunately for them, the humans, who lack both unified purpose and forces, have yet to pose a significant threat. For the time being, it is enough that satyrs patrol the road through the forest, ensuring that caravans do not tarry overlong in the woods by supplying haunting noises, the sounds of pounding hooves, and other methods to inspire human fear; these tactics also keep the mysterious allure of the deep forest alive with superstitions and rumors. Aside from the human threat, the centaurs and giants have had to drive off war bands or foraging parties of gnolls, which live on the Golden Plains.

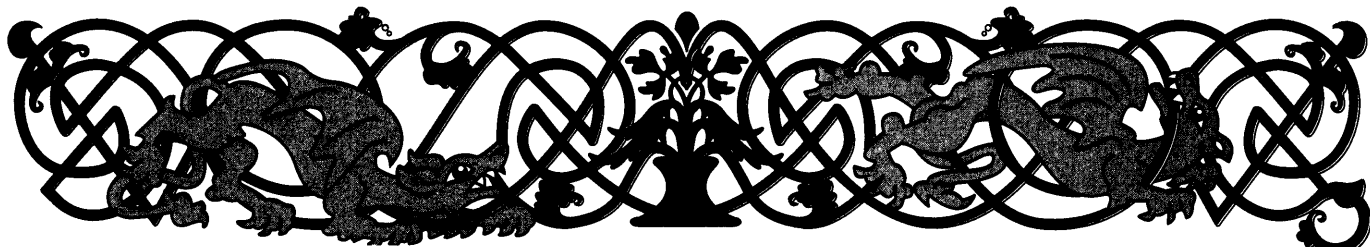
Rumors abound in and about the Chondalwood. Some believe that the resident evil creatures prowl the forest in search of more than simply food, firewood, or a desire to pillage: The hidden city of Rucien Xan, secret treasure troves left behind by the elves, a spring whose waters keep one young forever, and a supposed entrance to the halls of the Underdark are all allegedly concealed within the limbs and leaves. Other rumors relate the recent disappearance of some elves to the reported presence of naga within the Chondalwood. (The well-known fact that the Nagaflo originates deep within the Chondalwood feeds this rumor.) However, experts on such creatures suggest that even the evil spirit naga lacks the wit and the fortitude to blithely attack sylvan elves in their own homeland. Rather, they theorize that a leader of some sort, perhaps even one of the rare dark naga, is the cause behind the elves' disappearance. In the absence of substantiation of this supposition, the elves fearfully wonder what this mysterious leader, dark naga or otherwise, wants with them. Some speculate that the missing elves are captured and sold to slaving caravans headed along Golden Road, toward the markets in Calimshan, but no one knows for sure.

Ruins of Eïellûr: The present-day Chondalwood once held a southern outpost to one of the greatest elf civilizations on the face of Faerûn: the sylvan elf empire/nation of Eïellûr. While the Chondalwood covered vastly larger tracts of land at that time, over 11,000 years ago, the heart of Eïellûr is believed to be located within the Chondalwood as it is known today.

The doom of Eïellûr and its sister, the moon elf nation of Thearnytar (in the present-day Thornwood), rests in the time known among elves as the Crown Wars and lies squarely in the hands of the drow. The Crown Wars were darkest of times for the elves, when pride and avarice overcame reason and long-held grudges exploded into hatred and war. (See the *ARCANE AGE™* campaign expansion *Cormanthyr* for more details.)

Of what people expect when they hear the term *ruins*, little still exists in the Chondalwood. However, there is actually more of Eïellûr to investigate than most human explorers believe at first because they do not typically think as elves do: Humans build their structures on the ground, and they tend to assume all races do the same. Therefore, those humans who have searched for the ruins of Eïellûr have missed them because they lie *overhead*, not beneath their feet. Eïellûr was a nation of tree-dwelling elves. The elves used magic to harmlessly shape the trees into homes, bridges, and ladders. Not only did this practice give the elves a close sense of association with the forest itself, it also gave





them an outstanding vantage of the woodland and what went on in the woodland beneath them.

Certainly most or all of the green elves' valuables were lost or taken by invading dark elves, but stories to the contrary are common enough to light up the eyes of many in dark taprooms and inns across Faerûn, as they hear tales of faraway Eie llûr from bards fortunate to learn the ballads of the tragedy from the elves. Those who climb into the forest canopy in the right places may find any number of interesting objects, magical and mundane. Described below are two of the many interesting sights that can be found among the ruins if one is brave and looks in the right direction.

The Woventree: This immense oak, 250 feet high and 100 feet in circumference, may be as old as Eie llûr itself. Its branches are apparently immune to disease and the adverse effects of advanced age as it climbs ever higher and spreads ever wider. It gains its name from its vast array of intertwined limbs, branches, and leaves; one can trace the path of any limb for but inches before it twists or twines itself about or between others. The effect is of a vast weaving, as if some intelligence meticulously guided the path of each branch as it grew over the years and centuries. Some of those lucky enough to view the majesty of this living thing compare it to the wicker weavings of Kara-Tur, though on a gigantic scale. Some ponder if this work of art is the result of the lost art of elf High Magic.

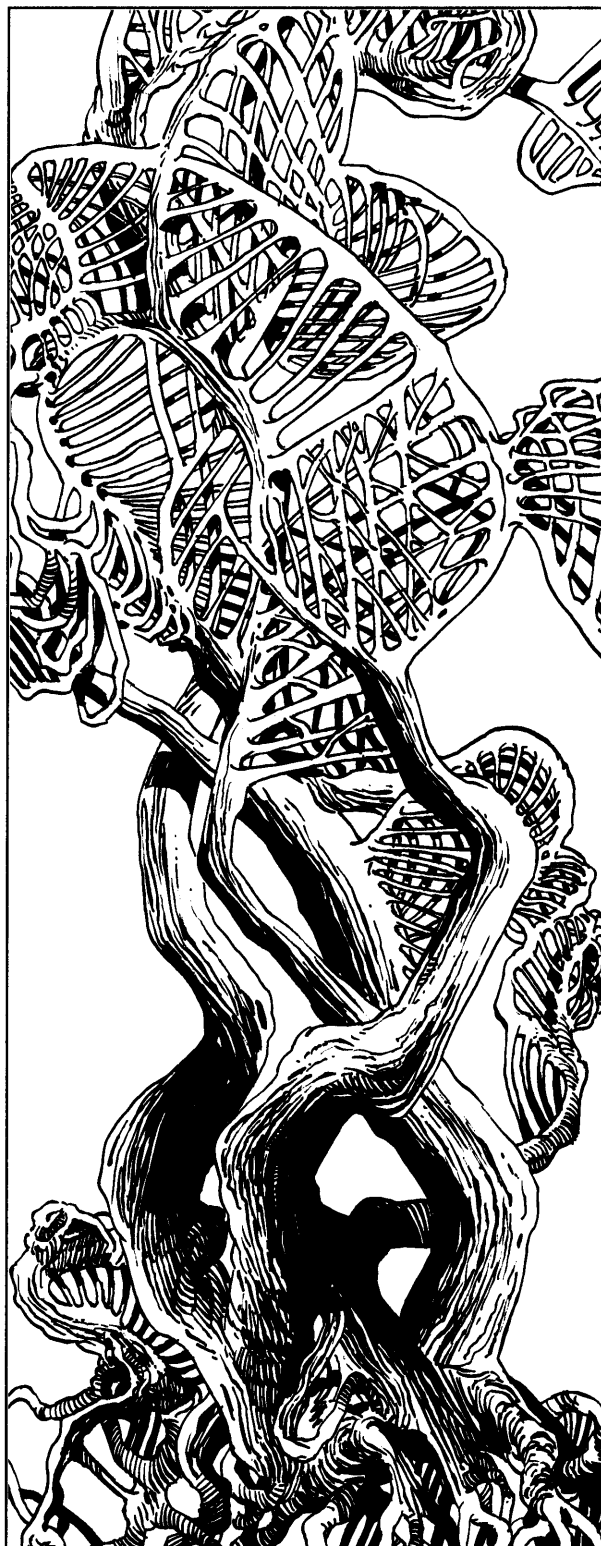
The purpose of the woventree, beyond the simple, thrilling aesthetics, remains unknown. The tree detects as magical, but no item of value or any other sign of civilization has ever been found on or near it.

The Fallen Wonder: Another curiosity of Eie llûr is this fallen, petrified specimen of a shadowtop tree. The only remaining part is a section on the forest floor some 80 feet in diameter and almost 150 feet in length. This hollowed-out tree once served as home for many sylvan elves. Within its hard-as-stone interior are carved dining halls, bedrooms, what was once a great library (empty now, though whether cleared by the elves or by those who fell the massive giant is not known), barracks or a hospital, and several temples—all burned and so badly defiled that no deity or power can be identified. All of this lies in what humans would describe as a nine-story building on its side, resting on the forest floor. No other piece, base or crown, has ever been found to match the broken ends of the fallen wonder. Where this came from, who or what could have inflicted so much damage upon this tree, and when the petrification set in are all mysteries.

The Deepwash

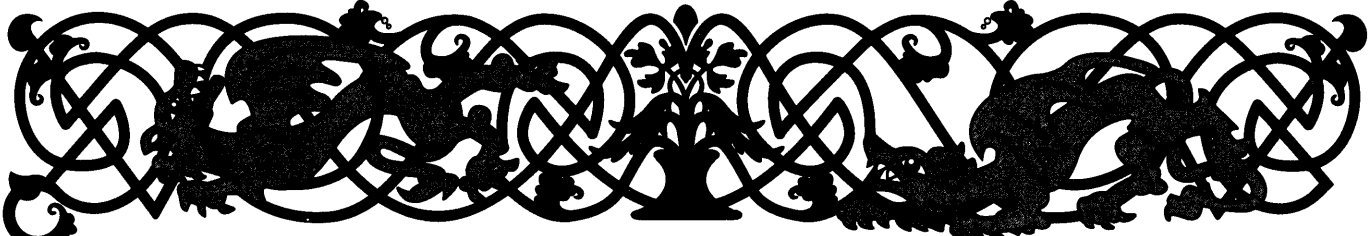
This large freshwater lake is the largest and by far the deepest in the region. Its waters teem with trout, freshwater gar, and the smaller catch called griddlefish by locals (since their bodies are wide and flat). Some sturgeon also are taken from the Deepwash, primarily in winter. These bottom-dwelling fish are not consumed (they taste rather muddy), but the eggs taken from females are a local delicacy.

The Deepwash is also home to an immense dragon turtle that seems to prefer the fresh water of the lake. Some speculate that the dragon turtle wandered up the Vilhon Reach, stayed in the lake to feed for a time, and when it tried to leave, the beast discovered it had grown too large to safely navigate the shallower



One section of the Woventree





waters that lead back to the Reach. A city on the north shore of the Deepwash, called Surkh, even has a small sect that appears to worship the great beast as a deity.

The Golden Plains

This region gets its name from the distinctive grass that grows here. The green blades' tips and edges possess a unique golden-yellow tinge to them, in contrast to the deep green grasses more common in the Land of the Lions. The Plains' borders are the Chondalwood to the east, the Firesteap Mountains to the south, the Golden Road to the west, and Sespech to the north.

While the easternmost tribe of Lion nomads, the Talu-min, occasionally roams this far east, they are not the Plain's only inhabitants. East of the Golden Road, several groups of centaurs roam with their herds or break the grass's dense root structure with their strong bodies in order to farm the land. Some of the tribes also trade information or goods with caravans making their way up or down the Golden Road to Innarlith. Those caravans carrying slaves along this route are detained by the centaurs when caught. The confrontation may be a straightforward challenge to release the slaves or die in battle, or it may consist of harassment, sniping, and nighttime ambush/breakout attempts if the caravan is too well protected or has more magic than the centaurs can face in battle.

Some of the more wily slaving caravans have recently struck deals with the other intelligent race that calls the Golden Plains home: the gnolls. These beasts do not seek to herd or farm but to raid and loot. The caravan route is a gold mine for these tribes, and the open, rolling landscape not only allows the gnolls full advantage of their long-strided, loping run but also a commanding view of potential prey—both animal and intelligent—in the area. Gnolls hired by the caravans seldom travel with the slavers themselves (even the slavers do not trust them that far), but they instead serve as outriders to prevent any centaurs from reaching the precious cargo. Some gnolls take the opportunity to divert the centaurs away from the Golden Road by enticing the centaurs to chase them, usually to regain animals or foodstuffs that the gnolls have stolen.

The High Peaks

Much of Faerûn refers to this group of jagged mountains as the western end of the Cloven Mountain range, which is so named from being cleaved in two by the lake known as the Deepwash. Locals specifically refer to the mountains west of the Deepwash, reaching into the Land of the Lions north of the Thornwood, the High Peaks. These peaks not only are home to the Shieldbreaker mercenary company of ogres and hill giants (led by Koranan Splitoak, an ogre of massive size and maximum hit points), but they also mark the northern border of the lone tribe of corrupted Lions, the Sala-min. These peaks are also the source of many creeks and streams that feed into the Thornwash river.

Numerous goblinoid clans make these mountains their home, but in recent years some of these clans have begun to migrate south into the already dangerous Thornwood. This migration lends credence to the supposed existence of some fierce,

unknown monster deep within the High Peaks, strong and mean enough to drive off entire humanoid clans. Another possible basis for the humanoid migration, reported by regional diviner mages, is a terrific campaign of war against the humanoids, waged over the past few years by a large company of well-trained dwarves. If this is true, the dwarves must have reached the mountains through some Underdark passage, as no one in either the Land of the Lions or the Vilhon Reach has noted hundreds, perhaps thousands, of dwarves passing overland through their territory in recent centuries. The dwarves may have come from the south, in which case they would probably be gold dwarves.

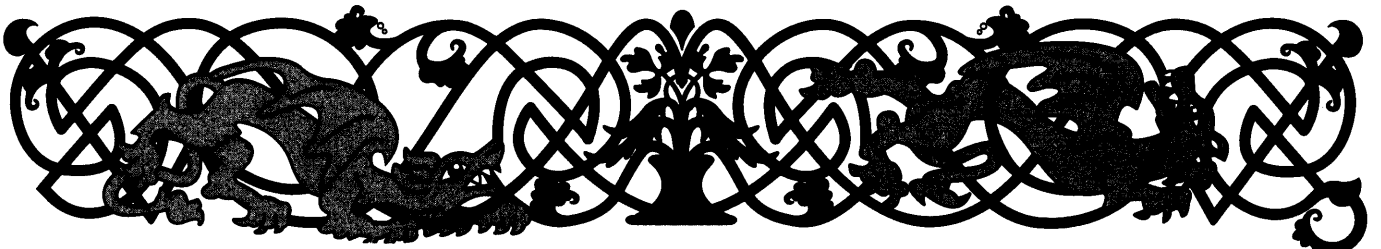
The Lake of Steam

The lake gets its name from the clouds of steam and vapor it almost constantly gives off. Volcanic activity beneath the lake bed constantly warms the water to many degrees above that of the sea beyond the Strait of Storms, the lake's aptly named exit to the Shining Sea. Most evident in the morning (and ever present during the winter), the moist clouds of warm vapor are carried to the lake's northern shore by prevailing winds from the south. This can make the already hot and humid Summer in the region almost unbearable to outsiders. Locals simply stop working and close their shops after lunch to avoid the hottest, most uncomfortable hours of the day. Markets and shops typically reopen an hour or two before dusk and remain open until night has fallen, and sometimes later.

The Lake of Steam is actually a bay of the Shining Sea. Its water is salty though less so than that of the Shining Sea itself, for several reasons. The first lies within the Strait of Storms, also called straits of Suldophur. This narrow, treacherous waterway regulates how much sea water flows into the lake. (It somewhat similarly allows Suldophur to maintain a taxation stranglehold on trade between the lake to the sea.) The second reason is that several fresh water rivers and innumerable underwater springs drain into the lake. The result of these two effects is a brackish water, high in mineral content, that is not recommended for consumption. Indeed, drinking or swallowing any of the lake's waters can cause severe distress in the healthiest of beings.

The lake is quite shallow, less than 200 feet deep at its deepest point. The floor of the western end of the lake is a mostly stable volcanic shelf, although the bubbling springs and gas vents from the lake's floor are not rare sights. The eastern end of the lake, from Arnrock eastward especially, the lake bed becomes more dangerous. Huge fumaroles can build up vast mineral deposits only feet or inches beneath the lake's surface in a few days. Meanwhile, underwater earthquakes or eruptions of lava can crash vessels against the rocky shores at any time. Finally, a peculiar form of coral grows in the warm, mineral rich eastern end of the lake, further complicating travel upon the waters.

The warm waters of the lake have an astonishing effect on the aquatic flora and fauna. Seaweed, shellfish, and fish all grow to astounding sizes. Furthermore, those creatures that feed upon these food sources grow correspondingly large. Great fishhawks soar over the daylight waters, searching for a 20-pound salmon or trout to hoist back to their nest of hungry chicks, and scavenging, green-hued gulls, called calathra by the locals, are the size of



the geese so common to the northern waterways. The latter's size only seems to increase their annoying and aggressive behavior toward fishermen and anyone bearing what the gulls might consider food. There are also giant otters that feed on the shellfish and seaweed of the lake, and in efforts to play or defend their young, they can capsize small vessels.

A creature loved by all seafaring folk is the dolphin, and the lake is home to several pods of the Shining Sea's lustrous black dolphins. The dolphins visit the lake yearly to feed, though they seldom venture very near to shore. Their visits are short before they return to the sea. The black dolphins are taken as a sign of good luck to come by all who are fortunate to see them.

Some of the lake's denizens are more than simply annoying. Giant predatory fish, huge sharks that can withstand the brackish water, and even giant leeches and suckerfish have been known to attack any who fall into the water. Indeed, until Mintar's takeover by the forces of Bane, the favorite sport of that city-state's nobility was hunting the giant leeches of the lake. The leeches, which can grow to the size of small rowboats, are lured to the surface with blood or raw meat dropped into the water. Then the noble (or a hired leech hunter) spears the leech with a small, barbed harpoon, and a long, violent struggle against capture and death ensues. In pretakeover Mintar, much accord was garnered by those nobility who brought in the largest leeches during several fishing festivals held throughout the year.

The Lake of Steam is also home to creatures dangerous and more fantastic than any shark (though several massive specimens have been caught in recent years). Dragon turtles from the Shining Sea occasionally visit the lake, a pearl dragon reportedly lives among the sea caves along the lake's western shore, and eyes of the deep, monstrous eels, sea lions, and morkoth are all rumored to live in the lake, waiting to snatch the unwary or the unwise. No one allows livestock to wander too close to the water. As with all places in the Land of the Lions, the Lake of Steam is to be treated with deferential respect.

The lake is not without its benefits to the people who live on its shores, though. In fact, many of the Arnadar call the lake the Breadbasket of the Sea. The large fish are edible, though they taste very salty unless heavily rinsed in fresh water or strongly spiced to cover the flavor. Many of the poor wade into the shallows near shore, despite the dangers, to harvest the seaweed and kelp to feed to their animals or sometimes themselves. Crayfish grow up to 10 pounds, and a mammoth crab harvested off Ankhapur sometimes weighs over 30 pounds! Soft-yet-tough sponges are common in the lake's waters and are sought by the noble and wealthy from across Faerûn.

Other harvests from the lake are even more valuable than the sponges. Tadjani is a flavorful shellfish that grows only in the Lake of Steam, probably due to the combination of mineral content and warm water. The village of Yeshpek, on the lake's western coast, maintains the largest number of tadjani farms, but others occasionally try to raid the tadjani beds and take living specimens to other regions of the lake. They do this because no other shellfish from the lake has the light, thoroughly unsalty, unique flavor of tadjani. Dishes (and recipes) calling for tadjani are very common in the region, though outsiders (like Waterdhavians) who have developed a taste for the shellfish know but a mere handful of means to prepare them. Tadjani recipes are almost as popular among travelers to the area as the shellfish themselves.

Another valuable commodity of the lake is pearls. Oysters from the lake cultivate pearls with a greenish color to them. The hue varies from year to year and from region to region within the lake. The small town of Yhep enjoys a further boon: the legendary scarlet pearls of Yhep. Due to some unknown factor in the waters off the town's shore, the oysters there cultivate pearls of a vivid red color, a hue that complements a ruby or jewelry wonderfully.

The Naga Plains

This region lies between the Golden Plains to the east and the Nagawater and Nagaflow to the west. As one might guess, the region is named for its population of the creatures known as naga. The warm climate seems to suit their species, and all types of naga are believed to be found there.

The Lion tribe that ranges this far east, the Talu-min, has occasioned to make contact, if not friendships, with a few of the area's guardian naga. Spirit naga prefer to lair underground, "the better to keep their evil from the light of day," say the Talu-min. The spirit naga do rise from their holes under rocks or patches of dense brush on occasion, however—perhaps to reinforce the Naga Plains' reputation as a dangerous place. The water naga, though not evil, have tended in the past to regard the Talu-min and their herds as fair game should they venture too close to the waters of the Nagaflow or Nagawater alone.

The centaurs of the Golden Plains do not frequent this area. The holes (and traps) that some naga create are particularly hazardous to the long legs of the otherwise sure-footed centaurs.

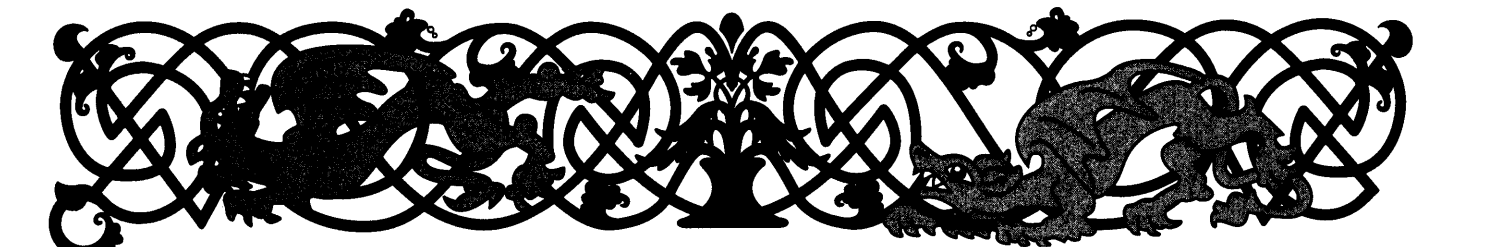
Nomad Settlements

The term *nomad settlement* may seem to be an oxymoron, but all nomads follow regularly used routes in their migrations—usually one long established—and the tribes of the Shadi'ar are no different. Each tribe roams its own territory, and each follows a yearlong circuit of its lands.

Unless specified otherwise, the Lion tribes live in large brightly colored tents that serve to warm them in the winter and shade them in the summer.

The Ala-min Tribe

The westernmost of the Lion tribes, the Ala-min, follow a generally oval path through their lands. During the wet winter months, the Ala-min leave the open hills and retreat to the southernmost verges of the Thornwood forest. There they can find shelter for themselves and their herds from the heavy winter rainstorms that pound the region. The forest itself holds dangers, so the tribe closely monitors how deeply it enters the woods. As Autumn turns to Winter, the tribe is normally to the easternmost extent of its range, upon the shores of the Thornwash river. They typically follow its course upriver to the Thornwood and slowly make their way west, along the length of the forest, until spring arrives and they have crossed the river Mintar (they must cross before the spring thaw or risk losing their herds to drowning), onto the open lands northwest of Mintar. In past years, they resupplied themselves at the town of Kzelter, but since its takeover by Mintar, they avoid the



town as they do all things close to that evil. After allowing their herds time to fatten on the land's grasses and to breed the next generation, the tribe turns south and east until the seasons turn again, and thence retraces its steps.

The Bzada-mín Tribe

This Shadi'ar tribe follows a simpler migratory route than the Alamin tribe to the west. The warriors and riders of this tribe spend the warm months in the southern parts of their range, near the city of Ankhapur (but not too near) and the Ankhwood forest. In the colder, stormier months, they move their herds north and east to the Serpents' Holding, east of the Winterwood. The colder weather keeps the area's numerous snakes lethargic, and the vast forest protects them from the worst of the storms. The tribe also pays the village of Nagarr visits in Fall and Spring to do business (selling or trading sheep or goats for food, tools, or weapons).

The Talu-mín Tribe

The proud, chaotic Talu-min tribe winters on the eastern side of the Ankhwood, sheltered from the harsh winter winds. The tribe will not enter the woods though, not even during the fiercest winter storms. They know all too well the strange, warping effect this woodland has and want no part of it. In Spring, they move south to trade with the bustling town of Yhep, then trek east toward the Golden Road, where they turn their herds north until they come within sight of the city of Ormpetarr. If need be, they visit the town and resupply before turning the herds south again, to reach the verges of the Ankhwood before Winter lays its cold, wet blanket on the land.

The Sala-mín Tribe

This corrupt tribe is nomadic only in name these days. The Salamin have made their homes in the ruins of southernmost Tathar or in the caves nestled in the foothills of the southern Cloven Mountains. These people are almost sedentary, farming the hilly, rocky land as best they can. They worship the evil Garagos at an outdoor temple they call the Vale of the Reaver.

Their settlements are composed of extended family groups, as are all the tribes', and every few weeks some members of the family travel to the next settlement to trade goods or swap stories of the orcs that come from the mountains or forest to attack them. That is pretty much the extent of their travels, except when they attend a Caliyate (see the "Nomadic Traditions" chapter).

Offshore Sites

Islands and tiny islets appear and disappear regularly in the bubbling, volatile Arnaden, but a few of these isles remain above the waterline, where they grow and sprout life. The most prominent of those are detailed here.

The Arnrock

The only above-water active volcano in the region (no one knows how many vents or true volcanoes may lie at the bottom of the Lake of Steam), the Arnrock's smoking caldera is a landmark for all to see and wonder when the next time Old Smokey will erupt.

Halfings who live and farm (in the best soil in the region) on the mountain's slopes, and fish in the waters that surround the volcanic island, are the Arnrock's only permanent inhabitants.

An old treaty forced upon all the cities on the Arnaden's shore by a then-strong Calimshan keeps the Arnrock free of naval bases and other signs of ownership. The hin on the Arnrock are interrelated, belonging to the Brolluck, Minstrelwish, and Rauligar clans. The last of these also use the heat from some of the Arnrock's vents to cast copper. These clans collectively call themselves the Arn.

The only nonhin residents are the owner and staff of the Brazen Buck, the sole inn and tavern on the island. Run by a human priestess of Sune, Belathra Kyndle, the inn is located in Sleeping Hollow, a ramshackle assortment of boarding houses and small homes (the closest the Arnrock has to a town). This place alone welcomes other nonhin to join the party. Belathra keeps a fully equipped cog that can evacuate all the island's residents, if need be, moored to a jetty on the island's eastern side.

The caldera itself is almost a mile deep and boasts several smoking fumaroles and gas vents. If asked, the Arn admit that 70 years have passed since a major eruption of Old Smokey, and he is overdue for another one.

Felmer's Keep

Felmer's Keep is located in the western Arnaden, not far from the town of Yeshpek. It appears to be a castle fortress when viewed from shore or from any distance. Instead, the island boasts no construction at all; the walls are simply the sides of a steep-sided, extinct volcano, and its ramparts are the volcano's outer flanks.

Within the extinct caldera grows a lush, verdant garden tended by several priests (male and female) of Chauntea. These simple folk have no treasure or belongings, and they hide in deep caves whenever visitors appear. No beasts larger than the verrick and a few giant lynxes (to cull the herds of herbivores) live there today. Seabirds, including the green-hued calathra, nest high in the sea cliffs in great numbers.

The island is named for a long-ago adventurer who fled here when pursued by foes. Some versions of the tale say he died here, alone and forgotten, and that he haunts the island still. Others say he was welcomed by the animals, taught by them to live off the land, and that he became the first priest of Chauntea there.

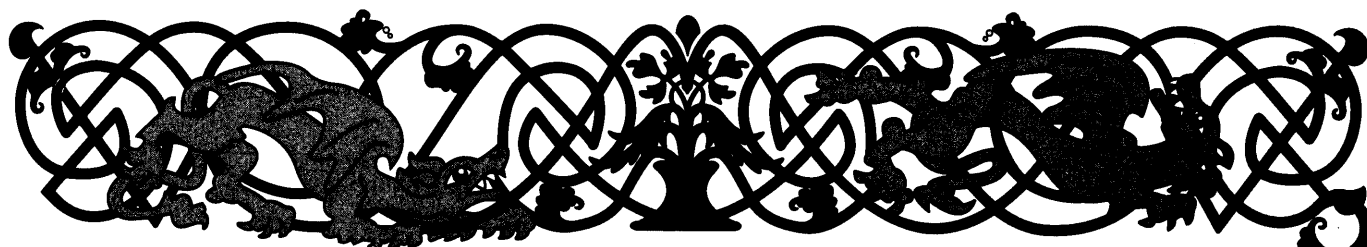
With no resources and no usable land beyond the steep-sided caldera, no other peoples have ever bothered to settle there.

Narruth

This island, in the northwest corner of the Arnaden, is just north and east of its sister isle, Olodel, and is the home of the Baldovans, a band of mercenary warrior-merchants who also run a naval trading coster from the island. The coster's 18 cogs trade from Calimshan, around the Arnaden, to Lapaliiya and the Tashalar. (The Baldovans would dearly love to catch and crush the pirates of the *Crimson Corsair*, who seem to be two steps ahead of them at all times.)

About 260 "brothers" (most, but not all, male) make up the Baldovans, named after their founder, silk merchant Ildeg Baldovar, who died of heartstop. The brothers dwell and keep businesses all over the Lake of Steam and in such ports as Almraiven, Urbeth, and Lushpool.

Narruth itself is the fortified headquarters of the coster and is off limits to uninvited nonmembers. Several shared estates also exist on Narruth, flanked by gorgeous, specially cared for gardens and topiaries.



Due to its central location and strong fortifications, the Baldovans arranged the political coup of the last decade by hosting a priestly convention of all the region's major and minor faiths, with regard to the widespread looting (and occasional burning) of Waukeen's temples after the Time of Troubles. This not only put the coster's name on the lips of every religious person on the Arnaden but also gained the Baldovans favors and friendships among many powerful clergies in the region. (The prelates decided it was best to safeguard the valuables of the Waukeenar temples by stripping them and guarding the structures until they could be put to use. Most were either sold or reconsecrated to other powers.)

Olodel

Olodel lies just south and west of Narruth, but the two "sisters" could not be less alike. Olodel is roamed by wild beasts galore. It once was the private hunting preserve of some eccentric Calishite wealthy, self-made merchants. These men somehow procured a number of the abomination-spawning monsters known as deepspawn and had them deposited on the island. The merchants then proceeded to feed the horrible creatures all sorts of dangerous beasts, from tigers to su-monsters, manticores, and chimerae. It was the merchants' practice to go forth from their fortified hunting lodges on griffon or hippogriff steeds to hunt and slay the creatures spewed upon the island by the deepspawn. They also charged other wealthy Calishites for the privilege of joining them on these expeditions.

Everything changed when one of the merchants brought (either by choice or by force) a cadre of beholders to the island. The evil eye tyrants quickly slew the "lords of Olodel" and took the island as their own. The ruined lodges of the long-dead lords now serve as the beholders' lairs. The beholders seem to enjoy enticing adventurers ever deeper into the maze of traps and malicious creatures the beholders create, using the still-alive deepspawn. The eye tyrants then strip the corpses of any interesting bits of magic and feed the ill-fated heroes to the deepspawn—if the island's other monsters do not get to them first.

Talagath

Talagath lies in the Straits of Suldophur, also known as the Strait of Storms. This lush, heavily wooded island has been traditionally used by smugglers and pirates who desired to meet and make deals, exchange goods (or slaves), or occasionally fight personal duels of honor. The island has many small, skulking beasts, numerous snakes, a single campsite that is little more than a clearing with a latrine ditch, and two iron anchor rings sunk into the stone cairn near the shore.

Cutthroats are not the only evil to call Talagath home, however. A mysterious, haunting presence is known to roam the island at night. Tales regarding it vary widely but are enough to keep any from staying too long. Those who remain here overnight feel as though they are being observed. Then, unattended gear begins to disappear, those who can sleep suffer terrifying nightmares, and those who cannot sleep see ghostly apparitions that seem to come at them out of the night.

What no one knows is that the last Magelord of Mintar, Sardukh, now a lich, resides here and uses ancient magic and magical creatures to keep others from lingering too long on his island home. What else he has hidden within his lair—what arcane formulae in forgotten spellbooks or potent items of magic—is unknown.



The Arnrock

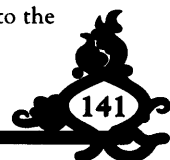
The Raging Reef

This treacherous, ship-wrecking expanse of coral lies dangerously near the surface of the Arnaden in the small bay between Yhep and the Border Kingdom city of Derlusk. There is nothing unusual about the coral, but like all living things in the Arnaden it grows quickly, often too quickly for ship captains and navigators to keep up with. During a vicious winter thunderstorm, a vessel can be tossed about by the wind easily, and those too near the reef may well be wrecked upon it. At least a dozen ships have torn the bottoms right off their vessels as they moved through this expanse of water. Those making offerings to Istishia and Umberlee seem to have better luck in navigating around the coral, but no power ever gives any guarantees.

The reef is named for its violent red color. Every few years, a group of hardy young people is recruited to live aboard barges in the spring, and use picks, axes, and other tools to keep the bay clear for the passage of the shallow-drafted, flat-bottomed cogs so common on the Arnaden.

The Rivers

Six rivers of note flow through the Land of the Lions: the Arran, the Ankhapur, the Mintar, the Nagaflow, the Thornwash, and the Wintercloak. There are certainly many smaller rivers and streams as well, and each of them is important to the local ecology, but they are all merely tributaries to the half-dozen bodies of water described below.





River Arran

This river flows from two sources deep in the Chondalwood, flowing northwest past the towns of Ebulder (at the confluence of the river's two branches) and Fort Arran at Arranford (near where the northwest tip of the Chondalwood almost meets the river) to finally drain into the Vilhon Reach.

Following the River Arran back to its source (or one of them, in any case) is reported to be the key to finding the hidden city of Rucien Xan, somewhere in the deepest recesses of the Chondalwood, where fell creatures lie in wait to feast upon those foolhardy enough to venture near.

River Ankhapur

This river stems from the heart of the perilous, magic-warped Ankhwood forest to flow past the site of the long-vanished twin city of Ankhapur and the battlefield it became, then loses itself in the Lake of Steam.

Sages say that the beholder-human-elf battle that took place on the banks of the southern Ankhapur River loosed so much magic in the ground that base metals buried there will transform to gold in but a year's time. Also, any plant grown in the soil will, when consumed, grant the eater a small measure of magical power. Of course, no one has yet proved these claims, but strange effects would not be surprising considering the warped-magic source of the river, deep within the Ankhwood.

River Mintar

Originating within the dark Thornwood, the river Mintar flows almost due south to empty into the Lake of Steam, past the Banite-held city after which the river is named. The river has steep banks and a swift current, with few passable fords. The Ala-min Lion tribe knows the safest places to cross the river, but they are never free with this information, especially to outsiders or those who do not treat them with the honor due such a proud people.

Before its takeover by the forces of evil, Mintar was the primary shipbuilder on the Lake of Steam. Woodsmen cut down trees from the Thornwood, and the logs were dragged by animal teams to the river where they simply floated downstream to the dock ward of Mintar. These days, no one from Mintar is allowed to wander as far as the Thornwood, away from the "protection" of Teldorn Darkhope and his Banite troops. (See the "Cities of the Arnaden" chapter for more about the Banite takeover of Mintar.) As a result, Ankhapur and several of the Border Kingdom cities are attempting to usurp Mintar's former position in shipbuilding.

The Nagaflow

The river known across the Land of the Lions as the Nagaflow begins its life deep in the heart of the Chondalwood, where rumors have it that the creatures that give the river its name have their origin as well. These campfire tales, told among the caravaneers of the Golden Road, speak of the breeding grounds of naga: the water naga in the headwaters of the river, the guardian naga in hollow trees and other hidey-holes that guard the approaches to the headwaters, and the vile spirit naga in subterranean caves exposed by the river's coursing waters. Sages scoff at the unprecedented cooperation these three races, with such dissimilar attitudes, would need to exhibit to make such a scheme possible. They are less certain, though, about the rumor that a pregnant dark naga has managed to make her home somewhere near the river's source.

In any case, the river's lazy current crosses the Golden Road (beware of ambushes from hungry water naga there) and eventually drains into the Nagawater. The northernmost branch that flows out of the Nagawater, draining into the Vilhon Reach at the city of Nimpeth, also is referred to as the Nagaflow.

The Thornwash

The largest, most powerful river in the region finds its rush in the numerous streams that flow together, down from the Cloven Mountains and from the deepest recesses of the Winterwood Forest. The river's course takes it south, beyond both the Winterwood and the dark Thornwood, to the gates of Ankhapur, the City of Seven Hills. The river irrigates the driest region in the Land of the Lions, and as it nears Ankhapur, many orchards and farms divert some of the plentiful water to grow grapes, olives, apples, pears, and several citrus fruits.

The potent force of the river has carved a deep channel over the millennia of its flow, and it has in places (usually far north of Ankhapur, in the rough terrain of the Land of the Lions) exposed caves and deep systems of tunnels and caverns. Whether these systems were dug by the course of an ancient underground river or by means of some intelligence is a mystery. The vast majority of the cavern walls are worn smooth, though again the agency by which this was achieved is unknown. The Lion tribes of the area, the Brada-min on the east bank and the Ala-min on the western shore, now and then shelter themselves within these caves during times of bad weather or the occasional cold snap that comes every few winters.

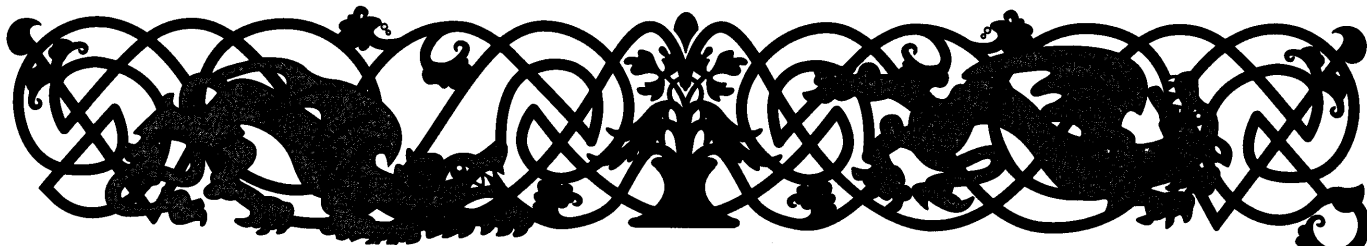
The Wintercloak River

The Wintercloak River flows out of the Nagawater, into and through the dark, misty Winterwood, and empties into the Deepwash. The meandering course makes travel, especially upriver, difficult for river crafts of larger size. While the current is not too swift to row or paddle against in a small rowboat, the prospect of moving barges or other such large craft upriver with animal teams on shore or other, more fantastic means has yet to prove profitable for any of the larger trading costers. Until such time as it becomes profitable, the water route from Ormpetarr to the Deepwash, across Shalane Lake and to the foothills of the Snowflake Mountains by way of Impresk Lake, remains the domain of the entrepreneur and the adventurer.

Ruined Cities

The forests alone do not hold all the lost secrets of the Land of the Lions. More sites of interest lie along the shores (and within the depths) of the Arnaden. Some elf scrolls, allegedly retrieved from the Thornwood, tell of a sunken city of sea elves somewhere in the triangle formed by the Arnrock and the Border Kingdom cities of Derlusk and Themasulter.

Besides the farms and small fishing villages that nestle near the shore of the Arnaden, the wave-washed ruins of cities that lost out in the political and martial battles for supremacy in the region are interspersed. To keep brigands or more monstrous creatures from inhabiting them, the cities of the Arnaden broke these ruins down beyond all hope of repair or habitability. Still, strange things sometimes creep up out of the half-buried cellars or wash up on the remnants of stone docks. Among the names of those cities and towns now lost to the Realms are Bremortha, Calagath, Daleost, Meirpirt, Nuel, Phindas,



Talter, Velbrath, and the vanishing Zalgram (called Irram by the Lion tribes). The sites (and peoples) below are but a few of what may lie in wait for explorers.

Corsairs' Enclave

In a little-known sea cave near the promontory between Saelmur and Ankhapur, a band of rogues and pirates has found a home. Easy access to the Arnaden and Saelmur's preoccupation with Mintar to the west have likely allowed these cutthroats their foothold on the Lake of Steam's northern shore. Composed of slaves escaped from Calimshan, criminals on the run, and those simply hiding from a past they cannot forget or a future they cannot face, the crews of these two (or three—reports vary) cogs are clever, well disciplined, and heavily armed.

These Crimson Corsairs, as they call themselves, are led by one Caine Starshield (CN hm F11), a human warrior with an outstanding grasp of close-quarter tactics, an acerbic tongue, a deadly quick scimitar, and an ironic sense of humor. This blond, curly-haired rogue has two chief lieutenants. The first is a lean, hard-driving, hard-drinking halfling warrior called Albruuk Threetoes (N halfm F8), who keeps the crews in line. The other calls herself Ibreena (NE hf Inv9), and she commands powerful fire magic to punish any who make the crews work too hard for their quarries. Some Ankhapurran fisherfolk also claim to have seen at least one of the Corsairs' vessels fly up and out of the water one starry night, and rise toward the heavens. Another oddity has been reported among the crews of these cogs: huge, gray bipedal beasts with a seemingly dangerous predilection for smokepowder weapons.

Daleost

This ruined city lies between the mouth of the River Ankhapur and the town of Yhep. It once contended with Yhep in the pearl trade, but a series of calamities reduced the city to rubble in less than a decade. These ruins, or their cellars and subbasements, have lately become home to a small number of priests of Iyachtu Xvim, in service to the Twisted Rune, a power group on the rise in the region. They have dedicated a small temple in one of the deepest cellars and are known to command a number of lesser undead. More powerful, sentient undead—perhaps actual members of the Rune—may be located beneath the city as well. Beyond this information, nothing else is known of the priests or their activities.

Serpents' Holding

The band of plains between the Winterwood to the west and the Nagawater to the east has come to be known as Serpents' Holding by the Brada-min tribe of Lion warriors. The hilly landscape boasts no large land predators (though great hawks are common, as they feed on the tunnel-digging lyndar) and few prey are large enough to support them in any case. As a result, the smaller animals, both prey and predator, have made this stretch of plains their own.

Of all these beasts, only the numerous snakes pose a threat to the Lions or other humans. The hilly, rolling terrain affords the serpents many hiding places from which to pounce on their prey. All varieties of snakes, harmless and poisonous, viper and constrictor (though the constrictors rarely grow to a size large enough to threaten even a gnome or halfling) make this region

their home. Some of the Brada-min warriors (both male and female) do a brisk spring trade in the cities of the Arnaden, dealing in snake skins for cash or items the Brada-min need. A few Brada-min do pay a mortal price for their hunting, but not enough die to discourage the trade from increasing every spring. When tanned, snake skins can be used in many of the same ways traditional leather can be employed.

Most dangerous of all the serpents in the region is the spitting snake, a serpent of dark brown or black color with an arrow-shaped head.

Spitting snake (1d4): AC 5; MV 12; HD 4+2; THACO 17; #AT 2 (bite and spit); Dmg 1d3; SA injected poison or spit poison; SZ M (8' long); ML avg (9); INT animal (1); AL N; XP 270.

Injected Poison: A bitten victim must make a successful save vs. poison with a -1 penalty or be incapacitated for 1d4 days. Onset time is 2d4 rounds. *Spit Poison:* A target must make a successful save vs. poison or be blinded for 2d6 hours or until cured by a *neutralize poison* or *cure blindness and deafness* spell. Range of spittle is 30 feet; only a single being may be targeted. Onset time of blindness if saving throw is failed is immediate.

The Thornwood

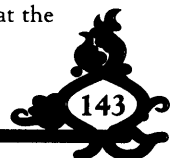
Simply put, the Thornwood is the most dangerous expanse of forest in the Land of the Lions. North of the city of Ankhapur and south of the Cloven Mountains, the Thornwood had a dreadful reputation even before the humanoid tribes from the mountains to the north began migrating to the wood, and both the orcs and the goblinoid races found the Thornwood to be little better than the lands they left behind.

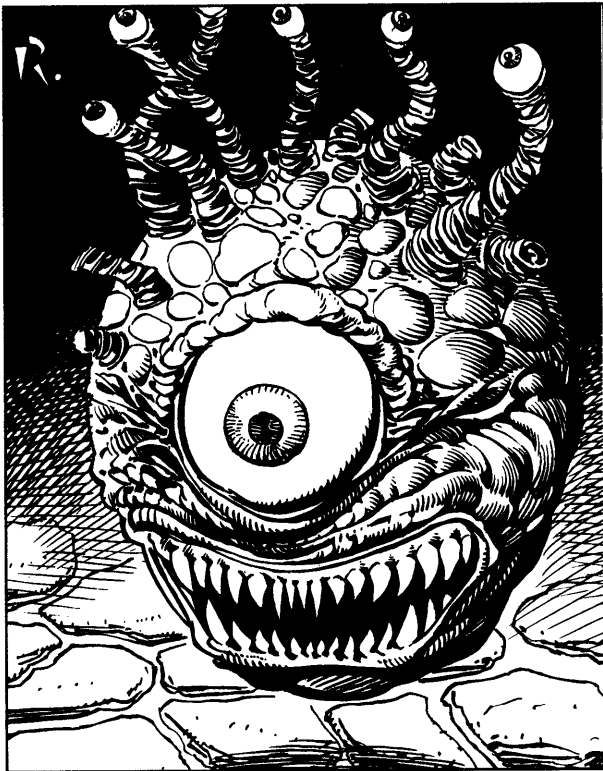
Numerous types of dangerous plants grow profusely in the Thornwood, among them the retch plant, the choke creeper, a (fortunately) few yellow musk creepers, and the thornslingers for which the forest is named. Several intelligent species of plant also reside in this perilous wood: the hangman tree, the obliviax, strangeweeds, and a rare shambling mound, to list but a few. The cause of so much malevolent growth within the forest remains a persistent mystery to sages.

