

# HackMaster

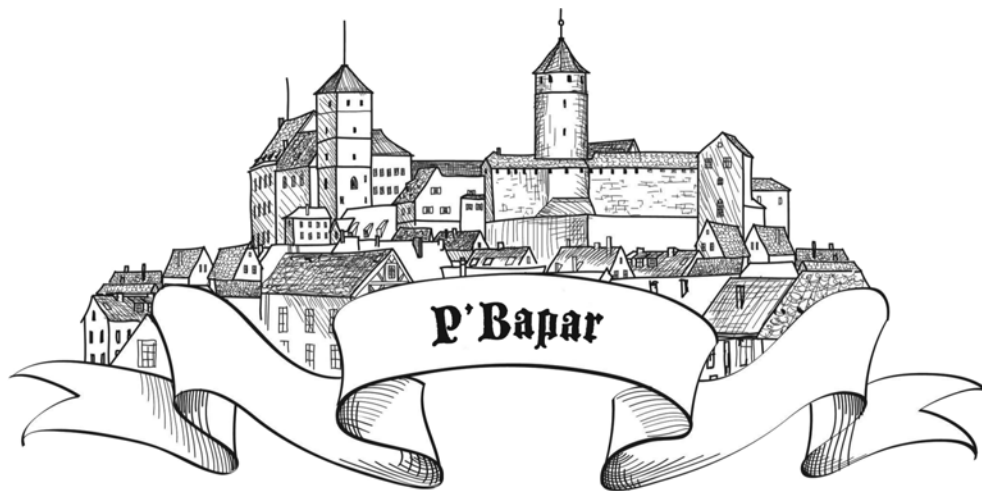
## Kingdoms of Kalamar

*Fantasy Campaign Setting*

### P' BAPAR



### PART 2: CITY OVERVIEW



## Part 2: City Overview

**K**nown as “Sentinel City”, P’Bapar resides at the base of a wide mountain pass just over 10,000 feet above sea level. The city safeguards the only viable route through Coniper Gap and over the Legasa Peaks. The largest independent city-state on Tellene, 73,100 people live within P’Bapar’s city limits. Humans (Kalamaran, Brandobian and Deji) comprise the majority of the population, but halflings, gnomes, dwarves and half-elves are common enough.

Nestled in a large glacial ravine near the the tree line, the city spills down the length of the mountain pass along the banks of the Banadar River and up into the adjoining hills. Most of the forest and vegetation lies on the downslopes to the east of the city.

P’Bapar is situated in a vital strategic position, controlling all traffic intent on crossing the mountains. Highly defensible, the archduke’s citadel overlooks the city and provides protection against any potential invasion; its towers can detect an approaching army for miles along the mountain pass. Beyond the city limits, the terrain is virtually impassable, particularly to the west. High mountain walls, ravines and canyons force travelers to use Coniper Gap in order to cross the mountains.

The city is higher in elevation to the north and west, and tumbles downward along the valley floor towards the south and east. Six wards, defined by location and natural border, divide P’Bapar: North, High, Green, Lower, South and Outer.

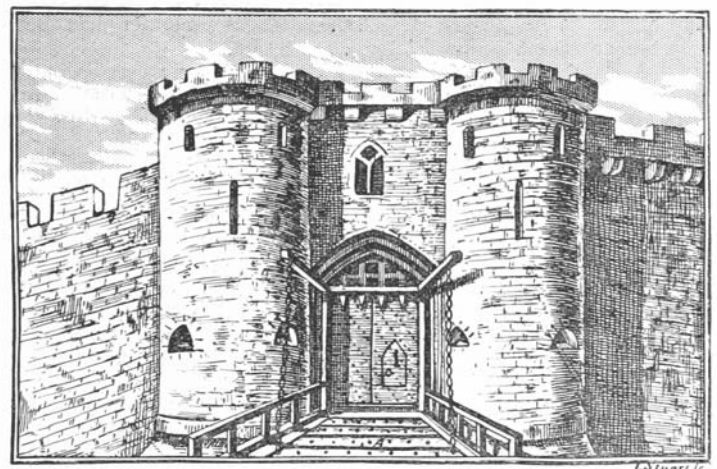
Residents live in two- to four-story half-timber buildings with stone foundations and mud and wattle, wood or plaster walls. Clay or stone tile cover the steep roofs, though older and poorer buildings still have thatch or wood shakes. Streets are cobblestone and lined with formed gutters that carry waste and water into the sewer system below.

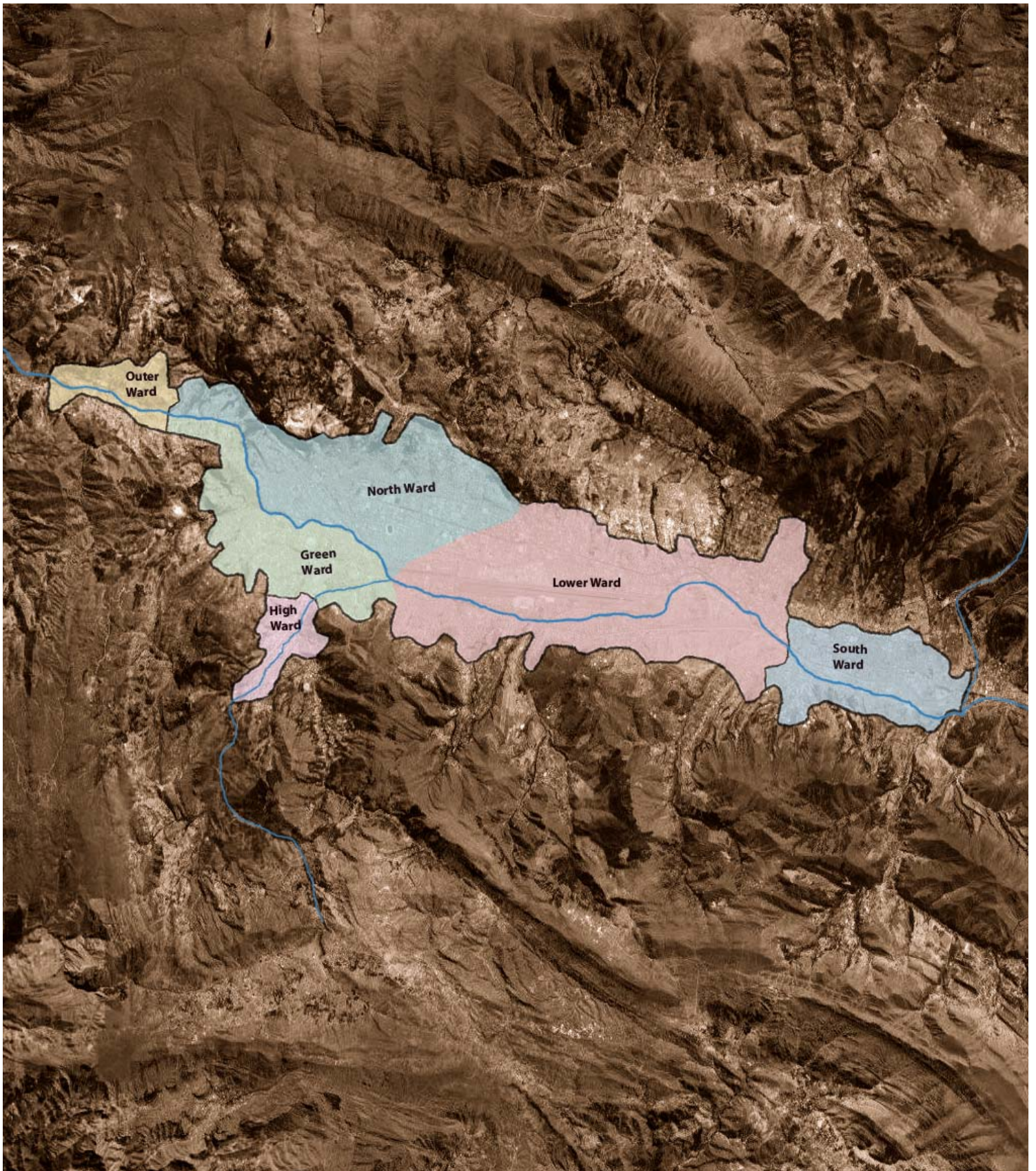
P’Bapar’s official symbol is the silhouette of a hippogriff. This emblem appears on official seals and the creature’s imagery appears throughout the city in various pieces of architecture, stone and metal designs, and even toys. On rare occasions, one might catch a glimpse of a wild hippogriff flying high over the Legasa Peaks in search of food or a place to nest.

