

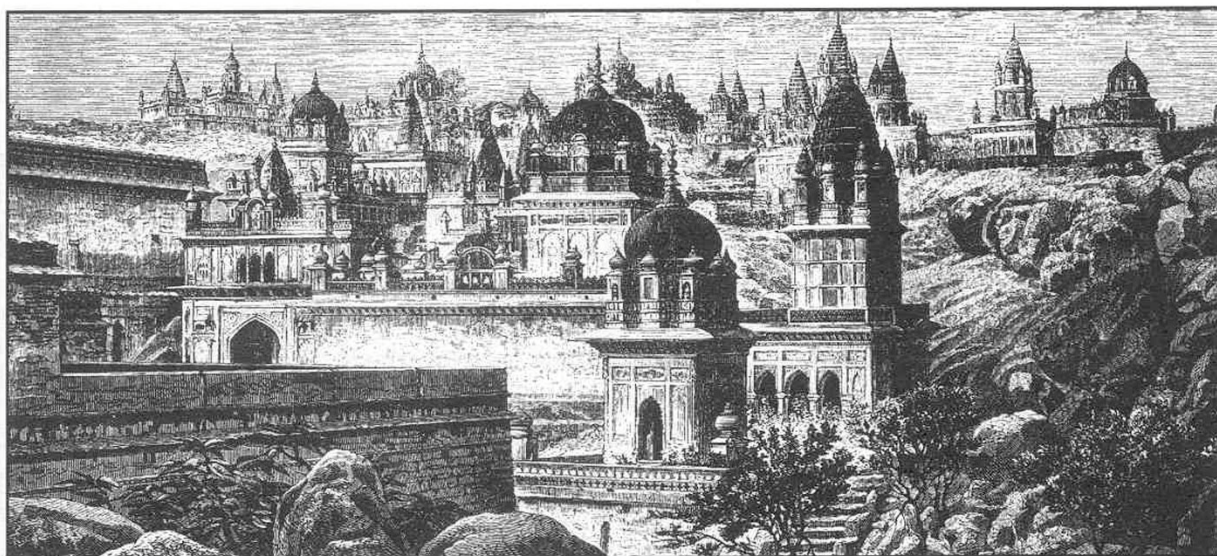


Archaeological Discussions on the 18th Aeon

Concept & Content: Greg Saunders

Editing and Layout: Ian Thomson

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Introduction

Since Greg's suitably horrid article on Necrophages I have been gently pestering him to relinquish further of his works to the auspices of the Violet Cusps page. Much to my surprise and appreciation, the following magnificent and substantial article was made available. Greg is hereby (June, 2005) bestowed with the Order of the Violet Cusp for services rendered. Please note that none of the footnote references to the superb (in terms of both investment and enlightenment, not to mention sheer game-worthy enjoyment) 'Demons of the Dying Earth' (Pelgrane Press, 2003) were inserted by the editor. The editor of this piece freely admits that he is the author of that tome, but declares that in the event that he felt the need to self-publicize that superbly crafted and tangibly invaluable work, he would do so in a far more subtle and insidious fashion.

'I, Maedillio, set down these words as commanded by my master Kemawick Perrin, Inferator of the Syncretic Symposium for the Simulation of Reality at the Scholasticarium in Kaiin¹. My master feels that he has been unfairly slighted by the Arch-magicians of the Blue Principles (principally by Ildefonse, Preceptor of this body) for his dedication to pursuits of the mundane world - notably his involvement in the running of the Scholasticarium of Kaiin. Seeking to gain recompense for such aloofness, my master has anticipated a moment from which to gain just advantage over his detractors.

With this in mind that I took great pleasure in informing my master of the recent arrival of the Magician Keletto and his mannequins at Boumergarth, the Manse of Ildefonse. Many Scholars know Keletto as a great sage of antiquities, who, aided by his five tireless servants, has excavated and catalogued the tired and dusty remains of numerous lost cities and empires. Ildefonse had desired to question Keletto on the subject of archaeology in private and thereby gain advantage in matters of pedantry over his colleagues, but alas for the Preceptor, Keletto had also invited Rhalto the marvelous to join the discussion. (No doubt with the aid of his sandestin Osherl, Ildefonse could gain much of this knowledge first hand by the process of temporal flux, but few Arch-magicians seem willing to spare the time and dedication required to pursue such a mundane task.)

¹ Readers unfamiliar with this organisation either lack the sagacity to purchase the Kaiin Player's Guide, or have neglected to read the volume. The first shortcoming may be simply rectified at the official website, whilst the second, regrettably, may indicate a problem of a more permanent nature - but we are confident in our ability to provide you with a pedagogue for a reasonable fee.



Once informed of this occurrence and assuming an 'open house', Perrin dispatched me - his notable secretary - to eavesdrop upon the Archaeological musings to see what insight might be gained into the intellectual shortcomings of his rivals. To this end I was to set down the major topics of discussion for my master to peruse at leisure, along with additional entries by myself. The contents of these were defined by the exacting terms of my orders - "in the case of dispute you must also add what you know on the subject so that the record is set irrefutably straight". I have done so as commanded, but unfortunately have since been dismissed for reasons I cannot claim to fully understand².

You hold within your hands the result of my eavesdropping, the pages delivered to my master. The topics are arranged by Aeon, and though far from exhaustive provide a clear overview of many of the major powers of such times. Indeed, so pleased was I on the content, clarity and quality of the work that I felt it only fair to furnish Ildefonse and Rhialto with their own copies for future reference.'

Maedillio

Since writing this document, I believe it has been copied several times and thus has fallen into the hands of those less knowledgeable than the aforementioned worthy Arch-magicians. To this end I have annotated the text with information helpful to the uninformed, in the hope of elevating them from the mire of ignorance that afflicts general humanity.

The Discussions Begin

After introductions, the two Arch-magicians accompanied Keletto around Boumergarth, with Ildefonse taking the opportunity to display items from his collection procured from the distant past. At a respectful distance of ten paces, the five mannequins (curiously devoid of facial features) accompanied the magicians - much to Rhialto's discomfort. Ildefonse particularly attempted to display his knowledge of the past, but in this regard Keletto is clearly more knowledgeable. Ildefonse cannot help his curiosity, and he allows his guest to display his great knowledge of the lost empires. The conversation waxed on many subjects before settling on the topic of that most venerable age of mankind, the 18th Aeon. During the discussion, I decided to hold my tongue in check. It does not do to upset Arch-magicians in their manses.

1) Baltanque of the Tall Towers, Coralline City of the 18th Aeon

Keletto: 'Based upon much research in a wide variety of learned tomes including Calanctus: His Means and Modes, The Decretals and The Doctrines of Calanctus, I skillfully triangulated the position of the fabled city of Baltanque of the Tall Towers to a small area within the confines of the Ocean of Sighs, a great body of water previous known in the 18th Aeon as the Ciaaic Ocean.'

Rhialto: 'Only too well I know this body of water and its dank and muddied depths. I have traveled within a short distance of Baltanque to the village of Az-Khaf, a den of swindlers and men of dubious character. I hold out little hope for the civility of others of this Aeon'

Keletto: 'Nevertheless, without the aid of temporal fluxes I employed powerful thaumaturgical calculations based on the rate of earthly convulsions as determined by Dubtelo to determined that the ancient Antipodal current now ebbs at its lowest level in two Aeons. With this in mind, I journeyed to the Ocean of Sighs to investigate the site.'

'Upon reaching the shores of this notable body of water I traveled out in a hired skiff. As I distanced myself from land I sighted ahead the tops of several tall towers of red stone, seemingly jutting from the very surface of the ocean at angles of inclination to the water. Steering the vessel within the shadow of one of these structures I ordered the second of my mannequins to enter one via a yawning aperture within reach of the boat. Using my Amber Cusps to visualize the mannequin's surroundings, I searched many scum-filled chambers within the decrepit tower. Somewhat disappointed by the lack of artifacts uncovered, I nonetheless discovered in the apex of the structure a large crystal of red stone. Unfortunately, upon touching the stone a discharge of magical energy destroyed my mannequin and caused my eyes some discomfort. The ensuing magical enervations whipped the sea into froth and forced a hasty retreat.'

'Clearly this was one of the tall towers for which Baltanque was named, I had recovered from the tower a collection of blades before the magical explosion, clearly they are constructed from the bones of some sea-beast, possible a Finned Fulk.'

Keletto is correct in this statement; the tower was indeed one of the eponymous structures of Baltanque. Studying the works of Calanctus, Keletto surmised that Baltanque was a city constructed by a cabal of powerful magicians known as the 'Undoubtable Logicians', the greatest of which was by tradition known as the Olkol. When the Santune Sea, an inland arm of the Accic Ocean, drained away during the early epochs of the 18th Aeon, the steppes of T'chaxmatar so created formed the hub of the Coralline Empire of Olkol, a state rivaling Motholam in power in the early years of that great land. The city of Baltanque formed the center of this realm, with the city itself carved from a single great mass of blood red stone, the

² It is the editor's opinion that, in his absence, Maedillio may have been accused of making noticeable inroads into Perrin's wine cellar.



fossilized crystalline skeleton of a vast Coralline sea creature left stranded by the receding waters. The tall towers made so famous in the worthy works of Calanctus were themselves the remains of the coral-beasts mighty tendrils that during life reached up in yearning toward the surface of the sea and the geranium-red sun above. The Undoubtable Logicians, under the command of the original Olkol, employed a legion of mindless simulacra to carve the city, specially adapted and multiplied to complete the task within an acceptable timeframe. Each of the Logicians occupied the apex of a tower whilst the general populace were stratified within the structures in chambers that spiraled down to the base, leaving the innumerable bestial simulacra that remained to occupy the lowest levels. In Baltanque height from the ground equated simply to status, and beneath the Arch-magicians petty squabbles for an elevation of a few feet were both numerous and deadly. Present within the summits of these towers and jealously guarded by the Logicians were large red gemstones, nearly five feet in diameter, all that remained of the crystallize brains of the coral-beast.

Keletto stated that the city of Baltanque lies just off shore in the Ocean of Sighs. Much of the bulk of the city lies deep below the waves and is now the habitat of sea-beast of fearsome aspect. Apparently the towers of the city, several of which remain relatively intact, sometimes poke above the water line when the Antipodal current which once rounded the straits of Garch ebbs low. If he is correct, then perhaps modern day explorers could gain access to the summits of the towers under such conditions, or they could journey beneath the sea (perhaps protected by the Charm of Untiring Nourishment) to explore the watery depths.

Ildefonse: 'Keletto would have us believe that the towers themselves were scum-encrusted and ribbed rather in the manner of sea sponges. There can be no doubt that the occupiers of Baltanque worshipped the sea, for why else would the structures adopt this form?'

Rhialto: 'My encounters with these times would support such a notion – there was little in the way of sensible thought.'

In its prime the city of Baltanque resembled a scab of dried blood welling from the steppes of T'chaxmatar. The deep red Coralline mass from which the city was carved was in places nearly translucent, refracting the light from the sun in a most beguiling manner. The lowest levels of the city (composed of the hollowed remains of the coral beast's organs) were of various and myriad size, shape and design, including great halls cut from the crystallized remains of air sacks, winding tunnels serving as roadways shaped from the petrified arteries and vast plazas leveled from submarine scales. The towers rose above the lower city, symmetrically arranged in a vast circle about the city center. Carved from the six great pseudopodia of the beast, these twisting and sinuous dwellings housed much of the population of Baltanque. Each of the towers appears to be petrified in the act of reaching upward toward the sky³.

Rhialto: 'I considered Baltanque unworthy of a visit during my sojourn in the 18th Aeon, clearly the ravages of age and time have done little to improve the site. The blades you offer appear 19th Aeon at the earliest'

Ildefonse: 'I fear Rhialto displays prejudice in this matter. I for one may supply some information – Baltanque was a civilized realm. Unfortunately the Archveult Isil Skalte destroyed anything of worth during his cursed occupation. These blades are of 18th Aeon design, but surely hail from the land of Kharay.'

The Guardsmen of the City were known as the Coralline Guard. Marked by their propensity to bear arms and armor garnered from the remains of extinct sea-beasts, the Guard were a well-respected and feared fighting force. As the Undoubtable Logicians had little time to spend in mundane tasks the eminences of this constabulary interpreted the whims of their masters, often with a shocking disregard of logic that would have had the Arch-magicians quivering in rage. Any who entered the city were likely to meet members of the Guard, and many found themselves the butt of petty bureaucracy and similar uncouth squabbles for power.

The Coralline Armaments of the Guard come in all shapes and sizes, but typically are blades of various kinds fashioned from the splintered bones of sea-beasts. These weapons in combat yield a boon of one to Attack due to their vicious serrated edges. They may also be used in conjunction with the Tweak 'Fearsome Weapon', detailed on page 16 of the notable Cugel's Compendium.

