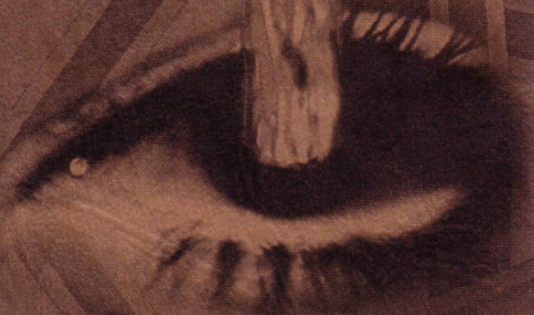


Ye Booke of Tentacles 3



Editors

Fabian Kuechler
Christian Einsporn

Co-Editor

Daniel Fahey

Design & Layout

Fabian Kuechler
Christian Einsporn

Project Manager

Fabian Kuechler

Authors

Sten Åhrman, Shannon Apple, Andrew Bean, Edward Bolme, Danny Bourne, Andrew Clements, David Dunham, John Hughes, Peter Johansson, Martin Laurie, Stephen Martin, Wesley Quadros, Roderick Robertson, Eric Rowe, Harald Smith, Greg Stafford, Gary Switzer, Ian Thomson, Lawrence Whitaker, Jane Williams

Cover Art

Dan Barker

Interior Art

Simon Bray (p. 107),
Dario Corallo (p. 19, 34, 35, 37, 38, 39, 40, 43, 45, 46, 47, 52, 55, 57, 64),
Jimmy Allmen (p. 84, 85, 90, 92)
Mike o' Connor (p. 98, 100)

Maps

Ian Thomson

Print

Bomhoff GmbH, Pappelstrasse 23/25,
D-28199 Bremen,
Germany

Publishing & Distribution

RuneQuest-Gesellschaft e. V.
c/o Ingo Tschinke
Schevemoorer Landstrasse 33,
D-28325 Bremen
Tradetalk@t-online.de

Welcome to Ybot 3!

Well, even evil things delay! But finally you hold Ybot 3 in your little hands! We hope you will enjoy this issue as much as Ybot 1 & 2 and overlook erratic typos and layout hiccups.

Ybot is the proud work of many authors and artists and we were overwhelmed by the amount of material that was submitted this time. It was just too much to be published at once. We are sorry for each word, each article we could not include in Ybot 3. Despite this we hope that the authors and artists not published here will still work with us in the future. We are certainly looking forward to work with you again next year.

We are proud to present you the tremendous Pavis and Big Rubble Companion by Ian Thomson and friends, some of the stories once written for "Heroes of the King", the unpublished collection of Glorantha fiction, as well as the last chapter of John Hughes marvellous Glorantha novel "Fires of Mist and Wind-Blown Snow". But you will find much more material covering the lozenge world of Glorantha, Elric!, Hawkmoon and Call of Cthulhu.

Apologies to Johan Lindhom, eh, Lindholm, for misspelling his name in the first two Bookes and Ingo Tschinke who was not mentioned as co-author of the fantastic Culbrea material in Ybot 2.

The funds we receive from this book are used to finance the Tentacles Millennium Convention, Castle Stahleck, Bacharach, Germany, June 9th to 12th 2000.

Visit our website: www.tentacles-convention.de

Coming soon!

The Pavis and Big Rubble Companion Volume 2

The Pavis and Big Rubble Companion Volume 2 contains a series of adventures through the Old City, including 2 more detailed descriptions of original Rubble locations, and the complete Hero Wars cultural, religious and professional keywords for generating Heros and Narrator characters from both New and Old Pavis. Pre-orders now being accepted.

Contact:

Ingo Tschinke, Schevemoorer Landstrasse 33,
D-28325 Bremen, Germany
Tradetalk@t-online.de

All material in this collection is © 2000 by the respective authors and artists and may only be reproduced with their permission. The publications in this collection are not intended to infringe in any way on the future copyright use of the material by it's legal owners.

Glorantha is a creation of Greg Stafford and is used with his permission. Glorantha™ and Hero Wars™ are trademarks of Issaries Inc. Call of Cthulhu™, Elric!™ and Hawkmoon™ are trademarks of Chaosium Inc. RuneQuest™ is the Avalon Hill Company's trademark for its fantasy role-playing game. Any use of trademarks without mention of trademark status is not meant as infringement of that status.

Table of Contents

The Fall and Rise of Heroes of the King	Page 4
The Red Folk Leave	Page 5
The Wind Blows also Softly	Page 7
The Return of Hargart the Liberator	Page 23
A Boy and His Alynx	Page 26
Fires of Mist and Wind-Blown Snow	Page 31
Pavis and Big Rubble Companion Volume 1	Page 35
The Cult of Pavis	Page 36
The Cult of Opili	Page 40
Holiday Glorantha: The 'Real City' of Old Pavis	Page 42
Zebra Fort and the Stockade	Page 49
The Dwarfs of Pavis	Page 55
The New Flintnail Temple	Page 62
The Rubble Trackers	Page 69
Mani's Fort	Page 70
The Flintnail Tunnels	Page 77
A Rough Visit to Glamour	Page 78
Ernalda Initiation	Page 97
The Hero Wars Cult of Eusibus	Page 98
"We Hate Darjini Usurpers"	Page 100
Innsmouth 2000	Page 101
The Creators of Life	Page 106
Kingdoms of the Middle Sea	Page 108
Meliadus - My Part in His Downfall	Page 110

The Fall and Rise of Heroes of the King

by Stephen Martin

A long time ago, following up on the unexpected success of *King of Sartar*, Greg Stafford wanted to publish a book of Glorantha fiction. I was eventually selected to be the editor, and I solicited stories from Glorantha fans as well as about 40 big-name science fiction and fantasy authors. The concept of the book was eventually defined to be stories about Argrath and his companions; stories were written, rewritten, and rewritten again; and finally several copies of the book, named *Heroes of the King*, were sent to readers.

And then the project disappeared.

There were many reasons for the demise of *Heroes of the King*, and there is no one person that can be blamed. Although I was the editor, I really don't know a lot about some of these reasons. And ultimately, they are unimportant. What is important is that the stories are finally being published.

The five stories you will read here are "The Red Folk Leave," by David Dunham; "The Wind Also Blows Softly," by Ed Bolme; "Beorgan's Ring," by Roderick Robertson; "The Return of Hargart the Liberator," by Harald Smith and "A Boy and His Alynx" by Eric Rowe. All of these stories are excellent pieces of fiction, and each depicts Argrath in a different manner.

"Beorgan's Ring" has the best last line of any of the stories, but Harald's story does the best job of mixing different aspects of Argrath into a single whole. "The Wind Also Blows Softly" is the "cleverest" of all the stories I received, and David Dunham's is an elegantly simple first-person account of Argrath. "A Boy and His Alynx" is a fun tale about the best known event of Argrath's childhood, and sows the seeds for future stories. Each story has its strengths, but is very different; as varied as Argrath himself.

In some ways, however, more important than the stories you will read here are those that you will not.

The first story from *Heroes of the King* to see print was my own "Kallyr's Flame." In this story, Kallyr, not Argrath, is the one who lights the Flame of Sartar in 1627. I guess I sent it to *Enclosure* because, despite my hopes otherwise, deep down inside I knew that *Heroes of the King* would never see print. My greatest regret after this fact is that it was my own story that was published first, a grave injustice to the other authors, especially since my story was not wholly original.

"Argrath the Stickpicker" is a charming folktale about Argrath told by Nick Brooke. Many people have heard him tell it at Convulsions, and it has appeared elsewhere since then. It is my favorite of all the submissions, because it shows that in the end, Argrath was just another foolish mortal like all of us. "How One Man Became a God" indeed!

Oliver Dickinson's stories about Griselda are always a favorite among the Glorantha Tribe. So, I told Oliver that it was time for him to write about how Griselda and her friends save the Giant's Cradle that floated through Pavis in 1621. Oliver agreed, and "The Cradlesnatchers" soon made its way to me. Many readers have heard him tell this story at Convulsions, and all of you will get a chance to read it when a new volume of *The Collected Griselda* is published, hopefully soon.

Of all the stories submitted, one in particular impressed me with its ability to draw me into Glorantha. Until I read Penelope Love's "The Harrowing," I had never actually been able to picture any particular place in Glorantha. But this tale of love and betrayal

gave me a wonderful vision of the city of Pavis that I cannot forget. Although her story does not appear here, it is scheduled to appear in *Tradetalk* #8.

And now we come to the last two stories, "The Road of Kings" and "When the Wolf Pirates Came to the City of Wonders," which as everyone reading should know were published in *Glorantha Visions* as part of *Deluxe Hero Wars*. If you missed this, get it while you still can!

"The Road of Kings," by John Boyle, is merely the beginning of a much longer epic. Greg and I have both encouraged John to continue writing, and soon we will be able to read the entire saga of Orkarla the Black, last member of the Maboder Tribe.

Phyllis Ann Karr is best known for her Arthurian works, and before I contacted her had no knowledge of Glorantha. Yet in just a few short weeks she absorbed enough information to write, "When the Wolf Pirates Came to the City of Wonders." This story focuses on Gunda the Guilty, one of the companions of the great Harrek, and a key figure later in the death of Kallyr. In this story we see her softer side, and get a guided tour of the Otherworld as a side benefit.

I hope that you enjoy all of the stories, and encourage you to seek out the ones that you have not yet read. Although the project died long ago the stories live on, which is as it should be. "Better late than never" is a trite way of saying I didn't do a very good job as editor of *Heroes of the King*, but thankfully the best trite sayings are the ones that are true. This is also a poor apology for the authors, but the best that I can give, and I hope it will be enough.

Note: A longer version of this introduction, with more information on the stories and the demise of *Heroes of the King*, can be found on the Drastic Web Page at:

www.geocities.com/TimesSquare/Ring/1722/Heroes.html

The Red Folk Leave

by David Dunham

Told by Lwezichwe, an old woman of the Ironspear clan, to five Agmori children. Recorded and annotated by Ink-Enjosar.

(1) Many of the Agmori were allied with the Praxians against the Lunars; Lwezichwe apparently chooses not to remember this defeat.

(2) Actually New Pavis.

(3) The Eiskolli family opened the gates and were granted concessions by the Lunars.

(4) The ruins of the original city of Pavis.

(5) Lwezichwe gave me a strange look at this point.

(6) Asteli Firebeard believes that Argrath enchanted the dragon teeth to force the bearer to follow his commands. This would explain why he gave Lwezichwe one, except that Lurana Wise-eye's brilliant essay "The Generosity of Argrath" shows the opposite to be true.

Ah, hello my grandchildren. Come here and help stretch these hides for me.

So, Ngcobo, your father saw a dragon yesterday? It might have been Krang, the dream who sleeps in the Five-Eyes caves along the River of Cradles. Have I shown you my dragon tooth? No, Mgashiyo, you can't touch it --it's still very magic today. It was even more magical before the Red Folk left.

You know why we called them the Red Folk? Yes, their goddess was red, but also because when they first came, the Sun burned their skins red.

The year of my First-Marriage to your grandfather, the Red Folk came to the Plains of Prax. In those days their goddess shone bright in the heavens. They fought the Herd People at Moonbroth, and won, thanks to the treachery of the Sable tribe and the Plant Tenders who worship the sun.⁽¹⁾

Then they went to Pavis⁽²⁾, where the Rabbit People live. You know why we call them the Rabbit Folk? Yes, they are the weakest of the Weak Folk, but besides? Well, because they live all packed in their homes like rabbits in a warren. Think of all the clans in the Big Camp during Sacred Time. Now imagine all those people living in a regular camp. And living in big houses made of dried mud, all right next to each other, or even stacked one on top of another. That's why they're called the Rabbit People.

The army of the Red Folk was large, but it was even larger because they were Weak Folk and had to use animals to carry water when they traveled. You could see them coming for days, and the people of Pavis had lots of time to get ready. But when the Red Folk and the Plant Tender warriors showed up outside their walls, the Rabbit Folk turned over the city without a fight.⁽³⁾

For many years, nobody could make the Red Folk go away. They were stronger than any of the other Weak Folk. They took part of the Herd People's animals, they made the Rabbit People and the Plant Tenders feed them, and they captured many of the Weak Folk and made them slaves. They even tried to take part of our hunts, but our clans were always able to avoid them.

The Red Folk also killed all the priests of the Storm Chief, or chased them out of Pavis into the Big Rubble.⁽⁴⁾ That's a place that shows the folly of building houses. It would take you four hours to walk around it, and every house inside has fallen down. And even though the Rabbit People surrounded the Big Rubble with a wall taller than I can throw a javelin, it didn't keep out their enemies the Dark Folk, who chased them out and now live inside. Remember, walls cannot defend you. The clan is defended by its spears.

Besides the Dark Folk, many Twist-Horns live in the Big Rubble, and the Red Folk were afraid to go there. But there were old temples, forgotten treasures, and forbidden magic of the God Killers inside, and the Red Folk wanted these.

They let other people go into the Big Rubble, and when they came out, took part of any treasure they had found. But all the same, many Weak Folk came to the Big Rubble to look for treasure. I once guarded some Weak Folk who were looking

for god-blood crystals there, and found this stone that squeaks when you squeeze it. The Weak Folk were busy looking at marks on paper⁽⁵⁾, and never found anything. That was after your grandfather died, and before my Second-Marriage.

The Rabbit People were very unhappy, but the Red Folk were too strong for them, and kept chasing their priests away. The Herd People were unhappy, because the Red Folk made sure the Sable tribe got to graze in the Good Place, and the other tribes had to live in Vulture's Country. The Plant Tenders were friendly with the Red Folk, but had to pay them treasure every year. Everybody wanted the same thing, for the Red Folk to go away, but nobody could agree to work together to make them go.

Then Argrath came to Prax. He made friends in all the Herd People tribes, and brought them together to make a new tribe, the White tribe. They were called that because when they met in their Big Camp, all their animals turned white. Argrath asked the White tribe to drive the Red Folk out of the city of Pavis, and he asked everyone else who had a grudge against the Red Folk to help.

When the Red Folk and Rabbit People saw the White tribe and the other Herd People coming, they closed the openings in their wall, and yelled insults and shot arrows at the Herd People. The Herd People tried to break into the walls, but could not, so they camped outside and waited. The Rabbit People were trapped inside Pavis by their own walls, because they could only leave through the openings, and the Herd People were waiting there. I was in Pavis to visit my friend Lyzal White-Hands the Healer, who healed you when you caught the Rolling Fever, Mothusi. I gave her some healing herbs I'd collected, and decided to stay and make sure she came to no harm.

When Argrath saw that his army couldn't force their way into the city, he went into the Big Rubble with some of the Herd People. He knew of a tunnel that led into Pavis. The Herd People couldn't ride their mounts into the tunnel, so Argrath went on alone. The tunnel was full of mouth-monsters, which live underground and eat anything. One of them bit Argrath's sword, but he killed them with his Red Gold Knife. That's right, Ngcobo, gold isn't really red, but that's what he called it when he showed it to me. The mouth-monsters had eaten their own tunnels through the earth, and Argrath got lost in them. Finally he called on his god for help. The Storm Chief sent a wind, and Argrath followed it to where it blew into the mouth of the tunnel, and he knew where he was. No, Mgashiyo, I don't know why he couldn't follow his own tracks back, but most Weak Folk cannot even follow the new trail of a wounded rhino calf.

He came out of the tunnel inside Pavis. At first the Rabbit People thought he was a spy and wanted to kill him. A spy is someone who pretends to be a friend, but after he drinks your water he goes back to your enemies and tells them how many warriors defend your camp. Well, before the Rabbit People could kill Argrath,

some old friends recognized him and gave him firewater to drink. But the firewater clouded Argrath's mind and slurred his speech, so nobody listened to him when he asked them to open the walls and let the Herd People in. Remember that even heroes can be unmade by firewater.

The next morning I climbed the stone hill temple of the city god to see over the wall. The tents of the Herd People were still scattered everywhere like the skullbushes in the Good Place. When I climbed back down, Argrath was there. I introduced myself and he smiled. "I was told to find a long iron spear, and now I see what the prophecy meant." He told me who he was, and why and how he had come. I said I was not a friend of the Red Folk, but I was not their enemy either. He asked me to go on a hunt with him. He said he knew the path to find a creature I could tell my grandchildren about.

I painted myself with the hunting marks, and Argrath took a new sword. We went to the Lame Man's Eating Place and through another tunnel that opened up inside the Rubble. We walked to the fields called the Big Grazing, because there is good hunting there. Your great-uncle Hrathi Mba had his Dream Hunt there. Argrath started singing a song and dancing. I followed the steps of the dance, but I couldn't understand the words. The sky grew dark, but the Sun was still shining. Argrath kept singing until I saw an antelope with no horns and a long nose that almost reached to the ground. I have never seen its like since, and no other hunter I asked knew what it was. Three-Drum Ntombi told me he once saw a spirit like that on a trip way back, when he looked at the way the world was before the gods broke it.

I took the long-nose down with one javelin, and sang the Release Song, but Argrath asked me not to make any other cuts in it. We carried it to the temple of the Dragon Men, which was in the Big Grazing. It was made of rocks my size balanced on standing stones. Dragon Men have heads and scales like dragons, but walk on two legs and use swords and shields like men. One of them stood at the entrance to the temple, holding its stone sword straight out at arm's length. Argrath twisted up his mouth and hissed some words at it, but it didn't move. He said words in Trader's Talk and other languages, but it still didn't move. He tried offering it bars of silver, and green gems, but it didn't move. Argrath had no more ideas, so finally I walked underneath the sword, and Argrath followed. I put the long-nosed antelope next to the altar stone, and Argrath sat down next to it. A Dragon Man with a long tail like a tswana lizard's brought out a pile of gold disks like those the Plant Tenders trade with, but Argrath said nothing. Then it brought out an arrow fletched with ostrich feathers which floated in the air, but Argrath said nothing. It brought out a blue rabbit the size of my fingertip, which hopped around making peeping sounds, but still Argrath said nothing. It sang a song that made us both sleepy, but Argrath poked me with his Red Gold Knife, and I poked him with the Knife-Tooth dagger that Hrathi Mba gave me, and we stayed awake. Finally the Dragon Man brought a bolo lizard-hide bag painted with jagged designs, which Argrath took, and we went back to Pavis.

The next day, Argrath took the bag to the square in front of the stone hill temple. He told everyone that he would make the Red Folk leave. Some people laughed, but Argrath pointed to the sky, and everyone saw that there was only one cloud in the sky, and it was blowing over the moon as he pointed. Somebody said that the Red Folk had always crushed rebellions, and nailed the rebels to trees. Argrath laughed, and said that since there were no trees in Prax, they had nothing to fear from the Red Folk. Besides that, he said he had dragon teeth, which would protect them from harm. He gave one to anybody who would help him against the Red Folk, and made them swear on the tooth to use all their abilities in the fight. There were exactly as many teeth in the bag as people who wanted one. He gave this one to me, even though I didn't need its protection. I think he wanted to give me something for my help. (6)

When everyone had a dragon tooth, they ran to the opening in the wall. The Red Folk had it closed, but were being attacked by flying, blood-sucking demons. The Teeth -- everyone Argrath had given a tooth to -- fell on them from behind, and soon opened the wall to the Herd People outside. The White tribe only fought the Red Folk, but other Herd People attacked the Teeth. I fought against a demon with the body of a man but the head of a horse, who had a curved sword as red as a vaxrose. My spear broke against its armor, but I tripped it with the haft, and hit it in the neck until it stopped moving. Then one of the Red Folk ran at me, but I held up the tooth, and he hesitated until I could grab a javelin and threw it through his eye. I saw Lyzal White-Hands in the middle of the battle, performing a healing spell on one of the Herd People. She too had a dragon tooth, but I didn't trust the Red Folk to observe the Healer's Truce, so I moved closer to her, just in case.

All the Teeth managed to escape or fight their way free, and just as Argrath had said, none were hurt. But all the Red Folk were killed or fled. The Herd People ran through the city for two days, and drank firewater until they passed out. When they woke up, Argrath talked to their leaders and gave them gifts, and they left the city. Argrath became the chief of Pavis, and the Red Folk never came back.

No, Mothusi, I don't know what happened to Argrath after that, because I left Pavis after I saw that Lyzal White-Hands was safe. But I hear he fought against the Red Folk in the Lands of the Sunset.

Yes, Mgashiyo, it does look exactly like a hyena tooth. You've been learning well. But Argrath said it was a dragon tooth, and everything else he said was true.



The Wind Blows Also Softly

by Edward Bolme

A spoken song, copied from a Donandar document owned by Mona, the Bard-Without-Music

The spoken song format was very popular for a short time, but rapidly fell from favor. Part of its loss of popularity was in the fact that any bard who couldn't carry a tune thought they could perform spoken song, when in truth only a very powerful speaker could do so. There are no spoken song artists left to my knowledge.

(1) Although 'Marauders' is capitalized in the original, it does not appear to be the name of a particular military formation but instead a poetic description; hence we have opted not to capitalize the word.

The marauders⁽¹⁾ leapt like tigers from the tall grass, striking the caravan in its center. Everyone was surprised, and several guards fell quickly, their swords whining uselessly in their scabbards. The marauders were, of course, Lunars. Their wicked, curved scimitars gleamed silver and crimson in the sun; their cruel, crescent-bladed throwing axes sliced through the very air, whispering like bats. The Issaries priest, panicked and stuttering as the first guards died, failed to erect a magical defense before an axe split his balding skull, and many were the victims who bled their misty life out upon the winding mountain road because of his failure.

The onslaught was short-lived, however, for the Lunars who dealt the treacherous blow faced a surprise of their own: by sheerest chance (or perhaps divine ordinance), the simple merchant caravan was escorted by an Orlanthi priest and his loyal retinue. With a bellowing war cry, the Voice of the Royal Storm stood and called for aid, and the wind itself devoured the Lunars' thrown blades. All around the priest the Orlanthi drew their swords and countered the marauders, and the air sang with the clash of bronze...the clash indeed of iron wills.

With the Orlanthi was a camp boy, thirteen years of age, dedicated to Orlanth merely three months and already hoping for initiation. He had no sword or armor of his own, but he had the wind's desire for justice. He jumped from a wagon and ran to one of the fallen caravan guards. Part of the guard's spear had been shorn off in an ineffective parry, but the boy grabbed the remainder and hefted it. He looked about the caravan, and saw that the Lunars were already in flight, regrouping from the unexpected resistance. Murmuring a quick prayer to Orlanth, he threw the spear in the air with a braying boyish yell. The Wind, yet attending the priest, heard the boy's prayer, and drove the shorn missile hard into the heart of one of the Lunars. One of the wind warriors heard the boy's yell and laughed. "Do you always squawk, boy, when you strike your foe?" The boy, red-faced, said nothing, and the warrior laughed again. "Now I understand why they call you Ducks. That was a very good throw, lad; be proud of yourself. An honest warrior is never without honor, even when his voice cracks."

Now everyone knew that this part of Sartar, along the east road, had been plagued by nefarious and cunning bandits for well over a season, and word of these troubles had circulated throughout the kingdom. In response to this mysterious threat, many Lightbringers conjoined their groups. This is why the wander-lusty priest of Orlanth agreed to journey with the slower Goldentongue caravan. "Better that all should arrive late to Boldhome," said he, "than that a single Lightbringer should fall." But now the highwaymen had revealed their true color to be scarlet, and unlike all their previous raids they had left a fresh trail for the brave Orlanthi to follow. The priest vowed that he would see the Lunars slain for the depredations they had already caused, and for their dishonorable means of waging war. He sent his followers to track them, while he and a few of his warriors saw the remnants of the caravan safely to Boldhome.

The boy called Ducks accompanied the tracking party as they wound their way through the rugged hills, hot on the scent of the bandits.

Although the winds blew, they restrained themselves from caressing the fair face of the Mother Earth, and the tracks of Lunar sandals were plain to all. One of the Orlanthi warriors pointed at some blood spattered upon the ground and laughed. "To find these villains we need only follow the Red Moons!"

By the end of the day the warriors had tracked the Lunars to their lair: a cave on a steep slope situated within a half-day's journey of Swenstown. Ducks gathered wood for a fire while the soldiers kept watch over the cave, their weapons always at hand. Urged by their mistress somewhere in the veil of darkness, a handful of trollkin timidly approached the Orlanthi camp in the night. For the price of a half-dozen small bells they agreed to scan for the Lunar marauders throughout the night, for troll hunting parties had suffered at the hands of those crimson brigands as much as the Sartarites.

When Dawn preceded her father the fiery Emperor into the sky, the Orlanthi were better able to survey the Lunars' lair. The cave was set halfway up a steep and rocky slope, and could be reached only by a single narrow, winding path. Along that path the Earth offered no cover, and the cave overlooked the entire approach. A dense thicket of dried brush grew just inside the cave mouth and obscured those who waited within. Ducks listened all day as the warriors discussed the problem facing them, hoping to improve his knowledge of the way of the warrior by attending their stratagems. By the end of the day, the Orlanthi priest had returned with the rest of their band after delivering the caravan safely into the care of a detachment of the Boldhome militia. The priest decided that they would attack the cave the following day, and everyone made their preparations. For a second night the Orlanthi camped while the trollkin kept watch, bought anew with fresh fruit from Apple Lane.

The morning was filled with strong winds, which buoyed the spirits of the Orlanthi as they began to climb the slope to assault the Lunars' lair. The armored warriors gathered around the mouth of the cave, swords drawn, then three moved in to clear the brush out of the way. These unlucky three stumbled back out at once clutching at the arrows which suddenly pierced their armor. They slid down the slope on their backs and into the tending hands of their horrified priest. Furious, the rest of the Orlanthi charged into the cave and engaged the Lunars. Battle rang sharp and strong from the cave mouth, but lasted only a short while before the Orlanthi withdrew, torn by thorn and scimitar, dragging their fallen with them. Laughter echoed hollowly from the yawning mouth of the cave, carried sullenly by the wind and providing a macabre counterpoint to the moans of the wounded Orlanthi. Ducks was sent to fetch many pails of fresh water to bathe and quench the wounded, until he, too, felt worn by the battle. Not all of the Orlanthi returned, and there was dark speculation on the fate of the missing.

While Ducks cleaned and oiled the warriors' blood-stained equipment and the Priest moved

among the wounded, the Orlanthe warriors told of their experience. "The Lunars are well-fortified," they said, "and the cave is not a simple one. The brush at its mouth is a wall of stout and interwoven brambles, with long and cruel spines. It did more than simply slow our movement, yet the Lunars fired their arrows through it with ease. No one can say for certain whether we killed even one of them, for it was dark and they were at an advantage. We cannot take them by bravery alone, for they are devious; we must starve them out."

The trollkin, hidden from the sun somewhere nearby, had heard the battle. Though they saw nothing of the struggle, the hearing of the Men of Darkness is keen, and they understood the meaning of the furious din which had sounded through the vale. Impressed with the bravery and fortitude of the Orlanthe, a troll mother approached the Orlanthe camp during the daylight, her now-familiar trollkin cowering miserably in her great shadow against the bright power of the Sun. She stood two heads taller than even the tallest wind warrior, and her long white fangs gleamed starkly against her ebon skin. She stood fully erect at the periphery of the camp awaiting the priest, her mouth slightly open and her head swinging easily from side to side. Although she had a regal bearing, it was obvious that the sunlight pained her small and squinting eyes, so the priest ordered the warriors to fashion an umbrella of sorts for her, using a shield and a few spears. Once this had been set up she seated herself in its shade, growling her thanks.

The troll was not entirely comfortable around Lightbringers like the Orlanthe, but still she graciously volunteered her kin to keep watch through the hours of darkness until the chaos-loving Lunars were at last defeated. The priest was grateful for the aid, and gifted her with an artfully-carved sword taken from one of the warriors whose soul had gone to the wind that noon. Its lengthy handle fit her hand well, and the friendship and trust so displayed eased her discomfort. She left soon after, but returned at dusk to gamble at stones with the wounded Orlanthe while her hapless trollkin set up a skirmish line around the cave.

After a long, tedious week it became obvious that the Lunars were well-supplied for a siege. Some of the Orlanthe began to wonder aloud if the Lunars had eaten the bodies of the fallen warriors. The priest sent Ducks to Swenstown with a letter to the garrison commander, requesting additional supplies. Word of the stand-off circulated about the town, and when Ducks returned he brought with him another Issaries caravan merchant, who provided five large casks of lamp oil imported from Esrolia. The Merchant Priest pledged these to help avenge the death of his long-time acquaintance and compatriot (the caravan master who had been slain in the raid) at the hands of the Lunars.

Together with a handful of soldiers and mules, the trader clambered up the slope to a point directly above the cave. He prayed to Issaries to guide the travels of the oil, then uncorked the first cask and poured it down the steep slope. Ever-faithful Issaries heard the plea of his devoted servant, and though the oil meandered (as do all good merchants), it reached its goal and dribbled into the open mouth of the cave. After the cask was empty one of the soldiers fired it, and flame leapt down the side of the hill and across the cave mouth. Unfortunately, the lip of the cave did not slope down and in, and the flaming oil pooled at the entrance to the cave, burning harmlessly. Eventually it drained further down the slope. Saddened, the merchant bartered additional supplies to the Orlanthe in return for the remaining four casks which he had pledged. The Orlanthe gave the troubled merchant an excellent deal, but he still left disheartened.

The following day was Fireday, and on that day a Yelmalion arrived. He strode slowly yet purposefully into the camp, ignoring all who attempted to interrupt him, and finally stopped in front of the campfire. A horse followed the spearman attentively (although it wore neither bit nor bridle), a hawk perched on its saddle horn. The sun-worshipper had fine, tanned features and piercing blue eyes, and Ducks wondered how his blond hair could

be so sun-bleached beneath his crested eagle's-head helmet. A deep yellow cloak wrapped the Light Son's body, and he carried an ornate spear in his right hand. Ducks noticed that the head of the spear was wide and razor-sharp, and that it had the Truth and Light runes graven ornately upon it.

The Yelmalion stood silently until the Orlanthe warriors had brought their priest to him. The Voice of the Royal Storm parleyed with the Son of the Sun, and they entered into a contest of riddles by which each strove to prove his worth. The Yelmalion won the contest more easily than anyone could believe, and all were thankful when he said he would aid them. He spoke with the assembled warriors, and together they decided that if the brambles could be removed an assault would be much easier.

It was late in the day, so the proud Yelmalion faced west as he spread a ceremonial blanket upon the ground. Pale yellow in color, it was adorned with many obscure symbols, but the Circle of Light dominated the center. Even though the Yelmalion knelt, his pride and joy at serving his demanding god were plainly obvious.

After making his preparations, the Light Son stretched his arms wide and threw his head back as if crucified, and prayed in a loud, clear voice, the strange, regal tones of Firespeech carrying strongly throughout the valley. The thin clouds towards the west parted and Yelm, the fiery father, showed his face fully upon the man, making his polished armor gleam so brightly that it stung the eyes of the Orlanthe. He continued his prayer, raising his arms slowly until his hands came together above his head. With his outstretched thumbs and fingers he formed a circle, then he lowered his arms in front of him, following their movement with his eyes until he was looking directly into the face of his god, praying all the while. Those watching found themselves squinting, but the man showed no discomfort from staring directly into the bright sun. Of a sudden the warrior of the Winter Sun stood and threw a spear at the cave mouth with amazing strength and accuracy. The sun replied in kind, sending a javelin of flame which struck the cave squarely. Even as far as they were from the cave the mortals winced from the sudden heat. In an instant the Sun-spear was gone, as were the brambles, but the Orlanthe's joy died in their throats for they could plainly see a stone wall further inside the cave. It had numerous arrow slits, and though the ramparts were a mere six feet high inside the cave itself such an advantage was immeasurable.

If the Yelmalion was disappointed with this result he did not show it, and he continued watching the cave until Dusk with an arrow nicked to his bow. During that hour he slew one of the Lunars, striking the marauder through the eye with a feather-fletched arrow. After that the Lunars showed their despicable heads no more. When night fell the Orlanthe made sure to distract the Yelmalion with tales and dice games, so that he would not notice the trollkin who watched over the cave during the hours darkness, for they knew that trolls were a special foe of the god Yelmalion. Even so, many thought that he knew they were out there, because so little escaped his preternatural senses.

Three days later the Great Prince himself arrived with an impressive company of veteran soldiers assembled from the clans near Boldhome, including a High Healer. Even though the besieged raiders were a small problem, the persistence of the Lunars convinced the Great Prince to postpone his many other duties and take personal charge of the siege. He rode up on a powerful steed dressed in his finest armor. He looked every inch the true leader of Sartar, and all knelt before him, except the Yelmalion. He alone appeared unimpressed, and gave the Great Prince only the minimum amount of respect he was due before returning to his bow watch. The Prince, the most honorable man alive, was not at all offended by this minimal token, and he welcomed the able assistance of the spearman.

After studying the situation it was apparent that standard tactics would not work. Yelm could not reach into the darkness of the cave and, motion being its nature, the Wind should not blow in

without somewhere to blow out; no one there wanted to arm the Lunars with a cave full of wind. Attacking the cave directly was impractical, as several missing warriors, likely dead, attested. After a mere hour's thought, the Great Prince turned to his assembled men and said, "There is none that can match the bravery of my fine warriors here, but bravery alone is not strong enough a weapon to carry into battle against a fortified enemy, especially one alerted to our approach. We must strike like a gust of wind, catching them unawares, for even a small gust of wind can topple tents where stronger, steadier winds fail. The enemy must not have time to brace himself against our blows."

The Great Prince then outlined a simple plan to his loyal troops, wherein the twelve finest warriors would have ropes tied around their waists; the other end of these ropes would be tied to twelve strong horses. This, the Prince decided, would be a quicker, quieter, and more reliable solution than pounding stakes into the hilltop upon which to tie the lines. The chosen warriors would be lowered from the top of the steep slope to drop suddenly at the mouth of the cave, and rush in to slay the surprised defenders. As they attacked, the rest of the Orlanthi would charge from below to assist. It seemed such a simple plan that none could understand why they hadn't thought of it before. "Because, loyal friends," replied the Prince, "the simple solution is often times the most difficult answer to find." The twelve warriors selected by the Great Prince prepared themselves for battle, gathering and holding hands for a group prayer, while the boy Ducks went to Swenstown with an official letter to obtain twelve lengths of rope from the city merchants and twelve strong horses from the garrison on orders from the Royal House of Sartar.

The next day was blustery, and bright clouds scudded across the sky. Both were good omens, especially as the gusts helped to conceal the sounds of the twelve chosen warriors descending towards the cave mouth. The Yelmalion stood below by the Orlanthi priest, his hawklike eyes probing the cave for any motion. Following closely the orders of the Prince, the twelve warriors dropped the final distance to the cave mouth, cut the ropes from around their waists, and charged without a war cry. The Yelmalion saw six of the wind warriors scale the inner wall on the backs of their fellows, and nodded to the priest. The Voice of the Royal Storm raised his arm in signal, and the Great Prince led the rest of the Orlanthi forward. As a man they surged up the slope towards the cave as the winds conveyed the sounds of battle once more.

"It is already too late," observed the Yelmalion as the main body of warriors reached the cave mouth. "The Lunars have retaken the wall inside the cave, and any of your men who try to dislodge them will be slain." Red-painted quarrels flew from the cave, and the assault faltered. The Orlanthi priest hesitated for but a moment, then saw the inevitable truth of the words of the Light Son. Fervently he pleaded to Orlanth to aid the men, until blood ran from his nose, and truly the King of Gods heard, for the prayer was echoed by the spirits of the valiant dead. At the same time, the Prince also saw the futility of continuing the assault, and loudly implored Orlanth to rescue him and his men from immediate threat. The wind whipped up into a small tempest and blew the Great Prince and the remaining Orlanthi out of the cave to safety. A few Lunars were left exposed in their zeal, and the Yelmalion fired at them with his powerful bow. The maddened wind blindly threw the gilded arrows aside, however, and the Lunar soldiers retreated to safety. To appearances, the Yelmalion was neither surprised nor angry at this interference.

The Prince, though, was furious to be thwarted by a mere handful of Lunar assassins and bandits, and deep inside his own kingdom as well. He raged the rest of the day as the wind howled, echoing his anger. He threatened to strike into Tarsh and kidnap Shaker priestesses to crush the cave upon itself. He threatened to make brave the horrors of Delecti's Swamp and send wave after wave of fetid, rotting zombies into the yawning cave until it was filled with carrion. He even threatened to sell his kingdom to buy the

Demon of Snakepipe Hollow and set it upon the Lunars, simply to see justice done. But at last he fell into a brooding silence, staring at the cave without talking while his servants bound his wounds.

Only one of the twelve chosen warriors survived, a man named Borin who had been sucked out of the cave to tumble down the rocky slope. "Better to fall on the rocks and stones of Mother Earth than on the blade of a scimitar," he said as Ducks cleaned the sand out of his many deep scrapes. "They had malicious traps inside the cave. Several of us were caught by bear-traps, yet they kept fighting until they were overwhelmed. Others simply vanished, I know not how." The boy was impressed by the man's fortitude, and asked that Borin teach him more of the art of sword fighting. This Borin agreed to do despite his wounds, for Ducks' desire was compelling, and it was plain that there would be no more assaults on the cave unless a new plan could be formulated. The Great Prince cared too much for his followers to send them into such a trap again, although each and every one would gladly go if asked.

Once Borin's wounds were clean and the healer had laid her hands upon him to seal his deeper injuries, the warrior gave Ducks a shortsword. Ducks had learned a little about sword fighting as he had grown up rough and roguish in the streets of Wilmskirk. Borin checked his stance and grip (which needed some attention), then began to demonstrate a few simple moves. Ducks was a quick learner, and so they practiced for almost an hour, his tireless enthusiasm making Borin's bandages seem but paltry excuse for rest.

As the practice continued Borin's energy was slowly depleted, until of a sudden it left him almost entirely. He asked Ducks to stop for a rest but he, heated with boyish abandon, took no heed and pressed his attack. The hardened warrior instinctively turned the attack and gave Ducks a sandal to the seat of his pants, sending him face-long into the dirt. Borin moved to help the lad to his feet, but he was interrupted by guffaws of laughter from the warriors who had gathered to watch. Ducks, unwilling to be the object of scorn among men whom he admired, retook his feet, anger flaring hotly within his eyes. He grabbed up his sword and came at Borin again. Gripping the small sword with both hands, Ducks chopped down with a boyish grunt. His voice cracked again, twisting his yell into another braying honk. Borin sidestepped the clumsy attack neatly, and another burst of laughter reddened the boy's ears.

Even Borin could not help but laugh, and so he was caught nearly unprepared when Ducks came at him a third time. Fueled by shame and anger, Ducks swung again and again, overhead, backhand, forehand, full of power and fury, yet every time he swung Borin deflected the blade away and nicked at his tunic with a gentle riposte. Ducks' complete inability to penetrate the warrior's defense infuriated him all the more, and he abandoned all pretense of training until at last Borin felt compelled to end the conflict immediately. He caught Ducks' slash on the pommel of his sword, and with a turn of his wrist disarmed the boy. To put an immediate end to this explosion of temper he brought the flat of his blade hard against Ducks' ear, sending him to the ground.

The merriment of the onlookers faded rapidly, until the only sounds to be heard were the boy's stifled sobs. Ducks felt naked in the scrutiny of those he most respected. He felt he had been humiliated, and that there was no chance he could ever become a warrior such as the Orlanthi who had witnessed his failure. He heard a heavy pair of boots step up and felt a hand laid gently on his shoulder, but he didn't want compassion or pity from Borin; he wanted respect. Unwilling to be further embarrassed with needless coddling, he lashed out blindly with a fist and yelled, "Leave me alone!" He was stunned to be seized roughly by the collar and hauled bodily off the ground like a puppy. His face blanched as he found himself face to face with the regal visage of the Great Prince, who, staring at him with steely eyes, said menacingly, "I will not have a warrior address me so." As Ducks desperately tried to stammer out some sort of apology the Prince set

him down and bade him follow, so he settled for a simple, "Yes, sir."

The Great Prince took Ducks away from the camp, leaving the warriors to contemplate the measure of a leader who troubled himself so for an angry young boy. Once they were alone the Prince sat down facing Ducks and asked why he felt so angry.

"Because I'm not strong enough to be a warrior," replied the boy, "and they all laughed at me."

The Great Prince thought for a moment and said, "Boy, there is more to being a warrior than strength, just as there is more to being a man than war. I watched you as you fought Borin. Borin is one of the best fighters I have, much bigger and stronger than you are, and yet you tried to overpower him. You came at him overhand, so, or backhand like this," he said, demonstrating the moves. "These are simple attacks, predictable, and easy to defeat, especially when your opponent is stronger than you are."

"Power has its uses, and there are times when you should use strength, but do not rely on it, for eventually strength fails everyone, even as it failed our lord Orlanth in the Darkness. If you would use a sword, the weapon of the wind, then you must do so as though you were the wind. Become one with it. Remember, although it is most terrifying in a hurricane, the wind blows also softly: even the slightest breeze can move a silver-laden galleon across the Homeward Ocean. Blow both strongly and gently in turn, like the wind, and you can overcome any opponent."

The Great Prince then took his sword and showed Ducks some of what he knew about sword fighting, what he called 'the soft moves'. He showed the boy how to disengage, spinning the blade under the opponent's pommel to come up again into his breast. He showed him how to coupe, sliding a thrust neatly over a parry. He showed him how a flick of the wrist could completely change the direction of a swing, and how the inside edge of the sword could catch an opponent behind the shield. Ducks absorbed everything immediately and without fail, and within an hour was laughing with his new-found knowledge. Finally the Prince found a large, solid stick, and threw it to Ducks. "Here, lad," he said smiling, "show old Borin the swordsman you can be. Only use this stick; I don't want you to hurt him." Ducks bowed deeply, then turned and ran back to the encampment.

"Borin!" he yelled (again with a squeak) as he strode into the camp brandishing the stick. The warriors around smiled at his return, but somehow didn't quite laugh when they saw the easy way he held the stick. Borin stood up slowly and drew his sword. "I'll hack your stick to pieces, boy," he said, smiling wryly. Ducks moved in cautiously, then swung his stick around hard. Borin, having seen plenty of this already, raised his sword to parry the stick in half. At the last moment, however, Ducks turned his wrist in, guiding the stick lower, and struck Borin squarely on the side of the knee. Laughter again erupted from the assembled warriors, but this time it was for poor Borin, who was trying to hop on one leg. Ducks bowed low, basking in the applause of the witnesses, until Borin pushed him onto his rear.

Smiling, Ducks brushed off the back of his pants and joined Borin as the limping warrior retook his seat. "I'm glad you have your temper back in check, Ducks. There's a reason that a warrior's training is called the temper of a man. And that was a good shot you put on me."

"Thank you," said Ducks quietly. Then, unwilling to take all the credit for himself, he added, "The Prince told me a few things."

"Oh? And what did he say?"

Ducks, who felt suddenly three years older than he had but an hour ago, smiled and said, "He told me 'the wind blows also softly.'" As he glanced about his eyes chanced to alight on the cave where the Lunars still lay in wait. Suddenly, his brow furrowed. "Or sometimes not at all," he added slowly. Borin turned to ask what he meant by that, but Ducks was already up and running for one of the twelve horses the Great Prince had required of his army.

When Ducks arrived in Swenstown he first sought out the merchant who had donated the five casks of lamp oil and, later, the twelve lengths of rope. He found him in the marketplace, as he had before. Ducks entered his massive tent and knelt before the merchant, saying, "I come from the Great Prince, who has need of your assistance once more in removing the Lunars from their cave."

"The Prince has great warriors, not little boys," said the Merchant.

"Perhaps you remember me, noble Goldentongue," said Ducks. "I came before bearing a letter from the Prince requisitioning twelve lengths of strong rope."

"I remember the letter, but not you," said the merchant. "Pray give me the Prince's second requisition."

Ducks realized in his haste that he had not asked the Prince for one, and in fact had failed to make even the simplest of preparations to help him accomplish his goal. He marshaled his wits and said, "I have no letter, noble sir, for the request for aid is small indeed. The Great Prince has need of merely ten pieces of silver, to buy...."

"The Prince lacks ten guilders?" The merchant guffawed. "I see not a royal messenger before me, but a cunning street urchin looking to feed his belly on my fair earnings!"

Ducks stood, his pride injured. "No, sir, I just forgot to ask the Prince to give me some money, and...."

"Guard!" bellowed the merchant impatiently, interrupting Ducks again. "Remove this urchin from my sight!"

The guard came over to Ducks and laid a heavy, gnarled hand upon his shoulder, but Ducks seized a carved totem from Hendrikiland and dealt a practiced blow to the guard's knee. Placing the totem back upon its pillow he fled the tent quickly, leaving the merchant and his limping guard to ponder the ways of adventurous young boys.

Although foiled once in his plan, Ducks refused to admit defeat. He went next to the Yelmadio compound, where the adherents of the God of the Winter Sun had built themselves a small stockade to segregate themselves from "those who cannot see the light." Ducks knew the Yelmadios held themselves superior to others and avoided what they considered 'contaminating influences.'

Ducks steeled his mind and manners to the task ahead of him as he opened the door that led into the compound. The doorway was unguarded, and inside he saw several people moving about a small courtyard. One, a proud old man with long white hair, turned and stared at Ducks. He moved towards him with a swiftness that defied his age and, before Ducks could even kneel, struck him a stinging blow to one cheek which sent him to the ground. Ducks started to get up into a kneeling position but he was seized by a guard, a tall man wearing yellow-hued leather armor and carrying a long and wicked-looking spear, whose blade was serrated in imitation of a leaping flame. The guard threw him roughly out of the compound, and gruffly warned him not to return in such a state.

Ducks got up slowly and brushed himself off. He was hurt and confused, but in his resolve he was starting to move back towards the door when a young woman gently took hold of his hand. He turned and saw that she wore a white sash, indicating that she had dedicated her life to the healing arts. "Please pardon my presumptuousness, young sir," she said, "but I would rather not heal when I might avert an injury instead."

He pointed angrily at the closed door to the sun compound. "Do you know why they ejected me so?"

"I do," she said. "Those who worship the sky gods are a proud and regal lot. While they may seem arrogant and haughty, they simply have a code of conduct stricter than our own, and isolate themselves to keep themselves pure. Do not judge them harshly for their higher standards: they barred you entry for the way you are dressed."

"What's wrong with my appearance?" protested Ducks.

"My pants have no holes, my sandals are well-kept, and my vest is nearly new!"

"Your clothing is fine, dear lad, but in the eyes of the sky worshippers it is incomplete. You need to wear a shirt or tunic of some sort. Never will you see a worshipper of the sun with naked arms or legs. Go, cover your arms and return, and all will be more peaceful." With that, the healer turned and walked away.

Ducks thought back to the Yelmalion who stood guard over the cave with the wind warriors. Even during the heat of the day the man refused to remove his shirt, yet he never seemed to sweat from the heat of the sun. Ducks nodded, and as he had no shirt he took the saddle blanket from his horse, washed it in a stream that cut through town, and rung it out. When it dried he donned it as though it were a cloak and then, careful to keep his arms inside it, returned to the compound.

He slipped inside the front gate again and found that the guard who had thrown him out was awaiting his return. He looked Ducks up and down, and nodded once. Ducks noticed that the guard held no prejudice against him for his previous appearance. He knelt before the soldier and said, "Guardian of the Gates of Heaven, the noble Prince of Sartar has need of a gift from your masters. If you please, sir, he...."

"Lad," said the guard, "know you surely that we are less than well-disposed of our self-righteous cousin, barbaric Orlanth, who separated us from our mate, the beloved Earth; and that all those who joyously and freely follow the whimsical vagaries of the air gods bring upon themselves the full weight of our displeasure. For while we are present in this realm, and while we will aid in its defense even without the mercenary pay which is our due, we declare ourselves not its citizens; for we will never bow our knee before the gods of the air or our lord Yelmalion's disloyal brother Elmal. We will not offer up tribute, no matter how well-concealed the asking. However, if the Warlord of Sartar sends you to us with coins of gold, we will be willing to barter with you, Fiery Emperor to Airy King."

Ducks bit his tongue at the subtle insult with which the guard closed his statement and instead said, "Sir, I have none of your holy metal, and I ask not for tribute, but I petition you for...."

"Lad, you try our patience. Deal with us fairly, or not at all. Contemplate on this now and interrupt us no further, for we must make prayers to Rausa, Goddess of the Western Gates, as she prepares the way for our father on his journey to the Underworld." Behind the guard Ducks saw a woman kneel down facing west, with a ceremonial dagger with which to pierce herself as the Goddess of the Close of Day bled into the sky. Before she began her prayer the guard turned Ducks out from the compound, though this time he was gentle, and did not throw him to the ground.

Ducks fumed and paced the central square as dusk stained the sky and the Sun descended from the sky. He walked back to the market square and spent his only copper buying himself some potatoes for supper, causing the oil merchant to raise his eyebrows again. As the last light faded from the western sky Ducks resolved to gain what he needed from the Yelmalions by theft, since he believed he would get nowhere attempting to persuade that proud folk, and he had nothing with which to barter.

Ducks wandered out of town, and finally found a secluded place in a grove where he could sleep. He chose the spot deliberately for its stony discomfort, for he knew that he would be unable to sleep more than a few hours there, and though he planned to arise again late at night, he needed to get some sleep in the meantime.

Ducks awoke in the middle of the night as he had hoped, his muscles protesting his choice of bedsites. He stood up, walked back and forth to get his blood flowing once again, and then stretched thoroughly for a quarter of an hour until he broke into a sweat. He then took his horse towards the compound and led it up to one of the walls.

The night was still and quiet as Ducks climbed on the back of the horse. He saw the tip of a serrated spear bobbing

along the other side of the wall, and kept his head low until it passed. Then he stood up on tiptoe on the back of the horse and peered into the compound. He saw the shape of the guard continuing on his way, his yellow cloak seeming grey but still easily visible in the starlit darkness. Ducks clambered silently over the wall, noting with relief that the supports on the other side would lend themselves easily to handholds when he made his escape.

Ducks crept quietly through the compound, moving only when the night wind blew. He wasn't sure if the spirits of the air were watching over him or just playing, but he took no chances. He saw the central structure of the compound, well-lit in the darkness, and when he turned his eyes away the afterimage lasted for several moments. As he crept along he passed the barracks, the armory, and the stables. Rumor had it that the temple's Light Priest actually had a pegasus, but whether it was one of the original breed or a horse with wings returned by heroquest, no one was sure. Ducks decided against finding out, since he was sure the guards would check the stables often, and he'd heard how smart the sun god's horses were.

Ducks was as silent and invisible as a breeze as he stole through the compound. He found the building he needed, slipped through the unlocked door, and obtained the items he wanted without raising an alarm. While he'd wished for size and strength as he battled Borin the day before, he was indeed glad for his small stature now. He slid back out into the night, but as he passed beneath the window of the stables on his return one of the horses suddenly whinnied in alarm, and would not stop. He was near the center of the compound when this happened, and as he ran quickly for the wall he saw the guard moving to intercept him. The man stood a full foot taller than he, and had both armor and weapons. Ducks panicked, his mind racing for a way out.

Not long ago he had been in the presence of the Great Prince himself, and now he was surrounded and threatened by the strict and unfriendly Yelmalion guard. The dichotomy seemed almost comical, to fall so suddenly. He could hear the words of the Prince, telling him to act as though he were the wind. If he were the wind, he could blow out of here. If he were the wind, he could not be cut. If only he were the wind, he could...

The answer smote his spirit like a thunderclap: he could come between the Earth and the Sky.

The guard was almost upon him, reaching for his neck. Ducks dove low and balled up, clutching his precious cargo and striking the man just below the knees. For a moment Earth and Sky were separated again, but it was only a second before they rejoined with a loud and painful crash. Ducks had rolled back to his feet and mounted the fence by the time the guard regained his spear. Ducks fervently hoped it wasn't balanced for throwing as he jumped off the fence and onto his horse, startling it into a full gallop. He did not stop until he was at the far side of Swenstown, and even then he dared not sleep for the rest of the night.

When Theya the Fair, rosy Goddess of the Dawn, retook the eastern skies for her father, Ducks began to relax, and set about looking for a good tavern. After asking several questions of a drunkard he found waiting impatiently for the opening of the business day, he went to one alehouse where he was assured that the owner would be found to be short-handed. He entered in and knelt down before the owner.

"Good sir brewer, I have heard that you are a most experienced devotee of Minlister, and that your ales are second to none. Good sir, I offer you a full day's cleaning with small and energetic hands if you will but spare me a small portion of your god's influence."

"What's this, boy?" asked the brewer. "What do you want?"

Ducks displayed the wares he had stolen from the servants of the sun. The brewer sat back, perplexed. "Good sir," said Ducks, "I understand that Minlister helps in the fermentation of your goods, and makes them more memorable. I thought that you might be able to aid in making these more memorable as well."

"This is true Minlister helps me in my craft, as I serve him in it. But Minlister brings better results to those with patience. Further, I am not sure Minlister's magic would have an effect here."

"Ah, good sir," replied Ducks, "the best results are not what I am after here. As for the ends I seek, Yelmalio will see them through eventually, as these were, ah, unilaterally donated to our cause. Minlister would simply be aiding the Cold Sun to work their will more promptly, which is how I understand him to work. Further, I always thought the sky gods were not as powerful as our air gods..."

The brewer smiled at Ducks' persuasiveness and held up a hand lest the boy explain the day away. "What do you need these for, boy?"

Ducks spoke rapidly now in his enthusiasm. "The Prince has Lunar bandits besieged in a cave not far from here, and I thought these would help effect their elimination." After a brief explanation the brewer nodded in agreement, and offered to work his magic without payment if Ducks would give the Great Prince a petition for a contract for clearwine fermented from Konthasos grapes. The brewer had not been able to purchase such wine for three years, since the day he'd filed a lawsuit against one of the vintners over an unrelated incident. To this Ducks eagerly agreed, and after the brewer had called for the assistance of Minlister Ducks carefully shook his package and listened, wincing in appreciation at the efficacy of Minlister's aid. Ducks thanked the brewer profusely and tucked his package (and the brewer's letter) into his vest as he set out for his final stop in Swenstown: the temple of Ernalda.

The Spider favored Ducks that day, for as he knelt in the foyer pleading his case with an axe-wielding woman warrior a Priestess of Ernalda chanced to enter from the streets outside and overhear him. Something in his earnestness caught her ear and compelled her to listen to his request personally. She led Ducks to an alcove at the side of the foyer, sat him down at her feet, and bade him tell her what winds had brought him to her, for she could sense the Adventurous King in him.

"Sweet Green Lady," he said, using the Orlanthi greeting reserved for Earth priestesses, "My sovereign the Great Prince has harried a band of Lunars, and they stand trapped in a cave near here. Although we watch by day and trolls by night, the cave is well-fortified. The bandits appear to be thoroughly stocked on supplies, they are skilled and cunning, and we cannot pry them out. I seek your aid, please, to remove them."

The priestess shook her head and sighed. "Violence is always an option for you, isn't it? I'm sorry, I do not have the power to collapse the Lunars' cave. You'll have to turn elsewhere, young one."

She stood to leave, but Ducks persisted. "Patient priestess, if there is one thing I have learned from Ernalda, it is that there is always another way. I do not seek to kill the Lunars, merely to defeat them. I do not ask that you crush them beneath the roof of the cave, but merely that you summon the smallest of earth spirits to do thy bidding."

"Just one gnome?" asked the priestess.

"One gnome," replied Ducks, "armed with these."

The priestess did not understand, but when Ducks explained his idea she laughed long and loud. She agreed to help Ducks, just to see the face of the Great Prince when a small boy and a peaceful priestess outshone the best his warriors and strategies could muster. She summoned her attendants and ordered them to prepare her palanquin. With much bustling and disorder everything was soon prepared, and Ducks was even allowed to ride in the palanquin with her, eating grapes from her handmaiden's hand and then sleeping during the long trip.

The priestess' delegation arrived at the siege in the middle of the afternoon. While the Prince and his retinue greeted the priestess per tradition and religious requirements, Borin took Ducks aside. "Where have you been, boy?" he asked angrily.

"You left yesterday without so much as a 'by your leave'. We can't have behavior like that in front of the Prince himself! It makes our priest look like he can't control his men!"

"I am truly sorry, Borin," replied Ducks, feeling nothing of the sort, "but the priestess and I have arrived to drive the Lunars from the cave!"

"You worsen your trouble, lad, for an Orlanthi never lies," said Borin gruffly. Just as he was about to launch into a tirade against the youth the priestess' handmaiden called for Ducks to attend her. Borin looked at Ducks suspiciously but the boy merely shrugged, excused himself, and went to the priestess.

The priestess placed her hand on Ducks' shoulder and faced the Great Prince. Smiling she said, "Noble Wind Warrior, despite your conquests, this least among you shall deliver your enemy unto you. Pray, send your loyal troops to positions of cover around the cave mouth, each with a bow and an arrow nicked to the string, and wait. We shall ascend the slope and drive your enemies forth."

The Prince looked askance at Ducks, who flushed red, but did as the priestess bade. Ducks, the priestess, and her handmaiden turned to the hill. Borin followed, and helped the priestess climb the treacherous slope, for his left hand was still too injured to hold a bow.

At the top of the hill the priestess walked backwards in a square, sprinkling a green powder along the ground and chanting a prayer. Once the square was complete she sat down in the center and made passes over the earth with her hands, softly singing a prayer to her goddess. Finally she produced a small copper axe from the folds of her robe and chopped the earth rhythmically, carving the Rune of Mastery within the green Earth Rune.

Borin and Ducks felt the earth beneath their feet shift slightly, and looked around. They saw a ripple in the dirt some distance away which began to approach the priestess. It moved as does water when a fish passes just beneath the surface, and small pebbles rolled aside as the wave passed beneath her, causing her to wobble slightly.

The priestess seemed to be in a trance when she spoke, and the handmaiden gave Ducks and Borin a whispered translation of the Earthtongue words the priestess prayed. "Servant of Ernalda," she said, "I summon you to do our bidding. Beneath us, six fathoms down within the bosom of your Mother, is a cave. This solid shelter given by her is besmirched, occupied by Lunar soldiers, servants of chaos and murderers of Lightbringers. Child of Ernalda, take these three items which we give to you, and place them...."

"Drop them!" blurted Ducks. Borin rapped him smartly on the skull for his impertinence.

"Nay, throw them," continued the priestess seamlessly, "hard, into the cave below." She motioned for Ducks, and he placed his small sack into her outstretched hand. She opened the bag and placed its contents onto the ground before her, one on each of the tines of the Mastery Rune. "These are the gifts we bring for our Lunar foes; Child of Ernalda, take them and do our bidding." The earth moved again, forming what seemed like lips to snap up the items. Within a second they were gone, and the dirt in front of the priestess whorled as the gnome moved downward with its cargo. Then the ground was still again.

Borin nudged Ducks and whispered quietly, "I couldn't see. What were those?"

"Eggs," said Ducks, cryptically.

"What?"

"Well," he said sheepishly, "I stole them from the Sun Dome in Swenstown. You know that only sun worshippers can keep eggs fresh for more than a week. The sky gods see to it that any eggs beyond their cults' grasp go spoiled. So I had someone call Minlister's aid to help the eggs reach the state Yelmalio demands, just as Minlister helps fermentation to occur more rapidly. Now," Ducks added, pointing to the priestess, "her gnome is going to drop the rotten eggs into the cave. They'll blow the

Lunars out of there with the gentlest of breezes."

"Nay, lad, with the strongest of airs!" said Borin as he burst into loud laughter. He ran to the edge of the steep slope and yelled, "Here they come, friends, look ready now!" He watched from above for a minute but then retreated. "Orlanth's breath," he swore, "I can smell it from here!"

Then the Lunars came out, retching and gagging.

Several were naked, awakened from their sleep and desperate to escape the smell. Many of those who had been awake had forgotten or abandoned their weapons in their haste to leave. They staggered out into the bright sunlight and stumbled down the bare slope, eyes watering, stomachs heaving, their will to fight completely stolen by the gift of three small eggs. Without cover or weapons they collected at the bottom in a huddled group, raising their hands hesitantly in surrender. Within the span of a single minute, the entire Lunar company was captured without the loss of a single Sartarite soldier.

While Ducks and Borin looked on from the top of the cliff the Orlanthe moved in and bound the prisoners. Just as the last of the Lunars was taken a gold-fletched arrow landed in the earth between Ducks' legs. Startled, he looked around, but the Yelmalion was nowhere to be seen. The arrow had a note bound to it, and he asked the priestess to read it to him, as the scripted letters were too fine for his understanding. The note said, "I recognize the smell of the Sun's displeasure, and I believe I know how you came by His golden treasures. Though I swear that I shall never forget your crime, rest assured that whenever I remember it I shall smile." There was no signature.

After the Lunar prisoners had been marched away the priestess, her handmaiden, Borin, and Ducks descended the slope to her palanquin. The Great Prince met them there on his war-horse, abashed to have been outdone by a boy of thirteen. He thanked the priestess for her help, and she laughed and said that her goddess was always willing to help the followers of her wandering husband, Orlanthe. Upon examination of the brewer's letter, the Prince ordered that he be sent three cases of clearwine each season for a year, one for each egg he blessed.

Then the Great Prince dismounted and walked over to Ducks. He knelt down and placed his hands on the boy's shoulders. "My lad," he said, "you have learned the lessons of the wind far better than I could ever have taught them. You have shown that the gentlest of breezes is far stronger than the most powerful assemblage of swordsmen. You are indeed clever and imaginative, and have demonstrated the ability to find the simple solution. And that, lad, is one of the hallmarks of a true Orlanthe. I hereby ordain that you shall be initiated into the cult of Orlanthe, and be given full rank and privileges of an adult, for never have I seen someone succeed so completely with no weapons beyond his own wits and charm." Here the Great Prince winked at the priestess, who laughed again, proudly.

The Prince stood once more and extended his hand.

"What is your name, loyal servant?"

"Ah, Duc...er, Argrath, my Prince," stammered the boy.

"Argrath, be sure you are in Boldhome Windsday next for your initiation." Here Prince Salinarg turned and mounted his horse. Before he rode off with his soldiers he saluted young Argrath and said, "With your keen mind, I am sure you are destined to be the pride of Sartar someday."



Translator's Notes

There are no references in this tale beyond the names mentioned. Attempts to find a date for the story rely upon Argrath's age. Since he has already been dedicated but has not yet fled the country in this story, he must be between twelve (the age of dedication) and fourteen (the year when he kills the tax collectors who are raiding his home and flees Sartar, as the legends state). Various attempts have been made to place the hero's birth based on the information given in the collection *King of Sartar*, arriving at various years between 1595 and 1600. This in turn places the events of this story between 1607 and 1614.

Salinarg, however, was Prince from 1600 to 1602, at which time Sartar fell to the Lunars. Yet at the time of this story the Lunars are not waging serious warfare, let alone on the verge of victory, which implies that these events occurred sometime in 1600 or 1601, before the Lunar assault on the capital of Boldhome. This in turn would place Argrath's birth in 1587 or so, a not entirely unreasonable though quite unlikely possibility.

On the other hand, the use of Salinarg might just be poetic license. For that matter, so might the name of Argrath, and this story either an old fable (of which a few other versions do exist, it is true) or a true tale retold with more compelling characters than the original. Only the gods know for sure, and they rarely answer such direct questions with more than riddles and visions, especially on matters of such great importance.

The setting of the story gives us even less information. The hills around Swenstown are full of caves such as the one described in the story, and the only place marker is the "east road" mentioned in the beginning. The exact road indicated is unclear, since this appears to be a local name for at least nine roads within a day's ride of the city, each named by a different stead, village, or clan in the area, and none of which is likely to have existed so long ago.

Beorgan's Ring

by Roderick Robertson

Beorgan sighed as he mopped his brow and ran his fingers through his graying hair. He squinted at the Sun and looked at the land still left to plow. "Damn, it's another race against Yelm," he thought, then chided himself. "You gave up the need to compare everything in theological terms when you retired," he chuckled inwardly. Still, he had to complete the plowing today: tomorrow he had to drive the ox team over to his worthless brother-in-law's stead, and put up with talk of the new "rebellion." He wondered how a man of fifty-three could still believe that the soldiers of the Red Moon could be driven out of Sartar.

Beorgan shook the reins resignedly and started forward once more, the bronze tooth on the plow scratching the row for the third time. This last pass should make deep enough furrows for the oat crop. After years of plowing he was still turning up stones in the field, and the walls surrounding the plot were waist-high and a span thick.

He led the ox team back to the barn, having beaten the Sun once again. "Next time, Uncle," he said, a ritual of his, a remnant from his days as a priest. He sighed contentedly, at peace with the world, until his thoughts intruded again. Havstad was an idiot, and Prince Argrath's followers were just as bad. Beorgan had given his own blood to the cause long ago. He had seen with his own eyes as the Crimson Bat devoured Runegate, and had been one of the last defenders of Boldhome. That was a long time ago, and he was tired of bloodshed. He had lost count of the battles, the wounds, the friends who had died. His days of adventure were over, and he had no intention of joining another futile revolt.

Since the Lunars had smashed Argrath's army at Yoran they had seen to it that no organized resistance found a foothold in Sartar. They burned farms and steads, and garrisons occupied all major cities and towns. Cavalry patrols rode the countryside, often hunting known or suspected rebels. Tax collectors made the circuit of towns and steads, and it seemed that every time they came some new tax was being levied. To top it all off, no one had seen Prince Argrath since the battle. The few surviving Sartarite warriors told of the charge of broods that scattered the right flank of his army, and a few claimed to have seen the High King and his companions escaping, Hell-hounds on their heels.

Since then, rumors had come of Argrath in Dorastor, Argrath in Prax, Argrath in Volsaxiland, but none of Argrath in Sartar. Yet the spirit of rebellion still burned in the hearts of some fools, like Havstad. Beorgan had heard that Havstad was recruiting men, ostensibly for working his fields, but more likely for raiding the Lunars. Beorgan worried that Havstad's stead would be the target of a raid. That in turn would lead to more Lunar interest in the area. While Beorgan had nothing to hide, he did not relish the thought of soldiers tramping over his fields every week or so.

As Beorgan approached the stead a horn blew three times: a visitor announcing himself. By the time he settled the oxen for the night and washed the dirt off his hands and face, Yelm had set. He took his time, confident that Kerissa would entertain the guest, and certain that she would berate him if he came to dinner with the field clinging to him. He made his way across the yard, and noticed that it was empty; didn't the visitor bring any servants? He ducked under the lintel, and was about to ask Kerissa who had come when he saw the stranger. The man was dressed in fine wool and linen. The impression of a sword-belt was still on his tunic, and a fine dagger remained on his hip, but he was alone. Beorgan looked around, surprised that a man so obviously wealthy would travel without housecarls to protect him from the hazards of the road. Then the visitor turned, revealing a large Death rune tattooed across his face. No, Beorgan thought, no brigand would bother a Lord of Humakt.

"Beorgan Windrunner?" inquired the stranger. "I am Taralon, formerly of the Rock Bull clan of the Cinsina tribe, now Sword of Humakt."

Beorgan spoke before he could go any further. "Before

you go into your introductory boast, good lord, allow me to offer you the hospitality of my stead," said Beorgan. A servant brought out a tray with a goblet of mead, a slice of beef, and a cellar of salt. "Here is drink to drive the dust from your throat, meat to banish hunger from your belly, and salt to season our friendship. Sit, and tell me of your business, though, to tell you the truth, I'm probably not interested in what you have to say. I'm no longer a warrior; I sow my fields with grain now, rather than bones."

"Hear me out before you make a decision," said Taralon. "It is known far and wide that you have fought the Lunars. You fought at the fall of Boldhome. You were with Starbrow when she rebelled, and later served as the leader of her Housecarls while she was Queen. Always you opposed the Imperial troops, yet now I find you here, scratching out a bare living from the soil, grubbing in the dirt like a thrall; you, who were once called the Bane of the Moon. Bards sing your tale, but their paeans of glory turn to dirges when they tell of the end of your career. Is this the way a warrior ends his days? Do you not yearn for the feel of battle...?"

Beorgan angrily interrupted. "Glory it is you want?" he roared, Kerrisa's hand on his arm failing to hold him back. "A chance to stare Death in the face and come out laughing? I didn't realize the Humakti were in the habit of making the mentally incompetent into Swords; I thought only the Uroxi did that. Go back to your precious Argrath. Go back and tell him that the rebellion is over, it ended years ago, and there is nothing he can do to change that. You tell him that, boy!" Even as he continued he knew that he should not, but the words just boiled forth, dragged from the depths of his soul.

"The rebellion died with my son Guthred, damn you! Only seventeen, and filled with talk of glory. Off to be a hero, off to glory and riches. Off to an unmarked grave, buried with all the other young fools the Lunars caught at Three Trees farm. His body broken by the clubs of inhuman dragonewts. Oh yes, you speak of glory, but what of family, what of futility?" The sobs caught Beorgan by surprise, as did the shocked faces of Kerrisa and Taralon. Before they could speak he stumbled out of the house, blindly making his way to the gate and out into the darkness.

To the north the full Moon hung, crimson and bloated like the earthly Empire she had founded. "Damn you, damn you," he sobbed. Memories of Guthred came flooding back, so eager to follow in his father's footsteps. Beorgan remembered the last sight of him: the leather armor he had bartered two milk cows for, the shield bright with new paint, the sword and spear so keen and sharp. All this had been destroyed, with no rites of death sung over the body, no pyre prepared. The day of Guthred's death had been Beorgan's last day as a priest of Orlanth, his last day of battle and rebellion. He still worshipped the Lord of the Middle Air, but no longer could he perform the sacred services, and no longer would he fight for him. All the bard's tales of glory had given him was the death of his only son. No glory, no admiring glances; only death.

The next morning Beorgan rose before the sun, as was his wont. He stumbled to the privy pit and then to the water barrel, where he thrust his head under the water, breaking the thin film of ice on the surface. He went back to the house for his breakfast, noting scornfully that Taralon was still snoring in the corner. The servants brought out his meal, a bowl of porridge with chunks of kid and a horn of ale. His repast finished, he cast one last annoyed look at his guest and went out to the barn. Hitching up the team of oxen to take them to Havstad's stead took but a few moments. Beorgan took only an ox goad and a dagger as he set out at a walk, driving the oxen before him.

While the walk was only five miles, it was past noon when Beorgan reached his brother-in-law's stead at the slow pace set by the oxen. He had plenty of time to mull over the events of last night. He was ashamed of his outburst, and his actions were more than rude, but Taralon's taunts of glory had pricked memo-

ries that still festered. For six years he had lived with the memory of his son's dreams, and of his death. He knew that others would probably come to recruit him, but he would try to control his temper in the future. He also knew that he would have to watch himself at Havstad's. Just knowing that Havstad was once again going to ask him to join the rebellion made his headache.

At Havstad's he partook of the midday meal, though the meat was stringy and the ale was flat. He noted the neglect around the stead: weeds growing up around the foundations of the houses, even small bushes in out of the way corners inside the wall. The animals he saw were obviously poorly cared for, and it was no wonder Havstad had to borrow his oxen for the planting. All this, he knew, was due to Havstad's preoccupation with the "rebellion." Havstad had many more men around his stead than he needed, especially with the lack of activity on the farm. The fact that a number of them openly carried weapons only confirmed to Beorgan that these men were warriors, not farmers. He sneered inwardly: trust Havstad to surround himself with useless men when he needed to get the fields plowed and sown!

"You really need more men who know which end of a plow to follow, instead of these rowdies and bravos, brother. Your fields are weedy, and don't think that Lidonius won't notice, the same as I have. He'll be out here in a week or so for the hearth tax, and he can't help but see that you've too many men for the shoddy job you're doing. If he takes the tale back to the garrison at Blue Boar Fort, you'll have troops down here so fast your head will spin."

The remaining warriors muttered until Havstad shushed them. "Brother, I wish you would reconsider your position on the chances of Argrath. You've just shown that you've lost nothing since you left the Queen's guard, and we need leaders, not just warriors. Besides, think of what is waiting at the fort: the taxes for the entire district!" Havstad's eyes gleamed with avarice and anticipation. Disgusted, Beorgan shook his head and walked out of the gate, weary of the whole business. If Havstad was an example of the men involved in the rebellion, he wanted even less to do with it than he had before.

Without the oxen to slow him down, Beorgan's return journey was much faster. As he reached the top of the ridge between his stead and Havstad's, however, he caught the scent of burning wood in the air. Cresting the hill, he saw a column of smoke rising from the valley. With dread in his heart he began running, though he knew that he was too late. Just as he cleared the tree line surrounding his stead he saw the roof of the longhouse collapse into the building, flames leaping fifty feet or more into the air. He ran the final distance to the structure, covering his face with his hands to protect it from the intense heat, heat more intense than a fire this size should produce.

As Beorgan entered the compound he noticed the bodies of two servants close to one window of the longhouse, shot with red-fletched arrows. All of the other entrances had been barricaded from the outside, thus trapping the remaining servants and Kerissa inside. The heat forced him back, and back again. He could hear the screams of the people trapped in the building but could not approach, though he soaked his clothes with water from the barrel and tried repeatedly. As the walls tumbled down, he thought he could see Kerissa through the flames. One last desperate attempt to reach her ended when several strong hands restrained him. Looking around, he saw that Havstad and his men had entered the compound. Some were trying vainly to douse the flames on some of the smaller buildings, while others carried the two dead servants to the pyre that had been his home.

After the fire had burned down, Havstad and his men turned to leave. Wordlessly, Beorgan joined them. At the crossroads outside the stead, a grim signpost stood which Beorgan had not noticed in his earlier haste. A cross had been raised, and nailed to it was Taralon. Around his neck was a placard reading "Rebel Against the Moon, Take heed and do not follow his mistake." They cut him down, but no one knew any healing magic strong enough

to cure his numerous wounds, and he died later that night.

A season had passed since his stead had been burned, and Beorgan sighed in disgust as he looked over the road. In that time, Havstad and his men had raided two Lunar caravans and burned the Red Moon Inn in Herongreen. Now they hid in White Deer woods, waiting for a patrol of Lunar horsemen guarding a herd of cattle to come around the bend. "Cattle raiding," he thought scornfully. "What's next, stealing spiced apples from babies?" He hawked and spat, quietly. From around the bend in the road a blackbird cawed three times: Havstad's signal.

Beorgan looked to his two javelins and loosened his sword in its scabbard. The horsemen should be riding around the corner into the trap; yet, they weren't. Puzzled, Beorgan looked around, fearing the worst. He saw no one, but the hair on the back of his neck stood up. Off to his left, where Kerlor Broken Nose was stationed, he heard a slight sound, like a sigh. Suddenly, he heard the hoofbeats of at least a dozen horses. He turned and had just enough time to dive out of the way of a lancer, losing his grip on the javelins in the process.

With an oath Beorgan gained his feet, noticing more horsemen flushing Havstad's band from their concealment. His field of vision narrowed to one lancer. The man kicked his horse into a trot toward Beorgan, coming between the trunks of the trees. Beorgan reached up and grabbed a branch at about head height. As the lancer reached him, he released it, then dodged the spearpoint. He let his momentum take him in a full circle, drawing his sword as he came around. The branch struck the trooper in the chest, nearly sweeping him out of the saddle. As the rider struggled to remain seated Beorgan swung his sword, cutting deeply through the chain links and padding, and into the man's side. Beorgan grabbed for the reins of the horse, but it evaded him, and cantered off deeper into the forest. The trooper stayed on for only a few paces, then fell heavily to the ground. He tried to regain his feet, but the scabbard for his scimitar had come between his legs and tripped him. Beorgan slashed at him again, cutting almost all the way through the man's neck.

Looking around, Beorgan saw a lancer thrust his spear through Havstad's leg. The lancer kicked him off his spear, then looked around for more targets: the horsemen were having little difficulty rounding up the ambushers. Beorgan turned to the dead trooper, hoping to salvage the man's armor and belt pouch, and so did not see two lancers from further down the road spur their horses toward him, one of them riding wide to catch him in a circling trap.

Havstad's cry of warning reached him seconds before the first trooper. He did not see Havstad cut down by a guard; his world shrank to the trees and the approaching lancer. Beorgan ducked behind the trunk of a tree, then whirled as the hoofbeats of the second horse caught his ear. Cursing, he cast around for something to even the odds, even if just a little. He found a sturdy branch about seven feet long. As the first lancer wheeled his horse to come at him again, Beorgan swung his pole, catching him in the head. The blow knocked the trooper's helmet askew, blinding him for the second necessary for Beorgan to swing again. This time he caught the horse on the nose. Swinging its head back, the horse bolted through the trees. The horse ran under a low-hanging branch, ending the fight for its still-blinded rider.

The second trooper slowed his horse to a walk and cautiously thrust his lance at Beorgan like a spear as he came up to him. Beorgan threw his branch at the Lunar like a javelin, then cursed as the man batted it away with his shield. As the rider thrust his lance again and again Beorgan dodged, looking for a chance to escape. At last the trooper over-extended, which allowed Beorgan a chance to grab the lance. He yanked hard, pulling the lancer off the horse and forcing him to release his grip on the lance. Beorgan reversed the weapon and slammed the bronze spear point into the man's chest. Without checking to see if he had killed him, Beorgan plunged into the forest. With luck, he would be able to elude the lancers, especially in the thick woods. As he

dodged between the tree trunks the sounds of the failed ambush faded behind him. While running away galled him, staying to be slaughtered was not going to gain him anything.

Beorgan soon came across the tracks of the horse of the first lancer. Following them, he found the horse with its reins caught in the branches of a tree. He approached the animal, murmuring soothing words to it, and finally calming it enough to accept his presence. Freeing the reins from the tree, Beorgan led it farther into the woods, to a stream with a pool. He tied up the horse by the pool, then stripped it of its tackle. He found some trail bread and sausage in one of the saddlebags, a dirty tunic and some apples in the other. He used the tunic to wash the blood off the horse's side, then dug a hole with his dagger and buried the garment. The horse nickered softly, reminding him that it was getting dark. He fed one of the apples to the horse, apologizing that he had no oats for it. The other two apples he set aside for his own supper.

As he sat, Beorgan took stock of his possessions. In addition to the horse and its cargo he had his knife, sword, and the items from his own belt pouch: a fire-starter, a few coins, and a small bag of salt. No javelins, no armor, no bow, no spear. "Well, you had better get used to it," he thought, "seeing's how you're now deep in the forest without 'em." He gathered dry branches and tinder for his fire, then brought out his fire-drill. As he worked, his mind turned back to the last day of his old life.

Returning from the fire, he had asked how Havstad had gotten there so quickly. "Our lookout noticed smoke over the hill not long after you left," he explained. "Since the woods were still too damp to burn, we knew it had to be your stead. We came as quickly as we could, but we were too late."

The following weeks passed in a blur for Beorgan. He was accepted into Havstad's band with few comments, even Kerlor accepting him, though grudgingly: Kerlor was surly and cynical, but he knew how to follow orders. It did not take Beorgan long to realize that Havstad and his men were little more than bandits, with no idea how to stage a proper military action. Though his men were enthusiastic, the first raid on a tax caravan was a complete disaster for the rebels, mostly because of the lack of cooperation between the men, but also because of Havstad's idiotic deployment. Beorgan took over planning the next raid, which went smoothly. Soon he was accepted as, if not the leader, then at least the tactician of the band. Several times he had to override Havstad's ideas, but this last time, unfortunately, he had let Havstad have his way.

