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**LOST KINGDOMS
OF THE INNER SEA**

LOST KINGDOMS

A Pathfinder Campaign Setting Supplement

This book works best with the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook*. Although suitable for play in any fantasy world, it is optimized for use in the Pathfinder campaign setting.



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INTRODUCTION

Dozens of kingdoms, nations, and empires rule the Inner Sea Region, from the expansionistic Qadiran satrapy to Taldor's decadent monarchy or the confederated island-states that make up the lawless Shackles. Yet these kingdoms are not the first efforts by humanity to establish civilization around the Inner Sea. Whether spoken of in the legends of desert-dwelling nomads or inscribed on the ruins of wave-lashed monoliths, the empires of yesteryear have left distinctive marks on the Inner Sea region and beyond, and influences from these ancient realms can still be found or felt in nearly every corner of modern society.

The six chapters in *Lost Kingdoms* detail some of the most noteworthy and influential civilizations that have existed in the Inner Sea region, all of which now lie in ruins or have in some way fallen from their former glory. Much like *Lost Cities of Golarion* and *Dungeons of Golarion*—both of which offer additional information usable with this book—each chapter in *Lost Kingdoms* presents an in-depth overview of an empire, including a summary of its history, what remains of it today, what kinds of creatures or dangers yet exist in its ruins, what kinds of treasures are found there, and a detailed sample site to help inspire adventures and give further flavor to the kingdom.

OTHER LOST KINGDOMS

The fallen empires presented in this book are hardly the only kingdoms that have risen and collapsed throughout history. The following entries detail some of Golarion's other lost civilizations ripe for exploration.

Azlant: The Azlanti are often attributed with building the first great human civilization on the surface of Golarion, having been gifted with superior intelligence by the mysterious ocean-dwelling aboleths. Arguably the most impressive of humanity's empires, the empire of Azlant spanned a massive island-continent in the middle of the Arcadian Ocean. When the Azlanti leaders grew prideful and began to think of themselves as superior to the aboleths who had raised them out of barbarism, the sea-dwelling aberrations punished the humans for their hubris by summoning the *Starstone* and causing Earthfall, utterly destroying Azlant and bringing about the Age of Darkness.

Koloran: In what is now called Iobaria in western Casmaron, cyclops expatriates from Ghol-Gan once made new homes in a kingdom that they called Koloran. These cyclopes didn't share the same lust for brutality that their brethren in western Garund did, but their fledgling empire was short-lived nonetheless, and destined to become the icy realm of Iobaria thousands of years later.

Shory: Masters of incredible technology that is scarcely understood today, the aeromancers of the Shory empire produced countless arcane and mechanical wonders in the millennium they commanded the skies above central Garund. Little is known of the Shory's flying cities or what exactly caused the fall of the impudent empire, but remains of its soaring settlements can be found scattered throughout the entire Mwangi Expanse as well as other corners of Golarion. The ruins





of Kho—the first and arguably most impressive of Shory's flying sky citadels—lie in the northeastern corner of the Mwangi Expanse, and are held as a mystical and sacred site by the nearby Uomoto people. More information on the crash-landed city of Kho can be found in *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Lost Cities of Golarion*.

Tar Taargadth: The kingdom of Tar Taargadth was founded in the waning years of the Age of Darkness, when the dwarven Quest for Sky slowed almost to a complete halt and the dwarven leaders were forced to unite their feuding citizens lest their cause completely fall apart. Piercing the surface of the earth from their subterranean holdings not long after founding their kingdom, the dwarves of Tar Taargadth were proud and fierce warriors who concentrated their efforts to battle orcs and their goblinoid ilk. In addition, the powerful empire's efforts were vital to the sealing away of several underground-dwelling dragons that had made their lairs in the region. The dragons lurking beneath the mountains of the region have flourished in the years since the collapse of Tar Taargadth millennia ago, and tales told of malicious primal and chromatic dragons banding together to wreak havoc on the surface world may have a tinge of truth to them.

Tekritanin League: The numerous city-states that made up the Tekritanin League between Jistka and Osirion were never as organized or unified as their neighboring nations, but the nomadic Tekritani proved a notable political force in the early part of the Age of Destiny, serving as a neutral territory and melting pot for the disparate cultures of northern Garund. Known mostly for their role as Ancient Osirion's vassal nation before being absorbed into the pharaonic kingdom, the people of Tekritan were also famous for their uncanny ability to ally themselves with the bestial denizens of the sands, including desert-dwelling basilisks, behirs, and death worms.

TIMELINE

The following timeline serves as an aid organizing the information and dates presented throughout *Lost Kingdoms*.

Date	Event
–6530	Xin and his followers arrive in Avistan to found the empire of Thassilon.
–6420	After ruling for 110 years, Xin grows too old to maintain his expansive empire. He destroys himself and a would-be assassin in a burst of magical energy, splitting up the <i>Sihedron</i> and initiating Thassilon's transition to rulership under the runelords.
–5293	Earthfall. Azlant and Thassilon are destroyed. Much of the southwestern portion of Thassilon sinks into the sea, including the city of Xin.

–4160	Arustun and his brother Ejanos discover a small cache of Azlanti treasures in the Cave of Tiandra.
–4120	Arustun returns home to found Jistka after voyaging around the Inner Sea and the planes beyond.
–3500	The Jistka Imperium reaches the height of its power.
–3470	Azghaad unites the tribes of eastern Garund, founding Osirion.
–3429	Construction of the Hanging City of Teskra in the Jistka Imperium is completed.
–3428	Inperantike Rakiendos perishes of mysterious circumstances during a party to celebrate his 12th year as ruler of Jistka.
–3388	The Hanging City of Teskra is abandoned by Jistka when its citizens apparently leave the city in a voluntary exodus, never to be seen again.
–3064	The necromantic advisors of the Pharaoh of Forgotten Plagues—the Usij—capture an efreeti commander from Jistka and turn him into a ghul that carries the dooming Night Plague into Jistka and leads to the imperium's ultimate downfall.
–3000	Osirion reaches the height of its First Age under the reign of the Song Pharaoh.
–2999	The Song Pharaoh is killed and usurped by Jetrieti I.
–2764	The Jistka Imperium collapses in a prolonged series of succession wars.
–2385	An-Hepsu VII and his legions of genie servants finish constructing the city of Ipeq.
–1498	The Four Pharaohs of Ascension join forces to rule Osirion, initiating that empire's Second Age.
–1431	The power of the Four Pharaohs breaks and Osirion once again slips into decline.
1532	Qadiran operatives topple the decadent Pharaoh Menedes XXVI, establishing the first in a long line of foreign rulers over Osirion.
2557	The philosopher-astronomer Saoc and his followers flee the religious persecution of Rahadom to found Lirgen in the south.
3257	Rebel farmers break away from Lirgen to found Yamasa in the swamps to the south.
4606	The Eye of Abendego wipes out most of Lirgen and Yamasa within weeks; most of the surviving inhabitants flee inland, but the Koboto refuse to leave and disappear into the swampy wastes. In Lirgen the leaders evacuate their people, then search for a means to abate the storm. The Worldwound opens up in Sarkoris and devastates the region.
4609	Osirian loyalists overthrow their Keleshite masters and instate Prince Khemet I as pharaoh, initiating the empire's Third Age.
4615	The astrological philosophers of Lirgen take their own lives in a mass suicide after evacuating their land and making a discovery that shatters their most cherished beliefs as well as their sanity.





ABENDEGO GULF

SOME WERE NERVOUS. SOME WERE FRIGHTENED. SOME FELT GUILTY FOR WHAT WE HAD BUILT, AND OTHERS WRAPPED THEMSELVES IN THEIR ARROGANCE AND FOUGHT BACK AGAINST WHAT WE MUST DO. WE FAILED OUR PEOPLE, AND NOW THEY ARE DEAD AND SCATTERED. WE SOUGHT TO PROTECT THE NEW PARADIGM AND GRAND DIVINATIONS, BUT NOW THE FATES ARE INCOHERENT, INACCURATE, AS IF REALITY ITSELF HAS TWISTED. WITH OUR TALENT, TRADITION, AND ARTS USELESS, WHAT ARE WE TO DO? EVEN THE STARS LOOK DIFFERENT—BLINDING, FALTERING. WITH WHAT LITTLE WE HAVE LEFT, WHAT ARE WE TO DO?

—FROM THE JOURNAL OF HIGH SEER TRESORA VILDERANA,
SAOC BRETHERN, 4615 AR



Two nations once occupied the region now known as the Sodden Lands. The strongest were the Lirgeni, descendants and exiles from Rahadom who sought religious freedom in the lands to the south, though nearly as powerful were the Yamasans, whose vast swaths of rich farmland and expert trade tactics ensured they remained a dominant supplier of food and other goods to the surrounding regions. The death of a god and the subsequent widespread cataclysms that shook the world led to the destruction of these once-great nations, killing nearly all who once dwelled there and scattering across Avistan and Garund any survivors who remained. Of course, some managed to stay and carve out a meager subsistence amid the wind-blistered, post-apocalyptic wasteland, but now these scavengers and degenerate tribespeople must fight for every scrap they can get.

HISTORY OF THE ABENDEGO GULF

The histories of Lirgen and Yamasa are intimately intertwined. In 2555 AR, the region that became known as Rahadom first set into motion the Laws of Man, scriptures that outlawed all worship of the divinities and were aimed at putting an end to the devastating Oath Wars that ravaged those lands. However, not all of Rahadom's citizens agreed with these strictures, and one of the most outspoken opponents of these laws was an astronomer-philosopher by the name of Saoc.

Saoc was not necessarily devout, but he did believe the gods had a role to play in all civilizations. In 2557 AR, he and a small band of loyal followers made their way through the Napsune Mountains and the city of Haldun and into the vast, unexplored tropics to the south. Once there, they were free to worship their own gods; they constructed a capital, calling it Hyrantam, and the small nation of Lirgen quickly began to thrive in the rich pocket of civilization they had claimed as their own.

After this first expeditionary group established themselves, more and more followers from the north joined the Lirgeni in their blossoming cities along the Gulf of Abendego, escaping the increasingly restrictive nation of Rahadom over the course of centuries. These expatriates turned away from the Laws of Man, instead adopting Saoc's so-called New Paradigm. This simplistic set of laws started out as a decree that stated all citizens of Lirgen were free to worship as they saw fit, as long as such worship benefited the common good and greater success of Lirgen. As more people emigrated from Rahadom, however, they brought with them their own ideals, including the practices of philosophy and studies of the sciences, and these principles were quickly assimilated into Lirgeni culture and its peoples' own ideologies. By 2800 AR, Lirgen was a completely autonomous nation, and Saoc's dream lived on in the form of philosophically

inclined governors and astrologically minded overseers who called themselves the Saoc Brethren.

Thanks to Lirgen's proximity to the science-oriented nation of Rahadom and the relatively peaceful relations it was able to maintain with that realm, the Lirgeni benefited greatly from trade with the secular Rahadomi. Exchanging knowledge as well as goods, the Saoc Brethren were able to acquire and manufacture magnificent refractor telescopes, lenses, and astrolabes, as well as countless other devices to better view the stars and planets above, aiding in the divinations and fortune-telling that ran their lives. Some of the more audacious members of the Saoc Brethren even sought technology and magic to create gates and portals to leap from world to world.

Called the Land of Fortune in its prime, Lirgen grew in affluence not only due to its mastery of prognostication and wealth of available resources, but also from the hard work of the farmers and herders who worked in the southern marshes and fields and provided the Lirgeni with most of their food. This large underclass—known in the early times of Lirgen as the Swamp Walkers—was rarely afforded the privileges and rights granted to the Saoc Brethren and the middle class, and thus members of the underclass remained mostly alienated from their stargazing kin. Their proximity to the Mwangi Expanse allowed many of these laborers to intermingle with Mwangi tribespeople of all walks of life, and some of the so-called Swamp Walkers even adopted the more controversial practices of particularly violent natives, such as cannibalism and necromancy. Most such practitioners were firmly quashed almost as soon as they made themselves known, but among these disconnected and disgruntled people, a darker way of life always seemed to loom just over the horizon.

As the centuries wore on, the people of southern Lirgen quickly grew so jaded at their mistreatment that they could take it no more. In 3257 AR, on the seven-hundredth anniversary of Lirgen's founding, the members of the laboring underclass celebrated the occasion by throwing down their tools and picking up arms, leading a march straight into the capital of Hyrantam. The ensuing civil war (referred to in later years as the Yamasan Uprising) lasted less than a year, with the Saoc Brethren spending most of their time during the conflict consulting the stars above for advice. By the end of the feud, the rebels had won their freedom, and seceded from Lirgen to establish their own nation-state south of the Frogmarch River, calling the newly liberated swamplands Yamasa.

Though Lirgen and Yamasa were now independently operated, they still greatly relied on one another to ensure their continued prosperity—Lirgen needed the large quantities of rice and other foods Yamasa produced, and the Yamasans in turn desired the lumber, stone, and other valuable resources so prevalent in Lirgen's



uninhabited wild regions. The two nations managed to peacefully cohabitate in this way for centuries afterward, seeing relatively little strife, as they were both content in their own ways.

Lirgen remained a small nation with little interest in militaristic or expansionist ideals. Trade with Yamasa and other nearby regions generated considerable wealth, and the nation supported dozens of wealthy merchant houses. The Saoc Brethren—using the counsel provided them by the stars—advised these merchants on the most favorable times to send out fleets, the most profitable markets to sell certain commodities at, and the best prices to ask from their far-flung buyers. Horoscopes determined a person's status in life, even as early as childhood. The readings determined access to greater education and apprenticeships, often more so than actual examinations and previous experience. This cultural tradition led parents to carefully consider the best dates to conceive. In later times, these most auspicious days of conception blossomed into holidays devoted to bettering their progeny. Many children bore names that designated what day they were born on and some months saw absolutely no births. The celestial bodies above guided every aspect of Lirgeni life.

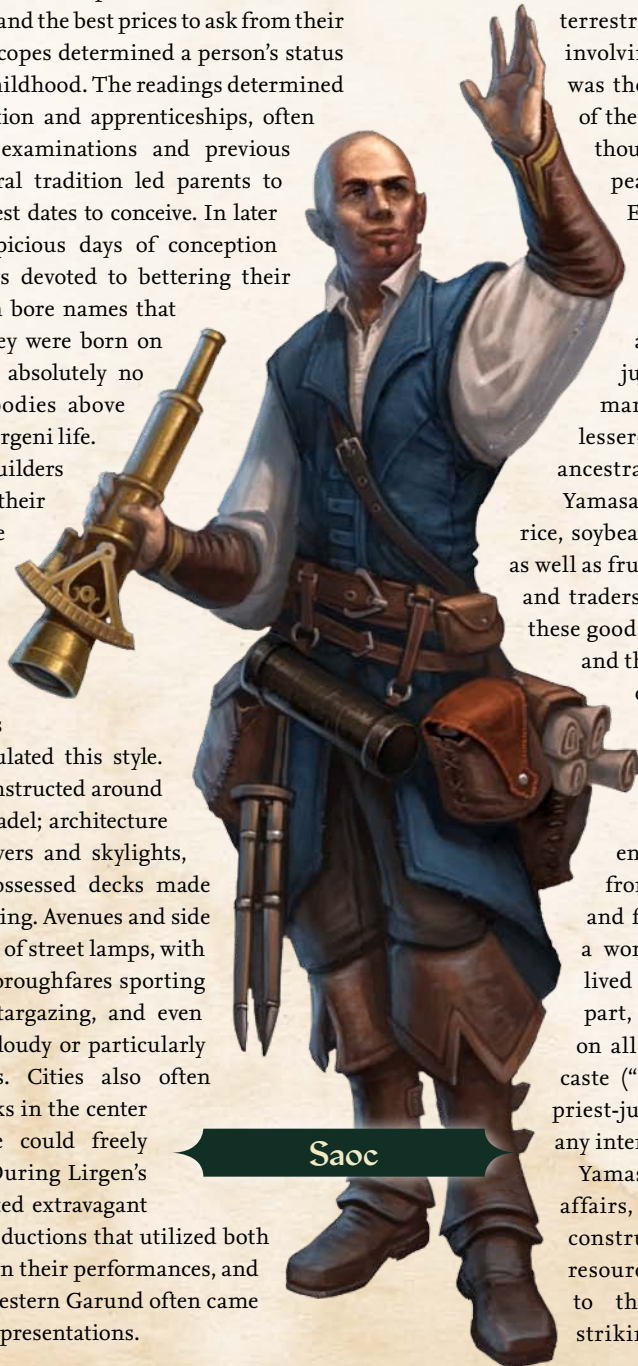
The founders and builders of Lirgen constructed their capital city in accordance with the constellations, laying out streets and important structures in a complex pattern that aligned with the stars, and other settlements in the region soon emulated this style. Towns were typically constructed around a central observation citadel; architecture featured impressive towers and skylights, and most buildings possessed decks made specifically for star viewing. Avenues and side roads had a distinct lack of street lamps, with only the most major thoroughfares sporting such obstructions to stargazing, and even these were lit only on cloudy or particularly dark, moonless nights. Cities also often featured large open parks in the center of town where people could freely observe the night sky. During Lirgen's height, these parks hosted extravagant plays and orchestral productions that utilized both the stars and the moon in their performances, and travelers from all over western Garund often came to see such magnificent presentations.

In their studies of the sky and planets beyond Golarion, the Saoc Brethren found the mathematics and symbolism of the triangle to be of significant import in astronomical matters as well as in studies of philosophy. Because of this, triangles marked much of Lirgeni design, from architecture to clothing patterns, and even their coinage was designed with three equal sides.

Whereas the people of Lirgen continued to focus their attention on the stars above in the years following the Yamasan Uprising, their neighbors to the south instead concentrated their efforts on more tangible, terrestrial matters, particularly those involving farming and trade. Agriculture was the primary trade for Yamasa; much of their exports flowed north to Lirgen, though sizable portions went to peaceful tribes of the nearby Mwangi Expanse and in later years to the regions that became known as the Shackles and Sargava. From these disparate peoples, the Yamasans adopted the practices of animism, juju, and spiritual awareness, and many Yamasans practiced worship of lesser-known spirits such as wendo or ancestral guardians.

Yamasan farmers cultivated corn, cotton, rice, soybeans, tubers, and other staple crops as well as fruits and rare spices. The merchants and traders of Yamasa controlled the sale of these goods through their ports on the shore and their expertly designed trade routes on land. The ruling Koboto caste oversaw most of the trading arrangements, and frequently held diplomatic meetings with the Saoc Brethren of Lirgen to ensure that both nations profited from any joint efforts. The laborers and farmers of Yamasa—who made up a working caste called the Duboku—lived peaceful, happy lives for the most part, and their efforts were protected on all sides by the disciplined military caste (“Ebony”), as well as the orderly priest-judges (“Umani”) who arbitrated any internal conflicts.

Yamasa's cities were simple, sprawling affairs, with most of the buildings constructed of stone, lumber, and other resources traded from Lirgen. In contrast to the vertically oriented, visually striking Lirgeni architecture found to



Saoc



the north, Yamasa builders concentrated on utility over aesthetics, and they devised numerous new technologies to help them deal with their wetland environment, most notably vast and efficient drainage ditches, aqueducts, and complex systems of interconnected cisterns and reservoirs. The people of Yamasa lived in spread-out communities centered near large farms and plantations, often linking their homes by bamboo suspension bridges so foot traffic didn't impact croplands. These interwoven plantation huts sometimes grew as large as castles or villages, housing thousands at a time.

When Aroden died in 4606 AR and the Eye of Abendego formed in the waters to the west of Lirgen and Yamasa, neither nation was prepared for the cataclysm that ensued. The wisest among the Saoc Brethren knew something terrible was coming, but the stars they had come to rely on were elusive in their answers, and all were completely unprepared for the nations' obliteration. Nearly half of Lirgen sank beneath the Arcadian Ocean in a matter of weeks following the disaster; the rest swiftly flooded or was simply blown to pieces by the hurricane winds. Many of the Saoc Brethren remained behind to consult the stars and attempt to understand the catastrophe, but most could hardly comprehend the astrological signs, and those who did suffered irreparable damage to their sanity, with a huge majority of the group partaking in a ritual suicide in 4615 AR. Yamasa was likewise devastated, with over 90% of its population perishing either in the immediate aftermath of the Eye or in subsequent weeks from disease and starvation. Almost all of the few survivors left alive fled the region altogether, but some of those with repressed, darker ideals stayed behind to revel in their newfound freedom to worship their evil gods and practice their vile arts.

THE ABENDEGO GULF TODAY

Over a century after their annihilation, the lands once known as Lirgen and Yamasa bear little resemblance to the empires they once were. The thriving jungle cities of Lirgen were reduced to rubble and half-sunken wastelands, while the fecund marshes of Yamasa eroded into swampy mires and disease-ridden bogs.

Lirgen and Yamasa were both successful countries in their own right, but those who escaped the cataclysm were lucky to make it out with just their lives, so much of the nations' collective wealth lies abandoned in the ruins of what is now the Sodden Lands and the significantly broadened Abendego Gulf. Hardy scavengers and fearless raiders now occupy most of the realm, trudging through the flooded chambers of abandoned temples and observatories in the hope of scrounging up any remaining relics. Few, if any, Lirgeni remain behind, having given up all hope of salvaging their destroyed

kingdom and instead migrated to other nations around the Inner Sea, and the remaining Koboto of old Yamasa long ago cast off the ways of civilization in favor of more depraved and barbaric systems of government, seeing little reason to cling to kindlier ideals in a world so clearly opposed to their very existence.

Few sailors dare journey to these shattered regions, this wasteland of desperation so close to the Eye of Abendego, unless they seek to plunder the old kingdoms' remains. Here in these truly savage lands, solid ground is a commodity almost as valuable as gold, and few even attempt to establish themselves in the meager cities that dot its coast. Numerous tribes and gangs of scavengers fight endlessly over every pitiful scrap available, warring primarily for food, water, and land. To travel from region to region, most such swamp-dwellers use small, wide-bottomed boats that sit high in the water; horses are rare, and some gangs—such as the nefarious Crocodile Raiders—instead use aggressive, trained reptiles as mounts to travel through the muck.

The gangs of scavengers, the tribes of the Koboto, and the scattered boggard and lizardfolk settlements are the only semblances of civilization in the lands once ruled by Lirgen and Yamasa. The scattered peoples fight ruthlessly to survive, and their abject poverty brings to surface violent and selfish tactics. If the Eye of Abendego were to dissipate, perhaps these lands might see their old empires brought back and peace restored. For now, however, the apocalyptic sprawl is only for the strong and the desperate.

The Dim Gate (CR 9): Though few can accurately claim to have descended from the Saoc Brethren, one of their number yet lives in the old lands of what was once Lirgen. Before Aroden died and the Eye of Abendego emerged, a high-ranking seer by the name of Meyi Panaho discovered a strange shrine to the stars in the Napsune Mountains, and while studying the relic came into contact with an otherworldly being who warned her of Golarion's impending doom. The mysterious being also told her how to obtain eternal life through lichdom, in return asking only that she construct an interplanetary gate at the shrine so her new master-entity might come to Golarion from beyond the stars. Over a hundred years later, Meyi has remained faithful to the mysterious being's wishes, and is dangerously close to completing the space-bending device she has dubbed the Dim Gate. See pages 12–13 for more information on the Dim Gate.

Haldun: Although not technically a part of old Lirgen, the Rahadoumi city of Haldun was still greatly affected by the emergence of the Eye and the subsequent destruction of that empire. Haldun hardly resembles the trade haven it once was, and is instead occupied by a small collective of scouts and seers who guard the nation



of Rahadoum from any monsters or cultists who would seek to infiltrate the Kingdom of Man—they maintain the Rainwall, a sprawling network of magical wards and sentries intended to give the Rahadoumi advanced notice should the curse of the Eye of Abendego attempt to move northward. Explorers visiting the ruins of Lirgen by land typically pass through the Haldun on their journey south, and the guardians who maintain the Rainwall grimly wave such vagabonds off, taking them for heathens who will find only the same doom that the god-worshipping Lirgeni did.

Hyrantam (CR 12): The former capital of Lirgen, Hyrantam now sits half-submerged in the flooded wasteland that remains, with only the leaning tops of the cities' hundreds of observation towers peaking out of the churning muck. Those few Lirgeni who stayed behind strung up catwalks and makeshift bridges between these isolated tower-islands, and convoluted webs of ropes and pulleys transport people and parcels throughout the barely surviving city while houseboats and floating boardwalks bob in the waters below. No laws dictate life in Hyrantam these days, but the largest tower jutting above the waters is home to a mysterious Mwangi sorcerer

known only as the Star Savior, and those still living in Hyrantam say he keeps a modicum of peace in the ruined city. Recently, a tribe of skum from the windswept waters of the Arcadian Ocean have successfully scraped together a small holding in some of the underwater ruins of the city, turning the once beautifully sculpted stargazing parks into aquatic battlegrounds. Inside flooded buildings with suitable pockets of air, the skum have constructed cages to pen humanoid breeding slaves, whom they impregnate to perpetuate their species. It is rumored the skum have only managed to avoid the wrath of the Star Savior because of their allegiance to a crafty and malevolent rusalka by the name of **Sarsene** (NE rusalka rogue 3), with whom the Star Savior is said to have fallen in love.

Kokutang (CR 7): Having lost all connection to their simple ways of old, the Koboto—the last of the Yamasans—reverted to foul practices of cannibalism and the worship of vile gods. These degenerate peoples meet seasonally in the ruined Yamasan capital of Kokutang to discuss the state of their tribes as well as to make sacrifices to their horrid patrons. The once-impressive city sports only the remains of a small, wind-battered village on the surface,



as the majority of the capital's buildings were buried underground when the Eye struck the coastline, and now lie in ruins in half-flooded tunnels and subterranean caverns. In order to reach these forgotten catacombs, the Koboto descend the crumbling Forever Staircase from the surface's Grand Hut, and use commandeered *goz masks* (see *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: The Inner Sea World Guide* 298) or magic granted by their dark deities to make it through the miles of winding, water-filled chambers belowground. Their ultimate destination is the Dome of Feasts, a massive, hemispherical chamber kept from collapsing only by water-soaked beams, slowly crumbling limestone pillars, and the sheer will of its congregation. In this vast hall, the leaders of the Koboto sacrifice captured victims to their dark deities on a huge slab of orbicular granite, collectively using stones and other blunt objects to brutally disable and maim the unfortunates before cannibalizing the barely living sufferer.

Oagon (CR 13): Despite the opulence of Hyrantam, Oagon was the hub of trade in Lirgen. While its skyline didn't feature striking towers, the merchant houses of Oagon were famous for building perfectly sculpted parks and architectural works of art. Now, the city of Oagon lies completely submerged beneath the waters flowing out the mouth of the Black Flow. Those intrepid explorers who use diving bells report that odd, multicolored lights burn along its sunken streets, fluorescent orbs of a magical nature. A menagerie the size of a small town once filled the city's central park, but the exotic creatures that once dwelled within are now long dead, and have since been replaced with evil *siyokoys* who stalk the flooded city. Countless riches lie hidden in Oagon for those daring enough to explore it, as the most successful merchant company in Lirgen—the Hundred Halberd Consortium—once traded magic items and other valuable treasures from this city, and its goods now simply lie abandoned in the dark crevices of the underwater metropolis.

Steel Maridoth (CR 5): As the waters rose during the emergence of the Eye, the storm pushed hundreds of ships and detritus from the coast ashore, creating small ship graveyards made up of ruined rigs piled up against seaside rocks and beaches. One such ship-strewn beach has been commandeered by members of the infamous Possum Gang, who have named their base Steel Maridoth because of the large number of ironclad vessels that mysteriously make up the spot.

Wetan (CR 8): Just off the coast and beneath the crashing waves of the Abendego Gulf, a group of locathahs discovered the ruined Lirgeni city of Wetan and claimed it as their own. Sequestered in their battered shelter and concealed by magic, the aquatic dwellers began toying with the magical devices found within, and soon

discovered a series of stamped copper plates with symbols etched on them. Deciphering the code, the locathah mystics opened an ancient planetary gate within the site—little did they know, however, that such meddling would be their undoing, as whatever foul energies were on the other side of the gate irreparably corrupted the normally peaceable locathahs, giving them fiendish, otherworldly qualities. The locathahs who opened the gate continue to lair in Wetan in savage packs, and none can say what dread influence the still-open gate has on other creatures in the region.

DEPIZENS AND DANGERS

Untold thousands perished as the Eye formed over the Abendego Gulf, and most of those who survived fled the cursed land, never to return. Some yet remain, however, who have held their own against the catastrophe and adapted to the flooded remains of what was once a pair of great empires, and yet more who have come to the ruined lands to seek their fortunes. Roving bands of Sodden Scavengers raid ruined settlements for resources and clash with the ever-growing number of boggard tribes, and the Koboto cannibals of the swamps of former Yamasa pose a threat to anyone venturing into the southern Sodden Lands.