The Undoubtable Logicians, Cabal of Arch-magician and Reasoners of Baltanque

Keletto: 'I quote from Calanctus' notable 'Loyal Servitors of the Enlightened Aeon', the indispensable text on such matters. The following appears to be a conversation between the ruling Olkol and one of his advisers, the Sanguine Functionary Simiod.'

Olkol: 'Simiod, am I mistaken, or are you truly unaware of your utter ignorance in regard to the matter in hand?'

Logician Simiod: 'Ah....Er....No Olkol, you are correct, I know nothing of any importance regarding this subject.'

Olkol: 'Then I logically conclude that in this regard you are totally worthless?'

Logician Simiod: 'Well I have never....I, er.....Yes, Olkol. Completely worthless.'

³ Philosophers and other dreamers ascribe this peculiar occurrence to the act of the coral beast entreating the heavens for rain as the sea drains away. Those of more pragmatic bent describe the odd orientation of the towers as a result of the process of rigour mortis.



Ildefonse supplied some insights into this enigmatic conversation. The rulers of the Empire of Olkol, the Undoubtable Logicians were a cabal of six Arch-Magicians spuriously adhered to a bizarre practice in all matters of dispute, stating that all dealings with their peers must be illuminated by the pure light of immutable logical. This code was known as the Olkolian Law of Utter Reason, and was the bedrock of the Empire. Adherence to this law was enforced by the sub-demon Puteraki, who had been bound into a dark jade gemstone by the original Olkol. Originally proscribed both to compete with the (relatively) co-operative ways of the magicians of Kharay that were later to seed the beginnings of the Grand Motholam and to reduce internal friction amongst Cabal members, the Logicians were bound by this code to such an extent that if any Logician were to prove that another member of the Cabal had displayed sophistry, the perpetrator of chaotic argument would be forcibly stripped of magical powers and thrown out of the Cabal. Intended to aid cooperation, the unfortunate result of this law was that the six Logicians would have as little to do with one another as possible for fear of the repercussions of an accidental logical flaw. The situation grew so bad that during the Grand Concordance, annual meetings which the Cabal were bound to attend, it was commonplace for none of the Logicians to utter a single word for fear of transgressing the boundaries of logic. Of course, such a rigorous code of conduct did not apply to the Logicians' dealings with ordinary citizenry, but like all Arch-magicians throughout the Aeons gaining influence over the unschooled masses was not high on the agenda.

The leader of the Cabal was rationally granted the name of Olkol, harking back to the first great Arch-magician who created the sub-man host that carved the city⁴. The position is held in some esteem by the cabal members, for not only is the Logician currently holding the post of Olkol the only being who commanded the sub-demon Puteraki, but the Olkolian Way dictates that if the Olkol asks a question of one of his colleagues they are duty-bound (on pain of expulsion) to reply. Hence the Olkol had a ready means of removing troublesome Cabal members purely by asking simple if tactless questions and relying on the over-weaning Arch-magicians to trap themselves. The position of Olkol was voted for annually by the rest of the Cabal, a process that generated much consternation amongst Logicians fearful of being victimized by an Olkol unfriendly to their cause. However, the power of the incumbent was such that there was always competition to join the Cabal should the ranks become depleted through the propagation of intrinsically flawed arguments.

Keletto: 'I can confirm that the tall towers for which Baltanque was famous were constructed to take advantage of the benefits of height. Clearly the discharge in the tower which rendered my mannequin inoperable was some sort of magical weapon, perhaps a defensive ward of some kind.'

Ildefonse: 'Your logic is flawed. Summing your investigations so far I conclude that the tower you came across on the Ocean of Sighs was simply the breathing-pipe of the deep-sea Sporigode – the discharge was simply the beast's exhalations.'

Rhialto: 'You too display a lack of wit upon this subject, for as L'Verison pointed out in his 20th Aeon 'Journeys on Thriving Waters', the Sporigode is a native of more northerly climes and does not travel in groups – note Keletto's reference to several towers.'

For myself I know the true nature of the towers discovered by Keletto, for they are clearly described in the 'Copper Visions' of venerable the Layeth. Layeth expounds that in the city of Baltanque, the Logicians each occupied the outstretched fossilized tendrils of the coral-beast. Like all Arch-magicians they were vain and over-bearing, but unlike many of their later counterparts they were a secretive and uncommunicative lot, even amongst their peers. Should individuals find themselves thrust back through time and into the presence of a Logician, they had best beware lest they break the strict code of logic observed by this peculiar group.

The benefits of the towers of Baltanque were that they ensured that each Logician remained at the greatest possible distance from the other members of their Cabal, ensuring that unsolicited social contact was at a minimum. A further advantage was that the tendrils gave the magicians' access to Cranial-Gems, great tools in the art of magic. Layeth explains that during the lifetime of the Coral-beast, the creature's tendrils each held a single brain (thus forming six brains in all). Working in concert, these cerebrums linked to govern what passed for the creature's thoughts. After the drying of the Santune Sea and the subsequent death of the coral creature, these brains crystallized to form exquisite gemstones several feet in diameter. It remains an enigma why such a beast should require six brains, but needless to say the majority of the intellectual storage of the brains was not utilized to the fullest extent. The first Olkol selected the Coral-beast's crystallized remains as an ideal site for a city because he found that the fossilized cerebra could be used to store spells, just like the sensoriums of human magicians. A smaller chip of the each gem, known as the Loci, was then carried upon the Logician's person. Simply holding the Loci in the palm of the hand allowed the Arch-magician to unleash the spells stored in the gem as if they were encompassed directly and regardless of distance.

⁴ Calanctus states that the original Olkol was lost in the mid-term of the Empires' existence seeking IOUN stones at the edge of NOTHING. Miscalculating speeds and distances he managed to transport himself within a hand's span of NOTHING, but unfortunately on the wrong side.



Cranial-gems of Baltanque

Each of the Cranial-Gems can hold a number of spells equal to half the magic pool of the magician attuned to the stone, a process itself taking approximately one week of intense concentration whilst in contact with the crystal. The magician can then store spells into the stone by keeping his hand in contact with the gem during the encompassing process. Any person holding the Loci can unleash these spells, simply by the act of focussing on the stone facet. Should a character come across a Loci during their general journeying, the malicious Moderator may decide upon the spell inadvertently released.

Adventure Seed - A magician of some skill has discovered an ancient text describing the powerful magical gems of Baltanque. This could be an ally or an enemy of one or more of the players. Seeking knowledge on this subject, the magician has traveled to Kaiin to inveigle the storerooms of knowledge at the Scholasticarium. Needless to say, the secret that there is something of importance in the ruins of Baltanque has leaked out, and now others have joined the chase. Depending on the players' relationship to the magician, they could either join him in fending off the curious or themselves be seeking to wrestle the secret of Baltanque from the magician. Needless to say, travelling to the site of the city will not prove an easy task, and the simulacra who occupy who city regard the gems as their own and are unwilling to part with them.

The Fall of Baltanque

Ildefonse: 'It is however indisputable that the Archveult Skilte destroyed the city of Baltanque, presumably in a fit of idle rage.'

Rhialto: 'My learned colleague is correct. Skilte harvested the souls of the populace to feed the extra-dimensional engine that powered his manse.'

Keletto: 'I shall present the particulars of the situation. Look, my mannequins will join us to act out the downfall of Baltanque.'

At least in this regard the Arch-magicians demonstrate their depth of knowledge. Keletto related the unfortunately end of Baltanque, the mannequins acting out the actions of the various parties with frightening intensity. It would seem that unfortunately for the folk of Baltanque their Logicians attained the summit of magical achievement at precisely the time that the personal dimension containing Ikk, the manse of the Archveult Isil Skilte, bordered this reality. At such close proximity the combined thaumaturgical energies stored in the Cranial-gems of the coral beast was sufficient to rend the fabric of dimensions and suck Ikk through on to the earth. The perplexed Isil Skilte found himself one moment surrounded by the azure skies of his personal realm, the next deposited rather roughly in the central plaza of Baltanque. Naturally piqued at this turn of events, the supple-necked Archveult took swift revenge. Turning to the mindless simulacra of Baltanque Silke gave them two gifts, both equally dangerous. Firstly he gave them intellect such that they could understand the world around them, then he gave them memory so that they could understand how the Logicians had treated them.

Completely enraged and with murderous revenge in mind the downtrodden simulacra used the powers of their newly expanded craniums to turn upon their one-time masters and, over whelming the Corraline guard, slaughtered the surprised Logicians before they could act⁵. During this battle several of the Cranial-gems were destroyed and the resulting dissipation of magical energy allowed Isil Skilte to reactivate his personal dimension and depart. His last known act on earth was to confine the intellects of the Undoubtable Logicians into the multiple sensoriums of a six-headed serpent, sealing the enslaving-spell with a form of the Charm of Untiring Nourishment. The Archeveult found it amusing to consider them trapped in each others company until the end of the sun but the Cabal members striped of their magical powers were powerless to retaliate. I must say that the mannequin attempting to portray a six-headed serpent did a thoroughly commendable job.

It seems that for the simulacra the gift of intelligence proved a short-lived boon. Once Baltanque was theirs they fell into the in fighting and squabbling that characterizes intelligence. Within a few short years the city had fallen to wrack and ruin and the simulacra reverted to their sub-man origins, albeit with the remains of a cunning and inhuman intellect.

Baltanque in the Present Day

Ildefonse: 'Baltanque remains notable in shaping the 18th Aeon, but otherwise remains of scant interest.'

Rhialto: 'I concur. Come Keletto, what knowledge have you of more worthy times?'

At this point Keletto insisted that though it is true that some of the towers of Balkanque were destroyed by the creeping return of the Santune Sea, several still poked above the waves of the Ocean of Sighs when the tides are low. I believe the bulk of the city rots on the seabed and is in fact still inhabited by the remnants of the simulacra. In many times creatures

⁵ With the aid of their powerful magics it seems somewhat surprising that the Logicians were powerless. Unfortunately the events taking place defied all logic and so several members of the Cabal either failed to acknowledge the events taking place around them or rounded viciously on the first of their number who did.



born of the vats have displayed impressive adaptive abilities and it is not unlikely that these beasts have taken to the return of the Santune Sea with the minimum of difficulty. Unfortunately, the passing years have probably done little to sweeten their minds and encountered below the water these beasts would make fearsome opponents, being no doubt well equipped with the remnants of a variety of carving and shaping tools. Surely what remains of the wealth of Baltanque resides at the base of the towers, dragged to the depths by these unwholesome creations.

The Simulacra

Simulacra resemble fearsome anthropoid molluscs with a vaguely human head and torso terminating in a shell-encased tail equipped with multiple legs that can propel the beast through water at an impressive speed. The four arms radiating from the upper body bear a variety of shaping tools, each as well adapted for the rending of flesh as the carving of stone.

Luckily, these beasts have poor eyesight, as their original tasks required much close work on non-moving targets.

Ratings: Persuade (intimidate) ~, Rebuff (Obtuse) 0.75~, Attack (Ferocious) 2~, Defense (Parry) ~, Health 2~, Athletics 1.5~, Perception 0.5~

Innate Abilities: Simulacra can tunnel through stone and rock at a rate of 1 meter per round. They can survive out of water but are much less mobile (Athletics reduced to 5).

Haunting the depths of the city lurk the Logicians, collected together into the form of a large hexacraniacal serpent. The Archveult who trapped them showed sufficient foresight to gift the body with similar adaptive abilities as the simulacra, and the creature has since mutated into a form of sea serpent. Unable to die by natural means, the six Arch-magicians have yet to find the sufficient level of cooperation required for suicide and so haunt the depths in a dark cloud of Aeons-old anger.

The Logicians' Formidable Sea-serpent

The Sea serpent has a long and sinuous body surrounded by a wide number of trailing fins and topped with six snake-like heads fully capable of speech. The intellects of the Logicians each occupy a single head and control certain sections of the body – working together they are able to propel the serpent through the water. Unfortunately the Logicians have been driven to the edge of insanity by the nature of their prison, and although seemingly capable of logical thought prolonged study will show that they act without sound reasoning. They do however hold many secrets of elder days entrenched in the morass of their minds.

Ratings: Persuade (Obfuscatory) 2~, Rebuff (Lawyerly) 3~, Attack (Ferocious) 2~, Defense (dodge) ~, Magic (for resisting spells only) ~, Health 3~, Athletics 0.5~, Pedantry 2~, Perception ~

Keletto: 'I do however concur with Rhialto on this point. Surely nothing of value remains in the city, all is rotted. Rest assured this magician shall not revisit Baltanque. Let us move onto to more enlightened lands'

I believe that again ignorance abounds. My copy of L'Verison's 20th Aeon 'Journeys on Thriving Waters' comments of the preservative effect of the ocean floor, and I feel confident that a brief inspection of the depths would surely reveal several trifles which may be of value. True, these items may be under the care of the simulacra, but a resourceful individual could no doubt free them from their watery resting-place. Surely several lucrative endeavors could be carried out in the remains of Baltanque. The following items may be discovered in the noisome depths of the city of Baltanque.

