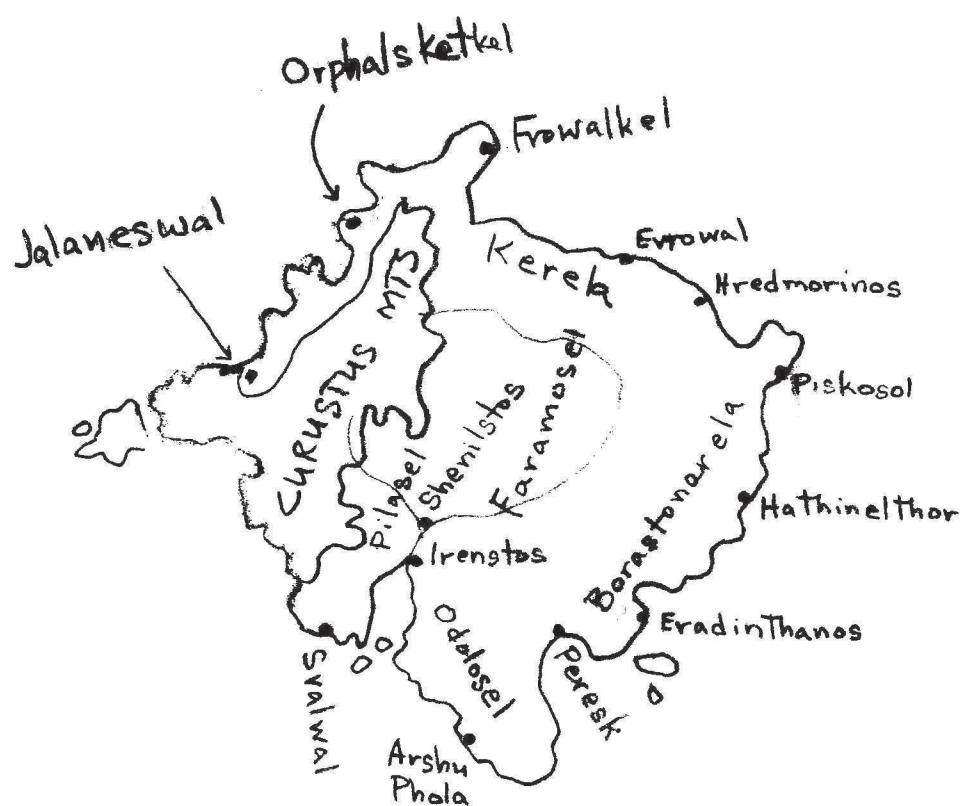


# THE MIDDLE SEA EMPIRE

AN UNFINISHED WORK  
CONCERNING THE GLORY AND EXCESSES  
OF THE PEOPLE OVERSEEN, PROTECTED AND EXPLOITED BY THE  
GODLEARNERS



# THE MIDDLE SEA EMPIRE

## COMPILED ARTICLES ABOUT THE GLORIOUS MIDDLE SEA EMPIRE

BY GREG STAFFORD

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## ABOUT THIS BOOK

*The Middle Sea Empire* is an **Unfinished Work**, compiled from Greg Stafford's notes, expanded by Greg and Jeff Richard, with some tidbits by others. This is not intended to be a finished product, and is subject to change by Greg at any time for any or no reason whatsoever.

The general subject matter of this product is the **Middle Sea Empire**, also often called the **God Learner Empire**. This does not attempt to be complete but is simply a compilation of the notes that I've gotten together for it.

## OUR GREAT EMPIRE

This is a translation of a popular and widespread book known in the Middle Sea Empire during the reign of Emperor Ilotos. After the primary document is other information added to fill in subsequent data that may be of interest to the reader.

Thanks to Jeff Richard for his contributions, David Dunham for his research and support,  
and Jeff Kyer for the quibble and bits.

Greg Stafford, July 2006

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# OUR GREAT EMPIRE

## A HISTORY OF THE GLORIOUS MIDDLE SEA EMPIRE

### INTRODUCTION

The information is translated from a document compiled circa 908 ST Gerfej de Arshu Fola, son of Drofchar de Arshu Fola, a noted politician who variously held Governor posts in Slontos, Nolos, Kumanku. His most famous activity was a military commission as Duke of Kotor during the period of fierce fighting called the *Brutal Bloody Battles*.

Gerfej assembled his treatise from several other documents and sources. The sources are:

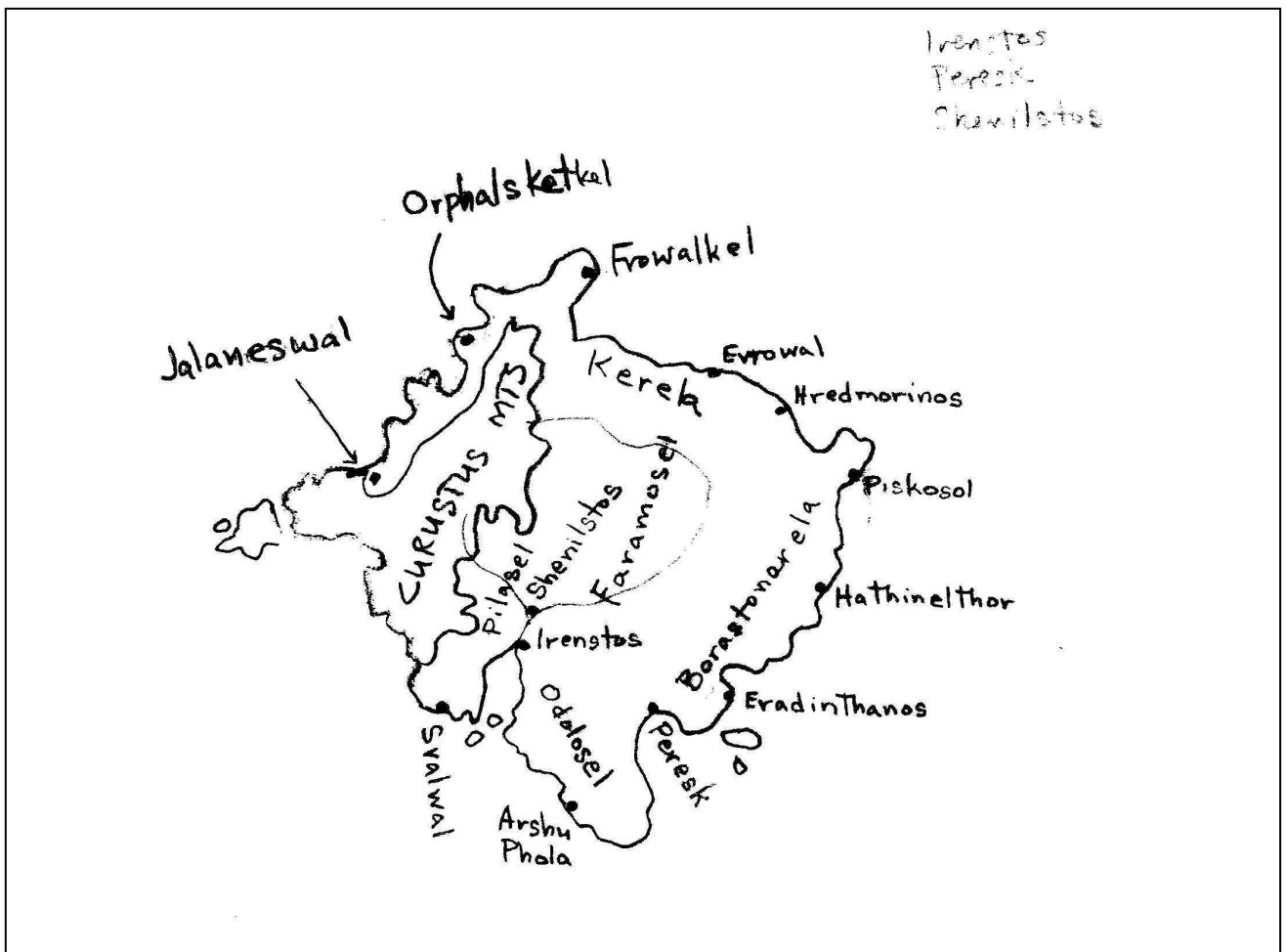
*Salovan's Book of Emperors*. Since Gerfej's purpose was to compile information about the Middle Sea Empire he omitted the first 31 kings. He heavily annotated the sparse entries to explain information about the kings and emperors. He then interspersed information (clumsily, say many) from other sources into the king list. In this document key words are in **boldface** which are followed by explanations of them.