A number of dangerous reptiles make their homes in this flooded land. A breed of aggressive monitor lizards known as Lirgen dragons stalk the marshy lands, and oversized shocker lizards can be found in swamps that see few humanoid visitors. Flocks of yellow-tailed dimorphodons native to the region soar through the air farther inland, and tylosauruses hunt the storm-wracked swells and coasts.

Though Lirgen and Yamasa were hardly havens to giants in their prime, the waterlogged remains of these empires are now home to numerous tribes of marsh giants, who worship their demon lord patron Dagon and view the Eye of Abendego as a manifestation of his will.

In the early days of Lirgeni civilization, a number of strange constructs fell from the sky, mechanical beings thought to have come from another world. Such monsters were said to wield cannons that shot destructive beams of fire and possess the power to turn invisible. Though surviving reports claim the malevolent constructs were all destroyed in confrontations with Lirgeni soldier-seers, parts of these automatons can still be found scattered across the nations of the Inner Sea, and some say that one of the otherworldly constructs survived and still stalks the swamps and plains of old Lirgen.

Sodden Scavengers, Koboto cannibals, and tribes of boggards now make up the majority of the lands that once were Lirgen and Yamasa. The following are some of the best-known members of such groups.



Sodden Scavengers

The disparate groups of plunderers referred to as “Sodden Scavengers” were once a unified team of Norgorber-worshipping self-seekers who had hoped to plunder the riches from the collapsed empires of Lirgen and Yamasa after their demise. As time wore on, however, these raiders fractured and divided, and today there exist nearly two dozen small gangs of looters, with alliances constantly forming and breaking between groups. Below are listed a sample of some of the more powerful gangs dotting the survivable landscape of the once-powerful Lirgen and Yamasa.

The Crocodile Raiders: The scavengers who call themselves the Crocodile Raiders wear crocodile-hide armor adorned with crocodile teeth and the finger bones of their humanoid victims. They train enormous and aggressive lizards as mounts and animal companions, and lair in the debris-filled waters on the coast of the Black Flow River, making frequent trips to the ruins of Oagon in search of ancient riches.

The Eyes of Night: Led by a powerful necromancer named **Gastala Hartblood** (LE female human necromancer 7), this vile gang employs shuffling undead as foot soldiers and enforcers. Druidic scouts train vultures as spies; these circle high overhead and report back on the movements of other gangs and settlers. As an intimidation technique or perhaps a true divination, some of the sorcerers and oracles of the Eyes of Night perform a monthly ceremony during the new moon in which they eat the eyes of their enemies in order to see the future.

The Knights of Abendego: Easily the most powerful group of Sodden Scavengers, the Knights of Abendego make their lair in the ruined city of Jula, which was once a Yamasan settlement before the fall of that fledgling empire. The Knights have proved a thorn in the side of those peoples trying to eke out a living in Jula, as they frequently raid or exploit these citizens for their own gain. Led by Ajbai Kimon, an ambitious young scavenger claiming to have descended from Lirgeni blood, the Knights spend much of their time gobbling up territory held by weaker, less-organized gangs.

The Possum Gang: This gang’s members are plagued by a strange disease, and are thus shunned unanimously by all other Sodden Scavengers, who only interact with the sickly pillagers when they wish to purchase their potent drugs, curatives, poisons, and other brewed goods. No one in the Possum Gang lives much beyond the first few years of adulthood, and despite constant work on new healing salves and concoctions, a breakthrough eludes them.



Ajbai Kimon

AJBAL KIMON CR 9

XP 6,400

Male human ranger 3/rogue (survivalist) 7

(*Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Combat* 73)

LE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +3; Senses Perception +13

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 14, flat-footed 16 (+6 armor, +3 Dex, +1 dodge)

hp 64 (10 HD; 3d10+7d8+17)

Fort +6, Ref +11, Will +5

Defensive Abilities evasion, uncanny dodge

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 trident +9/+4 (1d8+3)

or short sword +8 (1d6+1/19–20)



Ranged mwk light crossbow +12 (1d8/19–20)
Special Attacks favored enemy (humans +2), sneak attack +4d6
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 7th; concentration +8)
 1/day—*endure elements*

STATISTICS

Str 14, **Dex** 16, **Con** 12, **Int** 13, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 13
Base Atk +8; **CMB** +11; **CMD** 24
Feats Agile Maneuvers, Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Endurance, Improved Feint, Iron Will, Two-Weapon Fighting
Skills Bluff +14, Disguise +14, Escape Artist +16, Intimidate +14, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +10, Knowledge (geography) +8, Knowledge (nature) +8, Perception +13, Stealth +16, Survival +13, Swim +15
Languages Common, Polyglot
SQ favored terrain (swamp +2), hardy*, rogue talents (fast stealth, resiliency, surprise attack), track +1, wild empathy +4
Combat Gear *potions of cure moderate wounds* (2), *potion of invisibility*; **Other Gear** +1 *mithral scale mail*, +1 *trident*, masterwork light crossbow with 20 bolts, short sword, *belt of mighty constitution* +2
 * See *Ultimate Combat*.

The Koboto Tribes

The Koboto were once the ruling caste of the Yamasan people, but when the Eye wiped out that civilization, its leaders reverted to primitive ways and violent gods, having lost faith in the ancestral and nature spirits they once worshiped. Despite being split into dozens of different tribes, the Koboto all worship Urgathoa, Rovagug, and the demon lord Zura, whom they refer to as the *Sar-gorog* (“the Three Feasters”) and believe are intimately connected to the formation of the Eye of Abendego. The Koboto gather seasonally in Yamasa’s old capital of Kokutang to celebrate their foul gods through ritualistic cannibalism and orgiastic bloodbaths. Below is just a sample of the tribes that survive in former Yamasa.

The Blood Wardens: Allied with a small group of Mwangi nosferatu vampires dwelling in the jungles to the east, the Blood Wardens are led by a masked warrior-priest who goes by the name of **Yzogro** (NE male human cleric of Zura 7). The cannibals of this tribe swarm their victims in quick frontal assaults, and after a successful raid they are said to bathe in large wooden vats filled with the blood of their victims.

The Death Stalkers: Strongly allied to the Urgathoan branch of the Three Feasters cult, this tribe has legions of skeletons representing all manner of creatures as its primary fighting force, and its most powerful necromancers raise undead guardians from the corpses of powerful monsters such as froghemoths and marsh giants.

The Storm Merchants: This large tribe rules the coasts between Jula and Kokutang, always looking westward to the Eye of Abendego. They have a tenuous treaty with the boggards who call themselves the Knights of the Tempest

Mistress, but any plans to organize against common enemies always fall to arguments and betrayal, and often, bloodshed.

Boggard Tribes

Since the formation of the Eye, boggards have thrived in the southern and central Sodden Lands. In the immediate years following the emergence of the Eye, the boggards of these lands threw off their fealty to Gogunta and instead began to venerate Rovagug. The constant bickering between tribes ensures that most boggards stay preoccupied with their own internal conflicts, though they of course still pose a serious threat to the scattered humanoid settlements of the region.

Knights of the Tempest Mistress: Emulating human society in a vulgar manner, half a dozen orders of boggard fighters make up this tribe. They swear fealty to a creature they call the Tempest Mistress—a hezrou who found herself mysteriously stranded on the Material Plane following the emergence of the Eye.

The Shark-Tooth Scavengers: Composed mainly of slave-takers and poisoners, this tribe deals with a small army of sahuagin stationed off the coast just north of the Eye of Abendego. The boggards trade human slaves as food to a nearby tribe of sahuagin in return for scavenged remains of old Lirgen and a particularly deadly type of sea urchin the Shark-Tooth Scavengers use to make their deadly poisons.

Those That Have: The massive boggard tribe called only Those That Have is ruled by a corpulent, albino priest-king. They currently inhabit the fortress of Fangspire, making them the rulers of all the boggard tribes. The demon-tainted **Priest-King Gilgantrook** (CE male half-fiend boggard priest-king oracle 6) demands richer and richer tributes every month, and some say if he doesn’t make a forceful move against some of his enemies soon, Those That Have may not be able to hold Fangspire for another season.

TREASURES AND REWARDS

The most easily accessible ruins of Lirgen and Yamasa have been scoured over countless times by entrepreneurial scavengers and treasure hunters, but there yet remain untold riches in the darker depths of some of these ancient sites. Lirgeni astronomers built numerous observatories in the Napsune Mountains, using powerful magic and mysterious technology to study the stars above. Farther south, the Yamasans were known to mine valuable ores and minerals from the nearby hills, crafting the metals and gems into beautiful and durable pieces of jewelry that now inevitably reside in buried cities or flooded temples.

Though they were, for the most part, pragmatic in the design and function of their astronomical devices, the Lirgeni still possessed a sense of artistry in their work, and often ornamented their sextants, telescopes, and compasses with decorations that reflected the purpose of





the equipment as well as the current artistic trends at the time. Suns, moons, and other celestial bodies were either etched into a tool's gold or silver plating, or were cut from fire opals and pink tourmalines and set into particularly showy astronomical tools.

Led by the passing of celestial bodies through the dark canopy of the night sky, the people of Lirgen developed a number of spells and devices to aid their stargazing and divinations. The following spell and magic item are examples of Lirgeni creations.

EMBRACE DESTINY

School divination; **Level** oracle 1, sorcerer/wizard 2, witch 2
Casting Time 1 standard action
Components V, S
Range personal
Target you
Duration 1 round/level (see text)
 Upon completing this spell, roll a single d20 and record the result. At any point during the duration of this spell, you may use that roll for a single ability check, attack roll, initiative check, saving throw, or skill check, using the recorded result in place of a roll. This spell cannot be used to replace a roll that has already been made; the recorded result must be used instead of a roll. Once you have used this recorded result or the duration of the spell ends, the spell's effect ends. You can't have more than one instance of *embrace destiny* active on you at the same time.



FARWATCHER

Aura moderate divination; **CL** 11th
Slot none; **Price** 120,850 gp; **Weight** 260 lbs.

DESCRIPTION

This exquisite telescope is crafted of brass, ivory, wood, and carefully polished crystal lenses and silver mirrors, and is over 10 feet long. Anyone using a *farwatcher* must possess at least 5 ranks in Profession (astronomy) in order to use it—the device is simply too complex for anyone with less training to use it properly.

An observer using this device gains a +20 circumstance bonus on Perception checks to discern celestial bodies, as well as a +20 circumstance bonus on any Profession (astronomer) checks made while using it at night. A *farwatcher* can be used during either the night or day to look at celestial or terrestrial objects, though any object within 1 mile viewed through the telescope is obscured beyond recognition. A *farwatcher* allows its user to see things through it as though under the effects of *true seeing* for up to 1 hour per day. These minutes need not be consecutive, but must be expended in minimum increments of 10 minutes each.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, Profession (astronomy) 11 ranks, *true seeing*; **Cost** 60,550 gp

THE DIM GATE

Observatory-Temple to Eox

Location: Western Napsune Mountains
Master: Meyi Panaho (LE female human lich diviner 12)
Notable Inhabitants: Alien beings, ghosts, skeletons

While most of the Saoc Brethren could hardly fathom the catastrophe that was to befall them with Aroden's death, one scholar knew its precise magnitude before it occurred. This was the seer Meyi Panaho, who came into contact with an otherworldly being while studying a shrine to the stars in the Napsune Mountains. Through this mysterious creature, she learned of Golarion's impending doom as well as the path to eternal life through lichdom. The price for such

knowledge was a promise that she would construct an interplanetary gate on the spot of the shrine, no matter how long it took.

Meyi has thus far made good on her part of the deal, and the

observatory that now stands on the old shrine is a testament to her efforts. She believes her interstellar patron to be an undead bone sage from Eox the Dead, and continues to converse with the mysterious being as she nears completion of the gate.

The interplanetary device itself—which Meyi has named the Dim Gate—is incredibly complex, and takes up the majority of the observatory. Meyi stores energy for the massive contraption by channeling energy through her altered *farwatcher* each time particular celestial bodies are in alignment.

The observatory itself makes up relatively little of the entire complex, and serves mostly as a container for Meyi's *farwatcher*. Large rolls of star charts, intricate cosmograms, and astronomical studies sit in hundreds of racks along the walls of the chamber. A hatch in the center of the room leads down to Meyi's old study, where she once housed most of her books before finishing construction on the lower galleries. Knowing she would need help in building her complex, Meyi lured a nearby tribe of Koboto cannibals to her mountain observatory, slaughtered them, and raised them as skeletons. Their chieftain, **Kemota** (NE female human skeletal champion fighter 5), still leads her tribe in death and protects the lower chambers against intrusion.

Meyi's underground complex possesses several galleries, built during her century of lichdom through various

means such as the enslaved undead of Koboto tribes. Her smaller galleries house her books and lab materials, but the larger chambers are home to some of her most prized possessions, including an elaborate orrery of Golarion's solar system, which sits next to another orrery of a mysterious, unnamed system unlike Golarion's own. Perhaps Meyi's most valuable belonging, however, is the massive chamber of her largest gallery, whose ceiling plays host to a constantly moving illusion of the starry sky so one can observe even during the day. **Kian** (LE male human nosferatu bard 7), a lover and servant of Meyi, created the illusions in this gallery as a gift to her on the celebration of her seventy-seventh year of undeath.

Other chambers include Meyi's so-called "speaking rooms": lightless, spherical chambers that emulate the void of space, as well as her control room and several other access hallways. The control room contains numerous devices of alien nature, including banks of crystal rods, copper switches and levers, and a window into the main accumulator chamber so that Meyi may examine how much cosmic energy she has gathered so far.

In order to siphon the interstellar energy of the stars beyond, Meyi has created three accumulator shafts along the side of the mountain near the Dim Gate. These massive tubes are usually covered by circular iron doors warded with *symbols of pain* and other magical deterrents, and sometimes go years or decades before opening briefly and seemingly at random, presumably controlled by a link to Meyi's patron himself. Even Meyi scarcely understands their function or the magical energies that fill the central chamber of the Dim Gate during these open periods, but with each successive "siphoning," she can feel the link between her and her master become even stronger.

The Dim Gate's accumulator shafts each lead down to a mirrored hemispherical chamber carved hundreds of feet below the surface of the mountain. Most of the time the accumulator chamber appears to be merely a room with walls made of mirrors, but when the accumulator shafts are open, they dilate to absorb the cosmic energy, and the hemisphere is bathed in a brilliant purple light that is further directed by the adjustable mirrors to the core of the complex. The Dim Gate itself lies deeper in the mountain, and only Meyi and her undead minions can access the gate's core, since the destructive, warping energy—presumably transmitted through the ether from a source on distant Eox—is more than capable of tearing a creature apart when channeled through the observatory's main accumulator shaft. The core is perfectly spherical and coated in a thick layer of black crystal applied when it was molten. The properties of this chamber ensure no living creatures would survive passage through the gate from this side, but undead creatures from Eox—assuming that's indeed where the lich's mysterious instructions and benefactor come from—could easily stream through to Golarion, painting a grim picture of what might await the world should Meyi ever finish her device.



The Dim Gate



ANCIENT OSIRION

“WHEN MY COLLEAGUE HARLE AND I MADE A GENTLEMAN’S BET REGARDING THE AGE OF THE MONUMENT, I SET UP AN EXPEDITION TO THE SITE TO GET THE ANSWERS FOR MYSELF. UPON REACHING THE EERIE ANDROSPHINX OF ZUKEBRI, HOWEVER, I FOUND MYSELF IN A CONFLICTED STATE FROM THE MOMENT WE APPROACHED THE THING. MY GROUP QUICKLY FELL PREY TO THE MONUMENT’S TELEPATHIC SCREECHES, AND THE SPHINX’S EYES BURNED RED AS THEY POURED THEIR BLACK TEARS DOWN THE THING’S FACE—BUT MOST STARTLING OF ALL, PERHAPS, WAS THAT I ALONE WAS UTTERLY UNAFFECTED BY THE VILE THING’S DARK MAGIC.”

—ABRAUN CHALEST,
DURING A SEMINAR ON DELVING
INTO WELL-FORTIFIED OSIRIAN TOMBS

Easily one of the most expansive—as well as powerful—empires to take hold of the Inner Sea region after the devastation of Earthfall, the kingdom of Ancient Osirion was renowned for its advances in social structure, technological ingenuity, and epic conquests. The pharaohs of this desert empire were responsible for the obliteration and acquisition of both the Jistka Imperium and the neighboring Tekritanin League, and their influence can be felt even now throughout nearly all of northern Garund. The sheer length of time that Ancient Osirion dominated the southern shores of the Inner Sea serves as testament to its glory, and the relics of this old empire can still be found in the towering pyramids that dot the scorching deserts, along with mummified god-kings, beasts of the sands, and mysterious curses few would-be treasure hunters can withstand.

HISTORY OF OSIRION

The history of Ancient Osirion is incredibly lengthy, as the desert empire has existed in one form or another for over 8,000 years now. Osirionologists agree that the kingdom was founded in -3470 AR by a tribal leader known as Azghaad, but from there, details become a bit more complicated, and theories among scholars vary. Unbeknownst to most, Azghaad himself was merely the pawn of a much greater power—a mysterious man who came from the west and called himself Nethys.

Azghaad knew to trust—or at least fear and respect—the stranger as soon as he first saw him, for Nethys's skin was of an unnatural violet hue, and his eyes appeared to be made of solid gold, lacking both pupil and iris. He bore riches the fledgling tribal leader could scarcely fathom, and his entire being surged with both divine and arcane might. When Azghaad asked the stranger where he came from, Nethys responded in cryptic riddles, and when Azghaad asked the stranger what he was, Nethys only said, “Your god and your king.”

It was through Nethys that Azghaad gained all of his magical powers, and so he heeded his newfound master's wishes without question. Nethys commanded that Azghaad keep the god-king's identity a secret from his comrades, and he instructed him on the method he should use to unite the warring tribes around the River Sphinx. With Nethys's help, Azghaad showed his people the true meaning of power by laying low the mighty Ulunat, Spawn of Rovagug, channeling the power of Nethys through his own body to destroy the behemoth. This terrifying display of magic was more than enough to unite the tribes under a common banner, and Azghaad soon founded the city of Sothis around Ulunat's shell, in no small part thanks to Nethys's secret interventions. Azghaad came to rely on Nethys for all matters pertaining to his fledgling kingdom, but after Sothis had become self-sustainable

and Azghaad had grown old as its king, he found that his divine master had left him, and would no longer answer his summons. Nethys had somehow risen to divinity. To repay the god of magic for his deeds, Osirion's First Pharaoh commissioned construction of a magnificent temple to the All-Seeing Eye, solidifying Nethys's godhood by instating him as Osirion's official patron and marking the beginning of the First Age of Osirion.

The First Age of Osirion

From his otherworldly realm of wizard towers in the Maelstrom, Nethys gazed down upon the empire he had helped to fashion. It was through his hand that Azghaad's successor, a queen known as the Naga Pharaoh, rose to power in -3412 AR. Through this scion, the All-Seeing Eye would let all know the fickle power of magic, haunting the Naga Pharaoh with violent visions and nightmarish prophecies until he had instilled within her a destructive rage that would send the empire he had created spiraling into oblivion for a small time, and it was the first time Nethys's temple would see destruction at the hands of one of his chosen leaders, who set the monument on fire in protest against her haunting visions.

Thankfully for the still-young kingdom, Nethys chose to take a more hands-off approach to the management of his empire in the coming centuries. After the Naga Pharaoh perished in the temple fire wrought by her own hands, the people of Sothis rebuilt their church to Nethys the All-Seeing Eye, this time implementing a glorious spire to their nation's founder, Azghaad I, in hopes of cementing his place in history and supplanting the memory of his destructive successor's. For several centuries, ambitious pharaohs ruled over Sothis and commissioned the construction of countless settlements and tombs to their own honor, carving out their marks all over northeastern Garund and beyond in the form of titanic pyramids, monolithic spires, and sprawling underground crypts rivaling the size of cities.

Few rivals posed any significant threat to Osirion during this time, and those that did were swiftly vanquished at the hands of the kingdom's mighty god-kings—pharaohs who adopted the term in reverence to their favored patron, Nethys. Their impact on the world around them could be felt even thousands of miles away, as was the case with the Pharaoh of Forgotten Plagues, who with the help of his necromantic advisors—the Usij—and Ahriman, lord of divs, effectively brought about the end of the Jistka Imperium to the west, unleashing the deadly Night Plague upon its royalty and bringing the once-mighty nation of golem-workers to its knees.

Shortly after the Song Pharaoh destroyed the Pharaoh of Forgotten Plagues—banishing Ahriman from the Material Plane and confined his div followers and the cultish Usij to



the nigh-endless deserts to the west—Osirion reached the peak of its power in the First Age. The establishment of the city of Shiman-Sekh heralded an unprecedented boom in the arts, technological advances, and cultural milestones. Osirion controlled vast territories throughout much of northern Garund, and with the help of the Tekritanin League, which essentially remained a collection of servitor states to Osirion during this time, its realms spanned the Obari to the Arcadian, with large cities and fortress-settlements like zealous Magarai, lawful Deromas, and distant Erspurn dotting the land between.

Unfortunately, the splendor of Osirion's First Age was not meant to last. When the benevolent and wise Song Pharaoh's

rule came to an end at the edge of a dagger wielded by her assassin-successor Jetrieti I in -2999 AR, the killer effectively ended the national prosperity the Song Pharaoh had instigated. Jetrieti was merely the first in a long line of cruel and decadent rulers, whose gluttonous appetites and dim-witted advisors contributed extensively to the empire's decline. During Jetrieti V's reign from -2885 AR to -2866 AR, the Insatiable Pharaoh ordered his legions to raid no fewer than half a dozen of Osirion's previous emperors' familial tombs, irreligiously bedecking himself in all manner of pillaged jewels and throwing the mummified corpses of his forebears on massive pyres in Sothis. Some Osirionologists believe that it was during Jetrieti V's reign that some of the first vengeful spirits of Osirion's deceased god-kings stirred awake and to undeath, angered at the hubris and dishonor of this new breed of pharaoh. When the pharaoh's body was found mutilated and bound to Azghaad's Spire in Sothis one morning, few were surprised at the slaughter, and it was only with hesitation that Jetrieti's eldest son took the throne later that week. Needless to say, the rule of Jetrieti VI was marked with slightly less arrogance than that of his father.

For more than a millennium afterward, Osirion continued to sink into disrepair. Successive pharaohs' knowledge that their forefathers might be watching them in the forms of undead mummies and angered spirits did little to dissuade future generations of effete rulers from their capricious ways, though. Instead, it only inspired a fatalistic ideology in pharaohs' minds, causing them to think about their roles in the afterlife even more than they did their existences on the Material Plane. Osirion's pharaohs quickly became obsessed with the idea of life after death, as well as what station they would occupy after their spirits had left their mortal bodies. Though all Osirian pharaohs from this point on took great care to inscribe their tombs with messages to whatever psychopomps came to claim them and filled their burial chambers with heaps of accumulated wealth, perhaps none have left their mark so brazenly on Osirian history as the infamous Incorruptible Pharaoh, An-Hepsu XI, who maintained his throne via well-hidden lichdom for nearly 4 centuries. It was under the foul lich's rule that Osirion reached its most decadent and unstable condition since the nation's founding, but it wouldn't be long before a group of wise and powerful god-kings took the throne and brought prosperity to the desert empire once more.

The Second Age of Osirion

By the fifteenth century prior to the founding of Absalom, Osirion was in a truly dire state, as its people had been effectively split into four separate factions, each aligned to one of the four dynasties contending for rulership of the empire. As the region stood on the brink of civil war, the main contenders of the dynasties struck a deal,



Nethys

and came to jointly rule Osirion as the Four Pharaohs of Ascension in –1498 AR. Rightly paranoid of betrayal, the four made a powerful pact that sealed their fates together, ensuring that should any pharaoh betray the others, it would spell the downfall of all four of them.

Under the rule of these four powerful god-kings (including Hetshepsu, the Fiend Pharaoh; Ankana, the Radiant Pharaoh; Anok Fero, the Cerulean Pharaoh; and the Pharaoh of Numbers, whose true name has been lost), Osirion flourished and rose to a new state of prosperity, bringing about the nation's Second Age, also known as the Age of the Black Sphinx. Among their many accomplishments were the construction of Tumen—which they named as Osirion's new capital—as well as the destruction of the neighboring Tekritanin League, which had served as a useful vassal nation in past centuries, but proved much more valuable when conquered and absorbed into the Osirian empire.

The downfall of the Four Pharaohs in –1431 AR, however, brought about the end of the Age of the Black Sphinx, issuing in once again an era of decline overseen by self-righteous and incompetent pharaohs. Tumen was swiftly abandoned and Sothis reinstated as Osirion's capital. The recently conquered lands of the now-defunct Tekritanin League fell into barbarism shortly after the pharaoh at that time, Yafeha I, failed to replace the region's assassinated governor in –841 AR. So it was that, with little more than a whimper, Osirion succumbed to its own hauteur and wastefulness once again.

In 1532 AR, Osirion felt the sting of its self-neglect most clearly when Qadiran operatives—seeing an opportunity to establish their ruling empire of Kelesh in the dying nation—infiltrated Osirion and overthrew the ruling Pharaoh Menedes XXVI, establishing the first in what would come to be a long line of foreign rulers in the desert nation. It wouldn't be until Osirion entered its Third Age in 4609, when Khemet I claimed the throne, citing a lineage traceable all the way back to Azghaad I, that Osirion threw off the shackles of its Qadiran and Keleshite masters and achieved independence once again. Now, under the rule of Khemet's youthful and mysterious grandson, the Ruby Prince, Osirion's fate is uncertain as its citizens come to terms with their still relatively newfound freedom and what possibilities it might entail.

OSIRION TODAY

The Third Age of Osirion is thus far markedly less impressive when compared to the empire at the height of its glory around –3000 AR and again just before –1431 AR, and its borders cover but a fraction of the lands it once held under its banner. Because most of the lands that once composed Ancient Osirion are covered in the ruin-burying sands of windswept deserts, both tombs

and indeed entire cities of the old empire may yet lie enshrined beneath the wastes.

Many of Osirion's most famous adventure sites have been featured in products like *Pathfinder Player Companion: Osirion, Land of Pharaohs*, as well as the Pathfinder Modules *Entombed with the Pharaohs* and *The Pactstone Pyramid*. The four-tiered abandoned capital of Tumen is detailed extensively in *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Lost Cities of Golarion*, while the enormous tomb of the Rovagug-worshipping Pharaoh Kamaria the Brazen is outlined in *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Dungeons of Golarion*. Some of Ancient Osirion's lesser-known tombs and other forgotten sites of antiquity are detailed throughout the rest of this section.

Androsphinx of Zukebri (CR 11): One of the smaller sphinx monuments left standing in Osirion's deserts, the Androsphinx of Zukebri is nonetheless a marvel to look upon. Its bronze-cast face resembles that of a handsome pharaoh—though exactly which one is hotly debated by Osirionologists—and the oversized jewelry that adorns the statue is bedighted with ruby and sapphire jewels of impossible size. However, what is perhaps most interesting about the statue is not the figure itself, but the magic that surrounds the structure. Even though it is located in the unpredictable desert realm of the Underdunes, the mysterious androsphinx seems to be unaffected by the region's perpetually shifting valleys and mountains of sand, always surrounded by a fine-edged crater that makes access to the structure easy for adventurers who know of its location. Those who near the thing find themselves in a sorry position, however, as trespassers are assailed by piercing telepathic screams of anguish that rattle their skulls until they leave the premises. At the same time, an odd black fluid seeps from the sphinx's eyes to give it the appearance of crying. Strangest of all is that perhaps one in a thousand visitors to the monument find themselves immune to its mental attacks, and a small contingent of like-chosen individuals have recently started to worship the Androsphinx of Zukebri as an idol to Lamashtu—perhaps influenced by a sister chapter of the Mother of Monsters to the east near Eto—and unwary travelers who find themselves in the midst of such violent cultists are occasionally sacrificed to the androsphinx in orgiastic ritual massacres at its base.

El-Amara (CR 16): Once the provincial capital of Thuvia when that realm was still ruled by Ancient Osirion, the long-abandoned city of el-Amara fell to ruin at the same time the pharaohs of its ruling empire started to ignore their distant vassal state. It was there that the last Osirian governor of Thuvia, High Theurgist Fentet-Pesu, was assassinated in –841 AR by one of his favored consorts, who also happened to be one of his most



fervent dissenters. Since the capital's collapse and the swift exodus of its citizens, few have dared wander near its half-buried spires and crumbling campaniles. The city remained abandoned until just a few centuries ago, when disciples of Ahriman, lord of divs, took to the site in hopes of establishing a base near the nation of Osirion, which they despised for its hand in banishing their vile patron from the Material Plane millennia ago. Its current population is mainly composed of sepid divs and hordes of their subservient ghul and edimmu thralls, and the ruins of el-Amara are overseen by the self-styled Herald of Disdain, a sepid general by the name of **Karesh-Ekhial** (NE female sepid barbarian 4). Though it is known that she wishes to see Ahriman return to the Material Plane to once again wreak havoc on its inhabitants, Karesh-Ekhial's exact agenda beyond this is unknown to all but her most trusted warrior-companions.