Lost Items of Arcane Interest

Meriand's Gift of Melodious Speech (Charged, 10pts)

Summary: Amulet that assists the wearer in thinking logically.

Description: Shaped like a six-pointed star with a dark ruby at its center, this beautiful amulet converts the wearers Persuade style to Obfuscatory and Rebuff style to Lawyerly. The effects remain in place whilst the amulet is worn (note that when the persuade and rebuff pools are emptied the method required to refresh each pool will be either those natural to the wearer or those of Obfuscatory and Lawyerly, depending on whether the amulet is still worn or removed). Also, if a charge is expended the wearers' Rebuff pool is doubled whilst her Persuade pool is halved. The effect of each charge lasts approximately one hour, after which the wearers Persuade and Rebuff pools both drop to one (unless the pool was completely emptied, in which case it remains so). The Undoubtable Logician Meriand created this item so that the forced encounters with his peers that took place during the Grand Concordance went somewhat better than usual. It now resides in the gullet of a ravenous Liik-Fish (along with a simulacra, the amulet's last owner)

Adventure seed: An Arch-magician of some standing seeks 'volunteers' to travel back to the Olkol Empire in its pomp.

Meriand's Gift of Melodious Speech is the target of the audacious raid, set to occur some years before the capture of the city by Isil Skilte. Unfortunately, controlling temporal flux is difficult at the best of times, and it may just be that the Arch-magicians calculations are incorrect and that the travelers arrive on the eve of the Archveult's unceremonious entrance.



The Spiny Gauntlet (Charged, 5pts)

Summary: Gauntlet laced with deadly poison.

Description: This weapon was once owned by the leader of the Corraline Guard and was used as a mark of authority. A black gauntlet created from the shell of the Bloaly crustacean, the glove is covered in thin black spines. Any blow administered by the glove has two effects. Firstly Health rolls to avoid injury by the target are made at a levy of one, and the glove also delivers a charge of toxin (potency 4) with immediate effect. Those failing to resist the poison suffer a painful bloat, with the effected limb swelling to twice the normal size causing the loss of a wound level along with the use of the limb in question. The swelling does eventually reduce but the process has been known to take several days. The glove is ineffective against opponents armored sufficiently to stop the spines from penetrating. Extracting the poison from the Bloaly crustacean, not a trivial task, recharges the gauntlet. At a pinch other poisons could be substituted.

The Crystalline Servitor (Charged, 10pts)

Summary: Magical crystalline sea-creatures capable of acting on simple commands.

Description: Along with the mass of coral from which Baltanque was carved the original Olkol also uncovered the smaller crystallized remains of a number of now-extinct sea beasts. Each of these the Arch-magician animated through thaumaturgical processes, creating a skeletal copy of the original beast. These creations were then distributed about the Olkol's tower as servitors. Stating the keyword, typically the name of the species of the beast in question (according to the Baltanque naming system) activated the creatures. Although skeletal in structure and missing those fleshy parts considered *de rigor* for locomotion, once the keyword is spoken the outer layers of flesh were replaced by a skein of magical energies. Once mobilized, the crystalline creatures carried out any single task within its capabilities for the owner. At the end of the task the Servitor reverted to its original crystalline form. There are a number of these objects still present in the city representing a wide variety of sea-beasts, typically no larger than an Erb.

Typical Ratings: Attack (Ferocious) ~, Defense (Parry) 0.5~, Health 2~, Athletics 2~, Perception ~

Hemlath's Mirror (Permanent, 5pts)

Summary: A mirror that reveals the face of a beautiful lady in obvious discomfort.

Description: Unbeknownst to the rest of the Undoubtable Logicians, the original Olkol did not adhere totally to the path of logic. Once, no doubt during a time of personal weakness, Olkol made the mistake of falling in love with Hemlath, a local witch and survivor of the war with Grand Motholam. Allowing himself to be controlled by wild passions, Olkol undertook a clandestine affair with the woman. However, despite his best attempts to keep the affair secret the remaining Logicians became increasingly suspicious. Eager to end the affair but unable to part with Hemlath, Olkol persuaded the witch to hide in a small temporally static dimension, which he placed behind a glass mirror. For her part, Hemlath believed the situation to be purely temporary. Unluckily for her Olkol decided to cover his indiscretion with a trip to NOTHING, with dire results for both their persons. Although time passes very slowly in the mirror dimension and Hemlath does not want for sustenance, the last three Aeons have presented little more to view than fish and slaving simulacra⁶ and Hemlath is decidedly bored. Should someone free the now aged witch from her watery prison, she may grant a service.

Adventure Seed: By a curious route the Mirror of Hemlath has traveled much of the dying earth before resting in the manse of a magician the players are currently looting. The Witch is keen to escape the mirror, and has developed an elaborate sign language with which to interact with viewers. Needless to say, if the players release the Witch she would be most grateful and may reward them with knowledge of the position and treasure of Baltanque. Should they mock or shun her and she escape, her retribution could prove most trying.

Effervescent Pipework (Charged, 10pts)

Summary: A mechanical pipe that blows bubbles that can be used as modes of transport.

Description: This device resembles a large chest-sized mechanical device mounted with various spinning cogs, gears and camshafts. A large horn of mother-of-pearl carved into the likeness of a Hoon's jaws protrudes from the top of the device, mounted next to a small handle. Charged with Coos Oil obtained from the ground seeds of the Lampora tree, a large bubble of prismatic colors is blown from the horn when the handle is turned. This bubble can be entered while still linked to the horn whereupon the surface of the sphere solidifies. From this point on the bubble is permeable only to air, but still remains seemingly light enough to be borne by the wind. Once the bubble touches the ground it bursts with an audible pop. Each bubble can hold up to three individuals and assuming the wind is favorable could carry the occupants for several leagues. Each pound of ground Lampora seeds makes sufficient oil for three bubbles.

⁶ Pedants will note that it is impossible to slaver beneath the ocean's surface. This phrase was used with the intention of conveying mood. We suggest for those readers seeking accuracy that Groven's 'Mandibles of the deeps' is an excellent if somewhat tiresome source of reference with regard to undersea mastication.



2) The Forty Khades, diabolically inclined 18th Aeon City-States

Keletto: 'To the north of Fer Aquila the realm known as the Forty Khades once stood. Compared to the sunken remains of Baltanque, the remnants of this great land offer significant improvement for the itinerant archaeologist. During much study of this land I have managed to peel back the layers of detritus deposited by the Sherrit Empire and Golwan Andra and numerous other empires to uncover the remains of the Khades.'

Ildefonse: 'Even given your knowledge of such matters, I find it hard to imagine that remnants of this realm survive in such a war-torn land. Also, the naming of this land after a genus of blood-sucking fly does little to stir my enthusiasm.'

Rhialto: 'Dear colleague I fear you are incorrect in this matter. The term Khade re-appears throughout history as the nomenclature assigned to administrative regions ruled by a Prince-aristocracy. In this regard the land has merit. Keletto, were there not five mannequins a moment ago? There now appears to be only three.'

Keletto: 'You are mistaken Rhialto. I believe you mistake the Khades for the Korabes, the thirty-six Luminous islands of the Accic Ocean - a common error. Matters of etymology aside, I did uncover a relic of this ancient time in the town of Hes Arese. A giant, headless statue dominates the town, clearly a religious relic. Carved upon the base are the names of forty deities, the gods of the Khades. Look, here is the other mannequin now.'

Keletto then proceeded to clear a path through the confusion of facts presented by the Arch-magicians. During this discourse I stood politely to the side, trying to ignore the faceless mannequins which appeared (somewhat incredibly given their physiognomy or rather lack of it) to be studying me. It would seem that the current thought amongst scholars is that the Forty Khades were indeed intimately linked to the forty names carved into the ancient statue, but it seems that the details are sadly lacking. As all pedants know in an early epoch of the 18th Aeon a vicious war waged between Arch-magicians and witches (resulting from the death of Phandaal and the destabilization of the Grand Motholam). One of the most powerful survivors of this conflict was Nolem Obleth, was a dedicated diabolist⁷. At the end of the conflict Nolem Obleth found himself the ruler of a war-torn, magically tainted kingdom, the scattered remains of its people desperately fending off threatening hordes of half-men that threatened to bear down from all sides. The embattled populace looked to the Arch-magician for leadership, but needless to say Nolem had no desire to take up the reins of governance. Instead after much coercion Nolem decided to use his knowledge of the diabolical sub-worlds to the people's benefit (and finally free himself of their constant nagging). Contacting a sub-world now thought to be Yarranos, Nolem created a portal to this twisted dimension. Striking a secret bargain with an Avatar of Ezeral, the demonic-centrality of Yarranos. With the help of the Avatar, Nolem summoned forty intelligent greater demons through the portal and bound them into vast stone statues scattered about his realm. The diabolical agreement stated that these possessed statues were to provide a specially created order of priests with spiritual advice and leadership for the realm of the Forty Khades. In return the defeated half-men and other enemies were to be forced through a large portal into the demon realm, feeding Ezeral. The nature of these statues was not disclosed to the populace and each was called a Khade, meaning 'wise one'. The demons' advice was so useful that eventually mighty cities arose around each structure and Nolem Obleth stepped down from public life to peruse his studies in his manse atop the yellow mountain of Yalm.

The Fall of the Forty Khades

Ildefonse: 'Nothing truly of lasting worth can be achieved with diabolical assistance.'

Keletto took up the story of the end of this empire, ably assisted by the sad capering of the mannequins who sought to act out the scenes. It seems that during the earlier years of the Forty Khades this system worked well, and the priests advised by the statues led them to many victories. In return for this assistance Yarranos received many sacrifices and the Avatar of the demonic centrality Ezeral was pleased. With the help of demonic advise the half-men were driven back and the war-like populace gave way to a more civilized people who constructed great roads and public buildings. However, as all wise in the ways of demons can testify (Rhialto and Ildefonse agree with sadly shaking heads) nothing truly of lasting worth can be achieved with diabolical assistance. The spreading of peaceable ideals led to a waning in the supply of victims to the Yarranos. The demons complained bitterly of this change in fortune and sought to find a way to revitalize the supply lines and as a result the quality of advice given by the statues began to wane. Slowly with smooth words and spurious logic the imprisoned greater demons sought to turn the cities against each other, breeding discontent and paranoia among the people. Eventually, the land of the Forty Khades collapsed into full-scale civil war and the priests led their new enemies, once their own people, through the portals to Yarranos. Eventually the war ended simply because there was no one left to

⁷ For details of this rare but not inherently evil magical specialisation, readers are directed toward 'Demons of the Dying Earth'. The author assures me that purchasing this tome is sure to remove at least one point of demonic taint.



fight. With the supply of souls to Yarranos bled dry and the vast majority of cities destroyed, the demons broke their bindings and the statues themselves rose up and marched on the mountain of Yalm. Despite many bitter conflicts in which the yellow mountain was totally leveled Nolem Obleth was finally defeated and the Arch-magician was dragging through into the sub-world, thus ending the Forty Khades.

Keletto: 'The statue I have found stands approximately one hundred fathoms high, and resembles a large man of lizard-like posture. Six appendages protrude from the torso of the being, each ending in single book-like object. The creature has a pair of scaled bird legs. The head itself has been removed from the statue, the beaked and crested visage lying some distance to the side. I intend to write a dissertation on the structure'

Rhialto: 'The structure in question is clearly evidence of both an ancient form of worship and of poor quality building skills. If any demon once inhabited the structure it must surely have returned to the sub-world from whence it came.'

During the growth of the Forty Khades each statue stood in an area of open land, surrounded by the buildings of the Priesthood of Divine Truth who interpreted the voice of the demons. With the passing of time cities grew up around these figures of divine advice. The statues themselves were individual, each carved to resemble a more wholesome (or more precisely a less noisome) version of the demon trapped within. The Priests of the Divine Truth, bald of pate and simply dressed, used a selection of rituals to 'read' the mind of the statues⁸. This knowledge was then disseminated amongst the various ranks of society as a form of divine governance. After the civil war that destroyed the Forty Khades it was thought that all of the statues uprooted to march upon the manse of Nolem Obleth. However in truth one remained in place. During the civil war a neighboring city had dared a most audacious move and using powerful magic beheaded the monument. With out the statues head the demon trapped within was powerless to move.