Finally, unsubstantiated reports concerning the lair of one (or more) beholders within the dark copses of the Thornwood are a source of concern both to the Elder Caliyms of the Lions and to the leaders of the cities on the Arnaden.

The small number of sylvan elves, human and half-elf druids, and the few treants living within the forest are increasingly hard pressed to keep the growing evil within the boundaries of the forest. These beings unselfishly strive against mounting odds, and some concerned sages wonder how much longer they can maintain this holding action.

The Green's Sword: Some tavern tales bespeak the supposed existence of a mystical grove deep within the Thornwood's briar patches and deadly plants where, once per year, century, or even tenday—depending on the tale's teller—a grass-hued sword grows forth from the earth itself. Anyone with wit and luck enough to find the grove may pull free the sword and wield it to battle evil, if they are worthy (and what makes one worthy continues to be a topic of heated discussion). The only clue to the grove's location is the peculiar, sword-shaped leaves that the plants near the Green's Sword grows.





Vaxall of the Dying Gaze

Lair of Vaxall: In recent years, several reports have surfaced regarding a beholder, perhaps even an elder orb or beholder mage, making its lair within the Thornwood. If such reports are to be believed, the sage Ordil Harauntan of Ankhapur speculates that the being's identity is Vaxall of the Dying Gaze, a predacious curse on the Land of the Lions for over 50 years.

In the aftermath of the Eye Tyrant Wars 1,500 years ago, and later after the destruction of the Ring of Eyes in Mieritin, more than 500 years ago, many thought the power of the beholders broken forever. Indeed, such was the case for centuries, until Vaxall of the Dying Gaze appeared, near the turn of the last century. In the decades since, Vaxall has manipulated many of the forces of evil in the region into a loose association. The eye tyrant's long-term goal is not known but can be guessed simply enough: rebuilding the beholder cults in the region and regaining control of lands that long ago were held captive under the lethal gaze of the beholders and their armies of magical and charmed followers.

Knowing the vile orb's lair (or one of them) lies within the most dangerous forest in the region, and reaching the site hale and hearty enough to survive the elder orb's many ingenious traps, ambushes, and servitors are two entirely different matters. The creature's lair is said to be hidden among the deepest brambles and deadliest plants of the wood. Furthermore, the entrance is said to be accessible only from above, and nothing exists above the entrance from which to suspend oneself. Using its race's ability to fly is but the first obstacle those determined to face the eye tyrant in its lair must overcome. A few of the elves of the woodland have tried to discover another entrance, but none have returned.

Ruins of Thearnytar: The contemporary of its sister nation to the east, Thearnytar was a moon elf-dominated nation, at least part of which existed in what is now the Thornwood. Much of the wonders of this land were lost when the drow attacked and destroyed both Thearnytar and Eiellûr while the dark elves' allies in the North fought the allies of the moon and green elves.

The barbarity of the tactics used by the drow in their attacks against the other elves shocked and horrified all who heard the tales. In Thearnytar, some legends even speak of the dark elves *setting fire to the forest* (an abominable act, criminal and shocking to elves even in wartime!) in areas where the moon elf defenses proved too strong. This was fatal for Thearnytar. Both its ground and treeborne dwellings were resistant but not immune to the effects of fire, especially magical flames. Thearnytar burned, moon elves died, and dark elves' hearts grew darker that terrible day.

As a result, little remains of Thearnytar today. However, as always there are rumors of vast treasuries of gold and gems, secreted away by either the losers or the victors. Those who are very lucky may discover armories hidden by the ages and High Magic, filled with enchanted elven armor and blades. Fortunate and elated wizards may unearth fireproof grimoires of arcane knowledge. Until these and more treasures are found, only the imagination limits the possibilities that lure those brave or foolhardy to try their luck.

The Winterwood

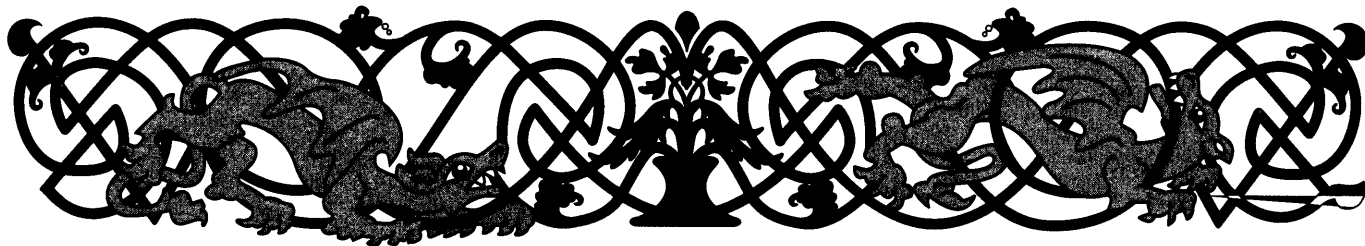
The lush vegetation of the Winterwood blocks the majority of sunlight from reaching the forest's floor. A cool, dewlike mist lingers above the ground throughout most days in the forest. From a distance, this mist can resemble freshly fallen snow—a rare sight in this climate—which has earned the forest its climatically incongruous name.

The sylvan elves of the Winterwood have long lived within the sheltering confines of the greensward's branches and clinging mists, but their ancient enemies the orcs have also made their homes there for centuries. Strife between the races is constant, though for the most part it is presently limited to patrols of each race encountering one another on the common border between them.

The moist atmosphere within the wood recently has allowed a tribe of mold men to take up residence as well. This has caused the local orcs, the White Hand clan, to engage in even more hostilities, as the mold men have occupied a portion of the orcs' lands. This ongoing guerrilla warfare makes the Winterwood a very hazardous place through which to travel, as neither race is particularly discriminating in their choice of targets. Most of this conflict has taken place in the northern areas of the forest. The elves appreciate the respite from orc raiding parties, but they are still attempting to fathom the mold men's bizarre thought patterns well enough to formalize relations between the two races.

Perhaps the most formidable danger within the wood goes by the name of Foilsunder, a green dragon of indeterminate age and gender. Foilsunder has called the southern woods its home for several decades now, and at least three bands of adventurers have failed to return from hunting the beast.





Cities of the Arnaden

"The cities of the Arnaden—the greatest of which is Ankhapur the White, the City of Griffons—face the terrors of the past and the challenges of the future with a thorough, steadfast resolve."

—Ordil Harauntan, Royal Sage of the Royal Court of Janol I, King of Ankhapur



As the nomads of the Shadi'ar tribes define the Land of the Lions, so do the cities and their peoples define the northern coast of the Lake of Steam, otherwise known as the Arnaden. Hence, the people are called the Arnadar. (The Arnaden's southern coast, dominated by the city-states of the Border Kingdoms, has been detailed extensively in the RPGA® Network's POLYHEDRON® *Newszine*, issues 109–125 and beyond, in Ed Greenwood's "Everwinking Eye" column.

Key Routes In and Out

Before learning about the cities, themselves, it is useful to put them in the larger context of the world around them, noting how they connect with the nations beyond. This especially is true for the Arnadar because the Arnaden lies along a direct path between the Sea of Fallen Stars and the Shining Sea, placing the Arnadar along a key bridge upon the continent of Faerûn. Trade is life's blood of virtually all civilizations, and the cities of the Arnaden (and the lake itself) occupy a precious position along an important artery. Several overland and waterborne trade routes converge in the area, making all the cities (but most especially Innarlith) thriving marketplaces of goods from across Toril (and some say beyond). Because of this, key routes of the Arnaden and the surrounding Land of the Lions are described in this section.

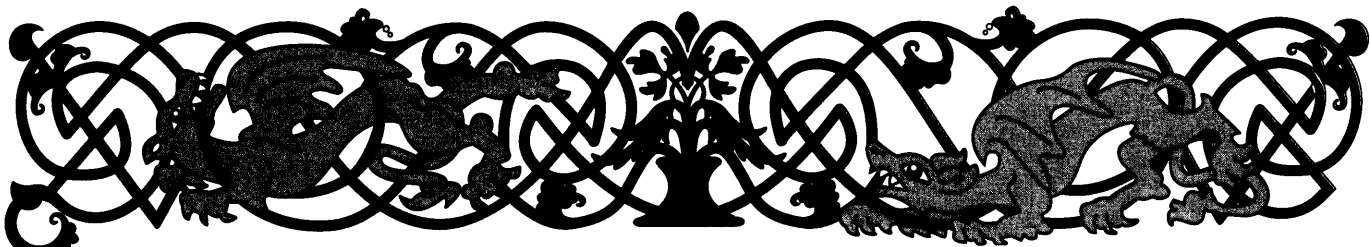
Of Ships and the Sea

While overland caravan routes are discussed in some detail below, many sages ignore the importance of waterborne routes, perhaps because they are not contiguous from the Sea of Fallen Stars to the Arnaden. Many of Faerûn's merchants know better, however, as a comparatively short portage of several hundred miles along the Golden Road connects the Moonsea with the Trackless Sea and all points beyond. While looking at a map of Faerûn, one can place a finger upon the Moonsea and trace a water route to the Sea of Fallen Stars. Following this route south (while avoiding the Pirate Isles as best one can) to the mouth of the Vilhon Reach and up its waterway, one arrives at the Chondathan city of Arrabar. From there, the Golden Road leads south to the city of Innarlith and back to the water of the Lake of Steam, and thence through the Strait of Storms and beyond to the wide Shining Sea. In short, one wise in the paths of trade knows that a shipment of goods can travel quickly and cheaply from Hillsfar, Mulmaster, or Melvaunt to the jungles of Chult, the Sword Coast, Waterdeep, or even to the distant lands of Maztica or exotic Zakhara. Of course, this primarily waterborne route for trade good applies not only to the Moonsea but to the Dragonmere, the Dragon Reach, the Easting Reach, the Alambar Sea, and all port cities anywhere on the Sea of Fallen Stars.

Any merchant will tell you that waterborne travel is quicker and cheaper than overland caravans, and these facts afford access of the goods of Cormyr, Thar, the Dalelands, Impiltur, Thesk, Aglarond, Mulhorand, Chessenta, Turmish and many other regions to the Shining Sea and every port in the world that its waters touch. Thus far, Sembia has been the only nation on the Inner Sea to seriously conduct major amounts of waterborne travel, and their coffers have not suffered for it.

There is one drawback to this otherwise invaluable trade route. Another group in Faerûn has discovered the convenient medium of waterborne commerce—one that enriches none except itself and its evil allies: In the last few decades, the forces of the Zhentarim have run major portions of their slaving operations along this route. They gather slaves from the Heartlands, pack them aboard vastly overcrowded ships, and sail south to the slave markets of Thay, Calimshan, and beyond. Worse yet, not all slaves survive such a trip, especially under the inhumane conditions practiced by the despicable Zhentarim, so the slavers often recruit replacements while moving south along the Golden Road. The slavers' most common targets are isolated farms, small bands of travelers or pilgrims, weakened or unprepared adventuring parties, and the nomads of the Land of the Lions. The Talu-min tribe most often falls victim to these raids, though the people of Sespech and the centaurs of the Golden Plains are not immune. The slave trade is among the vilest of evils





facing the region of the Arnaden today, and Calimshan's constant demand for more slaves means the practice will not die soon.

The AD&D sourcebook *Of Ships and the Sea* can help a Dungeon Master turn a trip from the Dalelands to the Land of the Lions into a side campaign of its own. Next year's FORGOTTEN REALMS campaign expansion box will also create opportunities for extensive adventuring at sea.

The Trade Roads

For the common man, trade roads form the links that join communities together. One might argue that trade forms the basis of civilization because it acknowledges mutual dependence and demands peaceful relations. Trade roads tie disconnected cities and peoples together, forging both friendships and alliances as well as commerce and prosperity. Trade roads also give rise to new civilizations, as most settlements begin as stops or outposts along various trade routes. Hence, roads not only link cities but allow them to develop in the first place.

The Golden Road

This main route begins at the Chondathan port of Hlath and unfurls to the southwest through Chondath and Sespech before turning south at Arrabar to pass through the eastern Land of the Lions, the city of Ormpetarr, the village of Kurrsh, and the Arnaden city of Innarlith. From there, it gradually bends to the southwest as it passes through the Shaar and stretches as far as Lapaliya.

This trade route is a main artery for overland trade in this part of Faerûn, and all nations of any wealth act to protect the caravans that travel up and down the road's tan cobblestone way. Those with business interests along any part of the road establish guard patrols and way stations even outside of their formal borders, where wilderness stretches (such as through the Land of the Lions) are not normally maintained or policed. Merchants' guilds cooperate with local governments to quarry and stockpile stones, and to hire crews to repair the road. Thus, the Golden Road remains in excellent condition virtually from end to end.

Unfortunately, it is along those lengthy miles of the Golden Road where no nation, city, or other civilization claims ownership that brigands and thieves of all stripes find golden opportunities. Outlaws are not the only ones to beware of, either: Along the road between Sespech and the Arnaden, the Talu-min tribe of Lion warriors are not above raiding a passing caravan if the tribe is in need of supplies. Most of the Shadi'ar reserve their hatred and raiding for the slaving caravans that try to pass as quickly and unobtrusively as possible through the area, but those who trespass upon their lands are not automatically entitled to the benefits of the Lions' codes of honor. The Golden Road may not pose a danger to wagon wheels, but wagon cargo is another story. . . .

The Lake Way, the Coast Road, the Tyrant's Road, Darkhope's Road, the Narrows Trail, and the Dragon Turtle Trail

These paved roads are narrower than the Golden Road and are almost never mapped when northerners detail the Arnaden. The Lake Way branches off from a thoroughfare within the city of Innarlith. It winds its way over and between the hills that lie along the shore of the Arnaden's bubbling waters to Yhep and Ankhapur, where it continues as the Coast Road to Saelmur. The road from Saelmur to Mintar also used to be called the Coast Road, but has recently been

renamed the Tyrant's Road in the local patois in reference to Teldorn Darkhope. From Mintar west to Kzelter stretches Darkhope's Road (formerly the Peaksirt Trail), from which branches to the southwest the Narrows Trail, which hugs the shore of the Arnaden in the shadow of the Alimirs to Yeshpek. The Dragon Turtle Trail leaves Yeshpek and passes through Tulmon to end in Suldolphor. All of these individual "roads" more or less comprise a single connected flow of pavement around two-thirds of the Lake of Steam.

These roads form the main overland route of trade and travel for the Arnadar. The farmers whose homes and fields line the near-shore areas of the Arnaden make the most use of this road system, though caravans are not an uncommon sight along its path. Both the caravaners and the farmers alike enjoy the inns and festhalls that have cropped up along the length of these trails. These outposts of civilization tend to be located far from major cities in the area, as the rustic pleasures offered by the establishments often pale in comparison to those found in Innarlith or Ankhapur.

The Ankh Road

This unpaved road connects the village of Nagarr, on the Nagawater, to the city of Ankhapur. Traffic on this road is brisk at all times of year, as goods shipped from or made in Ankhapur are carted north to Nagarr, where they are sailed across the Nagawater to Ormpetarr. Meanwhile, cargo coming down the Golden Road from Sespech, destined for Ankhapur, is loaded upon these same vessels for the brief westerly sail across the lake. This route saves caravaners both time and money as they need not travel all the way to Innarlith and then sail upon the Arnaden or roll upon the Lake Way west, nor must they pay that city's excise taxes on all shipments that move through.

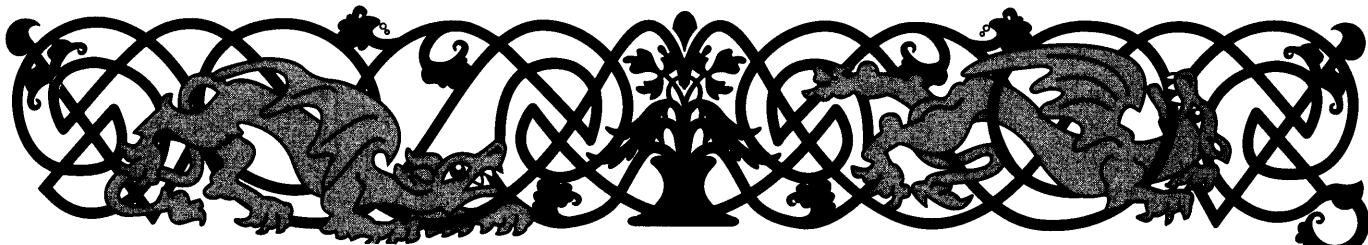
King Janol I of Ankhapur is actively working to promote the Ankh Road as an alternate route for all goods headed to the western Arnaden and beyond. His primary goal is to widen the Ankh Road and then pave it. The Ankh Road does cut through the heart of the Brada-min tribal land, but as the Lion warriors are nomadic and not farmers, this plan, when they learn of it, should not concern them overmuch. In fact, the Lion warriors will be able to buy and sell sheep or even hire on to guard travelers along the way.

The Old Road

This thoroughfare leaves the city of Shamph in Chondath, passes through the ruins of Timindar, and cuts through the Chondalwood to cross one bridge over a tributary of the River Arran into Elbulder and another bridge over a second tributary leaving it. It then continues through the Golden Plains and crosses the Nagaflo, branching out into two fords, the Naga Ford and Roaringford, and then rejoining beyond the river to skirt the southern boundaries of the Chondalwood. It threads a path between the Chondalwood and the Firesteap Mountains into Torsch and continues along the forest's edge into Hardcastle. It joins up with a southerly thoroughfare in Torsch, but itself curves northward again through Uthangol Pass to enter the southwestern reaches of now-chaotic Unther. The Old Road is the region's primary route for overland transport to and from the Old Empires and a secondary connecting road leading to the Shaar, the Eastern Shaar, and eventually Dambrath, Luiren, Estagund, Veldorn, and Var the Golden.

Bandits and slavers present the same hazards they represent on the Golden Road, though the centaurs of this region and the Chondalwood's elves are even less forgiving toward these threats than are the unpredictable Talu-min tribe. Nearer Shamph, the road is rumored to be walked at night by spirits of some sort.





Shrines and Temples along the Way

Roadside shrines are a common sight all along trade routes across Faerûn, and the Land of the Lions is no exception. Most of the major deities worshiped here (Azuth, Tymora, Oghma, Deneir, Tyr, Torm, Ilmater, and Selûne) have shrines scattered about, but in the past decade all the roadside devotional sites to Waukeen, the missing goddess of merchants and trade, have disappeared. In their places rest shrines to Lliira the foster goddess, who has answered the Waukeenaar's prayers since the end of the Time of Troubles, and to Shares, the goddess of emotional and physical fulfillment. The goddess of felicity has attracted many former Waukeen worshipers who were unhappy with Lliira's handling of Waukeen's former portfolio. (Those DMs who have incorporated *For Duty and Deity* into their campaigns may wish to reintroduce some shrines to Waukeen in this area.)

Other Civilized Sites

Any number of curiosities can be found in the Land of the Lions, but there are two in particular that bear close examination. They are included in this chapter because of their proximity and particular importance to more civilized areas of the region.

The Ruins of Tathtar

South of the Deepwash lies what once was the southernmost expanse of the nation known as Tathtar. All that Tathtar once was is long gone from the world, with only the crumbling ruins of the cities left behind. Many of these ruins are now home to wyverns from the Cloven Mountains. Some of these ruins are occupied at certain times of the year, by the Sala-min tribe of Lion warriors (though they paid a steep price for these homes).

The ruins of Tathtar's southern capital, Saalirk, are of most concern, for it is in the ruins of this city that one of the most dire threats to the entire Land of the Lions resides. Shyressa, vampire and mage of the Twisted Rune—that arcane association of evil undead that not long ago succeeded in plucking Halaster from his very throne in Undermountain—now calls the ruins of Saalirk home. While her duties for the Rune take her many places, she has infested the ruins and cellars of Saalirk with numerous magical creatures and undead. Foremost among the latter are Shyressa's two vampire consorts. One was once a proud Sala-min Lion warrior named Maluuk, who ventured too close to the ruins. The other was a humble serving wench in Ankhapur named Salana. They both now serve Shyressa and protect her home from intruders.

The Rune's plans are not complex, but neither are they simplistic. With knowledge of *gates*, which they reputedly gained from Halaster Blackcloak himself, they have established a network across midwestern Faerûn. They plan to use these gates to help them become the power behind the rulers in this region. This keeps them from the spotlight of the public but leaves the power firmly in their undead hands.

Shipwreck Neck

Named for the narrow channel of the Arnaden between Innarlith and Yhep, this place claims more ships each year than the rest of the Arnaden. The shifting lake floor, the rapid growth of coral and

mineral deposits, and the tricky currents and tides these produce make the most experienced Arnaden captain sweat for each pass through Shipwreck Neck.

Cities and Towns

While each of the cities described below is unique, many of them deal with the same basic facts of life in the Land of the Lions. Both the cities of Mintar and Ankhapur suffer each spring from swollen rivers that flood the fields around them. While the yearly flood brings much-needed fresh water and rich sediments to the farms and orchards, the floodwaters cause havoc in the cities themselves. Riverside neighborhoods are abandoned each spring before the snow in the mountains to the north melts. By the time the waters reach the cities, they bring much detritus with them, and outbreaks of disease are common. After a tenday or two, the waters return to their normal course, the clean-up is begun, and life returns to normal, though each city has developed a tradition of celebrating the receding of the rivers with a grand spring festival. Ankhapur's is called the Festival of Wealth and Mintar's was known as the Celebration of Spring (before the Banite takeover of the city and the cancellation of the festival for the last two years running).

Saelmur, Ankhapur, Yhep, and the villages of Kurrsh and Nagarr all experience visits from the Shadi'ar tribes at least once per year. The younger Lion warriors often take this opportunity to enjoy the soft life of the city to its fullest, and drunkenness and debauchery are frequently a problem. A degree of this activity is normal for any city, but when the Shadi'ars' code of honor and their deadly martial skills are combined with high spirits and alcohol, caution must be exercised by all, especially the local constabulary or other law enforcement officials.

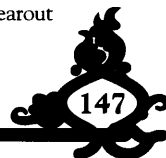
Ankhapur (Fortified Independent City)

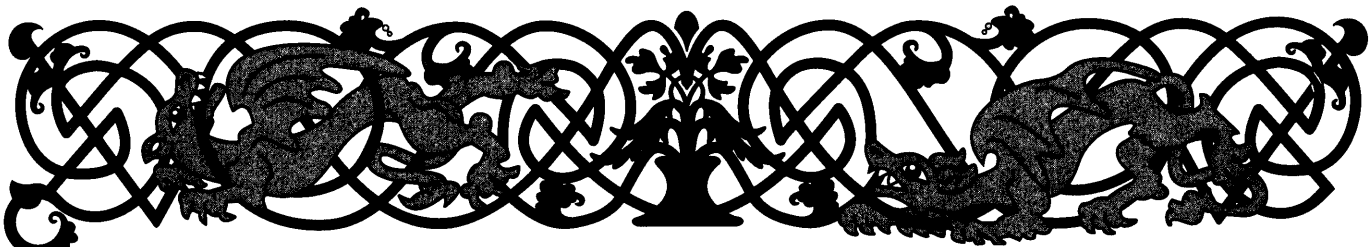
Who Rules: King Janol I (family name: Famisso) of Ankhapur (N hm T10).

Who Really Rules: King Janol and the Meldrin council, consisting of the heads of the eight most powerful families in the city. They are all wealthy merchant administrators and tend to get along well enough, as their interests are commonly shared. The Meldrin votes in secret ballots and the approved measures are submitted to the king. King Janol and the Meldrin are still exploring their relationship, testing and probing to expose both strength and weakness. The king has proven more cunning than the Meldrin had guessed, with Pinch's past as a thief serving him well.

Population: Approximately 53,000 (latest tax rolls); after the rainy winter, the population surges by as much as 10,000, as trade increases with the good weather. Over 90% of the population is human, but a minor migration of dwarves into Ankhapur in recent years has boosted its population. Both the dwarves' smithwork and work ethic are valued by the city.

Major Products: Trade (an increasing share of traffic bound for the Shining Sea and beyond is coming to Ankhapur by way of the Ankh Road, from Nagarr on the Nagawater), wagons, beasts of burden, some metalwork, mirrors (one of the city's traditional claims to fame), and vorbel wagon wheels. Named for their creator, vorbels are trebled thin metal wheels with the spokes offset (for strength), which are bolted together and share a common wooden rim and a replaceable wearout layer of wrapped cloth, rubber (from Maztica), and metal plates.





Armed Forces: The City of Griffons (or City of Knives) Watch numbers some 4,000 members in burgundy and yellow livery. The Watch patrols the city's streets (most of them, anyway) and the small valley of vineyards, farms, and orchards that surrounds the six hills upon which Ankhapur is built. The Watch members typically range from F2s and F3s up to F7s, F8s, and F9s for the leaders.

Important Features: Ankhapur the White, Ankhapur the Bloody, the City of Griffons, the City of Knives—all these names and more have applied to the former colony of ancient Chondath over the centuries. Each king stamps his likeness on the coins of the city he (or she, as Ankhapur has had three ruling queens) rules.

Now, with King Janol I on the throne, the vile pall left by Janol's father Manferic III is slowly lifting from the city. If nothing else, King Janol's past has taught him that money makes the world go around, and making Ankhapur prosperous means bringing more money to the city. To this end, the king has lowered excise taxes while hiking the nobles' taxes. Janol's goal of expanding and paving the Ankh Road from Nagarr has also increased cargo traffic through the city's gates and docks. While long-term affluence remains a long way off, the king has withstood the sniping disgruntlement of the nobles.

The many-spired city and its environs lay in a bowl-shaped valley (that floods each spring) at the delta of the Thornwash. The temples and King Janol's palace sit atop the six hills that form a *de facto* perimeter, separating them from the fields and orchards beyond.

Equipment Shops: Full (with more dwarf craftsmen than normal for a city this size: DMs can charge up to 20% more for quality dwarven items).

Adventurers' Quarters: As any port city that specializes in trade, Ankhapur's gypsum-white walls and tarnished brass gates are home to many inns, taverns, and festhalls.

- The Hoof and Shank is renowned for its steaks, chops, and other meat dishes as well as its strong brews to wash them down. Drinking and eating contests are common in this sawdust-floored inn and attract an even bigger crowd than does the food itself. Some rooms are also available. *Quality/Price:* Good/Moderate.
- The Beholder's Arse is even less sophisticated than the Hoof and Shank, a place where one goes to make dark deals or dream darker dreams over a cracked earthen mug of ale or grog. This tavern, near the docks, is quite popular with sailors and others who are looking to drink enough to forget whatever troubles them. *Quality/Price:* Poor/Cheap.
- The Brass Griffon attracts the well-to-do and those desiring an exotic touch. Staffed exclusively by young attractive Calishites of both sexes, the Griffon offers authentic Calishite dishes, drinks, and entertainment. Rumors that the huge, red-skinned bouncer is actually a genie of some kind are supported by the staff, but not in front of the bouncer himself. *Quality/Price:* Good/Expensive.

Important Characters

- Lord of the Watch Buckweather, (formerly known as Sprite Heels, the thief). This male halfling (N halfm T7) is the last of King Janol's former adventuring companions. Blinded in the final confrontation with Manferic, Lord Buckweather was appointed chief of the watch by the new king. Much subdued from his former exuberant self, Buckweather has taken his job seriously, using his own background to help foil as much crime as possible. Lord Buckweather is concerned, however, with the new crime lord Therin's actions to unite the underworld of the city.

- Kerne Tazziil (NE hem F7/M7; STR 17). A hulking beast for a half-elf, this stocky warrior/mage has resided in Ankhapur for almost a year now. He is a trader and warehouse worker who always travels with his three half-orc bodyguards (all NE hom F4). He cuts good deals (some say he undercuts others with prohibitively low rates) but never seems to run out of the money he spends so flashily. In truth, the half-elf is an operative for the Knights of the Shield, seeking to expand their brotherhood and influence to the south and west. Tazziil is slowly but surely recruiting members.
- Dariq, Seller of Rugs. The man is actually an evil jann (the weakest of the genies), seeking to blend into the city's population and eventually center himself in a web of crime, power, and money that will allow him to rule the city with his whims. His magical abilities aid him greatly in this, and only time will tell how successful he will be.

Notable Mages and Sages

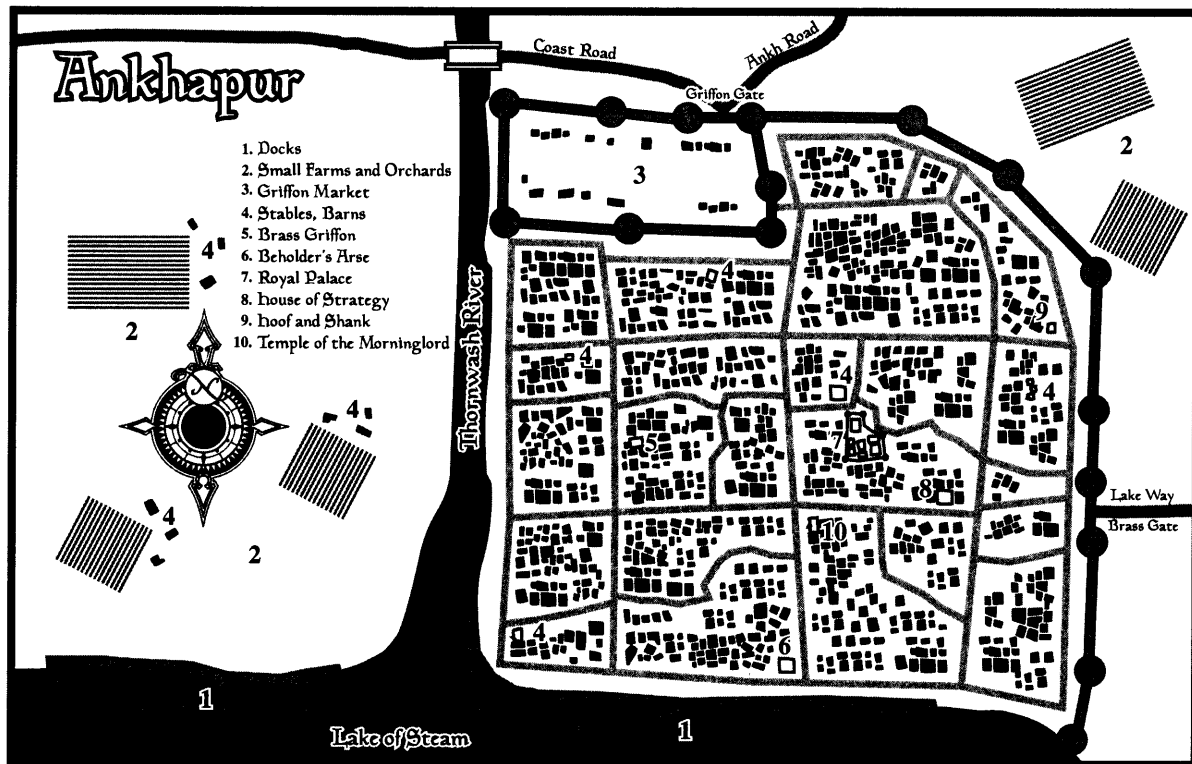
Like all cities of such size, Ankhapur has many mages of small to middling power, but those of might are relatively few. Many are pledged in service of one form or another to the king of the city, and these mages are required to wear white shifts or other apparel when in the city. (King Janol's cunning but evil father, Manferic III, devised this scheme. He reasoned, "What better way to control a tremendous source of potential power in the city—one that could otherwise be used against me—than to employ the most significant wizards and thus keep them close, and to have them rely on me for income and other support?") King Janol has been wise enough not to tinker with this particular remnant of his father's rule.

- Brown Maeve (N hf M9/T2). A former adventuring companion of King Janol, this late-middle-aged woman with long, graying brown hair was made Royal Magister upon Janol's assumption of the crown. Though she lacks much of the book learning other mages in the city can boast of, Maeve has years of combat experience and *street smarts* to compensate. For a long time, Maeve overindulged in drink, but her new responsibilities and her new "familiar," a brownie named Shank that shares her larcenous spirit, have helped convince her to dry out. Potential enemies may have marked Maeve's weakness, however, for some future exploitation.
- Gustavus (LE hm M15). This is a scheming, power-hungry man who hoped to rise in power under King Manferic, but who has now turned his sights to the Twisted Rune as his avenue to greatness.
- Ordil Harauntan (NG hm M11; Sage: Lake of Steam/Land of Lions region and cultures). Royal Sage to King Janol's court, Ordil is the acclaimed expert on all things and peoples on the region. He serves Janol and Ankhapur faithfully, though his family has business and political connections throughout the region.

Notable Clergy and Churches

- The Temple of the Morninglord. This temple to Lathander is run by Lissa of the Morning (LG hf P8 of Lathander). The temple is small but growing due to the king's link (exact status unknown) to the Morninglord. Lissa is close to the king, but their differing viewpoints often cause friction.
- The House of Strategy. Hierarch Justicale (LN hm C13 of the Red Knight) heads this temple to the Red Knight (referred to locally as the Red Lord or Lady). Justicale is the keeper of the Cup and the Knife, the traditional symbols of the king's power. With the new prominence of Lathander in the city, the Red Knight's





clergy has suffered a loss in prestige, as it is no longer the king's temple. Justicale is patient however, awaiting the time when the king has need of sound strategy. Justicale and his lord will be there to provide it, thus proving their value to the ruler.

Notable Rogues and Thieves' Guilds

Ankhapur's underground has recently been consolidated into a single force.

- Therin the Gur (N hm T7). Another former companion of King Janol, Therin has left the service of his former leader to satisfy his own ambitious streak. The Bloody Scarves are the result of Therin's uniting the various smalltime crooks and minor operations into a force the Watch must reckon with. Any who have challenged Therin in his rise to power have been found dead days later, victims of violent murder.

Members of the Bloody Scarves range from T1s up to a few T7s (the ones who have not challenged Therin). The city's most powerful thieves before Therin's arrival have all been killed or fled, leaving Therin the leader of all the illicit activities in the city. This coup is reportedly making Therin very rich very quickly.

Local Lore

The talk of much of the city (especially among the common folk) is still the tale of how Janol destroyed the undead King Manferic III and became the ruler of the city. (This tale is told in full in the novel *King Pinch*, by David Cook.)

Ankhapur's nobles, on the other hand, have few nice things to say of their new king. The Meldrin has made a few noises of discontent regarding the higher taxes all nobles must now pay to make up the reduced taxes on the cargo shipments that move through the city,

but the king's savvy has deflated all serious threats to his power so far. How long the Meldrin can soothe the noble families they represent, is unclear. Unknown to the authorities of the city, a being known as an al-jahar has infiltrated Ankhapur and is feeding off the emotions of the city's residents. Local fables concerning the creature have sprung up and named it a *dazzle*. Children now run up and down Ankhapur's narrow streets, taunting each other that the dazzle will come for them next. (Statistics for the al-jahar can be found in the *MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM Annual, Volume One*.)

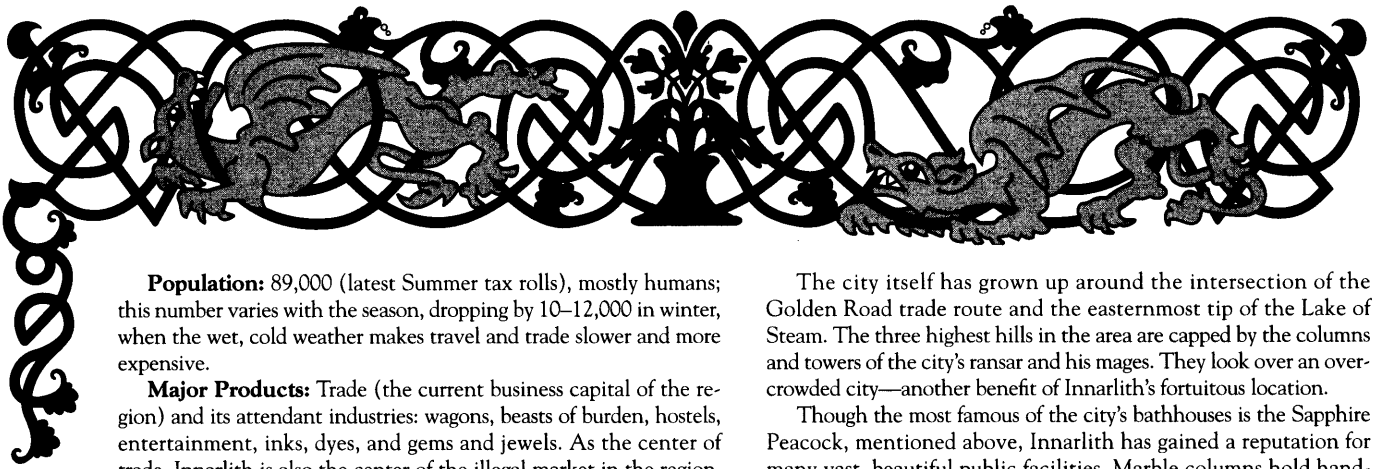
The ultimate goals of Therin, the city's new (and bloody) crime boss, are unknown. Lord Buckweather recalls the numerous instances when Therin tried—unsuccessfully—to usurp control of Janol's adventuring band from him, and he wonders how deep the bold Therin's grudge against the king runs.

The tresssym of the city disappear for three days and nights each year, with the time period centered on the Highsummer festival. No one knows why they leave or where they go. When people awaken, the winged cats are gone, even from cages. After three days, they are back, discovered when the city rises from slumber. Tavern talk about this revolves around "them nomads," the Lion tribes of the Shadi'ar. One of the nomadic tribes' gods, Nobanion the Lionheart, is rumored to have visited Ankhapur the White four years ago, the year before the tresssym began disappearing.

Innarlith (Fortified Independent City)

Who Rules: The ransar, Aubrin Ravilis, elected ruler for life.

Who Really Rules: The ransar, the Black Firedrakes (Ravilis' peacekeeping force), and the ransar's two resident (and rival) mages, Mandalax and Pristoleph.



Population: 89,000 (latest Summer tax rolls), mostly humans; this number varies with the season, dropping by 10–12,000 in winter, when the wet, cold weather makes travel and trade slower and more expensive.

Major Products: Trade (the current business capital of the region) and its attendant industries: wagons, beasts of burden, hostels, entertainment, inks, dyes, and gems and jewels. As the center of trade, Innarlith is also the center of the illegal market in the region, including illicit narcotics, poisons, and slaves bound for Calimshan and beyond.

Armed Forces: The Black Firedrakes are the personal employees of the ransar and are led by numerous former and retired adventurers. They protect the city, the roads leading to and from the city, and the harbor. The Black Firedrakes concern themselves especially with any activity that interferes with business. They remove damaged wagons or spilt cargo from the roads themselves, see that traffic flows smoothly, and make sure the merchants, dealers, and traders in the city are protected. They have been known in some cases to pursue those who escape them (in this case, jewel thieves) across the face of Faerûn to recover stolen goods and ensure the city's reputation as one where business and business people are cared for and safe.

The common Firedrakes are 70% F1–3s, with M1–3s and T1–3s comprising the remaining 30%. The commanders are of the same classes but range from 4th to 10th level.

Important Features: Even more than most cities, Innarlith is the city that trade (some might say greed) built. As long as the money flows into Innarlith's coffers, the residents and the ransar are happy. Literally anything can be had in Innarlith if one is willing to pay the price.

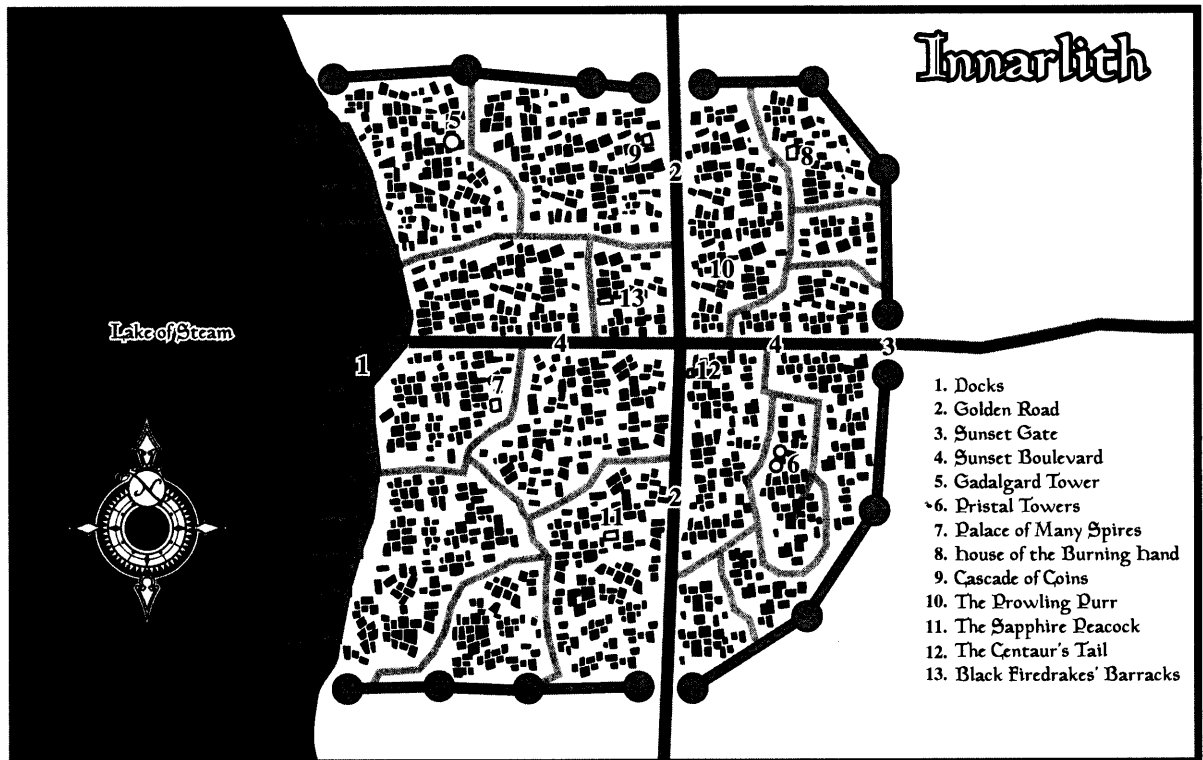
The city itself has grown up around the intersection of the Golden Road trade route and the easternmost tip of the Lake of Steam. The three highest hills in the area are capped by the columns and towers of the city's ransar and his mages. They look over an overcrowded city—another benefit of Innarlith's fortuitous location.

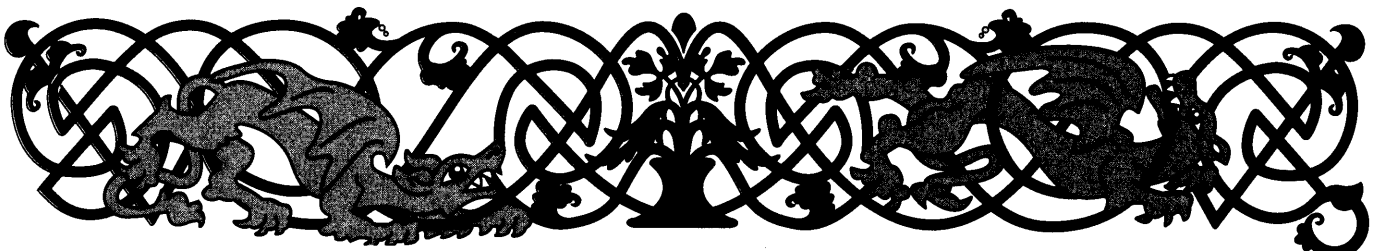
Though the most famous of the city's bathhouses is the Sapphire Peacock, mentioned above, Innarlith has gained a reputation for many vast, beautiful public facilities. Marble columns hold hand-painted, tiled ceilings aloft as men and women (together or separate, as they choose) can dip themselves into hot baths, inhale the aromas of incense and herbs tossed in the water, sit in saunas, and then refresh themselves in cool, marble-lined pools but a few steps away. Cold drinks and food are served by many of the bathhouses, and therapeutic massages, herbal rubs, and mud packs are available to those who desire them. The staffs of such places are always young, clean, attractive, and smiling.

Equipment Shops: Virtually all equipment listed (and much not listed) in the *Player's Handbook* can be had for a good price, thanks to brisk competition. Up to a 20% discount can be gained by those PCs eloquent in the art of haggling.

Adventurers' Quarters: With the number of caravans passing through Innarlith, beds and entertainment for the caravans' guards, mercenaries, and other wandering adventurers is a vast industry.

- The Prowling Purr, noted above, is popular with those who worship the Lady of Cats and who can afford its prices. "Only the best—the goddess wouldn't stand for less," is Priestess Darkeyes' favorite saying. *Quality/Price:* Excellent/Expensive.
- The Sapphire Peacock is the pride and joy of its owner, Master of the House Peldyn Daragon (an anxious, always bustling man who does his best to treat his clientele as nobility, and largely





succeeds). The Peacock is famous for its scented baths (both hot and cool water, both public and private) connected to suites, private meeting rooms, and unobtrusive street exits. Wonderful, hot meals are served in the rooms, and it can be cooked in front of the quests if desired. *Quality/Price*: Excellent/Moderate.