Gozarin Necropolis (CR 7–15): Located in the vast Tremor Valley of Osirion's central desert, the Gozarin Necropolis is a massive collection of interconnected crypts, tombs, and graveyards, each section of the realm flowing into the next to create a seamless sea of funerary pinnacles, headstones, and steeples. At the center of it all

is the towering Pyramid of Masks, a temple dedicated to an otherwise mostly forgotten line of rulers—the Jetrieti Dynasty, whose progenitor was responsible for killing the Song Pharaoh in -2999 AR. More information on the Gozarin Necropolis can be found on pages 22–23.

Kilik-Tura Oasis (CR 9): Though at first sight the so-called Kilik-Tura Oasis may appear to be nothing more than another one of the dozens of hot springs that dot the rocky region known as the Footprints of Rovagug, those who near its waters are often startled to discover that the pool's cerulean waters are refreshingly cool to the touch. From the surface, the oasis occupies a near-perfect circular pit just wider than a horse carriage, but divers who have dared to plunge into its impenetrable depths claim that its bottom is unreachably distant. Numerous underwater tunnels weave their way out from the central pit, and some intrepid delvers claim that the passages wind beneath the crust of the barren earth for miles. The number of divers who submerge and never come back dissuades all but the hardest spelunkers, and caravans who camp near the oasis overnight often claim to see giant slithering creatures emerge from the oasis's waters and wriggle away at lightning speeds, sometimes

striking down a horse or guard, dragging the body back into the pool, and disappearing beneath the waters. Wormlike tracks seem to support such rumors, but to date no one has encountered one of the things and lived to tell the tale.

Tomb of the Pharaoh of Blades (CR 12): After An-Hepsu VII—also known as the Pharaoh of Blades—made a pact with an enormous force of noble genies to erect the mighty fortress-city of Ipeq in –2385 AR, he used the help of his enlisted elemental spirits to construct a little-known tomb deep beneath the white-walled metropolis. The twisted burial chambers were designed so as to deter would-be graverobbers, and ended up resembling a labyrinth more than a crypt. An-Hepsu VII would later be buried here after his mysterious murder in –2359 AR, rumored to have been at the hands of his own son, who sought to lay siege to the lands of Katapesh and so snuffed out his father's own dreams in order to claim the glory all for himself. To this day, the vengeful spirit of the **Pharaoh of Blades** (CE male human ghost fighter 5/wizard 8) yet lurks in the cracked catacombs of his tomb, imprisoned in a mazelike chamber of his own design and driven to madness over millennia of frustration and impotent rage. So named for his love of sharp-edged weaponry, the Pharaoh of Blades was famous for his collection of swords, which held legendary pieces such as Swordmaster Tsing Xiao's famed *Jeratakra* (a +2 *keen katana*) and a golem-commanding relic stolen from Jistka called *Harosteir* (a +1 *greatsword of cleaving* that allows its wielder to cast charm spells on golems, bypassing their immunity to magic). Unfortunately for treasure hunters, the Pharaoh of Blades also preemptively populated his crypt with undead versions of his most favored warriors, armored mummies collectively known as the Black Reckoners, led by the undead form of his most favored general and lover in undeath, **Chigaret Nerfauner** (NE female mummy fighter 6/duelist 4).

DEPIZENS AND DANGERS

The deathless guardians of Osirion's pre-Keleshite tombs are primarily the restless spirits of pharaohs, their loyal honor guards, and sometimes even mummified beasts. The emperors of Ancient Osirion occasionally demanded to be buried next to particularly favored pets, which were carefully sacrificed and embalmed. Famous examples include Zahur II's desert-acclimated firefoot fennecs, the toothed akh-birds of Menedes V, and the Dream Pharaoh's unsightly six-legged hounds. Perhaps no beasts were trusted into the afterlife so much as felines, however, who were almost without exception buried alongside deceased pharaohs or at the very least inscribed into their burial chamber walls. Those cats that rose from the dead—either because of the foul magical energies of a pharaoh's

crypt or thanks to the necromantic magic of a restless undead pharaoh herself—were known as ubashki.

Ubashki were prized for being stealthy, agile, and preternaturally perceptive sentries that made for effective spies and watch guards for the tombs of Osirian god-kings. Emperors often filled their crypts with the bodies of strangled and mutilated cats before they themselves were entombed, believing that a feline's suffering in life would translate to strength in undeath. Whether or not such theories were true is up for debate, but those felid creatures that did rise from death with their masters were indeed beasts to be reckoned with, and a sizeable pack of the mummified things could very well spell the end for would-be tomb raiders. Ranging from tiny housecats to desert-roaming mountain lions, the feline enshrined with a deceased pharaoh varied in type depending on the predilections of its master, but all were known to be significantly more powerful than their living iterations.

UBASHKI SWARM

CR 2

XP 600

NE Tiny undead (swarm)

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +5

DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 15, flat-footed 12 (+3 Dex, +2 size)**hp** 19 (3d8+6)**Fort** +3, **Ref** +6, **Will** +3**Defensive Abilities** half damage from weapons, swarm traits;**Immune** undead traits

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.**Melee** swarm +7 (1d6 plus distraction and disease)**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.**Special Attacks** distraction (DC 13)

STATISTICS

Str 5, **Dex** 17, **Con** —, **Int** 2, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 15**Base Atk** +2; **CMB** —; **CMD** —**Feats** Lightning Reflexes, Weapon Finesse**Skills** Climb +5, Perception +5, Stealth +15; **Racial Modifiers** +4

Climb, +4 Stealth

ECOLOGY

Environment warm deserts**Organization** solitary, pair, or nuisance (3–5 swarms plus 1 ubashki lynx)**Treasure** none

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Disease (Ex) *Ubashki Fever*: Injury; save Fort DC 13; onset 1d3 days; frequency 1/day; effect 1d2 Str damage and 1d2 Wis damage; cure 2 consecutive saves. A creature afflicted by ubashki fever develops unsightly splotches and sores all over its body that persist until the disease is cured. The save DC is Charisma-based.



UBASHKI LYNX

CR 6

XP 2,400

NE Large undead

Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +6

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 14 (+3 Dex, +5 natural, -1 size)

hp 60 (8d8+24)

Fort +4, **Ref** +7, **Will** +7

Immune undead traits

Weaknesses vulnerable to fire

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee bite +11 (2d6+5 plus ubashki rot), 2 claws +10 (1d8+5)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Special Attacks piercing howl, rake (2 claws +10, 1d8+5)

STATISTICS

Str 21, **Dex** 17, **Con** —, **Int** 2, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 15

Base Atk +6; **CMB** +12; **CMD** 25 (29 vs. trip)

Feats Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Toughness, Weapon Focus (bite)

Skills Acrobatics +9, Climb +10, Perception +6, Stealth +8;

Racial Modifiers +4 Acrobatics, +4 Stealth

ECOLOGY

Environment temperate or warm deserts

Organization solitary or pair

Treasure none

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Piercing Howl (Su) When an ubashki lynx howls, all creatures except other undead within a 300-foot spread must succeed at a DC 16 Will save or become frightened for 1d4 rounds. This is a sonic, mind-affecting effect. Whether or not the save is successful, an affected creature is immune to the same ubashki lynx's piercing howl for 24 hours. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Ubashki Rot (Su) Curse and disease—bite; *save* Fort DC 16; *onset* 1 hour; *frequency* 1/day; *effect* 1d6 Str and 1d6 Wis;

cure —. Ubashki rot is both a curse and a disease and can only be cured if the curse is first removed, at which point the disease can be magically removed. Even after the curse element of ubashki rot is lifted, a creature suffering from it cannot recover naturally over time. Anyone casting a conjuration (healing) spell on the afflicted creature must succeed at a DC 20 caster level check, or the spell is wasted and the healing has no effect. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Many crypts and tombs belonging to the god-kings of Ancient Osirion have been pillaged by adventurers in their thousands of years of existence, and so most of the traps in such ruins have either already been tripped or disarmed, making exploration by further adventurers slightly safer. In the less-pillaged lower levels of pyramids and vaults, however, there yet remain numerous snares and pitfalls for the unwary to encounter. Crushing stone traps, electricity arc traps, and spiked pits are all common, and tomb constructors often filled entire pits with the reanimated bodies of slaves who perished during the building of the crypt. The following magical trap was commonly used in the pyramids of the Hirkoshek Dynasty in the secluded Vale of Burning Stars, as well as the heavily fortified tomb of Sharsqa II.

GRASPING HANDS

CR 11

Type magical; **Perception** DC 29; **Disable Device** DC 29

EFFECTS

Trigger proximity (*alarm*); **Duration** 7 rounds; **Reset** none
Effect spell effect (magical, mummified hands reaching up as *black tentacles*, CMB +12, 1d6+4 damage each round); multiple targets (all targets in a 20-ft. square)

The Pahmet

Having embedded themselves in Ancient Osirian culture since the late years of the Age of Destiny, the dwarves known as the Pahmet—or “sand dwarves”—claim to have been sent from the gods to warn Osirion’s pharaohs of great crises and cataclysms. True, the Pahmet were greatly valued by emperors in the early years of Ancient Osirion for their sagely advice, but most scholars agree that their claim of being otherworldly messengers is more hyperbole than fact. Numerous Pahmet remain in Osirion to this day,



Ubashki Cat

many stationed in the southwestern mountains of the region near the monastic city of Tar Kuata, where it is said that many of their contemplative brothers, the Ouat, reside and study their ancient martial arts.

West of Mount Osiki in southern Osirion, a small clan of the Pahmet dwell in a small, subterranean settlement called Erekrus, which is built into the side of the mountains and serves as a necropolis for pharaohs whom the Pahmet have deemed noble and worthy of their blessings. It was there that Osezis II—famous for enacting policies largely responsible for ending a nationwide famine—was entombed in –652 AR, as well as Menedes XVII—who abolished the slavery system during his reign—in 1262 AR. In Ancient Osirion, it was considered a great honor to be chosen by the Pahmet, but only those who were true of heart would earn their favor; pharaohs who tried to sway the dwarves with gold or violence inevitably fell victim to mysterious and sometimes gruesome fates.

The Pahmet of Erekrus are led by a secretive pair of dwarven priests who claim to be siblings, but whose strikingly disparate features lead many to believe otherwise. **Garzukk** (LG male dwarf cleric of Grundinnar 10) has long golden locks of hair, bronze skin, and is said to be the older of the two. Visitors to Erekrus seek out Garzukk before resorting to meeting with his dour, dusky-skinned sister **Trelka** (LN female dwarf cleric of Magrim 8), whom many find off-putting for her stoic demeanor and fatalistic ideologies. Together, they guide the Pahmet in their prayers and rituals to honor the deceased god-kings of Osirion, acting as curators for the sprawling collection of hieroglyphics that adorn the underground city's walls and aiding guests who have come to pay their respects to the buried emperors.

TREASURES AND REWARDS

Ancient Osirion offers its despoilers many exquisite treasures for their efforts—gold, lapis lazuli, and coral were particularly prized by Osirians for the materials' versatility in crafting jewelry and other luxuries, while artifacts and magical items of incredible power fill abandoned cities as well as the halls of the dead. After all, the god-kings and their pharaonic courts prized their accessories not only for the baubles' aesthetic qualities, but also the magical properties that imbued such items. Because of this, the tombs and crypts of buried emperors

are littered with potent rings, necklaces, and bracelets enchanted with mystical powers. *Rings of evasion* and *rings of freedom of movement* afforded pharaohs some protection from potential assassins and would-be kidnappers, while the most powerful emperors often possessed *rings of djinni calling* to aid them in times of need; indeed, some god-kings were said to wield unique rings linked to one of the other elemental planes, capable of summoning either efreet, marids, or shaitans, and many possessed rings or amulets that would call lesser elemental forces if not those among geniekind.



Mumia

Perhaps the strangest of the valuables removed from the dusty tombs of Osirion is the flesh of the dead itself. During the years of satrapy-dominated Osirion and later under the rule of Keleshite sultans, a highly prized royal physician of Osirian descent by the name of Merenfren used a previously unknown black, tarlike substance as an ingredient in numerous salves, potions, and pills she concocted to treat ailments and revitalize her wealthy clientele.

Calling the drug *mumia*, Merenfren managed to keep the key ingredient of her potent cure-all hidden from her patients until 2271 AR, when a rival scholar finally discovered her sinister secret: *Mumia* was nothing more than the flesh of carefully preserved corpses excavated from Osirian tombs. Even the sweet elixir that she sold as the “water of life” was merely a diluted substance derived from the body of a young child preserved in a jar of honey. Merenfren was quickly tried and executed for her crimes, including the desecration of the dead as well as tricking her noble patients into consuming the vile substance. However, it was too late to undo the chemist's discoveries—she had already left her mark on Osirian society by inspiring an entire subculture based on the trade and consumption of *mumia*. An extensive black market took hold in Osirion's grisly underworld, and even the Keleshite masters of Osirion continued to partake of the foul drug made from the dead. The mysterious disappearances of *mumia* addicts were often attributed to their contact with the Osirian criminal element rather than any of the drug's long-lasting side effects, but *mumia* sellers knew better and took care to not get hooked to the drug themselves.

Even today, *mumia* made from the bodies of properly prepared and aged corpses—as well as cheap, knock-off *mumia* made from the embalmed bodies of animals or the recently dead—fetches a fine price in the back alleys



A VALUABLE CONTACT

Several Osirionologists residing in present-day Osirion and Thuvia are more than capable of assisting adventurers hoping to explore the buried necropolises and other sites of Ancient Osirian lore, but none are perhaps so notable as the reclusive and eccentric scholar Khamos Al-Awlaq, who makes his home in the mercantile district of Eto. In addition to his scholarly pursuits and frequent contributions to the Grand Library of Eto, **Khamos** (LE male ghoulish alchemist 5/ bard 2) owns a small antiquities shop that he runs out of his house, and he makes a living pawning excavated curios to wealthy collectors, adventurers, and royal courts. He is particularly welcoming of fellow tomb raiders, whom he frequently employs to perform seemingly minute tasks that almost inevitably unravel into larger plots of monumental danger and questionable morality.

That he is in fact undead is Khamos's best-kept secret. A little over a decade ago, the scholar had made his way out of Jetrieti V's lavish tomb with an incredibly powerful artifact in his possession. Unbeknownst to the treasure hunter, however, the artifact inflicted upon him a deadly wasting illness. In his desperation to cling to life, Khamos took to consuming powdered mumia even though he knew the risks involved in eating the foul substance. The results were startling: He felt invigorated and recovered from his wilting in a matter of days. Khamos began buying more and more bodies of the dead to further enjoy the new youthfulness mumia provided him, and eventually turned to consuming newly prepared bodies of questionable origins. Eventually, tourists and lone travelers began to disappear after visiting his dim shop, and within a year Khamos slowly transformed into a ghoulish. He is somewhat deluded about his undead state, but knows to carefully conceal it from clerics and paladins, who would surely destroy the undead merchant. Via the application of alchemical reagents, powerful magic, and mundane cosmetics, Khamos has thus far been able to keep his ghoulish nature a secret from those he interacts with, but he lives in paranoid fear that he will be found out, and so resorts to hiding in his shop more and more often, getting adventurers to secure the treasures he intends to buy and resell—and paying good money for the excavated bodies of pharaohs from adventurers of a particularly amoral bent.

of Sothis and other major cities in northern Garund. An unscrupulous graverobber need not hawk only fineries and art anymore, but can profit immensely from the act of plundering mummified bodies as well if she knows where to pawn them.

Full rules for drugs and addiction can be found on pages 236–237 of the *Pathfinder RPG GameMastery Guide*.

Information on the curse and disease descriptors can be found in *Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Magic*. Cheap, imitation mumia made from the recently deceased or improperly treated bodies has the same stats as mumia, but the benefits are rendered at 50% their normal potency and for half the duration.

MUMIA

Type inhaled, ingested, or injury; **Addiction** major, Fortitude DC 18

Price 500 gp

Effect 1 hour; +1d8 temporary hit points, +2 alchemical bonus on saving throws made against spells and effects with the curse or disease descriptor, fatigue. If the user is addicted for more than a week straight, she has a cumulative +5% chance of transforming into a ghoulish every week she remains addicted.

Damage 1d2 Wis damage

GOZARIN NECROPOLIS

Sprawling Ruins of the Dead

Location: Tremor Valley in central Osirion

Master: None

Notable Inhabitants: Ghosts, mummies, Jah-Ipo priesthood, skeletal wardens, ubashki, zombies

The Gozarin Necropolis is a vast field of tombs, crypts, and graveyards that occupies the sprawling Tremor Valley in central Osirion, west of the Pillars of the Sun. Ranging from simple pit graves to mastaba tombs, the funerary sites of the Gozarin Necropolis comprise those of dozens of dead pharaohs and hundreds of their favored servants, soldiers, and family member. Notable emperors buried here include the Yafeha Dynasty, Sekhemib I, and members of the late Zahur Dynasty. Each of the 30-some crypts and tombs sports an impressive aboveground entrance leading down to swaths of interconnected catacombs, with each gravesite inevitably connected to the central structure in the necropolis, the Pyramid of Masks.

The Necropolis—unlike those gravesites belonging to large cities such as Sothis and Eto—has seen numerous lengthy periods of disuse, resulting in a widely varying series of architectural styles and significant differences in the state of repair and accessibility of the shrines and monuments. The Pyramid of Masks was the first structure built in Tremor Valley following the death of Jetrieti I in –2957 AR, and was the burial site of the Masked Pharaoh and most of his direct descendents. From this massive tomb—whose interior boasts a mammoth labyrinth both within the pyramid itself and beneath the sands it was constructed atop—subsequent rulers built outward and created their own postmortem dwellings.

A small group of scholars and clerics calling their organization the Jah-Ipo priesthood maintains the funerary

gravesites of Gebessek IX and the aboveground levels of the Pyramid of Masks. Though their purview does not extend beyond that of these distinct locations, they remain uneasy with the cavalier way in which adventurers and tomb delvers pillage the lesser and older graves of the expansive necropolis. The Jah-Ipo were stripped of their right to arrest and try graverobbers in 4707 AR with Khemet III's opening of Osirion's tombs to explorers—now, the most egregious violations of the dead are handled by the royal court itself, drastically limiting the power of the watchful Jah-Ipo. The current leader of the Jah-Ipo is a paranoid and aggressive priest of Nethys, **Father Echume Hepripe** (LN male human cleric of Nethys 8), who, in spite of the Ruby Prince's decree, frequently orders his militant group of fellow guardians to spy on visitors to tombs no longer under his jurisdiction.

While the nearby city of Eto is now one of Osirion's major centers of antiquities trade since the opening of the land's ancient crypts to foreign adventurers, the city has also long hosted a local tradition of tomb-robbing thanks in part to the city's proximity to the Gozarin Necropolis. Generations of Eto families have honed their abilities to bypass traps, put down undead, and avoid the attentions of rivals, and they often sell such skills to hopeful treasure hunters who pass through their city. While a few honest mercenaries offer their services to well-heeled adventurers for a cut of the treasure, just as many happily arrange "accidents" in the warren of stone and sand in hopes of garnering any excavated relics all for themselves.

Numerous burial sites make up the Gozarin Necropolis, and some have yet to even be discovered. The following are just a couple of the most famous or harrowing crypts in Tremor Valley.

The Pyramid of Masks (CR 7–14): The vast Pyramid of Masks comprises dozens of levels both above- and belowground. The levels closest to the valley floor are safest for adventurers to explore, but those within the pyramid itself are vigilantly guarded by the Jah-Ipo priesthood, who use force if necessary to expel any who trespass into their deceased masters' crypt. Below the pyramid, however, some of the Jetrieti Dynasty's most powerful rulers and their followers were buried in tombs guarded by powers vastly more dangerous than those of the Jah-Ipo, including barded ubashki leopards and Jetrieti's personal legion of mummy-guardians known as the Ashen Architects. Hieroglyphics in the complex frequently hint at

the existence of a trapped nightwalker guarding the bottommost level of the catacombs.

The Temple of the Vermillion Snake (CR 12): The Temple of the Vermillion Snake was named for the red-orange stone that makes up its winding corridors. The inscriptions of whatever emperors and their servants who were once buried in the temple were defaced centuries ago, and even knowledgeable Osirionologists can't agree on who was most likely placed in the structure's dozens of tombs. Numerous scholars and several members of the Pathfinder Society have expressed interest in finding any pieces of evidence that might link a certain pharaoh or lineage to this expansive crypt, but the majority of adventurers who have braved the temple have either never returned or come back severely scarred, their tongues brutally sawed out and bodies badly burned. Those still able to write claimed to have been victims of undead giants wrapped in black bandages who perpetually burned with purple flame, though whether the accounts are factual or merely the hallucinatory ravings of ravaged souls, none can say.



Gozarin Necropolis



GHOL-GAN

BENEATH A BLOOD-RED MOON, THEY HUNTED. THEY STALKED THE LANDS UNDER JUNGLE CANOPIES AND ALONG CRAGGY HILLSIDES, THEIR EARTH-SHAKING FOOTSTEPS PUMMELING THE PLANTS AND ANIMALS BENEATH THEM INTO DUST. WHAT THEY COULDN'T SNATCH, THEY CRUSHED. WHAT THEY COULDN'T EAT, THEY MUTILATED AND OFFERED TO THEIR ALIEN GOD-BEINGS. THEY WERE NOT ALWAYS THIS WAY—AS IS EVIDENCED BY THEIR MAGNIFICENT STRUCTURES AND WORKS BUILT FROM STONE AND BRONZE—BUT IT IS CYCLOPES' MOST DEBASED ACTS OF BRUTALITY AND SLAUGHTER THAT LEFT A STAIN ON GOLARION, AND SHOULD THEY EVER RISE AGAIN, THE GHOL-GANI WOULD NO DOUBT REVERT TO THE GROTESQUE WAYS THEY ARE BEST KNOWN FOR.

—FROM *HOLLOW EYES: A GUIDE TO GHOL-GAN RUINS*

The enormous white ziggurats of Ghol-Gan can be found throughout many parts of the Shackles, the southern Sodden Lands, and much of the western and central Mwangi Expanse. The faded glyphs of Ghol-Gan's long-abandoned towers and half-flooded temples depict their builders as mammoth and violent beings, monocular humanoids who worshiped the sun and the moon in early times and foul gods of mysterious origins in later years. The religion of Ghol-Gan's cyclopean inhabitants demanded frequent ritual sacrifice and cannibalistic rites. Obsessed with the oracular insights granted by their mysterious singular eyes, the cyclopes of this kingdom relied on their innate and divinely inspired powers to guide their empire toward glory and riches. Their visions led them astray, however, and Ghol-Gan's fall came swift and hard. Now all that remains of this crumbled kingdom are the degenerate giants who scarcely realize their lineage to the great empire, and the half-buried ruins of what were once masterful works of herculean architecture, which remain plagued by the abhorrent curses that their fiendish worship brought upon their people.

HISTORY OF GHOL-GAN

The Ghol-Gan empire first emerged millennia before humankind even set foot on Golarion's lands, when giants, dragons, and elves still dominated much of the surface, and the dreaded serpentfolk ruled kingdoms in the subterranean Darklands. Though scholars have found it impossible to pinpoint the first city of Ghol-Gan or the names of its original founders, most signs seem to point toward the center of what is now the Abendego Gulf as the birthplace of Ghol-Gan civilization.

Before Earthfall, the lands that now compose western Garund extended much farther into the Arcadian Ocean, and the islands of the Shackles were once a sprawling mountain range that connected to Mediogalti Island and Rahadom. Where the Eye of Abendego now whirls, verdant rainforests and sprawling hills once dominated a region with a climate similar to the Mwangi Jungle. Most scholars agree that the capital of Ghol-Gan—or at least the largest city in that perplexing and brutal empire—now lies submerged somewhere beneath the Eye, having sunk when most of the region collapsed into the ocean as a result of the cataclysm that brought about the Age of Darkness.

While Ghol-Gan's origins remain mysterious, scholars have been able to decipher large chunks of Ghol-Gan history through the numerous runes and inscriptions on ziggurats that dot the lands of western Garund. The annals of the empire have been segregated by historians into a series of distinct periods, each marked by important events that shaped the empire and its culture. The least understood is the prehistoric period, which saw the initial development of settlements as well as primitive

worship of nature spirits. Most of the relics dating back to this period remain buried beneath the churning waters of the Abendego Gulf, as by the time Ghol-Gan's borders encompassed what is now the Shackles and the Sodden Lands, the empire was already well into its brief preclassical period. This era was marked by Ghol-Gan explorers' first interactions with other intelligent species, including other giants, dragons, and elves.

The classical period of Ghol-Gan is defined by the development of a crude writing system, primarily consisting of hieroglyphs and jagged symbols etched into the faces of stone walls and monuments. It is thought that during this time, the Ghol-Gani first realized the uniqueness of their monocular composition, as well as what it could mean symbolically. Their mode of worship soon evolved from general reverence of nature spirits to a specific veneration of the sun and the moon, figures they regarded as sacred for their semblances to the cyclops eye. It was also during this time that the first Ghol-Gan rituals of animal sacrifice took place, as cyclops shamans and tyrants incited bestial bloodletting to appease the watchful sun and the fickle moon. The Ghol-Gani knew they were different than other creatures, and considered themselves chosen by the gods to spread their influence across the land and guide—or dominate—the weaker, two-eyed races.

The classical period is regarded as the pinnacle of Ghol-Gan civilization, as the epoch saw a considerable boom in cultural improvements, religious developments, and regional expansionism. Citizens of Ghol-Gan tribes no longer lived in communal caves carved into hillsides or cliffs, but began to construct longhouses from stone and wood and to create longstanding cities. Most of the limestone and basalt ziggurats found in the jungles of the Mwangi Expanse come from this period, having been constructed by devout Ghol-Gani in hopes of becoming closer to their celestial deities. Ghol-Gan's settlements varied in size, with the largest of its cities capable of sustaining up to 50,000 cyclops citizens. The capital of Ghol-Gan, referred to in some ancient texts as Tzaarban, is thought to have hosted a population rivaling that of present-day Sothis and other metropolises.

City planners tended to build settlements vertically rather than horizontally, and their structures soared upward just as often as they plunged beneath the crust of the earth. During the building of a particularly immense series of catacombs, the architects of Ghol-Gan first came upon the shallow layer of the Darklands known as Nar-Voth. The expansive zone they uncovered—which the cyclopes called *Reguare*, or the "Sleepless Realm"—incited much curiosity in Ghol-Gan explorers, who viewed the Darklands as an entirely new world to be claimed and conquered. The few remaining serpentfolk of these lands posed relatively little threat to the Ghol-Gani, who



came into contact with the reptilian monsters when the serpentfolk's kingdom was already dwindling, and the hardy, one-eyed warriors swiftly eradicated most of the serpentine menace dwelling beneath their heartlands. In the later years of the classical period, when the humans of Azlant came in contact with the kingdom of Ghol-Gan, the two forces would sometimes ally against their mutual enemies in more distant regions of the Darklands in hopes of completely wiping out the serpentfolk.

Ancient Ghol-Gan writings tell of one cyclops commander in particular, a tyrant by the name of Xalekti, who would

prove instrumental in the obliteration of serpentfolk in Reguare. Wielding the mighty blade *Ilthsgar*—a curved bronze sword crafted by the finest cyclops swordsmiths in Tzaarban—Xalekti led her severely outnumbered troops to victory in the Battle of Sekrysdia beneath the Ghol-Gan city of Garkotar. After beheading the serpentfolk high priest of Sekrysdia, she mounted the skull on the right arm of her throne as a trophy. Subsequent battles likewise ended in glorious victory. The long-lived Xalekti ruled well into the waning years of the classical period, and witnessed firsthand the corruption of Ghol-Gan, as the empire she had helped build steadily slipped into decline.