His document opens with general information about Jrustela. This early information comes from *The Abiding Book*, the ineffable document of God Learner Truth.

Further information is drawn from *Old Freedom, a History of Jrustela's Golden Age*. This includes the sections of "Mornastan Myths," which fills in details of the land that later became Jrustela; and "Beautiful Jrustela."

A large part is original. It was largely used later as a part of *Gerfej's Book of Emperors* (named after Gerfej, and using his works, but not actually written by him).

Finally, some comments of note have been inserted directly into the text, set aside in [brackets] by the modern editor of this work.



# THE MIDDLE SEA EMPIRE

A DOCUMENT OF TRUTH AND GLORY COMPILED TO LIST THE MAGNIFICENT DEEDS OF OUR GREAT EMPIRE, AND TO BRING NOTICE TO THE HERETICS WHO WOULD SULLY IT.

- *There is no God but the Invisible God,  
and Malkion is His prophet* -

---

## THE MYTHOLOGY OF JRUSTELA

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### THE CREATION PERIOD

To fully appreciate Jrustela its long and honorable history must be understood. Then some of its oddities can be seen within the context. Here is a synopsis of its oldest mythology as related by the Ineffable Source, the **Abiding Book**.

#### FIRST ACTION

First was Mystery, which was manifest as limitless, empty Space, within which were the Universal Perspective that perceived the Prima Materia, and thus Ferbrith [Intellect] separated lifeless Matter from formless Energy.

*Ferbrith is also called Malkion the Creator. Thus it is said, "Malkion created the universe."*

#### SECOND ACTION

*Analyzing*, Ferbrith became Kiona [Law].

First were the lifeless Earth and formless Sun, *perceived* by Ferbrith [Intellect]. The analysis of Ferbrith manipulated the earth and the sun, and Kiona *analyzed* them and thereby separated the Erasanchula [Primal Runes], which were True Beings, True Shapes and True Principles.

*Ferbrith is also called Malkion the Law. Thus it is said, "Malkion created the Erasanchula."*

#### THIRD ACTION

Kiona *analyzed* the primal runes [Erasanchula] and became Ord Elvis, which *combined* them to create the **Prime Objects** of the First World. [There is one of each object in the world].

Kiona created the Citadel of Thought, and lives therein, and is called **Ord Elvis**.

*Kiona is also called Malkion the Seer. Thus it is said, "Malkion created the Prime Objects, which He gathered into Ketord Elvis" [the Citadel of Thought].*

#### FOURTH ACTION

Ord Elvis *duplicates* the Prime Objects and creates **Danmalastan** [the Perfect World.] He makes the first people as well, who are the Six Tribes.

*Ord Elvis is also called Malkion the Founder. Thus it is said "Malkion the Founder created Danmalastan and made the Six Tribes."*

In the south east of Danmalastan lived the people called the Viymorni. *Their land was called Mornastan*. To their west rose Pipovar Mountain, one of the Erasanchula called Mostal, a huge magnetic lodestone. It was surrounded by others like it. To the east of the land was one of the Erasanchula called Aldrya, the Great Tree, and it was surrounded by others like it. To the north were the Kachasti people, and to the south was Bamatela, the Forbidden Land.

#### FIFTH ACTION

Elmalkion [Malkion the Old] lived in the **time of Disintegration**, when the Erasanchula turned on Creation and corrupted the world. The Erasanchula seized the powers of Life, but the rest of the world suffered Malkion and his people struggled against the powers of corruption, but at last the Erasanchula of sorcery threatened the Good People with annihilation. Instead, Elmalkion absorbed the destruction and sacrificed himself for them. Thus he gave his physical life away, and his immortal **Life** dispersed through all the material world, so that his people could partake directly of **It**. The sacred families each took their portion of **It**, with plans to reassemble them into **It**. Thus would the world be redeemed.

*Elmalkion is also called Malkion the Sacrifice. Thus it is said, "Malkion created salvation."*

#### MORNASTAN MYTHS

In the time of the Fourth Action in the land of Mornastan there lived five peoples.

In the center were the Viymorni. They were ruled by their Talars.

In the north were the flesh people. They were adventurous, exciting people who were never content to know what they knew, but always had to know more. They also were ruled by their Talars.

In the east were the wood people. They were a happy but languid folk, living amidst a vast forest, at whose center was the Superlative Tree. They were ruled by Aldrya.

In the south were the fleshless people. They were hungry and vile, and they always plotted to lure others into

their lands to corrupt them, or hurt them, or eat them. They were ruled by Bamat.

In the west were the stone people. They were slow and steady and almost never failed at what they intended, even though it took a long time for them to do. They were fueled by Mostal.

### WHY MOSTAL HATES PEOPLE

Vimorn was one of the Flesh People, and the only one who went outside his territory. He went all over the place, and he discovered the other peoples.

He saw the tall mountain to the west, and he was drawn to it. There he found the stone people, who stared but did nothing. They moved extremely slowly, and Vimorn went among them, high up into the mountain, and there he saw their master, Erasanchula Maker, an immense tool of skies and worlds and pulleys and wires and flywheels.

One foreman acknowledged his presence, Zarstorestav [Mr. Gold.] He told Vimorn who they were, and what they did, and then told him to leave.

From the mountain Vimorn had seen a huge forest to the east, and he went there. There he found the wooden people, who stared but did nothing. They moved very slowly and Vimorn went among them, high up into forested mountain. He went past the yellow trees, past the green, past the white and saw the master, Erasanchula Grower, a vast family of things that grew.

One of them acknowledged his presence, Mr. Seed. He told Vimorn who they were, and what they did, and then told him to leave.

Vimorn saw the empty land to the south. This was the Forbidden Land. Malkion the Founder had told all of his children to avoid it, and he had gotten the cautionary words from Ordelvis the Creator. But Vimorn had been everywhere else, and he'd seen some animals come and go across the river. So he went there, wading into the cold black river, and half way across the current seized him and dragged him under.

Vimorn was eternally restless, and because he could not stay in one place he was freed from that deadly river, and he crawled ashore at the far side in Bamatela. There he saw an immense, empty place void of everything. It had no time and no space and it had no features, not a mask or a heart.

And he saw that this emptiness was engulfed by something else, larger and emptier; and that beyond, there was yet again another void engulfing all.

"There is no earth here," said Vimorn, "but the dead earth." And then, there was that dead earth under his feet. She moaned with hunger.

"Well, I can't stay, so I imagine that there is no bridge, but the dead bridge."

And sure enough, a bridge appeared over the river. But it was dead, and broken, and something lived under it that was hungry, and some bats hung from the rotten bottom rafters of its ruined span.

"Then let me be precise," he said, "There is no floating boat here with a friendly boatman, except a dead floating boat and dead boatman."

And the boat man guided the boat to the shore, and then Vimorn boarded it, and he gave the man two coins and was poled across to the shore of the Good Land again. And on the shores of the Living World he said, "That is indeed the Forbidden Land, and I forbid anyone to go there again."

One day the lords of the east and west each came to Vimorn. They were having an argument and they needed a third party to judge for them.