Beorgan came back to himself as smoke started to wisp up from the tinder. Blowing gently on the sparks, he soon had a merry blaze going. He thought about his future plans as he set the apples to roast next to the fire. He didn't feel like embracing the Cult of Death, though he had to concede that there wasn't much point in living without Kerissa by his side; besides, it hadn't done much for Taralon. He could turn his footsteps southward, or to the east or west, but what would the good of that be? The Lunar Empire was too large and controlled too many lands to easily escape. Much as it galled him, the only course of action seemed to be to join Argrath's rebellion. The last rumor he had heard placed Argrath somewhere in the south, seeking aid among the Heortlanders as Kallyr had so long ago. Sighing, he decided to seek Argrath in the morning. At least he had a horse.

As he traveled south Beorgan saw the devastation that followed the Lunars. Towns and steads were silent; often burned shells were all that remained of houses. He foraged in each village he came to, looking for clothes, weapons, food, anything that would make staying alive a little easier. In one village, he came upon a hauberk of chain armor worn by a corpse. Obviously the man had been mortally wounded and crawled away to die, and had not been found by looters. Beorgan cleaned the hauberk thoroughly, not wishing to smell the stench of death wherever he

went, and merely hoped that the man had not been slain by broos, for he had no way to cleanse the taint of disease from it.

Thus armored Beorgan went farther south, skirting occupied towns. As he passed through one burned-out village he noticed movement in the shell of a house. Thus, he was prepared when a starving man rushed out to pull him from his horse. He kicked out, catching the man in the chest and knocking him to the ground. The man burst into wracking tears and curled into a ball. Beorgan dismounted and walked to him. "Why do you cry; is it for shame, or for anger?" he asked roughly.

The man was so thin that his ribs showed through the thin fabric of his shirt. "I have not eaten in several days, nor have my wife and children. I was forced to banditry merely to stay alive, but my body failed me even in that." Beorgan went to his horse. That morning he had downed a brace of hares with a makeshift sling. He pulled them from his saddlebag and came back to the man. "Tell me where your wife and children are so we may eat."

The man led the way toward the hovel. "Here, sir, and bless you," he said gratefully. "My name is Celsan, sir, and this is my wife Ilin. We knew each other before the Lunars came, though we were not married then. I was in the high pasture with the boy here, watching the sheep, when the Lunars came. Ilin was visiting her grandma. We came back at about the same time, to see the village as it is now. We found one other survivor under her mother's body: little Solya there was the chief's five-year-old daughter. She has not said a wordsince the massacre." The boy, Kallum, was only about twelve years old, at that stage in his life when his bones grew faster than his muscles, though those bones showed promise of great size in the future. Solya just watched Beorgan silently from behind her blond hair, her eyes bright with hope.

Beorgan stayed with the family, unwilling to leave them to continue his search for Argrath until they were better able to support themselves. Two more men and a boy joined the small band within the week. One, also named Kallum, was a Khan of Urox, a Berserker with great strength but small stature. He was soon named "Little Kallum," while the boy was called "Big Kallum." The others were Jalkon, a farmer from a neighboring village, and his seven-year-old son Froadar. Together, the group was better able to provide for itself, and Beorgan began thinking about leaving them. Soon, however, they began to refer to themselves as "Beorgan's Ring." Beorgan was not entirely sure that he wanted the added responsibility of leadership, but he did not think he could leave them behind when they so obviously felt dependant upon him for it. One night he sat staring at the fire when an idea began to grow. "Maybe, just maybe, I can create something better than a warband or a gang of bandits. If we could find some land where we could farm in peace, far from Lunars or rebels, then perhaps I could gain my vengeance on both by living, not of dying." That night he addressed the band, and announced his plan to lead them to a place which could better support them.

The next day would be Windsday of Movement week, Orlanth's holy day, and at dusk the members of the band approached Beorgan hesitantly. Celsan spoke for them. "Beorgan, Jalkon says that you were once a Voice of Orlanth, though we do not know why you gave up your office. If it was not for some offense against the Lord of the Middle Air, could you lead us in prayer tomorrow?" At first Beorgan was appalled, having given up the office of priest many years ago. After a moment, however, a formless feeling inside made him think that perhaps it would please Orlanth for him to resume his duties. And if Orlanth wanted him to become a Storm Voice again, who was he to argue? The God would do as he pleased, even to revoking a priest's resignation.

Beorgan went to sleep troubled, but the feeling grew stronger, and by dawn he had convinced himself that he had interpreted Orlanth's will correctly. Thus, when the Sun rose, and for the first time in seven years, Beorgan led his small congregation in prayers to the Storm King. As the service came to its dimax a great wind came rushing down from the north, blowing leaves and

dust towards the south. Beorgan nodded to himself: tomorrow they would turn their footsteps south, where they would find their new land.

The day after the service the band left the ruined village. They herded a few sheep in the center of the group and carried their possessions on their backs. Beorgan had the only horse, but he did not ride it, as it carried the heavier goods: cookpots, tools, and the heavy hauberk Beorgan had found, which he now felt silly wearing. They headed south and skirted the towns, whether Lunar held or not. Beorgan no longer had a desire to join Argrath's army, no more than he wanted to meet Lunar soldiers. The group needed a father, a guide for their journey, and he had been chosen. Even the need for revenge for his wife's death faded with his new responsibilities. He began to feel a sense of peace which had been lacking for half a year.

As they passed deserted steads, the group scavenged what they could. More people came to join them, in ones and twos, as the group passed their burned-out homes, bringing more supplies and a few more animals with them. Beorgan and his followers passed through the lands of the Culbrea and Sambari tribes, and eventually found refuge in the Storm Hills. They found their land hidden deep within the mountains, a large valley unclaimed by any clan or tribe, with only one pass to the rest of the world. Beorgan oversaw construction of several houses and a corral for the animals. A stream provided fresh water, and fish glittered in its depths. As the stead slowly grew Beorgan's only major concern was the lack of an Ernalda priestess, a problem which worried the women of the group as well.

Within a season the stead had grown to six houses and the group to over forty members. The herds had increased as well, so that milk and butter were available every week, and the ladies even made cheese. The season was too late to plant any crops but a few leaf vegetables. Beorgan worried at the stead's lack of seed grain, but did not want to send anyone to Roundstone Fort, the nearest major town, because of its strong Lunar garrison. Yet without grain the stead would not be able to survive the next year. The animals could graze on the grass this winter, but next year they would be grazing in the pastures all year long, and would require grain for the winter. With no other option Beorgan eventually gave in and left for Roundstone, taking Jalkon with him.

Beorgan and Jalkon arrived at Roundstone Fort in time for the Autumn cattle fair, which allowed them to hide in the crush of strangers. Still, Beorgan kept a wary eye out for Lunar troops on the off-chance that he might be recognized. He and Jalkon found a grain merchant and bargained until the man agreed to sell them a wagon-load of grain, along with the wagon. Their business finished, Beorgan and Jalkon retired to a nearby ale tent to refresh themselves and catch up on the latest news.

As usual, most people were complaining about the Lunar taxes, the latest being a fifth of all herd animals under the age of three years, to be given to the Lunar army. Political news was practically non-existent. Prince Argrath's whereabouts were still unknown, the Lunars still had not released the King of the Grazers, and the Volsaxi were going to come north to smash the Lunars. The last rumor Beorgan dismissed as mere wishful thinking. There were stories of Lunar atrocities and of chaos creatures roaming the lands of the Colymar and Balmyr. At one point Beorgan overheard the name Argrath and turned to hear better. The storyteller told how Argrath had single-handedly defeated a full troop of Lunar lancers, then rescued the daughter of the King of the Malani tribe and burned Two-ridge Fort to the ground. Through the normal exaggerations of the storyteller Beorgan eventually heard his own exploits in the story. "Oh no," he groaned inwardly, "Now they're thinking I'm Argrath! Even when I stop looking for him, he intrudes into my life." The bright start to the day was ruined for Beorgan. He tapped Jalkon on the arm and said, "Come on, we're getting out of here." Just as he got up from the bench a young, well-dressed Lunar officer walked into him. "Oaf!" the officer screamed. "Damned barbarian! I ought to give you a

thrashing for that. Do you know who I am? I am Ephiocus, commander of the Upland's Regiment and Provost of this town."

Beorgan reined in his temper. "I'm terribly sorry for the inconvenience," he said, but Ephiocus would not be mollified. He drew his baton of office, and took a step forward with his arm raised to strike. Beorgan's temper flared; first the Argrath story, now this! He stepped aside and pushed the officer, sending him sprawling into a table loaded with mugs of ale. The crash was spectacular, and many of the men around the tent guffawed at Ephiocus' clumsiness. This made Ephiocus more furious. At his shouts, several Lunar hoplites entered the tent. He sat in a puddle of beer and mud and pointed at Beorgan. "Arrest him! He has assaulted an officer of the Emperor's Army!" The hoplites pushed through the crowd and grabbed Beorgan's arms, then attempted to move him out of the tent. Angry mutters ran through the crowd. The crowd was growing, augmented by men pushing their way in from outside to see what the problem was, and they could not get Beorgan to the door. The hoplites instead dragged him over to Ephiocus, who had them form a circle around him and his prisoner.

Before the gathering could erupt into a riot, however, a man stumbled drunkenly out of the crowd. As he reached the soldiers, he noisily threw up on the sandals of the nearest one. He next fell forward, knocking the hoplite into his fellows, then slid to the floor. In his efforts to get up he managed to smear the vomit on first one soldier, then the next. When he reached Ephiocus he vomited again, all down the officer's tunic. Recoiling in horror, the officer fled the tent, followed by the soldiers and the uproarious laughter of the crowd. "Quick, you've got to get out of here," the drunk said, suddenly sober. He winked at Beorgan. "What a friend we have in Eurmál Drunkard, eh? Now come on." Beorgan, Jalkon, and their rescuer slipped under the back flap of the tent, then ran for the edge of town.

"M'name's Fauchet No-shadow," the trickster introduced himself, pointing to the ground. True to his name he cast no shadow, though the Sun stood high in the sky. "I lost it a while back, and haven't really missed it since. Now you, my friend, look familiar. You wouldn't happen to be from the north, say the Malani tribe, would you?" Beorgan started, then reached for his dagger. "No need, no need," the other exclaimed, "I recognized you from the time, several years ago, when I was passing through there; you kept me from being thrashed. Well, just a few weeks ago I hear of a band of people passing through several clan lands, always avoiding people. Now what, I says to myself, could such a group want? If they were raiding we'd have heard about it, and we didn't, so they mustn't be. So I decided to follow you, and what do I find? A stead new-formed, and a man who wants peace instead of bloodshed. In these times such a one is obviously under the influence of the Trickster, so I decided that my future must be to join you. No one ever really wants a trickster around, so you probably won't either," he lamented, wiping away the sudden tears that streamed copiously from his eyes. "But," he said, tear-free and smiling, "you've got to admit, we do have our uses!"

"Ah, yes, I remember you now, and if I remember rightly you had just made a newly-opened barrel of ale smell like rotten fish. I must tell you, it took a long time for the smell, and the anger, to fade. I do hope you're not planning on any more such tricks around me, as I might not be as understanding next time. However, I must thank you for your timely intervention back in town."

They camped out in the hills near Roundstone Fort for a week while the Lunars scoured the countryside for them. For some reason the Lunars decided that the man they had almost arrested was Argrath. Fauchet (who it seemed could appear as almost anyone he wanted, if he tried) brought back word from town that the bounty on the supposed Argrath's head was 10,000 lunars and a year's exemption from taxes. However, he hastened to add, no one in town seemed inclined to take the Lunars up on their offer. The tavern stories had him defeating a full squad of fully armed hoplites with his hands tied behind his back, killing

each one with a single kick.

The three walked most of the way back to the hidden stead. By the time they reached the valley, Beorgan was not sure if he should kill his new companion or embrace him. Fauchet took nothing seriously, not even his own predicaments. He proved to be a practical joker still, whose jokes failed more often than not; Beorgan could still smell the results of Fauchet's attempt at "Polecat Stew". Still, Fauchet was a good companion, even if he did mention his "rescue" of Beorgan every time one of his jokes went bad. He was also a remarkable scout, and alerted them to danger more than one time. On the way the three caught up with the grain merchant and took possession of the wagon, though Fauchet nearly spoiled the deal when he picked the merchant's purse.

Back at the camp a new band of refugees, twenty strong, had arrived in Beorgan's absence. They had been wandering in the hills, looking for a place to settle, much as Beorgan had. Little Kallum had found them in a routine patrol of the hills, and taken them in hand. He had assigned them temporary quarters while additional houses were built. Beorgan praised Kallum's initiative and abilities, then addressed the crowd. "We have been too long without any structure to our lives, without the clock of the days and seasons to order our lives. I know that I have been troubled by the lack of a true Clan Ring, and some of you have told me that you have as well. I think that the time has come for us to join together as a family. Unfortunately, we cannot do this until we have a woman for Ernalda's Seat, for what is a family without a mother? I wish that we were so blessed, for the sake of the Ring, for we cannot proceed until we have one."

The crowd stirred and then parted as one of the new refugees, a young woman carrying a baby at her hip, came forward. "My name is Berla of the Black Stone, and I am a priestess of the Mother of Us All. My son and I are the last survivors of our clan, slain when the rest of our tribe betrayed us and joined the Lunars. If you find me suitable, I would be honored to represent our Mother on your Ring, even as you shall be its Father."

Beorgan talked with her for an hour, questioning her about her faith and her willingness to be the Mother of the Ring. Then he returned and addressed the crowd again. "With Berla as our Mother we can at last become a family. Tomorrow we will begin the Clan-making ceremony at High Sun, at the bare hill where Big Kallum found the old stones." That night Beorgan and Berla talked with many people. Some roles in the Ring were obvious, like Fauchet taking the Trickster's part, but others were harder to discover. Finally, though, they filled all of the positions. With their chosen companions they completed their preparations for the Clan ritual.

The next day the entire village gathered at the bare hill, where a make-shift altar of stones had been consecrated to Orlanth and Ernalda, the Father and Mother of the Orlanthi peoples. The wind blew gently. Beorgan and Berla took their places on the hill and began singing the story of how Orlanth and Ernalda created the first Clan in the Darkness to save a group of refugees. As Beorgan named the men to take the roles of the brothers and sons of Orlanth, Berla sang the names of the women who would represent the goddesses. As each was called forward the assembled people sang their response, accepting them and singing a prayer to the appropriate deity. Beorgan called Little Kallum forward to represent Urox the Storm Bull, and Fauchet to become Eurmial the Trickster. Jalkon took the part of Barntar, the Farmer, while Berla's sister Candra was called to be his wife Mahome, Goddess of the Hearth. Others were called, those whom Beorgan and Berla though best exemplified the virtues of the gods and goddesses, those who could lead the Ring without arrogance or avarice. The notable absence of Humakt, Master of Death, was explained by Beorgan. "We are a Ring of Peace, not one of War. It is more important that we have the Four Providers to feed us, Voriof, Barntar, Odayla, and Pelaskos, and their wives to comfort us. We do not need Death."

After the men and women had sung the world into being

Beorgan and Berla faced each other. He took her hand and sang to her as Orlanth did to Ernalda, asking if she would comfort and nurture the clan as its Mother. Berla answered that she would. She in turn sang to him as Ernalda did to Orlanth, asking if he would feed and defend the clan as its Father. He also answered that he would. The assembled people sang their response joyfully, accepting the two as their Mother and Father, agreeing to support and obey them, as children support and obey their parents.

Beorgan and Berla turned to face the crowd, and he addressed his followers as a clan for the first time. "My family, I am honored that you have chosen Berla and I to lead you, and I pray to all the gods that we will lead you well. We are now a true clan, and I call out to you to speak our name to Orlanth and Ernalda, to tell them that their children have not forgotten them! In honor of Berla, whom the Goddess sent to answer our secret prayers, I say to you that we are the Black Rock Clan. May we live as Orlanthil!" The jubilant shouts of the clan echoed throughout the valley, proclaiming to their gods that the Black Rock Clan lived once more.

After the last echoes had blown away on the winds, Beorgan brought out a silver arm-ring that one of the clan members had given him. "My family, this ring shall become the Heart of our clan. Its shape is a symbol of our unity, its silver a symbol of our strength. I give it to Kallum, Khan of Urox, and proclaim him the Champion of our Ring, second only to myself in leadership of the clan. Let him wear it with pride and honor!" The clan shouted their approval of Kallum, praising his courage.

He then called forward Fauchet. "As a token of his ineffable nature I present this ring to our Trickster, in recognition of his aid in an ale-tent in Roundstone." So saying, Beorgan revealed a ring woven from skunkwort, asafetida, and several other evil-smelling plants. He flung it over Fauchet's head, and the clown immediately fell over as if in a swoon. The crowd laughed and cheered as he writhed on the ground, obviously being strangled by the wreath. Then he popped back up and made such a low bow that he fell right over into a somersault. From the ground, he proceeded to praise Beorgan's wisdom and esthetic sensibilities so outrageously that Beorgan threatened to kick him into the stream. He began juggling a number of colored stones as the crowd began to break up, and though he was among the last to leave the hill, somehow he made it to the celebration feast ahead of even the fastest child.

With the winter's supply of grain carefully stored in pits specially dug and fired for the purpose, Beorgan's Ring settled into their autumn routine. They slaughtered those animals considered unlikely to survive the winter, salting or smoking the meat. More houses were finished, allowing the entire clan to sleep under a roof. Beorgan and Little Kallum walked the perimeter of the village and marked out a plan for a palisade, which they planned on building in the Spring. Logs were cut and trimmed to this purpose, then stacked under cover to cure over the winter. Beorgan and Berla saw to the spiritual needs of the community. Together they celebrated the covenants of Household and Hearth, Field and Family: they officiated together at several marriages, and Berla acted as midwife for several births. They showed no signs of wishing to marry, but it really wasn't important until the Spring sowing; most of the clan were content to wait at least that long, especially since everyone knew that each had recently lost their spouse.

Winter passed with no major problems. Wolves howled in the hills surrounding the village but never bothered the clan, though fears of Telmori renegades circulated almost daily. Once an outrider came across deformed tracks, which Little Kallum confirmed belonged to some Chaos creature. He followed the trail into the hills to the south but lost it in a snowstorm. Few refugees found the valley, but those that did reported spreading rumors of Argrath's activities. They said that he was said to lead a band of heroic warriors, and that he attacked Lunars wherever he found them. He had been spotted in Alda-Chur and Boldhome, and was even said to have raided Furthest! Among the more far-fetched



Beorgan, you're the man we want to follow. I am Varkelor the Eagle, Sword of Humakt. Single handed, I slew the three-headed Scorpion-man. With one other man, I climbed to the top of Stormwalk Mountain and talked with the spirits of the air. I am the son of Tasgat the Mighty, Chief of the Long Rock clan. I have wrestled the champions of the Sylangi tribe and won every time. The men with me are also of the Long Rock clan of the Sylangi tribe. The Lunars outlived us for protecting our homes. You have a name as a leader of men, and we would feel honored if you would accept us into your stead."

Beorgan interrupted, "We need farmers, not warriors. Unless your men show more promise in the grain-field than they do on the battlefield, we have no use for you." Varkelor glanced over at the just-begun palisade. "My men are no farmers, but we could help put up that fence you're working on."

Beorgan thought, then replied, "If you are to join us, you

rumors were definite reports that bands of marauders calling themselves Argrath's men had been seen in the area of Roundstone Fort. Beorgan found it disconcerting that they used his exploits as their rallying point. He sometimes wondered just how many Argraths there were, and if the real Argrath was even still alive.

Dark and Storm Seasons passed, and with the coming of Spring most of the men of the Ring went out to prepare the fields for planting. One day, as they labored to clear stones from one of the plots, Big Kallum came running out to them, yelling at the top of his lungs. The men dropped their tools and ran for their spears. Before they could even reach them, however, Kallum stopped long enough to catch his breath and yell clearly. "Lord Beorgan, there are men here to see you! They bear weapons, but they look peaceful enough."

Beorgan roared back at him as he came forward. "You young whelp, you could have said so before you interrupted every man from his chores! All right you men, continue on here, I'll take Little Kallum and Celsan with me to have a look at these visitors. The rest of you get this field cleared, and then work on that one over there."

The three men and the boy jogged back to the village, where a few men had begun digging a trench for the palisade. Waiting at the ditch were about forty mounted men, Sylangi Tribe from the look of them. Their leader wore iron mail, and a tall helmet surmounted by a white horsehair plume made him seem even taller than he was. His gear had the look of hard wear, but was neatly repaired. His shield bore a large cross, and many of the men also carried items decorated with the Death Rune. Beorgan stopped in his tracks, and almost turned away. How dare these warriors, these men dedicated to Death, come to his peaceful Ring?

The leader hailed him. "Are you the one they call Argrath Moon-Bane?" he called. Beorgan's reply was curt. "No. There is no need for you here. I am Beorgan, not Argrath."

The leader looked surprised for a moment, but then he brightened and deliberately winked. "Well, my lord Arg-, er,

will have to follow my orders; no questions, and no slacking. Little Kallum here is our Champion and my right hand; obey him as you would me. If you have women and children, they are more than welcome to join us as well. Those of you who are not married, take care that you court only unmarried lasses, as I'll not have love-sick men brawling over a woman's favors. If these rules seem fair then you may stay, at least for a while. One more thing. I will not tolerate you using this stead as a base for raids; we will allow you to stay as defenders, but not as brigands."

Varkelor and his band settled in the valley, and they soon had the palisade erected. His men made mounted patrols of the nearby hills, several times chasing away or destroying bands of marauding broos or other chaos monsters. As time passed they were accepted as full members of the Ring.

The village settled into a normal routine, except that Varkelor's men and, increasingly, the rest of the clan caught themselves almost calling Beorgan "Argrath" to his face. Many of the settlers seemed to believe that it was true, especially those who had come after the Ring entered the valley. But life was good: away from the Lunars and their taxes the settlement flourished. Young Solya and Froadar became fast friends, and she began to talk and smile for the first time since Beorgan had met her. Everyone was glad of the change in her.

From time to time other refugees found the valley. After two years the settlement numbered several hundred men, women, and children. Two other palisaded steads were built, one far up in the hills, the other hidden near the mouth of the valley and manned mostly by warriors under Varkelor. All of the low-lying areas on the valley floor were under cultivation, and the pastures in the hills were filled with sheep, cattle, and goats. Varkelor convinced Beorgan that the peacefulness of the valley was itself a danger to the clan, and that the people needed to know how to use weapons, in case the Lunars or other brigands found the stead. Thereafter, everyone able to bear arms practiced with weapons, supervised by Varkelor, Little Kallum, and Beorgan. Some practiced with spears, some with javelins, others with swords and axes. Even the boys practiced with slings. They made plans to

move the noncombatants to the upper stead if the clan was raided. Everyone knew his own part, and several times Beorgan staged "raids" to test the preparedness of the Ring.

Jalkon and Fauchet became the Ring's primary link to the outside world during this time, taking caravans to Roundstone Fort or Wilm's Church to trade wool and leather for metal goods and salt. They reported that raids by "Argrath" continued to plague the Lunars, and the price on his head had risen to 30,000 lunars. The Lunars claimed several times to have destroyed Argrath and his "band of thieves," but each time a new raid would prove them wrong. Beorgan worried that the Lunar scrutiny would eventually lead them to the valley, but decided that he could do nothing about that except to be as prepared as possible.

At the end of Sea Season, two years after Varkelor and his men arrived in the valley, Fauchet came back alone from Wilm's Church. "What have you done with Jalkon? Have you killed him finally with your cooking, or did you drop a tree on his head 'accidentally'?" asked Beorgan.

"No, he is walking back with our goods, but I thought you needed to know the news." Fauchet was sober and serious for once, which warned Beorgan that the news was grave indeed. "While in town we overheard two Lunar soldiers talking about their upcoming campaign. They will be combing these hills for the latest Argrath. It seems that another of these bands of raiders has started to operate from the Storm Hills. The Lunars'll be bringing Upland's and Moonarrow cavalry, and some special archers from some Sun temple up above Tarsh. They'll have some Tarshite troops with them too, though I didn't catch their unit name. The Tarshites are no veterans, that's for sure."

Beorgan sent for Celsan and Little Kallum, and had the latter get his arms and armor. Then he sent for Varkelor. "When you came to us, I told you that I would not condone raids from this stead. I require your Sword-oath that you have not done this. And remember that Humakt deals in Truth as well as Death, for your life depends on it."

Varkelor drew his sword and Little Kallum tensed, but he set the point of the sword on the ground and grasped the crossguard. "My Lord, I swear to you on my Sword, may it break in my moment of need if I lie. I have not led any raids since I have come here. Neither have my men done so, by this sword do I pledge this, on my life."

"Assemble the Ring," cried Beorgan. "Varkelor, send out your men to patrol the foothills toward Roundstone, and have them keep a sharp eye out for scouts. The herds are already in the upper pastures; Celsan, take all the infirm and elderly as well, with a guard of ten men. All those who can bear arms are to carry them at all times, including the boys who are to be initiated this summer. I will lead the Arming of Orlanth on Windsday."

Messengers ran hither and thither. Men prepared their weapons, or filled packs for their wives and children to take to safety. Berla organized the women; those who were leaving for the hills collected the children still in the village, while those who were staying to fight looked to their own weapons. A few scoured the countryside for healing plants: Bindwound and Chalana's Tears, Fingersticks and Arrow Flower. Berla came to Beorgan for council, concerned about a group of women who had been defiled by Lunars. They wished to put aside their very womanhood and worship Maran Gor and Babeester Gor, the defenders of the Earth and women. She had pleaded with them, crying that the worship of these dark goddesses would change them forever, but they were adamant. Beorgan calmed her, saying that such was the course of life, that the Darkness could not always be denied. She realized that there was nothing she could do to stop this tragedy, though she refused to give it her blessing. The women performed the rites for themselves that night, forswearing their fertility for vengeance against the male sex that had wronged them.

On Windsday Beorgan led those who were staying to the bare hill for the ceremony of the Arming of Orlanth. Big Kallum came forward in the role of Heler, bearing Beorgan's arms and

armor. After he was fully armed, Beorgan turned to Celsan. "When our Lord Orlanth went forth to rescue the Emperor and restore the world, he named one thane above the rest to stay behind and guard the stead, loyal Elmal, who lit the world during the Darkness. Celsan, you have served the Ring long and faithfully. In you we place the greatest burden, that of caring for the stead while the majority of its defenders are away. I leave you thirty men only, for that is all we can spare. If we are defeated, you must make sure that the Ring is not broken. Take the people into the hills, or down south to the land of the Volsaxi if you think you must, but keep the Ring alive. In your hands we place more than the lives of our families; in your hands we place our future." Little Kallum removed the Clan Ring from his arm and solemnly handed it to Celsan. Then Beorgan invoked the Seven Winds and the Four Sacred Weapons. He felt infused with the power of God, and many of the attendees felt the divine power as well. They prayed for courage to face their foes, and power to defeat them. Little Kallum invoked the rage of Urox, pledging to face any monsters that the Lunars might bring with them. Several other Uroxi joined him in this pledge. Big Kallum, now grown to manhood and his name, stood with them, swearing to fight side by side with the Berserks. Next Varkelor stood forth and invoked the powers of Humakt the Thane, praying for honor and courage. By his side stood a dozen sworn Humakti, each ready to die or give death. Even Fauchet came forward, tipsy and staggering, but there. He looked determined for a minute, then folded over laughing, pointing at all the serious faces arrayed behind their leaders.

As Beorgan brought the ceremony to a close, many saw each group of warriors take on the aspect of their god: the Uroxi appeared to grow horns, the Humakti became dark and distant. Beorgan himself grew tall and gray, and from him mighty winds flowed, circling the hill and whipping through the ranks of the crowd. Each man and woman felt the immanent power of the gods, and was filled with determination to defend the Ring, no matter the cost.

The fighting force of the Ring set out the next day, hoping to engage the Lunars as far from the valley as possible. Most of the army was on foot, but Varkelor led a band of Humakti horsemen, and Beorgan had several mounted messengers as well as a dozen mounted scouts. A score of fighting women marched as well. Some followed Vinga Red-hair; they were veterans of the fighting with Kallyr in Volsaxiland, and marched in military precision. The other women made up for their inexperience with their fanatical lust to spill blood. A dozen shamans, godi, and wise women accompanied the army as well, individuals who had joined the Ring one by one over the years. They had practiced their magic while the rest of the Ring were at weapon-drill, and had found ways to combine their power so that their spirit was stronger than the sum of its parts. Now they marched with the army to heal and to keep the Lunar sorcery at bay.

On Freezeday, Froadar, now a scout, returned to the army announcing that he had seen the Lunar forces. "There's hundreds of them, sir," he gasped, "maybe even thousands!" The men around Beorgan shook their heads, dismissing Froadar's panic. They had chosen the boy more for his small size and superb horsemanship than for his ability to count, and so his had been the farthest position forward of the army. The group around Beorgan knew that there was no chance that the Lunars could scrape together more than four hundred men in all, if Jalkon and Fauchet had heard correctly. The second scout brought better news. Beorgan collected his commanders to hear the report.

"I saw the whole army pass by about half a day beyond the mouth of this valley. They're moving like they're on the parade ground instead of out in the field; I'd say they don't know we're here. They've got a screen of horsemen out in front, but none on the flanks as far as I could see. I watched the whole thing and saw only five standards: two cavalry commands of about fifty men each, armed with spears or lances; two foot units armed with spears, one had about two hundred men, the other about a hun-

dred; and a detachment of archers, I'd say about fifty men. There was a group with a fellow all in silver armor, it must have been the general. I didn't see anything that looked like one of their Battle Colleges, thank Orlanth for small favors."

"Orlanth will provide us with another favor, I think," said Beorgan. "I've been praying for rain, and I think that tomorrow the Lord of Storms will provide. We will cross the hills right here and hit them tomorrow morning, just before sunrise. Any Sun priests they have will be at their lowest ebb, though they may get stronger as Yelm rises; hopefully, Orlanth's clouds will block their sun magic, and the rain will certainly ruin their bows. The Moon will be on its last horns, so any magic the Lunars throw should be weak. The day after tomorrow would be a better time as far as the power of their magic goes, but we might as well wish for the dragon to return and swallow them as for an extra day's time."

The army moved over the hills that night, creeping up on the enemy camp like shadows. Beorgan placed scouts around their camp, both to keep an eye on the sleeping soldiers and to prevent his own troops from moving too close. He set his magicians the task of keeping the Lunar troops from detecting his army. Without a unit of sorcerers in the Lunar force their task was easy, as they only had to dull the senses of the human guards. His shamans also captured or chased away a few spirits, none of any great power. By early morning the entire army of the Ring was in position without being detected. Clouds covered the sky, and the glow of morning was lost in the gloom.

Part of the camp was laid out in straight lines: obviously the Lunar regulars. The remainder, however, was much more haphazard, with tents pitched wherever their owners had dropped their gear. There was no palisade around the camp, either, not even a ditch. A few guards patrolled between torches set around the perimeter, but most were obviously asleep, curled up in their cloaks. Cooks were just starting to blow their fires alight for the morning porridge, and some early risers wandered to the latrine trench. Beorgan shook his head at the enemy's carelessness, then raised his arms to the sky and quietly began his prayer to Orlanth, his voice rising in volume and pitch as the clouds above him responded to his plea.

The battle began with a flash as several lightning bolts hit inside the camp. Each seemed guided to its destination: the battle standards and the general's tent. The spirits in the standards died screaming as their shafts splintered and burned and their metal head-pieces melted. The General's tent flashed as the lightning struck it, but appeared to be unharmed. Following on the heels of the thunder, rain fell in sheets, drowning torches and cook-fires and turning the camp into a quagmire.

As the Lunars woke from their sleep Beorgan signaled his men to attack. With a mighty cry of "ARGRATH!" Varkelor led his horsemen towards the Lunar cavalry pickets, their swords glowing with blade-enhancing magic. They cut down the guards and headed set the horses free, then drove them away from the camp. At the same time the women swarmed forward, gleefully cutting down men who straggled out of their beds. Male screams came from the tents they entered, and Beorgan was glad he could not see the cause. Kallum and the Uroxi, detecting a faint taint of chaos from the commander's tent, charged through the camp, unmindful of the men in their way, not stopping unless killed in one blow. Beorgan saw one Uroxi continue to run even with a spear through his chest, collapsing only after he had charged through a hasty shield wall and opened the way for his colleagues.

Beorgan looked at Fauchet and shrugged. With his own cry of, "ARGRATH AND SARTARI!" he sent the main force of the Ring into the camp. He had spent many months training his men to fight together instead of as individuals, but even now he could see quite a few men fighting alone, usually dying as they fought the well-drilled Lunar troops. Beorgan fought the old instincts which urged him to charge at the head of his troops, instincts that came to the fore in this moment of fear and exhilaration. Instead, he waited until all of his troops were engaged and no Lunars see-

med to have escaped the battle. Then he led his picked body-guard to the thickest fighting. He struck around himself with his sword, trying to keep one eye on his immediate area and one on the whole battle. He spurred from one fight to the next, heartening his men and cutting off groups of fleeing Lunars.

The battle eventually centered on the commander's tent, and Beorgan drove his horse into the melee. Big Kallum lay on the ground, his leg severed by a sword slash. Even though he was bleeding out his life the boy was still fighting, tripping and stabbing unsuspecting Lunars. Little Kallum was fighting the commander's bodyguard, a huge man with a smith's muscles. The two had no finesse, and hacked at each other with a total disregard for their wounds. Both bled heavily, and by the time Beorgan arrived they were grappling and snapping at each other, locked in a death embrace, weapons forgotten in their berserk fury. The remaining Uroxi were engaged in massacring the commander's guards, though not without casualties. Beorgan could see the commander in the tent, obviously preparing some sort of foul ritual. Spurring his horse into a short gallop, he crashed into the Lunar line, knocking two men sprawling. He felt his horse take a spear in the neck and start to fall. Kicking his feet free of the stirrups he leapt over the prone bodies of the men he had knocked down. He swept the flap of the tent open with his sword. The man in the tent wore silver-chased armor, though his helmet was on a table. He stood over a glowing brazier, inhaling the foul-smelling smoke that rose from it. Beorgan threw his sword at the man just as he was preparing to finish the passes of his spell. The blade flew wide, but the man jerked aside, spoiling the ritual.

The two men glared at each other. Beorgan recognized Ephiocus, the Provost of Roundstone. The officer's eyes widened. "Argrath," he snarled as he drew his scimitar. "I should have killed you when I had the chance. Now you die, Storm-scum, and I shall have the reward for your head." He charged and swung with his scimitar, and Beorgan ducked into a roll as it swept through the space where his chest had been. He rolled into the wall of the tent, then rolled away again as the scimitar came close to beheading him. He drew his dagger and threw it in one smooth motion, and cursed again as the officer ducked away from it. At least it gave him time to get off the floor.

Ephiocus dropped into a fighting stance and advanced on Beorgan, driving him backwards with threatening passes of his blade. Beorgan felt heat at his back, and knew that his opponent was trying to drive him into the brazier. With a thrust, the commander attempted to drive Beorgan back, but Beorgan was expecting it. He ducked and spun away from the thrust, grabbing one leg of the brazier as he moved. Coals scattered in an arc as the heated bowl caught the officer in the wrist, causing him to drop his sword. The next blow caught him in the temple and he dropped to the floor, dead.

Beorgan retrieved his weapons and strode out of the tent. Everywhere he could see the Lunars were surrendering, except for one group which was protected by a rampart of corpses. Beorgan's men surrounded them, unwilling to attack, but even more unwilling to allow the enemy to escape. Beorgan went back into the tent and cut off Ephiocus' head. Walking up to the ring of Lunars, he held up his trophy.

"Men of the Moon, look at your leader now! He led you out to punish a bandit, but instead he found out what the love of freedom can do. Surrender now and I promise that you will be returned to your Emperor alive and whole. Refuse, and I will turn these loose on you." With an out-flung arm he swept aside a screen of men, revealing the bloodstained followers of Babeester Gor, axes in hand, male members strung around their necks. "These are the only two choices you have: life from my hand, or death at theirs. There is no other escape from this valley for you." One by one the Lunars dropped their weapons, aghast at the savagery on the faces of the women. An officer tried to force the men to fight on, but one of his own troopers killed him with a spear, then dropped it and its grisly burden. Beorgan waved the women back, then

sent his men forward to collect weapons and bind the prisoners.

Beorgan went to the body of Big Kallum where it lay tangled in his last victim. Little Kallum was there before him, tears streaming down his face. "This one fought with the spirit of a true Urox. If it is all right with you, I wish to send him to the gods in our way, rather than Orlanth's."

Beorgan comforted his friend, "Of course. I wouldn't dream of depriving him of his afterlife in the Bull's Hall. But you had best look to your own wounds, else you will be joining him there. Take the time you need; I think we have given ourselves time to heal, as well as time to mourn."

One by one and then in groups, the men of the Ring came forward to praise Beorgan for his leadership. Before a quarter of the Ring had come forward a chant had started. "Argrath! Argrath!" the Ring cried, and two men came forward, carrying a shield. Behind them stood Little Kallum and Varkelor with expectant grins on their faces. The two men put the shield on the ground in front of Beorgan. "Please, Beorgan, would you consent to this?" asked Kallum.

Beorgan looked around at the army of the Ring. On each face he saw the same thing. Bloodstained, tear-streaked, exultant in victory or grimacing in pain, he saw the same thing in each of their eyes: hope, the hope that he would take this band of outcasts and refugees and mold them into a free clan, something of which they could be proud. With a prayer to Orlanth for guidance and luck he stepped forward onto the shield. The two men picked up the shield, and Varkelor shouted, "Behold Argrath, chief of the Ring!" The army, to a man, clashed their weapons and cheered themselves hoarse. Beorgan grimaced inwardly at the name but did not let it show on his face. For the first time since the Lunars had burned his stead, he felt part of a family, even if it was under the wrong name.

Beorgan brought his victorious clan back to the stead and performed the funeral rites for those slain in the battle. Immediately afterwards he led prayers of thanksgiving with Berla and, to the delight (and relief) of the Ring, asked her to become his wife. The marriage eased the pain in his spirit, and at last he began to relax and enjoy life.

Later that year, a man in princely raiment came to the stead hidden so deeply in the mountains. At the entrance to the valley he hailed a young man in armor who carried a spear. "I am here to see the great Warleader called Argrath. Could you tell me how to find him?"

"Indeed sir," grinned Froadar, "even now he is giving tactical advice to my father, there across the valley. But you should know, sir, that he does not usually go by that name." In the distance, the man could see a group of men gathered in a circle around some object, perhaps a map or battle plan. As he came near, he heard them laugh at some joke. He drew rein, and as the circle opened out to meet him he could see that the object in the middle of the men was a plow. He grimaced at his own preconceptions. "I seek Argrath, chief of this stead and Bane of the Moon."

A silver-haired man rose to answer him. He had soil under his fingernails and his tunic was sweaty and dirty, yet for all the dirt he held himself erect with pride. His face shone with exertion, but also with the satisfied look of a man who is doing what he loves. "I am called Argrath, though that is not my name: it is Beorgan. How may I help you, my Lord?"

"I have traveled to see the man who would steal my name. I thought I must either kill him or offer him a place in my court, in recognition of his bravery and loyalty. Many deeds have been credited to me during my absence, both base and noble, and I have come to reward or punish the men who have born my name. Of you I have heard nothing but good. I offer you the chance to join me as an Eorl and the leader of my bodyguard, as you were for the Queen. Will you join me?"

Beorgan answered slowly. "I never looked for the name of Argrath, it came to me from the mouths of others. You can have

it back, and gladly. Know that I am loyal to the Crown of Sartar, though I will never fight for it again, not even for the memory of the Good Queen. If such displeases you, my lord, then by all means you may have my head, though the Clan will suffer without me."

"Killing you would indeed make the world a lesser place, and your service to me has already been paid, and more than paid. While I rule you may call upon me at any time, but I think I can give you nothing which you do not already have. May you and your Clan fare well."

King Argrath saluted Beorgan and rode away, poorer by one war-leader, but richer by one farmer.



The Return of Hargart the Liberator

by Harald Smith

Hargart came from the Manisking clan within the Aranwyth tribe that dwelt upon the borders of Prax. These simple folk were almost as nomadic as the Praxian beastriders, following their herds of sheep for many keymiles along the border, even to the Wolfgang Break, commonly called Battle Valley. The Aranwyth rode upon short horses (fine and sturdy mounts known for their endurance) as they tended their flocks. They were keen-eyed folk, too, always watching for the signs of raiding wolves or nomads.

Like his brothers, Hargart grew up in the saddle, and could ride and hunt with ease. With long, flowing brown hair held back by wind knots, and eyes grey as the rain-bearing storm clouds, he looked like any of his fellow clansmen. Javelin, spear, and sword were familiar to his young but hardened hands.

Now, when Hargart came of age, the old king of the Aranwyth and the chieftain of the Manisking clan were both under the sway of the Moon Folk. Thangbrand, chieftain of the Manisking, had even gone so far as to place Ormhild of the Crescent Lock, a Moon Priestess, upon his clan council! Under the urging of these Moon Folk, the old king and Thangbrand both made agreements to exchange tribute with the cursed Telmori werewolves and to trade with the dark-bringing trolls.

As part of these agreements, the Manisking and the Aranwyth agreed not to venture into the Wolfgang Break. But Hargart, one of Thangbrand's housecarls, had a responsibility to defend and feed his folk. When the wolfbrothers came south and stole a sheep, Hargart led his men north and caught the predators in Wolfgang Break. They took seven hides that day, and Hargart proudly returned to his clan with necklaces of claws and teeth.

The cursed Telmori came to the council of Thangbrand the next Windsday and protested this violence. Though Thangbrand was reluctant to call forth Hargart, one of his own thanes, Ormhild, foul child of the Moon, said that there must be justice. Thangbrand the coward agreed. When Hargart came forth, the wolf folk cried out that he was a murderer. Hargart, calm as a summer breeze, presented his case, that he fulfilled his duty to defend his clan and kin, and feed them. The wicked Telmori called this a lie, and pointed to the necklaces which Hargart wore. "Would a defender of kin flaunt his conquests so?" they cried.

Ormhild rose then in her swirling robes of red and grey and said that this wanton killing of the people of King Sartar was not the way of the Orlanthi. Her gentle face filled with compassion, she pleaded that violence was not the only option and she called upon Thora, the Ernalda priestess, as her witness. Ormhild claimed that Hargart brought dishonor to the Manisking clan. She claimed that Hargart broke the laws of hospitality. Thangbrand, the fool, believed her.

Thangbrand ordered Hargart and his followers bound hand and foot. Hargart demanded an option to fight, but he could find no champion, for many had fallen under the sway of Ormhild, and others were afraid of being punished with him. Instead, Thangbrand's henchmen pulled Hargart's rope band of wind knots from his head. They sheared his locks so that the long braids could not fly with Orlanth's winds. They broke his clan brooch and his sword. Last, they cast Hargart, a thane, from the clan and tribe, together with his friends, all carls.

After Thangbrand had completed this pretense of justice, Hargart turned to Ormhild and spoke with the words of Orlanth. "Perfidious Moon woman!" he cried, his body trembling in rage and humiliation. "No fishwife, no slave woman, should treat me like this! I am mocked, shamed, cheated. I am also angry, and I shall return to show you my powers!"

Ormhild laughed softly, and mocked him with the words of Ernalda. "Oh most powerful and horrible man, render of terrors, have mercy on me, please." She laughed again, as did Thangbrand and all the clan at Hargart's words.

Hargart and his friends left the Aranwyth upon the backs of their sturdy mounts. They descended into the march lands of the Pol Joni. There Hargart took to the ways of the Wild Hunter, Gagarth, the last true wind, free as he was from the Lunars, free of compassion, free of any chains or constraints. Hargart and his friends rode across the plains wherever they wished, through ruins and rubble, liberating countless herds from their harsh masters and nameless men from the prisons of their bodies. Thus did Hargart first become the Liberator.

As Hargart rode and fought, anger and shame ever driving him on, he gathered many others to him, outlaws from Sartar and Prax alike, until his band numbered over a hundred men. When they broke the power of the Redhorn Sable clan, Hargart stole the Queen's own shaman, Ragura, freeing her to master the mighty winds instead of petty nomad spirits and wizened ancestors. With Ragura's aid, Hargart and his men bound spirits to their bodies in great white whirling tattoos.

The band of Hargart traveled far in those days, and continued to grow in strength. To Moonbroth they rode, and Hargart blew out the guttering fount. To the Big Rubble they rode, and Hargart stole treasures from the Lunars and other fools who came to plunder the ancient ruins. To the Assembly Rocks they rode, and Hargart spoke of the Wind To Come. To the Bison Plains they rode, and Hargart brought the clan of the Whirlvishbane to an utter standstill. To the Windworm Ranges they rode, and Hargart battled the Dark Wind for seven days running until the Dark Wind broke. Finally, they rode to Staghorn, a potent shrine of magic and power brimming with the antlers and horns of ancient beasts.

There, at the Staghorn, Ragura, shaman of Hargart, called for a halt. Using the angry blood from Hargart's veins and the bitter tears from Hargart's iron eyes, Ragura began to dance. Round and round the Staghorn she danced, sometimes closer, sometimes farther, but always in a frenzy. When she finally collapsed at the base of the shrine she reached forth, magic dancing like lightning from her hand, to touch that sacred altar.

From the earth beneath came first a bellow and then a spout of dirt and dust, white as snow, rose up like the Moonbroth geyser. When the dust had settled on each man of Hargart's band, the White Stag stood high upon its muscled legs and strode forth with fiery eyes and blooded antlers. It sought the blood burning with anger, the tears brimming with bitterness and shame. It sought Hargart.

Hargart battled the White Stag around and around the Antler Case. Dust and blood swirled and mingled in their wake. Borne upon the wind, Hargart attacked from above and below and all four directions, striking again and again with his spear. The White Stag charged Hargart and, leveling its antlers, slew his mount. As the white dust settled again, the two combatants circled warily.

Then the White Stag shouted out its words of power: "Urdo, Urthos, Urox!" Blood sprang forth from Hargart's arms and legs, but Hargart's anger boiled the blood and sealed the wounds. He threw a javelin that bit deep into the White Stag's flank. The White Stag shouted again, "Ystar, Ysgar, Ysvar!" Pain enveloped Hargart from head to toe, and tears of bitterness and shame rolled down Hargart's face. He tasted those tears, and knew he had already borne such pain. Shrieking like a fiend, he threw two more javelins and these tore at the White Stag's throat and breast.

The White Stag bellowed a third time, "Kylesh, Kynesh, Kyresh!" Hargart felt loyalty and love torn from his body and loss fill his soul. He fell to his knees, lonely and despairing, but he was not alone. From the place where they watched, his band, his brothers, shouted "Hargart!" as one. Orlanth and Gagarth carried that shout upon the swirling, biting winds so that Hargart could hear. Then, knowing that he was not alone, he rose and threw three javelins to break the White Stag's charge. It faltered, but still the contest continued.

Though they tired, one could not overcome the other. At last, Hargart dropped to his feet and flung down his spear. The White Stag surged forth in triumph, its antlers lowered for the kill. Hargart leaped high with the last of his strength. Riding the wind for one final burst, he grappled the bellowing stag by the antlers and wrestled it to the ground. In one great move, he tore the antlers from his downed foe and placed them on his own brow, letting its great white mane flow down from them across his back. The great horns were Hargart's now, and he bellowed in triumph.

Hargart took the name of White Bull then, his horns raised high above his head, his long mane flowing down behind his ears. His band stripped the Staghorn, taking antlers and horns to wear in the image of their leader. The nomads who saw them called them the Brothers of the White Bull, but the trolls (whose altar it had been) called them the Antler Case Riders. All who lived throughout the Shadowed Land and the Plains of Prax feared the bellowing that signaled their approach.

After the seasons had turned back to Spring, word of the Brown Dragon and its awesome awakening spread faster than the winds themselves across the barren plains. The word spread through the oases and the ruins, through shaman's dreams and the camps of khans, and through the heart and soul of the Liberator. Men, spirits, and heroes alike awaited what was to come.

Hargart dreamed of celestial dancers falling from the sky and crashing to the earth. He first saw a dragon rise from the whitened ash of broken stars, saw it rise and summon up a destructive storm to swallow the bloody Moon. Then he saw a horned man who stood upon the air and rode forth to conquer all which he could see.

Ragura had been dancing her twisted body through the Greylands, and she saw the spirits fleeing past her as if blown by a hurricane gale. She halted and spoke to one, and learned a truth which sent her fleeing from the Greylands to warn Hargart.

Hargart was along the Zalador Stream when he heard the truth of his dream from Ragura. The Seven Winds cried out for vengeance and release. They touched the anger and bitterness that held Hargart's heart fast like chains, the pain which crippled his soul. Hargart knew that the dream spoke to him and that he must act to break those chains and heal that pain.

Hargart brought the news before his loyal band. "Today, the wind speaks of great times and great travails. Where before the Moon Folk called upon the harmonies of the sky to bind Sartar to their ways, today the Wild Hunter runs, scattering his foes to the ends of the earth. It is a sign to us that violence is still an option. It is a sign that true justice still exists. It is a sign that we must return to the lands we once called home and liberate them from their confinement."

Hargart's band, over a hundred strong, thundered their approval. He turned to Ragura the Gale, his shaman, and she began to dance the spiral. At each turning she drew her flint blade across her many-scarred face, drawing out fresh blood. When she reached the center of the spiral she stood within a trance, her second soul revealed, the sinuous wind twisting round her. Suddenly, from the depths of her trance, she called out, "Come, find me Kyresh, you of the eastern storm. Come, lift me Kyresh, lift me from the shackles of the earth. Come, hurl me Kyresh, far from the center of my soul." She opened a leather bag decorated with the whorls of the Seven Winds and bound with the gutstring of a bison.

The air slowed and stopped. A stillness crept out along the spiral path and walked amongst the members of Hargart's band. Greyness enveloped them, though the sun was at its zenith and no cloud defended the sky. From the depth of that grey stillness came a sound. At first it was but a whisper, and all strained to hear it. Then it grew into a piercing song, as if a bird tried to reach its highest note. Finally, when all could bear the song no more, the sound grew deeper, stronger, louder, and the air thundered in its wake.

Dust whipped high around the band. The stinging air circled and circled along the path walked by Ragura the Gale. Kyresh had answered her call. Antlered Hargart raised high his spear as his horse leaped upon the westward wind. Together they ascended into the blue. "Come, my band, come," Hargart cried amidst the thundering roar. "Come, let us ride the bitter wind together, for there is good hunting on our path!"

From within her trance, Ragura continued to speak in her shaman's speech, her words alternately whispered or shouted. Hargart pointed with his spear, and from behind him came a chant as each of the band in turn mounted into the air upon their steeds. "We ride, our lord, we ride. Borne upon the howling wind, we ride." A dark band of swirling dust struck westward from the barren plains like a thin grey cloud. The cloud travelled ahead of the riders, aimed like the barbed spear of Hargart straight at the Wolfgang Break, straight at Battle Valley.

By the time the sun sank in the western sky, the shepherds upon the Forloss Hills and the wolfbrothers to the north could see the coming storm. They fled the approach of the gale, seeing devastation in the swirling dust and death in the wild winds. To their chieftains they ran crying, "The desert wind comes against us! All is woe!"

To the north, the chief of the Telmori strode haughtily amidst his tribe, his wolfbrother by his side. When the wind howled, some of his warriors were afraid, but he chased away the cowardly pups. He called upon the shapeshifters and the wolfbrothers to run with him and view this desert wind. So they ran together in the manner of wolves down to the Wolfgang Break.

In the lands of the Manisking clan of the Aranwyth tribe, Chief Thangbrand heard his shepherds cry. He was afraid, for he knew the legions and magicians of the Moon folk had fallen to the dragon. He called Ormhild of the Crescent Lock, his council, and his housecarls to his side, for he felt there was always strength in numbers. "Evil approaches from the wastes. We must flee this foe, lest all be lost."

Ormhild pushed back her lock of purest scarlet with a gentle hand and chided his cowardly ways. "No, my lord, we must stand, for surely this is a test of mighty Orlanth. Can he not stop such winds, such storms? Can he not send his rebellious nephew back into the Wastes, as he has always done? Or must you look to the thunder of the Crater Makers and the shields of the Granite Phalanx to stop such petty winds?"

Chief Thangbrand was ashamed, and his housecarls called for action. He was left with no choice if he would remain chief. "Very well," he said. "Let us call upon our Telmori allies. Let us take up the Thunder Boots and the Bane Swords and go to meet this foe."

The clan gathered its strength. The clansmen placed the Thunder Boots, blessed by mighty Orlanth to knock down any foe, upon their feet. They placed the Bane Swords, blessed by deadly Humakt to cripple any nomad, within their hands. Swift runners raced before the wind to reach the Telmori at the Break, and call them to aid the clan. Chief Thangbrand called his priests and thanes to protect him on all sides with shields and magic. So accoutered, the Manisking warriors marched down from the Forloss Hills to the Long Wall, where they met the cursed Telmori and awaited their foe.

When the cloud reached the opening of Battle Valley, Chief Thangbrand commanded his warriors to use their Thunder Boots, and the ground before them leapt and shook. Clouds rose as the thunder swept outward towards Hargart's band. Beasts fell in the passage of the thunder, even the vile troll monsters which lived in the ruins in the center of the valley. The ground shook so hard that the nose on the Duck, one of the mighty Six Sisters, came crashing from its place. Again and again the ground shook with the thunder of those boots, a thunder which filled the air with sound.

Hargart laughed and shook his spear, for, riding on the wind, his band did not heed the shaking ground or rolling thunder.

Instead, he pointed with his spear. "There, Ragura, there," he cried, and pointed to the Smooth-and-Sandy Place. "Drive Kyresh the gale there."

Ragura released the strings on the leather bag once again, and mighty Kyresh, demon of the air, leapt forth again the indicated spot and swept all the sand before it. Up Battle Valley and through the Break it raced, and the sand was driven before it into the eyes and noses of both Thangbrand's clan and the wicked Telmori. Blinded and stung by the raw, biting wind, the Wolfrunners howled in agony. Covering their faces and sensitive noses they fled under cover of the storm so that no one would see, though Hargart, flying above them, did. The Manisking warriors held their ground like true Orlanthi, but they did not see Hargart until he, the Liberator, the White Bull, was upon them.

"Ho, Thangbrand," Hargart called in scorn. "Do you know me? Do you know justice? Do you feed and defend your folk?"

"Who calls me?" answered Thangbrand with a cloth before his eyes.

"It is I, Hargart, whom you once outlawed from your land, though I merely sought to feed my folk and defend them from the ravishing wolves." Thangbrand's fear overpowered him then, and he ran from his protecting priests and thanes; Hargart laughed. "You are as blind and cowardly now as you have always been."

Alone and desperate, Thangbrand called to his allies, the Telmori, to strike at the raider who was still invisible to him. There was no answer but a mocking laugh. "Ah, dearest Thangbrand, your precious wolffriends have left you to your fate. They have fled like the thieves and skulkers they are. It is now just you and I."

Like a gale himself, Hargart raced down from the wind upon the Manisking chieftain. Thangbrand ran from the Long Wall, blind in his fear, abandoning his folk and stumbling upon the broken ground. With a perfect thrust, Hargart drove his spear between the blades of Thangbrand, bearing the cowardly chieftain to the ground and his just rewards. When Hargart pulled his spear from his foe, the barbs held the puny heart of Thangbrand for all to see.

Around Ormhild had the housecarls gathered. With sand and dust now settled they stood their ground, protected by the Long Wall, and fought. Some of Hargart's band, those gathered from the nomad clans, fell quickly before the Bane Swords. Others, good Orlanthi outlawed by the Moon Folk, fought longer and harder, years of hatred driving them on. The battle raged on as the first bands of night darkened the Wastelands behind them and the Red Moon's light gained in strength.

Hargart, never one to lose an advantage to the Moon Folk, closed upon Ormhild. When the two were no more than five steps apart, each descended from their mount. "So, Moon child, the day of the Storm is at hand." Hargart smiled as he taunted her. "The Moon seems not so mighty when a dragon is at hand, does it?"

Ormhild shook her head, her dark eyes sad. "The fate of the Empire is ever in cycles. Just as darkness overcomes the face of the Goddess, so shall light return to it in time. Violence is not the only way, for peace always follows war. What you hope to gain is already lost to you."

"Ah, dear Ormhild, ever so clever with your words. But words shall not help you here. You shall fight or you shall die, though if I have my way you shall do both!" With the suddenness of a morning gust, Hargart leapt through the air at his true foe.

Though Ormhild's face was serene, her body moved quickly and lithely from under Hargart's blow. Dancing now in circles, Ormhild chanted softly and stretched out her hands. Red coils flung outward and caught Hargart, tying his arms to his torso and his legs together. He could not even raise his spear, but his lips were not so bound. "I, too, know a few words, Ormhild. Try these: Urdos, Urthos, Urox!"

Ormhild screamed, but Hargart drew back at what he saw: no blood gushed from her arms or legs, only dust, dry aged dust. Where the dust departed, her skin pulled tight against her

bones as it does on a corpse pulled from a bog. In his terror, Hargart tried more words. "Ystar, Ysgar, Ysvar!" he cried.

Ormhild shuddered as her skin rippled beneath a wild wind and tore away from her body. The Moon child stood revealed in her true form -- a withered hag. Deep dark eyes that had seemed to understand the world brightened with unearthly light until red orbs, bright as the Moon, glowed from the sockets. Scales of black, silver, and scarlet covered her gnarled form, shimmering with magic. Soft, gentle fingers lengthened into hard, grasping claws with nails as red as blood. Small snakes that writhed and hissed grew from her scalp, all black save one of darkest crimson. Lips and teeth fell away, leaving hard black gums and a mouth filled with fear.

The demon which had been Ormhild approached Hargart and glared at him. He shrank from the horror. "So, you would look upon me with true sight," she spat. "Look and die, mortal fool. Better for you if you had remained in the Wastes of the world, for now you will taste the true Wastelands, the Wastelands of Hell."

Hargart saw the hag's hands glow black as if covered with a virulent plague. He saw her toothless mouth move silently working her curses. When she reached him, he made his last move and leapt into the arms of Gagarth. Curses sailed up after him as he danced in the air. He knew he had but one chance, bound as he was, so he flew again and shouted a final set of words: "Kylesh, Kynesh, Kyresh!"

Ormhild cried in terror as her powers and desires fled from her demonic soul. This time Hargart did not leap up or to the side, but back, flipping himself over through the air and off the path of Gagarth. Headfirst he plunged, straight at Ormhild. His action surprised her, and she could not change the final curse she wrought. Antlers leading, Hargart smashed down atop the witch and drove through her with his stately horns, so that she was pinned to the dusty ground.

With the release of her evil spirit, Ormhild's body shriveled into red dust and black bones. All around, the Maniskings and Hargart's band lowered their arms and made their signs of warding, fearful of the evil spirit's passage. Slowly Hargart moaned and rolled over, the bonds that held him departed. He lived, though his head ached like never before. The sweeping curves of his fine antlers lay broken in Ormhild's dusty remains. Short horns still graced his brow, now truly like those of a bull, but blood ran down his face and back, coloring his white mane red. Bone jutted from one arm. Both Ragura and the Manisking healer came to him and tended him through the night.

Without their leader, the Maniskings were divided. Some fled, cowards with little heart like Thangbrand. Ragged whirling winds filled with anger ran these down and slew them, pulling out their souls to join them in wandering the plains. Others huddled together, prisoners of Hargart's band, fearful of the vengeance which Hargart would exact. The strong and true Orlanthi, however, sat amongst the White Bull Brothers, their weapons set aside. Together, the two groups talked of the coming Storm and waited for Hargart the White Bull to lead them forth against the power of the Red Moon.

The sun broke briefly the next morning, then cloud wrapped the horizon. Winds whipped in from south and west, striking the tents in Wolfgang Break. From one such tent strode Hargart the Liberator. He called out to all around, his voice thundering through the morning air. "Maniskings who gave me birth, Gagarthi who gave me second birth, hear me. I have returned to my land. I have broken the spell of the Moon witch."

Hargart took up the black bones of the demon and with his own hands ground them into dust. He cast that dust high into the air, and Orlanth sent the Seven Winds to carry it away. "This is how we deal with demons who have no respect for life." He wiped his hands clean and held them up empty-handed.

Hargart continued to speak, his voice strong and firm, "There is more to be done here, more evil that stalks this land. I

offer to defend my folk, new and old. I offer to feed my folk, old and new. Together we can form a new Ring, as has been done before, to strike at this foe. Will you do so?"

All who heard him, Manisking carls and Gagarthi outlaws alike, acclaimed his words as good. Hargart the Liberator had returned. Orlanth was free again.



A Boy and His Alynx

by Eric Rowe and Stephen Martin

The cold west wind blew steadily through the open door of the barn and into the stall of the stead's prize bull, named Urain for its nasty temper. Argrath drew his woolen cloak more tightly about himself to protect against the wind's bite while his boon companion, the alynx he had named Broyan, curled itself into an even tighter ball of blue and black fur. Though it was already the fifth week of Storm Season the weather was still bitterly cold, as if the winter was refusing to release its hold on Dragon Pass. Argrath thanked Orlanth that there had been no troll raids this year, then made the symbol of the spear with his left hand to ward off the bad luck that mentioning such good fortune was sure to bring.

As he piled the last few armfuls of straw onto the floor the supper horn blew, but he was careful to spread the remaining straw evenly about the floor before turning to leave. He latched the stall door and then closed the barn door securely before following the ever-hungry Broyan back to the main cottage. It would not do to have any of the oxen stray off in the night, especially the bull. The oxen all belonged to Kirray, and she would not forgive such carelessness. Her nine oxen (especially the enormous black bull) ranked her high in the clan, a position she had worked hard to gain and would be loathe to lose. Lost in his usual contemplative thoughts, Argrath walked slowly back to the main cottage, then hurried to catch up with Broyan when he heard the alynx begin to scratch at the door. Kirray only tolerated the energetic Broyan grudgingly, and would not allow Argrath to keep the shadow kitten if it damaged anything else, outside or in.

Finally safe inside from the bitter cold of the wind, Argrath settled with the rest of the children by the hearth as they waited for Kirray to begin the evening meal. She was ranked as a housecarl of the Entan clan of the Malani tribe, and only her great kindness allowed so many to stay within her crowded cottage. Before the meal could begin, however, her underhusband Jerthan Thurlisson led a short prayer of thanks to Orlanth, for his hunt today had been successful: upon the table lay a small boar, the first of the hunting season which had technically not yet begun. Argrath's mouth watered in anticipation, although he knew there was no guarantee that there would be enough for him to receive a slice of the meat. He silently thanked Orlanth and Kirray both ahead of time for providing him with any meal at all, and that he would be grateful even if he did not receive any of the wonderfully-smelling roast. He added pointedly, however, that Broyan probably would not be so content if that occurred.

After the prayer the adults began serving themselves. Argrath saw his guardian Tathar near the back of the press, waiting for the adults of higher status to choose their food first. Mora the housewoman did her best to serve the food in an organized manner, but the fragile order soon decayed into good-natured disorder, as it almost always did. Tathar was one of the few who waited until Mora had prepared his food for him completely before taking it, and not just because of his low social standing: he was one of the most respectful members of the stead, and always said that even if Orlanth did not love a humble man, Barntar the farmer

did, and that was good enough for him.

Tathar had been Argrath's guardian since his mother's death seven years ago. His father had been killed several years before that sad event, and Argrath had grown up in his mother's clan; he did not even remember his father, and had only vague memories of the stories his mother told of Maniski, her husband. As an orphan he had needed a guardian, for Heort's laws require that all members of the clan receive its protection, and only a man of the clan could provide him with the direction, recognition, and participation which his father would have given him. Argrath had tried to be brave that day, but he had been only seven after all, so he didn't hold it against himself that he had cried when Rasteniss, the clan chief, asked for someone to come forward to claim and care for him. Of all the clan only Tathar, his mother's cousin, had come forward. Since that time he had raised Argrath as his son and taught him the ways of the clan and of Orlanth, their god. Though he was only a stickpicker, Tathar had taught Argrath well.

Eventually, Tathar took his meal and headed back to the hearth with the rest of the adults as the children ran to the table to fill their plates as well. To Argrath's disappointment, however, the meat was all gone, and Mora piled his plate high with boiled cabbage and wild blue parsnip.

As he sat and ate he was very aware of Broyan, for the silent alynx stared at him mercilessly, visibly upset at not being fed more than the scraps the housewoman left on the floor for the animals. Shortly afterwards, however, Tathar came over to Argrath where he sat by the door and gave him his unfinished plate. A thick slice of gravy-covered boar remained, and as Tathar patted Argrath's head fondly the boy quietly thanked him. Argrath tore off a piece of meat for Broyan, who responded with a pleasant rumbling sound and a quick flick of his tail. Tathar then returned to his seat by the fire to talk to Mora while the two friends happily finished off their meal.

After everyone had eaten and Mora had led the other servants in gathering up the dishes and heading into the cooking area, old Nori Tarilson the storyteller took up his storytelling drum, and Argrath knew that he was preparing to entertain the adults through the rest of the evening. Nori was in his fifties, and counted among the elders of the tribe; he was Kirray's brother, and one of the reasons her stead was so prosperous. The story he told that night was one of Orlanth, King of the Gods, and Thed, vile mother of the chaotic broos. Most of the children were sent to bed, but Argrath insisted on staying and listening to the whole tale, for the tales of Orlanth and the other gods always interested him. The adults were used to this by now, and they allowed him to remain with only a few good-natured comments.

Before he began old Nori looked around. Then he spoke, quietly at first.

"Broos," he said, and a few members of the audience growled appropriately.

"Broos." Louder this time, and more of them responded.

"What are you? Cowardly Colymar? Broos!" he yelled, and the adults present all jeered loudly as Argrath shouted at the top of his voice. After shushing Argrath (laughing the whole time), Nori continued. "That's better."

"Thed," he said loudly, making an evil face, and all of the adults responded with more jeering. "Thed!" he yelled, and everyone present shouted with Argrath this time to drive out the evil spirits summoned by the name of that foul daemon.

"Good. You all hate the foul broos and their twisted mistress Thed, and you know they despise us as well. Perhaps you have heard the story which describes the enmity between King Orlanth and vile Thed. The Colymar (his voice dripped with scorn as he said this word) tell a tale wherein one of Orlanth's brothers ('can you guess which one?' was muttered loudly by Kirray, which made everyone laugh) commits a heinous act upon Thed's person, and her revenge is forcing Just Orlanth to make her the Goddess of Rape. Or perhaps you have heard another, more corrupted tale, the lie spread by the evil Lunars. In that tale it is

Orlanth himself who violates Thed, and her powers of rape and revenge come as justice for his act.

"Of course, these are trickster lies. We of the Entan keep the true tales of our god, and leave them untainted by the cowardly half truths and deceitful lies of others. What you hear now is the

tale you must tell your children of Orlanth and Thed. I call on Orlanth Lawspeaker to bless my story with truth, and on Issaries the Guide of Light and Knowledge to send me inspiration, and on Drogarsi the Runesinger, who knows all verses. And I call on Eurmial the Liar to get his ass out of this house before I kick it out." There was more laughter at this last comment, though many of those who laughed also poured a bit of their beer on the ground to appease the Hotfoot God, just in case.

Nori then took a long drink of his own honeyed mead and began his tale, speaking in the staves which he favored for his stories.

"When Orlanth was young, when the world was young,
Savage Yinkin stalked frogs deep in the forest.
Purple Kraslors his favorite, for their raspberry taste.
Just as he caught one a strange noise he heard.

"Purple legs dangling, Yinkin spied foul Thed.
Now she births broos and other things unclean,
But then people thought her fair as Ernalda.
Only Yinkin knew better, for he smelled her evil.

"Thed sneaked through the wood as the frog found its freedom,
For Yinkin the clever tracked the false goddess.
A small glade held treasure, fine golden faragon
Which no longer grows: cruel Thed took the last.

"Lurking Yinkin was seen, enraging the witch;
Horrible magic, unknown, flowed from her eyes.
The poor Cat was cursed and went running away.
So evil her powers, long weeks did he flee.

"A man also witnessed, saw Thed's vile deed.
Only mortal the hunter, too horrible the sight:
His fragile mind broke as in terror he fled.

Found by the White Lady, no wound she can't heal.

"The hunter was calmed and related his story.
Evil omens she saw, took him to Great Orlanth.
Wise Orlanth took council and called his Companions:
Lawspeaker and Healer, Thane, Trickster, and Guide.

"Spoke first Lhankor Knowing, told Orlanth of faragon:
When brewed as a potion it magnifies lust.
Thus Orlanth discovered the foul plan of Thed:
Trick Orlanth to bed, Ernalda's rage would be great.

"But meanwhile foul Thed continued her plan.
Sought out bright Minlister, bubbly essence of ale.
Already quite tipsy, he fell to her wiles
And brewed potent faragon into foamy mead.

"The Lightbringer Council discussed how to trick Thed
And punish the goddess for her great betrayal.
Wise Orlanth was stumped, the Lawspeaker silent
'Til Eurmial the Trickster related his plan.

"Then foul Thed appeared, tainted ale in hand.
She offered to Orlanth, our brave lord he quaffed it
And graciously thanked her for her tasty gift.
Then spit it back out after Thed left the hearth."

Nori stopped to take another drink of his mead, and Kirray spoke out so that the entire room could hear her. "Can you talk with a mouth full of ale, Nori?" He choked on his startled answer, spilling mead down his shirt and onto the floor. "Now we know why the gods really made Orlanth their king!" Kirray continued, and everyone present laughed at her jest. Nori jokingly raised a fist at her, then cleaned himself up. The room quieted again.

Broyan had curled up in front of the fire and fallen asleep after the second verse of the story, but the sudden loud laughter awakened him. He hissed in surprised fear, then growled in embarrassment when all of the adults turned to look at him. Argrath quickly shushed him and stroked his fur to calm him. Nori winked at Argrath and continued the story.

"Wily the Trickster, wily cruel Eurmial.
He pulled from his pocket a small piece of lead,
Gave this to the Goldvoice, who went to the Fire Tribe.
There traded the lead for an enormous goat.

"Smooth Issaries returned, the goat gave to Eurmial
Who pulled from his pocket his greatest disguises.
Skillful the Trickster, makes dung look like silver.

Simple the task: a goat like King Orlanth.

"Then Eurmial the Cruel made the goat drink the potion
And led it inside of Great Orlanth's longhouse.
Instead of the Stormlord, King Goat waited in bed
For Thed to arrive and satisfy her lust.

"Dark was the night when Thed crawled inside,
And secret her plan, or so she thought.
But even in daylight would have been deceived,
So clever the Trickster, his plan and disguises.

"The dark night was silent except for her heaving;
loud were the noises, though the clan still slept soundly.
Come morning, Thed screamed when saw she her lover.
In shame she ran blindly away from the stead.

"Then Orlanth the Just called after the goddess:
'Oh, traitorous Thed, you have your reward.
In jealousy you sought to poison my life
By stealing my love and raping my Justice.'

"So here is my judgement, listen well to my words.
See now what we do to those who defile us!
Forever you'll wander, no stead call your home.
Your children will hate you, a blight on the world."

"The goat they returned as a jest on the Fire Tribe,
and laughed at revealing Thed's sinister plan.
Since then, her broo children bear hatred for us
And for Orlanth, who rightfully shamed evil Thed."

Kirray gave a brief prayer of thanks to Orlanth for the tale and its teller, and then the adults began preparing for the next day's hunt. It would be a special day, for tomorrow began the first week of the Great Hunt. This first major hunt of the season was the most important of the year, for it celebrated the victories of Odayla the Hunter over hunger and death in the Darkness. The entire stead would join in the hunt, for most of the men (and Kirray herself) were initiates of Odayla, and they would compete for the position of Master Hunter. Few planned on trying very hard, however, for Jerthan had easily won the honor the last six years in a row, and no one seriously hoped to defeat him in his seventh, and luckiest, year.

Because of the importance of the hunt both Kirray and Jerthan would participate, even though one of them would usually

stay to defend the stead while most of the adults were gone. This year, however, had been quiet, with no rumors of danger, and so they would leave only a few of the older steaders (and the children) to stay and watch the home. In addition to being one of their greatest religious festivals, the stead needed the hunt to be successful this year, to replenish their meager food stores. The stead had been crowded during the long winter, and last night's dinner had been more food than any of them had eaten in four weeks.

Argrath wished desperately to be invited, but he knew that he was still too young. Because he had been only eleven when the last initiation was held, three years ago, Argrath still had not been initiated into adulthood; even at that age he might have been, if he had not been ill with a strange fever. Argrath knew that he would be the oldest boy initiated during the ceremonies which finally came next summer, but it was hard for him to wait another year and a half for the honor. He had learned the clan bloodlines and studied Heort's laws, asking so many questions that often his elders told him he would be better off as a clan sage. But Argrath knew better: he was meant for Orlanth. This he would tell Kirray when his time came, for everyone knew he could pass the test of the wilderness, and his insight into the clan's laws and traditions was second only to the clan's lawspeaker.

In fact, though Argrath had not been formally initiated by the clan, and given its closest secrets, he had already discovered most of them for himself. Because of his age and knowledge, many of the wiser elders such as Tathar and Kirray considered him an adult in most things, and knew that he had already been chosen in the eyes of their god. Orlanth cared not for formality, but for what was held true in a man's heart. However, most of the adults lived by their customs and ceremonies, and so, formally at least, Argrath was still a child, though one with certain special privileges (such as staying up late). Unfortunately, however, these privileges did not include the Great Hunt, which was open only to adults by law as well as custom.

So Argrath watched eagerly over others' shoulders as they prepared their weapons and hunting gear. Finally, after much pestering, and many oaths and promises of later favors, Muralan the hunter at last let him shine his spear and sword. In the past the sturdy man had occasionally shown him the proper way to wield them, and Argrath had been an apt pupil. Argrath stayed up late that night watching the rest of the preparations before finally falling asleep curled up in front of the fire, a look of eagerness and frustration still showing on his face. Tathar gently picked him up and carried him to his own pallet, where they both slept for the night.

Broyan, who had nodded off again after being startled during the story, roused at this disturbance. After determining that no one had left new scraps of food for him, he padded over to join his friends in the corner and was quickly asleep again.

Before Elmal the Sun sent his golden rays over the top of Starfire Ridge the activity began at Kirray's stead. As Argrath awakened, Mora was already packing food and filling waterskins for the long hunt, while Tathar ran back and forth helping the hunters with various errands. Argrath wished to help as well, but knew he would just be in the way, so he collected wood for the fire (since Tathar was otherwise occupied), then sat by the hearth and watched the others prepare themselves. He knew that one day he too would join them. When that time came they would all be impressed with how much Argrath knew, and they would respect him for his knowledge and skill.

The morning light had just touched the top of the oxen shed when Kirray called the stead together at the speaker's stone. The hunters were all prepared in their skins, and each carried the tools of their trade, many pulled from chests for the only use they would see that year: short spears for boars, bows and barbed arrows for deer and elk, and sharp knives for cleaning and scraping their valued prey. Kirray addressed the stead as she always did, not as a master to her servants, but as a leader to a band of free men and women. She knew that they stayed with her of their

own will, because they saw in her the virtues of Orlanth and knew that she would lead them well. She had no intention of failing them, and this long hunt into the nearby mountains was no different than preparing the seeds for the first planting or defending the stead against the depredations of wild trollkin bands. Kirray had never failed in these tasks; it was not likely she would fail this time either.

As she began her prayer for success in the hunt, Kirray named all of the hunters and asked Odayla to bless them with his skills in the upcoming hunt. She also asked that Orlanth and his loyal thanes watch over the stead in their absence.

"Odayla the Provider, first son of Orlanth,
Master Hunter seeks prey to feed his family.
No greater feeder is there than Odayla,
His return to the clan, never with empty hands.

"We follow his footsteps, sure of our way.
Odayla leads us to plentiful game.
He guides our arrows and strengthens our spears,
He teaches us charms that bring Death and Rebirth.

"Mighty is Orlanth, great King of the Gods:
He feeds and defends us, his loyal children.
We follow his Bravery and rely on his Wisdom
To help us provide food and life for our clan.

"And while we are far away on the hunt,
Wise Orlanth has Elmal, his loyal Sun Thane,
To watch over the stead and protect those behind.
Thus all are cared for under Orlanth's protection."

The hunters then departed in high spirits, sure of a successful hunt, while Argrath prepared for his chores of the day. He found Mora again and got some bread to eat for his breakfast. Then he said goodbye to Tathar, who headed out into the forest to gather wood for the stead. Argrath picked up their blanket and rolled it up neatly, placing it back in the corner, then began the first of several trips to the nearby creek to collect water for the household barrel.

On Argrath's last trip back from the creek he heard a suspicious noise from the chicken pens. He set down the bucket and quickly ran to investigate, arriving just in time to see a large red fox crawl out from under the pens with a limp chicken in its jaws. The fox was briefly startled by Argrath's appearance, but recovered quickly and fled into the woods. Argrath ran back to the side house where the men kept their weapons and grabbed one of the extra hunting bows and a fistful of arrows. He then ran off into the woods to chase the fox. Broyan, who had been lazily watching the whole scene with amusement, finally made up his mind. He stretched lazily as he rose, and then bounded after his friend.

The fox's trail was easy to follow until the chicken stopped dripping blood, but Tathar had taught Argrath the ways of the woods well. He followed the small signs of the fox's passing, the fresh paw prints and the swaying leaves; the few times he lost the trail, Broyan's keen nose found it for him again. The chase soon turned into a game for Argrath, a make-believe hunt where he and Broyan were Odayla and his companion Yinkin, and the fox was the legendary Blue Boar, the god's greatest prey. Broyan, of course, paid no attention to such nonsense.

Eventually the path ended at an old hollow log, and Argrath got down to business. He and Broyan had played this game in the past, and the alynx knew just what to do. Argrath got into position while Broyan leapt screeching into one end of the log; as usual, a burst of red and white came flying out the other end. At the same time there was a loud twang, and Argrath's shaft buried itself deep in the body of the startled fox. Argrath then walked over to the dying fox and said in a strange voice, almost as if he were

possessed: "This is what we do to those who defile us; this is what we do to enemies who harm and steal from us."

Argrath shook his head, bemused at the strange feeling which had come over him. He dispatched the fox, but he knew that its fur was valuable, and so took the time to carefully skin it. He would ask Mora to clean and prepare it so that he could gift it to Kirray, for she was the head of the household, and Argrath owed all he had to her. He hoped it would please her. Argrath was also proud, and took careful note of the Sun's position, in the hopes that he might be able to claim the first kill of the Great Hunt for himself.