- The Centaur's Tail is the watering hole of many of the Black Firedrakes, as it is not distant from their stables and main barracks. Here the Firedrakes can relax, compare notes, and tell tales of the stupidest crook of the day (the winner getting a free drink). If one can become friends with the Firedrakes who commonly visit here, much information can be gained on any number of topics pertaining to the Firedrakes' duties or simply the goings-on around the city. *Quality/Price*: Good/Moderate.

Important Characters

- Captain-General Marsh Gahalen, Commander of the Black Firedrakes (LN hm F12). This middle-aged warrior gained his first adventuring experience during King Azoun of Cormyr's crusade against the Tuigan Horde, years ago. Since then, he has wandered from battle to battle and war to war, hiring out his swordarm to those willing to pay. Some ten years ago, he fell in with a wealthy, ex-jewel thief named Aubrin Ravilis, who had an ambitious political plan: Less than three years later, the former jewel thief became the ransar of Innarlith, and his friend Gahalen became the commander of the town's peace keepers. He likes the arrangement and does all he can to see it does not change.
- Aratho (N hm F0), a discreet trader in rugs, can—for a price—procure any (nonmagical) item a customer desires. The prices vary by request, but Aratho boasts he never accepted an order he could not fill.
- Salah Obeah (NG hf M3; Sage: magical items). This ancient-looking, veiled woman has made a lifelong study of all things magical. She often whispers to her clients that she must consult the forbidden lore of Volo the Hunted to positively identify an item in question—for an extra fee, of course.

Notable Mages and Sages

Innarlith is almost totally dominated by the ransar's two personal mages (and their entourages).

- Mandalax the Mighty (CG hm M11) is the younger of the two mages. He lives in the red-spined Gadalgard Tower, atop one of the highest hills in Innarlith. Mandalax often works with the Black Firedrakes when extra magical divination, research, or fire-power is needed, and he trains several of the Firedrakes' mid-level mages who, in turn, train the magelings. He despises the slave trade and other black-market operations in the city, and he always tries to convince the ransar (a former jewel thief who bribed his way into the job, as most ransars do) to take stronger measures against this trade. Thus far, his most gratifying success has been to get the ransar to increase taxes on all such trade.

Mandalax also believes, but cannot yet prove, that his rival mage Pristoleph is behind much of the smuggling operations throughout the city. Mandalax hopes to gather enough evidence to present to the ransar and the Firedrakes and have Pristoleph scandalized, deposed, or even exiled beyond the city itself. Mandalax knows well how the ransar cares only for the tax revenue generated by the trade and not the trade itself. However, Mandalax believes that Pristoleph has been avoid-

ing paying the taxes on the illicit goods he moves through Innarlith. If he can prove that, he may gain the leverage he needs to force his rival out of power and favor.

- Pristoleph the Purple (LE hm M12) is well aware of his rival's plans. However, the evil mage theorizes that Mandalax's inherent goodness and inclination to root for the underdog will be his undoing.

From the garden balconies of his black-walled, purple-domed Pristal Towers, the evil mage hatches his own schemes. Smuggling operations are but minor moneymaking schemes while he gathers his true strength. Pristoleph plans to remove Mandalax, the present ransar, and his Firedrakes in one brilliant ploy and set himself upon the Golden Seat in the Audience Chamber of the Palace of Many Spires—the home of whoever claims the title of ransar.

Having little or nothing to do with the Firedrakes, Pristoleph has nevertheless gathered around him an entourage of power-hungry apprentices and creatures. His present chief advisor (and lover) is a dark naga who calls herself Calliope. Pristoleph has summoned or charmed numerous lesser creatures and uses them as needed to eliminate his foes. He has not removed Mandalax from the picture yet, as that would throw too much suspicion his way and distract the ransar from his coin counting.

Notable Clergy and Churches

There are only a few notable churches within Innarlith. The rest have been squeezed out by the ransar (who considers most priests—and most gods for that matter—to be meddlers interfering with the timely transactions of business) and his two mages.

- The House of the Burning Hand. This temple to Azuth is headed by Fallah Al-maalik (LN hf C8 of Azuth), who is half Shadi'ar, of the Talu-min tribe. Mandalax has been smitten with the dusky young priest for almost two years, but Fallah only has eyes for her deity.
- The Cascade of Coins. Formerly a temple to Waukeen, this three-spired temple to Lliira prospers as long as the city's trade traffic flows. It is run by Andreas L'wei (N hm P10 of Lliira).
- The Prowling Purr. Kitiana Darkeyes (CG hf P7 of Sharess) runs this temple/inn/festhall devoted to the worship of Sharess and the delight of her congregation.

Notable Rogues and Thieves' Guilds

None; the Black Firedrakes keep all such organizations from growing beyond their initial stages. This is not to say that crime does not exist in the city. To the contrary, the wealth of Innarlith attracts many kinds of scum and villainy. Many of these scoundrels are looking to supplement their income as caravan guards or wandering mercenaries by rolling a few fat, rich merchants.

Though none of the authorities of the city have yet noticed, the nearly grown children (four young men and three young ladies in total) of the city's three wealthiest merchants have disappeared recently. The families have not reported them missing and refuse to speak of the matter even to friends. The possibility exists that a kidnapping ring has formed in the city, taking a different tack to separate the merchants from their money. Were Mandalax or the Firedrakes to learn of this, they would certainly investigate.



Local Lore

Like any city where money makes all the final decisions, Innarlith has many layers. On the surface it may seem a virtual paradise: Abundant goods, busy people, and a thriving industry and trade could seem to many the hallmark of things to come. As more regions increase trade, more cities like Innarlith will be created.

Beneath the hustle and bustle of business in the city, though, lies the dark side of easy money, and lots of it: greed. If any city in the region has dark heart to its existence, that city is Innarlith. In a city where lives can be bought or sold, the concept of life itself pales before that with which Innarlith constantly assaults one's sense of decency: a never-ending stream of gold pieces.

Kurrsh (Village, Monetarily Allied with Innarlith)

Who Rules: Inarlane Enariil, mayor-for-life of Kurrsh (NE hm M6).

Who Really Rules: Pristoleph of Innarlith, through his Black-as-Blood mercenaries.

Population: 7,000 permanent residents, mostly human, though thousands more pass through along the Golden Road, on their way to Innarlith each year.

Major Products: Service industries for the caravaneers that move through the village: wagons, blacksmithing (shoeing horses), hostels, boarding houses, stables, inns, and taverns.

Armed Forces: The 250 Black-as-Blood Riders, mercenaries who follow Mayor Enariil's orders but are paid by Pristoleph of Innarlith. They patrol the city and the Golden Road for 10 miles in either direction from the village. These mercenaries do not get along well with the Talu-min tribe, and the tribe avoids the village when possible. The Black-as-Blood patrols have been known to go off on wide patrols when they know the tribe or its herds are in the vicinity of the village, just to stir up trouble.

Important Features: Beyond the fact that the Golden Road runs through town, the village of Kurrsh is physically unremarkable. The buildings are made either of timber (most of the businesses) or of sod with thatch roofs (most of the private residences). The only stone building is the small, two-story mansion of the mayor-for-life (whose position was paid for by Pristoleph money and influence).

Equipment Shops: Poor.

Adventurers' Quarters: Adventurers are not welcome in Kurrsh, as they tend to interfere with illegal activities, even when practiced by the local authorities. Inns and taverns are plentiful in the village (far more than a village of the same size but not on a major trade route could support), but relatively few of them will provide more than a meal to anyone who appears to be more than a mere sellsword or caravan guard. Getting routinely raided by the Blooders when they do otherwise has taught most innkeepers that it is better to lose some business than the whole of their business.

Important Characters

- Maurgon Dukat (NE hm F10), commander of the Black-as-Blood mercenaries. It is because of him that the Blooders have come to dislike the Talu-min Lion tribe. Maurgon's father was killed by a band of Talu-min that defended the caravan in which Maurgon's mother traveled. Maurgon's father died the painful, violent death he deserved, but his mother was taken by the orcs as they retreated from the Lion warriors' assault. Raised with the

story of his father's death oft repeated in his piglike ears, Maurgon now seeks battle with the Lions whenever he can find it. (His mother—fortunately for her—died delivering him.)

- Panamon (LE hm P7/M3) is a priest of Xvim but is posing as an aide to Mayor Enariil. Panamon seeks a suitable tyrant with whom to ally. He knows Enariil takes his orders from someone important in Innarlith but has thus far been unable to identify the person as Pristoleph.

Notable Mages and Sages

Mayor Enariil is the only mage of any power in the village. Pristoleph has given standing orders that all other mages are to be harassed until they leave town or give the troops an excuse to arrest or kill them outright.

Notable Clergy and Churches

None. The Black-as-Blood mercenaries also have standing orders for harassment of clerics and priests entering the town. As a result, those priests enterprising enough to determine the extent of the Blooders' (as the locals call them) patrols have constructed roadside shrines both north and south of the village, just beyond those patrol ranges. All the major deities of the region are represented if one seeks a particular shrine. The Talu-min tribe has even added shrines to Nobanion, Akadi, and Sharess to the "parade of shrines," as the caravaneers have begun calling the two stretches of the Golden Road.

Notable Rogues and Thieves' Guilds

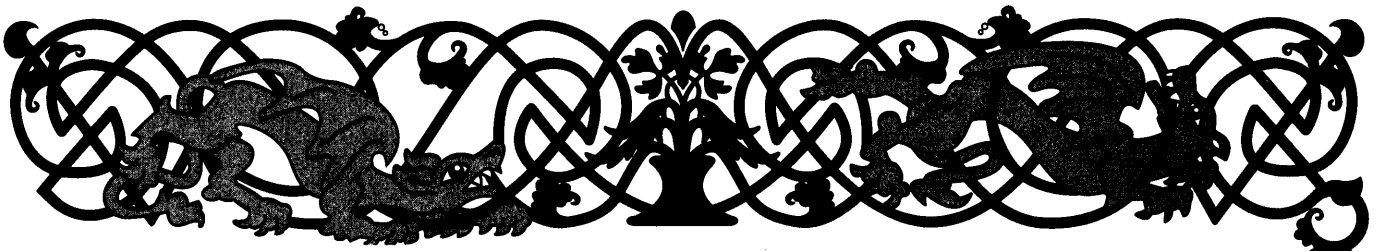
The Blooders actually organize and manage the vast majority of the illegal activity in the village, little of which targets either the villagers themselves or the caravans passing through the village. Rather, the Blooders' manage Pristoleph's smuggling and slaving operations through the village and into Innarlith. The Blooders' provide the slavers with the papers and bribes they need to pass into Innarlith without attracting undue attention from do-gooders such as Mandalax. The Blooders also receive and hold slaves in the village jail from time to time, until the next slaving caravan (most of which come down from the rebuilt Zhentil Keep) arrives to carry them on to Calimshan.

In addition, the Blooders have developed quite a lucrative arrangement with an unknown agency (to them) in the Chondalwood, who can fulfill requests for elf slaves. This secretive entity typically demands valuable gems, jewelry, all magical items the Blooders confiscate from passing mages, and so on in return for the unfortunate elves it delivers into bondage.

Whenever Pristoleph needs special spell components, poisons, potions, or other items to be kept from prying eyes, he uses the Blooders to stash his cargo in the wagons of passing caravans, often without the caravaneers knowing they are carrying contraband. These wagons are marked in a way Pristoleph's apprentices and accomplices are trained to notice, and the items are removed once in the city of Innarlith.

Local Lore

While the vast majority of the village's population is unaware of their town's true nature, many people are beginning to wonder about Enariil's true motivations and the Blooders' true devotion to justice and protecting the village's inhabitants. A small band of villagers has organized, pooled the money left to them after Enariil's exorbitant taxes were levied, and is planning to sign onto a caravan in order to



reach another city in the region. There, they hope to some hire adventurers to find out what exactly is going on in their hometown. They have not yet decided which city to visit, though Yhep and Ankhapur are the closest; they rightly think that part of their trouble stems from Kurrsh's proximity to Innarlith, so they plan to pass through the city as quickly as they can.

Given the Blooders' treatment of suspicious-looking outsiders, the village has gained an unfriendly reputation (exactly as Pristoleph planned). While caravans are always made welcome, wanderers and other travelers on the Golden Road hear much of Kurrsh's inhospitable reputation well before they arrive there.

Kzelter (Fortified Town, Allied to Mintar)

Who Rules: Aramman Freebane (LE hm F8), Constable General of Kzelter.

Who Really Rules: Teldorn Darkhope (LE hm P9 of "Bane" [really Iyachtu Xvim]; really an authlim, but thinks he is a dreadmaster), Conqueror of Mintar, Tyrant of Kzelter. Lord of the Knights of the Black Gauntlet.

Population: 1,500 permanent residents, mostly human; the people of this small agrarian community numbered over 3,000 before the Banite forces of Mintar attacked.

Major Products: Produce, milk, cheese, beef, all of which are now confiscated as tithes to the revived church of Bane in the small village.

Armed Forces: At least 5,000 troops (with more arriving weekly from Mintar) and mercenaries swearing allegiance to Teldorn Darkhope and his planned conquest of vast areas of this region and beyond—for the glory of Bane.

Important Features: Much of Kzelter burned in the battle against the invading Banites. The original buildings that remain are of timber, with thatch or slate roofs. Most of the town of Kzelter is the tent city that holds the Banite troops and mercenaries. Still, the idyllic beauty of the rugged farmland is difficult to disguise. Sunrise and sunset can be strikingly lovely, even if the sunset's rays must pass over the tents of the village's occupiers.

Equipment Shops: Empty. The Banites have confiscated all armor and metallic weapons they could find, short of farming implements. Those who would throw off the Banite yoke on the village either fashion wooden weapons or secretly melt down plowshares abandoned farms by those lucky enough to have gotten out before the Banites arrived, forging them into crude swords and spearheads.

Adventurers' Quarters: None; any adventuring types spotted in or around Kzelter (strangers in armor, carrying weapons, or any who are not the farmers or the village madman) are rounded up and placed in holding pens until the Banites can determine their identities and goals.

Important Characters

- Frederique (NG hm R7), known as "Red" for his hair color, has been monitoring the troop movements from Mintar to Kzelter for the Harpers and the crown of Tethyr. He knows that in the Spring the Lion tribe known as the Ala-min move their herds through some of the same territory that the Banites cross on their way to Kzelter. Unsure whether he can convince the tribe's elder, Faerdaleeyn, to simply attack one of Mintar's military caravans, but hopeful nonetheless, he will do what he can to arrange what will appear to be a chance meeting of the two groups.

- Lantana Duskeyes (LG hf F3). The daughter of a retired adventurer who died fighting the Banite invasion, Lantana has devoted herself to organizing and running an underground resistance group in and around Kzelter. Thus far, she has secretly recruited some of the village's younger residents and many who have lost family, friends, or lovers during the invasion and occupation. These people are farmers, not warriors, though. So far, they have managed to steal some supplies and weapons, and they occasionally harass a Banite patrol or set afire a few of the barracks tents. They have also dug a series of well-hidden ambush and bolt holes, and even a few tunnels a few feet underground, to be able to move more freely. Lantana wants to do more but fears losing too many members in some disastrous ploy, as she knows a blow of that kind to the fledgling group's morale could be devastating.

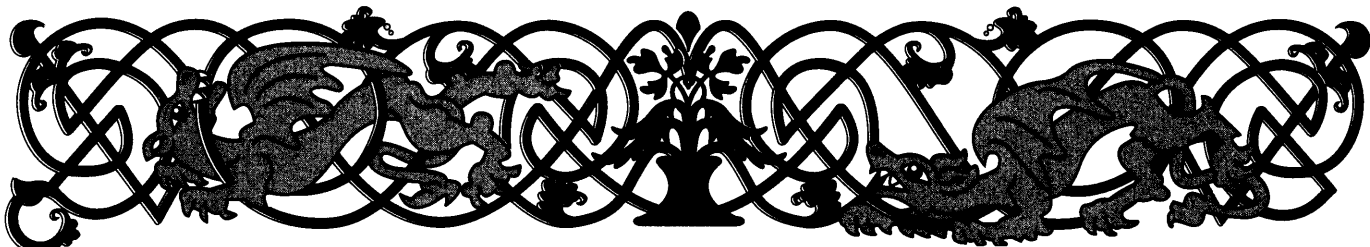
Notable Mages and Sages

- Victor Arianus (NE hm M12) is Teldorn Darkhope's lead magical advisor in Kzelter, and he commands the Banite forces' retinue of over a dozen mages. As the most powerful wizard among them, it is Arianus's charge to shape the mages into an effective force for fighting a war. Among the cunning mage's schemes are:
 - (1) Making an elite force (as large as possible) invisible and somehow delivering the lot behind the rail-fence and ditch lines that the Tethyrian forces at Ithal Pass have constructed.
 - (2) Forcing a section of the Tethyrians' lines to be abandoned by a concentration of stinking cloud and other spells cast at the enemy forces.
 - (3) Turning many mages invisible, as above, but using spells and flying devices, plus offensive items such as wands and staves, to bombard the Tethyrians' rear or flanks, crippling their reserves. This strategy might be employed to eliminate the enemies' leader, General Paulus (NG hem F4/M3), and his spell-casting contingent.
- Elesor Smytheson (CG hm M7; Sage: history of Tethyr, royal line of Tethyr). This old, learned man (INT 17) went into hiding during the Interregnum, as many of the petty bandits and warlords that sprung up during that period wished to wipe out all traces of Tethyr's past. The man is also utterly devoted to his family, and he did not wish to see them come to harm because of him.

Elesor moved his family to Kzelter, where they took up lives as simple farmers, and they remained so until the Reclamation. With the ascension and crowning of Queen-Monarch Zaranda and King Haedrak III, Elesor hoped to return to court; he even journeyed to Darromar to seek an audience. Such was not to be, however, as the Banites attacked and conquered Kzelter in early Mirtul of the Year of the Gauntlet. Worse, Elesor's outlying farm was burned, as was the farmhouse where his entire family slept. Upon his return, Elesor's mind could not deal with the loss of all those he loved. He lived in the woods, slept in barns, and became known both to the villagers and to the Banites as the local madman.

Now, Elesor's mind has slowly begun to return, for his grief has been fading with time, and the injustices he sees before him every day spur him to act. Keeping the madman ruse as a front, he is slowly learning more of the Banites and their plans. He hopes to strike a decisive blow against those who took his family from him. For now, he merely acts the fool and bides his time.





Notable Clergy and Churches

None but one; all others were burned, desecrated, or both during the invasion. The Tyrant's Hope is the temple to Bane that Teldorn Darkhope consecrated in the burnt husk of what had been a temple to Oghma. Darkhope resides there while in Kzelter—otherwise, the chief priest in residence is Neth Arrovar (LE hem P7 of "Bane" [really Iyachtu Xvim]).

Notable Rogues and Thieves' Guilds

None; the village had virtually no crime before the conquest by the Banites, and the only crimes now are those committed by the Banites themselves.

Local Lore

Vague rumors of buried armories of magical armors and weapons have persisted in this region since the Fall of House Tethyr. No one has ever found any such treasure, but that does not stop folks from looking for it. Some of the Banite troops have even been combing the vicinity of the burnt garrison (which was looted after the fall of Tethyr's last king) with various detection spells and wands; they have had no luck thus far.

Mintar (Fortified Independent City)

Who Rules: Teldorn Darkhope, Lord Knight Imperceptor of the Dark Lord.

Who Really Rules: Darkhope and his minions in the Knights of the Black Gauntlet.



Teldorn Darkhope

Population: 34,000 (latest Banite tithing records, mostly human), down from a minimum of 45,000 permanent residents. In summer, the population of the city used to exceed 50,000.

Major Products: Before the conquest of the city by Banites: trade, boat and ship building, wagons, seafood, and wine. Since the Banite conquest, trade has dropped significantly, and while the industries continue, virtually all that the city produces goes into the Banite war machine in Mintar or is shipped northwest to the occupied village of Kzelter.

Armed Forces: Almost 8,000 troops occupy and patrol the city at all times. Some are Banites, but most are mercenaries. Despite reports to the contrary, no armies of magical, constructed, or summoned beings fill out the regular ranks, although all these are occasionally called upon. Troops are circulated from here to Kzelter and back from time to time, to keep them from getting too comfortable in one place.

Important Features: Much of the city was burned (at first intentionally, then accidentally as the fires spread) in the days and weeks that followed Darkhope's coup. Some of these buildings have been rebuilt or replaced to house troops, store equipment, stable horses, and so on.

Equipment Shops: Poor; most items of use and value are purchased by the Banites controlling the city, for just enough money to keep the merchants in business.

Adventurers' Quarters: Virtually every inn, boarding house, hay loft, and even the city's marketplace have been occupied by the tents of the thousands of troops in the city. Beds are scarce in Mintar, but then sleep is the least of one's problems there.

- The Magelords' Rest resembles the majority of Mintar's inns and taverns in these dark days: Armed troops fill the place, drink far more than they pay for, and generally harass any who look at them. The common room is full of those soldiers each night, too drunk to walk back to (or even find) their barracks, while the rooms upstairs are rented for minuscule amounts by minor officers and their companions. *Quality/Price:* Fair/Moderate.

Important Characters

- Ilindyl Fireblade (NG hm F18), the former master of Mintar's Academy of the Drawn Sword (which teaches a precise, spare system of bladework), was trapped within the city after leaving his mistress' home on the night of the Banite coup. Anarchy already ruled the streets, but Ilindyl's skill with his rapier and main-gauche brought him within sight of his school of swordsmanship. He saw several fireballs cast into the place by mages on the Banites' payroll. In all-too-brief seconds, the fireballs detonated, destroying his school (and he believes, his student body).

Since that night, Ilindyl has stalked the streets of Mintar, killing any number of Banites who cross his path. The man takes incredible risks, but through luck and skill he has survived thus far. To keep his true identity a secret, Ilindyl has taken to wearing a domino mask made from the black silk sash of one of the Knights of the Black Gauntlet. He sleeps in the sewers to avoid detection and scrounges food when hunger demands it, but he otherwise exists only to kill Banites. Ilindyl's mind is unstable; he feels responsible for not protecting his students and may be taking such awful chances in battle as a means to commit suicide.

Ilindyl has no way of knowing it, but very few of his students died in the fireball blast that night. The eldest students





1. Banc Bridge
2. The Docks
3. Tyrant's Road
4. Darkhope's Road (to Kzelter)
5. Small homes and farms
6. Burned-out areas
7. Temple of the Dark Lord
8. Magelords' Rest
9. Former site of the Academy of the Drawn Sword
10. Former site of Master of the Blade Academy
11. Market Plaza

led the youngest in a successful escape to Saelmur. The rest of the students joined the hastily organized militia to fight the Banites. Many of Ilindyl's students died in that battle, but the tales of the courage, skill, and noble sacrifice shown by warriors so young are still told in whispered tones today—tales that were Ilindyl to hear them, would burst his heart with pride.

- Gloran Galleos (lich, M22), one of the last two Magelords of Mintar, a cabal of wizards whose primary interest was in creating magical hybrid creatures. They fought and lost a war against the Harpers over 200 years ago.

As an undead being who has no need to breathe, Gloran fled to the bottom of Mintar's harbor when the Harpers hunting him got too close. He made a spherical home and laboratory for himself there. The sphere lets water pass through but prevents silt and living things from entering (unless Gloran needs a few test subjects). He exists there to this day, his sphere long buried by silt, while he continues to create bizarre and dangerous hybrids of various lake-dwelling creatures. The lich etches his records into rust-proofed steel pages of his spell tomes. A staunch atheist, if Gloran were to learn that his former home had been conquered by a minor priest of a dead god, he would surmise that it should be child's play to wrest control of the city from Teldorn Darkhope.

Notable Mages and Sages

Few mages and almost no sages still live within the walls of Mintar unless they serve (willingly or otherwise) Teldorn Darkhope and his Knights of the Black Gauntlet.

- Victoriana Arianus (LE hf M9) is the twin sister of Victor (stationed in Kzelter). She is Darkhope's right-hand assistant and for-

mer lover. Not long ago, she caught Teldorn in a romantic indiscretion with a cleric of Bane. Though her fury raged, she contented herself with personally killing the young woman a few days later. This drove a wedge between the pair, but they both believe in the cause for which they fight, so they endure the unpleasantness they now feel in each other's company.

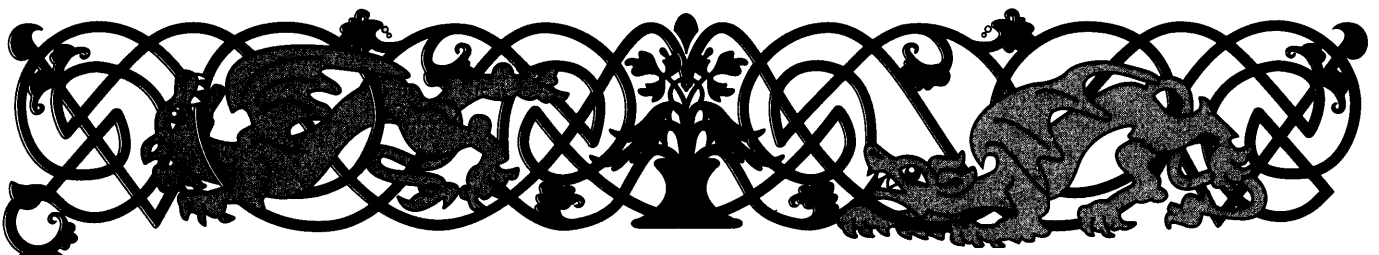
- Trillan (NG hem F6/M6) is a retired War Wizard of Cormyr, but since his arrival in Mintar, some years before the conquest, he has been content to be seen as a simple innkeeper. He grew tired of the constant plotting and scheming within the ranks of the War Wizards and sought a quieter life. As an innkeeper, he found comfort and contentment, until Darkhope rose to power. He now continues to play the simple man who only wants to keep his inn open, though he has begun magically charming officers and Knights when given the chance. He has no plans, but it never hurts to have a few friends in powerful places.

Notable Clergy and Churches

The Temple of the Dark Lord, the temple at which Teldorn Darkhope received the visions that launched him on his schemes of conquest. Unknown to Darkhope, it was not Bane who was whispering tales of conquest and reward into his ears—it was actually Iyachtu Xvim, the Godson of Bane. Darkhope remains unaware of the deception to this day, but he suspects Bane may not be of the power he once was.

Soon after Teldorn Darkhope's grip was firm about Mintar's throat, all the temples in the city were sacked and burned. Fortunately, many priests survived the attacks, hunts, and burnings at the stake that followed. Many of them fled the city, leading other refugees to safety, but some have holed up and continue to do what they can to minister to





the city's sick and homeless. Loremistress Cindric Alaekyn (LG hf C12 of Oghma), for example, was the leader of the Pursuers of Pure Knowledge, followers of Oghma within the city. Cindric and her staff fled their temple with as many books, scrolls, maps, and other records of knowledge as they could carry. These they have secreted in caches around and beneath the city. The priests who remain have declared two missions: The first is to record all the events that transpire within the city while the Banites rule. That way, the Banites can be held accountable for the crimes and atrocities they have committed when a day of reckoning comes to Mintar. The second mission is to hinder and impede the Banites in their work. Thus, the Pursuers of Pure Knowledge have become the nucleus of Mintar's resistance movement, called by some the Pursuers of Freedom.

Notable Rogues and Thieves' Guilds

None; the Banites wiped out all organized guilds not long after the city's churches were sacked and burned.

Local Lore

Mintar before Midwinter night in 1362 DR is nothing like the city today. The city was ruled by Obril Alaekyn (N hm F0; Sage: politics), the Grand Murlistar (though many commoners, outsiders, and Calishites referred to him as *sarap* or *sultan*). This expressionless, coldly calculating man had dead-white pale skin, a slender build, glittering black eyes, and an elaborately waxed mustache. The man was a mystery even to most members of his court, for he ruled for only a year after the death (from disease) of his fat and lazy but storm-tempered father, Elrauvilar Alaekyn (1301–1361 DR).

Obril studied for several years at Candlekeep, but before much could be learned of or about him, death called for him. On Midwinter night in 1362, a ghostly black hand appeared in Obril's bedchamber. The hand opened, and Teldorn Darkhope and several Knights of the Black Gauntlet rushed out and quickly killed the Murlistar and his fiancée, one Fyriana Darkenstar.

For next few days, Darkhope, his Knights, and the double-handful of helmed horrors (led by flameskulls, which can be found in the *MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM Annual, Volume One*) eliminated powerful potential foes such as the other churches, both schools of swordsmanship, the rogues' guild, and anyone who dared to openly disagree with Darkhope's proclamations. Meanwhile, the mercenaries (most of whose leaders were under *dark promise* spells) ruled the streets, putting down riots, breaking up crowds, and destroying the attempts of the militia to gather.

In 1369 DR, with Mintar firmly in his black-gauntleted fist, Darkhope turned his sights north to the Tethyrian village of Kzelter. His Knights conquered and occupied the village easily enough, but Tethyrian forces have been massing in the town of Ithal Pass ever since. Darkhope has been sending caravans of troops and supplies north as well. Before too long, the Dark Tyrant's dreams of empire will soon face their first real threat.

Nagarr (Fortified Village, Protectorate of Ankhapur)

Who Rules: Torgis Hatchetson (LN hm F6), mayor.

Who Really Rules: The merchants who are increasingly using Nagarr's docks (which are rapidly becoming overcrowded and in need of replacement or expansion) and the crown of Ankhapur, Janol I, and his court.

Population: 4,100 (last census, mostly human). As trade increases through town, more people choose either to move to Nagarr and make homes and lives for themselves or to stay there.

Major Products: Wool, fish (from the Nagawater), and trade (wagons, animals, inns, boarding houses, taverns and festhalls).

Armed Forces: 375 members of Ankhapur's Watch, on permanent loan to the Mayor of Nagarr.

Important Features: The village lies huddled against the western shore of the Nagawater's lapping waters. A quiet fishing village (along with some shepherders) until recently, Nagarr's docks were constructed for small fishing vessels, not the large rafts and barges that are now arriving from Ormpetarr. Construction of new docks is planned for next spring.

The paving of the Ankh Road down to Ankhapur. While the paving is also beginning at the road's terminus at the gates of Ankhapur, the village is to begin the laying of paving stones as well, soon.

Equipment Shops: Partial. A few years ago, a "poor" rating would have defined the availability of the shops and craftsfolk of the village.

Adventurers' Quarters: With the slow increase in trade through the village, demand for bed space and places to relax has increased.

- The Scaly Catfish is an inn and tavern on the docks. Its rough-hewn furniture, bad food (mostly ill-cooked fish dishes), and watered drinks make it a haven for only the broke or the desperate. *Quality/Price:* Poor/Cheap.
- The Naga's Water is a new place that caters specifically to the traveler and the trader. A large stable adjoins the inn, and numerous private sleeping and meeting rooms on the place's second floor allow for business to be handled discreetly. The food is basic but tasty, the drinks not watered (too much), and the rooms are clean. *Quality/Price:* Good/Moderate.

Important Characters

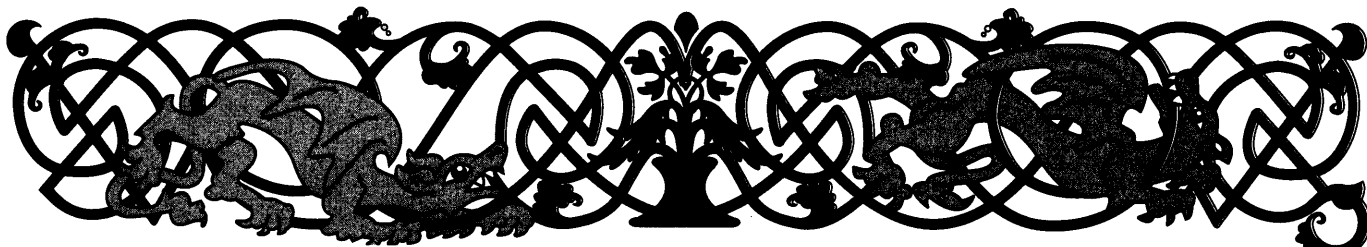
- Brendal Morganson (LG hm F3), the owner of one of the largest trading costers in Ormpetarr (Morganson's), is personally supervising his business venture in Nagarr. He is often accompanied by the Mayor of Nagarr, Hatchetson, who listens intently as the rich and vain Morganson points out how his business could be better served in this village. (Hatchetson takes the good advice and implements it but somehow seems to neglect to give Brendal *all* the special treatment he requests.)
- Orswin (N hm F0; Sage: snakes) is a sage from the North who is researching the definitive treatise on all varieties of serpents. He has spent years combing the rolling hills, looking under bushes and rocks for specimens. He has most recently set his sights on the naga of the region. While he has yet to make contact with one, he looks forward to the opportunity to chat with such an interesting creature.

Notable Mages and Sages

Joshua Ariadne (CG hem Ele6 [Water]) is a man who has lived his whole life on or within running distance of the Nagawater. As a mage his specialty is elemental water magic, which makes him very popular with the farmers of the village who want their fields irrigated, with the fishermen who want to know the best spots to drop their nets, and with the traders who want calm waters for their barges and rafts that pole, sail, or row across the Nagawater from Ormpetarr.

All this attention Joshua finds unnerving. He was raised in the area and liked it because it was small and he loved the lake called the Nagawater. He lives in an anchored sailing vessel with an enclosed cabin. The main reason he lives on the water is that his mother was a sea elf.





She was swimming through the Nagawater from the Vilhon Reach when she became entangled in a fisherman's net, and when he rescued her, it was love at first sight. Joshua's mother Ariadne stayed a few years with the man after giving birth to Joshua, but the love eventually faded from her eyes, so she returned to the waters she came from. Joshua seemed a normal human boy until puberty, when he sprouted gills. He learned magic from a rare nonevil water naga that lived a long time in the lake. Joshua lives alone, now, and keeps his watery secret to himself.

Notable Clergy and Churches

Nagarr has only three temples to speak of:

- The Palace of Justice, Duty, and Sufferance: a temple to the triad of Tyr, Torm, and Ilmater, run by Cadrin Velacloak (NG hf P5 of Ilmater). The temple is small and the priests are few, but the congregation is humble and reverent.
- The House of Mysteries, one of the few temples to Mystra in the entire region, is a devotional site run by Alamandra Whitehair (NG hef C7 of Mystra), who strives to make all people of the village appreciate the wonders and beauty of magic itself, not just what magic can do to make one's life easier.
- The Shrine to Dawn, a newly founded temple to Lathander, is sponsored by the Morninglord's church in Ankhapur. The temple is presided over by Cathel deFaux (LG hm C6 of Lathander), an elderly cleric who has spent most of his life cloistered away. When he eventually requested a change of venue, this is not what he expected. Nevertheless he has done well thus far, organizing the temple and its staff and gathering together a small but growing congregation. Cathel dismisses his part in the success, placing the acclaim strictly in the loving hands of the Morninglord.

Notable Rogues and Thieves' Guilds

Only recently has the village attracted the attention of organized crime.

- The fledgling Red Masks organization is headed by Rathan Silverknife (LE hm T11), who lost out in a turf war in the city of Innarlith. He was savvy enough to spy out a great place to hide—the sleepy village of Nagarr—but when he arrived, Rathan was surprised at the level of thieving activity at the village's docks. After organizing several friends and compatriots no longer happy in Innarlith (and some from Ankhapur), Rathan is just getting underway with the Red Masks' first operation: a protection racket involving the docks and the burgeoning number of storehouses and stables nearby. The guild is so new, it has yet to attract the attention of the Watch members on loan from Ankhapur.

Local Lore

The most common stories that are told in the inns and taverns of Nagarr all involve the monstrous and mysterious naga. The locals have no idea that separate species of good, evil, and neutral naga all live in the area (despite Orswin's attempts to convince them), and the consensus is that the only good naga is a dead naga. Naga skins can be sold for a tidy profit in the village (and for even more in Ankhapur, where they are used for boots)—if the hunter actually succeeds in killing one.

Saelmur (Fortified Independent City)

Who Rules: The Councilium of Prelates, the high priests of the seven largest faiths in the city (Chauntea, Helm, Ilmater, Lathander, Oghma, Torm, and Tyr).

Who Really Rules: The Councilium truly rules for the best interest of the city all those who call her home.

Population: 33,000 normally; with refugees from Mintar, the population in and around Saelmur has passed 40,000, the vast majority of which are human.

Major Products: Fruits, vegetables, seafood, minerals such as salt and sulfur (and including the magical *zardaxil*, which is extracted and refined in a secret formula from hidden sources in or around the city), dyes, and inks.

Armed Forces: In their purple tabards and golden chain-in-a-circle badges of the city, 3,000 members of the Bresmer (the Guard force, named after its founding captain) are sorely pressed to patrol the fields and orchards neighboring the city, the tent cities that have sprung up to house the refugees from Mintar, and the overcrowded city itself. All the while they are trying to prepare for possible war with the Banite forces of Mintar.

Important Features: The city lies in a natural bay in the Arnaden and rises swiftly from the water to the crests of the four hills that cap with city with spires, towers, and columns. Known as the cleanest city on the lake, Saelmur's overcrowding (and overwhelmed sewer system) have left the city, dirty, smoky, and smelly. The Saelmurrans often need to remind themselves that these matters are minor compared to what those in Mintar must be enduring.

Equipment Shops: Poor; with many more people in the city, the demand for all types of items has skyrocketed. More expensive items can be ordered but the wait is often weeks long.

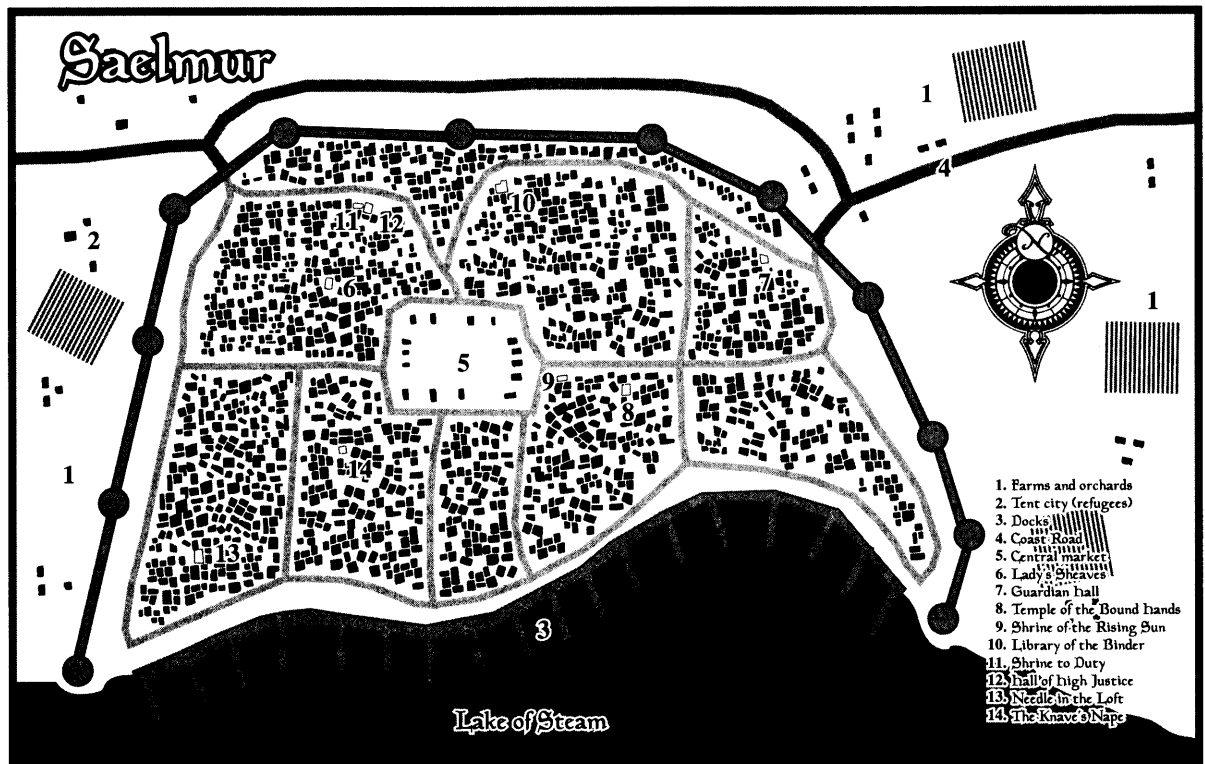
Adventurers' Quarters: The inns and boarding houses of Saelmur are packed with those refugees who escaped with enough to support themselves, and mercenaries and sellswords hoping to be hired on by the Councilium (with money the city does not have; it is difficult to raise an army when a city must first pay the cost of feeding and lodging so many displaced persons).

- The Needle in the Loft is a converted hay barn near the stables that serves thin drinks and spare meals. (It is difficult to find any meals in the city.) The place has lousy, rude service. *Quality/Price:* Poor/Moderate.
- The Knave's Nape aims itself at a higher-class clientele, as it is near the nobles' district, but the hard times have cost it much business. Fortunately, it is still the place to go when one wishes to be seen or to watch the city's elite. *Quality/Price:* Good/Expensive.

Important Characters

- Ehbryn Olossker (CG hm F16), Master of the Blade swordsmanship school in Mintar, rallied his students on the night of the riots in Mintar. He conducted them through a well-designed fighting withdrawal through the streets of Mintar to freedom beyond the walls, bringing many innocents with them. Though his students maintained a rivalry with Ilindyl's Academy of the Drawn Sword, the disappearance of that school's founder and the loss of many of his students weigh heavily on Olossker. Olossker teaches his students (and the students of Ilindyl who also fought their way to freedom, whom he has taken under his wing) an acrobatic style of slashing attacks and swift, swirling parries.
- Aradon the trader (LE hm F10) is a spy for Teldorn Darkhope and the Knights of the Black Gauntlet. Though he plays a simple trader with perhaps a too-strong affinity for drink, Aradon is both observant and quick-witted (INT 14 and Wis 14). He sits in taverns, listens, and separates the half-truths from the fiction, then asks slurred questions to guards or others he feels may have





some kernels of truths to reveal. Compiling these, he periodically returns to Mintar via a circuitous route and reports to his dark master.

Notable Mages and Sages

Many mages have made their homes in Saelmur over the years, taking advantage of the easy access to certain hard-to-find mineral substances and the spell components that can be derived from them. Many mages fleeing the tyranny of Teldorn Darkhope and his Knights of the Black Gauntlet have also decided to stay in Saelmur, at least until the city of Mintar is retaken by the forces of good.

- Enthos Raziir (N hm M4) is a displaced citizen of Mintar who only wants to go home, but not for the reasons most refugees from the occupied city claim. Enthos wishes to return in order to banish the marilith demon he and his late mentor Kosmal Ontos (CN hm M14) summoned into the subbasement of Ontos' mansion and bound within a magic circle. In the chaos of the Banite coup, Ontos was killed by a panicky mob that blamed magic or mages in general for the death of the Murlistar. Enthos fled the mob but could not return to the mansion as the mob sacked it after Ontos' death. The crowd never found the magically hidden summoning chamber and Enthos believes that the demon must still be trapped there, unable to leave the circle and unable to return to its home without being dismissed by either Ontos or the young Raziir.
- Taziq yn Maliz (NG hm M12) has lived in Saelmur longer than anyone can remember, just as his modest two-story stucco home has been there as long as anyone living can recall. Taziq was a hunted man in Calimshan over 100 years ago—he was caught in the harem of a very rich, very jealous sultan—and he fled to the safety and anonymity of Saelmur. He knows not why he has lived

so long, but he just seems to age only very slowly. He can be injured just like anyone else, and he requires the normal time to heal, but he sometimes considers the possibility that he could survive what would be a fatal injury to another man. Nevertheless, and he is in no hurry to test the theory.

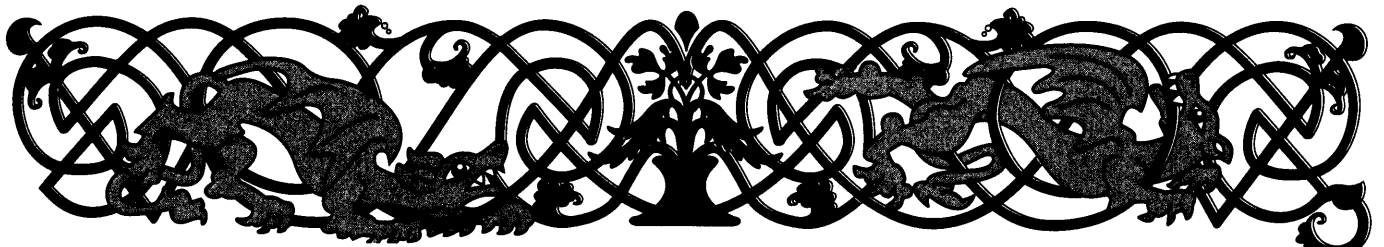
- Adder Blacksnake (CE hm M8) is an old adventuring companion of Teldorn Darkhope, from before the time when Teldorn's god chose him for something grander. Blacksnake knew Darkhope well and called him friend before they had a falling out over shares of magical treasure after their group defeated an ogre magi. The adventuring party split soon afterward, with Darkhope settling in Mintar and Blacksnake in Saelmur. Blacksnake knows how Darkhope thinks and bears only ill will toward the man whose career seems to have leapt past his.