Many scholars link the initial degradation of Ghol-Gan society with their exposure to serpentfolk beliefs and traditions. With the Darklands' absence of their much-revered sun and moon, the cyclopes who first came to this realm initially sought to seize it from the scaled monsters in the hope that their gods would smile upon them and shine their light in the perpetual darkness of the subterranean world. As time wore on, however, those cyclopes who spent most of their lives in these lightless caverns realized their celestial deities could never find them here, and so they came to embrace the dark ideologies of the serpentfolk they had conquered. The underground-dwelling cyclopes eventually brought such practices to the surface of their empire, where the beliefs quickly spread among the common folk and later the nobility. Ghol-Gan rituals of animal sacrifice swiftly converted to the bloodletting and cannibalism of sentient creatures, including fellow cyclopes and their Azlanti allies. Needless to say, such betrayals swiftly eroded whatever peace Azlant and Ghol-Gan had forged in their wars against the serpentfolk, and the human empire came to view the cyclopes as no better than the scaly monsters beneath the earth. The transition from sky-worship to brutal mass-sacrifices marked the transition from Ghol-Gan's classical period to its subsequent postclassical period and demise.

The wisest of Ghol-Gan's seer caste foresaw the destruction that such rampant brutality would bring upon their empire, and did their best to dissuade Ghol-Gan's rulers from moving toward such base acts. Their efforts proved futile in the face of this new, violent society of giants, however. Seeing little other option, the intelligentsia of Ghol-Gan gathered what loyal followers they could muster and fled the failing empire in search of other lands. These farseeing refugees would eventually come to found the distant empire of Koloran in northern Casmaron, populating parts of Casmaron as well as the island nation of Iblydos.

No longer did the giants who remained behind regard the sun as a benevolent giver of life and the moon as its fertile mistress; instead, the unblinking, fiery orb was to be feared and appeased by ritual massacres, and nights of the full moon brought on bouts of cruel debauchery in the



Xalekti

rapidly devolving citizens of Ghol-Gan. Cyclops zealots defaced the tamer depictions of their sky-gods in favor of more brutal, violent inscriptions and carvings of alien deities who gifted their one-eyed worshipers as a reward for their indiscriminate bloodlust. Members of the cyclops empire continued to dominate both the surface of western Garund as well as its dark underbelly, performing the majority of their rituals and increasingly unsuccessful conquests aboveground, and saving only their most egregious acts for the Sleepless Realm. In this small corner of the expansive level of Nar-Voth, the cyclopes conducted their orgiastic mating rituals and births in the dark, as well as some of the most heinous of their cannibalistic rites.

The final erosion of the cyclops civilization was swift and obvious. Artifacts found from Ghol-Gan's postclassical period are devoid of artistry, instead reflecting a doomed people all too conscious of their end and seeking escape not by soft decadence or introversion, but through the perversion of all restraint. They made promises to horrid god-beings from other dimensions, nightmarish monsters of impossible size and power who only further twisted the malleable minds of their one-eyed followers. They performed vile experiments on their own kind and bred with otherworldly creatures to create degenerate beasts of burden and twisted hybrids. They indiscriminately slew one another and ate of their own flesh in futile attempts to regain the power that was once theirs at the height of their empire. With each successive murder and act of cannibalism, however, the lost people of Ghol-Gan only slipped further into oblivion.

By the late years of the Age of Legend, Ghol-Gan was already corroded beyond salvation; the fall of the *Starstone* was merely the final blow to an already dying kingdom. The earthquakes that resulted from Earthfall laid waste to the few cyclopes who yet remained in the stagnant holdings of Ghol-Gan, causing most of the nation to crumble into the depths of the Arcadian Ocean. The tunnels that connected Ghol-Gan's subterranean domain of Reguare to other caverns in Nar-Voth and Sekamina were also largely destroyed during the catastrophe, effectively sealing off the Sleepless Realm from the rest of the Darklands. Only a few entrances to these underground holdings were left unscathed by Earthfall, with the majority sinking below the waters of the newly formed Abendego Gulf with the rest of the decrepit empire.

GHOL-GAN TODAY

After most of Ghol-Gan crumbled into the sea, the region slowly reformed into what is now the west coast of Garund. The ruins of the cyclops empire were further made inaccessible when the Eye of Abendego formed at the dawn of the Age of Lost Omens, transforming Ghol-Gan's watery shell into a spiraling maelstrom, making the region all but impossible to explore and causing the shoreline to

further recede. Most of the ruins that scholars rely on when studying Ghol-Gan are those that remained on solid ground despite Earthfall and the emergence of the Eye—ziggurats and stone cities scattered throughout the Sodden Lands, Mediogalti Island, the Shackles, and the Mwangi Expanse.

Egrezia (CR 8): Located on the western side of the Terwa Lake in what is now the Mwangi Expanse, the ruins of Egrezia are mostly buried beneath the alluvial grime that has spread from the lake in the thousands of years since Ghol-Gan's fall. Intrepid divers who delve beneath the surface of the lake can examine the badly eroded, sunken structures of the dead cyclopes' waterside city, but must be wary of the freshwater monsters that lurk in the ruins' dark crevices, as well as the dormant but deadly volcanic gases of the lake itself. It is rumored that numerous Free Captains from the Shackles have buried their treasure beneath the flooded ruins of Egrezia, and that should any explorers manage to make it past the merrows, skum, and scraggs dwelling here, they will be richly rewarded for their efforts.

Ganagsau (CR 21): When the native kuru people of the Shackles were forced onto the so-called Cannibal Isles, to the far west of the archipelago, they unknowingly entered the domain of a gigantic, vile outsider that called itself the Blood Queen. It was originally sent by the alien gods of Ghol-Gan's oracles to further lead their empire to corruption and ruin, but rather than flee Golarion after the fall of that kingdom, the Blood Queen stayed behind in order to pervert future generations of followers. Having repurposed a sunken Ghol-Gan sun temple into its profane cathedral, the Blood Queen enslaved the minds of the kuru and turned them into cannibalistic heathens, similar to how she helped corrupt the Ghol-Gani millennia before. Now, she works through her tainted surrogates in order to spread chaos across the entire Shackles. (For more information on Ganagsau and the foul, otherworldly monster known as the Blood Queen, see *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Isles of the Shackles*.)

Gutblood Labyrinth (CR 12): West of the city of Free Station, in a stretch of otherwise unassuming grasslands in the vast Rechiend's Plains, a precipitous fissure splits the landscape and plummets deep into the earth. Formed during Earthfall, the fissure falls off so abruptly that careless travelers sometimes come close to falling into the hole, and locals have taken to calling it Calistria's Grin. Spelunkers who have plumbed the chasm find little of note for the first several hundred feet, but farther in, where the light of day can scarcely reach, a series of now-disconnected caverns dot the sides of the cliffs. The tunnels wind beneath the earth for miles, constantly looping around and branching off to create a complex web of interconnected cave networks. Though the Ghol-Gan ruins in Gutblood Labyrinth hint that this region was once connected to the rest of the Sleepless Realm of



Reguare, signs also indicate that the Ghol-Gani barricaded all passageways leading to the underground maze. As to exactly why, few can say for certain, but the mysterious disappearances of explorers—as well as the discovery of their bloated and mutilated bodies floating in the Fever Sea some weeks later—may be a potent clue.

Imnuxeos (CR 11): Though this expansive swath of rocky plains now appears to be little more than sprawling badlands, the fields of Imnuxeos were once home to the most brutal pit-fighting competitions in all of Ghol-Gan, where cyclops gladiators battled against captured monsters and other slaves to exhibit their prowess or win their freedom. Ruins of the massive coliseum in which these brawlers fought still stand in chunks throughout the field. At sunset, it is said that the long-dead champions of Ghol-Gan rise once more as ghosts to do combat with one another all night, and should any mortals dally too long in the cursed region, they too might get drawn into the arena to clash with undead giants, wretched aberrations, and the shambling bones of reanimated beasts.

Reguare (CR 10–17): The encapsulated expanse of Nar-Voth that lies beneath the ancient holdings of Ghol-Gan was cut off from the rest of the Darklands during Earthfall, and many of the entrances that connect Golarion's surface to the so-called Sleepless Realm were buried at the same time. What few passages remain are as well hidden as they are fraught with danger. In the Shackles, the infamous fortress of Eel's Skull on Nalt's Island was destroyed by its master in a fit of madness. While the lower levels are largely buried beneath tons of rock and rubble, should anyone manage to clear out the debris and gain access to the catacombs, she would inevitably discover the tunnel to Reguare that Nalt kept secret until his death. On Mediogalti Island, rumor tells of an entrance to the Darklands via the Crimson Citadel. While finding the fabled fortress of the Red Mantis assassins would be a perilous endeavor in and of itself, locating the citadel's hidden entrance to Reguare is by and large considered a fool's errand, and of the adventurers who have sought out the tunnel, none have returned to tell the tale.

There is only one major tunnel that runs through Reguare, called in ancient times the March of Madness. While the March is notably shorter than the Long Walk in the Darklands below Avistan, its length is contrasted by the cyclopean size of its halls. Towering hundreds of feet high, the caverns of the March of Madness were no doubt once home to creatures of epic size, a fact further evidenced by the strange inscriptions on the walls that sometimes span from floor to ceiling. Scholars speculate that the most powerful cyclopes of Ghol-Gan captured and tamed purple worms or other slithering behemoths to use as mounts in their wars against the serpentfolk, and the March of Madness served as a valuable passageway for

Ghol-Gan cavalry on their expansive campaigns. Other caverns within Reguare contain underground jungles populated by primordial flora that grow despite the dark, and numerous hot springs and lava vents draw treacherous monsters with a bent for high temperatures.

Temple of the Ravenous Moon (CR 7–18): The Ghol-Gani built this ziggurat (originally called simply the Temple of the Moon) during the classical period to worship the moon and bless pregnant cyclops women and the recently wedded. When the cyclopes brought the perverse beliefs of the serpentfolk back to their empire, however, the zealous demon- and alien-worshippers of the postclassical period defaced the temple in favor of more barbaric depictions. The blood of sacrificed newborns and their crying mothers poured from the ziggurat's upper steps and down to its base; late Ghol-Gan poems claim that it is these rivulets of blood that stained the white temple and gave it its characteristic crimson veins. The myths also claim that within the expansive catacombs of the temple is an entrance to Reguare, as well as an alien behemoth of impossible brutality that guards the passageway, shackled to the walls of a single massive chamber with 88 chains of mage-forged adamantine. If such legends are to be believed, then the monster hails from a realm beyond the stars, and possesses dozens of horned, vermicular heads, writhing tendrils that end in massive hoofs, and a toothy maw in the center of its veined underbelly.

Two expeditions have thus far been made to the Temple of the Ravenous Moon, both funded by the Hurricane King himself. Though no survivors managed to make it out of the temple and reach Port Peril alive, two members of the second expedition did escape briefly and were held captive by a tribe of kuru cannibals dwelling in the mountains. Fearing that his men had already been disemboweled or eaten alive by the savage kuru, the Hurricane King sent a rescue party to investigate the matter and capture some of the kuru for interrogation. The kuru hostages they managed to seize, however, weaved an eerie tale, and stated that the explorers who made it out of the ziggurat were “possessed by the mountain” and thus were unfit even for eating, and eventually perished of hunger in a catatonic state. Their bodies were retrieved, but even spells such as *Speak with Dead* proved useless at discerning the fate of their party.

Temple of Xanthuun (CR 5–16): One of the most elusive ruins of Ghol-Gan, the Temple of Xanthuun was built for the oracles of the cyclopes empire who used the site to practice their twisted soothsaying and give praise to the alien gods they worshiped. Now, the vine-choked ruins of the temple-fortress stand amid sprawling jungles, and countless monsters have made their lairs in its half-flooded chambers and sunken catacombs. The ghost of Ammelon VI, the last patriarch of Ghol-Gan, continues to guard his greatest treasures from nosy adventurers, including his



wish-granting phoenix, which remains magically bound to the adjoining Golden Phoenix Aviary. For more information on the Temple of Xanthuun, see pages 32–33.

DEΠΙΖΕΠΣ AND DANGERS

Today, the descendants of the once prominent and widespread cyclopes of the Ghol-Gan empire are scattered throughout the Inner Sea region as well as the rest of Golarion. While many stayed behind to see their dying kingdom gasp its last breaths, the successors of these loyal soothsayers and emperors possess but a shadow of their former splendor. At best, the brutes most people of Golarion recognize as cyclopes are barbaric and temperamental. Few of their kind even realize they once commanded holdings all across western Garund, and even fewer strive to reclaim such glory; most express their frustration through violent outbursts, resembling beasts more than the civilized conquerors they used to be.

Of course, the results of postclassical Ghol-Gan's twisted experiments and monster-worship can still be found on the shores of Garund. Though none can say for sure how great cyclopes first came about, myths speak of their horned beasts lairing outside proper cyclops society even in Ghol-Gan's heyday. Now, the gigantic cyclops can

be found at the tops of mountains in the Terwa Uplands, as well as on some of the scattered islands of the Shackles. Mundane cyclopes worship their mysterious brethren through cultish reverence and sacrifice, in a manner similar to the bloodlettings of Ghol-Gan but lacking in both intensity and size. Some humans have even taken to following great cyclopes as they tromp through hills and valleys, regarding them as primordial ancestors with the ability to see both into the future and the past—such beliefs are largely misguided.

Ghol-Gan legends tell of strange, magic-infused members of their kind who possessed but a single leg and arm in addition to their monocular visage. The present-day Bonuwat people of the Mwangi refer to such monsters as *hai-huri*, or “the people of death,” and claim that they are the result of some misbegotten rite—bisected corpse-beings whose deaths are staved off only by constantly absorbing the guts of humanoid victims into their own bodies. The stolen organs inevitably spill out after their nutrients are sucked dry, forcing the *hai-huri* to hunt once again for fresh prey.

When the Ghol-Gani battled the serpentfolk in their underground realm of Reguare in Ghol-Gan's golden age, they also encountered the reptilian slavers' numerous



thralls, including primitive humans, dwarves, and elves. While such slaves were usually indiscriminately killed alongside their serpentine masters, it was from this corner of Nar-Voth that the jungle-dwelling dwarves known as the Mbe'ke emerged during the late years of the Age of Darkness. Though they were cut off from the rest of their dwarven kin during the cataclysmic Earthfall, the Mbe'ke continued their own Quest for Sky at about the same speed as dwarves in other parts of the Inner Sea, emerging somewhere in the Terwa Uplands. The Mbe'ke have scattered from that region in the millennia since their egress, but it is rumored that in the years just following their arrival at the surface, they constructed an impressive Sky Citadel in their tropical domain. Dwarven and human explorers alike have spent years searching for the missing Sky Citadel to no avail; the tropical flora that has no doubt grown over most of the ruins only makes the search harder as adventurers plunge through miles of hilly jungle to locate the lost city.

In the rocky archipelago of the Shackles, the most obvious threat to explorers comes from their fellow

vagabonds—pirates who care not for the delicacies of proper society, and instead adhere to a strictly carnivorous way of life, leaving none safe from their depredations. Perhaps even more dangerous than these treacherous captains and crew, however, are the denizens of the islands themselves. The kuru, a widespread tribe of warped, cannibalistic humans, were once peaceful natives of the Shackles, having located there from the Mwangi Jungle more than a thousand years ago. But as pirates made their homes on the islands, they pushed the native kuru peoples toward the western islands. The tribes steadily became more and more corrupted, twisted by the demented architecture and fiendish magic left by the Ghol-Gani on what became known as the Cannibal Isles, and were irrevocably turned to the brutal and self-destructive ways of the cyclopes. Now they plague the westernmost isles of the Shackles, abiding by the will of their foul, alien demigod, the Blood Queen.

Ngogas

In the tropical rainforests of the Kaava Lands and the Mwangi Jungle lurk animalistic offshoots of the cyclopes that once dominated the region. Known as ngogas, these half-orangutan, half-cyclops hybrids are infamous in the folktales of the Mwangi peoples, who fear them for their unpredictability and unnatural agility.

In cyclops legends, the ngogas were a gift to the Ghol-Gani from their otherworldly patrons near the collapse of the empire, magical beings infused with the brutality and insight afforded cyclopes, but lacking the intelligence that would make them viable competitors. Ghol-Gani soldiers often trained these beasts to follow them into battle and fight alongside them, and present-day cyclopes who encounter ngogas inevitably feel a sort of kinship to the similarly monocular beasts, enticing them with gifts of fruit and meat in order to gain an ally in their destructive conquests.

Since the fall of Ghol-Gan, ngogas have proliferated throughout the dense jungles of central Garund, and many of their kind can be found as deep as Usaro, where the destructive Gorilla King trains them as war-mounts for his smaller minions and relies on their bestial speed to stage ambushes against any who would dare to intrude upon his realm.



Ngoga

NGOGA

CR 7

XP 3,200

N Large magical beast

Init +9; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +7**Aura** stench (DC 18, 10 rounds)

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 14, flat-footed 15 (+5 Dex, +6 natural, -1 size)**hp** 85 (9d10+36)**Fort** +10, **Ref** +11, **Will** +6

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft., climb 40 ft.; burst of speed**Melee** bite +14 (1d8+6), 2 claws +14 (1d6+6)**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.**Special Attacks** rend (2 claws, 1d6+9)

STATISTICS

Str 23, **Dex** 20, **Con** 18, **Int** 2, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 9**Base Atk** +9; **CMB** +16; **CMD** 31**Feats** Improved Bull Rush, Improved Initiative, Improved Iron Will, Iron Will, Rending Claws***Skills** Climb +20, Perception +7, Stealth +7

ECOLOGY

Environment warm jungles**Organization** solitary, pair, or band (3–5)**Treasure** none

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Burst of Speed (Ex) Once every 1d4 rounds, a ngoga can summon a burst of energy in order to move twice its base speed in a single move action.* See the *Advanced Player's Guide*.

TREASURES AND REWARDS

Adventurers seeking to claim or barter unearthed Ghol-Gan antiquities must deal with the anarchic social conditions of the Shackles and Sodden Lands. Avaricious collectors such as the pirate lords of the Shackles are often more interested in Ghol-Gan's grotesque and magically potent relics rather than items that are merely refined or unique, and the generally "finders-keepers"-based economy of these regions means that excavators and Pathfinders can face hostile interest in their newfound discoveries even from supposed allies.

Very little evidence supports the idea that Ghol-Gan used any form of coinage or currency-based system. Though Azlanti monies have been found in some Ghol-Gan caches and sites, such relics appear to have been treated as trade goods based on their aesthetic value, bought and sold only to be used as decorative pieces in necklaces, bracelets, and crowns. Economic power in Ghol-Gan, at least in the better-known later period, lay in the hands of the tyrants and their chosen officers, with food and other necessities apportioned according to status as well as through a complex system of poorly understood auguries and superstitious rules. A certain ruthless determinism could decide the fate of any cyclops

within the empire, and there is some evidence of ex post facto justification for institutional corruption and greed.

Before the classical period, Ghol-Gan weapons and armor were generally fashioned from dinosaur bone, hide, obsidian, marble, limestone, and wood. Alongside their writing system, however, the Ghol-Gani of the classical period perfected the art of mining copper and tin, as well as the manufacture of bronze. These discoveries vastly strengthened their expansionist efforts and aided them in fights with the serpentfolk of the Darklands. In later years Ghol-Gan smiths learned to craft steel weapons that their oracles and seers could enchant with potent magic believed to have been granted by the celestial bodies they worshiped.

Crude alchemical devices and symbols have also been recovered from some Ghol-Gan temples, particularly those that took to worshiping demons and other horrid entities in the waning years of the empire. Such apparatuses were undoubtedly used in the countless experiments Ghol-Gani performed on captured hostages as well as their own kind, though the means of operating most of these tools and rudimentary machines were lost along with the rest of Ghol-Gan.

It is with stone that the cyclopes worked their greatest craftsmanship. In the earlier periods, the Ghol-Gani made carefully carved stone-scale armor and jade and obsidian jewelry. Many of these items have been found on the skeletons of the giants entombed deep below Ghol-Gan cities or within hidden grottoes in the mountains of the Shackles and Terwa Uplands. The most exalted of the cyclops ruler-priests were sometimes so covered in stone armor that they resembled recumbent statues—and weighed about as much as well. Because of the bulk of cyclops anatomy, many of these magical items are not usable by Medium-sized humanoids without skilled adaptation by magical crafters, though of course, ancient *ioun stones* and certain pieces of jewelry cause fewer problems. Some cyclops ornaments have been repurposed by discoverers of particularly small stature, such as the goblins of the Shackles, who wear Ghol-Gan bracelets, torques, and rings as clumsy-fitting collars, belts, and armbands.

Though the arcane and divine magic of the Ghol-Gan empire is still poorly understood by scholars, the fact remains that the cyclopes possessed access to unique and sometimes powerful spells. Of particular interest to present-day historians and explorers are the mysterious *disks of Ghol-Gan* (*Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Faction Guide* 59), which allowed the tyrants and seers of ancient Ghol-Gan to easily escape to safety during wartime with the serpentfolk. Many of the disks now rest in the hands of the pirate lords of the Shackles, but dozens more await discovery, and since each disk is keyed to a different location, there's no telling where one might end up if she should find herself in possession of such a powerful relic.



In the late years of the Ghol-Gan's postclassical period, many of the fiendish gifts granted to the Ghol-Gani by their alien gods stopped being boons to the cyclopes and instead became curses. Numerous pieces of such accursed equipment remain, yet to be found, including swords that hack their own wielder to pieces, boots that sink into stone, and gauntlets that destroy anything their wearer touches. The following helmet is a particularly nefarious piece of armor that may have contributed to the cannibalistic inclinations of the Ghol-Gani.

HELM OF IKIMIZI

Aura moderate enchantment; **CL** 7th
Slot head; **Weight** 3 lbs.

DESCRIPTION

The *helm of Ikimizi* grants its wearer a +4 circumstance bonus on attack rolls made to confirm critical hits. However, whenever the wearer threatens a critical hit (regardless of whether or not he actually succeeds), he immediately becomes berserk (gaining all the benefits and drawbacks of the barbarian's rage ability). For 1d4+1 rounds, he is compelled to attack the nearest creature until it has fallen, regardless of whether the target is friend or foe.

In addition, whenever the wearer of a *helm of Ikimizi* slays a creature, he must spend at least 1 full-round action feasting on the flesh of the fallen creature, heedless of anything or anyone else around him.

Once it is equipped, the *helm of Ikimizi* can only be removed by a *remove curse* spell.

CREATION

Magic Items *helm of comprehend languages and read magic, helm of telepathy, helm of underwater action*



ΧΑΠΤΗΥΥΠ ΑΝΔ ΤΗ ΓΟΛΔΕΠ ΡΗΟΕΠΙΧ ΑΒΙΑΡΥ

Flooded Ziggurat of the Last Cyclops

Location: Eribastos Peninsula in the eastern Sodden Lands

Master: Ammelon VI (CE male ghost cyclops sorcerer 15)

Notable Inhabitants: Crocodiles, gholdakos, ghosts, trolls, vermin

The Temple of Xanthuun, the redoubt and final resting place of the last true Ghol-Gan tyrant, Ammelon VI, lies mostly submerged off the coast of the Sodden Lands, west of where the Terwa River flows into the Abendego Gulf, near the head of the Eribastos Peninsula at the northeastern edge of old Ghol-Gan's borders. Nearly 80 miles of dense

swamp and rainforest surround the well-hidden ziggurat. The closest speck of civilization is the chaotic town of Julia to the southwest, and even the refugees of this flooded city avoid the cursed temple, whose remote location fortunately makes it nearly impossible to reach without a guide. The encroachment of the great lagoon that spreads below the pyramid has eaten away the surrounding complex of roads and symmetrical pools that once reflected the grandeur of Ammelon and his predecessors. Great, close-set trees and vast flooded chasms make for a circuitous route to the temple should one travel by land. The only relatively sane approach to the site is via the nearby estuary of the Terwa and along the coast by means of watercraft, and even this path is marked with myriad perils.

Hardy, knotted mangroves and palm trees of massive proportions surround the terrain directly around Xanthuun. The temple's lowermost entrance was barricaded by fallen pillars millennia ago, and was rendered even more inaccessible when the Eye of Abendego wrought havoc on the temple's exterior and flooded its base layers in over a hundred feet of standing saltwater. Now, giant swamp barracuda and black-hided crocodiles dwell in the murky lagoon surrounding the stairway to the temple's only viable entrance.

Since the publication of the 13th volume of the *Pathfinder Chronicles*—which details Pathfinder Escobar Vellian's bold journey into the heart of the Temple of Xanthuun—numerous adventurers and explorers hoping to garner a piece of the hoard for themselves have plumbed the depths of the ziggurat, with almost all failing to ever return. How exactly Escobar managed to escape the undead legions of cyclopes that remain in the temple is anyone's guess, and the fact that he delved into the temple before its flooding by the Eye has led many to believe it was not nearly so perilous as had been believed. Now, however, the treasures of Ammelon VI and his kingdom lie buried beneath tons of rubble and muck left by the onslaught of the Eye. The flooding of the temple has forced any denizens not capable of breathing underwater to the higher levels of the fortress, including horrid beasts brought to Golarion by the alien gods of late Ghol-Gan and left to rot, as well as all manner of cave-dwelling vermin that make their home in the ruins.

The relatively dry upper chambers of Xanthuun have seen the most pillaging by explorers, and the monsters that dwell here have been thinned out by numerous adventuring parties, some of whom can still be found in the form of scattered bones and ragged remains where they were caught

by predators. Most recently, a small band of scraggs have made their lair on the entrance level of Xanthuun with their pack of voracious trollhounds. The scraggs have been at odds with a territorial hodag that dwells on the crumbling level below ever since the beast confronted them when they commandeered the upper chambers, and a resolution between the two forces seems unlikely for the time being.

A few layers lower, aquatic cave dwellers and deadly fungi have taken root in what were once the expansive entheogen halls of Xanthuun, where cyclops seers once meditated in clouds of hallucinogenic incense. Now, the chambers are half-flooded, and the ornate furniture that once decorated the rooms has long ago crumbled to dust. A clutch of tojanidas has taken a particular liking to these chambers in recent years; they managed to salvage some well-preserved spiritual drugs of Ghol-Gan and make use of the incense for their own amusements. Phantom fungi and globsters also roam these sunken layers, consuming whatever vermin and nutrients they can suck from the grimy floors and walls.

The catacombs beneath the temple have survived the onslaught of time and flooding remarkably well, and many barricaded areas form underground pockets of stagnant but breathable air, slowly replenished through half-collapsed tunnels, where trapped monsters have made their lairs for centuries or even millennia. Deathwebs, ghouls, and totenmaskes are but a few of the lifeless horrors that dwell in Xanthuun's shadowy underbelly. Perhaps most fearsome of all, though, are the gholdakos, undead cyclopes who continue to protect their designated wards even after death. (More information and stats for gholdakos can be found in *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Isles of the Shackles*.)

The so-called Reprieve of the Forever King lies at the bottommost level of the crypts, and is where the trapped and insane ghost of Ammelon VI resides in his undead state. The Reprieve's ebon walls—carved from a massive chunk of obsidian extracted from the once-active volcanoes west of Xanthuun—are bedraggled with the muck of a century of near-flooding, and if not for the enormous, broken vault doors behind Ammelon's throne that provide just enough drainage, the entire adytum would surely be submerged in water. The thick stone doors lead to an extensive tunnel that spans a number of miles, terminating in a staircase that leads up and outside into the mythical Golden Phoenix Aviary, where Ammelon spends most of his time when not brooding in the Reprieve.

The Golden Phoenix Aviary is a vast grotto that stands as magnificent testament to the glory of the Ghol-Gan empire. Well hidden in the depths of the surrounding jungle and obscured from the outside world by a grand *screen* spell that Ammelon constantly renews, the aviary has proved impossible

to find by any means save through the Temple of Xanthuun itself. Lush figs, kapoks, coconut trees, and other verdant flora thrive in abundance here, and provide shade for the garden's most illustrious feature—a beautiful phoenix by the name of Erenkrest whose white feathers are edged with gold. The phoenix is renowned not only for the sheer majesty of her fiery species, but also because it is said she is capable of granting wishes to mortals. Before Ghol-Gan collapsed and was annihilated by Earthfall, Ammelon managed to capture the mythical Erenkrest and wished that she would stay in his aviary until his soul departed the Material Plane. It has been millennia since the two made their pact, but Erenkrest remains true to her magical oath, never straying far from the Golden Phoenix Aviary, but always hoping for someone to slay Ammelon's ghost and free her from her pledge.



Temple of Xanthuun



JISTKA IMPERIUM

PRAISE BE TO THE SCARLET-ARTIFICERS,
WHOSE BLOODSHED FUELS THE FOUNDRIES
AND WHO SUP AT THE NEGLECTED BREAST OF CARNAGE.

PRAISE BE TO THE METAL-ARTIFICERS,
WHOSE CASTINGS MOLD THE MACHINES
AND WHO GIVE SHAPE TO THOSE THAT WILL CONQUER.

AND PRAISE BE TO THE PRIEST-ARTIFICERS,
WHOSE VILE PATRONS STRENGTHEN THE STONE
AND WHO IN DARKNESS BRING JISTKA BLAZING GLORY.