Baparans often bless a new structure with the likeness of a hippogriff, assuming the builder has not already incorporated one into the exterior façade of the edifice. Commonly, an artisan will work a stone relief, etching or statuette into the exterior design of the building, typically above a doorway or within a mantle.

### The City Proper

The first sight travelers see when approaching the city is the archduke’s citadel. Situated on a spur of rock at the edge of the High Ward and visible for miles on a clear day, this highly defensible granite fortification houses the archduke’s army. As one draws nearer the city walls, farms and outlying structures increase in frequency. Dozens of homes and businesses line the roads, many on the edge of





This map depicts the City of P'Bapar nestled in a gorge high up the Banader river valley.

the highway, catering directly to those merely passing through with no intention of entering.

The surrounding foothills, high canyon walls and several stretches of stone wall (where the natural boundaries are insufficient) define the boundaries of P'Bapar's city proper. Three gates provide access through the walls where soldiers inspect incoming cargo, question disreputable looking visitors, and collect tolls for the city coffers. Long lines stretch away from each gate, forcing potential entrants to queue up before seeking admittance. At the busiest times of the year (spring and harvest) the wait to enter the city is measured in hours.

The 20-foot high masonry walls discourage even the most determined climbers, though the skilled, brave and stupid have made the ascent with varying degrees of success in order to gain entrance. Routine patrols pass along the parapets keeping a watchful vigil for any signs

of trouble. Anyone detected scaling the walls is captured or repulsed with missile fire.

Passing through the gates, visitors are assailed by the horrendous stench of more than 70,000 people living in intimate proximity to one another. Excrement, garbage, animals, sweat, food, remains and whatever else one can find in the streets of P'Bapar combine to create this disgusting reek. Residents dump chamber pots into the streets, farm animals defecate where they please and trash rots in the gutters.

Festering living conditions prove ideal for the germination of diseases. More than a few among the ever-present beggars show evidence of malady. For some, a simple walk through the city could prove their demise.

Most streets boast weathered cobblestones, but in the poorer sections of town, streets and alleys are hard-packed earth. Two to three carts or wagons can pass side-by-side on larger avenues. This is more the exception than the rule, as the majority of streets are only wide enough for one. Traffic on these narrow avenues halts to a standstill any time a wagon or carriage halts, or worse, breaks down. Accidents between people, wagons or beasts of burden (or any combination thereof) are commonplace.

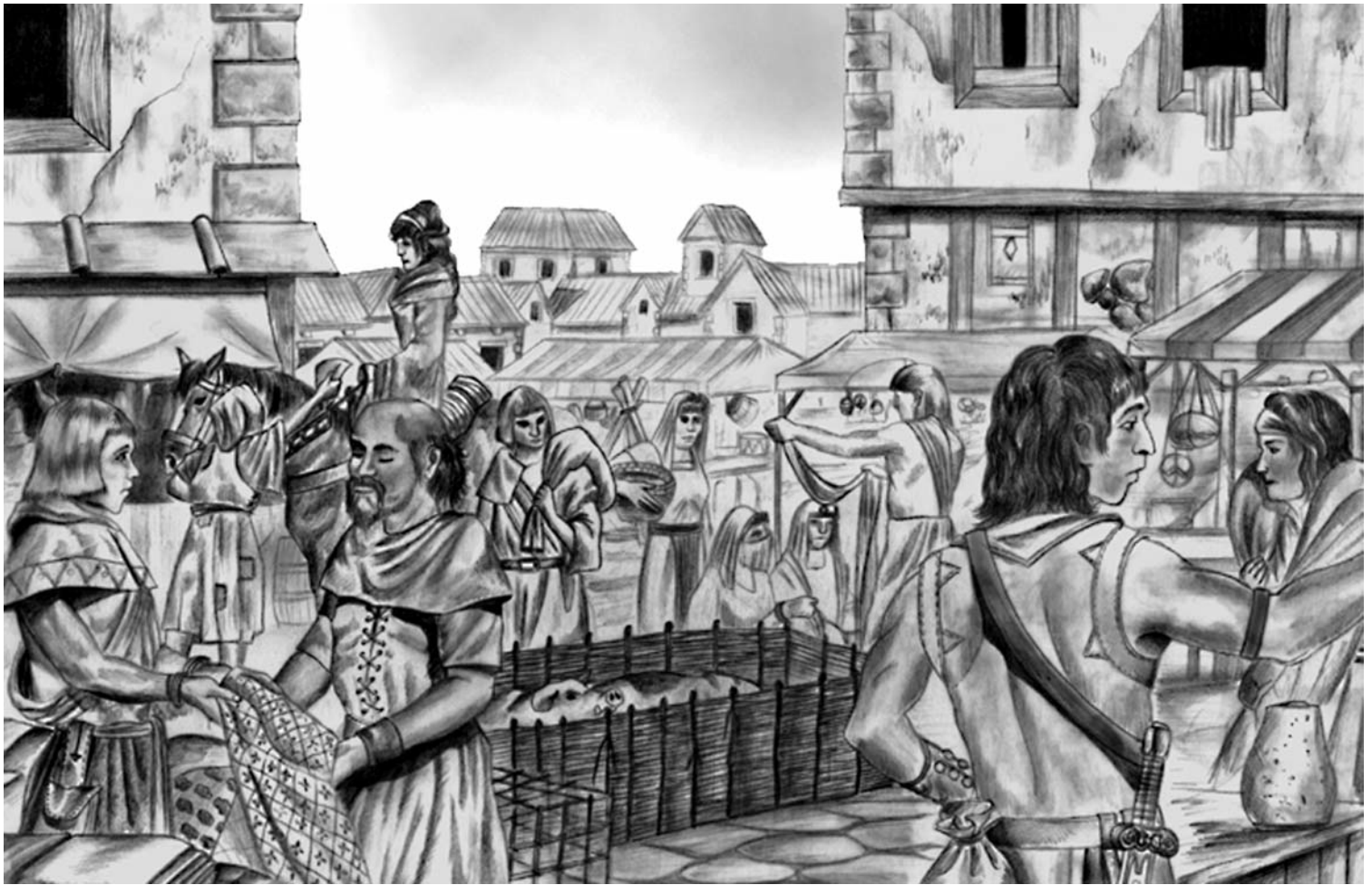
Shadowy alleyways crisscross through the neighborhoods, bisecting main avenues of travel and providing shortcuts for those familiar with the streets. Less-than-reputable types often linger in the shadows of the nearby buildings, awaiting any opportunity to line their pockets, especially at night.