Notable Clergy and Churches

The seven churches all have sizable congregations and considerable influence in the city. The high priest of each temple also sits on the city's Councilium.

- The Lady's Sheaves, a temple to Chauntea near the central marketplace is run by Thera Goldencom (NG hf C12 of Chauntea) and her staff of priests. (A few druids live in the fields themselves, nurturing the crops and protecting them from blights.)
- Guardian Hall, a temple to Helm, has been virtually besieged by worshipers since the refugee tide from Mintar came to the city several years ago. The temple complex is supervised by Genos Stoutshield (LG hm F9), a thick, strong, older man who is one of loudest proponents of war with Mintar on the Councilium. He states in his loud, authoritative voice that wiping Mintar clean of the stain that now soils it will save lives in the long run.





- If the temple of Helm has been besieged, then the Temple of Bound Hands, a temple to Ilmater, has been overwhelmed in an endless sea of homeless and downtrodden. Instances just such as these are what Illian Jargos (NG hm C9 of Ilmater) is trained for. Though the temple's coffers nearly have run out under the tide of refugees, Jargos knows his power will provide for those in need.
- Shrine of Rising Sun, the temple to Lathander, is led by Santan Argath (LG hm P11 of Lathander), who feels that the evil in Mintar has too long been allowed to hide behind the city's walls. He preaches that the light of the Morninglord and of freedom must again shine in Mintar before the darkness spreads further.
- The Library of the Binder, the temple to Oghma, enjoyed one of the few boons from Mintar's fall. The Oghmanytes escaping Mintar brought as many tomes and scrolls of knowledge, faith, and music as they could carry, adding this material to Saelmur's already impressive temple library. The Oghmanytes from Saelmur pressure the temple's leader, Presman Taliemin (LG hm P14 of Oghma), to rally to the aid of the Oghmytes operating the resistance movement in Mintar, but Taliemin has yet to pronounce his decision regarding war now versus war later.
- The Shrine to Duty, led by Athelstan Meidos (LG hm Pal13), who wants war, wants it bad, and wants it now. In several Councilium meetings, Meidos has threatened to mobilize the forces of his temple and attack Mintar without additional support if need be. His advisors and the Councilium have managed to talk him out of it thus far, but the paladin's already-thin patience regarding war with the Banites stretches thinner each day.
- The Hall of High Justice, the temple to Tyr, is led by the one-eyed Thallon Geiros (LG hm P16 of Tyr), who lost his eye to a Banite priest almost two decades ago. He knows war will come, but he is wise enough to know that Saelmur cannot stand alone and hope to defeat Mintar. Another party must enter the fray—Tethyr perhaps, if they can be prompted to launch an attack at the Banite town of Kzelter. That would tie up much of the Knights' forces and give the Saelmurrans a chance. If the Ala-min tribe of nomads could be brought into the conflict; their noble, fierce fighters and lightning steeds could run circles around the Banite's heavy cavalry.

Notable Rogues and Thieves' Guilds

Normally, the city is so well run by the Councilium that any thieves' guild is uncovered and broken up by the Bresmer almost before it forms. In trying times such as these, however, some seek to take advantage.

The group that has managed to gain the strongest foothold in the city is the Scarlet Throats, an organization of thieves and assassins that leave their victims with cut throats and missing tongues. With shortages of most materials due to the strain of overpopulation on the city, an incredibly lucrative black market exists, and this enterprise is how the Scarlet Throats make their money.

Local Lore

Due north of the city, some 15 miles (too far from the city's walls for most refugees to feel at all comfortable), the ruined city of Treshla rests like the unquiet dead. The town was obliterated in 1101 DR by a pod of beholders that came out of the Thornwood, destroying every building down to its foundations, reducing it all to dust.

What the beholders failed to do though was to destroy what they had come there to wipe out. A lair of spellweavers (MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM *Annual, Volume One*), ancient enemies of the behold-

ers from Realmspace, had been within Treshla. But by the time the beholders arrived, the spellweavers had fled far underground, to deep tunnels they had found and expanded. Though unheard from in years, the long-lived spellweavers may still lurk far beneath destroyed Treshla, waiting for what only they know.

Other entrance ways to the deep underground, and perhaps even the Underdark (maybe that is where the spellweavers went, say some sages), may be here, waiting to be explored. Some even suggest an access point to a drow nation can be found in the Saelmur area.

Suldolphor (City)

This is the easternmost city of Calimshan is not technically a part of the Land of the Lions, yet its proximity to the Lake of Steam places it geographically with the cities of the Arnaden, hence its inclusion in this chapter. Furthermore, Suldolphor the Golden is a wealthy and intrigue-ridden stone city of tall spires and independent ways. It pays lip service (and grudging taxes) to Calimshan, but its folk not-so-secretly consider themselves masters of their own city-state. Long important as the guardian of the Suldolphor Strait, linking the Lake of Steam and the Shining Sea (a narrow passage of water also known as the Strait of Storms or the Wide Water), Suldolphor is a city of almost as much importance as its citizens think it wields.

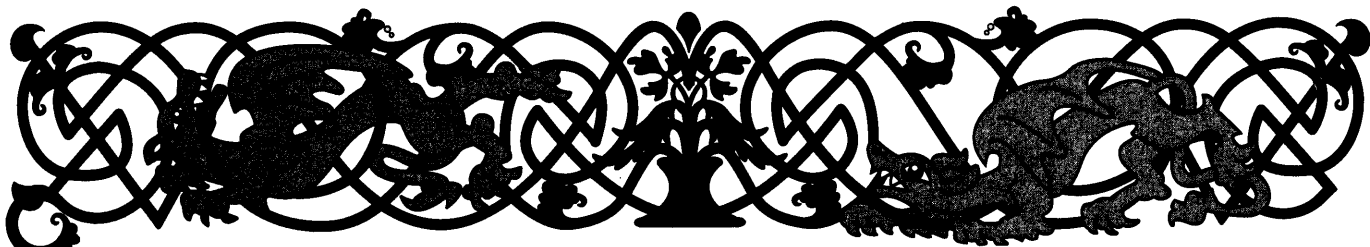
Among the cities about the Lake of Steam, only Ankhapur can rival Suldolphor in the rankings of the largest and richest cities in the region. Suldolphor indulges itself in the gaudiest, most eccentric and ostentatious excesses of Calimshan. Veils, rich tapestries, gilding and cloth-of-gold, gems (or paste imitations) are everywhere, dazzling the eyes. Appearance is everything; there are many bands of highly skilled actors who work for hire constantly as mourners, applauding audiences (or hecklers of a client's rival), revelers at weddings and parties, supporters and bodyguards, and so on. More is always better, expensive is impressive, and everything must be the most splendid yet or the largest.

This, of course, makes for a prominent, influential life beyond the financial reach of many, and a flourishing class of moneylenders (known as *redcoins*) has arisen whose safety is insured by their double-death contracts; if a redcoin dies, all outstanding debts must be paid to his estate doubly. Injured or beaten redcoins can charge fees to all debtors, a state of affairs that often has a moneylender surrounded by six or more bodyguards sent by different patrons, each eyeing the other suspiciously and keeping the redcoinside in a tight, always-alert cordon.

Who Rules: Suldolphor is ruled not by its fashion-setting *Foremost* (who rise and fall continuously in their endless game of oneupmanship, as judged by each other, or as Suldolphans put it, "by the eyes of the brightest") but by the *olanger*, the "Heartflame of Suldolphor," whose decrees are absolute but very seldom issued.

For the last century or so the olanger has been a wizened old lady priest of Waukeen, Daeranatha Dorluu (LN hf P14 of Waukeen). Recently disillusioned by the disappearance of the goddess, she was for years content to revel in the shows and showers of wealth around her (it was not unheard of for partying *Foremosts* to actually hurl showers of gold coins down the streets of the city), and drift her days away amused at the latest spectacle or grand scheme. Now she is failing, a mere shuffling bag of bones in her long-trained robes of flame-orange silk, bitter at her loss of spells and the youthful vigor they brought her. Talk is growing of who shall succeed the Goldmother when she finally passes away. The decrees of the olanger have always been enacted by her elite warriors, the Flame Guard—and they have always issued forth into the city to find and bring back whichever startled individual has been chosen to be the next Heartflame.





So who chooses the next olanger? The belief has always been that Waukeen reveals the chosen one by image and voice from her altar in the Wall of Coins, at the heart of Suldolphor, but that altar has been dark, empty, and dust-covered for years now, and whispers say that the dying olanger has in truth always named his or her successor. Yet what if the olanger dies without naming someone? Do the two high swords of the Flame Guard choose? No one knows, but those two veteran commanders, not young themselves, are growing very testy at the sudden attentions and offers being thrust at them. Calishite merchants are coming to visit the ailing olanger more and more often, too, and many Suldolphans see dark plots to seize control of their city in such visitations.

Who Really Rules: Real daily power in the Golden City is held not by the Foremost (the 200 or so most prominent, free-spending *foremost* merchants) but rather by their factors: agents who see to their business dealings, the security of their homes, warehouses, and investments. A wealthy merchant addresses himself and other prominent merchants as "lord" and "lady," factors are plainly dressed, no-nonsense folk who use the titles "sir" or "saer." The factors work long hours and tend to be cynical, wise in the ways of the world, and suspicious of outsiders. A visitor who tries to slip away by himself in a grand house will probably discover that the factor has anticipated this and assigned several agents to shadow the visitor closely. The factors work as rivals more than they act in concert, but they will swiftly band together to rid themselves of external threats, from visiting thieves to brigands or attacking armies or Calishite spies and tax collectors.

Population: 158,500 (total): 112,000 civilians (92% human, 8% other) plus 46,500 in nearby settlements, farms, and ranches (97% human, 3% other); grows during trade season by 38,000 (total: 196,500); additional 2,000 troops in the Flame Guard (including 800 trainees).

Sabbans/Drudachs: 39/108; like Tulmon and Yeshpek, these internal divisions matter little to the governing of the settlement now, but the walls still remain in place.

Major Products: Money, fine carvings, and blown glass.

Suldolphor is famous for its small yet intricate carvings in wood, bone, horn, and stone; many ornamental handles for all sorts of items are made within the Gleaming Gates. Blown glass pieces of slender beauty are also a valued export (of dark green hues in particular), but the Foremost and even the common folk, in syndicates known as *manyhands*, send forth their money in even greater bulk. Suldolphans invest in anything and everything throughout the Realms, backing almost all large moneylenders and a fair number of new businesses. They are popular creditors because they so seldom check on their investments or call them in. This leads to their often being cheated—but most Suldolphans have so many interests that, cheated down to a trickle or not, the net flow of incoming coins is always healthy.

Armed Forces: The Swords of Suldolphor, a militia of 16,000 commanded, trained (in use of spear, shield, sword, and dagger), and paid by the Flame Guard. The Flame Guard is the standing army of the olanger, an elite and highly trained force of plate-armored horse lancers skilled with sword, crossbow, and hand crossbow. The Flames (as Suldolphans call them) are garrisoned in the Elaph's (East) Tower and the Corondor's (West) Tower, at opposite prows (pointed ends) of the city walls. Both are full-fledged fortresses, with their own walls, granaries, walled stable yards, dungeons, and smithies. Guard units are rotated from one Tower to the other to avoid the fostering of rivalries, and they are ably commanded by the high swords, two duty commanders of equal rank, who serve in shifts (one is always on duty,

and their duty tours overlap twice a day, for an hour each time, to accommodate meetings and rituals). High Sword Golordin Maertringul (LN hm F16) and High Sword Jalasta Keelder (LN hf F14) are both wise, middle-aged, no-nonsense veterans of much mercenary duty in Tethyr and elsewhere. Both bear +2 *flame tongue* swords and are known to possess enchanted suits of armor (provided by the olanger, powers unknown).

Suldolphor's navy, the Golden Sails, is little used these days. It has become no more than a dozen fast, shallow cutters used for escort duty in the Strait and to defend the city harbor, which opens onto the Strait between Mists Gate and Spice Gate. The cutters have expert crews and are loaded with catapults and ballistae; in times of trouble they put forth, heavily loaded with Flame Guard units, whose weight is offset by floatation and stability (anticapsizing) spells developed by Neirshyn Fallowfar, the Mage of the Towers. They can boast an enviable past as swift and merciless pirate-chasers, but the present-day crews have never been tested in more than mock battle.

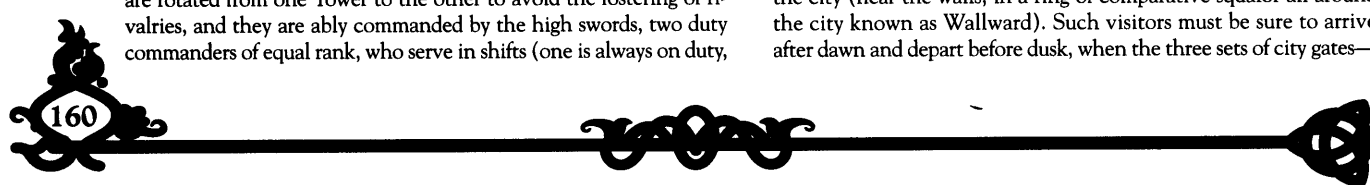
Important Features: Life in the Golden City is a glittering, endless parade that swirls around the Foremost, while common folk watch, gossip, and keep at their work. Money hoarded is money idle, and money idle is money wasted—Suldolphans *spend*. New fashions sweep in, and they spend accordingly. War threatens in some distant land, and they scurry to send agents to head it off, to keep yields high. New fashions burst into the streets, coins flow in response, and the Brightest invent new spectacles and amusements. And so life in Suldolphor continues. . . .

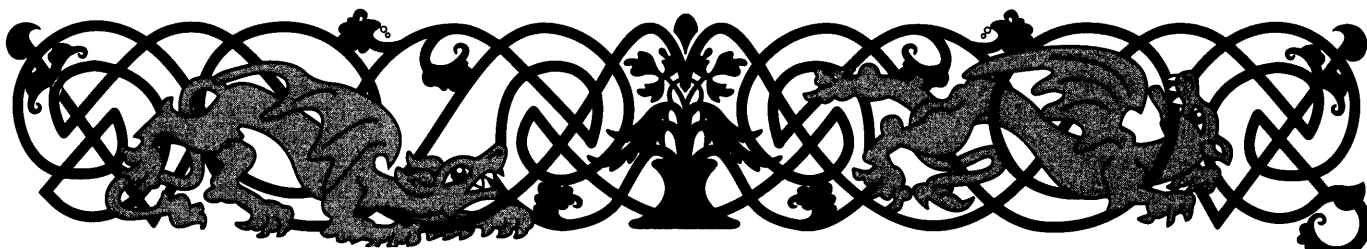
Of all the sights in rich and many-towered Suldolphor, the grandest and yet most typical is Emerald Dragon Way. A gently curving avenue that runs through the heart of the Golden City, the Way is lined with the glittering walled homes of no less than 14 of the senior and most powerful families of the Brightest. Roughly in descending order of wealth and influence, they are the Uluevryn, the Ilusprostors, the Sacrarans, the Glusters, the Narabruses, the Daraelii, the Tapralarans, the Onieles, the Klavasters, the Vustravans, the Balaeaa, the Marusters, the Guthkonts, and the Halavanrii. They form a grand (and at night grandly lit, thanks to extensive and expensive *faerie fire* enchantments) display of impressive stonework.

The Way runs for about a quarter of a mile, from Ludluth Street to Gaerul's Street. It is the heart of Suldolphor's wealth, where citizens go to stroll when they want to feel touched by the excitement of great wealth. The bones of a great emerald dragon, slain here by a forgotten hero long ago, are set into great translucent paving slabs here and there along the street, one bone to a stone, in no particular order. Strong enchantments protect the stones against thieves and would-be relic gatherers. An old legend says that folk who stand on the right stone and ask a question with all the effort of will they can muster will occasionally hear the ghost of the dragon whispering advice or even a direct answer to them.

Equipment Shops: Full (all items on PHB/DMG lists of 500 gp or less, with a fair chance of more expensive items of all sorts). Many goods rare or banned elsewhere in the Realms are available here to even the casual seeker.

Adventurers' Quarters: Travelers looking for cheaply priced establishments in the Golden City are warned flatly that there are not any. The most inexpensive way to see Suldolphor is to stay at an outlying inn and eat meals from street vendors in the seedier parts of the city (near the walls, in a ring of comparative squalor all around the city known as Wallward). Such visitors must be sure to arrive after dawn and depart before dusk, when the three sets of city gates—



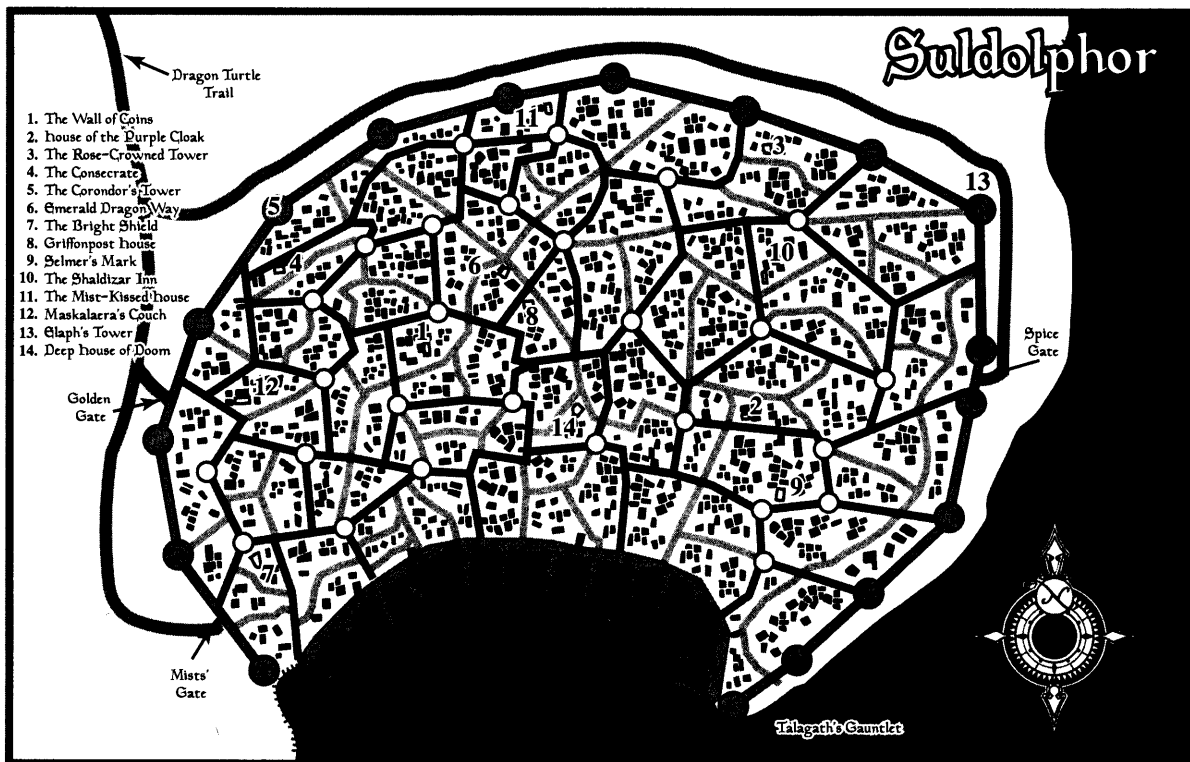


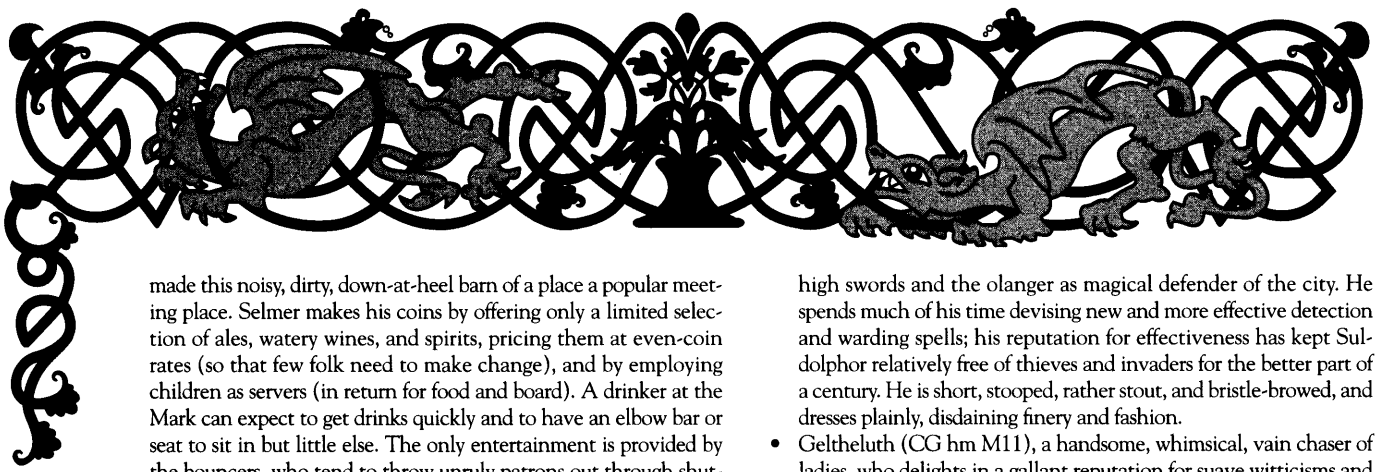
Golden Gate, which faces Calimshan; Spice Gate, which faces south; and Mists Gate, which faces the Lake of Steam—are open. Slim-pursed visitors who find themselves benighted (caught inside at night) are best advised to sleep on a roof if they cannot afford to share a festhall couch.

The city sports only 750 or so taverns but boasts 436 festhalls, 498 inns, and no less than 287 clubs (that is, members-only establishments offering drinking and dining facilities plus activities—usually centered around a theme, such as hunting or gaming). The best known of these include:

- The Bright Shield Inn. The bare metal shield symbol of this sprawling and very clean establishment welcomes all outlanders—mercenaries, adventurers, and those of risky reputation in particular. Six interconnected houses, each a tall-spired mansion in its own right, are staffed by a seemingly endless army of polite, attentive, and swiftly skillful young citizens. Proprietor Ruldigul Prestar, rumored to be a disguised mind flayer or to have many close dealings with illithids, maintains a school to train his staff. Medical services, warm baths, and secret rooms to hide out in are all available. House security includes at least two shifts of powerful adventurers demonstrably capable of dealing even with magical emergencies, so guest misbehavior is rewarded by detention, fines, and/or ejection. *Quality/Price:* Excellent/Expensive.
- Griffonpost House Inn. The sign of the griffin's head on a post welcomes patrons to the most popular and widely known inn in Suldolphor. This is a large, clean, and soundproofed place favored by almost all wealthy caravan merchants. Suites feature entry audience/business office rooms from which patrons can readily conduct trade. Heavy-item carrying squads are on staff and available at all hours. *Quality/Price:* Excellent/Moderate.

- The Shaldizar Inn. The sign of the golden scimitar (whose blade is so exaggerated that a warrior could barely lift it, were it a real weapon) heralds from afar the site of the currently trendy (and overpriced) place to be seen staying in. The "Shalda" boasts flashy, gaudy furnishings (fireveil hangings, enchanted musical chimes, glossy-polished curved "floating" staircases, forests of sensual statuary) and scented air (thanks to spices and perfumes thrown into the warm fires). The Shalda is dominated by laughing and flirtatious social climbers at all hours. *Quality/Price:* Good/Expensive.
- The Mist-kissed House. This festhall and inn purports in public to be a private home. Its low-key, half-timbered exterior conceals a cozy yet large establishment (six houses joined together) that features discretion, veiled niches to hide in when others approach along the heavily carpeted corridors, and an attentive staff that comes and goes soundlessly by means of secret passages, including in their ranks a doppelganger who can, for an extra charge on the bill, impersonate anyone of a guest's choice for a short time or specific task (such as leaving the House by one exit, just before the person they are impersonating leaves by another). *Quality/Price:* Excellent/Expensive.
- Maskalaera's Couch. This festhall/inn/tavern is a noisy, always-crowded house of revelry that caters to the wilder-than-thou crowd and is always a riot of noise. Complaints over the years have forced the owners to purchase adjacent buildings and turn them into warehouses, creating a small district whose alleys are perilous by night. Privacy is almost nonexistent, though many seem to find this feature attractive. *Quality/Price:* Fair/Moderate.
- Selmer's Mark. This tavern, frequented by the less-well-heeled (or just fiscally prudent) citizens and visitors, is a large, centrally located house of flagons. The acceptable prices and swift service have





made this noisy, dirty, down-at-heel barn of a place a popular meeting place. Selmer makes his coins by offering only a limited selection of ales, watery wines, and spirits, pricing them at even-coin rates (so that few folk need to make change), and by employing children as servers (in return for food and board). A drinker at the Mark can expect to get drinks quickly and to have an elbow bar or seat to sit in but little else. The only entertainment is provided by the bouncers, who tend to throw unruly patrons out through shuttered windows—without opening them first. *Quality/Price:* Fair/Moderate.

Important Characters

- Caulgrith Narueto (LN dm F10), a dwarf of unusual breadth, literally wider at the shoulders than he is tall, whose arms and calves are as thick as those of a muscular full-sized human male. Caulgrith is a smith and jeweler of legendary skill who specializes in fine detail work and in duplicating the look of existing metalwork and jewelry, both for repairs and to make copies. His shop is on Pelaerel Street, and he seems never to sleep (though some whisper that he has a twin brother who pretends to be Caulgrith when the real bearer of that name is sleeping).
- Irrith “Twocoins” Dravvan (CN hm F8), a handsome, sarcastic, agile man who was once the richest young heir in Suldolphor. Duped out of all the Dravvan money, right down to the last two coins, Irrith literally picked himself up out of a gutter and set about getting it all back. It took him 16 years and many brushes with both the authorities and rivals, but Irrith Dravvan is now wealthier than he was at birth. He refuses to resume the idle gaiety of the Brightest, however, and lets his devoted sisters see to his investments while he remains the shady fixer of deals. His quest for his lost coins made him into a man who specializes in finding lost things quickly, knowing people and getting information from them in return for things they want to know, and in learning rather more about most large and important Suldolphan deals and investments than the participants want anyone to know about.
- Dustras Uluevryn (NE hm T6), haughtiest of the Brightest. A tall, slender man of sneering ways and amply voiced disdain, Dustras is one of the wealthiest self-made (as opposed to family wealth) merchants in Suldolphor. He considers himself superior to old-blood nobles from elsewhere in Faerûn, and he seems simply too bored for continued existence with life, wines, the world, and everything (though he seems to find a way to face each new dawn). His long fingers drip with rings, his robes are always new and spectacular, and his glib tongue and idle manner conceal very swift wits and a ruthless willingness to manipulate events and people to increase his personal wealth, regardless of the cost to anyone else in all Faerûn. Dustras is always curious about newcomers to the city (and the possible opportunities they bring with them), but he never wants to appear so. He spies through others or from afar and waits for the overeager to approach him.

Notable Mages and Sages

Suldolphans regard wizards as useful and powerful but best celebrated elsewhere; they can *destroy* so much hard-won wealth with a few ill-chosen words or a power-driven loss of temper. Mages are best kept to distant cities, or sworn to serve Suldolphor, like trusty old Fallowfar. . . .

- Neirshyn Fallowfar (LN hm M15), the Mage of the Towers, a studious but shrewd, rather humorless scholar-mage who serves the

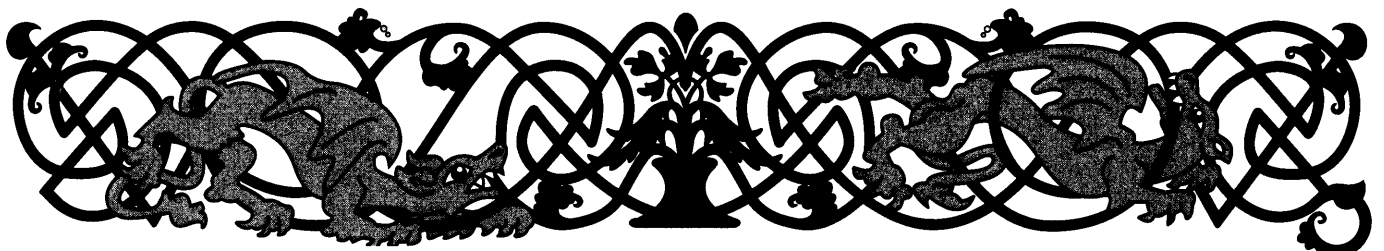
high swords and the olanger as magical defender of the city. He spends much of his time devising new and more effective detection and warding spells; his reputation for effectiveness has kept Suldolphor relatively free of thieves and invaders for the better part of a century. He is short, stooped, rather stout, and bristle-browed, and dresses plainly, disdaining finery and fashion.

- Geltheluth (CG hm M11), a handsome, whimsical, vain chaser of ladies, who delights in a gallant reputation for suave witticisms and smooth conquests. He is always in style, always in the know (or, pretending to be, with a catlike smile and raised eyebrow), and casts spells for hire (charging merchants very stiff fees, never going adventuring or venturing outside the city walls). Although he refuses to undertake magical spying of any kind, it is widely rumored that he commands several enchanted creatures to watch over, and listen in on, private Suldolphan business affairs for him.
- Ballaera Heerilyte (NG hm M10), a curvaceous beauty who is widely believed to have gained her present good looks through magic and is known to some as “Tentacles” because she has devised a spell that allows her to shoot very long, strong, eel-like tendrils from her palms that can grip or deflect weapons, trip or hamper foes, and allow her to climb or reach for seemingly impossible distances. Contrary to rumor, she never uses them for thievery, spell-casting, or intimate moments. Although she loves parties and flirtations, no one can convincingly claim to have been Ballaera’s consort. She specializes in discreetly gathering information for fees—and is rumored to be able to convincingly adopt far less pleasant forms for days at a time. One such form, it is whispered, may be her true one.
- Embril the Identifier (LN hm M9), a fussy, paranoid wizard who makes his living identifying items or their properties (magical and otherwise) in return for stiff fees. He dwells in a dingy old house that bristles with shooting-spike traps and with guards—both human and helmed horrors. He looks older than he really is and secretly loves gossip; he often uses spells to pry about the city, seeking unwarded chambers that contain interesting conversations. He has been known to pay certain innkeepers to leave unwarded the chambers used by their most interesting patrons (adventurers, for example).

Notable Clergy and Churches

- The Wall of Coins, an empty, echoing shaft of dust and dark shadows, still sheathed in panels of beaten gold and cloth-of-gold draperies (and guarded night and day by fully armed and armored members of the Flame Guard). Once it was revered among Waukeenar for its floating altar—a block of solid gold as large as a man’s coffin—from which the echoing voice of the goddess rolled forth from time to time (and which can still spit chain lightnings if anyone tries to move it or attack it with spells or tools), but it has stood empty for years now, and Suldolphans have even adopted the expression “as empty as the Wall of Coins.” Its clergy are all gone from the city, and many citizens welcome the ending of its former role as unofficial court of trade and mercantile rule maker. Its rulings always favored the status quo and those who were already rich and powerful, at the expense—literally—of the small or struggling merchant. Even so, they would rush back to worship Waukeen, were her glory somehow restored.
- The House of the Purple Cloak, a many-pillared formal temple joined to a sprawling, luxurious mansion dedicated to the worship of Sharess. The social center of the jaded sensualists among the





Brightest of the city, staffed by clergy who are tireless organizers of new and fresh events. When all of their talents are mustered, the priests are experts in music, cooking, dance, and all pleasures of the senses (from arranging visual spectacles to combining scents—sometimes they have held night-long scent symphonies in darkened chambers). This temple is wealthy and influential; there always seems to be more than a touch of envy in the tones of those Suldolphans who sneer at it as an undisciplined, godless orgy house. The House is guided (that is, ruled with an iron but behind-the-scenes fist) by Priestess of the Purple Cloak Hallabra Burune (CG hf C14 of Sharess), a tall, patrician woman who affects a frosty and formal public manner but is known to be lusty, athletic, giggling, and an excellent mimic when the temple doors are closed and the revels underway.

- The Rose-Crowned Tower, a small but energetic temple of Lathander wherein the larger a donation one makes, the higher the level of tower room in which one is allowed to pray to the Morn-inglord. (Those who drink from the chalice of sacred wine in the uppermost chamber are rumored to be heard directly by the god.) The temple clergy is almost exclusively male, and these Lights of Lathander have acquired a reputation around the city as revelers of the first rank. They wear all the latest fashions, always cut from, or adorned with, rose-red cloth. Most High Mornmaster Elurthron Belsurd (NG hm P14 of Lathander) presides over the local Lights.
- The Deep House of Doom, a small but dedicated underground temple to Beshaba, is reached through heavily guarded passages that run from the cellars, secret back stairs, and closets of several festhalls and taverns. It is thought to underlie the triangular block of shops (a variety of establishments, all with apartments built above them) bounded by Elabralal, Milindral, and Nousoorn Streets. Mistress of Dread Shalarlane Druistrar (CE hf C12 of Beshaba) is in charge of the Cloaked Ones, as her clergy are locally known. They go about the city by night, donning caps adorned with racks of antlers to denote the hand of the goddess working through them. They seek to instill fear by offering casual menaces wherever they go, which is usually taverns, inns and, festhalls. All of those establishments have capable security forces to either keep them out—a tactic that attracts the determined attention of the temple—or more often, to limit their parades of dread to a token one or two appearances per night.
- Small chapels to Gond, Sune, and Umberlee stand in the Consecrate, a walled garden hard by the Coronador's Tower, entered through the Hall of the Arch. This Hall contains a leper house, an infirmary, and a hidden chapel (to Ilmater). Like the chapels and all else in the Consecrate, these are overseen by the saintly, always-exhausted Ansimmer Belold, known to all in Suldolphor as "Father Allfaiths," although he is in truth a revered brother of Ilmater (LG hm C12 of Ilmater). Ansimmer tends the sick and injured of all races and creeds and is the most loved person in Suldolphor—certainly almost the only person in the city whom a street full of citizens would unhesitatingly leap to aid or defend.
- Shrines to many deities can be found around the inside city walls, in the form of small niches adorned with idols, inscriptions, and altars. Offerings are customarily watched over by militia ready swords of the appropriate faith before being gathered by Father Allfaiths (with a well-armed Flame Guard escort). Proceeds are distributed to local citizens of each appropriate faith that he deems the most needy (or to the highest-ranking priest of that faith). On some occasions he is forced to keep offerings in storage until a visitor of the

right faith comes to Suldolphor; in such cases, he purchases any perishable offerings at the current fair market price and adds these funds to what he holds in trust. There has never been any suspicion of his keeping money or misdirecting such funds; hence, some call Ansimmer "the One True Man in Suldolphor."

Notable Rogues and Thieves' Guilds

Insider dealing and the covert cascade covering of loans (lending money one does not have by borrowing from someone else under false pretenses) is widespread, but organized thievery is rare. All Suldolphans work together to report suspected thieves, in a degree of cooperation rare in Faerûn. A Flame will be sent for when a suspect has been apprehended or has escaped, rather than citizens expecting the Flame Guard to do their daily policing for them.

A successful (that is, still living) rogue in Suldolphor tends to be a sharp merchant, not a cutpurse or snatch thief. Three centuries or more ago there was briefly a Slavers' Guild, which delved into fencing stolen goods under the alias "the Fetch and Reach," but a dozen factors banded together to hire mages enough to magically interrogate captured Fetch members. Each and every Reacher was hunted down and slain on the spot. These very public executions have served as an enduring lesson.

Tulmon (Town)

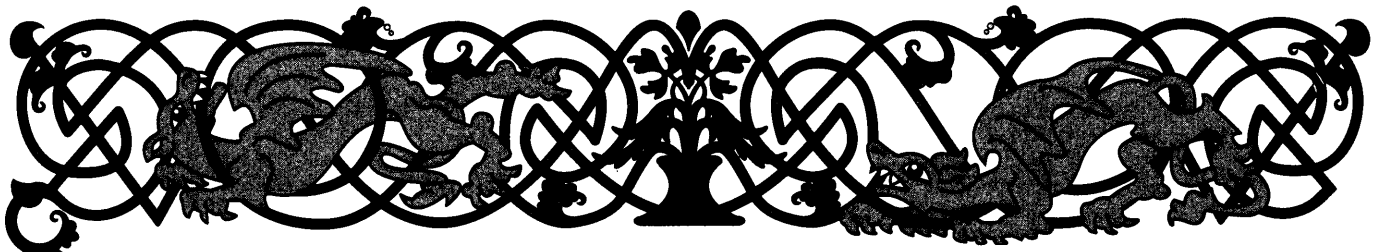
Another Calishite town linked to this region by the Arnadar, Tulmon stands in the lee of a long, low rocky plateau known as the Shoulder of Lehreng. (In local legend, Lehreng was an always-hungry giant who lived on the Shoulder "a thousand thousand years ago," of whom horrific stories are still told to enthrall children.) Tulmon of the Spears dominates the shallow, muddy Bay of Balefires. Named for the long-lived plumes of volcanic smoke that arise once or thrice a year from its sulfurous waters, the Bay is the first shoreline feature of any consequence along the south shore of the Lake of Steam, westwards from the Suldolphor Strait. It has other names, but to Tulmonites it is always the Bay of Balefires.

From its beginnings as a cluster of shepherds' and fisherfolks' huts, Tulmon has become a quietly enduring feature of the Arnadar landscape. Dismissed as a town of dull-witted peasants by citizens of larger and brasher centers, Tulmon is a small city almost entirely built of stone, with tile roofs and cobbled streets. As one would-be raider said, "There's very little that meets the eye in Tulmon that'll burn." Surprisingly, it is also a quietly industrious center of learning, art, and book publishing, ruled by a sultan from his rich and opulent Manticore Court (named for the enchanted guardian stone statues that flank its entrance, and the principal throne within), where reading and witticisms are highly valued.

In the past, under the Calavarr, Tulmon was a center of power and influence, but it lost several wars with rival cities once its cruel ruler was gone (and his mighty spells with him). Its western half has long lain in abandoned, undead-haunted ruins known as the Crypt City, and the rebuilt city walls exclude the haunted streets that were once the Sunset Quarter and the Gardens Quarter of Tulmon.

Who Rules: The present sultan of Tulmon, Arkanuirr Tchallern (LN hm M11, though he keeps his magical skills as secret as possible). He is a fork-bearded, effete man whose age has been magically prolonged (he has ruled for some 300-odd years) and who makes most use of his harem these days as dramatic readers of the latest books he has procured. Arkanuirr is a wise observer, a skilled diplomat and orator, and a careful, unambitious man. His skills at bowing





and fawning have kept Tulmon from openly becoming an enslaved satellite town of Suldolphor the Golden. He is the great-grandson of the first sultan, Anganather Tchalem, who won his title by defeating the infamous Calavarr.

The Calavarr was a cruel archmage who ruled the city by means of his spells and fear. He was the developer and keeper of the dread Anglatha of Tulmon, a magically altered captive deepspawn that disgorged only small beholders, which the Calavarr controlled with spells. (There are persistent tales that the Anglatha had offspring or was magically cloned. In other words, other deepspawn may exist who can produce beholders by the score. If so, no evidence of their output has yet been identified.) Arkanuirr owns some of the Calavarr's magical rods, staves, and wands, passed down to him as family treasures, and has been known to use them in times of great personal danger. He has in the past slain both an ambitious priestess of Loviatar who intended to magically enslave him (and through him, the city), and he has eliminated an unscrupulous Calishite pasha who intended to establish a slave-breeding operation in the Sultan's Citadel, replacing the sultan with a doppelganger.

Who Really Rules: Tulmonites prefer to overlook the fact that the Manticore Court is almost entirely financed by the Brightest families of Suldolphor, and that the leading citizens of Tulmon in truth function as hired craftworkers of those glittering merchant clans. Thankfully, Suldolphor's olanger and her Flame Guard have worked to prevent rivalries among the Brightest from becoming open struggles or mercantile wars in the cobbled streets of Tulmon. They have successfully balanced the ambitions and plans of one faction or investment cartel against another. Tulmon can therefore claim independence and exist free of Suldolphor garrisons or official visitations—but what the factors of Suldolphor want produced, the craftworkers of Tulmon create.

Population: 26,000: 25,200 civilians (95% human, 5% other) plus 3,400 in nearby quarry camps, fruit farms, and sheep ranches (98% human, 2% other). At the height of the summer trade season, Tulmon's populace can reach a height of 44,600 (in most years, the total is 37–38,000); additional 800 troops in the Stone Spears.

Sabbans/Drudachs: 11/46; like Suldolphor and Yeshpek, these internal divisions matter little to the governing of the settlement now, but the walls still remain in place.

Major Products: Sheepskins and dyed wool, cast brass and bronze, assorted metalwork.

Tulmon is famous for its stamped and rolled bookbindings, corners, and surrounds (of locks and handles affixed to furniture elsewhere), and for its flexible metal sheets, made for use in the pages of books meant to last—such as spellbooks. The fruit, mutton, and building stone produced in the countryside around the City of Spears is almost all consumed in Tulmon, not exported.

A few decades ago, zombies and skeletons were animated by priests of Myrku in initiation rituals and left to wander the Crypt City that lies to the west of Tulmon. This was the main reason for the recent rebuilding of its walls. The undead subsequently were exported from the wharves of the City of Spears by certain enterprising Suldolphor merchants in “blacksail ships.” They were taken to Chult and various southern ports for sale as mindless worker slaves. Since the local temple of Myrku (after a brief flirtation with the faith of the Dark Sun, locally known as Cyruk) embraced the worship of Kelemvor, the supply of shambling undead has dwindled to almost nothing. Adventurers hired by Suldolphor interests to scour the crypts met grisly fates when they encountered animated augmented undead, created earlier by Myrku-

lyte clergy, who merged the skeletal remains of various monsters into many nightmare-inducing creations.

Armed Forces: A militia of 4,000, commanded and (minimally) trained by the standing army, the Stone Spears (foot lancers armored in chain mail and skilled with broadsword and crossbow). The Spears are garrisoned in the two gate towers of the city, Bloodarch Gate (which houses 200) and the Lehrgate (150), and in Spearpoint Tower (3,650), which stands at the end of the longest wharf in the harbor and is equipped with both ballistae and catapults of sufficient range to menace all nearby ships. (It has been years since they have seen battle, but the Spears often sink leaky barges for practice).

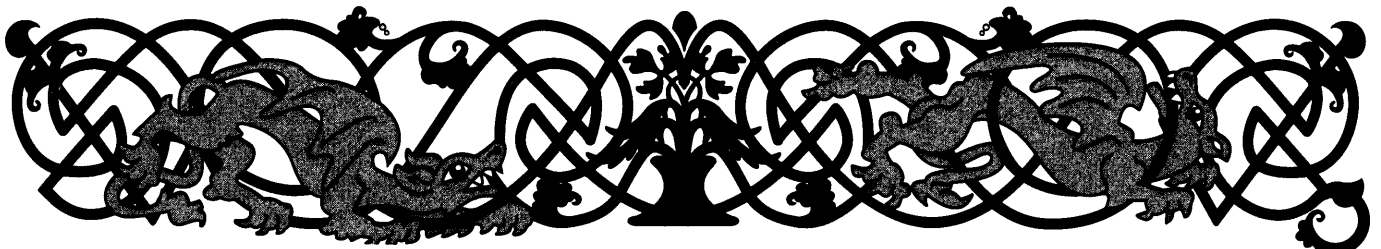
The Spears have a good reputation for policing the city and patrolling the perimeter of the Crypt City, but they are regarded as slow, unimaginative (and therefore easily trapped and ambushed) land troops. In particular, their few brigand-hunting expeditions have not been famous successes. They are led by the Olembarlar, Grymmon Borlethgar (LG hm F17; STR 17, CON 18), a gruff, grim veteran who sports a magnificent mustache and even grander coat of plate armor. He marches with his men, stands six-and-a-half feet tall, and fights with a two-handed sword of awesome reach and weight, despite the fact that he is over 80 years of age. Rumors insist that he is kept alive by the divine aid of Helm or Torm or perhaps Tempus, but the truth is far simpler: His ancient enchanted armor (won by him from an old tomb in his long-ago adventuring days) can *heal* him when he desires it to, once every three days. If he uses this power when unwounded, the magic renews and strengthens aged organs and arteries, reversing the effects of aging. To maintain its power, the armor must drain the life of a sentient creature every so often. To prevent that life from being his own, Grymmon goes forth from the city alone to seek out monsters and grapple with them. Thus far, he has always come back.

Important Features: The Citadel of the Sultan, an old and grim stone keep with deep walls and a stout stone defensive wall, frowns down on the walled Peacock Gardens where the sultan's airy summer house stands. Covered walkways link the Citadel gates with the Peacock House, and it in turn with the Manticore Court, which is housed in three linked buildings (and includes a grand feasting hall, a throne chamber, a dozen or so audience chambers, robing rooms, and extensive kitchens). The visitor can readily recognize the Court from afar by its rich blue stone facing, even before the shrieks of the strutting peacocks in the gardens behind are audible.

To the west of present-day Tulmon, beyond the city wall, lies the Crypt City, the deserted (and undead-haunted) ruins of the older, larger Tulmon. Visitors are warned that although few undead are seen in its overgrown and rubble-strewn streets these days (thanks to the concerted efforts of the local priests of Kelemvor), certain merchant cabals and smuggling societies use the ruins to hide goods, money caches, or message drops. They tend to react to intrusions with ambushes of hired bladesmen, or at the very least street youths hurling stones, or merchants firing crossbow bolts from windows of buildings on the other side of the wall, in the living Tulmon of today.