They were arguing over whether Growing or Making was a better act of creation. Each demonstrated their arts, and Vimorn was equally impressed with both.

He said, "Both these are miraculous, but I am seeing only the external results. If you each will teach me something of your real powers, then I will be able to judge better."

So first Zarstorestav taught to Vimorn how to do metal sorcery, so he could use the immutable laws of the universe to act as a subcreator. Vimorn's scribe wrote the spells down in the Adamant Grimoire.

"This is mighty and will help everyone," said Vimorn. "Now Grower, what will you teach me?"

"Nothing. My secrets are not secrets for flesh men to know."

"Then I've won," said Zarstorestav the metal Sorcerer.

"No, regrettably not," said Vimorn. "For in truth, by my standards, that which I do not know is greater than that which I do know. Thus I give the prize to Grower."

Zarstorestav complained to his father, Erasanchula Mostal, who protested this judgment, saying that he should have won because Vimorn had said that he could only judge what he knows for quality. Erasanchula Mostal went to the father of Vimorn, who was Malkion the Founder, the Erasanchula Law.

But Malkion said, "I support my son over my brothers."

After this Erasanchula Mostal and the Mostali [the metal people] closed their doors to outsiders. They made some Latsom [fast people] to keep everyone out. They did not trust the Flesh People, and they didn't like Aldrya and the plant people. They put a fence all the way around their land, which they called Thakarn. They forbade anyone to cross over into their land, upon pain of being reprocessed.

Vimorn had five sons and five daughters. His daughters went off to marry among the nobles of other lands.

### THE CHILDREN OF VIMORN

Vimorn has three families of children.

After he was initiated to be an adult he married Kalonia, and they lived in the land of Hestanadarol in Vimornela. They had four sons and six daughters, and they were called the Hestanadaroli, or more commonly "The Seekers" or "The Scouts." They were his first family of children.

He also worked with all of his brothers when they created the race of the Erasko, and the five whose head he made were called the Pelans. They were his second family of children.

Finally, he found three, all of whom were similar but unlike him, and they were called East, North and West. They were his third family of children.

### VADEL

Vadel was one of the Seekers. He was the Viymorni who went outside the western lands, which were the laws of Malkion. He was overly curious, and he disobeyed the Laws of Malkion to satiate his curiosity.

Vadel was the one to let Disobedience come among the Malkioni.

Vadel was the one to let Deceit come among the Malkioni.

Vadel was the one to let Greed come among the Malkioni.

Vadel was the one to let Gluttony come among the Malkioni.

Vadel was the one to let Theft come among the Malkioni.

Vadel was the one to let Arrogance come among the Malkioni.

Vadel was the one to let Hate come among the Malkioni.

Vadel was the one to let Incest come among the Malkioni.

Vadel was the one to let Death come among the Malkioni.

Vadel was the one who let the Devil come among the Malkioni.

The Devil was his husband and his servant, and the Devil was his wife and his master, and the Devil was his God and his demon.

Vadel taught these sins to his children, and the children to theirs, and the evil permeates them all and their grandchildren so that anyone who trusts them at all is a fool, is subject to corruption, is subject to punishment, banishment and death.

### VADEL FIGHTS BAMAT

Here is how Vadel went bad.

Vadel himself went outside Danmalastan to explore. He went south once where he met a thing that had no material form. This had been considered impossible by the Viymorni before this, since Zzabur had said everything has matter and energy. The thing was only energy. Vadel got a Kachasti to speak with it, and then with the help of his strongest Vadeli children he imprisoned the energy into a slowly burning staff that had been made by the Kadeniti. They sent it to the Tadeniti, who copied how to do this, and they sent it to Zzabur.

After that, Vadel continued onward. He and his companions met an Energy Complex then, which had many smaller powers about it, its own great intelligence, courage, and a cruel streak. It took the energy right out of some of the younger Vadeli, and this was done in retaliation for its own loss of energy that had been captured and sent to the Erasanchula Zzabur. It left behind only poor bodies that staggered away, mindlessly roaming around the world and

scaring everyone afterwards. Vadel and his survivors survived only because they ran away.

Vadel went to his friends in Mostal's Mountain for help against this Energy Complex. They gave to him the Iron Energy Prison that had no energy at all, but was only material. Vadel meantime had worked his with daughters to make spells to conquer energies, which they called the Seizure Enchantment. Then they went back to the Energy Complex with the Seizure Enchantment and the Iron Energy Prison. They fought with the Energy Complex, and they captured many of its followers, and they sent it fleeing away.

As before, Vadel sent this to be recorded by the Tadeneti, and then on to Zzabur to be researched. On his visit, Vadel received the Sorcerous Energy Prison from Zzabur, which was made by the Kadeniti, and had been copied from the Iron Energy Prison.

Vadel and his Vadeli then went on, and they met an energy even bigger than the Energy Complex. It was a strange complex of forces, and was so great that it even controlled all of the matter that had gathered around it too. It was of the magnitude of a Secondary Erasanchula [minor god], though such measurements would only be made much much later. Whatever it was, Vadel fought the god, and would probably have been defeated again except that the Sorcerous Energy Prison worked. It was a wooden rod, with bronze and gold rings, not iron, carved with runes.

On the next journey, Vadel met the Lord of Energies. This was a Erasanchula, Bamat, one of the equals of Zzabur. Vadel fought and fought, losing his own people to the enemy, but also countering most of the energies that attacked him. Finally both combatants withdrew from the fight that first time. Afterwards Vadel returned, and they fought again and again, but neither of them ever fully overcame the other. During this time Vadel learned all the essentials about fighting against energies and gods. They called it Energy Conquest Magic.

On the way back Mostal's own servant, Umostal [Tin Mostal], met Vadel on his way to see Zzabur. Umostal demanded that the Energy Prison be given to him then and there, since it had been copied by Zzabur without permission. He said that this was a Mostal Magic, and it must not be in the hands of mortals. Umostal waited for it. Vadel walked around him, ignoring the requested demand, and gave it to Zzabur. Umostal waited there for a very long time, until it saw many duplicates of the thing he sought. He demanded those too, without success, and eventually realized it would not succeed. At last Umostal went back to his creator Mostal with the news of the refusal.

This was the cause of the rift between humans and Mostali. The Mostali refused to give anything else to the people, who began to mindfully copy everything that they had ever gotten from the Mostali.

One time the Mostali sent a whole century of creatures out to forcefully take away all copies of the Energy Prison away from everyone that they met. These creatures were successful at first, harvesting the tools (and many others in the process). Vadel, who had avoided Umostal so easily, taught magic to his children so they could avoid pursuit, and

even to steal them back. At last Horal fought them and destroyed every Mostali that he and his army could find, until the last of them were withdrawn to Mostal Mountain.

### **THAKARN, DWARF STRONGHOLD**

The Mostali had many strongholds, and they were all connected to each other in mysterious dwarfish ways. Thakarn was the oldest, the first stronghold of the metal people.

They had been the first victims of theft, and so they were extremely cautious ever afterwards. They were primarily concerned with preserving themselves to do their work. They made a fence around their land to mark the territory, and told everyone to stay out.

Later on, because the Vymorni and Vadeli did not obey a verbal command, they made physical walls, and they had patrols and wards set to destroy anyone who came in. They were generally successful in this guardianship.

However, the thieves were never content and grew more jealous and angry when the Mostali kept their knowledge to themselves. They determined to destroy the Mostali of Thakarn with a flood. They summoned a huge wave to attack them.

The masters of the metal people met to resist this. They made a huge wall shaped like the prow of a ship that diverted the flood and divided its strength into two parts. These flowed around Thakarn and made it an island. This was Mostal's plan, for it made the place safer for the time being.

The Mostali were happy that the flood had destroyed all the pestiferous human beings that had swarmed about the hills and valleys that were now flooded by the seas. But they claimed that the submerged land was theirs, and that they would get it back.