Skinning the fox took longer than he had thought it would, but he finally finished. He wrapped what meat he could in some leaves, then whistled for Broyan; the alynx slinked out of the log with a mouthful of chicken feathers and a guilty look on his face. Argrath gave him a little pat to tell him that he was forgiven (no sense in wasting the chicken, after all), and the two wandered back to the stead.

They arrived to an unpleasant sight: Lunar soldiers milling around the main house and stead. Feelings of hatred quickly welled up in Argrath's chest as he spied on them, for men and women like these crimson-cloaked warriors had slain his parents. Even Broyan's fur stood on end at the sight. Argrath could see that several of the soldiers had already entered the house, and he wondered what they were here for: Kirray had carefully paid their taxes only six weeks ago, and had even given an extra "gift" to the commander to ensure that they were not troubled again until the New Year. Tathar (and personal experience) had taught Argrath much about the Lunars and their evil ways, and he knew that they lacked all honor, and were probably here just to cause trouble and oppress Argrath's clan.

Although Argrath had never seen actual Lunar soldiers before (only the oily tax collector from Apple Lane), he had been taught all about them by Tathar, Kirray, Nori, and others. They came from the lowlands far to the north, where they had already conquered all of the other free peoples of the world. They did not recognize Orlanth as King of the Gods, as was proper, nor even acknowledge the sovereignty of Yelm the Emperor, as other northern peoples did. Instead, they worshiped an outsider goddess who had risen into Orlanth's sky centuries ago to the north, and who could be seen every night after the Sun set. She dressed only in red, and the evil light of her influence could sometimes be seen glowing dimly on the northern horizon. They called her the Red Moon Goddess, and Nori had told the adults and children of the stead vivid stories of having felt her presence when he was in Tarsh. He had said that there the Moon hung like a bloated spider over the land, casting the bloody light of its Glowline over all the nearby lands. Argrath's father had died fighting to keep Sartar free of the Lunars and their strange ways, but they were too strong, and showed no honor in battle. Many men had died in that fight, including the last Prince of Sartar, Salinarg, and all of his family.

Even after Sartar was conquered the Lunars were not content: they would never be satisfied, said Kirray, until all freedom had been beaten from the inhabitants of the land. But the Orlanths are a proud people who love their freedom, and Argrath knew that they would never accept the foreign rule. Even the women and children would fight for their freedom, and die if necessary, as his mother had when Lunars threatened her family. Argrath knew no fear, even though he realized that this day it might finally be his turn. He felt again the Breath of Orlanth on his neck, and did not wonder that his hair stood up almost as stiffly as Broyan's.

Argrath had not been spotted yet, so he used the nearby bushes for cover. He and Broyan managed to sneak up to the side of the main house without alerting the Lunars, the cat unusually silent, as if he also understood the seriousness of the situation.

Argrath crept carefully up to the corner of the building so that he could peek around to view the proceedings. He could already hear the Lunars, and what he heard he did not like. What

his ears heard his eyes confirmed when he glanced around the corner of the house. The soldiers were speaking in their unnatural northern tongue so he could not understand them, but their cruel intentions were clear from the fact that they had rounded up all the children and adults present, even crippled old Arlena, Kirray's grandmother. Two of the youngest, Henasa and Dernay, were crying, but they were not yet five years old, so Argrath was not surprised. The youngest, three-year old Rostakos, was not crying at all; he had a look on his tiny face of righteous hatred for this enemy, and Argrath thought he would make a great warrior someday.

The ground about the soldiers was piled with the valuables of the stead. Kirray's silver goblet, the stead's totem, and even young Dernay's birthday hat (woven from precious telapis leaves) were piled among many other items, mostly furs the household had collected to trade for supplies (and grain for planting). Every few minutes another one flew out the doorway and joined the expanding pile.

As Argrath watched this injustice being carried out, every fiber of his being cried out for him to act, to leap out and confront the Lunars. Only Tathar's teachings prevented him from doing so, for he knew that he was only one young man, no match for a single trained Lunar soldier, let alone an entire file. Though the Lunars might pillage the stead today, tomorrow Orlanth would have his vengeance; one more dead Sartarite would not bother the Lunars a bit, nor help Argrath's clan. So he held back his growing fury, storing each moment irrevocably in his memory so that he could, one day, achieve his vengeance. Even Broyan's rage continued to grow, the alynx's eyes flashing daggers of hatred while his extended fur seemed to double his size.

Argrath watched in despair as the Lunars continued pillaging his home, too afraid of discovery to risk returning to the cover of the woods. He knew that eventually he would have to leave, however, but further thought was interrupted by another cry, this one coming from behind the main cottage. He cautiously moved along the side of the building until he had a better vantage point, and as he did so he gradually became aware of an increasingly loud struggle. Since the Lunar soldiers studiously avoided investigating the disturbance, Argrath knew that one of their number must be responsible for it.

Argrath reached the other end of the wall and looked around the corner, and there saw a scene of even worse violence. One of the Lunars, in fact the leader, an Imperial tax collector, was beating Mora savagely. Her face was bloody and bruised under her hands, but despite the continuing abuse she did not cry out again. The tax collector continued to beat her, and Argrath noticed her dress was badly torn in the front. The occasional forays of the tax collector's hands made clear his intent towards the uncooperative Mora and, realizing this, Argrath could take no more. He might die, but death was better than living without honor.

"Unhand her, defiler of sheep," Argrath screamed as he ran to Mora's aid. The tax collector, surprised by the sudden attack, leapt up and fled the swiftly approaching youth. Argrath thought to himself that all Lunars were the same, cowards at heart, afraid of a small warrior armed with only a hunting bow. He knew that the tax collector's calls for aid would alert the soldiers, but without their leader they rushed about harmlessly in circles, and Argrath realized with joy that he would have time to kill the worst of the defilers before he himself died a hero's death. He smiled in anticipation.

Before he could come close enough to slow and draw back his bow, however, the tax collector found shelter in the oxen shed. Argrath tried to force his way in, but the coward had had time to bar the doors, and the stout brace held. The soldiers had also regained some degree of order, and a few of them were beginning to search through the area for what they imagined were the returning hunters while the rest recollected the children and adults. Argrath ignored them and simply waited, for he felt again the strange sensation from earlier in the day. Suddenly he was patient, as patient as the storm which builds for days before

unleashing its wrath upon the world.

As Argrath waited for his moment of opportunity, supernaturally certain that it would come before it was too late, he saw a small dark form leap through the small side window of the shed. A moment later a terrible hissing and thrashing sound echoed from the inside, and then the badly scratched tax collector burst through the door. He stopped suddenly, confronted by the sight of a small but determined Orlanthi, his bow trained carefully upon him. Argrath did not smile, for he recognized the importance and true meaning of his next act.

"This is what we do to those who harm and steal from us," Argrath said, speaking slowly and with deadly emphasis. He then loosed his arrow. The shot buried itself deep in the startled tax collector's neck. His cry for aid turned into a bloody gurgle as he clawed uselessly at his throat. Even his obvious prayer for divine aid went unheeded, for the evil goddess of the Lunars held no true power in Orlanth's lands. The other soldiers, alerted by his strangled cry, began racing toward the two figures, but they were too late to save the tax collector, who crumpled slowly to the barren ground.

Though their Goddess had no power in Orlanth's lands, the swords of the approaching soldiers were real enough, and Argrath began to wonder if there was a way to save himself after all. The tax collector was obviously dead, so Argrath bolted towards the nearby woods. The soldiers followed close behind him, and their curses raced ahead to taunt him. He was confident in his ability to escape them, however, for this was his home, and he knew the trails better than they ever would.

Once early on, Argrath almost turned back, for he had heard a cry that could only come from a wounded alynx. But the safety of the others came first. With a little luck, Mora and the children would have time to escape to a nearby stead before the Lunars returned. If they did not have time to flee, Argrath was certain that the Lunars would kill everyone present, whether for revenge or silence it would not matter. So Argrath continued more slowly on the obvious paths, tears in his eyes at the thought of his friend, and merciless Lunars on his heels.

Argrath's strategy seemed to work, for the Lunar soldiers chased him for three hours before giving up. Even then he did not stop, however, for during his escape he had realized that he could not return to the stead himself: though the Lunars had obviously been raiding, and so could not retaliate against the stead directly, Argrath knew that he would be crucified or impaled if they caught him, for he had killed a Lunar citizen. He had originally hoped to find Tathar in the woods, but he realized that that would only endanger the man he loved like a father. A price would be put on his head, and his return would only make life more harsh for those he loved. The Lunars would be angry enough already (though there was little enough they could do about it); so he continued to run.

Argrath ran until he could run no more, until exhaustion finally forced him to stop to catch his breath. As he panted softly, he heard a faint rustling approaching from the woods. Too tired to continue, Argrath had just begun to steel himself for his fate when a familiar blue-black ball of fur limped into view. Argrath laughed tears of joy as faithful Broyan nudged his nose gently against him, his way of asking Argrath to pet him. Argrath scratched the alynx's ears in response, then lifted his chin to speak with him. "Thank you for following me my dear friend, but I cannot return to the stead; to do so would mean both my death and the death of my family. I must seek my fortunes where there are no Lunar soldiers or tax collectors. I will travel to the east, following the breeze that even now blows through the trees; I will follow it, going wherever Orlanth bids me go."

Argrath stopped for a moment, then looked the cat in the eyes and continued, his voice calm but full of emotion. "Though I wish with all my heart for your companionship, you would be neither safe nor happy in the strange lands I will enter. I am counting on you to look after Tathar, Mora, and the children now; keep

them safe for me. I swear by Orlanth and Odayla that some day I will return to you, and we shall hunt side by side again."

Broyan passively listened to Argrath's farewell speech looking unperturbed, only the occasional twitch of his tail showing he was paying any attention at all. Argrath was crying again, for he was sad and frightened to be losing his only remaining friend. But he knew it was the right thing to do. He hugged Broyan tightly to him, then gently pushed him in the direction of the stead. Broyan hesitantly moved back toward the path, stopping a few times when he saw Argrath did not follow, but each time Argrath nudged him westward again. The alynx finally padded off slowly, often looking back at his departing friend, before finally vanishing into the darkening woods.

Argrath caught his breath as he rose and started moving towards the east where storm clouds had been gathering for the last hour. He had gone no more than a few steps, however, when Broyan suddenly landed hard on his back, almost knocking him over. Even before he had pulled the playful cat off his shirt he had begun yelling at him, the fear and frustration of the day finally overcoming his self-control.

"You awful alynx, I'm doing this for your own good," Argrath shouted, but the cat ignored him and simply sat staring into the east. Argrath argued for a few more minutes, then tried again to coax the alynx back toward the stead. Broyan stubbornly refused to move. "You stubborn beast, I'd take you with me if Orlanth willed it, but the journey will be far too dangerous for you," he growled.

Argrath had given up for the moment, and was sitting on the ground next to Broyan when the cat finally moved. Instead of heading back west to the stead, however, he padded east into the gathering storm. As Argrath prepared to grab the cat and carry him back to the stead the storm broke open with a tremendous roar of thunder and rain. Argrath stopped, then shrugged his shoulders and hurried to catch up with Broyan. "Well, I'm not one to argue with Orlanth," he muttered. The cold west wind blew steadily from behind the two very wet, but very happy, friends as they began their journey toward their destiny.



Fires of Mist and Wind-Blown Snow

RUNO XIV Infinity

by John Hughes

Sartar is aflame with rebellion! Fires of Mist and Wind-Blown Snow relates the story of Helden Broken Tongue, a Rallan Sword whose wyrd takes him to Dragon Pass and the first momentous actions of the Hero Wars. Driven to madness and despair by recurring visions of his wife's death at the hand of Wolf Pirates, Helden abandons his fellow humakti to seek solitude in the wilderness of the Far Place. Seduced back by a Vingan named Cradledaughter, he is summoned to fight for Queen Starbrow and her mysterious Consort. Helden and his allied-spirit Karls rejoin his cult as part of a desperate gathering attempting to delay the Lunar Army on the Tarsh Road west of Alda Chur. In the following excerpt, battle is finally joined.

"Praise not the day till evening has come; a woman till buried, a man till burned. Praise not a horse till broken; a sword till bloodied; a youth till married. Praise not gors till it has been crossed; gallt till it has been hunted; beer till it has been drunk. Praise not a life till death has judged it. Thereafter, nothing can change the story to be sung of our valiant dead."

The prisoner Balin Godgift's speech before the Golden Octad, Alda Chur, 1630.

"Sartar's freedom is the prize of our blade. This day we fight with honour to loose the Wind, to unleash the Hurricane!"

We stood in perfect symmetry, row upon row of bronze and blue-dark iron. The Highblade Cohort on parade, sentry-proud, displaying our arms before Humakt's holy standard. We had eaten and offered sacrifice. Now came the glory-trial.

Kiomar She-Viper addressed us, fearful in her rune-wrought armour. It seemed that she too had fallen beneath the Consort's spell, for I had not heard her speak such words before. It was as though killing the enemy was no longer enough.

"We are ravens perched on the palisades of Firststead. In death this day our dust and deeds will summon others to duty. So sharpen your spears, adjust your shields, listen to the voice of the battle flutes and drums. There may be no respite till night parts us in our fury. Your shield straps will be soaked with the sweat of your breasts; your hand will weary on your sword. Even so, we will prevail!"

Humakti do not cheer on parade, nor pound their spear on shield. Nevertheless, I could feel my comrades respond to her exhortation with growing battle-eagerness. In silence we waited, impatient for the fray.

"Remember what you are: do nothing to disgrace the name of your god! Fear nothing but dishonour in each other's eyes. When warriors fear disgrace, then more are saved than killed. We are humakti, we do not yield! And if your roster is called, Death himself will guide you to your glory. Now captains, to arms!"

We ran at a jog to our appointed position at the crest of the long ridge, beyond the sturdy defences of the camp. As tradition and sound strategy dictated, we held the extreme right. There was no palisade behind us, but a series of gigantic posts dug vertically into the ground, adorned with carved boxwood runes of death. The posts contained a warding, but our battle plan included a more practical use as well.

Behind us, the sun rose slow, fighting through thick clouds 'neath Clayday's bitter sky. Silent silver shields hovered on the sky-track, while above the Lunar lines, piercing the pale mist, a lesser red-tinted sun turned baleful eye upon us. Reality rippled around the stout defence of our standard. Hell Sisters danced above the nearby hills. Red vultures stared down from the high trees of the gods. A battle-day indeed.

The Cohort formed itself into a rune-hearted phalanx, twelve warriors deep, bristling with great spears of ash and oak. Ten anointed heroes formed our runic blade, six sanctified godi the guard, sword

sign of our strength and warding. The jewel and pin of our hero-forged death rune was the battle standard, iron-blue pillar of our honour, set by our ceremony into the bloody soil of the Cliffs of Shadow. Initiates and truth-tellers packed tight about the rune shape, guardians of our battle wall.

This was not our chosen way of battle, for neither skill at arms nor courage can help you in the wild crush when shield walls crash. It was, however, the Lunar way, and the only tactic to break their crescent wall was with similar formations of our own. And when the spears were shattered and the line broken, then warrior fought warrior with naked blade and spear. For this we hungered.

My appointed position was behind the phalanx, with the standards, their protectors, the battle flautists, the commander and shieldbearer. I would fight by Kiomar's side until such time as the shield wall was broken and the gatherings might pursue their separate objectives. Behind us the weaponthanes commanded their swift-heeled flankers, and behind them bevaran healers and sword godar waited with moss bandage and fetished standards.

The plain below us still swirled with thick banks of fog. The ground seemed mud-slick and treacherous, soaked with expanses of icy water. The foe would fight hard even to reach us.

With our sacrifices complete, there was nothing to do but pass the herb-mixed wine. We lay our heavy shields to ground and waited for death.

Most of our host waited behind the palisade and ditches of the hill top camp. I could see little, and knew that those within the phalanx could see nothing but the rank ahead; row on row of shining bronze and spear. Kiomar knew this as well: calling for silence, she explained the disposition of our forces.

Praxian beast riders waited on the ridge behind us, beyond the formal defences. The mounted bison and zebras would charge and fight as opportunity and courage permitted. They were brave though unpredictable, and would probably make for the plunder of the Lunar camp at the earliest opportunity.

To our immediate left stood the main defences, a rough palisade atop a mud-strewn slope. Behind the rough-hewn stakes waited most of the Orlanthi tribesmen, Aldachuri and northern Sartari, many stripped for battle, woad-painted, anointed with laurel leaves as ward against thunderbolts. Behind the palisades also waited the archers of the Blue Ridge Mountain Queen, ready to sally forth and harass the advancing foe.

On either side of the muddy stream that was the Tarsh Road stood twin formations of Sun Dome Templars. Like us, they had ventured beyond the palisade in phalanx formation. Honarous Fly-From-Fornication and Vega Goldbreath led them, resplendent in gold and yellow. They had often trained our Cohort in the way of spear and shield, and were as steady and dependable as the Star Captains to which they prayed. Finally, behind them, ready to give sup-

port, a single squad of elmali cavalry, with swift footrunners to follow through.

I was concerned for our far left, for it seemed that we were vulnerable to a flanking attack. A row of earth altars stretched upon that ridge, still attended by chanting groups of priestesses. Whatever the purpose of their week-long ritual, I hoped that it could contain charging Lunar cavalry.

Long minutes dragged on. Finally, there came the bitter sound of battle horns, echoing across the plain from the enemy camp. The rising mists revealed the Lunar palisade, seeming flecked with branches of spring green. Our previous night's ceremony had obviously bought the blessing we wished, but had it accomplished its full purpose? Only time would tell.

The first sign of advance; a silver-braced moonboat rising through the mists above the Lunar camp. I'd seen such craft before, but this one seemed sluggish and wayward, already listing badly to one side. Its carved wooden decks were fresh adorned with foliage, Ernalda's living green. The war craft slid forward in silence, braving the godi-gathered storm above. All about it spirits of storm hard-hurled their blazing bolts. Flashes fused silver: spikes of flame rose spluttering from the spring-touched craft. The moonboat's path curved, its advance no longer true.

The lightning ceased. The strange craft now seemed surrounded by a swarm of darting insects. I caught a rare sun-gleam of metal, the flash of powerful magics, realised that Windleapers were boarding the craft. In a silent slow motion dance the gory blood-feast had begun.

"Cut short my days, destroy me..."

Within the Orlanthi palisade a battle thane raised his horn, a hollow-spiralled whorl. Once a wilderness warrior's weapon, it now drew breath anew from a brave man's lungs. The great summons sounded, a call to battle. Long-necked carnyxes and horns of ivory repeated the call, and soon surrounding ridges and peaks resounded with the echoing blast. The brave to battle called. 'The enemy advances.'

The mist thinned as great weather magics wove themselves in twisting fury across the plain. I could see lines and crescents forming beyond the Lunar palisades, watched the slow advance of spears across the mud. Rank upon rank they came, like the darkened surface of the sea when the storm wind begins.

"Betray my hope, destroy me..."

Above us, invisible, spirits and powers clashed in the storm-thick air. I heard howling horror, the din of destruction. Raw bursts of elemental power scorched the sky as ancient warriors seared each other into nothingness. The Tribe of the Storm contended with the Tribe of the Moon for majesty of Middle Air.

Skirmishers clashed upon the muddy plain. Archers and slingers surged forward to vex and prick the foe. Before us now, a troop of zebra riders shook their dark-dyed reins, charging forward with bow and shaft at the ready. Finding range of the foremost phalanx, they bent the springing crescent, clove the air with far-travelled force. The piercing shafts flashed from the string. While only few found flesh amidst the shieldwall, the thick death-rain forced high the heavy shields. The skirmishers did not relent: our enemy would face us tired and worn by the exertions of their advance.

"...the truth that cuts, the blade that frees..."

Behind me, a bearded raven screamed omen of dark death. Across the plain, the foremost Lunar phalanx advanced now at a run.

"Destroy me once, grant death its blade to free me..."

From altars within the palisade, the storm-godar unleashed the fury of the Lord of Middle Air. Tribal god-talkers and the Consort's Brown Eagles together danced the Thunder. Boiling blue-black clouds congealed across the plain, the wind a screaming fury from the east. With searing crack the vengeance-cloud spat forth its arsenal - stinging spears of hail, sharp pain pellets to confuse and blind the foe. It clattered against the armour at my back, violent and loud.

Lunar magicians answered with fury of their own. The baleful pale red globe above their camp held the clouds at bay, defending its perimeter. Now it spat forth foul magic upon our defences. Screaming red-gold fireballs shot forth to burst upon the palisade, moon-summoned meteors tinged with madness and death. We sheltered 'neath our shields, lest one burst down upon us. Within the wooden wall, the clansfolk howled, diving for shelter. Some panicked and ran, caught in the spreading lüne-fire. On the edges of our own position, warding standards glowed white hot.

The deadly bombardment soon ceased, whether by countermagics or exhaustion I did not know. The foremost enemy phalanxes had reached the base of the ridge, victors of the boggy plain. They now faced a long slope before they could engage, blinded and stung by the oncoming hail. I could make out individual shields and standards, identify the nearer units ranged against us.

Silver serpents twined upon a moonstone pole. Howling bat shield devices. We faced the spears of the Devastation Legion, veteran campaigners, with scarlet cloaks and long hair. The god's bounty would be great.

Yet their formation was deeper than it was wide, and many in the further ranks carried neither spear nor pike. Of those that did, some hoisted training poles quick-capped with tips of bronze. *Another outcome of our wyter ritual. Praise the Earth, and all the fertile blessings of her touch!*

Kiomar was patient and unhurried, using long experience to judge the correct moment. Finally, the signs stood correct. "Cohort, prepare for battle! Orderlies depart from the ranks. Silence, pay attention to command! Take up your spears!"

A veteran of several of these terrible clashes, I did not envy my brothers and sisters in the ranks. Just breathing and hearing were difficult enough in the close-packed mass of the phalanx, let alone with roar of thunder and the insistent clatter of hail on armour. Our front formed with much rubbing and jostling of breastplate, shield and spear. Battle-wise veterans rested shield-rims on the lip of their shoulder-armour, saving strength for the crucial minutes ahead.

Then came the fear of which the skalds do not speak. The terrible fear, the chattering fear, the fear that runs down the legs. That gut-twisting anticipation of battle, awaiting the terrible moment of blind slaughter when phalanxes collide, the dread crush of friend and foe. A fear that settles on Sword and initiate alike - for I had seen veterans of a hundred battles break and run under that terrible pressure.

A few enemy skirmishers shot shafts into the phalanx from downslope. Salamanders flamed into existence before the advancing foe. A summoned lüne locked itself in desperate battle with Hail Children between the two shield walls. Shields came up, locked into place: a seamless wall of hide and burnished bronze.

Kiomar spat, shouted above the gust-driven hail. Her voice echoed within my head, heard also with Karis' spirit sense. "Take a wide stance; stand strongly against them! Dig your heels in the ground; beware you do not bite your lips. Brandish your war spear and shake the crest above your helm! Remember - your armour and breastplate are your own, but your shield protects us all. Hold firm! The shield wall must not break! To the standard now our strength and offering! "Grim Sword this day..."

"Grim Sword, this day we smite the foe, honour is our shield..." Our battle chant began, slow and sonorous, strength and magic now centred on the death rune formed at the heart of our phalanx, energies and spells wound about the cohort standard, our temple and our only treasure. For those of us with godi-sight, the Cliffs of Shadow revealed themselves about us, its soil running thick with blood of foes eternal.

The next few minutes held the measure of victory or defeat. I glanced with mortal eyes across the battlefield a final time before giving myself completely to the chant and the advancing wall of spears.

The Praxians to our right had gone; I could not sight them on the hail-swept plain. Behind the approaching phalanx, I saw Lunar troops in open order struggling through the mud: they carried no spears. Capricious winds assailed them, knocking men about and wrenching shields from arms. A great mass of riders were advancing at a trot from further up the valley. Their bulk was unmistakable: tusk riders. *A grim day indeed.*

The palisade to our immediate left burned and splintered. >From within I heard screams mixed with the sharp crack of thunder stones; saw the soul-bright flash of spell or spirit. Enemy troops had struck that hill of swords and spears; probably War Dancers using motion magic, seeking to kill our commander. While the blood fray would be terrible, I knew the orlanthings preferred it to the battle dance we faced. They despised the collective march of formations, the discipline of columns and spears. *Good fighting, friends.*

The Sun Domers had marched their spear forest to the base of the hill: they too were moments away from the terrible clash. The elmal cavalry still stood steady behind them, even though several lines of Lunar cavalry were advancing at a charge to flank the mercenary ranks. How could they ignore such peril!

I'd forgotten the altars on that further hill. The ground trembled beneath my feet, grim rumble of the Dark Earth. I watched in open-mouthed astonishment as a great portion of the hillside detached itself, surging downward like a wave over the terrified Lunar cavalry beneath. I involuntarily touched the charm at my neck, fearful lest the ground open in gaping seams before us, and the fury of the battle stream down to bitter hell itself.

Yes! The chant around me faltered, recovered. The earth sisters had once more done duty fit and well. I saw now the purpose of those days before the altar, undermining the hillside with spirits of earth and water. The Earth Shakers had done the rest.

Below us, the enemy surged forward. I knew that this day would bring me release; I now felt a chance it might bring victory as well.

Our own elementals fell upon those of the enemy. Gnomes rose through the ground to bite at the feet of the phalanx, causing the spears to falter and sway. The battle chant grew to a towering crescendo.

Any... moment... now...

Karis screamed across two worlds as the auras of the opposing standards touched and flared. A mighty flash of energy seared our senses, our own screams in unison with those of the enemy. I glanced to my right, eyes blurred and hurting. Our standard stood, though its lesser icons glowed with a fierce red heat. I could not see the standard of the foe.

"Cohort, step back! Retreat!"

Now the gamble. We streamed back between the warding posts, shields up. Quickly, they are close. If panic caught us now, our deaths would be for naught. Several stumbled in the rush, trodden by sword kin who could not break formation. Through the blinding hail I heard the first Cohort screams, saw the first of Cohort blood. From the palisades I also heard howls of derision and horrified disbelief from watching tribesfolk.

Sword kin streamed past the posts as I guided them through. A spearman broke rank in panic, herald of a growing rush that would cause the formation to collapse, signal of needless death. Karis danced: I cut him down without thought or prayer.

I dare not look at his fallen face.

The foe were nearly upon us, surging forward, shouting in triumph, eager for our blood. The last of the Cohort passed between the posts. I followed, rushed to our left flank, where Kiomar waited.

The first of the enemy streamed past the warding posts. Their spears were low slung, hungry for our backs. Yet their ranks were broken as they passed between the wooden defences.

Their crescent wall was weak. Confusion reigned. Screams and shouts echoed in terrible array.

"Now! Turn and form! Shields up! Advance!"

"Humakt!!!" Deathsong ringing from one hundred throats.

And the moment upon us. I watched the Cohort turn, spears set and lowered, advancing upon the milling and suddenly terrorised foe. It seemed to me then our phalanx became a solitary being; spear-rich, all long beard and stinking armpit, heaving breast and iron-steady limb. Dressed in bronze, cloaked with hide and iron. And hungry. *Blood hungry.*

Then the furious collision. The shield walls met, a clash of bucklers, spears, and bronze-clad warriors. The bosses of our shields collided: a great roar went up, terrible cacophony of smashed bronze and wood and flesh. Spears snapped. Spirits keened. The ranks fought toe to toe and shield against shield. Screams of the dying were mingled with the vaunts of their destroyers, and the earth ran thick with warrior's blood.

I watched in morbid fascination, helpless till the grim task was done. I caught the battle-smell of sweat, odour of blood and entrails, the hard whiff of excrement.

The ranks pushed forward, heaving and grunting, pressing their very flesh face to face, a single great mass of screaming humanity. The foe rallied briefly, but their rear ranks were caught beyond the posts. In that terrible mindless crush the wounded and wyrded were trampled down and suffocated, grim broken bodies crushed in huge collapse.

And our strength triumphed! Suddenly we broke their crescent board-wall, burst in among them. The foe's entire line shattered, shield wall shattered, bone-shielding boss boards split.

The enemy faltered then, all order gone. Panic bit them, they turned and fled, a sweeping madness starting from the rear. Warriors trampled each other in the mad rush. Screaming again the name of the God, the Cohort swept forward past the warding posts, pushing, jabbing, killing... and dying. Those of the foe brave enough to rally against us were quickly despatched; the grim impersonal push of the shield wall allowed no room for hero play.

All around me, death sounds of battle, screams of the dying, storm of spears and hail, wyrd-rain of blood. Everything seemed stained, a broken husk, pulped flesh and bloody bone, broken spear and excrement.

Amidst mass death, I lingered on a single shameful sight. A dead sword-sister sprawling in the mud, driven through from behind by an enemy spear. Why should I notice this one amongst the multitude? *Perhaps because her hair blazed henna red.*

Our enemy was routed. Our flankers, fresh, with lighter armour and shields, streamed forward to pursue the fleeing foe. The battle flautists gave hoarse assent to the chase. Our shield wall paused, exhausted. We would follow them soon enough. There was still death a plenty to deal this day.

From the palisades there came a Thunder Shout, blessed with all the force that fury gave. Clansmen were streaming forth from behind the defences, screaming the names of their ancestors at the tusk riders locked in battle with their kin below. I could not see the further flank, but guessed the foe were broken there as well.

The Cohort dropped its spears, regrouped. The sounds and sights of the battlefield had their own tale to tell, and both Kiomar and I could read it. The foe were faltering, the wildfire panic spreading. Their wyter was broken.

"Honour Lord! Bronze-Dyer! Blade Truth! Victory!"

Kiomar called the First Gathering, followed her flankers at a run towards the Lunar camp. Good hunting! I took the Fifth and led them across the muddy slope in open order. Our chosen foe the tusk riders, surrounded now by howling Orlanthi and panic-stricken Lunar infantry.

All down the blood-slick slope isolated groups stood defiant against the rout; Lunar veterans drawn into defensive circles. The fighting there was fierce; death given and taken freely. This was war in the Orlanthi-style: hero against hero in wild disarray.

And gods themselves had come this day to fight for Middle Air! Orlanth Himself, gigantic, furious, indomitable, clothed in lightning and armoured by the Storm, stroud forth amongst the

clouds to smash the Lunar foe. But no! It was the Consort, surrounded by flying Windleapers, grim embodiment of the Hurricane Rebellion. Amidst the clouds he faced a Lunar hero, a woman armed with razored blade and baleful blood-red fire. They slashed and pummelled midst the hail-store, the bright flare of their magics blinding and burning those who flew beside. On ground below the tribesfolk paused and raised their voice in shouts of exhortation.

And the name upon their lips the name they gave their battle thane, was 'Liberator'.

The moon woman fell, or fled, I could not tell. The Liberator, his lightning sword all bright with battle-glee, descended with his Windleapers to final bloody confrontation midst the confusion of the Lunar camp.

On the plain behind our swords swung free: the play of spears was over. Karis flashed eager in the fray, forged of fire and file, firmly fastened, embellished and bolted.

Talor's wild blessing was upon me.

All around me now the clatter of blades, shriek of sharp edges, scream of the dying. All around me severed heads, slaughterhouse of heroes, soil streaming blood. All around me the fierce confusion of Death.

My body faltered, failed me. Exhausted, I sank to the mud-stained turf, the sword kin streaming by. A blade had pierced my chest. It did not seem to matter.

Death stood at last in his true rank and order. It was time. "Karis, I love you. Let's die."

I took two coins of bronze from the birch bark wallet corded round my neck. Kissing them, I uttered the secret name of the god, calling down my death song. "Darkness free me, cut me, bleed me." I felt the blood-spell take me, lift me, push me forward. Time to be complete.

Karis keened, something beautiful and wordless and holy.

The fit mastered me. I surged forth in fury towards the hated foe, death-ready and laughing. Laughing so hard my throat spewed blood.

It seemed a woman fought beside me. I caught the flash of blunted mussel knife.

I could see forgotten faces pass before my eyes. I heard them laughing, calling out my name. I could smell the sea wind, see the birds of another country, once my own, but in a foreign sky. Senses awash in ecstasy, I surged forward, the bloody sword play a slow motion dance on every side. I was complete in every way. *He who gives the wacry has been born.* The foe fell: my funeral sacrifice, my offering. Wolf Pirates loomed where half-trolls and Lunars had threatened but a moment before. Blades flashed. Iron rang. I gave them what was due.

A woman fought beside me in those last precious moments, blunted mussel-knife ablaze. Her shining hair fell about her head in braids, henna-rich, luxurious. We danced, we laughed together.

True liberation was upon me. The world was complete, perfect, keening a war-song in rhythm to my blade. Darkness beckoned. I was longing to die, perfect, complete, confident of victory. And I would go to my god laughing, knowing that the pikes and spears of the Lunar army, their wagons and moonboats, had, by the Earth's blessing, taken root and sprouted in the night.

*So Death draws his darkness.
Complete.*



How Rabbit Hat Got Its Name

by Gary R Switzer



MOB asked, so I looked at my copy of Sun County and came up with a number of clues to build a story around:

The original name of the fief is "Golden Ears", referring to the hoped-for bountiful harvests of barley and corn.

The first holder of the fief (or some notable later one) had a helmet like the one worn by the figure on the left of Roger Raupp's wonderful cover painting (a "Corinthian" style with side plumes and a crest) that he wore on ceremonial occasions and was passed down to

later fief holders as a symbol of their rightful possession. Just as office-holders in the Sun Dome are often known simply by their title - Light Keeper, Librarian, Guardian, etc. - fief holders are known by the name of their fief ("Lords Wyoh and Golden Ears to see you, Cellarer, it's about their taxes.")

Human nature being what it is, there was undoubtedly a less than notable lord somewhere along the line and, one day while bustling along he came upon a group of farmers sneaking a quick hazia break and one wag says "Here comes Old Rabbit Hat, look busy!" and the name eventually stuck. Chances are good that even before the place was wiped out by Bison Riders the locals would have given you a blank look if you'd asked them why it was called "Rabbit Hat Farm".



A NOTE FROM MOB

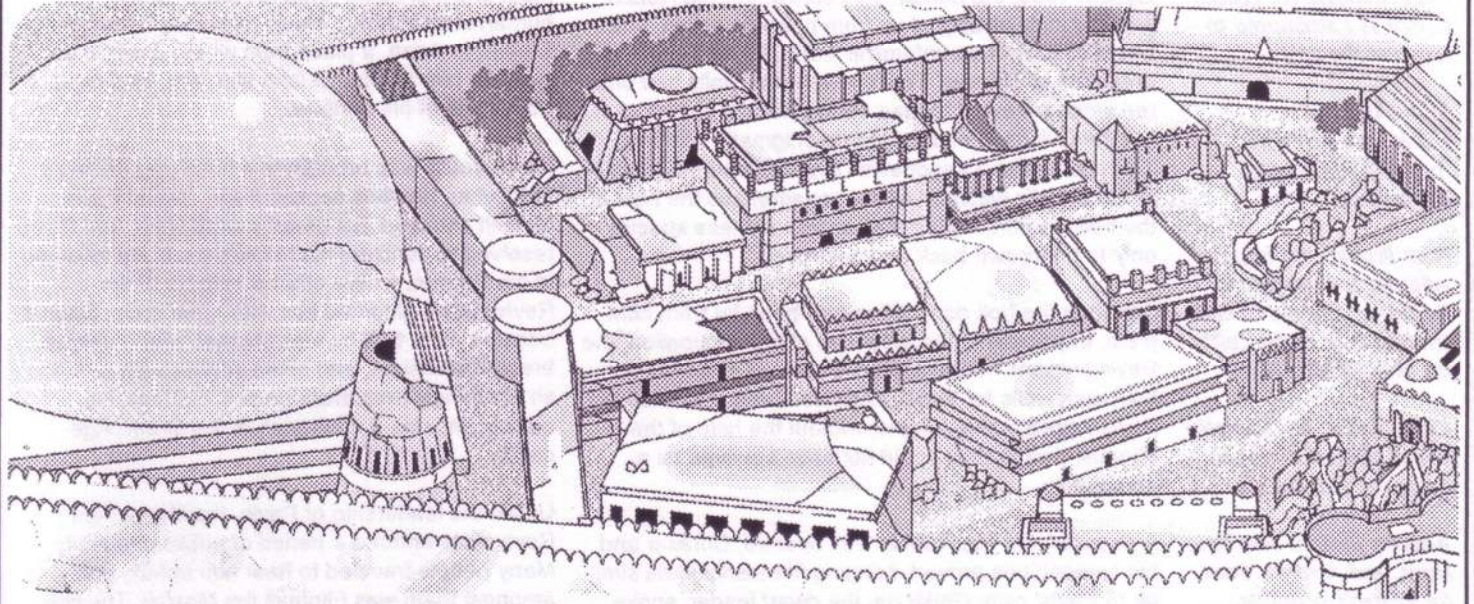
"Rabbit Hat Farm" is one of the scenarios in Sun County. Trevor Ackerly and I wrote it, but we can't remember where we got the name from - if it's one of our usual bad puns or RW references, ie. "Pent Ridge", "South Fork", it must be so obscure even we've forgotten the joke! In general, I've got no problems with these sorts of names, as long as they are not too obvious, and have a clear, convincing explanation of why the place would be so-called in Glorantha. With this in mind, I recently asked the Glorantha Digest if anyone had ideas where the name "Rabbit Hat Farm" came from. Gary Switzer came up with this, which I for one am happy to accept as the truth!

Pavis and Big Rubble Companion: Volume 1

by Ian Thomson

with Greg Stafford, Peter Johansson, Andrew Bean, Lowell Francis, Sherri L. Stewart, Martin Crim and Sten Åhrman

Illustrations by Dario Corrallo, Maps by Ian Thomson



"A spectacular sight, especially after the tortuous days of desert travel. Pavis' City, as ever, brings refreshment merely with its appearance, and once within its walls the wonders begin in earnest. One can visit any number of restful parks, each tended by peaceful Aldryami, and if you sit quietly you will be rewarded with visions of their graceful activities. In search of pleasant company, you can do no better than visit one of the many inns (my favourite being in the shadow of Pavis' Palace itself), and talk with travelers from far across the known world. The good-natured city patrols make sure that all visitors respect the peace, and are renowned for their quickly offered assistance in all areas of dispute. All around the city, men and dwarfs labour happily side by side constructing civic amenities, roads, tenements and residences of great splendor. On my last visit, magicians from the Empire were creating an astoundingly complex recreational canal system, the purpose of which is no more than to bring peace and happiness to the minds of all who boat or stroll within its boundaries. If only such activities as those I witnessed in this city were common across the whole of the world. One can only hope that 'Pavis' will continue to set such a glorious example of true civilisation for a great many centuries to come."

From a fragmentary EWF travelogue, author unknown, approximate date 900 ST

Introduction

This collection of work was created twenty years after I first saw Prax and Pavis in the RQ2 rulebook and went "Wow". I hope it recaptures some of the original flavour of this amazing city, and answers some of your questions, and I apologise for the delay. Incalculable thanks to Greg Stafford for taking the time to clarify a great many points, for shooting down some of my wackier ideas in flames, and for embracing others with enthusiasm. The approximate date that this material is set is 1621/22, some time after the Cradle has passed, and Duke Raus has replaced Sor-Eel, as acting Governor.

You may notice that the settlement maps seem to vary from the scale indicated in the main map of the Rubble in "Pavis and Big Rubble". This is due to following the text description (population figures and history), rather than that main map, as a guide to their size. Also, the Pavis and Flintnail Cult details here are designed to expand on the official descriptions, not to replace them. Greg (quoted in one of the CON books) has explained that Cult write-ups can only detail a part of the reality of a religion, and this is so very true in Pavis.

Much gratitude to Fabian for the initial encouragement to put this together, to Dario for appearing from nowhere and offering his wonderful pictures, and to Michael O'Brien and Wesley Quadros for encouraging me to give it a go. I can never express enough appreciation to the small platoon of people that assisted me with writing and editing when life got in the way of getting it finished in time. I have tried to credit you all within the work, and if I've missed anyone out in the insane rush to meet the final submission deadline, please forgive me. (Not all of the pieces fitted into the space available, and those credits will appear when the item worked on is published later.) Finally, thanks to Carrie for putting up with this obsession, especially during the last few weeks.

Ian Thomson
6th April 2000

www.home.primus.com.au/arkat/runeq.html

The Cult of Pavis

Looking Behind the Scenes

Acknowledgments

Greg Stafford, for crucial advice as I attempted to recreate the past.

"Cults of Prax" (Chaosium 1979), for firing my original enthusiasm.

Nick Brooke, for inspired editorial assistance, and for prompting me to take another look at the cult's masonic legacy.

Keith Nellist, for a lengthy E-mail discussion on the nature of Old Pavis.

Andrew Barton, Stephen Hunt, and Andrew Bean, for valuable proofing.

I. Introduction

After the ghostly dragonewts broke down Wyvern Gate in 1539, the human survivors in the Big Rubble painstakingly struggled up from near-extinction, and were faced with an unfamiliar world. Since 1490, the presence of Thieves' Town outside the walls had offered some renewed human contact for the survivors, but the Cult itself maintained its enigmatic solitude. Then came the "Dragonewts' Dream", and the people of the old city watched with amazement as the best of the troll warriors hurled themselves at these spectres, only to be thrown back and destroyed.

Although the troll domination had been far from complete, especially in the latter half of the occupation, the Pavis humans had existed in a state of siege within their own walls for three centuries. Even protected by Pavis' impregnable temple, without the help of the Flintnail dwarfs they could not have survived as a community.

A decade after the Rubble was opened, Dorasar and his companions arrived, bringing friendship skills similar to Pavis' own. Ginkizzie, the dwarf leader, spoke for all the people of Pavis, and agreements were made. This was when the Pavis and Flintnail Cults told outsiders of their lineage, and purposes, for the first time in generations. By now, the legends of the old city were barely recalled outside the walls of Pavis itself, and the survivors were free to paint the pictures as they saw fit. Wisely, they decided to obscure a large part of the true nature of Pavis and the reasons why he founded his city on this spot.

Dorasar learned some things about the local religions, as he negotiated to sanctify a new temple to Pavis, but even he only knew a fraction of what is revealed here. The Pavis Cult themselves claim that all their papers long ago provided the fuel for fragile cooking fires amidst the ruins, and the Flintnail dwarfs say that their records were all destroyed when they collapsed their halls on the invading trolls back in 1237. Even Mani's Clan can offer no help to the casual enquirer, patiently explaining that they have no need for a codified history, because the past shifts and flutters like dust on the desert winds.

II. Mythos and History

Pavis' parents were members of one of the many unusual organisations that were tolerated in the permissive Empire of the Wyrms' Friends (EWF). As well as the path to draconic enlightenment, many other secrets became available to the thinkers of the day, due to the expanded awareness that characterised that period of history.

The Green Age Revivalists were an elite collection of researchers and dreamers, who wanted to return the world and its peoples to the energies and relationships of that more harmonious time. Many saw them simply as idealists in search of an unreachable utopia, but it is undeniable that several of their experiments succeeded spectacularly.

Pavis himself was the result of arguably their most impressive project, the successful cross-breeding of a

human with a dryad. As he grew, although he appeared human, it became obvious that he was a most unusual being. With his family (father and human step-mother), Pavis relocated from the Empire to Adari, a place from where it would be easy for him to interact with aldryami, and explore both sides of his heritage.

Pavis' youth was brought to a horrifying ending in 809, when nomads sacked Adari. Whilst Pavis himself escaped, his parents were slain, and Pavis resolved to continue his father's work. He returned to the Empire, where other members of the Revivalists welcomed him with open arms. Soon it became clear that he was blessed with a unique breadth of insight, and could intellectually synthesise seemingly irreconcilable philosophies. He quickly became a champion of the Green Age cause.

Under the leadership of Pavis, the Green Age Revivalists entered a period of public popularity. Many people traveled to hear him speak, and amongst them was Flintnail the Mostali. The two became close friends, and a partnership was formed that would have powerful consequences.

Pavis became fascinated with the geographical and spiritual remnants of Genert's Garden. This interest had evolved during the decade he had lived in Adari, as he had traveled not just to visit his aldryami relatives, but also out onto the Praxian plains. Strange ruins and the peoples he met there left an indelible mark upon his soul.

Over the next few years Pavis and Flintnail organised and led a variety of expeditions out into Prax and the Wastes, seeking spirits and forgotten lore that might help them bring about their dreams of a new Green Age. The Horse People of Joraz Kyrem, whom Pavis knew through cult connections, usually assisted them in these ventures. Joraz was an ambitious Khan who was only too pleased to challenge the nomads.

Eventually their explorations uncovered a great secret. On the banks of the Zola Fel was a surviving fragment of Genert's Garden, preserved by a Green Age Hero and his followers. Unfortunately, these people were in hiding, due to the presence of the nomads and giants occupying the ruins of Robcradle.

Encouraged by his friend Flintnail, and by Joraz Kyrem who wanted to re-establish his own people in Prax, Pavis devised the Green Age City Project. This was not a course of action decided on lightly, and several years of questing and securing allies followed. In 830 ST they were ready.

Marching first to the Faceless Statue in Dagori Inkarth, Pavis here proved his mastery over stone, and reanimated this God Time relic. Riding atop its shoulders, and trailed by their followers, Pavis and Flintnail entered Prax and made history. The new city that later also became known as 'Pavis', was

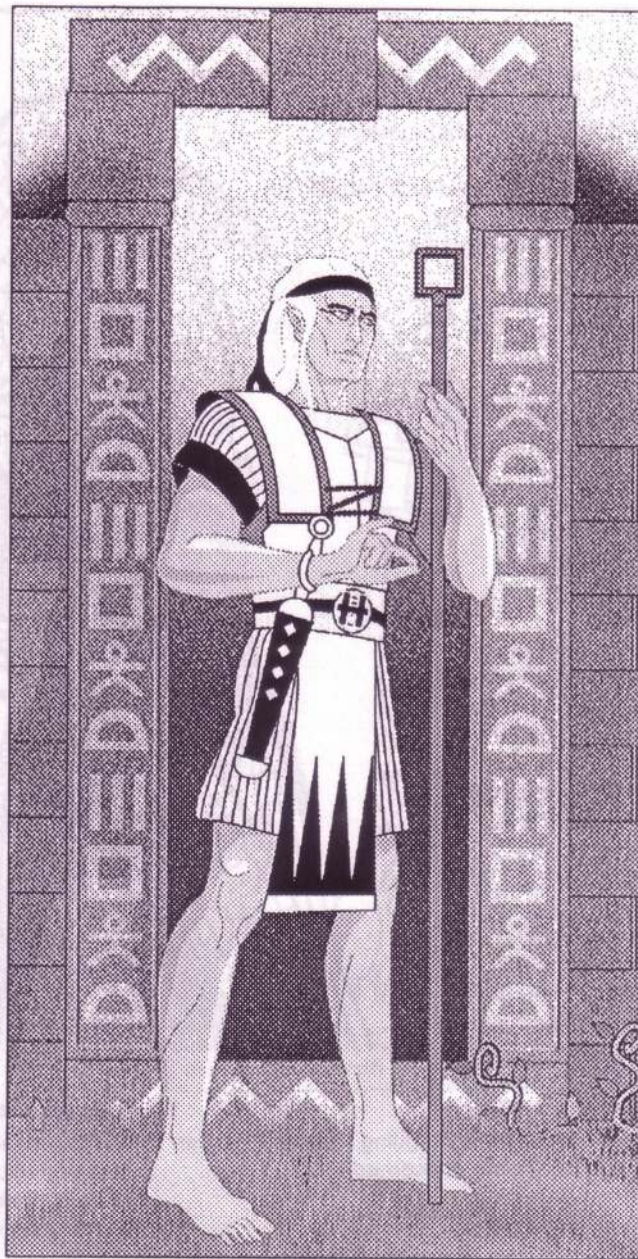
founded in 831, and Pavis used his heroic abilities of negotiation and reconciliation to forge a fragile, but nonetheless impressive, peace.

Although Pavis' main focus was creating a centre for exploration of many 'Green Age' projects, he was also an extremely charismatic and inspirational civic leader. Throughout his life, the city seemed to expand all on its own, with settlers arriving from many different places across the continent, adding their own ideas and energies harmoniously. Even so, the sheer time and energy required to govern and co-ordinate a city of such size and vitality was overwhelming, and eventually Pavis bowed to the wishes of his peers and devised a formal system of Government. He created the 'Council of Seven', each member of which was given a special 'Speaking Mask' to signify their authority.

Between 831 and his apotheosis in 860, Pavis co-ordinated a huge number of experimental ceremonies. His own daughter, Shelbaris, arrived at the city soon after her father, and was found to be almost as gifted as he. She worked principally alongside the dwarfs of the city, eventually assisting in the greatest successful quest of that period. Without her contribution, it would be fair to say that the dwarfs of Flintnail would not be half of what they are today.

Evidence of another aspect of the city's origins may still be noted, although most people overlook this even though it may sometimes be literally before their eyes. Pavis and Flintnail shared an understanding of sacred geometry, and based the shape of the city, and the location of major buildings and amenities, on ancient diagrams. They held the firm belief that this would assist their work through harnessing the powers of the elemental Earth. The unusual written language of glyphs, which is known by the inner circles of the Pavis Cult, was also evolved from this tradition.

It was not clear at the time, even to their colleagues, how much Pavis and Flintnail inspired the work, nor how their personal skills, and personal associations with Green Age myths, powered the ceremonies. Even after Flintnail departed, his spirit inspired and drove the dwarfs in their joint activities of city construction and mythical explorations. Pavis, with his apparently boundless energy, was able to provide enough motivation for the other citizens, but in the end even he tired.



In 860, aged in his seventies, after giving a great speech in front of the citizens, Pavis entered his temple for the last time. With the assistance of the Priests of Mani's Clan, he took his place alongside the great spirits of Prax, the country which had become his home.

As arranged, Joraz Kyrem became civic leader, ruling the council wisely, but amongst the various factions were those who sought a greater share of authority. Most outspoken amongst these was a group from amidst the followers of the City Magician, who took advantage of the awe in which all sorcerers were held.

During the life of Pavis, it had been unthinkable to interfere with the passing Cradles, and Robcradle's 'Great Basher' had stood

idle. This all changed in 863 when, to the horror of the citizens, these sorcerers halted a Cradle with their magic, and looted it. The other Magicians were too wary of the

might of their fellows, the fledgling Cult of Pavis was too weak to act decisively against these sorcerers, and Joraz Kyrem feared their powerful magic. Great was the pillage, and the baby was slain. The looters claimed that its death was an unfortunate accident, but their selfish motivations seemed only too clear.

The terrified citizens waited, but nothing happened immediately as a result of these events, and life went on as usual. Whilst most of the inhabitants were initially against stopping the Cradles, none were strong enough to oppose the renegade Magicians, and in truth the lure of Cradle goods was tempting to all. In 867 another Cradle arrived and was plundered, and yet another in 869. The first sign of trouble came in 870, when Thog the giant led some smaller members of his kin, and many trolls, against the city. On this occasion they were repulsed easily, with the city's network of sorcery towers providing as effective an aid to defence as the Magicians had claimed they would.

For a time, these rogue wizards gained popular support, and two more Cradles were looted, one in 872 and another in 875. Then Thog returned, accompanied again by other giants, and by an entire army of trolls. A band of mindless, and brutish, constructed giants called Jolanti further enhanced the attackers, and this time they proved unstoppable. Even the aerial defence towers of the sorcerers proved inadequate, and several were smashed down. Trolls quickly occupied the city, giants guarded its perimeters, and for two years the citizens were enslaved. During this time, the last two Cradles passed safely down the river and out to sea.

As history tells us, Joraz Kyrem escaped to Dragon Pass and returned with several regiments of Sun Dome Templars, and other more unusual allies, from the armies of the EWF. Thog and his forces were crushed, and Pavis the city entered its second dynamic era of vitality. After the city was liberated, Lord Kyrem and his new friends forcefully reorganised the power of the sorcerers, who were never again able to force their wills onto others in such a way.

Soon after this time, the Cult of Pavis evolved into a powerful entity dedicated not only to the gradual recreation of Pavis' own mythical ambitions, but also to governing the city. The Cult quickly gained three

Relations with other Cults and Groups

Aldrya

Common knowledge is that Pavis was somehow related to aldryami, although if the cult is questioned, they obfuscate this connection by suggesting that it is one of close association rather than kinship. The truth, of course, is that Pavis is of crossbreed heritage made possible by the experiments of the early Revivalists. The Cult of Aldrya has a presence in this city still, and has done since Pavis invited his kin here long ago. Back at the height of the old city, elves and runners were relatively common sights, tending the parks and gardens. The only evidence of this still seen is when a procession of elves arrives from time to time at the Real City and sings to the plants and trees.

Black Fang

Dark rumours of close relations between these two cults are merely that. The Pavis Cult and Black Fang share an uneasy co-existence at best. The assassin cult is less than 200 years old, and throughout the troll occupation was nothing more than a violent, and self-serving, gang of dardevil bandits. Even after the founding of New Pavis, calls for their special services were limited for quite some time. Only since active Lunar Interest in Prax have they become a political force, increasing their skills and gradually altering their style to embrace more refined methods. The Pavis Cult prefers to use its own members to mete out any Internal Justice that may be required, although on very rare occasions the Fang's services have admittedly been arranged through a discreet middleman. Recent disharmony between cells of the Black Fang has been caused by an attempted Lunar takeover. Although such information is known to few, the inner circle of Pavis is well-informed, and guards itself.

Flintnail

The cults of Pavis and Flintnail evolved side by side, each revering their own founder in ways resembling both ancestor worship and city cults. Although the Pavis Cult does not like to talk about such things, the Flintnail dwarfs have saved the humans of the city, time and

of the seven council positions, and was normally supported without question by Ginkizzie the dwarf, the incumbent holder of the fourth position.

This age of prosperity lasted until 940 ST when the nomad hero, Jaldon Toothmaker, ate a hole through the walls, and the city was sacked by Bison Riders, supported by Impalas. Over the previous years, Jaldon's forces had defeated three relief armies from the EWF. The Arrowsmith Dynasty was destroyed, and all contact with the Empire was lost.

After Jaldon's invasion, which killed or enslaved more than half of the population, the city fell understandably into decline, even though it rallied enough to drive off several further aggressors before the devastating attack of Toras Joran in 1150. Green Age Revivalism had already been sidelined in favour of other activities more necessary for sheer survival, especially since the fall of the EWF. As time passed, the Revivalist movement became merely a series of intriguing legends as far as the human survivors were concerned

III. Nature of the Cult

Upon the cult's founding, masonry skills were encouraged, to expand and maintain the city. Later these same skills were transferred readily to the greater needs of erecting and repairing forts, hideouts, traps and other defences that could resist the nomads and the trolls. They remain valued by the cult as symbols of their hope to one day rebuild their ruined home. Similarly, the Great Axe proved a staunch weapon against the trolls particularly, and was adopted as a heroic symbol of resilience, although many of the survivors actually used swords or spears.

Although it has devolved into a simple city cult, at least to outward appearances, things are not always as they seem. Invaders have never breached the enormous original Temple, and within its echoing halls are contained artifacts and texts that reflect the glories and purposes of old. Even with the knowledge of the dragons having been torn away, much remains here that would feed an inquiring mind.

However, this Pavis Temple is not open to casual browsers, and the Priesthood long ago set up circles within circles amongst the Cult membership, to decide how much could be revealed, and to whom. The few remaining relics of the old city were sealed up for protection and for secrecy, and over time the emptiness of the chambers and passageways became seen as

normal by those few allowed to wander around them without supervision.

Especially in New Pavis, the Cult appears as a social network, acting as a typical city cult should. The Priests are very careful that things remain this way. Everyone knows, of course, that you have to be a Pavis initiate to vote in elections or stand for civic office, but people don't usually think of this as a religious or ritual obligation. (Certainly not one in which some of the Priests and Initiates have a mythic agenda of their own to pursue.)

Back in the old city this social function has a different flavour, as the Cult has also been the focal point for knife-edge survival these last centuries. Few traditional residents treat their religion as a mere social club. For them it is a great

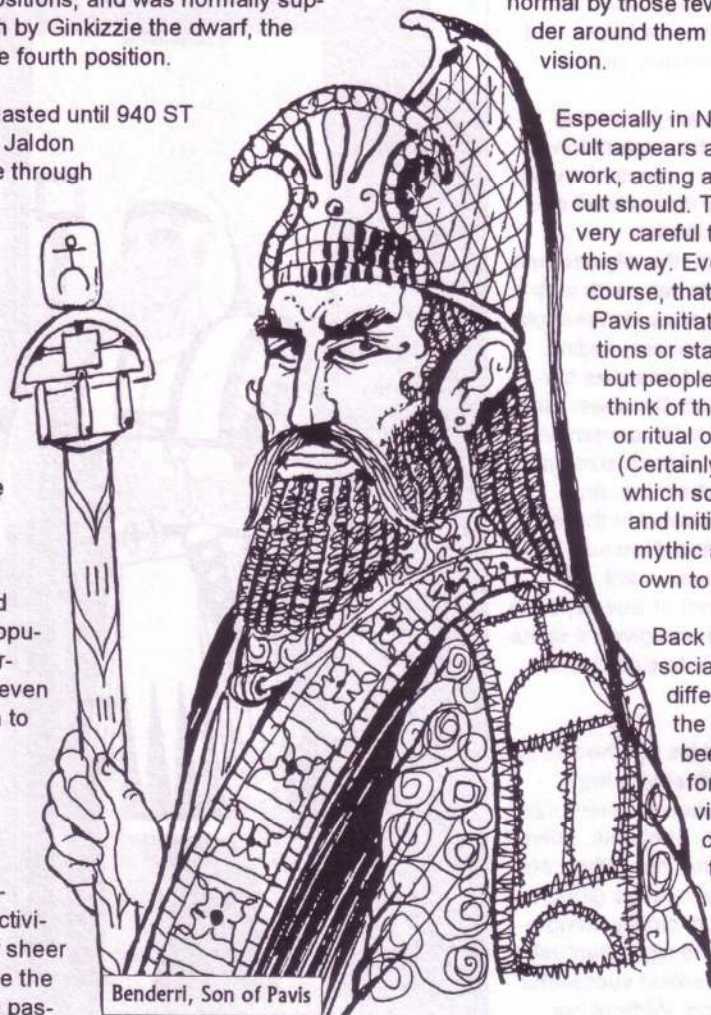
deal more. Amongst these families, many stories are known about the old city, some true, and some fanciful distortions of history. Nonetheless there is profound respect for the traditions of the city and the cult.

IV. Organisation

Most outsiders, and many junior cult members, believe that below the 'Son of Pavis' the Cult has only three ranks: Lay Member, Initiate, and Daughters. The existence of the Pavis Temple's inner circles has remained well concealed through the ages. Moreover, obtaining initiation into the Cult of Pavis is rather more difficult than it at first appears.

There are many restrictions on entry, and Rune Level members of another religion (other than Flintnail) can never progress beyond Initiate with Pavis. Additionally, Initiates must have been born inside the old city or in New Pavis, although exceptions are sometimes made by symbolic adoption of foreigners. This rule protects the cult from the casual membership of those who wish simply to avail themselves of its services, and who have no real love for the city.

Members of the first circle follow a path most closely resembling that of a standard cult format. Such a person will be typically a New Pavis citizen who desires to support the cult of his (or her) home. Through piety and hard work they may eventually progress from Lay Member to Initiate,



Benderrl, Son of Pavis

and are taught the outer traditions, including Masonry, Great Axe, and Hammer. They are also eligible to vote on mundane cult and civic matters.

Cult members of the second circle are most likely to be from the families of the old city, whether living in New Pavis or the Rubble. The majority of these Initiates within the Rubble reside in the Real City, although others live in Manside and Zebraside. Their religious services include even more of the traditional activities such as the Priests speaking at length in remnants of Auld Wyrnish, and wearing headdresses and cloaks of ancient design. To enter the second circle, solemn oaths of loyalty are required.

Initiation into each circle beyond the first also includes the teaching of signs and passwords that one can use to indicate one's status to other members of an equal or higher level. Surreptitious use of such signs can be very effective in the most surprising places, when dealing with the lesser or greater problems of everyday civic life. Also, from the third level on, cultists are taught to recognise obscure masonic glyphs hidden amongst architectural features around both the old city and New Pavis.

It is normally only from the second circle that members of the third circle are chosen. This third level is where the deepest traditions of the cult begin to be hinted at, and each member receives a ceremonial name. Acceptance at this level requires the swearing of great oaths invoking dire Earth magics against any that betray secrets, or threaten the safety and security of the cult or city in any way. Pavis Priest Cyrillus Harmonius knows of this level, and hints often of his desire for acceptance into it. However, admittance is by invitation only, and so far he has not been approached. He cannot ask his friends amongst the Lunars for support in this matter, as even revealing the existence of these circles would be breaking cult oaths. (A hypothetical analyst might imagine that, of the other Priests, Benderri and Bendrath would be members of the inner circles. Bilkar, Fleeter, and Broosta, however, give away no clues.)

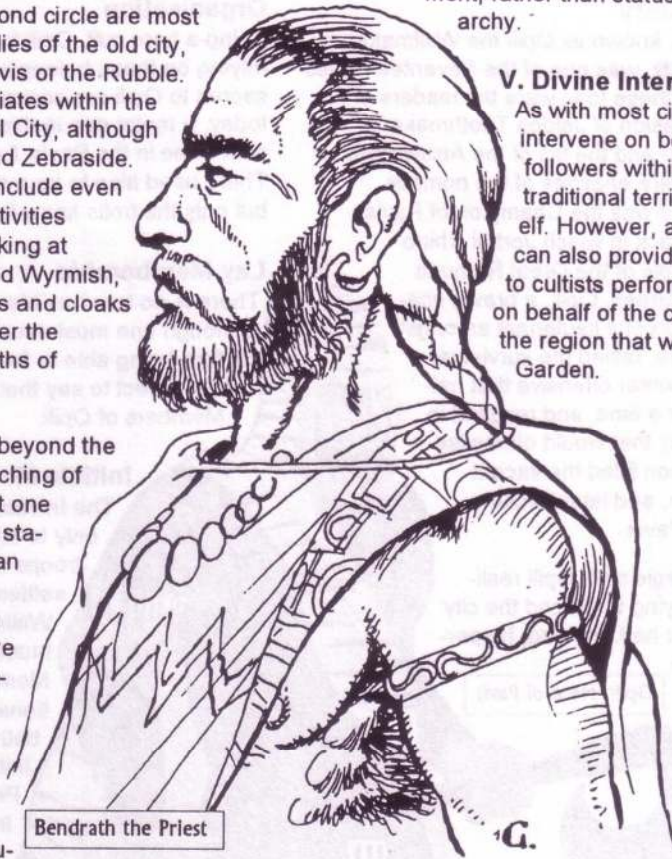
The fourth, or 'inner', circle is where the differentiation between Initiates and the levels within the Priesthood is least important. Only those within this circle know for sure who is a member and who is not, and only they know the extent to which ancient lore is understood and revealed here.

The martial 'Rune Lord' level of the Pavis Cult is another branch of this intricately woven organisation. Originally such cultists commanded different levels of the Cavalry or Foot, and most often (after the turn of the millennium) were from the Opili sub-

cult. As with all other aspects of cult worship, Champions, or the more junior 'City Marshals', were accepted into the inner circles according to individual merit, rather than status within the cult hierarchy.

V. Divine Intervention

As with most city cults, Pavis may intervene on behalf of his favored followers within or adjacent to his traditional territory, the old city itself. However, as a spirit of Prax he can also provide limited assistance to cultists performing special duties on behalf of the city anywhere within the region that was formerly Genert's Garden.



Bendrath the Priest

again across their dangerous history. In return, the Pavis Cult members who know better willingly support the general misconceptions that the Flintnallers are a harmless and Industrious people, who have nothing more than forges and machine shops in their underground lairs beneath New Pavis and the North Quarry. Whatever other relationship the Inner circle of the Pavis Cult has with the most senior dwarfs remains a mystery. Conspiracy theorists claim that the dwarfs provide various opposing groups (including the Pavis Cult) with access to secret tunnels under New Pavis and the Rubble. Surely if this were true someone would have found at least one by now and exposed it to public scrutiny?

Mani's Clan

Relations have always been cordial with the occupants of this Fort. From time to time, members of the Pavis Cult travel to Mani's Fort for short or long visits, attempting to reconstruct some of the history of the old city from the Clan's vague recollections. They do this through listening to folk tales, and by joining in the ritual dances and chants.

Opill

He is mainly remembered as the general of Pavis who devised the scheme of many small forts spread throughout the ruins, and is the only one of the Seventeen Foes of Waha known to be currently worshipped. (Although worrying rumours of a revival of the 'Sons of Estangtang' have recently surfaced.) The hero-cult worship of this former City Champion is detailed separately.

Zola Fel

The city of Pavis has always maintained good relations with the Zola Fel riverfolk. After all, without the river the city could not exist. Riverfolk are often part of Pavis Holy Day celebrations, making ritualised donations of their catches in return for gifts of city-made items.

The Cult of Opili

by Peter Johansson and Ian Thomson

Acknowledgements

"Pavis: Threshold to Danger" (Chaosium, 1983)

Additional ideas: Wesley Quadros and Andrew Bean.

Editing assistance: Robert McArthur.

Mythos and History

Opili the Protector, known as Opili the Wallmaker in many Pavic legends, was one of the Seventeen Foes of Waha. Many of these foes were the leaders of Pavis after the invasion of Jaldon Toothmaker's nomad army in 940 and the fall of the Arrowsmith Dynasty, and all were enemies of the nomads. Garngar Gateguard was the Champion of Pavis who died in the attack in which Jorbai Rhino Khan used the magic of the Great Rhino to make the Second Break. Opili, a brave, charismatic, and resourceful lieutenant amongst the defending riders, rallied the survivors. He led a daring counter offensive that halted the nomads for a time, and resulted in the escape of many that would otherwise have died. Opili soon filled the vacant leadership position, and later became the Champion of Pavis.

Having great strategic skill, Opili realised the futility in trying to defend the city in the way Garngar had. Instead, he persuaded the people

of Pavis to build and settle inside a number of small forts inside the towering walls, allowing the nomads to roam where they wanted outside these barricades. The forts were much easier to defend than the enormous area inside the Great Walls, and despite being segmented, Opili ruled the entire city for many years. He eventually died of natural causes some years after retiring to his Fort, and was given a prestigious burial in the Real City. Nomad tales claim they killed him, and it is true that he previously died at least twice. He did however return each time, due to the mercy of his Lord, Pavis.

Despite Opili's best efforts, the city splintered into small clans after his death. Nevertheless, because of his success in protecting the people during his life, they erected shrines in his honour at several forts. From this worship the tradition began that all Pavic warriors became his Initiates.

Nature of the Cult

For almost two centuries after his death, followers and family of Opili lived in his Fort and other strongholds, and were respected by the citizens, and feared by the nomads. However, trolls now inhabit Opili's Fort, and most of the other strongholds, except the Real City, have also fallen. The hero cult of Opili the Protector has relatively few Initiates these days, having declined rapidly after the troll invasion. Its primary reason for continued existence is to protect the settlements within the Great Walls. Opili's worshippers still believe that his spirit strengthens their ability to defend their homes, and families. Presently most of his worshippers live in the Real City, where one must normally be an Initiate of Opili to serve in the Watch.

Organisation

Being a hero cult, Opili has no temple of his own, relying on those belonging to Pavis. Two shrines sacred to Opili are commonly known to be in use today, a major one in the Real City Temple, and a minor one in the Pavis Temple in New Pavis. There used also to be a major shrine in Opili's Fort, but only the trolls know its fate.

Lay Membership

There is no true Lay Membership of Opili's Cult, although one must usually first be a Pavis Initiate before being able to follow Opili. So it is technically correct to say that all Pavis Cultists are Lay Members of Opili.

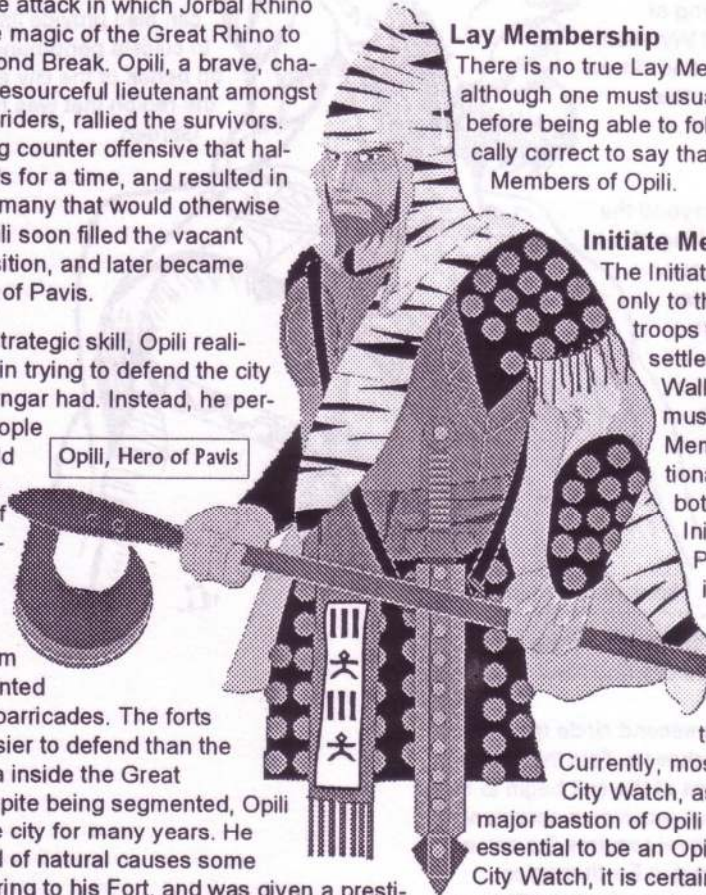
Initiate Membership

The Initiate level of this cult is open only to those who wish to enlist in troops that defend the fortified settlements within the Great Walls. Normally a candidate must be at least a known Lay Member of Pavis, but exceptionally can be initiated into both cults at once if required. Initiates are called Protectors, and during their initiation they take an oath to defend the city and its inhabitants. Initiates must sacrifice the usual one point of POW during the initiation ritual.

Currently, most Initiates are in the Real City Watch, as this settlement is the last major bastion of Opili worship. Whilst it is not essential to be an Opili Initiate to be in the Real City Watch, it is certainly most commonly the case. There is a rumor that many members of the outlawed 'Pavis Survivors' are Initiates of Opili, but no such people have ever been listed on Opili's public membership rolls.

Benefits: Through Pavis, Initiates of Opili can learn Great Axe and First Aid at half normal price, and, through Flintnail, Crossbow is available at half price. Initiates also are encouraged to learn Broadsword mastery from whoever is available to teach it. In the old days the skill with lance was valued, but has been neglected since the demise of the Pavis cavalry. Demoralize, Detect Enemies, and Healing up to 2 points are taught for half price, as is Bladesharp up to 4 points (available through the cult of Pavis). Forbidden spells are Darkwall and other inappropriate Troll magic. Being an Initiate also means guaranteed food rations when inside, or in the service of, the Real City. Opili Initiates may learn the Spirit Spell 'Control Zebra', and exceptional initiates have single-use access to the cult special Rune Spell, 'Evade'.

Obligations: When joining the ranks of the Protectors, you swear to protect the citizens of your settlement with your life. A person breaking this oath is expelled from both the cult and the



Opili, Hero of Pavis

settlement. Each day thereafter that they remain within the Great Walls there is a 5% accumulated chance of a nasty visit from the spirit of Opili. Breaking the oath is as significant an event as cowardice in the face of the enemy, or betrayal of one's fellows. Because of their importance to the defence of the Real City population, Opili Initiates need only sacrifice 2 MP on Pavis Holy Days. This is in contrast to the "all-but-one" rule for regular Pavis Initiates. Initiates are part of the Pavis Cult and take part in its ceremonies.

Spirits attached to the old temple in the Real City are loyal to Opili, and watch this settlement for visitors who break their oaths of hospitality. When they find such a criminal, they are able to alert Initiates of Opili through communicating feelings of urgency and alarm. These heighten as the wrongdoer is approached, and Initiates must always respond to these alarms. The intelligent spirits can guide individual Initiates to varied locations if required, and were originally bound here to help co-ordinate the actions of the 'Protectors' during an attack.

The Champion and Marshals of Pavis (Rune Lords)

The normal pathway to Rune membership of the Pavis Cult is open to Initiates of Opili. The rank structure of Pavis Rune Lords, however, is largely theoretical, as no holders currently exist. Historically there was one senior 'Champion', who was normally the wearer of the Mask of Wakwakis or Jalakis, and several junior champions known as 'City Marshals'. These Marshals commanded forts and patrols, and were usually followers of Opili although this was not an obligatory requirement. 15 POW is the minimum acceptable. Required minimum abilities are: 90% in Great Axe or Lance, and 90% in four other skills from Ride Zebra, Archery, Sneak, Camouflage, Crossbow, or any other two skills that a Pavis Priest can be convinced are valuable for the defence of the city. (Ride Zebra and Great Axe must in any event be at least 70%.)

The position of Champion is important ritualistically and actively, whilst the City Marshals are almost purely practical. In recent years, the Pavis Temple has considered reappointing Marshals to embody the interests of the gradually expanding old city. An 'Opili' Player Character of sufficient dedication and experience, with a loyal band of Pavis followers, could realistically hope to represent their city. New Marshals might well find their duties to be many and varied, reflecting the recent multi-cultural and multi-racial civic mix. There is still a traditional badge of honour available to each Marshal, a bronze seven-pointed star which historically signifies their loyalty to the old city's 'Council of Seven'.

Benefits: Each Marshal is entitled to free food and board at any Pavis stronghold within the old city, and traditionally has a comfortable room set aside at their Fort for permanent residence. The normal benefits apply towards Divine Intervention (see later), and they gain reusable access to the Rune Spell 'Evade'.

Obligations: Marshals of Pavis expect normally to remain within the Great Walls; however this is not a

cult stricture. The zebra cavalry often used to pursue fleeing nomads beyond the walls. The Marshals must obey any Pavis cultist of equal or superior rank, and must attack any nomads or bandits found plundering the old city (if this is obviously suicidal, then they must instead proceed to the nearest Pavis Fort as swiftly as possible, and alert the Watch Commander there).

Divine Intervention

This is normally only available to Cultists within, or adjacent to, the Great Walls, or in the new city. On occasion, Opili answers the call personally, arriving to assist his follower for a limited time. Such a situation might be when a follower is ambushed, or otherwise injured, and is helpless in the Rubble. Then Opili will ride to their aid, and in this capacity, as well as draining MP with his weapon attacks, he does physical damage to his foes as a superior warrior. (It may not be until later that those closely involved realise it was Opili and not some living warrior: "Who was that zebraskin clad man?") Those rescued from the Rubble are pulled magically with him as he rides from the scene, and find themselves fully healed beside the closest safe active altar to Pavis or Opili. Opili cannot intervene in arguments between fellow-cultists of Pavis, and if defeated, his spirit vanishes for several hours, and cannot attack the same enemy again for a whole day.

The Spirit of Opili

POW 24, INT 17, DEX 18, MOV 9

When acting as a retributive spirit, Opili usually chooses to hound oathbreakers out of the Rubble. He reveals locations by hollering, and waving flaming torches, making stealth and secrecy impossible. He can also arrange unfortunate accidents, such as doors sticking, and footholds crumbling. If this does not work, or is not appropriate, he can engage in Spirit Combat. Attacks continue irregularly whilst offenders remain inside the Great Walls, or on rare occasions even in New Pavis.

Opili appears in these cases to be a living adventurer riding a pale zebra stallion, attacking first with his lance, and, if required, dismounting and engaging with his great axe. His weapon damage in its retributive capacity is spirit-like, and each successful attack drains D6+2 MP from the offender. Once the individual reaches 3MP or less they are affected as if by the Rune Spell 'Fear'. The Spirit of Opili will not reduce MP to death, unless the offender has ever purposely murdered (that is unlawfully and unfairly slain) an Initiate or higher of Opili or Pavis.

Sometimes Opili will appear to his worshippers, or to other loyal followers of Pavis. This has almost always been within the Rubble, and always in order to give warning of ambush or other threat. Such manifestations are rare, and the dangers he has warned of have always been unusually potent. In these instances, his method of communication has been through archaic handsignals, now fully understood only by his own Initiates and by those trained as guards and scouts within the Pavis Cult. It is rumored that the zebra outlaws known as the 'Pavis Survivors' also use this code.

Control Zebra - 2 point, Ranged, Temporal, Active (until the zebra is instructed, then Passive)

The caster must overcome the POW of the zebra if it is not their personal mount, and will then be in limited telepathic connection with it. This is largely limited to 'line of sight', but the mount will continue to obey simple instructions, or respond to prearranged stimuli in a certain way, for as many hours after the instruction as it has INT. If the caster is riding when the spell is in use, the zebra is immune to fear from all but the most horrific foes, unless the caster/rider becomes magically Demoralised. This spell will not work on horses, only on zebras.

Evade - 1 point (or 3 point), ranged, temporal, nonstackable, reusable

Opili became a master at camouflage and evasion within the Rubble, and has left this spell as a legacy for his worshippers. Affecting the caster and their mount, its effect is to blend the two into the surroundings so imperceptibly, that when the spell becomes active they appear to vanish as if they had been ghosts. Once activated, the magic will carry all participants directly to a pre-arranged destination that is sacred to Opili or Pavis, and it cannot be ended voluntarily. (It will end automatically if the destination becomes occupied by hostiles before their arrival.) The user is still detectable by Rune Magic, and by spirits, but Spirit Magic and all normal senses, are blocked, including scent and all darkness vision forms. Rune Level cultists also have access to a 3-point version of this spell. This creates the magical 'evasion' effect in a 10m radius, and includes any other cultists of Opili, or Pavis, and their mounts. Either version of this spell can only function within, or adjacent to, the Great Walls.

Holiday Glorantha: The 'Real City' of Old Pavis

by Ian Thomson

Acknowledgments

Special thanks to Greg Stafford for sharing some of his original Pavis thoughts and helping get this piece into shape.

Moon Publications' Gloranthan Classics: "Pavis and the Big Rubble" 1999, for background info.

Peter 'Real Inn' Johansson for various MGF ideas.

Wesley Quadros (proofreading, suggestions, and Hero Wars ideas)

Jim Rogers and David Gordon for proofing.

Glan Gero for RQ3 statistics

History

The Real City represents the first completed part of the original city of Pavis. Although it was constructed by dwarfs, its design was heavily influenced by architectural styles that Pavis had admired during his time in the Empire of the Wyrms' Friends. This settlement has withstood the ravages of its enemies over the centuries with greater success than other parts of Old Pavis partly due to this dwarven durability. Nomads managed to destroy several of the ancient buildings, however, and the temple itself has a large crack across its front. This was caused by rhino tribe magic, during an invasion led by nomad Khan Toras Joran. Buildings smashed by nomad magic mostly block the main street near the gates, however the resulting heaps of masonry are now crucial to city defences.