—FROM A JISTKAN ETCHING FOUND IN RACHIKAN,
CIRCA -3500 AR

The technologically adept and ruthlessly expansionistic nation known as the Jistka Imperium was the first major human civilization to emerge after Earthfall and the subsequent ash-clouded Age of Darkness. Though it endured for a mere 700 years before its demise, the empire was highly influential in bringing humanity back to the surface of Golarion—albeit through conquest and dominion—and at its peak Jistka's borders spanned from current-day southern Chelias to eastern Rahadoum. The rise of Ancient Osirion eventually spelled the downfall of Jistka in -2764 AR, and since then the ancient kingdom's ruins have remained largely unexplored, most having been destroyed by soldiers of Ancient Osirion or buried beneath the desert sands.

HISTORY OF JISTKA

Though Jistka itself was highly advanced in the fields of sciences and civil ideologies, its history relied more on legend and hearsay than actual fact. All citizens—even scholars—used an ancient series of texts known as the *Poleiheira* to trace their heritage to a small group of primitive mythological hero-figures referred to as the Ancestors, who lived sometime in the late years of the Age of Darkness and up to the founding of the Jistka Imperium. In the times of the first Ancestors, humans had just begun to reemerge from their protective caves and subterranean dwellings to once again walk the ash-strewn lands of Golarion. During this bleak era, perpetual clouds of soot and dust still blanketed the sky, and only those tribes of humans dwelling near the equinox were able to stand the constant chill of a land without a reliable sun to provide light and heat.

Among these scattered tribes was that of the clever and ruthless hero Tiandra. She focused her squabbling and unorganized pastoral tribe and its immediately neighboring peoples on exacting revenge against a select Azlanti citadel that still stood on the nearby shores of the Arcadian Ocean in defiance of the chaos wrought by Earthfall. A scant few Azlanti remained in this crooked and swiftly decaying tower, having endured nearly a thousand years of darkness in their lonely fortress with little intrusion. Tiandra and her primitive tribe had seen the tower and thought to claim it, superstitiously thinking that whoever dwelled within it must have brought the plague that was Earthfall and its subsequent era of ash, and wanting that power for themselves.

The Azlanti survivors, starving and demoralized, put up only the most pathetic of a resistance, and were quickly slaughtered by the needlessly enraged Tiandra. She ordered her fellow tribespeople to gather what few remaining relics they could find in the citadel—including books, furniture, and whatever else they could carry off—burn the building down, and hide the

commandeered artifacts in a cave complex sacred to the Ancestors, so they could study the power they had just inherited. However, the Ancestors were illiterate, and even the wisest among the tribespeople proved unequal to the task of interpreting the “magic scratches.” And so the writings and relics of Azlant were promptly forgotten, with generations passing before anyone would ever set their eyes on these pieces of the past again.

According to Jistkan hagiography, it was an inquisitive and strange young man named Arustun who, along with his older brother Ejanos, rediscovered the Azlanti treasures in the Cave of Tiandra in approximately -4160 AR. Ejanos initially snatched up the scrolls and opened their seals with the intention of using them for kindling, but Arustun knew these strange findings held too much importance to be burned as fuel, and so he contested his brother's claim. A fight swiftly broke out between them, with Arustun inadvertently slaying his brother in his attempt to take the relics. With his elder's death, however, Arustun suddenly gained the ability to understand the writings and gleaned more than he could possibly have imagined, quickly absorbing all there was to know from these sparse treasures of Azlanti lore while in the cave. Whether the source of his ability to interpret such texts was sheer acumen or the divine favor of some elder god that smiled upon the murderous brother, none can say, but when the young man brought his newfound knowledge back to his tribespeople, he also brought with him the gift of civilization. Arustun's miraculous insight that turned the Azlanti scrawls into a readable text enabled Jistka to take the first steps out of subsistence in the dark and into the coming sunrise. But the fragments of knowledge were not enough to sate Arustun's newfound hunger for enlightenment.

Along with help from his friend Venistos and his wife Mirnura, Arustun crafted a ship for himself and his favored companions to sail the Inner Sea, and for years he traveled from shore to shore in search of knowledge that would enhance what he had gleaned from Tiandra's stolen Azlanti texts. From the shadowbound warrior-lords of ancient Nidal to the magnificent Sky Citadels of the dwarves, Arustun's travels took him far across the lands of Avistan and Garund, and he recruited numerous allies in his quest for civilization. During this time, he recorded everything he saw and learned—as well as the legends of his people—in his extensive journals, tomes that would later be referred to collectively as the *Poleiheira*. After he had exhausted those lands around the Inner Sea, the talented hero even managed to learn some of the forgotten magic of the fallen Azlanti and Thassilonian wizards, and used the arcana to travel the planes, most notably that of the Eternal City of Axis. It was there that Arustun finalized his plans for the empire



he had received visions of building. After his long odyssey he returned home in -4120 AR with scores of foreign associates and newfound allies in tow. He would name the capital of the Jistka Imperium after his beloved wife, who had remained at the site of his departure and helmed the construction of the city during his absence.

The tales of Arustun and his companions were known throughout Jistka thanks to the widely printed *Poleiheira*, and while most Jistkans regarded some of Arustun's more fantastical stories as somewhat exaggerated, all cherished the books as the first heralds of civilization since the mysterious cataclysm that had brought on the Age of Darkness. The *Poleiheira* formed the basis for the early Jistkan government, an imperialistic monarchy focused primarily on expansion and technological advancement, heedless of the blood spilt in the process of such endeavors. The ruler of Jistka was called the inperantike—a title equivalent to emperor—with the first inperantike cited as being Arustun. Subsequent inperantikes were selected from among the most dignified Jistkan military officers or members of the magistrate, and the individual was ratified by the Honorat—the eldest and highest-ranking officials of the Imperium at the death of the previous incumbent.

Thanks largely to Arustun's planar travels, Jistka was home to powerful, magic-wielding magistrates who made pacts with otherworldly allies (particularly genies) to guard the nation's borders and spread its influence. The scriptures' depictions of inevitables, the judge-servants of Axis, led to the development of Jistka's infamous artificer caste. The artificers crafted increasingly elaborate mechanisms and golem guardians for the Jistka Imperium, using summoning magic to call forth elementals whose spirits they bound to their constructs.

During the middle period of the Jistka Imperium, these two factions—the magistrates and the artificers—constantly clashed and vied for power, with the former relying on political maneuvering and extraplanar allegiances to gain the upper hand, and the latter concentrating their efforts on the manufacture of

golems and other highly advanced war machines. As the Jistka Imperium expanded, the magistrates firmly established their most prominent holdings in northern Garund, where genies were noticeably more prevalent, and they often put efreet and warlike shaitans at the command of their impressive armies of Jistkan legionnaires. Though many magistrates knew the risks involved with hiring such powerful outsiders to command their soldiers, few doubted their ability to control outsiders or heeded the warnings of their advisors, as the prospect of supremacy and domination blinded them to their own hazardous ventures.



The artificers, on other hand, built the majority of their golemworks factories in the Jistkan territories of southern Avistan. An intricate caste system separated artificers into different levels of influence and importance. The worker-artificers made up the lowest class of miners, forgers, and other laborers, and these citizens typically held the least power. Priest-artificers were revered as much for their connections to the Outer Planes as for their prowess with divine magic, and they

often practiced their prayers and miracles at vast temple-forges, where they would bless particularly powerful golems with powers granted by their mysterious gods. Judge-artificers commanded the legions of golem soldiers that served as northern Jistka's armies, and it was they who first started using the Imperium's legendary *ivory batons* to control the automaton troops.

The distinct rift between the magistrates and artificers of Jistka had profound effects on the rest of the nation as well, as in its later years corruption became rampant in the upper echelons of Jistkan society, even as far up as the position of the inperantike itself. Though the inperantike was not formally determined via a hereditary line, rulers found it to their personal benefit to name their successor in a testament upon honorable retirement rather than letting others make the decision upon their death, and thus many children and kin found themselves thrust into the headship of Jistka by rulers who sought to keep their family in power. Political magnates and military victors married into an



increasingly entangled web of genealogies, houses, and clans, generally called the “imperial houses.” Before long, forged testaments and assassins were the major tools of ascendancy utilized by would-be imperantikes—all of whom boasted real or faked connections to royal lineages as part of their justification for power. Scholars of the time warned their leaders that given such corruption and the rapid rate at which the empire was expanding, it could not possibly support its scattered and varied peoples for long. To make matters worse, signs of civilization to the east were sure to hinder Jistka’s economic arrangements with distant trading partners. None of the nation’s rulers were willing to halt or even slow their efforts, however, and with each passing decade the political structure of Jistka weakened as the empire spread itself thin.

It wasn’t until –3470 AR with the emergence of Ancient Osirion to the east that the rulers of Jistka realized they may have overestimated their own nation’s importance. The imperium’s genies began to betray the Jistkans both of their own accord and after being enslaved by Ancient Osirion’s necromancers, the Usij. At this point, both the artificers and the magistrates of Jistka knew it was time to put aside their petty squabbling and act. The talented engineers and binders of the golemworks consulted their priest-artificers, who made pacts with the rulers of the evil Outer Planes to bolster their legions of golems. By infusing the constructs with fiend-tainted compounds and fueling them with the spirits of daemons, devils, and demons, the artificers were able to make semi-intelligent behemoth golems that could stand against Ancient Osirion’s divs and necromantic elemental outsiders. Meanwhile, the magistrates built towering fortresses along their borders, including wonders such as the Jaizun Citadel, to focus the powers of their elementalists and their extraplanar allies, and crafted potent items such as the *rings of the weary sky* to control wild elementals.

These developments came too late, however. When the Pharaoh of Forgotten Plagues and his cruel necromantic advisors captured a particularly powerful efreeti commander from the armies of Jistka in –3064 AR, they turned the outsider into a terrifying undead ghul and made him the carrier of a disease called the Night Plague. This deadly affliction specifically affected only the members of Jistka’s widespread and convoluted royal houses, and when the enslaved genie traitor beset these nobles with the plague, it was only a matter of time before their previous feuds reemerged amid the resulting chaos. These feuds were further fueled by the plague’s revelations about which self-proclaimed royal houses were legitimate and which were frauds. Over the next 3 centuries, the winnowing of the Jistkans’ most able rulers eroded further into infighting and then all-out succession wars, which finally spelled that empire’s

ultimate doom. The rulers of Ancient Osirion—with the help of their new allies among the Tekritanin League—either absorbed or obliterated the Garundi holdings of Jistka, and those scattered peoples who did not submit to their new rulers’ whims either perished or fled, leaving their once-powerful Imperium in shambles and its treasures and lore lost to history.

JISTKA TODAY

Little remains of the sprawling Jistka Imperium, its cities either having been burned to rubble by legions of Ancient Osirian and Tekritanin soldiers or buried beneath the history-erasing sands of the Rahadoumi desert. The conquerors who spelled the end for Jistka cared little for the failing empire they absorbed, destroying countless acres of farmlands and settlements in their efforts to wipe the empire from the history books. Ancient Osirion’s devastating touch can still be seen in the landscapes even today—the Path of Salt on Rahadom’s northern shores still proves infertile thousands of years after its razing, and the once-mighty Jaizun Citadel (now known as the Citadel of the Weary Sky) is little more than a crater after Ahriman, the Lord of Divs himself, snuffed the tower from existence.

Many of the ruins that did remain in the wake of Jistka’s collapse were used by the Ancient Osirians to build their own metropolises, which would later become Rahadoumi holdings millennia afterward. In southern Avistan, the towering golemworks and forge-cities steadily crumbled as their artificer masters abandoned the structures, and a series of violent earthquakes near the end of the imperium’s demise buried many Jistkan temple-foundries beneath tons of dirt and rock. Some conspiracy-minded scholars speculate that the fiend-tainted golems constructed in the later years of the Jistka Imperium may possess some link to the rise of infernal rule in modern-day Cheliox, but most researchers dismiss the idea as preposterous, citing a distinct lack of evidence.

The Chelish cities of Corentyn and Westcrown both sport several pieces of Jistkan architecture in some of their buildings, and in 4589 the Hellknights reorganized their ranks after the legions of Jistka. For the most part, however, this ancient empire has had little influence on the nations of the Inner Sea today, and its touch can only be felt clearly when one delves in the buried ruins of its cities, where ancient golems still protect lost treasures for masters who have long since perished.

Cave of Tiandra (CR 4): Though the specific location of the legendary Cave of Tiandra is still hotly debated among Jistkan historians, the most widely agreed upon theory places the cavern northeast of what is now Manaket on the Inner Sea coast of Rahadom. The formation these scholars claim as the legendary cave at first appears to be little more than a hillside grotto with but a single



chamber, its stony walls mostly barren and its low ceiling eroded in parts to form tiny skylights. However, a barely discernible, narrow pitch in the back of the entrance chamber reveals there is much more to the cavern than meets the eye, for beneath the initial level lies a vast network of tunnels, dens, and hollows, with soaring drops and high-ceilinged domes creating a winding maze throughout the entire hillside and beyond. While the damp cave complex's primary occupants are bats, scorpions, and other underground-dwelling vermin, the presence of crysmals has led many scholars to believe this primordial cave once possessed some link to the Plane of Earth and perhaps other planes, possibly hinting at how Arustun gleaned such insight from the relics he found there. The oozy writings of a mysteriously absent troupe of flail snails seems to support the hypothesis of old extraplanar gates, but further studies into the matter have been put to a halt, as the discovery of a large band of vile cloaklers and monstrous fungal crawlers has impeded scholars' efforts to explore the primordial cave.

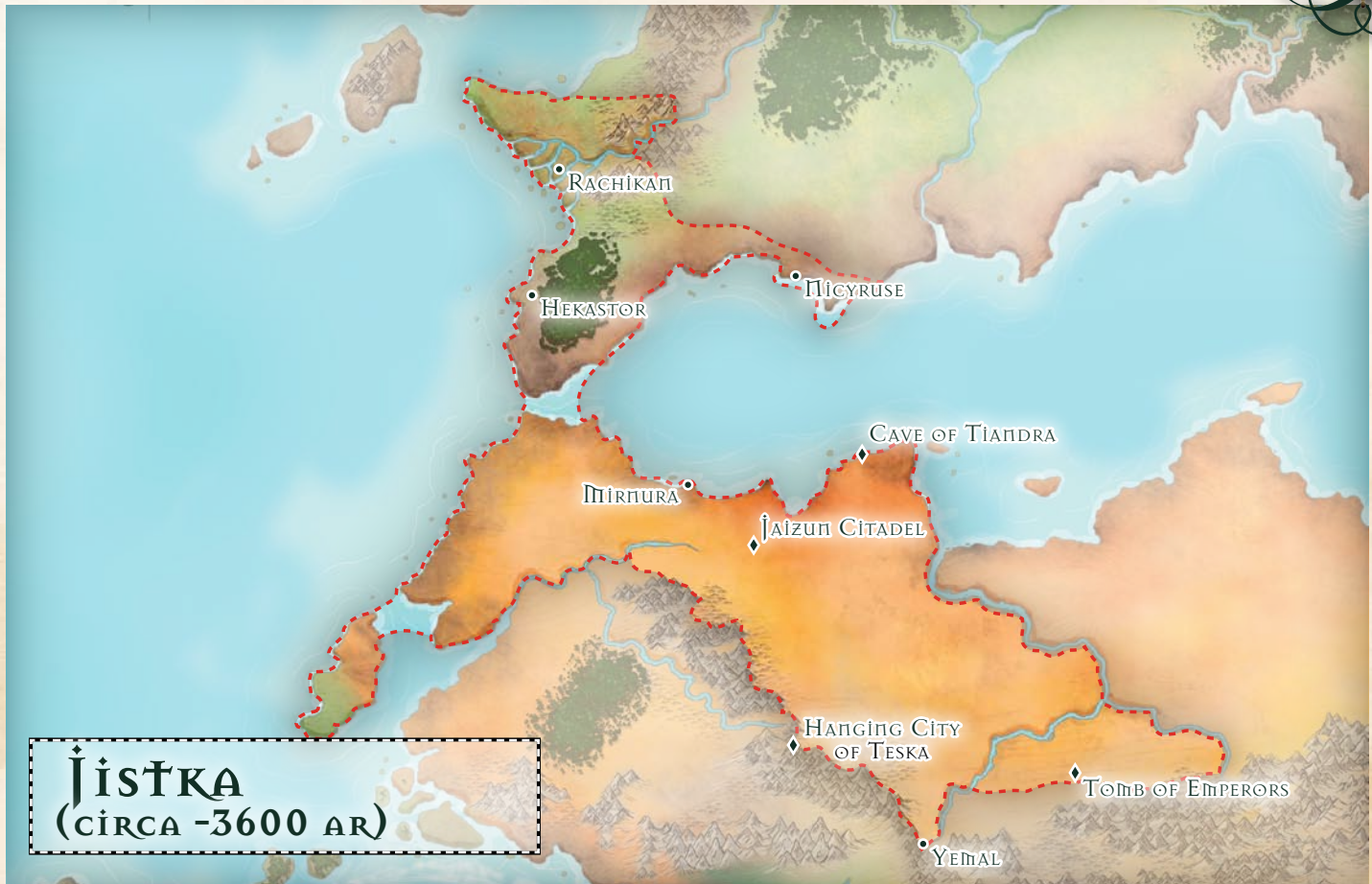
Hanging City of Teskra (CR 10): The wondrous Hanging City of Teskra was commissioned by Inperantike Rakiendos in -3429 AR, who had traveled as a youth to the fabled Eternal Oasis west of Jistka's borders and sought to emulate the proverbial paradise in a metropolis of his own design. The city garnered its name from its numerous stone suspension bridges and vast marble tunnel networks, which connect the 21 mountaintops that surround the valley below. Its bejeweled Pleasure Gardens and flocks of mechanical animals were famous among affluent Jistkans for a time, but a mysterious, sinister magic caused its residents to vanish long before the Imperium's collapse. Since then, the accursed Hanging City has largely remained abandoned except for the mechanical beasts and humanlike automatons that still dwell in its cavernous halls. For more information on the Hanging City of Teskra, see pages 42–43.

Lost Yemal (CR 16): When the armies of Ancient Osirion and the Tekritanin League overwhelmed the Jistka Imperium, the leaders of the falling empire sought to hide their most precious relics and pieces of history in their southernmost settlement of Yemal, hoping its remoteness would sway invaders from completely demolishing the town. A small team of priest-artificers and high magistrates was assigned the task of accompanying a single, massive chest known as Jistka's Hope to Yemal and placing it in a heavily fortified tomb there. But the team of guardians reached the tomb of Yemal only to be ambushed by Tekritanin troops, and none escaped alive—for when the foolhardy marauders followed the Jistkan escorts into the tomb, the monument's brass door closed shut on all of them, and the fleeing citizens of Yemal could only make out the victims' unholy screams as whatever dire magic the

crypt and Jistka's Hope possessed consumed their bodies, minds, and spirits in white flame. Though the town of Yemal was eventually razed like the rest of Jistka, the tomb of Jistka's Hope yet remained, unscathed by fire and hammer alike, and it is thought that should any prove able to open the door to the crypt, they would undoubtedly find untold fortunes and relics dating back to the Imperium's prime. That, or they would discover the same fatal end as those who sought to steal the treasures of ancient Jistka.

Mirnura (CR 14): Once the capital of Jistka, Mirnura was situated on what is now the northern coast of Rahadoum, on the Fallen Peninsula north of the Path of Salt. It was a key target in Ancient Osirion's campaign to utterly destroy the Jistkan empire, and when they burned it to the ground they salted the lands around it—supposedly using over 2 million tons of salt to eradicate all signs of life, according to the ancient journals of one Ancient Osirian lieutenant. The epic razing gave the region its current name, and though few flora and fauna can subsist here now, hints of the destroyed city remain buried beneath the sands. Monuments made of solid jet peak out of the ground during powerful sandstorms, and the vaults of Jistka's rulers are thought to show themselves to individuals of royal Jistkan descent, though hopefuls seeking these sites of fortune almost always return empty-handed—if they return at all. One vault of epic depths, dubbed the Halite Crypt by treasure hunters, is of especial notoriety, for it is said that a Jistkan behemoth golem by the name of Helatoros still protects the farthest reaches of the place, and the bones of would-be intruders litter the salt-ridden slabs of granite at the foot of the golem's mythic Spire of the Invalid.

Nicyruse (CR 5): The ancient city of Nicyruse was once a major player in the artificers' bid for power among the nobles of Jistka, as it housed one of the largest temple-forges in all the Imperium, rivaling even that of Rachikan. However, when Jistka's end became imminent and whatever foul gods the priest-artificers worshiped stopped smiling upon them, the demise of Nicyruse was swift—divine earthquakes tore the region apart and forever extinguished the fires of the temple-forge. Now, the seaside ruins of Nicyruse have mostly eroded away in the surf of the Inner Sea, but recent reports among the Chelish fisherfolk of Hinji state that a recent storm has cleared a new entrance to the buried site. Some locals claim that squat, mechanical creatures now shamble up and down the shoreline near the ruins, grabbing fish from the ocean with their bare hands and taking the things back to their fallen city, but whether these rumors are true or are merely hallucinations induced by the townsfolk's favored drug, called "ice tears," few can say. The Pathfinder Society has expressed a desire for intrepid adventurers to explore the ruins and bring back any information about lost Jistka, but so far few have dared to take up the job.



DEΠΙΖΕΠΣ ΑΠΔ ΔΑΠΓΕΡΣ

Unlike lost kingdoms such as Ancient Osirion, whose memories remain corporeal in the form of their embalmed rulers and the murals inscribed on their pyramid walls, the ruins of the Jistka Imperium are haunted by ghosts and other phantoms that hold fractured and imperfect recollections of the empire. The countless constructs of Jistka's fabled Artificers are perhaps the most infamous of the denizens that still dwell within Jistka's crumbled fortresses and sand-buried metropolises. Golems occupied myriad stations in Jistkan society—from miniature mechanical actors that reenacted religious and historical scenes for audiences' amusement, to the empire's grim sentinels and black-masked executioners—and so many of these undying beings can still be found in places rife with Jistkan lore.

In what is now southwestern Chelias, monstrous beings of flesh and stone alike plague the ruins of the legendary artificers' golemworks, including those foundries in the buried cities of Rachikan, Perovar, and Hekastol. After divine earthquakes buried the Jistkans of these and other Avistani holdings and brought ruin to their forge-cities, some of the imprisoned citizens slowly evolved into

morlocks over the millennia. Such monsters still dwell near their crumbling temple-foundries, worshipping foul ancestor-spirits they scarcely understand.

The most notorious of Jistka's automaton inventions were the fiendish behemoth golems, whose connection to the evil Outer Planes brought them incredible power of an unholy nature, and whose mammoth size and bestial visages struck fear into the hearts of whoever witnessed them. Jistkans came to rely on these four-legged constructs when the armies of the Tekritanin League and Ancient Osirion overpowered their simpler, mass-produced golems derived from the spirits of elementals, and while the war-machines were costly, they provided the generals of Jistka with the additional military power they needed to maintain their ground for several more decades. These elephantine goliaths were incredibly hardy, and many survive today in one form or another, dwelling in ruined cities as well as the vast, underground canyons along the coast of both Garund and Avistan near the Arch of Aroden.

Among the myriad otherworldly visitors that frequent Jistkan ruins, jann are the most prevalent, as they enjoy both the desert climate and the solitude such ruins afford them. Jann of a more scholarly bent scour the remains



of Jistkan citadels and elemental temples for their connection to the elemental planes, and bands of jann sometimes search for signs of efreeti presence to root out the foul outsiders. Of particular note is a nomadic tribe of jann that has recently settled down in the previously abandoned city of Syrasis. The band's leader is an exiled noble by the name of **Sheikh Benizere** (LN female noble janni sorcerer 3), who decided this was her tribe's promised land after she fell in love with the city's cracked but fully functional Celestial Pools—naturally and artificially formed staircases, arches, and waterways, made primarily of travertine deposited by the springs of the Napsune Mountains. Benizere's followers mutter that their leader

has been acting oddly ever since they arrived at the Pools, and some of her closest companions report that they've seen her staring at a mysterious stone idol in the lower chambers of the park after dark.

Nomadic Rahadoumi tribes that roam the Napsune Mountains speak of other beings frequenting the halls of the benighted Jistkans—jackalweres, gorgons, and worse. Jistkan cavalry often used a desert-dwelling breed of bulettes as steeds when they charged into combat, and many of these fearsome creatures still roam the hilly regions, their ancestors having long ago broken out of their pens and proliferated throughout the area. Desert bulettes are similar to the more typical breed of their kind, but have a sunset-orange hue to their shells, giving them a +8 racial bonus on Stealth checks in deserts, as well as resistance to fire 5.



Behemoth Golem

BEHEMOTH GOLEM

CR 17

XP 102,400

N Colossal construct

Init -1; Senses darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +2

DEFENSE

AC 31, touch 1, flat-footed 31 (-1 Dex, +30 natural, -8 size)

hp 206 (23d10+80)

Fort +7, Ref +6, Will +9

DR 15/adamantine; Immune construct traits, magic

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee gore +31 (4d8+16), 2 slams +31 (3d6+16)

Space 30 ft.; Reach 30 ft.

Special Attacks quake, trample (3d6+24, DC 37)

STATISTICS

Str 42, Dex 9, Con —, Int —, Wis 15, Cha 1

Base Atk +23; CMB +47; CMD 56 (60 vs. trip)

SQ castle

ECOLOGY

Environment temperate and warm deserts

Organization solitary

Treasure incidental

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Castle (Ex) A behemoth golem has a small stronghold built onto its back. Up to eight Medium creatures can occupy this tower by climbing onto the behemoth golem with a DC 25 Climb check (DC 10 if the golem is willing). A creature occupying the tower can choose either to hide in the castle's interior, gaining total cover as long as it remains within the structure but losing the ability to attack anything outside of the tower, or to stand on the parapet around the perimeter of the tower, gaining partial cover thanks to the battlement surrounding the walkway. A behemoth golem's castle moves with the creature itself, and though creatures occupying the castle count as occupying the same square

as the golem, they cannot be engaged in melee unless their opponent is also occupying the castle.

A behemoth golem can shake off unwanted occupants by making a combat maneuver check as a full-round action; any creatures currently occupying the castle must succeed at a Reflex save (DC equal to the result of the behemoth golem's combat maneuver check). Creatures standing on the parapet that fail their save fall out of the castle, landing in the nearest empty square and taking 5d6 points of falling damage (6d6 if standing on the uppermost parapet); creatures hiding within the castle that fail their saves are jumbled about and take 10d6 points of bludgeoning damage (Reflex DC for half damage).

- Immunity to Magic (Su)** A behemoth golem is immune to any spell or spell-like ability that allows spell resistance. In addition, certain spells and abilities function differently against the creature.
- A *stone to flesh* spell negates a behemoth golem's damage reduction for 1 round.
 - A *transmute rock to mud* spell slows a behemoth golem as the *slow* spell for 1d4 rounds (no save).
 - A magical attack that deals acid damage heals 1 point of damage for each 3 points of damage the attack would otherwise deal. If the amount of healing would cause the golem to exceed its full normal hit points, it gains any excess as temporary hit points. A behemoth golem gets no save against acid effects.

Quake (Su) As a standard action once per day, a behemoth golem can stomp its two front feet down, creating a ripple of destruction in a 60-foot cone. This effect is otherwise identical to *earthquake* (caster level 17th).

Behemoth golems are elephantine constructs once crafted by the artificers of the ancient Jistka Imperium. Rather than use elemental spirits to fuel the constructs' animation, artificers made pacts with demons, daemons, and devils from the evil Outer Planes, and bound their spirits to these titanic horrors to bring them to life. Though from a distance they resemble armored mammoths with a castle attached to their back, a behemoth golem's flesh is in fact made of tons of mined stone, and its tusks and teeth are carved from rare minerals similar in density to ivory.

The main body of a behemoth golem is 40 feet tall, with the highest part of the tower reaching 60 feet.

Construction

While the methods for creating a behemoth golem are largely considered lost along with so much Jistkan lore, a character who finds herself in possession of one of Jistka's fabled *behemoth golem manuals* gains the knowledge required to construct such a mammoth being. A behemoth golem is built from 70,000 pounds of rocks and rare minerals treated with profane oils worth 25,000 gp.

BEHEMOTH GOLEM

CL 18th; Price 305,000 gp

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Construct, *earthquake*, *geas/quest*, *mage's magnificent mansion*, *wish*, creator must be at least caster level 18th; **Skill** Craft (stonemasonry) and Knowledge (history) DC 26; **Cost** 165,000 gp

TREASURES AND REWARDS

Among the artificers of the Jistka Imperium, golems and other war machines were not the only creations that exemplified their peoples' technological prowess. In addition to their infamous construct soldiers, talented crafters among the merchant-artificer caste frequently produced humanoid and bestial simulacra of a mechanical nature, simple automatons that populated city streets and roamed hillsides as much as real people and animals.