Forty Khades in the present day

Keletto: 'The town of Val Loost now surrounds the remaining statue of the Forty Khades. A bustling market town, the inhabitants appear to thrive despite the high numbers of Hoons, Deodands and Erbs known to inhabit the surrounding forest. The people account this immunity from attack to the thick mud from a nearby swamp that is said to display a repellent effect. To this end, hunting parties from the town often daub themselves in this muck before striking out.'

All present agree that the statue in the town of Val Loost was most probably the one remaining mark of the Forth Khades. A small market town, the inhabitants survive by herding a variety of herbivore known as a Long Haired Soop⁹. They use this beast for food, milk and cheese-making, and tan its hide for clothing. A simple and peaceable folk, the people of Val Loost do not credit the statue with anything more than ornamental function, though if pressed they may concede that the object carried religious overtones to their forebears. Still, as the most prominent structure in the valley the population have been thinking of re-uniting the structure with its head, a beaked stone block that lies to the west.

The Demon Fuvef

The men of Val Loost have benefited from the unpleasant emanations for the headless statue that dominates the center of the town. The perhaps surprisingly, the demon enslaved in the stone by Nolem Obleth is still present. However, denied its head for many Aeons has robbed the being of its essential power (including the power to escape it's bonds). Instead the demons silently rages, sending forth virulent feelings of intense anger. Luckily for the population of Val Loost, only beings with a demonic taint or significant demon blood (such as half-men) are sensitive to these pan-dimensional emanations. Those beings of demonic nature who stray within a stones throw of the town suffer intense feelings of ill-ease, intense enough to override the insatiable hunger of a typical half-man. This serves to keep Val Loost free of the usual deprecations of the earth's latter days.

Adventure Seed - The following adventure seed is recommended for Turjan level players due to the dangerous nature of the demon. For Cugel level play, the GM should ensure that the demon is not released. Unfortunately, the situation is about to turn for the worse. The gentry of Val Loost have been persuaded to reunite the statue with its missing appendage by the magical entertainer Hjezel, a travelling conjuror recently arrived in the town. Unbeknownst to the townsfolk, the jovial Hjezel is in fact a demonologist of some regard amongst dark circles. His studies in numerous scabrous tomes have revealed the presence of the demon within the statue of Val Loost. Hoping to free the entity, Hjezel seeks to encourage the civic feelings of the townsfolk.

Trapped within the statue is the greater demon Fuvef. Resembling a large multi-armed lizard fully twice the height of a man, Fuvef is extremely angry and incredibly hungry. Originally coerced to enter the statue by the goading of Ezarel and Nolem Obleth, the demon has not heard anything of either being for several Aeons and now believes that at least the

⁸ Each ritual was in fact constructed by Nolem and contained within the required commands to waken the enslaved demon.

⁹ The author cannot verify the existence of the Short Haired Soop or of any related hirsute species.



Arch-magician is no more, making escape from his bonds an actual possibility. Unfortunately (for the demon), without the energies held within the stone head, Fuvef cannot escape his prison. Should the head be reunited with the body, Fuvef will be able to break his bonds.

The players are sojourning in the town of Val Loost, perhaps seeking protection within the walls from the ravaging half-men of the forest or collecting quantities of the supposedly efficacious mud for later application. While doing so, they come across the path of the jovial Hjezel, a magical entertainer who funds research into ancient lands by displaying his magical talents for local dignitaries (who are not as worldly-wise as the aristocrats of Kaiin). Somehow, suspicions are aroused. Perhaps one of the characters remembers seeing an individual much like Hjezel at a recently disrupted coven of witches, or perhaps they catch the wizard drawing arcane symbols on the feet of the statue (attempting to arose the demon). Either way, the players may come to the conclusion that all is not as it seems and take interest in Hjezel's true activities in the town. In doing so, they will soon uncover the magician's plans to reunite the head of the statue with the body, a desire that the entertainer expresses most fervently at a local civic gathering. Uncovering Hjezel's plan could take many forms. A visit to the magician's secret encampment in a nearby cave will no doubt reveal a number of unpleasant artifacts, including the animated skeleton of a long dead warrior enchanted by Hjezel as a guard. The final climatic scene of the adventure could be a powerful magical battle raged as the townsfolk set to raise the head, or failing that the luring of a terrible demonic statue into the nearby swamp.

Hjezel, Entertainer, magician and discrete demonologist

Short, plump and somewhat bland of feature, Hjezel does not correspond in appearance to the typical master of the dark arts. Appearances can be deceptive however, and Hjezel feels himself perfectly able to claim the title of demonologist. Hjezel hides among the populace as an entertainer, performing cantraps to a learned audience accompanied by witty dialogue. By offering to free Fuvef, Hjezel hopes to bargain with the entity to increase his magical knowledge.

Ratings: Persuade (Charming) 15, Rebuff (Obtuse) 12, Attack (Speed) 17, Defense (Vexation) 9, Magic (Devious) 19, Athletics 7, Perception 8, Wherewithal 13

Spells: Javanne's Enervation of Will, Liberation of Warp, Phandaal's Mantle of Stealth, The Omnipotent Sphere, Gilgad's Instantaneous Galvanic Thrust, Call Frit, The Curse of Lox, The Imperative Demonic Application and other spells at the GM's discretion.¹⁰

Fuvef, greater demon (50-73 Blue)

Ratings: Persuade (Intimidating) ~+5, Rebuff (Contrary) ~, Attack (Ferocious) 2~, Defense (Dodge) ~+2, Magic (Forceful) ~+5, Athletics ~, Perception +2, Wherewithal 2~

Spells: The Blue Bolt, Churtringal's Diabolical Aura, The Lashing Agony¹¹. Once the head is reunited with the body, Fuvef is able to magically animate the stone from within. The walking statue is practically invulnerable to physical attack and only partially susceptible to magic¹², making Fuvef a dangerous foe.

3) The Benefice of Kharay, Sarsounian Realm of the late18th Aeon

Rhialto: 'Again Keletto you supply information based on conjecture and musings. This statue you have uncovered seems of little interest even if it does reveal the names of all Forty Khades about its base. Tell me, what do you know of Kharay? That realm is of far greater interest than the crumbling remnants of uncivilized peoples.'

Keletto: 'Ah, of Kharay I have learned much. As the Forty Khades faded into history, no doubt destroyed by their belief in ancient gods, Kharay was growing in power. The tall Sarsounians were the people of this land. Much can be gleaned of their culture in The Gracious Moolan's 'Among the Stars' that my mannequins recovered from a sunken vessel of the 19th Aeon Tettan Confederacy.'

Ildefonse: 'Well Keletto, tell us what you have learned and I will confirm or refute your suggestions. I myself am an authority on this period. Talking of your mannequins, there now appears to be only three where before there were four. I must admit to confusion in this matter – where is their companion?'

Indeed this is the case; only three mannequins were now present. It would appear to me in hindsight that Keletto sought to turn the Arch-magicians' attention away from this perplexing fact by waxing lyrical on Kharay, which I must admit was a most interesting subject. It would seem Keletto believes the Benefice of Kharay to have formed from one of the surviving cities of the Forty Khades. Relatively undamaged in the war that ended Nolem Obleth but bereft of the statue

¹⁰ This enigmatic statement can again only be simply resolved by the purchase of *Demons of the Dying Earth*.

¹¹ For details of these unpleasant charms consult *Demons of the Dying Earth*. Those who do not have access to this worthy tome will be forgiven should they choose to berate themselves for their lack of foresight.

¹² Again we direct the discerning reader towards *Demons of the Dying Earth*. Surely you must have purchased a copy by now?



that had once advised the priesthood of the city, populace had suffered dark times following the collapse of the city-states. Eking out a living on the ruined land, the inhabitants of the city seemed destined to vanish into history. However, all was to change when the Sarsounians, one of humanities' Diaspora from the stars returned to the earth. Rhialto added at this point his knowledge on this race, visibly interjecting before Ildefonse could speak. It seems that the Sarsounians had been forced from their own dwellings by the Grey Sorcerers, and came to earth through the depths of space in vast crystalline vessels.

They chose the city of Kharay as a suitable place to settle due to its proximity to the remains of the ruined yellow mountain of Yalm. The mountain itself was no more; completely leveled during the cataclysmic battle between the demonic forces of the Avatar of Ezeral and the Arch-magician Nolem Obleth. It seems that during the confrontation the greater demon Yessolf was unraveled and his magical skein cast down on to the mountain. The ensuing arcane detonation leveled the rock to a smooth flat plane in the process creating several weak points where the dimensional fabric was all but compromised. The Sarsounians recognized that at these points the dimensional surface was sufficiently weakened to allow their technicians to create portals through the planes. They used these windows to view neighboring civilizations and to monitor the spread of the Grey Magicians amongst the star-borne races. Peoples such as the Green Men, the Pharials and the Clamps were subject to such scrutiny. By detuning the resonant frequencies of the portals the Sarsounians could even send their own people through the conduit into other lands and also abduct specimens of other races for study. With the help of the benevolent Sarsounians, the fortunes of Kharay were much improved and the city grew to become the center of the technologically advanced empire of the Benefice of Kharay.

Sarsounians

These people resembled thin and pallid humans with hairless heads and sad, deep eyes. Completely lacking in vocal ability, Sarsounians communicated in a complex form of sign language, often aided in articulating complex phrase patterns by the addition of mechanical arms worn strapped to the back. A profoundly religious people, the Sarsounians originally left earth to investigate the NOTHING, which they feared had swallowed their creator deity which they referred to as the as the Mind. With their highly developed technology the Sarsounians were well-known visitors to many star-borne realms and were instrumental in banishing the Grey Sorcerers to the prison moon. This act made the Sarsounians the implacable foe of the Grey Sorcerers and on their eventual escape the Sorcerers hunted the Sarsounians from the stars. So savage was this eradication that it is thought that the earth realm of the Sarsounians was the last surviving vestige of this once great people. Tall and wiry Sarsounians were no match physically for humans. However, they were wielders of technologically advanced items making them significant foes if roused into action.

Typical Ratings: Persuade (Obfuscatory, sign language) 0.5~, Rebuff (Lawyerly, sign language) 0.5~, Attack (Devious) ~, Defense (dodge) 0.5~, Magic (see below) 2~, Health ~, Athletics 0.75~, Perception 0.75~

Innate Abilities: Sarsounians are technicians wielding a number of items may seem wondrous in the current latter days of the sun. Long in their past they employed the abstract theories of mathematics to adjust their primal matrices, given them an effective magic rating which can be used to resistance magical attack. If during an attempt to resist magic a Sarsounian rolls an Illustrious Success, the offending magic is reflected back upon the caster.

The Grey Sorcerers

The pedant will point out that these being are in fact a single entity, the original Grey Sorcerer, multiplied many times. The name of this being has been lost in the depths of time but it is known that he became the subject of much displeasure due to his ability to copy himself amongst a population. Using aberrant magics garnered from other spheres, the sorcerer could render any living human into a copy of himself in both appearance and in thought. The copy was however notably flawed in that all pigment was erased during the process, leaving the duplicate uniformly grey in coloration. It is known that the entire Kingdom of the Seven Axioms fell in this manner, the grey sorcerer's person replicating through the population like a plague. As a result of this action many peoples (including the Sarsounians) rallied together and eventually destroyed the original magician. The remaining copies were taken en masse and shipped to the cratered prison moon of the planet Servinus. The Sarsounians were however unaware that the sorcerer's duplicates also had the ability to propagate themselves and they soon escaped from their confinement, converting the prison guards to their cause. Seeking out their enemies the Grey Sorcerers eventually destroyed the home of the Sarsounians, forcing the survivors to flee back to Earth¹³. It is believed that the Grey Sorcerers eventually destroyed themselves when the lack of suitable peoples to convert forced them to face the stark truth that they hated their own company¹⁴.

¹³ It is reputed that the notable Arch-magician Twisk is actually a duplicated Grey Sorcerer. His pallid skin does little to discourage such thoughts.

¹⁴ The moral is that familial relations test even the strongest and most generous of personalities.



Typical Ratings: Persuade (Eloquent) ~, Rebuff (Penetrating) 0.5~, Attack (Speed) 0.75~, Defense (Vexation) 0.5~, Magic (Devious) ~+5, Health 0.75~, Athletics ~, Perception 0.5~

Spells: Various, including some rare and lost magic (see Turjan's Tome for examples).

Innate Abilities: If a Grey Sorcerer can successfully grasp (Attack) an opponent they can attempt to make a duplicate of themselves. To do this they match their magic rating against their target. If successful, the unfortunate victims will find themselves slowly transforming into a grey facsimile of the Sorcerer. This effect can be reversed with powerful magic such as The First Retrotopic (see Turjan's Tome), but is otherwise permanent.