The residents have always felt a deep loyalty to Pavis, and are dedicated to keeping the essence of the original city alive. Without their continuing loyalty, the worship of Pavis might have completely vanished. In return, Pavis has helped protect the residents from attack, and at least sheltered them in the Temple and hidden tunnels during the worst periods of nomad and troll activity. Local history records that the number of survivors here sometimes fell to less than a hundred souls, but the very fact that they survived at all appears nothing short of miraculous. Since the Dragonewts broke the Rubble open in 1539, and slew many troll warriors who tried to stop them, the Real City has slowly begun to re-establish itself as a lively echo of Old Pavis. Dorasar's arrival has influenced the nature of the Real City somewhat, and he assisted them with rebuilding and donations of supplies, in return for a negotiated relocation of the Spirit of Pavis into the new temple.

The old Pavis families in the new city acknowledge the Real City as their ancestral home, and there are blood ties between the two groups. Some of the families of Real City also own property in New Pavis. Relations with the Lunars are stable, with the official Lunar policy being that the Real City is just another settlement in the Rubble. The Real City residents themselves like to claim that they are a free province, undefeated since the time of Pavis, and all Lunars are required to complete weighty forms before entering. The Lunars tolerate this independent stance, so as not to threaten their plan to woo Pavis into marrying the Red Goddess, an outcome publicly supported by Benderri, the current High Priest, or 'Son', of Pavis.

Getting There

The easiest way to reach the Real City is to leave New Pavis by the People's Gate (after filling in the appropriate Lunar paperwork), and travel out past the Zebra Stockade along the old roadway. It is a little more than one key-mile from here, and takes around half an hour of careful travel. However, the Real City is far enough into the Rubble that attacks on those traveling at night are fairly common, and not unheard of against small groups traveling during the day. The ruined areas are quite dense, especially past the halfway point on the roadway, and can easily hide ambushes. The next most common way to reach the Real City is to pass through the demolished Wyvern Gate

(perhaps hiring the services of one of the numerous escort agencies), and make a slightly longer trek across marginally more dangerous ruins. Rarely do more than a few weeks to go by without adventurers emerging directly from the Rubble at the Real City to seek refuge with varying degrees of urgency.

At First Sight

The upper part of the glinting multi-faceted sphere of the Pavis Temple usually catches a viewer's attention first. This can even be seen from the Great Walls alongside New Pavis, but often disappears from view whilst one travels through the ruins. On close inspection, the size of the Temple looming above the Real City walls often surprises newcomers, as it is one of the largest buildings in Prax. The Real City walls are 15m high dwarf-made stone defences, and, whilst not as tall as the 25m giant-built Rubble Walls, are nonetheless impressive. Six sturdy towers punctuate the wall, one either side of each gate. The walls have proven their worth again and again throughout the area's violent history, although sometimes even they were not enough. Some of the buildings inside are four stories tall, and travelers can occasionally see the tops of these above the walls as they cross raised areas of the Rubble.

Visiting the City

Many Manside residents consider the Real City to be their local trading centre, however, there are entry regulations. Entrants must agree to respect Pavis, Opili, and the hospitality of the Real City. It is customary also to give your name, cult and reason for visit when entering. Casual visitors may stay without restriction for two full days, and then must leave an hour after dawn. If they want to stay longer, they must petition the Mayor (through the Captain of the Watch) stating their special circumstances. Any 'undesirables', whose survival might be threatened if they were simply evicted, will be escorted back to New Pavis with the next supply convoy. Mansiders tend to visit only for a few hours in the middle of the day, respecting the wishes of the residents.

If the visitor's privilege is abused by repeated frequent arrivals for no real purpose, the Watch will establish an entry toll as they see fit. In this way the settlement discourages floods of refugees from the Rubble straining their meager resources and very limited accommodations. Gifts to the City certainly increase the chances of being welcomed back without awkward questions. At any one time there are also several dozen honorary residents who are granted a yearly permit to enter and leave the Real City as they wish. These are usually people who have visited several times, shown their trustworthiness, and have some significant attachment to the city even though they don't wish to live there. (Talk around New Pavis is that certain rebel personalities take advantage of such freedoms, but Real City authorities vehemently deny this.)

Pavis Cultists from New Pavis are the most common visitors, other than the Mansiders, and are welcomed in relative friendship. Even so, it can be quite a surprise to new Initiates that the Real City retains many traditional customs and behaviours. It often appears that one has stepped back in time, until the visitor gets used to their ways. The Orlanthe of New Pavis are greeted as friendly neighbours when on recognised business, and many of them have grasped the nuances of local custom here and fit in quite well. For the first-time visitor who is not a Pavis Cultist, the social atmosphere is initially quite cold, with these new arrivals being subjected to stares, and hearing whispers from darkened doorways.

Lunars are treated politely, but are never engaged in friendly conversation nor invited to stay. Those Lunars who genuinely believe that they are friends of Pavis can be disappointed by their reception here. Likewise, adventurer groups are tolerated if they have a good reason to enter the city, such as to purchase supplies or be healed, but are encouraged to leave as soon as possible. The exceptions to this rule are adventurer groups with a significant membership of Pavis Cultists. Sometimes locals cannot help but question these dashing fellows about their experiences in the Rubble and New Pavis, and perhaps even foreign lands if the group is one that has traveled.

Nomads rarely come to the Real City in large groups, and such are always watched carefully. Only Ceremonial processions of nomads dedicated to Waha, who visit on certain Holy Days, are regular visitors. Trolls are also rarely seen in groups of any significant number, but their traders sometimes attend markets, and others might visit as members of adventurer parties. The few merchant trolls who visit fairly regularly are sure to show their respect ostentatiously. None of this means that there is overt prejudice: there have been, and still are, both troll and nomad worshippers of Pavis, and these are accepted. This wariness represents a sensible caution amongst the Real City residents, unsurprising given their history.

The Real City Interior

Inside the main gate is an uneven open area, bounded by the gatehouse itself and by rubble heaps and broken foundations. The locals know this place as "Foes Welcome", and the rubble is mostly the remains of a building destroyed by nomad magic. The inhabitants have set up shielded missile locations and easily rollable boulders to greet invaders. An apparent path through the main pile of shattered masonry is actually a decoy known as "Dead Troll Lane". Once beyond "Foes Welcome", the real Real City is at last clearly visible.

The ruins here are in a variety of states of decay, and this disordered mixture is emphasised by the lack of any original coherent street plan. Even as a shadow of its former glory it is still impressive, and reflects the beauty the original city must have held. The large buildings are all of especially fine design, a blend of dwarven and EWF architectural styles. Several buildings were three or four stories high, and a ruined tower stands even higher, although its top has long since disappeared. In area, some of

the buildings are as large as those in major cities of the West, and local youths have taken over a large room in one ruin as an 'arena' for contests of skill. The streets still give the general appearance of a city at the end of a violent siege, with shattered paving stones, rainwater pools, and ever-present large piles of broken masonry. Closer examination reveals that the pools are part of a carefully designed watercourse (which still empties into the original drains), and the piles of rubble have been rearranged to allow entry to buildings, and to provide strategic barricades for the inhabitants to fight behind if necessary. The trees that grow singly or in small patches of woodland, amidst the ruins provide fruit and limited quantities of timber.

Visitors who are not known will be acknowledged only with nods and grunts, and the normally playful children will tend to run and hide from them. The inhabitants otherwise go about their daily tasks seemingly at peace with themselves. Their antipathy towards outsiders is a result of the centuries of extreme persecution they have suffered.

Residents of the Real City

More than 500 humans live here at present. Dwarfs maintain a small trading presence at Flintnail Mansions, and sometimes as many as several dozen of them might congregate here for special meetings or recreation. They arrive through tunnels known only to themselves and the city leaders. (It is widely believed that tunnels lead here all the way from Dwarfside in New Pavis.) No Aldryami live in Real City, however Elf groups from the Garden visit from time to time and are welcome here. They much prefer Real City when they have to visit a human settlement, and find the disordered architecture and overgrown streets much calmer to Elfsense than the straight lines, stanches and pandemonium of New Pavis. On Pavis Holy Days, the Aldryami help keep the valuable city vegetation thriving by speeding the growth of useful trees and shrubs with their magical singing. Apparently these rituals have continued, whenever possible, since the days of the Old City.

The humans have reclaimed parts of many buildings, and dwarfs have also helped them restore sections of housing, which allows them to live in a reasonable shadow of the city's former greatness. The city's dwarfs have in fact been crucial to human survival throughout the last centuries, sheltering and feeding their neighbours, often for extended periods. (This aspect of the city's history is not normally discussed with outsiders.) Whilst the inhabitants live in fairly close proximity in these reclaimed sections of buildings, storage space is usually underground, and there is considerably more recreational space outdoors here than at New Pavis.

The Real City culture is tied intimately to the Pavis Cult, and children normally become Initiates on reaching maturity. All the residents are staunchly committed to supporting what they see as 'true' Pavic society, as opposed to the "frontier town" mayhem of New Pavis, and as always are prepared to fight fiercely to defend their ways. The residents work as a semi-closed community, and grow their own fruit and vegetables around their dwellings. Food supplies have been significantly increased through hunting in the Rubble since the troll domination was broken. The Real City



One of several crude statuettes of Opill that have been discovered. This one is in a display cabinet in the Rubble Museum

City Defences

The Real City benefits from ancient Pavic magic that is slowly being reactivated, in addition to the walls and the vigilance of the Protectors. The Pavis Temple staff, understandably, gives little away. However, it is said that in the event of a serious attack they can activate protective sorcery, on and above the city walls, which can resist spells, spirits, and even physical intrusion. The Pavis Temple also controls spirits, which patrol the settlement.

People of Note

Benderri - Son of Pavis

The current High Priest of Pavis conscientiously spends the vast majority of his time looking out for the welfare of the residents and any other members of the Pavis Cult that are in need. Whilst he is old now, he is still strong-minded and not to be trifled with, often flexing his will from his position on the New Pavis City Council. It is his determination that has gained most of the important concessions from the Lunars, helped by his public view that marrying Pavis into the Lunar Pantheon is a good idea.

Hero Wars: Intelligent 2w, City Magic 13w3 (Bless City with Peace, Commune with Spirits of City, Increase Morale of Inhabitants, Direct Labour of Inhabitant), Devoted to Pavis 4w, Lead Worship of Pavis 17w, Friendly with Lunars 15, Piercing Gaze 19.

Bendrath - Daughter of Pavis

Bendrath is a former adventurer who was born in Oldtown and has spent time in the Rubble. He is the younger brother of the mayor. He is a new Priest, dedicated to restoring the whole city to its former greatness. Bendrath is the least Lunar-friendly of the Temple staff, and his enemies say he has rebel sympathies. He certainly spends as little time in New Pavis as he can, where an evening at Glimpy's with his friend Goram the dwarf is more to his taste than passing the time with members of the occupying forces.

Hero Wars: Knowledge of rebel personalities 17, Dislike Lunars 13, Devoted to Pavis 19, Sword and Shield combat 15w, knowledge of Rubble 9w, Wall-building magic 17w2 (Mend Wall, Strengthen Stone, Lighten Stone, Clear rubble, Dress stone), stone masonry 3w2, quick wit 19.

Bilkar - Daughter of Pavis

A Real City native, Bilkar has worked his way up the cult hierarchy from altar boy. Although technically senior to Bendrath, Bilkar has chosen to defer to the newer Priest's quicker wit and more active devotion to the cult.

culture appears to operate as an extended temple society, with a single hierarchy revolving around the Priesthood.

The tough admission policy of new residents is due to the limited resources of the Real City. Even so, a handful of successful ex-adventurers and a few former New Pavis residents have added to their numbers in recent years. In the mid-1500s a few individuals and families from the 'City of Thieves' outside the walls were also allowed to settle here, and a few more in the years following Dorasar's arrival. However, the Cult is determined to retain a truly Pavic identity here, and are very careful who is allowed to become a resident.

Since the humans began to live above ground again, residents who die are cremated on top of the towers of the temple walls in a traditional service. Real City residents were forced to use more mundane and messy ways to deal with physical remains when they were confined underground.

Prices

Being a relatively isolated outpost, many items are difficult to come by. Some residents store goods for sale, knowing that many visitors do not wish to return to New Pavis, or are in a great hurry. Therefore if required goods are available, double the price compared to the regular New Pavis cost, although friends of the Real City can expect a better deal.

Places of Interest

Pavis Temple

"The Pavis Temple is the original temple, and its cracked, but intact, crystalline walls still shelter services, in defiance of the worst that nomad or troll could do. This cyclopean structure has given spiritual backbone to the surrounding colony of humans ever since it was founded. The human culture of Pavis has always been centered on this temple. It is enormous and seems to be made out of a single piece of translucent pinkish-white stone. The only mar on the structure is a single crack running the height of the front. Pavis himself is no longer believed to dwell permanently in this temple, and (some of) the (cult) leadership lives in New Pavis. Still, this old temple has the patina of centuries to shed honor and respect upon its main priest, Bendrath. The temple is still the site of sacred city rites, carried out anew each Holy Day. Though Pavis lives here no longer, he is said to be here every Holy Day."

(Moon Design's 'Pavis and the Big Rubble', 1999)

Differing rumours say that this building is made from the heartstone or the headstone of the Faceless Statue; however surely that would make the statue unfeasibly vast? Whether or not either is true, this enormous multi-faceted dome is a wonder to behold, and in certain lights still reflects the sun from radiant crystalline grains within the stone, revealing its magical origins. It contains shrines to Flintnail, Opili and Zola Fel, and rooms maintained by Benderri, Bendrath and Bilkar. Within the Temple are also two 'Wonders': (i) the 'Eyes' of the Faceless Statue, which are actually ancient bindings for the spirits that patrol the Real City and its nearby surroundings; and (ii) the 17 immortal (but not indestructible) warriors remaining from those created from the Statue's teeth by Pavis. (These normally line the entry hall motionlessly, but

spring into action when commanded by chief cultists or when an attacking force crosses the Real City walls.) Various lesser and greater spirits also reside in the temple, performing duties and wielding magic the nature of which few people now recall.

The walls that divide the Temple from the main city are comparatively recently reconstructed, and the entire Real City used to be the Temple compound. Lunar Priests visit this Temple quite regularly, renewing requests for Pavis to 'marry' the Red Goddess. This is required by the Pavis Cult, as the first step before the Lunars can renew their application at the more convenient New Pavis Temple. Some cynics have suggested this is all part of a Pavic conspiracy of passive resistance to Lunar plans, but spokespeople from the Cult deny this completely. Beside the temple stands a battered mausoleum containing the burial vaults of Estangtang Griffin Rider, Opili and Jokat Pulos, three famous leaders of the Pavis people during the days of the nomad raids. One of the most remarkable features about this original Temple is its lack of a discernable door. On Holy Days, worshippers, led by the priests, walk in procession directly through its surface at the top of the stairs, near the crack made by the Great Rhino.

Main Gate

This is the chief access point to the city, the other gates having been blocked long ago. The two strong towers are connected by a double-wall, with a small room above. In the wall facing the Rubble are large double-gates of huge bronze-bound wooden slats, including a smaller postern gate with a small grill. Behind these is an enormous portcullis, creating a retaining area under the gate's huge arch. The Gate Guards have their own series of questions, which replace the Lunar paperwork that New Pavis offers. In fact, only Lunars must complete forms to enter here, often needing an hour or more to do so. All others who enter are greeted with a ritual challenge, typically something like: "Halt! What are you called and what is your business?" - "I am Jerod, son of Mornil and I have come to attend the market." - "Do you swear before Opili, our Protector, not to bring harm to the people and property of this city?" - "I so swear." - "Pass friend and hoist a drink for me." These ritual words draw the attention of the protective spirits attached to the Pavis Temple and make them aware of the visitor. (Despite the Main Gate commonly being perceived as the only access point, there is also entry to the settlement via at least one super-secret tunnel. This connects the sewers near Flintnail Mansions to an exit hidden by a concealed 'Flintnail door', half a key-mile away to the northwest.)

The Real Inn

Nailed to the wall outside this establishment is an old metal sign. The writing on it is regularly repainted, and reads in Trade and Pavic, "The oldest pub in Pavis." A smaller plaque on the wall inside also makes the claim that this was Balastor's favourite drinking establishment. Moran is the name of the Innkeeper, a Pavis Initiate who claims his ancestors have run the place since the time of Pavis

himself. The building certainly was some kind of hostelry before, and has been carefully restored. The food here is famous: Moran has contracts with Gedge and his hunters and prepares memorable dishes every day. Accommodation is reasonable, and it is the only proper drinking establishment in the Real City.

Flintnail Mansions

This large residence was taken over by dwarfs when the humans began to live above ground once again. They have walled most of the doors and windows, and only allow visitors into the main parlor area. It is here that they seal trade deals, and off the parlor is a wide corridor where the Rubble Trackers sometimes discuss missions with hopeful employers.

The Sculpture Garden

In their spare time, local youths have created a unique exhibition space here. On this derelict site, amidst the small and bedraggled trees, they have gathered bits of old statue, rusted and shattered metal, and sections of wood. From these they have fashioned makeshift sculptures and other indescribable installations, often painting sections of them in garish colors. This has proved an unlikely venue for dwarf and human co-operation, and several small pieces of unfathomable machinery have mysteriously appeared overnight, adding to the artistic jumble. Callous visitors have occasionally tried to steal these unusual items to sell elsewhere, discovering too late that the dwarfs maintain a constant watch, and that thieves must pay a high price in goods or services if they don't want to be evicted naked into the Rubble.

Jolanti Heights

This large housing block is amazingly well preserved. Some rooms on the second story, and most of those below this level, are still sound, although only a few have been patched up enough to be comfortably habitable. Some of the rooms are vast, easily the size of entire dwellings in certain of the poorer parts of New Pavis. One of the rooms here has been converted by local youths into a bad-weather sports hall. The architecture here and at Riverview Apartments remains the best example of (mostly) still-standing EWF buildings throughout the whole of Prax and Dragon Pass. At the back of Jolanti Heights stands a small roofed structure supported by pillars and open to the elements. Its local name is the "Temple of Winds", however it is not known to be an Orlanthi sacred site.

Riverview Apartments

Very similar to Jolanti Heights, just smaller. Another popular place with local residents, especially as its stable upper floor overlooks the Rubble: across Kakstan's Art Museum down to the River of Cradles. One of the Real City's permanently staffed watchposts is on the roof of this building. Whatever structure was originally between this building and the Watch HQ is completely gone except for the foundations.

South View

Another example of beautiful architecture, however in a much sadder state of repair than Riverview and Jolanti Heights. Its main point of interest is that it contains the Issaries Hostel known as the "Rubble Runners' Rest".



Captain Kline

Rubble Runners' Rest

Retired adventurer, and Issaries cultist, Sendrik Wideyes runs a cheap and cheerful series of cramped dormitories on the lower floors of this building. His prices are very generous for the Real City; however guests are expected to undertake chores as part payment, and may even stay for free, weeks at a time, if they enroll as official

helpers. (Sendrik can arrange a special permit for people he takes a shine to.) This hostel gets supplies via the regular convoys from New Pavis. Its main customers are adventurer groups passing through, and people staying over around market time. At any time during daylight hours, Sendrik may play for long periods on an unknown stringed instrument he picked up on his travels. Whilst some of his tunes touch the soul, others are considered an acquired taste.

The Law Courts

In great disrepair, although efforts are being made to reclaim some of the rooms.

The Entrance to the Drainage Tunnels

Below the city, dwarfs and humans long ago created a labyrinth of secret fortified caves and tunnels to protect them from nomad and troll depredations. These areas have entry points off the main drains. Only the city leaders and dwarf masons still regularly inspect these areas, in case they are ever needed again. The main drain is still partially used for its original purpose, and many latrines in the buildings above have been restored. The domestic cisterns do, however, require re-filling with buckets, as no aboveground piped water has functioned for centuries.

Headquarters of the Watch and the 'Real City Armed Escorts'

This large building has been fortified over the last decade, since retired mercenary Nervon Kline gathered the best of the local fighters and New Pavis lower-class adventurers to forge them into a respectable fighting force. Suspicious characters and thieves are held here, awaiting trial or deportation to New Pavis, depending on the severity of the offence. The Armed Escorts and the Watch are not one and the same, but are very much interlinked. Kline is now head of the Watch, and some of the Protectors always lead the supply convoys. The community's zebras are penned in the shell of the building next door.

The Old Town Hall

Gomor anx and his family and servants live in this formerly prestigious building that has been extensively restored. Many of the upper rooms are still exposed to the weather; however the ground floor and basement

Gomor anx the Wise - Mayor of Real City

The Mayor is elected by popular vote (all adult residents are required to vote), but must also be approved by the Temple. His duties are simple: to act as official spokesperson for the City, and to co-ordinate and organise the small committees required for important city decisions. Gomor anx is always willing to meet with residents to discuss any problems. He is both an Initiate of Pavis and of Issaries, and sometimes disagrees with High Priest Benderril as to the extent of concessions they should allow the Lunars.

Hero Wars: Negotiation 15w2, Pander to Voter 1w2, Administer City 10w, Initiate of Issaries 17, Initiate of Pavis 17, Communications Magic 7w, City magic 2w

Nervon Kline

Originally from Aggar, Nervon made Prax his home a long time ago, and doesn't talk about his past. Whilst a demanding employer, he is generous, and he has often provided temporary employment for reliable fellows, even adventurers who have found themselves stuck in the Rubble and taken shelter here in the Real City. He is an Initiate in the Cults of Humakt and Pavis (Opill), and has been for a long time, apparently once turning down the opportunity to take the test for Pavis 'Champion'. Kline commands the small but effective Real City Watch that conducts patrols and mans the walls, gate, and lookout posts. He also commands the Irregular force known as the Real City Armed Escorts, or RCAE.

Hero Wars: Close Combat 7w2 (dagger, sword and shield), Initiate of Pavis (Opill Subcult) 12, Initiate of Humakt 17, Secretive 13, Generous 19, Lead/Command Watch 3w, Brave 10w, Combat magic 17w.

Ginklzze the dwarf - Daughter of Pavis

Also a priest of Flintnall, he is believed to be the most senior dwarf living in the Rubble. Though he is rarely abroad in New Pavis these days, he and his closest dwarf colleagues (especially Karzad the Chief Mason) have a liking for the Real City, and can usually be seen at least once a week at the Real Inn. Like the Flintnall dwarfs in general, his comparatively sociable demeanor is strikingly unusual for the species.

Hovak the Morocanth

An officer of the Watch, he is a rarity in several ways: an aging morocanth, thumbed, and comfortable with humans. He is an extremely successful ex-adventurer, and is good friends with Nervon (who sponsored his appointment). Still a formidable warrior, he and Opus (the bound spirit in his broadsword) are stalwarts of internal security. Brought up on the Praxian plains, Hovak nevertheless eventually chose Orlanth as a cult that suited his ambitions and temperament. (Hovak is also an Initiate of Opill the Protector.) Despite his formidable appearance, he has been seen letting three or four human children ride through the sculpture garden on his back - when off-duty of course. Hovak is loyal to the Real City, but could be tempted onto an adventure of an impressively high quality (such as a Cradle coming down the river, or the need to recover Balastor's Axe before the Lunar Coders find it).

Hero Wars: Close Combat (sword and shield, spear and shield) 11w2, Combat Magic 9w, Awareness 14w, Initiate of Orlanth Adventurous 17, Initiate of Opill 17, Formidable appearance 15, Loyal to Real City 14, Likes kids 18, Knowledge of Real City geography 12, Broadsword (Rank 5 weapon, Bound spirit Opus: Sense Enemy 17)

Argan the Curator

During the day, Argan is often found at the New Pavis Knowledge Temple or expeditioning under heavy guard in the Rubble rather than the Museum. He has made study of the Rubble his life's work. Rather scatterbrained, Argan relies heavily on his own enormously convoluted

provide comfortable living, comparable to the best places in New Pavis.

Rubble Museum

Especially since the founding of New Pavis, adventurers have swapped unusual items for the cost of meals or accommodation. These have been supplemented by rare discoveries made by the RCAE whilst performing their duties outside the Real City walls. Two famous exhibits are here: a battered metal sig-

post informing the viewer in Trade and Old Pavis that Balastor's Barracks is only two key-miles to its right; and an enormous wooden fork the size of a man, said to have come from a Cradle. Visiting adventurers from New Pavis are often surprised that information they found hard to clarify in the larger city is clearly displayed here in the tabletop models. Museum staff are: Argan the Sage; his assistant Lorn; and Finrax, a dwarf artisan who helps create the impressive models.

The Old Traders' Hall

This building retains much of its original sculpted façade and Issaries Holy Symbols, and is considered one of the landmarks of the Real City. Families now live in the booths and rooms amongst the faded grandeur within.

The Market

Twice every season, on Waterday in both Harmony Week and Stasis Week, the Real City hosts a large market along this street. Here Mansiders, travelers, and New Pavisites gather to barter food, equipment and information, and the locals sell produce and items they have made. Markets are the only times that the City actively welcomes visitors, and many people from New Pavis attend, as much to experience the traditional culture as to buy anything. The unusual city pump is also situated here, and is in good working order. Apparently, long ago, every district of Pavis had one of these dwarf-designed items.

Transients' Shelter

This ruin is mostly protected from the weather, and has the added advantage of an exterior courtyard where a fire may be made if those using the shelter have brought their own wood, or can afford to buy some. The Watch requires penniless, suspect, or rowdy adventurer groups to stay here, if some emergency, or lack of discernment by the gate guard, means that they are allowed into the city at all.

Tower of Alchemy

A small group of Quicksilver and Lankhor Mhy cultists have taken over the lower three levels of this tower (the higher level being too damaged). With the occasional help of dwarven experts, they pursue their dangerous professional exploration away from Lunar rules and regulations. Once there was a fourth story labora-



Hovak of the Watch

tory, but they blew out one of its walls. The services of an alchemist are available for a very reasonable fee.

Sisko's Stables

The only private stables in the city. Sisko, a friendly ex-Zebra Rider, will stable most riding beasts (rhinos are barred, and all nomad mounts other than zebras cost extra). Usually a few zebras in reasonable condition are for sale, as well as standard riding gear. Animals are also penned on the open ground alongside the building.

Werrick's Store

Werrick is considered a genuine Real City relic. At 84 he is still a sharp-witted individual with dry humor and a thirst for imported wine. He's also an Issaries cultist with a formidable skill at striking bargains. His front store is fascinating enough, and some say he

has a cellar filled with bric a brac he can't bear to part with. Locals have a saying: "If you can't find it at Werrick's, you can't find it anywhere." He sells and trades everything from minor magical items (such as matrices), to simple traveler's gear, and can recount his memories of the day Dorasar and his forces arrived at the Big Rubble. Some adventurers correctly assume that Werrick's store is designed to take advantage of the, often dire, need for magical items, or the need for quickly gaining ready cash in exchange for spoils.

Lightbringer Shrines

This building was originally a theatre, or possibly a meeting hall of some kind. It was refitted soon after the arrival of Dorasar, when the Real City became a relatively safe place to live again. The overseeing Priest here is technically Riblin the Talker, a Lankhor Mhy Sage who is more likely to actually be at the Real Inn or the Tower of Alchemy. The only genuine full-time staff member is Cillandra, who is an Acolyte of Chalana Arroy. The basement of this building serves also as the Real City hospital, although for emergency cases, the healers must call on their Temple in New Pavis for aid. Each Lightbringer Deity has a small shrine here; however the Real City residents are primarily Pavis cultists, so visitors are the main users of these facilities.

The Watchpost

This small building is the informal meeting place for the night patrols to use during shift changes and special alerts.

The Old Gaol

The lower floor of this building is an all-weather meeting and trading place for the residents. Here they informally discuss matters of interest, barter goods, assign daily tasks, and distribute food from the public allotments as well as that brought from New Pavis. This local market takes place every morning except Godday and during the twice-seasonal city market.

The Drill Hall

The building is sheltered enough to provide cover in bad weather conditions. (Captain Kline and the other Protectors train the locals here in combat techniques for free.)

The House of the Grey Company

Inside this building (restored by the new members in the mid-late 1500s) powerful spirit guardians and wardings protect the Armory, Library and Treasury. Among the most valuable contents are the diaries of the original Company, which include rare lore from long ago. Members of the Company may sometimes be seen sparring, through the gates of the walled front yard.

Groups of Note

The Real City Watch

The full-time Watch consists almost entirely of Initiates of Opili, who are known as Protectors. Presently they number 49, including Nervon and Hovak. In an emergency they are able to call upon around 200 able-bodied city residents in a matter of minutes by blowing alarm horns. The citizens are all reasonably well trained, as practice at arms is required of all residents that are able. If the city walls are breached, above-ground defence will be limited, as Watch leaders are trained to lead a fighting withdrawal underground through trapped entrances. All dwarfs available also aid in any defence, and are rumoured to have a variety of bizarre weapons stored at Flintnail Mansions for this purpose.

A squad of ten 'Protectors' staffs the Gatehouse at all times. They admit visitors first into the retaining area between the gate and the portcullis, if it is too dangerous to leave them outside whilst they are being questioned. Often the guards include two or three dwarfs armed with magically-assisted repeating crossbows, or with blunderbusses and other oddities if there is reason to suspect trouble. The guards are required to submit all suspicious visitors to thorough assessment by questions and magical detections. This has led to some harrowing delays for those seeking sanctuary from pursuing forces, but the guards always know what they are doing. Sometimes, members of the Watch will sally forth and rescue groups under attack who have almost reached the Real City. They will never sacrifice themselves pointlessly, but if Hovak is duty commander he can rarely restrain himself from attacking any Chaotic scum that dare to disturb the peace. Captain Kline also hates to see trolls attacking people almost as much as he despises human bandits.

The Real City Armed Escorts (RCAE)

A fairly recent addition to the Real City population, Kline created the RCAE. These warriors are recruited from a variety of local sources for contracts that may be renewed season by season. All who are not at least Initiates of Pavis or Opili must swear strong oaths of loyalty under Kline's watchful eye. Duties are simple: they are contracted to protect the twice-weekly supply convoy to and from New Pavis, as well as ensure the safety of important visitors journeying between New Pavis and the Real City. They are also available for hire on other expeditions into the Rubble, but Kline may veto any jobs he thinks

are too dangerous or disorganised. Their pay is low, but they receive regular training, and food and shelter are free. The Real City gains the benefit of extra warriors for its protection and prestige, and profits from the occasional mission that finds something of worth in the Rubble.

The Grey Company

Originally this Company was a band of dilettante adventurers which formed way back in the mid 800s. They roamed the River Valley and the Wastes, and later helped protect Old Pavis from the nomads. When the Troll invasion drove everyone underground, the Company bravely fought on. They survived as heroic defenders and a scourge of the trolls, but suffered inevitable casualties, and eventually the Pavis Temple was given joint custody of their resources. Sadly the Pavis Cult became the sole owner, when all remaining members vanished in the Rubble around 1370. The Pavis Cult honored their requests and kept their records and special items safe inside the temple until the Company could be reformed, which it was in 1564. Since then, they have waxed and waned in fortunes, mostly acting as a superior band of independent Rubble adventurers, guides and bodyguards. Currently there are 11 members, and their leader, Skren Vester, is both an Initiate of Pavis and a Wind Lord of Orlanth Adventurous.



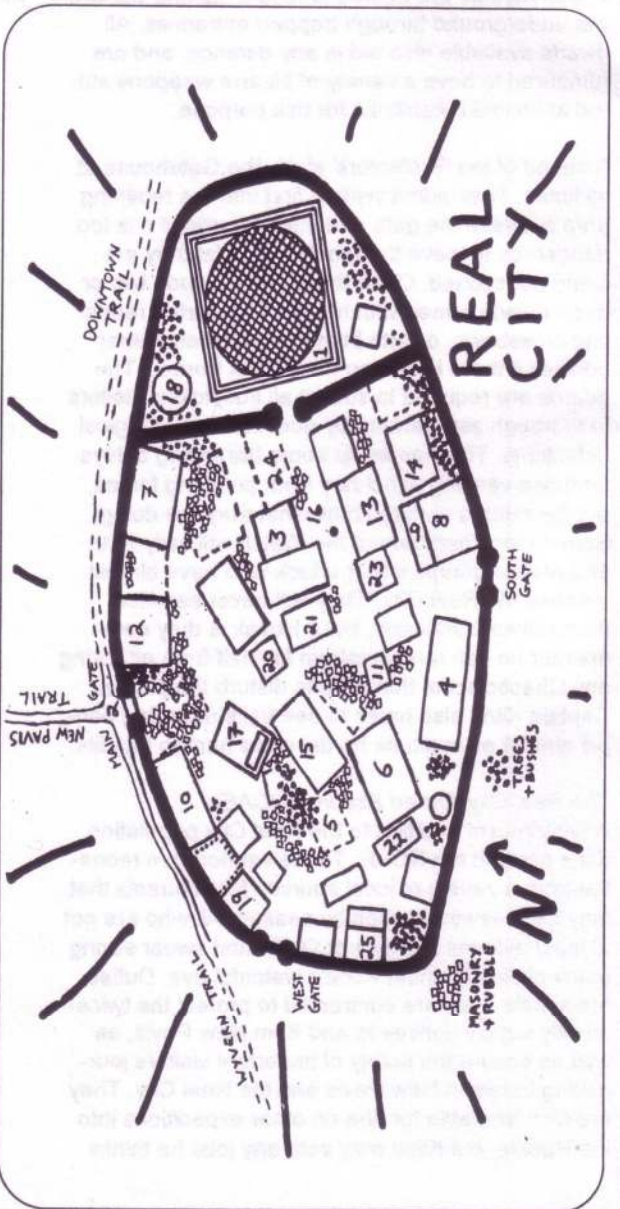
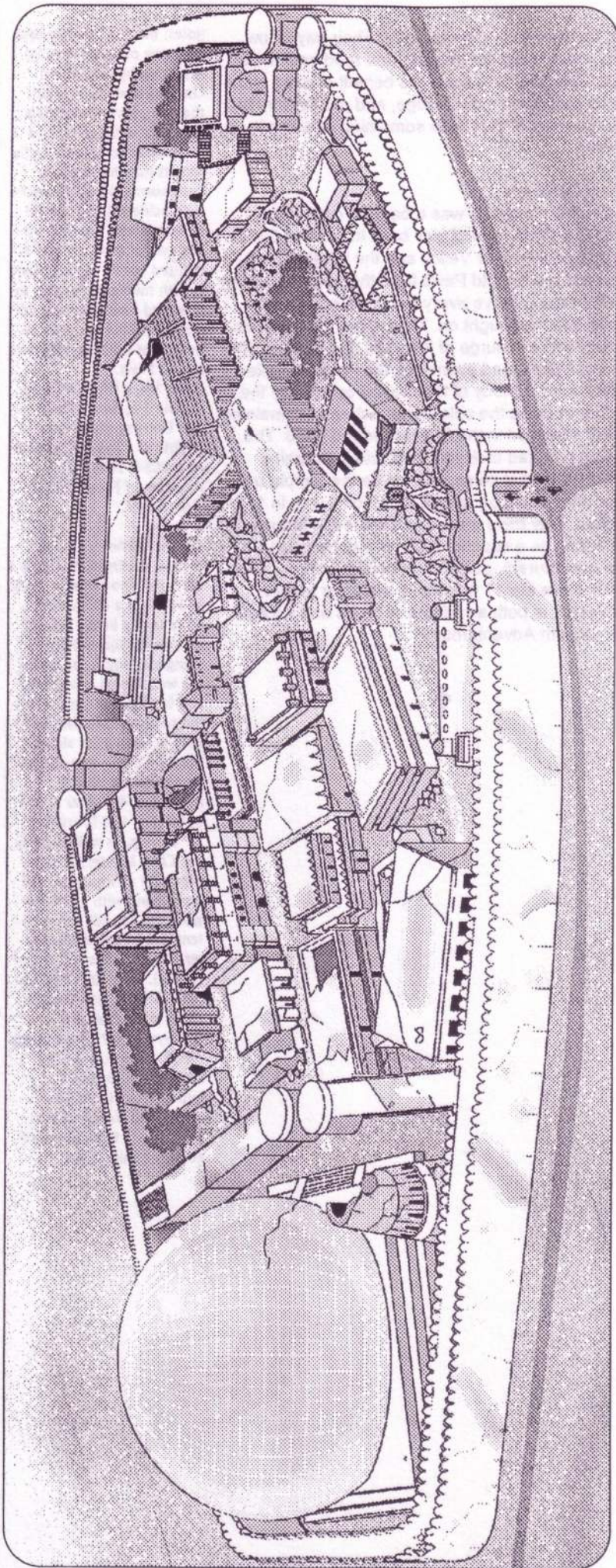
notes; however people with immense patience may be rewarded by revelations. Unfortunately almost half the time, his knowledge is wrong or misleading, and even when correct he easily forgets how he came to such assumptions. His name is coincidental and has no connection to the troll trader cult. If this similarity is pointed out he always reacts with mild amusement, as if he had never considered it before. He is actually an Initiate of Lankhor Mhy and also of Pavis.

Hero Wars: Knowledge of Rubble 17, Scatterbrain 14, Literacy magic 6w, Initiate of Pavis 10, Initiate of Lankhor Mhy 17, Member of New Pavis LM Temple 19.

Gedge Firebow

A local celebrity, Gedge is a Sartarite who came to Pavis in 1604 as a child. After adventuring in the Rubble for several years, often alongside Hovak, he became well known as a guide and hunter. He was permitted to move into the Real City as reward for aiding the RCAE on some dangerous missions. Gedge instructs in the finer points of hunting and in archery for a living, as well as being the Chief Hunter. A crack shot with a Firearrow, and mean hand with a broadsword, he can still often be tempted to guide adventurer parties (for a stiff fee of course). He is an Initiate of both Orlanth and Odayla.

Hero Wars: Stalk 4w, Archery 18w2, Hunt magic 14w2 (firearrow feat), Initiate of Odayla 17, Initiate of Orlanth 13, Sword and shield combat 19w, teach 12w, knowledge of the Rubble 8w.



The Real City

- | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| 1) Pavis Temple | 13) The Old Town Hall |
| 2) Main Gate | 14) Rubble Museum |
| 3) The Real Inn | 15) The Old Traders' Hall |
| 4) Flintmail Mansions | 16) The Market |
| 5) The Sculpture Garden | 17) Transients' Shelter |
| 6) Jolanti Heights | 18) Tower of Alchemy |
| 7) Riverview Apartments | 19) Sisko's Stables |
| 8) South View | 20) Werrick's Store |
| 9) Rubble Runners' Rest | 21) Lightbringer Shrines |
| 10) The Law Courts | 22) The Watchpost |
| 11) The Entrance to the Drainage Tunnels | 23) The Old Gaol |
| 12) Headquarters of the Watch and the 'Real City Armed Escorts' | 24) The Drill Hall |
| | 25) The House of the Grey Company |

Zebra Fort and the Stockade

by Peter Johansson, Sten Åhrman, and Ian Thomson

Acknowledgements

Greg Stafford for clarifying the Fort's history.

Background information from "Pavis: Threshold to Danger" and "Big Rubble" (both © 1983, Chaosium Inc.)

Daniel Fahey for editing assistance.

Roger McCarthy for proofing assistance.

History

Zebra Fort was built by dwarfs and humans during Opili's Fortification phase, and was one of the main human settlements (alongside the Pavis Temple community, Mani's Fort, Angle Fort, and Opili's Fort). It successfully withstood nomad attacks for around three centuries, before eventually falling to trolls. Records from the troll-domination period are scarce, but historians believe that trolls used the fort as a base for raids on both human settlements and rivalling clans of their own race. After the Dragonewts' Dream, a combined force of dwarfs and humans drove the trolls out and re-established it as a human settlement.

When Dorasar founded New Pavis, he brought his friend Olgkarth Arrow-eye who had a dream to re-establish the Zebra Riders in Prax. With Dorasar's help, Olgkarth and his housecarls climbed the walls of Zebra Fort one night and took control. Olgkarth became leader of the 'Zebra Tribe', and his family and kin prospered until the coming of the Lunars in 1610. They chose to fight the invaders, and lost, although many escaped into the Rubble. The weakened ruling family of the Zebra folk was driven out of the fort by the Lunar-sponsored bandit-leader Hargran the Dirty, who then proclaimed himself "King of Pavis". Hargran originally staffed the Fort not only with his own gang members, but recruited also a number of local and foreign mercenaries to bolster the numbers.

In the last two or three years particularly, Hargran seems to be changing his image. The more violent members of his former gang have been dismissed from service, and many of the new recruits are loyal Pavic mercenaries. Hargran is even approaching the Pavis Cult, seeking official Pavic acceptance. Around the fort, as this section of the Rubble gradually becomes safer, a small local community is arising, and Hargran long ago gave up his claim to kingship.

Some local historians speculate that Zebra Fort is built in the same spot as Joraz Kyrem's 'Zebra Castle'. These ideas have contributed to several rumours that there are great riches to be discovered under the fort.

Location

Zebra Fort stands next to the eastern end of the Zebra Bridge, to which it controls access. The fort is easily reached by travelling through Manside from New Pavis, or by boat along the river. Although it is on the east bank of the Zola Fel, the fort and the surrounding 'Zebra Ruins' are considered to be part of Manside.

Appearance

The fort is a well-built structure, and by far the most impressive in the Zebra Ruins. Like all remaining buildings in this area its stonework is striped in black and white, like a zebra. It has several sturdy towers and a well-protected corral at the rear. The ruins closest to the fort have been cleared to prevent attackers from using them as cover, but many of the larger buildings slightly further towards the river have been repaired and re-occupied in recent years.

The Fort Buildings

Inside the fort, there are seven major buildings, and all of them are striped. Unlike the original structures in Zebra Ruins, most buildings inside the fort are painted stone from the North Quarry and are not built of the easily identifiable black and white marble. The exceptions include the outer walls, and the tower that the dwarfs built to their own plan. This has led to the conclusion that only the walls and the tower are original buildings, and that other masons than the dwarfs have built the rest. The difference in quality of construction gives credence to this theory.

The Walls

The walls of the fort are over six meters in height, making them impressive to visitors. However, the entrance to the fort has at some point been replaced, with a structure that is probably not as reliable as the original gate. Hargran always has warriors manning the walls and gate.

The Zebra Bridge

One of the few original features of the old city that is still standing, it is a tribute to dwarf workmanship. At the base of the bridge are two buildings, the smaller immediately next to the bridge, and the larger some meters away. The closest to the bridge is an original construction being of the same style as the bridge and virtually indestructible, while the larger one is much more recent. This larger gatehouse has an alarm bell that is used by the guards if there is an attack. Hargran has a squad of the Fort Guard stationed by the bridge at all times whose job is to keep it under surveillance and collect toll from its users. The toll has, since Hargran's takeover, been one silver per leg for each of those who cross (i.e. two silvers per man, and four per beast). Residents from Zebraside, and the areas of Manside closest to the other end of the bridge, come to the fort to visit the Tavern, for Pavis Ceremonies, and to engage the services of the Fort's craftspeople. Poor locals from across the river are exempt from the bridge toll, but must be registered with the PRG. (Anyone who can afford a zebra is not considered to be poor.) All local Pavis Cultists are also exempted from the toll if attending Pavis ceremonies at the Fort.

The Main Gates

These gates mostly stand open during daylight, and are firmly closed at night.

Menial Quarters

All the servants and staff at the fort are bunked here in relative squalor (although conditions here beat Badside, hands down, and are certainly an improvement on an average Manside residence). Probably the worst aspect of living in this building is the overcrowding caused by the creation of the fort's tavern.

The Guard Barracks

A very basically equipped building. Apart from the "Blades" and the rest of the Guard, various skilled servants also dwell here.

Politics in Zebra Fort

The Yelomans

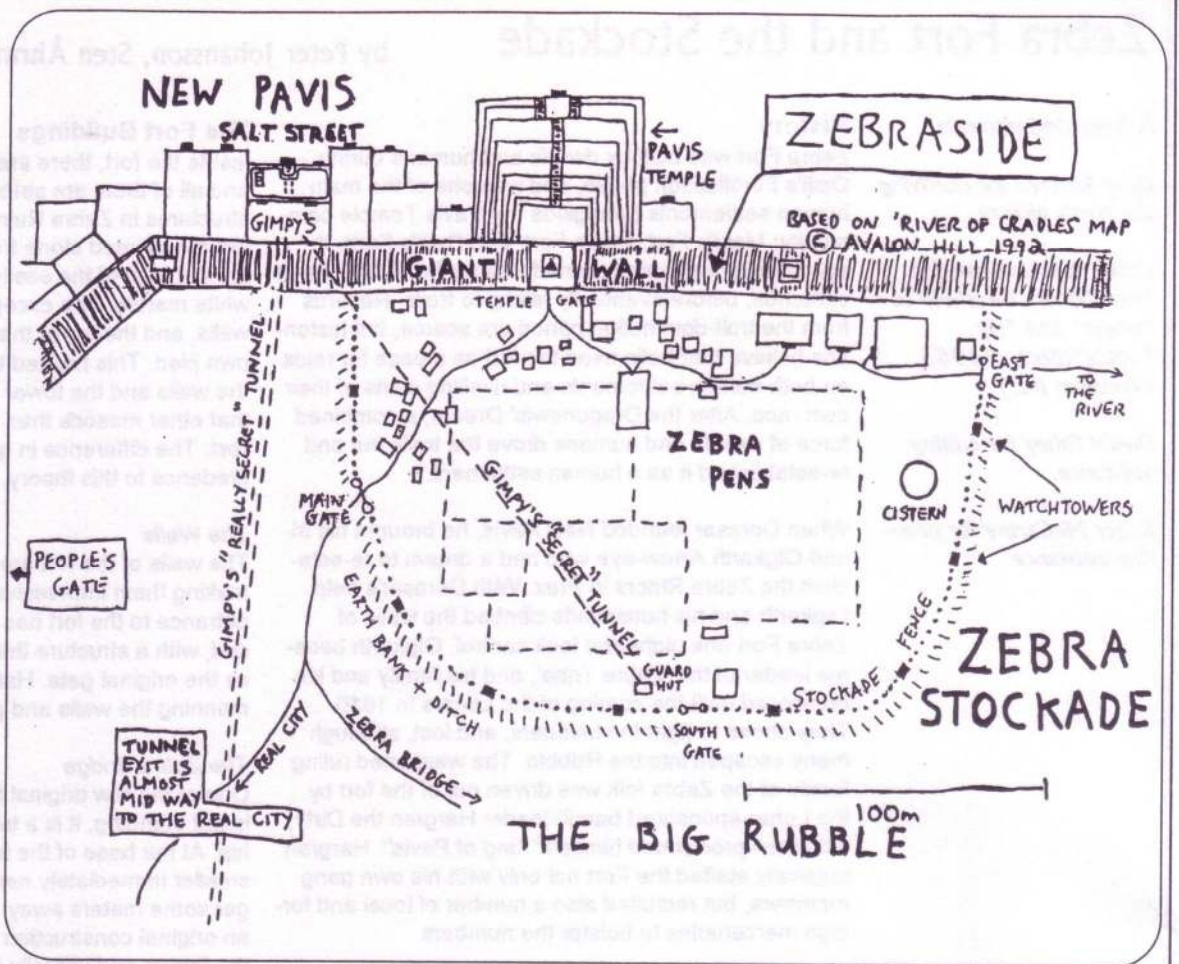
These warrior women, whose Temple is close by, sometimes practice defensive sweeps with the Cavalry Patrols or the Silver Blades, and also sometimes with the Zebra Ruins militia. They are not too happy with the attention Azera gets from the "Vixens", however. They also do not like the Lunar domination of the fort, but feel responsibility towards the civil population in Zebra Ruins. Their contacts with officials at the fort are strained at best, although they traditionally attend celebrations there on Pavis Holy Days. Morganeth the Priestess, and many others of her followers, are also Pavis Initiates. Cyrilius Harmonius nonetheless dislikes the Yelomans intensely, due to Morganeth's powerful personality often over-riding his wishes, and he has claimed they are a disruptive influence in Zebraside. He makes it no secret that he wants their temple to be closed down, but is not supported by any other Pavis Priest.

Hargran's Ambitions

What Hargran wants with his position at Zebra Fort is not commonly known. It seems clear, however, that he is slowly building himself a power-base in the Rubble. Most people still see him as a common criminal who, with the help of the despicable Lunars, manages to hold on to a position of power he should not have. This is the attitude that Hargran has been trying to change in the last five years or so, and not totally without success (even the officials of the Real City at least acknowledge his envoys). Furthermore, for every year that passes, there are more and more people coming to live in the ruins surrounding the fort, who rely on Hargran to protect them from the raids of trolls, nomads, criminals and chaos.

The Pavis Royal Guard

Hargran is also slowly reshaping the PRG stationed at the fort, into a more civilised organization, kicking the scum out and letting honest men in. To assist him with this task he hand-picked Hubert as the commander of the Zebra cavalry, although most of Hargran's dealings with him are through his friends in the "Old Gang".



The Tower

The tallest structure in the fort is the tower, a three-story building just inside the entrance. The height makes it possible to scan the surrounding area in every direction from the roof. Hargran always keeps a lookout here.

The third story of the tower holds Hargran's scrupulously maintained quarters. These have only basic furnishings, and no decorations apart from some original murals, which depict scenes from ancient Pavis in fading colours. Morkro Smellgood and Nesca the Sleepy also have their rooms here. The second floor of the tower contains rooms for storage of religious items, and also the quarters of Birtel the Ragged and Azera Shorthair.

The ground floor harbours the Pavis shrine. It was lavishly renovated by Olgarth and his kin and is the most (some would say the only) beautiful room in the fort. The Pavis Priest Cyrilius Harmonius holds regular ceremonies here for the locals, the most prominent attendees being Hargran and Hubert the Short. Harmonius is a known Lunar ally, and as such is finding it difficult to obtain advancement through the inner hierarchy of his cult. Consequently he is taking full advantage of his responsibility for the zebra people, and trying to establish a respected 'parish' amongst the local Mansiders. He is tolerated by local Pavis worshippers, although Initiates of Opili often travel all the way to Real City to worship, especially on major holy days.

In the basement is a currently inactive shrine of Opili. It is a large black and white marble block, inscribed with Opili's runes. The shrine still detects as highly

magical and is said to once have had magical connections with the outer walls. Guards are always posted here, as stairs lead down to ancient underground chambers that are off-limits to regular personnel, and nearby is a blocked up arch said to connect to the secret dwarf tunnels.

The Tavern

Hargran's latest addition to the fort is this tavern. He made the space here by moving the fort's servants and some of the storage into one building (3). The tavern has yet to be given a proper name and serves as a drinking locale for locals and the inhabitants of the fort. It also provides beds for visitors who can afford Hargran's inflated prices. Lately, the tavern has attracted attention from fortune hunters and adventurers preferring to sleep in the safety of the fort rather than in the Rubble, despite the high prices on food, drink and beds. Such outsiders who want to take advantage of this service must leave their weapons and armour at the gatehouse.

Lunar Barracks

Whichever Lunar platoon has been assigned to Rubble patrol this Season is bunked here. It is the most well-maintained building in the whole fort, as the soldiers can afford luxuries from New Pavis, and their officers refuse to live in squalor. Here is the spacious office of Zartax Goldentread, Zartax's personal suite, and the fort's only meeting room. In this building also live various Lunar servants and comfort women, and the fort's holding cells are here in the basement.

The Barracks of the Zebra Patrol

This building is another which is only basically equipped, and even the former bandits who used to work for Hargran are not treated to any luxuries. Only the officers have private rooms, and even they share with each other. Just inside the main door is the small office of Hubert the Short. Also housed here are various family members of the soldiers.

The Stable

For security, the zebras are usually brought into the fort overnight, via a tunnel through the adjacent watchtower. It is a single-roomed building, giving some protection from the weather. The turfed roof and its wooden supports give a feeling of natural shelter that soothes the zebras, which prefer open areas and are at unease inside buildings. The majority of the patrolmen based here ride the sterile cavalry zebra, although Hargran and a few of the officers each have an impressive war zebra reserved for personal use. Around fifty of these animals are stabled here at any one time.

The Corral

The outdoor stables and corral allow the zebras to be exercised in safety. A solid palisade fence, and an exterior ditch, protect the corral.

The fort also has its own smithy, used for all sorts of metalwork and repairs. This building is situated in front of the stable, and Malan the Smith is in charge. Against the fort walls are also workshops for leather- and woodworking.

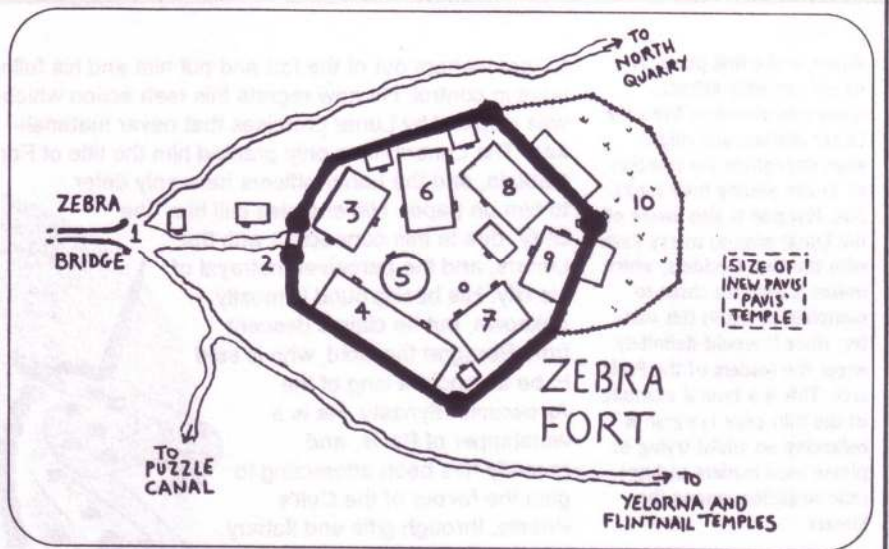
Beneath the Ground

Under the fort exist several spacious areas. These were apparently originally built as storage facilities, and as shelters for the residents of the fort and its surroundings during attacks. The shelters were also used as a last resort for retreating troops in case of invasion. Hargran apparently uses them mostly for storing food and equipment. The entry to the underground area is located in the tower, and these basements were once connected to the dwarf tunnels. This tunnel was blocked by the dwarfs when trolls took over the fort long ago, and was re-opened in co-ordination with Olgkath's attack, to allow dwarf commandos to assist in the take-over. The tunnel was blocked again when the Lunars invaded. Hargran has the old entrance constantly guarded, wary of the connections between the dwarfs and the former occupants.

The Surroundings

The inhabited buildings outside the walls are mainly located between the fort and the river. Only a small number of reasonably intact houses stand close by, and these zebra-striped marble buildings are inhabited by the most prominent of the non-fort dwellers, such as the leaders of the militia in Zebra Ruins. Around 250 people live here, under the protection of the Fort.

The Inhabitants of Zebra Fort and the Ruins
More than 300 people live inside Zebra Fort, although a significant number are out on patrols during the day, or working in the fields and vegetable patches near by. Inside the fort, the residents



are divided more or less evenly between non-combatants and military personnel. Although the inhabitants of Zebra Fort often get lumped together, there are actually four main groups: Hargran and the surviving members of his old gang; more recent recruits from the local population; a mercenary group called the Silver Blades; and the Lunar platoon. (Each group, other than the Lunars, also contains members who have family residing at the fort.) All non-Lunar combatants work either in the Fort Guard, or amongst the Zebra Patrols.

The Pavis Royal Guard (PRG) is the collective official name of the non-Lunar forces under Hargran's command. It was originally a Lunar created force of local warriors that replaced the Zebra Cavalry (now known as the Pavis Survivors) who resisted the Lunar occupation. There are three branches, two of which (the Fort Guard, and the Zebra Patrols) are based at Zebra Fort. The third branch (the New Pavis watch) is usually seen as an independent entity and is rarely identified any more as being part of the PRG.

Senior Officers: 8
Fort Guard: 60 (25 of Hargran's original bandits/mercenaries, 20 original Silver Blades, 15 Pavic recruits)
Zebra Patrols: 88 (34 of Hargran's original bandits/mercenaries, 28 Lunar cavalymen, 26 Pavic recruits)
Artisans: 9
Apprentices: 7
Servants: 36
Family members (inc. children): 87

Hargran the Dirty and his comrades

Hargran only considers four people in the fort to be totally trustworthy: Azera Shorthair, Birtel the Ragged, Morkro Smellgood and Nesca the Sleepy. They are the four surviving officers from his original gang, and are all combat veterans holding positions as officers in the Fort Guard. What they say goes, in regards to the PRG and non-military personnel in the fort. Only the Lunars and the Silver Blades are outside their direct control. They still socialise with other original gang members at the fort, but consider none of these to be their equals.

Hargran the Dirty

Hargran is the current ruler of Zebra Fort, who proclaimed himself "King of Pavis" after the Lunars drove the

Zebra Fort

- 1) The Zebra Bridge
- 2) The Main Gates
- 3) Menial Quarters
- 4) The Guard Barracks
- 5) The Tower
- 6) The Tavern
- 7) Lunar Barracks
- 8) The Barracks of the Zebra Patrol
- 9) The Stable
- 10) The Corral

The Lunars

The Lunar force at the fort is currently only a potential problem for Hargran. As long as they are here, for reasons of maintaining discipline (according to Lunar command), he rightfully believes that he will not appear threatening to the Lunar administration in New Pavis. Meanwhile, he can work on strengthening his position in the area without risking the involvement of the Lunars. The only cloud in his sky regarding the Lunar platoon is the ambitious and suspicious sub-commander Trusln dal-Martalton, who Hargran tries to keep in as good a mood as possible.

The Pavis Cult

Hargran's real problems lie outside the internal politics of the fort. He still has not gained any larger amount of trust among the local leaders of the Real City, Mani's Fort or New Pavis. To help things along in that direction, he is currently thinking of reactivating the shrine of Opill at the fort. What makes such an action problematic is that this would not be appreciated by the Lunar administration, since they were the force behind closing the

shrine in the first place. It would certainly attract unwanted attention from the Lunar leaders, and might even strengthen the position of Trusin among their ranks. But, Hargran is also aware of the Lunar plan to marry Pavis with the Red Goddess, which makes it hard for them to complain or act in this matter, since it would definitely anger the leaders of the Pavis cult. This is a typical example of the thin edge Hargran is balancing on whilst trying to please local leaders and not raise suspicion among the Lunars.

The Pavis Survivors

Another problem is with the Pavis Survivors outlaw gang, and the former ruling family of Zebra Fort. Although they hardly constitute a military threat to the fort, they still have a lot of influence in the Rubble, and are the main reason why the tainted reputation of "Hargran the Dirty" is so hard to wash away.

Sarkan's Gang

Sarkan, the current "owner" of the Old Mint, is more and more becoming a burden for Hargran's plans to gain sympathy among the population in Manside. Being associated with a relatively powerful criminal gang is not something that looks good in the eyes of honest people, i.e. the same people that Hargran eventually must win over to gain political legitimacy. Unfortunately, the Lunars still have their uses for Sarkan, and insist that Hargran maintain relations. Lately, Sarkan has become somewhat of an economic burden as well, after some very bad raids which cost him many zebras. Hargran has been forced to compensate for these, since they are an essential part of Sarkan's operations.

Financial Concerns

Economy is maybe Hargran's most acute problem. Direct sources of income are from taxes in Zebra Ruins, the toll at Zebra Bridge, and the profit from the tavern. A larger income is the levy unwillingly paid to him by the breeders in Zebraaside for every animal sold. The single largest source of income comes, however, from the Lunars. They pay Hargran money for the stationing of troops at the fort, and also for services performed by the Silver Blades

former owners out of the fort and put him and his followers in control. He now regrets this rash action which was inspired by Lunar promises that never materialised. The Lunars have only granted him the title of Fort Captain, and the Lunar officers here only defer to him on paper. His enemies call him "the Dirty" due to this connection with the Lunars, and the perceived betrayal of his city. His background is mostly unknown, but he claims descent from Baragrat the Bold, who is said to be an ancient king of the Arrowsmith dynasty. He is a worshipper of Pavis, and recently has been attempting to gain the favour of the Cult's Priests, through gifts and flattery.

Over the last few years, Hargran has become more reclusive towards strangers, and Morkro has conducted most meetings with visitors to the fort.

According to stories told by those who have met him, Hargran looks troubled these days and his behaviour can be somewhat absent-minded. Hargran is still an excellent fighter with his axe and shield, but rarely engages in any kind of combat these days, apart from the occasional sparring with some of his closest followers. Few people know that Hargran's grandfather was the commander of Zebra Fort when Dorasar arrived, or that he was slain by Olgarth.

Azera Shorthair

Azera is a woman who keeps her hair closely cropped to her skull in order to appear more formidable. She is a Humakt initiate, and would probably qualify as a Sword if she tried. She, however, keeps very little contact with the temple in Pavis; apart from occasional required duties. Azera has a great appetite for men, but has no urge to commit towards anyone. Handsome male visitors easily make contact with Azera, and with smooth talk she might reveal secrets about Zebra Fort. However, if she suspects that she has been taken advantage of, she becomes furious and proves to be a formidable foe. She often trains with the militia in Zebra Ruins, and also coaches the "Vixens", a local gang of teenage girls that she has sympathy for. Because of her great interest in men, and her involvement with the Vixens, she has a frosty relationship with the Yelornans. They see her as a bad example for the young women in Zebra Ruins. She rarely uses her shield in combat, preferring to rely on her blades and her dodge skill. She has a peculiar habit of singing in a low voice in combat, but she claims it helps her focusing. Humakt has forbidden her to drink alcohol.

Birtel the Ragged

Birtel is a man who appears to have come from Badside if judged by his clothing. Rumour holds it that he has never bought any clothes while living in the Pavis area and that he replaces his attire with garments from foes he kills on expeditions in the Rubble.

He is a quiet man, possibly of Sartarite origin, who doesn't mix much with others apart from his friends in the "Old Gang". Because of his appearance, most inhabitants of the fort and its surroundings avoid him as well. He is an experienced combat veteran who often leads smaller scouting expeditions with soldiers from the PRG into the Rubble. He is infamous for his cruelty in combat, a trait that has put him in trouble concerning his cult membership in Humakt several times, though never quite enough to become excommunicated. Birtel's fighting technique is a two-sword combo.

Morkro Smellgood

Morkro is a humorous guy, quick with a joke or a funny comment. He is 'friends'

with almost everyone he meets, but still keeps a distance from those outside the "Old Gang". He is the type of guy you could talk to for hours and still never learn anything about. His nickname comes from a true story he occasionally tells, which involves an incident at an Uleria temple in his youth. His thin appearance belies a surprising strength that often makes his foes misjudge him in a fight. Morkro acts publicly as a Pavis cultist, but his primary allegiance is really to Lanbril, something that is not even known by the others in the "Old Gang". The information Morkro has access to in Pavis is very important to Hargran, and once even helped stop an assassination attempt.

Nesca the Sleepy

Nesca has gained his name from the sleepy look given by an old scar that hinders him from fully opening his eyes. He is very large, and was once a bison-riding Storm Bull initiate, but he left both the cult and his tribe many years ago. When in a fight, he still goes into typical Storm Bull battle fury, making him a formidable adversary. Under normal conditions, he is the total opposite of his fighting self. He is extremely helpful and often assists in the daily lives of the inhabitants in Zebra Ruins. Because of this, he is the most well liked person of the "Old Gang", among the civilians.



A resident of the Zebra Ruins

The Fort Guard

There are two groups within the Fort Guard: the original bandits, and the Silver Blades. The "Blades" have not automatically accepted the former bandits of the Guard into their ranks, and both groups tend to act as separate units. The main duty of these groups is patrolling the Fort itself, and the immediate vicinity, and guarding expeditions across Manside. Occasionally, Hargran hires the Silver Blades to traders, and others, who can't find any other suitable protection service in the Pavis area. When travelling any distance from the Fort, the officers in both factions ride zebras.

The Silver Blades

A mercenary group of 35 experienced men and women of mixed origin and religious backgrounds. They stand under the leadership of Taborg who takes his orders directly from Hargran. Their name comes from the emblem all of them wear, a silver sword on a blue background. Originally consisting of less than twenty members, they arrived in Pavis in 1615. They were soon recruited by the Lunars to form the backbone of the Guard at Zebra Fort because of the perceived lack of discipline amongst Hargran's bandits. Since then, the original, and replacement, mercenaries all consider themselves "Silver Blades", even though many of their number are now locals.

Taborg the Esrolian

Taborg has led the Silver Blades for more than ten years in several successful campaigns, and earned the respect of his "Blades" on the battlefield. In accordance with his name, he indeed comes from Esrolia, but neither shows any particular loyalty to his country, nor any open dislike towards the Lunars. This has led to speculations that he is actually an Esrolian outcast.

Taborg is a harsh looking, well-built middle-aged man. He favours physical expertise above mental and magical skills; something shared by his followers in various degrees. His attitude makes it easy for weaponmasters to befriend him, while this is almost impossible for shamans, scholars and magicians. If the Rubble were not considered such a terrible posting, it is possible that the Lunars would not let an Esrolian (even an outcast) hold authority.

The Zebra Cavalry

The current commander of this force is Hubert the Short (a nickname he gained long before the arrival of Sor-Eel). Under him are four sub-commanders, leading squads of about fifteen warriors each. Unlike the Fort Guard, Hubert has forged both the new recruits and the former bandits under his charge into a single disciplined unit. Even so, the PRG cavalry still has a bad reputation, although this is slowly improving. They are still looked upon with hostile eyes by supporters of the former leading family of the Zebra folk. The recruitment of competent and civilised personnel, and the dismissal of the dregs goes on under the approving eyes of Hargran, and is part of his long-term plan to improve his reputation and increase his political power. Hubert is one of many from among the Zebra folk who have rejoined the PRG in the years following

Hargran's taking command of the fort. He has proved himself to be a competent leader, and quickly climbed in rank. Hubert didn't much care for Hargran when he joined the PRG, but has slowly come to respect him as a competent leader and good diplomat (although he still mistrusts him as a Lunar appeaser).

Hubert is tough but fair, a man in his late thirties who demands good performance from all under his command. A person not living up to his standards is kicked out of his force fast. Hubert is also of generous and perceptive nature and gives the warriors who serve under him both time and attention.

His style of leadership has earned him the respect of his troops, who, if tested, would prove to be more loyal to him than to Hargran. This is something Hargran is well aware of, but doesn't worry much over, since he has judged Hubert to be an honest and loyal man who would never betray someone he has sworn allegiance to.

Hubert is a proud worshipper of Opili, and often promotes the idea that the Opili shrine beneath the tower should be reactivated. This has put him in conflict with Trusin dal-Martalton, who sees such a development as a threat to his own ambitions of proving to the Lunars that he has full control of the fort. (Sor-Eel has in any case left a secret standing order that the shrine should be kept inactive.)

The Lunars

The Lunars use Zebra Fort as a base-camp for their patrols inside the Rubble, which was one of the conditions in the agreement with Hargran when they first helped him to power. They still ride horses, which their patrols obvious to identify from a distance.

A complement of thirty or so Lunar soldiers, divided into three patrols, lives at the fort at any given time. They are part of the regular Lunar army stationed in Pavis. Each group of soldiers has a corporal who commands them, and they will transfer out together with their squad when these duties are over. The rotation of forces makes the soldiers and their junior officers disengaged from the every-day life of the fort and they mostly keep to themselves when off duty. Only the commander and the sub-commander are stationed at Zebra Fort for any longer periods of time. The current patrols at the fort are Silver Shield Peltasts under the command of Cartania del-Myskarfanx (F), Quatzina Robrebbon (F), and Fangul Eiskolli (M).

Zartax Goldenthread

Zartax is a junior Triarch, and the current commander of the Lunars stationed at Zebra Fort. He officially lives in one of the few decent apartments inside the fort, but is rarely seen there. He prefers to remain in the city of New Pavis and leaves most of his duties to his sub-commander Trusin. Zartax comes from a Kostaddi family, and regards his position in Prax as a cruel punishment for something his father was involved in. Basically, he wants to go home, and since that will not happen for several years yet, he tries to live the best life he can among the uncivilised barbarians of Prax, enjoying the relative comfort of New Pavis.

(unofficially also by Sarkan's gang). Sarkan also pays Hargran a kind of interest on the money Hargran "invests" in his "organisation". Altogether, the economy of the fort is in balance, but there is not enough profit to leave any room for investments that would increase Hargran's popularity. Since criminal activity would counteract his intention to gain popularity, this is no longer an option. Hargran is therefore currently looking for new and alternative sources of income, including considering re-opening the blocked doors to the deeper chambers beneath the Fort.

Rumours about Zebra Fort

Badside: Hargran and Sarkan are not cousins by blood. This is a misconception due to "cousins" being a slang expression in Badside meaning criminal associates.

General: Hargran is digging for treasures in the ruins of Zebra Castle, located under Zebra Fort.

General: Hargran wants the tavern in Zebra Fort to be called "the Zebra Inn", but everyone insists on calling it "the Tavern".

General: The economy of the fort is in such a sorry state that Hargran has run out of resources.

Humakt temple and weapon-masters: Some of the Humakti in Pavis are trying to get Birtel the Ragged excommunicated.

Humakt temple and weapon-masters: Birtel the Ragged uses Blade Venom.

New Pavis: Trusin dal-Martalton has problems with his drinking habits and can easily be bribed with a bottle of fine wine or liquor.

New Pavis: The toll at Zebra Bridge varies, and newcomers get over charged if they are not careful.

New Pavis: A small band of enterprising newtlings has opened a ferry service just north of the Puzzle Canal. Their fee is half that collected on Zebra Bridge, but they do not transport beasts. Hargran and his men raided them twice last season without success, and expeditions led by Hubert always fall even to find a trace of these wily criminals.

The Real City (Real Inn): The beer served at the tavern in Zebra Fort is thinned out with water, or (more abusively) llama urine.

Zebra Fort: Hargran aims to become the first Champion of Pavis since Balastor.

Zebra Fort: Birtel the Ragged and Azera Shorthair have been planning to raid a minor troll clan on the outskirts of Troll lands, but Hargran has forbidden them to go through with it.

Zebra Fort: The reason that Hargran does not agree to Birtel's and Azera's ideas for a troll raid is that he hopes to make the Fort a trading post for contact with a major troll clan.

Zebra Fort: Taborg the Esrollan is a social outcast from a minor noble family, and is regarded by other Esrollans as being of lower status than a beggar.

Trusin dal-Martalton

Trusin is a centurion, and the sub-commander of the Lunar force here. He comes from Doblin and is the commander-in-fact, except in some formal and ceremonial duties, which are still performed by Zartax. He is more ambitious than his commander and also reports in secret to Gim-Gim. Trusin does not think highly of his commander, due to Zartax's apparent lack of interest in his duties as senior officer. He also believes himself to be better suited for Zartax's position, and is secretly hoping for a promotion. He does not let this ambition show in his relations with Zartax. Meanwhile he is doing his best to show the Governor and other high-ranking officers that he commands an efficient force at the fort. A posting in the Rubble is usually not what the troops expect when they are

transferred to Pavis, and Trusin is not well-liked among the soldiers. Not realising this situation, Trusin can't believe what kind of undisciplined and sloppy soldiers the army keeps sending him.

Trusin's relations with other notable characters in the fort are usually somewhat strained, especially so with Morkro, whom he cannot stand. Trusin also considers Hubert the Short a troublemaker because of his open propagation of a reactivation of the Opili shrine. Trusin's social isolation makes him very suspicious of everything out of the ordinary at the fort, and visitors who catch him on a bad day can expect long and boring questionings, and numerous forms to fill in. Trusin is a Seven Mothers initiate.

Other People

The remaining population in Zebra Fort, and the surrounding ruins, are civilians. Those resident in the fort may hold recognised positions, like cooks, stable boys, metalworkers etc, although others are simple family members or farmers, who tend to work in the surrounding fields during the day. In his attempts to improve his reputation, Hargran is actively promoting resettlement of the Zebra Ruins. In exchange for an endurable tax, new residents are given the protection the fort offers, and free passage across Zebra Bridge. New arrivals do occasional odd jobs at the fort, but spend most of their time hunting, fishing, and cultivating small crops in the vicinity of their homes. The fort normally buys all surplus food produced.

Vantaper the tender

Vantaper is the stable master in Zebra Fort. He is responsible for the daily care of the PRG's cavalry zebras, and he has the exclusive say when the fort buys new animals. Vantaper is an Issaries initiate but also carries the big secret of being Illuminated. He has one Illumination question that he often slips into private conversations (skill Camouflage or Scan):

Q: "Is a zebra white with black stripes or black with white stripes?"

A: "In the eye of light, all souls are golden".

The Local Militia

The residents in the Zebra Ruins can muster around fifty warriors. They are trained and commanded by three former soldiers of the PRG, who served under Hubert the Short when he was still a sergeant. Their names are Grazer, Brinky Neversick, and Lazlo the Slow, all of them initiates of Opili.

Azera Shorthair occasionally helps in training the militia, giving special attention to the small band of teenage girls (age 13-16) who call themselves "the Vixens". The Vixens look up to Azera as a free and independent woman, capable of handling both men and dangers.

Zebra Stockade

Still commonly known as Zebraside, these zebra corrals were given the extra protection of a stockade fence several years ago. This, accompanied by its surrounding ditch, and earth bank, has allowed the families of the non-outlawed Zebra folk to congregate in safety at last.

Cyriilus Harmonius, the Pavis Priest responsible for supervising relations with the Zebra Tribe, has been gradually increasing the defences here since being appointed to this position. Whilst it seems likely that these efforts are inspired by the desire to increase his own prestige and influence, they are certainly also helping the fortunes of the Zebra people. These days, around a hundred humans reside in shacks or tents inside the Stockade, looking after the zebras and cultivating their fields of crops to the south. Newtling neighbours still live in the gullies and reed beds alongside the Zola Fel, and trade fish for other goods, however the baboons have long ago moved south.



The Dwarfs of Pavis

by Ian Thomson

Acknowledgments

Greg Stafford for an extremely valuable discussion on the nature and history of Flintnail and the Pavis dwarfs.

Moon Designs' "Pavis and the Big Rubble" (1999).

Steve Perrin's 'Dwarf Weapons for RuneQuest' from "Different Worlds" Iss. 24 (1982)

Mike Dawson for the 'Flintnail Doors' in "Codex 1" (1994).

Sandy Petersen's 'Dwarf Senses' from "Different Worlds" Iss. 24 (1982)

Andrew Bean, Wesley Quadros and Daniel Fahey for reviewing this piece as a work in progress.

Andrew and Kate Barton for proofing.

Eric Sleurin for comments on the Trackers, and a discussion on dwarf booby-traps.

Peter Metcalfe and Andrew Shelton for price advice.

Common Knowledge

To the residents of New Pavis, the sight of one or two dwarfs wandering along a street is not something to be overly surprised at. Before the arrival of the Lunars, such an encounter was almost an everyday occurrence for someone whose activities took them frequently around town. For some reason, the dwarfs have withdrawn noticeably from New Pavis in recent years, although they still maintain a trading post under Dwarfside, and "Goram's Sturdy Weapons" still operates its sales office overlooking the main city square.

For those new to this city, their first glimpse of a dwarf, or even a small group of them, going about their business, can be most startling. After all, typical dwarfs who venture above ground have immense difficulty relating to human cultures, and most often travel in large, self-contained groups, equipped with their own unfathomable arms and equipment. They act as if they are traveling through an alien environment; which is of course how they view it. On the rare times they can be communicated with, exchanges are complicated by the dwarfs' most unusual views of the world, and their total focus is on a single specific role, or group of responsibilities.

If a newcomer to New Pavis is from Northern Sartar, they may have had dealings with Isidilian the Wise and his Openhandist followers at Dwarf Mine. Even there, only the dwarfs who are in charge of trading operations have made a reasonable attempt to understand their customers. The over-riding feeling when associating with Isidilian's dwarfs is still one of great strangeness, but at least they seem content to deal with other races without malice or suspicion.

The Pavis dwarfs are more unusual even than their closest fellows at Dwarf Mine, and seem to have settled into living alongside humans very well. Presumably it is their long association with the Pavis Cult and the human survivors of the Old City that has brought about this familiarity. Should you have cause to engage a Pavis dwarf in conversation, whether they are out purchasing supplies, or welcoming you into their office behind Dwarf Street, you will surely find it surprisingly easy to understand one another.

This is not to say that the Pavis dwarfs are just like their human neighbors, they are not. Often their manner, and tendency to assess priorities according to unknown dwarfish criteria, can remind a person very quickly that they are not dealing with one of their own kind. Even so, visitors with knowledge of dwarfs have commented that those in Pavis are like no other dwarfs they have ever met, or even heard of.

Those inquisitive enough to delve further into the origins of these unusual beings may be treated to a

recounting of the history of the city. Apparently, Flintnail himself was one of the last Mostali, and came out of Dragon Pass with Pavis to help found this city. When the city was completed, Flintnail vanished from history, but his dwarven followers remained and have been here ever since.

Some time during their association with their Mostali leader, the dwarfs developed a relationship with him that has turned to worship, and now they revere him in the same way that a human might revere a hero or an ancestor.

For some years after the founding of New Pavis, the few dwarf experts amongst the knowledge cultists thought that the Flintnail dwarfs were immortal heretics, who had remained followers of Mostal as well as worshipping their former leader. However, when they began to request audiences with the dwarfs in order to write a coherent history of the old city based on first hand experience, Dorasar himself

asked them to restrict their investigations. This act, plus the oddness of their manner, now leads sages to presume (more or less correctly) that the dwarfs are fully apostate, and thus mortal.

The dwarfs, when pressed, declare that they are very happy here, making metal goods, and excelling in masonry. This, they say, is what they live for, to work as the Maker did and add to the order and restoration of the world by their labours. Whilst they are reluctant to discuss points of mostali spirituality, it is likely that the Pavis dwarfs are the last fully Individualist colony still in existence.

The Cult of Flintnail

What even your good friend Goram the armourer won't tell you!

I. Mythos and History

Flintnail, as is documented by historians, was an unusual Mostali. He did not follow his kin when they withdrew from contact with other races, and is believed to have taught many groups of humans the secrets of working with metals. He came to the old city with Pavis, and he and his dwarf followers were closely involved with constructing the city whose ruins are these days known as the 'Big Rubble'.

Little else is known in any detail, although much has been subject to speculation. What follows are secrets known in their entirety only to the dwarfs of Pavis themselves, and much of this knowledge is carefully managed in its distribution even amongst their own. Due to their long and close association with the dwarfs, the innermost circle of the Pavis Cult also knows some of this lore. It is classified by this Cult as equal in importance to its own most precious secrets, and shared only with the most trusted of its members.



Flintnail came out of Dragon Pass with a substantial group of dwarf followers. They were not just any dwarfs, but individualists and other unusual heretics who saw Flintnail as the only Mostali who could guide them in their search for fulfillment. At that time the Empire of the Wyrms' Friends provided a tolerant society where many more unusual groups existed. Flintnail and his dwarf associates were welcomed wherever they traveled, and sold their skills in the working of metal and stone.

During this period, Flintnail encountered Pavis and other members of the sect of the Green Age Revivalists, and was drawn to their ideas of restoring the peace and understanding that formerly existed between the races. Whilst in no way the idealist that Pavis was, Flintnail nonetheless saw a great opportunity to restore the old ways of the dwarfs, and balance what he saw as an unfair domination of his kind by such conservatives as the Nidan Decamony.