The layout of the city tends to confuse newcomers. P'Bapar is a hilly city, with switchbacks, stairs and rises throughout, all of which can befuddle unfamiliar visitors. Streets quickly and unexpectedly become congested or cluttered by traffic, wagons and beasts of burden. Pigs, dogs, goats and cats roam the city streets, feeding on the endless stream of offal and garbage tossed into the gutters.

Shops and businesses are scattered throughout the city, with the heaviest concentration near marketplaces, public gathering areas, or along main thoroughfares. Business owners most often reside on the premises. Multi-story buildings provide landlords the opportunity to rent space to other businesses or tenants, providing an additional source of income.

Visitors and residents flock to the markets of P'Bapar where it is said anything on Tellene can be purchased. Nowhere is this truer than in the Eldan Marketplace. Thousands of vendors bark out to passing visitors, hawking their goods and services. Mundane goods as well as exotic imports from as far away as Kalamar and Svimohzia can be found here.





Information travels throughout the city via town criers. They patrol large public spaces and well-traveled roads, heralding the news of the day and the decrees of the archduke. Since the vast majority of residents cannot read, this is the most common method of conveying important information to the public. Still, postings, notices and job offers decorate public boards and plaster the sides of buildings throughout P'Bapar (with or without the owner's consent).

Soldiers commonly circuit the city. Like the criers, patrols focus their efforts on the marketplaces and well-traveled roads of the city. Roving squads of guards can be spotted every hour in these areas, and less frequently in others.

Streetlights topped with candle housing similar to a lantern twinkle after dark on the main avenues. Maintained by the Guild of Lamps, these lights provide meager illumination for the soldiers patrolling the darkened streets in search of troublemakers.

While the archduke enforces no official curfew in P'Bapar, locals generally frown upon those caught out alone in the city after midnight. City watchmen can detain anyone (on reason of suspicion or not) they desire, and often times they do just that.

Likewise, the archduke imposes no regulation against carrying weapons, however, the guard disapproves greatly of such activity unless there is an expectation or right to do so (such as a knight, clergy or nobility). Guard patrols have been known to follow armed bands to ensure they cause no trouble. It is impossible for the city watch to monitor everyone, but they are drawn to anyone acting suspicious, having low honor, or causing a disruption.

### Daily Life in P'Bapar

Most (if not all) Baparans fall into one of many broad social structures that define their daily lives – even if they don't realize it. Wealth, status and power further sub-divide society. Within the city, most citizens are classified as peasants, freeman, merchants or soldiers.

Peasants are comprised of the poor folk who work for a liege lord (a merchant, a land owner, a nobleman, the archduke, a church, etc.). Typically, peasants live on borrowed or leased land, work with borrowed tools, and earn a living at the grace of those who provide for them. All land in P'Bapar is owned either by the archduke, an earl or a nobleman. In order to farm, hunt or herd on said land, a peasant must first be given permission.

Some land owners are more lenient than others. They allow peasants to lease or rent-to-own land with favorable terms. Others take the majority of what is farmed, while continuing to tax their own workers to the point of death for staples such as food and board.

Hunters and shepherds fall into the peasant category purely because they rarely own the land they work. Hunters in particular are closely monitored in some earldoms, as poaching is a major crime punishable in some areas by maiming and death.

Life on the lowest rungs of society is hard. The average peasant works a six- or seven-day work week with little to no rest with the exception of holy days or festivals. Most seek to marry and have children, not only for the continuation of their bloodlines, but because it eases the burden of work (more hands equals more work). This is more important for farmers, shepherds, ranchers and anyone else that works (or owns) large plots of land. Children provide security during times of illness or during sudden influx of work where other, less ably skilled men wouldn't suffice.

Freemen provide goods and services in exchange for money or trade. There are countless examples of freeman, but this class of people includes tradesmen, laborers, mercenaries, beggars and those who provide a service for a fee.

While peasantry seems a terrible life, it does provide a guaranteed meal and a place to live in service to a lord. By modern standards it seems simple to exclaim that no one would be a peasant when they could willingly work a trade as a freeman. Unfortunately, it isn't that easy. Many peasants simply lack the requisite training to do anything else. Education and opportunities to serve as an apprentice are limited, especially after a certain age. Freemen must seize upon an apprenticeship or opportunity to learn a trade if they are to succeed.

Still more difficult is the rise to merchant. A merchant's success is largely dependent on the goods being traded, access and demand for his inventory, his ability to

negotiate, and the amount of capital he has at his disposal to take on risk. Good judgment and a solid sense of business also play a large role.

Soldiers serve the archduke to protect the residents of P'Bapar from enemy forces, humanoids and other threats. Their lives are not their own and they must go where they are directed, do what they are told, and die when their time comes. In P'Bapar, soldiers are recruited from all the classes (though few noblemen serve). Most are the sons of peasants who hope for a better (and easier) life for their children, but freemen account for a large majority of the recruits as well.

This is by no means a limit to the social classes found within P'Bapar. Nobility and slaves comprise two special classes of people and are detailed in a later supplement.

Baparans begin each day by breaking fast and then readying themselves for work. Days are short and the work is hard, so most labor until sunset. Taskmasters allot workers time for a midday meal and a short break or two, depending on their profession. As the sun sets, residents return home or retire to a tavern for a drink and meal before bedtime. At midnight the church bells ring in unison throughout the city and most taverns shut their doors at this time.

Pigs, goats, sheep and cattle provide the majority of the meat consumed throughout the city, but fowl is common enough, especially among the poor farmer who can raise chicks to adulthood for both eggs and meat. Fish is popular and salmon and trout are readily available from the local mountain rivers.

Ocean-caught fish is considered something of a delicacy in P'Bapar. Imported from Cosolen, merchants store these fish in barrels, salted for preservation before shipping east. When treated this way the fish can last for years. Prices fluctuate depending on the time of year, the weather, and the success of the fishing fleets.