Southwest of the city, amid several squat, bare hills, lie quarries that yield the hard yet durable black stone for which Tulmon is known (as well as the occasional vein of pure, soft copper, and—more rarely—a cluster or two of gemstones). Visitors are warned that these pits are watched over from rickety wooden towers, by folk expert at seeing the smallest change in the familiar ground they oversee, and who can see quite well in all but the deepest darkness. They also are guarded by secret means, said to involve both disguises and monsters—mimics, perhaps, or doppelgangers. The stone is regarded as the





property of Tulmon, not something outlanders should be able to seize or even survey.

Tulmon proper boasts at least two businesses important enough to warrant any traveler's attention: the Dashalam Winery on Arblood Street (source of the rich ruby wines and sherries so popular locally) and the House of Golada. Under the eagle eye of wrinkled old Hegleira Golada, widow of its founder Fflaerin, this factory produces thousands of little round tins of Golada's Fish Spread, sold around the Lake of Steam and throughout the Border Kingdoms. Golada tins have porcelain lids that one smashes to unseal them and get to the highly spiced fish mash within. The strong-smelling (and stronger-tasting) mash is an acquired taste, but many folk around the Lake of Steam love what envious merchants have dubbed "Golada gold."

Equipment Shops: Full (all items on PHB/DMG lists of 500 gp or less). A few metalwork goods rare elsewhere in the Realms are available here to even the casual seeker. Copies and forgeries are more likely to be found here by the discerning and persistent seeker than in all but the largest cities of Faerûn.

Adventurers' Quarters: Accommodations in Tulmon tend to be spartan but elegantly designed and outfitted, showcasing the skills of local windowmakers, carpenters, and lampmakers. The best known of these include:

- Garmuth's Golden Gauntlet. This festhall/inn is immediately recognizable by the man-sized brass replica of an upright human, gauntleted right hand, closed into a fist, that stands in the center of its lobby (visible whenever the double entry doors are open). This is the place hard-working Tulmonites go when they want to play hard. The evening dances are sometimes interrupted by brawls, and on most mornings the balcony-lined ballroom is littered with snoring revelers who fell wherever exhaustion overtook them. Party suites and private bowers (rentable rooms) separate the noisy, usually packed ballroom from two much quieter wings of rooms for guests to sleep in. This is *the* meeting place for Tulmonites who want to have fun—and to be seen having it. A discreet, numerous, and skilled security staff (led by several ex-adventurers) prevents theft from overcome patrons. *Quality/Price:* Good/Expensive.
- Havalanker's Tavern. An old, dimly lit place of dark booths, confusing internal layout, and generous flagon sizes, this is the traditional favorite of visitors and wealthy Tulmonites alike. It is still the best place for covert negotiations, despite its increasing shabbiness and dwindling clientele. Havalanker's serves full meals, but expect them overcooked, with the dryness covered with thick gravy. *Quality/Price:* Fair/Moderate.
- The Wemic and Wineskin. This tavern is the noisy, bustling place to be seen for young, rebellious, and in-fashion Tulmonites, especially those who embrace Suldolphian fashions or seek to make a break with the rules, traditions, and vocations of their families and elders. A few spiced buns are the only food available; it is drinks all the way here. Brightly lit, crowded, and about as private as a very busy marketplace. There are some who insist the Wemic actually is a very busy marketplace. *Quality/Price:* Good/Expensive.

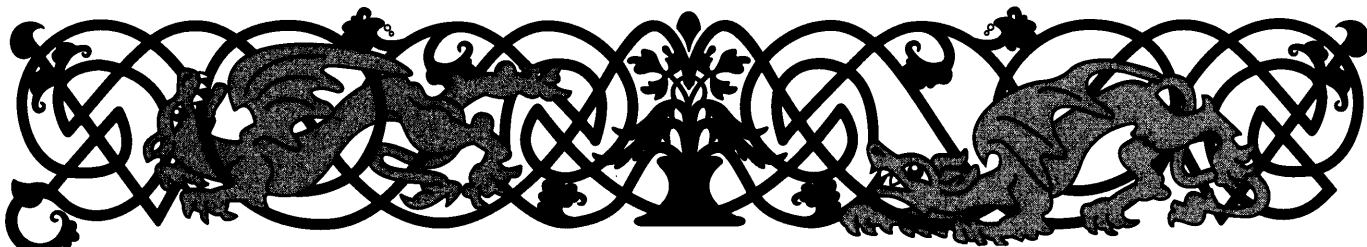
Important Characters

- Halandras (NG hm F9; STR 18/26), a strong, kindly smith and warrior for hire, only too glad to leave his anvil for a little adventuring. Honest and slow to anger but wary of manipulation by adventurers who hire him, he is possessed of a handy secret: He has an amulet sewn under his skin (just where, he will not say, but the scar that overlies it is probably in the midst of one of his many tattoos) that

allows him to use a *word of recall* spell, cast on the amulet by a 15th-level priest of Lathander (whom Halandras worships and has done much service for). The spell will whisk him back to the chapel of Lathander in Tulmon, where he knows the whereabouts of a secret panel behind which rest quite a few potions of healing. Halandras will use this the instant he detects foul play on the part of his employers, or when their adventures together have landed him in a hopeless situation (such as wounded and caught in a trap or cornered by a monster he cannot prevail against).

- Roabrel Mememitur (CN hm F5), an oily, glib-tongued fixer (agent among merchants who gets things done, on either side of the law, by a mixture of manipulation, bribes, threats, vandal and bully gangs, favors, and telling the right things to the right people at the wrong time). A rival once described him (accurately) as "a handsome Calishite fop whose pointed mustache pries into every third business deal in Tulmon." He has many enemies but is too useful to Tulmonites for the prudent among them to harm; they snarl a lot instead.
- Khaligeira Moonthumb (CG hf F12), a bored and therefore reckless lady adventurer who hails from Turmish and spends her days when not on the adventuring trail fishing and gardening. She has more or less retired here because of a magical curse that causes eel-like tentacles to sprout from her back and arms from time to (usually inopportune) time—Khaligeira avoids answering questions about this. She spends her days training would-be warriors and outfitting adventurers and caravan travelers in her crammed shop, Moonthumb Necessities, on Ooloolar Street. She is the chief supplier of rope to Tulmonites and can produce almost every known piece or tool of adventuring gear from the cellars and back rooms of the shop. Her cheshleek soup is legendary—as are her right uppercuts when someone tries to take advantage of her. She once, on a bet, knocked cold an entire platoon of the Stone Spears, one after another, each with a single punch. Many adventurers are proud to have her as a friend . . . and so is the sultan.
- Dalaskiviir Sureiet (properly pronounced *Sur-AY-yet*, but Dal—as every local knows him—prefers to pronounce it *Sur-REET*—but only for himself, not his kin; CN hm F4), a slim, sardonic, graceful and dashing breaker of hearts who seems well on his way to becoming a clear leader of the younger generation. He is a rebel who will defy the sultan and take Tulmon down different streets, to a future independent of Calimshan, Suldolphor, and everyone else. A visionary whom many label as dangerous, Dal's dreams include a new kingdom with Tulmon at its heart. "The lad needs a good dose of reality," one old merchant said recently. "Life isn't all revels and young willing lasses and running about looking handsome (or at least mine wasn't). He has managed to ignore that truth, though, far longer than most can. Perhaps he is favored of the gods."
- Horomel Ibrin (NE hm T3), the quiet, stuffy, conservative Scribe and Speaker of the Merchants, their envoy to the sultan and negotiator in matters of trade. Thin, ascetic, balding, and thin-lipped, seemingly always in the act of disapproving something, Horomel is beginning to show his 40-some years. Only money and the raw lash of power, brazenly wielded, are known to excite him. His eyes burn when such excitement is aroused. Most Tulmonites count him a skilled diplomat and a dangerous foe.
- Orloro Tullamas (NG hm F4; STR 17, CON 18), a barrel-fat dry goods merchant of booming voice and perpetually chuckling manner. He often describes the breadth of his wares as spanning "from





gloves to grain, and candles to carts.” Orloro is Horomel’s nemesis, representing younger and smaller merchants who like to make their own deals and stay out of the deeper politics of trying to influence the sultan and have a heavy hand in the running of the city. Old-blood connections and the traditional state of things, wherein Suldolphor has a hand in everything through a few old and rich families, are what Orloro is trying to smash and sweep aside forever—whether or not he must smash and sweep aside Horomel to do so.

For his part, the scribe is tireless in his attempts to catch Orloro in violation of the sultan’s law so the justice of the Manticores Court can be brought to bear on his impudent, unrepentant rival. Horomel is apt to paint any outlanders who visit Tullamas Sales on Shandlas Street as “sinister agents of some dark brotherhood that the villain Tullamas consorts with, in treasonous activities against our fair sultan.”

Notable Mages and Sages

Tulmonites tend to regard wizards as craftworkers whose work is overly expensive and too dangerous for everyday practical use. They think wizards have a distressing tendency to take airs and think themselves too important to follow trade rules or the laws of the sultan. They tolerate local mages but do not welcome visiting wizards. “We’ll ignore the spells you have the good taste not to cast,” a famous Tulmonite warning goes (from the play *The Red Rages of Ozooone Stormspells*), “but before you think to topple towers, think on this: Just how many hurled stones can your spells ward away or blast aside? We have a lot of stones.”

- Tlanaggathur the Conjuror (CE hm M18), a secretive, seldom-seen man whose time is devoted to the summoning and control of creatures from elsewhere. He uses them to fetch him items he desires (usually enchanted items or rare substances useful in the castings of certain spells) from all over Faerûn. The gates of his walled mansion bear eight painted black hands, and Tulmonites whisper that each one marks the death of a wizard who came seeking to seize Tlanaggathur’s magic. Thayan merchants who visit Tulmon, it has been noted, always go to stand in front of those gates and frown at the painted hands.
- Daera Nythlyn (NG hf M13), a kind, friendly woman who acts more like a shopkeeper than a sorceress of power. She can be seen shopping or enjoying a tankard in local taverns every day—protected by no less than a dozen flying hands (skeletal human hands, like crawling claws, but able to truly fly) that can swarm out of her cloak to defend her if the need arises. She gardens, casts the occasional spell for hire, and studies spells in her small cottage (the door of which is known to be a stone golem). On rare occasions, perhaps once every dozen years or so, several masked and cowléd figures arrive at her cottage by night. Strange lights are seen at its windows, muffled explosions sometimes shake the vicinity, and the cottage is generally shut for a month or more thereafter. Who these visitors are, and where Daera goes with them, are mysteries that Tulmonites prefer not to pry into. The Lady Nythlyn is a useful friend that they’d prefer visitors did not pry into the affairs of, or hire any of them to help spy on or do ill to.
- Sakrysta Golthard (CN hf M9), a fierce-tempered, eccentric mage of wild black hair, wilder garments, avid passions, and a thousand get-rich-quick schemes (for herself, not to involve others in). She is forever hiring adventurers to rush off into the wider Realms in search of this lost bauble or that forgotten tomb, to bring back to her the one item that will make her wealthy and powerful. So far,

she has gained a handful of curses, some small benefits, a decade of slavery to a lich whose clutches she escaped only by great luck and trickery, and a strange ochre jellylike creature she keeps in a chest and only releases rarely. When it crawls slowly over her skin in place of normal garments; it seems to confer special abilities (including increased mastery of magic), but it is believed that the creature exacts its price by drinking of her vitality.

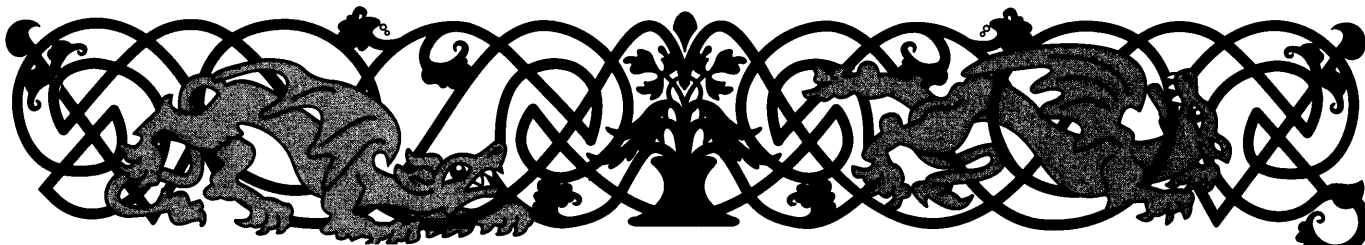
Notable Clergy and Churches

- Skullspire, a temple to Kelemvor. Formerly it venerated Myrkul, and briefly Cyruk (Cyrlic), before cleaving to the worship of the new Lord of the Dead. A slender needle tower of black stone that stands on the leeward slope of the Shoulder, overlooking both Tulmon and the Crypt City, the Bonethrone (as Tulmonites disparagingly label it) is today a quiet place, much lessened from its former, dark energy. Its priests spend much time in the Crypt City, destroying the fell undead created by their predecessors but also, Tulmonites whisper, using their own spells to guard certain areas of the crypts. These places, it is said, are used as secretive meeting and storage places by certain covert merchant cabals and organizations active in Tulmon, who pay the temple well for such services. The Skullspire is presided over by the grim, gaunt former adventurer Doomlord Esprelus Morammon (LN hm C13 of Kelemvor), who often comes down from the temple to walk the streets of Tulmon in solitary contemplation, in the dead of night.
- The House of Cogs and Hammers, a small, newly established temple to Gond that Tulmonites are a-buzz about. Many have flocked to its services “just to see what’s befaling.” The craftworkers of the City of Spears have a natural affinity for new and practical business ideas, tools, and ways of doing things. The local children just like watching the clockwork assemblage over the temple gate, wherein belts turn cogs that cause hammers to strike gongs, bells, and metal balls in an endless chiming cacophony. Local farmers are lining up to place orders for the spiral bell ascenders, which can lift water up hillsides to livestock troughs. Master Kalavdan Talast (NG hm C12 of Gond), a thin, stooped man with a knack for visualizing things that do not yet exist—and their consequences—is in charge.
- Small chapels to Chauntea, Lathander, and Oghma stand on the Street of Balls, all overseen by the sultan’s officer of holies, the fat and motherly Tresha Duaetorna (NG hf F2), a onetime believer in Ao and failed Waterdhavian adventurer. They receive as much local support as the larger temples, thanks to the local belief (encouraged by the sultan and his officer of holies) in personal, unassisted worship.
- Shrines to Waukeen (still venerated despite widespread local belief that she is dead), Tempus, and Umberlee (to assuage local storms on the Lake of Steam).

Notable Rogues and Thieves’ Guilds

Tulmon has no overt thieving organizations and no colorful, prominent local rogues. It is not a city that values excessive revelry or eccentricity. This is not to say that many illegal activities (that is, actions designed to evade the sultan’s decrees or his taxes) do not go on—it is just that it is done not by masked ruffians at night but by merchant cabals behind closed doors, directing quite open activities. Forgery is an increasing local talent and increasingly popular local service. Some Suldolphor factors send agents to Tulmon purely to take advantage of it.





Yeshpek (Fortified City)

Northwest of Tulmon “along the road to nowhere” (as a sarcastic Suldolphian song once put it), the coastal fortress-city of Yeshpek commands Bezrim Bay from its good natural harbor. The City of Chains (so-called both for the chain it produces and its suspicious, fortress attitude) raises purple banners to the world, each adorned with a circle of silver chain. A number of northern mapmakers and commentators have misspelled Yeshpek as Yeslipek, due to the blurred nature of their primary source map from the Fifth Age of Calimshan. This is not the sole error, as Lake Weng in Amn has been Lake Neng or Lake Menaj on several occasions, as well.

The citizens of this trading and fishing center have a reputation for defiance of authority, reckless, belligerent behavior, and they are often to be found elsewhere in the Realms as (generally undisciplined) mercenaries or caravan guards. Their city is a rather drab place of square stone buildings unadorned by carvings or frills, containing only cobbled streets, high metal fences, and locked gates. Nightly tavern brawls are common, and large numbers of Kardryn, the city guardsmen (armed with iron stunning bars that easily serve to do rather more than stun), can usually be seen restoring order with brutal efficiency.

Who Rules: The khaldomaun of Yeshpek, a ruler more often known as “Old Stoneface” or “the king of Yesh.” The current khaldomaun, Ilbaerth Malklyn (CG hm F9; STR 17, CON 17, CHA 16), is a large, bearlike man who once crafted canes and crutches. He spends many nights drinking and hiring visitors to tell him news of events elsewhere in the Realms. A khaldomaun can renounce his office by breaking his rod of authority, or he can die on his throne. In either case, a new khaldomaun is chosen from candidates called forth by the Kardryn from among the citizenry. Ten are selected (some say the first ten to walk past); they can be of either gender but must be Yeshen born and bred, and they cannot be Kardryn or related to any of the guards. Their names are put down on a ballot, the Kardryn march them around the city to make short speeches (the guards use the butt ends of their stunning bars to ensure brevity), and the citizens vote for a new khaldomaun from among them.

Who Really Rules: Yeshpek is a nominally independent trading and fishing center (largely trading in crab and clams, not just the more familiar silverscales fish, with their arrowhead shape and nutlike flavor) that kneels to the needs of whichever factor of Suldolphor or pasha of Calimshan is closest and speaks most loudly. In practice, Yeshpek appears defiantly independent on the surface but follows Suldolphian decisions “as well as an old and reluctant servant,” in the sour words of one Yeshen moneylender.

Population: 23,200: 19,000 citizens (85% human, 15% other) plus 4,200 in nearby quarry camps, fruit farms, and sheep ranches (88% human, 12% other). At the height of the summer trade season, the population of Yeshpek can rise to as much as 38,000 (in most years, the total is nearer to 29,000); additional 700 troops in the Yevven Riders (including 100 trainees).

Sabbans/Drudachs: 6/23; like Tulmon and Suldolphor, these internal divisions matter little to the governing of the settlement now, but the walls still remain in place.

Major Products: The folk of Yeshpek craft many small, everyday goods (from jugs to belts and sharpening steels to carry-coffers) in bulk, selling them by the sackload to visiting merchants. The city is known for its exports of sturdy (if simple) locks and finely wrought chains.

Armed Forces: Yeshpek has no militia. The 1,200-strong guard known as Kardryn (*ratcatchers* in an old local dialect), or more officially as the Swords of Justice, serve the khaldomaun. They wear dis-

tinctive purple-dyed leather armor, serve as the personal bodyguard of the ruler and as the city guards (police), and they are led by two Swords (officers of equal rank, who serve the waterclock around in shifts): the tall and quiet Haslet Quarren (NG hm F12), a master anticipator and strategist, and the fiery-tempered Dalanthla Dreirst (CN hf F10), a former adventurer famous for her skill at hurling daggers—or pots, or whatever is handy—hard, fast, and far. She has been known to hit targets as precise as a warrior’s weapon-grasping fingers or a sleeping guardsman’s nose.

The Kardryn are trained by the Yevven Riders, the standing army of Yeshpek (plate-armored horse lancers skilled with scimitar, javelin, and hand crossbow). The Riders are garrisoned in the Crownarch, a walled stronghold and stables that occupies the southwestern corner of the city. They are commanded by the bloodthirsty, hungry-for-action high rider, a raven-haired seven-foot-tall warrior who (legend insists) sleeps in her armor. High Rider Lassratha Nalorth (LN hf F14) dreams of leading Yeshpek to victory in a war that will humble both Suldolphor and Calimshan and make the City of Chains truly free at last, with herself at its head. She is wise enough to know that this is but a dream. Nevertheless, under her iron command, the Riders conduct themselves as if they were the elite troops of some vast empire, riding constant patrols of the countryside around Yeshpek in 40-strong battle bands. Such patrols carry powders that can turn the smokes of pre-prepared beacon fires different hues to signal different things, summoning reinforcement patrols swiftly if the need arises.

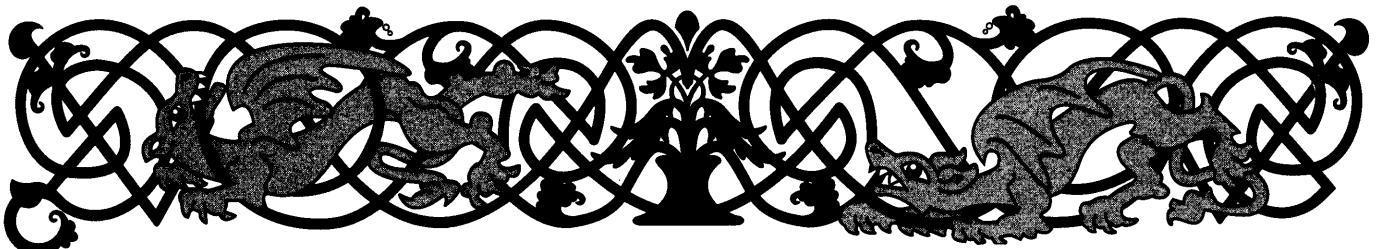
Important Features: The khaldomaun rules the city from a large domed circular palace, the Drestin, that also houses the currency exchanges and moneylocks (banks) of Yeshpek. All trade in Yeshpek is done at the khaldomaun’s favor, and he takes a copper (known as “the one-copper shave”) off every transaction in the city. In return, he keeps the peace, sending the Swords out tirelessly to hunt down every thief, swindler, and no-coins-for-a-month debtor in Yeshpek, keeping the city relatively safe and honest. This enables his citizens to set seriously about the task of getting rich.

The common Yeshen view is that free spending or any ostentatious display of wealth is foolish and wasteful. (They refer to Suldolphor as the City of Idiots.) Many of them have large fortunes hidden away in the walls and cellars of their homes. Increasing numbers of citizens are daring to trust the moneylocks with their funds (attracted by offers of high interest), but the majority still hide their coins. Some do so behind golems and other expensive defensive measures, fearing an invasion of the city may happen any year. The general Yeshen view of life is sour and pessimistic.

Besides the palace, there are no buildings of beauty in Yeshpek. In fact, the only sight of interest for the eyes of a visitor lies in the high-domed central hall of the Drestin: a gigantic floating octopus, preserved and gently animated (so that its tentacles curl and wriggle) by spells. It was slain in the city harbor. It is said to mirror the mind of the khaldomaun sitting beneath it; when he is agitated, it thrashes about, and when he is amused, it ripples its tentacles in lazy rhythm. One city legend says it holds the khaldomaun’s treasure, and another that it is animated by the watchful life essence of the hired wizard who enchanted it long ago, or even the undead sentience of the first khaldomaun. It is certain that its beak holds a coffer containing healing potions and other magic, which the ruler can draw down with a summoning word, for various khaldomauns have been seen to do this before their assembled Court.

Equipment Shops: Full (all items on PHB/DMG lists of 500 gp or less). Large and valuable items may not be easily had here, but tools





and small hardware of all sorts (and, of course, chain of any size and length) can be had here in a greater variety of sizes, hefts, and handedness than all but the largest centers.

Adventurers' Quarters: Yeshpek has few accommodations to welcome travelers, but many seedy rentroom houses are used by the laborers who dwell in the city. Most citizens eat their meals at stalls and well-windowed shops in the streets, dining on cold soups (fish and vegetable cream soups, made from a base of goats' milk), fried breads, scorched meat skewers, and date-and-fruit syrup confections. Yeshen folk tend to sit down to eat only in private, when courting or celebrating, or when they go to taverns in the evening and want a bite to eat between drinks. They typically dine upon whole fried baby crabs, clams, or scorpions with their stings chopped off and poison let out.

Visitors can find other services, too. Yeshen folk tend to eagerly direct sources of potential trouble (adventurers) to the places set up to deal with them. The best known of these include:

- The Fairshorn Wheel Inn. This is a very old and widely known place of grand pretensions and growing shabbiness; entire floors are now closed off, and cleaning is kept to a minimum. Suites are large and labyrinthine, with walk-in closets, alcoves, and sidechambers everywhere. The inn still has the best stables in Yeshpek, and the horses receive better attention than guests. For those who want to be left alone, the Old Wheel can be ideal. *Quality/Price:* Fair/Expensive.
- Malasarr's Wayhouse Inn. This is a frankly ramshackle collection of old stores, houses, and stables linked together with wooden catwalks, open-to-the-air back stairs, and rickety covered walkways. Rooms are simply furnished with cots and stone oil-pool lamps (over which many guests cook, causing a reek of food odors that can quite pleasant or ghastly), and they share access to a stinking outdoor privy. All chambers are furnished with doorbars so patrons can shut themselves in against unwanted intruders (who in more than one instance have simply broken in through the flimsy walls instead). Safe for groups of travelers only but a boon for the budget-minded, rooms can cost as little as four coppers, or a copper a head if shared. No food is available, but washwater is provided. *Quality/Price:* Poor/Moderate.
- The Dancer's Blushing Mask. This festhall/club is a swinging, partially underground place that is quiet by day but a roaring revel by night. It is staffed by a score or more pretty ladies who enjoy dressing up in costumes, though they always remain masked to conceal their identities. (A bold patron once tore off the mask of a lass in his arms, only to discover that she'd painted a second mask under it, on her skin!) The Mask is the place to be in town. Guests may pay as much as a dozen gold pieces just to get in the door, but most Yeshen men prefer to pay the 30-gp annual club membership, which buys them a wardrobe closet and access to a shared robing room.

Members come here to dance, flirt, and drink as they might in a dozen other places in the city. However, here they are encouraged and expected to dress up as someone else (with the assistance of club costumers and makeup artists). A short, timid, aging man who makes lamps by day may emerge from a robing room as a barbarian swordsman, a swaggering paladin, or even a blushing maiden. Visiting mages are allowed to charge whatever fees they care to (no split with the house; the coins are all their to keep) to cast illusions and other disguising magic. Much loud playacting goes on in the Mask, but the Kardryn have ordered that there be no more mock pirate raids or visits

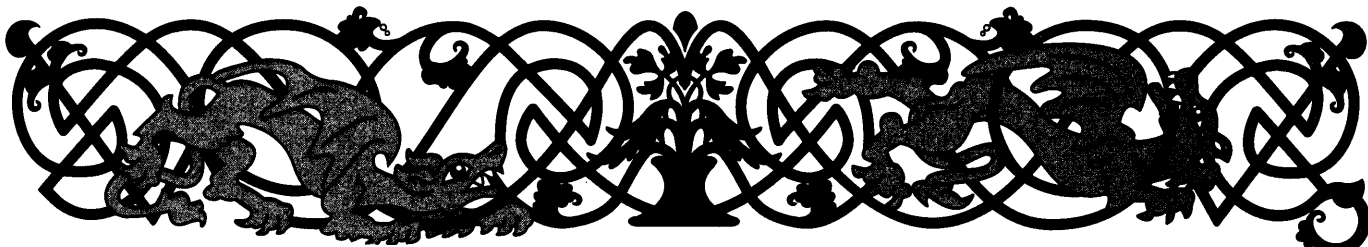
by "evil knights bent on hostage-gathering"—once weapons are waved, folks get hurt, and there were several fatalities during previous enthusiastic enactments. Only the ladies on staff know the layout of the many hidden passages and curtained-off bedchambers. *Quality/Price:* Excellent/Expensive.

- Hyderfaulcon's House. This tavern is a grand façade, and the flashy uniforms of the staff cannot hide the fact that this is a dirty, drafty barn of a place where drinks are watered down and the only food offered (roasted-with-nuts quail in gravy) is so salty that one cannot tell if it is burnt or raw. Apt to be noisy and crowded because to many Yeshen workers, low prices (a copper a tankard, across the board) are everything. *Quality/Price:* Fair/Cheap.

Notable Characters

- Malango Durlurleth (CG hm F11), a fast-talking, handsome (if overweight) rogue of a merchant who is always a deal or three ahead of his rivals. He is one of the traders who makes things happen in Yeshpek, representing craftworkers who will not leave their shops to deal with investments and agreements that should be handled in person. Malango knows where to find everything that can be had in Yeshpek—fast.
- Akhenauben Bolphur (LN hm F3). One of the most prominent craftworkers of the city, Akhen is famous for his silverwork, chiefly ornamented and engraved bowls and flagons whose inscriptions are personalized for gifts. Folk come from all over the region to get Bolphur silver, and Akhen has become a spokesman of sorts for the crafters of Yeshpek in matters of trade and local law. He is not known for his sense of humor or his tolerance of folk who want to dicker: His price is his price. Deal seekers had best try elsewhere.
- Saersword Magalar (NE hm T7). A long-haired youth of style and agility, Saersword would be handsome indeed if one side of his face were not pockmarked from a childhood disease. As it is, he is all glib-tongued bitterness, quick to manipulate others, and bent on outdoing his idol, the infamous Elaith Craulnobur of Waterdeep. He can call on a gang of bully toughs if need be, and he customarily employs children as his spies.
- Illythe Haudamar (NG hf T4), the elderly proprietress and owner of the Dancer's Blushing Mask. She is a wrinkled but pleasant lady with a gorgeous voice and a weakness for handsome young visitors. She can spot deceit and manipulation a day's ride off, and she is also a shrewd judge of the finer sentiments and emotions. Knowing she cannot possibly spend all the coins the Mask has made for her before she dies, she is quite happy to invest as her heart and interests bid, not looking for the best return. This has made her the sponsor of a dozen adventuring bands and twice that many Yeshen craftworkers (most of them widows or abandoned women). She is beloved of 50 or more citizens, who will do anything—including laying down their lives in her defense—for her.
- Alithraeya Devryn (CG hf F6), a wide-eyed and enthusiastic would-be adventurer who is always star-struck by visiting real adventurers. Her grace, beauty, and swiftness with a blade (but mainly her beauty) have made many such bands accept an offer of her services for free (in return for room and board) on "just one" expedition. Alithraeya loves the danger and the thrills and the attentions she receives, and it seems Tymora watches over her: Even when the adventurers she is with meet with misfortune and doom, she always seems to survive unscathed, to return to the taverns of Yeshpek and await the next party to happen along. Harper agents have twice investigated her to make sure she is not some fell monster out to lure





folk to their deaths, but they have found that she is just what she seems to be: a wide-eyed lass who loves adventures and the folk who undertake them. She is an honorary member of no less than 20 adventuring bands, and she has a trophy case of membership rings, charter citations, badges of arms, and symbol-decorated helms and shields to prove it.

Notable Mages and Sages

Yeshpek does not welcome wizards or other “lightworking folk” but grudgingly sees their usefulness as deterrents to brigands and would-be Calishite conquerors. Two mages of might are permitted to dwell in the city; one serves the khaldomaun, and the other is attached to the Riders.

- Imyskaulder Malaraun (NG hm M11), a kindly, flowing-bearded, impressive-looking man who loves stylish robes, listening to others, and giving gifts to children and the poor when no one is watching, by night, in the streets and alleys. “Too nice a man to be a mage,” one Harper (a traveling minstrel) recently judged him. His position gives him the power to rule the city through a magically dominated khaldomaun, or turn himself into a master-of-the-Kardryn petty tyrant using a title such as vizier, but Imyskaulder would never dream of such doings. Why be hated for being cruel?
- Uliskh Belarra (LN hm M10), a bald, withered young man of poor health and ugly looks, who disguises himself magically to go out and woo the women of Yeshpek on evenings when loneliness overcomes him. (On such occasions, he sometimes comically overdoes the gallant good looks part of his preparations.) He is devoted to—some would say manic about—the security of the city and the well-being and readiness of its forces, constantly striving to bring about this or that tiny improvement or 36th contingency plan or to make sure of a spare gate spear.

Notable Clergy and Churches

- The Bright Anvil, a small, quiet temple to Gond that reaps an impressive steady income in small-coin offerings from almost all Yeshen craftworkers. It divides its income equally between seeing to the sick and needy, and in encouraging new inventions, designs, and methods of working. All matters are conducted under the astute and caring judgment of Old Leather-jaws, Master Gadalut Mitheir (LN hm C12 of Gond), a retired warrior who is himself a master of small and delicate smithwork, who often makes replacement parts for the insides of locks and similar exacting items.
- The Bloody Sash, a new but as yet empty and unpopular temple to Ilmater. Its clergy asserts that Yeshen goods are the everyday tools that enrich civilized life in Faerûn, and that the craftworkers of Yeshpek should trim the profits they take so as to make their wonderful wares available as cheaply as possible, even for free in some worthy cases. (They call upon beggars and down-on-their-luck travelers, for instance, to succor those most in need and to spread word of the godliness of Yeshen folk). Most citizens are of the opinion that, despite daily spectacles of street processions carrying priestesses stretched on racks, the temple will remain neglected, its teachings falling on deaf ears, until Revered Mother Hervanda Suulrath (NG hf C12 of Ilmater) of the Sash realizes that Yeshen folk love the wares they craft and the money they earn more than anything else. If the Sash turns to exhorting believers to engage in self-mortification and the doing of small, anonymous monetary kindness,

the Ilmatari will find guilt enough among citizens, and they will gain eager worshippers.

- Small chapels to Helm, Lathander, Loviatar (many Yeshenites let out their tightly controlled frustrations by flogging statues, slaves, themselves, and each other), and Torm stand along the winding Way of Trumpets. Each has a handful of clergy, and each is already wealthy and steadily growing in popularity.
- Shrines to Umberlee and Waukeen, administered by the Holy Ones (scholars attached to the staff of the Drestin, who were once haughty and high-ranking priests of Waukeen).

Notable Rogues and Thieves' Guilds

Anyone who tried to establish any sort of thieving network in Yeshpek would be torn apart by the enraged citizenry. Fear may cow individual Yeshenites once or twice, but utter disgust at someone not willing to toil honestly to create something they can take pride in, to earn a living, will ultimately drive them to slay or drive out such misfits. Yeshen feelings run deep, cloaked by a quiet, forbiddingly unfriendly manner. Travelers take note.

Yhep (Fortified Independent Town)

Who Rules: High Lord Abalzmer Harauntan (NG hm F4), a curly-browed, gruff old trader who is well liked by the citizenry of the town.

Who Really Rules: The high lord, aided by the rest of the town's ruling Harauntan family.

Population: 9,000 (last tax rolls); though in summer the population can rise as high as 13,000; over 95% of the people of Yhep are human.

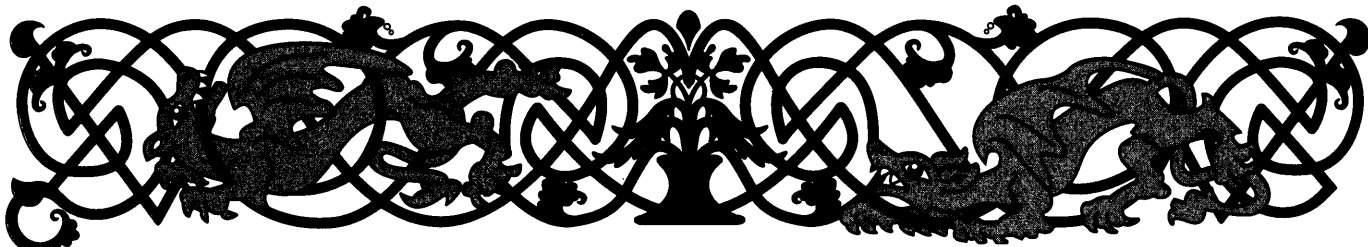
Major Products: Seafood, jewelry, trade (and associated industries), and the world-famous scarlet pearls of Yhep.

Armed Forces: 700 Constables enforce the Harauntans decrees in the town, and a 250-member Harbor Watch patrols the harbor and oyster beds in special, magical strike boats.

Important Features: The most unusual feature of the town of Yhep is that a small yet significant part of the town actually sets atop high, strong stilts. The buildings are linked with rope and wood bridges, and laddersteps built onto or carved into the stilts allow the fisherfolk and oyster farmers, who comprise most of stilt town's residents, to access their vessels. These buildings are lightly constructed and can be damaged by high winds. The stilts are sunk very deep however, so even if a resident loses his home, he can simply rebuild atop the stilts that endured the storm.

The Yhevvan harbor watch keeps the harbor, the fisheries, and the oysters beds safe with unique craft called strike boats, invented almost a century ago by a Harauntan mage. A version of the *levitation* spell is cast on what seem to be large, high-gunwaled rowboats or small, single-masted sailing craft. This raises the boat's hull out of the water, exposing sleighlike runners beneath. These boats then run before the wind on the runners, which allow them to attain unprecedented speeds.

The Harauntan family's yacht is much larger but operates on the same principals. It bears two masts but most often relies on the five *decanters of endless water* mounted to the vessel's stern: When the command word is spoken, the *decanters* release their contents under extreme pressure down and into the water. This grants the craft speeds never before seen on the Arnaden.



Equipment Shops: Full.

Adventurers' Quarters: Though lacking the depth and variety offered by cities such as Ankhapur or Innarlith, the comparatively quaint Yhep presents the wandering adventurer with numerous choices.

- The Scarlet Pearl offers plush private rooms, veiled snug booths for private discussions of all types, perhaps the best seafood to be found on the Arnaden, and wine imported from across Faerûn. *Quality/Price:* Excellent/Expensive.
- The Open Oyster offers a twist on the accommodations offered by normal inns: no chairs or tables, just piles and piles of pillows of all sizes. Trays are brought for those who order meals (Calishite dishes are the specialty of the house), and lovely young attendants fan with peacock feathers those who become uncomfortably warm. *Quality/Price:* Good/Moderate.
- The Dancing Lion offers simple fare for simple needs: good food, a pleasantly dark and cool atmosphere, and fine drinks. No ostentation, no preoccupation with style over substance. *Quality/Price:* Good/Cheap.

Notable Mages and Sages

- Zalazel Harauntan (CG hf M10) is the ruling family's chief mage (talent for the Art seems to run in the family) and chief magical protector of the town and its precious oyster beds. She keeps a large house in the town but actually lives most of the time in one of the largest stilt houses, built in the shallows above the town's beds of pearl-producing oysters.
- Malakos (NE hm M5/P4 of Xvim) seems to be one of the town's itinerant mages, concocting potions for lovesick merchants and contraceptive quaffs for the children of wealthy merchants and pearl traders. He is actually in service to the Godson of Bane and the Twisted Rune, though not necessarily in that order.
- Yashiira of the Talu-min Lion tribe (CN hf M2) is one of Zalazel's most talented apprentices, but the girl's wild spirit has proven a trial to her mistress.

Notable Clergy and Churches

- The Hand of Azuth, the temple to the god of mages, is run by Lydeia Harauntan (LG hf P9 of Azuth) and serves as the ruling family's official place of worship.
- The Guardian's Post, the temple to Helm, is led by Imingo Deiros (LG hm Pa19), who maintains a strict watch on the community for signs of any infernal beholder cults arising again in or around Yhep. The place seems to have been cursed through the course of history with the eye tyrants, baiting good, decent folk with unkeepable promises of wealth or their vile magical powers to rally behind the evil orbs and do their bidding.

Notable Rogues and Thieves' Guilds

The Lightfingers are a family-based group of thieves, catburglars, and pickpockets whose traditions go back six generations, when a Harauntan cheated a member of this (then noble) family of an inheritance. This family, the Dabichis, fell on hard times, lost its noble status, and swore revenge on the Harauntans. The original members' descendants have continued the practice to this day.

This family of criminals captures the essence of the gentleman (or fair lady) bandit. They only rarely accost victims in the

street, instead preferring to steal from homes of the wealthy, whether those homes are occupied or not. More than one victim of this family has happily exchanged a valuable heirloom for a single kiss from an attractive, masked burglar.

Important Characters

- Jakkob, a werehyena (from the AL-QADIM® MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM appendix) was captured for a wealthy Calishite's zoo while in animal form. Upon his first chance, Jakkob slew his captors and fled for the wilds. He reached the Land of the Lions and found a pack of hyenas, which he took over by killing the former leader in combat. Jakkob then began using his new pack to prey on the Talu-min tribe's herds of sheep. Before too long, the Talu-min's trackers found the pack and killed them. Jakkob was able to escape, changed his form, and fled to the town of Yhep, where he now leads the town's wild dogs on night hunts in the sewers and beyond the walls. What his next move will be is unknown, even to Jakkob.
- Tazmon Iridar (N hm F0) is a spy sent by an unknown party in the Border Kingdom city Derlusk, to steal the secret of Yhep's scarlet pearls. Oysters grow throughout the Arnaden, but few produce pearls, much less the bright scarlet ones that are so coveted by the wealthy along the Sword Coast, in Waterdeep, and beyond. Tazmon has hired on as a fisherman to get close to the oyster beds. He hopes to steal a few oysters by swimming out to the beds one night and then be picked by a small craft sent by his employer.

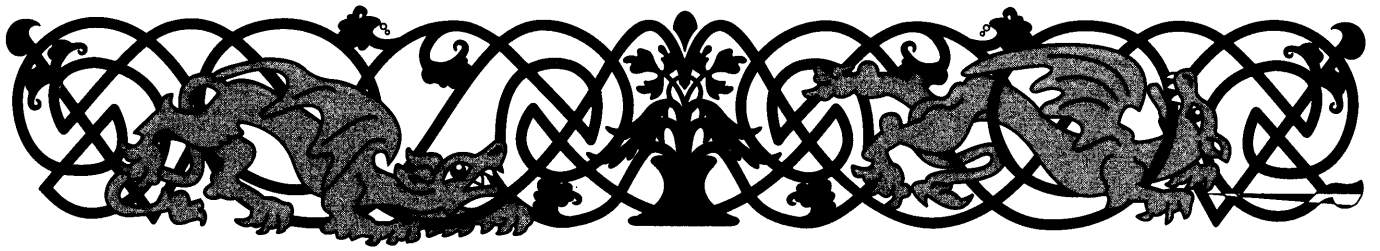
Local Lore

Alas, all is not as well with Yhep as the Harauntans, the clergy of Helm, or the citizenry would hope. The beholder of the Thornwood, Vaxall of the Dying Gaze, has sent minions to Yhep, and the corrupting lies they tell have found ears eager to listen.

The reason neither the Harauntans nor the priests of Helm have uncovered the fledgling beholder cult is because it is growing from the one source none would ever think to scrutinize: the Harauntan clan itself. At least one member of the family has (willingly or via a *charm*) converted to the side of the beholders and has been using his (or is it her?) position in the town to organize and recruit members for the cult. With the power of Vaxall and the money of the Harauntan clan, can anything stop another power-mad cult of fanatical, *charmed* orb followers and the eye tyrants that rule them?

Several times in the history of the region (particularly in or around Yhep for some reason), the beholders' promises of power, an overthrow of the wealthy, and equal riches for all their deserving followers have found dark responses in peoples' hearts. Those the eye tyrants cannot seduce, they either *charm* or destroy. They build their cults in secret, hiding their followers from the light until they have built their legions to the level where they can pour out of the sewers or caves or up from the slums to conquer and kill. During the Eye Tyrant Wars, it took the combined might of nations and races to finally smash the power of the beholders in this region. Will such measures be called for again in the near future?





Appendix I: Power Groups

The governments and the upper classes of Calimshan's city-states are not the only folk with political and social influence. While the ruling class, led by the syl-pasha, tries desperately to hold on to and control all the power with an iron grip, much of it slips through their fingers and into the hands of many others. While they are not formally considered to be ruling powers by anyone, these power groups remain omnipresent, and most people are well aware of the influence of at least the boldest of them.

Adventuring Companies

In and of themselves, adventurers do not formally comprise power groups among the Empires of the Shining Sea. They wield a not-significant amount of social and monetary influence, however, as they are sources of both legendary tales and wondrous lost magic. Adventurers were once outlawed during the Shoon Imperium, and for many centuries after that, but they are now only moderately censured, as many of them are either barbarians from the northern lands or wanderers and escaped slaves. Still, with the right sponsors and patrons, an adventuring company can easily find itself mixing with the ruling classes, entertaining them with recent exploits and perhaps displaying a magnificent piece of found jewelry. Many adventurers laugh at themselves or each other for traveling in these circles, swearing they never thought they would stoop to being "trained monkey-bards for the pashas." Still, when money is scarce and they are in need of a commission, smart adventuring parties seek wealthy employers.

Aldannar's Band

This group of warriors and wizards drives itself in search of ancient magic, magical items, and artifacts. Led by the paladin Aldannar of Duhlnarim (LG hm Pal13), the group was founded by the aged wizard Loqaad (LN hm M19), an aged friend of Aldannar's father. Some time ago, Loqaad met a Halruaan wizard named Dwalimer Omen, who sought artifacts with the specific intent to banish them to "the Demi-plane of Fear, where they would bring no further harm to the Realms." Finding this a noble goal, the 90-year-old Loqaad recruited the youthful Aldannar and his friends to join Dwalimer and seek out such items. (The old wizard is far too frail to travel and adventure anymore.) The band is almost totally unknown in Erkkazar because it keeps a low profile and does not want to attract attention to what it both seeks and destroys.