The Mostali composed a huge spell, and they fabricated a device to turn all the energy of the colony upon it. They then started it, assigned a crew to tend it, and turned to more important things.

The mostali then entered into the Fourth Action, and duplicated their core devices, personnel and connections and distributed them around the world. As each site became settled they began to create their own particular parts of the mostali machine. The purpose was to raise the land and reclaim it.

The Land Raising proceeded with irresistible determination. The ground beneath the raging Churkenos Sea began to slowly rise. The water could not resist it. The sea slowly grew more and more shallow.

Then earth broke the surface. Centered on the Vaybeti Convergence, the ground rose above the water level. It kept growing, until all was dry between the Senbanth Sea and Chir, save for the Bosta Sea which the Mostali used as a source of materials.

One day Lord Vand of the Northern Vadeli sent a message to Zarstorestav the Mostal Sorcerer that the Tadeniti army was going to attack them. The Mostali checked in the hidden place that Lord Vand had indicated and saw it was true.

Then Lord Vand volunteered to send his captains and regiments to serve the Mostali army in whatever manner they desired, for 500 days. All he asked was to have the victorious Mostali afterwards come to his palace to meet, and to shape rocks.

Tadenitela fell quickly to the combined armies of Vand and Mostal, with the refugees fleeing *en masse* to distant Zerendel. The Mostali left the Vadeli in temporary charge of the land.

When it was time for the mostali to go to meet Lord Vand they began building a bridge over the sea between. Churkenos was a narrow and raging river. The mostali had a huge crane and it dropped gigantic pillars into the Churkenos. The river was forced to go around them. Then they built a bridge to Parendal Island, where Lord Vand lived. Ceremonial Master Jewel of Silver met with Lord Vand, and Lord Vand was slow and patient enough to meet standards of protocol. For entertainment they made the Mammoth Elephantine Wall. [This wall had appendages that protruded from it, and they were able to move, and they stomped on any invaders who came too close. It also had hanging appendages that could reach down and pick up foes, and hurl them far away.] After that the mostali were friendly only to the Vadeli, and they occasionally lent some device, or sold the page of a grimoire. But in general they resisted participation in any of the ongoing struggles among the peoples around them.

Nonetheless, the jealousy of the increasingly corrupted humans caused them to attack the mostali again. They caused their allies, the aldryami, to attack their own earth, the eastern mountain. They sought the Mostali Key House there. The gods, a corrupt race of Erasanchula, poured into the House of Keys and broke the pillars of the hall, and the axes of the wheels and the empty space between. The mountain collapsed; it broke into a million pieces and became nothing.

An immense crevice tore the world asunder, into several parts. Zzabur directed it to destroy Thakarn and Somelz. But the foes didn't calculate the density of the block that is the mostali land. It is denser than anything, and so when the crack reached the block the force of the blow was diverted away and it only knocked a side off.

As always, waters rushed in upon the empty space, but Thakarn was still intact. The Great Bridge, long land bound, fell down from the shock. But the stronghold was intact.

Then the Zerendel sorcerers struck, and the second blow shook the universe. Another crack shattered the world. The world, its immense block of being, fell apart into pieces with the void widening between the pieces.

Thakarn was always called the Magnetic Mountain. First, because it drew things to it. Second, because it drew all iron and steel towards it. Finally, later, because it revealed its powers by drawing the world back together. The drawing powers of the mountain attracted the other parts of the world to return to each other. The nearest part drew closer and closer, faster with each moment. Then the coming-together world did what the coming-apart one could not. The parts of the world slammed together, and in the impact the great mountain of Thakarn was jarred off its base. It



moved, sliding upon the world and setting off huge landslides that changed the shape of the mountains.

This was fine with the mostali, who wished to only be left alone to do their work. They now had great repairs to make as well. They were protected from the monsters outside, and they were prepared to fight the monsters inside as well.

### **[AFTER THE DAWN]**

[After the Dawn this place is lost to Human knowledge. However, we know now it is within the mountainous region called Curustus.]

### **THE TADENITI WAR**

The Tadeniti were one of the six Malkioni peoples. They lived in the southwest part of the Danmalasten.

Without any warning, because they did not understand omens, they were destroyed by the Vadeli, aided by Helering allies.

This was the first time that any Malkioni tribe had fought another Malkioni. [This happened at the time of the Great Flood period, after the Churkenos is formed.] More horrible, though, was that the Vadeli separated all the Tadeniti people into matter and energy, and gave the matter to the Mostali of Magnetic Island. They used the energy themselves. The Vadeli afterwards went raiding far and wide against everyone, and did not give mercy even to their kin.

### **THE MAN OF GOLD**

The Man of Gold one day came to the islands where some cold, miserable people lived. He showed them how to make fire, how to make nets and spears, and how to hunt the pigs and catch fish.

The people called themselves the Vaybeti. They were happy to do anything that the Man of Gold said. The Man of Gold made leaders among the people. He made three groups: one was of spies, the second of workers, and the third were the ordinary people who caught fish and pigs.

The spies he sent to Tadenitela, to look at everything and come back with reports.

The workers raised some massive stones and carved them with signs.

The people caught fish and pigs.

One day some of the Vaybeti were thrown off stream and landed in a strange place. After they met the people there they came back, and they had some yams and cane and headfruit, and tobacco to smoke and mushrooms to eat. They shared these with everyone, as was their custom, and they were enjoyed by everyone.

When the Man of Gold came back to the islands he was angry with those customs. He called together everyone from the voyage and ordered all the yams and headfruit and tobacco to be given to him. A triple hulled stone boat came to the island, all was loaded onto it, and it set off into the deep with it all, gone forever.

The Man of Gold then ordered all the people to swear this: "That I surrendered all my yams and headfruit and tobacco, and will not return to Kovano to get more." Since they said this the Man of Gold was content.

Of course, they had planted these things long ago, and after the Man of Gold went on to the next island they all grew again. The people enjoyed these all the time, and it is probably why they never raised up in rebellion.

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## **HISTORY OF JRUSTELA**

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### **BEAUTIFUL JRUSTELA:**

#### **A HISTORY OF THE SETTLEMENT**

##### **FIRST IMMIGRANTS**

These are the Olodo. They were Slontan immigrants who had been secretly brought here in the Dawn Ages. After friendly relationships had been established by the superior Nralarites, descendents of the Olodo variously claimed their ancestors came here because they had been captured by the Waertagi; or that they had been exiled by enemies and rescued by the Waertagi; or else that they had paid a huge sum of money to escape their war torn lands. It is possible that all three are true, and that three separate migrations were brought here early.

##### **THE FIRST SESHNEGI SETTLEMENT, THE NRALARITES**

When the Waertagi brought the first Seshnegi settlers to Jrustela they landed them on the north shore with building supplies, animals and food sufficient for a half year of survival without any resupply or effort on the settlers' part

required. The settlers named it Hredmorinos, which means "Great Venture."

The people had already determined that they would form a republic, with all free men having a vote to elect from among themselves nine representatives to serve on a council, which they called a parliament. This political body would jointly make all decisions affecting the welfare of the colony, and would select from among themselves a leader of the parliament. The first elected was named Faramos of Lylket.

They enclosed it on all sides with a stockade, for they knew little of this place and were naturally cautious. They began to lay in supplies for the coming winter which, when it came, was so mild that they were all astonished. They found that some of their crops fared poorly, others extremely well. The fish and coastal resources were rich, and the forest game was abundant and the colony thrived.

Shortly after landing, even before they had finished their first fortifications, Faramos (who now called himself

Famos of Hredmorinos) sent explorers inland, and both east and west along the coast. The first parties, who had orders to only go two days travel in every direction, returned with word that no one lived along the coasts, and that inland they had discovered several strange creature that they labeled *tinimints*, which means “insect people.”