One of the more famous examples of Jistkan mechanical creativity was the work of the artisan Akamale, whose devotion to making metal "think," as he put it, led to a series of masterpieces, each surpassing the last in terms of technical ingenuity. Akamale was abducted by royal guards and forced to live as a slave-artist for Inperantike Rakiendos (famed for Teskra) until his master's disappearance 7 years later, at which point he relocated to the town of Syrasis, where he lived in obscurity.

Only after Akamale's mysterious fall from the cliff of Daskianos and presumed death was it discovered that the artisan's young wife and children were not in fact flesh and blood, but rather were mechanical replicas of human forms clad in treated hog flesh. Following the dismemberment of his "son," his pseudo-wife and -daughters were sold to a museum curator in Mirnura, and remained as marvels to be ogled at by paying customers and aristocrats until the complete destruction of the city by Ancient Osirion. Akamale's skillful work and the quality of his materials led collectors all over Jistka to take great pride in owning anything made by the artist, and a number of his zoomorphic constructs still reside in private galleries and menageries buried beneath the Rahadoumi desert—or are yet living among people and in the wilds, their artificial nature sometimes unknown even to themselves.

Other much-valued relics of Jistka include the full text of the *Poleiheira*—including the sections condemned by the rulers of Rahadom (now encrypted and known as the *Yemalan Codex*), remnants of which have been broken into several folios and placed in the hands of various collectors; the *ivory batons* of the golem-commanding Artificers and Magistrates; the *behemoth golem manuals*, which detail the precise means by which one might construct the fearsome brutes; and the sacred panoplies of Jistka's



proud legionnaires, trappings highly sought after by their spiritual heirs, the Hellknights of Cheliax.

The legendary Tomb of Emperors in eastern Rahadom is known to have housed the most splendid of the luxuries and treasures famous of Jistkan artisans, though most of the offering chambers were looted by Ancient Osirian invaders long ago. Whereas the clerics of Ancient Osirion venerated the bodies of their rulers with exacting embalment rituals, the more pragmatic Jistkans were practitioners of cremation, a process thought to release the soul to the gods in the heavens above. Because Arustun argued that the afterlife was inconsequential to proper Jistkan morality—since one’s choices in life should define one’s worth, and piety should be a continual, community-based activity rather than an internalized conviction—those haughty rulers who chose to have their remains enshrined here were often looked down upon by adherents to the teachings of the *Poleiheira*. Nevertheless, overly prideful inperantikes often demanded that their urns be placed in the enormous crypt along with heaps of their family heirlooms and treasures.

The Tomb—a sprawling, colonnaded structure built at the Oasis of Xerapsion—was originally dedicated to the fifth ruler of that kingdom, Inperantike Eraliskos, after her death at the concluding battle at Xerapsion that brought much of the region east of the Uta under the Imperium’s rule. Its isolation and magnificence were proverbial among the wandering desert tribes, and it became the headquarters of an entire legion recruited from their number. Though the Ancient Osirians and their div allies profaned the surface of the structure during the era of the Night Plague, the Tekritani refused to further pillage it for fear of vengeful spirits, leaving many of its lower depths and extensive catacombs untouched.

The following magic items are some of the more commonly encountered relics of the Jistka Imperium.

BEHEMOTH GOLEM MANUAL

Aura strong conjuration, enchantment, and evocation; **CL** 18th
Slot none; **Price** 70,000 gp; **Weight** 5 lbs.

DESCRIPTION

This book contains *earthquake*, *geas/quest*, *mage’s magnificent mansion*, and *wish*. The reader may treat her caster level as two levels higher than normal for the purpose of crafting a behemoth golem.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Construct, creator must be caster level 18th, *earthquake*, *geas/quest*, *mage’s magnificent mansion*, *wish*;
Cost 35,000 gp

IVORY BATON

Aura strong enchantment; **CL** 18th
Slot none; **Price** 40,000 gp; **Weight** 6 lbs.

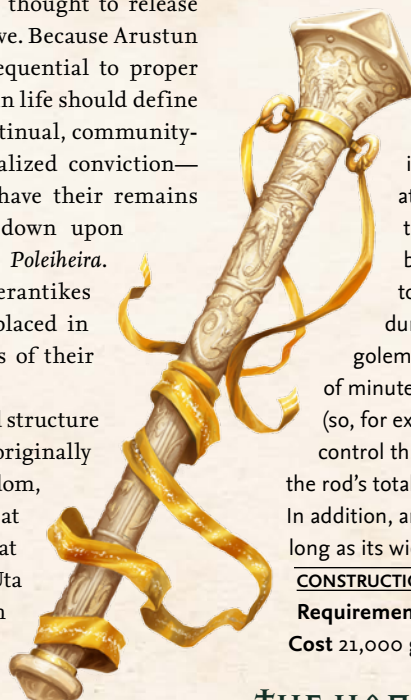
DESCRIPTION

This white, slender rod is engraved with decorative emblems of elephants, jackals, alligators, and other wild beasts, and is worth 2,000 gp because of its masterful craftsmanship. The wielder can command the obedience of golems within 120 feet when she activates the device (a standard action), bypassing their immunity to magic and any other resistances to magic they may possess. Up to 300 Hit Dice worth of golems can be ruled at once with an *ivory baton*. Ruled golems obey the wielder as if she were their creator. Still, if the wielder attacks a ruled golem or gives it a command that is obviously harmful to it, the magic is broken. An ivory baton can be used for 500 total minutes before crumbling to dust. This duration need not be continuous. For each golem ruled beyond the first, multiply the number of minutes expended by the number of golems ruled (so, for example, a creature wielding an *ivory baton* to control three golems effectively expends 3 minutes of the rod’s total duration every minute).

In addition, an *ivory baton* acts as a *golembane scarab* as long as its wielder holds the rod in one hand.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Rod, *geas/quest*, *mass charm monster*;
Cost 21,000 gp



THE HANGING CITY OF TESKRA

Abandoned Mechanical Paradise

Location: Northern Napsune Mountains
Master: Advindi (LE sentient wax golem fighter 4/rogue 5)
Notable Inhabitants: Clockwork creatures, golems

The Hanging City of Teskra, one of the most isolated ruins of Jistka, lies in the Napsune Mountains suspended over the deep canyon formed by the sources of the Winding Way, south of the once great city of Syrasis and surrounded by the arid Napsune Mountains. At the time of its finished construction in –3429 AR, Teskra was the site of a frontier stronghold marking the route toward the Eternal Oasis. Inperantike Rakiendos had commissioned the city shortly before his 11th year as emperor, haphazardly celebrating the glory of his precariously positioned empire.

In the canyon Teskra was built over, Rakiendos commissioned the landscaping of a massive park meant to house his collection of mechanical beasts—beings cunningly fashioned from brass and copper gears and cogs to mimic their living models, including leopards, parrots, baboons, and bats. These clockwork creatures

were programmed by their masters to emulate the habits and demeanors of the animals they resembled, and dwelled throughout the sprawling Pleasure Gardens of Rakiendos, as well as within the city itself when appropriate. At the peak of the city's prosperity, almost every family unit in Teskra owned at least one mechanical cat or dog, and it was rumored that some of the occupants themselves were constructed from the very same metals as their pets.

The cool balconies and cunningly lit chambers of the Hanging City's interior—hewn into the rock and supported by chains of mage-forged cold iron—served as paradisiacal refuges for the common folk of Teskra. Magical nets and walls of stone-hard glass kept the menagerie of bejeweled wind-up birds and beasts in the valley below safe from robbery, as well as from the depredations of living predators that might mistake the clockwork creatures for their natural prey. The Pleasure Gardens sported a variety of artificially crafted ecosystems for its equally false inhabitants to dwell in, including lush night-jungles with trees of rock and precious, glowing fruit-gems, as well as pristine lakes where aquatic clockwork serpents and mechanical sharks prowl the magically refreshed waters.

Shortly after its completion, however, the accursed nature of Teskra became quite clear to its overseers, whose leader would fall prey to a mysterious ailment a year after the Hanging City was finished. The Jistkan historian Gabirios wrote the following account:

“When the Inperantike Rakiendos entered the 12th year of his reign, he celebrated the anniversary of his accession by opening a lavish feast and debauchery in his newly completed Pleasure Gardens of the Hanging City. For a week, the halls of Teskra resounded with laughter and wild, foreign music. Strange folk of odd coloration and naked dwarves were seen thronging the folly. But sometime in the last night, an odd susurrantion was heard, and the inperantike, emerging from some recently planted bushes, became unknown to mortals and pious men. Markus Selaezios—then general of Jistka's Third Legion—proclaimed a general fast following the event, and a public penance for the infractions of the thereafter departed ruler, surmounting the throne after a suitable time and taking Rakiendos's wife as his own.”

After Rakiendos's mysterious and fatal bout of insanity, the Hanging City fell into a slow but steady state of decline, wherein its inhabitants would occasionally go missing, usually following the escape of a mechanical beast from the Pleasure Gardens below, but sometimes without any preceding hints as to their fates or whereabouts. Teskra was finally cut off from the rest of the Jistka Imperium, and its few remaining citizens—commoners and nobles alike—ritualistically shed their clothes and wandered into

the mountains, leaving no clue as to their intentions, and were never heard from or seen again.

Now, the only remaining natives of Teskra dwelling in the long-abandoned city are the clockwork animals that once occupied its Pleasure Gardens, but which long ago broke free from their rusting cages and deteriorating pens, as well as several other inhabitants of mysterious origin. A clockwork-enhanced sentient wax golem by the name of Advindi still lurks in the city with a small family of likewise artificial humanoids, constructed by the automaton-artists of Teskra sometime during the city's height and subsequently left behind after the kingdom's desertion. Her exact intentions are unknown, but those who have dared explore the ruins and have encountered Advindi often fail to realize the constructed nature of the golem and mistake her for human, an error few have the chance to make twice.



The Hanging City of Teskra



SARKORIS

NEVER HAS THE MIND OF A NATION BEEN SO DISEASED, ITS PEOPLE SO ABSOLUTELY MISLED INTO MISTAKING AFFLICTIONS OF THE SOUL FOR AN INCREASE OF VIRTUE. NEVER HAVE FAITH AND TRADITION SO INDULGED THEMSELVES UPON HERESY AND CULTISH STUBBORNNESS, CONSUMMATING THEIR UNNATURAL UNIONS UPON THE STONE ALTARS OF DRUIDIC DELUSIONS. NEVER HAS THE MORTAL SOUL BEEN SO DECEIVED, BELIEVING ITSELF BUT A STEP AWAY FROM GODLINESS. AND NEVER WILL THE BLASPHEMIES OF SARKORIS BE TOLERATED IN THE CIVIL LANDS OF THE SOUTH, WHERE EACH SOUL CLEAVES TO A SINGLE MASTER, AWE IS NOT TARNISHED BY FAMILIARITY, AND MORTALS DO NOT PRESUME TO THE PROVIDENCE OF GODS.

—PASTOR BROMON SHY,
WITCH-CULTS OF NORTHERN AVISTAN

The Northmounds exist on no modern map, no explorer can count the Field of Thrones among her conquests, and few even know to cite the marvels of the Forest of Stones as anything more than legend, for when the maw of the Abyss opened wide, these wonders, along with a proud race, were consumed. Few realms have ever known such utter carnage, such fundamental obliteration, as Sarkoris, a land not just destroyed, but sacrificed to the same bloody-minded powers it for so long revered.

HISTORY OF SARKORIS

The first Kellids hail from Sarkoris, their tribes arising from wanderers who crossed the Lake of Mists and Veils to find a land abundant with elk and roe deer. Upon the Plains of Sarkora the tribes discovered a realm rich in game to hunt and wolves to tame, atop the Northmounds they did battle with and threw down frost giant despots, and within the Forest of Stones they discovered they were not the first humans to make this rugged land their home. There, among stones ancient beyond reckoning, the druids of the Circle of Hierophants made peace with the wonders and savagery of this world and realms beyond, recording the voices of the wilds and marking the ages in their eternal march.

Tutored by the druids, the tribes that rose upon the Plains of Sarkora flourished and praised the earth, the seasons, the beasts of the land, and the beings that held dominion over each. They raised monoliths to their gods and spilled blood in sacrifice, their tales and imaginings inspired and loosely guided by the teachings of the druids who walked among them. As the tribes grew, many spread to neighboring lands to plot their own destinies, realms that would eventually be known as Mendev, Numeria, the Realm of the Mammoth Lords, Ustalav, and others. In the shadow of the Northmounds, these nomadic tribes gradually solidified into clans and claimed territories, raising villages and clanholds all their own. This brutal but worthy land came to be known by the people of the plains as Sarkoris.

Sarkoris was a land of disparate clans, neighbors, allies, cousins, and enemies united by boldness, culture, and shared religious traditions rather than a single ruler. Among them walked the druids, who spread the mysteries of nature and the planes to an awed people. Alongside faith in divine powers spread faith in druidic magic, sorcery, worship of godlike visitors summoned from beyond, and the mysteries of witchcraft. Sarkorians came to see the divine in all things, and came to worship much more than gods, even as they learned to dread and distrust the mortal magic of wizards.

When the cult of Deskari rose among them, few recognized it as worshiping anything different from the countless other deities, demigods, and nature spirits revered across

the lands. So insular were their communities that most Sarkorians didn't even realize that the Lord of the Locust Host claimed sacrifices in villages all across the region, or that their prayers fueled the demon lord's growing power. It wasn't until the hero Aroden traveled to Sarkoris and, along with an alliance of the nation's bravest clanlieges, crusaded against the demon that the danger was widely recognized. Over years of pestilent skirmishes, the cult was driven from Sarkoris, along with a skittering avatar of Deskari himself, forced directly into the Lake of Mists and Veils. But with Aroden's departure the union between the clans collapsed, and though the cult of Deskari was temporarily suppressed, the relationships between Sarkorian clans swiftly reverted to their former tenuousness.

History would not teach Sarkoris the same lesson twice, and in 4600 AR the nation's fated destruction began to unfold. At the height of the High Cairns stood the Threshold, a fortress-tower raised by frost giant hands to scrape the heavens. Here the religious leaders of Sarkoris's clans brought those who threatened their vision of divinity, yet who proved too valuable to silence permanently. At the highest point in the region, students of the arcane worked miracles beyond even Sarkoris's miracle workers—but still they were slaves. And like so many slaves, eventually they rebelled. The nature of their rebellion remains unclear, but it began with the defiant god caller Opon, the cunning witch Areelu Vorlesh, and the wizard-scholar Wivver Noclan. Some hypothesize that the mages hoped to open windows to the planes, showing their people the true faces of many of those beings they worshiped. Others suggest they merely hoped to create multiple portals to baffle their captors after a mass prison break. Regardless of their plot, when first the spellcasters cracked reality, a voice whispered through, a voice that promised aid. Too late would they recognize that voice as belonging to the demon lord Deskari. Soon their plan commenced, and a multitude of portals opened within the Threshold, but rather than leading to multiple realms as intended, each tore open a connection between Sarkoris and Deskari's Abyssal domain, the Rasping Rifts. Horrified, Opon and Wivver managed to undo their magic. They had nearly closed all the portals when Vorlesh betrayed them, casting both into the final closing portal and bracing it open a crack.

For the next 6 years, Vorlesh became Deskari's emissary in Sarkoris, but without her betrayed allies, she could do little to fully reopen the gates. With her daily nurturing, however, the portal to the Abyss grew from a pinprick to a tome-sized tear, and in 4602 Vorlesh and a horde of tiny fiends overwhelmed the Threshold, slaying her captors and converting many prisoners into cultists of Deskari. By 4605, her influence had grown to encompass much of the High Cairns, but still support from beyond proved minor and her conquests went largely unnoticed.



This changed in 4606. With the death of Aroden and the upheaval throughout Golarion, an emboldened Deskari threw open the portal. The trickle of demonic energies became a tidal wave against which the scattered clans and reclusive druids of Sarkoris could not stand. Those who fought perished. Those who fled found little sympathy, perishing in the wild lands of the Realm of the Mammoth Lords and Numeria or falling before the spears of Ustalav's paranoid defenders, or finding a measure of tolerance in Mendev—which too would find its borders gradually eaten away by the demon hordes. In a few short years, Sarkoris had been destroyed, its bones paving the path for a continuing invasion that threatens all of Golarion.

THE LOST FAITHS OF SARKORIS

In his vitriolic treatise *Witch-Cults of Northern Avistan*, the explorer and Erastilian pastor Bromon Shy documents and condemns the diverse folk religions of Sarkoris, referring to them as the Hundred Hungry Gods. In actuality, this dramatic title proves to be a misnomer, both for its underestimation of the number of figures included in Sarkorian religion and its broad classification of those diverse beings as gods—worship had a sweeping and often pragmatic meaning in Sarkoris, with distinctions between reverence on societal, familial, and personal levels.

Deities of Sarkoris

In a sense, druidism was the national faith of Sarkoris. While associated with the balanced doctrines of the Green Faith, the druids of Sarkoris understood the brutality of nature, the natural hungers of wildlife, and their culture's tenuous place among such ancient forces. Additionally, the druids of Sarkoris took a broad view of their place in the multiverse, viewing planar abnormalities like portals as being just as natural—and potentially destructive—as natural disasters, and outsiders like azatas and demons as beings no different from fey, elementals, or even animals. With the spirits of the planes held in the same reverence as the powers of the land, those with the ability to tap into and manifest such forces—such as oracles, summoners, and witches—numbered among the region's druids as founts of religious power and leaders of the faith.

While the land's religious philosophies maintained an expansive perspective, outside the Forest of Stones—the site of the Circle of Hierophants, the ancient center of the nation's powerful druidic faith—its practice among the people held to more provincial concerns. Beings like empyreal lords, psychopomp ushers, and daemonic harbingers were viewed as natural forces of a multiversal balance—as legitimate as any deity—and most regional congregations adopted divine patrons. Frequently such beings were true deities, their vast powers and influences making them practical choices, with Desna, Gorum, Gozreh, Lamashtu, and Pharasma holding especial prominence. It was not uncommon, however, for every region and settlement to have its own divine patrons, with communities raising circles of carved menhirs, each dedicated to a member of a local pantheon. The residents of the village of Raliscrad, for example, considered themselves both followers of druidic traditions and servants of Pharasma—the goddess proved influential along the southern Sarkora River. The villagers also revered the Empyrean Lord Pulura and the Demon Lord Kostchtchie as dualistic powers of the cold, and worshiped the planetar Dysureil for his legendary role in saving a local boy from drowning. Despite the collective worship of such planar figures, an area's established clergy



Areelu Vorlesh

usually gravitated toward a single figure—typically one who most closely embodied the people's concerns, and who most readily granted divine power. Other deities then took on more superficial positions among the community's true priests—similar to the saints and adversaries of many religions. Such nuances, however, proved meaningless for lay worshippers. For them, when a child took ill, it was the power of the whole pantheon that healed her, and when wolves attacked a shepherd's flock, it was because one of the pantheon's adversarial members was displeased. Thus, despite their habit of hedging their spiritual bets by adoring and placating varied otherworldly forces, Sarkoris's people held their patrons as integral parts of their regional identities, sources of grim honor, and beings as mighty (if not mightier) than any single southern deity.

Deities of the Clan

Just as communities adopted patron divinities, so too did Sarkorian clans. In areas dominated by a single clan, the patron of the community and the clan were often one and the same, though such was not always the case. Every family was expected to support the clan's faith by promising its third son or first daughter as an acolyte to the cairnhold's religious leader, typically referred to as druid, priest, witch-priest, or god caller depending on the leader's abilities and local traditions. This variety of titles suggests the breadth of Sarkorian religious traditions, with some clans holding to traditional nature or deity worship, others singling out and personifying the inspirations for their clan's witches' powers, and still others conjuring their faith into flesh through the powers of summoners. In some cases this meant a clan adding an additional true deity (or deities) to those of the local pantheon, while in others this clan god might be a fictitious character granted status and power by family lore, tradition, and the mysterious magic of witches and summoners. For example, the witches of the Stagheart clan claimed to commune with Alglenweis, daughter of Kostchtchie and the legendary Stag Mother of the Forest of Stones, while the god callers of Neverhome summoned the dawn-feathered offspring of Sturovenen, the storied Dragoneagle. As with adherents of regional pantheons, the uninitiated made no distinction between the powers and so-called deities of arcane and divine magic-users; for them, all expressions of otherworldly influence were mysterious and, through those who channeled such might, worthy of adoration and placation.

Deities of the Self

Not all Sarkorians were ignorant of the truths of divinity or their personal influence over magical powers. Many, like bards, rangers, sorcerers, and some summoners, realized the extent of their magical influence and recognized that such talents set them apart from common folk. Sarkorian

culture explained such magic by gathering it into the land's varied religious traditions, explaining that those with inexplicable talents had the blessings or direct protection of divine beings, who either watched over or actually resided within the spellcaster. Often such fictitious beings were deemed to be lesser scions of true divine powers or clan gods. Regardless of the explanations concocted by clan religious leaders, few who looked to their own people for magical power questioned the so-called "elder priests," whose status as a divinity's chosen proved an appealing explanation—not to mention difficult to dispute. While such reasoning proved sufficient for most Sarkorians, the worshippers of true gods from other lands balked at the claims of their deities having vast, interconnected, and often contradictory lineages to which some magic-using Kellids claimed direct connection. Such traditions were judged to be heretical by several religions and incited military scourges, inquisitions, and witch hunts against Kellid communities.

Not all magical traditions, however, fit so neatly into the Sarkorian religious paradigm. The priestly leaders of Sarkoris's faith faced significant challenges dealing with wizards from the south and their ability to derive magical power from mortal-created arcane writings. While many Sarkorians made little distinction between the powers of priests and wizards, some questioned how these spellcasters gained their might without any religious trappings or rituals. As such, the teaching of wizardly magic was strictly forbidden by the country's priests. Those discovered possessing or practicing such magic were quietly dealt with—they were given the option of either being exiled or sent to the druid-guarded fortress-tower known as the Threshold, where they would be honored prisoners, taught by masters of their art but utilized as the country's clanlieges and Circle of Hierophants deemed prudent. Those who resisted were either crippled to prevent their magic's use or sacrificed as heretics.

Abuses of Faith

Although Sarkoris's unique religious traditions united a wide variety of magical practices in the service of the people and the land, it also obscured the definition of "deities" in the public mind and created expansive fictions regarding otherworldly beings. Such mysteries left many—even among the country's diverse priesthood—vulnerable to the manipulations of charlatans, otherworldly beings, and more unnatural things. More than one susceptible Sarkorian community fell under the sway of a "living god," be it a magic-user able to employ arcane displays to pass himself off as a figure of worship, a cunning monster with abilities similar to a deity, or some corruptive otherworldly influence seeking terrestrial slaves. While the Circle of Hierophants hunted down frauds and sought



to avoid unguided interaction between the people and otherworldly forces, it remained a largely neutral body and avoided interference so long as balance within the land was maintained. As such, in the rare rugged frontier village or isolated vale, a god-being sometimes lived among its people, a vain protector or a monstrous despot demanding adoration. This sort of arrangement led to the rise of the Demon Lord Deskari in the very heart of Sarkoris, a corruption the Circle of Hierophants made little attempt to slow and that was only curtailed by the direct intervention of the god Aroden—more on behalf of the rest of Golarion's people than those of the Sarkoris.

SARKORIS TODAY

The land that once was Sarkoris is no more, obliterated entirely by the inaction of its rulers and the planar rifts that unleashed the barely restrained corruption now known as the Worldwound. Only the finest tether of reality (and some might say semantics) prevents the region from being considered a part of the Outer Rifts. Beyond the powerful magical wardstones that currently serve as breakwaters against the endless Abyssal tide, what was Sarkoris is now an abandoned, hostile land cursed with foul weather, desperate outlaws, and a burning horizon marking the tear between worlds.

Yet even though the body of Sarkoris lies dead and defiled, its memory remains. Adherents of the nation's faiths still pass down their traditions in their new homes in the Realm of the Mammoth Lords, Mendev, Irrisen, and Ustalav. Those who openly worship multiple or mysterious deities typically find their faiths met with distrust, disdain, or even the torches of heretic hunters who don't care to discern between deities fictitious or fiendish. Old ways die hard, though, and many northern Kellids still tell tales to their families and closest allies of a time when the gods were many and active, not few and reliant on mortal proxies like those today.

The druidic faiths of Sarkoris also survive, though they are broken and scattered. The great conclaves of the North have ended, the Living Library has burned, and the last druid with a true claim to the title of hierophant has fallen. But through the secret ways of the fey and paths known only to the ancient druids, a portion of the timeless knowledge of the Green Faith still survives in myriad hidden forms. Tablets of living bark charting secret paths between continents and planes have been discovered in strange groves deep in the Fangwood, rune-etched menhirs older than any surrounding tree stand in the depths of Andoran's Arthfell Forest, and a black tree with a dull but undeniable heartbeat withers the land around it from a cavern beneath the Mana Wastes. How these relics managed to escape the demonic hordes and what secrets they hold remain

mysteries, but mysteries the druids of old doubtlessly meant to be solved.

What else was once Sarkoris now lies largely in ruin. The clanlieges and those of their mighty bloodlines lie dead, their clanholds in ruins, their villages and cities burned, looted, and abandoned under clouds of despair. But in the ruins of Sarkoris, what once thrived rarely rests easy, and old pride seethes as a lingering hunger for revenge.

The following sites were raised during the time of Sarkoris and remain in some form today, a measure of the strength and secrets of that ancient land weathering an age of ruin and loss.

Circle of Hierophants (CR 17): At the heart of the Forest of Stones stood the meeting place of the lost leaders of the Green Faith. It is said that the heartstone of the ancient conclave marked the spot of untold miracles, the most significant being the first druids' accord, which founded the Green Faith and united the worshipers of the land. The entire forest bore the runes and standing stones of the druids' ancient wisdom—until the coming of the vrolikai Shaorhaz. The demon and his nabasu brood burned the Forest of Stones and despoiled much of what remained. Only in the aftermath did the demon warlord realize the secrets etched upon the shattered stones. Now, Shaorhaz and his minions seek to learn the teachings of the druids, unleashing all manner of half-live profanities and Abyssal monstrosities in his search for power, as the soul-hungry fiend believes that if he can understand the mystery of the world's life force, he might learn how to devour it.

Field of Thrones (CR 10): Upon the western plains of the Northmounds generations of Kellids interred their greatest heroes, priests, druids, and clanlieges amid dozens of buried armories, temples, feast halls, and other fitting eternal residences. After the demonic invasion, the dead no longer rest easy. Despoiling the crypts en masse, the demons plundered what they pleased, careless of the hundreds—if not thousands—of furious ancient dead that roiled up from the tombs. Now the Field of Thrones teems with demonic corpse wranglers, babaus mounted upon fiendish death worms, who herd the draugr, wights, mummies, and other undead that spill from the crypts seeking revenge against despoilers far more potent and greater in number. Occasionally a corpse manages to escape the demonic herders and seeks aid outside the Worldwound, promising the living fantastic treasures should they aid it in returning and reconsecrating its tomb. Such promises of mundane treasures usually prove empty, though, as the demons were most thorough in their despoiling.

Shroud of Unicorns (CR 7): Called the Kingdom of the Unicorns in some Sarkorian texts, this pristine woodland burned soon after the Forest of Stones, killing countless unicorns. Those that survived were attacked by demons, but the fiends find the unicorns' presence uncomfortable.



depths of the Thunderstair as she has for centuries, feeding off the worship and pains of the villagers (see *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Horsemen of the Apocalypse* for details). Her presence alone deters stray rampaging demons and their allies from slaughtering all in Valahuv.

Widowknife Clanhold (CR 12): Alongside a now-parched waterfall, where once the Rolling River plummeted to meet the Sarkora, the ancestral hold of the Widowknife Clan climbs the cliffs of the Northmounds in the ruins of Undarin. Soon after the demonic invasion of Sarkoris, the witch Arelu Vorlesh and an army of winged fiends overran Undarin, slaughtering hundreds of the city's residents but capturing even more. Vorlesh claimed the Widowknife clanhold as her fortress, along with the libraries and ritual chambers of the clan, which was infamous for birthing some of the most talented witches in Sarkorian history. Within she discovered the bloody method that transformed her into a half-fiend, a process she now searches for a way to repeat on a grand scale—using the blood of an

army of slaves. Now, sanguine rivers flow endlessly from the fortress, tainting the Sarkora River with all manner of pollution, strange oozes, omox demons, and fouler things of living muck. But one day something far fouler might surge forth from the Widowknife Clanhold, a soul-tainting poison that could flow from the Sarkora to corrupt thousands as it travels to taint all of Lake Encarthan.