Consequently, Flintnail gladly followed the call of the Green Age City project, and led his dwarfs through Shadows Dance and into Prax as part of Pavis' army. It was he that had taught Pavis about the Faceless Statue, and together they brought it back to temporary life. The ruins of Robcradle were taken from Waha and Paragua, and after much diplomacy a tentative peace was established and construction of the new city began.

In this new city, the dwarfs were happy in their labours, striving not only to create a harmonious and progressive settlement, but also to aid Pavis and his fellow Revivalists in many powerful projects and rituals both beneath the ground and on the Hero Plane. After the year 850, once the city began to flourish without their help, they started to charge for their work in masonry and metals. For several decades many dwarfs lived aboveground in a part of the city then called 'Dwarftown' and now called 'Smalltown'. (Once the nomad threat became impossible to ignore, they abandoned these buildings in favour of their more easily protected tunnels.)

Around 850, the Nidan Decamony declared 'Individualism' a complete heresy. Only a few years later, Flintnail gave himself up to the most powerful of Green Age magics that he could access. He danced his way into the myth of Genert's Garden, and from there walked into the realms of the spirits of Prax, successfully claiming his own place within the mythic framework. In doing this, he preceded his friend Pavis onto the GodPlane by several years. By the time of the destruction of the EWF, worship of Flintnail had become the Pavis dwarfs' primary religion. The ways of Mostal, although remaining inspirational, were relegated to the status of being just another set of tools, and the dwarfs of Pavis became apostates.

Over the first of the tragic centuries of the old city, Flintnail's dwarfs were crucial to the survival of the local humans. Whether defending against nomads or trolls, the dwarfs had their secure tunnels, large stocks of food supplies courtesy of obscure Green Age growing rituals, and limited quantities of effec-

tive and unusual weapons to back them up. The most well remembered example of human and dwarf cooperation during this time occurred under Opili's leadership, when the Pavis forts were constructed. There were, however, many other examples of heroism and self-sacrifice on both sides, which have left a great bond between the dwarfs and humans of the old city.

The greatest challenge to the dwarfs themselves came with the troll invasion, when their homes and laboratories beneath the south part of the Rubble were compromised. Showing that their resourcefulness matched that of their more traditional kin, the Flintnail dwarfs had a great surprise for the trolls, and made a supreme sacrifice. They collapsed the entire complex, along with several main tunnels, onto the heads of the invaders, as well as setting deadly traps in their other tunnels.

The surviving dwarfs moved north, and began a new centre of operations based around a secondary refinery on the south west edge of the North Quarry, and the New Flintnail Temple in the Rubble now marks its entry point. Since this time, the dwarfs have been slowly regaining their former strengths, although at first merely repelling the trolls took all their time and energy. Luckily for the Flintnailers, troll tenacity does not always match dwarf determination. Whilst the trolls remained the ruling force in the Rubble until the Dragonewts' Dream, their actual numbers diminished fairly quickly after the first few decades, as they settled down to mainly squabbling amongst themselves.

The arrival of Dorasar and the other Sartarites at long last re-opened major opportunities for the dwarfs, and they eagerly began selling their skills and products once again, in exchange for money and goods to aid them in their projects. Beneath the Rubble, the Flintnail dwarfs continue with much more complex activities than merely the manufacture of superior products. Above ground they pose as harmless workers in metal and stone, but the areas below ground, which most humans believe are storerooms and workshops, are actually very much more.

II. Nature of the Cult

The Cult of Flintnail exists merely to provide the spiritual home for a group of hard-working dwarfs. At least this is what the dwarfs want any people who examine their affairs to believe. In truth, the Cult of Flintnail is also a secret organization dedicated to pursuing goals that they have held for almost 800 years. The Pavis dwarfs have very long lifespans in human terms, and also very long memories.

Once the city's social and practical infrastructures were laid, the Green Age Revivalist experiments were also established. With the invaluable aid of Mani and his Clan; Flintnail, Pavis, and their principle followers, began carefully experimenting with the myths made accessible by the affinity of this region to the Green Age. One of their experiments was extremely successful, and had far-reaching consequences for the dwarfs of Pavis. This dwarf colony is now intrinsically tied to the Green Age, in ways few others can comprehend, and beneath the Rubble they are slowly and painstakingly recreating what they can.

Flintnail and Pavis' daughter, Shelbaris, were the indi-

Associate and Subservient Cults

Pavis

In sheer numbers, there are more dwarfs than humans who have significant knowledge of the real history of the city. At the major Pavis ceremonies in the old city, dwarfs make up a significant proportion of all congregations. All of the Flintnail dwarfs revere Pavis as co-founder of the city, and are at least Lay Members of his Cult. Many dwarfs are also Pavis initiates although their cult requirements for Pavis are mostly subsumed within Flintnail duties. This is not reciprocated in a like fashion, and only members of the inner circles of the Pavis Cult are automatically accepted as honorary Flintnail Cultists.

Shelbaris

The spirit of Pavis' daughter has often been used to threaten Lay Members who betray the cult through action or inaction. Amusingly, there is no such spirit attached to the cult in this manner. Presumably it is the dwarfs themselves, or perhaps stealthy nilmergs, who remove the tools of offenders and generally make their lives a misery until they repent or leave town.

Delayed Ignition: variable, touch, passive

This spell causes a dwarf-made fuse to ignite 5SR after being touched, and each additional MP used in the spell delays ignition a further 5SR. Use of 5MP (maximum possible) gives the user the opportunity to choose that the explosion occurs at any specific moment up to the duration of a regular spirit magic spell.

viduals in charge of the greatest experiment that the city ever attempted. It was to be the forerunner of an entire series of great enterprises, but sadly only this one was ever completed. These magical experiments were along the same lines as those that produced Pavis, but with a slightly different goal: that of creating a dwarf/human hybrid. First out of the pot, so to speak, was an animated youngster named Ginkizzie, and over the following decades came Prokinizzie and various others.

Despite their astounding lineage, these half-dwarfs look identical to regular dwarfs in the perceptions of other races. Even the most obvious differences, such as a slight increase in size, are simply not detectable by the untrained eye. One remarkable thing about them, which the Flintnail dwarfs discovered early on and have kept completely to themselves, was their ability to happily procreate in a very non-dwarfish way. Without this adaptation, the chances of their extinction would have been greatly increased.

Over the centuries since the collapse of the old city, the breeder dwarfs have replaced their vat-matured fellows as the older generation has died out, but unfortunately it seems that only the first of this genealogy have been gifted with enormously enhanced longevity. Whilst a typical half-breed dwarf lives two centuries or more, Ginkizzie and the other founders have watched several generations come and go, as they themselves endure.

On the occasion that a particularly observant Lankhor Mhy historian pointed out that Ginkizzie was mentioned to have been present around the time of Pavis, the dwarfs were quick to 'explain' that "Ginkizzie" is an honorary title, applied in turn to all of their leaders. So far nobody has noticed that the Mask of Altomis, which Ginkizzie wears occasionally at ceremonies, resembles his own face. In this the dwarfs are protected by the fact that, to other races, they all look the same.

Most people believe that there are around 200 dwarfs currently living beneath Dwarfside, including the ones stationed at the Flintnail Temple, and those observed in the Real City. The true number of dwarfs living in Pavis is closer to 600, and growing all the time. Beneath Manside and the northern quarter of the Rubble they have an underground complex where they live their peculiar lives, and raise their young. Under the inspired leadership of their unusual elders, they continue to conduct odd ceremonies, all but forgotten by the descendants of the human citizens of the old city.

III. Organization

Although the dwarfs are said to claim that their main underground temple is somewhere in Dwarfside, it is actually much closer to the structure known commonly as the New Flintnail Temple. This mistake probably

originated from a dwarf, in response to a question, pointing at the entrance to Dwarfside and saying: "The temple is through there".

The Pavis dwarfs work as a harmonious unit, and this is one of the few ways they reflect their traditional relatives. In this case, the history of close co-operation has been fostered by their isolated position, first as heretics, then as apostates, and lately as victims of what was virtually a centuries-long troll siege.

These dwarfs do not operate in rigidly defined social, or task-defined, roles in the same manner as a typical most-ali colony. Instead, each dwarf is encouraged to pursue the skills at which they excel, and which give them most fulfillment. Although every dwarf is also trained in the arts of tunnel fighting, and specialist melee weapons, as even now troll attacks are to be expected once in a while.

The Flintnail dwarfs live in a collective, where each individual is considered to have value and certain rights.

Regular dwarfs of other regions live in workgroups where their personalities are considered a liability, but in Pavis the dwarfs value each other's differences, and have codified the rights of the individual. These include participation in the various community councils, and the right for one's grievances to be heard. Even Ginkizzie and the other leaders are fully functional members of this peculiar society, and subject to the laws that they themselves helped to devise.

Their society has, however, been explained to outsiders in ways easiest to understand, reflecting an artificial 'standard cult format'. The reality is that Ginkizzie and the other elders retain the positions of highest authority, whilst also appointing the wisest and most experienced of their shorter-lived kin as specialist advisers.

III. Lay Membership

The Lay Membership is open only to Pavis-worshipping humans, who are readily trained in the arts of masonry and metalworking. No dwarf of the colony is ever a Lay Member for longer than it takes them to squeeze into the world, and then they are initiated immediately.

Whilst these human lay members can pay for training at reduced cost, they are also required to work in the employment of the Flintnail Cult, and thus generate income for the dwarfs. No lay member is ever privy to unusual knowledge about the cult.

IV. Initiate Membership

Whether it is with the Rubble Trackers, or working in the smithies or on building gangs, dwarf and human initiates are renowned for their skills, and



rightfully require high payment for their services. On the surface all seems equal, however most human Initiates are in the outer fringes of the cult, blissfully unaware of any hidden agendas.

Unless they are also members of the Pavis Cult inner circles, human cultists remain in this outer level of initiation permanently. These humans are actively discouraged from spending time in the dwarf complexes, and the disadvantages of the low ceilings and cramped quarters are cited as the reasons for this discrimination.

In a typically Pavic manner, dwarf cultists invite to their inner circle of Initiation only very privileged humans. Of the two inner circles of the Pavis Cult, many of their members are also Flintnail Initiates, although their identities are considered Cult secrets and never made public.

Some years before the Lunar occupation there was also a group of ducks in the city that claimed they were Flintnail Initiates. These gangsters, led by a notorious 'conduck' named 'Bigbill', managed to collect a small fortune in advance payments before their fraud was discovered.

Special Skills: Masonry, Architecture Lore, Craft (Armour), Craft (Weapon), Axe, Warhammer, Crossbow, Craft Traps, Locksmith, Musket*, Pistol*, Bowling*, Blackpowder Lore*, Mechanical Repair* (* Rare specialist skills)

Spirit Magic: Heal, Ignite, Extinguish, Repair, Bladesharp, Bludgeon, Protection, Delayed Ignition

V. Rune Lord Membership

This cult rank is reserved for the dwarfs who lead the warriors. No human has yet reached this respected position, although some dwarfs claim that initiates who work hard enough may get here eventually.

These Rune Lords are most commonly encountered above ground whilst leading bands of the Rubble Trackers on their more dangerous missions. However, they actually spend most of their time guarding the tunnel entrances from inside or out, patrolling the tunnels, or standing watch on the blocked passageways through which trolls occasionally try and attack.

As with the Pavis Cult, there are varying levels of advancement within the Rune Lord rank. Three senior warriors oversee the training and development of a handful of gifted pupils.

Common Rune Magic: All

Special Rune Magic: Extension I/II, Dismiss Elemental I/II, Call/Command Gnome I/II, Heal Body

'Heal Body' was gained by Flintnail from a friendly earth spirit during Green Age questing, and is actually known to the dwarfs as 'Repair Worker'.

VI. Rune Priesthood

The original half-dwarfs firmly retain occupancy of all the senior posts within this cult organization. As previously mentioned, however, they also regularly

seek advice and assistance from their fellows who fill the lower ranks of the Priesthood, and those who chair the various community councils.

VII. Unique Rune Magic

As well as the safely 'dwarf-like' spells that the Flintnailers allow outsiders to see them use, they have been granted access to several other spells (all of which are single point cost).

Hide Portal

This spell is cast upon the most secret of the already cunningly crafted 'Flintnail Doors' which are dotted about the Rubble, hiding the entrances and exits to the tunnels. The spell causes even the tiniest regular line or any smooth surface, to twist or seal, making visual identification of a portal virtually impossible. It also blocks most detections, even sorcery. It expires only when the portal is used, and normally will be recast at once.

Shift Stone

This allows the caster to instantly move aside a rock plug that other Flintnail dwarfs have used to seal a tunnel or doorway. Once the dwarf and any companions have safely passed through, the plug will slam back in the face of any hostiles. (If it is necessary to use this spell within the vision of an outsider, dwarfs are trained to disguise it by pretending to operate hidden mechanisms.) The more important stone doors are also protected by special ceremonies which mean that a Flintnail Rune level must be casting this spell in order for them to open.

Collapse

Within their tunnels, the Flintnail dwarfs erect deadfalls at crucial doorways and intersections. This has always been policy, as has purposely designing entire hallways to balance on a central point, or series of points. When reacting to invaders, the last ditch tactic is to destabilise these points to block passages, or even to bring down entire chambers. To collapse some of the more important areas requires a Rune Level cultist to be the one to use this magic, or it will not work. In any case, it only affects points that have been ritually prepared for this specific purpose.

Also: Mold Rock, Shape (Metal), Support, and Warrior of Stone (See 'Pavis and Big Rubble' pp81/82)

VIII. Divine Intervention

Flintnail, as a minor yet potent spirit of Prax, still walks the tunnels and ruins, protecting his charges. He may come to the aid of Initiates anywhere within, or adjacent to, the Great Walls of Pavis, and also anywhere along the route to Throne, in Shadows Dance, or along the way to Dwarf Knoll. Rune Level cultists may potentially access this assistance anywhere in Prax or the Wastes. Records show that human cultists have found that when their call is answered, the intervention works with total effectiveness only half the time. Dwarfs do not seem to suffer from this same problem. Usually, Flintnail will produce an item of mechanical or alchemical potency in response to the call, although the item will cease to function once the immediate need is over. After this, his most common method of aid is by using the elemental forces of the earth to protect the worshipper(s) or transport them short

Miscellaneous Notes

The Vats

Of the various other unique or unusual activities that the dwarfs own, but keep to themselves, they retain a working series of the old maturation vats. These have been carefully adapted to repair dwarfs who have been injured, and are capable of healing the most grievous wounds, and even regenerating limbs.

Flintnail Doors

Using a combination of exceptional skills and magical assistance, the Pavis dwarfs camouflage their tunnel entrances as parts of the surrounding scenery. The exact difficulty of finding and opening such a door depends upon its importance, and from time to time one of the lesser doors has been discovered accidentally. (These lesser doors never lead to areas of current dwarf habitation, as the highest level of technical complexity protects such places.)

Relations with the Aldryami

In the old days of the city, dwarfs and elves were able to co-exist in harmony, and some few even worked alongside each other. Since Pavis fell, the Aldryami have retreated to their Garden and rarely come out. The old spirit of tolerance is currently clearly evidenced only by the fact that the elves and dwarfs of Pavis feel no need to attack each other, preferring to expend their energies against other foes.

Public Demeanor

The Flintnailers have carefully developed the habit of behaving more like orthodox dwarfs, and suppressing their human tendencies. Their subterfuge mainly involves speaking only of simple concepts, and replying directly to questions without volunteering extra information. With the people of the old city, the dwarfs are more prone to relax these precautions, and the unusual sound of dwarf laughter may sometimes mix with that of other patrons, as it bellows from the Inn at the Real City.

distances through the ground. If necessary these forces will clear a safe path for escape, throwing up barriers or opening pits to delay pursuers. Flintnail is also capable of repairing the broken bodies and limbs of his own people.

The 'Rubble Trackers'

Dwarfs for hire!

Common Knowledge

The Flintnail Cult maintains several squads of mercenaries who are for hire as horse guards, guides, or explorers in the Rubble. Their cost is high, but their skills are undeniable. These groups are composed mainly of dwarfs, but may often also contain human auxiliaries who are Lay Members, or even Initiates, performing their Cult requirements.

True Objectives

The Trackers are a good source of income for the Cult, and they also gather intelligence about the Old City as they go. Each squad is briefed to observe closely and to report back in great detail. Each mission usually also gives the dwarfs and their companions a chance to practice their combat skills and reduce the numbers of trolls, outlaws or chaotics in the Rubble. The group that has hired their services effectively funds this on-the-job training for them.

Standard Terms of Service

Cost of Hire

Term of service is classified as either from dusk until dawn or from dawn until dusk, each at its own costing rate. Exceptionally, fractions of such a period may be negotiated, and longer-term rates are available on application.

CHARGES	Dawn to Dusk	Dusk to Dawn
Rock Mission	150L	250L
Tin Mission	250L	350L
Iron Mission	350L	450L
Rescue Insurance	+ 40L/person	+ 60L/person

This table is a guideline only, and rates will be arranged on application.

Sections of the Rubble

'Rock': Manside, Zebraside, Furner Fields, North Quarry, N part of Big Grazing, Huntlands during daylight only

'Tin': S section of Big Grazing, Huntlands during darkness, Outer Troll Stronglands during the day, Devils' Playground and Ogre Island during daytime, Yelmatio Hill during darkness, Blind King's Hill

'Iron': Inner Troll Stronglands during the day, Outer Troll Stronglands at night, Devils' Playground and Ogre Island during darkness, Yelmatio Hill during the day, Temple Hill during the day, area around the Dragonewt Temple

Not available: The Garden, Inner Troll Stronglands at night, Puzzle Canal

Terms of Hire

i) The Clients will engage the services of an experienced Squad, fully armed and armoured. No less

than nine Trackers will be provided, and a squad will usually consist of 12. (Contrary to rumor, undersize squads are not a sign of ineptitude, but rather a sign of above average competency.)

ii) Each Tracker will be armed with a broadsword, battleaxe, or warhammer in which they can demonstrate superior ability. Additionally, a minimum of six Trackers will carry blunderbusses or crossbows in which they hold professional competency.

iii) On a 'Rock' mission, serious melee is not expected. The Squad's duty is to protect the clients from incidental attacks, and guide them through the Rubble to any location in the Class 1 areas. Additionally, the Squad will await the return of the clients until a prearranged time, and after this time the squad will return to base. In the event of major assault, the Squad will withdraw and will offer all possible opportunity for surviving clients to join them in this withdrawal.

iv) Missions of Classes 2 and 3 ('Tin' and 'Iron') are considered duty during which serious melee is likely. In addition to the duties and restrictions detailed above, the Squad will be prepared to support in an assault against a prearranged foe, or against any chaos, trolls or bandits. Additionally the Squad will assist the Clients in any fighting retreat that may become necessary.

v) The exact nature of the exploration in which the Trackers are to be involved must be detailed beforehand. This includes proposed route, estimated duration of expedition, and the details of any known or suspected foes. Once these details are logged and payment made, the Flintnail Cult will offer any suggestions it considers will aid the success and survival of the expedition.

vi) The Flintnail Cult extends a guarantee of secrecy around any unusual or valuable discoveries made, however requires 20% of the value of any such treasure which the Trackers protect during transportation to a place of safety.

General Restrictions

i) Trackers will not enter any unknown underground complexes beyond initial entryhalls and chambers, with the single exception of an attempt to retrieve lost clients who have paid their Rescue Insurance.

ii) No member of the squad will be required to sacrifice themselves against superior forces, and the senior surviving squad member is expected to order a fighting retreat in such circumstances. Once again, surviving clients will be offered every reasonable opportunity to take part in such a retreat.

iii) The squad will return to base on expiry of their paid time, unless Rescue Insurance has been paid in full. Squad commanders are permitted only cursory searches for missing clients before departure if this Insurance has not been arranged.

iv) Credit or cost exemptions are permitted in only one situation - where clients (or potential clients) assist any Rubble Trackers in defending against superior foes and removing themselves to a place of safety. In exceptional circumstances refunds may be offered for such actions.

Growing Stone

One of the Green Age projects still under exploration is the long-term experiment of revitalising stone. Since Stone the deity (Mostal's greatest brother and companion) was killed, all rock lost its vital abilities, which included its movement, communication, and exuberant life-force. Close to the Flintnail Temple at the North Quarry, a group of Lankhor Mhy archaeologists (who studied the area between 1590 and 1610) noted that the rocks appeared to be regenerating, albeit at an infinitesimal rate. Their reports were not treated seriously, and the Lunar invasion ended the research.

The Food Caves

Under the Rubble, some sections of the complex are reserved for food production. Tended by dwarf gardeners, numerous plants grow edible tubers or sprout nutritious shoots.

Another relic of Green Age magic, the food caves were never completed to dwarfish satisfaction, and much processing is required to make these vegetable products edible. Nonetheless this capability was important for dwarf and human survival when Pavis was cut off from the rest of the world by its enemies.

Reactions to Foreign Dwarfs

The few foreign dwarfs who arrive at Pavis create great consternation amongst the Flintnailers. The local dwarfs always make great pains to welcome such newcomers, are very nervous until it is clearly established that the visitor is at least an Individualist or Openhandist heretic. The Pavis dwarfs fear their distant kin more than they do the trolls, and the reason that their original complex was rigged to collapse on command was not due to the nomad threat, but rather due to concerns of a possible attack from fanatical followers of Mostal.

Rubble Tracker Equipment

Standard Gear: rope (strong, 50ft); climbing mallet (with safety strap); metal pitons (box of 50); pulley fitting (for use with rope); Type IIb 'Helper' (metal crowbar, 1.6 ft long); warhammer or battleaxe; chain armour (+ 1 AP dwarven); plate helm; Type IVb 'Sparker' (Flintlock fire-lighter); Mille 'Dining Tool' (Tin-opener/spoon); and sufficient tins of dwarf food for each standard meal break during the mission.

Non-standard Gear: Type VIIb 'Adjuster' (monkey wrench); Type XIIa 'Longviewer' (telescope); musket; repeating crossbow; pistol; Type IIIc 'Investigator' (6ft long wide metal rod that telescopes out to a 15ft implement suitable for prodding out potential dangers); Type IIa 'Facilitator' (4ft long sturdy metal rod useful as a lever or for just hitting things); box of 6 emergency flares of assorted colours; 20ft coil of sturdy wire (for setting traps); Type IIc 'Snipper' (a pair of spring-loaded handclippers used for cutting wire); Book of Nilmerg commands.

Options

- i) On 'Rock' and 'Tin' missions, the Client may pre-purchase dwarfish incendiary devices at the discount rate (availability permitting). In the event that these items are returned intact to the Cult, a full refund will be given. Only under exceptional circumstances will clients be permitted to operate such devices themselves.
- ii) Rescue Insurance entitles the Clients to confidently expect a search and retrieve mission for survivors and bodily remains, if they fail to return to a rendezvous by an appointed time. The Squad will exercise all possible efforts in such an attempt, barring attacking obviously superior forces, but including entering unknown underground complexes should such action be judged to be within tolerable safety limits. If necessary, the Squad Commander is also authorised to open negotiations as to exchanging ransoms for captives.
- iii) In the unlikely event that a Client saves, or significantly protects, the life or body of a member of the squad, whilst exposing themselves to risk, a credit note of 350-850L (dependent on the boldness of their actions) will be made available to them on return to the Cult.

Purchasing Goods from the Dwarfs

Buying mostali technology!

Availability

The Flintnail Cult has strictly limited amounts of dwarf goods for sale (as indicated by the high prices they are able to command), and the details that follow should in no way be taken to mean that they operate a chain of stores for explosives and projectile weaponry. Nor are they a ready source for musket-wielding, grenade-hurling stormtroopers. Their skills and devices are always employed only after due consideration (and of course appropriate payment). If adventurers, or dwarf PCs, approach the Cult to buy or hire such items, the Storyteller should restrict availability to a limit that will not imbalance play. All 'black powder' items have only recently become available again in any case, since the Flintnail dwarfs have re-opened relations with Isidilian's folk at Dwarf Mine. (The Flintnail Cult does not discuss their suppliers or modes of transports, and so outsiders are unaware of any relations between the two colonies.)

There is a dwarf PC in my campaign, and once the PCs had amassed some wealth, and things got tough, it was necessary to codify the potential resources he had available. Dwarf goods will always be rare and expensive, even when the dwarfs of Pavis sell things to their friends. The entire Pavis area is a frontier town, and someone visibly carrying dwarf gear is obviously extremely wealthy, or else supported by someone who is. I may inadvertently present this information in a way that suggests some kind of ready availability of dwarf goods. This is inaccurate, and normal adventurer PCs will have to pay through the nose, as well as joining at the back of the sales queue, which may be many weeks, or even a Season, long. Bartering rare goods or interesting items with the dwarfs, or performing a dangerous mission for them, is probably a quicker way of obtaining dwarf items.

Dwarf Food

The first purchase of this commodity must normally also include the acquisition of at least one MIIc 'Tin-opener', a flanged and rugged hand-held implement that is designed to remove the tops from the tins. Its cost is 15/30/40L. Without this item the tins might still be opened, but require a solid pointed implement and precision stabbing. Such efforts often result in damage to the stabber or to the contents. There are a great variety of dwarf foods, however the Flintnail Cult only markets two forms of standard rations: one to dwarfs (DFDIXb), and one to humans (DFHVIc). The dwarven variety tastes of dirt to humans, and is unpalatable by them except in small quantities. The human version, which tastes and feels like some kind of fowl to humans, is almost as distasteful to dwarfs, but they can live on it for a while if they must. The greatest benefit of Dwarf Food Tins is that their contents keep indefinitely, often being discovered in serviceable condition after centuries. Thus the market in Pavis is mostly amongst well-financed expeditions heading into the Rubble, the Wastes, or across Prax. As with most dwarf goods, discounts are available for bulk purchases. (Although bulk orders need booking in advance as they may take a long time to fill.) Each tin provides enough food for one day, and when opened the contents normally keep for the whole day (reduced to only a few hours in intense heat).

The Small Print

Availability

- i) Superior 'Repeater Crossbows', are only available to dwarf-friends, and the DeLuxe version is only normally used by the dwarfs themselves (and occasionally sold to dwarf adventurers). Likewise, pistols and muskets might, very occasionally, be sold to independent dwarfs, but otherwise are not on the market. (PCs who are dwarf friends might bend any of these rules of course. The extremely rare cases of humans owning such things are usually the result of obtaining one whilst assisting dwarfs, or recovering dwarf wounded, and being given special dispensation to keep the weapon as a reward.)
- ii) Dwarf 'Grenadiers' might rarely be hired out to mercenary groups whose interests are sufficiently close to those of the dwarfs themselves, and one or two grenades might be sold to a dwarf-friend who could evidence great need. Otherwise grenades are only available for purchase by the very few independent dwarfs who are known and trusted by the cult.
- iii) Like grenades, bowling balls and disorder kegs are only normally available through the simultaneous hiring of specially trained 'sapper' dwarfs. Once again, a known and trusted independent dwarf might be allowed to ignore this restriction.

User Restrictions

Dwarf items have a deserved reputation for being something that you don't mess with. For instance, trolls and elves will never fool around with dwarf weapons, as their very touch is known to trigger off any booby-trap within the item.

Explosives

Lacking easy access to Mostali sorcery, or the wide availability of POW to create multiple matrices, the Flintnail dwarfs mostly rely on two things to protect their explosives. First of all, each device is formulated so as to explode a few moments after its contents mix with air - this takes care of tamperers, and normal users are protected from accidents by the superior construction of the exterior shell. (A loud hissing noise alerts dwarfs to a rare accidental breach in container casing, giving them vital seconds to take safety precautions or cast Repair on the item.) Secondly, items may often be constructed with an instant fuse, even though it may physically be several inches long. Use of the 'Delayed Ignition' spell is thus essential to operate such a device. Not all items are made in these ways, although any that are under reasonable risk of theft (such as those requisitioned by units of the Trackers) will be of this type, unless some special provision has been made.

Firearms

The weapons carried by the Rubble Trackers are often noted to look old and worn, and the Trackers claim proudly that each personally owns and maintains their equipment. In reality, these items have defensive matrices cast upon them, and are thus highly prized. Even if the weapon is crushed, or horribly bent, a dwarf will attempt to recover it in case the matrix is still intact. (In which case the item can be reconstructed around it.) These matrices have various user restrictions programmed into them; most normally they are set to activate if a non-dwarf touches the firing mechanism. (Even using a stick, or a gloved hand, will still activate the matrix.) The matrix causes the device to heat rapidly and violently, inflicting 2D3 damage to anyone who can't let go quickly enough (or 1D3 even to the quick). This will solidly melt and fuse all inner workings, and cause the item to malform slightly in the direction of gravity. *continue

Item (all subject to availability)	Discount	Partial Discount	Standard Rate
Tin of Food	6L	8L	10L
Repeating Crossbow	600L	700L	800L
Repeating Crossbow (superior)	700L	800L	n/a
Repeating Crossbow (deluxe)	800L	n/a	n/a
Flares (6 Pack - various colors)	120L	170L	200L
Rocket-powered Scaling Ladder	200L	250L	300L
Blunderbuss	500L	n/a	n/a
Pistol	450L	n/a	n/a
Musket	550L	n/a	n/a
Grenade	300L	400L*	500L**
Bowling Ball	350L	450L*	550L**
Disorder Keg	400L	500L*	600L**

"Discount" Rate is for Dwarfs and extreme Dwarf friends
 "Partial Discount" is for Dwarf friends and bulk orders
 "Standard" rate is for general purchasers
 * Only available if the purchaser is a dwarf-friend, and dwarf operators must still also be hired
 ** Only available if dwarf operator(s) also hired
 Standard Repeating Crossbow - 7 shots
 Superior - 9 shots
 Deluxe - 12 shots
 (All crossbows come with a spare clip that takes 6SR to reload, and it takes 5SR to reload each quarrel into an empty clip.)

Weapon	Damage	Range	Skill Required
Blunderbuss	4D6	10m range*	Blunderbuss (20%)
Pistol	2D6+2	10m range	Pistol (05%)
Musket	3D6+2	40m range	Musket (05%)
Fragmentation Grenade	5D6	1m radius**	Throw Skill
Concussion Grenade	6D6	1m radius***	Throw Skill
Bowling Ball	4D6+6	1m radius****	Bowling (00%)
Disorder Keg	3D6+10	12m radius*****	Blackpowder Lore (00%)

* Will strike D6 opponents (or at Storyteller's assessment) - roll damage against each. At 10-20m 2D6 targets at 2D6 damage each.
 ** 1-2m radius is 4D6, 2-3m radius is 3D6 etc
 *** From 1m up to 6m radius: 1D6 plus knockdown
 **** Range variation as Fragmentation Grenade
 ***** Disorder (or 'Blam') Keg's actually vary enormously in power. This is a standard model. It does full damage to those within 4m, two thirds to those 4-8m, and one third damage to those in 8-12m range. In the furthest range, rolling STR on D20 makes it possible to stay upright.

Dwarf Sense

Dwarfs are able to sense movement and objects in tunnels through measuring disturbances in the air. This variant of the pressure transducer works through their beards. Whilst they appear on cursory examination to be normal by human standards, a dwarf's beard also contains a network of hairs that are different from the rest on his body. These super-sensitive hairs must be activated by the dwarf's concentration (as otherwise permanent activation would overload the dwarf's sensory perception channels, and make other activities difficult). The hairs are connected to special nerves that pass images to the brain, and the dwarf 'sees' a superimposed basic 'picture' of any area he or she is able to perceive in this manner. Such an image lacks fine detail, but is otherwise perfectly serviceable for aiming, guiding movement, spotting intruders (even motionless ones) etc.

This ability does not require nearby surfaces in order for it to function, and it operates even in large caves, although its range is restricted, and dwarfs use light sources as a rule. It will also work outdoors, but only in still air conditions, as even a steady breeze will render it useless, other than at close range. A dwarf's eyesight is otherwise slightly less efficient than a human's in lighted conditions, and slightly more efficient in darkness. A dwarf's beard grows much quicker than a human's and if removed will reappear in its full glory within a few days.

Note: The theory about dwarf beards is believed to have originally come from Sandy Petersen.

Activating Explosives

Grenades explode 5SR after the 'Delayed Ignition' spell is activated. (Professional Rubble Trackers often have the matrix for this magic enchanted into a tightly fastened armband.) In the Real City, new Rubble Trackers occasionally practice above ground, and this attracts local amusement. The dwarfs pull a rock out of a satchel, pause, shout "1,2,3" (In Mostall), and then throw them at the town wall, or the side of a ruin. (A seemingly nonsensical ritual to most non-dwarfs.)

Bowling Balls explode also on application of the 'Delayed Ignition' spell. 'Bowling' training includes accurately assessing the speed of trajectory, so as to precisely know the duration of the spell that is required.

Disorder Kegs do their thing either on application of the spell, or through the lighting of a fuse. Experienced dwarfs instantly know the length of time a piece of fuse will take to burn. Less experienced dwarfs are not encouraged to use the fuse method.

*** An Extra Surprise**
 A rare item amongst the non-explosives has a superior defense, and will attack unauthorised users by suddenly warping form and sprouting razor sharp spikes coated in a mineral-based toxin of POT 14+D6.

Guarantee!
 All dwarf items come with a money-back guarantee against parts failure (simply return the defective item for a full refund), and relatively low cost maintenance agreements.

The New Flintnail Temple

by R. Andrew Bean and Ian Thomson

Acknowledgements

Moon Design's Gloranthan Classic: "Pavis and the Big Rubble" 1999.

Greg Stafford for detailed advice on the history of the Pavis dwarfs.

Getting There

The easiest way to reach the Flintnail Temple is to leave New Pavis by the River Gate, cross over the Lunar Bridge, and pass through the Great Walls along the Zola Fel River (by foot at low-water, or by boat at high-water). This avoids the toll on Zebra Bridge, but not the inexhaustible Lunar paperwork required at the Lunar Bridge gatehouse. Then a traveler must ride east above the Zebra Ruins, until the filled canal is encountered, and follow it to the end of the Quarry Road that leads south. Once level with the southern edge of the North Quarry, painted signs appear, guiding one through the broken landscape of half-quarried stone, rubble and gullies towards the Temple. Occasionally bandit groups, or even chaotics, paint bogus signs and obscure the real ones, so a guide, or current map, is recommended. This area is occupied only by a few goatherds, some escaped trollkin, and varying numbers of bandits. Large well-armed groups crossing the Rubble during the day are the safest way to travel, although some guides swear that smaller skilled groups moving carefully at night can more easily avoid attention.

Rumours persist of dwarf tunnels under the Rubble connecting the Temple to the Real City, Dwarfstown and possibly other parts of the Rubble, but these have never been proven. Adventurers have occasionally stumbled onto short sections of buried tunnels filled with trolls or chaos, but the dwarfs say simply that these are forgotten relics of the old city. Dedicated watchers might note that Ginkizzie often manages to get between dwarf settlements without being seen on an overland route. When he suspects he is likely to be under observation, he will be obvious about leaving his current location, with an escort of Rubble Trackers, apparently to travel overland. If pressed for information later, he will simply decline to comment.

The North Quarry

This stepped, open-pit excavation has been flooded since ancient times, although the water level rarely rises high enough to completely cover the second ledge down, which is the one below the level of the Flintnail Temple. More than a decade ago, some junior Knowledge cultists, who were studying the area, claimed that the rock in this region is still growing, and the dwarfs suggested that the energies of the Faceless Statue were still active here. The Dwarfs were actually covering up their activities, due to the remarkably bad luck of humans noticing the results of one of their active 'Green Age projects'. No further action was needed to protect their work, as the Lunar invasion put an end to all such frivolous study activities by the Lankhor Mhy.

Many animals come to drink here, and the magnificent Flintnail Temple overlooks its tranquil waters, and there are many caves amongst the piles of boulders and rocky hillocks. Two large islands often provide temporary bases for gangs, as both have ruins in reasonable repair, but occasionally the dwarfs will muster, build sturdy rafts, and drive away the brigands with force.

History

For centuries after the city of Pavis was established,

this location consisted only of a surface exit that connected to a simple chimney shaft. This led to a small refinery and mining complex on the southern side of the North Quarry. Even throughout the various nomad attacks, nothing much changed here, and it was not until the troll invasion that use of the chimney was stopped and the hole covered up, as tunnel penetration by the trolls became a serious risk.

During the initial troll invasion, the old Flintnail Temple in the southern section of the Rubble, and its accompanying underground complex, was compromised. Fleeing the victorious trolls, the surviving dwarfs collapsed the entire complex behind them. This slew their attackers and sealed off the area, but also destroyed their former home, including the temple, and their records, supplies, main forges and laboratories. This blow to their research efforts marked the transition from confident, hidden survivors, to besieged partisans, eking out a living amongst their ruined former glory.

Several senior dwarfs managed to escape, and they led the other survivors to the North Quarry's refinery. This facility had a store of many basic tools, and a good supply of water, and the next few years were spent concentrating on survival, and defending the underground access points. (The exterior accesses were simply sealed up and ignored, except for the chimney shaft, which was trapped and kept as an emergency exit, and later as a secret entrance for humans.) More than two seasons passed before the dwarfs re-established contact with the Real City. This event was a great surprise and relief to the humans, who had feared that the dwarfs had been wiped out.

As the trolls gradually became more divided, and the dwarfs became stronger and more confident, this chimney access was fortified and the surface entry point upgraded to a human contact area. (The tunnels below Pavis were still dangerously troll-infested). A temple to Flintnail was established, both for its defensive possibilities and as a site accessible for human worship that would not compromise the forges and refinery below.

After the Dragonewts' Dream re-opened the Rubble, and Dorasar founded New Pavis, the dwarfs chose to become more active in their dealings with surface dwellers. They were especially interested in trading for materials not available to them locally. They expanded the facilities in the 'Flintnail Temple', as it was now generally known, to include an inn and minor manufacturing facilities (more for assaying goods than the serious work, which is carried out below ground). This new section of their building was the public area that visitors still experience today.

At First Sight

"This beautiful and wondrous structure is the latest refuge of the resident dwarf mason cult. It is splendidly wrought and superbly defended. Even some concerted troll assaults failed to seriously threaten the residents who had, reportedly, deep hidden tunnels to other places in the ruins from whence they drew reinforcements and supplies."

Moon Design's 'Pavis and the Big Rubble' (p182)

The Flintnail Temple is approached along the winding path traveling through bluffs, cuttings and leftover piles of quarried stone and rubble. It is located on the highest of the North Quarry's interior ledges, and thus is below the surrounding countryside. The path is well signposted, but the complex only becomes visible when visitors emerge from the last cutting and can look down at the building. At first view it looks like a squat bunker, set 50m from the sheer wall of the ledge (which is broken only by the entrance cutting). The central building is two stories high and made of smooth stone, with no openings other than the entrance set into the closest side. This building is enclosed within a courtyard, bounded by a 5m wall that has circular watchtowers at each corner, and on either side of the gatehouse. The surrounding ledge is almost completely barren, with low piles of rubble and the occasional broken statue littering the landscape.

From above, four statues of dwarfs in full, enclosed, plate can be seen. Two are standing on each side of the door to the main building. During the day, the compound contains human and dwarf followers of Flintnail practicing their skills. Their three main activities are masonry training (using stones collected and shaped from the rubble around the ledge), combat practice with hammers and axes, and field repair of armour and weapons. Some days the activity here is minimal, and at other times dozens of human initiates, or paid-up trainees, are under instruction.

Close study of the main building will show something glinting on the roof of the right-hand section. A use of "Farsee", or observation by flight, would reveal that this area is covered with 15cm spikes. These are set so closely together that anyone trying to land on the roof would be lucky only to maim their legs, and more likely to impale themselves to death. The left-hand side of the roof is smooth stone, with no obvious defences. It is theoretically possible to scramble along the precipitous ledge behind the rear compound wall, but no-one is known to have tried this, as a 10m drop to the half-flooded ledge below greets those who fail. Such activities would also be likely to upset the dwarfs.

As the building is neared, visitors will notice that its walls are smoothly worked and elegantly carved, showing the full range of dwarf masonry skills. This work is, however, so shallowly cut that it would take a master climber to scale it. The outer compound wall is featureless, and no dwarfs can be seen until one reaches the iron portcullis that blocks the entrance. If a circuit of the landward three sides of the building is made, along with a Masonry roll, the observer will see that the stonework of the left side of the building is newer than that of the other half. The newer building is comparatively recent, and was built flush against its predecessor. This is reflected by a subtle difference in styles, with the older half being close to Old High Pavic, and the new half showing younger Rubble-influenced styling.

Temple Defences

The walled compound appears only lightly defended, with a small squad of dwarfs stationed in the gatehouse and occasionally patrolling the walls. This seeming lack of concern is actually the result of reliance on numerous observation posts scattered

along all possible routes to this area. A Warding 2, along the outer walls, also provides a last-chance warning of surprise attack.

The right hand section of the building is the original structure, erected once the dwarfs re-established themselves here. It is where the temple is located, and has only one entrance, at ground level, which is now inside the newer section. The roof defences were erected at this early stage, when the dwarfs planned to resist Gerak Kag's jumping attacks. The spikes will do d6+3 damage with an 80% likelihood for each of D3 hits per limb, and if the attacker falls, there will be d10+10 hits at 80%, with impales and criticals possible. Every season, some luckless apprentice gets the job of climbing a ladder to the roof and replacing any broken or damaged spikes. These are individually secured to the rock with magic, which takes a long time, and is done very carefully in full plate armour. The roof is also within its own Warding 3, and any intruders will be detected by the priests, as well as having to fight off the effects of the spell.

The more recent part of the structure contains the Flintnail Inn, stables, the forges and 'labs' used for checking trade goods, as well as the Rubble Trackers' headquarters. It was built more than 200 years later than the original temple, when security was less of a critical issue. Two iron-armored dwarfs guard the main entrance at all times, standing alongside two statues ready to be animated as "Warriors of Stone". Ever alert inside, a back up squad of armoured 'Rubble Tracker' dwarfs waits in an anteroom. Also, observer dwarfs keep watch on the surrounding area both on and above the ledge, using periscopes and other magical techniques.

The entire left half of the building has been rigged to collapse onto an attacking enemy, in two stages, and thus would block the entrance to the main section with impenetrable layers of debris. Hence there are no roof defences on the left side, and control over this feature is from within the Flintnail Temple proper. No serious security threats have occurred for several decades, and the new section now has a very lived-in look to it. This means that the younger 'modern' dwarfs, with no first-hand experience of the troll occupation, would now be very loath to collapse any part of the building, unless the threat had already penetrated to the Temple itself. (This is a potential security flaw). If attackers did enter the new section, however, they would still have the Rubble Trackers to deal with, plus several more Warriors of Stone.

A complicated route of dwarf sized tunnels also lead out of the Temple. They end at concealed 'Flintnail Doors' in some of the piles of rubble around the entrance cutting, and along other approaches to the area. These provide numerous opportunities for dwarfs to either get behind attackers, fire missile weapons, or toss out explosives and otherwise cause havoc without being observed until too late. These exits are only used when absolutely needed. Frequent visitors often joke that the path to the Temple seems to change each time they visit. This is in fact true, as the dwarfs regularly use ancient magic to shift the rocks in this region, so that their secret doors can never be located, even if someone clearly saw one open on a previous occasion.

The broken parts of statues littering the ledge near the Temple represent the remains of "Warriors of Stone" that were damaged beyond repair in previous attacks. These can still be animated by a magical

Dwarf Females and Young

Modern Flintnail dwarfs reproduce in the normal mammalian way, however no children or obviously female dwarfs will be seen in the public half of this building. Only mature dwarfs (over 40 years old) are allowed out on the surface in public. It is possible to distinguish between older dwarfs and younger dwarfs by their levels of skill, silver in their hair or beard, and the degrees of respectfulness shown by other dwarfs. Rarely, an older dwarf will refer to a younger dwarf as offspring and show a particular interest in a youngster's activities, but only Gaph Barak is obvious about this. His children have also inherited his odd interests, and tend to wander the Rubble more than most. No dwarf will explain anything about dwarf reproduction to anyone (no matter how curious or rich the enquirer). Contradictory rumours abound that the dwarfs mature their young in vats, are hermaphroditic, have more than two sexes, and that female dwarfs also have beards (meaning that they all look the same).

People of Note

Ginkizzle - High Priest of

Flintnail & Daughter of Pavis

One of the original hybrids, he is often away at the Temples of Pavis in the Real City or in New Pavis, but can occasionally be spotted in the Flintnail Inn. If a visitor can find their way through the circle of admiring dwarfs hanging off his every word, he is happy to talk about current or historical Pavis if approached politely. It is only after he leaves that the visitor will realise that nothing of any substance was revealed.

Ginkizzle's appearance is that of a newly grown dwarf, apart from the occasional scar. He has hundreds of years of experience in dealing with outsiders, but will always talk about his historical activities as if revealing information pertaining to previous individuals carrying the title 'Ginkizzle'. He took a few knocks to the head during the troll invasion, so his recall of this era and earlier is imperfect, and he may wince if reminded of the destruction of the Old Flintnail Fort, as the old trauma flashbacks strike.

Hero Wars: Flintnail Magc 14w4, Devoted to Pavis & Flintnail 18w2, Lead worship of Pavis & Flintnail 18w2, Bargain 12w2, Obfuscate 14w1, Avoid Lunars 16, Hate Trolls 14w2, Knowledge of Rubble 18w1, Close Combat 5w1 (axe and shield)

Prokinizzle - First Site Foreman

Another of the surviving original hybrids, Prokinizzle is in charge of various special projects that the Flintnailers do not discuss with outsiders. Her appearance is similar to Ginkizzle and is that of a young dwarf with beard and hair barely touched by gray at all. Most of her work requires that she stay below in the vast underground complex below the temple. However, she is the one called in for consultation on any big or politically important projects the cult may be considering.

Prokinizzle is responsible for approving every activity the cult becomes involved in. This seems a staggering workload to outsiders, who are unaware of the large workforce she has available for dele-

signal from the Temple, and whilst some half statues can still mete out reduced damage, mostly they slow and confuse attackers and their animals. Arms reach out and grab limbs, legs hop upright and try and kick opponents, heads roll over the ground and try and trip up enemies, etc.

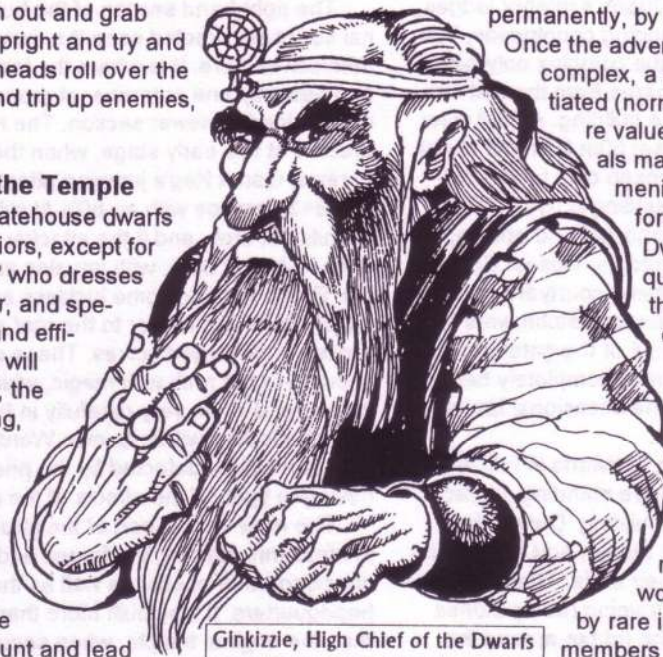
Admission to the Temple

The half-dozen gatehouse dwarfs are all silent warriors, except for their 'spokesman' who dresses only in light armor, and speaks in a clipped and efficient manner. He will request identities, the reasons for visiting, and sometimes references if the visitors are suspect. Once this security check is satisfied, the newcomers will be required to dismount and lead their animals through the low tunnel into the compound. Also, pole-arms and missile weapons must be temporarily surrendered before entering. One interesting rumour about this guard-post is that a few years ago a Lanbril cultist with the advantage of obscurity magic crept ahead of his fellows, and reported that the guards were laughing and joking amongst themselves, and playing a strange game with glass beads. As the main group approached, the beads were quickly hidden and formal postures adopted, and so the story has no corroboration.

The entrance to the building itself can be sealed by two massive, counterweighted, stone doors, which normally stand open. Approaching the door, one would have to be quite unobservant to not realise that two of the 'statues' beside it are actually living dwarf guards, who move slightly every few minutes, even though most of the time they are completely still.

To be let in to the building, one must hand over all weapons larger than an eating knife and pass under the gaze of these two iron-clad guards. Nobody is ever actually searched, which suggests that magical detections are used as part of the entrance process. All weapons taken are secured in the Guard Room, and can be collected on departure. No nomads, trolls or Lunars are allowed to enter unless vouched for by a dwarf or dwarf-friend or extreme circumstances are involved. Such visitors will be immediately allocated an honour guard of fully-equipped dwarf warriors, to ensure that their visit is uneventful.

Normally, entrants must have a good reason for visiting: negotiating a contract, hiring Rubble Trackers, Flintnail Cult business, trading with the dwarfs, etc. Once such business has been concluded, visitors will be expected to leave, unless it is too late for them to safely exit the Rubble, in which case they can stay at the Flintnail Inn. Human Flintnail initiates who are not doing cult service or training, may stay here for up to a week, but even they are discouraged from casual visits. Adventurers, merchants, and indeed any groups on good terms with the dwarfs, may book accommodation here in advance.



Ginkizzle, High Chief of the Dwarfs

Adventurers in genuine emergencies will be allowed into the compound, where they will be held until the trouble outside is cleared up, probably permanently, by a group of Rubble Trackers.

Once the adventurers are safe inside the complex, a reasonable fee will be negotiated (normally 20% of carried treasure value). Truly insolvent individuals may find themselves doing menial labour, e.g. pumping forge fires, labouring in the Dwarfside workshops, or quarrying rock for a week, if they have no money or specialist services to offer. A contract to this effect must be signed as soon as possible after entry under such circumstances.

Admission to the older part of the building, which includes the Temple itself, requires you to be an active worshipper of Flintnail, except by rare invitation. Even high-ranking members of the Pavis Cult require permission to enter, although they rarely come here in any case.

Residents of the Flintnail Temple

About one hundred dwarfs are estimated to live here, and ten human staff also live and work at the Flintnail Inn. Additionally, twenty or more human trainees are usually working here, and there can be up to thirty further human visitors especially if more than one trading caravan, adventurer group, or trading party is present. If a large number of human visitors are here, there will always also be a squad of Rubble Trackers mingling with the crowds. They will appear to be casually looking at wares, but will always be alert for trouble.

Priests and other worshippers of Pavis will occasionally visit, either for Holy Days or for discussions that occur inside the Temple itself. Non-dwarf Flintnail initiates come to do Rubble Tracker service, or to worship at the Temple proper, but even they are encouraged to do most of their religious duty at Dwarfside in New Pavis or in the Real City.

The atmosphere here is one of a bustling commercial enterprise, with everyone committed to getting the job done. Few arguments are heard, and laughter and even music can often be carried along the corridors from inside the Flintnail Inn.

Lunars, trolls and nomads will be looked at askance on the rare occasions they are here, and sometimes will be subject to hostile glances from someone who has lost a friend or relative due to their actions. Human Flintnail cultists, and even most dwarfs, usually have the time and inclination to stop and answer questions, but will never disclose dwarf secrets, or even discuss anything along these lines.

Although the food at the Flintnail Inn is nutritious, filling, and often tasty, it is difficult to identify what exactly it is made from and a visitor will soon notice that there are no obvious sources of food grown here, or brought in. Merchants occasionally trade spices or herbs to Barad the Innkeeper, but

never any large quantities of foodstuffs. The Inn is always full of dwarfs at mealtimes, usually forty or more of them. (The rest go below, to eat and rest with their families and friends, when their shift above ground is finished.)

Temple Interior

The entry into the building from outside is just high enough to allow a tall human to walk upright without needing to take special care. The ceilings of all documented rooms and passages within the public section of the Temple are also this height. (The dwarfs have managed to build an above ground complex that looks and feels like it might be deep underground, and the absence of windows can prove oppressive for most sentients, let alone anyone used to the vast open plains of Prax.)

The interior stonework represents intensive dwarf labour, and is a wonder to behold. Not only do the major blocks used in construction fit almost seamlessly together, but also each doorframe, corner post, torch sconce, and item of furniture is finished with the most wondrous decorative flourishes. Leering faces compete with spiralling vines and unknown runes, and animals of all varieties (although the burrowing ones are favoured) are so skillfully carved as to be almost life-like even at such a small scale. It is hard not to stop and wonder at each of these marvels, especially if this is your first visit.

The whole establishment is kept scrupulously clean, and dwarfs rush about on errands, or deal with any visitors that have just arrived. The varied clothing styles of these dwarfs evidence their unusual individualistic tendencies. Some few humans also wander about, talking with the dwarfs or else on their own errands.

Entrance Gates

These are made of solid stone, a full metre thick, and are counter-weighted to open and close easily. If required, these counterweights can be quickly disengaged, turning the doors into an immovable barrier.

The Duty Guard Room

The door to this large room is closed except when a threat is suspected, when dwarfs actually pass in and out, or when dubious characters are in the building. A squad of ten or so fully-armed dwarfs are on duty roster here, and occasionally patrol the building, or the compound walls. Combat practice areas are also situated against the side of the room, and it can get quite noisy. A wide stone spiral staircase leads from the far corner to a slightly larger room above. This Guard Room is out of bounds to visitors, however the dwarfs are not particularly bothered by people peering inside if they get the chance. Perhaps the dwarfs believe that the sight of their fearsome warriors can only discourage those with criminal intent.

Upper Guard Room

The spiral staircase comes up into this room, which is split into three. Part of the room holds twenty triple-bunks suitable for dwarfs or humans, and another part is the armory, although no secret dwarf items are stored here. The third section is the off-duty area for those dwarfs who cannot be bothered

returning to the underground lair, and for the humans who are not allowed to. At any time there will be a dozen or more dwarfs off-duty here, and maybe slightly less humans. Human and dwarf Rubble Trackers also use this room for relaxing with their colleagues. A door here leads to the common room provided for human Flintnail Cultists. (3d)

The Rubble Trackers' HQ

Office: Tormalizzie's current chief assistant, Dramagad, is based here, and is usually in the company of two or three patrol leaders, who act as his advisers. Those who wish to employ the services of the Trackers are invited inside and subjected to polite, but detailed, questioning.

Waiting Room: When other interviews or business arrangements are being conducted in the office, applicants for the services of the Trackers can sit here and regard the large map of the Rubble on the wall. No new information is indicated upon it, but over the years, certain of the locations have had their paint rubbed thin by prodding fingers.

Ready Room: This is where the Rubble Tracker squaddies gather for briefing and equipment checking, prior to their missions. At other times, members of the Trackers congregate in the Upper Guard Room instead. The walls in here are covered with moderately detailed maps of the Rubble; each studded with colour-coded pins showing the results of the latest dwarven intelligence. A spiral staircase in here leads up to common room that the dwarfs have provided for the human Flintnailers.

Humans' Common Room: Accessible via the spiral stairs from the Rubble Tracker briefing room, or the door into the upper guard room, this area contains tables, chairs, games and fitness equipment for the human Flintnail Cultists staying at the Temple.

Main Hall

This hall is four metres across, leaving plenty of room for residents and visitors to mill about on business or pleasure. Lining the first half of this corridor there are eight statues corresponding to the ancestral Mostali occupations. Like the statues outside, these can be animated to defend the complex, but have not been required in this capacity yet. They are actually modeled on eight of the original hybrid dwarfs, and so an exceedingly observant visitor might recognise Ginkizzie or Galinizzie, although this could be easily passed off as merely a racial resemblance. This corridor is split by a second set of hefty counter-weighted stone doors that can be quickly dropped in an emergency.

Stables

This large stable area can easily hold many animals, but never seems to be used to its fullest capacity. Oddly enough, however, it is always well-stocked with fodder for zebras. Two ramps lead up to an overflow section and store above.

The Smithy

This large workshop always has four or so dwarfs busily training their juniors, and also human apprentices studying weaponry and armor crafting. The workers here also take care of any horse-shoeing, and

gation of the mundane duties. Whenever she is consulted, her primary concern is how it may or may not impinge on the dwarfs' other activities. Most of New Pavis has little effect on this, so delays are not a problem. However, for activity inside the Rubble, days or weeks may go by before permission can be given, as the side-effects of changing the old city's magical and physical configuration must be investigated fully. It is unlikely that outsiders will talk to Prokinizzie, except in her official capacity. Her personality is that of a hard-bitten, non-compromising old dwarf (strangely at odds with her appearance). She has been known to disappear from public view for seasons every decade or so for unexplained reasons (whether her on again/off again relationship with Ginkizzie bears fruit).

Galanizzie

An absent-minded dwarf with white hair askew and raggedy beard, wearing a well-patched coat covered with a wide variety of colorful stains and burnt patches. He can occasionally be found wandering vaguely around the public Temple areas, whilst pondering theories he seems unable or unwilling to discuss. He is often mistaken for a mad old duffer, except when it comes to alchemy, where his lifelong passion and genius shine through.

Galanizzie is very hard of hearing due to the many explosions he has been through, and has lost any sense of his place in time many centuries ago. He too is one of the few survivors of the original hybrids, but his chosen career has damaged many of his brain cells, not to mention caused some odd burn scars on his face and his body. Any attempt to engage him in conversation will be difficult, and he may well ask the visitor to take a message to a historical figure e.g. Balastor or Estangtang, etc. on their way across the city. If questioners persist, Galanizzie may offer them a drink from his hipflask, which could produce anything from dwarf spirits, a healing potion, acid, or

poison (depending on the pocket), then insist on only talking about his latest experiments. If he starts to give too much away, nearby dwarfs will rush up and usher him off, whilst assuring the visitor not to believe too much of what they just heard from the poor old bugger.

Tormalzize

The highest ranking Rune Lord of Flintnail, and the only original hybrid dwarf who is not in the Priesthood. His role is the Commander in Chief of the Rubble Trackers, and also the expert on aspects of defence and assault. Whilst friendly, if somewhat formal, with other dwarfs, he rarely speaks to humans, even those in his own cult. This is not because he doesn't like them; he just doesn't have the time. He is constantly assessing and re-assessing the dwarf defences, both above and below ground, overseeing drilling and training techniques, and occasionally leading stealth operations into the Rubble.

Encountered here, Tormalzize looks like any other guard dwarf to the untrained eye, although his scars and decorations actually show centuries of heroic service to the dwarf colony. Back when they were desperately short of funds at the time of the Dragonkill War, he adopted an assumed name and went all the way to Sun County with exaggerated tales of draconic persecution. Armed only with dwarf survey schematics of the Pavis aerial defence towers, he convinced the Sun Domers to build their own defensive network, and accumulated a large fortune before returning to Pavis. The Sun Domers have once or twice made discreet inquiries about this 'Tinizle', but the Flintnail Cult say that if a dwarf of that name did exist around that time he has vanished from their records, and certainly never returned to the city with cartloads of wealth.

Encountered in the Rubble, Tormalzize looks like a fearsome dwarf warrior, all the more so because of his disregard for standard mortal uniform or weaponry. As well as more recognisable armaments, he always sports two sawn-off blunderbusses, and swears by them as a final

the various other metal repair jobs required. Despite the fact that a forge is continually going here, it is never excessively warm, suggesting that a venting system of some kind is in operation. The smith also spends his spare time here, as he likes to create metal sculptures of creatures of all kinds, and usually manages to sell them. The apprentices have no time for such luxuries, and will be kept busy pumping bellows or fetching water, etc. The smithy is where dwarf craftsmen check the quality of any ore or raw metal that is being purchased from visiting merchants.

Upper Stables: Up here are further stalls and the fodder storage area. Any exotic beasts that need housing are also normally kept in this section, where they cannot frighten the zebras.

Storage: This multi-purpose storage area holds fodder for animals, and also temporarily stores any bulk orders yet to be taken 'below'. The smithy also puts here anything they cannot fit into their spacious workshop below.

(N.B. sections 2,3,4 and 5 represent the first collapse zone.)

The Inner Hall

The doors to this section of the corridor are moulded bronze. The one on the left depicts a robed dwarf of powerful bearing, representing Flintnail. The one on the right depicts an earnest-looking young man who represents Pavis. Beyond the doors, this corridor is even wider than the first, and its walls are decorated with odd runes and symbols. Those few permitted here are special visitors who are headed for the meeting room, or worshippers on their way to the shrine of Flintnail and Pavis. Whilst in this hall, all non-dwarfs are routinely subjected to detections and other magic, to assure that they are not traitors, or otherwise posing any threat. Six superior dwarf guards are also posted in here at all times, and they even insist on passwords from any dwarfs they are not immediately familiar with. Most visitors to this complex will only see this hall when dwarfs open the doors to pass in and out on their daily business.

Alchemical Laboratory

This room has very solid stone benches lining the walls. Supported on them are various strange beakers of coloured liquids, bowls and jars of powders, and other odd things. The benchtops and walls are also decorated with scattered patches of coloured soot. All the items and experiments down here are bogus, and two young assistant dwarfs, wearing heavy white coats and strange goggles, pretend to prepare fascinating concoctions. A steep ramp leads to the upstairs room.

Upper Laboratory: Up here is a small lecture hall, and a genuine, if basic, lab. This hall is reserved for the instruction of visiting alchemists, who pay an exorbitant fee, and for serious purchasers of specially made substances. Galanzize is only here on very rare occasions, when teaching or discussing important business. (Or more rarely to run tests on samples of substances that the dwarfs are considering buying.) Otherwise he spends his time working in his real laboratory, far below ground. The bona fide equipment and substances demonstrated here are brought in only as needed from the dwarf complex below. Guards stand at the bottom and top of the ramp whilst these items are in use, and remove them as soon as

classes are over.

"Barak's Smallgoods Store"

This place is full of tall, narrow shelves, which are closely packed together, and loaded with smallgoods of all descriptions. Some of the items have been here for decades without being sold, but Gaph knows the location of them all. This is also the outlet for tins of dwarf food, as Gaph has the remit to sell all the surplus stock. At his counter at the rear of the store he will usually be found engaged in some strange dwarfish activity, such as reverently polishing his latest 'find', or cataloging his collection of Old Pavic pipe fittings. All the Baraks can climb like monkeys in order to reach items stored on the highest shelves.

Gaph's Room

Gaph stores his collections in the room at the top of the spiral staircase. He has partitioned an area at one end, where he keeps his bed, as he often spends days up here, rather than returning to the complex below. Here are also several padded chairs and a table, and he is probably the most sociable dwarf on the premises. A most interesting object up here is a brass kettle that he uses for heating herbal infusions for his guests. The odd device he uses to heat the kettle is kept under his bed, because it is actually a restricted dwarf "Bunson's burner" (one of the old Type 2's), and he is not authorised to possess it. (So far his superiors have chosen to turn a blind eye.) Gaph's weapons and armour are also stored under the bed.

The 'Defense' Shop

Weapons and armour are displayed on the walls, and Jobajak and his two assistants (including Pottra the human) will happily demonstrate, and show-off, their products to potential purchasers. They also take orders and speculate production schedules. The available equipment is unfortunately almost all dwarf sized, although they are ready for instant use. Two guard dwarfs of formidable appearance are always on duty just inside the door.

The Firing Range: Purchasers of dwarf-crafted missile weapons may try before they buy, at only a nominal cost for hire of example equipment. The room is sparsely furnished, with only firing positions near the door, and several life-size clay and wicker models of trolls against the back wall. More of the troll models are stored in a large cupboard near the front of the room. From time to time, unruly guests are taken in here and given a friendly demonstration of dwarf firepower, often accompanied by an oratory on the value of retaining dwarfish goodwill.

The Infirmary

Just as often as one might imagine, travelers from the Rubble arrive with minor or major injuries that require immediate attention. All Rubble Trackers, both dwarf and human, are required to study First Aid and Field Surgery as part of their basic training, and the infirmary at the New Flintnail Temple is where these rookies are given their first taste of action. This is not some kind of butchers shop,

however, as competent medics oversee all procedures. Even accounting for storage space, this room is larger than one would think necessary, unless the dwarfs are used to dealing with (or expecting) large numbers of casualties.

The Water Block

This large room contains the public amenities where guests wash and relieve themselves. Dwarfs presumably have facilities elsewhere, as none save the occasional eccentric adventurer dwarf ever use these, and even such a dwarf as this always uses a private cubicle. This room is one of the minor wonders of the Rubble. It contains not only remarkable water closets where personal waste is washed away simply by pulling a lever, but also other cubicles where multiple thin jets of water can be directed across one's body to wash away the dust and grime of a trip. Simple troughs are also available for the superstitious to clean themselves in, and a human attendant is always on hand to explain the purpose of each facility.

The Flintnail Inn

The Flintnail Inn is a large common room with a bar across one side, and several semi-private booths. It is typically well-populated with dwarfs, especially around meal times and in the evenings. As well as food and drink, it also offers accommodation in the bunkrooms or smaller chambers upstairs. (A standard staircase begins beside the bar.) No dwarfs use these sleeping facilities, although Barad's human staff live here. Barad keeps a blunderbuss under the bar for those rare occasions when things get too rowdy. He only uses this to threaten people, as it is never loaded; however it is an effective crowd-calmer. Cost for accommodation is 5L per night for a bunk, and 10L for a bed in one of the self-contained rooms. Meals cost 1L each and there is no choice of food available, as enough for each person who has paid is brought from within the private dwarf section of the Temple just before each mealtime. The stone bar of the Flintnail Inn is made from a single block of granite carved with various scenes from the heyday of Pavis. Most of the other furniture is also made from stone, making it virtually unbreakable, but also meaning that it can be a heck of a job to pull over an extra chair.

The Meeting Room: For those transactions and explanations not suitable for general listening. This room has a conference table, and sturdy wooden chairs.

The Bunk Rooms: Up to twenty guests can be accommodated in each room, and an equal number more could be squeezed in without it becoming dangerously crowded. Each bunk has its own locker, but guests are advised never to leave valuables unattended.

The Private Rooms: Singles, couples, or small groups may hire these rooms as opportunity presents.

Human Quarters: All non-dwarf followers of Flintnail who are staying on the premises are quartered in here. Their living conditions are even more roomy and comfortable than at the Inn, but even so, terms

of duty tend to be short, as life within the windowless complex is undesirable to most humans. These residents use the Inn as part of their accommodation.

The Inner Temple

Only members of the Flintnail Cult, or the Pavis Cult priesthood, proceed into this section with any regularity. Even the Pavis Cultists on the whole are only allowed to access the first two rooms if they are not dwarfs. Exceptions are made only for meetings that must be held in the utmost secrecy.

The Small Hall: Merely an access-point to the Shrine, the meeting room, and all points beyond. The only interesting object here is the huge bronze door to the shrine, which is decorated with embossed runes. Once again the doors into the deeper dwarf areas are guarded at all times by two dwarfs in plate armour. Each wields a dwarf-sized bastard sword.

The Flintnail and Pavis Shrine: Dwarfs have alluded that this is the only room beyond the public area that is tall enough for most humans to walk upright in comfort. Dwarf acolytes guide human members of the Flintnail Cult in worship here on special Holy Days, but even these humans are not normally allowed further access into the dwarfs' chambers. Ornamentation here is minimal, although the room certainly has a suitably reverent air. Apart from the incense burners, the twin bronze statues of Flintnail and Pavis (one either side of the beautifully cast bronze altar) are the only particularly impressive features. A surprising number of people still think that this room is the central point of the entire dwarf colony, failing utterly to imagine the chambers and activities that the dwarfs maintain below ground.

The Meeting Room: This room is dwarf-sized in terms of its ceiling height, and although the furniture is very comfortable, anyone over 5ft tall must sit on the cushions provided. This puts the dwarf negotiators, in their chairs, at a height advantage, and some uncharitable folk have suggested that this is deliberate. Only meetings of an especially important nature are conducted here, as the meeting room above the Flintnail Inn is normally adequate.

More People of Note

Barad - Innkeeper of Flintnail Inn

The proprietor of the Inn is a cheerful dwarf who is very keen to make sure that visitors are having their needs attended to. He is particularly keen to encourage them to buy the daily special on the menu board. This is because he sees it as his life's work to improve the quality of dwarf food tins, so that only one variety will ever need to be produced. One of the benefits for dwarfs working above ground is that they get to have their main meal at the Inn in the middle of their shifts. (This may look like either a crowded breakfast, lunch, dinner, or even a midnight feast, to visitors, as surface hours bear little resemblance to the dwarf schedules).

For several hours each day (when business is slow) he will be down 'below' working on his cooking and brewing experiments. However, Barad still can't quite get food right, as far as humans are concerned. The beer is fine, although it takes some getting used to its unusual style. However, for all his meals, no matter what he calls them, roll a d10:

defence. Somehow they have been engineered or enchanted to fire several shots before needing reloading.

Karzac - Chief Mason

At 160, his silver hair and beard show he is reaching the end of his lifespan, but he is still strong and competent. He is a perfectionist who has mastered his crafts and associated magics to expert levels. He is brought in once a big job has been confirmed by Prokinzle, and is responsible for organising work crews, plus as much of the hands-on work as he can manage. He enjoys a drink at the Real Inn or the Flintnail Inn as much as Ginkzle, but once you get him onto his favourite topic of masonry he is very hard to dislodge. He cares little for current politics or rumors, and is keen to pass on his knowledge to anyone who may benefit from it once he is gone.

Aladikis - Second Site Foreman

This middle-aged dwarf is Prokinzle's chief assistant. He accompanies her everywhere, and deputises for her whenever she cannot attend a location herself. A bustling, busy dwarf he feels his job is extremely important in the dwarf hierarchy, and is prone to lord it over other dwarfs or outsiders. He handles advice and consultation for the Flintnail Cult for any small or day-to-day business issues, and is not above taking bribes to push someone's request to the front of the queue. Of course he hands the bribe over to the cult, since as an organisation they rarely care what order outside jobs get done in, and view bribes merely as extra payments. It also means that occasional foolish criminals have tried to involve Aladikis in their schemes to defraud the Flintnail cult, only to find a group of Rubble Trackers paying them a terminal midnight visit.

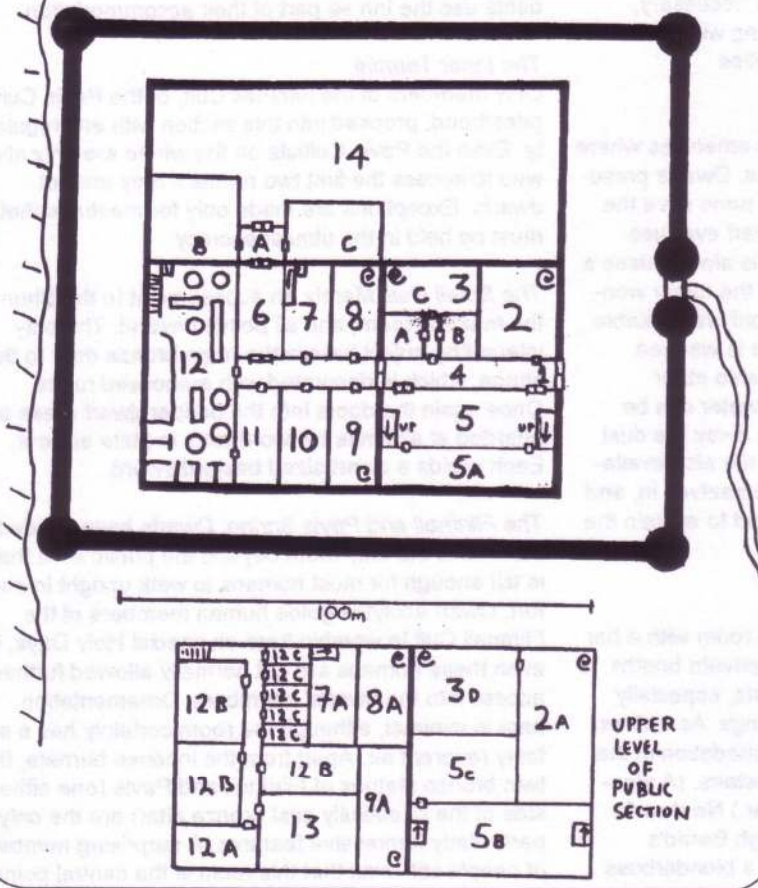
Temple Interior

- 1) Entrance Gates
- 2) The Duty Guard Room
- 2a) Upper Guard Room
- 3) The Rubble Trackers' HQ
- 3a) Office
- 3b) Waiting Room
- 3c) Ready Room
- 3d) Humans' Common Room
- 4) Main Hall
- 5) Stables
- 5a) The Smithy
- 5b) Upper Stables
- 5c) Storage
- 6) The Inner Hall
- 7) Alchemical Laboratory
- 7a) Upper Laboratory
- 8) "Barak's Smallgoods Store"
- 8a) Gaph's Room
- 9) The 'Defense' Shop
- 9a) The Firing Range
- 10) The Infirmary
- 11) The Water Block
- 12) The Flintnail Inn
- 12a) The Meeting Room
- 12b) The Bunk Rooms
- 12c) The Private Rooms
- 13) Human Quarters
- 14) The Inner Temple
- 14a) The Small Hall
- 14b) The Flintnail and Pavis Shrine
- 14c) The Meeting Room

Prices

All Flintnail worshippers have their needs provided for by the Temple, so only outsiders need to buy things here. Since the dwarfs are not overly keen on casual visitors, they multiply New Pavis costs by five. The dwarfs are not responsive to complaints in this area, but will tend to do a better deal for trade rather than purchase. Special dwarf goods and services are sold here at the same rate as they are available in New Pavis. It is likely that friendly Pavis cultists benefit from cheaper deals, however such people remain politely close-mouthed.

THE NEW FLINTNAIL TEMPLE



1-2 edible but tastes horrible,
 3-5 edible but bland,
 6-9 nice but missing something,
 10 delicious (but at some point diners will find a claw, beak, mandible, or some unidentifiable object, in their meal that will lead them to wonder just what it really was made out of).

Human Flintnail worshippers may find themselves carrying out their cult duties by helping run the Inn for a week or two. Barad will experiment on them, in the nicest possible way, so it should be an interesting dietary experience. Any human who pushes their meal away and gags, or complains, will invariably have a nearby dwarf ask them if they can have it. This dwarf will then wolf it down with much gusto and appreciation.

Saral One-Hand - human servant at Flintnail Inn
 Saral claims to be an ex-adventurer who got a lucky break here at the Inn. He is in his mid-40's, and his amputated right hand does not stop him from pushing a broom around or wiping the occasional glass at the bar. He is not expected to do much real work, but rather spends his time listening in to visitor's conversation. He is an initiate of Flintnail and Pavis, and is the 'Pavis Survivors' contact here at the Inn. He is also a member of the recently-established rebel organisation: 'The New Teeth'. Saral can receive or deliver messages on behalf of both groups. He also uses visitors to the Inn as an opportunity to catch up on recent gossip and news.

Saral has been at the Inn long enough that Barad trusts his opinions, and he now gets to taste Barad's more exotic concoctions before they go out for public

consumption. This has improved the success rate somewhat, but Barad occasionally insists on second opinions when he thinks he has produced a success. Saral can be quite cunning, and is especially happy to endorse any meals he finds revolting, if there are any visiting Lunars.

Gaph Barak

Gaph is an older dwarf who runs the small general store. He is the only source at the Inn for non-weapon or armor goods and will trade them happily at the usual inflated prices. However, if someone offers him such obscure nic-nacs as Old Pavis eating utensils or soapdishes, his eyes will light up, and he may be prepared to reduce his prices considerably for anything he considers genuine. Once such an item is purchased, he will catalog it and take it to his upstairs collection.

This behaviour makes Gaph an authority on some aspects of life in Old Pavis, and he can provide invaluable advice to anyone trying to temporarily locate a vision or picture in a particular era. Occasionally,

Pavis or Lhankor Mhy priests will even visit him to gain his help in understanding a difficult divination, or a set of images reconstructed from the city's past. He will perform these services for free if there is an interesting enough story, but he charges a steep fee if he considers it a waste of his time.

Gaph is probably the most gregarious dwarf that can be encountered amongst the Flintnailers. The other dwarfs think that perhaps his tongue wags a little too much, but they give him some leeway, as he is such a likeable fellow. His queries amongst visitors, after the health of Kag Barak and Daph Barak (two dwarfs who live largely surface lives), seem almost paternal, which in fact they are. If this family connection is alluded to, Gaph will realise he may have said too much, and change the subject, or obfuscate that the subjects of his questions are from the same work-order as himself.

In reality, the various assistants at his store are all relatives, and mostly his offspring. The entire Barak bloodline seems to lean more towards the human side of its nature, although physically they appear no different from the other dwarfs.

The Rubble Trackers

by Wesley Quadros and Ian Thomson

An Old Pavic Dwarf Gang

"The Old City rises and we know its ways better than anyone."

It is not recommended that adventurers are created from amongst the Rubble Trackers until you are experienced at gaming in Hero Wars. Having said that, a sample Hero (Kag Barak) is mentioned as having had some training in the Trackers, although he is meant to be a highly unusual character. The following information is provided more as an example of potential supporting characters, to be used as and when required.

Captain of the Rubble Trackers

To become a captain in the Rubble Trackers takes a lot of effort and sacrifice. These dwarf warriors are proven masters of the Rubble, the people there and the effective use of their resources.

Hero Wars

Close Combat 18w (axe and shield), Ranged Combat 16w (Cross Bow, Musket), Throw Grenade 17w, Rubble Lore 7w2, Leadership 9w, Warband Tactics 15w, Devotee of Kirkinzzie the Bold 6w, Combat Magic 18w (Sundering Axe Blow, Breastplate of Adamantine, Stand Fast, Rally Dwarf), Rubble Magic 15w (Know Location in Rubble, Recognize Rubble Denizen, Blend in with Rubble, Travel Safely through Rubble), Negotiate 15, Scan Terrain 1w, Loyal to Quarry 4w, Dedicated to Clients 2w, Dwarf Sense 5w, Sturdy 3w

Items of Note:

Flintnail Chainmail, Iron Helm and Shield ^7, Iron Axe ^4, Flintnail Pistol^8 (effective range 10m), Flintnail Grenade [A Dwarf Grenade's attack is resolved as a simple contest. The grenade attacks with a strength of 5w2 out to 3 m, 5w to 10m and 5 to 20m. Bid everything the grenade has against the target's strength, stamina or other appropriate skill], Copy of current contract.

Sergeant of the Rubble Trackers

While the officers lead the Trackers, the sergeants do all of the work. They are the goad that drives the squad through the Rubble and through training. They are responsible for a smart turnout. They are responsible for bringing them all home again.