The Green Men

This race of beings derived from human stock were bred to survive on the carnivorous world of Ffarct. The ecology of this world was most unusual, for no plant matter grows on Ffarct and the lowest form of life are small insectoids that absorb thermal energy from the planet's core. All other creatures either feed upon these beings or consume the beings that do so, creating a carnivorous food chain of unrelenting savagery. The original men to visit this world were soon to find that they slotted neatly into the local food chain as a tasty accompaniment to the standard fare, and for this reason alone mankind would normally have left Ffarct well alone. Unfortunately, planet held one of the greatest reserves of the purple metallic ore that provided power for all manner of Sarsounian items. In order to mine the ore and survive the planet's ecology, hybrid vat creatures were created combining man with plant. These so-called Green Men proved unpalatable to the indigenous life forms allowing mining to proceed in relative safety. Unfortunately the dominant form of native intelligent life did not take kindly to the stripping of Ffarct of ore. The lizardmen who inhabited the southern continent fought a long and bitter war with the Green Men, the outcome of which is open to question. Green Men can sometimes be found on earth, no doubt descendents of the creatures abducted by the Sarsounian for investigation. Their hated lizardman enemies can also be found on earth - a small colony of these repulsive demonologists is located in the southern hills of Almery.

Green Men are typically taller than men but otherwise appear as humans with only the green-tinge of the skin and the occasional leafy growth spoiling the illusion of normality. Due to their long conflict with the lizardmen of Ffarct, the Green Men are very warlike and aggressive. In the latter days of the earth purebred Green Men are rare – hybrids with humans and half-men are more common.

Typical Ratings: Persuade (intimidate) ~+3, Rebuff (Contrary) ~, Attack (Ferocious) 2~, Defense (Intuition) ~+3, Magic (for resisting spells only) ~, Health 1.5~, Athletics ~, Perception ~

Innate Abilities: Green Men are inherently quite resistant to magic, though they may not cast spells. The tough, bark-like skin of Green Men give them a boon of one to health rolls resulting from attacks by crushing weapons – edged weapons cause normal injuries. With time and the correct procedures, limbs severed from Green Men may be rooted and grown into new specimens. The Green Men consider the taking of cuttings by force a most horrendous crime. Green Men are susceptible to The Effective Vegetal Death (see Turjan's Tome).

Pharials and Clambs

These peoples were known to inhabit the hollowed sphere called Tuoc in the far reaches of space. A mutually symbiotic people long separated from humanity, the Pharials were tall and slender with underdeveloped limbs but heightened cranial lobes whereas the Clambs were physically strong but mentally unimpressive. In the distant past the two races had found it mutually beneficial to combine their strengths and when encountered Clambs bear Pharials upon is back in a 'piggyback' style, often employing a harness. In this relationship the Clamb acts in all matters physical whereas the Pharial contributes to all mental tasks. These creatures are always encountered together, and even share a common name. A knowledgeable and peaceful people, it is believed that the Pharials and Clambs escaped the spread of the insidious Grey Sorcerers due to their unusual physiognomy that was found to be unresponsive to replication. The sphere of Tuoc was known to be a paradise inhabited by a startling variety of artificial beings. The Pharials and Clambs dwelt in cities of marble blocks resplendent with many tall towers that reached toward the center of the Tuoc. The Pharials and Clambs can for the purposes of game mechanics be considered a single entity. The numbers in parenthesis refer to either the Pharials physical skills or the Clambs mental abilities should they become separated.

Typical Ratings: Persuade (Eloquent) ~ / (2), Rebuff (Lawyerly) ~ / (4), Attack (Strength) 1.5~ / (2), Defense (Speed) ~+2 / (3), Magic (Studious) ~+2 / (5 only for resisting magic), Health 2~ / 5, Athletics ~ / 3, Perception ~ / 6

Innate Abilities: the Pharial and Clamb can be considered a single entity. If desired combatants can attempt to strike one of the other being (typically the Pharial), use the rules for a contusion (DERPG, pp47) but with a levy of one to the roll representing the Clambs aggressive bulk. Pharials know a variety of spells typically from DERPG and Turjan's Tome, as decided by the GM.



Generally a peaceful folk, the Sarsounians created many amenities for the common folk. Technologically advanced compared to many of the other realms of the Aeon, they created a vast network of roadways that allowed swift travel about the realm in their flying wagons. Their crystalline vessels surrounded the city of Kharay and were used as watchtowers by the Sarsounians. Eventually with the entropy of time the knowledge required to operate the ships was lost.

The Fall of Kharay

Rhialto: 'The technological achievements of the Sarsounians cannot be denied. But what of their much-vaunted Crystalline ships? I suspect that all lie in ruin in these later days.'

Ildefonse: 'You are mistaken. Crystalline ships were the product of the Inomial Confederacy, The Sarsounians were simple agrarian folk with little grasp of magic.'

Rhialto: 'You refer to the Samonians of the 16th Aeon Preceptor. Perhaps you are hard of hearing?'

Ildefonse: 'My facilities remain as all encompassing as during youth. Little escapes my senses.'

Rhialto: 'I fear it is your waistline that encompasses all, not your knowledge of ancient cultures.'

Ignoring this obvious attack Ildefonse proved his previous statement to be a mere slip by relating that the Sarsounians and Benefice of Kharay were not destroyed in any cataclysmic event. Quite simply the growing powerhouse of the Grand Motholam absorbed them. During the early years of that great realm Kharay was a rivaling power, but as the Arch-magicians of Motholam made great strides forward in the arts of magic the non-aggressive Sarsounians could not compete. First Motholam annexed their empire, then they became a principality of the Motholam, and finally they became part of Motholam. Lel Laio, a notable Arch-magician of Motholam was a Sarsounian. The dimensional portals employed to study the stars became merely the curios of the magicians of Motholam and the self-destruction of the Grey Sorcerers occurred unobserved.

Kharay in the Present Day

I myself can add something to this debate. During my travels I came across a structure which I now believe may have been a Sarsounian crystalline ship. Located in the depths of an ancient crater and half buried by mud, the tip of the object was still visible. The object resembled a crystalline shard of black glass. Apparently the victim of subsidence, the shard was tilted alarmingly to the side. Large apertures yawned on either side of the tip giving access to the innards. What rests within is unfortunately the subject of conjecture, for a family of voracious Hoons had taken up residence and I was forced to beat a hasty retreat.

Adventure Seed - It is within this tip that a group of Hoons has become entrenched. Should a party of determined players manage to remove these troublesome pests, within the crystalline vessel are many wonders, including a wide variety of incomprehensible machinery, pipes, and dials, engines, control boards and viewing screens, all long since deactivated. Guarding all of these items are the bodies of several Green Men and a Sarsounian, suspended in a temporal stasis that has survived the Aeons. Disturbing the depths of the ship is very likely to release these beings. The Sarsounian will be disorientated by may be reasoned with, however the Green Men are unlikely to brook debate. Stored around these ancient beings may be found the following items. A sortie within the depth of the Sarsounians' vessel could prove very hazardous and is recommended for Turjan level adventurers. Cugel level players are perhaps more likely to encounter the deserted remains of a ruinous vessel, perhaps with a single befuddled Sarsounian within.

Lost Items of Arcane Interest

The Portable Portal (10pts, Permanent)

Summary: Small portals that may be used to access separate locations.

Description: This pair of linked devices appears as two rings of a dull metal. Unattractive to the eye, these items do however carry a wondrous technology long lost to man. When removed from the finger, each ring may be clasped in both hands and stretched to form a wide aperture. Looking through the ring will show the view from the reverse side of the second ring, allowing the user to view distant places assuming the rings are separated. If both of the rings are stretched simultaneously, then a person entering one will exit the other, regardless of the location (as long as it remains on the same plane of existence). Releasing one of the rings will cause it to slowly shrink to its original size. A somewhat bizarre side-effect of the ring's power is that when placed upon the finger, the digit in question will disappear from sight only to re-appear exiting the second ring. Should the same or different users wear both rings, the fingers bearing the rings will effectively be swapped leading to a somewhat unusual and uncomfortable sight (if the rings are on different hands or the fingers of different users, the wearer suffers a Levy of one for all Quickfingers actions using the effected extremities). Should a bearer of a ring attempt to pass through it when the other ring is unexpanded, they will find themselves pushing against an invisible wall of force with only a small aperture in the center.



Guravian Solid Projector (5pts, Charged)

Summary: Device for projecting and removing solid matter.

Description: This device resembles a long thin rod topped with an opal of unusual size. Two buttons, one red and the other blue, are all that adorn the shaft. The blue button projects onto any surface a hazy azure light that quickly deposits a volume of violet stone approximately 5ft cubed. This deposition takes around 5 rounds to complete during which time the device may be moved to spread the stone over a wide area. A useful tool for creating quick structures, the violet stone is as tough and wearing as granite. Pressing the red button has the reverse effect, removing a similar amount of violet stone. This device cannot be charged by normal means, violet stone must be consumed by use of the red button in order to allow the blue button to be activated. The GM decides how much many charges of stone are currently in the rod, finding fresh supplies with which to refill it could be an adventure in itself.

The Vaporous Aeriads (10pts, Charged)

Summary: Beautiful fluttery beings that help recharge intellect-based pools.

Description: A tablet of smoothed rose-colored wood-like material of extraterrestrial origins, this device has stored within its matrix the base structures of five Vaporous Aeriads from the tenuous planet of Wotry. When the surface of the wood is rubbed in a circular motion, the Aeriads are reformed from their matrices and freed from the object. Beautiful flying creatures resembling multi-colored butterflies, the Aeriads will circle the device slowly fading in and out of the dimensional fabric, singing in a melodious high pitch drone as they do so. The soothing effect of the Aeriad is such that those viewing the item will find their intellectual-based pools refreshed in a matter of two hours of inactivity if the GM is using the rules pool refreshment presented in the DERPG, or minutes rather than hours if using the rules suggested in Turjan's Tome¹⁵. Soaking in the blood or a freshly killed half-man that is still warm with the emanations of life reinforces the Aeriad's matrices and effectively recharges the device.

Mechanical Manipulators (5pts, Permanent)

Summary: Mechanical arms capable of independent action.

Description: These devices were common among Sarsounians who used them to help express their complex sign language. Resembling a pair of finely crafted arms constructed from an unknown alloy terminating in a pair of nimble hands, the artifact is worn as a metallic backpack. A ring of metal, attached to the pack via a thin cable, rests upon the head of the operator. Once the ring is in place, the owner may use the object as a second pair of limbs. Once calibrated to the wearer's thoughts, a process that requires a successful pedantry roll whilst wearing the headband, the user can use the extra digits as if they were their own. This effectively allows the wearer an extra action each round at no extra cost, simply stating what the arms are doing and simultaneously carrying out their own actions. Actions performed by the arms use the appropriate pools of the wearer. The arms are not overly forceful and all attack rolls are made at a levy of one. A drawback of the device (apart from its rather bizarre appearance) is that whilst wearing the device all athletic rolls are made at a levy of one due to its awkward and cumbersome nature.

Rhialto: 'I would concede that Kharay is somewhat more interesting than Baltanque and the Forty Khades. But when one discusses the 18th Aeon, there can really be only one subject of true interest. Come Keletto, don't be coy, tell us what you have found of Grand Motholam.'

Ildefonse: 'Indeed, your comments to date have been of scant worth. But Motholam, their lies a subject close to my heart.'

Keletto: 'I would guess from your chosen professions that you gentlemen would know considerably more on the history of this subject than I. Come, tell me what you know and I shall fill in any uncertainties from the results of my research.'

4) The Grand Motholam, Magical Democracy of the 18th Aeon

There can be no doubt that Motholam represents the greatest expression of magical knowledge. The mighty magicians that ruled this land have never been bettered in the long days since, either in depth of knowledge, magical power or arcane insight. The lost art of mathematics was a product of this land and the great magician Phandaal was one of its leading lights. However, of the more exacting history of Motholam I must confess I have little knowledge. Therefore it was with great interest that I listened to Ildefonse's monologue on the subject. I have expanded on his comments below, adding flesh to the areas the Arch-magician seemed keen to gloss over, particularly in relation to the benefits the magicians of Motholam seemed to find in the lost art of cooperation.

¹⁵ For enlightened GMs using the alternative rules suggested in *Demons of the Dying Earth* for the refreshment of pools, a different but no less useful result will be required.



It seems that at the same time as Kharay was waxing the realm of Motholam was growing. Formed from an amalgamated collection of smaller city-states, each subject to the rule of small cabals of magicians¹⁶, during the early years Motholam was considered a weak realm. Vying for power amongst their peers, the cabals of Motholam spent much time pursuing intrigues against neighboring city-states that resulted in a lamentable rate of magical progress.

This situation persisted until the magician Freseem became established in the Verdant Cabal of the city of Hekkech. By the time he had reached this position, Freseem was thoroughly disillusioned with the magicians of Motholam. Constantly seeking power but increasingly unable to devote himself to his studies due to the constant requirement to fend off the petty squabbles of other cabalists, Freseem sought to find a way to end this state of affairs. In the depths of his isolated manse Freseem devised a plan whereby the minds of his associates could be freed from the petty intrigues that seemed to consume them.

