





A GAZIETTITEER FOR ODYSSEYS & OVERIORIDS

LANDSOF GIANUS AND THEIR SERVANJES

# SECRETS OF GIANTHOME

## A GAZETTEER FOR ODYSSEYS & OVERLORDS

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## ODYSSEYS & OVERLORDS

In the ancient times, the Gods watched over humankind. This was a golden age of learning and peace. Humans revered the Gods, living in harmony with the divine and the companion beasts. Magic flowed freely allowing the learned and the faithful to alter their forms, prevent aging, and preserve health. The wild folk were born of this time as humans and companion beasts united in love. While most of the Gods rejoiced at this development, Ragnar, the God of Conquest was jealous and appalled by the humans choosing the animal companions as mates instead of the Gods. This caused a divine war during which the Gods who agreed with Ragnar tried to kill the other Gods. The first casualty of this war was Ember, the Goddess of knowledge. When Ember died, her scholar-priests, the Keepers of the Arcane were caught in a magical backlash creating the spellscorched. This war of Gods, called the Schism, raged for 1000 years, during which time the followers of Ragnar courted the worship and love of as many humans as they could. From these unions, the Abyss-kissed were born. After a long and bloody conflict, Ragnar and his followers were defeated. The Gods who fought them dragged Ragnar's followers into the Abyss where they are believed to still be fighting to this day. Only Ragnar and Chandra, the Goddess of the moon and nature remained among mortals. Declaring a cease fire, Ragnar retreated with a small retinue of cultists to the Tower of Wretched Wroth. Chandra and her highest clerics went to the Crystal Library on the surface of the northern Moon. Mortals were left to determine their own fates. The magic that had bound the souls of humans and the companion beasts shattered, though wild folk were already numerous enough to persevere. The spellscorched taught the ways of arcane magic sparingly, protecting the art nearly to extinction. Clerics of Chandra and Ragnar spoke of worship, but most mortal kingdoms rejected all gods and magic, relying on steel and blood to determine righteousness and rulership.

Now, the mortal lands are divided. A dozen kingdoms lie scattered across the world, separated by dangerous wilds filled with bandits and monsters. The bravest mortals act as adventurers, guiding travelers between the kingdoms, killing monsters to thin their numbers, and plundering ruins in search of the lost treasures of the golden age. This is the world of **Odysseys & Overlords**!

## GIANTHOME

Gianthome — site of the last giant settlements. Nestled in between the Shimmering Peaks to the north and the Austral Ocean to the south, it is a defensible and verdant region. Here, the giants built new cities for themselves. Three of the giant settlements lie at the top or beneath the Shimmering Peaks. Fire and stone giants enjoy the warmth and stability of their subterranean dwellings, while the frost giants overlook the land from their icy fortress, located on the highest of the Shimmering Peaks. The cloud giants live in the far south of Gianthome, on the Crooked Claw peninsula, sometimes sharing their home with the storm giant seafarers.

## THE PLAINS AND FOOTHILLS Population: 9,000

**Composition:** 88% small folk, 5% cloud giants, 5% fire giants, 2% storm giants

Nomadic fire giants, storm giant settlers, tribal humans, cromags, bugbears, and the like as well as cloud giant administered small folk settlers populate Gianthome's eastern plains.

Most fire giants wander the plains, offer their services to the settlements they pass through, while seeking inspiration. Some gather for raiding parties that venture into the Centaur Borderlands to attain high-quality metal for their smelters. Some fire giants also make it as far north as the lowest frost giant villages and apply their skills there, but most avoid the cold. For fun, the fire giants chase around the tribal humans, who roam about with their goat herds.

The cloud giants lead tranquil lives in the villages they administer. The frost and fire giants attack these villages only in rare cases, so the small folk enjoy the safety and stability the cloud giants bring. In turn, they pay taxes and supply the giants with food.