The Waertagi later brought other settlers to the island, and initially they also settled along the northern coast. These new settlements were called New Frowal, Evrowal and Piskosol. All these were quite small, numbering no more than a few hundred each.

Borostonar built the first boats to explore the new land. They were modest craft, unable to sail the seas and propelled only by oars pulled by hearty volunteers. He built three before settling on a design and then built seven of those, which are called “threes” because they were the third model he made. Each was pulled by eight oarsmen, and then he made one that was twice the size, and pulled by sixteen men. With this little fleet of eight boats he set to row around the island, heading eastward and hugging the coast and landing each night. Borostonar named every place that they passed of note and where they stayed. Thus the eastern coast is today called Borostonar’s Coast. It was pleasant and unremarkable until they had turned around Pinal’s Point and turned northwest.

## THE OLD PEOPLE

Borostonar discovered people living on the south side of the island. They saw the boat and everyone ran away inland, abandoning everything they had. When Borostonar and his men explored the abandoned village they saw these were very simple people, but they could not follow their trails into the forests.

As they continued onward they saw many signs of these strange people, who they called Olodo, or “old people.”

They sailed into a great bay which he called Gerlant’s Bay, because they discovered it on Gerlant’s celebration day. He discovered that a great river of sweet water emptied into this bay, and he named it Pila River, after his wife, “the sweetest woman he knew.” They rowed up it a short way, but then returned to the sea to continue their journey.

Borostonar had seen distant mountains, but everyone was surprised that they dropped right into the sea so that there was no place for the boats to land. They continued on this way for four days, finding no water or food from the shore, and so at Point Return Borostonar turned back and they only reached a place with supplies with great difficulty.

He then returned to Hredmarinos, and when he told their discoveries everyone was amazed, pleased and then alarmed to learn of other people.

Famos told Borostonar that his explorers had also found a large river inland, which he had named the Famos River. It flowed eastward, but it was large and Borostonar had found no great rivers that emptied into the eastern coast, so they speculated that this must be the Pila River. They argued what it should be named if it was the same river, but the council reminded the men that it was set foolish until they were certain of the facts.

The next springtime, after the crops had been put down, Borostonar built more boats on the Famos River, and the governor himself led an expedition down the river. Borostonar himself walked back home, and his people had meanwhile built others boats, and he led another exploration party westward from New Frowal around the coast, trying to discover what lay there. However, his expedition was destroyed at sea. [Later triolini claimed they had destroyed the people.]

Famos floated downriver and saw many signs of the Olodo, but no people. He reached the mouth of the river, and it was seen to be where Borostonar had gone. Famos then sailed around the coast to prove he had been on the river, going the same way that Borostonar had gone.

Over the next years attempts at friendship were made to the Olodo. Some were accepted tentatively, but the Old People were fearful, and the new ones mistrustful. Rivalry developed, then conflict, and the newcomers outer settlements were destroyed. Sergalis Manlanth was their leader. They in their turn attacked the Olodo, who could not defend, and so all their villages were burned to the ground. After some time reconciliation was reached at last, and in a spirit of fairness rarely seen since, the Olodo were given the same rights as the newcomers.

As for the argument about the river names, in the end the true names of the river were discovered, as they were inhabited by beings whose bodies were water. The rivers got those names instead, and the lands around them were instead named for the people. Thus there is now the Pilarela, centered upon the Jrezar River, and also Famosela, centered upon the Curand River.

## JRUSTELI CONFEDERATION (C. 650)

In 652 representatives from the thirteen free colonies of that island met together and decided to form a confederation to maintain friendship, unity and cooperation between them all.

To resolve disputes between cities, they hold a Insight Contest. The opposing Makanite Oracles are questioned by the other city’s sorcerers in an attempt to catch them in error. Whoever wins the contest is deemed correct. This resulted in the unification of large parts of Jrusteli customary law.

However, after a period of harmony certain portions of the law proved to be notably difficult to resolve by the Insight Contest and provided a focus for intercity conflict. The Return to Rightness Crusade believes that these differences exist because the world itself is not right. If they will be allowed to return everyplace to Rightness then these differences will be resolved.

The Jrusteli Confederation proved its wise value and whenever some political, legal or economic question was ambiguously held, the Confederation Council took control of it. Thus the Council held a lot of political power.

The Jrusteli Council later was elevated to be a Principality, honored as “The First Among Equals.” After the Mahnud family managed to secure the title for themselves Jrustela was often called a kingdom.

Trymir, Hadalin, Ullmal, and Saval were all Princes of Jrusteli. Saval set things up to be King of Seshnela as well. His son, Annmak, was the King of Seshnela and Jrustela.

## THE RED WAR

The Incorruptible Sons of Damolstan were a Seshnelan group of immigrants which fought against the local mostali in the 500s. They suffered horrible losses, but at last Dunchard Spellspitter caught them in the open and destroyed every one of them. When their bodies were burnt metal ran out of the fire, and this was taken back as treasure to the capital where it was made into the Dunchard Artifacts: dishes, jewelry and three sets of nearly impenetrable armor.

[In fact, however, most of the mostali escaped, and they simply went into their mountain fastness and disappeared.]

## ORDER OF THE NEW IRON STAFF

This is a sorcerous investigation group that crafted powerful combat magic that was later used to great effect by the Army of Rightness. Their Grimoire is the predecessor to most of the military sorcerous orders of the Middle Sea Empire.

## THE THIRTEEN CONFEDERATED CITIES

The Thirteen were the dominant city-states in 650 when the Jrusteli Confederation was formed. Technically each city is equal, but they picked one city-lord to act as head of the Confederation, a First Among Equals. Hyrafos of Piskosol cleverly exploited the religious backing he'd gained after being the First Volunteer, and was selected to this office.

Although the Confederation is only 50 years old, tradition says that a First (or Prince) must come from a different city than his predecessor. The current Prince is Nanithir, who won partly because he interpreted the oracles physically rather than spiritually, and as an outstanding athlete was thus the first to pass their tests.

The information below is accurate as of the early 700s.

### ARSHU FOLA

Arshu Fola is located on the southern coast of Jrustela. It is the oldest city on the island, founded by Slontan immigrants brought there in the Dawn Ages. The inhabitants variously claimed they went there because they were captured by the Waertagi, were exiled by enemies and rescued by the Waertagi, or else paid a huge sum of money to escape their war-torn lands.

The emigrants established several settlements, clustered in the south of the island. Significant among them were Chabu, Persek, Piskato, Managar, Lostrum and Barvendaru.

At that time they were all troubled by the spirits of the land, called the Dreo. These became active only after three years of inhabitation, and made several forests extremely dangerous by organizing animals to attack hunters. The bengen and medraden tinimints also attacked people who went into certain fields. Also, useful minerals were in short

supply, and anyone who went into the mountains seeking sources disappeared.

When food became short the initial co-operation broke down between the five settlements. At that time Sergalis Manlanth was the leader of Arshu Fola, which had become the largest of the settlements thanks to the rich land and the harvest of the coastal waters. When the other four settlements massed against Arshu Fola, Sergalis Manlanth entered the nearby Cave of Nemath and placated the Dreo spirits there. This secured the safety of his town, and allowed them to eventually dominate the seven villages. With vast tracts of excellent land available for farming they expanded their numbers and territory quickly. They also fished from their twelve-oared boats called *zinrin*.

The population increased rapidly, concentrated on the southern coast. When the first Seshnelan colonists arrived on the island several centuries later the natives attacked the Seshnegi settlements by land and sea. However, the Waertagi sent four of their "little ships" (which were still much larger than the Jrusteli boats) to help the Seshnegi, and then transported another wave of settlers whose superior sorcery terrified the natives. Then another wave of settlers arrived. Hadilon of Peresk launched a ferocious campaign against them, capturing Arshu Fola after a three-year campaign. Many of the Arshu Folites fled to Umathela, taking an extremely risky voyage in their little coastal boats. Though their cities were captured or destroyed, many Jrusteli continued their stubborn resistance and weren't pacified until many years later, when Algiman allowed them access to the sacred cave.