Breakfast usually consists of bread, cheese, eggs or a thick porridge containing oats and local spices (much like oatmeal). The midday and evening meals are typically



soups or stews with a thick gravy or broth and bread, though it isn't uncommon to see steamed or boiled vegetables served as a side dish to a main course of meat or fish.

Most of the common folk subsist on soups and stews. Ingredients vary but usually include some combination of: cabbage, leeks, rutabaga, onions, carrots, potatoes, turnips, garlic, corn and peas. To the average citizen a bowl of soup and a crust of bread makes a decent, and expected, meal. Once or twice a week meat will be purchased by those with the means to afford it, and used to supplement meals for two-three days. Stew then inherits the leftover meat, extending the life of the purchase. Roast game or large portions of meat are reserved for special occasions (such as when guests are present) or served by those able to afford such a luxury.

A typical commoner earns 1-10 tc/day in wages. Farmers, shepherds and others typically earn large sums of money once or twice a year (such as during harvest time). This income must be managed and parceled out to last for extended periods of time (months or even a full year).

For the poor, bartering and trading is just as common as exchanging currency for goods and services. This is especially true for those living in outlying regions where large sums of coin are unavailable.

Residents collect their waste in chamber pots and dump them into the city streets where it is washed away by the rain, trampled into the ground, or eaten by dogs, goats or pigs. On particularly long stretches of hot and dry weather the Master of Sanitation will hire laborers to patrol the city and clean the streets. In prominent areas (such as the High Ward or the Eldan Marketplace) several waste carts pulled by a single horse patrol the streets. Workers follow with shovels to remove waste.

Humanoids (half-orcs and half-hobgoblins included) are forbidden to make residence in the city of P'Bapar by order of the Archduke. Some earls extend this law throughout their lands and, in any case, these races are unwelcome at the best of times. Note, however, that no law prevents humanoids from entering the city, only residing within. The permanency of such a residence is usually left to the local authorities to ascertain.

## **Baparan Attitudes**

Baparans pride themselves on their independence and self-reliance, which outsiders might view as stubbornness. Merchants from the city-state traveling abroad are known as fierce negotiators who are difficult to move off of an established position.

Baparans feel an immense pride when accomplishing a

task others insist cannot be done. Many young, brash men thrust themselves into dangerous situations attempting to defend their honor in the face of dissenters.

Poorer Baparans perhaps characterize the best example of this prevalent attitude — working the land, herding animals, or farming in order to force a meager existence among the dangerous wilds of the Krond Heights. Humanoids frequently raid outlying villages and harsh mountain weather can also lay siege. Baparans just rebuild, doubling their previous efforts at defense while daring monsters and elements to come again.

Duels of honor are common in P'Bapar (as compared to other large cities) as prideful men attempt to defend their manhood against any slight (real or perceived). Not that every Baparan is quick to settle a dispute with a sword, but amongst the noble classes, the foolish young, and the would-be heroes dueling occurs often enough that it proves a concern for the civil authorities. Expert swordsmen train nobility in the art of swordplay from a young age, ensuring that those of high birth can defend themselves when the time comes.

Like much of Tellene, religion holds an important place in Baparan society. Prayer to a single deity is common, though many call on favors from all of the gods as need arises. Locals throughout the city-state hold clerics and temples in high esteem. Baparans tend to mistrust atheists, believing it is better to stand for something wrong than not to stand for anything at all.

An eclectic and cosmopolitan city, the former rule of two separate nations influences P'Bapar throughout. Nowhere is this more notable than in the languages spoken. Natives speak Baparan, Kalamaran, Brandobian, and Deji. As a result, traders prefer the Merchant's Tongue when dealing with unknown parties throughout the city-state. Scribes and translators are readily found, though in high demand.

Guilds play an extremely important role. Prominent guilds hold as much (or more) power as city officials. These organizations help establish laws and rules for not only their members, but for society as a whole. Guild leaders inevitably become embroiled in politics, hoping to enact and influence laws that would benefit their organization.

## **Slavery**

Like most places on Tellene, slavery is legal in the city-state of P'Bapar, though nowhere near as prominent as in Kalamar or Pel Brolenon. Slaves comprise only a small

portion of the population and are not counted in the census. The practice is slowly falling into disfavor in the city-state as younger generations see it as a holdover from the Kalamaran Empire.

Slaves in P'Bapar are made in one of several ways. Most slaves in P'Bapar are indentured; sentenced to slavery by a local magistrate as punishment for committing a serious crime. These slaves becomes property of the archduke, and while they may be gifted, sold, or treated in any other manner one would typically treat chattel they are usually confined to labor camps, mines or other places of work.

While rare, some become slaves after being captured in battle, forced to serve their conqueror until death. More common are those sold into slavery by family members to pay off debt, typically the case for children, though some adults freely enter this bondage. These slaves are freed once the debt is settled, though the rate of payment and interest can be so large that the slave will never be set free. A small percentage of slaves are actually people that have been forcibly captured by roving slavers and sold into servitude, though these are rare (due to illegality) within the city-state.

P'Bapar has many laws regarding slaves and their care, yet all of them consider slaves to be property and not

people. Owners may do with their slaves as they will, including abusing them, though it is unlawful to outright murder slaves. In such cases fines, reciprocity (if the slave of another), and even more severe punishment (such as a public flogging) are meted out as required. Publicly mistreating a slave, while perfectly legal, is generally frowned upon by the more independent citizens of the north.

Slaves are available for purchase in P'Bapar in the Eldan Market several times a month, or through private sellers and various businesses throughout the city. Permits are required to sell slaves within the city-state. Potential slavers are required to pay for the added protection of mercenaries supplied by the archduke, or provide their own protection.

Riots in the market, incited by anti-slavery groups or powerful individuals opposed to such activity occur every so often. Those detained in the act of freeing slaves are flogged, fined, imprisoned or hanged, depending on the severity of their actions and the amount of property or personal damaged caused. Particularly dangerous (or repeat) rioters are sentenced to a life of slavery, an ironic twist of fate to those that oppose the will of the archduke.

Slave owners identify their property through the use of





clothing, marks or (rarely) brands, identifying the slave as property. This typically takes the form of an orange colored ribbon worn around the bicep or as a headband, the latter being particularly popular among women. Branding or tattooing is less popular, as it makes the slave more difficult to sell at a later date or remove once the slave has earned freedom.

## Superstitions

Like most cultures, Baparans have their own unique superstitions. Some of the most common are listed here:

- ▶ Wearing amber jewelry will ward off disease and protect against illness.
- ▶ It will be an unlucky year if the firstborn calf of the year is white.
- ▶ Carrying (or wearing) a swan's feather will increase your appeal to the opposite sex.
- ▶ Discovering a stray bird in the house is considered a bad omen usually associated with death.
- ▶ All shutters or windows in a house or building should be opened upon the passing of the deceased. This allows the soul to escape. Failure to do so will result in a haunting.
- ▶ In general, hippogriffs are considered a sign of good fortune. Especially if spotted near dawn.
- ▶ It is considered bad luck to besmirch the dead. Grave digging is considered a sin and will bring 10 years bad luck.