The storm giant settlers usually stay near the coast since they find fishing for food easier and more enjoyable than tilling fields or herding—from their perspective—antsized cattle. Although the storm giants don't cohabitate with small folk, they enjoy spending a bit of time with the passing tribes, sharing food, drink, and news.

## **THE AULD WOODS**

## Population: 3,000

**Composition:** 80% wild folk, 20% other small folk The Auld Woods cover Gianthome's western parts. The giants are not fond of the woods since they have trouble traversing the dense flora. So they leave whatever lives in the Auld Woods to their own devices. With no threat from loggers and settlers, who the fire and frost giants squash periodically, the woods remain untouched by civilization.

This allows a large population of wild folk and tribals to flourish beneath the dense canopies. In hunter-gatherer

societies, they prowl the primeval forest and make a comfortable living.

## Fryostfäst

## HOME OF THE FROST GIANTS Population: 400

#### Composition: 100% frost giants

On the highest mountain of the Shimmering Peaks looms Fryostfäst, the frost giant fortress built almost exclusively from ice. The fortresses's best defenses are completely natural. The icy gales and thin air make it impossible for most other races to even lay eyes on the structure. Still, a thick bulwark of ice and stone surrounds the actual castle, just in case besiegers ever reach the frost giant's homestead. Behind the walls stands the imposing castle Fryostfäst. It features dozens of delicate spires, translucent walls, and many bridges spanning the castle's towers in dizzying heights. No fires burn inside, the frost giants have no desire for it. They only need their company and strong drinks.

## **GIANTHOME'S OVERLORDS**

From Fryostfäst, the frost giants have dominion over several villages, populated with yet more of their kind and cyclops shock troops. The lower the village lies, the lower is the frost giant inhabitants' rank in society. The most pitiful frost giants live even lower than the cyclops warriors. In total, around 3,000 frost giants live, love, and die on the Shimmering Peaks.

As Gianthome's overlords, the frost giants send socalled war delegations into the plains to collect tribute from cloud giant seneschals and wandering tribes they encounter. Once in a while, they put a village to the torch to remind the small folk and giants who their overlords are. The frost giants also send their delegations to Bärgheym and Fijälsmyälta, where they are paid off with chipped gems and second-grade arms.

## THE TELESCOPE

Fryostfäst's most impressive feature is a giant telescope, even from frost giant perspective. With perfect lenses made of ice, the frost giants spy on Gianthome's plains to the south and the Untamed Gauntlet to the north. Mostly it is used to pick out lucrative raiding targets in the Gauntlet, however. From its elevated location in the Shimmering Peaks, the telescope can view unbelievable distances on clear days—the horizon is 160 miles away, to be exact. Although one cannot actually make out any details at this range.

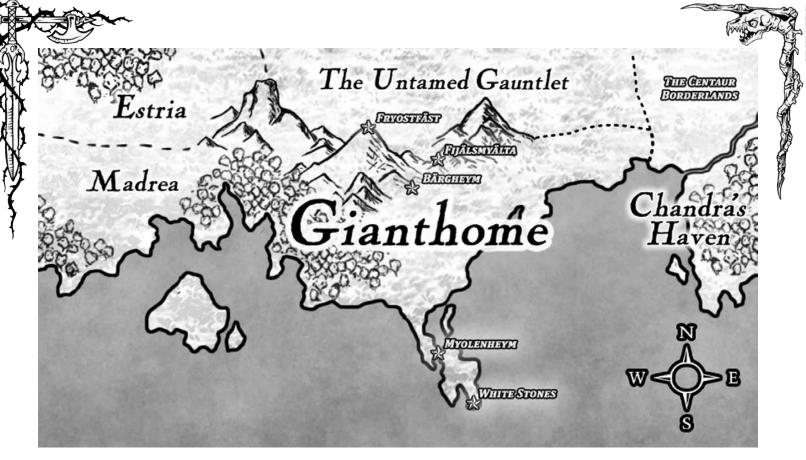
## **RUTHLESS RAIDERS**

The frost giants don't wait for official decrees to raid the Untamed Gauntlet. When they feel an itch, entire villages pack up and wander north to plunder ruins or decimate caravans. The frost giants make sure to let a few caravanners escape—if they survive the initial stone barrage. It wouldn't truly be a successful raid if no enemy was left to tell of the frost giants' prowess in battle. The frost giants are chiefly responsible for the giants' reputation, although there are evil specimens in every race who enjoy a good bit of carnage.