### IRENSTOS

Irenstos was a city originally settled by the Olodo. Its riverine communications eventually allowed it to grow larger than Arshu Fola, which nonetheless retained its primacy among them.

After Irenstos became a city Darangor was a famous scholar who attracted students from across the island, and whose establishments formed the nucleus of the later Irenstos University.

### PERESK

This was another of the early Olodo cities. It was never conquered by the Nralarites, and its people are not only militant, but they are also unusually victorious. Some say it is because there is a spirit of combat living there, but the people say it is because they have combat in their blood.

This was the home of Lord Valispur the general.

### SHENILSTOS

This is another Olodo city, established during the early expansion of the Olodo settlers. Its position at the confluence of the Curand and Jrezar rivers generated rivalry with Irenstos, which had not abated into modern times.

### FROWALKEL [NEW FROWAL]

New Frowal was the first city founded by the Seshnegi in Jrustela. They lived there and expanded their rules. Its traditional authority continues.

**HREDMORINOS**

Hredmorinos was settled during the first major wave of Seshnegi colonization. Even before troubles against the “old people” had been settled its people initiated extensive hostilities against the tinimints, probably because its first lord loathed insects. When he was killed by them the other humans investigated more closely, and discovered that there were some among the strange creatures that were intelligent, and could be negotiated with, and so eventually regions were given over to them, untouched by humans.

**ERADINTHANOS**

This was the home of the Seven Explorers, who were the first scholars who studied God. It is called the Mind of Jrustela. It is famed for its scholars, holy people and cathedral.

**EVROWAL**

The ruler of this city is drawn by lot from eligible nobles, a most unusual system anywhere. He serves for 5 years.

**HATHINELTHOR**

In this city the ruler may not be related to the previous lord, ensuring that no dynasty can take a firm grip on the city. This has actually resulted in many illicit affairs between the lord and women of prominent families, in the hopes that his illegitimate sons will in fact rule after him.

**JALANSWAL**

Jalans was a grandson of Nralar the Old, thus of royal blood. He was in the second wave of settlers, and asserted himself and his family to hold all position of authority. Even today this is still “the city of Jalans.” Outsiders say that they left Seshnela because they could do nothing well, and slander them saying this is still true.

**ORPHALSKETEL [NEW ORPHALSKET]**

A great shipyard is located here, and the earliest famous shipbuilders worked here. Thus it has a tradition of greatness which continues.

**PISKOSOL**

Hyrafos, the First Volunteer lived here. Thus it’s called the “City of Volunteers.” The University of Piskosol has an intense rivalry with that of Irenstos.

**SVALWAL**

Svalwal was settled in the second large wave of immigrants.

The city was destroyed by tsunami in 665, as part of Waertagi retaliation for sailing to Umathela. Its location was considered to be so propitious that it was built on the ruins of the dead city.

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## SALOVAN’S BOOK OF EMPERORS

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**KINGSHIP****LOST, BLESSED BY GOD, AND REGAINED (501 - 789)**

We give here a list of the Kings of Seshnela, including synopsis of their reigns. The earlier part explains some early interactions that affect Jrustela, and then the others continue the great history of Jrustela, which became linked to the Middle Sea Empire. The first 31 kings of Seshnela were during the Dawn Age. Froalar was the first king. Gerlant Flamesword, the Scourger of Gbaji, was the last.

**32. NRALAR THE OLD, KING OF SESHNELA**

Reigned 501-603 - Son of Gerlant and Hupala

Nralar was surnamed the Old because he lived so much longer than did most of the men of his time. He did not obtain the throne as his father had, through heroism in battle, but simply as a matter of health, vigor, and virtuous living.

Nralar was determined to assert humanity’s position in the west. He waged war against the **Stygian Empire** of Ralios because Arkat’s trolls caused so much damage. And also the Autarch of Stygia had personally **insulted him**.

During this time, too, the Nralar defeated the **Mostali** of **Iron Mountain**. The stone men betrayed an ancient pact with Seshnela, and tried to seal themselves away. **Salvid the Magus**, of the **Incorruptible Sons of Damolstan**, led an **underground war** that broke the Mostali, and sent them into flight. Nralar **took over the iron mines** for the crown.

**GERLANT**

Victorious King of Seshnela during the Gbaji Wars who ruled Seshnela from 453 to 500. He was the original bearer of the Flamesword. Afterwards a saintly order was formed to worship him, and the original sword became an artifact of the order. He fought with Arkat for a while, but was repulsed by the betrayer’s lies. When Arkat violated the One Church then Gerlant turned from the fiend and returned to lead his people wisely.

**HUPALA**

“Where Gerlant was the model for every knight and nobleman in the realm, his beautiful wife was the same for the ladies and damsels. She was ever humble and cheerful, save for when her sons were killed in battle.”—*Flamesword Book*

**STYGIAN EMPIRE**

Arkat the Betrayer used his dark powers to overcome the people of Ralios. He was aided always by an army of terrifying trolls that would devour any of his enemies. At first people simply obeyed him, but during his long lifetime he convinced people to worship him. When he died he received sacrifice and his deluded followers created a secret web of magic to ensnare their foes.

**AN INSULT**

When Nralar's ambassadors visited Arkat the Archon did not send the needed tribute, and so insulted the good king.

**MOSTALI**

The Mostali are one of the early races of beings made by Malkion, but the Twisted Runes marred the making and they were always afterwards burnt by sunlight so they live underground.

**IRON MOUNTAIN**

Several peaks mark this cluster of steep mountains where the mostali live. It is the primary source of iron for the western lands. The mostali are jealous of their resource and prefer to never sell or trade for it. Yet ancient pacts required this place and prehistoric pacts assured that trade here would exist.

**INCORRUPTIBLE SONS OF DAMOLSTAN**

This hero band of sorcerers and knights were pledged to exceptional moral standards to increase their magical powers. They never had many members but were fierce and hard fighters. They ended during the general corruption during Thyerm's reign.

**UNDERGROUND WAR**

The Tunnel Wars, as they became known. The Seshnegi entered into the mostali tunnels and overcame them and their magic. The ancient obligations made the mostali weak. As a result many mostali were enslaved and the Seshnegi controlled the iron trade.

**TOOK OVER THE IRON MINES**

All subsequent reports (scarce though they are) cite that mostali were working there through, and past, the Imperial Age. The terms of the conquest did not need human occupation or overseeing. The mostali gave their word and, of course, kept it to the "letter of the T."

**33. NEPUR, KING OF SESHNELA**

Reigned 604-632 - Son of Nralar

Nepur was one of the many sons of Nralar the Old. His older brothers were passed over in his favor, they having been deemed unfit to rule the kingdom by a council of nobles and churchmen. At the moment before being crowned Nepur confessed that he was "rent by resignation and fear of the consequences." Yet, never in his reign did he act that way. Though his reign he maintained the united kingdom, and he settled all struggles against outsiders.

At the beginning of his rule a great many descendants of Nralar **left the kingdom**, sailing upon Waertagi ships

over the ocean towards an unnamed destination. They founded **Hredmorinos** in Jrustela. They had taken the "**Froalar solution**" in the hope of removing themselves as rivals to the throne, and so thereby remove the causes for civil war. Instead, civil war broke out anyway and the departure of the virtuous had fatally weakened the kingdom.

Seshnela was reinforced with difficulties when **another Migration left Brithos**, some of the emigrants staying in Seshnela. Others tried to enter Jrustela, but although some were allowed to settle others were recognized as being incorrigible and refused entry. They passed south to unknown destinations.