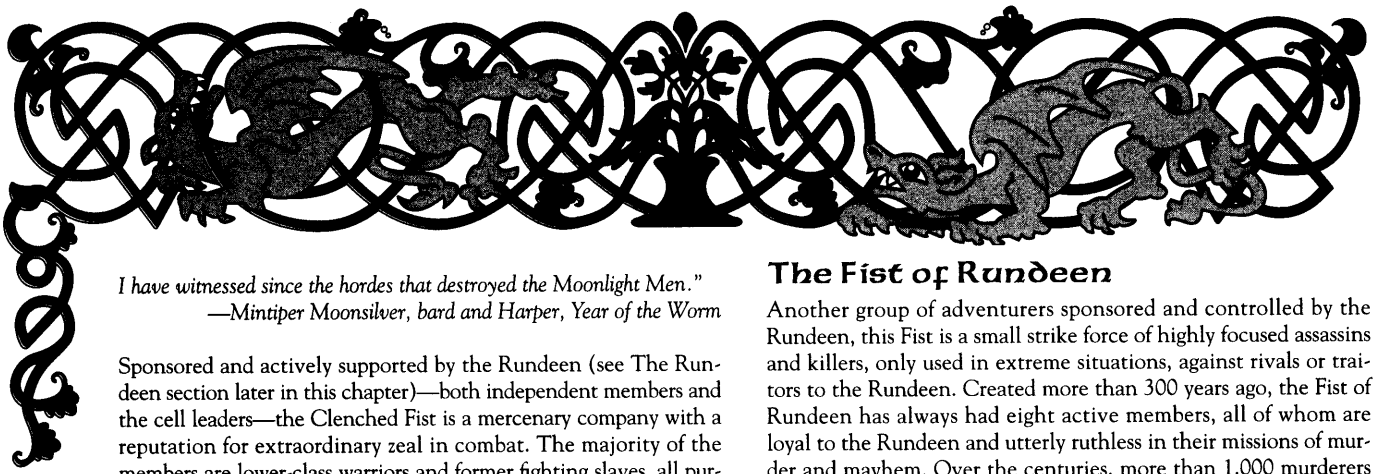
Along with Loqaad, Aldannar leads four others on this quest, and together they have stolen great magic from the teeth of dragons and the bony claws of liches, alike, over the past sixteen years. The twin elves Orlyra (NG ef Enc10) and Machyle (CG ef Div11) hail originally from a small elf camp within Thornwood, though this was destroyed by the beholder Vaxall of the Dying Gaze in revenge for the band's theft of the *Fanged Shield of Shyk Korort*. The tattooed ogre warrior Vhol, of the High Peaks' Shieldbreaker clan (LG ogrem F12), is a blood brother to the paladin ever since Aldannar saved him from two cave bears many years ago. The final member of the group is Orlyra and Machyle's nephew Argan (LE em F3/M3), an angry young elf and sole survivor of Vaxall's attack on his home in Thornwood, who has followed the band solely to avenge himself against any and all beholders.

While Aldannar and his friends are performing a noble service for the Realms, the tragic truth is that they are unwittingly feeding a great evil. More than 10 years ago, Loqaad died at the hands of a greater doppelganger, which assumed his identity and powers. "Loqaad" continues to seize the items recovered by Aldannar's Band, supposedly to banish them to the Demi-plane of Fear, but he actually does so only when they would harm or be useless to the doppelganger's master, the lich Saran yn Tulal el Asrim (CE lich M21). This undead wizard is more commonly known to Faer'nians as the Starskull, after his elaborately carved star of Mystra on his skull. The faux Loqaad teleports many of the artifacts claimed by the band directly to the Starskull's lair, in the foothills north of the Tathtarn ruins of Saalirk.

The Clenched Fist

"This band of ruffians is so unwashed and uncivilized as to make a pile of otyugh dung seem pleasingly noble. Their actions against me and mine, simply for being Those Who Harp, are more savage and unyielding than any





*I have witnessed since the hordes that destroyed the Moonlight Men.”
—Mintiper Moonsilver, bard and Harper, Year of the Worm*

Sponsored and actively supported by the Rundeen (see The Rundeen section later in this chapter)—both independent members and the cell leaders—the Clenched Fist is a mercenary company with a reputation for extraordinary zeal in combat. The majority of the members are lower-class warriors and former fighting slaves, all purchased by the Rundeen as a semiprivate army. Numbering well over 100 members, now, the Clenched Fist operates with small bands of eight to twelve warriors under the command of one of the nine senior members. The seniors were part of the original Clenched Fist, a rowdy group of 12 money-hungry warriors and thieves from Schamedar, who grew to appreciate the amenities of a constant cash flow from the Rundeen. Though they once accepted any job that came their way, the Rundeen purchased the Fist's time, itself, and assigned them to specific tasks like employees. The Fists are typically maps of local dungeons and told to plunder them, then give the Rundeen half the spoils in trade for weapons, armor, and intelligence. Within a few years, the Clenched Fist has expanded quickly as the members grow in experience and begin to attract more followers.

Now, with each surviving original member acting as leader of his or her own cell, the Clenched Fist accepts on a variety of tasks for their merchant masters. Current duties include coercion against creditors and nonpaying members, plundering of dungeons and rival merchants' safe holds, general enforcement in Rundeen-controlled areas (both to maintain control and eke away influence from nonRundeen sources), tradeway banditry or forced protection during the dangerous trek (a.k.a. extortion), and other unsavory jobs. The Clenched Fist leaders know they are merely the muscle for the merchants, but as long as they and their people are paid, they are quite content with their lot.

The senior Clenched Fist members each lead a group of fighters and rogues chosen for their temperaments and talents. The leaders include these six unworthies (and three more of the DM's creation).

- Yusuf al Memnon (LE hm F11) is a broad bear of a man with a face all but buried in a bushy beard and a lone eyebrow (over both eyes).
- El Yestaadi (CE hef F8/T9) is a slim, leatherclad woman with a dancer's figure and grace, and the cunning and bloodthirstiness that earned her the name *the Huntress*. (Her true name is long forgotten.)
- Daud (CE hm T15) is a singly named horror whose lack of early memories (beyond his name) makes him a relentless curious seeker of secrets. A possible clue as to the cause of his amnesia lies in a long scar across his forehead and scalp, which grows red when he is angry.
- Astil adh Saida al Manshaka (NE hm F10; STR 17) is a naturally gifted tactician and strategist in battle, who maintains his slave name though he slew his mistress owner more than 20 years ago and joined the Clenched Fist to remain free.
- Wagyrn (NE hm wereboar F9) is an ill-tempered wereboar, formerly enslaved and raised in the Djen Arena, who broke out during the riots in the Year of the Dragon (1352 DR) and joined this rowdy band for lack of other options (not to mention a foolish infatuation with Crymara).
- Crymara al Rundeen (LE hf T14) is a strong and sensual enchantress whose adroit conversation and thievery are only exceeded by her skill with throwing blades and her volcanic temper.

The Fist of Rundeen

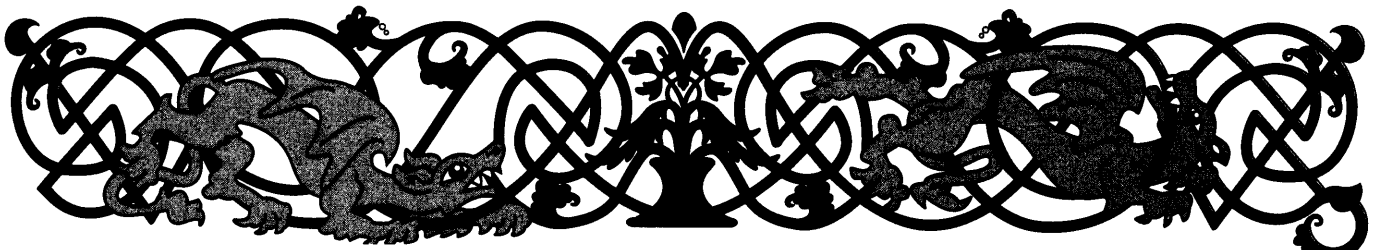
Another group of adventurers sponsored and controlled by the Rundeen, this Fist is a small strike force of highly focused assassins and killers, only used in extreme situations, against rivals or traitors to the Rundeen. Created more than 300 years ago, the Fist of Rundeen has always had eight active members, all of whom are loyal to the Rundeen and utterly ruthless in their missions of murder and mayhem. Over the centuries, more than 1,000 murderers and cutthroats have called themselves members of the Fist of Rundeen. There are no retirees from this group; it is a position held for life—that is, for as long as one survives.

Names are important to the members of the Fist. Their birth names considered extremely confidential, so they are never spoken among the Rundeen, and oftentimes not even among working companions. Instead, they assume names related to their weapons of choice, such as *the Dagger* or *the Sword* (see below), and they use these names even amongst themselves. They also like to give personal names to their primary weapons.

Listed in order of seniority below are the chief members of the Fist.

- El Yadhi (*the Hand*; LE hm F14; STR 18/92, INT 16) is the recognized chain-mail-clad leader of the Fist, and he is also the oldest of the current members, having outlived all of his comrades for the past 32 years. El Yadhi's method of killing involves no weapons, as the strength of his hands is enough to snap the necks or crush the skulls of his targets. His intellect is what makes the Hand so formidable, as he plans out elaborate strategies that negate or bypass most defenses and allow the other team members to deploy in places best suited to their talents. The aging man, with white hair in a ponytail, is quietly seeking to have el Dyrain (see below) slain, either in a way that looks like an accident or by an enemy during a mission of the Rundeen. She envies his position and covets the title *el Yadhi*.
- El Scimitar (*the Scimitar*; NE hm F13) is the elder brother of el Jambiya (see below), and he is quite protective of her both in terms of combat and the attentions of lesser men. He has slain three other Fist members in the past five years for daring to insult his sister with their attentions, which she finds amusing. His weapon of choice is a massive two-handed *scimitar +1/+2 vs. magic-using and enchanted creatures*; he thus draws many assignments to slay enemy wizards.
- El Jambiya (*the Dagger*; CE hf T11) considers herself better than all of the others in the Fist, other than el Yadhi. "They are butchers," she often declares, "but I am an artist." El Jambiya has left a maximum of three marks on any target, suggesting that she precisely chooses her points of attack and rarely misses with her killing stroke. Many of her victims display no sign of attack whatsoever except the token she always leaves behind: a jambiya buried hilt-deep in the heart. If forced into a mere brawl or street fight, she dispatches her foes with her personal silver *jambiya of venom* (poison type E).
- El Katar (*the Knife*; CN hm T12) is the most amoral of the current Fist members. He uses a punchblade knife and always kills by puncturing or slashing the neck of his victim. The bald Chondathan appears scrawny and ill-fed, but he is agile and wily. He seems to constantly emit an unnerving titter in all situations, making him appear mentally unbalanced. He





laughs out loud after telling a victim that the white rattling bracelet he wears is made from the finger bones of his past victims. Shock and despair thoroughly delight him.

- El Kholnar (*the Axe*; LE hm F10; STR 19) was the former executioner for the Pasha Pook of Manshaka, and he retained the hood and massive single-bladed battle axe of that position when he signed on with the Rundeen. Single-minded and considering himself the judge of all who judged him a monster makes Kholnar the coldest of killers among the Fist. The fact that he only speaks when forced to, usually in one or two word responses, makes him all the more fearsome.
- El Dyrarn (*the Arm*; NE hf F8; STR 18/76) is the most unique member of the Fist in years. The tall, broad-shouldered woman's primary weapon is actually the custom-made gladiator's armor on her left arm: The chain mail covered with razor-sharp scales cut and savage the necks of those caught in el Dyrarn's headlock (1d4 edged damage on unarmored areas, plus STR bonus) before she snaps their necks. She actually gained her title of *el Dyrarn* before joining the Fist, in the Djen Arenas, though this dusky Calishite with close-cropped flame-red hair had her current armor made by the Rundeen, to her specifications.

The last two members of the Fist are left for DM-created NPCs, but bear in mind the following; Each member must wield a particular weapon that is not used by any other current member. Past titles (and weapons) used among the Fist are el Jikholnar (*the Hand Axe*), el Enaza (*the Spear*), el Nadim (*the Club*), el Cestys (*the Cestus/Spiked Knuckles*) and el Nataf (*the Cord/Garrote*).

The Many Long Arms

While this cadre of rogues serves as intelligence gatherers for the Rundeen, it also performs many frame jobs and thefts for them. In effect, the Many Long Arms could be considered an official thieves' guild under the Rundeen's control. The only reason these thieves are considered an adventuring company is, like the Clenched Fist above, the agents of this group commonly operate in trios or quintets and thus act similarly to adventuring companies.

The group's leader is the aged but still-crafty Druzir Achmed yn Nuram el Darkiir yi Almraiven (NE hm T12/M9). His interests actually are hidden behind three or four identities, so only the Yrshalem, the leaders of the Rundeen (see the Rundeen Leadership subsection, in The Rundeen section later in this chapter), actually know the true name of the Long Arms' commander. The masked figure called el Chaddalk and his vizar the Scarlet Sorcerer Harun yn Riikaln are both disguises and aliases of Nuram.

The Many Long Arms has more thieves, burglars, thugs, assassins, pirates, and smugglers among its members than any other organization south of Darromar. Only the Shadow Thieves exist as a larger thieves' and rogues' guild. The Arms provide safehouses, fences, moneychangers, and new identities for its members when necessary—all in exchange for 35% of any take. The greatest heist ever achieved by the Many Long Arms was the total stripping of the Pasha Pook's palatial villa, removing literally *anything* of value, within four hours of his reported death. That was accomplished by 20 thieves sneaking around, unnoticed by panicked palace guards and distraught family members.

The Many Long Arms are a quieter cabal of rogues than the Shadow Thieves. The majority of those who are aware of the Arms are Rundeen or their enemies south of Amn. While the

Long Arms can (and do) send agents into the northern cities, their name comes from the long reach from their native Chul-tan Peninsula to northern Calimshan. The primary seats of power for the Long Arms are Almraiven and Teshburl, from whence they infiltrate nearly every ship sailing the Shining Sea to steal information or valuable cargoes. They also have a partially organized presence in Memnon, Yallasch, and Derlusk. All other ports have numerous Arms agents, but they operate almost independently, only reporting to the leaders on an annual basis. Suffice it to say, if the Rundeen need intelligence on a port or any location within 200 miles of the Shining Sea, they will have it inside of a month from el Chaddalk, due to his wide-spanning network of rogues.

The Scimitars of Mullivan

This veteran band of adventurers from Almraiven has made its mission the extermination of all illithid influence around Calimshan. Early in their careers, the *Shining Scimitars* were led by the Tethyrian ranger Mullivan, and at that time they uncovered surface caves within the Forest of Mir, leading to an illithid city in the Underdark. There, more than half their number died and were devoured, but Mullivan bought the survivors their chance to escape with his life. As a tribute, the Scimitars renamed their group after their fallen founder, then regrouped and rebuilt. Since then, their only goals are the end of illithid feeding off the surface races and the destruction of the illithid city of Oryndoll.

Leading the group now is Mullivan's cousin, Rasid yi Almraiven (NG hm F7), a former sultan's son who was banished from Calimport and his father's house for falling in love with a slave from the Festhall of Eternal Delight. The former slave Salaya yr Sayedotta (CG hf P5 of Sharess) is the other surviving member of the original band of adventurers. Her surname means *daughter of the cat woman*, which she adopted for herself after Rasid purchased her freedom from the temple. After the deaths of their original comrades three years ago, the pair learned caution and planning. Using their remaining money, they purchased a tavern in Almraiven and renamed it the Shining Scimitars. From that base they could live carefully for a time and readily meet potential allies in the fight against the mind flayers. Now, after three years of building alliances and establishing a solid clientele of friends and patrons, the Scimitars of Mullivan have sponsored more forays into the Forest of Mir and the Underdark than any other organized group in Calimshan. At current, the Scimitars have sponsored four other bands in exchange for 20% of their spoils and a vow to kill any mind flayers found.

Rasid and Salaya are actively adventuring again, too, leaving the tavern in the capable hands of their hulking barkeep Rahimat yn Butrys el Zharran (LN hm F2; STR 18/66) and his four barmaid daughters. Other recently recruited members include Baraka yi Yeshpek (CN hf T5), a rogue with a hidden past and an all-consuming hatred of slavers; Talaar, the studious and shy half-elf (LG hef Div6), whose face is striped with old scars from an umber hulk's claws; the ever-laughing Scimitar Shyk, Amun yn Kalas al Taqarl (CG hm R7), who wields two scimitars in imitation of a drow elf of whom he has heard (and hopes to meet and slay someday, believing him "as evil as all drow"); and Gunnab al Shakush (LN horem F8), a former fighting slave of Manshaka's Arena of Blood, whose massive warhammer crushes any who attempt to harm his newfound friends.





The Cloak Societies

The Cloak Societies, or the Cloaks for short, are information brokers of exceptional caliber. The name originated with the Graycloak Society in Calimport, nearly a century ago, but those early spies for hire were executed to a man by the syl-pasha, who was angered that his secrets were becoming common knowledge. Since that time, the name has caught on as a descriptive term, and numerous groups now call themselves *Cloaks*. There is no formal link between one group of Cloaks and another, just their mutual interest in trading, buying, and selling information. The term is becoming generic in both Alzhedo and common, and *cloaking someone* refers to spying or prying into someone's private matters.

Many northern powers, and those "restricted by cumbersome moralities and ethics," do not conduct business with Cloaks, as it is well known they will work for anyone who meets their price, and they do not respect the privacy of anyone save their own and their employers' (perhaps *only* as long as they remain employers). In the formative years of the Graycloak Society, the few Harpers who dared to operate this far south tried to recruit members of the Graycloaks to expand their intelligence and influence. However, within 10 short years, the secrets and identities of those Harpers were sold to the highest bidders, and once-seeming friends became the bitterest of enemies. A paramour of Dove Falconhand fell to Graycloak treachery, and she has since kept a very sharp eye on any Cloak interests throughout the Realms.

The Cloaks are as thorough and nearly as knowledgeable as sages, but only in terms of present-day conditions. They are investigators rather than researchers. In other words, they can tell you much about the activities of a particular group on which they are spying, and they are excellent and interpreting and predicting that subject's actions, but they do not necessarily know much about the group's history and the backgrounds of its members. Sages, on the other hand, might well know the full history of the group, and perhaps even a great deal about the origins of its members, but they are not as likely to understand the subject's current politics and activities. Most Cloaks do not sell any and all types of information but merely what is deemed their area of expertise. In other words, a Cloak is a group of highly specialized monitors and motivational strategists.

The Cloaks are active in Westgate and many parts south, concentrating much of their activity within Calimshan and Ankhapur. In general, basic information costs 100 gp per hour of research and interview with the client, and extensive information costs 500 gp per hour. These are general prices, and often other arrangements can be made to cover research costs or to speed up the retrieval. Magical items and spells are considered currency, since many Cloak members are either wizards themselves or can easily sell the information to the same.

Below is a random sampling of Cloak organizations, their topics of expertise, their methods of operation, and a few of their more prominent members. In terms of what they do (information ferreting), there are over a dozen Cloaks that are exclusively among the palace staff of the syl-pasha, whether employed by the pasha, his sultan sons, his advisors, or others.

The Cloak of Waves

This small group is the premier Cloak and information broker within Teshburl, and the group's expertise is in tracking ships on the Shining Sea and the southern Sea of Swords. If a ship has left any Calishite port within the past tenday, the Waves know of it, have a good idea where it is headed, and they know what it is carrying. Here is the main reason:

Nearly any ship setting sail from a southern port depends upon someone to hire crews for the coming voyage. Ali yn Marak, also known colloquially as *Squint*, is one of the primary agents of the Cloak of Waves, and he handles quite a bit of that traffic, as his counting house is the leading moneychanger and pawn shop in Teshburl. Merely sitting quietly as the mariners mill about allows Squint to overhear quite a bit of news. His most reliable news, however, comes from ships' logs, and he learns even more from the valuables many sailors and officers leave in his secure hands for safekeeping during a months-long voyage (from books to money to objects obtained in their last ports of call). Any dockside tavern patrons can point out Squint or direct strangers to his counting house, as he is "the guy in the know."

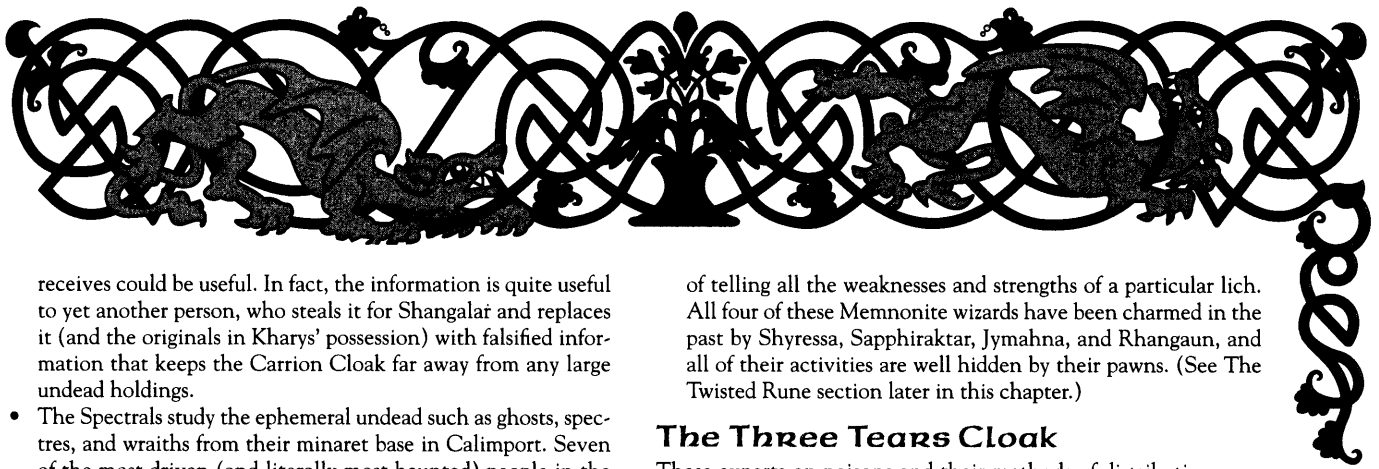
The Golden Fangs Cloak

Necromancers and mages dominate the membership of this large Cloak based in the wizards' guild headquarters of Calimport. The mages of the Golden Fangs say they know and can track the activities and identities of all undead and enchanted or transformed creatures throughout the Empires of the Shining Sea, the Lands of Intrigue, and even into the edges of Unther, Mulhorand, Sespech, and the Vilhon Reach. In centuries past, this Cloak existed both as a group of zoologists studying monsters and as a group of vampire hunters. Now, after a change in leadership and direction nearly 50 years ago, the Golden Fangs sell and buy information on undead and their workings and doings.

There are only 25 to 30 members of the Golden Fangs, but they maintain five distinct cells of operations. Each cell has an individual name akin to an adventuring company and a particular area of expertise, and the leaders of each cell communicate regularly, to corroborate and exchange news as well as tend to the business of the greater Cloak. The five city cells, their areas of knowledge, and their leaders are noted below.

- The Carrion Cloak is the only subgroup that still specifically refers to itself as a Cloak, and the natives in Volothamp know them to be more pompous than they should be for that very reason. This sextet of wizards and priests studies the lesser undead, from skeletons to ghosts. Senior Cloakmaster Rhiduin Thal (LN hm P11), an immigrant priest of Deneir formerly of Suzail, leads the group and earnestly believes they are performing a holy duty by collecting as much data as possible on undead.

What this middle-aged priest fails to recognize is that his trusted second-in-command, Kharys yn Ajor al Teshburl (LE hm M6), both embezzles money from the group's coffers and copies every piece of information his group collects to Druzir Abon yn Sabir (NE hm T9), to whom he owes massive debts. The druzir, who controls many mages and priests by monetary loans and extortion, is a low-level puppet within Shangalar the Black's (see section on Shangalar in The Runemasters subsection of The Twisted Rune section later in this chapter) power structure; all he knows is that the information he



receives could be useful. In fact, the information is quite useful to yet another person, who steals it for Shangalat and replaces it (and the originals in Kharys' possession) with falsified information that keeps the Carrion Cloak far away from any large undead holdings.

- The Spectrals study the ephemeral undead such as ghosts, spectres, and wraiths from their minaret base in Calimport. Seven of the most driven (and literally most haunted) people in the Realms serve in the Spectrals, and their leader is Pallec Silvertome (LE em M11), formerly of the Suldusk elf tribe of Tethyr, who became outcast due to his experiments with undead. Silvertome craves to learn all of the mysteries of undeath, if it takes him another 200 years to find the knowledge, so he can duplicate the process of becoming a baelnorn (or at least gain its projection ability).
- The Patient are a collection of Velsharoonite priests and faithful wizards, all of whom seek the final secrets of necromancy and the undead. Their studies encompass all undead related spells, revivification techniques, and spells that affect life forces. This group of five scholars is led by the cantankerous and nearly skeletal Harther Ulmnar (NE hm Nec12), whose reputation as the Black Bolt of Kzelter gains more fear and respect than he perhaps deserves. He alone among the Cloak leaders sees something curious about certain blank areas of knowledge and omissions by other leaders of the Patient, and his studies for the past 18 years have almost led him to knowledge of the existence of Twisted Rune (see The Twisted Rune section later in this chapter). Rhangaun (see the section on Rhangaun in The Runemasters subsection of The Twisted Rune section later in this chapter), the master of the Twisted Rune, allows him to continue his studies, for it amuses him to run Harther through a maze, and he knows that his control over Harther's daughter, the necromancer Shialla (LE hf Nec5), is absolute. (Shialla can easily kill Harther because his wards are not set against her.)
- The Golden Fang Hunters are a good-aligned group of eight vampire hunters whose exclusive body of knowledge on vampires rivals that of Elminster's library itself. Melek yr Baish (CG hf M8) is this cell's leader from her tower in Tulmon, a lovely woman scarred by the claws of a vampire all down the length of her left arm, which render it useful only for spellcasting but not lifting. This group is the only one that involves nonwizard and nonpriest members, given the combative nature of their task. For years, Melek (and through her, the Fang Hunters) has unconsciously been steered away from any prized hideaways or vampiric pawns of the Twisted Rune: The ring she has worn since her left arm was ruined provides her with some defenses against vampire attacks, but it also allows Shyressa (see the section on Shyressa in The Runemasters subsection of The Twisted Rune section later in this chapter) to enter her mind and point her toward expendable vampires, away from the Rune and its senior members' activities.
- The Scholara Dessica are those whose expertise lies with mummies and liches, the poorly preserved physical undead that are filled with unmistakable power. The quartet of scholarly wizards (two necromancers and two mages) provides vast amounts of knowledge on liches and mummies to those who pay them well, for such knowledge is not cheap. In fact, their information is not wholly accurate, for it is often incomplete in terms

of telling all the weaknesses and strengths of a particular lich. All four of these Memnonite wizards have been charmed in the past by Shyressa, Sapphiraktar, Jymahna, and Rhangaun, and all of their activities are well hidden by their pawns. (See The Twisted Rune section later in this chapter.)

The Three Tears Cloak

These experts on poisons and their methods of distribution, creation, and nullification are a group of former believers of Talona's faith, seeking to provide knowledge on poisons for a price. Aullas yn Orath al Hubal (CN hm T8) is the leader of this small Cloak, which numbers less than 10 people, within a villa in the north end of Manshaka. Their numbers were once much greater, but the destruction of Castle Trinity brought them to their present size. Still, these folk are knowledgeable of nearly any poison ever brewed in the past 500 years in the Realms. People seeking poisons can find nearly any type imaginable in the possession of this Cloak, including those purported to affect undead (though their prices are at least twice the DMG standards for poisons). If a dead or dying person is brought to the villa, they will attempt to neutralize the poison (for a price) but also take a blood sample from which to form future antidotes. If the patient dies, the Cloak not only takes blood samples for future reference but often offers to buy the deceased body for study.

The Dark Dagger

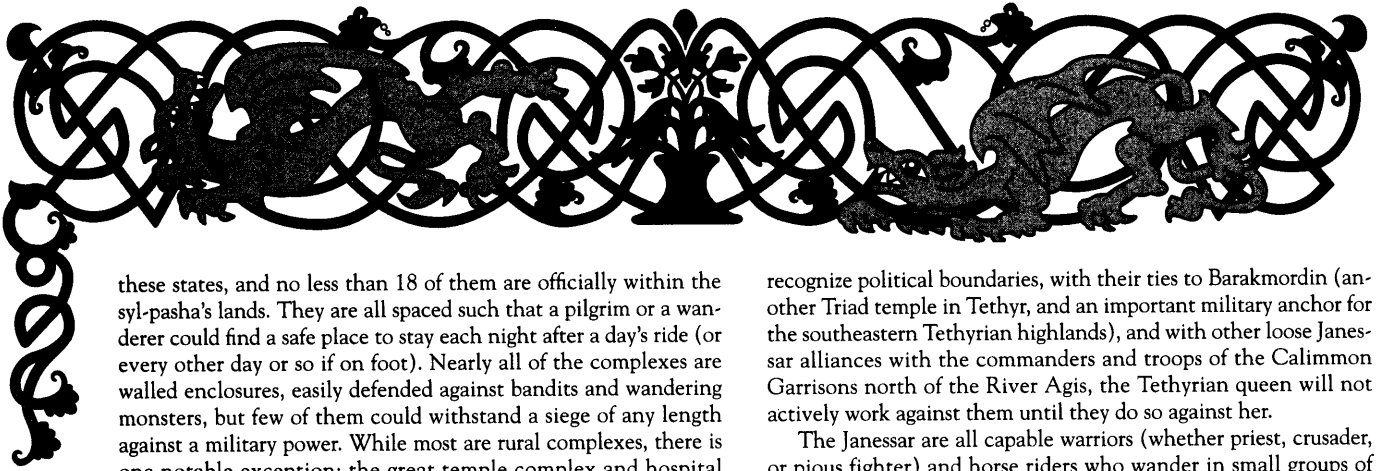
Long rumored in tales of warning, this group of sinister drow are zealous worshipers of Vhaerun, the drow god of thievery. Once a major power group amidst the three dark elf settlements of the Forest of Mir, these drow thieves sought to consolidate more power within Calimshan's underworld. With the Darkstalker Wars of the Year of the Serpent (1359 DR), the Dark Dagger's influence as a collective thieves' guild was broken among Calimshan's thieves. In fact, their power might have been supplanted and undermined by one of their own race, the drow known as Jarlaxle, whose true motives and ambitions in the underworld are darker than his skin.

The Dark Dagger is still an effective thieves' guild within and under Erlkazar, the western Lake of Steam city-states, and the Vilhon Reach. Their numbers are fewer than 100, but their expertise makes up for the group's size; none of the members is less than a 4th-level rogue. The Daggers keep an eye on Calimshan, watching for an opportunity to return and reap the great profits made there. While almost entirely of drow membership, there are a number of drow-Calishite half-elves who operate nearly without notice on the surface, and these are some of their most important agents.

The Ilmatari Church

Dotting the landscape of Calimshan and the western edges of the Land of the Lions and the Lake of Steam are numerous abbeys, convents, cloisters, and schools, all dedicated to the god Ilmater but named for particular holy folk among his church. In fact, these cloisters are also found across Tethyr, and a small few are located in Erlkazar as well. There are over 30 Ilmatari abbey complexes among Tethyr, Calimshan, and the lands east of both of





these states, and no less than 18 of them are officially within the syl-pasha's lands. They are all spaced such that a pilgrim or a wanderer could find a safe place to stay each night after a day's ride (or every other day or so if on foot). Nearly all of the complexes are walled enclosures, easily defended against bandits and wandering monsters, but few of them could withstand a siege of any length against a military power. While most are rural complexes, there is one notable exception: the great temple complex and hospital within Keltar, Ilmater's greatest temple on Faerⁿ and the center of Ilmatari worship for the southern Realms.

While the worshipers and priests of Ilmater wield little political or monetary power among the urban populations of Calimshan, they wield considerable social influence, they are beloved among the rural populations, and they are adored by the slave class. Since the height of the Shoon Imperium, Ilmatari priests have had one intriguing benefit among Calimshan's peoples: They are safe from the abuses and persecutions common to many priests across Calimshan, due to a long-ago proclamation by the Qysar Amahl Shoon V, in the Year of Screaming Sharn (173 DR). The emperor cast a spell that seemed to encompass each and every noble at court and within the Imperial City of Shoon. The magic forced each and every family and noble in the realm to swear never to harm or kill an Ilmatari priest lest they suffer a grave curse upon themselves, their houses, and all those associated with their families. Since that time, whether or not folks really believe the curse exists, Ilmatari priests have operated within Calimshan without persecution or any problems beyond the major differences between Calishite custom and Ilmatari beliefs. This incongruity has allowed the church to operate within one of the richest lands for more than two millennia, gain grants or gifts from rich worshipers, and build a great system of monasteries to better tend their faithful.

For more on the individual monasteries and abbeys of Ilmater, look to the "Civilized Calimshan" chapter, under the Monasteries of Ilmater section.

The Janessar

Like many across Faerⁿ, one person's hero is another's villain, and the Janessar are considered both. They are warrior and priest champions of their faiths, worshiping *The Triad* of Ilmater, Tyr, and Torm. Defenders of the oppressed and downtrodden, the Janessar waylay slaving caravans and free their illicit cargoes, and they stop anyone from being robbed on the roads. Most often of all, they intercede for slaves, who cannot defend themselves. For example, the Janessar frequently ride to plantation villas and demand that the owner desist in working his slaves under a Calishite noqnday sun. Their requests are often backed by a show of steel or at least clearing the hilt of a weapon from a Cloak to suggest they mean business. They see themselves as operatives of divine authority. They are recognized by their shields or tabards, all of which are marked by a rose entwined around Torm's gauntleted hand. (The rose is yellow if the emblem is colored.)

The syl-pasha and all of his governmental underlings despise the Janessar privately, for they do not recognize the champions' power or authority over them while operating within Calimshan. In fact, the syl-pasha has reputedly opened discussions with the Monarch of Tethyr to discuss these trespasses on their secular authorities. While she is uncomfortable with the Janessar's failure to

recognize political boundaries, with their ties to Barakmordin (another Triad temple in Tethyr, and an important military anchor for the southeastern Tethyrian highlands), and with other loose Janessar alliances with the commanders and troops of the Calimmon Garrisons north of the River Agis, the Tethyrian queen will not actively work against them until they do so against her.

The Janessar are all capable warriors (whether priest, crusader, or pious fighter) and horse riders who wander in small groups of four or six across the south. Never in their century of existence have more than a dozen Janessar formed a group, so their total numbers are the subject of much speculation. The group's dedication and zeal are admirable, but while they describe their quests and wanderings as "seeking out those in need of the Triad's touch," others suggest they go looking for trouble to keep themselves busy.

As they are rarely on good terms with the Calishite government, the Janessar maintain three major strongholds within the Marching Mountains; they are named Faeressar, Khanall, and Rutawwa. (See *Faeressar, Khanall, and Rutawwa: Enclaves of the Janessar in the Marching Mountains* section of the "Wild Calimshan" chapter.) They can also count on finding shelter and aid at Barakmordin in Tethyr, at a well-hidden cavern complex just a few miles northeast of Almraiven in the Alimir Mountains, and in scattered hideouts in Suldolphor, Memnon, and Yhep. These hideouts and safe holds are all spaced along the Marching Mountains and other spots across Calimshan so they can swiftly see and decisively react to all troubles. Within their order's strongholds, there are many freed slaves who have taken up the cause with them upon their deliverance. Thus the Janessar continue to replenish their ranks, despite having nearly every power in the country rallied against them.

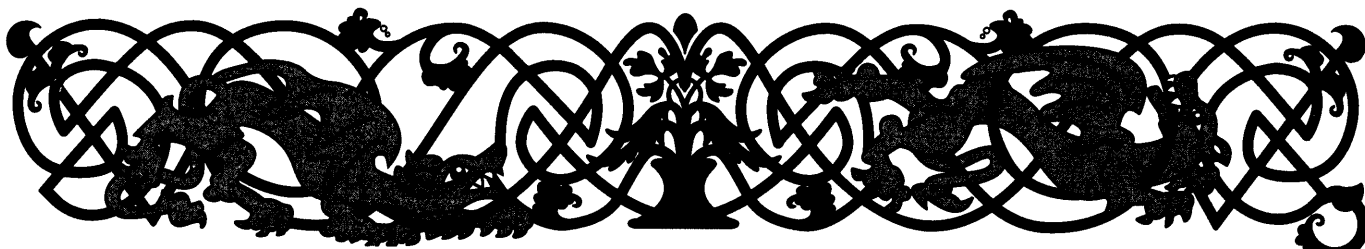
The leaders of the Janessar are actually a trio of elderly priests who no longer ride or fight (or, in some cases, see). Despite their ages, these holy men pursue their cause with as much vigor as their predecessors did when they founded the order over a century ago, in the Year of the Yellow Rose (1242 DR). Secluded in the Tower of the Three in the Khanall enclave, the Speakers are:

- Holy Justice Kadar al Haerim (LG hm P11 of Tyr), the group's weapons master and a former corrupt amlak of Keltar, who received his calling late in life and has sought to atone for the sins he committed in the system he once upheld.
- The former abbot of the House of the Broken God in Keltar, Brother Kalil the Painbearer (LG hm P14 of Ilmater), who has long since dropped his family name in the service of the Crying God. His reasons for taking up this cause are still unknown to many, but they have a link to a grievously wounded woman who came to Keltar's temple nearly 50 years ago. Few doubt his resolve or his piety and loyalty to the Janessar.
- Vanguard Shellidar (CG hm Cru13 of Torm), a tall, imposing bear of a man originally from Easting, far to the north, whose 40-year-long sojourn in Calimshan demonstrated his duty to end the suffering of her people. He serves the cause by teaching his Janessar how to forge their own weapons and fight.

The Knights of the Shield

The Knights are mostly merchants and nobles from Amn, Tethyr, and Baldur's Gate, but there is a small-but-vocal





minority among them from Calimshan as well as an isolated few among the Lake of Steam trade families. Through money, coercion, and strategic trade alliances, this group manipulates the politics and money of the Sword Coast to its advantage. They are not as strong here among the Shining Coast as they would like to be, but given the vast amount of power groups vying for influence, they recognize that any toehold of power is better than none. The seal of the Knights is circular shield with a central eye, surrounded by a circle of diamonds, and it is marked on special coins often carried by all members.

Similarly to the influence of the Rundeen, the Knights do not openly interfere with trade, but their members meet each other on an annual basis in the major cities in Amn, Tethyr, and Calimshan. In general, the Knights' structure is close to that of a guild of pashas and business owners. They use the organization to exchange news and fiscal information among the membership, or at least set to up trade deals and alliances between Knights rather than through competitors.

It might seem to be overly confusing, and a conflict of interest, for a pasha of Calimshan to be a Knight (and perhaps even a Rundeen member), but no Calishite sees it that way. As long as no one attempts a gambit that would be detrimental to either group, the multiple alliances allow one person to create a webwork of profit with the numerous power groups invested, each making it work for their own benefits. The Rundeen is slightly uncomfortable with this increasing incidence among its Calishite members, but the Knights of the Shield are very interested in working more closely with the Rundeen, attempting to render trade with the southern lands more simple and profitable, without the fear of piracy. The Knights' hidden Inner Council, which uses the group's power and money in clandestine ways, to manipulate trade up and down the Sword Coast, has quietly pushed for more interaction among other power groups, so far to no avail. Still, as the Rundeen see more benefits than dangers in working closely with the Knights, an alliance may be forthcoming.

Some of the primary Calishite Knights' members include:

- Fual yn Senaor al Barasth (CN hm F0), a low-ranking druzir of a military barracks drudach in Memnon, whose personal trade interests lie in rare armor and weapons.
- The pasha Syan al Derak (NE hm T5), a masterful controller of two guilds—the gemcutters and whitesmiths—in Teshburl and the seventh Knight of his family since his great-great-grandfather joined them over a century ago.
- Rahimat (LE hm F0), a tailor and merchant of silks and rare textiles who works toward gaining the pasha's seat in the Textiles Guild through both his own efforts and those of his allies among the Knights.
- Thallos yn Sarsor al Almraiven (LN hm F7), a former adventurer and weapons master in Keltar, with an inherited Knight-hood and a taste for greater profits.
- Jabal al Gaunrahl (CE hem T9), a hotheaded former slave and guard-turned-jewel thief whose exploits are rarely traced and whose newly acquired jewels are sent to exclusive Knight clientele.

For more on the Knights of the Shield and their secrets (including the inner cabal that uses the group's monetary influence for political gains), see the *Lands of Intrigue* campaign expansion boxed set (TSR 1159).

The Nadhari

The Nadhari (translation: *not-slaves*) are a freed slaves' movement slowly building power and numbers deep within the Marching Mountains. Active for only the past seven years, the Nadhari are the latest among many groups to attempt to free the slaves of Calimshan. After numerous mild successes and disastrous failures in the past two years, the Nadhari have become content to help individual slaves to freedom rather than attempting bring the entire system to a sudden end. Still, they have been melting down escaped slaves' chains and forging them into daggers and swords, which they have added to stores of weapons from allied gnomes and halflings. The Nadhari are building an armed uprising in some of the more outlying plantations north of Manshaka and hope to mobilize by year's end.

The leader of the Nadhari is Rahimata (LN hf R2), a former temple slave girl in the Temple of Old Night in Calimport. She escaped from the temple with the aid of a man named Adem Covar (NG hm R5), a warrior of Cormyr (and a Harper, though he never revealed that status). He taught her combat and survival skills for the rough life ahead, escaping bondage and fleeing overland, but he was slain by ogres while getting Rahimata and four others to safety through a mountain pass. Rahimata subsequently kept the others together and eventually got them to safety.

While there are more than 100 displaced folk, of various races, who call themselves Nadhari, the majority of them are humans of Tethyrian blood, and the next largest group among them is halflings. Their hideaways are caves deep within the central Marching Mountains, north of the headwaters of the River of Ice. If they are found at all beyond the caves, they will be among the many halfling settlements within the higher mountain plateaus.

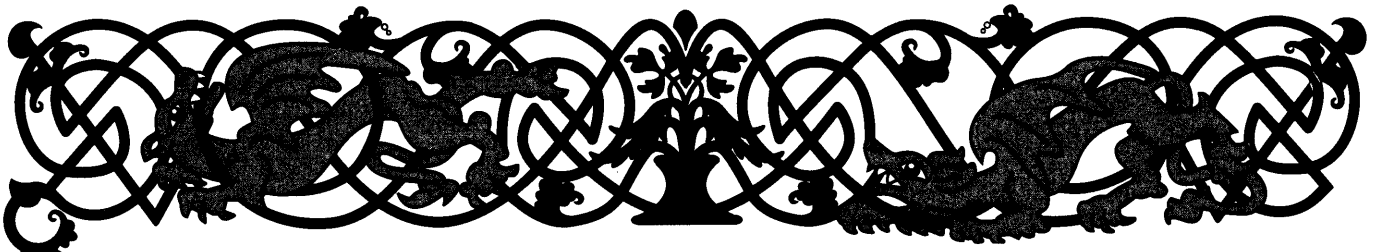
The Night Parade

Frightening in monstrous variety and ambition, the self-named Night Parade consists of bizarre, otherworldly creatures that are out to infiltrate the cities of the Realms. These beings have no set racial form or standard powers, but all are clearly not mere humans or demihumans, and they all have at least some small amount of power in addition to any magic they might wield. Worse yet, their ultimate intentions and motivations are still quite obscure.

The only clear agenda of the Night Parade is to abduct human and demihuman infants. These grotesque creatures are unable to reproduce children, so they steal infants of other races and magically alter them into their own. The processes are either totally random or intentionally hideous in their results, for the transformed child rarely looks even remotely like the race that spawned it. The Night Parade members adopt and care for their newborns much like a normal family, and the transformed children no longer have any emotional or physical ties to their birth parents.

In the Year of the Serpent (1359 DR), Lord of Arabel and Harper Myrmeen Lhal exposed the Night Parade's existence in Calimport, shocking even the most jaded of pashas into alert fear of what lay in their midst. At that time, the Night Parade numbered 6,000 strong amidst the squalor of the City of Sultans' alleys and sewers, only exiting their lairs by night and thus earning their name. Through various adventures while searching for her daughter, long ago lost to the Night Parade, Lhal slew many of the





monsters, and in the process she destroyed a Night Parader whose hypnotic powers kept most folk from noticing the existence of these strange creatures among them. In the resulting panicked riots, nearly every Night Parader within Calimport was destroyed. Myrmeen Lhal returned to Arabel and alerted other leaders in the Realms so none would be unaware of the dangers among them.

Still, given the immeasurable depths and labyrinths of Calimport's undercity, a number of the monsters managed to survive the "Nightcleansing," as many Calishites called that bloody night, long ago. With their numbers sorely depleted, the Night Parade went into hiding, or they traveled beyond Calimport, to places that did not suspect their presence. Over the next decade, the Night Parade managed to rebuild itself to a small degree within Calimport, and it also established a new colony of creatures within the shadowed alleys of Keltar to the north and Teshburl to the west. There are no less than 75 Night Parade members within Calimport, and approximately 20 to 40 each in Keltar and Teshburl. To avoid another disastrous blow, they no longer rely on charms and hypnosis to avoid detection but stealth and cunning. Since each cell is rarely larger than a dozen members, the discovery of one does not betray the existence of all. Below are a number of prominent Night Paraders who act as leaders among the various cells.