However, when the King and Queen call for an official campaign, the villages only send their most skilled fighters. They wouldn't want to embarrass themselves before the royals. Additionally, if a frost giant impresses the royals, the village might be allowed to resettle in a higher region in the Peaks.

## GOVERNMENT

The frost giants live under an absolute monarchy— Queen Ivir and King Wugant rule with an iron fist. The succession law is primogeniture and absolute cognatic, meaning the oldest child inherits. This is often cause for infighting, especially between brothers and sisters.



## **Myolnheym**

#### Home of the Cloud Giants

#### Population: 5,200

**Composition:** 75% small folk, 20% cloud giants, 5% cyclopes

Mist-covered Myolnheym, located at the isthmus of the Crooked Claw, Gianthome's largest peninsula. A two-tiered city with ports to either side of the ocean, offering a safe haven for seaborne travelers, from storms and monsters alike. In the truest sense, one would have to speak of Myolnheym as two cities. On an artificial mound in the center of the settlement lies the fortress of the cloud giants, eternally covered in a magic mist. Around the fortress sprawls the lower city of Mylonheym; populated by subservient cyclopes and small folk who go about their daily business. The denizens of the lower city lead a peaceable life in the shadows of the cloud giants, for no one dares to attack Myolnheym. One can go for years without seeing a cloud giant in the lower city. They only descend from their fortress to collect taxes—a menial task given to the lowest ranking giants—or to set sail for sanctioned, decades-spanning journeys. On the topic of tax collection: the cloud giants consider all of Gianthome's plains their fiefdom. Giant tax collectors travel across country, collect what is due, make investments where needed, and then return to MyoInheym with whatever is leftover. Several cloud giant seneschal living in the plains have the actual oversight and usually manage relations with the other giant races when they appear in the plains.

## THE FORTRESS

On the Foundation, as the giants call the 300 feet high artificial mound, looms Myolnheym proper. A fortress built from black stone the cloud giants collected from the bottom of the sea with the help of the storm giants. Its true extents are hard to judge from the outside; the mists surrounding the fortress never vanish—only rarely can one glimpse small portions of the outer walls. However, the giant architects and construction workers exactly know its impressive size: the circular fortress has a diameter of 3,000 feet and it is 300 feet high.

Life inside the fortress is tranquil and luxurious. The giants have access to several extensive libraries, theaters, operas, and bathhouses. Using their many hippogriffs, they correspond with cloud giant seneschals or the other giant races. By day and by night, cyclopes deliver food and other necessities to the fortress. In an endless string, the one-eyed laborers clamber up the steep stairs towards Myolnheym's gates to deliver their goods. Despite all, Myolnheym is still only a pale shadow of what the giants lost during the Schism—a mere village compared to the old giant cities.

## THE PORTS

Two ports exist in Myolnheym, one to the south and one to the north of the isthmus. Next to gargantuan cloud and storm giant vessels moor the boats and ships of the small folk. The latter appear like mere toys compared to those of the giants. Myolnheym's ports teem with activity. Bulging cyclops and human dockworkers load exotic trading vessels with the many goods produced in Gianthome. From the central plains and slopes of the Shimmering Peaks, the small folk bring the finest wines, mead, and goat cheeses to the harbor markets of Myolnheym.

If not for the humongous giant vessels, the port would appear like any other. The cloud giants have a dozen expansive vessels to their name. Fine carvings adorn the hulls, while the sails show paintings of former glory. The vessels of the occasional storm giant visitors could look not look more different. They are sleek, plain, and built to last.