## Birth

Not surprisingly, birth is a significant affair in P'Bapar and the birthing process contains its own set of unique rituals. When a woman enters labor she is moved into a birthing room (or partitioned area) devoid of men. Baparans consider the presence of a man during birth extremely bad luck. Clerics or priests are the exception to this rule; it is not only acceptable for them to be in room but also encouraged.

A midwife, most often a cleric of the Raiser, handles the delivery of the child. A relative usually fills this role though the wealthy frequently hire the best available. Baparans believe knots hold maleficent powers over birth and that they can prevent or delay delivery. Prior to labor, the midwife will prepare the delivery room and the location by removing all knotted ropes, strings, lines curtains and so-forth.

Mothers, grandmothers and sisters (but not sisters without children) are allowed in the delivery room to aid the midwife during the birthing process. Once the baby is born the priest (assuming one is present) immediately says a blessing and the eldest female in the room cuts the baby's umbilical cord with a small knife. If that person happens to be the maternal grandmother, extra luck is in store for the child.

The father always names a male baby, without consent from the mother. The grandmother, or eldest woman present, will name the female child. If neither is present it is acceptable for the mother to perform this task.

One week after the birth, the mother and father host a gathering for family and friends. Typically social affairs, many people come and go over a short period of time. While visiting, guests bless the baby with a small ribbon of fabric, which the mother later sews into a quilt or blanket. The child uses this blanket throughout her or his life and often these coverings become family heirlooms.

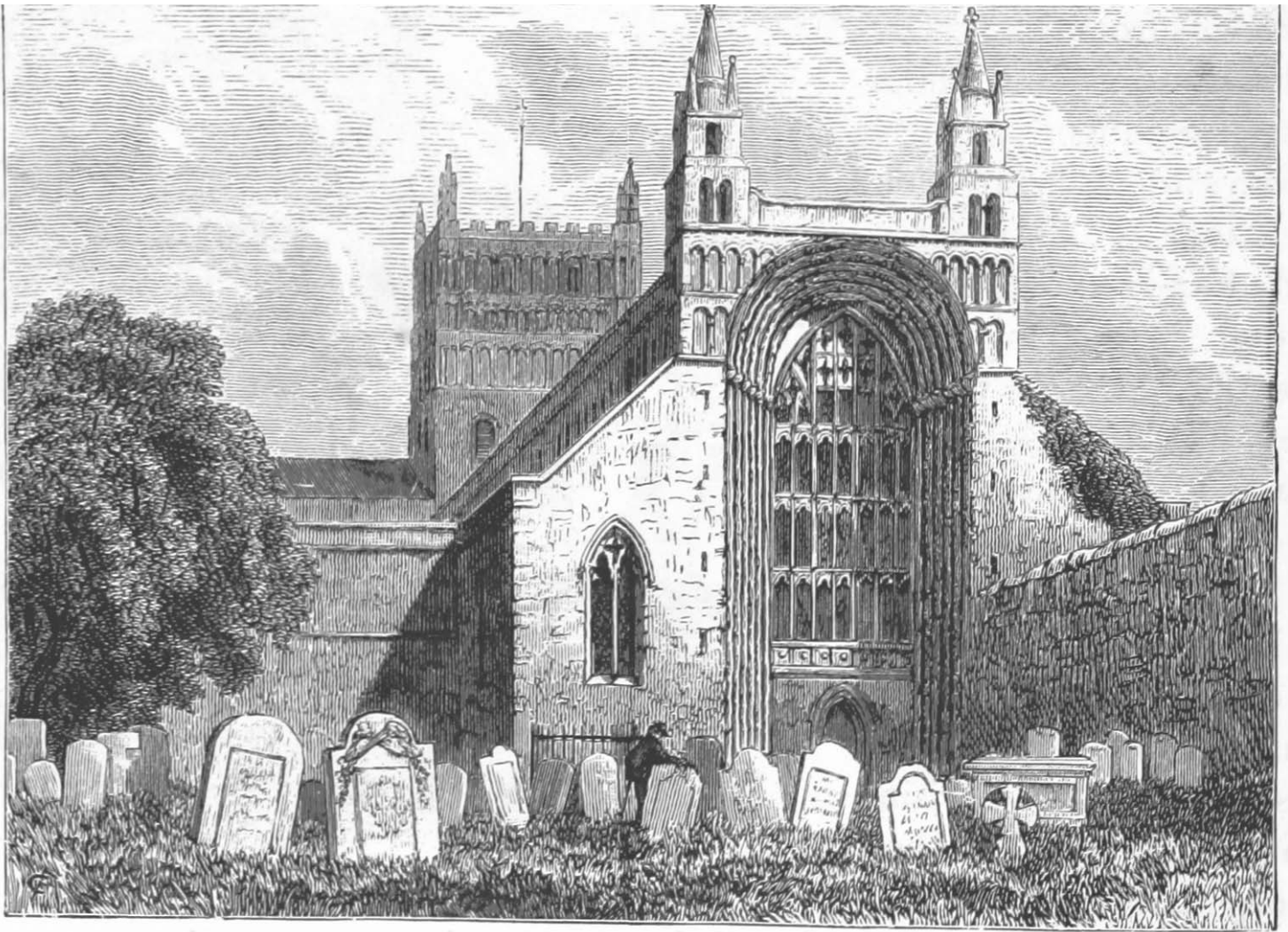
## Marriage

Marriages in P'Bapar range from small intimate gatherings to large formal celebrations. Regardless of wealth or social rank, most Baparans attempt to adhere to several traditions.

During the wedding ceremony, a close relative ties the bride's right hand and the groom's left hand together. This symbolizes their joint union and the two will remain as such until retiring for the evening. Removing the knot early is an ill omen, moreso when it occurs unintentionally. Still, most follow through with their commitments, believing the gods will punish them all the worse for neglecting their vows.

After the ceremony, the bride and groom socialize with their guests. It is considered good luck to touch the happy couple on their wedding day, so most newlyweds make an effort to speak to (and touch) all of their guests, ensuring that no one is missed. They accomplish this by shaking the hands of all of the men and hugging all of the women. In some circles (especially among noble houses) a bride or groom may go out of their way to shun and avoid an unwelcome or unpleasant guest. It is a sign of great disrespect to be treated in such a manner, and rarely does this type of slight go unnoticed.

Guests present offerings to the father and mother of the bride and groom, but not the newlyweds. These gifts are then slowly parceled out over the course of the following year, one each subsequent day since the wedding. It is



considered good luck to be so blessed that the gifts last longer than a year. Likewise, it is said to be bad luck when the presents run out earlier than expected.

## Death

The family or the individual do not dictate the burial customs, the church and the tenants of faith the deceased once followed do so. In all instances these take precedence over other traditions.

That being said, there are many old rituals that have survived the years. Upon death, Baparans are buried, or interned into a cairn or barrow. Mausoleums and crypts are common for the wealthy, while guild affiliates and members of a church are entombed in the catacombs below their respected guild houses or places of worship. Cremation is popular, especially in regions where the soil is difficult to work, and of course, among the poor.