Hero Wars

Close Combat 6w2 (axe and shield), Ranged Combat 4w2 (Cross Bow, Musket), Throw Grenade 19w, Rubble Lore 13w, Leadership 19, Warband Tactics 19, Initiate of Kirkinzzie the Bold 19, Combat Magic 13w, Rubble Magic 15w, Intimidate Trooper 15, Cow Client 2w, Yell Loudly 2w2, Scan Terrain 3w, Dedicated to Squad 19, Self Confident 19w, Dwarf Sense 2w, Sturdy 3w

Items of Note:

Flintnail Chainmail, Iron Helm and Shield ^7, Iron Axe ^4, Flintnail Musket^8 (effective range 50m), Flintnail Grenade, Copy of Current Duty Roster.

Dwarvish Trooper

These are the elite Flintnail Rubble Trackers. These dwarves are among the best fighters in the Rubble and they are secure in their knowledge of that fact.

Hero Wars

Close Combat 15w (axe and shield), Ranged Combat 13w (Cross Bow, Musket), Throw Grenade 12w, Rubble Lore 17, Warband Tactics 17, Initiate of Kirkinzzie the Bold 17, Combat Magic 9w, Rubble Magic 5w, Stoic 15, Ignore Pestering Client 2w, Avoid Angry Sergeant 19, Scan Terrain 8w, Loyal to Squad 19, Dwarf Sense 15, Sturdy 3w

Items of Note:

Flintnail Chainmail, Helm and Shield ^6, Iron Axe ^4, Flintnail Musket^8 (effective range 50m), Flintnail Grenade.

Human Trooper

These humans are amongst the best fighters in the Rubble and they are secure in their knowledge of that fact.

Hero Wars

Close Combat 15w (sword and shield), Ranged Combat 13w (Cross Bow), Throw Grenade 12w, Rubble Lore 17, Warband Tactics 17, Initiate of Opili the Protector 17, Combat Magic 9w, Zebra Harmony Magic 5w, Confident 15, Avoid Angry Sergeant 19, Scan Terrain 8w, Loyal to Squad 19, Swagger 15, Ride Zebra 3w

Items of Note:

Chainmail, Helm and Shield ^5, Sword ^3, Flintnail Crossbow^6, Flintnail Grenade, Riding Zebra

Mani's Fort

by Ian Thomson

Acknowledgements

Greg Stafford for having the patience to discuss these ideas with me at length, despite other priorities (such as the imminent release of 'Hero Wars').

Moon Publications' Gloranthan Classics - 'Pavis and the Big Rubble' (P&BR), 1999.

Wesley Quadros for illustrative Hero Wars statistics. Nick Brooke for editorial assistance.

Rex MF Smith and Jim Rogers for proofing.

Mike Dawson for the 'Hidden Fields', and the '1613 Report on the Pacification of Prax', both in "Codex 1", 1994.

Daniel Fahey for last-second editorial suggestions.

Michael O'Brien for a discussion on the Clan's relations with the Lunars

Common Knowledge

"Mani of the Many Lives is an ancient hero of Mani's clan, which rules this fort; he is reborn among them every two or three generations. His reign is always heroic and much benefits his people. They revere him and his customs above all else, for Mani has preserved them through all times. He uses strange powers to protect the residents, who are very loyal to him and his cult."

(Summarised from P&BR p59 + p183)

"The Twin Hills rise about 100m each, and on the sides that face each other have steep cliffs. The bare rock of these cliffs is brick red. Mani's Fort is an occupied human settlement on the eastern hill."

(P&BR p186)

Most people know little about Mani's Fort: only that a small independent clan of Pavis traditionalists is protected here by their sometimes incarnate ancestor, and that it sits on one of the Twin Hills, south of the Wyvern Road. Some people may also have heard stories that, when incarnate, Mani uses unusual magics to decisively drive away attacking trolls and nomads alike, although he never otherwise shows his strength. The Clan apparently deal as little with outsiders as possible, presumably having become used to their insular lifestyle during the troll occupation.

Rubble experts, who are questioned about Mani and his Clan, can additionally explain that the entire Clan is of an odd racial stock. They share the olive-brown skin and predominantly fair hair common to the variant groups of Oasis Folk, much more than they evidence nomad characteristics. Although they speak Old Pavis or Trade during relations with outsiders, they have often been heard to converse amongst themselves in some unknown tongue. Apparently members of the Clan rarely travel any distance from the Fort, other than on occasional trading trips to the Real City, where they sell their home-made crafts at the market. Apart from the atypical Indagos family, the Clan very much chooses to keep itself apart from their neighbours

Rubble specialists might also mention that the Clan is not keen on casual visitors, highly valuing their isolation. Even so, the natives of the old city know them as 'good people', reliable neighbours, who have also on many occasions assisted and sheltered Rubble travelers who were in trouble. Unexpected visitors are customarily given refreshment, asked to make a donation to the Clan coffers in return, and then encouraged to leave. Such visitors may engage in courteous, but totally uninformative, conversations with the Clan members, and even Knowledge Cultists have given up on visiting the Fort. (One expressed the opinion that trying to get the Clan to reveal their traditional secrets was like "trying to collect ten measures of sand in a newling's net".)

It is understood that the entire Clan are followers of Mani as their chief ancestor, but nothing specific is known about this 'Cult of Mani', as it is sometimes referred to. It is thought likely to be some form of straightforward ancestor worship, although it does not resemble any Praxian style of reverence to Daka Fal.

Since the Clan seem racially related to the oasis people, it is quite likely that their religious traditions are archaic remnants of a former age.

Directly approaching Clan members at the Real City market, as they sell their goods, will similarly produce little information of benefit. Aside from which, harassing traders is very much frowned upon by the Real City Watch. A typical trading group will consist of 3-5 adults, accompanied only by 1 or 2 warriors as bodyguards. Each trading group, perhaps surprisingly, is collected and escorted home by a posse of the Real City Watch.

Uncommon Knowledge

The Clan claim to have been here since even before the founding of Robcradle, and make no denial of suspicions that they, like other tribes of Oasis Folk, are descendants of the Golden Age people of Genert's Garden. Rumours abound as to their allegiance to various deities, but the Clan only admits to one thing: that they worship an Earth Spirit unique to this location.

Those people able in some way to access Lunar intelligence will be able to find out what they know. The 1613 'Report on the Pacification of Prax', for instance, is not available for public perusal; however, certain of its contents have recently been declassified. In it, the Lunar Survey Captain described Mani's Clan as:

"...in many ways similar to the varied tribes of oasis folk, but in several ways unique. Firstly they live with the same apparent ease and lack of focus as is typically found, but behind this is an air of purpose and strength of will that I have never before observed in their race. Perhaps what we are observing is the single example of Golden Age descendants who have survived the destruction of their gods without losing their vitality? This may, or may not, be connected to their legendary hero Mani. It will certainly be interesting to question him if he reincarnates once more. The Clan, despite its pride, does not appear to pose any significant threat to the Lunar occupation, however..."

(The following text has been deleted)

Admission to the Fort

Those approaching Mani's Fort will note that its outer walls are of similar dwarfish manufacture to other strongholds in the Rubble, such as the Real City and Zebra Fort. (The Clan accepted the assistance of Opili and the dwarfs during the great fortification period after Garngar's death.) Apart from the few guards customarily patrolling these walls, the only other obvious object of note is the crenellated roof of a small central tower. Depending on the weather, and current levels of activity of the various hostiles of the Rubble, members of the Clan can often be seen tending their small plots of vegetables, berry bushes, and wildflowers that surround the Fort walls.

On seeing people approaching more closely, the guards will sound horns to alert the rest of the Clan that visitors draw near. Either a delegation will be sent to meet these visitors, should they appear to

be friendly, or else warriors will muster on the walls, and inside the gates, to deal with a potential threat. It will then be up to the visitors to convince the Clan that they mean no harm, if they wish to avail themselves of the Fort's hospitality. On the rare occasions when outlaws, chaotics, or trolls are so foolish as to chase humans close to the walls of the fort, pits open beneath their feet, rocks hurl themselves at their heads, and vines and bushes twist and turn about their legs. The Clan will not talk about these effects, saying only that their spirit watches over them.

A typical reception will be led by Tambrak of the Guard, who will be accompanied by an appropriate number of warriors, armoured in the Clan's unusual style. The guards are never threatening unless provoked, in which case they fight well and ferociously, their bodies protected by heavily stacked magics. Groups judged worthy to speak with a higher authority are escorted to an audience with Artamis, or perhaps even with Pallinu Vibi himself.

As previously mentioned, visiting the Fort is not encouraged, although actually gaining entry is not that hard for the determined. Posing as a reputable trader (perhaps one offering budget deals on useful commodities), will likely gain at least an interview, although the Clan require little from outsiders. Actually being adventurers in trouble (such as being visibly chased by Chaotics from the Devil's Playground) will almost certainly convince the Clan to open the gates with speed. Once unexpected visitors are inside, the questioning is friendly, but thorough, and the guards make sure that nobody wanders the Fort unescorted.

The Clan provides basic accommodation just inside the gates if visitors need to stay for a while. They also explain politely that their Fort is not a hostel, and their way of life is fragile. Whilst they will not stand by and let people be slaughtered at their gates, all 'emergency visitors' are asked to make a substantial donation to the Clan from any wealth they are carrying, or else asked to agree to perform tasks on behalf of the Clan. Such tasks usually involve tending the Clan's gardens outside the Fort for several days, or more rarely helping them transport food or crafts to the market at the Real City. These entry requirements for casual visitors are a deliberate discouragement for adventurers and outlaws who might otherwise try and use them as a regular stopping point. It is also useful for the Clan to have such go-betweens, which lessen their exposure to other outsiders.

So far, no one has ever challenged these conditions, so the Clan's reaction to such a refusal is unknown. (Presumably nobody wishes to risk the gates remaining closed, should they be again in urgent need of shelter in the future.) Once a person agrees, one of the Priests will bind them into a magical oath pact.

Visitors to the Fort include reasonably regular deliveries of supplies from the Real City, but only known warriors from that settlement form the escort. Personal visits to the Fort are very rare, as day-trips across the Rubble are still more likely to be motiv-

ted by necessity than by whim. It might be possible to find an individual outside of the Indagos family who has personal connections to the Clan, but probably as few as half a dozen people of this type exist.

Inside the Fort

Within this small settlement, upwards of 300 people dwell, but it somehow doesn't seem too crowded, and the residents seem very content. Several will come forward to greet any visitors, seemingly fascinated with them and any tales of life in other parts of the world. Interestingly enough, this curiosity is very playful, and soon it can be noted that the Clan regards such stories as mere entertainment. They evidence no desire to visit these places or interact with the outside world. Anyone who asks about their life here in the Fort will be told that the residents enjoy a richness of spirit that is worth any civilised comforts or goods that might be available elsewhere. The thrill of travelling is nothing compared to the peace of friendship and contemplation available within their home.

The Clan dress in tunics and leggings vaguely reminiscent of Old Pavic design, but modified with such things as unusual sashes and odd-seeming flourishes of fabric. Men and women alike let their hair grow long, but also tend to keep it well groomed. Only the Priesthood wears obvious religious markings, but apart from the Earth Rune these are all obscure and unrecognisable symbols from long ago. The Clan members are in no way arrogant, and express the calm acceptance common to other Oasis peoples, although without the common bland fatalism. It is not totally unheard of for casual friendships to form between individual Clan members and outsiders, although deeper relationships are not encouraged, as those who wish to pursue such relationships must leave the Fort and choose another way of life.

Of the 300 or so Clan members, approximately two thirds are adults, and children and adolescents play and run amidst the buildings. The Fort could muster around 60 competent warriors and 80 more irregulars if required, although such an event has not occurred within recent history. Depending on the weather, many adult Clan members will be found in the open-air engaged in simple chores, like weaving baskets, sharpening and manufacturing tools, or teaching simple lessons to the children. In the evenings they entertain each other with singing and dancing, accompanied by drums, bells and horns. On their holy days many decorate themselves with flowers and with coloured paint and mud as they dance and play. (Few outside the clan have even been permitted to observe these ceremonies however.)

The buildings are sturdy and utilitarian, resembling the standard adobe buildings of Sun County more than Pavic mansions. The chief exceptions are the Chief's House, the Tower, and the Shrine, which are more remarkable stone constructions. At the Fort there is also a stock of zebras, penned near the Main Gate, and every day it is safe enough to do so, they will be exercised near the Fort and watered at the river. They are either enchanted or extremely well trained, as they need only a few outriders to control them (leading to the old misconception that the Clan herded zebras in the manner of nomads).

The Indagos Family

Sir Indagos of New Pavis, and his family, are originally from Mani's Clan, and are exceptional in their decision to relocate to New Pavis. Indagos the Elder was amongst those who greeted Dorasar in 1550, and was able to produce centuries-old Pavic legal documents, proving his ownership of parts of Manside, the Rubble Salt Mines, and an unremarkable oasis half way up the Scrltha River. His family lives very comfortably on the payments they receive from those who mine salt in the Rubble. It is obvious on first meeting the Indagos family, that they are of the same general stock as other Oasis People who may have been previously encountered.

Adventurers who approach the Indagos family respectfully, seeking information about Mani's Clan, will gain a few further impressions: information that would definitely not be forthcoming from the Clan. Perhaps they will even be introduced to old Sir Indagos himself, formerly Indagos the Younger who lived in Mani's Fort as a boy around seventy years ago. Whilst Sir Indagos fully respects the privacy that the Clan requires, he can confirm that they are amongst the last of the people of Genert. They were here first, and will still be here when everyone else has departed and even the Rubble crumbles into the sands. He may also admit, to a careful questioner, that the Clan worship a spirit surviving from the Golden Age which has some connection to Genert, and that Mani is a champion of this Spirit.

Clever and courteous visitors who ask Indagos about his own beliefs may discover that he too follows this deity, which he refers to only as one of Genert's people. Indagos has an unflinching belief in reincarnation, and is certain that his spirit will return to the great cycle, leading to his rebirth amongst the Clan some time in the future. He may admit that Mani's reincarnation is different only from the rest of the Clan in that his personality remains

Mani's Fort

- 1) The Chief's House
- 2) The Tower
- 3) The Work Barn
- 4) Residence Block
- 5) The Shrine
- 6) The Community Hall
- 7) The Stables
- 8) Office of the Guard
- 9) Gatehouse
- 10) City Wel
- 11) Guests' Residence

Intact. Despite his relative willingness to converse, Indagos will not talk about Mani in any detail, other than confirming he is the hero of the Clan, and that without him they would have died out long ago. Sir Indagos and many of his household also worship Pavis, and are respected citizens of the new settlement.

If asked why his family left the Fort and moved to New Pavis, Indagos will say that his parents simply realised that New Pavis would become a great local power and that the old city's interests would be well-served by having a presence there. (Wily characters might correctly suspect that the Clan made this decision, not purely the Indagos family, and that there is some greater reason behind the move. Sir Indagos will deny such allegations calmly and rationally, seemingly amused at such a 'conspiracy theory'.)

On the rare instances that an outsider is invited into the family rooms of one of the residents, they will find a place of comfortable serenity. The Clan make the very most of their limited facilities, keeping their rooms spotlessly tidy and all goods shelved or otherwise stored to make maximum use of space.

Decoration consists of hand-woven rugs and wall hangings, home-made sculptures, and other pottery ornaments. Amongst these sculptures a keen observer may spot some that appear to have religious significance; however, their owners will always explain them away as mere good-luck charms, or items of purely personal symbology. Beds and other furniture, where they exist, are of sturdy wicker design, however most families use simple cushions, sleeping mats, and bolsters only. Commonly a low table and a raised work surface are the only items of furniture.

Locations

The Chief's House

This building has a columned portico out in front and is a large house in the traditional Pavic style. It is in a magnificent state of preservation, and even the simple furnishings and ornaments it contains would be worth a fortune for their historical value. In front of this building, one on each side of the steps, are two 4ft tall statuettes of animals no longer known in Prax.

The Tower

This building clears the walls by more than 20ft and is the main lookout position for the Fort. Also, on the roof is Mani's bier, a holy object upon which his body is burned after each time he dies. Only Mani and the Priesthood now enter the upper levels.

The Work Barn

Although guarded whenever visitors are present, no attempt is made to hide the view of its contents. In here are stored wood, reeds, pots, and tools. During good weather the Clan work outdoors, but during rainy and hot seasons they may be found in here, making pots, weaving mats, and repairing and maintaining the necessities of their existence.

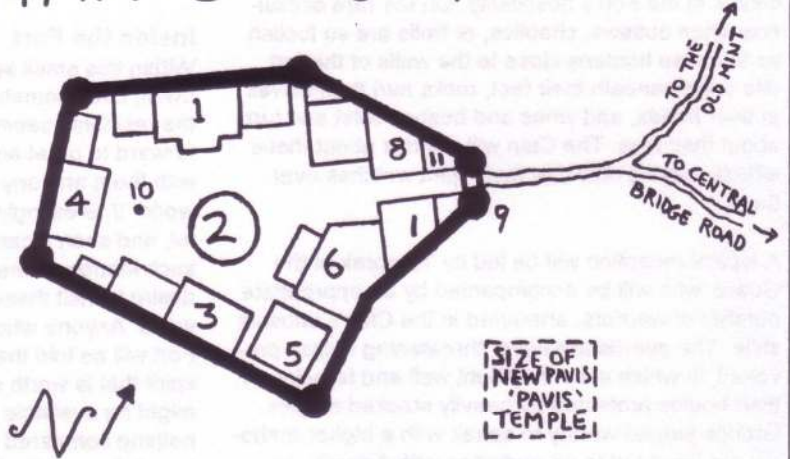
Residence Block

The largest of the purely residential buildings, and the only one built almost entirely of stone. It has been repaired and rebuilt many times, and has stood on this spot since before time began. (Only an expert mason or historian might notice the subtle hints indicating its extreme age.)

The Shrine

This building is another impressive relic of bygone days. Its lower walls (forming the square base) are vertical, but above this lower story the Shrine slopes backward into a flat-sided pyramid. The doorway is a

MANI'S FORT



most impressive feature, being formed from two roughly-hewn standing stones and a similar lintel. Ancient and unfamiliar runes can still be made out engraved upon these, although the wind and rain of the centuries has worn them almost to nothing. Details of this shrine's inner sanctum are unknown, as nobody outside the Clan has ever entered, and the Clan will not talk of it.

The Community Hall

This building is the place for social gathering, drinking and talking. The Clan have decorated it themselves, and produce their own paintings and other art forms. It is unusual if at least one complex sand-mandala is not being worked on here. Here is where the Clan congregates for simple meetings and possibly for other, more unusual, purposes. There is a raised stone platform at one end, behind which a large Earth Rune is inlaid into the wall. Barely visible now within the stone, many other small (and largely unknown) Runes were once painted or chiselled.

The Stables

The Fort owns more than 20 zebras. When replacements are needed they are bought from the Real City, but all the Fort zebras maintain excellent health and longevity, so such a purchase is rare.

Office of the Guard

From here stairs lead up onto the gate towers and the walls, and behind it is the fort's armoury. Despite the Clan's relaxed demeanour, several guards will appear, as if from nowhere, if visitors try and sneak into this area (or indeed any other restricted part of the Fort).

Gatehouse

As in the Real City, a sturdy double wall, with a room above, connects the two strong towers. Facing the Rubble are large double-gates of huge bronze-bound wooden beams, including the smaller postern gate with a tiny grille. Behind these is an enormous portcullis, creating a small retaining area under the gate's huge arch. Also like the Real City, the Fort may admit unknown visitors into this

space, if leaving them outside even for a few minutes is tantamount to a death sentence. In a small room off the Gatehouse is the Fort's shrine to Pavis and Opili.

City Well

The well-head roof is carved into the likeness of two reclining water nymphs, and is actually a Shrine to Zola Fel. If anyone in the Clan donates a magic point to it, it will fill several buckets of water, operating the hoists under its own power. Visitors have occasionally seen and remarked on this, but do not understand it.

Guests' Residence

Close by the Main Gate, this building is reserved for visitors and contains only the most spartan furnishings. Compared, however, to a night in the Rubble, with the company of brood and trolls, it is sheer luxury.

Mani's Clan

The organisation of Mani's Clan is simple: running as a co-operative. Individuals have free time to pursue their own hobbies, and these are usually traditional arts and crafts, or maintaining the vegetable gardens around the fort. Some members of the Clan do have special positions, such as Master of Kitchens, Gardens, Zebras or Refuse, but these are mostly casual on a rotational basis. Exceptions include the Priesthood of Mani, and the officers of the Guard.

Mani

Currently his physical age is only 16, as he was reborn in 1603. It was a surprise to his clan that he returned so soon, after having most recently died only in 1572. They see his swift return as a sign that momentous events must surely be at hand. Despite his apparent age, Mani's wisdom is most obvious to any that are granted the rare privilege to converse with him. Although, since few people outside the Clan even know he is currently alive, such conversations are rare indeed. Apart from in his previous incarnation when he finally agreed to talk with Dorasar in 1565, there are no credible reports of anyone meeting Mani since the fall of Pavis to the trolls. He poses as Pallinu's assistant in all encounters with outsiders where he believes his presence is necessary. In total number of years of life, Mani is ancient in human terms, and he has about him an air of otherworldliness due to this. He found Getenak's home as he looked for a place to shelter his family from chaos and death during the time of Darkness, and has been returning ever since. Amongst his abilities, Mani can call upon the Rune powers of the Earth to provide healing and protection for his Clan, and to summon gnomes to defend the hilltop. As a hero, his magic does not follow strictly defined patterns, hence the rumours of his 'strange abilities'. One of his most impressive feats is that as long as some part of his body is touching untainted earth or stone, Mani can resurrect himself at will. (Although this does not counteract the normal process of aging.)

HW Stats: Knowledge of Clan customs 5w3, History of Prax 10w4, Close Combat 13w3 (Spear

and Shield, Sword and Shield), Growing Magic 7w4, Earth Magic 9w4, Green Age Ceremonies 14w3, Wisdom 19w2, Devoted to Getenak 14w2, Knowledge of Genert Mythos 16w2, Leadership 4w3, Feign Normality 6w4, Speak Trade 17w, Speak Old Pavic 14w.

Pallinu Vibi

High Priest of the Cult of Mani, Pallinu is Mani's current deputy, and the Chief of the Fort. He is an accomplished diplomat and a powerful magic-user. Pallinu is approaching 60 years of age, and has a long grey beard. He is rarely seen without his tall ceremonial wooden staff, topped with a bronze fitting in the shape of an Earth Rune.

HW Stats: Diplomacy 14w3, Growing Magic 18w3, Earth Magic 10w3, Green Age Ceremonies 2w2, Lead Worship of Getenak 13w, Devoted to Getenak 18w, Leadership 12w2, Administer Fort 8w2, Patient 19, Love Mani 18w, Loyal to Mani's Clan 19, Speak Mostali 15, Speak Trade 16, Speak Old Pavic 2w, Friendly with Flintnail Cult 14, Cautious 15, Jovial 14, Frail 13

Artamis

A junior priest of Mani, only recently in his 40s, he speaks little but watches keenly, and is an excellent judge of character. His beard is still mostly golden.

HW Stats: Ride Zebra 16, Close Combat 13 (shortsword), Keen Eyed 15, Judge Person 12w, Quiet 15, Growing Magic 12w2, Earth Magic 15w2, Green Age Ceremonies 12w, Lead Worship of Getenak 18, Devoted to Getenak 2w, Distrust Lunar 3w, Knowledge of Rubble Lore 17w, Speak Mostali 12, Speak Trade 15, Speak Old Pavic 3w, Knowledge of Oasis Lore 14w, Knowledge of Praxian Geography 18

Shorna Tovik

Shorna is one of the youngest in the Priesthood, being only 36 years old. She is a strong woman with unusually dark hair, and is the Clan's Priestess of Ernalda (Leader aspect). Shorna replaced the old Priestess who died only a year ago, and is still somewhat nervous of her new responsibilities.

HW Stats: Close Combat 16 (Spear and Shield), Devoted to Getenak 4w, Devoted to Ernalda 14w, Leadership 1w, Earth Magic 5w2, Growing Magic 16w, Green Age Ceremonies 17, Strong 14, Exotic Looks 13, Distrust Stranger 14, Love Children 17, Find Another Way 19

Mirash

The Clan healer, who is an acolyte of Ernalda (Healer aspect), Mirash likes to help and is very sociable. She is certainly the most talkative of those listed here, and often shows the beginnings of understanding in the ways of foreigners. She becomes very pleased when commended for correctly pronouncing a new word, or completing a social ritual unknown to the rest of the Clan. Mirash is 27 years old.

HW Stats: Devoted to Ernalda 4w, Devoted to Getenak 17, Heal People 7w, Heal Animals 18, Heal Earth 14w, Calm Fear 9w, Talkative 5w, Knowledge of Pavic Customs 18, Knowledge of Sartarite Customs 13, Innovative 15, Eager to Learn 12, Ease Patient 17,

Relations with Outsiders

The Lunars

The Clan are not known ever to visit New Pavis, and have expressed quiet displeasure that they should be required to fill in paperwork merely in order to travel around their traditional home. Whilst Sir Indagos clearly favours locals over Lunars when voting on the city council, he is never other than the most cordial in relations with people of any background. Lunars who visit the Fort are always greeted with similar courtesy, however no Clan member will ever address a Lunar without being first spoken to, and the Clan tend to retreat into their homes, emerging once again only when the Lunars have departed.

Sartarite-descended Pavisites

It is clear from the attitude of the Clan, that Dorasar's people are foreigners; however, Mani's people do not evidence the same antipathy to them as they do towards Lunars. Occasionally clan members might even question an Orlanthi about their culture and beliefs, but always seem bemused at any responses.

Old City Pavisites

Outsiders tend to lump Mani's Clan and the Old City Pavisites in the same category, and there are certainly points of similarity. Educated observers would note that their cultures are actually very different, although relations are definitely friendly, having been forged across centuries of mutual aid in survival.

Dwarfs

The Clan give no clear indication of how they regard dwarfs, as the two groups are rarely seen interacting. However, there are occasional instances when a Clan member visiting the Real City has conversed with a dwarf, and unconfirmed reports of dwarfs having been seen within Mani's Fort.

Aldryami

There are unconfirmed reports that members of Mani's Clan sometimes visit the Garden. In fact, the Clan are welcomed there on certain aldryami Holy Days,

and have a special relationship with the followers of Aldrya. No aldryami have been seen at the Fort itself, however.

Trolls

Trolls are not normally allowed access to Mani's Fort, although once an adventurer party containing one successfully argued that he would die if left outside, and so he was permitted into the Gatehouse only. At the Real City market, the Clansfolk treat troll traders with cool restraint if forced to communicate, and no troll has ever succeeded in doing business with them.

Nomads

Nomad groups are not known to have ever visited Mani's Fort, although nomads within adventurer bands have certainly been admitted. One such visiting nomad apparently was used to pushing oasis folk around and tried to impose his wishes onto a Clan female. He was challenged by the Captain of the Guard, and slain in a fair fight.

Herb Lore 2w, Treat Disease 4w, Treat Injury 18, Speak Old Pavic 12, Speak Sartarite 13, Speak Trade 16

Tambrak

Captain of the Guard, his life has been dedicated to protecting the Clan. He is their acknowledged master of traditional fighting forms, despite being only 35.

HW Stats: Close Combat 3w3 (Great Axe, Lance, Sword and Shield, Dagger, Brawling), Archery 14w2, Ride Zebra 2w, Tactics 14w (small unit), Train Warrior 5w, Leadership 4w2, Brawny 2w, Scarred 15, Dedicated to Mani's Clan 4w, Devoted to Opili 18, 'City Harmony' Magic 18, 'Zebra Harmony' Magic 5w, 'Fight Invaders' Magic 12w, Devoted to Getenak 14, Earth Magic 18, Comprehend Outsider 17, Speak Tersely 17, Scan for Danger 16w, Speak Trade 19

Officers of the Guard

At present they are four men and two women. When interacting with outsiders they are typically polite and yet brief, saying only what needs to be said, and evidencing an air of seriousness and calmness about any task they set themselves to. One of these officers will normally be leading any group of Clan members encountered outside of the Fort, whether it be hunting, trading, or some other more mysterious mission. On the rare occasions when in-depth communication is required with outsiders (other than residents of the old city), members of the Guard are clearly more understanding of the ways of foreigners.

The Fort Guard

The Guard alone of the Clan conform to easily recognisable Pavic tradition, sporting the ancient armour of the city. However, unlike at the Real City, these men and women seem almost to be playing at soldiers, evidencing an easy-going lack of discipline, and having no regular patterns of behaviour. Also, their weapon of choice is the standard broadsword rather than the Pavic Great Axe. Only the officers of the Guard worship Opili and bear the Pavic Runes, the other warriors sport Earth Runes and others that are unknown. The Guard has less than 20 full-time members. One Sage has speculated that the Guards act as specialists in communicating with outsiders more than they are actual warriors, although they can certainly fight well when required.

The Secrets of Mani's Clan

What Uncle Pallinu told me: A Private View of Life in Mani's Clan

Who are our people?

We are the children of Genert, and it is our duty to endure until Genert comes again. We hope that he comes soon, because now only our clan and some of the Priestesses at the Paps remember him truly.

Who is Mani?

Mani is a hero of the old days, who is so pious that he can remember all his lives. It was Mani who discovered that a piece of Genert's Garden was safely hidden near here, and led his people to its safety. We are all descended from him and his followers, so he is our most honoured grandfather even though he looks only like a young man.

What is this city around us?

Long ago, but much more recently than when Genert was here, a man named Pavis came from the West, and built a great settlement. He had also learned of Genert and had become one of his children through visiting the past. For a short time there were many people here, dedicated to the task of bringing back Genert and his people, but enemies fell upon them and the city was reduced to ruin.

Why do we live here on this hill?

Our home is at the site where Getenak hid his garden when Chaos came. Mani found him here and became his friend. We stay here to remain close to Getenak, who is the last son of Genert and who must be preserved.

Who are our friends?

The people of the old city are our friends, although they no longer understand us, and you would be wise to treat them with caution. We helped them during the dark days, and without the dwarfs and ourselves they would have perished. The dwarfs and elves of the old city are also our friends, although our dealings with them now are few.

Who are our enemies?

Chaos is our enemy; it destroyed Genert and his Garden. We must resist it always. The people of the Red Moon are our enemies, because they embrace Chaos. We must tolerate them because they are strong, but soon the winds of the desert will blow them away. Trolls have made themselves our enemies by attacking our friends. Things are not as they once were, but trolls still cannot be trusted, although they are not Chaos. Nomads are our enemies because they attack us and our allies. They do not respect the old ways and want only to take from others.

Tell me more about our Gods!

Getenak, the last son of Genert, is our benefactor. Without him we could not dance our way to the Garden that gives us food. Ernalda is the goddess of the Earth who embraces us with her protection, healing and love. The Circus of Peace still offers the gift of harmony when enemies threaten our home. Some of the warriors here worship Opili, who is a young local spirit who helps defend the city. You will have no need of his services directly. Zola Fel, the river, is our neighbour whom we also respect.

What is my role?

You are to be trained as a Priest, and it is your duty to learn our ceremonies and the stories of Genert's Garden, so that they are never forgotten. You will learn to lead our rituals in time, and may even become the High Priest one day.

What are your duties, Uncle?

Being the High Priest, I watch over all the ceremonies of the Clan, and take care of your spiritual and physical well being. I act as the voice of Mani when he is not present.

What happens after we die?

Our bodies are taken to the garden and buried,

and our spirits reside there in peace until we are reborn here amongst the Clan. This is the way things will be until the Green Age comes again.

The Garden of Getenak

Mani's Clan has always known the secret of accessing a surviving fragment of the Green Age. Its presence at this location is the reason why the God Learners chose this spot for their city, and the reason why Pavis and his friends came here. The God Learners tried hard to access the secret, but the Clan retreated beyond their reach. Only when Pavis arrived bringing gifts and an honest heart did they emerge once more.

The ways of Pavis and Flintnail were not the ways of the Clan, and yet they had much in common and became allies. It interested the Clan for a time to become part of a much greater settlement that was certainly very different from anything they had known before.

Pavis, and Flintnail, and the most gifted of their followers, came to the Clan often, and were permitted to join with many rituals. After these, they went away and continued their own experiments, but all except these two leaders lacked the deep connection to the Green Age that made such things possible.

Getenak's Garden is the connection between the mundane world and the Green Age that makes this place unique, and the Priests of Mani's Clan know ceremonial dances which lead them and their people into the other world. Throughout its history, the entire Clan has hidden there many times, waiting until invaders or other dangers have passed before returning.

Of the newcomers, only Pavis and Flintnail themselves ever knew Getenak. Other devout people could access the echo of Genert's garden, but then had to dance their own new paths onwards, according to whatever intentions they held. In the rituals, the Clan can move easily into the Garden of Getenak, and take freely of its bounty, which they may then carry back to the Fort in the mundane world. This is the ability that the Green Age Revivalists wanted so desperately to emulate, and at their best only ever partially recreated.

The rituals of the Clan take place in the open within the Fort, but are never carried out with strangers present. If someone were to watch by means of magic or spirits, they would see the painted ceremonial dancers lead the Clan into the shrine building at the culmination of the ritual, but would not be able to perceive any further. The shrine is the focal point, or gateway, between the worlds, and passing inside under these circumstances takes one back to the Green Age. The dance of the Clan continues there as they approach Getenak's home, but outsiders lack the resonance to accompany them that far.

It is possible that lesser ceremonies could take suitable friends of the Clan into a shallower level of myth, which would be perceived in much the same way to the inexperienced. Here such a person could encounter spirits and beings long since vanished

from the face of Genertela, and learn much of the Green Age, but nothing of substance could accompany them when they returned.

Getenak himself appears in the innermost myths of the Clan in various guises. Most commonly he is depicted as a humanoid with the legs of some forgotten herdbest and the antlers of a deer. When encountered he is often playing with great skill on a set of wooden pipes, and loves nothing more than to join in with the playful revelries of his people.

Mani's Clan and the Cult of Pavis

Over the last two decades particularly, there are those within the Cult of Pavis who are actively seeking to re-establish their city in its former glory. This is not for prestige, or in direct response to the Lunar occupation, but motivated by a fascination with the hints and veiled references to Green Age Revivalism that remain within the Pavis Cult archives.

Mani's Clan is fully aware of the subtle variations of status within the Pavis Cult, and will teach city history and Green Age legends to members of the third circle. They also, however, teach much deeper secrets to those in the fourth circle, knowledge that comes with the great price of sworn loyalty to the Clan.

Visitors from the Real City Pavis Temple disguise their studies as assistance in traditional minor rituals, and such activities go ignored by the Lunars, who in general have a very low opinion of the inhabitants of the Big Rubble. The Real City already owes a huge debt to the Clan for their help in obtaining food during their harshest years, and it has already been guaranteed that Mani's Priests will have positions of influence when the old city government is revived.

The Cult of Getenak

by Stephen Watson and Ian Thomson

When Genert ruled his Garden, all was fertile and green. He had many children, and he made each responsible for part of his domain: these were the Gardeners. Getenak was the youngest of his sons and was given an area of Prax to oversee as his own; a garden alongside a river. When the Devil came, Genert led his other children in defending the Garden. Getenak's grandmother was staying with him then, and she did not want to see her grandchild slain. Using the powers of the Earth, she hid Getenak and his beautiful garden. Alas, Genert was killed along with all the other children, and Getenak alone was saved.

This garden survived the great disasters that befell the world, as did the people who were protected inside. However, all the inhabitants of the garden went to their peace, while Getenak kept it fertile and beautiful in memory of his father. He tended it in terrible loneliness until Mani the Wanderer found it again and brought new inhabitants to worship him. In return for this companionship, Getenak granted Mani the preservation of memory in the Cycle of Life. In thanks for their continued survival, Mani and his Clan worship Getenak and Genert.

Cultists are promised that when they die they will rest in peace for a time in Genert's Garden as it was, and

The Hidden Fields

Local legends of the city speak of many peculiar magics, most of which are attributed to Pavis. The 'Hidden Fields', that provided sustenance through the centuries of raids and occupation, are one of the more enduring of these folk tales. Like many such tales they are based firmly in reality. In this case, the origin is not Pavis; the Fields have always been reached through rituals known only to Mani's Clan.

Throughout the area surrounding Mani's Fort (in effect the Big Rubble) worship of Getenak has granted his Priests the ability to access echoes of his hidden garden. These Fields, in a similar way to the orchard accessible via Raven's Stepladder, are fertile grounds which can be entered to plant crops, and later to harvest. In the intervening period lush crops grow unattended, much faster than one would ever expect.

The Priests of the Clan taught this magic only to Pavis, to help him feed his growing city in the early days. Whilst the Pavis Cult retains records of such magic, they have long ago lost the secret of activating the Fields, and when the people were starving they relied upon the Priests of Mani's Clan to open and close the portals on their behalf.

Although these Fields were no longer needed after the city grew, and cultivation began in the region now known as Pavis County, throughout the nomad raids and troll occupation Mani's Clan reactivated several of them. These were used to help feed their Pavis neighbours who were facing extreme hardship.

Peace (from Cults of Prax)

This three point spell works only within the ruins of Genert's Garden (Prax and the Wastes), and causes all beings not of Rune status to forget all thoughts of violence or war, and become amenable to ideas of peace and harmony.

Ceremonial Earth Magic

Attune to Hidden Field

A Priest of Getenak need sacrifice only 1 POW at the end of a ceremony, and this opens or closes a portal to the desired field for long enough for planting or harvesting to take place. The ceremony to activate a new Hidden Field has not been used for almost 300 years, but is also still known.

Enter Garden of Getenak

Normally the High Priest, or Mani, will lead this ceremony, however any devout Clan member could theoretically call upon Getenak to guide them to his sanctuary.

Create Neutral

Ground This magical effect is renewed around the Fort's locale regularly, and alerts the inhabitants to the approach of hostiles. Unlike Issaries' spell, the boundaries of this version are invisible.

then return to the cycle of life. The Runes of the Cult are Earth and Harmony.

Cult Ecology

The cult currently accepts only the Clan of Mani as its members. Centuries of warfare have shown Getenak the wisdom of remaining hidden, and of keeping his cult exclusive. Other than this, Getenak has no particular likes or dislikes, except for two: Chaos is shunned and avoided, but not sought out; and Gagarth, the Wild Hunter is an enemy and his worshippers must be driven away by any means necessary. The High Holy Day is Godsdag, Illusion week, Fire season.

The Cult in the World

There is only one temple to Getenak: Mani's Fort itself. The small shrine is actually only the centrepoint, and what can normally be seen of the Fort is not all that exists.

Initiate Membership

To become initiated, a candidate must be a blood member of Mani's Clan.

Duties: To tend the hidden garden faithfully and protect the secret of its existence, and to function as a useful and loyal member of the Clan of Mani.

Benefits: Continued reliable supply of food and water, and protection by the ancient earth magics still available on this site.

Spirit Magic: Heal, Second Sight, Shimmer, Strength, Vigor, Visibility

Priests

The High Priest is of course Mani himself, whenever he is incarnate, although the Clan refers to him as 'High Father'. Whichever Priest is most senior will hold the honorary title of High Priest irrespective of whether Mani is incarnate or not. Underneath these two are several normal Priests who are also taught the special Earth magic and myths of the Green Age. Getenak himself often teaches these lessons.

Common Rune Magic: All

Special Rune Magic: Absorption, Heal Body, Restore STR, Restore CON, Restore SIZ, Summon/Control Gnome

Rune Magic from Associate Cults: Earthpower, Peace (Mani and High Priest only).

Associated Cults

Genert

Though all but scattered scraps of his body were devoured by Chaos, Genert's spirit is sometimes seen in the distance during the most sacred Praxian Ceremonies. The Clan's fondest dream is that he will one day return.

Ernalda

In different myths she is named as the wife or mother of Genert, and she clearly aided him, bringing bounty and fertility to the Garden. When Chaos came, she was able to save herself, but not Genert. In memory of his sacrifice, she grants 'Earthpower' to the followers of Getenak. In Prax and the Wastes, her worship is otherwise confined to the Paps.

The Three Bean Circus

This unique band of travellers are survivors of the Green Age. They move from oasis to oasis, teaching the old ways through song, dance and story. Whenever they appear, they bring joy to the lives of the natives, and a renewed interest in life. Through association with the Circus, Mani and Pallinu Vibi are able to cast the Rune Spell 'Peace'.

Pavis

The city founder and Mani were close friends. Although Pavis provides no Rune magic, his cultists in the old city traditionally hold Mani and his people in great respect. Mani, or his High Priest, has often visited the Real City throughout the years, giving them access to various Earth ceremonies that aided their survival.

Opili

Although worship of Pavis by the Clan is confined to respectful mentions in their ceremonies, the officers of the Fort Guard avail themselves of Opili's special Spirit and Rune spells (see Opili Cult), and worship him directly. The shrine at the Fort was built under Opili's rule and at his instigation. Almost uniquely amongst the oasis peoples, Mani's Clan is more than capable of fighting on its own behalf, and accepted this help alongside the training in armed resistance that Opili offered.

Zola Fel

The river god makes sure that their well never runs dry, and Mani's Clan revere her as the source of their vital water supply.

Divine Intervention

Getenak may provide assistance within the old city and at any oasis within Prax or the Wastes, restoring life and limb, and manipulating elemental earth forces to allow cultists to escape from aggressors. In the barren tracts between watering holes, Getenak's powers are restricted in a way that mirrors the demise of Genert's Garden itself. In these cases he may only provide healing, send along ghosts to distract enemies, or cause a spring of water to appear temporarily. Since Mani's Cultists almost never travel beyond the city, Getenak's influence outside his immediate territory is understood only by the Priests.

The Flintnail Tunnels

by Ian Thomson

Dwarvish Weapons and Incendiary Devices

by Wesley Quadros

Flintnail Musket

Weapon Rank: 8

Skill: Ranged Combat (Musket) or Musket or Firearms.

Range: Effective to 50m.

Notes: It takes one (1) unrelated action to reload the musket. Most muskets are built so that only a dwarf may use it. The Flintnail dwarves strictly control access to their muskets and - more importantly - their black powder.

Flintnail Pistol

Weapon Rank: 8.

Skill: Ranged Combat (Musket) or Musket or Firearms.

Range: Effective to 10m.

Notes: It takes one (1) unrelated action to reload the pistol. Most pistols are built so that only a dwarf may use it. The Flintnail dwarves strictly control access to their pistols and - more importantly - their black powder.

Black Powder

Black Powder is a magical substance whose creation is a closely guarded secret of the Flintnail dwarves but that is well known for exploding on contact with any size of flame. This gritty substance, much like fine sand, usually comes in a hollowed-out animal horn with an opening in the narrow end. This container is ideally shaped to facilitate the ritual of firing one of the famed Flintnail muskets. Each horn is of a standard size and usually contains enough of the powder for 50 shots.

Another commonly seen container of black powder is a metal barrel-shaped can that fits in the palm of the hand. The dwarves call these containers 'grenades' and hurl them at their foes where they explode doing horrendous damage. A Dwarf Grenade's attack is resolved as a simple contest. The grenade attacks with a strength of 5w2 out to 3m, 5w to 10m and 5 to 20m; defend with a stamina or agile-related ability (IE: tough, dodge, duck, resilient to damage, etc)

More rarely, black powder is seen in larger barrels massing 10 or more pounds. *continue

These dwarf-made tunnels are Flintnail Cult secrets, and all access points that are not under direct dwarf control are hidden with the most cunning workmanship and magic. On those, extremely rare, occasions that an 'active' entrance is discovered, alarms alert the dwarfs, and inner doors swiftly close to prevent access further into their territory. Under these circumstances, it is normally possible for the dwarfs to maintain the illusion that intruders have discovered a tunnel or entrance that has long since been abandoned.

The tunnels are very deep beneath the Rubble, and the northern section is maintained and guarded superbly. Recently, the dwarfs have re-opened access to the southern tunnels, but have confirmed that trolls and chaos still dwell there, and so progress in their reclamation is slow.

From time to time the dwarfs have trouble with Krasht incursions into their territory, however they have refined their defensive measures into an art-form worthy of their tactically trained, Mostal-worshipping, kin. The dwarfs are continually on the alert for any breach of tunnel integrity, and maintain a stock of special missile and explosive-based weapons for these contingencies.

1. The original underground base of the Pavis dwarfs. Collapsed since the initial troll invasion.

2. The new Flintnail home complex and centre of operations.

3. An abandoned outpost. Some paths have been left open, but all of these are heavily trapped. A close watch is also continually maintained at this strategic junction.

4. A minor operations centre, and formerly a shelter for human refugees. Now off-limits to all humans, save those with the highest level of clearance.

5. Storerooms and workshops that supply the Dwarfside trading post in New Pavis.

6. The largest tunnel from New Pavis into the Rubble, and the only such major route unknown to the Lunars. Currently used only by rebels, few people even suspect its existence. Even the most streetwise adventurers, and residents, scoff at those newcomers who take the rumour of this tunnel seriously. The dwarfs

assure the rebels who use it that there is no secret continuation of this tunnel all the way to the Real City.

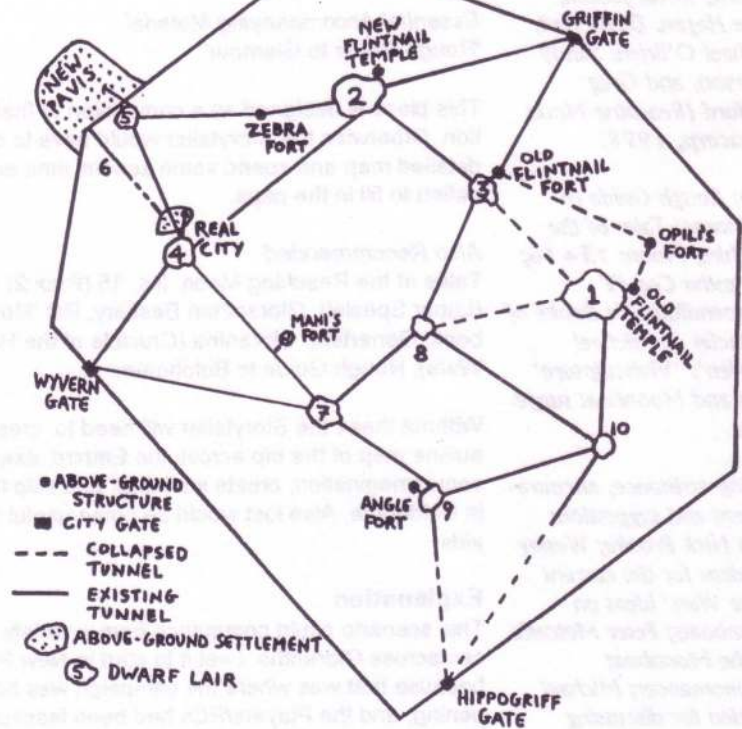
7. Another abandoned, and trapped, minor outpost, where the dwarfs maintain constant vigilance.

8. The old pumping station for the city's piped water. Now in ruins, and fought over as a temporary home by escaped trollkin, renegade trolls, and worse.

9. This area once served the residents of Angle Fort as a refuge. These days its echoing chambers offer only danger instead of comfort.

10. A former research station that is usually occupied by trolls from one clan or another. Anything of interest was destroyed or taken, by the fleeing dwarfs, when the trolls invaded.

THE FLINTNAIL DWARFS' MAJOR TUNNELS



* The Flintnail architects and the Rubble Trackers use these masses of black powder in demolition work. Bulk black powder has an explosive rating of 10w per pound and affects an area 1m across per pound. The person employing the black powder may use their demolitions skill to augment the powder's explosive rating.

A Rough Visit to Glamour

by Ian Thomson

Acknowledgements

Principally: The 'Rough Guide to Glamour' by Nick Brooke, Chris Gidlow, Kevin Jacklin, Mike Hagen, David Hall, Michael O'Brien, Sandy Peterson, and Greg Stafford (Reaching Moon Megacorp, 1998)

Also: Rough Guide to Boldhome; Tales of the Reaching Moon: 15+ 16; Glorantha Con IV Compendium; Ye Booke of Tentacles 1; Michael O'Brien's 'Vivisculpture' Ideas and Moonboat suggestions.

Editing assistance, encouragement and suggestions from Nick Brooke; Wesley Quadros for the current 'Hero Wars' Ideas on Moonboats; Peter Metcalfe for the Moonboat Chronomancer; Michael O'Brien for discussing some of the Ideas here; and general inspiration from the Glorantha Digest (including David Cake's comments on 'Chaos in Glamour').

Playtesters: James Squirrel, Peter Ujvari, and Andrew Shelton

Proofing: Rex MF Smith and Derek A Stoelting Gian Gero for the details on Agrestis

A detailed Scenario outline based around Reaching Moon Megacorp's "Rough Guide to Glamour". It also uses location descriptions and the map of the Lunar Empire from Avalon Hill's "Glorantha: Crucible of the Hero Wars"

Essential Accompanying Material 'Rough Guide to Glamour'

This piece is designed as a companion to that publication. Otherwise the Storyteller would have to create a detailed map and spend some serious time and imagination to fill in the gaps.

Also Recommended

Tales of the Reaching Moon: Iss. 15 (Prax 2) + 16 (Lunar Special); Glorantha Bestiary; RQ 'Monsters' book; Genertela: Glorantha (Crucible of the Hero Wars); Rough Guide to Boldhome.

Without these the Storyteller will need to: create an outline map of the trip across the Empire; exercise some imagination; create statistics; and skip the day in Boldhome. Also lost would be some useful visual aids.

Explanation

This scenario could commence from a variety of places across Glorantha. I set it to start in New Pavis, because that was where the campaign was happening, and the Players/PCs had been fascinated by the arrival of the Coders. I wrote this scenario outline due to my appreciation of the wonderful 'Rough Guide to Glamour'. It was an experiment, starting with the idea to take the PCs to Glamour and see what occurred. The experiment worked, the Players hugely enjoyed wandering around the decadent capital, talking with odd people, taking in the sights, and even enjoying simple things like eating at the "Moonrock Cafe".

Notes

Currently, I am unclear as to the visibility of the Red Moon outside the Glowline. So you might wish to decide on this for your Glorantha and then reword a few parts of this piece. Running the Moonboat voyage served as a useful vehicle for reading out excerpts about the Lunar Empire from the Genertela book, and other sources, disguised as summaries of conversations with fellow passengers. Finally, please note that some favourite PCs might be unsuitable for some, or all, of this scenario. For instance, Stormbulls should NOT be sent along!

Abbreviations

G:G - Glorantha, Genertela: Crucible of the Hero Wars

RGB - Rough Guide to Boldhome

RGG - Rough Guide to Glamour

RM - RuneQuest 'Monsters' book

TRM - Tales of the Reaching Moon

My Campaign Introduction

Following on from an expanded version of Borderlands, I was enthused by an idea on the Glorantha Digest (Nick Brooke or MOB I think) that Raus made a reasonable choice for next Governor. With the Coders in town and the Cradle episode about to occur, I was lucky with the timing. Suddenly Sor-Eel was in disgrace, sacked on the recommendation of the Coders. Raus saw his chance and petitioned Count Julian. Julian responded favourably, but said that they must wait on the approval of the Emperor, and Raus felt his hopes dashed! After all, the time it took to process the paperwork merely for an application to be considered! During that time any number of people in Glamour would have twisted the Emperor's ear and been appointed to the Governorship. Then Raus overheard a discussion about a Moonboat being diverted urgently from Boldhome, called to take Sor-Eel and his family and retinue back directly to Glamour for debriefing.

Raus had a flash of inspiration, and, pulling in his every favour, managed to book passage for himself and a handful of retainers all the way to the Capital. (In my game Raus has an Irippi Ontor brother living in Pavis - 'Sardeus of Rone' - who helped significantly in calling in these favours, and in dealing with Glamour bureaucracy. If you want to use Raus, and yet such a brother cannot be added in Pavis, Sardeus might be either an old friend in Pavis or still Raus' brother but one who lives in Glamour. Whatever you decide, he is a useful plot device for explaining Raus' relatively quick success (or lack of, if that is what you decide). Various parts of the scenario refer to that rationale of this introduction, so be prepared to edit accordingly if required.

Incidentally, the game reason I gave for taking his local mercenaries along as retinue, rather than polished Lunar soldiers, was that Raus was hoping to impress the Emperor with his command of loyalty from Praxian residents. Certainly he would still make sure they were all immaculately groomed to fit the stereotypical image of the noble savage, exotic nomad, or esoteric specimen of an Elder Race (dependent on PC types).

Alternate Introductions

From Pavis or from Boldhome, couriers travel throughout the Empire. Some of these couriers are shining examples of Pelorian youth - men and women destined for Lunar greatness. Others are more secretive and dubious, recruited from local populations or suspicious foreigners. Perhaps someone you've known for a long time is a Spoken Word agent? He or she might be suddenly summoned to the Heartlands, given a cover as an official courier, merchant or ambassador, given cash to hire some bodyguards, and told to be ready to leave in two days. Or, they might instead be operating under their own brief, carrying a vital message for the Emperor that will somehow also motivate the PCs to join them (see below). With no time to find regular mercenaries that can be trusted, this

person comes running to the PCs, desperate for their help as his bodyguards, and offering a suitable cash incentive, plus full bed and board for the trip.

Using an alternative introduction might also require adding a couple of extra encounters. After all, if the contact NPC is worried enough to hire them as bodyguards, then perhaps someone will try and kill him in Glamour, or even on the Moonboat, before he can deliver his important message to the Emperor. Perhaps the assassins will even succeed, leaving the PCs to deliver the message. (The assassins should not succeed before the PCs have been left for at least two days to wander Glamour alone, whilst the NPC spends his time struggling with the bureaucrats just to get an appointment with the Emperor - whom he insists he must see personally.)

The plot thickens if this message is something like the one destroyed in "An Interview with Roan-Ur" (Penny Love, Tales of the Reaching Moon: Iss. 16). In brief, that message recommended Roan-Ur's dismissal, due to chaotic activities likely to seriously undermine any chance the Empire has to convince any Orlanthi peoples of its benign overplan. (See also 'Kree Mountain' if you can find a copy.) The motivation for PCs to take over the messenger role could be Lunar: 'the courier must get through!'. Or even Orlanthi: 'Roan Ur must be stopped!'. Perhaps one of the PCs needs to assume the courier's identity, although such a thing might not stand up to zealous Lunar scrutiny once within the Empire.

Preparations for Departure

Raus knows that a Moonboat is arriving in Pavis any day now, to collect Sor-Eel and his family and then return them to the Lunar Heartlands. (The Lunars don't want to be seen to be losing face and so it has to look all nice and official.) Raus calls the chosen PCs together, probably only 3-5, and tells them his plan. He has arranged permits through his brother to allow them to be in the Empire for up to one Season on special business.

"My mercenaries. As you well know, the Cradle fiasco caused Sor-Eel to overextend himself and he squandered his resources. The Coders had also cautioned him for mishandling the Air Temple incident. (Delete this second reference if you have not run "One High Priest Too Many" from Strangers in Prax.) In private I think he is prone to foolish actions. If the Empire is to continue here in Prax, we must cultivate a relationship of respect with the natives and the Sartarite colonists. We should have halted the Cradle at Pavis or Corflu only to study it temporarily, simply putting Knowledge cultists on board. We should not have attacked it like it was treasure in a locked chest protected by dogs.

I believe that rebellion is fermenting here as it has been in Sartar, and if we want to avoid massive bloodshed then changes must be made. I believe I am the man to make those changes. At the moment, Centurion Radak is acting Governor. However this cannot continue, as he is not fit for that position. I believe I am, but Radak is Sor-Eel's man and will not support my proposal. The only way I can see to cut through all the red tape is for me to petition the Emperor himself. Therefore we will be accompanying Sor-Eel and his retinue aboard the Moonboat that will collect him, and flying to Glamour, the capital city of the Empire.

I wish you to accompany me as representatives of the various cultures that support me. I think that will help my case. My brother, Sardeus the Sage, will also be coming with us (or "will be meeting us in Glamour"), and Daine will remain in charge of the Fort in my absence."

NOTE

Daine is still alive in my Campaign.

Duke Raus draws the Rone Sword from its scabbard and suddenly seems taller and more commanding.

(Any PC that fails a POW-2 roll bows automatically in deference.)

"With the power of my ancestors bound into the Rone Sword to support and advise me, I feel my case is strong. I am the right man for the job, and can turn Prax into a place that Lunars, Praxians, and Orlanthi will be proud to live in. I do not believe that brutal oppression wins anything except armed resistance in the long run, and forging a new Prax requires diplomacy and understanding. I am hoping you will support me in this! (Pause) It is a great journey, but swift by Moonboat. If my petition is accepted we shall return swiftly the same way. If it is rejected we shall have to make our own way back along the Oslir River and then I would be greatly appreciative of your protection and loyalty, as I shall be if I become the new Governor."

NOTE

It is entirely possible that Raus is a dangerously deluded idealist, but for this scenario that does not matter.

Sor-Eel's Retirement Party

The Lunars organise a street Festival for Sor-Eel in New Pavis. The Moonboat will arrive in the early morning and depart in the evening. It moors once again (use cover of "Strangers in Prax" as a visual aid if available) atop the Pavis Temple. This day is declared a public holiday, and the Lunars 'encourage' the whole populace and the different interest groups to come out and throw flowers, and send representatives to make speeches. Even Sor-Eel is forced to take part in this charade. The official word is that he is retiring for family reasons, but anyone with half a brain knows that it is because he made such a mess of the Orlanth Temple Incident and the Cradle Fiasco. Krogar Wolfhelm is ill and unable to attend the festivities, however Faltikus the Good thanks Sor-Eel on behalf of the Orlanthi Citizens of Pavis. PCs in the streets may notice that much of the cheering for Sor-Eel actually consists of howls of the foulest abuse.

As the day draws on, and the festivities fade to a close, Sor-Eel, Bor-Eel, Agrestis (Sor-Eel's jester in 'Sun County'), and the rest of the ex-Governor's retinue and family (about 18 souls in all) gather together outside the Lunar Barracks with their packed belongings. They are bodyguarded by the Lunar Coders, and Julian shakes Sor-Eel seriously by the hand, wishing him the fortune of the Goddess in his future endeavours.

Raus has been ready for a few days and has ascertained that there is space for him and his people aboard the Moonboat. He has obtained from the Irripi Ontor Temple (via Sardeus or some other friendly contact) a permit for himself and his bodyguard to be given passage. He has also made a generous 'donation' to the Temple of the Seven Mothers, and gained Visitors' Visas for himself and his party for the City of Glamour, itself. Raus will wait until all other passengers and their luggage has gone aboard the Moonboat. Then he will have his party and their belongings rushed up the boarding plank. This gives less chance for anyone to argue, especially as his paperwork is in order and the Moonboat has some space anyhow. He will browbeat the Moonboat Security Officer into allowing them on board, flourishing their passes, and using the full power of the Rone Sword.

The Moonboat "Darjini Enterprise" and her Crew

NOTES

i) It is likely that Moonboats, like Lunar Regiments, are quite varied in personnel structure, due to the requirements of individual missions. (The single common factor is that all essential flight crew are worshippers of Vargar the Sky-Mariner.) What follows is

merely one (attempted MGF) example of a crew, albeit based fairly strongly on current 'Hero Wars' thinking.

ii) For this part of the scenario you might like to devise a simple series of deck plans as further aids for players in visualising their situation during the voyage. (See later for Moonboat details.)

iii) All worshippers of Vargar are Darjini, or descendants of Darjini, and their secrets are handed down only to blood relatives. They will not discuss any such secrets, but otherwise are boisterous and approachable in a rough moon-sailor kind of way. As senior crew, their coarse and unusual ways have been transmitted to varying degrees to the other non-Darjini personnel.

Vargar the Sky-Mariner

This is a Lunar hero-cult of Yestendos the Reed-Boatman, who is the Darjini god of boat builders and sailors. Vargar himself was an outspoken Lunar advocator and led pirate raids against the Alkothi during the Jannisor rebellion. He was later rewarded with a trip to the Red Moon, where he accidentally discovered that objects made of moonreeds would float in response to his magic. Much experimentation later, the first Moonboat was launched, and their construction and operation have remained secrets known only to the Vargari ever since.

Voyage Procedures

Behind the scenes, a Moonboat operates through a Vargari altar that focuses Lunar magic attuning the vessel to the Moonbeams. Moonbeams are available at any time, except during the dark phase of the moon whilst outside the Glowline. (The moon's phases outside the Glowline of course regulate the ease and speed of travel.) A Moonboat outside the Glowline can travel for only very limited (and POW expensive) periods if it is out of sight of the Red Moon. The onboard altar is a shrine to Vargar, and the Red Goddess, but such details are probably unimportant to 'landlubber' PCs in any case. I do share (unofficial) visions with Wesley, of such an altar requiring constant attention from Vargar Initiates overseen by the crusty First Motivator: "I'm tellin ya Capt'n, the moonreeds are almost gan, we've given it all we can. If ya push her any hardar, we'll drap like a stoon!"

At the start of each section of the voyage, the main flight crew (all followers of Vargar Sky-Mariner) - Captain, First Officer, Pilot(s), and Ship's Magicians - perform the embarkation ritual. This is a relatively brief ceremony performed on the foredeck, and the publicly comprehensible sections call for the blessings of Vargar and the Goddess on their voyage. The Captain activates the Rune Spell "Attune to Moonbeam", and the boat begins to move. (This spell has no cost to the crew within the Glowline, but costs 1POW outside it. This POW may be donated by any willing participant in the ritual, and is sometimes stored in the boat's Truestone.)

Whilst this occurs, the passengers are invited to a talk on procedures on the stern deck. In this voyage, the Medical Officer gives this talk. She informs them that naked flames are not permitted anywhere on board, gives an outline description of the crew and their duties, and describes the route they will take and any specific sites to watch out for. She also offers any Initiates of Lunar Cults the opportunity to sacrifice for the special Rune Spell: "Moonfall".

At the end of each section of the voyage, the Moonboat must moor to some object, as it is continually buoyant during its active life. In the Heartlands these are pylons on special Moonports, but outside the Glowline they might be such places as the top of the Pavis Temple, or even a particularly sturdy palm tree. The mooring ceremony is less impressive than the launch ceremony, but just as essential, as it holds the vessel in place long enough for a secure mooring to take place. At each mooring, a specially trained 'ground crew' comes aboard the vessel, to politely and efficiently

clean it and restock the supplies (food, linen, moist towelettes etc). Occasionally a stopover will also bring Lunar Priests or Priestesses on board, to ceremonially renew the formidable protective enchantments.

Moonfall

1POW, automatic on leaving a Moonboat during flight

This single-use spell will, in the extremely unlikely event of Moonboat failure, cause the user to drift slowly and safely to the ground. Directly above the user, a dome of pink glowing Moon-energy hangs, acting as magical interference with the forces of the earth (gravity) and the air (wind). (In practice, strong air currents may still make a controlled descent difficult.)

Captain

Identity: Kulandro Ivedenus, Champion of Vargar the Sky-Mariner. Age 46

Specific Duties: To oversee the Ceremony required for each launch and each landing. The Captain acts as much like a Priest as he does a commanding officer, activating (with the assistance of the Ship's Magician) the ship's altar that generates the link to the moonbeams, and monitoring that magic throughout each voyage.

General Duties: Command of the crew, ultimate decision-maker in any non-routine situations.

First Officer

Identity: Hodigus Jurrallar, Rune Lord of Vargar Sky-Mariner. Age 42

Specific Duties: Advise the Captain when requested.

General Duties: Act as the Captain's voice in commanding the crew, oversee general running of the ship and report to the Captain anything noteworthy

Ensign

Identity: Darnel Fromakk, Initiate of Vargar Sky-Mariner. Age 25

Specific Duties: To learn the ways of the Moonboat from his superiors.

General Duties: To assist his superiors with unfailing alertness and dedication.

Security Chief

Identity: Frek Tordannov, Senior Spoken Word Officer, Tarnils Scimitar. Age 39

Specific Duties: Organise watches, visa and security checks, clear goods and baggage before loading, oversee exchange of intelligence with Lunar operatives outside the Empire.

General Duties: To oversee onboard, and external, security, and to ensure discipline amongst the crew.

Security Officers

A dozen superior Yanafal Initiates in their mid-late 20s: chosen for strength, speed, clipped politeness, and unswerving loyalty to the Lunar way. Each is enhanced with Lunar Sorcery before each voyage, and equipped with a variety of matrices and POW storage devices.

Duties: Security in all its forms (including boarding-pass validation), first line of physical defence during the unlikely event of attack. Each one is also assigned to one or two officers as their personal assistants during the voyage, to fetch and carry as required.

NOTE

Each Moonboat is of course heavily protected by enchantments and so the chances of actual boarding are minimal, even outside the Glowline. This size of Moonboat is simply not capable of supporting a huge number of warriors, although it is well suited for speed and manoeuvrability.

Archers

Attached to Security are ten superior archer followers of Sagittus, whose duty is to pick-off flying assailants, in the improbable event of their existence, as well as dissuade aerial creatures from coming too close. Five archers will be on deck at any moment, day or night, including one each on the fore and aft observation platforms. These last two double as lookouts.

Pilot

Identity: Danton Solos (Arrolian), Initiate of Vargar Sky-Mariner. Age 26

The Pilot's Role on a Moonboat

Within the Glowline this is largely straightforward, to assist the Captain in the launch and mooring ceremonies. Outside of the Glowline, Moonboats are much more subject to the vagaries (and sometimes hostilities) of the air currents. Navigation requires that the Moonboat is kept steady, riding (or tacking between) moonbeams. Any significant mistake at best brings a crash-landing, and at worst causes the Moonboat to plummet from the sky. Many Moonboats that travel outside the Glowline employ pilots from borderland areas such as Arrolia, due to their greater skills, honed in areas where the Moon does not yet reign supreme.

Unlike common practice on water-going vessels, a Moonboat pilot on missions outside the Glowline does not usually stand vulnerably on deck, but rather has a seat in the cabin that holds the boat's altar. From here the pilot controls the vessel's speed and direction whilst in a semi-trance. It is also worth noting that pilots must attune to the spirit of the individual Moonboat before the commencement of a mission, and only they and the Captain share this magical empathic link with their vessel. The altar cabin is protected at all times by two guards, who have sworn to protect the secrets of the Moonboats with their souls if necessary. Casual observation is not possible from a distance when the door is opened, as there is a small antechamber directly inside. Vargari might be seen beginning a deep bow of reverence before the main door closes swiftly behind them.

Take-Off and Landing

Current Hero Wars thinking is that Moonboats cease to be buoyant when not actually flying, or in precisely controlled position for loading and unloading (needed at locations without proper Moonboat facilities). The Moonboat that delivered the Coders to Pavis is implied (and pictured) as floating above the great wall all day, but perhaps it stayed afloat for security concerns. After all, it may have been a special military courier ship. Keeping the buoyancy ritual going means being extra sure that nobody can get on without going through the guards. This would also seriously impress the natives. If you want to change this in your game, and revert to the splendid idea of mooring-pylons, that's fine by me. In this piece I have indicated that the vessel rests on the ground between flights.

Junior Pilots

Identities: Lopus Milekos (28) and Stravan Roonvig (31), both Vargar Initiates

Duties: to act as relief for the Pilot during routine sections of the voyage, and to learn excellent piloting skills from the Pilot.

Ship's Magician/Navigator

Whilst the title of "Ship's Magician" is somewhat out of place, it is still customarily used as a reflection of the traditional nautical position. This position commonly includes the duties of Navigation Officer on smaller craft.

Identity: Quillibbi Hastromangus, Chronomancer (Lunar Magician with specialism in understanding the phases of the Red Moon), Star Priest of Buserian. Age 47

Specific Duties: to advise the Pilot and Captain of the 'tides' of the Moon, plot course and position.

General Duties: magical and spiritual security of the vessel

Ship's Acolyte

Identity: Davanna Lopez, Chronomancer in training. Age 36

Medical Officer

Identity: Solandra Jannis, Initiate of Deezola, Age 27

Duties: to oversee the mental and physical well-being of passengers and crew. (This position is the only one where no extra duties are routinely assigned to fill idle moments - after all, nobody wants to get on the bad side of their surgeon! Nonetheless Solandra assists the other officers as best she can. For instance, it is she who gives the safety demonstration shortly before each launch.)

Chief Petty Officer

Identity: Rodal Byerblad, Initiate of Lokarnos. Age 28

Duties: to ensure adequate provisioning of passengers and crew, to check goods and luggage on and off the vessel, to supervise the general staff, and manage the bar and kitchen

General Staff

Identities: Fourteen Pelorian teenagers or twenty-somethings, often students taking a leave of absence. (See Rough Guide's description of the decadent Lunar economy for ideas.)

Duties: waiting on passengers and crew, cleaning the vessel in-flight, other tasks as ordered.

Entertainers

Optional (see below)

The Other Passengers

Probably there is not room for many more, depending on your perceptions of the volume of a Moonboat. So far in this scenario there are 47 crew, 6 or so in the Raus party, and 18 or more in the Sor-Eel party, making already 70+ aboard. I leave you to devise more passengers, as whim and necessity drive you to populate your version of this scenario. Moonboats (except for the rare military transports) routinely outnumber passengers with crew.

Agrestis the Jester

(Stats included here in case you want to use him during the voyage, however his main chance for interacting with the characters comes in Glamour.)

Agrestis

Pelorian Trickster (liar Aspect) if well-played, the spells of this guy make him very powerful.

STR	12	Locations	Point
CON	15	Rleg	0/5
SIZ	15	Lleg	0/5
INT	13	Abdomen	0/5
POW	17	Chest	0/6
DEX	16	Rarm	0/4
APP	15	Larm	0/4
Move	3	Head	0/5
FP	27 - (ENC=4)= 23		
HP	15		
MP	17		
Dex SR	2		
Siz SR	2		
Arms and armor (total ENC)=	4		

Armor: none, only jester-like, funny and colourful robe.

Weapons: only 1 dagger (for personal extreme defense) enchanted for extra AP defense.

Dagger SR 7 Att%35 Par%50 damage 1D4+2+1D4 AP 12

Spirit Magic (94%): Glamour 3, Silvertongue, Voice Mimicry, Fumble, Protection 4
Divine Magic (109%): Charisma II; Conceal I; Dismiss Magic III; Reflection III; Lie IV; Extension III
Communication (+10%): Speak Sartarite 20%; Speak New Pelorian 60%; Speak Pavic 40%; Speak Trade 40%; Fast Talk 60%; Tell Jokes 90%; Sing 15%
Agility (+2%): Dodge 55%; Dodge in a Funny Way 80%; Dance 25%; Jump 50%, Caper Annoyingly 110%
Manipulation (+10%): Sleight 75%; Conceal 75%; Devise 45%
Knowledge (+3%): R/W New Pelorian 30%; R/W Sartarite 10%; Human Lore 45%; Compose Funny Ballads 65%
Perception (+10%): Search 30%, Listen 60%, Scan 50%
Stealth (-6%): Hide 75%; Sneak 80%

Any bonus/modifier is already applied (even if evidenced apart).

Distinctive Traits

Joyfully offensive (on one's weak spots)
Provoker (with light, ironic and spectacular ways)
More attentive than he appears to be (he loves to hide his insatiable curiosity behind funny, even if annoying, behavior)

Personal Connections

Agrestis is a Trickster of the Liar Aspect; this makes of him a totally unreliable Lunar Agent; but he is still one and had the attention (if not the trust) of several Lunar personalities in New Pavis.

Atmosphere Aboard

Raus and his brother are allocated one tiny shared cabin, and the mercenaries must all share another, unless any are female in which case they get their own (although it will be a cramped former storeroom).

Remember that this is the mode of transport reserved usually only for the elite of the Lunar Empire's personnel. A Moonboat is quite lavishly decorated, although there are no bulky ornaments aboard. The public areas are few: the Promenade (upper deck), the Saloon (large central cabin with a bar and dining tables), and the narrow corridors and intersections belowdecks. Crew will be polite but aloof, except for the service staff, who might be more affable. The hold and crew cabins are included in a security warding.

As well as Sor-Eel, Bor-Eel, their wives and children (if applicable), the ex-governor's retinue consists solely of Agrestis and a handful of bureaucratic and military personnel. None of these are willing to engage in conversation of any depth, except perhaps for Agrestis, who will delight in tall tales and pranks. (Note: Agrestis was already an enemy of my PCs, and so pops up in Glamour to torment them. You might wish to devise a different way to gain his enmity during the voyage instead. Perhaps the PCs get fed up with his tricks and outrank him royally?) Rodal will man the bar during meals and at popular times (such as after dinner), but other than that the general staff take turns. The only other crew that are approachable are also hired entertainers, three Donandar cultists: Ricky; a drummer and flute player; Tasha, a singer and percussionist; and Sammy, a mean lute player. They are professional musicians from Tarsh, and are careful not to upset their employers. They are also good people, and amongst the minority that will talk with the PCs. Raus and Sardeus don't have that problem, and are able to socialise with Sor-Eel and the other Lunars, although such conversations are unsurprisingly a little strained.

Other Rooms aboard

The cargo hold - split into three sections. On the first leg of the trip it contains only personal belongings.

The galley and food storage area (kept magically chilled)

The water tank (a source for drinking water, and embodying the boat's sylph)

Equipment lockers for the boat crew

Small bunk rooms for the crew

Cabins for the officers - slightly larger (but still tiny) (but at least they get their privacy)

The Captain's cabin and his audience room

The passenger cabins - still smallish but very comfortable

The altar room, deep under the decks

The Moonboat ascends like a slow balloon (not that PCs would know what a balloon is). It is propelled only by the magic of the Red Moon, orchestrated by the Officers. It climbs to around 300ft and sets off slowly west across the Praxian landscape under the stars. The faint red line of a moonbeam seems to pull it gently, stretching before them as straight as a military road, but their course heads somewhat south of a heading directly into the Moon, and the moonbeam swings to stay with them. The Moonboat's route eventually takes it north of the Dead Place, and despite the stark beauty of the desert landscape, there is little to see. On deck it is very cold, and travellers are better off in their cabins or the saloon. The Moonboat travels across the plains all night and arrives in Moonbroth in the morning.

Meals are served aboard communally, although those with rank may demand to be served in their cabins if they wish. Nondescript PCs will draw attention from the more privileged passengers, however due to the presence of Sor-Eel's retinue, this is already an unusually 'low class' voyage. The only public entertainment apart from the minstrels might include impromptu sermons from an extremely dull and self-important Seven Mothers acolyte within Sor-Eel's party. There are also many pamphlets in Pelorian, Trade and Sartarite on the bookshelves at the side of the saloon. Whilst the varied titles suggest a diverse selection, the content of each is designed for a single common purpose: to extol the virtues of the Lunar way.

(If the PCs ask for details about Glamour at any point during the trip, refer to Raus' speech later in this piece.)

Additional Ideas for the Voyage

i) On the approach to Boldhome, some irate Wind Children, heroic Orlanthi, and massive sylphs attack the Moonboat. The craft is yet too distant for the Boldhome Lunars to know there is a problem. The Moonboat's magical defences are phenomenal, as are the magic powers of the archers, and yet some heroic assailants are able to cast spells, and hurl missiles on board. Perhaps a few even gain the deck and begin hand to hand combat! This attack could just as easily happen as they pass Kero Fin.

ii) At Moonbroth markets, or in Boldhome, or at the Furthest Moonport: Assassins strike! Whilst muggers distract the PCs, the chief assailant(s) go for Raus, or whomever the PCs are travelling with. What are their reasons? Revenge against Raus for perceived sleights against Sor-Eel? Or, trying to prevent the dangerous message reaching the Emperor? (Depends on your chosen storyline.)

iii) Seemingly friendly fellow passengers (perhaps a couple of Sor-Eel's retainers who are frankly glad to be recalled the Empire) offer a game of cards to pass the time. Before long some of the PCs owe them small fortunes, but are offered the chance instead to do a little delivery job once they reach Glamour.

iv) A polished Lunar ponce (who happens to be a Yanafali Officer) takes a dislike to one or more of the PCs and makes challenge to a duel. Whilst combat to the death is not permitted in such a fashion aboard the Empire's Moonboats, martial entertainment is entirely valid, and something can easily be organised.

v) Although Alkoth was discussed as an interesting possible site for a mini-scenario, this idea was abandoned due to the complexity of the city. If you have access to the Alkoth details from Enclosure 1, and want to pursue this, go for it. On the river trip back might be more reasonable than the trip in.

Moonbroth

This oasis town is detailed in TRM: Issue 15, and the craft will spend the day there. It will land on the shore of the oasis itself.

Read the first two paragraphs on page 30 (up to 'Inhabitants') to describe the place.

In Moonbroth the characters might like to visit the geyser, Beatpot's, the Spa, or the famous Moonbroth Market. There is nothing unusual designed to happen here, and the only unexpected people encountered are a group of seven White Moon pilgrims (Moonies) who wander round town trying to find people to talk quietly to as they prophesy that the violence of the Lunar Empire will be its downfall.

(If Raus is asked his opinion, he thinks they are extremists, and will not admit in a casual conversation that he agrees with some of their principles.)

As with all the stops outside of the Heartlands, various individuals will approach the Moonboat during its stopover. These may be seen conversing with members of the security crew, and can be presumed to be agents exchanging intelligence for orders. Other Moonboat crew might engage in a little trade, as a half-hearted attempt to cover the fact they are a very visible example of the Lunar Intelligence operations.

The Moonboat departs as soon as the moon rises, and they spend another night travelling west, eventually arriving at the Quivin Mountains and mooring in Boldhome, above the building site which is destined to become the new Temple of the Reaching Moon.

Boldhome

(Read out the overview on pp xviii/xix of RGB)

Customs officers will meet the boat, however as it is such a prestigious mode of transport Lunars need only complete one form. Any non-Lunars, or people with irregular status, will have to go to the Administration building in the Lunar Pocket (29), and register in triplicate, as well as answering probing questions about their journey and about Raus.

The PCs have all day to investigate Boldhome and this can be a freeform business, using the 'Rough Guide to Boldhome' as source material. One way to introduce the place would be for any Orlanthei in the party (or a handy local guide) to explain its history (RGB pxviii) and then what there is to be seen. (Use a copy of the map and read the descriptions on pp xix-xxii.)

One encounter of note could be with some Orlanthei locals who question the PCs in a surly manner about where they are from and what they are doing in Boldhome. In the playtest, the Picture Door generated great player interest, but the PCs had no authority to approach it. The Issaries PC (who was in fact the only Orlanthei pantheon character) was also greatly intrigued by the bowl that used to contain the Flame of Sartar, but Lunar guards would not let them approach it too closely.

After Boldhome, the Moonboat once again leaves in the evening, but this time it departs late, and travels for a night and a day until it reaches Furthest in Tarsh. There are only a couple of new passengers on this leg of the trip, both Lunar officials returning to the

Heartlands. If available, use the map on p59 of G:G (Genertela book) to show the route. In the very early morning they will pass Wintertop 20km to port. It is described in that book as an "incredible peak towering 12km into the air". I have also seen a picture on the net with a corkscrewing pathway winding up to the top. Legend says this is the place where Orlanthei was born. It is dangerous to approach too closely because of Tarsh rebel activity.