- The Naga is little more than a male Calishite head, with a bushy beard, mounted on a python's sinuous body. His hiss shoots a spray of poison in a 10-foot-long and 10-foot-wide fan ahead of him (successfully save vs. poison or suffer 2d12 points of damage and blindness). He is highly intelligent (INT 18) and shares the leadership of his cell with his partner, Master Khanar.
- A massively powerful human frame, six feet in height, Master Khanar is particularly distinctive because his shoulders bear no neck or head! His 10 eyes are at his fingertips, and fanged mouths scream from the centers of his palms. His eyes are protected by sphincter muscles underneath flinty hard skin (AC 3) and his great strength and hand maws inflict much damage upon those in his grasp (STR 17, with bites that automatically deliver 1d4 damage to those held). Master Khanar can speak through either of his mouths, but he often allows folks to believe that the head on his shoulders (the Naga coils up and perches there) is his own . . . until the pair shock their target by springing forth to make separate attacks!
- The Lady Seryx yr Tarub may have the rarest, most beautiful violet eyes of any child ever born in Calimshan, and she kept those eyes after her induction into the Night Parade. Now, those purple orbs peer from a scaled, alligatorlike head atop a vulture's body. Rather than feathers, the bird has scales and sharply scaled wings. Her flight is not graceful (MV 24 [D]), but it is swift, and she can slash her sharp wings for damage equal to her bite (1d6 per wing or bite).
- The most dangerous of all the Night Parade cell leaders looks like a normal dog, which begs for scraps throughout the city of Calimport. While Nadim the Hound easily adopts the traits of a common street mongrel, he is feared and respected by nearly every other Night Parader in Calimshan. When out of view of the public, he speaks in a cultured accent, walks upright on his hind legs, has opposable thumbs (and thus wields a magical wand or two when handy), and has psionic powers that allow him to mimic *detect lie*, *ESP*, and *command* up to five times a

day. However, most folk's fear stems from Nadim's temper, which is shorter than he is, and his cruelty is unbelievable when he thinks himself double-crossed.

Among the Harpers of Arabel, Lorya Songheart has developed an intriguing theory about the Night Parade. After investigating all the available lore about the creatures and conducting personal interviews with Lord Myrmeen Lhal of Arabel, Lorya posed a new idea that fits in with her other studies of magic-using nonnative beings across the Realms: The Night Parade might not be otherworldly, after all, but merely a magically transformed enclave of wizards and beings from Netheril!

For more information on the Night Parade and its various powers and creatures, see the *Villains' Lorebook* (TSR 9552).

Pirates of the Shining Sea

Just as they harass and disrupt trade on the Trackless Sea, pirates sail the relatively undefended waters of the Shining Sea with near impunity. There are a great number of buccaneers upon the waters south and west of Calimshan, and about the entrance of (if not within) the Lake of Steam at all times of the year, including the winter storm season.

The Bloody Buccaneers

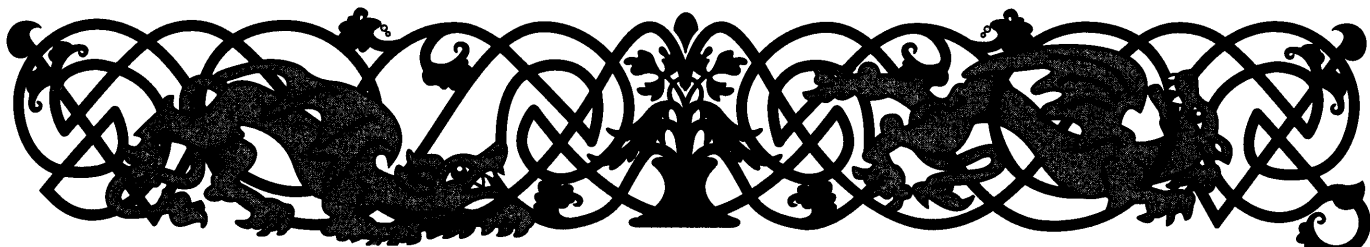
This small force of corsairs operates with two cutters (the *Water Weird* and *Umberlee's Wake*), manned by 70 Rundeen-sponsored rogues who have made deliberate strides to live up to their name. In the past five years they have managed to attack and win the cargoes of more than eight ships, which they then turned over to their sponsors for rewards (and the goods' resale through Rundeen circles). Their standard areas of operation are around the Singing Rocks and the western horn of Calimshan, where the two seas meet and the Buccaneers harass non-Rundeen ships attempting to move trade goods into the Shining Sea.

The recent death of his elder brother (and fellow captain) has disturbed and upset Jhamil al Tassand (LE hm F6), the commander of the *Wake*. He and the new captain of the *Weird* (former first mate Jafar [CE hom T7]) both swear vengeance upon the Amnian houses of Bormul and Bladesmile, for it was their ships whose crews slew Tassand's brother.

The Scimitar of Fire

Captain Raurivyl Ornshield and his crew have been infamous pirates for more than a decade, and the ship's and her captain's names are equally notorious in the minds of many Calishite and Amnian ship captains. Ornshield is a fat Calishite, with a curled and perfumed beard, who has made his primary targets the coasters and caravels of Amnian trading companies. The *Scimitar of Fire* is a fast caravel with two ballistae mounted on either side of the ship. The ship's flame-red sails are famous for inspiring panic in their prey, since most have heard "you cannot outrun or outmaneuver the Scimitar of Fire once its sights are upon you." Captain Ornshield's reputation is ironclad, as no one he has targeted for attack has ever escaped. While he rarely scuttles whole ships or slays entire crews, his most common practice is to relieve ships of cargo and important personages (whom he ransoms). When ransoms fail to be paid, hostages are keelhailed and (if they survive) then set





ashore miles from any port, to avoid fast pursuit of Ornschild and his men.

The captain and his half-orc first mate Dreak were once Amnian slaves, who broke free of bondage in the Year of the Worm (1356 DR). Ever since, the pair has waged war against Amn's merchant houses and the Council of Six. Ornschild is the planner and brains, and Dreak supplies the brawn. Their currently hideaways are either on the island of Carcathen or at a tentative safehouse in the Lapaliian port of Ilyaport. The Rundeen is currently wooing the captain and crew with promises of a safe haven, ship repairs, and any pleasures they might ask in exchange for their services, as part of the Rundeen's organized piracy efforts in the Shining Sea. Ornschild is tempted, but he understands how the Rundeen operate using the same methods as his hated foes in Amn. In other words, while the captain and crew might enjoy an alliance with the Rundeen, the more likely outcome of the Rundeen's overtures is to focus the Scimitar's sails on them.

The Scarlet Picaro

The crimson-and-sable-striped sails of the *Scarlet Picaro* are a new sight on the Shining Sea, but its crew's reputation is growing as swiftly as the ship itself moves. This mixed crew of wizards and rogues is not known to be affiliated with any merchants or landed powers that any can speak of, and their savagery against all in their path is fearsome and totally without pattern.

The pirates of the *Scarlet Picaro* have standard attack patterns that have been discerned from reports of surviving sailors and traders. Most involve special spells developed by the captain and wizard Sabira the Wicked (CE hf M12), which boost the ship's speed and strengthen its hull to allow incredible ramming damage against other ships. Other tactics include flying pirates with *wands of fire*, targeting rigging and sails, or saboteurs casting *warp wood* on the hull within the cargo hold after stealing a ship's precious cargo.

No one knows (or has the temerity to ask) of Sabira's goals and reasons for her crew's savagery. In truth, she is one of many agents working for the Twisted Rune (see The Twisted Rune section later in this chapter). Her anger and frustration at being refused a position of authority among the mages of Almraiven grew slowly over the years, so with the backing of a mysterious benefactor, Sabira built the *Scarlet Picaro* to serve her need for revenge. Her benefactor was a disguised Jymahna (see the section on Jymahna in The Runemasters subsection of The Twisted Rune section later in this chapter) of the Twisted Rune, who speaks with Sabira through a magical armband. The item allows Jymahna to effortlessly track Sabira and communicate mentally with her twice daily. In exchange for the ship and the cost of hiring her crew (some of whom were fellow disgruntled mages), Sabira's patron requires only first choice of any magical treasures claimed. Given the surprisingly close-mouthed loyalty of the crew (aided by Jymahna's charms), no one has even guessed that the they work for anyone or anything but themselves and their own greed.

The Sea Witch

Like the crew of the *Scarlet Picaro*, the privateers of the *Sea Witch* are a mix of mages and rogues (though there are far more of the former among this crew), but their operation is nearly eight years old. The Calishite-and-Amnian crew has a long-practiced and effective attack that has yet to see effective defenses mounted against it.

The *Sea Witch's* mages harass target ships with numerous spells—mostly enchantments and distracting illusions, since they are under orders never to use fire-based spells until Captain Mala Ravenstar (LE hef M7/T8) orders the target scuttled. While the distraction continues above, a number of pirates *teleport* into their target's hold and fill their *portable holes* with easily accessible cargo and treasure with *hasted* swiftness. If the hold is warded against teleporting (as many are beginning to do, anticipating the *Sea Witch's* strategy), the wizards employ the more brazen *passwall*, which increases the dangers of immediately scuttling a ship if the battle makes the ship rock and take on water.

Often, the wizards of the *Sea Witch* vastly overpower their foes and are more akin to cats toying with mice. Despite all this, Captain Mala has a twisted sense of honor to go with her ruthlessness, in pursuit of a goal. She takes aboard any stranded persons after her crew sinks a ship, rather than leave them to the mercy of Umberlee or the sea itself. Of course, never one to pass up profit, Mala either makes them part of her crew, leaves them stranded on a small island on the Trackless Sea, or ransoms them to their rich families on the mainland. Tactics like this are how the *Sea Witches*—both Mala and the ship—got their name.

Mala is not heartless, nor is she without a plan. Certainly she and her crew are in it for the money and the freedom, but the Amnian captain has also begun thinking of larger profits and goals: Once she and her men can steal a Pearl Charter off an Amnian ship, they will set sail for the New World of Mztica, where she believes they can easily rule or at least strike back at her Amnian oppressors.

The Red Wizards of Thay

The zulkirs of Thay have long been interested in keeping themselves involved in the Shining Lands for one simple reason: There is much magic there. The Red Wizards' and the Tharchions' influence on Calimshan and the Shining Lands should not be underestimated, and they are quite justifiably feared and respected there. However, the majority of Thayan involvement in these western lands is in the form of trade in spices, slaves, mercenaries (both warriors and wizards), and magic.

If a Red Wizard wishes to quietly enter the northern lands of the Sword Coast without attracting the usual attention, a standard practice is to sail for Calimshan and hire on as a caravan guard wizard or merely as a passenger wishing to travel in the safety of numbers. The zulkirs and their minions have their pride, but they also know to lie low this far afield. Practically every Red Wizard that ever walked the streets of Waterdeep entered the city under the pretenses of being a wizard of a Calishite pasha's retinue. This practice continues to work well because questioning a caravan driver or the pasha who owns it, or detaining members of said caravan (i.e. the wizards), is always taken as an affront and insult to Calishite pride and honesty. Since Waterdeep enjoys steady trade with Calimshan for silks, spices, and other rare goods, the intrusions of Red Wizards probably are less disruptive than the protests that would be raised among the nobility and trade quarters should the Calishite trade channels be blocked or severed.



The Rundeen

This ancient secret society dominates trade across much of the southern Realms that include the Empires of the Shining Sea, but its major seat of power lies south of the Chultan Peninsula. Its origins are shrouded in obscurity, but some sages suggest it is actually a splinter group of the Knights of the Shield. This theory arises from fairly subtle cues, however. For example, both the Rundeen and the Knights of the Shield operate with a secret membership and do not actively advertise their presence unless it is necessary to seal a deal. Also, members of either organization recognize each other with a similar, simple greeting—crossing wrists against one's chest and clenching one's fists—although the precise execution of the movement is slightly different between the two. (The Rundeen wait until their wrists are crossed before clenching fists.)

Whatever common roots they may share, their stems have grown in different directions. While the Knights of the Shield are an exclusive society, the Rundeen are far more expansive and count thousands of members across the Empires, the Shaar, and other parts south. While the Knights are largely a social group, interested in bringing together like-minded merchants to build trade alliances, the Rundeen is an independent organization with a financial power all its own. The Rundeen oligarchy controls numerous shipyards, fleets, caravans and trading costers, and many other attendant businesses. In this manner, the Rundeen exists behind the scenes in every aspect of trade in the southern Realms, and only rarely is it prevented from having its way, as very few powers beyond the sultans of Calimshan can challenge its influence.

For more than 500 years, the Rundeen have dominated and held monopolistic control over every port in the Empires of the Shining Sea and the peninsular lands to the south. Only in recent times have they encountered increased opposition and breaks in their control. With the unification of Calimshan under the *sylpashas*, the Rundeen lost control over both Calimport and Almariven, though enough of their members and agents are powers in the others cities to help maintain near-monopolies in certain trades. Less than 75 years ago, a group of Harpers dedicated to breaking the Rundeen choke hold on the majority of ports along the Chultan Peninsula succeeded in uncovering and killing three of the Yrshalem (and no less than 47 lesser agents and representatives of the Mitalibbar—see the Rundeen Membership subsection later in this section on the Rundeen), thus disrupting the organization to the extent that its monopoly has yet to be reestablished. For this operation alone (conceived by Cylyria Dragonbreast and spearheaded by Myrmeen Lhal), any Harper identified by the Rundeen at any level is either immediately slain or captured for interrogation and then slain in retribution by the Yrshalem.

Rundeen Organization and Goals

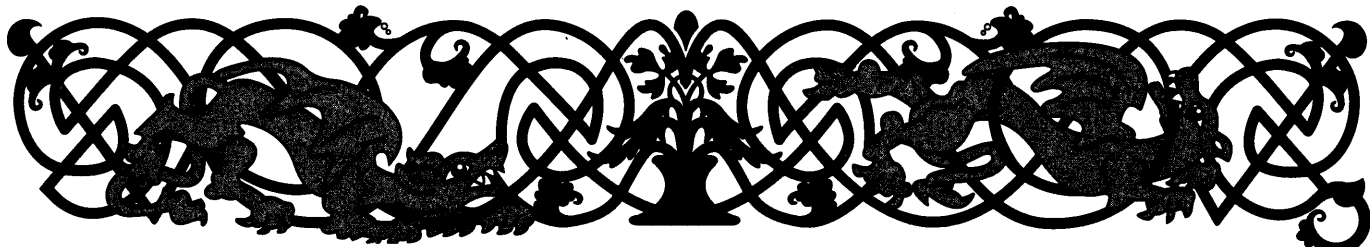
Few have attempted to investigate the full history of the Rundeen, as many intrepid researchers, especially Harpers and Heralds, have ended up dead in the endeavor. As far as can safely be determined, the Rundeen have been in existence for no less than 800 years and more than likely have been around since the height of the Shoon Imperium. In all this time, the only changes among the Rundeen's activities and organizations have been made by external forces such as the Harpers, the Knights of the Shield, the pashas of Calimshan, and (though only through other agents and from the shadows) the Twisted Rune.

The name Rundeen suggests a possible origin of the group. *Rundeen* mixes the generic root word for *coin* used during the Shoon Imperium, *deen*, with a dwarvish word, *ruln*, that loosely translates as *safety from fear of theft*. Thus, the *safe coin* consortium built its reputation on the protection of its members and their assets. Ancient shipping reports refer to *Rulnadeen* and *Rulndiin* corsairs and raiders, who fought everyone to protect their own shipping and trade, and many scholars believe the name merely became simplified through the centuries. Assuming the theorized origin of the name is correct, it certainly reflects the practices and primary concerns of the group: The Rundeen ruthlessly protect their merchants and their money while traveling long and dangerous distances in search of profit.

When the Shoon Imperium fell, the Rundeen found itself well positioned to unilaterally make and enforce mercantile law. Without the Imperium's soldiers to keep the peace, refuge under the Rundeen's shadow was a preferable move, as less profits were better than none. As the organization asserted its dominance and offered protection to its members—and became the only association that offered protection—the Rundeen was able to undertake riskier ventures in order to reap larger profits. This practice continues to the current day. For example, trade from the Inner Sea to Luiren and elsewhere net greater profits since the normal trading costers do not have as long a reach. For the Rundeen merchants, the amount of peril faced in the course of a trade mission is often less than the amount of profit at its end.

Rundeen-affiliated trades encompass nearly every aspect of the shipping and caravan traffic in the Calimshan area. The consortium owns or has members who own over 40% of the known trading businesses in this geographic region and dominates the affiliated guilds in many ports south of Calimport. Unlike many other financial power groups, the Rundeen do not involve themselves in trade goods so much as the service and maintenance end of the trades. The specific businesses, warehouses, and ships of the Rundeen are too numerous to mention, but the major trades of broader Rundeen involvement are the following: butchers, coopers (barrelmakers), carters/coachmen, farriers (horse trainers), fishermen and fishmongers, harbor hands, harness makers, joiners (cratemakers), mariners (ship crews and officers), moneychanging, moneylending, salters/packers (food prep for shipping), shipwrights, saddlers, wagon makers, and wood (and ivory) carvers. The only trade goods the Rundeen deal in are raw materials (wood, grains, spices, sugar, raw wool or unworked but tanned leather, furs, etc.) and slaves.

The Rundeen are a major linchpin in the slave trade operating along (and beneath) the southern shores of Faer'n. In fact, if not for them, slavery might long ago have been disrupted and reduced to unprofitable proportions and thus abandoned. The bulk of the slave trade coming out of the Shaar and leading into Calimshan and parts north is under the absolute control of the Rundeen, as is the slave trade running to Innarlith for the Red Wizards and the Zhentarim. (They only have about 30% of the interests among the Underdark slaving market and the internal transfer of Calishite natives into slavery, however.) As the primary organizer of slavery after the fall of the Shoon, Rundeen slavers have not allowed anyone to challenge their supremacy in this trade. Elimination of potential rivals often is as simple as informing a known Janessar or far-from-home Harper agent that a rival "is a slaver, and she is shipping out a group of slaves from Derlusk on the *Ladyslipper* in three days' time."



Piracy has always been among the favorite practices of the Rundeen leadership, but not necessarily as a direct means of profit. Sponsoring pirates to scare off or disrupt trade shipments, and thus bankrupt any who choose to not use Rundeen services or who attempt to break into a market where there is a Rundeen monopoly, is an effective use of corsair tactics. Piracy also provides a simple method for the Rundeen to steal trade secrets, sabotage established deals, or even (in the case of the Three Scourges) commandeer cargoes and deliver them disguised as the legitimate crew, thus reaping those profits for the Rundeen. (See the *Pirates of the Shining Sea* section, above, for affiliated or member corsairs.)

The Rundeen likewise sponsor adventuring companies and employ them similarly to their pirating operations.

Rundeen Membership

Membership in the Rundeen is very loose and informal, though it is not without structure. Joining the Rundeen affords one additional protection for caravans and ships alike, cut rates on services and products (for example, cheap rates on wagons or ships are more than enough to make it worth becoming a member), and preferential treatment within the numerous ports under Rundeen control.

All that is required to become Rundeen is the execution of a contract for 5% of a person's total earnings each sixmonth, but violation of that contract is a slippery slope toward ruination. If a person cannot pay in full his half-year's dues, the Rundeen is entitled to collect 20% of the following six months' earnings. If a full year goes by without payment of dues to the Rundeen, the organization automatically becomes a full partner with the member, taking 50% of the gross earnings before expenses are covered. If the member cannot pay in full, the Rundeen are entitled to buy out the business and consider the member's debt to represent payment in full. However, they actually prefer not to buy out a member, as they like to keep the same names on the deeds of ownership and present a stable business front, rather than dropping in and establishing a new owner.

Those businesses that have been bought out and converted fully for the use of the Rundeen's membership are frequently easily identified, as they are usually named after current and antiquated coins from all across the Realms. Thus, while they are not obviously Rundeen operations, the Seven Guilders Caravan Coster of Yallasch is named for a Tethyrian gold piece, the Yulthaari Shipyards are an elf-owned and elf-operated Rundeen shipwright in Almraiven, and the Gold Lion Wheelwrights of Saelmur are directly controlled by the leaders of the Rundeen rather than being separated units of the membership.

Every port and caravan city south of Amn's Lake Weng has an agent for the Rundeen actively watching its members. This person is the *mitalib*, a representative of the collection agency known as the Mitalibbar. To many Rundeen merchants and members, this person, to whom all membership payments are due, is the highest-ranking member of the Rundeen they know. A *mitalib* employs his own agents to keep tabs on all creditors and any meddling usurpers such as rival merchant houses or Harpers. He is effectively a pasha of each city in his own right, though he too has his superiors. (A number of Calishite pashas are secretly the local Mitalibbar of the Rundeen.)

Rundeen Leadership

Known quietly as the Yrshelem (*coin collectors*), the leaders of the Rundeen organization are of two ranks: *First Yrshelem* and *Grand Yrshelem*. The First Yrshelem are the primary organizers and managers of the Rundeen's many holdings and fortunes. Numbering 15 in all, the First Yrshelem work in groups of three to serve the five Grand Yrshelem. The first of the trio handles the money, the second the personnel, and the third manages the hard assets of equipment and costs. All First Yrshelem are former lower-level members who made their way to the upper circles through hard work and/or voluntarily acceding their independence as members to work among the inner circle.

Each of the five Grand Yrshelem has his or her area of authority: slaves, ships, caravans, raw goods, and moneychanging and loans. (Despite the standard Calishite prejudice against women in positions of authority outside of the home, there have been many female Grand Yrshelem across the centuries.) However, they evenly split the responsibilities and profits for the five major markets they control. Similarly to the Council of Six in Amn, the Grand Yrshelem are not seen directly and rule secretly over the group.

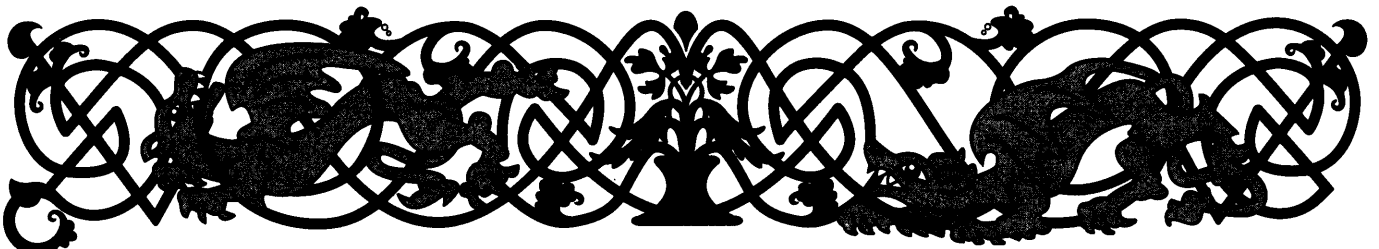
The Twisted Rune

While still a relatively unknown group outside the southern Realms, the Twisted Rune wields more power than a number of better-known evil consortiums, partially due to its utter secrecy and partially due to the fact that its primary and senior members are both undead and powerful wizards. Operating mostly around the Vilhon Reach, Amn, Tethyr, Calimshan, and the Lake of Steam, the Twisted Rune controls and manipulates more power of disparate sources than all the pashas of Calimshan.

The Rune's membership totals are unknown, especially because most of its agents do not know each other, or even that they work for the Rune! Of those cognizant of their allies or masters, there are more than 100 liches, alhoon, beholders, and other evil magic-using creatures. Rumors persist that there are phaerimm among the Rune's structure, but as most phaerimm are restricted to their prisons beneath Anauroch and Cormanthyr, this seems unlikely.

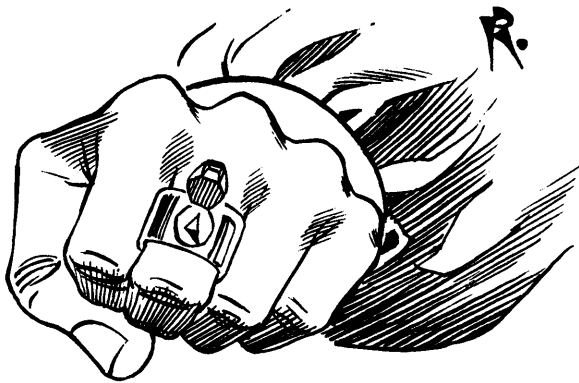
The group has long achieved its primary goal of effective control of midwestern Faerûn, though this is tenuous elsewhere and is only solidly held over Calimshan (which remains blissfully unaware of its true masters). Rival power groups such as the Cult of the Dragon, the Zhentarim, or the Red Wizards of Thay are in awe of the game the Rune plays, but its true motivations and actions are as hidden to them as they are to those ruled. This group has existed since the Year of the Broken Branch (864 DR) and remains a power because it refuses to allow its members to waste their energies fighting themselves.

The aging Calishite mage Rysellan the Dark brought together his Twisted Rune to be a secret consortium of nine Runemaster mages who would manipulate real power in the region, just as the pashas were more effective in controlling the power of Calimshan without the burden of the higher titles. Members would recruit agents to act for them, and these agents would cultivate a greater web of lesser agents and contacts, none of whom knew the others within their ring. In very Calishite fashion, the Runemasters built their positions of power through the work of others,



though they remained quite busy at magic and protections to guard them against detection. Soon, the collective agents of the Runemasters had grown to infiltrate the inner circles of power of every country and city south of the High Moor and west of the Storm Horn Mountains.

While the Rune's influence has slipped over the three centuries since its height, in the Year of the Dracorage (1018 DR), it has rebuilt from its every loss to remain the largest and single most influential power group in southwestern Faerûn. One of the primary reasons for the group's successes is its nondisclosure of information: "Secrecy means success." Most agents only know who works beneath them, and few of them are even aware that they work for the Rune at all, so senior members are well protected from exposure. Rune agents often employ rather well-known or flamboyant pawns for their plans, who become the sole object of notoriety if caught in illegal business; besides, law enforcers are often shy to look too deeply at the levels of conspiracy surrounding any activities when well-known and well-respected figures are involved. Rune agents who distinguish themselves through great success are either slain or promoted higher into the Rune structure to ensure secrecy. Finally, the immortality of the Rune's leaders allows them to pursue agendas that develop over long spans of time, making it exceedingly difficult for most investigators to comprehend their machinations and plots. The Rune might use hundreds of agents, across centuries, to achieve a goal, and such moves preserve their power, their lives, and their clandestine nature.



The Runemasters

The Twisted Rune is a hydra of a power group, with its nine heads—nine Runemasters—to rule nine power groups that act in concert to commit evil acts. Each "head" has many "teeth," as each Runemaster has his or her cabal of agents, who in turn have their own networks, some of which may deploy networks of their own, and so forth. Only those members within one or two ranks of the senior Runemasters even know they are part of the network, because the Twisted Rune's activities are widespread, subtle, and deeply entrenched, and few of their agents are aware that their various jobs fit into larger plans, which fit into grand plans, which fit into high-level agendas, serving a web of dark intelligence and black-market enterprise. It is far easier to allow individual agents to believe their singular contributions are great victories in themselves, no matter what level they take place on—but only the plans of the Runemasters are ends in themselves. Thus, in a power structure similar to the Shadow Thieves' multiple levels of denia-

bility and secrecy, many of those working for the masters of the Rune are blissfully unaware of their true leaders. The pleasant irony is not lost on the Runemasters when their manipulations draw paladins and heroes into their agencies.

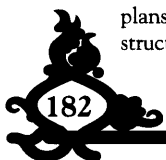
The senior Runemasters' Council is a group of nine undead working in concert and in secret to acquire power of any sort. Its current leader, the lich Rhangaun (see below), declares the primary purpose of the Rune's controls and machinations is merely to keep them protected and safe while they all expand their knowledge of magic, and their low profile in the past few centuries bears witness to this. Only four of the current Council members are original members assembled by Rysellan the Dark; those who left the inner circle fell due to internal strife, not external interference. The Runemasters are active only in very small ways among the lesser members and their agents, using charms and other subtle tactics to avoid drawing much attention to themselves. Of the nine Runemasters, five of them are detailed below as well as some of their primary agents. (Two more—Kartak Spellseer and Priamon "Frostrune" Rakesk—appear in *Book Three: Erikazar & Fok of Intrigue* in the *Lands of Intrigue* supplement, noted under "Power Groups of Intrigue" [TSR 1159]). The two remaining Runemasters are either among the primary agents of the Rune (see the Agents of the Rune subsection below) who could be recently promoted, or they are so mysterious that none save the other five know who they are. Optionally, the Dungeon Master can create customized Runemasters to serve the campaign.

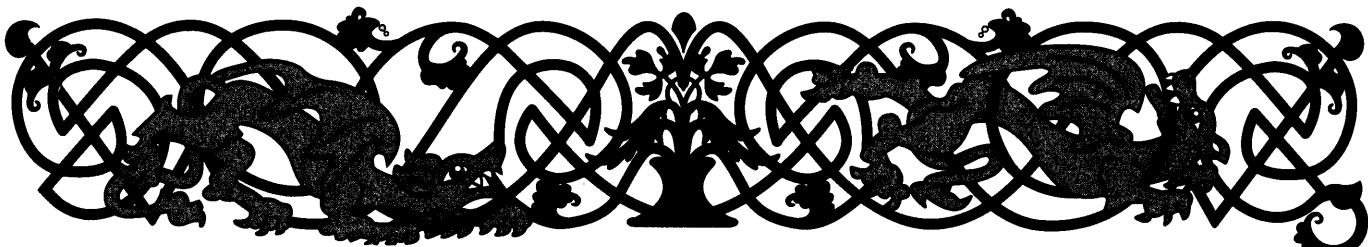
Jymahna

The Silver Pearl (NE hf lich Enc19) was once a lady of note among Calimport's rich, renowned as a concubine who acquired no less than seven pashas' fortunes with a combination of guile, charm, and enchantment/charm magic. She was mummified and prepared for the Transformation by Shangalar the Black (see below). For centuries after the change, she acted as his agent and proxy, but their relation dates back to when both drew breath, when they were lovers. Jymahna's lair is actually the closest to Shoonach, as she resides in a former fortress at the desert's north-easternmost stretch, among the lower foothills of the western Marching Mountains.

Presently, she prefers to be seen clad in golden gowns and wrappings, and a malleable silver funerary mask that acts as her flawless face and hides its true, desiccated visage, so even more than 600 years after her death, Jymahna is as much the enchantress as ever. Of the many tavern tales told of Jymahna, many believe to look upon her unmasked face is to be driven mad—but whether from fear or delight is a topic of debate. Others hint that Jymahna lives only through the mask, and any who place it on their faces are possessed by her. Neither she nor Shangalar would ever reveal the mask's secrets to any agent, or even to the other Runemasters, but it is obviously a source of some power. (Some speculate that it endows her with *suggestion* at will and *charm person* three times per day, as well as a constant *friends* spell that affects all beings within 30 feet of her visible face.)

Jymahna has only recently cemented deals that have earned her a seat among the senior Rune members, making her its newest member. Her agents such as the Spymaster Bellaq yn Effen (a.k.a. the Silver Spider, after the peculiar brand his magical silver-threaded whip leaves with each strike—LE hm T18) of the Spies' Guild, and numerous caravaneers whose travels bring the Rune





word of far-off lands, have made her a clearing house of information, and this is her primary importance to the group.

Rhangaun

The mage Rhangaun (NE hm lich M33) first learned of magic during the Shoon Imperium, and he spent his early years as an apprentice among the mages of the Sword Coast. For a time, he even hired himself out as a mercenary-mage to gain greater spells and infamy—during this time he slew the Prince Cauln Aumar of Athalantar but soon left the intrigues of the Stag King's throne behind and returned to Calimshan. Later, he lived a life of luxury in Memnon as a nazir (a lesser governor over Memnon's outlying plantations), but his family was among the nobility less favored by the Qysar Shoon IV. Thus, he was not welcome among those that thronged at the mage-qysar's feet. Even so, his mercenary work brought him some notoriety, and he did gain a number of imperial audiences in his old age, due to his loyalty to Shoon. These brief meetings with his corrupt majesty engendered a certain ruthlessness in Rhangaun, to outlive the already venerable emperor and gain the power he had. In fact, Rhangaun lived, as did many of the mystic nobles of the Age, to a wizardly age of 312. However, his last century of life was upset by the fall of the Shoon Imperium, and he was forced into hiding within Memnonnar's ruins. It was there that he became undead.

His first few centuries as a lich were unremarkable and unrecorded, for he had learned the benefits of secrecy, privacy, and subterfuge. It was only in his third century of unlife that his activities became known, as Rysellan the Dark captured Rhangaun's phylactery and chose him to be a founding member of the Twisted Rune. After centuries of controlling Rhangaun by threatening his phylactery, Rysellan's position of leadership crumbled when his true nature was exposed in Tethyr in the Year of the Tomb (1182 DR). Numerous plots involving other living and undead agents in Amn and Tethyr came together almost seamlessly; surprising to all but Rhangaun, a group of heroes slew Rysellan's physical body as the proud and vengeful Rhangaun located his phylactery and destroyed it. Rysellan's exposed plans caused the deaths of a wide number of agents and even a few fellow Runemasters, but his death brought these dangers to a halt and the Rune as a group was not exposed. Conveniently, as the senior member of the Twisted Rune (as well as the slayer of the former leader), Rhangaun took over the Runemaster Council and began reorganizing the group into more secret intrigues and patterns, familiar to him from his years among the bureaucracy of the Shoon Imperium.

Rhangaun is no longer the affected noble of Shoon he used to be, though his simple black robes are of the cut of that empire's style. Long desiccated and over 1,100 years beyond death, Rhangaun is just an animated skeleton, though his eyes still glisten black with purple irises in their sockets. He is never without his *staff of the magi*, *shoonrings of human influence and spell storing*, and two ellipsoid (lavender and green) *ioun stones* orbiting his skull, which absorb up to 8th-level spells. His primary lair lies about a half-mile beneath the ruins of Memnonnar and is the site of a library of spellbooks rivaled only by the collection of Elminster of Shadowdale. Rhangaun maintains no less than seven decoy or lesser lairs (one of which, closer to the surface, is guarded by his faithful mummified apprentice Kahras—see the Agenst of the Rune subsection below).

Sapphiraktar the Blue

This lawful evil dracolich was a 900-year-old blue wyrm when he came into undeath three centuries ago. By residing in a subterranean cavern beneath the ruined city of Teshyll, which was once used as a theater for dwarf actors in Shanatar, Sapphiraktar meticulously maintains his appearance and hide in spite of the drying heat of the desert. If one ignores the heart-to-hip gash in his underbelly (which was the blow that slew him), Sapphiraktar seems to be a living 200-foot-long blue dragon when viewed from more than 50 feet away.

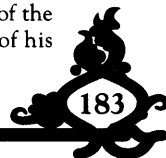
This crafty dracolich has the broadest network of personal agents among the nine Runemasters, and all of them believe they work for someone or something else. Sapphiraktar maintains 40 or more aliases and illusory guises spanning seven races, most of which communicate with others through images and sendings. The dracolich rarely leaves his lair; when he needs to employ a physical claw, he sends specially crafted flesh golems (elves, humans, and even one drider) that allow him to channel spells and speech through them, as if they were *projected images*, from the safety of his lair. Even if they even consider the possibility someone is pulling their strings, the agents are often *charmed* or at least well bought to maintain their loyalty to the dracolich.

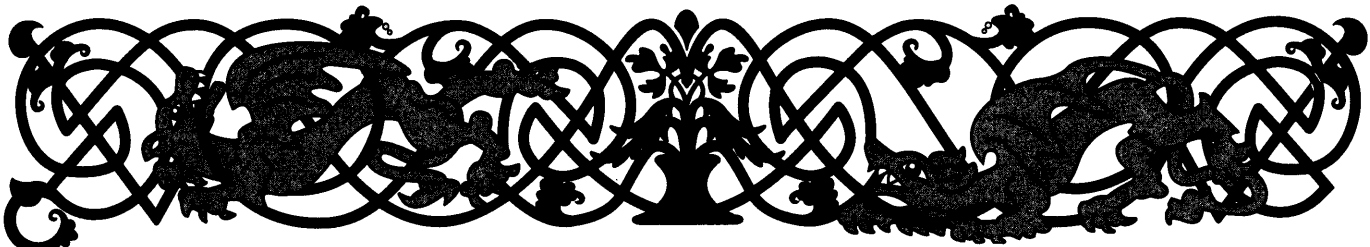
Jymahna's recent entry among the Runemasters brings with it long-distance contacts that make Sapphiraktar's seem paltry. Even more threatening, her spies cover much of the same territory as his, so their efforts create redundant information. Sapphiraktar now subtly pushes his agents into the lands around and spreads his network; thus, he has agents in Tethyr, Erlkazar, Mintar, Baldur's Gate, and other cities across the Sword Coast and the Heartlands. Though he has never revealed the slightest intention to do so, the rest of the nine would be fools to believe the dracolich would not betray and destroy Jymahna at his first opportunity, and she is watching out for him.

Aside from his manipulative abilities that seem to affect any race, the blue dracolich also has a hoard of magical items and dragon spells. Sapphiraktar is keeping himself useful to Rhangaun and Shangalar (see below) by teaching them dragon magic, which is impossible to learn in a mortal lifetime, but the Runemasters have naught but time. As the most physically powerful of the liches of the Rune, Sapphiraktar is imposing at Rune Council gatherings, since his form dominates more than half of the meeting chamber.

Shangalar the Black

As grand vizar of Mameluk Murabir Avarrk of Calimshan in the late Seventh Century DR, Shangalar the Black (LE tiefling lich M27) was an imposing and frightening figure at court. The son of a demonic cambion vizar, the boy grew so swiftly in power and ability that he was underestimated by even his own sire. The powerful tiefling slew both his father and his king to bring himself and his friend (and heir to the throne) Avarrk to their respective seats of power. While many assumed Avarrk was his puppet, Shangalar was actually a loyal servant to his lifelong friend, with little ambition to be anything else. However, when Avarrk died in an assassination plot, Shangalar merely collected his library and artifacts and quit the capitol at Schamedar with little show of regret or remorse. He hid among the Marching Mountains from both real and imagined foes, where he built a pyramidal flying fortress north of the headwaters of the River of Ice and lived to see the fall of his





mameluk enemies. He was later sorely wounded when a pair of black dragons attempted to claim his lair and treasures for their own, during the Dracorage of 1018 DR, but he managed to slay them and create greatcloaks of their hides. Unfortunately, his wounds were near impossible to heal, so Shangalar turned to undeath and became a reclusive lich of fascinating abilities.

Where once the only hints of his tiefling blood were his pointed, scalloped ears and vestigial bone spurs at the elbows and knees, Shangalar's skin darkened over the centuries to its current jet-black hue. It also calcified to flintlike hardness (which grants him an Armor Class of -3, beyond a normal lich's imperviousness to harm). His skin also reflects spell energy, adding to his defenses, so he enjoys an innate and constant *spell turning* effect.

Despite his utter lack of ambition, Rysellan the Dark and Rhangaun recruited Shangalar as an ally in the Twisted Rune when he displayed his great power by nearly defeating the two of them for trespassing upon his domain. Shocked out of his comfortable isolation by the battle, Shangalar immediately decided to join the Rune and stay in closer touch with the outside world (if only to warn him of impending attacks).

During the Time of Troubles, his lair was nearly destroyed by the chaos magic running rampant in the land. The resultant disruption of many delicate experiments and other vulnerable magic reduced his own powers and destroyed many items, including one of his *drag-oncloaks*. These losses have made him more active within Rune activities, as his interests lie in restoring both his own and the Rune's overall power. His unique magic and significantly enhanced item enchantments make him useful, even though he has the fewest number of active agents of the Runemasters' Council.

Shyressa

The lissome, beautiful Shyressa (NE hf vampire M23) is among the younger of the Runemasters, both in tenure and actual age. Once a concubine in a wizard ruler's harem in Lower Tathtar, Shyressa succumbed to a vampire in the Year of Writhing Darkness (572 DR), at the tender age of 21. She swiftly slew her former master and all 15 of her harem companions in her first frenzy of power, releasing all her anger about her former life. After stealing all of his spellbooks and magical apparatus, Shyressa hid among the High Peaks for three centuries, venturing back into Tathtar only to feed and test out her new spells. Few rejoiced more when Tathtar fell to a plague, for it was one of Shyressa's making: A vampire hunter had nearly destroyed her months before, so she unleashed the virulent plague to ensure his destruction as well as that of all her mortal enemies. A century later, Shyressa moved into a mausoleum lair within the royal graveyard of Tahtar's capitol of Dajaan. Now, she has chosen a new path of power, of which her new undead lover, Mankar Ottal (see Agents of the Rune, below), has promised great success.

Shyressa is very catlike in nature, and her games of toying with prey and ally alike are pointless and tiresome to her lich companions. Still, they admire the abilities and magical prowess of one so young and not even a lich. Long kept as an agent but finally moving into a Runemaster's seat about a decade ago, Shyressa uses the resources of the many abandoned libraries beneath Tathtar's ruins to the Rune's advantage. With them, she has developed magic that works with her (and the liches') undead status and energy to provide her with black-flame-based spells which are easy on undead eyes and more subtle at night. These "blackfire" offensive spells

mimic any flame-based spell such as *fireball*, *flaming hands*, and *flaming sphere*. The only restrictions these spells have (while all other casting factors are identical to the standard spells) is that they can only be used by undead casters.

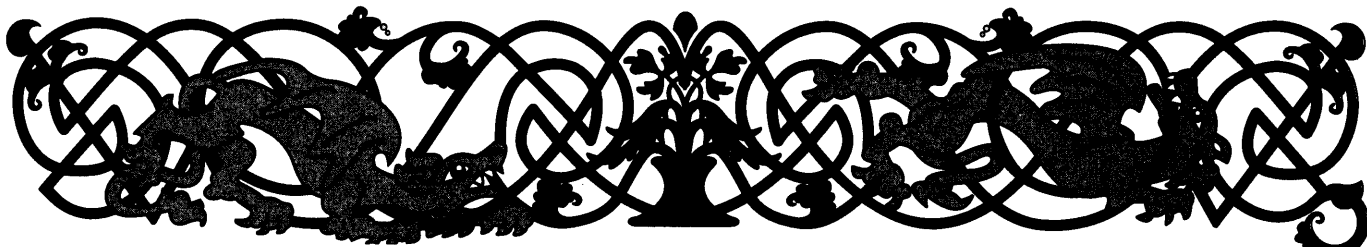
Agents of the Rune

There are over 100 Twisted Rune agents in all, but only 30 truly know whom they serve. These 30 are the sole agents formally treated as members. Many Twisted Rune agents and members belong to other power groups in the Shining Sea and Sword Coast regions, such as the Knights of the Shield, the Rundeen, and even the Janessar, and these groups are none the wiser. Not everyone who works for the Rune does so out of evil or even selfish intent. In fact, various good adventuring groups are sometimes sponsored through agents of the Rune either to pursue those who cross the Rune (like the Zhentarim or the Cult of the Dragon) or to seek out treasures and knowledge currently beyond the liches' reach.

- The famous and feared Mummy of Memnonnar, Kahras (LE) is the most treasured servant among Rhangaun's many undead servitors in more ways than one. Most importantly, this apprentice to Rhangaun for more than 700 years has maintained a lair above his master's, so those of Memnonnar's ruins or Memnon's undercity believe he is the only great undead sorcerer there, successfully drawing attention away from Rhangaun for centuries. (Actually, none have even passed beyond the antechamber of Kahras' lair to look directly upon him. Instead, they gaze upon gold and gems whirling on floating magic around his antechamber, convincing them that he is the center of the greatest wealth and magical power in the region.)

Kahras is unique in that he has all the standard abilities of a normal mummy, but he maintains his vocal abilities, 16 Intelligence, and his M13 spellcasting abilities. Kahras also wears gifts from his master (beneath his wrappings): a *shoonring of fire resistance*, *shoonring of spell turning*, and a *medallion of ESP* with a 60-foot range. He often hides and uses ESP to ascertain the abilities of each group entering his ruins, and then prepares for them.

- Mankar Ottal (LE hm vampire T11) is a former Tethyrian rogue, spy, and assassin trained by the Shadow Thieves. Since his death three years ago under Shyressa's bite, he has been her paramour and closest agent. He is aware of the other Runemasters but has only met one—Shangalar the Black—and has little desire to meet any of them again. Operating from a lonely and long-abandoned (but renovated by him) hunter's cabin in the Forest of Mir, Mankar spies on many of the goings-on in Tethyr's Duchy of Suretmarsh and the Forest of Mir for the Rune. He also has achieved great ignominy as the mysterious slayer of people throughout the region who bleeds and beheads his victims (discarding the heads in the forest and thus disguising his feedings). His combat abilities were once far weaker than his guile and agility, but Shyressa granted him use of numerous magical daggers and a short sword of unknown properties, all of which now make Mankar nearly invincible.
- Olavir al Xvim (CE hm P8 of Xvim), an agent of Shangalar, is a zealous priest within Tynar's Drudach of Calimport's Eraré Sabban (Hook Ward). Olavir believes, after an encounter in the Marching Mountains, that Shangalar is the embodiment and avatar of Iyachtu Xvim and does anything required of him without question. Shangalar, who has a lay knowledge of Xvim's church, plays on this misconception



and gains much information about the goings-on among the temples in Calimport.

- The title of the *Starskull* was granted to the lich Saran yn Tulal el Asrim (NE hm lich M21) more than 100 years after his transformation to lichdom. In a fit of frustration more than a century ago, Saran sought to stabilize his wild magic and end his failures by carving Mystra's star into his forehead. Whether this brought him greater success is unknown, but he is certainly among the more notable of the liches active in the Land of the Lions. The former Memnonite, who learned his magic at the feet of more than seven masters (four of whom he slew), still serves a master today, though many of his own agents are utterly unaware of this. The Starskull rarely allows anyone within the two curtain walls surrounding his tri-towered lair, in the foothills north of the Tართარ ruins of Saalirk, but his master Rhangaun can *gate* directly into the inner sanctum. The Starskull's goals have always been modest, as he is a collector and scholar of artifacts who seeks to make his own by studying many others, so he likely will never rise to the senior circle of the Rune. Still, with his power and large arsenal of relics and items, he is a good servant.
- Voraya (CE lamiaf M6), one of the Rune's best agents within the undercity of Calimport, is a lamia noble who controls the major black markets of Calimshan's capitol. Through these venues, she hears and schemes much, all for the benefit of her dracolich patron Sapphiraktar as well as her own, direct gain. She has dominated the markets of both Underdark agents and smugglers, and she protects herself from discovery with her selective *charm* abilities and her shapeshifting ability. She ventures into the city above when word reaches her of an amlak's interests in her (through various pseudonyms) or her agents, but she never personally kills those nosing around in her business; she hires local assassins instead. Her use to the Rune lies in her intelligence network that spans a 75-mile radius around Calimport, including the Underdark, and reveals many of the myriad plots afoot. She knows she reports to a lich, but she does not know that "Cassidus," the lich who claims to come from Baldur's Gate, who is currently holed up in the desert, and who sends her magical support oftentimes, is an illusion woven around the dracolich Sapphiraktar.