Upon a person's death all worldly possessions (including assets and debts) pass to their spouse, sibling(s), or children. Possessions and assets are passed on to more distant relatives, friends, and colleagues through the use

of a will (blessed by a priest of the person's faith). City officials make little effort to hunt down living relatives, forcing those wishing to lay claim to seized assets to seek out city or church officials to settle the matter.

Customs on debt are entirely another matter. Family members can inherit crippling amounts of debt if their parents, or spouses, failed to care for their accounts. It is customary, and considered a token of respect, for the lender to forgive a debt passed from the deceased. This isn't always the case and some debtors flee the state in order to avoid being bound into slavery.

When a person dies they are generally buried with a weapon, even something as simple as a small knife would suffice, so that they may fight off the spirits that come for their soul in the afterlife. Forgoing this tradition is a strong mark against the deceased's honor (20%). Baparans bury their women with their faces covered so that their beauty may sustain throughout their journey into the afterlife. In general, it is a sign of disrespect to bury the dead face down. Baparan's believe that the soul of those buried face down will forever become lost deep within the mountains.

Cremation is considered an acceptable (and cheaper) manner of honoring the dead, and common to the poor. Mass graves are used during times of famine or plague, but the rocky, mountainous terrain isn't always conducive to such digging, so pyres are preferred.

After a funeral, respectful mourners offer a service, item of food, or token of goodwill to the grieving family. It is good luck (for both the giver and the family) if the relatives of the deceased accept the service or item offered. Widows don veils for one week for each year that they were married.

Widowers wear a black glove on their left hand, or ribbon of black cloth tied around their left arm. The amount of time such items are worn is solely to the discretion of the grieving widower. Some men have been known to carry a glove or cloth for years as a sign of devotion to their lost wife. Others discard them immediately.

When a child dies, the parent(s) will typically hang a wreath of evergreen branches above each of their windows and doorways into their house so that the ghost of the child may not return to haunt them after their death. These wreaths remain for one year and the removal of them is often reason for a (muted) celebration. In addition, mothers observe a vow of silence for ten days after the loss of a child.

The church and chosen religion of the deceased dictate other rituals of significance. This is especially true for devout (or anointed) followers, and especially members of the faith such as clerics. In all cases religious rituals take precedence over local customs, though temples do their best to incorporate or accommodate local traditions.

Two large cemeteries are located in the nearby hills just beyond the walls of P'Bapar. Another dozen smaller graveyards are within a day's walk. Prominent members of Baparan society are buried closer to the city, as the cost of a burial plot often exceeds what a typical citizen can afford.

Many noble families build private crypts on their land, or intern their dead in catacombs below their homes. Every temple in the city has a private catacomb where they inter members of their order and significant contributors to their faith.

Those that are not buried are burned in one of the crematoriums located inside of the city. Some of the poorer citizens have been known to dump bodies in alleyways, knowing that if they cannot be identified or claimed the city will freely dispose of them.

## Religion

Faith and worship play important roles in day-to-day living. The gods of Tellene draw their power from mortal worshippers. This results in rigorous competition to secure as many followers as possible. Clerics and priests work endlessly in this capacity, bolstering their faith with new conversions by recruiting members throughout the city.

Religion is often a contentious, yet prevalent, aspect of life for Baparan citizens. The devout choose to be anointed in their faith, following the tenants of only one chosen god. The less pious pray to multiple deities, depending on need or mood. Yet typically Baparans prefer the worship of one chosen deity over several. Baparans have a general dislike for self-proclaimed atheists. When someone openly refuses to acknowledge or appreciate the gods, Baparans look upon them with distrust.

Worshippers of every faith can be found in P'Bapar in some capacity or another. The most prolific are: the Parish of the Prolific Coin, the Founder's Creation, the Fraternal Order of Aptitude, the Home Foundation, the Courts of Justice, the Church of Chance and the House of Laughter. Temples dedicated to other deities are scattered throughout the city, as well as several shrines and cults dedicated to the darker gods of Tellene.

Clerics and priests are held in high esteem in most social circles. Some merchants and business owners offer clergy reduced rates, while others provide free meals, drinks and other privileges unavailable to the general public. Socially, it is a mark of honor for a priest to accept an invitation to a social gathering or celebration.

Evil priests, and the worship of evil deities, are not uncommon in P'Bapar. Those brazenly brandishing evil icons and preaching the dark arts might draw the attention of the authorities. Guards monitor these places, and city officials prefer their temples didn't exist, or at the least are not easily found, but their worship is not expressly forbidden.

## Religious Holidays and Festivals

Not surprisingly, holidays and festivals are the most popular days in the city. They provide a respite from daily life while also enabling priests to petition potential parishioners for donations and recruitment into the ranks.

Each religion celebrates their holy days and festivals in a unique manner. Politics play a pivotal role in approving celebrations. Any church may hold a holy day whenever it pleases them, but the impact of such an event is significantly larger when the archduke declares the day a citywide holiday.

Not every day of significance for every religion can be honored in such a manner. Approved honorariums are plucked from the most popular religions. Behind the scenes, a significant amount of political jockeying occurs as churches petition, time and time again, for inclusion of days that hold a special place within their faith.

Currently, only a small number of holy days are celebrated on an official citywide level. Individual temples honor additional holy days specific to their faith with smaller celebrations in the evenings or at other specified times.

Citizens celebrate several secular festivals as well. Like religious holidays, these disrupt businesses, interrupt trade and cause enough of a distraction to affect the day-to-day operation of the city.

Of all the holidays (both religious and secular), the most celebrated in P'Bapar are: the Midsummer Festival, the Festival of the Cat, the Festival of Fools, Harvester's Day, and Founder's Day Festival.

## **Festival of the Cat**

Celebrated on the 9th of Renewal, the Festival of the Cat is a day of particular significance for those who worship the Coddler.

The Church of the Silver Mists hosts a gathering outside of their temple in the Green Ward. This is a time of great celebration and revelers consume copious amounts of wine and food provided by the temple and their patrons.

Nearby businesses shut their doors on this day near midday, but those in other areas of the city remain open. As such the Festival of the Cat is celebrated most vigorously in the Green Ward. Other areas of the city observe the holiday, but most residents are forced to work at least half of the day.

During the festivities, which mostly include socializing, eating and drinking, Dream Weavers move among the crowds preaching the benefits of their faith. Each year, priests anoint more new followers of the Coddler on this day than in total for the remainder of the year.

Unlike other celebrations, the Festival of the Cat is a muted affair. Revelers rarely become disruptive and entertainment is limited to storytelling and scripture readings from the Tranquility. Poets are more popular than bards; but the temple only allows them to perform works that venerate the Coddler.

It is considered an act of faith to feed or care for a stray

cat on this day. Some residents go as far to adopt strays into their homes, though most merely set out a plate of food, or a bowl of milk for any felines that may wander by.