It will still be dawn half-light as any PCs on deck watch the huge mountain passing to the west. Suddenly, one will notice that the Red Moon seems bigger and slightly higher in the sky (ask for Scan rolls to see who notices first). Over the next few minutes the Red Moon changes from being one of the small low celestial bodies to a much more discernible Red Moon now several degrees higher in the sky. The effect is most unusual, and its red light is a little stronger too. Obviously as dawn is breaking, subtle effects will not persist, but from now on (day and night) the Red Moon is present, getting higher and higher and larger and larger, and I'll put a few notes in the text to remind this to be mentioned to players/PCs.

NOTE

Your Glorantha, or indeed official Glorantha, might have a different set of visual rules for crossing the Glowline, although Wesley has given this the tentative nod.

Furthest

This large city is heavily Lunarised, and is their first landfall within the Empire. It is the highest point up the Oslir River that large boats can reach. They arrive in the late afternoon, and are advised that the Moonboat only stops overnight. The vessel lands in the small Moonport on the banks of the Oslir, close to the river docks. This area includes several taverns, warehouses, and a small but active marketplace, where street entertainers amuse in the late afternoon and evening.

If you have no scenario ideas developed for Furthest, Raus advises them not to leave it, due to customs checks and other problems due to travelling at night. If a PC wishes to leave for personal reasons (in my campaign one PC was actually from Furthest) then you might describe a prosperous Roman City and make up some details. The culture is 40% Lunars, 50% Lunarised Tarshites, and 10% traditional Orlanthei. It is a very civilised place, a real urban centre, with baths, a colosseum, parks, a university, a large library, an army training college etc etc.

The Moonboat leaves very early in the morning and travels a very long day arriving late in the evening at Mirin's Cross. (Use map on p36 of the G:G Genertela book) During the day it passes over the Oslir River basin, and watchers can see the many trading boats and small towns along its banks. This part of the world has obviously been settled for many many years. Before noon they can see a few key-miles to starboard the large walled city of Filichet (p42 Genertela book). It is probably worth emphasising this amazing opportunity they have to observe the Lunar countryside from hundreds of feet in the air.

The most friendly fellow-passenger so far (or a Lunar PC if there is one, or even Sardeus) can chat with them about the Lunar Empire today. In which case use the description in G:G pp 28+30 of the Genertela Book, finishing before 'History of the Lunar Empire'. If they want to know the history, you can read that too.

Mirin's Cross

This is another large city, and the headquarters of the Lunar Provincial Government. Once again, the boat only halts overnight (I have only one paragraph of description to go on). The Moonport here is larger than the one at Furthest and more obviously a symbol of Lunar prestige. Statues of the Red Goddess and Vargar the

Sky-Mariner almost reach as high as the windows of the control tower itself. Three other Moonboats are docked here, one of which is more than twice the size of their own, and another is leaving as they arrive. On the edge of the Moonport are several large hangars that could hold two or three Moonboats even larger than the one they have noted.

From the Moonport they may see the many towers of the city in the early dawn as they set off, as well as the impressive crystal bridge crossing the Black Eel River, a tributary of the Oslir. This is the beginning of the main Lunar highway, known as the Daughter's Road. It is so named because Hwarin Dalthippa, a consort of the Red Emperor, built it. Using great magics, the route she travelled on her HeroQuest grew up into a wondrous elevated roadway behind her. (Use illustration on p47 of TRM: Issue 16 as a visual aid.) At the centre of the crystal bridge stands a 15ft tall obsidian warrior that moves only to defend the city from attack. It is apparently able to detect assassins and rebels passing by and knocks them off the bridge. (Perhaps it will turn to watch the Moonboat going by?)

At Mirin's Cross, the two officials from Boldhome get off and a party of Red Tribunes (Officers in the Cult of the Emperor) gets on. One of these will take a dislike to the PCs the next day and question them thoroughly as to what they are up to, ridiculing the Duke's wishes to become acting Governor if told about them.

Another very long day, this time travelling above the Daughter's Road the whole way. When night descends, it become obvious that the Red Moon is slowly rising towards the centre of the sky dome, the closer they get to their destination, and getting progressively larger as it does so.

Jillaro and Alkoth

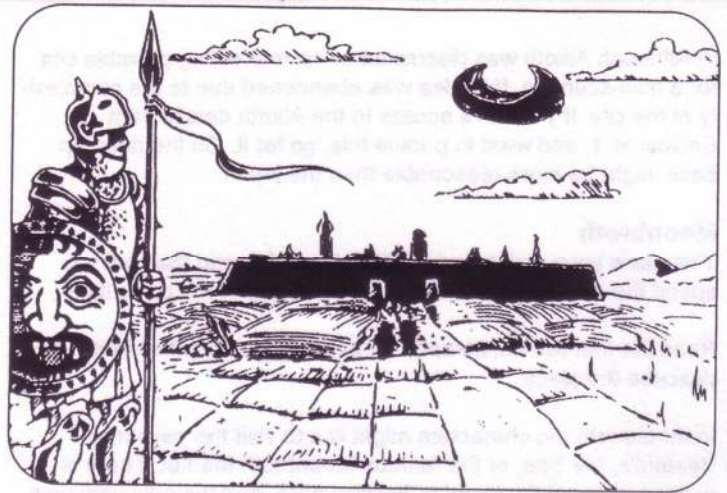
Late at night they moor at the expansive Moonport outside Jillaro. Yes they are so deep in the Lunar Heartlands now that Moonboats are a normal experience (at least to observe). There are four other Moonboats here, one of which is obviously a military transport and soldiers patrol around it continually to prevent anyone approaching. Jillaro itself is a 'marvel of beautiful architecture'. Another Daughter's Road heads east from here, and the one they were following ends. This is another huge city, the capital of the ancient Sylila Sultanate.

Once again the boat departs early, although today's journey will be slightly shorter. As well as the usual fertile river valley features, around the middle of the afternoon they can see on the east bank the dark walled city of Alkoth. Alkoth was once a major capital that withstood the Lunars but has since been humbled. There is now a famous military college there, where the local Shargashi and the Yanafali feud almost constantly. Duels to the death are commonplace. The enormous featureless wall, a great, unbroken ring, under which the gates actually tunnel, surrounds it. Inside this city, correct codes of conduct are strict, and rigorously enforced.

Fortunately the Moonboat is not stopping here and continues almost 20km further to the city of Darleep, where it moors in the early evening. As the Red Moon rises, they can tell unmistakably that it is much larger and higher in the sky. Raus reminds them that they should be passing into the Silver Shadow region tomorrow and mooring at Glamour by nightfall.

Darleep

This may be the capital of the Kostaddi Sultanate, as the phrase 'Kostaddi Sultanate' is its only entry in the Genertela book. It is another Turkish-type city with minarets and churches, and once again Raus warns them not to leave the boat in case they fall foul of local customs. The Red Moon is fully two thirds of the way up the sky dome, and with careful squinting, the face of Rufeza



(TRM: Iss. 16, p63) can be made out. The Moonport is very similar to those at Jillaro and Mirin's Cross, although there is only one other Moonboat here at the moment, which is of similar size to their own.

Their Moonboat stops overnight and is due to set off early in the morning, but a problem arises: a large party of senior Lunar Officers needs passage urgently, and all papers are examined. Raus' permission is seen to be discretionary, and he and his party are politely but firmly asked to leave just before departure. Rather than cause a scene, Raus agrees. Sor-Eel is smugly sympathetic, and Raus and company collect their baggage and descend the gangplank.

Raus is obviously stressed about the prospect of seeing the Red Emperor, and once on the landing ground just sits on their luggage with his head in his hands and sighs: "Please arrange us passage to Glamour as quickly as possible."

If questioned further he is in a bad mood and may say "Any way you like, I don't mind."

They are after all his paid employees and should just get on with it. Meanwhile, Sardeus is tired and sets up some luggage as a bed under a Moonport lean-to, and goes to sleep.

Raus lived in Darleep for several years (in my game) and was here when the Dart Wars that led to the destruction and disenfranchisement of his family took place in 1615. He may have friendly contacts here, but has consciously turned his back on his old life and will not mention the connection unless asked. This does not come into play, unless something unusual happens like one of the PCs gets into trouble and Raus needs to contact an old friend in the judiciary or constabulary to get them released with a caution. Depending on who gives them a lift, Raus may be recognised, perhaps by someone who once lived in, or visited regularly, the lands of Rone, and some of the Rone history may be revealed.

This is a section for Player decisions

Check the other Moonboat

It is going to Yuthuppa, and whilst this is roughly the right direction it will not be setting down. Dropping the PC party along the way is a worse option than going by river or road (as the new Moonboat Captain will tell them if they press). It is departing in a few hours.

Check the Riverboats

It is only a key-mile or so to the river docks. There are several boats moored there for the night. Arriving there sees activity already beginning. There are two large barges, two fishing boats and a private yacht, all big enough to take the passengers.

Barge 1

Pelorian skipper, Rattan Belegos. Cargo: Silks and Spices. Heading north not south. Willing to turn around for a heavy bribe

Barge 2

Pelorian Skipper Turrish Holover. Ugly and unpleasant man will want to know every detail of their visit and who is in their party. Hates Carmanians. He is going to Glamour but won't let them come unless there is a huge payment such as magical items

Fishing Boat 1

Local Carmanian Skipper Pieter Wisbish. Happy and friendly man, heading north to trawl for salmon in an hour or so. His wife would be very upset if he was away for more than the day and won't go, but wishes them luck

Fishing Boat 2

Carmanian settler, a dirty and uncultured individual, he will agree to take them for a large fee, however when Raus arrives, the boatman absolutely refuses to travel with the Duke. He claims that to arrive at Glamour in such a manner would be a bad omen for his business. (He recognises Raus as a landowner, and has working-class reactionary tendencies.)

Private Yacht

Pelorian noble James Bollinger, and his crew of privately wealthy young noblemen of independent means. One of them is a Carmanian noble, and whilst they are very condescending they would agree to take only the Duke and his brother if convinced it was important. This means the PCs would have to make their own way, probably by hay cart or some such.

The Road Route

Hitchhiking is illegal, however courteous questioning of travellers at the Inn just outside town might get them a lift. If they do ask, the travellers are mostly independent groups of riders and wagon trains of goods, although most goods traffic goes by river.

The Inn is called 'Moonview' and if the PCs act like bums, the owner will send for the local constabulary, who will question them extensively. If they are not courteous, they will be hauled into town for interrogation on suspicion of vagrancy.

Standing by the roadside all morning, they will see various lone wagons and groups of riders pass, which are no use. The few useful things are:

After one hour

A three wagon convoy under Carmanian Maglak Dale. He is a rough and impatient man, but will take them for a substantial fee (more when he realises they have to go and get the Duke)

After another hour and a bit

A five wagon convoy under Pelorian Bernar Wills, a friendlier man who requires a substantial fee but is reasonably pleasant about it.

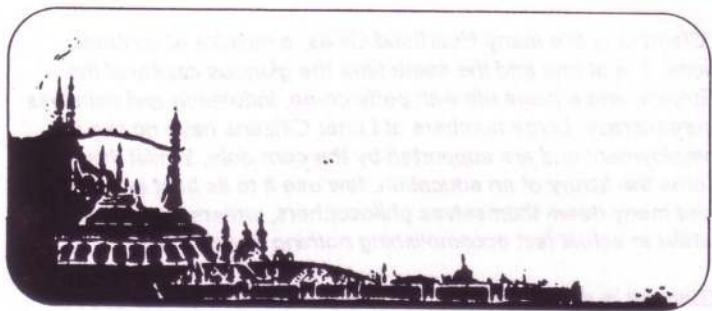
(Both wagon trips involve being squashed beside goods such as bales of cloth and dried herbs and spices.)

By River

A long day's sail to Glamour, late afternoon passing Raibanth city, and mid evening through Good Shore, arriving at Glamour late evening

By Road

A long day's haul to Raibanth, where there is a bridge over the river, and where they stay in a roadside inn overnight. From Raibanth it takes only a bit more than 3 hours to reach Glamour.



Approaching Glamour

They leave the Oslir proper at Good Shore, and turn up either the road alongside the Oslir Canal, or the Canal itself. One of the first things they notice, night or day is that the Red Moon is now almost at the centre of the sky dome, and is so large that one can make out the grosser physical features. (You may give a comparative assessment that it is as large as the terrestrial moon can appear in such environs as movies about the African Plains - that is VERY large.) Also, a subtle network of canals/lines can be made out by the sharp-eyed. (See 'The Energy Net', TRM: Iss. 16, p63)

The canal is wide and carries many impressive merchant barges and richly decorated pleasure craft. The road is known as the Emperor's Highway, a "broad, triumphal avenue" lined with huge oak trees, and regularly placed statues to the Lunar Gods and major spirits.

Nearing the City itself, one can't help but be impressed by the size of the crater-lip behind it (up which the City of Dreams sprawls, obscured by a rosy haze). One is also able to see the majestic towers and imposing facades of the taller buildings over the enormous city walls. These walls are not only extremely high, but also regularly topped with impressive ballistae and other large weaponry.

(If you haven't already, simply read out the first 2 paras on p3 of RGG to create an atmosphere of suitable reverence.)

Less than a key-mile from the city, they pass to their right the Moonport, an aerodrome with seven of the magnificent craft parked on the stone causeways. There is also an impressive temple building here. (Molanni - see 39 on p10 RGG)

The Central (main) Gate (to which they are heading) is known as the Gate of the Four Beasts, and is a massive intertwined carving of a Lion, Bat, Bull and Eagle (Show illustration on p2 of RGG, and then read out the left-hand column from p4.)

Behind the public city of Glamour (show map on back cover of RGG) it is possible to make out the City of Dreams. (This is not visible on map, but its location can be pointed out. Also, as a description you can read out the second and the final paragraphs of the City of Dreams section on p5 of RGG.)

Glamour FAQ

The Red Moon Little is certain, information is likely to be waffle, such as that on TRM: Iss. 16, p63 (However if they specifically ask about how people get to the RM, use 3 paras starting "Behind the City of Glamour..." which begins at the bottom of p 4 RGG.)

The Red Emperor (p33 RGG)

The Crimson Bat (p33 RGG)

The White Moonies (p29 and p35 RGG)

The Red Goddess The whole of "The rise of the Red Goddess" on p28 of RGG, then "Rufelza" p30)

Glamour described by a Carmanian

If the Duke (or someone else) has not already told them his opinions about the city, he will do so now. Most suitably, Raus might casually recite these words shortly before their mode of transport halts.

"Glamour is like many Heartland Cities, a mixture of contradictions. It is at one and the same time the glorious capital of the Empire, and a place rife with petty-crime, indolence and pointless bureaucracy. Large numbers of Lunar Citizens have no regular employment and are supported by the corn dole. Whilst this allows some the luxury of an education, few use it to its best advantage, and many deem themselves philosophers, writers, or adventurers, whilst in actual fact accomplishing nothing of any worth.

Glamour is divided into large city blocks called *Insulae*, each of which is a unit on its own, bounded by roads on all sides. The city residents are loyal to the *Insula* much as country folk are loyal to their own village. At ground level are the shops, and the owners usually live above them. Further above, and sometimes in the basements, live families, unemployed, and the low waged. Usually in the basement are the latrines, although some of the poorer *Insulae* must make do with nearby public facilities, and others are rich enough to have their own bathhouse. Each *Insula*, except the poorest, has a communal pump for water.

Staff at the *Insulae* are usually the same: a doorkeeper, a janitor, and possibly security and cleaners in the richer blocks. Only the richer blocks have cooking facilities worth mentioning. It is normal for all citizens to eat at the multitude of cheap bars and ethnic eating establishments, usually in their own block. Due to the large amount of leisure time, entertainment is commonplace and also inexpensive, however it suffers proportionally in quality. The brief time I spent in Glamour made me long for the harsher society of Carmania, where life seems to have significance.

I will warn you of two everyday hazards. Thievery is rife, and investigation of minor thefts is non-existent. It is far less trouble to accept the loss of your goods than to willingly associate yourself with the Glamour Police. Their criminal investigation divisions are all Initiates of Danfive Xaron, and are known collectively as the Black Army. Whilst individually many members can be surprisingly human, their strange cult procedures and group mentality makes them exceedingly dangerous to become involved with. They seek sedition with an unnecessary vigorousness, and have informers everywhere. Whether the thieves or the Police are more unpalatable, I'd be hard-pressed to say. The thieves are more annoying; the Police can be more sinister. Still, most people like to impress visitors with their own city, so as long as you stay away from side-streets, obey the laws, and watch your pockets, your visit to Glamour should be most entertaining."

(This speech is much paraphrased from the Glorantha Con IV Compendium)

Entering the City

Inside the enormous gatehouse beneath the beasts is a paved courtyard illuminated by huge torches on top of ornately spiralling columns. It is cool and peaceful. Above your heads the largest bladed portcullis you have ever seen hangs menacingly. As the group passes through the gatehouse, Lunar soldiers step forward from the other end. There must be an entire century of them, but then you realise they are just presenting arms. Two scribes hurry up to you, as other travellers are also being met, and one politely asks to see your papers. Raus has them inside his jerkin and hands them all over, and the scribes scrutinise them carefully. "Welcome to Glamour and the warm embrace of the Red Goddess," one smiles, "you have journeyed far. As new visitors to the city you will have to register in full at the Temple of *Intrplicatos*." (Whilst he is speaking a dozen Lunar warriors have emerged from the shadows and surround you closely, but without menace.) "For your own safety we have provided an armed escort. This is a courtesy service for which there is no charge. Have a wonderful visit." After returning the paperwork to Raus, the scribes then go back into their office, and the Captain of the guard

says politely "Follow me please," and marches off. (After they have entered read out the first two paragraphs of the right hand column of p4 RGG.)

Glamour

(Use map in RGG, and show route for each visit. Advise Players that the map is a gross simplification and that the city is actually a maze of lanes and sidestreets, as well as the main thoroughfares and larger buildings marked!)

General

The city might be compared most easily in Real World terms to Greco-Romano architecture with an extra dose of Byzantine minarets and domed buildings. Various areas away from the main streets resemble the packed and seething backstreets of North African cities in the 19th century. (Apologies for my rudimentary grasp of architecture and history.) One of the most noticeable features of the main ways, especially the central Avenue of Heroes that they walk along to the Temple of *Intrplicatos*, are the statues. Alone, or in impressive tableaux, these life-size creations illustrate various events and personages from Lunar History, ancient and recent. Glamour certainly wishes to glorify the triumphs of the Lunar Way, and is not shy of showing this. Inscriptions beneath more impressive monuments are in both Pelorian script and the basic Trade pictograms.

Temple of *Intrplicatos* (64)

The party must wait seated inside a large corridor of this building for a little while, until a scribe comes and asks their business. Raus and Sardeus are escorted away with the paperwork, and return after two and a half hours looking a little tired. Not for the last time, Raus says to Sardeus (referring to his expertise in paperwork) "Thanks be to the Ancestors that you accompanied us on this trip!" Raus now carries a leather folder full of this paperwork, and distributes visitor permits to each group member. "Don't ever lose this!" he says seriously. Each permit has the name and homeland of the person, plus their main cult of allegiance and status in that cult, and their job title: ("Retainer and bodyguard to the most noble Raus of Rone, landholder in the Lunar Province of Prax")

(Read these out for each character for atmosphere, perhaps even write on a scrap of paper, and hand them to the Players.)

Prax House (45)

Raus then says "The one thing I wasn't able to do was to arrange accommodation, so let's see what ambassadorial influence I have." He marches off.

If asked, he has no problem in telling them they are going to Prax House. (Use Illustration on p11 RGG.)

There is a much shorter wait once he has announced who he is to the gate clerks. After only 20 minutes a scribe comes up and announces himself to be Tyrol's Lancer of the Blue Sable Clan, and also the Praxian Ambassador. Whilst he greets them with openness and smiles, he is a sycophant, and any nomads amongst the PCs will clearly see the hypocrisy of having a Sable clan member as representative of the diverse Praxian peoples. Nevertheless, he takes them to the ledgers and gives them several likely addresses for accommodation, plus a letter of recommendation. Raus is at all times courteous, and thanks Lancer warmly, but as they leave anyone who makes a Listen roll can hear Raus mutter a suitable blasphemy.

Attitudes of the Citizens to the PCs

If the PCs decide to seek specific individuals to talk to, then the attitudes that the citizens have towards the PCs might be obvious. However the PCs might ask random citizens questions on occasi-

on, so simply use the D10 rule:

- 1 - extremely friendly, and eager to impress on foreigners the wonders of Lunar achievement
- 2-3 - friendly and helpful
- 4-5 - helpful but disinterested
- 6-7 - barely helpful and distinctly cold and aloof
- 8-9 - unhelpful and rude
- 0 - surly, unhelpful and obviously having personal dislike for the PCs

(Attitudes may be softened if the Duke and/or Sardeus accompany them.)

Finding Accommodation

They proceed to Monument Plaza (I have situated this near B Gate - the circular road junction). In the centre of the Plaza is a massive statue of the Red Emperor holding the severed head of a barbarian foe. Across a large lawn can be seen the Palace of Art. Raus then leads them down various lanes and streets stopping at various well-situated boarding houses. Depending on time of day this will run differently. Eventually they will find a house that has a small suite of rooms on the upper floor available. Raus and Sardeus have a room each, the PCs share either one or two small bunkrooms, depending on how many of them that there are.

Depending on the time of day, Raus and Sardeus will either go to bed, or freshen up, eat (by nipping out to a local shop and buying kebabs or similar) and head off for the Citadel of Halfway (1). There they will begin the process of obtaining an audience with the Red Emperor. If Raus sleeps now, then this latter is what he will do as soon as he wakes and breakfasts.

Whenever it is day, Raus tells the PCs that they are free to go sightseeing. (Raus has no hope that an important audience will be offered immediately.) He suggests that they find a city guide, or else buy a map from the Irripi Ontor Temple. He also requests in no uncertain terms that they keep their noses clean. If they get into trouble he will have to bail them out, and this might threaten his application. If asked for local laws to obey, he will tell them that the Empire recognises that foreigners don't know all the rules, so simple etiquette and sobriety is the way to go. The places he personally recommends that they visit are:

- Red Square (2) and the Ringing Bridge (32)*
- The Great Library at the Temple of Irripi Ontor (7)*
- Imperial Market next to the Etyries Temple (11)*
- Magnificus Baths (19)*
- The Sevenfold Gardens of Enlightenment (24)*
- The Artifex Theatre (26)*
- The Glass Menagerie (37)*
- The Palace of Art (which is closeby - 71)*
- and The Garden of Flowers (80)*

(If they ask for further information on these, refer to RGG)

Telling the Time in Glamour

In Glamour it seems likely that chronomancers call the hour from the top of minarets in uncanny precision. This is useful to know if the PCs are ever required to be somewhere at a specific time. There may well be some kind of simple call on the half-hour as well.

Out and About in the City

Hiring a Guide

Mostly available at the Imperial Market. Usually young people who want to get into Etyries or Irripi Ontor and are eager to increase their knowledge and communication skills, but also many down and outs pretending to be on their way up, and actually just looking to make money.

Public Conveniences

This should come as a nice surprise. After they have been out for just a little while the PC who makes the highest roll on a D20 urgently needs to take a dump. Refer to p19 of RGG.

Eating

Many establishments are extremely pricey, however there are small shops and street vendors scattered liberally in most areas who will haggle for fairer costs. If they hire a guide, or ask someone knowledgeable and friendly, use p17-18 RGG.

Getting Around

Dinosaur carts (bus service!) down main thoroughfares, and Lokarnos Rickshaws, notable through being a distinctive yellow (see also p15/16 RGG). Everywhere they go, they will find awestruck Lunar pilgrims and street traders, selling all manner of wretched memorabilia (from Moonrock Candy to cheap copies of religious artefacts, to scale models of the more famous monuments). Such folk might cast aspersions on folk who do not buy, proclaiming them heretics and enemies of the Empire! (The playtest PCs had a great time watching the city go past from the top of a brontosaurus, but after the novelty of this first trip they reverted to walking.)

The Guide, or other citizens asked, will also recommend places that Raus did not:

- Monument to Time (an architectural wonder - 6)*
- Temple of Peace (8)*
- The Necropolis (15)*
- Monster Colosseum (16)*
- The Hideous Zoo (17)*
- Arch of Robustus (another architectural wonder - 20)*
- University of Glamour (23)*
- Celestine Circus (25)*
- Red Light District (27)*
- Temple of New Consciousness (28)*
- Winter Gardens (29)*
- Memorial (38)*
- Aqueduct (architecture again - 50)*
- Imperial Mint (53)*
- Central Post Office (55 - also illustration p11)*
- Temple of the Seven Mothers (68)*
- Moon Rock Café (75) and the Stairs of Pleasure (Gate O situated next to 75)*

Most of these places must be ad-libbed. Intersperse with details on the bustling, sparkling visible city, and (if they go off the main streets) the relative poverty and squalor of the underprivileged (which have reasonable living conditions if compared to somewhere like Pavis, although living costs here will be much more expensive.) However always check below when they visit somewhere, because some places have additional expansion material. Also remember to refer to the later section detailing special encounters, because these need to be fitted in whilst the PCs wander about. If there are no extra details, don't be tempted just to brush it off: describe possible tours, the pride of the workers/inhabitants/admiring locals, the services and facilities available...

Red Square (2) and the Ringing Bridge (32)

Borrowing heavily from Chris Gidlow's article in TRM: Iss12 See Illustration p12 RGG.

There are various ways to enter the Square, not just the Ringing Bridge, but if they cross that, make sure to stress its magnificence.

The massive wall of the Citadel of Halfway forms one wall of the Square. The Mausoleum of Yanafal Tarnils has a queue of soldiers waiting to be allowed in. It is a squat red building without

noteworthy architectural features. (Humakti might begrudgingly find this admirable in the face of other Lunar pomp and circumstance.) On the opposite side of the Square is the Etyries Temple and market hall. Also on the Square is the Temple of Truth containing the Shrine to Glamour herself (9) (with its eye-catching shining triple domed roof.) Further along is the Irripi Ontor Temple (see 7 and immediately below) with illuminating slogans written on its walls (including "War is Peace, Light is Darkness, Chaos is Fertility").

Near the great doors to the Citadel is a small building known as the Ministry of Information Kiosk. Here may be purchased town plans, guide books, souvenir statues and etchings of the most famous city landmarks (including a blank black slate panel titled only "Glamour at Night").

At some point whilst they are on the Square, a troop of about a hundred shouting people dressed in white robes will enter from one of the stairs. They are holding placards with white circles on, and shouting slogans such as "Peace not War", "the only good moon is a white moon", and "Lunars out of Sartar". This is apparently unusual, and locals and tourists alike stop and stare. These white moonies form a circle, and scream and shout. After a few minutes, the great doors (next to the public doors) in the Citadel open, and Char-Un nomad cavalry ride out at full speed. (Char-Un are distinctive due to their barbarian gear and fierce warhorses.) The Moonies hold fast and shout defiantly, however the Char-Un head for the most outspoken woman (who was leading chants) hacking aside any that get in their way. The Moonies break and flee, with some making it out of the Square, but many lying injured or dead, and some captured. The woman is hauled onto the back of a horse and dragged back into the gates. From these gates regular Lunar soldiers have now run, and push everyone back from the scene, claiming that the Moonies provoked the attack by throwing missiles and placards and endangering the populace.

The Great Library at the Temple of Irripi Ontor (7)

Just a note to say that peace and quiet are requirements for being in the building, a fee of 5L per person is required to consult the material, and some areas are out of bounds. For a further 5L a trained Librarian will make themselves available for half an hour or so, to aid in finding the material of your choice. One part of the building is the large temple area, with colonnaded walkways, large pools of coloured fish, and a great worship hall with a huge statue of Irripi Ontor.

The Sevenfold Gardens of Enlightenment (24)

Do not include mentions of the Arkat Asylum when reading out the description. If the PCs choose to spend any time here they will discover that the Gardens are far bigger on the inside than could be possible, given their external walls. There is no cost to enter. These gardens are exceedingly beautiful, and players should be encouraged to recall the most wonderful parks and gardens they have ever experienced, and then multiply their sense of peace and enjoyment many times. There are woods, and lakes, and rain-forest walks, swamps, and grass lawns. The place is also most obviously magical, with huge chessboards on which the human-sized chess pieces move under their own power, and even wander freely along the pathways. One can entertain oneself for hours merely trying to negotiate through one of the living hedge-mazes that rearranges itself continually.

In my campaign there was a Trickster PC, who I gave a small chance of noticing a pathway into the deeper gardens. (This chance could also be available to an Illuminated, or partly-illuminated PC, but there should be some reason that this hidden path is noticed, as most people cannot see it.) The chance was successful, and the PCs found a secluded trackway that led to the shores of a lake. On the opposite side they could see a huge old mansion

house, but before they got there, they were stopped by an old woman (a priestess of Jakaleel, although they didn't know it.) She was polite but curious, asking what they were doing in this area, as they were obviously neither patients nor healers. She explained that the mansion they could see was a place of solace for those who found the riddles of the world too much to bear, and began questioning the PCs as to their own understandings of reality. I don't know how to play Nysalor riddles, so I fudged it a bit, but even so the atmosphere was pretty eerie. Most of the PCs answered at least one philosophical question and came away with a taste of Illumination. Where that goes from here is anyone's guess.

The Artifex Theatre (26)

This week's performance is an acrobatic extravaganza by a group of Donandar cultists, with jokes and comedy routines. It is exceptionally good.

The Glass Menagerie (37)

This place is more like a regular Zoo, except there are no extensive areas of greenery within its confines. Remember however that the PCs have never seen anything like this before, so describe the mundane interior in awed tones. After this you can get a bit nasty and have them overhear a small child, who is pointing at them say: "Mummy, are those people barbarians?" "Hush dear, yes they are, now don't stare at them, you don't know where they've been!" Entry cost is 5L per person, and access is through a turnstile. The enclosures are mostly of reasonable size, and contain some foliage and items of diversion for the inhabitants, such as logs, trees, streams, pools and the like. Large panes of enchanted glass that the animals cannot see through also protect them. It is a pleasant place to spend an afternoon or even morning, but closes at dusk. There are many regular animals such as foxes, varieties of wild dog and cat, monkeys, exotic birds of all shapes and sizes, and the like. Inside, one is able to avail oneself of decadent refreshments such as ice-delights, or take a ride on a donkey, or even on a camel, llama or elephant. The complex is open and spacious, and the attendants polite and helpful. The animals seem happy enough, although some few seem listless in their small cages. If you need more details, creatures of note include: Antelopes, Baboons, Bats, Bison, Gorillas, Hippopotami, Kanguruh (from the Wastes), Parrots, Rhinos, Sabretooth cats, Tuskers, Zebras

The Necropolis (15)

Not much more to say - guided tours take visitors through the towering sombre buildings, perhaps a Humakti might find this impressive, but not overly so. Cost is 3L per person.

Monster Colosseum (16)

This place is an awesome monument, a huge building the like of which they have never seen before. In it are held only serious events, such as the weekend gladiatorial contests. If the PCs go in to watch a show, it will be as described in RGG. The only other alternative is outlined in the poster displayed at various locations outside (written in Pelorian and Trade): "Fancy yourself as a Gladiator. Huge cash prizes to be won pitting yourself against unintelligent beasts. Apply within." By the generosity of the Colosseum staff, there is no cost to enrol as an amateur Gladiator. (Cynical, or intelligent, individuals might think this is just a way to keep the beasts fed and in shape, at the cost of ignorant visitors, and desperate or deluded citizens.) The beasts available, and cash prize, are as follows:

(Bear in mind that the event is rarely won by a warrior, so they don't expect to lose beasts beyond the reach of magical healing very often. The Colosseum staff are just trying to fill quiet evenings with amateur events. Unusual creatures are from the Glorantha Bestiary.)

Rubble Runner (actually 3 at once) - 30L
Nightstalker - 250L
Baboon (giant) - 60L
Bear (Polar) - 200L

The Hideous Zoo (17)

This place is walled. Outside the only gate is a sign in several languages:

"The Hideous Zoo of Emperor Venerabilis - the creatures inside may disturb those of a sensitive nature."

Entry cost is 10L per person, 20% discounts for groups of 5 or more. The cages and enclosures are made of iron bars with only tiny gaps between, and there are stone pits with some of the creatures at the bottom unable to get out. The descriptions in the Bestiary should be read as the inscriptions on plaques outside the monsters' enclosures. Pictures are also carved on these plaques. When reading descriptions out you might want to underplay how many of them are only found in Pamaltela, and substitute 'rare Gloranthan creature' or something like that. (RM = RQ Monsters book) The creatures found in here are not happy, and wail and scream. If relevant, perhaps one or more will break out whilst the PCs are here, but such an event would be extremely unusual of course. (Unless the PCs had fallen foul of the Spoken Word, or perhaps other enemies of Raus had released them? In the playtest, Agrestis used Rune Magic to break open a cage. If it is Agrestis, he will be seen a little later, running away just as he is spotted.) A large hydra might be fun, as its cage bars warp open, just enough for it to get out, just before the PCs eyes. You might need to remind them about innocent bystanders, and that defeating the beast could be seen as a public service, however they are of course free to run away if they wish and let the authorities deal with it eventually.

Dragonsnail (RM), Fachan (RM), Gargoyle, Gorger, Gorp (RM), Grampus (RM), Griffin (unintelligent as most are), (RM), Gray Giant, Gulper, Harpy (RM), Hydra, Lizard (Rock) (RM), Lucan, Manticore (RM), Nightstalker, Orveltor, Ouori (in a tank), Rascullu, Rubble Runners, Scorpion Folk (RM), Scythanni colony, Toad (cliff) (RM), Walktapus, (RM), Watchwere

Celestine Circus (25)

Entry fee is 2L for casual days and 5-10L for special performances. When the Red Emperor speaks, entry is for free.

Here there are opportunities for visitors and local talent to compete against each other for rewards. (Like a game show, this is always popular and occurs throughout the afternoons and evenings when there are no regular performances.) Chariot Races, running races, archery competitions, combat to the first fall or first blood (healers on standby, deaths a rare bonus) etc. Also the "face the unknown creature" combat for huge money. This can be anything from a rabbit to a jabberwock, although truly fierce and rare creatures are unusual. The prize is very tempting though, and contestants must sign a disclaimer form in case of death.

Archery - use 3 locals with 60+D20 skill, and a gladiator plant with 90%+ skill. Entry is 15L, prize 100L

To the First Fall or Blood - Combat is with gladiator. Use Lunar stats. for a good officer. Entry 10L, prize 150L

Facing the Creature (D6) - Entry 10L, prize 150L

1 - a Tusker, 2 - a Rubble Runner, 3 - Gladiator, 4 - trollkin gladiator, 5 - giant spider, 6 - Grampus
Invent other contests as required.

Temple of New Consciousness (28)

Atmosphere similar to a Zen monastery, except tuition is by philosophical discourse as much as by riddles and koans. Anyone already with Illumination skill who spends a morning or afternoon here and succeeds with an INT roll gains 1% more Illumination. (Each further attempt cumulatively subtracts 2 from the effective INT for the roll to succeed). Anyone without Illumination, who spends a morning or afternoon here, and makes an INT-5 roll, gains 1% Illumination. (Each further attempt cumulatively adds 2 to the effective roll but a maximum of 3% may be gained). Anyone who gains % in Illumination here has that % as a chance to become tainted by Chaos. This is only rolled for the once (as they leave Glamour on the return trip) and of course is kept secret until revealed by detections.

Moon Rock Café (75) and the Stairs of Pleasure (Gate O situated next to 75)

This is a groovy eating establishment with good food, and a selection of travellers will always be found here. These are mostly Lunars of one kind or another, but can include an Issaries trade delegation from Vanch if you like. This delegation is here petitioning for better trade rights, but have little hope of success, and are otherwise enjoying the holiday. This place is also expensive. Despite its lack of detail, when the PCs in my campaign expressed an interest in dining at the best place in town they arrived here. I ad-libbed some students serving as waiters, and some friendly dialogue, and the Players loved it. The PCs came and ate again here the next night, which goes to show that sometimes role-playing can surprise even the Storyteller. The PCs also had an encounter with Agrestis, the Lunar jester whom they had uncovered at the Garhound Contests, and he tried to exact revenge by tipping hot soup on them (via a spell to push the waiter's elbow). The PCs saved the waiter's job, and caught Agrestis and beat him up - damn pesky Tricksters!

Special Encounters

Some credit to Monty Python's "The Life of Brian"

(Insert these as appropriate throughout the travels in the city)

Vivisculpture

(Designed for humour. Separate the Vivisculpture encounters across the beginning of their stay, although #3 could keep on turning up as long as it stays funny and/or interesting. Vivisculpture is the (relatively) recently popular art of sculpting gargoyles expertly into the likenesses of famous figures such as Fazzur or the Red Emperor. For static statues the gargoyles are posed and then killed, resulting in a long-lasting monument with life-like poise. However in the last few years it has become trendy to train gargoyles into a number of poses and actually employ them to maintain varying displays throughout the day.)

Vivisculpture #1

As they stop to admire, or simply pass, a scene depicting Fazzur Wideread leading a band of warriors during the conquest of Dragon Pass, Fazzur suddenly begins to move. Stepping carefully over the sculpted dead and dying Orlanthi, he stretches and steps off the platform. It is his lunch break (dinner break? tea break?), and he wanders across the street to a snack bar, where he joins the queue for a bison burger. This was a total surprise to my Players/PCs, and gave them a real feeling of the bizarre decadence of Glamour. (Sometimes it's such fun to run games for people who know very little about Glorantha!)

Vivisculpture #2

Several statues are positioned as unofficial extras in a tableau showing a famous Lunar Council. (A special Scan may notice they seem out of place - monsters and soldiers at a bureaucratic meeting.) They try and mug the PCs, but end up begging for aid, as



they were vivisculptures on pieces that were dismantled, and are now unemployed and destitute. (Make this as violent, or as amusing, as you like. A nice ending might be to flee the arrival of a patrol of the City Watch.)

Vivisculpture #3

A wandering bunch of statues, which are sculpted as the Red Emperor and his bodyguard, roam the city, posing in various tableaux from time to time (and spying on the populace). They may follow the PCs for a while, oddly reappearing nearby each site the PCs decide to visit, and remaining motionless in an artistic piece if questioned or examined. Perhaps just the Red Emperor himself follows the PCs?

Yanafali Bravoos

Just back from the front in Heortland, these nine soldiers are all Lay Members, and are drunk. They are not the epitome of an honourable Yanafali. Seeing foreigners, they decide to have some fun, and ask them what they are doing in town, and why they don't worship Lunar deities. No answer will be enough for them, and if there are Humakti in the group, one will challenge him to a combat to the first blood. (NB: It is not polite or honourable to challenge a rival cultist this way in your own city, and this will not normally happen.) Pick the most suitable level of Lunar soldier from the any suitable official publication. His friends will all stand round and support the battle. If the PC kills the Lunar, there will be a hearing, and the PC will be expelled from the city if they can prove they were provoked (not a problem as there are witnesses, but possibly a harrowing time getting someone to step forward). If there is no death, then real Yanafali officers will arrive after a suitable period, and reprimand their men, putting them all on charges, and apologising to the PCs (especially if there are any Humakti). If the PCs are in a small group and make any threatening moves, the Yanafali will all attack them, and give them a beating before running away and laying low. If the PCs press charges, play it by ear.

More White Moon Subversives

A group of apparently ordinary citizens will approach the PCs offering leaflets. These basically outline the White Moon doctrine that Lunar civilisation is all well and good, but that violent imperialism can only lead to violent resistance and the Lunar way of might by arms is wrong. The White Moon is coming, and those that embrace violence as standard practice will suffer in response to their own actions. There is a meeting being held this evening. Do the PCs want to go? If they do, it will be just more of the same. In a large back room at a shady tavern, about 20 in the audience (plus PCs), and a male speaker. In a fit of originality, thugs will not break up the meeting, although anyone who attends it will be tai

led home. Later that night, a party of Spoken Word agents will visit the PCs and make enquiries as to their business in the City. Presuming the PCs can convince the agents of their ignorance, they will merely be warned in no uncertain terms not to attend such a meeting ever again.

Graffiti Artist

A night-time encounter. A young man with a bucket of whitewash will be in a sidestreet, halfway through writing "Lunars out of Sartar". It is in Pelorian, however he is Carmanian, and the grammar is bad. He is just a spoilt nobleman's son, and if he were caught would be let off with a caution and a very heavy fine. However, as the PCs approach, he will sprint off, dropping the paint pot, as from round another corner come the Watch. They haven't seen the boy and will accuse the PCs who appear to have been caught red (white?) handed. This may lead to a chase (in which the PCs will get away), or else a trip to the local City Police Station where they will have to undergo truth tests. (In the Playtest the Trickster character posed as a Lunar Agent and made the young man write the phrase out correctly 100 times before morning.)

Soothsayers

A daytime encounter. In a suitable area of the city, they will come across a small bazaar, with many stalls packed together selling gourds, clothing, candles, wooden tools, baskets, bread, wine, parrots, snakes, monkeys etc. At one end of the bazaar are five men and a woman, each standing on a podium and talking to a small crowd.

#1 - Talks about why Lunar military conquest is the only sensible way for a new Glorantha. That all the gods save one have accepted the Red Goddess as their mistress and an era of peace and prosperity is certainly beginning. (Use the whole box at the bottom of p33 in RGG).

#2 - Why Yanafal is better than Humakt (civilised, intelligent, not obsessed by death, able to be resurrected)

#3 - Utter gibberish about his father being unable to find tools mislaid in his workshop

#4 - A non-Illuminant (pretending to be an Illuminant) talking about the balance between Chaos and Law, how one cannot exist without the other, and that Chaos is necessary to balance out existence.

#5 - Trying to convince the crowd to live simple peaceful lives like the birds and plants and animals that live without stress and without needlessly harming each other. He will exhort a PC: "You, sir, consider the Lily. The Lily lives at much more peace than you do, I'm sure. How much peace do you have in your life, sir?"

#6 - The female speaker is espousing the 'Equal Rites for Women in Carmania' movement.

Procession

Crossing a main road, the PCs are confronted by Lunar soldiers kicking low-lives and throwing them off the street, taking their paltry belongings, and shouting "Procession coming through!" How do the PCs look, like beggars or citizens? They may be asked to stand at the side of the road and get ready to cheer (Lunar flags thrust into their hands), or they may be asked to move on. (Although they are 'asked' this will, of course, be enforced.) The procession is for a visiting Satrap (from Doblian) who is a Yelmic noble. He is in a gilded carriage pulled by two unicorns, and is supported by 40 Yelmialo warriors all wearing shining gold armor. They are off to an audience with the Red Emperor.

Glamour Police

Checking the papers and identities of foreigners and suspect looking citizens. They check cafes, theatres, zoos, everywhere, and may be encountered twice or even three times. An extension of this could be to have all foreigners on the streets rounded up and

brought in for questioning: the authorities are looking for someone whose identity they will not reveal to simple foreign mercenaries. The Special Police of Glamour are Danfive Xaron Cultists. These are part of the 'Black Army', the internal security force for the Lunar Empire, and DX Initiates are all reformed criminals. This makes this arm of the Police Force perhaps akin to a military Police Force in a 'real world' repressive regime, very scary! They are not people you ask the time of day, although Lunar citizens in genuine need would probably be bold enough to approach them. The personalities of each Initiate vary, as do those of all DX cult members. Some have been made wise and serene by their ordeals, others are surly and unhinged, and some are schizophrenic and prone to fits of berserk rage (although these are much more likely still to be in the penitentiary). The average bunch should be presented as sinister, with barely concealed violence and horror hidden beneath the surface. Some will have horrible scars, and some will be unnaturally and chillingly polite.

Procession of Conquered Rebels

The Aggar campaign is going well, and 30 warriors with a high chief are brought into the city in chains and paraded through. At their head, an Irripi Ontor scribe shouts out that the Lunar missionary movement in Aggar has succeeded in capturing some dangerous bandits who are being brought to face the Emperor's justice. If the PCs follow the procession it ends up at the Colosseum, and the Emperor does actually arrive and sits in his box, along with several nobles (not Raus). Getting into the Colosseum will be a scrum affair amongst the eager scrambling masses. The rebels are all assembled in the ring surrounded by armed Yanafali.

The Red Emperor's Voice is magically amplified as it rings out in Pelorian:

"My people, I am proud to tell you that another of our client states is becoming a safer place to live for honourable law-abiding citizens of the Empire! Before the bandits here are judged, do they have anything to say?"

Their leader is brought up to the box and his voice is not magically amplified (Listen roll to make out each phrase.) He speaks in Trade:

"Citizens of the Empire, we are not bandits, Aggar is our home. Since the arrival of the Lunar Empire our traditions and are people are being destroyed. We want only the freedom to continue out traditional ways, freedom from violent oppression and the imposition of foreign gods. If your homelands were invaded, would you not rise up to protect your ways, or would you lie still for the slaughter, like sheep. Long Live Aggar, down with the Lunar Empire!"

He leaps at the Red Emperor and is incinerated in a great burst of magical flame.

The Yanafali in the arena retreat through the doors, and lions are released on the other prisoners, for the greater amusement of the populace assembled, but perhaps not the PCs. If any PCs are obviously Orlanthi they will be jostled and taunted on the way out, but may be able to retaliate in the crowded stairwells. Although this might lead to them being pursued through the streets by an angry mob.

Ralian Ambassadorial Party Site-seeing

A Malkioni Sorcerer accompanied by warrior worshippers of Saint Humakt. (An ambassador and his bodyguard.) They are from a province in Ralios, and may have some things in common with the PCs; perhaps they will be friends?

Chaos in Glamour

This is an Aug 99 Digest Posting by David Cake, stolen pretty much in its entirety

I think there is a large 'underclass' of chaotics living in (and in the sewers beneath) the streets of Glamour. Chaotics throughout the Empire gravitate there, because Glamour is probably the only place in the Empire where chaotics are not persecuted. Nevertheless, most chaotics can only survive in Glamour by begging, thieving and other criminal activities, because few people are willing to employ them.

All over the Empire, the philosophies of the Lunar Empire tempt the unwary into experimentation with chaos, or otherwise encourage interaction with chaotic forces. But obvious chaotic features, or other evidence of chaotic taint, are still not socially acceptable to the majority of the Empire. A seven fingered hand or third eye might be something a high Lunar official can get away with, but for most it leads to ostracism and lynch mobs. Those afflicted gravitate to Glamour - it is noted in the Empire that chaotics can live unmolested in Glamour, as there are a few high profile chaotics who live there and are well known (at least one broo poet, for example).

The Teelo Norri cult and other such do-gooders will assist chaotics in making their way to Glamour - the minor level of official assistance they can provide is often the only reason many chaotics survive the journey. At least they can sleep in Teelo Norri poorhouses along the way, rather than in ditches - chaotics are welcome in few inns. Once in Glamour, they discover the ugly truth - while the few successful chaotics are fêted for propagandist purposes, those who have played with chaos and lost are still losers in Glamour. While the citizens of Glamour may accept the Emperor's edicts about the official acceptability of chaos, such are still regarded as unwelcome by most.

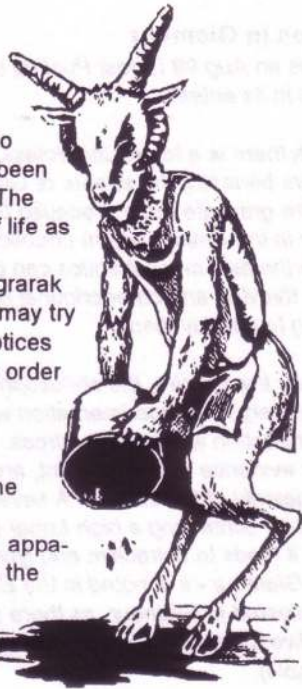
The only place where they are truly welcome is among their own kind. Glamour has a literal underworld of sewers and strange excavations (even, it is rumoured, Krarshtkid tunnels). There live the rejected experiments of the Empire's grand chaotic project. Many were not born chaotic, but became chaotic through Chaos Gift and similar magics. Many turn to crime, including trading in exotic drugs and pleasures not socially acceptable even in the decadent heart of the Empire. The secret masters of the Krarsht cult grow fat.

The crime, of course, as well as the use of broos as sewerage workers, means that the good Lunar citizens of Glamour can justify their discrimination, while at the same time mouthing the platitudes of Lunar acceptance of chaos. 'Of course I do not discriminate against those who accept the gifts of chaos, but that does not mean I need to welcome criminals or dung-carriers into my neighbourhood or employment!'

I imagine the Underside of Glamour to be the Gloranthan equivalent of William Burroughs' Interzone - deranged half-humans turning to exotic vices to cope with their shattered lives. A little of Al Amarja, too. The scorpion man that continually threatens to commit suicide with his own sting, strange prostitutes that defy classification into the normal sexes, half-man/half-insect beings that sell their own body parts as exotic drugs, and so on. And 'Spare Ass Annie', of course, straight from the title track of the William Burroughs/ Disposable Heroes CD.

Chaos 1

The PCs see a crowd ahead, some kind of street entertainment. These people are gathered about a poet, the famous Broo poet Orgrarak Shattral, who has been praised by the Emperor himself. The poetry is all about the hardship of life as an outcast, and the wonders of Lunar Civilisation. Orgrarak is of course a Dorastan spy, and may try and befriend the PCs when he notices they are strangers to Glamour (in order to see why they are here).



Chaos 2

Sewerage working party. Along the side of a street is a great trench. Beside the trench stand two men, apparently overseers of some kind. As the PCs pass they may notice that one man has an eye in his forehead, whilst the other man has a third arm growing below his left armpit. In the trench are two dozen humans (with varying degrees of obvious chaotic taint) and three broo. This group is replacing a collapsed sewer tunnel, and is an official work party. This is one of the few jobs chaotics can get in Glamour.

Chaos 3

Mugging! - Yup, chance for real melee on the streets of Glamour! The low-life chaos scum that live in the sewers occasionally get desperate enough to attempt robbery. They only ever attack foreigners, as fear of reprisals is much lower. Out of a narrow alley romp: a great twisted mass, a stunted goat broo and a man with no head but a face in his chest. The mass attacks with whipping tentacles instead of arms, otherwise use regular broo stats. An official complaint gets an apology stating that they must have swum in from the river, but the fact is that at some point they needed to pass through the gates.

If you want to make the whole area even more remarkable, there are many rumours about the Glamour underworld. Some say that something else existed on the site of Glamour, long ago, and the tunnels under Glamour have dug into strange ruins. Other rumours say that the tunnels actually reach the inside of the Crater in places, there to contact secret dark Lunar mysteries.

Possible Timetable for the PCs' stay

Playtest Version

Day 1

This will be the rest of the day they arrive, or the first day if they arrive at night. Raus and Sardeus go off to try and make an appointment for an audience with the Red Emperor. Before they set off, Raus buckles on the Rone Sword and the characters have a chance to see his transformation again, as he gains an even greater air of authority. Raus forgets to assign a return time for the PCs to be back, so the Players have their own whims. Raus and Sardeus will return exhausted after sunset, and Raus will buy Sardeus dinner nearby for his help. Then they will retire early. If asked, they will say that it is a tough and exhausting business, and they merely queued and got nowhere today, and without the influence of the Rone Sword, and the knowledge that Sardeus

has, they would not have even made it into the queue. They will ask how the PCs are enjoying themselves, if an opportunity presents.

Day 2

Raus and Sardeus breakfast early, and leave early. In the afternoon the PCs will pass a small group of nobles leaving the city. On second glance they will see that it is Sor-Eel and his party. Agrestis is capering behind and every now and then, one of the group turns and tries to kick or punch him to drive him away. Sor-Eel will recognise them and call for his group to halt. He will tell them that he has been removed from office and that he has actually recommended Raus for the next Governor. He says that he believes he was a good Governor and perhaps trying to stop the Cradle was a mistake, but "what's done is done." "You don't need a spare jester do you?" he asks wryly. He and his party then continue and leave the city. (If asked, he is returning to his family lands and retiring.) Agrestis does not attempt to follow them this time, but will tag on with the PC party, being a pest and trying to pull feeble practical jokes - hopefully they will get very angry and tell him to clear off. (If he is already an enemy, then of course he will not try and join with them.)

Agrestis might try and get them all with a cruel joke, by casting 'Lie':

"Well, I'll go then, but I know something that you don't know. The Crimson Bat is coming to town this afternoon in preparation for the Great Hunt, and they are looking for foreigners to feed it. Nowhere in the city is safe. If you run now you might just get out of the city before they lock the gates! Imagine that, fed to the Bat and suffering total annihilation!!!!" (ends in a shriek)

Cue for PCs that don't resist to flee, screaming, for the gates, and get stopped and cautioned for disorderly behaviour.

Raus and Sardeus queue again all day with no luck, but hear an exasperating rumour that the Emperor is soon to leave for a Hunt on the Red Moon. They return at 8pm.

Day 3

Raus and Sardeus leave early. This time they do not return, having decided to queue all night so as not to lose their place. This is entirely allowed, as there are public conveniences next to the hall of supplicants, and experienced petitioners bring their own food and bedding (neatly packaged of course). The PCs might nonetheless become concerned.

Day 4

Raus and Sardeus have not returned during the night. If the PCs go to the Citadel of Halfway and inquire, a clerk will go through the records and inform them that Duke Raus and his brother Sardeus the Sage are still registered as applying for an audience with the Red Emperor. Though the clerk looks down on them, he at least is able to inform them what they want to know, which is that it is not unusual for applicants to stay two or three days in order to reach the head of the queue. They may even meet Sardeus here, nipping out to get another couple of kebabs for him and Raus. Raus and Sardeus do not return until late in the afternoon. Raus has been granted a five-minute audience the day after tomorrow. He has been told he can talk to the Emperor, whilst he prepares to leave for the Imperial Hunt on the Red Moon. He reports proudly to the characters that the Rone Sword not only cuts through foes of the House of Rone, but also cuts through the small minds of petty bureaucrats!

Day 5

Raus and Sardeus do some sightseeing. Sardeus finds out through his temple that he can get a place on a Moonboat to Furthest leaving this evening, and so he takes it and goes back to Prax. From Furthest he will join one of the frequent Lunar military columns heading down the Lunar Road to Pavis. (This is a game mechanic to remove a now pointless NPC from the returning group of PCs.)

Day 6

Raus' appointment is in the afternoon. This time he will require some of his mercenaries to accompany him as retainers. Once again, he buckles on the Rone Sword and gains a new boost to his charisma and authority. He takes the PCs to some expensive shops and has them kitted out in specially made matching tunics with emblems he invents, which combine the House of Rone arms with the runic symbol for Prax. He treats them to a lunch, before they go and report to the Citadel at 3.00 Calls (see 'Telling the Time in Glamour' earlier). The following is a description of what the PCs observe.

The Citadel of Halfway

First of all they report to the main administration. Before they get there, Raus advises them that they must behave exemplarily whilst inside the City of Dreams, and if this means that all they do is walk, hold themselves proudly and answer simply and honestly when spoken to, then that is fine. The whole building is, in atmosphere and appearance, a blend between Roman and Greek pillared corridors and high-ceilinged rooms, and stuffy government offices of the early twentieth century. Raus presents the official scroll that confirms his audience, and this is passed from the desk clerk to the chief scribe of the day. This man comes out of the office and looks Raus over, firing off a few small spells with ease, and scarcely flickering his fingers. (These are detections.) "*These outlanders are with you?*" "*You guarantee their behaviour within the Citadel of Halfway?*" Raus looks at the PCs and pauses, then grips the Rone Sword and says 'Yes'. The man pales visibly and then stutters "*Good. Follow me.*"

He takes them down a corridor guarded by two huge Yanafali soldiers, and into a large waiting room. Another clerk sits at a desk, and the chief clerk walks over and speaks to him. The desk clerk looks at the Raus group (Scan or Listen rolls). He sniggers. If they succeed he is making some snide joke. The word Carmanian might be heard. (If the Players don't know by now, explain that many Pelorians see Carmanians as second class citizens.)

The Chief clerk comes back. As he passes them he pauses and says "*An escort will arrive shortly.*"

There are leather-covered benches that they may sit upon. Raus prefers to stand. After about ten minutes, an immaculately dressed imperial lackey arrives. "*Duke Raus and party?*" "*Please follow me.*"

The City of Dreams

Some ideas taken from RGG

The party is taken away "*through a bewildering series of marbled corridors, gilded halls, and splendid staircases*". On the trip they sometimes pass by huge windows and can see out across the City of Dreams itself. The fluted towers, colored domes and majestic minarets are all sparkling under the ruby glow of the Red Moon above. More than once when the view is in the right direction towards the centre of the city, they can see the Silver Bridge rearing into the air, and disappearing in a thin strip as it plunges upwards to the Red Moon. There the heroes of the Empire such as Hon-Eel and the Seven Mothers dwell in eternal paradise, and also where the Empire's Horrors such as Yara Aranis and the Crimson Bat are restrained until they are needed. (Remind the players, through your tones, how in awe the PCs must be!)

The journey continues, with the group crossing "*marble courtyards fragrant with fountains of rosewater*", traversing enormous colonnaded walks, and even crossing a small park of unusual vegetation and unidentifiable ornamental birds. One of the more memorable features is when they cross a large hall with a beautiful mosaic

floor. (It takes only a few moments to work out that the scene depicted in the tiles is "*the Crimson Bat devouring wailing prisoners at Castle Blue.*") Throughout the walk they occasionally notice other people, but none of them approach the Raus party. These people are all richly dressed and seem to be living a life of untroubled leisure. The walk takes at least an hour and a half, although time is hard to measure here in this mid-way place between the mundane plane and the myth plane.

At last they cross another small ornamental park, via a walkway whose roof is held aloft by particularly beautiful columns carved in the shapes of naked bodies. As the visitors stare in awe, they see that the columns are actually moving sinuously, they are, after all, the famous living Caryatids of the City of Dreams. The visitors enter a large mansion, and after only a few more minutes of walking are ushered into an awesomely beautiful waiting room. This chamber is decorated with silks and tapestries from the most exotic of locations. Sumptuous cushions and divans are scattered around. At the centre, a small fountain sprays fine jets of water, and as it does so, it somehow also plays a continuous soft melody. The room has several doors, some closed and some half open. Their guide indicates that they should wait. After a little while, a chamberlain with an oiled beard and dressed more finely than anyone they have ever seen glides into the room. Their original guide introduces "*Duke Raus*" in a whisper, then simply turns and leaves.

The chamberlain beckons at them with barely concealed disdain, and leads them through a large door and under an arch decorated with silver symbols of planets and stars set on a black background. Anyone who fails a CON-5 roll at this point feels nauseous.

Raus Meets the Emperor

Beyond the arch is a smaller room, the architecture is just as rich, but the furnishings simpler. There are plain wooden benches, and thick red drapes cover three sections of one wall. On the wall opposite the drapes is a simple mosaic, depicting several men in glinting gold and red armor. These men are carrying bows and riding on hippogriffs, as they fly above a beautiful forest.

The chamberlain says quietly: "*Your people will have to wait here, the Emperor will see you now. You are fortunate that he is in very good spirits today.*" Raus, who has been rigid with tension the whole trip, relaxes slightly. He nods to the mercenaries. (Ask do they wish to say or do anything?) Then he follows the Chamberlain through a small door.

Does anyone wish to try a Scan roll to see what is through the door? Anyone who does so sees Raus begin to bow deeply as he enters the room.

Success - the glimpse of several people half-naked, attending to a central larger person with dark red hair, and a goatee, who is wearing white sequined clothes.

Special - Attendants that are mostly scantily clad females are helping a man with long dark hair and sequined white clothes to dress in red and gold armor.

Critical - At the centre of a marbled room, an imposing dark-haired man in sequined white clothes, which have flared arms and legs, is being dressed in red and gold armor. Against one wall rests a gold shield and a large golden bow. Some kind of large lute decorated with gold inlay sits on a velvet cushion. Out of the window they see the top of a domed building bathed in red light.

Once the Duke is inside, tell the players that the PCs have very few options open to them:

i) Listening (either at the door, or simply standing near the door)

ii) Searching the room, either diligently or simply in passing whilst examining its beautiful architectural lines

(They may also, of course, look behind the drapes of their own free will, but don't suggest this.)

Listening at the Door

If the character is not obviously eavesdropping, reduce their Listen success by one level (e.g. Critical becomes Special, Success becomes Failure).

Failure - Raus is putting his case forward to be Governor of Prax as a tributary state rather than a full province.

Success - Raus and a man with a soft and resonant voice are talking politely to each other. Raus outlines his plan to forge a Prax that is a safe and valuable tributary state of the Lunar Empire. His main point is that he believes the fiercely independent peoples will cope with being a tributary state and having a limited military presence, but will inevitably rebel if they feel themselves to be subjugated and enslaved.

Special - As above, and the other man sounds agreeable. He says however, that this is only because Prax is such a dire and arid country. Sartar is a rich client kingdom and must be made a full province of the Empire, despite its rebellious nature. This includes the Heortland Orlanthe. Whitewall must fall, and fall soon. The term 'Crimson Bat' is also heard.

Critical - As above, and "I am really not that happy with my generals. I'm gonna send the Crimson Bat against Whitewall soon.

When this hunt is over I'll start things moving. Just you watch me, uh huh!"

(The references to the Bat are a hastily manufactured reference to the second part of this adventure in my campaign, which was a trip to Whitewall to meet Fazzur, outlined at the end of this piece. You may wish to replace this with words more useful in your campaign, leave in if historically topical, or simply ignore.)

Searching the Room

Actually moving things and having a sticky beak, even if using the pretence of examining the drapes and architecture - No roll required. The only thing in the room that was not already obvious to them is the shadow of a stain upon the floor. Of the obvious features, when the mosaic is examined there can be seen in the forest a fleeing creature that seems to be made up of the parts of several human bodies fused together. And when the drapes are examined it is noticed that they hang close to large windows, and through the windows a deep red light shines. (This light is far stronger red than the rose tint that they have been used to whilst crossing the City of Dreams.) You may have to ask them if they want to look out of the windows.

Through the Windows

First of all, ascertain if anyone doesn't want to look, and actively closes their eyes or turns away, but be casual about it.

Then, anyone who looks must make a POW roll. If they fail, their mind cannot comprehend what they have seen and they are rendered speechless until they have left the City of Dreams. This is not a total incapacitation, they will make simple befuddled phrases like "It was beautiful, so red, ..."

Anyone who makes their POW roll sees:

"Outside the window your mind makes a complicated flip-flop trying to make sense of the images. Suddenly it becomes clear. You are looking from the upper window of a building in a small city of red buildings. It is a very beautiful city, however this is not what draws your attention, and your gaze travels over its walls onto a plain of red grass dotted with stands of red trees. Over to the left is a range of unusual mountains (red of course) standing almost

like a parade of leaping dancers bounding from beneath the ground. Over to the right is a beautiful forest, the leaves of the trees sparkle like rubies, and the tree trunks are a deep reddy-brown. As you look at it, you notice that the trees seem to be shifting subtly, swaying in an unpredictable breeze. Despite all this, it is what hangs above the city that takes most of your attention. At first you think it is an enormous patchwork quilt with a great circular mandala as its centrepiece, but then your mind makes another alteration. You are looking down on the crater and the city of Glamour from above. Out to each side stretches the Lunar Empire. As your eye travels you notice that your vision somehow telescopes, and even though you must be looking across hundreds and hundreds of miles, larger details such as rivers, mountains and even cities are visible."

(Viewers must make another POW roll at -4, and if they fail, notice that they are developing a slight nosebleed and headache.)

Anyone who fails, and continues to look, will find his or her vision begins to blur and will develop a terrific migraine and lose 1 INT, perhaps being automatically Befuddled.

Those who roll successfully and continue to look can see all the way to the edge of Tarsh. However after that the vision abruptly dims and no further detail can be made out.

Even these people are now subject to the POW-4 roll, and discourage further viewing attempts by Befuddling anyone who looks for more than a few moments.

Raus Returns

After slightly less than ten minutes, the door opens (anyone listening who rolls successfully will hear someone approaching), and both Raus and the Chamberlain exit backwards, bowing deeply.

The Chamberlain leads them all back through the arch (CON-5 roll again or nausea) and back into the waiting room. Then he guides them down some stairs and along a different hall that they didn't arrive by. At the end of the corridor is a small vestibule on the other side of which narrow stone stairs descend. The Chamberlain says "At the bottom of the stairs turn left and go through the first door on the right. May the Red Goddess shine upon you all your days." He turns and goes.

Passing through the vestibule, anyone who fails a simple CON roll feels nauseous. Raus leads on at a swift pace, down the stairs, turns left in a small corridor, and unhesitatingly opens a wooden door on the right and ushers them through. On the other side they are at the end of a small corridor which leads back into the innermost waiting chamber of the Citadel of Halfway. A junior scribe waits for them at the end and escorts them to the main exit and out into Red Square.

What Raus tells them after they leave the City of Dreams:
"The Emperor gave me a good hearing. He is interested in my proposal to make Prax a tributary state rather than a province, and thus divert the impending rebellion. However, he says that I must also gain the approval of General Fazzur Wideread, who is currently the military commander of the whole Dragon Pass region and co-ordinating the invasion of Heortland. That campaign is very much on the Emperor's mind." Raus gets a dark look and frowns. "He plans to take stern measures against Whitewall, possibly as soon as within the next few weeks. I pity the rebels there, as they will be totally unprepared and shall be utterly consumed." He will say no more on these subjects. But he will outline their plans: "We leave immediately for Whitewall to seek an audience with General Fazzur, I can only hope he will be as appreciative of my ideas as was the Emperor."

Heading for Home

NOTE

If you lack "RQAdventures: 'The Fall of Whitewall'" or possibly some new official piece from the Hero Wars game, you might like to ignore such references and have Raus (or whoever took the PCs to Glamour in your campaign) simply succeed in his mission and initiate their departure.

Raus hurries them back to their rooms and packs preparing to leave immediately. They may of course spend a final night in their rooms, and leave after a hearty breakfast, over which Raus will ask them what they thought of the city!

As they leave the city, be mindful to mention again its impressiveness and the thronging masses of Lunar citizens again. The gateguards will recheck their papers on the way out.

The group go first to the *Moonport* (39), where Raus is confidently expecting to be able to book passage. This is a huge and bustling place, with many guards checking people's business, a large hall for checking flight times and booking-in luggage, and several expensive snack bars, and last-minute souvenir stalls. Unfortunately, the group is told in no uncertain terms that there are no free berths available for at least three weeks, possibly two if there are cancellations. If they loiter, Lunar guards will firmly escort them off the port premises.

Raus is angry that his progress is being impeded:
"Damn it! We must get to see Fazzur at Whitewall before the Emperor sends..." his words tail off.

"There's no choice we'll have to get a boat down the Oslir. The best merchant barges are powered by large elementals and make very good time. Follow me!"

He leads them to the *Oslir Canal Basin* (59), a walk of over half an hour, and goes into the shipping office, asking them to wait.

From Glamour to Furthest

Raus books passage for himself and his mercenaries on a riverboat returning up river to Furthest. He doesn't have a lot of money left, and so has bargained for them to be relief oarsmen and general helpers on the trip.

Raus takes them down to the dockside. Describe the place as bustling and filled with ships of all kinds. The great warehouses stand back from the ornate wooden wharves, and statues to the river deities stand at every corner. Even the wharves are comparatively civilised, as befits one of the most prestigious trading hubs of the whole of Glorantha.

NOTE

If your PCs are suitable, you might be inventive enough at this point to drop the PCs into a variation of the scenario "*Akritas's Heir*" (by Michael O'Brien and Nick Brooke, TRM: Iss. 16 p22). This doesn't fit with my original storyline, but might with your variation. (Perhaps trading boats operated by foreigners are relatively common on the Oslir, and someone offers the stranded PCs a way to make some easy money?)

After a few minutes searching, Raus spies the river boat "*Yatha's Bride*" (Make Yatha a river spirit if the PCs ask.) This large boat looks to be in the middle range, well-made and indicating reasonable success, but certainly not belonging to one of the more prosperous trading barons.

Raus says *"We are fortunate again. I asked in the shipping office if there were any Carmanian vessels soon to go to Furthest that needed some crew, and here is one."*

Captain Pandras is a businessman first and foremost, however when Raus takes him aside and talks to him, they strike a deal. Pandras explains that he is short handed, as three of his crew recently transferred to another company: Pelorians that are trying to cut him out of the business. Pandras is keen to get some hard workers to help him load up this afternoon, maintain the vessel, and unload at the end of the trip. Most likely, there will be no rowing required, unless some of the rowers get sick. They should be in Furthest in nine days or so. Raus will bunk in the first mate's cabin (the mate was one who left), and the mercenaries get to share the small passengers' common bunkroom. This is not so bad, as it could sleep six at a push and there are less of them than that.

The goods aboard the *Yatha's Bride* are primarily army surplus gear which arrives in depots at the *Campus Militaris* (18 RGG) from around the Heartlands and is then sent to equip the *Borderlands Seven Mothers* regiments. Pandras counts himself lucky to have this regular upriver trip. Returning downriver he carries differing luxury goods and foodstuffs to the *Heartland Cities*, and sometimes slaves.

So, for 4 hours in the afternoon, the PCs join the sweating wharfies loading crates aboard. This is all completed by early evening, and the Captain invites them all to share a meal. There are a dozen oarsmen, and 4 other crew. The meal is fish and bread, with a good local wine.

In the early evening they cast off and sail for over three hours down to the docks at Goodshore. Even though the boat is indeed powered by a large water elemental, especially on this upriver trip, the rowers must put in a good effort.

The River Trip

This will pass swiftly in real time. The Oslir River is enormous, like the Danube or the Nile, and the banks pass slowly because of their distance from the boat. Along the way there is much river traffic of all types, from local fisherfolk, to Imperial transports. The scenery also varies, although wide, undulating, fertile plain is by far the most common foreground feature. They also pass many small and medium settlements, and also expanses of farmland punctuated by woodlands. The most common animals grazing are cattle and sheep, but river birds, such as waders and divers are also frequently seen. (Use the map on p36 of G:G, Genertela book)

Day 1

Setting off early, after a few hours they pass Raibanth, that magnificent city, and moor at the river's edge in the evening, near a small village.

Day 2

All the way to Darleep. There are a surprising number of jobs to do aboard a riverboat, from rope coiling to swabbing the decks, and the mercenaries build up quite a healthy appetite. They moor in the river docks at Darleep and leave early again.

Day 3

Passing Alkoth about noon, all towering walls and dark atmosphere, once again they moor along the river's edge at night.

Day 4

All the way to Jillaro, once again mooring in the river dock.

Day 5

Alongside the impressive *Daughter's Road* for most of the morning and able to watch the carts, wagons and most splendid chariots that traverse that edifice. (Illustration on p47 TRM: Iss. 16) Moor by the riverside at night, next to a small town.

Day 6 and Day 7

Two uneventful days to Mirin's Cross.

Days 8,9 and 10

Two uneventful days and a morning to Furthest.

Beyond the Empire

Furthest, as they saw before, is a heavily Lunarised settlement that still has a notable Orlanthi element, although most of the Orlanthi have accepted the Lunar way and become 'civilised'. Raus treats his mercenaries to a dinner at a good tavern in the dock area on the outskirts of town, but does not want to waste time by going into the city.

Exactly how you close this scenario depends entirely on any restructuring you have done. Possibly Raus and the PCs will travel across Snakepipe Hollow with an armed caravan, hoping to join up with a Lunar Convoy at Alda Chur. (And possibly Raus will be kidnapped by Chaos during the night - a 'Snakepipe Hollow' scenario opportunity: every campaign should have one!) Possibly your PCs will simply head south into Sartar, or east into Prax, and home?

When originally run as part of the campaign, the PCs had some fun riding across Sartar, eventually reaching Whitewall. Raus left them in the Lunar Camp, and flew to Boldhome by Wyvern because Fazzur was at that city in lengthy meetings (and not directing the siege as they had been told). The PCs (with unexpected time to kill) then decided it was their honourable duty to warn the rebels that the Bat was coming. With much fun and games they got into Whitewall with a troll supply train, and out again with the help of a Lanbril guide. (The Crimson Bat arrived shortly after and added even more fun, but this is all a different story!)

Endnote

If you are using this as a lead-in between Borderlands and the Pavis Companion scenarios, then Raus honourably dismisses the PCs once the whole party is back in New Pavis. Now that he is Governor (presuming he is), he has decided it might be bad for his image to have types like the PCs openly representing him. Also, in my campaign, members of his family came out of the Heartlands to join him, and so he suddenly had a surplus of staff, and the PCs were the least valuable. Depending on your characterisation of Raus, he might gift them well, and even apologise for this political move, promising to point any suitable jobs that cross his desk towards them. (A likely way that they could get the job to look after Arlaten and Mikos, replacing the random introduction and replacing Bor-Eel with Raus, or Sardeus, at the tricky Main Gate section.)

Ernalda Initiation

by Jane Williams

Overview

Initiation for women is into the Earth Six, rather than just Ernalda, though most women find that Ernalda is the aspect to which they are closest. The test is in three parts, one for each generation. In each case, the questor is presented with a problem to solve. Many solutions are possible, but two will be obvious: one using the methods of the Light side of the goddess and one using the Dark side. Almost all candidates manage to find some solution: most choose the Light side, or an unbiased method.

Introduction

The candidate is taken to the women's holy site: usually a cave. They go through the usual methods of starting any important ceremony and transferring their spirit to the Other Side. They are not told what the tests will be, only that they should try to use the skills of whichever of the Six they feel is most appropriate. Then they are sent, unarmed and alone, deeper into the cave: which by now seems considerably larger and deeper than they remember. And darker. Pointing out the earth spirits inhabiting the walls would be a good move round about now. Be scared...

Test 1: Voria v. Babeester Gor

The cave opens out, and there is light ahead. Not quite daylight, but light of some sort. The roof is no longer visible, and there are plants growing. In fact, someone's planted a vegetable garden, with a neat little fence around it. Cabbages, lettuces, that sort of thing. As the questor gets closer, she can see movement in the garden: lots and lots of rabbits, eating the plants. This is obviously not a good thing, and the rabbits will have to be removed. How?

- Voria would ask the little fluffy bunnies, nicely, if they wouldn't mind leaving. If the questor tries this, it will work. They may find that flowers grow in their footprints for a while if they invoke this power.
- There's a broom leaning against the fence. Shooing the rabbits away with this will work. Unbiased choice, no special effects.
- There's also a copper axe. Killing the little bunnies would work. If the questor tries to use the axe for this purpose, they will find their Axe Attack is about 50% higher than they thought it was. The axe feels good in their hands, and they may be unwilling to put it down. A very few questors come out of the HeroPlane holding the axe: don't overdo this, but it can be a method of helping out an underpowered character. On the mundane, the axe is inhabited by a spirit of Babeester Gor. No, I'm not giving allied spirits to new initiates: I'm giving allied initiates to spirits. Unless the questor can resist, the spirit will be in charge of their actions. Don't do this to PCs unless the player really wants to be a Babs fanatic.

If the player can't come up with a solution at all, they've failed their initiation and will still count as a child when they emerge. Though how anyone with a grain of sense could fail this is beyond me.

Test 2: Ernalda v. Maran Gor

(With overtones of Esrola. Well, she's the same generation)

The questor leaves the first big cave, and pases down a tunnel (dark, spirits, scary, etc.) until the cave opens out again. They're entering an area full of crops. (Pick a crop suited to the clan and the questor. My cider-maker's daughter found herself in an apple orchard).

At the centre of the crops is an area/a tree that seems to have something wrong with it. Close inspection will reveal that it's diseased: as usual, its spirit is visible, and looks weak and unhappy. A Plant Lore roll will tell them that the disease is highly infectious. It can be cured, but that would take time and special ingredients. By

a curious coincidence, those ingredients have been provided: they're sitting in a bucket close by. There is also an iron axe, suitable for chopping trees down. (Or perhaps a scythe, if you've gone for that sort of crop.)

- The pure Esrola answer is to cure the disease, using the ingredients provided.
- Ernalda's spiritual aspect might try to strengthen the tree's spirit to help it fight off the disease.
- Maran Gor would go for destruction in the service of life. Chop down the tree. And burn the remains. Dig out the roots if you must: it's surprising how effective the axe can be at making holes in the earth. Again, too much use of the axe will make it difficult to put the thing down.

Failing this (which takes some doing) not only results in the questor failing initiation, but gives the clan poor crops that year.

Test 3: Asrelia v. Ty Kora Tek

Next cave. Tell them about the earth spirits in the walls again, get them feeling claustrophobic. Here the light is daylight, because the roof has partly fallen in. In the centre of the cave is the body of a warrior. He seems to be lying where he fell defending quite a lot of treasure. Gold, scrolls, delicate glass jars of strange liquids, pots of spices, you name it. All precious, all fragile, all being rained on. Every now and then, more rocks fall from the hole in the roof. It's only a matter of time before the whole lot comes down. There's a tunnel out at the far side, but it's going to be a tight squeeze.

- The Asrelia answer is to move as much as possible of the treasure to safety: the edges of the cave look stable. In fact, there are smaller caves leading off where things could be stored out of danger. Of course, when the roof comes down the whole lot will be a bit difficult to get to, but it'll be safe.
- The Ty Kora Tek answer is that that body needs proper laying out, and the spirit, if still present, sending to the right place.
- Do you have time to do both? How about having a word with the spirits in the falling rocks, and asking them not to do that?
- Take some of the treasure with you? You know I said that tunnel out was a tight squeeze? You won't make it while carrying any of this stuff. (But taking either of the two axes out would be possible: don't ask how.)

Rewards

Coming out holding an Axe is not a reward. It's more like benign possession.

Spells? Normally I would give each questor a single point of spirit magic, appropriate to something spectacular they'd done on the quest. Any criticals rolled, any particular initiative shown. The spell can be chosen from any of the Earth Six, or less commonly any of their associates. The player who went through this, for instance, critically Dodged a falling rock. Vinga gave her a point of Read Foe (the spell that increases Dodge).

The Hero Wars Cult of Eusibus

by Martin Laurie and Greg Stafford

During the Dominion of Avivath, Alkoth fought for the true ways of Antirius and Yelm but a leader was needed to ensure the safe return of the righteous Emperor. Shargash saw the need for a man of strength and so came among his people once more. He made himself into a fly in the Enclosure and was eaten by the priestess Sagata, who thereby became instantly pregnant and carried the child to term during the cremation ceremony she was part of.

When she went into labor, demons swarmed around her as midwives. With their unearthly aid, she birthed a son. The demon Karadka, who Tests all who would be divine, grabbed the child from his mother and threw him upon a roaring pyre. There, the Great God appeared for a moment above and in the flames and the drumbeat of his laughter sent joy through the hearts of those who watched.

Then the baby leapt out of the fire, black with soot but laughing also. Afterwards Sagata took the child home and named her son Eusibus, a lucky name in her family. She never washed the soot off. He grew rapidly to a mighty size, within three years he stood ready to take his tests of manhood. On that day he strode to the Red King, who presided over the man making ritual and challenged him. The Red King sensed Shargash within his foe and gladly agreed to fight, though to some it would have been a dishonour for the King to fight on that day. All new Eusibus and few were surprised when he threw the King and was crowned by the beaten mans own hand. "I see now that my rule was but a stewardship for the greatness of our Gods purpose. Eusibus is that purpose." he said. And there was much acclamation. The drums beat and the armies mustered for the times were hard on the Empire and a new way was needed.