Current Activities of the Rune

For a group of nine creatures, all of whom have been dead for at least 400 years, the Runemasters have been active of late, with their manifold plans and plots. Those described below are by no means their only plans, but they may be the most bold and important. Of course, it should be noted that current plans have been "current" for centuries, and such plans unfold on different levels than most mortals imagine.

The Rune's Role at Mulsparkh

Mulsparkh and its wizard-kings are insignificant footnotes in the histories of Tethyr and Calimshan, or they would be if not for the death of the beloved Prince Rythan of Tethyr and the theft of his *Sword of Starlight*. The Twisted Rune secretly put the idea to rebel into the minds of many puppet wizards in Calimshan, and it shaped the idea of a wizard kingdom based near the old lands of Mir. Their *charmed* agents actually believed they were destined to return Calimshan to prominence through their actions, even

though they first acted against its interests by starting an ill-advised war against Tethyr and Calimshan both.

Pricked on by destiny, the Mulsparkh mages claimed the Tethyrian territory for their own, invoking the expected response from Tethyr: Prince Rythan led an army, and he fell into the Rune's tactical traps. Filled with cutthroat mercenaries and spell-cloaked orcs, goblins, and other monsters, Mulsparkh's armies gave way before the prince's cavalry charge but then closed ranks around the Tethyrian army and overwhelmed it. Tethyr's army fled in defeat, taking their proud prince's body back for a funeral rather than a victory parade.

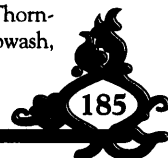
Calimshan soon unleashed their army on the emboldened Mulsparkh, and the Mages of Mulsparkh rallied spells and troops against this enemy as well. The Mulsparkhen tactics of teleporting monsters behind or into the midst of advancing forces effectively decimated the normal efficiency of Calimshan's troops and cost them many troops early on. The rout reversed later when the Mages of Mulsparkh suddenly and mysteriously lost their magical advantages at the critical moment by their hidden Rune masters, and Calimshan's soldiers butchered their swiftly panicking enemies nearly to a man, and very few of Mulsparkh's wizards survived despite many contingency plans. In truth, the Rune devised these plans to destroy the ambitious mages as well as their hated foe Prince Rythan, who ever sought to pierce the veil of secrecy around the Twisted Rune. The prince had destroyed one of their own Runemasters, Jhaniloth Puiral, in the Year of the Marching Moon (1330 DR), and his constant efforts to uncover and destroy all undead in Tethyr disrupted many of the Rune's careful plans.

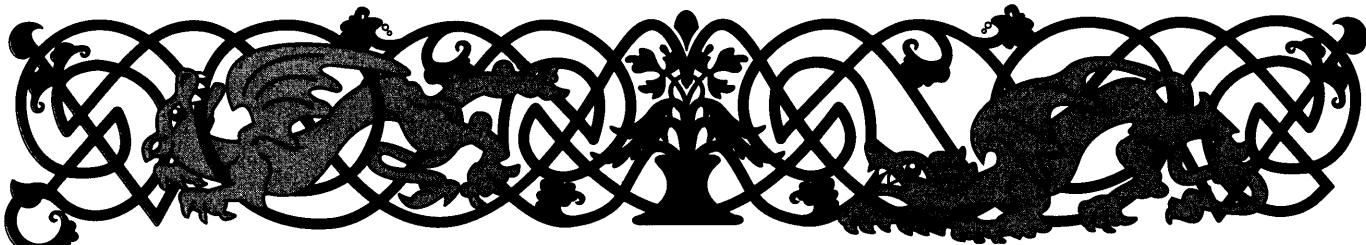
A secret long hidden from Tethyr's people but not from the Rune, the ultimate irony of its plot to kill Prince Rythan was that his elder brother King Alemander of Tethyr wanted him dead. In fact, the Rune allowed Alemander to get wind of and participate in the setup that led to Rythan's death. Doing so not only rid them of their nemesis and a group of otherwise-useless pawns, but it gave them a powerful piece of political blackmail: If anyone should learn the king was connected to his brother's death, the instability and possible change of dynasties could shake Tethyr to its roots. Ultimately, they lost their royal pawn with the Ten Black Days of Eleint and the fall of Alemander, though they recouped some of the losses by using agents to enhance the hysteria and steal much of value from the falling nobility.

The Gates of the Rune

In their boldest and most overt move in a millennia, the Twisted Rune has taken on one of the preeminent powers of the North—Halaster Blackcloak of Undermountain—and emerged victorious in their goal! On Highharvestide of the Year of the Gauntlet (1369 DR), they stole the secrets of creating and maintaining unique and mentally controllable *gate* systems from the Mad Mage, and they now use them to allow themselves greater freedom of movement than they have had since their deaths. Of course, their victory is tainted by a few details: Halaster yet lives, he knows who his foe is, and he too takes centuries of plotting before bringing a plan to fruition. . . .

In the meantime, a series of more than 30 gates now arcs invisibly about the Lands of Intrigue and the Empires of the Shining Sea. The magical portals are in such locations as the Wood of Sharp Teeth; the Giant's Run, Troll, Marching, Omlarandin, and Osraun Mountains; Shoonach; Cape Velen; the Calim Desert; the Thornwood; and various islands among the Nelanther, on the Deepwash,





and in the Lake of Steam. Underground and undersea gates also exist, linking the Rune to places such as Kyorlamshin, Skullport, the various kingdoms beneath the waves around the Velen Peninsula and the Moonshaes, and at least three illithid cities. (The Rune gives them magic with which to defeat the drow in exchange for information and drow artifacts.) Not all of them link to the lairs of the nine, nor are they all automatic (some requiring a mental or verbal command for their destinations or activation), and none are visible unless marked by a floor mosaic for ease of location.

Each Runemaster's lair has a gate to various meeting points or even to each others' lairs. The major meeting places of the Rune have two-way gates that recognize which gate brought beings there and automatically sends them to that gate when they leave the meeting unless commanded to do otherwise. These gates, unlike their counterparts in Undermountain, which operate under many circumstances, are powered by negative energy and thus work only for undead beings. Any living being that tries to use the *gate* does not move anywhere but crumples in pain, losing two experience levels upon contact and suffering 1d10 points of cold damage.

The Unification of Calimshan

In the past five centuries, the Twisted Rune has made so many connections and inroads among the powerful city-states of Calimshan that they all but rule the country from behind the scenes. The liches of the Rune have done much to reestablish a greed for magic in Calishites, and the avaricious pashas and calephs dutifully seek out more magic. The Runemasters have need of rare components or currency, and their agents find and deliver such to them. The Rune hears of other groups planning particular coups of power and disturbances of the status quo, and their agents immediately go to work to covertly disrupt those plans.

The Sythillisian Empire

The current destabilization of Amn, brought on by the intrusion of ogre magi from the East, works marvelously for the Rune and Calimshan, and it is manipulation by the Rune's leader, Rhangaun. More than a decade ago, Rhangaun engineered and expended a great deal of effort and money through various controlled shipping agents to lure a number of ogre magi out of their homelands. While their entrenchment and building of forces beneath the Small Teeth seemed to take a long time for the involved Rune agents, Rhangaun simply waited patiently. When, in the summer of the current Year of the Tankard (1370 DR), the forces of the ogre mage Sythillis at last boiled out of the mountains to conquer the southern half of Amn and destroy its former capitol at Esmeltaran, Rhangaun smiled.

In the short term, Rune agents can profit from this situation by trading with desperate Amnians, offering protection and aid in exchange for rare magic with which they normally might not part. The instability and disruption of Amnian trade also favors Calimshan, as people still demand their goods, war or not, so the Rune profits there as well. This situation could even become permanent, breaking Amn's fiscal strength and returning the same to Calimshan. Even if it is not and Amn defeats the Sythillisian Empire, many Amnians are dying in the war against the ogre mage's armies, and they are being replaced by *charmed* Rune agents who will insinuate themselves into the first families of Amn. Later, after a suitable period of waiting, the Rune can grab their puppets' strings and take control of the Coinland as well.

For more on the Sythillisian Empire and its war on Amn, see *Lands of Intrigue* (TSR 1159).

The Jhasina Gambit

The Yshah Drakosa yn Sallah yi Manshaka (N hm F8) is the sole Calishite landholder in the New Amnian colonies of Maztica. While inherently greedy, self-serving, and crafty in financial matters, Drakosa also is an unwitting pawn of the Rune. Before his latest visit to the New World of Maztica, at the end of the Year of the Banner (1368 DR), he purchased five slaves for the voyage west, including the jhasina Tara (N hf M4). The slaves were bought both for their beauty and for the status they would bring him in the New World—not even the Governor of New Amn had a harem, and such decadence could be a useful political tool with which Drakosa might get the power he wanted.

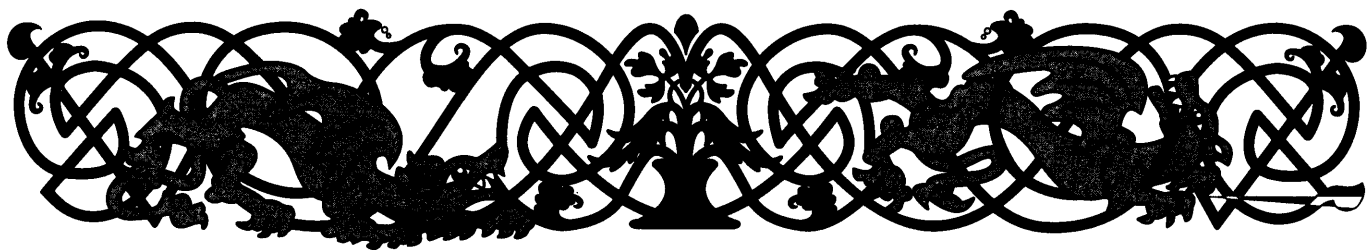
What Drakosa failed to see was Tara's intellect and cunning. He was, like so many others, distracted by her unique amber eyes and flawless body. Tara, while not undead, belongs body and soul to the Twisted Rune. While she has been a lifelong slave and is destined to remain among the jhasinna for some time to come, Jymahna the Enchantress (see the section on Jymahna in The Runemasters subsection of The Twisted Rune section earlier in this chapter) has been her owner behind the scenes since her birth. A disguised Jymahna (whom Tara knows only as Lady Shaliar) or one of her hand-picked agents (often the unwitting current owner) taught Tara magic, often only harmless illusions or charms for her position as a jhasina. Later, through dreams and other arcane methods, Jymahna established both deep controls on Tara and opened up more potential for magic. Her slaves' manacle—a delicate ankle bracelet that appears as seven asps intertwining around her ankle—contains a magical eighth metal asp, which crawls out of the anklet at her mental command and unwraps its own skin to become the metallic sheaf of scrolls which is Tara's spellbook.

Armed with no less than 17 spells that she has mastered (or will yet learn—Jymahna's *secret pages* will reveal themselves and their spells when she is capable of casting them), Tara performs her duties for Drakosa as a jhasina without question, but when left to her own devices, she explores what she can of Maztica, including its native magic and the weaknesses that can be exploited to the Rune's benefit. (She believes she is doing this all for her mysterious teacher Lady Shaliar.) Dutifully, Tara communicates with Jymahna across the sea by using the magic of her anklet under the light of a full moon, sending her information about the New World. Tara believes that one day the Lady Shaliar will come and destroy her fat, hated master and they will found a new land where women are not treated as cruelly as they are in Calimshan. Indeed, the relative equality of women and men among the Mzticans impresses Tara, and she longs to kill Drakosa so she and the other slaves can escape to better lives.

The Rune's current plans for little Tara are quiet and still under discussion. Killing Drakosa helps none of them, as the fat fool is effective at disturbing the Amnians' hold on the colonial lands. Jymahna wants to reward Tara with her freedom from Drakosa, and insists that her escape to a life among the natives may see her learn the elusive *pluma* and *hishna* magic the Rune wants to know more about. Rhangaun has advised patience, for his true goal is not the animal-based magic of the Mzticans but the hidden secrets of the savage elves in their northern jungles. If left to his own devices, Drakosa will eventually press too far into the wild elves' territory and get himself killed, but even images of the elves or anything of their make in his eyes before he dies would expand the Rune's knowledge.

For more on the Twisted Rune, its other Runemasters and agents, and additional secrets, see the *Lands of Intrigue* campaign expansion (TSR 1159).





Appendix II: Slavery

The enslavement of sentient beings is a practice deemed immoral by most of Faerûn's peoples, but Calishites are not among them. Regardless of what Calishites see as (at best) the unenlightened and youthfully naïve attitudes of outsiders, Calimshan is fully and unashamedly a slavery-supported society. The well-to-do openly enjoy the profits and services gained by trading in living beings. From the Calishite perspective, it is a way of life that has been in place for millennia; it has always worked for them, and they see no reason whatsoever to change their ways. At least as long as slavery remains a profitable business, this vile practice will continue to be part of the darker side of Faerûn and a necessary part of life in Calimshan.

Over the past seven millennia, many have escaped Calimshan's slave system and done what they could to destroy the system. Calimshan's newly restored neighbor to the north, Tethyr, was founded in large part by escaped slaves from Calimshan, and that nation may one day bring more direct pressure to bear against the slave trade, but not until its own borders and political affairs are secure.

Slavers and Their Prey

Contrary to popular belief, Calishite slavery is not limited to humans enslaving demihumans and other sentient races. Calishite slavers are notoriously egalitarian: Every race and every person is a potential slave, including anyone in a small band of armed vagrant trespassers (an adventuring band) or "a thief who stole from my pocket" (a beggar requesting a coin or food). As long as the "owner" has more political influence within the system and no witnesses to argue to the contrary, enslavement is cut and dried, so many fighting or strong galley slaves claim to have once been a noble warrior or explorer of lost tombs. The most prized of slaves/servants are wizards, given the Calishite taste for all things magical. Captured wizards are kept under control by their owners, who restrict access to spells that might allow escape or threaten their own safety.

Slave Bonds

The most immediate mark of a Calishite slave is a metal anklet or bracelet welded shut around the limb, marking that person as the property of another. These bonds (which often have loops for chains, should such discipline prove necessary) are branded to show ownership of the slave. The basic bond is a spartan band of metal, but it can be (and often is) made into elaborate jewelry to underscore the owner's wealth. Especially among owners who travel to ports where slavery is outlawed, a slave's bond is crafted to look like a delicate (but deceptively strong) arm or ankle bracelet with some decorative flourishes (the owner's mark). Of all the slave brands across Calimshan, the most notorious and recognized is that of the Arena of Blood in Manshaka. These bonds are gold-plated steel bracers with a skull depicted on the outer forearm and a graven dagger positioned on the underside, along the inner forearm. The skull's teeth and the hilt of the dagger are closest to the wearer's wrist, so the skull faces a viewer when displayed, but the dagger can only be seen when offering a hand to someone. The point of the blade toward the slave is a symbol and reminder that the ones who forged the bond hold the slave's life in their hands.

Escape from Servitude

Slaves generally can leave behind their lot only if someone ransoms their freedom with at least the sum that was paid for them, but performing a service of equal or greater value, such as saving the master's life or at least his treasure, can also buy a slave's freedom. Once more, freed slaves have a short life of freedom of them unless they immediately flee Calimshan, as any who remember that person as a slave are apt to capture and reenslave them immediately. (Few question the word of a classed person over that of a slave, and many slave owners' overseers or thugs carry a set of broken manacles as proof that an unlucky former slave has just escaped.)

Fortunately, there are a number of folk willing to help an indentured servant or slave escape. However, Calimshan law vigorously prosecutes thieves, and those who help slaves escape are considered thieves of the worst type. The escaped slaves, themselves, are legally thieves of their own bodies and servitude, both of which are owned by their masters.



The Slave Trade in General

Trading in living beings is not limited to Calimshan. Both the Red Wizards and the Zhentarim are major players in the trade to the north, and the Twisted Rune, the Knights of the Shield, and the Rundeen all are or have been involved in the trade over the centuries. Of all the major evil power groups, only the Cult of the Dragon has refrained from large-scale participation in slavery, likely due to the Cult founder's personal aversion to (and alleged experience with) the trade. In fact, the whole of Faerûn is affected by this cruel market. Calimshan and Thay are the largest destinations, but unfortunates from across the face of Toril can end up in a filthy slave pen in Calimport or Amruthar—neighbors and unfortunate natives are not the only ones who need beware. The jungles of Chult, the Shaar, Anauroch, the Land of the Lions, and many of Faerûn's wildest, most remote locales are slavers' favored hunting spots. They attack isolated villages or small bands of natives in these areas, rounding them up using force and magic. They make examples of those who will not fetch much of a price and those who resist too long or too strongly, and then take their quarry back to their camp, caravan, or vessel and the horrible fate beyond. Even civilized lands are not immune to the predations of slavers, however. More than one Dalesman farmer and Sword Coast trader has been taken in the night.

Time is of the essence to slavers, as others may attempt to rescue those whom they have captured. One tale told around the tavern tables of the cities of the Arnaden recalls a brave Shadi'ar priestess



Slave Traders

who attacked a band of Calishite slavers, all alone, in an attempt to rescue her betrothed and his family. Fighting like a tiger, she inflicted so much damage upon the rapacious slavers that they pursued her into the night when she finally fled the battlefield. This priestess, called Lyeera, led the slavers into the hills and directly into a trap she and her family had set. They swiftly, mercilessly killed all the slavers but one, allowing him to live so he could take the tale to all who would prey on the Shadi'ar. They left him tied to a post, awaiting the arrival of other slavers who would come to buy and sell with him. The rough-hewn corral where the Shadi'ar slaves had been held now contained only the lone survivor and the severed heads of his 30 companion slavers.

Lion tribes are not the only enemies of slavers, and death is not the worst of treatments they can receive if caught, yet the commerce is profitable in the extreme, and it is unlikely it will cease in the conceivable future. Getting slaves to the market is dangerous work, and they accept and even enjoy it. They are rough customers themselves, to say the least, choosing between dangers rather than eschewing them altogether.

The Caravan Trade

In order to avoid attracting attention, especially in areas where slaving is frowned upon or illegal, slave caravans must avoid normal trade routes and their attendant amenities such as inns, stables, blacksmiths, and so forth. Traveling through the wilds of Faerûn, far from even outposts of civilization, is both a risk and a hardship. To protect the caravan from raiders, thieves, and predacious monsters, numerous guards and several spellcasters are hired. Such protection is hardly foolproof, though, as slaver hunters such as the Nadhari often note that an overly large or powerful contingent of guards is one clue that a caravan is carrying slaves. Other caravans use expensive and elaborate illusions that hide the true cargo from the eye of casual observers. (This is a trick first devised by the Red Wizards but now copied throughout the slave trade.)

Still others choose to travel at night, which carries additional dangers of its own. When slavers use normal caravan routes, they call the practice a *silent run*. On occasion this term is literal, as magic-wielders employ *silence* spells to aid in a quiet passage.

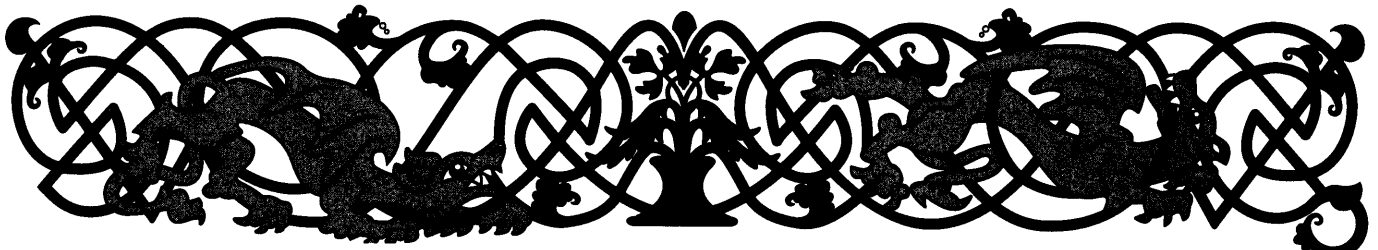
The Sea Trade

Silent runs can occur on the water, too, but the seagoing slave trade is less problematic for most slavers, and hence, more common. On the open sea, few can exactly see what cargo a vessel carries, and ships can usually carry many more slaves than a caravan. Typically, slave vessels are even less humane than caravans, as shipboard slaves are fed less, given less water, and generally are mistreated more. Seriously sick or deceased slaves are easily and quickly tossed overboard to prevent the spread of disease among the healthy cargo.

Seagoing slavers normally only have to pass two inspections of any kind during a voyage, upon departure from and arrival at port. In slave-oriented ports, these inspections are not a problem at all, but even ports that do not support slavery have plenty of authorities who are more than willing to ignore the plight of others, given enough coins in their pockets.

Cities' Roles

The major cities of Calimshan, and the role they play in the Calishite slave trade, are described below. Note that most



of the cities of the Arnaden (and points beyond) were settled in part by escaped Calishite slaves centuries ago. As a result, the majority of these cities seriously frown upon the slave trade passing through their gates. This is not to say that slaving does not take place or pass through these cities, it simply means that the slavers must be more careful, more willing to risk attack and imprisonment, and more forthcoming with bribes to operate in these locales. The exceptions to this antislaving attitude are Innarlith, and the Banite-occupied city of Mintar.

Rumors have reached Saelmur, Ankhapur, and Darromar in Tethyr that the Banites of Mintar are selling off much of the youth of that imprisoned city. This “conscription service” is being used to raise money needed to pay increasing numbers of mercenaries, likely to be used in a war against the newly reformed Tethyr at Ithal Pass.

Almraiven

The majority of the slaves that pass through this coastal city are gnolls, flinds, and other humanoids on their way to Alimir mountains. Many of these creatures become galley slaves or gladiators in the Arena of Manshaka. Some are bought by mercenary companies and offered a wage and a weapon instead of a chain and a collar.

Calimport

This capital is the primary market in the Calishite slave trade. Several competing slave trade costers have their own businesses set up throughout the city, though most tend to be near the docks or the city's gates. Most of these slaves end up in the fields or households of wealthy Calishites, though buyers travel from far and wide to browse through the best selection of enslaved beings on Faerûn. Millions of gold pieces and thousands of lives are exchanged in these markets each year, like so much grain or cattle or lamp oil.

Keltar

This city's slave trade focuses on goblinoids, the races that many there proudly declare deserve to be slaves. Most of these goblins, hobgoblins, and bugbears are sent on to Calimport or the cities of Thay, where they perform the most menial, distasteful tasks. A number of these creatures also succumb to Thayan or Calishite magical experiments, a fighting pit or arena, or are *charmed* to play the role of fool in a pasha's court.

Memnon

Until the recent Reclamation of Tethyr, this port city was the staging point for outbound slaves who were taken from the then-lawless lands of Tethyr. Considering recent events there, and the trouble in Amn to the north, the local slavers may relocate to Murann or Athkatla in the near future.

Schamedar

This city's location between the ports of Almraiven and Calimport make it a common stopping point for both land-based and seagoing elements of the slave trade. The city also specializes in rare creatures captured in the Marching Mountains and the Forest of Mir (including but not limited to dwarves and elves).

Suldolphor

This city is no better than the other Calishite cities listed here, but this city's rulers do not profit by the purchase or sale of slaves

but from the high fees and bribes required to ship slaves through the Straits of Suldolphor (also known as the Strait of Storms), linking the Shining Sea to the Arnadar or Lake of Steam.

Volothamp

Humans are the primary slave cargo that passes through this city. Most of these unfortunates were captured in the Shaar, Chult, or outlying settlements on the Chultan Peninsula in the Tashalar.

The Major Traders

Various groups and evil races take part in the despicable commerce of the slave trade. Each has its own motives for doing so beyond that of simple greed. The major groups and races and their reasons are discussed below.

Red Wizards of Thay

Within their own borders Thayan slavers need not conceal themselves, as this nation thrives on the toil of slaves. Huge plantations are owned by wealthy zulkirs and tharchions, and they are run by human, and in some cases humanoid or quasihumanoid (such as ogres or evil centaurs), overseers. Many slaves in Thay also disappear into their wizard masters' laboratories, never to be seen again.

Many of these slaves come from Thay itself, for the slightest infraction of Thayan law can result in the forfeiture of all property and permanent indentured servitude to the (wealthy and powerful) injured party. This practice cannot fill the constant demand for more slaves in the cities however, and overtaxing this resource could lead to civil problems. In order to prevent this, the Thayan port city of Bezantur, north of the Alaor, has become the main entrance point for foreign slaves.

The Rundeen

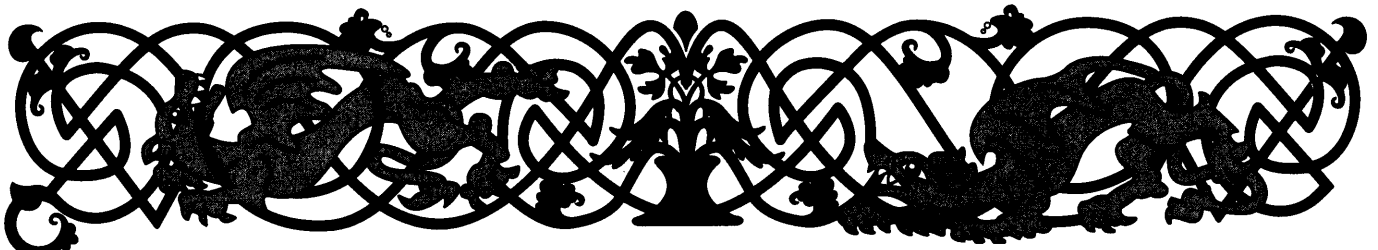
In Calimshan and throughout the Shining Sea and Sword Coast regions, the secret society known as the Rundeen remains a vital cog in the slave trade. Though the group no longer holds a monopoly on the business, it is still the foremost slave dealer in the region. In fact, the Rundeen outright controls the trade coming out of the Shaar and retains a virtual monopoly to ports north of Calimshan, along the Sword Coast.

As might be expected, the Rundeen are very good at what they do. Unlike other, smaller operations (“amateurs,” the Rundeen would call them), the members of this group know that every slave lost is profit lost. An ill or otherwise-damaged slave is worth less to prospective buyers, and the Rundeen know that enough food, plenty of water, and perhaps even a cold bath and a clean (or at least cleaner) shirt before stepping onto the auction block pays dividends in a better price. They therefore take special care of their cargo. Rundeen ships, for example, do not pack slaves into the hold so tightly that they actually must sleep standing up, as other slavers commonly do. The usual horrible tales of the slave trade—the beatings, whippings, rapes, and mutilations of recalcitrant slaves—are never told where the Rundeen runs the operation.

The Twisted Rune

This cabal of undead and other magic-wielding beings does not play a major role in the commerce of slaving. Its goals are not in





the accumulation of material wealth (undead have little use for gold pieces) but in insinuating itself into the background of the halls of power, where it can pull strings and be the power behind the facade they allow to exist. Were these beings to change their minds, however, their recently acquired knowledge of *gates* (stolen from Halaster Blackcloak himself) would allow easy movement of any type of illicit goods—including slaves—between points across Faerûn.

Other trade goods are more likely to pass through these *gates* than slaves however. Magical items, potions, poisons, various illegal substances, monsters, and the agents and members of the Rune itself are much more likely to make use of the gates.

Beholders

Any who know the history of this region tremble at the mention of these horrible creatures. Tales and ballads of the horrors of the Eye Tyrant Wars are still told or sung at the hearths, inns, bathhouses, and temples of both Calimshan and the Land of the Lions. Nightmare visions of vast armies of slave warriors, *charmed* or otherwise compelled to serve the evil orbs, led by mad priests proclaiming the divinity of their spherical masters, still haunt the old battlefields and the sleep of those who fear the eye tyrants' return.

Although beholders rarely trade in slaves, they are known to purchase them, if boastful tales told in seedy Calimport feshalls are to be believed. However, beholders are capable of magically charming victims into serving them, and they are likely to do so rather than look to the average slave to tend their special needs and ambitious plans. Therefore, they probably buy slaves for other reasons: There are unconfirmed reports of gigantic holding pens in the Underdark, where slave "cattle" await their owners' appetites.

The Drow

In the south, the drow slave trade pales beside that of the Runderen and even that of the Zhentarim, but in the North the drow, not the Runderen, are what harried mothers tell their sleepless children will come to take them away if they do not go to sleep. Fortunately, the notorious inability of the drow cooperate even among themselves has prevented their slave trade from becoming what it could be. Too many betrayals, broken deals, and sheer mountains of mistrust keep the drow from escalating their slaving practices.

One of the few places where the drow are involved in slavery is in the city of Skullport, in the caverns of Undermountain beneath Waterdeep. While the number of slaves that pass through Skullport is minuscule in comparison to that of Calimport, the city and its drow slavers are a vital link to the North and the Underdark for slavers. Those purchased by the drow are commonly used by the powerful matriarchs of Menzoberranzan and the rulers of other drow cities of the Underdark. They perform menial, hazardous labors or are kept and bred as cattle for the spiders of Lolth and as sacrifices to gods such as Vhaerun and Ghaunadan.

The Duergar

One of the races with which the drow trade slaves for goods is the duergar. While the gray dwarves share the typical dwarf's love of hard work, they are less convinced that *they* be doing that work. More specifically, there are many tasks that the duergar would prefer to leave to slaves while they toil in the mines,

digging out valuable ore. (The duergar trust no one, not even each other, to do their digging for them.) Slaves tend mushroom gardens, care for duergar children while their parents dig, and complete other thankless tasks.

The Illithids

The mind flayers are perhaps the most ambitious of all the groups and races that partake in the slave trade in the Realms, for they do not limit themselves to the planet Toril. As one of the more powerful evil races in Arcane Space (along with the fractious, feuding beholders), the illithids run their operations not only on and beneath the surface of Toril but also in the heavens (and crystal spheres) above. The mind flayers' mental powers permit the safe transport of much more powerful, dangerous creatures than would otherwise appear as slaves. Umber hulks (courtesy of the neogi), giants, and even the blue-skinned race known as the arcane have appeared on Toril in illithid-forged chains. The illithids also make use of the more common human and demihuman slaves for food, for barter with other races, or as fuel for lifejammer engines.

More locally, illithids buy and sell not only the surface races but also Underdark races that they consider a threat or competition. It is not uncommon to see mentally dominated drow, duergar, *svirfnebli*, or other Underdark creatures serving the illithids as cannon fodder, menial labor, or a walking larder.

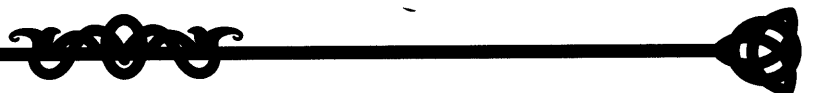
Various Cults and Temples

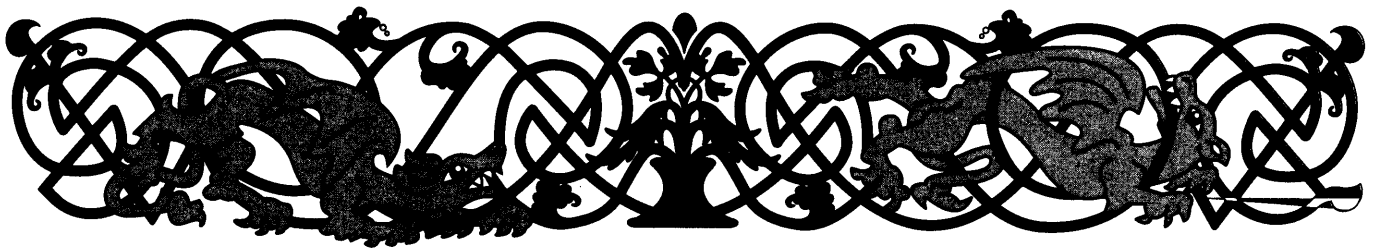
Many minor cults, quasimystical societies, and temples devoted to dead gods such as Bane dabble in the slave trade in the Realms, most commonly to acquire suitable subjects for unholy rituals. Slaves purchased from distant lands are used for this by savvy cults and so on, as this practice does not deplete nearby populations and thereby attract undesired attention to the region and the cult's activities. In the scope of the slave trade as a whole, the activities of these small groups has little if any impact. However, heroes are most likely to encounter the slave trade through a group just like this.

The Zhentarim

In the lands that bound the Inner Sea, the Heartlands, and much of what people consider to be Faerûn, the evil Zhentarim control the slave trade. They do so by making efficient use of the Inner Sea and the other waterways of Faerûn to transport their living cargoes from Zhentil Keep in the north (they do buy some slaves from the drow upon occasion) to Thay or up the Vilhon reach, overland to Innarlith, then across the Arnaden to Calimshan or points beyond. Many of the slaves that the Zhents ship in this manner are those enemies they take in battle or kidnap from positions of power. Removing these beings, be they soldiers, adventurers, or politicians, and sending them thousands of miles away not only solves problems for the Zhents but also makes a tidy sum.

Some members of the Zhentarim have heard stories lately that a colony of *avariel*—legendary winged elves—has been discovered in the mountains of Sossal. Capturing the only known colony of winged elves known on Toril would be the slaving coup of the century and could make the Zhents wealthy beyond belief.





Appendix III: Magic

Dany a northerner scholar or adventurer has been stymied by the seeming overabundance of artifacts and relics throughout the Empires of the Shining Sea. However, after spending decades seeking all knowledge of the *Shining Shield of el'Haram* and expecting an item of fabulous power, they may be disappointed, but not necessarily surprised, to find this “legendary” shield is merely a *shield +2* with a glamer on it to prevent tarnishing or scratching.

The line between artifacts and magical items is far more blurred here than in any other Faerûnian lands due to one thing: the importance of stories. To a Calishite, a battle or quest itself is far less important than the retelling, often with great embellishment. While it is true that everything has a story all over the Realms, here the stories are organic and often shift and build on each other, thus creating artifacts where there are only simple items. In fact, if one wishes to search for true artifacts and things of great power in Calimshan or the Lake of Steam, the best signal to watch for is a subdued or lackluster story with little significance paid to an item—those stories often attempt to draw attention away from object of real importance.

General Calishite Items

Before discussing items of genuine import to the adventuring public, it is crucial to be aware of the vast overabundance of magical items of all manner and make in the Lands on the Shining Sea. For hundreds of years, Calimshan and its rulers (both high and low) have been fascinated by magic and commissioned thousands of items to be made for their every use or amusement. This commonality of magical items is mitigated only by their highly specific natures and/or their relative uselessness in applications other than the amusement of an arrogant autocrat. Also know that not everyone on the streets of Calimpor is loaded with magical items. To the contrary, magical items are often a sign of prosperity and wealth, so one must find the wealthy to find the magic.

Here are a number of magical items one might find among Calimshan's idle rich.

- Magical boots and shoes that lace themselves.
- Doors and gates that recognize those allowed inside and open automatically for them.
- Clothing that sheds stains and dirt (watching spilled wine flow off a silk shirt and back into a drunken pasha's goblet is almost commonplace).
- Carpeting for floors and stairs that magically moves a person in the direction they face while standing on it, with no effort wasted on taking steps.
- Everburning braziers and lamps that automatically dampen themselves when enough light enters from without, but relight themselves when needed.
- Levitating feather fans to keep air circulation constant and cool.
- Wine goblets that walk themselves to a bottle and refill themselves.
- Lounging pillows that fluff themselves constantly to keep the lounge cool and comfy.

Calishite Mail

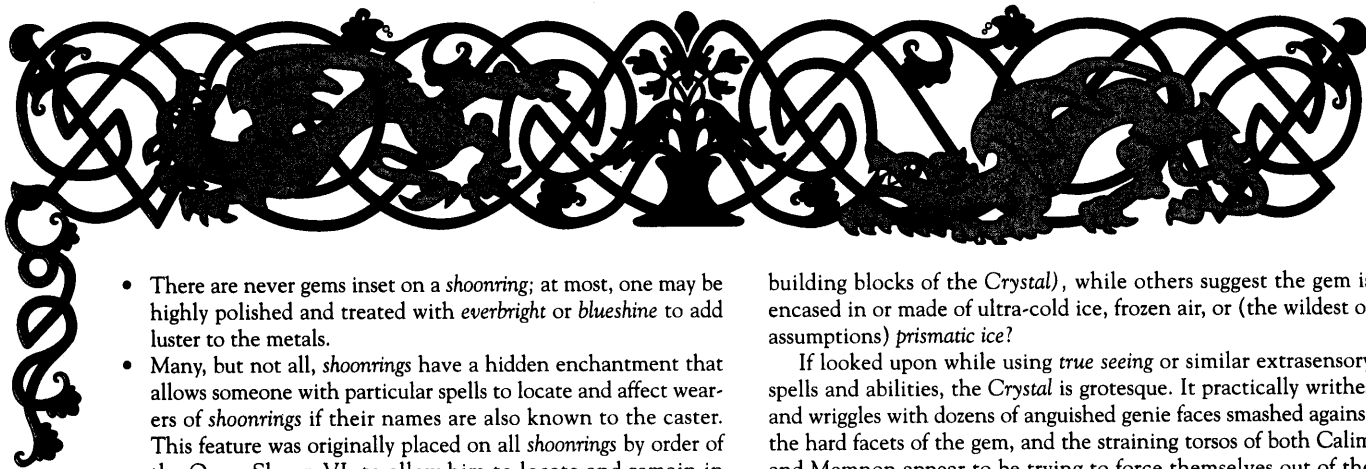
A generic term for this particular style of magical armor, *calishite mail* is merely enchanted chain mail of +1 and +2 protection, with one distinguishing factor: It keeps its wearer cool, despite the normal stifling nature of armor. This magic affords no protection against fire attacks of any kind, since it simply works to keep the wearer's body temperature normal and allows the armor to be worn at all times rather than for short periods.

Shoonrings

Shoonrings are magical rings created to uniform standards during the time of the Shoon Imperium, when it ruled over Calimshan and the Lands of Intrigue. During that time period, these were merely the standard for magical rings, and they only acquired their current generic name about 200 years or more after the fall of the Shoon Imperium. While there are some that do not have modern (or northern) analogues, they all share certain characteristics that label them *shoonrings*:

- They are constructed of two different types of metal, formed into bands that are twisted both independently and then twined together, creating thick rings of twining bands of color.





- There are never gems inset on a *shoonring*; at most, one may be highly polished and treated with *everbright* or *blueshine* to add luster to the metals.
- Many, but not all, *shoonrings* have a hidden enchantment that allows someone with particular spells to locate and affect wearers of *shoonrings* if their names are also known to the caster. This feature was originally placed on all *shoonrings* by order of the Qysar Shoon VI, to allow him to locate and remain in touch with all his agents (and enemies to whom he had gifted some rings). After 50 years, enchanters continued placing the magic within the rings, some unwittingly and out of habit while others did so with the full intent of using the feature to aid friends and allow them powers over their enemies.
- In general, the types of metal in a *shoonring* can betray what type of magic is contained within it. Iron of a particularly dark hue (found in the Marching Mountains and the Alimir Mountains) is standard for defensive rings and those dealing primarily with combat. Gold in a *shoonring* is an obvious clue that the ring is capable of multiple magical effects, while a pure silver band suggests that the *shoonring* either enhances spellcasting or the stored abilities within the ring. Electrum bands provide the benefits of both gold and silver, though the alloy reduces the levels of power allowed by the purer metals.

Alloys are harder to determine by sight, aside from two distinctive alloys in Calishite metalwork: *solbar* (*bright steel*, an alloy of steel and silver) and *hamaad* (*war metal*, refined, folded steel). *Solbar* is spotted by its bluish radiant shine that never tarnishes; its presence in *shoonrings* is most often linked with electrical magic. The use of *hamaad* steel in a *shoonring* was difficult, since the tempered and folded metal was stronger than other materials (and almost exclusively used in weapon blades); *hamaad* steel made a *shoonring* heavier than normal (though blades of the same steel were light) but provided a good receptacle for the most powerful magic.

Other metals are used in rarer quantities, but these are the most common metals and combinations.

In all other ways, *shoonrings* are standard magical rings subject to the common AD&D rules (any exceptions are noted under a particular ring's description). Thus, other than the bulleted details above, there is no difference between a northerner's *ring of protection +1* and a *shoonring of protection +1*.

The Calimemnon Crystal

This legendary crystal is among the most powerful of living artifacts ever seen on Faerûn. The gem grew from elf High Magic and the fused life forces of Calim the djinni, Memnon the efreeti lord, and more than 100 of their genie followers. It appears to be a diamond with more than 30 facets on both sides. The *Calimemnon Crystal* always sparkles and glints as if under direct sunlight. Curiously enough, the atmosphere within the Spinning Keep, where it rests, is quite chilly and damp, and much of the cold emanates from the *Crystal* itself. Theorists propose that the legendary *Crystal* may be a fusion of elemental air and fire (as Calim's and Memnon's physical forms are the primary

building blocks of the *Crystal*), while others suggest the gem is encased in or made of ultra-cold ice, frozen air, or (the wildest of assumptions) *prismatic ice*?

If looked upon while using *true seeing* or similar extrasensory spells and abilities, the *Crystal* is grotesque. It practically writhes and wriggles with dozens of anguished genie faces smashed against the hard facets of the gem, and the straining torsos of both Calim and Memnon appear to be trying to force themselves out of the gem by the top or bottom.

Powers: Since none have ever touched the *Crystal* other than the baelnorn who sits placidly in the air above it, these are the powers granted by the *Crystal* that were supposed by learned explorers who penetrated into view of the great *Calimemnon Crystal*.

- *Life Drain or Healing:* Rays from the *Crystal* arc all around the inside of the Spinning Keep, and they have the effects of either robbing or adding life (10% cumulative chance per round of exposure, 50% chance of either effect for 1d8 points of healing or damage). The baelnorn and the elementals within the prison are immune after long exposure.
- *Invisibility:* The *Crystal* can render itself or any item or thing within its sphere of influence invisible. This effect is used most often for confusion or to disguise the deadly coating of razors and blades along the inner walls of the Spinning Keep (same effects as the spell, though invisibility is permanent while the gem is present).
- *Illusions:* In a similar fashion, the *Crystal* can project illusions to obfuscate its presence and its other powers. These are permanent illusions for all five senses, designed to keep everyone away from the *Crystal*; thus, of the few people ever to penetrate the Keep, only two have actually seen the *Crystal*, while others have seen whole other worlds or empty ruins or other things entirely.
- *Genies' Touch:* The aura of the *Calimemnon Crystal* may convey temporary genielike powers due to the amount of power in over 100 major genies. For each round spent in the presence of the *Crystal* (illusion cloaked or not), a person gains an hour of magical genie abilities. If a living being touches the *Crystal*, there is a 1% chance of granting genie power for a number of years. Roll randomly to determine whether the acquired powers are those of a djinni, dao, efreeti, marid, or jann. DMs determine what ability or power is gained: The more powerful, the shorter the ability is retained, but the most commonly endowed abilities are size changing and flight, followed by invisibility and creating water.

DM Note: If either Calim's or Memnon's presence could come into physical contact with the *Crystal*, that entity would absorb all the lifeforce and power that was originally his own, plus that of his foe. The claiming of such power would also serve to kill the other genie lord. Thus, the pair have been fighting for centuries, and all for a prize removed from either reach.

Last Known Location: The *Crystal* remains, as it ever has, floating placidly within the Spinning Keep of Siri'wadjen. It has been viewed by a number of parties over the centuries, but none have ever touched it, as none have defeated its guardian tasked genies, air elementals, and one High Mage baelnorn (undead elf guardian of tombs and magic), who buffet or blast any intruders haplessly against the razor-studded walls.



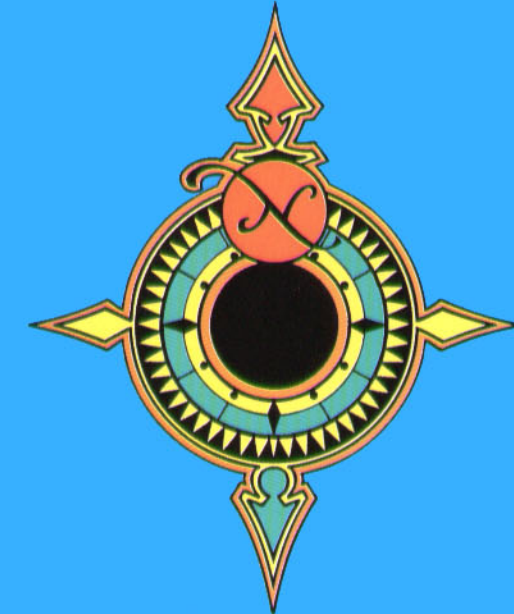


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Empires of the Shining Sea

The Shining Sea

One Inch = 30 miles





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ISBN 0-7869-1237-5



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U.S. \$29.95 CAN \$39.95

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