Festivities end before darkness settles in. This provides revelers ample time for an extended night of sleep (also considered an act of worship) before a time of reflection in the morning. The less pious will continue to celebrate long into the night, but the church doesn't condone such activity.

Away from prying eyes, priests of the Coddler take part in an early evening celebration that includes an excess of wine and food before retiring for the evening for a good night's sleep. In the morning church leaders gather to discuss the past year and the church's plans for the coming year. It is a time of planning, strategy and great celebration among followers of the faith. Anointed followers follow suit, reflecting on their personal lives before clearly defining a direction for the following year.

### **Adventures and Interactions:**

▶ The days prior to this festival, Dream Weavers patrol the city hoping to perform good deeds as an act of worship to their deity. Those lucky enough to encounter such an individual may be truly blessed with some divine wisdom, an act of service, a few coins or even a miracle performed for their benefit.

▶ The Fellowship of Terror does its best to disrupt the tranquility of the night during the Festival of the Cat. Priests embark on a mission to frighten and intimidate their arch-enemies, knowing that Dream Weavers retire early for a good night's sleep. In at least one instance, priests of this order captured a cleric of the Coddler and tortured the holy man into insanity. In recent years, the Dream Weavers have made a concerted effort to hire mercenaries and bodyguards whom they trust to watch over their temples and sanctuaries on this night.

## **Midsummer Festival**

Celebrated on the 28th of Replanting (the night of the summer solstice), the Midsummer Festival is the largest city sponsored celebration of the year. It is a time of great revelry. Visitors from all across the city-state make the sojourn to P'Bapar to partake in the festivities. Merchants use this holiday as an excuse to bring early season harvests to market from portions of eastern P'Bapar, where extended, and multiple, growing seasons are more commonplace.

The summer solstice is the day that the Eternal Lantern blesses Tellene with the most light and the Assembly of

Light sponsors and supports this festive occasion. It is not a day to be wasted, and priests rise early for an extended day of work and celebration.

Throughout the day, clerics of the Assembly of Light offer consultations and services free of charge to anointed followers. Those desiring to become anointed could choose no better day, and the temple is more than happy to accommodate new initiates. Spells are offered up for the general populace (with a donation commensurate to the miracle and the recipient's purse, of course), but demand is high and most clerics exhaust their allotment early in the day hoping to replenish their spells at noon and begin anew.

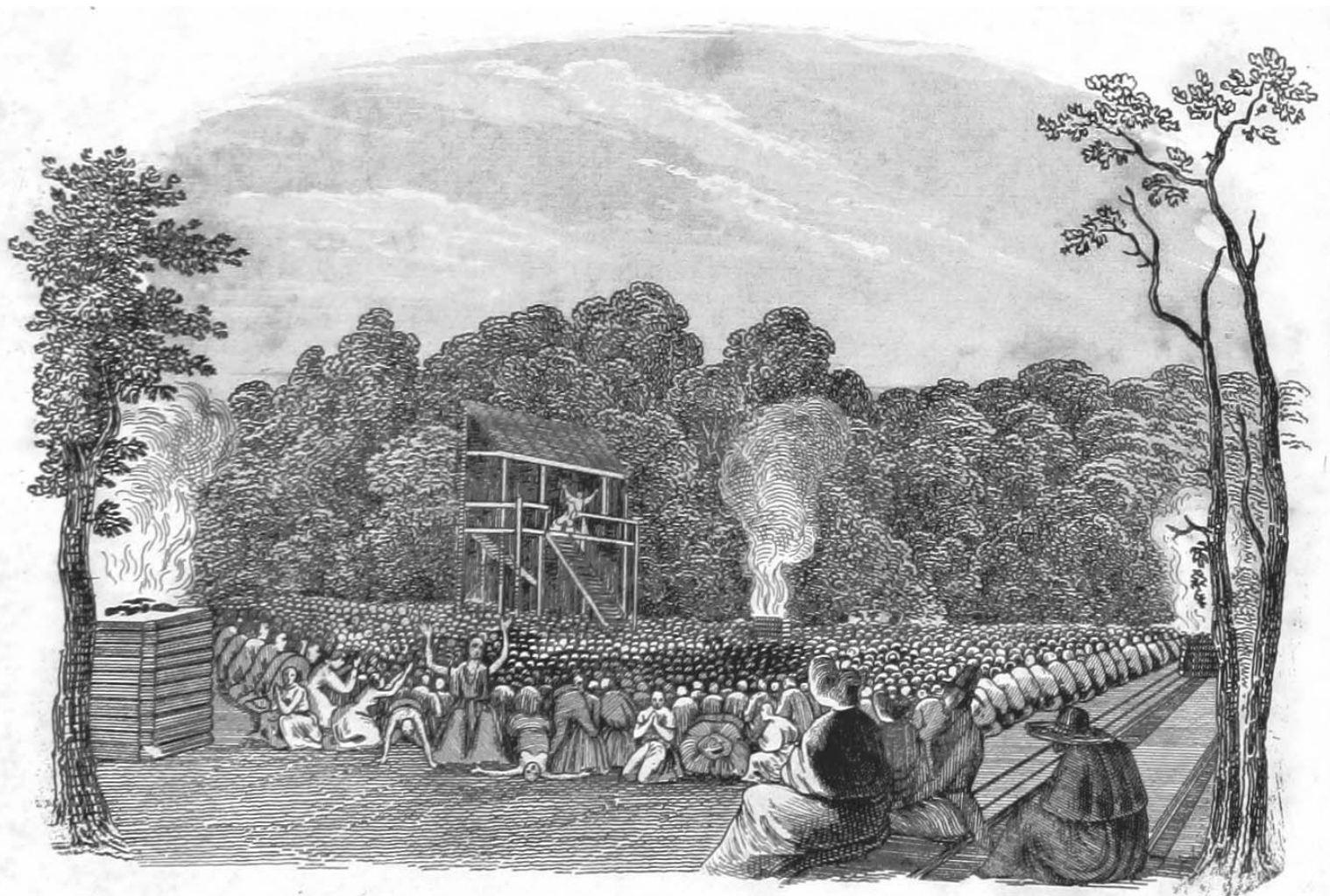
The Assembly of Light holds two special services during this day. They hold the first at dawn, reserved for clerics, priests and anointed followers. The second, open to the entirety of the city, occurs at sundown. An hour beforehand the building exceeds capacity and the congregants spill into the streets. After the evening service, priests pass through the crowd blessing attendees, accepting contributions, answering questions, and offering personal prayer to those in need.

Beginning at daybreak, revelers prepare for a feast that begins at noon and lasts through the evening. Thousands pour into the marketplaces for food, drink, shopping and to enjoy a day of revelry entertainment. For many merchants, this is the most lucrative day of the year.

The archduke hires scores of entertainers and also the Assembly of Light to perform for the masses. Non-commissioned performers work for tips throughout the city, performing on street corners and any place with a crowd.

One of the highlights of the day transpires in the afternoon at the Eldan Marketplace. Municipal workers cordon a large area for warriors to square off in the Midsummer Melee. This competition is limited to the first one hundred combatants able to pay the twenty silver piece entrance fee. Fighters draw a number and the first twenty enter the ring. As one is eliminated another is allowed entry, until a victor finally emerges.