Eusibus became the last of the Alkothic Emperors of Dara Happa, who had been holding the position awaiting the return of an earthly emperor. Eusibus pacified all Henjarl, and all lands touching its borders. As the avatar of Shargash he hated all the Kargzanti of the Jenarong dynasty, and crushed their chariots everywhere.

He fought many battles, some against the Kargzanti others against the powerful Monster Men armies of the barbarians. Eusibus was a great captain in war

and used many stratagems to defeat his foes and confound their skills. He was famed for his defensive tactics where he drew his mobile enemies into a waiting phalanx, usually deployed upon a ridge or hill.

In heroic battle he was unbeatable, few could stand against his mace for more than a moment and his strength was legend. He killed the Warlord of the barbarians in battle several times and slew a hundred chariot heroes, binding their souls to him as slaves for the Enclosure.

He gathered a great storehouse of gold and silver, and he went to the western mountains and brought back a magical smith called Forgestus who made weapons of power and armour of strength for the armies of Eusibus.

The Emperor stockpiled arrows and spears and shields. He collected golden grain and white rice. The tribute he received was hoarded and held for Khordavu, Lord of the Ten Princes, Son of Khor, Protected by Antirius, and Chosen of Yelm. Khordavu came to Eusibus when the time was right to make his claim. Eusibus was prepared, and happily joined forces with Khordavu.

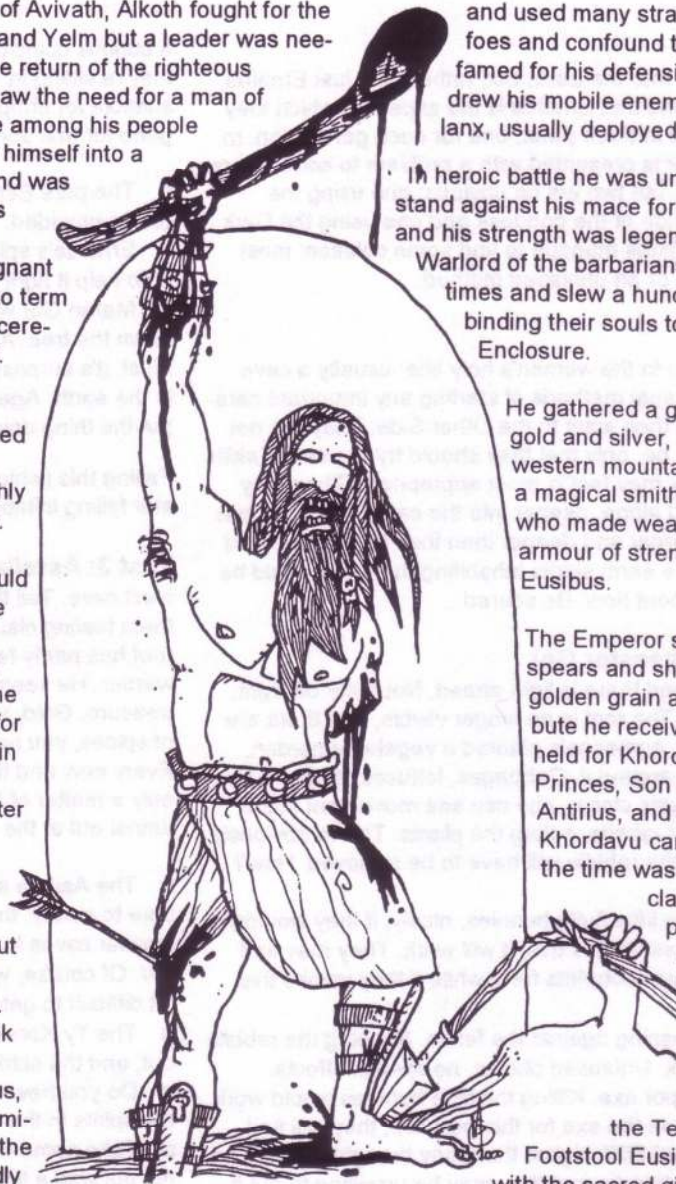
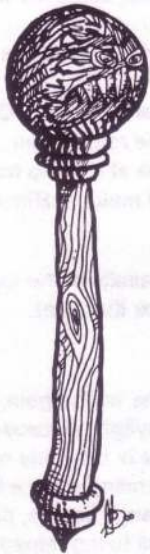
Emperor Khordavu proved his rights to be true Emperor with the Ten Tests. Upon the Footstool Eusibus girdled the Yelm with the sacred gift of Shargash. With those ceremonies, the true empire of Dara Happa was restored.

Eusibus served Khordavu for sixty seven years after his Enthronement. He was granted the post of Guardian of the Royal Reglia, for none could surpass him in such a role. He was also Lord of the Roving Army and commanded Khordavu's forces in a thousand more battles and sieges across Peloria.

At the end of his life, Eusibus went to the heavens to guard his Emperor for eternity.

Since his apotheosis, his cult has provided bodyguards for the Emperor and his regalia. The cult is strong and enduring thanks to the many myths and tales of Eusibus. He is venerated as a great King even by those not of his cult.

Lunar court politics has relegated the Sons of Eusibus regiment to a posting in Raibanth where they guard part of the regalia, if not the Emperor himself. Some of the regiment are less than happy with this.



The Cult of Eusibus

Requirements

Must be Male, must be an initiate of the Destroyer aspect of Shargash

Physical Skills

Imposing presence

Mental Skills

Knowledge of Monster Men armies, Knowledge of Eusibus Myths, Bodyguard, Operational art of war.

Personality

Loyalty to Emperor.

Affinities

Protect Emperor

Detect assassin, Strike Usurper, Shield of loyalty, Find Emperor

Generalship

Lead army, Find good terrain, Sense ambush, Heroic leadership

Secret

Loyalty to true Emperor (acts as an integrated passion spirit to be used on any augmentations in combat or relevant abilities)

Worshippers

Many warriors of the Destroyer follow Eusibus as he is the epitome of a good Alkothi. The entire Sons of Eusibus Regiment of the Imperial Bodyguard follows him and try to protect their Emperor as best they can.

Other Connections

He is also associated with the just rule of Henjarl in the Alkothi region. Many locals not of Alkoth look on his cult as being a kinder face of the Destroyer.

Other Sides

Khordavu resides in the palace of Yelm and Eusibus is at his side as ever. The cult members can look forward to joining the heavenly bodyguard of Khordavu upon death where they practice war and fight the enemies of the Emperor with their god.

Manifestations

Normal depicted as a huge warrior, yet of regal and proud bearing. Less of a berserker god than other Shargashi. His main temple in Raibanth still has his original armour on his statue.

Disciples

Called Guardians, they are the ultimate warriors and protectors of the Emperor. Only a few exist and they all are prominent commanders of the Sons of Eusibus regiment in Raibanth.

Disadvantages

The Cult is not very popular outside of Alkoth, even among those who admire the bearing of the Sons of Eusibus. The Lunar citizens find all Shargash to be reactionary, violent and compulsive and group the worshippers of Eusibus with them. Advancement in the regiment or cult does not help advancement in the court.

"We Hate Darjini Usurpers"

by Martin Laurie

Ritual Occurrence

Only happens under specific ritual and mythic stimuli.



The Red King and the Green King stand atop their hills, atop their palaces, atop the spires of Blood and Ash and await the coming of the Red Planet. Beneath the kings stand their great households and all the folk of power in the city. They chant and smash drums while all around a multitude scream and dance in time with the beat. When the planet is overhead and the stars in the sky above Alkoth mirror the darkness as they did in the time of Manarlavus the Roofer, then a great shout is given and the city stands quite.

Through the Fifth Gate comes a rider. He seems to materialize from the ash of the Enclosure like a creation but he is no creation for he is Menlioros, Messenger of Justice, Voice of the Emperor and he has come as he came in the time of the Roofer to give word. With Red King and Green King on either side of the Great Enclosure the Messenger speaks for all to hear.

"Al The Emperor blesses you in his Justice and sees your worth. He stands atop the Footstool and is mocked by the impure. He has given word and said Al hate Darjini Usurper! You must destroy them and remove their injustice from the sight of Yelm. Nivorah stands at the center of their filth, raise it and see them burn!"

He leaves, but the multitude arms for war. With them stand ghosts and spirits and demons and monsters all made flesh by the ritual and all empowered by its magics. Then above the host the skin of Dromakus stretches atop the Ring of Shargash and seals the sights of the sky from their eyes. A gasp of joyous wonder at the proof of the Destroyers great victories fills the watchers and then the beating begins.

From the Red Planet come the Drumsticks of Joyous Battle. Intermittently, boulders like houses crash down upon the skin and the whole city, the whole of Henjarl reverberates with the beat. Each warrior of Alkoth shakes to his feet with its power. Many die, to rise up again as demons of vengeance, many go mad with the frenzy around them and slay each other indiscriminately. And in far off Darjiin the drumbeats are heard and bring a terror to the hearts of every single foul scion of the Lewd goddess and her travesty of rule.

The gates open and the Red King leads out the host. And it is mighty. So mighty that ten times the warriors of Alkoth march out to fight and still more come. So many come that the ground for leagues shudders with their marching feet, hooves, claws and talons, giving backdrop to the Battle Drum beat of Alkoth.

And the Alkothi come to the city of the Darjini and lay it waste and slay all who they can find and all who resist.

They burn, destroy and slaughter till the work is done and the Drum ceases its beat. Then the host returns and the demons, spirits and ghosts depart. Some of those who were human to begin with disappear also and some of those who were spirit are once more human for this is the power of Shargash and all bow before it.

and all who resist. They burn, destroy and slaughter till the work is done and the Drum ceases its beat. Then the host returns and the demons, spirits and ghosts depart. Some of those who were human to begin with disappear also and some of those who were spirit are once more human for this is the power of Shargash and all bow before it.

Lesser forms of the event can occur, the full occurrence is perhaps something for the Hero Wars to bring forth, but lesser rituals have happened outside

the walls of Alkoth. Even during the march of the army to war - Ulikarelm the Just saw his army destroyed in 866 and abdicated as a result of this debacle.

Hero Wars Mechanics

The Alkoth have the mental skill of "Hate Darjiini Usurpers" which is used as an augment to their combat and other physical skills when fighting the Darjiini. During the ritual, the Red King performs an extended contest challenge, usually with the extraordinary support of the entire Alkothi population, other than a few mystics of the Rakapas mysteries.

The bonus given is applied to all the Alkothi who participate and is added to their Hate Darjiini Usurpers skill. Devotees of Horribilus Primus, to enhance their summoning of demons for the host also use the skill.

Darjiini response

Naturally the Darjiini have developed some methods of dealing with the mythic assault. Their usual practice is to abandon the city the Alkothi march on (once the route of march is established), while leaving ritual sacrifices there to represent the people of Nivorah. The shamans of the Darjiini - the Damuski - also summon the ghosts of that ancient city to enact their mythic role. Through this method, the Darjiini ensure that the Alkothi do a minimum of damage. To date, all attempts to physically or magically defeat the Alkothi have failed.

Innsmouth 2000

by Andre Clements

Andrew Clements
please!

by Andrew Clements

'My ex-wife was a cultist?
Does this mean I dont have
to pay matrimony?'

'I have a better idea. Let's
just shoot everyone who
speaks a rare dialect
that hasn't been used for
over a thousand years.'

'Sorry, what was that name
again? Can you spell it?'

Introduction

Robert walked down the wet street, asit approached midnight. Damn taxi hadn't shown up to pick him up from that club. What was it called? Deep Throne or something. Pretentious name. And the music! A friend who'd been in town once had recommended it, but to him it sounded like an unholy meld of new age and deep bass straight from a heavy metal concert. He had never thought such a mixture possible, until now. But then again, Innsmouth was wierd in every way. Like the old people. Or more specifically, the non-existent old people. After the age of about 50, there didn't seem to be anyone. The people who didn't mind talking about it, rare as they were, said that the old people were from a generation destroyed by the world wars. The old people weren't the only thing missing. Innsmouth had used to be a decrepit town, but now it was on the verge of becoming a city. Cheap land had lured big companies and dotted the landscape with factories, bringing an influx of people. But despite this, Innsmouth lacked the beggars common to every city in America. He'd joked to a store owner last week about it, when he'd barely arrived to his new post at his company, said that maybe they were all being shipped out and fed to the fishes. The store owner had grinned and said maybe that was it.

Robert breathed a sigh of relief when he reached his apartment. There didn't seem to be any gangs in Innsmouth, but the city still throbbed with a sense of danger, even more-so at night.

When Robert turned off the light, and got into bed, he didn't see the staring eye at the window.

Innsmouth isn't the place it used to be. In the 1920s, it is described as decrepit, abandoned almost, with a population consisting only of those who hadn't yet joined the Deep One colony nearby. This isn't a likely state of being for the modern era, as we approach the millenium. Towns no longer can avoid being printed on maps, and people don't listen to the 'old people who talk about the 'queer' reputation of the place. Even the poor reputation only serves to help Innsmouth. The land is cheap, low values generated by the lack of population, and the hideous rumours which made the land hard to sell. Companies, who rarely listen to warnings, have moved in, making Innsmouth a good place to go if you want a job. Innsmouth is experiencing it's own mini-economic boom.

So Innsmouth is far from being the decrepit place it once was. But this leaves one question. How have the Deep Ones adapted? Once the sole population of Innsmouth, now the Deep Ones are a minority within a thriving town, which will likely become a city during the new millenium.

What was before

After the late 1920s, when the federal authorities raided Innsmouth and bombed the Deep One colony, Innsmouth suffered a set back. The Deep Ones no longer wanted to operate in the area, for their secret had been discovered. Instead, most of the Deep Ones relocated to colonies near other port towns, in

order to infiltrate other locations. The major families, such as the Waites and the Ornes decided to flee before they could be killed by the humans, leaving the other inhabitants of Innsmouth without effective leadership. During the 1930s, as America began fell into depression, several companies saw Innsmouth as a place of potential, with cheap land available in large quantities - for some reason the local population only occupied about 10% of the town. The few companies that went ahead with the move brought with them employees who would travel anywhere if they thought they could keep their jobs. For their part, the native population of Innsmouth welcomed the companies, despite their insular nature, as a way to return to the outside world, having been abandoned by their Deep One patrons. Many of the younger members of the population got work in the factories, even if they did cause disquiet amongst the other workers.

The Second World War was also beneficial, if in an unlikely way, to the native population. Most of them had Deep One blood running through their veins, if a little weaker than in the main families which bred exclusively with the Deep Ones. As a result, those who still felt some loyalty to the departed Deep Ones wished to spread their genes, to create hybrids amongst those who had come to Innsmouth. When America finally joined the war, many of the men left Innsmouth, save the natives, who were banned from the army by federal directive. The promiscuous behaviour which became common during the war (due to fears of what the next day might bring, and because of the behaviour of army personnel on leave) allowed the hybrid population of Innsmouth to breed with the new comers, resulting in many pregnancies. These babies were not noticeably odd, as the only hybrids who were able to breed ith new comers were those who mostly looked normal. The trend for hybrids had now turned towards those who looked least like their Deep One patrons.

During the 1940s, with the end of the war, and a recovering economy, the population of Innsmouth increased. Those few who had strong enough blood to make the full change to Deep Ones were now forced to leave Innsmouth, both by their yearnings to join their Deep One brethren, and by the increased public view of those who were not 'entirely normal'. This left those hybrids who looked too much like humans, and had too little Deep One genes to be able to make the change and join the Deep Ones in the sea. It also left a small 'old guard' of those who decided to stay behind in order to preserve the old ways. These latter people were invariably those who had already made the change, but only visited the sea on occasion. By this point, the native population seemed to be composed only of young people, who looked fairly normal, if a little 'exotic', and of grand parents, who looked like they had nothing to fear from muggers.

The 1950s were also good to the hybrids, as many of those born during the war began to grow up, and their parents continued to breed with the new

'A birthday card from Nyarlathotep? How sweet. What does that squiggle down there mean? Wurble wurble, I want to kill everyone.'

'Of course Cthulhu will never rise, have you seen the amount Texaco has spilt around the pacific?'

'What would *I* use to kill a vampire? Is this a hypothetical question?'

comers. Furthermore, the economy had recovered to the extent that other companies were attracted to Innsmouth, causing another population and economic boom. The structure of Innsmouth was attended to, and proper housing estates were constructed to replace the crumbling gothic buildings that had once served the town. The old guard of hybrids hurriedly removed any trace of the Esoteric Order of Dagon, and many young hybrids, especially those born illegitimately into new comer families, grew up without knowing their heritage, only that they were good swimmers. Several churches were built in Innsmouth, as well as other structures to attend to social aspects of the town. For the first time in ages past, Innsmouth had a proper legal structure, with police and law courts. Of course, the hybrids saw their chance, and managed to gain access to most of the top positions, largely on the basis of being the original population.

The 1960s and 1970s were like a dream come true for the hybrids. Promiscuity was now a social norm, and the new comers and hybrids began to inter-breed much more, even resulting in inter-marriage. For the first time, there were also marriages of hybrids and ethnic groups, which pleased the hybrids as the Deep One genes were being spread widely. However, as a result, the genes of the Deep Ones were spread ever thinly, leaving it largely impossible to tell who were true Deep One hybrids. This displeased the old guard. While the interests of the Deep Ones were served in the spreading of genes, they were unhappy with being unable to keep a close eye on the hybrids, and were only able to teach basic rudiments of their culture to most, and many hybrids went through life having no idea what they were, apart from what snippets they could gain from their parents. Human nature surfaced, as many parents were reluctant to discuss the realities of their nature, and often told their children that they were simply lucky to be healthier, more vibrant, and stronger than the other children. The most that children were taught about their culture was that they worshipped a being named Cthulhu. When they grew up, the parents also conceded information about basic rituals, although these often were not ones involving sacrifice. The parents themselves often lacked knowledge about Deep One culture.

The 1980s saw little improvement in the education of hybrid children. By now the town was a bustling location, with a population rivalling that of the smallest cities. The old guard conferred amongst themselves as to the teaching of Deep One principles. The first method would be to track down hybrid children, but as the newest generations exhibited only slightly larger eyes than normal, and an aptitude for swimming, and natural born lean muscles, it was hard to spot hybrids in a crowd. Some of the old guard returned to the Deep Ones, while others asked the Deep Ones for advice on their situation.

In the meantime, the younger generations, dissatisfied by parents who could teach them little about their culture, turned to 'alternative' religions, like Christianity, which they found quite 'quaint' in their optimism.

The early 1990s saw a dramatic change in the situation of the hybrids. The Deep Ones had decided to move back to the old colony near Innsmouth, feeling confident that most humans who had known about

Innsmouth's dark truths would be dead by now. They lent their help to the old guard in their search for hybrids who had 'slipped through the net'. The old guard of hybrids was also aided by breakthroughs in medicine, which allowed genetic abnormalities to be spotted. The old guard, through hybrid contacts in hospitals, could now search records of the newborn to spot hybrid genes, which showed up as 'birth defects' causing symptoms familiar to the hybrids - wider eyes, compact muscle, etcetera. After that, it was a simple matter to track their parents.

What is now

As Innsmouth approaches the millenium, the old guard are still trying to round up the hybrids, but the younger generations, namely those below the age of about 25, are stubbornly refusing to integrate into hybrid culture, especially those raised in ethnic families where they have grown up under a different culture. Those below the age of ten are being 'properly educated', thus grooming a future population of fervent Cthulhu worshippers. However, even the old guard have failed to guess at the hybrid population, for they did not pay much attention to the promiscuous '60s and '70s. The hybrids now account for as much as 60% of the population, and since the modern culture also tends to promiscuity, it is likely that this percentage will slowly increase. However, the term hybrid has also become somewhat a loose word. Deep One genes haven't been injected into Innsmouth for over 70 years, and it shows. Gone are the wide staring people who never blink, and resemble monstrosities. Now there are mostly average people, with slightly odd features. Some are even made beautiful by exotic features, and a few are drawn out of Innsmouth by the fashion industry. However, mostly noone leaves Innsmouth, not even the 'new comers', who are now as much 'native' as the descendants of the original population 70 years ago. In fact, a large proportion of the new comers are also hybrids.

However, there are several areas in which Innsmouth should be examined, in order to provide a proper view of the modern town.

Population

Susan, an average looking twenty year old, was shopping in one of the Innsmouth malls. She stopped to get something to eat from one of the fast food outlets. Working behind the counter was a good looking boy. Dark eyes (a little wide, she had to admit) and soft brown hair. She smiled at him, and surreptitiously slipped him her phone number along with the money for the burger. He grinned back, and said he knew a good pub they could go to later, but he was silenced by a scowl from the manager, who pointed out he shouldn't be flirting with the customers. The manager was an asian woman, who looked young for what her age probably was. She also had wide eyes, like most of the other people in the town. Maybe it was something in the water. She took her burger, and sat at a table near a small group of black teenagers. She looked at them out of curiosity, and saw they also had large eyes. This place was creeping her out, but she felt reassured when the boy from the

counter grinned at her. He walked past her to say hello to the teenagers near her, and invited her to join the discussion. That was the other thing that sometimes scared her. How the whole population of Innsmouth seemed to know each other, even though there was a population in excess of 400,000. Still, she figured, it would be nice when she settled down and got to know the locals.

As has been mentioned, most of the population are hybrids. And while the number of hybrids is likely to grow, their blood is so thin as to make this detail meaningless. In fact, the next generation of hybrids is likely to be almost entirely human, and the generation after that will probably have no Deep One genes at all. The only hybrids in as much as old hand investigators will know them, are the old guard, and they very rarely come out into the open, although in entirely hybrid neighbourhoods (this is more rare than you would imagine) they openly talk with other hybrids, and make a special effort to teach the old ways to the children. However, they have only managed to teach these ways to about 10% of the hybrids, and even this teaching is incomplete. The old guard were never Deep One priests, and could only pass on what they remembered: That Cthulhu was an entity of great power, that his worshippers could perform great deeds, and that he could sometimes be bargained with using sacrifices. None of the old guard know any spells or rituals, although the Deep Ones will probably correct this soon. It's debateable, however, to what degree the old guard will accept Deep One culture, when they learn that it is an apocalyptic religion.

The rest of the hybrids are more sympathetic to the humans, and most don't even distinguish themselves as being anything other than human.

Education

'Now class', said the teacher to her class, 'can anyone tell me what we call a group of animals who bear common characteristics?' The teacher looked at her class, mixed race, but most exhibiting hybrid traits. She had told the old guard about the hybrid children, who would one day be truly educated.

A chinese hybrid put his hand up. It had webbed fingers, which secretly delighted the teacher. Blessed were those who regressed to more fully Deep One genes. 'Kingdom?', said the child.

'A good effort', she said to the eleven-year old, 'but the technical term is 'phylum.' And do you know what phylum we all belong to?'

A kid from a family new in town put his hand up. 'Mammals?'

'Well done', beamed the teacher. 'And mostly that is the case.'

The hybrid children grinned, some of them showing sharp teeth.

There are several schools in Innsmouth that deal with children up to college age. The education is not entirely up to standard with the rest of America, and is slightly hindered by hybrid teachers who

occasionally confuse the children by adding Deep One teachings, as in the above example. However, there are few colleges in Innsmouth, and no universities. Those determined to pursue a career in, for example, law, must usually leave Innsmouth. This has contributed to a potential spreading of hybrid genes, although the weakening of Deep One blood will cause this to have little effect.

Culture

'Okay Sarah', said the mother, 'have a nice time tonight, and don't let him make you do anything you don't want to do.'

Sarah blushed at the inference. She might be 19, but it was still odd hearing her parents talk like that.

'And if he tries anything funny, tell him we'll throw him to the things that live in the warehouse district.' added her father.

Sarah grinned at the joke, but tried hard not to think of what she had seen in that district, when the 'old guard' had shown her the Shoggoths that the 'ancestors' had left behind.

The culture of Innsmouth is limited in the sense of opera, museums etc. However, the recently elected Mayor of Innsmouth is working to alter this, as his political career depends on him being able to prove that he has made Innsmouth a better place. The Mayor is not a hybrid, so it remains to be seen how long he remains in office.

Hybrid culture, as a race, is a different matter, as culture is mostly based on social mores of ethnic groups (bearing in mind that Caucasian is technically an ethnic group, despite modern applications of the word 'ethnic'). Unlike virtually every other culture on Earth, promiscuity is not discouraged, although this is beginning to change, as most hybrids no longer know why their ancestors wanted to spread their genes as far as possible. In non-white hybrid families, the culture of the ethnic group tends to pre-dominate, although hybrid culture may make some small appearances. For example, an asian family will still adhere to asian culture, although hybrid relatives may try to encourage promiscuity amongst young members of the family (young as in 'young adult').

Homosexuality is strongly repressed in hybrid families. While this is not because they see it as 'evil', they do feel that it is the duty of all hybrids to have family, in order to carry on hybrid genes. Some families allow gay children to have freedom, while some staunch families 'compromise' by allowing their gay members to be 'free' once they have procreated at least once. However, for the most part it is 'not allowed' by parents of gay children. (I say 'children', but this is not to imply under 16s, but rather refers to adolescents).

Racism is completely lacking in hybrid culture. Considering that their ancestors had sex with Deep Ones, this is not suprising.

A major aspect of hybrid culture, for those that have been reared to Deep One traditions, in so much as is possible, are the old guard. Originally there were twenty members of the old guard, but seven have

'Which particular Inhuman god are we talking about? And don't start with 'the nethermost blasphemous' because that's what you said about the other twenty.'

'Amazingly, hideous murders, strange Inhuman noises, and the overall atmosphere of impending doom has not adversely affected property values.'

'Oh my. Who'd have thought you could fit *that* Into a coffin?'

'Sometimes I'm not sure what I like the most about this job: the intelligent companions, or the opportunity to die a slow and hideous death'

'Ever since we started grave-robbing, I've really come to curse my allergy to dust'

'The mythos might be immune to bullets, but it's scary what a half-brick in a sock will do.'

since re-joined Deep One culture, both afraid and disgusted by modern events. The remaining 13 are over 90 years old, and look every day of it, in a semi-amphibian way. However, they are also surprisingly fit, capable of performing tasks as if they were merely 40 years old. They are also, without exception, hideous, and non-hybrids viewing them must make sanity checks. None of them know any spells or rituals, as has been mentioned, although the Deep Ones are likely to correct this soon, in an attempt to bring many hybrids back to the fold through the demonstration of the power inherent in the Old Ones. This may or may not work, and should Keepers introduce such an event into their campaigns, this will effect hybrids in varying ways. Some may return to the fold, but most will be horrified by the alien powers. Indeed, some hybrids may become Investigators, although they should be restricted to status as NPCs. A discussion of hybrids as player characters will be dealt with later.

Deep One beliefs are not known to a large extent by the hybrids, and so piece-meal information is handed out in the form of those stories that can be remembered by parents to their children. The vagueness of this information is one of the reasons many hybrids turn to other religions.

Religion

The Sunday school teacher, new to Innsmouth, continued the story of Easter, having told the story of Good Friday the previous week.

One of the children had a question.

'Miss', the little girl started, staring at her with those odd eyes, 'how did Jesus rise from the dead without the sacrifice of human beings?'

It was at times like this that the teacher wished she had stayed in New York, where at most all the children did was yawn openly. She'd already had a nasty shock when some hideously wizened old woman with huge eyes and a frog-like expression had accused her of corrupting children with unholy religions.

Religion is varied in Innsmouth. People who have not bred with the hybrids, and even other cultures which have bred with the hybrids have kept their own religions. This has caused the building of synagogues, mosques, catholic and protestant churches, and more besides. The majority of the population attends these 'mainstream' religions, and only 5% of the hybrids follow any kind of accurate guesses at Deep One religion. Most of the hybrid younger generation have been taught enough about their culture to know that they don't like it much. As a result, most join other religions, such as Christianity, where they unnerve religious ministers and priests by being consistently surprised by how 'nice' the other religions appear to be.

Entertainment

The dark haired boy picked Susan up from her apartment, and offered to show her the night life of Innsmouth. His name was Ian. First they went to a pub, but Susan couldn't find anything that she liked to drink. Ian asked her what she liked to drink, and then said that the nearest pub selling it was four blocks away. Susan stuck with a coke, which the barman implied she was lucky to have. After a couple of

drinks, Ian took her down to The Deep Throne, but the music hurt her ears. Ian offered to take her to Deep Throat. She asked about the odd name.

'Gay club', he said, 'but the music's okay, and people don't bother you there.'

So they danced the night away there, and Susan finally felt she was blending in with the Innsmouth crowd. She was even getting to find those wide eyes quite attractive.

The next morning, she woke up with Ian next to her. He said he'd take her swimming, but the sea smelt appalling. He didn't seem to notice, and said she'd get used to it eventually. Susan couldn't imagine getting used to the smell, but thought it might be worth it for the boy with the dark wide eyes, and the sleek muscles that looked so good.

Oddly enough, there is quite a lot to do in Innsmouth, although people new to Innsmouth are often disgusted at how poor everything is compared to where they have come from.

Unsurprisingly, going to the beach and swimming is quite a popular past time for most people who have grown up in Innsmouth, even those without hybrid blood. People who have recently arrived point out that the sea smells of dead fish, and that the waters don't look natural, dark as they are. But the Innsmouth folk don't seem to notice, and many think nothing of swimming out to Devil's Reef. The Deep Ones don't attack anyone, partly to avoid attention, and partly because they know virtually everyone in Innsmouth is at least part Deep One.

There used to be a pier along the Innsmouth beach, but it collapsed during the 1980s, and the collapsed wood, which was never cleared away, provides as stark back drop to swimmers.

The night life of Innsmouth is not entirely dead. There are three main clubs for the younger generation, but the most popular by far is The Deep Throne, which is owned by a hybrid named David Sherryton, who co-manages it with his wife, one of the arrivals drawn by the economic boom of the 1970s. People going to the club usually have a good time, although the eerie music does freak some people out, and sensitive people may suffer nightmares. Unbeknown to even the owner, a Shoggoth lives in a cavern connected to the cellar, which could cause problems if it ever rouses from its current sleep. As it is, the Shoggoth is content to eat the occasional rat.

One of the other popular clubs caters to the homosexual population of Innsmouth, but many straight people go there none-the-less. The music tends to be very energetic, with most of the youths here being hybrids who can let their hair down away from their families. This club, named Deep Throat (the owner thinks the name is very funny, but doesn't realise that bad puns on the population's hybrid nature aren't winning over any new customers), has been operating for ten years, and has never suffered from arson attacks from homophobic gangs. This is largely because hybrids are deeply ingrained with proper behaviour from birth,

as the same decrepit location it was in the 1920s.

Hybrids as Investigators

Some Keepers may feel that the mostly human hybrids of Innsmouth are potentially interesting as NPCs. However, some may want to experiment with the idea of players with hybrid characters. This is perfectly acceptable, and won't cause any game imbalance. This is because the hybrids, being mostly human, have no advantages because of their Deep One blood - since Deep One genes are so recessive amongst the Innsmouth people. If the Keeper does want to distinguish hybrids, he may wish to give small bonuses to strength, but how this is balanced should be dealt with as the Keeper sees fit, by giving an equal penalty to other attributes. For example, Ian from the extracts may have +1 to Strength, with a penalty of -1 assigned to Education - the standards of education in Innsmouth are not very high. Some hybrids with stronger Deep One genes may take the penalty to their Appearance.

However, hybrid Investigators must be role-played appropriately. All hybrids come from Innsmouth, even if they eventually move away. Those who live in Innsmouth should play their characters normal life as well as investigations, in order to savour the strange feel of Innsmouth, which lends itself to horror. (Such as in the unfortunate example of Robert at the beginning of this article).

In the end, Susan persuaded Ian to move with her, away from Innsmouth. It hadn't been too hard, since he didn't get on with his parents too well. Religious arguments apparently.

'Didn't want to be Christian?', asked Susan, when he'd mentioned it.

'No.' Ian had said. 'They weren't Christians.' He hadn't wanted to talk about it.

He still talked to them occasionally, so long as they kept the conversation away from that area. Susan had even met them once, and while they seemed a little odd (she was used to the strange eyes by now), they seemed nice enough. That had been sometime last year, and Ian had never taken her to see them again. Ian had said that they liked her enough, but that they just weren't keen on the two of them getting married.

Susan decided that she'd have to meet them again, if only to clear up this mess between them and Ian.

She carried on driving her car, Ian beside her, packed bags in the back, as they drove out of the bleak town.

They passed a small poster, pasted onto the side of a warehouse, at the edge of town. It had a picture of a man on it. It was posted by the police. It read: 'Have you seen this man? Robert Hunnen disappeared from his home...'

†

'I'm not entirely sure what this means either... I know, let's just read it all out, draw the funny pictures on the floor in chalk, and see if anything happens.'

'Do you think it has more or less tentacles than the last blasphemous horror we battled?'

'So, these Hounds of Tyndalos, they move through the corners of space-time do they? Do you actually know what that means?'

The Creators of Life

by Shannon Appel

The following is a study of the Elder Things⁽¹⁾ or Old Ones. They are an ancient alien race, the ultimate creators of all life on Earth.

History

The Big Bang is currently reckoned as occurring some 15 billion years ago. The Milky Way galaxy formed some 10 billion years ago. These are our only data points for the ancient history of the Elder Things. Some time after the Big Bang, mostly likely in the Milky Way galaxy, a race of primitive beings arose in the primordial environment of some far distant planet. They would eventually become the Elder Things.

Through the aeons the Elder Things evolved. Eventually, they began to evolve themselves, changing and modifying their bodies until they were pleased with the result. They gained the abilities to fly between the stars and to survive the rigors of space. They colonized vast numbers of planets, and when they learned of the Great White Space, a space beyond space that allowed for rapid travel across the universe, their speed of colonization only increased. They must have settled a thousand planets all across the universe.

This is all prehistory, however, for mankind is only aware of the Elder Things as they have made their presence known upon Earth, and that begins one billion years ago, with the arrival of the Elder Things on this planet. The Elder Things first landed in the Antarctic Ocean, and they build their first city there, beneath the waves. They came to a largely barren planet, inhabited only by the earliest alien invaders. That would soon change.

Prophetic texts speak of the three great works of the Elder Things on Earth. The first was the creation of Ubbo-Sathla, the first of the Shoggoths. He was The Original Progenitor. The first creatures formed from him were the Shoggoths--the Elder Things' great servants--but Ubbo-Sathla's creations were neverending. It was its children, escaping from the experiments of the Elder Things, that ultimately led to the creation of multicellular life on Earth.

Following the creation of Ubbo-Sathla, the Elder Things spread across the world, making the Earth their own. 800 million years ago, they colonized land, and it seemed as if the planet would be theirs alone.

However, other alien races were to descend upon Earth. The Elder Things' ultimate control over the planet could not stand. 750 million years ago, the flying polyps came, destroying many of the Elder Things' land cities. 400 million years ago, the Great Race of Yith drove the Elder Things from what is now Australia, though peace between these peoples ultimately was negotiated. These early wars were but skirmishes when compared with the war against the Xothians, led by Great Cthulhu, 350 million years ago.

Though never entirely victorious, the Elder Things remained strong through all of their early battles. This all began to change 300 million years ago, when the stars changed and R'lyeh sank beneath the waves. Perhaps this change weakened the Elder Things as well, or perhaps the abrupt defeat of the Xothians made them overconfident. What is known is that their culture grew decadent and weak. 250 million years ago, when the Shoggoths rose up in rebellion, the Elder Things were barely able to tame them once more.

160 million years ago, when the mi-go arrived on Earth, the civilization of the Elder Things was already beginning to wane. The Elder Things of Earth learned that they had degenerated as well; they were unable to fly into space to meet the new invaders.

The war with mi-go was long; slowly, the Elder Things began to retreat from the north.

In desperation the Elder Things of Earth came together for the second of their prophesized three great works. Upon the south pole they built the Elder Pharos, a huge machine designed to lure entities from beyond the world. They trapped these entities, enslaved them, and used them to destroy legions of the mi-go.

About 50 million years ago⁽²⁾ the Pharos lured in something too big to be trapped. An earth-shattering cataclysm resulted from the summoning of this Unknown God. Elder Thing cities across the globe were destroyed, including the ancient city in Antarctica. The cities were eventually rebuilt, but with their ultimate weapon useless, the Elder Things could only retreat before the ferocity of the mi-go, who eventually inhabited much of the northern hemisphere.

From there, the tale of the Elder Things of Earth is only one of decline. By 2 million years ago, they had retreated to the Antarctic Circle. The coming of the Ice Age, beginning about a million years ago, forced the Elder Things to retreat to their final city, in an abyss beneath the ice, and there they exit the history of the world.

Elder Things in the Modern World

Upon Earth, the Elder Things are all but extinct in the world of the twentieth century. Some may still lie hibernating below the snow and ice that has covered their ancestral homes, but for the most part they are gone: passed, a thing of history alone.

Though they are gone, the Elder Things have left behind their cities, full of the things that they have discarded and left behind. The cities recall the history of the Elder Things and remind mankind of just how insignificant its span upon Earth is. Only the greatest of cities are still known with surety:

KADATH, the ancient and mysterious mountain, marks the great Elder Thing city near the south pole. It is hidden away by the Mountains of Madness, or the Miskatonic Range as they are known after 1931. It is the home to the Elder Pharos and its great god trap. Once the greatest of the Elder Things cities, destroyed 50 million years ago and rebuilt, this is probably the best preserved Elder Thing city upon Earth. *Beyond the Mountains of Madness* provides an in-depth description (pp. 160-196).

CROTH is a great city hidden somewhere in the mountains of China. It is largely deserted, though once more the signs of the history and technology of the Elder Things still remain. Vastly degenerated Elder Things still live in this place, little better than animals, and with them certain of their servitors. Croth is particularly reknown for being an Earthly entrance to the Great White Space.

Once, Elder Thing cities dotted the globe, and there are doubtless many more that could be discovered.

Out among the stars, Elder Things still live. There may be many who are as degenerated as the Elder Things of Earth, but some unquestionably still possess the enhanced biology and the amazing technology that was possessed by the Elder Things who first came to Earth, a billion years ago.

Biology

The Elder Things are a strange combination of vegetable and mineral, or at least that is how we would label them upon Earth--they come from a much more ancient time when such labels might have been meaningless.

They are radially symmetric—arranged around a central barrel-like torso—with the exception of their wings. The Elder Things' radial symmetry is surprising, since on Earth radial symmetry is usually associated with a very primitive, often sedentary, class of animals. Thus, the radial symmetry of the Elder Things suggests the alienness of their original environment. In all likelihood, it was a high gravity world where bilateral symmetry was not a sound evolutionary strategy. The appearance of the Elder Things' wings as the main exception to their radial symmetry suggests that they were a late, probably artificial, addition.

The skin of the Elder Things is particularly strong and resilient to harm. The Elder Things can breathe air, water, or aether through the gills in their necks. These are results of the bio-engineering that made the Elder Things able to fly in space. These traits are partially atrophied in Earth-bound members of the species.

The senses of the Elder Things are quite unlike those of Earth creatures. In particular, they have no visual organs, relying on what humans would likely classify as extrasensory perception.

Elder Things are very long-lived, perhaps even immortal, dying only from violence or boredom.

Technology

Little is known about the technology of the Elder Things before they came to Earth. However, their Earthly technology is clearly biologically based. The creation of Ubbo-Sathla and the shoggoths is merely the most blatant example. Many other servitors were created by various Elder Things conclaves spread across the globe. In addition, crystals, elixirs, and other non-organic items were created by the Elder Things in order to fulfill various needs.

Some have noted the similarity between the biological sciences of the Elder Things and those of the serpent people. It has been posited that the Elder Things were the progenitors of the serpent people race, creating them from lesser serpents, perhaps as a response to the growing unrest of the shoggoths 275 million years ago.

Society

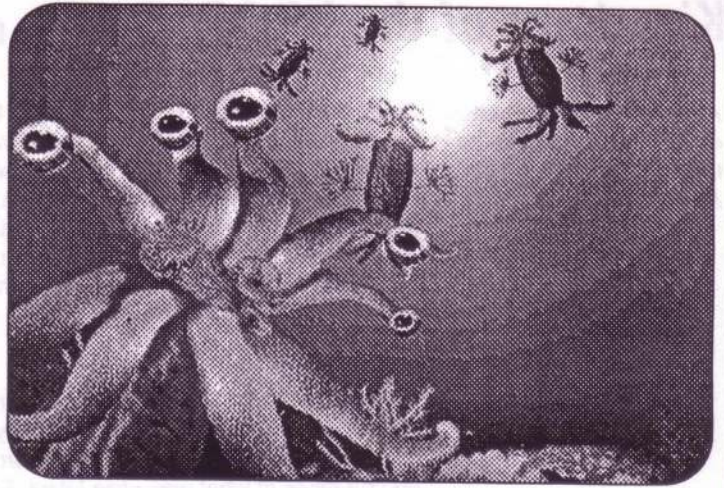
The society of the Elder Things was one based upon intellectualism, science, and logic. This is best evidenced in their written language, Elder Cipher, in which all of the letters are constructed from a set of up to five dots arranged in a pentagonal matrix, made up of a set of five shells along five radials. It is purely logical, devoid of creativity. The Elder Things' spoken language, a type of rhythmic whistling based upon a set of twenty-five notes in five keys, is equally austere.

The extreme logic and intellectualism of the Elder Things leaves them without emotion. They kill without pity, harm others without thinking, all in the name of science.

Elder Thing society is held together by learning, and the desire to share in the discoveries of others. Great tasks tend to draw them together, more for the need to be part of important tasks than for the desire to pursue the common good. Intellectual greed and a desire to be part of important events tend to keep Elder Thing society functioning, when otherwise it would fly apart due to the singular logic of its inhabitants.

Cults

As far as is known, the Elder Things are free of religious ties to the Great Old Ones and the Outer Gods. They seem to treat them merely as powerful beings to be bargained with, or weapons to be used, as evidenced by their Elder Pharos and its god trap.



Call of Cthulhu Adventures

Close Encounters of the Fifth Kind

Cattle mutilations! Alien abductions! Investigators in the modern world forced to investigate these ridiculous claims discover that they have a very real basis. Non-terrene Elder Things have come to Earth looking for their long-lost brethren (while engaging in a little scientific inquiry on the side). Even if they know the true story of the Miskatonic expeditions of the 1930s, will the investigators tell the Elder Things? And, if not, what will they do to drive these non-terrene Elder Things away?

Let's Do the Time-Warp Again

Through any of a variety of methods (Yithian mental transfer, Yaddithian light-wave envelope, hitching a ride on the Hounds of the Tindalos), the investigators are transported back in time to the Elder Thing empire at its height, when it battled against the other invaders from the stars. The investigators will soon realize that they are living in a time when great weapons are being created to defeat the creatures of the mythos. Can they avoid the scrutiny of the Elder Things, discover the technology they're looking for, and escape back to the future?

The Third Great Task

Ancient Elder Things prophecies tell of the three great tasks that all of the Elder Things of Earth will engage in. Two are already past, the creation of Ubbo-Sathla and the building of the Elder Pharos. But, according to the prophecies, in the End Times, after the civilization of the Elder Things has fallen, it will rise again, and then the third task will be carried out. When investigators hear of this prophecy, perhaps after spending some time verifying it, they must begin to move against the Elder Things, which are just then started to wake across the globe, and just beginning to plan their final construction.

Sources

- _The Antarktos Cycle_, edited by Robert M. Price
- _Beyond the Mountains of Madness_, by Charles and Janyce Engan, et al. (G)
- _The Great White Space_, by Basil Copper
- "The Shadow Out of Time", by H.P. Lovecraft
- _The Thing at the Threshold_, by Paul McConnell (G)
- "The Whisperer in Darkness", by H.P. Lovecraft

1. This is the fifth in a series of short articles detailing the races of H. P. Lovecraft's Cthulhu Mythos. The first two, on Yithians and Serpent People, may be found in *Starry Wisdom* #2 and #3, reprinted in electronic form at <http://www.chaosium.com/chaosium/starry-wisdom/>. The third, on Ghouls, is located in *Ye Booke of Tentacles* #1. The fourth, on Deep Ones, is located in *Tradetalk* #7 (forthcoming).

2. Sources seem to vary on this event, marking it alternatively at 150 million, 65 million, or 50 million years ago. The latter date is used.

Kingdoms of the Middle Sea

by Danny Bourne with thanks to Pete Nash and Loz Profile

A Hawkmoon adventure catalyst set on and around the coast of northern Afrika

Since the Hawkmoon novels are set in Europe and Amarehk, it is unsurprising that the Hawkmoon RPG releases so far have concerned themselves with these two areas. But there's only so much you can do - even in a place as big as Europe - without missing out on some great role playing opportunities in other locales. The following catalyst for Hawkmoon should be just the tonic for anyone who's thinking of a long sea voyage...

Those who felt that Europe suffered during the Tragic Millennium did not bother to look far beyond their shores. Afrik was just as hard hit, if not harder. Millions of square miles of what was once Libya, Egypt and the Middle East are now a parched, glassy plain composed of radioactive, vitrified silica, inhospitable to all but the hardiest of life. North-eastern Afrik, while not so physically damaged, still suffered in its own way. Plague and famine walked hand in hand with the decline in civilisation until now, at the time of Hawkmoon, the only areas that could be considered metropolitan are one or two of the larger ports - but even these portray the faintest shadows of their former glory. With one notable exception - Tunis.

This port has managed to keep some of its exotic splendour, the quayside being fronted by pink and golden hued stucco buildings. There is a crumbling but still imposing ruined fort at the south end of the town while the northern end switches from adobe houses to the gaily coloured permanent tents of the merchant classes. Nestled in the centre of this tented area, like a volcanic island rising from the sea, are the towers and minarets of Tunis' ancient mosque - now used as a palace.

As western civilisation collapsed, piracy, once unheard of in the Middle Sea, increased to the point where the Berbery Pirate Hordes (reviving the name from a by-gone age) were all but undisputed rulers of the waves. Over the course of time pirates came and fell, victories were won and lost, cities plundered and ships burned, but now an uneasy status quo has settled. And it is all because of two men - Buq Buq and Zem Zem.

Buq Buq is undoubtedly the most successful pirate (or seaway negotiator as he prefers to have himself called), alive today. His fleets roam far and wide from his base in the Middle Sea, raiding as far as southern Espanya and Kyrus. The reason for his success is his base: the Blood Isle. Gaining its title from its colour and grisly reputation, this (with the exception of a building at one end), completely flat island is, somehow, mobile. It makes its way slowly through the waves flanked by the hundreds of exotically sailed pirate ships that swear allegiance to Buq Buq the Sea Master. The truth behind this moving island is known to only a few, for those who have managed to see the island up close have rarely escaped to tell the tale. Buq Buq's moving island is, in fact, the remains of a pre-Tragic Millennium vessel, huge in size and of unknown use. Its method of propulsion a series of treadmill-powered paddle wheels, each a hundred feet across, which are manned twenty four hours a day by slaves. But here, in his strength, also lies Buq Buq's

weakness. His 'island' needs a constant supply of slaves to keep the treadmills moving. And that supply comes from Tunis.

Zem Zem is undoubtedly the most successful slaver (or landway negotiator as he prefers to have himself called), alive today. His slave caravans roam far and wide from his Topkapi-ensconced, palatial building in Tunis, rounding-up any and all that he can to fill his pens. Tales of his ruthless exploitation of humanity in Tunis are known by every sailor, merchant and mercenary for hundreds of miles and his veritable army of followers have crushed more than one rebellion attempt. His power is assured by the constant demand from slaves from none other than Buq Buq. Now it would seem that this would be a mutually beneficial situation for the two men; however there is one tiny problem. They hate each other with a passion greater than even most Granbretanians could muster.

It is said, by either the brave or the foolhardy, that Zem Zem and Buq Buq are identical twin brothers. Whether this is in fact true is not known. What is known is that each wants what the other has and will go to insane lengths to achieve their goals. However two things hold the pair in check and prevent total warfare. The first is that neither is strong enough to beat the other. Buq Buq's floating island is too large to come close to shore and any troops he can land by would be easily overpowered by Zem Zem's land forces. And the reverse is true for Zem Zem; his feeble collection of fishing boats would be decimated well before they managed to sight the floating island, let alone get close enough to board. The second check is that both men realise, however grudgingly, that they can only maintain their positions with the aid of the other. Zem Zem needs Buq Buq's money, and Buq Buq needs Zem Zem's slaves. The result of all this is a continuing, desultory skirmish where skiffs and small boats of the two factions alternately blockade and free Tunis, with neither side able to gain the upper hand. In its own way, this bizarre situation has brought the closest thing to peace that has been seen in the area for decades; but it cannot last forever.

Scenario Hooks

Granbretan has invaded Espanya. Thousands flee by boat to avoid the advancing troops, the Adventurers included. Their boat takes them to Tunis where they must run Buq Buq's blockade. Will the captain sell them all into slavery upon arrival?

With the invasion of Espanya and the consequent flood of refugees, Buq Buq steps up his attempts to get slaves himself by raiding any ships he comes across. Zem Zem is keen to see as many people as possible arrive in Tunis to swell his slave stock. A contingent of Buq Buq's sailors attack the Adventurers' vessel, who are aided by some of Zem Zem's sailors who offer to escort them safely into the harbour only to show their true colours and try and enslave the Adventurers themselves.

Two members of the infamous Straw Dogs are rumoured to be in Tunis asking questions about the strange mountain-peoples who live in the Afrik interior. What is it they're looking for? Do the Adventurers want to join them, or do they want to get whatever it is first?

A strange, solitary figure called Oladaq arrives in Tunis, he seems to be very interested in both Buq Buq and Zem Zem. Who is he? Does he want to destroy them both, ally with one or the other, or take over both their operations for his own, unknown ends. Some say he's a servant of the Balance, others assume that he must be even more bloodthirsty than their current overlords. Perhaps the Adventurers want to find out more.

Intrigued and impressed with the ruthlessness of both Buq Buq and Zem Zem, Granbretan seeks to discover the secret behind their enmity. The Adventurers are hired by the Dark Empire to act as emissaries, bearing gifts to both men, to discover more of their empires. How do Buq Buq and Zem Zem react? Are they flattered by Granbretan's attentions? What is Granbretan planning? Might it throw its military weight behind one or the other - and if so, for what ends?

†

Meliadus - My Part in His Downfall

by Ranyart Finn

Translated and edited
by Lawrence Whitaker
and Una Persson

Editorial Note

As I believe I have mentioned before, the Ranyart Finn papers arrive from time to time, sent, presumably, by the mysterious Mrs Persson. The papers are extensive; most of Finn's life is detailed, and with it, the fascinating history of the Young Kingdoms and beyond.

I say beyond, because Finn does - did - not remain in the Young Kingdoms for his entire life. It's unclear how old Finn was, but a mighty catastrophe, only barely described, resulted in the complete destruction of his world. But Finn, and others, escaped the cataclysm and were somehow scattered to different parts of (what Mrs Persson describes as) the Multiverse.

In Finn's case, the part of the Multiverse he found himself is most peculiar. The world appears to be our own Earth, but a version of it we could never recognise. Europe exists, but is a disturbing, baroque variant that could be our future - or a version of our future - dominated by an evil presence stemming from our own green and pleasant land.

The world Finn describes in his continued papers is suppressed by the Dark Empire of Granbretan. Dominated by a fascistic order of mask-wearing, beast-idolising madmen, this future Europe teeters on the verge of utter chaos. Whilst the names Finn uses in his papers are familiar to us - France, Germania, Muscovia and so forth - the nature of these places is not. We in the 21st century enjoy a harmonised Europe (one must ignore the ramblings of Mr Hague and his toothless lackeys!), but for the people of this version of our future, the norm is constant war, brooding decay, and a fragile reliance upon an unseen, fabled power, Finn terms 'The Runestaff'.

In the excerpt presented here, Finn has been resident in this new world for several months. Somehow he has found himself in the heart of the Dark Empire itself, the city of Londra. However, despite being in the midst of congenital insanity, Ranyart Finn somehow manages to retain his carefree voice and askance view of the world. Alcohol figures largely, one assumes, but if he is anything, my friend Finn is a survivor, first and foremost.

Lawrence Whitaker
Hampstead, February 2000

"...And so the albino prince raised the hellsword high, meaning to slice his cousin from pate to gonad. Sweat cascaded down his face, blurring his vision, and he cursed in the High Tongue as his vision of the enemy blurred and distorted. This was to be his downfall! Prince Elric did not notice Cymoril, his beloved, running to intervene in the battle. Driven by hatred for Yrkoon, his ears filled with the moaning of the runesword, he thrust! A cry echoed through the palace, but the sound was not Yrkoon's. It was, instead..."

"Shut up."

"Sorry? My lord, this is the denouement - the, the whole turning point of the story. Would you have me..."

"I said, shut up. If you do not, I will have your lips attended to like my wine-servant over there." Baron Meliadus gestures towards the poor old wretch who hovers skeletally, at his elbow. I wince. The wine servant's lips have been stitched together with barbed wire. I shut up.

It's hard, you know, trying to entertain the insane. I thought the regulars of the 'Tarkeshites' Head' in Raschil were difficult, but Baron Meliadus, Grand Constable of the Order of the Wolf is a nightmare. The mask doesn't help of course; it covers his entire face, a black-lacquered, bejewelled, and utterly fearsome wolf-head. He takes it off now and again, but his mood never improves, and I have yet to complete a story for him. Every time I start, I get so far and he becomes bored and either dismisses me or calls for a few slave girls so that he can make the Beast With Two Backs (or several backs - he's most certainly athletic, even with the mask on) while I continue the tale.

Today he's both bored and irritable. A dangerous combination. So I shut up.

Meliadus lounges across the cushions that litter the floor and holds up his goblet for more wine. Poor old Wire Lips obliges, and the Grand Constable lifts the hinged muzzle of the mask and drinks deeply. I try not to lick my lips; it might give him ideas.

"Why is it, storyteller, that you persist in telling me tales about this made-up land? What do you call the place again? The Youthful Realms?"

"Young Kingdoms, my lord." I say. "And it is not made-up. It existed."

"Ah yes. Destroyed by its warring gods. Ha! They must have been a foolish race to let their gods do battle like that. Our gods would never dare challenge the might of Granbretan. Chirshil and the Feared Four serve us, and not the other way around."

Like all Granbretanians, the Baron maintains a healthy scepticism of dieties, whilst paying them lip-service (there you go - lips again!). Here, gods

are seen as a sort of nuisance and, whilst they have statues and churches and all that, they don't seem to take them at all seriously. Meliadus is still droning-on. He's drunk. I wish I was.

"...yes... the gods fear the King Emperor. He is a god made flesh, the true architect of all our destinies. Our worship is reserved for him." And he staggers to his feet, mask wobbling like a fucked spinning-top, and offers a toast: "To King Emperor Huon! May he be blessed with life everlasting!" He pauses, looks at me, and, even though I can't see his face, I know he's scowling. "Why don't you drink his health, you feeble bastard?"

"I, er, don't appear to have anything to toast him with, my lord." I offer plaintively. Meliadus mumbles something to Wire Lips, and the creaky-old servant finds me a goblet and brim-fills it with the horrible, sickly-sweet muck Meliadus likes to get shit-faced with. I don't care much; it's alcohol, and I need a drink.

"To King Emperor Huon!" Meliadus thunders again. "And life everlasting!"

"Life everlasting!" I chorus, and take a good, deep quaff of the wine. "Er, Wire - I mean, servant, would you mind?" While Meliadus is busy draining his goblet, I get mine refilled. Then, seemingly pleased with his toast, the Baron flops back into his cushions and lets loose a fart which echoes within the confines of his armoured britches.

"Of course... er..."

"Finn, my lord. Ranyart Finn."

"Yes, Finn. Of course, he's mad you know."

"Who my lord?"

"Huon you imbecile! Who do you think I've just toasted? Utterly mad, floating there in that globe of his. I humour him, naturally, but the true power should reside in more capable hands."

"How about, 'paws'?" I suggest, and Meliadus turns his head slowly towards me. Now this really is a side of him I've not seen before (and remember, I've seen his arse) and it's quite entertaining. Drunk he might be, but I'm sure he's serious. Who would have thought it, Grand Constable Meliadus, beloved of Huon, a traitor? Well, me, actually.

"Are you daring to suggest that I might be the one to rule the Empire?" His tone is icy and earnest. The rather disturbing vision of someone threading a big needle with barbed wire enters my mind, and I decide I might have overstepped the mark.

"The thought never crossed my lips. I mean mind, my lord. Arioeh forbid the notion. Ridiculous to even hint at such a thing." I can still feel his gaze and I can hear that needle being threaded.

"Oh? Are you suggesting, then, that I am incapable of ruling the empire?"

Bugger. Damned if I do, and damned if I don't. I just hope they provide me with a straw to drink through.

"Baron Meliadus! What I meant was, that you would never contemplate seizing the beloved King Emperor's throne-globe for your own. But what I also meant was, if anyone is a natural successor to the King Emperor's mantle, then it is you." Meliadus growls but relaxes a little. Somewhere, someone returns the needle to the sewing box.

And then the clocks go off. All of them. At once. The beloved Baron collects clocks like he collects slaves and venereal diseases; his private quarters are filled to the rafters: big clocks, little clocks, chiming clocks, clanging clocks, clocks that tick, clocks that don't, and even a clock that, when it hits the hour, has a little bird fly out of a shuttered window and warble. In fact, the only person who owns more clocks is Taragorm of the Order of the Ferret - even his mask is fashioned like a bloody clock (although it doesn't have the little bird, which I think is a bit of a shame). Anyway, the clocks strike the hour, and pandemonium breaks-out. I wince at the noise of a hundred chimes, clangs, crashes and cuckoos whilst Wire Lips drops the tray he's carrying. Meliadus, acting like he's listening to a chorus of Melinbonean eunuchs, cocks his head appreciatively and taps his foot in time to the commotion. When they finally stop, I find I've lost the use of the hearing in my left ear. Meliadus is saying something, and, because I can't see his lips moving, I miss half of it.

"...so that is my plan, storyteller. Cunning, is it not?"

"Ah... yes. Cunning. Very. Like a greased fox on an iceberg." I hope to the mercy of Lord Arkyn that I hadn't just agreed to having my own head lopped-off. Meliadus nods and reclines on his cushions.

"That Germanian upstart Hawkmoon's a problem of course, but I'll deal with him soon enough. By Jhone, Pawl, Jorge and Rhunga! I've sworn on the Runestaff to kill him, and believe me, he'll die very slowly." Naturally I believe him. When it comes to punishments, old wolf-face surpasses even the Pan Tangians for inventiveness. And this Hawkmoon chap seems to have really upset the Baron. I'm not sure how, entirely, but when he gets drunk like this, Meliadus is apt to spiral-off into an out-loud daydream about the tortures he intends to inflict on good old Hawkwind. My hearing's returning a little, but everything sounds fuzzy, and for once I'm quite relieved because I don't have to listen to the same, mad ramblings about what's going to be done to Hawkmoon with various kitchen implements.

*

I dismiss myself when Meliadus falls asleep. Liberating a bottle of wine from Wire Lips (hells - he can't tell anyone!), I return to my quarters on the lower floor of the mansion. And who should be waiting for me but my old friend Una Persson.

When in Londra, Una affects Granbretanian ways and dons a mask. Hers is fashioned into the likeness of cat and is made from silver with golden wires for whiskers. She purrs when I enter the room and gently removes the mask. I scowl at her bitterly. I haven't seen her for months, but I heard she was around, and whilst I'm pleased to see her, I'm still sore about getting lumbered with the Baron. "Something wrong with your ears Finn?" She asks politely. I don't answer, and busy myself with getting the wine bottle open. After a good long glug, I stop feigning deafness.

"Ears? Why yes, my dear Una. They've just been assaulted by the massed chimes of the Granbretanian Philharmonic Pendulum Orchestra. It goes like this: ding-fucking-dong-fucking-dong-fucking-dong. But around a thousand-fold louder and longer."

"Oh. Yes, Meliadus does like his clocks. I suppose I should have warned you." She smiles sweetly, and that just makes me angrier.

"No, Una. You should have warned me that I was entering the employment of a mad sadist who's obsessed with torturing Dorian-bleeding-Hawkmoon von Kiln."

"That's 'Koln'"

"I don't care if he's from Hwamgaarl! The fact is that, whilst I'm very grateful to you getting me out of the Young Kingdoms, I never expected to end-up in a place like this. Honestly. I might go over the top with the wine now and again, but I never thought I deserved to be in the middle of this lunatic asylum."

Una sucks her bottom lip and turns the mask over in her hands. She looks ever so slightly sorry, but I know her better than that. Una Person never does anything without a reason, and so I'm waiting to hear exactly what the reasoning is behind my appointment to Meliadus. "I know he's a bit of handful, Ran, but believe me, you do have a part to play in all of this. The Runestaff, apparently..."

"The Runestaff? Una, you don't believe in all that stuff. You've told me scores of times."

"It depends, Ranyart, on what part of the multiverse I happen to be visiting. Here, the Runestaff is very real, and it has its servants. It chooses people for the most unlikely reasons and, as I'm trying to tell you, you've been chosen."

Half the bottle vanishes as I try to take all this in. Me? Servant of the Runestaff? Arioeh's farts! I couldn't even get served in half the inns of Raschil, let alone here. Still, it's best not to argue with Una; that only makes her start talking about Lord Jagged, and time streams, and everlasting champions, and other stuff that makes my head hurt. "Okay, so I've been chosen to serve the Runestaff," I reply. "What does it want me to do here?"

Una taps her finger nails on the surface of her mask. "I'm not sure, exactly. Someone will be in touch with you about it. Expect a warrior wearing gold and jet armour. Or a big, red-haired man with a Scottish accent. Anyway, they'll guide you. I'm just here to make sure you haven't done anything to upset Meliadus."

"Not yet, but he's done plenty to upset me. Ah, just a minute, there is something..." And I tell her about his drunken musings on who should control power in Granbretan. Una listens carefully, smiling all the time.

"See? You're already serving the Runestaff! Information like that is invaluable."

"Perhaps," I say, taking care not to slur my words, "but invaluable to whom?" That sly smile again.

"Be patient Ranyart. The Runestaff works in very mysterious ways."

"Oh, right. By the way, Una, what's a 'Scottish' accent?"

*

It's five or six days later, and I'm being transported by carriage across Londra to tell stories at some banquet being thrown by the Grand Constable of the Order of the Lion. No one walks anywhere in Londra; the air is foetid, choked by the constant clouds of acrid smoke churned-out by the foundries, factories and smelting works that line the Tayme river. Every now and then, some of the foul air finds its way into the carriage and I almost cough-up my lungs in disgust. The carriage is being pulled by slaves, obviously, and they've been altered through some vile sorcery so that they actually extract nourishment from the polluted air. Their mouths and noses have been stitched-shut, and they breathe through livid-red gills grafted onto their necks. They're also incredibly strong, with three of them hauling this carriage with the kind of power normally associated with a team of decent horses.

I hear sounds outside, and the carriage slows. I consider peering outside to see what's the cause of the delay, but get another whiff of the air and am rapidly dissuaded by a further fit of coughing. The carriage grinds to a halt, and the voices grow louder. There are the sounds of a scuffle, and then we're off again. My eyes are clogged by tears brought on by the coughing, and I'm just glad that we're moving again.

But we're not moving for long. The carriage slows once more and I hear the distinctive sounds of doors or gates being opened and closed behind us. The air suddenly becomes cleaner, and footsteps echo around the outside of the carriage. The footsteps are booted; my slaves were barefoot. Suddenly I'm feeling very afraid.

The carriage door swings open and I'm peering into a beast mask. It's fashioned like the head of a tiger with a vicious set of sabre-like fangs jutting out of the upper jaw. "Out. Now." Comes the command; meekly I obey.

The tiger-face steps back to let me climb out of the carriage, and I can see several more tiger masks - half a dozen at least. We're in a large, dark, empty building - a warehouse or storage depot of some kind. Four of the tigers carry those flame-spitting spears cherished by the beast orders, and they're watching the outside world from narrow slits in the walls. Three of the tiger masks, including the one who ordered me from the carriage, are staring intently at me. "You're the storyteller, Ranyart Finn." It's a statement, not a question, and I nod. I can't see the slaves, but there's fresh blood on the bronze armour of the lead tiger. I look studiously at the floor. Another statement: "You work for Meliadus."

"I take it," I say, quite bravely I think, "that the banquet's off then?" The three tigers glance at each other briefly, and then the lead one nods. One by one, they remove their masks.

The leader is of swarthy complexion, with fair hair and deep blue eyes. His face is badly scarred across the jaw, and I'm certain that, when he smiles, he has metal teeth. Behind him is another blond-haired man, taller, and with a thin, high-cheekboned face that, whilst unscarred, looks like it's seen a great deal of action. The third tiger has dark hair, a thick brow, and a set of brooding brown eyes. None of them look particularly Granbretanian, although it's difficult to say exactly what a typical Granbretanian might look like given that their faces are always covered.

"Oh, the banquet's still on, Ranyart Finn," the leader says. His accent is definitely not Granbretanian. "We just wanted to have a little chat with you beforehand."

"That's right." The dark-haired one says. "We think you can help us." I offer a wan smile.

"Well, anything I can do to assist the glorious Order of the Tiger. Please, just ask." The tall blond man stares at me, a look of disbelief on his face.

"Your accent... where are you from?" I frown.

"Erm, it's a long story, but I'm not from Granbretan, as you might have guessed. I come from a place far away. Very far away in fact."

"You're from Filkhar, are you not?" The question takes me utterly by surprise, and then I notice that his accent is Filkharian too.

"Raschil born and bred." I say. "And you - I have a good grasp of dialect - you're from the southern dukedoms aren't you?"

"Aye, Espadirium. I know Raschil well. How is the old country?"

Tricky one this. Last time I saw Filkhar, the Chaos Fleet was moving across Raschil harbour and turning every last building and person into a vile, diseased, parody of existence. I shrug and offer a reassuring smile. "Oh, you know, the same." I say. "Well, who would have believed it? Another from the Young Kingdoms here in Londra. Are there more of us?"

"Enough!" The scarred man barks. "We don't have much time. Storyteller, you are going to help us. Co-operate and you have our undying gratitude. Make things difficult..."

"...And we will crush you." The dark-haired man adds, in his own, thick accent. I swallow hard. My skin is peppered with goosebumps and my knees feel like giving way. Meliadus might be a bastard, but he's never openly threatened me like these people are doing.

"You're not of the Order of the Tiger, are you?" I venture, mouth as dry as the Dorel summer. The three men smile in unison, and several of the other tigers turn their bemasked heads in my direction.

"No," the scarred man says. "We are of the Order of the Dog." I was right, he does have metal teeth.

"The Straw Dogs." The dark haired man adds. "You have heard of us, dah?"

This cannot be. This is too difficult and strange to take in all at once. First I am hijacked and brought to this dingy place; next I find one of my abductors is from, not only the Young Kingdoms, but my home country; and then I am told that I have been abducted by a mercenary band which was infamous throughout the Young Kingdoms - one hundred years before I was born. I'm aware that I'm staring blankly at them. I'm aware that my knees are shaking and my teeth chattering. It's very cold in here. I don't feel very well. I...

*

Cold water across my face like a slap from a spiked maul. Hands hauling me to my feet. Fainted, must have. Have I had a drink today? Have I? No, not since... that's it. Need a drink. Got to get some booze - it's the only answer to this intense cold.

"Finn!"

Gurgle.

"Finn!"

Whimper. Booze...

"FINN!"

Faces swim into view. Mabelode's balls, they're still here. Shit, hoped it was a dream. Hoped I'd wake up in Raschil. With Una. With a hangover. Hoped...

"Finn. You fainted. Mikhail, leave him. He's in shock." The Filkharian is helping me up. The dark-haired one, Mikhail, stands over me with an empty bucket in his hands. The Filkharian sits me on the running board of the carriage. He manages to step back as I vomit my breakfast across the warehouse floor. I feel better for it, but I'd feel a thousandfold better if I could have a drink.

"You said you're the Straw Dogs?" I finally manage to say. The Filkharian, arms folded, watching me intently, nods. "Impossible. They were killed a century ago. Everyone knows that."

"Perhaps, in the Young Kingdoms." The Filkharian says calmly. "I knew the Straw Dogs. Tasis was my sworn enemy. But this is not the Young Kingdoms. There are forces at work here that you and I cannot understand."

I raise my head to peer into the Filkharian's eyes. Pale blue, like opals. "Who are you?" I ask.

"I am Edric, last of the Filkharian Irregulars." I nod sadly. I am no longer surprised. Edric is a legend to me; a character from countless stories I have told. The sole survivor of the Sad Hill massacre, betrayed by his own people to the Straw Dogs. He disappeared decades before I was born, thought to have made the trek to dreaming Tanelorn.

"Am I mad?" I ask him. It is the scarred man who answers.

"No, Ranyart Finn. You are not mad. We are the Straw Dogs. Not the Straw Dogs of your home plane, but one version of the mercenaries that exist on every plane. Or so I am told. I do not understand it, or even wish to. My name is Jurgen. I lead here. Edric you have met, and this - " he gestures to the dark haired man - is Mikhail, my second in command." Mikhail bows his head slightly. "The others are Dark Sky, J'Arios, Lafette, Ginelli, Nils and Breygun. We are enemies of the Dark Empire of Granbretan."

Edric produces a small flask from somewhere and hands it to me. "We were told you might need this." He says. I taste it. Saramath! I haven't tasted saramath since... I resist the urge to drink the entire flask and offer it back to Edric; he shakes his head and so I slip it into my cloak.

"Whoever told you I needed this was right. Is she about my height, fair hair, almond eyes and likes to wear a Cat Mask now and then?" Jurgen confirms my suspicion with a nod.

"It was Una Persson who told us you could help. That is why we waylaid you. Now, let me tell you why."

*

It isn't me who's mad: it's them. They might be mercenaries who've fought countless campaigns, but what they have in mind is insanity of the highest order. And what's more insane is the fact that they want me to help them.

"It can't be done." I say for the tenth time. "Believe me, I know. It's suicide."

"We have to try." Mikhail says calmly. "We've tried more dangerous things, and survived. If we plan this correctly - and you help - it is both possible and survivable."

"Mikhail is right," Jurgen says, teeth glinting. "If you help us, we stand a good chance."

"And if I don't, you'll - how did you put it, Mikhail - crush me?" Jurgen laughs.

"No, but you'd be kept out of harm's way so that you could not possibly betray us. We are not without resources. How do you think we were able to get into Londra without detection?"

I sigh and chew on a fingernail. They are utterly convinced of their abilities, and quite plainly devoted to their lunatic task. I cannot see I have much choice; and, when I think about it, I would rather be with them than with Granbretan. I do not know them, but now that the shock has worn off, I feel some kind of kinship - a similar feeling of kinship to the one I have with Una.

"Very well. But, all I will do is provide you with information. I'm no fighter, you understand. And, when this is done, no matter how things go, I want you to get me out of Londra. Agreed?"

"Agreed." Jurgen says, and pats me on the shoulder. He turns to the rest of the Straw Dogs and smiles broadly. "It is settled. Ranyart Finn will help us to kill Baron Meliadus of Kroiden, and start the destruction of the Granbretan once and for all!"

*

I do not enjoy the banquet. It's held in the strangling confines of Baron Delius Throbb's tower-like abode in the centre of Londra. The tower is enormous and stretches phallically towards the pale moon like a metal and glass needle. The banquet takes place at the top of the tower, in a room that slowly revolves so that the entirety of Londra's sick-sprawl comes into view.

But none of the guests are watching the panorama. Neither are they listening to my stories and poems. Instead they are engaged in some of the most sickening and perverse acts I have ever witnessed. I cannot - will not describe them - but twice I have to close my eyes against the shocking displays, and many more times I have to cover my ears to block-out the screams. I know I will not be amongst those who provide the sport; I am Baron Meliadus's man, and carry his seal to show I must not be abused. Presumably Meliadus wishes to reserve that pleasure for himself. He is not here tonight, but many of his kind are: Constables and Grand Constables of at least ten different Beast Orders. They are aptly named, for they behave like beasts. No, they are worse than beasts. No animal would ever do to its own kind what these bastards do to their's.

The exhibition of atrocity finally ends shortly before dawn, and I am allowed to climb down from this glass tower to where my carriage awaits. The Straw Dogs did not kill the slaves who pull it; merely cut one who put-up a fight to show they meant business. And, as I am dragged through the ghastly dark streets of this ghastly dark city at the centre of a ghastly dark empire, I am sure that what I have agreed to do is right. Meliadus must be killed, and for two simple reasons: first, because he is the worst of the worst and does not deserve to live. Secondly, because an example must be set to the rest of the Grand Constables. Their crimes must be punished, and, if the Straw Dogs can get to Meliadus, then it's proof that they can get to any of the others. This insanity, this utter evil, has to end, and if I have a part to play in that ending, then so be it.

I am exhausted by the time we reach Meliadus's residence. Squads of wolf-masked guards peel away to let the carriage into the inner courtyard, and for the first time I realise how heavily protected Meliadus is. The whole mansion is ringed with warriors bristling with weapons. Flamelances encircle the walls pointing in all directions. Heavy iron doors slam shut behind me as I enter the mansion and make my way to my quarters, and I pass countless wolf mask guards as I slink back to my bed.

In the safety of my room I fish-out the bottle of golden wine I stole from the banquet and open it, drinking deeply with shaking hands. Next, I take out my parchments and quills, and begin to write down all that you are reading now. I write in the Low Tongue of Melnibone, because I know that no one in this insane city can

read it. To them, the script of the Dragon Isle is little more than swirls, curves, and seemingly random assortments of dots on the page; to me, it is a reminder that I am not of this place and time, and therefore not One Of Them. I take a little comfort in that, but not much. Never mind, the wine will help. It is a good vintage, slightly sour but with a pleasing warmth and honeyed aftertaste.

I do not know if the Straw Dogs will succeed in their plan. It is ambitious and mad, and I will need to be very careful and very discreet. It will take time, and I am conscious the Straw Dogs do not have such a luxury. But if I watch and listen, there is a chance that Baron Meliadus, Grand Constable of the Order of the Wolf, beloved of Huon, enemy of Hawkmoon, will soon be dead.

The question I continually ask myself is, will I die before, or after him?

†

Editorial Note

Like Finn, I do not know if the plan to kill Meliadus succeeds or not. The papers I receive are jumbled, and skip from one point in time to another. The set of papers I received last week return to the Young Kingdoms and are nothing more than mundane diary entries. Perhaps the extract above is truly the last Finn ever wrote.

Yet somehow I doubt it very much. If he is a servant of this mysterious Runestaff (and has the equally strange patronage of Mrs Persson), then I suspect he has several guardian angels watching over him.

And another strange thing occurred, shortly after I prepared the above extract for publication. Reading The Times over breakfast, I happened across a report of yet another civil war taking place in some small, horribly divided, African country. The correspondent described how a group of mercenaries had helped the democratically elected leader of the country to regain power from the syphilitic despot who had seized control.

The mercenaries were led by a Scandinavian called Jurgen Hrothsen, and a Russian called Mikhail Kavelnikov.

They were nicknamed 'The Straw Dogs'.



Products of the Chaos Society

TRADETALK

THE MAGAZINE OF CHAOS SOCIETY

Tradetalk # 2 - Safelster issue

Tradetalk # 3 - Eastern Wilds

Tradetalk # 4 - Kethaela issue

Tradetalk # 5 - Kethaela issue II

Tradetalk # 6 - Catch up issue

YE BOOKE OF TENTACLES (YBOT 1)

Fundraiser for the IX. RuneQuest Con "Tentacle over Bacharach" at Whitsun 1998. This 112 pages book contains a lot of transcripts of the VII. and VIII. RQ Con in Germany about the Lismelder tribe, Malkiansm and the lore auctions. Furthermore there are Orlanthe Mythologie from Greg Stafford, Pent Ridge from MOB, City of Wonders from Simon Bray and some more material about Cthulhu as well as a Nephilim Campaign.

SOLD OUT! Copies still available trough Wizard Attic

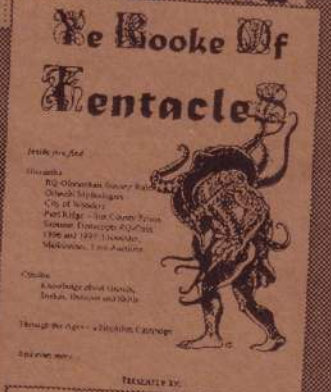
YE BOOKE OF TENTACLES (YBOT 2)

Fundraiser for the X. RuneQuest Con "Tentacles Reanimated" at Whitsun 1999. This 136 pages book contains Shaman Rules by Sandy Petersen, The Great Temple of Rufdayen Raibanth by Greg Stafford, The Culbrea Tribe by Martin Laurie & Patrik Sandberg, Holiday Glorantha, The Men with the Golden Gun by MOB, The Legacy of Ranyart Finn & Significant Trees by Lawrence Whitaker, The Adventure of the Reluctant Bride by Shannon Apple and some more material about Cthulhu as well as Nephilim.

YE BOOKE OF TENTACLES (YBOT 3)

Fundraiser for the XI. RuneQuest Con "Tentacles Millennium" at Whitsun 2000. This 136 pages book contains the Pavis and Big Rubble Companion Volume I by Ian Thomson, Alkothi Timeline, We hate Darjini Usurpers & The Cult of Eusibus by Martin Laurie, Glorantha stories from the unpublished Heroes of the King collection, Loakamaydon Becomes Herald by Greg Stafford, Creators of Life by Shannon Apple, Meliadus - My Part in his Downfall by Lawrence Whitaker and some more material about Cthulhu.

All these material are available through the Chaos Society round the world and the Reaching Moon Megacorp



World of myth

Glorantha



Hero Wars, Role Playing in Glorantha

ISBN 1-929052-01-4

Hero Wars is a new fantasy role playing game. It has the simplicity of a beginner's game, the appeal of a storytelling game, and the elegance of the sophisticated world which it portrays

256 pages, trade paperback size, ILLUSTRATED

Also available separately for \$19.95

Hero Wars, Narrator's Book

ISBN 1-929052-01-4

Hero Wars is a storytelling game and this book gives many useful insights to the narrators (not GM's) as well as advanced magic (such as getting a bonus from your community), creatures, and Hero Questing

256 pages, trade paperback size, ILLUSTRATED

Also available separately for \$19.95

Visions of Glorantha

No ISBN, Not Available for discounts

Visions is an anthology of fiction and mythology the heroic world of Glorantha

Also includes:

Rules Synopsis: 8 Page Booklet. All You Need to Know to Play

Starting Characters: Heroes ready to play. Fill in their names and go

Blank Character Sheets: Ready to record your original heroes

Map of Dragon Pass: Large map showing the place where the Hero Wars Ignite!

Map of Glorantha: The World of the Hero Wars

Starting Adventures: Sample adventures to cast your players into the Hero Wars

It's out Now!

official webpage at:

www.glorantha.com

Available through:

Wizard's Attic

www.wizards-attic.com

900 Murmansk St.

Suite 7

Oakland, CA 94607

Phone: +1 (510)452 4951

Fax: +1 (510)452 4952