Freseem announced that there was to be a grand contest of magic in which all members of the cabals could participate. The contest would pit magician against magician in feats of magic, with the winner being that cabal which the other participants would concede as the strongest. The winning cabal would then be transported, along with their manse, to one of the Purple Sub-heavens (typically Bloplar or Jamjain) where they could study the arts of magic at leisure. Freseem himself had calculated the necessary thaumaturgical permutations required to access these worlds and needed only the power of the combined cabalists to tear open the dimensional fabric. This was a great prize indeed, for not only were the sub-heavens beautiful realms in their own right but they were of divine origin - any who entered became gods and were able shape the heaven as they wished. The years' isolation from Motholam also allowed the lucky cabal to concentrate on pure research without the need to spy on their neighbors, thereby pushing forward the boundaries of magical knowledge. Initially skeptical, the other magicians were won over when Freseem displayed a vision of the sub-heaven of Bloplar. Stubborn to the extreme, the cabalists took several decades to agree to enter Freseem's tournament.

The Purple Sub-Heavens

These spheres are known to modern magicians principally through Amberlin II's 'Crystalline Spheres of Divine Expression', from the late 20th Aeon, and are thought to be the crystallizations of pure divine thought. The art of entering the sub-heavens is now lost but is the subject of intense research by notable libertines such as Kandive of Kaiin. The purple moniker attached to these realms comes from the hazy coloration that permeates the very fabric of these lands, thought to be the precipitation of pure physical pleasure. Two of the realms are described below.

Bloplar

This realm has no solid structure but appears to be constructed entirely of diaphanous veils entwined into vast agglomerations that are suspended in a purple sky. The occupants of Bloplar include amongst others a race of charming silken winged nymphs and the disembodied spirits of sensual pleasure capable of projecting a wide variety of intense physical sensations. The peoples of Bloplar believe that they are the creations of god and so any strangers who enter the realm must be of divine origin. Lel Laio (see below) was particularly fond of Bloplar and some think that he still resides in the realm.

Jamjain

A fluid realm of warm liquid, visitors to Jamjain soon find that existence is sweet in the liquid depths¹⁷. Dwelling on the sponge-like seabed of Jamjain are the Moorts, a race of giant, fluidic females. These gentle creatures find visitors delightful and are willing to expend all their energy in making their visitors as comfortable as possible. Jamjain seems particularly attuned to magical research - the liquid nature of the realm conducts magical energy to a far greater degree than the airs of the earth, allowing magicians to gain far greater control of their magics than their earth-bound colleagues¹⁸. In game terms this effect can be expressed by the doubling of Magic pools for any magician in Jamjain.

Freseem's plan had an immediate effect. With the first winners safely ensconced in the sub-heaven and able to concentrate fully on research, the magical knowledge of the newly divine cabal increased at a prodigious rate. The magicians left in the mundane world had to work very hard to match this rate of progress and to ensure that they had a chance of winning the next contest. As the years progressed the magicians became so intent on their research that the city-states were left to run themselves, leading to the introduction of beneficial policies by newly empowered civic authorities. It also became clear that the only way that the cabals of Motholam could effectively stop those spending a term in the sub-heaven from simply

¹⁶ To the modern mind it seems strange to think of magicians showing sufficient interest in mundane matters to rule any land, even fabled Motholam, but Ildfonse assures us it was not always so.

¹⁷ Whether there is a 'surface' to Jamjain is a moot point - few visitors have the inclination to find out.

¹⁸ The astute reader may surmise that the research-orientated magicians of Motholam visited magical Jamjain, whereas their more physically-inclined colleagues sought the pleasures of Bloplar



winning the contest again immediately after their tenure had expired was to co-operate, a concept normally alien to those studying the arcane arts. Though these small leagues of cabals astounding progress was made in the magical arts. Coupled to the enlightened civic policy, Motholam grew to be a great power, devouring many smaller realms in the process. This expansion was made easier by the fact that Farseem's tournament was open to all, even unknown wizards from freshly adsorbed realms.

Cabals of the Grand Motholam

At this point Rhialto joined the debate by describing the most notorious of the numerous cabals that existed during the long reign of the Grand Motholam, many boasting as members some of the most brilliant magicians of the later Aeons. Unsurprisingly, Ildefonse disagreed on many key points. Rhialto explained that typically a powerful magician acted as both a figurehead and a de facto leader for each cabal. I believe that the principle source of Rhialto's knowledge was Thereus's oft-cited 'Thaumaturgical excellence' of the late 19th Aeon. It should be noted for completeness that the Rotund Hyrislip¹⁹ has recently called in to question the validity of these groupings based on his research of the writings of Calanctus.

The Jade Hegemony

This group consisted of a small number of very competitive wizards led by the charismatic Amberlins I and II, powerful magicians whose contribution to arcane knowledge cannot be questioned. Firm believers in the rule of might, the Jade Hegemony aggressively ruled the vertical city of Feltez, which was carved into the outer walls of an extinct volcano. It was said that by night the lights of Feltez were so bright as to attract visitors from other spheres such as Sarsounians, Pharials and Clamb. Belligerently dealing with competitors, the Hegemony was initially reluctant to take part in Freeseem's tournament until the ambitious Amberlins I and II saw the value of a sojourn in the purple sub-heavens. Erratic, unprincipled and demanding, the Amberlins led the Hegemony to seventeen terms in Bloplar until their reign was unfortunately cut short by a misunderstanding with an unnamed Avatar of a demonic centrality. After the removal of their leader, the power of the Jade Hegemony shrank and was soon eclipsed by other groups. Nolem Obleth, later of the Forty Khades, was thought to be a member of this cabal.

The Amberlins

Rhialto: 'Amberlins I and II were clearly the same individual.'

Ildefonse: 'Nonsense, at least an Aeon occurred between their incarnations.'

At this point two of the mannequins stepped forward and strutted before the Arch-magicians with much pomp and bluster, clearly a rather uncanny impression of the Amberlins. The manse of Amberlins I and II resided in a portable dimension of unknown proportions that they carried in their pockets when in Feltez. Typically wearing the guise of a tall, thin and whip-like man with bright red hair and penetrating red eyes, Amberlins I and II were not men to be trifled with. With the sort of razor-sharp mind that would leave modern day magicians quaking in their boots, the Amberlins reputedly forced other promising magicians to join their cabal. It is thought that Amberlin II was a copy of the original, although it may have been the other way around. The main difference in appearance was the dark skin of Amberlin II. Amberlin II stated that he created his namesake from a faulty matrix, hence the unfortunate blanching of the skin; where as Amberlin I claimed that his dark-skinned copy was the result of a magical denotation that occurred whilst handling thaumaturgically charged obsidian. The pair was invariably found together and it was noted amongst other magicians that one could always escape the unwanted attention of the Amberlins by raising the subject of precedence. A notable opponent of Phandaal's Prismatics, Amberlin I and II led a cordial but ferocious campaign against their notable foe until their dabbling in the sub-worlds led to their undoing. Rumor at the time indicated that Phandaal might be implicated in some way with their fate.

The Prismatic Positivists

Led by the great Phandaal, the Prismatic Positivists firmly believed that the future death of the sun could be easily averted by feeding the swollen orb with the colorful exhalations of the human mind, typically achieved by macerating the cerebrums of volunteers. Perhaps unsurprisingly volunteers were hard to come by, leading to the press-ganging of the populations of neighboring city-states. After the introduction of Freeseem's tournament the Prismatics turned away from this worthy course to concentrate on magical research, leading to victories in fifty-three contests. During their sojourns in the purple sub-heavens the brilliant Phandaal directed his research toward mastering the secrets of mathematics, a science thought lost to mankind. His many tomes in this field, although difficult to read due to the author's peculiar habit of leaving sentences unfinished coupled with a complexity beyond conception, were the cornerstones of Motholam's emergence as the premier magical state of latter Aeons.

¹⁹ Although undoubtedly an apt description of this worthy historian, the only known individual to address Hyrislip by this moniker was last seen scuttling into a sewer.



Phandaal

Keletto: 'Of Phandaal their can be no doubt. He lived in the manse Tyorl and died during an ill-informed attempt to travel to the larval age.'

Rhialto: 'Twaddle. Phandaal was dismembered by witches in the 18th Aeon.'

Ildefonse: 'Wrong again my colleagues. Phandaal lives now in Jamjain.'

Perhaps the greatest magician of the later Aeons, Phandaal is attributed with almost single-handily rediscovering the lost art of mathematics. He was known to have utilized this capricious art to create and simplify a large number of spells and charms. A ferocious cataloguer, Phandaal originated the lists of spells discussed by magicians in the present day. Phandaal's appearance varied with the epochs and took any number of shapes, each of which were instantly recognizable as the great wizard by the presence of the blue eyes of uncommon depth and purity. Phandaal and his Prismatic colleagues lived in a personally designed reality called The Encompassing Radii, reportedly created by the master magician during a single day. No others are recorded as every having entered the Radii, but rumors of the strange 'planes, curves and indices' are rife in learned texts. The magician Pandelume, a student of Phandaal, is said to have modeled Embelyon on the Radii of his master, and it has even been whispered that the Radii is the source of Pandelume's mathematical knowledge. Phandaal's dismemberment at the hands of witches was the well-known precursor to the war of witches and wizards.

The Optiplex

The charismatic Lel Laio, a Sarsounian from the absorbed realm of Kharay, led these optical magicians. Then in his male guise (Lel Liao spend several epochs as a female, reputedly in an attempt to avoid conflict with Llorio), the magician led his colleagues in the acquisition of sunlight that they used to power a range of wondrous magical machines. Incredibly lazy for a magician, Lel desired to reach the Purple Sub-heavens not for the opportunity for quiet research, but to achieve the maximum level of debauchery which he deemed only possible in a deific environment. Lel led the Optiplex to eight terms in Jamjain before retiring from Freseem's competition, a 'spent man'.

Lel Laio

Rhialto: 'Lel Laio was a worthy magician and a man after my own heart, for I too seek answers to the great questions of existence.'

Ildefonse: 'Indeed Rhialto, Lel Laio was a man after your heart, as his disproportionate pleasure-palace proves.'

A tall figure typical of a Sarsounian, Lel Laio was a libertine of uncommon tastes. Gathering around him a number of like-minded rakes and debauchers, the wizard sought all pleasures open to him in the pleasure palace of Albacus, protected by their magical machines powered by the rays of the sun. Although not a competitive group, the Optiplex engaged in wide-ranging magical research once they heard of the pleasures to be found in the Purple Sub-heavens. It is believed that Lel Laio, after spending many years as a man and then a woman, and suffering persecution in both genders, adopted an androgynous form in the hope of avoiding conflict. Unfortunately this led to denial of the magician's chief pleasure and his slow retirement from active research.

The mannequin that came forward to join our group at this point threw on a guise of self-weaning indolence clearly in reference to Lel Liao. Both Rhialto and Ildefonse appeared disconcerted by these actions. Kelleto described Lel Laio's decadent palace Albacus floated serenely over the city of H'Knarre, packed full of concubines, succubae and pleasure-slaves of all devising. Anchored to the ground by chains of iridescent bubbles, the populace of H'Knarre paid the Optiplex with slaves to remain above the city, for although lazy in the extreme; the mechanical defenses of the palace were formidable.

The Fall of the Grand Motholam

Rhialto: 'The thought of allowing witches to enter the sub-heavens fills me with horror.'

Ildefonse: 'Indeed my friend, I could not countenance such a plan.'

Keletto: 'But what of the great Phandaal? Was he dismembered as Llorio would have us believe?'

Rhialto: 'I have no reason to doubt the words of Llorio, and I would certainly not count such actions beyond such witches as it has been my displeasure to encounter.'

Ildefonse: 'I for one believe my colleague to be mistaken on this point. The greatest magician of the latter Aeons humbled by a mere witch, even one so supposedly powerful as Pontecilla? I doubt this. My studies lead me to believe that Phandaal resides in Jamjain, his favored sub-heaven.'

Rhialto: 'What research was this? I thought your inquisitiveness reached only as far as the next meal.'

Ildefonse: 'Again you are mistaken. I am a savant of the arcane arts; sadly I have come to believe that it is you who have difficulty thinking beyond the satiation of base urges. Keletto, would you not agree?'

Keletto: 'I, ah, look, my mannequins display treasures from old Motholam.'