DEMONS & DANGERS

Doubtlessly the demons in their infinite numbers and the perverse cultists of Deskari pose the greatest threat to the lands surrounding the Worldwound, but their menace is not the only danger to crawl from those profaned reaches. Bandits in great numbers make their camps in Sarkorian ruins, raiding Mendev, Ustalav, roaming Kellid tribes, and what trade dares pass through the land, counting on their proximity to the demons to deter pursuit. Creatures like behirs, manticores, and drakes, once beaten back by Sarkorian warriors, again flourish in those lands abandoned by humans. And those who linger near the Worldwound eventually discover that more than demons clawed through the rift between worlds. Once known only to the lightless crevices and shrieking half-live jungles of the Abyss, the yammering, gnashing stray teeth of the Outer Rifts have also been unleashed upon Golarion—the gluttonous vermin of the Abyss called vescavors.



Vescavor Swarm

VESCAVOR SWARM CR 5

XP 1,600

CE Diminutive outsider (chaotic, evil, extraplanar)

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +9

Aura gibber (15 ft.)

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 17, flat-footed 16 (+3 Dex, +2 natural, +4 size)

hp 47 (5d10+20)

Fort +7, **Ref** +9, **Will** +2

Immune poison, swarm traits, weapon damage; **Resist** fire 10, electricity 10; **SR** 16

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., fly 40 ft. (good)

Melee swarm (2d6 plus distraction)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.

Special Attacks distraction (DC 15), ravenous, traumatizing

STATISTICS

Str 7, **Dex** 17, **Con** 16, **Int** 4, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 12

Base Atk +5; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 12 (can't be tripped)

Feats Blind-Fight, Lightning Reflexes, Toughness

Skills Fly +21, Perception +9, Stealth +23

Languages Abyssal

ECOLOGY

Environment any (the Abyss)

Organization solitary, pair, plague (3–12), or apocalypse (16–30)

Treasure none

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Gibber (Su) Vescavors yammer the endless chorus of the Abyss.

Any creature within 15 feet of a vescavor swarm or inside it must succeed at a DC 15 Will save or be confused for 1 round. This is a mind-affecting compulsion insanity effect. A creature that saves cannot be affected by the same vescavor swarm's gibbering for 24 hours. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Ravenous (Ex) Vescavors can devour nearly anything, with the exception of adamantine. If the swarm attacks an object or structure, the vescavors ignore its hardness if it is made of any substance other than adamantine. Additionally, every round that a creature is in the same space as the swarm, the vescavors begin devouring one object on the creature. The object takes half its maximum hit points in damage and gains the broken condition. If the vescavors attack an object with the broken condition, it is destroyed. An attended or magic object can make a DC 15 Reflex save to negate this effect. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Traumatizing (Su) Vescavors embody the meanest depravities of the Outer Rifts, and walking among them is akin to being trapped in the Abyss itself. Any creature that spends more than 3 rounds inside a vescavor swarm must succeed at a DC 13 Will save or gain one of the types of madness presented on page 250 of the *Pathfinder RPG GameMastery Guide*. Roll on the Types of Insanity table to determine which type of insanity affects the creature—the creature does not make another Will save against the specific insanity. This affliction is permanent, but can be healed as detailed in the Curing Insanity section of the Sanity and Madness rules. The save DC is Charisma-based.

TREASURES & REWARDS

An entire nation of wealth and treasures lies trampled into the dust of what is now the Worldwound. While the shattered armaments of Mendevian Crusaders, the paltry takings of brazen bandits, and unholy devices of torture and madness have all accumulated in the region since Sarkoris's fall, by far the most numerous and unusual treasures are those employed by Deskari's fanatics. Ever seeking to be more akin to their lord, cultists of Deskari infest themselves with insects and parasites, counting them as allies and striving to emulate their ravenous ways. The cultists have created two types of foul magic items, held by their most devoted brethren and bequeathed to their deadliest servants.

ROTCARVER

Aura strong conjuration and necromancy; **CL** 13th
Slot none; **Price** 52,118 gp; **Weight** 10 lbs.

DESCRIPTION

Though largely constructed in the image of Deskari's own terrible scythe, *Riftcarver*, these +3 scythes bear tiny cracks and etchings that, upon close examination, make the weapons appear like they're constructed of minute petrified maggots. Once per day, upon scoring a successful critical hit with a *Rotcarver*, the wielder can animate part of the blade as a rot grub that immediately attempts to burrow into the victim struck. The victim must succeed at a DC 15 Reflex save to avoid the grub; otherwise, it is affected as per the description of rot grubs on page 245 of the *GameMastery Guide*. Additionally, once per week, the *Rotcarver*'s wielder can transform it into a swarm of rot grubs (see page 215 of *Bestiary 3*). The swarm obeys the wielder's commands for 13 rounds before turning back into a weapon. If the swarm is destroyed, it immediately reverts back to a weapon, which is undamaged. The wielder takes no ill effects from a swarm under his control.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *contagion*, *summon monster VII*; **Cost** 26,218 gp

VISAGE OF THE BROODLORD

Aura strong conjuration; **CL** 6th
Slot head; **Price** 9,600 gp; **Weight** 1 lb.

DESCRIPTION

Made of interwoven wicker strands and insect-excreted resin, these horrific masks have the appearance of demonic insects. The mask's wearer is rendered immune to swarms' distraction special attack. Additionally, once per day the wearer can transform into an insect as per the spell *vermin shape I* (see page 297 of *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: The Inner Sea World Guide*).

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *vermin shape I*; **Cost** 4,800 gp

GUNDRUN

In the months and years following Sarkoris's demonic invasion, countless refugees fled their homes. Thousands chased the Silverscale River, intent on following the rivers to Lake Encarthan or seeking shelter in Ustalav to the south. Along their way, most passed through the simple town of Gundrun, completely overwhelming the small fishing community with their desperation and fear. Conditions became worse as the pikes of Ustalavic soldiers turned back displaced Sarkorians. Believing the survivors tainted or infiltrated by demons, Princess Maraet of Ustalav ordered the execution of any refugees attempting to cross

CLANS OF SARKORIS

Over centuries of war, conquests, alliances, and intermarriages, the tribes of Sarkoris evolved into numerous clans. Gradually chieftains gave way to family patrons and, later with the rise in acceptance of family matrons, the title “clanliege” arose—denoting the leader of a clan. Family honor and obedience to one’s family occupied a prominent position in Sarkorian psychology, with whole clans willing to take up arms to avenge a slight against one of their kin. Sarkorian names reflect this prominence, typically following classic Kellid conventions but with the addition of a family name (the name of the specific branch of a clan to which the individual belonged) followed by the clan name. The only exception to this is among the family of a clanliege, who take no name other than the name of the clan itself. For example, Innerys Dismar-Stagheart is a vassal of Clanliege Ghald Stagheart.

Occasionally a clan permits an outsider to join its number, either adopting an honored ally or taking the children of a conquered foe as charges. In Sarkoris’s final days, 23 clans held lands across Sarkoris with as many as a dozen families sworn to each.

Sarkorian Clans: Allriver, Balemoon, Blackearth, Bloodstone, Clefthorn, Everhearth, Everleaves, Foundlast, Highbough, Howlingblood, Icelodge, Laurelshield, Meadow, Neverhome, Neverrun, Riversoar, Stagheart, Stareye, Stormheart, Tamer, Widowknife, Windstep, Wintersun, Youngbow.

Notable Families: Atlemoag, Belostar, Chosnic, Devimai, Dismar, Dziergas, Erimannar, Faidmeir, Ghalmont, Golhas, Hywaith, Istul, Jauntlar, Junzt, Kelebrey, Lemma, Masgath, Moah, Neveid, Noxtaag, Odes, Parnknot, Ricleer, Setarn, Trelimbors, Ummardar, Voagx, Vorlesh, Wieland, Yharloch.

the Moutray River from the north, provoking a series of massacres remembered in Ustalav as the Demonskin War, but in Gundrun as the Bloodwater Betrayals.

Hundreds, turned back from Ustalav and ill-prepared for journeys through uncivilized lands, returned to Gundrun, defeated and despairing. Looting began, and with the murder of Clanliege Bulraas Riversoar on the streets, anarchy ensued. Even the land turned against the people, as the taint in the earth caused crops to sicken and the Silverscale to gradually dry up. Without a demon ever setting hoof within Gundrun, the community fell.

Until 4667, Gundrun was little more than a ghost town, picked over by scavengers and raiders for decades. With the beginning of the third Mendevian Crusade, members of clan Clefthorn returned to the region from Mendev and sought to reclaim Gundrun and the nearby Riversoar

clanhold as a base to launch attacks against the demons and reclaim the lost honor of Sarkoris. The attempt proved a disastrous failure, as in a span of 3 years the returning Sarkorians were largely wiped out and the Riversoar clanhold mysteriously burned to the ground.

Yet, something remained. Attracted to the Clefthorn banner, numerous Kellid families, wanderers, traders, and sellswords tentatively returned to Gundrun. The constructed ramshackle homes, as well as stables, a trading post, a forge, even a few scattered farms, resurrecting the town as a rough community, somewhere between a military encampment, refugee camp, and barter-town. Built upon the corpse of a true Sarkorian village, Gundrun is far from what it once was, but here the descendants of Sarkoris feel that something of their nation had survived, and even the flickering hope that—just maybe—the Sarkoris that was might one day return.

GUNDRUN

CN small town

Corruption +2, **Crime** -3, **Economy** +0, **Law** +3, **Lore** +1, **Society** 0

Qualities notorious, superstitious

Danger +10; **Disadvantages** impoverished

DEMOGRAPHICS

Government overlord

Population 665 (636 humans; 16 tieflings; 8 demons; 5 other)

NOTABLE NPCS

Clanliege Martolls Clefthorn (CN male human fighter 7)

Dalmard Odes Foundlast (LE male human ranger 5)

God Caller Alase Brinz Widowknife (NG female human summoner 5) and **Tonbarse** (wolflike eidolon)

Shalchenars (CE succubus rogue 3)

MARKETPLACE

Base Value 800 gp; **Purchase Limit** 5,000 gp; **Spellcasting** 2nd **Minor Items** 1d6; **Medium Items** 1d3; **Major Items** —

Gundrun Features

The following prominent locations stand amid the various tents, cabins, and other ramshackle shelters that make up the town of Gundrun.

Brinz Farmstead: A direct descendant of the Brinz family, vassals to clan Widowknife, Alase Brinz Widowknife practices the Sarkorian art of god calling, summoning and commanding a creature her family once viewed as a deity. Although she doesn’t truly know whether it has divine blood, she knows her eidolon Tonbarse—a great wolflike creature with a pelt that glistens like a night full of stars—as a life-long companion and friend. Many look to Alase and Tonbarse for help when the Clefthorns deny aid. Secretly, Alase harbors greater objectives than growing old in Gundrun, specifically one day reclaiming the Widowknife clanhold in the ruins of Undarin.

Clethhorn Lodge: Far from the grand clanholds of old Sarkoris, this crude wooden fort serves as mustering ground for the troops of the Clethhorn clan and home to its eldest members. Fewer than 10 people in Gundrun claim true Clethhorn blood, these largely being the sons and daughters of the aged Clanliege Martolls Clethhorn, who in his youth aided in reclaiming Gundrun. Now the de facto leader of the community, Martolls broods in his lodge and would rather tell tales of his glory days and keep the peace in Gundrun than strike against the demons—a foe he deemed invincible long ago. Martolls will adopt nearly any capable warrior into his clan, a dubious honor that bears with it the responsibility to patrol and defend Gundrun.

Looter's Market: Legitimate merchants, local farmers, looters, and bandits all call truce to participate in this endless flea market. Food, weapons, tools, livestock, lost clan treasures, and even the occasional demon-forged curiosity can all be found among the wagons and tents of this muddy bazaar situated in the ruined town center of old Gundrun. The bandit lord Dalmard keeps the peace in the market, viewing it as vital to his brigandry and other operations in the surrounding lands. Few know that Dalmard, seen as a dangerous but honorable man, is a direct descendant of the Odes-Foundlast family, once one of the richest families in eastern Sarkoris.

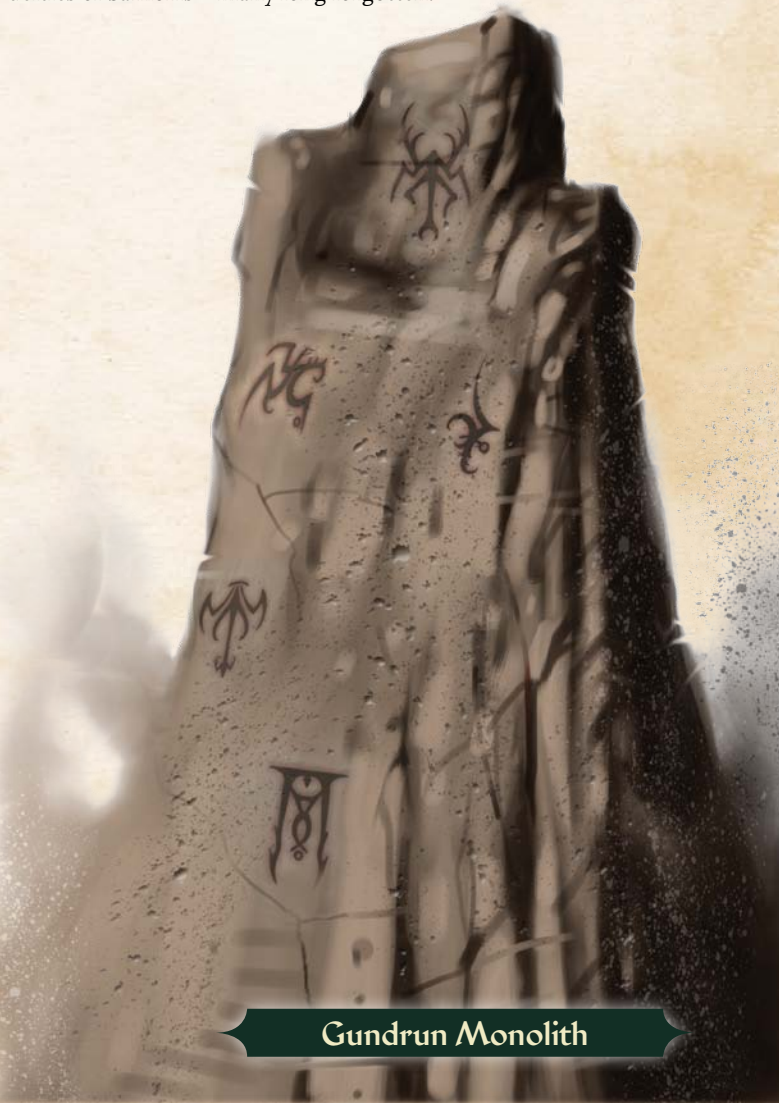
Riversoar Clanhold: The fortress of the Riversoar clan burned to the ground within months of the Clethhorn clan reclaiming it as a military headquarters. Many say demons destroyed the keep in retribution, but others claim one of the Clethhorns betrayed their family as a service to Deskari. Regardless, the ruins lie outside the town on a hill overlooking the runnels that mark the onetime path of the Silverscale River. The endlessly bored succubus Shalchenars lairs within the ruins, watching over the town for her demonic overlord and occasionally entertaining herself by seducing and slaying wandering shepherds and bandits.

The Splinter: The only tavern in Gundrun is a rowdy place, situated in the still half-ruined structure of an Old Gundrun inn called the Gilded Antlers. **Whalt** (N male human fighter 5), the owner and barkeep, lost his arm fighting demons at one of the many sieges of Drezen, but claims he can still out-pour and out-drink any other barkeep in Sarkoris—a joke that always gets grim guffaws from the locals. The bar takes its name from both the collapsed upper floor of the once two-story structure, and the prominently displayed wreck of Whalt's shield, bitten in half by the same hezrou that took his arm.

Timberwhiles: Golin Imbrenhol (NE male inquisitor 4) is something of an abnormality in Gundrun, a native of Ustalav who recently moved to the town to set up shop—supplying the people with all manner of wooden tools, furniture, and his true passion: dolls and marionettes. While most take the woodworker's relocation as a sign

of positive change, many who call themselves native Sarkorians hold a grudge against all Ustalavs for the Bloodwater Betrayals. Such suspicions prove reasonable in Golin's case, as the dollmaker is a member of Karcau's Harlequin Society and a worshiper of the devil Alichino. His diabolical lord seeks to extend a peace offering to the people of Sarkoris and lend his legions in the fight against the demons in return for a portion of the retaken lands. Golin has been sent to find a true Sarkorian ambassador to bargain on the land's behalf.

Walk of Lost Gods: Surrounding Gundrun rise the weather-worn standing stones of old Gundrun's deities, with monuments to Gorum, Gozreh, Pulura, Torag, Urgathoa, and Vard Rockgrinder (a fictitious local deity of the hills) being the most prominent. As refugees passed and settlers returned to Gundrun, they brought with them their gods as well. Now more than a hundred carved logs, metal markers, and etched stones lean amid the ancient monoliths, memorials to the innumerable deities of Sarkoris—many long forgotten.



Gundrun Monolith



THASSILON

“THIS, M’LORD, IS NONE OTHER THAN TANNARIS, ONE OF THE SEVEN LEGENDARY ALARA’HAI, THE SWORDS OF SIN. NO DOUBT A SEASONED ADVENTURER SUCH AS YERSELF HAS HEARD OF SUCH RELICS—BLADES SAID TO POSSESS POWER EQUALING THAT OF THE RUNELORDS THEMSELVES. I CAN TELL YOU NOW THAT SUCH RUMORS ARE PATENTLY FALSE. THE POWER YOU WOULD GAIN FROM WIELDING THIS WEAPON EXCEEDS THE MIGHT OF THE THASSILONIAN RULERS BY LEAPS AND BOUNDS. WHY, WITH BUT ONE FELL SWOOP, YOU COULD SPLIT A RUNE GIANT IN TWAIN WITH TANNARIS, AND SHOW SUCH BEINGS THE TRUE MEANING OF ENVY, AND THE TRUE POWER OF THASSILON!”

—CARTHAC DARTHWEN, MERCHANT AND CON ARTIST,
TO A POTENTIAL BUYER

Before Earthfall decimated much of Golarion, the empire of Thassilon was the home of the legendary runelords, wizards who utilized rune magic in order to enslave giants and build monuments and cities across northern Avistan. Thassilon's cyclopean towers soared into the sky and plunged beneath the earth, but the early achievements and gifts of Thassilon were soured in later centuries by a richly deserved reputation for greed, pride, and hauteur that makes even the most arrogant Taldans of today seem models of modest comportment in comparison.

The bold rulers of Thassilon thought big. They brainwashed giants and even dragons, and the mark they left on Golarion endures to this day in the form of myriad ruins, sculptures, and mysterious landmarks that dot the western coast of Avistan. The rune magic of that kingdom powered a great flowering of arts, learning, and culture, and much of modern magic that does not trace its roots to Azlant can instead be traced to the teachings of Thassilon. Its relics still define much of the sense of place of the northwestern Inner Sea region, where colossal stone faces are still embedded in the side of the Storval Rise, and countless ancient ruins riddle the coast of Varisia and the Lands of the Linnorm Kings. Most of Thassilon's towns and villages have eroded with the passage of millennia, but the roads and statues of their capitals yet remain buried beneath some of present-day Varisia's cities, forming the rune-marked foundation stones for metropolises such as Korvosa and Magnimar.

HISTORY OF THASSILON

During the golden age of old Azlant, its wizened mystics exiled a powerful wizard named Xin for his scandalous belief that Azlant should cooperate with the lesser races to build an even greater nation in Avistan. Though he fought passionately for his ideals, he was ultimately banished for such heretical theories. On his perilous journey eastward, Xin took with him as many followers as he could muster, including a large number of ambitious soldiers, mercenaries, and fortune-seekers who believed in his vision of a greater Azlant. Together, Xin and his small army of devotees sailed to the shores of Avistan with a careful plan, and on landing, built their first settlement near what is now known as Hollow Mountain, naming the city Xin-Bakrakhan and their fledgling kingdom Thassilon.

The immediate years following Xin-Bakrakhan's founding were a curious mix of battles waged against the existing human and elven tribes of the land and of swift expansion through the rich realms of Thassilon's provinces. The empire spread first along the coast and then inward to the Kodar Mountains and beyond, establishing the provinces of Edasseril, Cyrusian, and Shalast in addition to Bakrakhan. Though the native

peoples of these lands—the Varisians and the Shoanti—were initially hostile toward the entrepreneurial First King Xin, the commerce he brought with him as well as the tools of his civilization were a great boon to the simple Avistani nomads, who came to rely on the empire for their necessities in but a short period of time.

One nation, however, stood its ground against the newcomers: Mierani, a small forest-kingdom of elves west of the Velashu Uplands. Though the noble elves are now largely remembered in the name of the Mierani forest, their woodlands once filled all the lands between Bakrakhan and Edasseril, and their power was too great for Thassilon to displace. The standoff between the two nations cooled shortly after their initial confrontations, but throughout their existences the two nations frequently engaged in minor acts of sabotage and border-skirmishes. Legends state that the ruler of the province of Edasseril took her kingdom's name from the elven princess of Mierani at the time because she was jealous of the forest-empire's grace and beauty, and hoped that by stealing the name of its most beautiful princess she'd also steal its legacy in history. (Her hopes would prove to be futile, as the name yet lives among the elves of the Inner Sea region, the most famous example being Queen Telandia Edasseril of Kyonin.)

As Thassilon's reach and influence continued to grow, Xin appointed seven of his most powerful wizard allies to act as governors, splitting his empire into seven domains. Xin's governors—who became known as the runelords—each focused on one of the seven schools of rune magic that Xin had helped define, methodologies that stemmed from the seven Azlanti virtues of rule and coincided with the teachings of Thassilon's patron goddess, Lissala. They held that in order for Thassilon to prosper, its leaders would need to embrace wealth, fertility, honest pride, abundance, eager striving, righteous anger, and rest. But not long after their appointment by King Xin, the runelords corrupted these noble virtues into the seven sins. While there were certainly others, the runelords best known to history are greedy Karzoug in Shalast, lustful Sorshen in Eurythnia, prideful Xanderghul in Cyrusian, gluttonous Zutha in Gastash, envious Belimarius in Edasseril, wrathful Alaznist in Bakrakhan, and slothful Krune in Haruka. These powerful tyrants ruled their separate kingdoms up until Thassilon's collapse, and some of them for centuries beforehand.

While it was soon apparent that Xin's optimism and trust in his runelords was sadly misplaced, the First King did not live long enough to see his empire completely fall to the depredations of his corrupt governors. After 110 years of ruling Thassilon, Xin was assailed by powerful agents of the runelords, sent to the imperial palace to assassinate him. He had prepared for such treachery, however, and in a final conflagration of awe-inspiring magic, Xin consumed both himself and his enemies in an inferno of crimson



flames, torching most of the imperial palace, obliterating his remains, and splitting up the *Sihedron*. Xin had arranged for his magical resurrection should the *Sihedron* ever be put back together, but the runelords suspected his plot and split up Xin's mysterious artifact so that he could not rise upon its reconstruction. The seven wizards seized total control over their realms in Thassilon, ultimately leading their people to vulgar decadence and constant infighting. Each kingdom's partisans openly brawled on city streets, and the runelords' militaries frequently clashed on the field of war as Thassilon became a shadow of its former majesty.

A thousand years after the emperor's death, the current runelords had become a nightmare of egotism. Truly, each championed one of Xin's virtues of rule, and each claimed for him or herself the mantle of Xin's succession and wisdom, but in so doing, the runelords were rendered blind to how they transformed the teachings of Xin and Lissala into the seven deadly sins of envy, gluttony, greed, lust, pride, sloth, and wrath. To fight greater battles and build taller monuments, the runelords enslaved giants and created gargantuan statues to themselves. Colossal towers, bridges, and monoliths stand throughout northwestern Avistan to this day, though their original purposes have been lost to history. In truth, most served no purpose but to satisfy the runelords' vanity.

In the end, Thassilon grew too decadent and massive to sustain itself. Its virtues evaporated and were replaced by sin and vice. So outsized were its cities and so vast were its final populations that by the time Earthfall devastated Golarion, Thassilon was already tottering from its bloated size, the impossibility of its transporting and distributing vital goods, and the sheer magnitude of the resulting hunger and desperation. The slightest shift in the allocation of foodstuffs and giant slaves was enough to trigger mass rioting, starvation, and decades of bitter war over the remaining elements of the nation's raw power.

Thassilon did not collapse overnight. In some ways, it should have been well prepared for calamity, with its powerful magical tools, despotic rulers, and everyday cruelties. But its citizens certainly suffered because of the *Starstone's* impact; after Earthfall, the people of Thassilon died in droves as the oceans rose up to destroy Bakrakhan and Edasseril and flood the swamplands of Eurythnia. Giants slipped their shackles and wrought havoc on cities. Even the runelords fought for food and resources as cities drowned and millions died from plague, famine, and the great tsunamis that overran the coasts of three provinces. In inland regions, new mountains thrust cities and fertile fields high into the icy, airless heights, spoiling all hope of raising crops. When the runelords realized Lissala had turned her back on Thassilon and they could no longer bind the giants and dragons they had come to rely on during their reign, the evil wizards enacted carefully laid plans to escape the devastation. Ancient tales say that most—if not all—of the runelords fled to hidden fortresses guarded by powerful artifacts known as *runewells*. If such myths are to be believed, the runelords linger in stasis, awaiting the day their *runewells* reawaken and they can unleash their arcane might on a new, unsuspecting era.



Xin

Despite Thassilon's fall, a few Thassilonian cities held on in the form of ruins. Though many such sites remain hidden in the treacherous mountains and valleys throughout the Storval Plateau, others have survived and now form the foundation of present-day holdings in Varisia, Belkzen, and the Lands of the Linnorm Kings. Riddleport, Korvosa, and Magnimar all possess clues linking the great cities to ancient Thassilon, as do countless other smaller settlements and townships. Though Thassilon died, new kingdoms were built on its bones, and fragments of rune magic are commonplace in almost every part of present-day Varisia.

THASSILON TODAY

Spanning all over western Avistan, Thassilon's holdings ranged from jagged mountains to rolling hillocks, from verdant forests to rich grasslands. The woodlands were once all tamed, its mountains heavily mined, and its cities well watered by artificial rivers. The runelords used their powerful magic and the backs of enslaved giants to mold the very earth to their grandiose liking, and the scale of their work was so great that it remains visible to this day.

Thassilon's days as a well-connected, thriving empire are long gone; Varisia's own lands mirror the environments of that ancient kingdom, but are largely covered by mountain peaks and desolate valleys, and two of Thassilon's old provinces are mostly sunken beneath the western sea. Today, the centers of trade and influence are independent city-states such as Magnimar and Korvosa. Much of the physical remains of Thassilon's art and architecture have simply been lost to time, despite protective enchantments and hardy construction. The erosion of 10,000 years has destroyed Thassilon's textiles, books, and weak magical items, and even much of its religion and faith.

The people of the region are marked by the struggles of their forebears: doughty humans in the lowlands and all manner of giants in the Kodar Mountains and Storval Plateau. The Varisians and Shoanti of this realm still whisper of their tyrannical masters in the myths of their people, though the specifics of Thassilon have been long lost to all but scholars—most commoners attribute the monumental works dotting their lands simply to “old giants,” not even aware of the name of Thassilon.

Despite—or perhaps because of—their great antiquity, many Thassilonian ruins remain undiscovered and others are only partially explored. The following are just some of the sites of old Thassilon that might draw an adventurer's eye.

Black Tower of Jorgenfist (CR 11): The Therassic Order was responsible for running most of the Peacock Spirit's monasteries in ancient Thassilon. The black tower that juts out of the stone giant fortress of Jorgenfist was originally a lookout or bell tower of one such monastery, and the walls are clearly built in the style of the Thassilonian empire.

While giants have cleared out some of the lower levels of the tower, many treasures remain inside, waiting to be discovered by intrepid adventurers.

Castle of the Green Feather (CR 15): The knights of the Order of the Green Feather were the holy warriors of the Peacock Spirit, and served the runelords as faithful, specially trained militia used against enemies to the empire. The Castle of the Green Feather served as a flying fortress to the knights, and could easily transport legions across great distances as well as provide a last line of defense should Thassilon's terrestrial holdings fall. The castle is thought to have survived the onslaught of Earthfall by floating safely in mid-air during the cataclysm, but shortly thereafter, the arcane magic keeping it aloft failed, and the fortress crash-landed on a mountaintop northwest of the city of Xin-Cyrusian. Some of the knights of the Order of the Green Feather maintained their guardianship over the fortress by turning into grave knights and lichs upon death, and today they continue to serve the Peacock Spirit and ward their sacred castle from intruders.