## THE CYCLOPS QUARTERS

The cyclopes live in an extensive cave network in and beneath the Foundation. Like bees from a hive, the cyclopes swarm out from their burrows to work, hunt, and fish. Humans and other small folk keep a respectful distance from the many cave mouths the cyclopes have built over the decades. For one, the stench is quite foul. Secondly, and most importantly, the cyclopes often brawl and excessively celebrate on their doorsteps, which can be quite dangerous. However, when the cyclopes stroll into the lower city, they work hand in hand with the small folk. Their powerful build makes their help invaluable. The cyclopes carry cargo, plow the ground, scoop seawater into the salters, and power large grinders as well as pumps. Myolnheym would cease to function without them.

## GOVERNMENT

An elder council made up of the five oldest cloud giants rules over Myolnheym. They set taxes, dispatch seneschals, organize the entertainment, act as judges, and philosophize. The elder council also receives the cyclopes matriarch and small folk hetman. These representatives bring news of their respective people and receive decrees from the council.

## BÄRGHEYM

## Home of the Stone Giants

## Population: 1,200

Composition: 95% stone giants, 5% fire giants

To small folk visitors, the underground home of the stone giants would be an endless maze of caves, tunnels, lakes, and water chutes. With an emphasis on would, since the stone giants have never greeted a single member of the small folk in their realm. Even among giants, they are considered strange and thought best to be left to their own devices. The latter being a sentiment the stone giants welcome.

## LIFE UNDERGROUND

Stone giants enjoy their secluded lives, in respects to other races. Among themselves, they are very sociable. However, once every decade, the stone giants elect an emissary who ventures out into the world. The emissary takes account of extrinsic changes to the landscape, carries sought after goods for trade, and speaks with the other giant races about cultural developments. Several months later, the emissary returns to Bärgheym and spreads the gained knowledge among all stone giants.

Living underground, far removed from the nurturing sun, makes it necessary to adhere to a special diet. Naturally, the stone giants mastered the cultivation of mushrooms. They boast extensive knowledge about all underground fungi and even bred new species according to their needs. The giants use mushrooms as a basis for solid food and alcoholic beverages. To supplement their diet, they breed giant newts and bats, a true delicacy.

## THE NEXUS

Bärgheym is a decentralized city, bordering on being a realm in of itself instead of a settlement. The unifying feature to Bärgheym is the Nexus, the center of all stone giant society. The stone giants built Bärgheym in such an exceptionally skilled way that a speaker who stands in a special place in the Nexus can be heard all over Bärgheym. The unique acoustics carry the sound into the farthest dwellings and tunnels.

The Nexus is also a hub for trade and rumors. Exchanging the latest gossip is a favorite past time of the giants, who can chatter for days once they get going.

## GOVERNMENT

The head of all stone giants they call the Decider. A Decider is elected for a specific purpose or undertaking, and after finalization, a new Decider must be elected. Some Deciders rule for decades, others only for a handful of days. When the time to elect a new Decider comes, interested stone giants assemble in the nexus and speak their piece. If more than half of all stone giants lay a stone to the feet of the speaker in the span of a day, the speaker is elected as the new Decider.

## Fijälsmyälta

## Home of the Fire Giants

**Population:** 150 **Composition:** 100% fire giants

Five enormous smokestacks emerge from a mountain somewhere in the Shimmering Peaks. The structures mark the home of the fire giants, Fijälsmyälta. In the common tongue, this translates to the "Smelter of Mountain Ranges", which is an accurate description. On calm days, travelers can spot the black fumes from beyond the horizon. The settlement offers meager living space for the temporary inhabitants, who only stay for long enough to mate or create a masterpiece. After their business is concluded, the fire giants return to their peregrination or raiding. Masterpieces are an integral part of the fire giant society. No matter if it is a weapon or tea kettle, without forging it in the fires of Fijälsmyälta, fire giants cannot become adults—in the eyes of their kin.