Of the decline of Motholam both Rhialto and Ildefonse were only too aware. As both agreed the problem lay with the unfortunate practice of allowing females to become magicians, or more properly witches²⁰, which seems to have been common practice in the City of Shel-Shabba, itself absorbed into Motholam in the tenth epoch. This female-dominated city revered the goddess Aea and were led in worship by the witch Pontecilla the Pious and the great Llorio. Naturally, these witches wished to enter Freseem's then venerable tournament in the hope of gaining access to the Purple sub-heavens. However, as Rhialto and Ildefonse seem to agree women are clearly unacceptable in the divine realms, a position they clearly shared with their more illustrious ancestor Phandaal. A strong advocate of gender discrimination, Phandaal's outrage at the witches' proposed entry into the competition galvanized the other male cabals and the witches were thrown out. The leader of the witches, the beautiful Pontecilla, took exception to this situation and vowed to take revenge on the cabals and on Phandaal in particular.

The situation worsened with passing years. The enmity felt between the magicians' cabals and Pontecilla's witches manifested in many magical skirmishes across Motholam and as relations between the genders deteriorated, leading members of the prominent cabals began to note the lack of magical research being carried out as resources were diverted against the witches. Even Phandaal, advocate of all things male, saw that the enmity was divisive and was weakening Motholam²¹. Therefore, in an attempt to broker peace between the injured parties Phandaal and a number of other prominent magicians accepted an invitation to join Pontecilla in a banquet in which both sides could present their case. Unfortunately for Motholam, despite his willingness to talk, Phandaal's position had not changed and he refused to back-down on the subject of female magic wielders. As a result, the enraged Pontecilla imprisoned Phandaal and, with the help of her demon-ally Tolkoloto, Phandaal was slowly dismembered and his component parts banished to various sub-worlds as an example to the rest of the magicians. This violent act was expected to cow the magicians into submission but Pontecilla had not counted on the old martial spirit of Motholam. Instead of scaring the cabals into submission the act only galvanized the magicians and the war of witches and wizards was begun.

The results of this war are clearly visible to the present day – the witches were defeated and broken as a force and the magicians regained Motholam with the worship of Aea all but disappearing. Unfortunately with the death of Phandaal and many notable magicians the power of Motholam was on the wane. The magicians, weary of war and mortal affairs turned their backs on the cabals. The decline of Motholam was accelerated by the fact that without the combined power of the cabals the magicians were unable to breach the seals between this reality and the purple sub-heavens and those pleasurable lands were placed beyond reach. Freseem's tournament was abandoned and the realm diminished throughout the remainder of the 18th Aeon. By the 19th Aeon Motholam had completely dissipated. From the ashes of this realm stepped the magicians of the present day, self-centered, power-hungry and uncaring of the mundane world about them.

Grand Motholam in the Present Day

It is certainly true that the Arch-magicians of Grand Motholam represent the zenith of the magicians' art. The sheer number of spells and items that bear the name of one of the great wizards of Motholam bears witness to this.

Keletto: 'Phandaal is attributed with many spells and the other cabals of Motholam were equally prolific. I myself wield twenty-three charms perfected during this magical zenith.'

Rhialto: 'I fear you are mistaken. Many spells attributed to Phandaal are but the ineffectual scribblings of a hundred pretenders. Hey, whom does your mannequin mock? That self-preening strut seems overly familiar...'

Keletto: 'Mannequin! Cease at once! Ah, the mannequin mocks no one Rhialto, these beings are as mysterious as the wind.'

Magical legacy of Motholam

Below are listed a small selection of powerful 'lost' spells which are attributed to Phandaal, the Amberlins and Lel Laio²², as examples of the output of Motholam. In regard to the magic rules expressed in Turjan's Tome, these charms may be considered unperfected spells.

Amberlin's Intrinsic Replicator

Range: Self

Duration: Feat.

Difficulty: Complex

Style Affinity: Forceful

²⁰ GMs' who run a game reflecting our more enlightened age may wish to replace the definition of witches as 'female magicians' to one of 'demonologists', thereby reducing the burden of guilt on this much maligned gender.

²¹ And more importantly his chances of returning to beloved Jamjain.

²² There are of course a great many spells attributed to these magicians in DERPG and Turjan's Tome.



Summary: Creates a copy of oneself.

Description: Either Amberlin I or Amberlin II created this spell in order to create their namesake, the truth of the matter is not known. What is beyond doubt is that the copy conjured by this spell is identical to the original in every regard, including physical appearance, intellect and magical ability. The only observable difference between the copy and the original is that of a slight discoloration in the skin tone that may end up slightly lighter or darker than the original. The copy thinks, acts and behaves in exactly the same manner as the original. Although a seemingly useful method of doubling ones magical firepower, the selfish nature of modern-day magicians makes the thought of facing a double of like power and ambition unwholesome at best. The process is also rather painful, for the copy sprouts from the hip of the original and gains full cognizance before the separation is complete. It is thought that this charm is related to the Grey Sorcerers' ability to replicate.

Spell Failure: Instead of 'doubling' the magician, the unfortunate caster is 'halved', i.e. shrunk into a half-sized version of the themselves, resulting in a halving of all physical attributes.

Amberlin's Dimensional Rent

Range: Touch

Duration: Day

Difficulty: Complex

Style Affinity: Forceful

Summary: Creates a rent between two dimensions.

Description: This unusual spell requires two cooperating casters, both of which know the pervulsions. Linking hands the magicians form a circle with their arms. Muttering the charm simultaneously, the magicians create a dimensional rent between this reality and another of the casters' choice. Both casters must have visited the dimension in the past. Big enough for a man to pass through, the rent remains open while the magicians link arms – if they release each other the rent re-seals. During casting both magicians must be successful, if either fail then both fail. If the casters think of different locations then the spell also fails.

Spell Failure: The magicians are catapulted into a random dimension, typically a demonic realm.

Amberlin's Forceful Fist

Range: Touch

Duration: Feat.

Difficulty: Straightforward

Style Affinity: Forceful

Summary: Allows the caster to propel victims through the air.

Description: This spell allows the caster to propel the victim through the air as if they had received a very powerful push. The spell requires only a single word to cast once encompassed and is therefore a good surprise attack. The charm provides enough force to knock a man-sized target approximately twenty feet through the air, typically up to six feet off the ground (GMs' must adjust these values to reflect the size and weight of the target). Upon landing the victim must make a Health roll with a limit of two to avoid injury. If any object obstructs the path of the victim (such as a chamber wall) then the Health roll is made at a limit of one. The spell can also be used to batter down doors etc.

Spell Failure: The magician is instead propelled backwards through the air, landing with a nasty bump (a Health roll at a limit of one is required to avoid injury).

Lel Laio's Gentle Transformation

Range: Touch/Self

Duration: Feat.

Difficulty: Complex

Style Affinity: Devious

Summary: Changes the sex of the target.

Description: This spell was devised by Lel Laio to allow him to transform into the opposite gender, in his case a woman. Once cast the spell takes around a week to complete, during which the primary and secondary sexual features of the target's natural gender are slowly transformed into the opposite sex through a painless although somewhat disconcerting process. The abilities of the target remain identical regardless of gender adopted, although of course attitudes toward the target from third parties may change. The spell may be reversed by powerful anti-magic, such as The First Retrotropic (see Turjan's tome for details of this spell).

Spell Failure: On a spell failure the caster loses all sexual characteristics becoming completely androgynous.



Lel Laio's Airy Splendor

Range: Self

Duration: Day.

Difficulty: Straightforward

Style Affinity: Devious

Summary: Allows the caster to float through the air at will.

Description: A favorite amongst the Optiplex, this charm allows the caster to float at whim through the air in a controlled but indolent manner. The caster is unaffected by winds and may rise as high as desired (keeping guard for hungry Pelgranes). The speed of movement is limited to walking pace and each change of direction or height requires a successful Athletics roll. The magicians of the Optiplex used this spell to 'walk on the clouds', something they and their paramours apparently found pleasing. Other spells may be cast whilst the Airy Splendor is in effect, and in fact may be useful if one accidentally rises to high where the airs become chill. It should be noted that unfortunately once the duration of the spell expires the effect is terminated instantaneously which may prove inconvenient to the unwary caster.

Spell Failure: The caster becomes cloud-like and unable to interact with solid materials for the duration of the spell. It may be considered that this could prove a useful turn of events but unfortunately the magician is at the full mercy of the winds, whose capricious gusts could lead to considerable discomfort.

The Acquisition of Appropriate Etiquette

Range: Touch

Duration: Hours

Difficulty: Straightforward

Style Affinity: Devious

Summary: Generates the correct clothing and an Etiquette boon for any situation.

Description: In complex social situations this charm is invaluable. Assuming the caster has spent at least a day observing a particular society, he may by casting this spell conjure mannerisms and dress that allow him to blend in with natives seamlessly. The spell works by allowing the caster to copy actions he has witnessed unconsciously without the need for concentration. In game terms the spell will create an appropriate costume replete with suitable accoutrements and allow the magicians to gain a one-time boon of 5 to his Etiquette pool (or a pool of value 5 should the unfortunate be lacking in this regard). In the context of the spell the term 'society' represents social strata as well as local customs – a magician could not spend a day in the company of rogues and expect to be able to use the charm to blend into the company of a group of viziers.

Spell Failure: The caster is unaware that anything is amiss and still gains the Etiquette boon of 5, but has been so mistaken in interpreting the society in question that all rolls are made at a Levy of 3. Not only that, but the garments conjured by the spell are hideously gauche and may even be insulting.

Phandaal's Rainbow Interrogator

Range: Sight

Duration: Feat.

Difficulty: Straightforward

Style Affinity: Studious

Summary: Determines the sex and magical ability of a target.

Description: Phandaal reputedly created this charm for use in the build up to the war of witches and wizards. The spell will instantaneously reveal the true gender of any target within sight of the caster, with females glowing a violent red and males a soothing blue. Only the caster can see the auras. The intensity of the aura also allows the caster to attempt to estimate the magical power of the target. To do so the caster makes a Perception roll with a limit of one – any success will reveal the current size of the target's Magic pool. An illustrious success will reveal the exact size of the pool and the Magic Ability. A dismal failure will alert the target to the fact that the caster is scrutinizing them.

Spell Failure: The size of the caster's magic pool is revealed to all within sight, along with their gender.

Phandaal's Temporal Study

Range: Sight

Duration: Feat.

Difficulty: Complex

Style Affinity: Studious

Summary: Allows the caster to read tomes at an accelerated rate.

Description: A favorite of the research-hungry magicians of Motholam, the Temporal Study allows the caster to read an entire tome in a single hour. The spell performs this task by isolating the caster in a personal dimension where time passes



at a much slower rate. During the hour the caster appears to be surrounded by a bubble of silvery light resting one foot above the ground which cannot be pierced or punctured – it may however be pushed or pulled along and is permeable to air. It will also float above water. Once within this sphere the caster can encompass their limit in spells in one hour assuming they have the appropriate tomes, scrolls or tablets at hand.

Spell Failure: The bubble is unfortunately permanent and the magician trapped within. Unless the magician is to die of thirst (assuming they do not have the Charm of Untiring Nourishment) they must be freed from the sphere within a day.

Carefully steering the conversations away from the topic of Phandaal, lest he inadvertently upset either of his illustrious companions, Keletto went on to describe how the legacy of Grand Motholam can be seen across the dying earth to the present day. The spells perfected during this great age either dominate the tomes of all magicians or are hungrily sought-after in deserted ruins. Magical devices created by Motholam's wizards are hoarded by arcane-savants across the earth and the magical specializations perfected by these folk (such as the lost art of metaphysical mathematics) represent the pinnacle of magical research. Of more mundane evidence the ruins of several cities remain, including those believed to be the remains of H'Kharre and Shel-Shabba, which are no doubt the resting places of all manner of wondrous items (as well as the typical complement of Hoons, Gids and the like).

Rhialto: 'H'Kharre? You are mistaken. Nothing remains of this city, a flood destroyed the manse of the Optiplex in the 20th Aeon.'

Ildefonse: 'As for Shel-Shabba, who would wish to visit that degraded place? I fervently believe that the war-machine of Motholam destroyed that accursed city. Why does that mannequin watch me so? Its bland feature are strangely disturbing and yet somehow familiar...'

The City of Shel-Shabba

Little remains of the once glorious city of the witches, Shel-Shabba. It seems it was the nature of these uncouth folk to dwell in the boughs of great trees grown especially for the purpose. With trunks close together on the ground, the outstretched limbs of these trees entwined with their neighbors such that a close-knit canopy of living thoroughfares and dwellings was formed. This seems to be peculiar to this particular group – Rhialto assured us that the witches of the Cobalt Mountains form no such vegetative dwellings. It would seem however that now all such ephemeral structures have decayed, leaving nothing but the petrified remains of huge tree stumps. There are however the remains of tall stone dolmens, intricately carved with the now-eroded signs of the goddess Aea, dotted around the perimeter of the ancient city. Beneath these stone are thought to lay the buried chambers of powerful witches of Shel-Shabba, sufficiently important to be granted monuments that have survived the test of time.