Because of the brutality of the combat, combatants are equipped with padded armor, shield, helm and blunted iron swords. Despite these precautions, broken bones are common; death is rare, but one occurs every few years or so.



The winner of the Midsummer Melee is granted the title of “Midsummer Champion” and crowned with a wreath of holly, presented with a finely crafted sword (a broadsword +1) and 100 Silver Towers. Champions go on to enjoy a night of drinking and revelry unlike any they have ever experienced.

Towards evening bonfires are lit throughout the city in designated locations for celebrants to dance around. Ancient Baparan tradition claims that any woman who dances around seven bonfires on this evening will be married within a year. Celebrants will continue to party long into the morning before stumbling home in a drunken stupor.

Festivities officially end with the midnight chiming of the bells, but in reality they last until the ale runs dry. The following day parents are inundated by drunken or hung-over men hoping to court their daughters.

#### **Adventures and Interactions:**

▶ During the Midsummer Festival so many foreigners sojourn to the city that the gate guards stationed often try to levee fake and unnecessary fees to line their pockets. This might include an increase on the amount paid to import goods, taxes on weapons or mounts, and a fee to move to the head of the line and bypass the long wait.

Some guards are more creative than others. Shake-downs and bribes are common, but the man who propositions the wrong guard is likely to spend the festival in the stocks.

### **Festival of Fools**

Celebrated on the night of the spring solstice, the Festival of Fools is a time of revelry and the beginning of the courting season. For women this day signifies when men are socially allowed to begin courting them. For those coming of age this is a particularly important time.

As darkness falls revelers begin to turn out, all dressed in costume. Celebrants don some sort of facial decoration (theater masks being the most popular form of concealment) obscuring their features and identity. It is customary to create a persona, allowing nobles and peasants alike to assume a new identity, at least for one night a year.

The highlight of the event is the evening dancing and general carousing. Baparans celebrate until dawn, drinking, dancing, and socializing with their fellow city-dwellers. Fireworks are common on this night throughout the city, and even (more rarely) open showy displays of magic, though neither is legal.

Food is freely provided for all attending, though those refusing to dress in costume are mocked, heckled, and pelted with vegetables. Some vendors will refuse food to improperly dressed attendees.

An old custom dictates that at some point during the event each attendee should perform some sort of public act of foolishness. The goal is to earn a kiss from a stranger (typically on the cheek). As the night draws deeper and the revelers drunker, the stunts of bravery become more daring and stupid. Each acts a fool as best they can, be it by dancing in a silly manner, singing off key, or performing a foolish stunt. Those acting the biggest fools earn the most kisses.

Injuries are common and nothing is more humiliating than waking the next day with an arm in a sling, broadcasting to the city that, indeed, you were the fool who broke a bone leaping from a two-story building!

#### **Adventures and Interactions:**

▶ The Festival of Fools is one of the most lucrative times of the year for thieves and burglars. With the ability to conceal themselves, thieves wander the streets in disguise picking pockets, robbing homes, or performing other nefarious activities without much notice. Regular attendees of the festival know better than to carry a coin purse (which is often entirely unnecessary, as all of the food and drink are free).

City watchmen hate working this night as it is an active evening with many small crimes, most of which go uncaught and unpunished.

### **Harvester's Day**

Celebrated on the 28th of Harvest, Harvester's Day is a city-wide celebration of thanks for the bountiful harvest. The archduke hosts a massive city-wide feast. Decorations (including flag-banners, wreaths, streamers, ribbons and other garish accents) are hung, and food, drinks and entertainment are prepared for the day's festivities.

Revelers dance and participate in many games of chance and skill, including: bobbing for apples, knife throwing contests, pumpkin tossing, stone throwing, and various eating contests. Such matches are always playful, with entertainment (as opposed to winning) always the goal. Jugglers, tumblers, bards, musicians and other entertainers provide colorful and exciting distractions.

Friends of the Fields consider this a day of special significance, for it marks the culmination of their yearlong efforts and acts of service in bringing crops to harvest. This day is their highest of holidays and a time to not only

celebrate the harvest, but also birthdays of saints and famous followers. During the Harvest Festival they spread their merry joy throughout the crowds, blessing new births and marriages and passing on bags of seeds to prospective farmers.

### **Adventures and Interactions:**

▶ Smugglers are extremely active during Harvest Festival. The heavy influx of trade goods coming into the city makes it impossible for the guards to search every wagon, donkey and cart. As such, tax-evaders conceal smaller and more valuable (and higher taxed) items amongst less valuable trade goods. To the north of the city, a small band of smugglers routinely gathers during the days leading up to the festival. They offer payment to incoming merchants to hide the smugglers' goods with their own. Those refusing are threatened. Other times the smugglers will distract a merchant and secret their wares amid the dealer's goods without his knowledge.

▶ Harvest Festival marks the beginning of a morbid period called Blood Month. During the subsequent weeks, butchers slaughter livestock and the meat is smoked, salted, and cured for the coming winter. When the streets run red with blood (as the locals say) it attracts the attention of the Vermus living beneath the city. These foul creatures become more active during the weeks following this festival, stealing as much food as they can as they too prepare for the coming cold.

## **Founder's Day**

Celebrated on the second Pelsday of Declarations, the Founding honors the establishment and construction of the city of P'Bapar, as well as the founding of the Founder's Creation within P'Bapar.

Church elders ensured that the construction of their temple was founded on exactly the same day as the city, knowing that the dual significance would draw attention to both the city and their church.

Unfortunately, the significance of the temple founding is often lost on the ill-informed. Instead, this holy day is honored throughout the city as a time of rest and joyful distraction. In some outlying areas Founder's Day is celebrated over the course of two or three days, but within the city of P'Bapar it is a single day event.

On Founder's Day, the archduke gives a public address at a large gathering. Revelers drink, play games of chance and sport and generally are well behaved. Most of the festivities take place over the evening hours and many

citizens work half of the day prior to retiring early to celebrate.

The Temple of the Founder holds several short services in which they explain the significance of the day for both the church and the city. Donations to the temple are at an all-time high during this holiday, and priests are generally instructed to spend what free time they have preaching throughout the city.

Masons hold this day sacred and abstain from working on the days both prior and following Founder's Day. The mason's guild holds both a large public party and a private social gathering for its members. Renowned throughout the city, the mason's party is one of the most prestigious affairs to attend. Invitations are prized and often flaunted by the social elite. Every year the masons invite the archduke to their party. On the few occasions in which he attends, the archduke always gives his Founder's Day speech at this event.

Every year a celebratory digging takes place, marking the beginning of construction for a new project within the city. Competition to earn this honored right is fierce and the "official" project of choice must be approved by civic leaders.

### **Adventures and Interactions:**

▶ The civic leaders in charge of the Founder's Day digging are some of the most corrupt officials in the city. They extort a heavy price for honoring their project of choice.

## **CREDITS**

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