## The Hyärtya

The heart of Fijälsmyälta is a tremendous forge and smelter. The operators of these machines are the only permanent inhabitants of Fijälsmyälta since it takes years to master the handling of these fiery beasts. Weapons and armor forged in Hyärtya belong to the fire giants exclusively—they would not trade them away to other giants, much less to the lesser races.

Fire giants who want to use the Hyärtya must bring all the iron they need and double the fuel. The fires can never be allowed to stop, else the iron cools out and might crack. Felling most of the trees in the foothills north and south of Fijälsmyälta made the journey to the settlement more dangerous than in the past. Mudslides occur frequently, burying travelers and goat herders alike.

#### **THE BATHHOUSES**

After a strenuous day in the forge, the fire giants meet in the many boiling hot pools and saunas, warmed by Hyärtya's exhaust heat. Only adult fire giants are allowed inside, one of the perks of being accepted into adult society. With hefty supplies of mead and firewater by their sides, the fire giants often challenge each other, to see who can remain longest in the scalding water.

## GOVERNMENT

Fijälsmyälta, or the fire giants for that matter, have no ruler or government. They live by a strict code and have no need for anything else. The only authority the fire giants truly bow to is the foreman of the Hyärtya. Whoever it may be has the final say on who is allowed access to the almost sacred facilities—and without creating their masterpiece, a fire giant cannot advance in society.

## **THE FIELD OF WHITE STONES**

#### **MEETING PLACE OF THE STORM GIANTS**

## THE THAIDING

At the southernmost tip of the Crooked Claw lies a flat field of worked stone, where the seaborne storm giants meet once every decade. The giants call the event a Thaiding. During this long-awaited time, the storm giants exchange stories of their travels, show off the artifacts they uncovered and celebrate for seven days straight. Some few land-dwelling storm giants visit the Thaiding for the spectacle, although the seaborne consider them cowards and treat them with indifference.

During the Thaiding, the storm giants meet the newborn, reinvigorate old friendships, or settle feuds. They also band together to form new ship's crews—seldom does one crew stay together for more than a decade. A full crew consists of ten storm giants, who elect a captain among themselves. The most prestigious crews have the first pick when it comes to choosing their vessel. The Thaiding concludes with the election of the Finyal. Whoever tells the greatest tale, or brings the greatest treasure, is honored with the title. Aside from the respect of their peers, the title brings no material benefits or authority above the giants. After the election, the storm giants return to their vessels to set sail for new adventures.

## SEABORNE GIANTS

Around 300 storm giants, split among thirty tremendous ships, sail across the Austral Ocean. They visit the different continents to trade, explore enchanted islands, and search the ocean floor for artifacts with gigantic nets. The storm giants' hope is to uncover items of such power that they can return the giants to their former glory. This is what they dedicate their lives to. Uncovered artifacts which are not useful during their travels, the storm giants bring to Myolnheym for safekeeping. The cloud giants have ample time to study and catalog, and in Myolnheym there is no risk of losing the artifact during a storm or battle.

Children born on the vessels learn their trade from earliest childhood. The young storm giants usually leave their parents during their second Thaiding, although there are exceptions. Some also elect to remain on land, which is a blow to the parents' hearts and brings dishonor to the family.

## **STORM GIANT VESSELS**

Although only ten storm giants typically crew a vessel, the ships are enormous. With a length of 900 feet and a width of 140 feet, they dwarf all other seafaring vessels, even those of the cloud giants. Despite their size, the ships are surprisingly sleek and perfectly built for long voyages on stormy seas. Aside from a few details, the vessels look very plain. A simple wooden hull, white or violet sails, and no colorful pennants.

The distinguishing marks of all vessels are the round shields fastened to the side of the hull. They serve only ornamental and sentimental purposes. They depict in fine drawings the life of the individual vessel. Although the crew changes every decade, the vessel is an unwavering pillar of storm giant society—they have seen hundreds, if not thousands of storm giants come and go, but still carry on across the raging ocean.



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