**LEFT THE KINGDOM**

These are the Nralarites, the peaceful people who saw the looming civil war and preserved their virtue by departing to better lands and leaving the corruption behind.

**HREDMORINOS**

Hredmorinos means "Great Venture." It is still one of the great cities of Jrustela.

**FROALAR SOLUTION**

Froalar Talar departed from his homeland in Brithos to disarm an increasingly hostile struggle with his twin brother over their respective rights as Talars in the city of Drelesket. Froalar later became the First King of Seshnela.

**ANOTHER MIGRATION FROM BRITHOS**

Many times people have left Brithos because they wisely recognized the bleak soulless future of living there. Froalar was simply the first. Arkat the Liar led another huge group out during the Gbaji Wars. Another migration had come to Seshnela shortly before this one in 632.

**34. BRETNOS, KING OF SESHNELA**

Reigned 632-660 - Son of Nralar

His entire reign was filled with **civil war** as the descendants of Nepur vied for the throne. Bretnos ruled for a remarkably long time, primarily through his moderate ambition, shrewdness and stubborn honor. Taking advantage of the weakness, **leonine barbarians** from **Tanisor** and its allies invaded Seshnela (as well as distant Slontos). [A historical error, or perhaps propaganda, based on the coincidence that Slontos was invaded by barbarians during this period. However, it was a local trouble and had nothing to do with the wars in Seshnela.]

In Jrustela, in the year 646, *The Abiding Book* appeared, written by the hand of God. It proclaimed the One God, and monotheism was rediscovered by the Malkioni. The Witnesses showed everyone the *Abiding Book*. Everyone was spontaneously affected by its Infallible Truth. It provided a great new bond between all the people of Jrustela, and by 650 they had formed the **Jrusteli Confederation**. After a few years missionaries began going out of Jrustela to other places, bringing with them the new knowledge and magic of the Invisible God. Their motto was "There is no God but the Invisible God, and Malkion is His prophet."

King Bretnos welcomed the missionaries, gave them land in Frowal for a church, assigned scribes to copy the *Abiding Book*, and attended worship every day. He encouraged others to join the new church, and in 660 sponsored the **Fourth Ecclesiastical Council of Malkionism**. It was held in Frowal, intending to unite Seshnela as Jrustela had been. King Bretnos was assassinated while addressing the conference, swords and spells struck in the chamber, and chaos ruled in Seshnela again.

#### CIVIL WAR

These are the Nepurite Wars, starting between rival nobles from opposite ends of the country, but eventually devolving to fratricide and the plundering of neighboring cities in pursuit of greed and wealth.

#### LEONINE BARBARIANS

Tanisor had been pacified by Arkat, and seemed to have accepted the civilized ways of Malkion. The resurgence of the pagan Pendali peoples and practices occurred at this time, as if an underground well of ancient corruption had surfaced and polluted the souls of the people. Possibly, they had been conquered by neighbors, for it is documented that some of the leaders of this movement came out of the Tarinwood, where they had been hiding for centuries.

#### TANISOR

The rich valley of the Tanier River had occasionally been a holding of Seshnela, but the weakness of the king allowed it to break away, only to fall to the savage ways of the Pendali.

#### THE ABIDING BOOK

Everyone knows how the Hand of Makan [God] appeared and inscribed this ineffable document that brought Truth and Rigor to all who would embrace it. It was widely copied with the most perfect exactness and distributed far and wide to be the source of all the Truth and Wisdom that has allowed our Great Empire to conquer the world. The original book still resides in the Tabernacle of the Book, the chief monastery on Holy Mountain outside of Damolsket. However, it is clear today that physical distance from the original *The One Book* allows weak and jealous minds to incorrectly interpret its Immortal Wisdom incorrectly. Since it would be blasphemously dangerous to move *The One Book* it is natural to bring those wrong-headed heretics to *The One Book* to be interrogated and instructed in its presence.

#### JRUSTELI CONFEDERATION

The Thirteen Great Lords of the Golden Age formed a ruling council, and created the Insight Council to resolve disputes. It is often admired as the perfect working council of enlightened people. Certainly it was more perfect when it was new than the venial old men of the Empire period.

#### FOURTH ECCLESIASTICAL COUNCIL OF MALKION

Also called the Disastrous Council, the intentions of this gathering were excellent, but the execution corrupted

because selfish individuals argued for their interpretations rather than learning the lessons inherent in the Ineffable Truth of *The One Book*. They were the True God Regicides, a temporary alliance of Malkioni who did not accept the One Book.

#### 35. RELAM, KING OF SESHNELA

Reigned 661-666 - Son of Nepur

After the assassination of Bretnos, Relam seized the treasury, the **magical regalia**, then the throne. He reigned for a short period, but was slain in battle by his brother.

#### MAGICAL REGALIA

The regalia had been handed down since the time of Froalar, and included the Talarian Rod, the Seshnelan Crown, the Hrestolan Cloak and the Gerlantan Sword [which had been added later.]

#### 36. PAMALAR, DUKE OF FROWAL

Reigned 666-673 - Son of Nepur

Corrupt King Relam was killed in battle and his virtuous brother ascended the throne. He never recovered significant parts of the sacred regalia, which had disappeared. Hence, he modestly claimed only the ancient dukedom. Although he firmly held only a small part of the kingdom, and for a time even lost control of the royal city of Frowal, his virtue and honest efforts to maintain peace and integrity warrant his inclusion as a King of Seshnela. The corruption of the kingdom was so strong that it overcame his virtue, and he was in turn most foully murdered by his own brother.

#### 37. HYMAT, DUKE OF FROWAL

Reigned 674-676

Hymat was of noble ancestry, descending on his father's side from a minor branch of the family of **King Grimnos**, not the family of Old Nralar. He assembled the **Damned Regalia**, which were recognized and acclaimed to be the legitimate signs of the royal office.

The Duke of Tanisor brought in mercenaries from Ralios and led an army bigger than any of the dukes or counts in Seshnela. Castle by castle, he took over the kingdom. His mercenaries assaulted Frowal and slew Hymat. A large part of the city was burned to the ground.

#### KING GRIMNOS

This is the origin of the Hymatian Law. The acceptance of this king greatly expanded the opportunities for legitimate kings. Previously the candidates had been limited to first cousins of the ruling monarch.

#### DAMNED REGALIA

So called because whomever used it as their basis for power was subsequently killed in office. It was originally laughingly mislabeled as the "Regalia of Peace."

### 38. THYERM KING OF TANISOR AND SESHNELA

Reigned 677-679 - Ancestry Unimportant

Thyerm is properly cursed and castigated by all later Seshnegi historians, and even during his own lifetime was called “the Barbarian,” the “Child Eater,” and “Razer and Strangler.” Among **his own people** he was afterwards remembered as a great hero. He ruled Tanisor for many years, united Seshnela, and was crowned King of Tanisor and Seshnela, and he proudly displayed his so-called Regalia of Peace. We now know that this Ralian seized the kingdom for a short time, but was forced to fight against his former mercenary allies as well as the Seshnegi. According to Tanisorians, he granted it as a fief to his best warlord, Grodlam. Thyerm ruled in Tanisor for years afterwards.

#### HIS OWN PEOPLE

Even today, centuries later, the people of northern Tanisor and western Ralios esteem his memory, and they call him “Our Good King.”

### 39. GRODLAM THE WOLF DUKE OF MALKONWAL

Reigned 680-681

As is normal with all the barbarians related to the deluded Pendali, his ancestry was illegitimate, with several

hideous **werelions** among his fathers, **whores** for mothers and even several revolting **sibling marriages** in the lineage.

Some say Grodlam murdered Thyerm and seized the throne. Others, that it was a gift. Either way, the natives quickly revolted against him and his werewolf household.