Lost Items of Arcane Interest

The dolmens stand roughly fifteen feet high. Should any of the stone be moved (there are twelve in total), a yawning opening will be uncovered. These lead to the burial chambers of the witch-queens of Shel-Shabba. Although differing considerably in design as fashions changed, a single feature is common to all the sites. A powerful ward has been placed on the stone dolmens. As soon as the stones are disturbed, the following spell is cast. The wards have an effective magic rating of five²³.

Llorio's Blanket of Arcane Nullity – special warding charm

Range: Sight

Duration: Feat.

Difficulty: Complex

Style Affinity: Devious

Summary: Nullifies magic pools in the vicinity of the stone dolmen.

Description: This warding charm unleashes a powerful blanket of magical nullity that effects all within sight of the stone dolmen, becoming active as soon as the stone is disturbed. The effects of the spell are particularly powerful – victims who wish to resist the spell must do so at a levy of 2. Each target that fails to resist the spell has their magic pool reduced to one. Furthermore, if the target leaves the site of the dolmen their magic pool will regenerate as per normal, but once the spell has been successfully cast the blanket of nullity becomes attuned to the victim's magical emanations such that should the victim return to the site of the dolmen, the spell will automatically take effect again. The only way to remove the arcane resonance is to recite the cantrap carved into the wall above the witch-queen's coffin. Within the witch mausoleums are a wide range of mundane items of considerable worth. Among the items to be uncovered include several of arcane worth. Examples of these are listed below.

²³ Like some much else of eminent interest, wards are detailed in Turjan's tome. Rest assured that for those unwilling to display the strength of character to purchase the tome the ward may be summarised as follows: the magic rating of the ward is used to cast the spell once the stone dolmen is moved.



The Llorio's Familiar (Permanent, 10pts)

Summary: Summons a pedantic familiar who may be questioned at a cost.

Description: This object is a small delicate necklace shaped in the form of a jade stone on a silver chain. Wearing the necklace allows the bearer to summon a familiar, typically some small animal, by reading out loud the name carved on the stone. The creature will appear once per day, and only in when the bearer is alone and unlikely to be disturbed. The familiar is very wise can speak eloquently with an effective Pedantry pool of seven. When summoned the familiar will attempt to answer any single question put to it at a price of a cup of fresh blood. Once an answer to the question is attempted the familiar departs. If the bearer of the necklace demands assistance but refuses to pay the price the familiar will depart and may not be summoned again.

Aea's Tears (Permanent, 5pts)

Summary: Mournful crystals that effect persuade and rebuff attempts of viewers.

Description: These crystals are strung on a length of golden thread. Lustrous and shimmering, these blue gems are purported to be the tears of Aea crystallized by Pontecilla. When viewed, they bring out feelings of sadness and loss in all that see them. Under such conditions those affected make any persuade or rebuff attempts at a levy of one. The effect lasts until the tears are removed from sight. The downside of the tears is that the wearer must make a Wherewithal test every hour – failing the test results in the wearer suffering from the same effects for an hour, even if the tears are removed and hidden from sight.

Feathers of the Belgrath (Charged, 5pts)

Summary: A feather that when placed in suitable headwear allows the wearer to talk with birds but also attracts Pelgranes.

Description: Bright purple and over two feet in length, this feather allows the wearer to converse with all forms of feathered beasts as long as it is in sight. The wearer will find that some birds are relatively talkative whilst other obtuse and sullen depending upon their nature, but many will happily address the wearer as long as he or she does not threaten them with harm. Unfortunately, not all beasts will prove welcome. Though now extinct, the Belgrath was considered a delicacy by Pelgranes and the wearer might find themselves tarred with the same brush.

Ghostly Guardians

Standing guard over all these treasures are the ghosts of the witches who were buried in each site, typically between one and three in number²⁴. The following statistics may be used for the ghosts.

Typical Witch Ghost Ratings: Persuade (Eloquent) ~+3, Rebuff (Penetrating) ~+5, Defense (Dodge) ~+6, Health ~, Magic (innate) 1.5~, Athletics ~+4, Concealment 1.5~, Stealth ~+8, Pedantry ~, Perception ~+ 3, Wherewithal 2~.

Innate Abilities: Ghosts can touch a living target and then match its Magic rating against the victim's Health. Success results in the victim losing life energy. The ghosts can move through narrow gaps and are able to completely dematerialize, a process that takes two rounds. The ghosts still have be faint representations of their personality in their former life and vaguely feminine forms. Luckily, the ghosts know no spells.

The City of H'Knarre

One of the most powerful city-states of Motholam, H'Knarre is situated in the Land of the Falling Wall. After the slow dissolution of Motholam the Optiplex cabal deserted their floating manse of Albacus. Without their constant magical upkeep the pleasure palace sank slowly and majestically toward the ground, to hover only hundreds of feet above the city²⁵. Some decades later the magical vortices keeping Albacus afloat finally and fatally gave out and the vast structure of towers and minarets crashed downward, smashing into the barracks and training ground of the H'Knarre hoplites. Striking the soldiers as they prepared to parade the cities' might to dignitaries from the new kingdom of the Forty Khades, Albacus' fall destroyed the greater part of H'Knarre as well as the several visiting dignitaries. After this disaster the city was abandoned and left to decay, slowly being consumed by the encroachment of an inland sea. In the present day the city is buried under several layers of silt deposited by the sea which has since receded. Much of this once great martial H'Knarre is hidden far underground; the long avenues, tall guard towers and wide plazas lost beneath solidified mud. But poking above the eroding deposits can be seen some of the towers of Albacus. The few buildings that jut above the surrounding landscape give relatively easy entry to the mud-choked lower levels. Within these structures may be found fabulous creations of the Optiplex arch-hedonist, as well as fearsome mechanical guardians powered by the sun.

²⁴ *Demons of the Dying Earth* presents an excellent account of how one should handle these beings.

²⁵ Providing a useful barrier against inclement weather.



Lost Items of Arcane Interest

The following items may be uncovered in the remains of Albacus.

Lel Laio's Gloves of the Languorous Touch (Charged, 10pts)

Summary: Gloves that allow Seduction tests without the need for conversation.

Description: Rarely removed by their master, these black velvet gloves were endowed with the distilled passions of a Bloplarian succubae. When touched against the bare flesh of a member of the opposite sex, the wearer may make an immediate unopposed Seduction test with a limit of three. Success results in couching without the need for tiresome conversation. Failure indicates that the target is repulsed by the rather fulsome odor of the gloves and they cannot be used again on that target and as a side effect the wearer suffers a levy of one to all future Seduction attempts with that individual due to the association of sight and smell. Once a successful Seduction has occurred, the limit is increased by one for the next attempt on that target, which may not occur on the same day, representing the growing fascination the victim has for the glove's wearer. Should the gloves be removed the effect dissipates, any current congress fails and the results of continued exposure to the gloves are lost. Once the charges are spent the gloves may be refreshed by laying them beneath the pillow of a virgin for a single night, something that may not be as simple as it first appears.

Adventure Seed - Legacy of the Optiplex

Whilst resting in Kaiin, the players become alerted to the activities of a rogue known as Sullko. Renown for his lack of wit and brazen appearance, Sullko has long been associated with the roughest of females that Kaiin has to offer. However, it now appears that Sullko's fortunes have changed for he has been seen several times in the presence of a Lafarello, a lady of Kandive's court. It seems that Sullko has won over the fair maiden for he has moved into her home in Odkin Prospect and is living a life of consummate ease. What could Sullko's secret be? Why is he never seen without a pair of long black velvet gloves and why are his once-boon comrades now missing?

Discovering Lel Laio's Gloves of Languorous Touch on a recent expedition to the Land of the Falling Wall, Sullko soon uncovered their powers. Luckily not as unintelligent as his appearance make him appear Sullko soon did away with his compatriots before they could try to rob him of his good fortune. On his return to Kaiin, Sullko immediately set about seducing as many rich and well to do women as he could find and is now living a life of exceptional luxury, surrounded by a cloud of beauties. Unfortunately for him, his luck has not gone unnoticed and a wide range of groups - including various magicians, cut-throats, adventurers and even Prince Kandive - are eager to discover Sullko's secret. Perhaps the players are among the parties seeking to gain the secret to Sullko's hold over the women of Kaiin, or they could be hired by the libertine himself to protect him from the unwanted attention of these interested parties.

Cusps of the Erotic Vision (Permanent, 5pts)

Summary: Replaces the image of a current lover with the object of the wearer's desire.

Description: These ruby cusps are worn over the eyes giving the bearer a rich red-hued stare. Lovingly coated with the tears of a hundred forlorn lovers, when activated by a simple cantrap these cusps present the viewer with a vision of his or her most desired partner that handily replaces the current view of any prospective partner standing before them. In game terms this vision of loveliness grants a boon of two to the Seduction pool. Popular amongst all magicians of Motholam, these creations of the Optiplex were thought to be so common as to litter the ground in the floating pleasure-palace.

Obsidian Soldiers (Permanent, 15pts)

Summary: Powerful soldiers of stone.

Description: These fearsome creations of the Optiplex were responsible for the decadent magicians' acceptance by the forthright people of H'Knarre, for they provided much military strength along with the H'Knarre hoplites. Standing over ten feet tall, shaped like bizarre crossbreeds of human, animal and demon and carved from black obsidian, these statues came in two forms - warriors and guardians. Warriors were powered by the sun and acted willfully to fulfil their owners' wishes; guardians were mostly inanimate, only awakened by the passage of living beings through their field of vision. Once woken by a target they challenge the creature in a booming voice. Should the individual be unable to provide a suitable password the guardian would attack. Both forms of soldier require the rays of the sun for power, and will slow and eventually freeze if denied the feeble rays of the red globe. Albacus is thought to contain several of these beings.

Typical Ratings: Attack (Ferocious) 2~, Defense (parry) ~, Health 3~, Athletics 0.5~, Perception 0.5~

Note: Slashing and puncturing weapons will not damage Obsidian Soldiers. Without the sun's rays a Soldier's pools will decrease by one point every five minutes and when any pool reaches zero the soldier will freeze. Providing the statue is not destroyed, returning it to sunlight will restore all ability pools. To become the soldiers' master, one must recite the keyphrase written on the crown of the being's head.



The Discourse Ends

Keletto: 'What do you know of the Silver Keddish Empire? I have discovered the roots of its demise.'

Rhialto: 'Do go on, this realm interests me greatly. I have recently translated a tome attributed to Shyatal of the 19th aeon on the very subject.'

Ildefonse: 'What is that mannequin doing? It carries itself as if a king, not a humble automaton...'

Rhialto: 'Wait...It mocks me! Keletto, what is the meaning of this outrage!'

Unfortunately, further debate on the interesting subject of Motholam was cut short. Ildefonse, glancing behind him, noticed one of the mannequins affecting a haughty air and superior attitude as it walked, much to the fascination of the rest. Rhialto turning to observe the object of his colleague's interest noticed the mannequin and could not help but draw the obvious conclusion that he was being mocked. Spluttering with anger, Rhialto demanded to know the meaning of such an occurrence. For its part the mannequin and several of its fellows aped Rhialto's moves, causing Keletto much further embarrassment. After the ensuing altercation Ildefonse had no recourse but to call a halt to proceedings. Keletto, begging the Arch-magician's forgiveness, directed the capering mannequins toward the door of Boumergarth and without a further word swept from the manse. Rhialto took several moments to regain his composure, trembling with barely concealed anger. I considered this a wise moment to depart Boumergarth myself.

Keletto was not seen again at Boumergarth. However, his standing amongst the antiquarian community must be called into question due to the fact that whilst his discourse was taking place several trifling items of magical paraphernalia went missing from Ildefonse's manse. Coupling this occurrence with the fact that for all parties present the exact number of mannequins present during the archeological discussion is somewhat hazy. Furthermore, in hindsight it would appear that Keletto's account of the Aeons does not bear close scrutiny. It was clearly stated that the Forty Khades grew from the demise of Motholam. The Benefice of Kharay was said to have formed from the destruction of the Khades. However, it is also stated that Kharay was itself absorbed into Grand Motholam. Such contradictory statements do not give Keletto credit. Needless to say, mentioning the name Keletto in the presence of either Rhialto or Ildefonse would be considered ill advised. Further musing on this topic were tragically terminated by the ill-conceived actions and outrageous accusations of my former employer.

I now close my discourse on the 18th Aeon, which I hope Rhialto, Ildefonse and any other readers have found of interest. It remains for me to bid my readers farewell and to advertise my services to any wishing to employ a secretary of undoubted talents and rare understanding. I feel I ought to add that employment locations outside Kaiin are preferred due to the unfortunate lack of tolerance displayed by my former employer.

Yours,

Maedillio