The Emerald Chambers (CR 12): The Emerald Chambers are a legendary shrine to the First King of Thassilon, constructed by the runelords in mocking honor of Xin. Each of the temple's thousand doors leads to a different fate, and myths claim that one of the portals is a magical entrance to King Xin's famed treasury. The other 999 doors lead to deadly traps, otherworldly monsters, slaving undead, or instant disintegration, so only the most foolhardy adventurers dare to visit the Emerald Chambers. For more information on the Emerald Chambers, see pages 62–63.

Floating Sphere of Mauffrey (CR 3): A peculiar monument indeed, this massive orb of stone is partially hollowed out, and drifts aimlessly over the Curchain Hills in a 100-mile radius, driven by some primeval magic to continue its orbit between the Iron Peaks and Stony Mountains even to this day. Nesting drakes and even giant spiders have made a home of the Floating Sphere, and sometimes tribes of bugbears or smaller goblinoids use the thing as an aerial base of operations when they manage to leap onto it from a nearby cliff. The runes that decorate the outside of the Floating Sphere of Mauffrey may hide ancient secrets or the keys to treasure, or they may simply be all that remains of a shell of Thassilon's mysterious magic, long since emptied out.

Great Temple of Lissala (CR 19): Lissala was the patron goddess of Thassilon, and her monasteries could be found throughout each of the seven kingdoms. At the peak of that empire, the Great Temple of Lissala was widely considered the most famous of her numerous abbeys. Sunken deep in the waters of the Varisian Gulf, the ruins of this monumental shrine are said to be the resting place of a *chalice of Lissala*, a magical item with the power to make



its wielder's enchantments nigh irresistible. Presently, the colonnaded structure is occupied by an elder kraken that goes by the name Vanush. Using the chalice to lure sailors into the watery depths, Vanush has been gathering sacrifices for Lissala in hopes of restoring the forgotten goddess's faith throughout the Inner Sea.

Irespan (CR 1): The city of Magnimar is the greatest mercantile rival of Korvosa, and both can trace their founding to Thassilon and the scions of Xin. While the city itself was not around in Thassilon's time, the megalithic Irespan that once connected the region to Xin-Bakrakhan yet remains. The Irespan once served as a massive super-highway that soared over the craggy, mountainous realm of Bakrakhan. Now, however, most of what remains of the bridge following Earthfall can be seen in Magnimar, where its southern foundation remains rooted to the earth, creating a gargantuan roof for the shadowy Underbridge district of that city.

Justnoque (CR 12): Northwest of Varisia beneath the white-capped waves of the Steaming Sea, nearly a dozen sleek black stones lurch out of the water, regarded as unlucky by the Linnorm Kings who rule those lands. In Thassilon's time, Justnoque was a center of scholarship and metalwork,

but now its works lie tumbled and abandoned beneath the icy waters. To the northeast, the ruined city of Torandey yet remains, its crumbling edifices repurposed by the citizens of Southmoor and now serving as the foundation for the city of Jol. Adventurers occasionally embark from Jol to explore the sunken city of Justnoque, but few return, and those who do speak of aquatic giants dwelling beneath the waves.

Minderhal's Anvil (CR 8): The god of giants is rarely worshiped these days, but a few sides of his most famous temple—originally built in the shape of a monumental anvil—still stand on the shore of the Storval Deep near the Iron Peaks, and the site still attracts a few stone giant pilgrims each year. Stories claim that an enormous crypt lies under the Anvil, holding the remains of important stone giant elders, but the entrance stones are too heavy for any human-sized creature to move, and the giants who frequent the place give its buried crypts a wide berth. Within the catacombs themselves, numerous horrors of eons past lurk behind basalt pillars and in massive sarcophagi, including giant mummies and the dreaded horrors known as inverted giants.

Sech Nevali (CR 9): Also known as the Hanging Monastery, this massive temple complex hangs above a

mile-deep chasm by enormous chains running between three high mountain peaks. It was originally dedicated to the mysterious Peacock Spirit, but now serves as the home for an order of reclusive monks who prize their privacy in the desolate castle, away from the bickering hordes of orcs of Belkzen, which give the gloomy temple a wide berth. Their deity long perished, the monks work tirelessly to formulate a means of resurrecting the Peacock Spirit, though what form the avian god-being would take in undeath is uncertain, and the implications of such a feat are dire indeed.

Spindlehorn (CR 13): This eerie tower is made of dark slate that soars thousands of feet into the air, its sides sheer save for the jagged staircase that winds its way around the crooked spire until it reaches a flattened peak, an open space barely 10 feet in diameter. The structure was originally built for the summoning of the titanic Oliphaunt of Jandelay, so that the summoner might stare the Oliphaunt in the eye while commanding it to lay waste to Shalast's enemies. The tall tales that surround Spindlehorn claim that the body of some powerful, eldritch force is buried beneath the structure—perhaps a long-forgotten runelord, a king of the rune giants, or the ghost of some more recent tyrant. Though the secrets of summoning dread behemoths such as the Oliphaunt of Jandelay are thought to be lost to history, the site itself is still remarkably amenable for summoning; creatures called forth from Spindlehorn's peak inevitably arrive on the Material Plane with unusual and monstrous properties of a fiendish bent.

Xin (CR 17): The sunken capital of Thassilon and final resting place of the emperor it was named after, Xin is scarcely known among even the most learned scholars of Thassilonian lore. The First King perished here, but made provisions to rise again should the *Sihedron* ever be reconstructed. Though the city remains completely submerged in the Varisian Gulf, if the seven-pointed relic is rebuilt, it is destined to rise from the watery depths once again so that King Xin may reclaim his fallen empire.

Xin-Edasseril (CR 6): The sinspawn, ettercaps, and ettins that were the servants of the runelord Belimarius still haunt the broken islands that make up the remains of her realm, the shattered kingdom of Edasseril. Accounts of the capital city, Xin-Edasseril, tell of a glorious Temple of Desna's First Dream, built of glass, diamond, and pure magical force, said to be a prismatic marvel and a repository for the runelords' most stunning gemstones, as well as home to a vast dreaming chamber that made its sleeping occupants' fantasies come to life—for better or worse. The ruins of Xin-Edasseril are known to lie on Chakikoth Isle in the Ironbound Archipelago, but the Temple of Desna's First Dream is mysteriously absent from the collapsed metropolis. Some believe that the temple can still be accessed via a portal on a nearby dream plane, though how to reach this alternate dimension is another matter entirely.

DEPIZENS AND DANGERS

The most prevalent creatures that remain in the holdings of old Thassilon are the humanoid races, including humans, elves, dwarves, gnomes, halflings, and half-orcs. The humans are composed mostly of the nomadic Varisians, who once made up the provider caste of Thassilon, and the seven tribes of the Shoanti, who were the soldiers of the militia caste. Both ethnicities still bear the scars inflicted on them during their enslavement by the runelords, and though the name Thassilon has been effectively wiped from their cultural memory, legends of the cruel overseers permeate their mythologies and myths in various forms. Varisians speak in hushed whispers of the red-haired demons that once dominated their people, even though many of their mystical traditions stem from Thassilonian times. Shoanti refer to the runelords in their oral histories as the Azghat, a pantheon of war-bringers who rewarded the brave and punished the dishonorable.

But not all the creatures of the old lands of Thassilon are so friendly or so forgetful. In the mountains and fens of the Varisian frontier, other creatures of times long lost subsist in scattered dwellings, descendants of Thassilon's slaves. These include large numbers of ogres and all manner of giants, as well as red dragons, sinspawn, ettins, and ettercaps.

The rune giants, found in the Kodar Mountains and elsewhere on missions of their own, have a long tradition of retaining Thassilon's lore; Thassilon's runes, after all, helped them enslave the other giant races, and though they rage at the thought of being enslaved once more, they revel in the eldritch powers granted to them by their Thassilonian overlords. Other giants, for their part, fear and despise rune giants, still viewing them as agents of the evil wizards who enslaved their kind so long ago, and many would put aside their own feuds in order to fight off a greater rune giant menace if it should present itself.

Besides the giants, other servitors of Thassilon can often be found in modern Varisia. The creatures known as the shining children were summoned and bound to guard certain gravesites or long-forgotten treasuries, and they steadfastly hold to their duties even millennia later. Thassilonian constructs watch over libraries or scriptoria where all the tomes have turned to carefully tended dust. Graveknights are also found quite often in these lands, for the runelords were inordinately fond of keeping such creatures close at hand. Some were members of the martial orders that King Xin founded, or the Therassic Order of the Peacock Spirit, but others were devoted followers of the runelords, former champions granted one last opportunity to serve their debauched and eldritch masters.

Perhaps one of the most disturbing of the runelords' creations was the inverted giant, a hideous monstrosity

created when a runelord was displeased with a particular giant minion. Through despicable arcana long lost to the ages, giants were ritually bound and transformed so that they would continue to live and think, but only as monstrous caricatures of themselves, their bodies turned inside out in the most painful and gruesome of punishments. Needless to say, few inverted giants tried their masters' patience again, and the unimaginable pain they suffered throughout the rest of their days served as a maddening punishment that would remind them of their insolence until their merciful deaths.

Before the *Starstone* fell and obliterated Thassilon, many of the runelords and their servants enchanted their inverted giant minions, freezing the tormented creatures in stasis so that centuries later they would continue to protect their masters' holdings, their mutilated organs providing sensory information among cunningly-looped

entrails and viscera preserved by rune magic. Those who find themselves exploring Thassilonian dungeons and ruins sometimes stumble upon such horrors, inadvertently releasing the monsters and restoring them to raging life and madness, the pain of their mutilated bodies having long since driven them to insanity and burning hatred.

No two inverted giants look the same, though some features remain fairly consistent between them. Instead of a head, most possess little more than a gaping maw the size of their neck, jagged bones and bits of skull serving as teeth for a monstrous mouth. They have no true eyes—what oracular systems they once had are now embedded somewhere near their sternums—but instead possess an innate sense of direction, and through the dark arcana that surges through their beings they can sense the location of their prey perfectly. Their moist, splotched bodies are marked with runes, and their muscles and bones are often visible through their translucent flesh.

Inverted giants understand speech, but their deformed mouths rarely work well enough for them to be understood by others. The average inverted giant is over 20 feet tall and weighs 1,400 pounds.



Inverted Giant

INVERTED GIANT CR 11

XP 12,800

CE Huge humanoid (giant)
Init +6; **Senses** blindsight 60 ft.;
 Perception +9
Aura fear aura (60 ft., DC 21)

DEFENSE

AC 25, touch 10, flat-footed 23 (+2 Dex, +15 natural, -2 size)

hp 152 (16d8+80); fast healing 4

Fort +15, **Ref** +7, **Will** +7

Defensive Abilities rock catching; **Resist** cold 10, electricity 10, fire 10

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee bite +19 (2d8+9 plus grab), 2 claws +19 (1d8+9 plus 1d6 energy)

Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.

Special Attacks grab (Large), rock throwing (120 ft.), runes, swallow whole (2d8+13 bludgeoning damage, AC 17, 15 hp)

STATISTICS

Str 29, **Dex** 14, **Con** 20, **Int** 9, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 16

Base Atk +12; **CMB** +23 (+27 grapple); **CMD** 35

Feats Awesome Blow, Cleave, Critical Focus, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Power Attack, Vital Strike

Skills Climb +17, Intimidate +11, Perception +9

Languages Giant, Thassilonian (can't speak)

ECOLOGY

Environment any

Organization solitary

Treasure standard

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Claws (Ex) An inverted giant can channel arcane energy into its fists whenever it makes a successful claw attack, dealing 1d6 points of energy damage (cold, electricity, or fire, chosen when the inverted giant attacks) in addition to the damage its claws normally deal.

Runes (Ex) Whenever a rune giant is affected by a spell or spell-like ability, it can cause the runes covering its body to flash with light. All creatures within 10 feet of the giant must make a DC 21 Fortitude save or be blinded for 1 round. The saving throw is Charisma-based.

TREASURES AND REWARDS

Only three kinds of things have survived fairly consistently from the ancient empire of Thassilon: enormous monuments, tremendous gemstones, and powerful artifacts. Thassilonian monuments are obvious enough, though not exactly treasures except in the sense of knowledge—a few are covered in glyphs that hint at powerful rune magic, but the keys to their secrets have long been lost. Cut jewels from Thassilon are often marked with the royal sigil of the runelord whose kingdom they belonged to, making it easy to identify a gemstone excavated from Thassilonian ruins. Of the artifacts of Thassilon, many are lost or buried beneath tons of rubble—others, however find themselves once again in the hands of tyrants who hope to use them for their own nefarious purposes.

Because of the runelords' propensity for etching their sigils onto magical or valuable relics, many items of modern make are marked with Thassilonian runes and sold to gullible adventurers by crafty chisellers. Countless customers have been duped into purchasing gold-painted armor, flimsy swords, and brittle wands by extortionists looking to make a quick gold piece—adventurers must be wary when dealing with salespeople claiming to possess the robes of Xin or a staff wielded by Alaznist.

Wizards and sorcerers capable of channeling the powerful rune magic so prevalent in Thassilon's times occasionally makes themselves known in the regions around present-day Varisia, and some even offer to teach their powers to students for reasonable prices. (For more information on Thassilonian magic, see *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Inner Sea Magic*.)

THASSILONIAN ARTIFACTS

Though the runelords of Thassilon commissioned the building of their monuments to enslaved giants, the evil wizards and their advisors were expert crafters of magical items and artifacts in their own right. Most of their relics were lost during Earthfall, and some are surely immured alongside their runelord masters, who wait in stasis for the magic of their *runewells* to bring them back to life. The following are but several of the myriad Thassilonian artifacts that appear in tales and lore.

The Mirror of Sorshen: The lustful runelord Sorshen commissioned this looking glass as a tool to enslave any humanoid of the opposite sex. Those who gaze into it are wrapped in a dream of permanent arousal, and awoken only to serve the mirror's master.

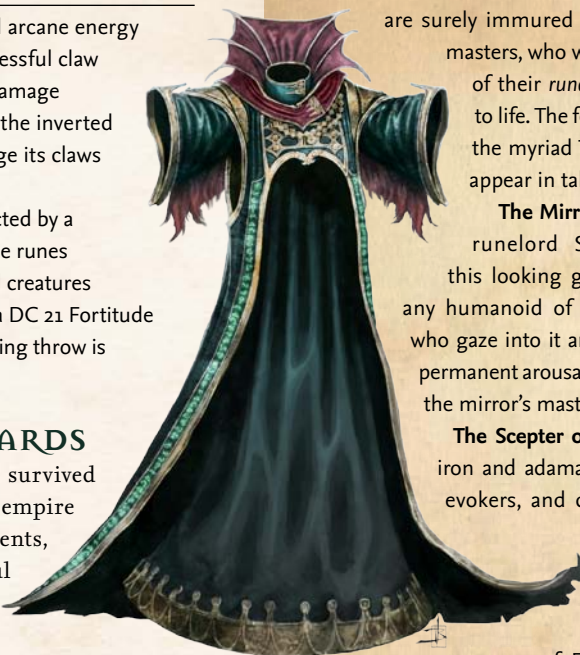
The Scepter of Alaznist: This scepter of iron and adamantite is a potent tool for evokers, and can maximize, empower, and expand nearly any spell its wielder casts.

The Shield of Xin-Undoros: The champion of First King Xin serves his liege beyond death as a graveknight in the Emerald Chambers, and his shield is said to reflect spells like arrows and grant its wielder the strength of a giant.

The Sihedron: The seven-pointed star known as the *Sihedron* was a powerful artifact owned by King Xin; it floated behind his head, and each of the points was made of a different skymetal and set with an *ioun stone*. The *Sihedron* was broken into seven pieces when the emperor perished, and each of the runelords took one of the shards and hid it, fearing what might happen if the fragmented relic were reconstructed.

The Spherical Boat of Zutha: As large as a small manor, this spherical boat was said to traverse the world faster than the eye could follow, and was used to distribute grain and fodder to the common people, or to carry a small army of Zutha's elite soldiers in times of war. When not in use, the *spherical boat of Zutha* shrank to the size of an orange and fit in the runelord's pocket.

Xin's Robe of Runes: All other robes in this style are said to be poor imitations of the first such garment, worn by First King Xin, which granted immediate access to the powers of rune magic in a pure form. Even when Xin used powerful magic to destroy himself and his hall, his *robe of runes* remained behind, untarnished by the destructive arcana.





SILENT DEVOTEES

The exclusive order of monks and sorcerers known as the Silent Devotees were among old Xin's most favored disciples, and in order to be ushered into the sect, followers were required to cut out their own tongues to symbolize their devotion. The Silent Devotees were responsible for maintaining the Emerald Chambers, performing such tasks as transferring tributes to the expansive treasure vaults of the tomb and looking after the central chamber. Should any of the Emerald Chambers' visitors find themselves lost among the countless rooms and portals of the labyrinthine crypt, a single Silent Devotee would occasionally come to rescue wayward explorers—or clean up the intruders' remains.

The original Silent Devotees have long since died out following the fall of the *Starstone* and collapse of Thassilon. Some of the more daring individuals of that order, however, continued their guardianship after death by pledging their souls either purposefully or accidentally to undead forms, including lichs, grave knights, and ghosts. These spirits continue to watch over the Emerald Chambers to this day, though the millennia of solitude has driven some of the mute curators mad.

THE EMERALD CHAMBERS

Magical Maze of Portals

Location: Southeastern Velashu Uplands

Master: None

Notable Inhabitants: Demons, giants, golems, outsiders, undead

The Emerald Chambers are both the shrines to First King Xin, the only true emperor of Thassilon, and his treasuries. His death in –6420 AR was viewed with such dismay by his runelord governors (at least publicly), that his extravagant tomb was destined to become both a place of pilgrimage and a target of tomb robbers for generations, if not millennia to come. His body was never found after his explosive departure from this realm, but his devotees still deemed it necessary to erect a structure to his honor. To prevent his tomb from being despoiled and yet still make it accessible to visitors, the runelords commissioned the construction of the Emerald Chambers.

The structure was built in the form of a vast underground complex centered around a single, grand chamber called the Hall of Xin's Memory. This incredible foyer was designed to be open to the public—its walls were decorated with colorful mosaics of emerald and gold and mithral, and it was furnished with statues of Xin and chandeliers that shed perpetual light. Grievers and loyal followers of Xin's cause could present gifts at an unassuming altar at the front of the great hall, and the tributes were then taken by the workers

of the temple—the Silent Devotees—to one of the countless doors that lined the grand chamber's walls.

These doors were the method by which the builders of the Emerald Chambers meant to keep Xin's greatest fortunes and secrets hidden from prying eyes, and their secrets are known only by the Silent Devotees. Each portal leads to a different chamber, of which there are rumored to be a total of a thousand, each lavishly warded with extraordinary beasts, spells, and traps. *Xin's robe of runes*—rumored to have granted the wizard some of the fell powers he possessed in life—was placed in one of these 999 chambers, and his other treasures scattered among the others. The majority of the Emerald Chambers, however, were designed to be deadly, magically warded trap-rooms to dissuade foolish grave robbers from raiding the tomb.

The initial rush to explore the 1,000 Emerald Chambers upon its completion led to hundreds of dead would-be tomb robbers, which greatly discouraged others from pell-mell attempts at looting. Indeed, an entire generation of rather hasty grave robbers died in the Emerald Chambers, and their remains are scattered in many of its chambers, sometimes accompanied by the explorers' dread ghosts or haunts. This gave people yet another reason to stay away, and the Emerald Chambers have been largely ignored for millennia, their stone edifices weathering into soft curves, but their wards and deadly magic as active as ever.

The Chambers Today

The chambers stand high enough for giants and dragons to visit, with doorways about 20 feet tall and 10 feet wide. The size of the interiors vary wildly, but most range up to about 80 feet long and 120 feet wide, with ceilings standing up to 100 feet tall. The whole site spans dozens of acres.

Of the original 1,000 chambers constructed, about 200 have been prized open and are empty but for dirt and rune-covered walls. About 20 or 30 have been buried by the shifting of hillsides during Earthfall, or perhaps were deliberately hidden under enormous piles of rubble. Such rooms are only accessible through tunnels or teleportation, though many of the chambers are warded against teleportation by powerful runes that defuse certain types of magic.

That leaves about 750 of the chambers still sealed and dangerous, waiting for curious visitors. Of those, it is unclear how many are actively inhabited by various graveknights, ghosts, Thassilonian constructs, demons, or worse. Some of these creatures claim to be ancient members of Xin's court. Others simply seek his riches for themselves.

The Connecting Doors and Guardians

Each of the doorways to the Emerald Chambers is made of enchanted stone that emits a faint, greenish glow. Upon stepping through the door, visitors are magically transported to another chamber. The door by which visitors

entered immediately disappears upon being shut, and the chamber they've entered inevitably contains at least two doorways at the opposite end of the entrance: at least one of reddish stone that shimmers with magical illumination, and a single door the shade of burnt orange flecked with black. The reddish doors lead immediately to another of the 1,000 chambers. The burnt orange doors lead back to the Hall of Xin's Memory, and serve as a sort of escape hatch. It is believed that some chambers cannot truly be entered from the main hall, but only found through a series of the red doors. The physics of the Emerald Chambers care not for practicality or even feasibility—a room may be entirely flooded, only to contain a doorway that leads into a vast chamber filled with verdant greenery.

The following are just a small sample of the extraordinary rooms that make up the Emerald Chambers, and there are hundreds more of equally extravagant design waiting to be explored.

Chamber of Gears: This immense chamber smells of iron, and its floor is covered with a layer of dried brown blood. Twisting mechanisms of impossible design churn throughout the entire room, creating a deadly maze of traps that stab, maim, and gore intruders who don't watch their step. Nine statues and heaps of ancient urns are visible at the far end of the room, and those who escape the Chamber of Gears say that the statues serve as the room's true guardians.

Great Rune Chamber: The walls of this chamber are lined with bookshelves, each one bearing hundreds of ledgers, tomes, and scrolls, the spines of which claim that the writings are the collected history of the runelords, their triumphs over great foes, and the glories of Xin and his empire. When a tome is removed from the shelf, the entire library comes to life to attack the unfortunate would-be scholars before they can glean any knowledge.

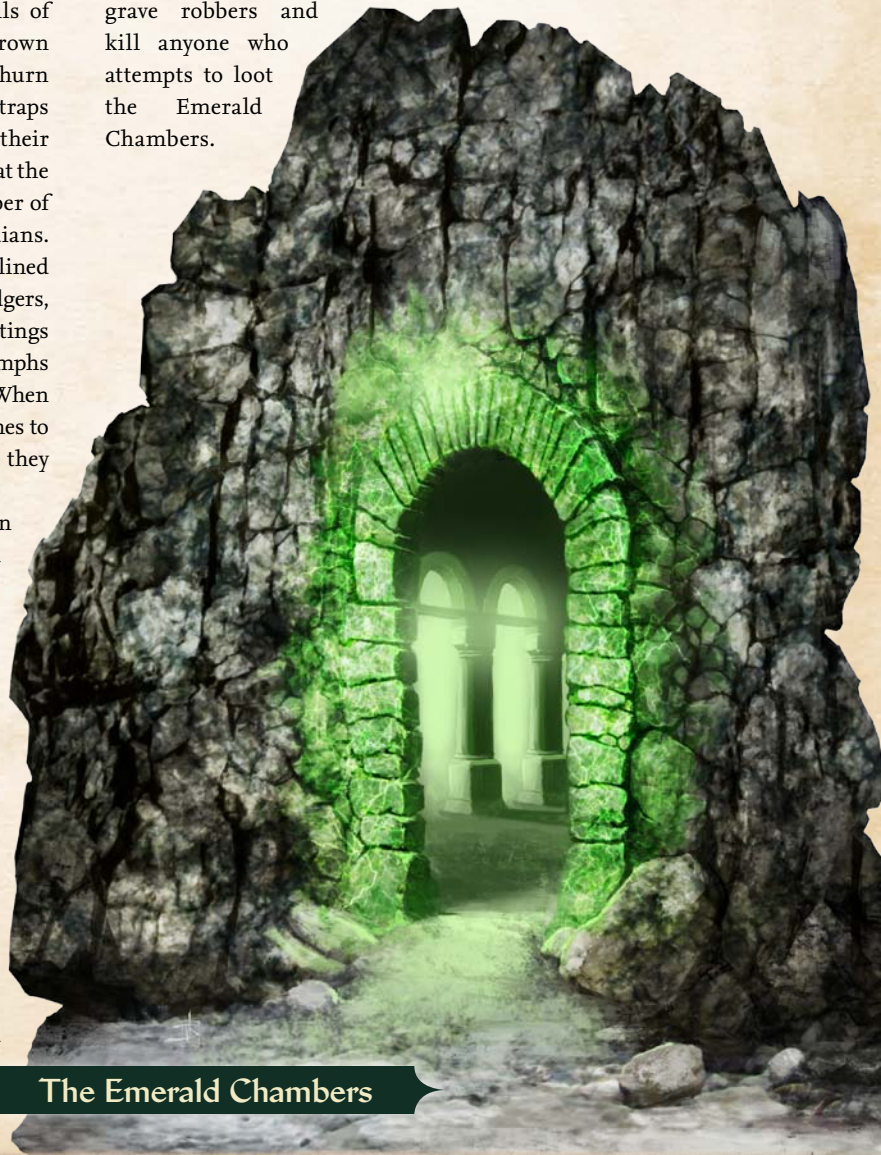
Green Mirror: One wall of this chamber is a green shimmering field of magic, showing Thassilon at its founding and at its peak, with images of Xin ruling and judging the progress of the empire. Some believe it is possible to pass through this mirror to an earlier period of Golarion's history. Others believe it is merely an elaborate illusion that feeds on memories given to it by the mourners of long ago.

The Hall of Xin's Memory: The expansive main chamber of the Emerald Chambers was looted long ago by avaricious explorers too cowardly to plunge farther into the maze. Its walls are made up of durable slabs of granite, interrupted every few feet by a glowing green doorway, with over 50 in all adorning all sides of the chamber. A great door once led into the Hall of Xin's Memory, but it has long been removed from the entrance to the Emerald Chambers, most likely torn off during some great storm during the Age of Darkness. Faint

traces of murals and bas-relief carvings showing Xin's life and achievements adorn the pillars and walls, and cryptic Thassilonian runes mark what entablatures remain intact.

Seeing Chamber: This chamber's walls are covered with clear crystal balls; polished brass and silver mirrors that never tarnish; and black, lightless holes. Each seems to display an object or treasure of some kind, some rune-marked, but all obviously of Thassilonian manufacture. However, these are illusions; anyone who attempts to seize the objects triggers warding runes. The illusions survive—visitors often don't.

Xin-Undoros: One of the few sentient Silent Devotees to have remained on duty since Thassilon's fall is the placid and diligent Xin-Undoros, who took his name from his king when he turned himself into a graveknight. Since his transition to undeath shortly before Earthfall, the passage of millennia has not affected Xin-Undoros in the least, and he continues to drive away grave robbers and kill anyone who attempts to loot the Emerald Chambers.



The Emerald Chambers

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UNEARTH THE PAST

The shattered remains of dead civilizations lie dormant throughout the Inner Sea. Whether such ruins are entombed under tons of rubble, sunk beneath white-capped oceans, or warped into blasted wastelands by otherworldly energies, the perils of these obliterated empires are equaled only by the unfathomable treasures locked within their crumbling temples, crypts, and citadels.

Lost Kingdoms provides a detailed overview of six of Golarion's most famous and mysterious ancient nations, fallen empires that promise intrepid adventurers the opportunity to claim untold riches, explore fantastical realms of antiquity, and unravel mysteries thought long lost to the sands of time.

Ancient kingdoms explored in this book include:

- ▶ Ancient Osirion, the pharaonic empire whose rulers constructed treasure-laden crypts, pyramids, and temples dedicated to their own honor.
- ▶ Ghol-Gan, where cyclopes raised ziggurats to otherworldly deities, but whose works now serve as half-flooded temple-lairs for alien horrors.
- ▶ The Jistka Imperium, the first true civilization to rise after the apocalypse of Earthfall, famed for its golem-crafting artificers and expansionist magistrates.
- ▶ Lirgen and Yamasa, whose astrological divinations and ancestral spirits led their cultures to prosperity, but failed to warn them of the coming of the great hurricane destined to destroy their lands.
- ▶ Sarkoris, where barbarian warlords and druids now raise spears against the demon-spawning rift in the center of their ancestral lands.
- ▶ Thassilon, a divided empire ruled by the runelords, vile wizards whose sin magic enslaved entire tribes of giants and shackled them to building monuments to their glory.

Lost Kingdoms is intended for use with the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game and the Pathfinder campaign setting, but can easily be used in any fantasy game setting.



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