His position proved to be untenable, however, when the Seshnegi finally united to throw out the barbarians.

#### WERELIONS

The Pendali are kinfolk with wild beasts—lions in fact. This alone living proof of just how low they are—not even human. Every so often among Pendali families a cub is born. This continues to crop up spontaneously among the lowest peasantry of Tanisor. Even the prohibition of any of them becoming pregnant by their own kind, enforced by King Meipal, has failed to breed it out of them.

#### WHORES FOR MOTHER, SIBLING MARRIAGES

Efforts by cultural relativists to excuse these abominable acts as “quaint prehistoric survivals of prehistoric customs” serve simply to expose the weakness of mind and of virtue among them.

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## THE JRUSTELI PERIOD (680-788)

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### 40. TRYMIR COMMANDER OF THE ARMY OF RIGHTNESS, PRINCE OF JRUSTELI

Occupied 680-689

Son of Hagoth, son of Alfros, son of Nralar; he was a native of Jrustela.

On a midsummer day, 680, Trymir led the **Army of Rightness** ashore from Waertagi ships. The Army of Rightness was of Jrusteli origins, and because they rigorously followed the precepts of *The Abiding Book*, was destined to right the shameful state of their ancestral land, and to bring the power of the Invisible God to them.

Many local lords joined with them, converting quickly when exposed to the True Religion and destroying all **pagan worship** among their own people. The Army of Rightness was from Jrustela, bearing with them the power of the Invisible God. Their sorcerers, especially the **Order of the New Iron Staff**, bore magic that helped sweep the battle field clear of foes. When the **werewolves** tried to sweep through the woods to reach the boats the wizards detected it, and Trymir ambushed the creatures and annihilated them, almost without a loss.

Trymir exploited his descent from Nralar to unite the Seshnegi nobles and oust the foreigners. But he never sought to be a king or lord, holding only the rank given him by the Jrusteli Confederation. Nonetheless, he enforced

peace over most of Seshnela, and kept peace with Tanisor and Nolos.

#### ARMY OF RIGHTNESS

The crusading Army of Rightness was one of the great manifestations of *The One Book* in Jrustela. Its precepts led to this force, an army determined to bring Righteousness to the deserving people of the world. Since all previous peaceful missionary attempts in Seshnela had resulted only in the martyrdom of the saintly Bookbearers, armed force was justifiably the correct method of conversion. The rapid spread of The Upright Recital under the protection of the Army of Rightness proved that it was correct and true.

#### PAGAN WORSHIP

The professed Malkionism of the old Hrestoli religion that was being practiced by the “unrightly devout” of Seshnela had been corrupt from its earliest betrayal by King Ylream, the first foul “serpent king” of Seshnela. The good works and revelation of Hrestol had alleviated the corruption and offered true insight, but still allowed the corruption of True Malkionism by not dis-allowing pagan style sacrifices. Even when those sacrifices were to Malkion and the Saints it was wrong. The fact: that this bastardized practice was performed in Tanisor and later allowed by the vile Pendali warlords who occupied noble Seshnela; is simply another proof of its inherent wrongness.

**ORDER OF THE NEW IRON STAFF**

The *Iron Staff Grimoire* provided this order with spells that were effective against everyone not of *The One Book*. Its continued value, and the fact that it is still the basis for our current military grimoires attests to the truth behind it.

**WEREWOLVES**

The Pendali had found a new method of transformation to try to confound the magic of the Seshnegi and turned into wolves instead of lions. [Actually, they just had new allies. The Telmori wolf people are from the farthest reach of Ralios. Their presence attests to the influence that Grodlam had over the serpent druids, for they reached far afield to find these allies.]

**41. HADALIN, MANAGER OF GREATER SESHNELA, HIGH DUKE OF GREATER SESHNELA, PRINCE OF JRUSTELI**

Employed 689-702, Reigned 703-708

Descendant of Borostonar the Bold, one of the initial settlers of Jrustela.

Borostonar the Explorer had a son named Bretnosonar; who had a son named Borostonar the Governor; whose son was named Bororestol; whose son was Borostonar de Jalanswal, or “the Mountaineer;” whose son was Iranrestol; whose son was Bororestol the Magus; whose son was Hadestol de Jalanswal; whose son was Hadalin the Great.

Hadalin was appointed by the Jrusteli Council to manage and govern “Seshnela and its adjacent lands.” Hadalin was inspired, as were many, by the Invisible God. Hadalin supported the School of **New Order**, one of many new sorcery groups approved, but not overseen, by the early Clergy of the **Malkioni True Church**. The School of New Order gained many adherents, who agreed with their magical implementation of an aggressive and imperial policy.

Hadalin negotiated peace with Tanisor, then alliance. He welcomed the **Duchy of Nolos** back into the kingdom with generous grants. The Malkioni missionaries of the Invisible God were safe in those lands now. He was so popular among the Seshnegi that the Jrusteli Confederation granted him the title of High Duke.

**SCHOOL OF NEW ORDER**

The School of New Order was a sorcerous association loosely associated with the Emanationalist and Reconstructionalist movements. The School taught powerful sorcerous techniques derived from their study of *The One Book* and advocated an aggressive and radical Return to Righteousness policy. This held that the sorcerers of the New Order should have a lead role in the restoring Seshnela and its adjacent lands to the Law. They included the famous philosopher-sorcerer Zositar of Dardo amongst their early members and were perhaps the first to assemble the Thirty Core Runes.

**MALKIONI TRUE CHURCH**

The Malkioni True Church was established in Jrustela in 655, with the Grand Master Ecclesiarch as its head. He exercised sole authority to appoint (or later, to approve) the Bishops (and later, Archbishops who in turn were approved to appoint bishops); who in their turn were the sole authorities to commission the Approved Clergy.

**DUCHY OF NOLOS**

He appointed his brother Hadestol as military overseer here, whose grandson was invested with the hereditary dukedom as a family possession.

**42. ULLMAL, HIGH DUKE OF GREATER SESHNELA, PRINCE OF JRUSTELI**

Reigned 708-725 - Son of Hadalin

The Jrusteli Confederation did not recognize Ullmal as High Duke when he was crowned as such by the Seshnelans. The shadow forces of the dark Stygian Empire in Ralios saw an apparent weakness, and seized a chance to **plunder Rindland**.

Unexpectedly, Ullmal **appointed his own War Bishop**, who consecrated the **Monks of Blood**. These wizards had a new grimoire of combat spells to help their soldiers. The barbarians were shocked when they saw their arrows bounce off their foes, and terrified when an infantry unit ran down their pony warriors. They didn't wait after that, and Ullmal's agents spread rumors that any wound would kill, that the sorcerers breathed out poison clouds, and that the grass blades could be turned into nails. **Marshall Mandalos** chased the Stygian army past the **Sodal Marsh**, accepting each city and castle which surrendered peacefully as long as they accepted Ullmal and the Church, and stopped only when the High Duke called them back because of other troubles.

As early as 660, as part of the general wave of innovation that followed the Jrusteli unification, inventive individuals had begun to **experiment with seagoing ships**. No humans had ever made ships before that, though they had plenty of small boats and coastal craft. The Waertagi, natives of the sea, had performed all the oversea commerce since the Dawn. On earlier occasions when people had built ships and set off to sea the Waertagi had destroyed the fledgling fleets to maintain their monopoly.

The **Jrusteli Free Men of the Sea** had actually sailed to Umathela and returned before the Waertagi retaliated. Then the ship and the city of Svalwal were crushed beneath a tidal wave. In a tremendous miracle the new Malkioni priesthood brought most of the victims back to life. Afterwards these resurrected folk were called the **Just Shipbuilders**. They were a fervent work force, dedicated to their job and to destroy the Waertagi. They made more ships, shuttling several loads of goods and people to Umathela and back, and by 713 even to Seshnela. The Waertagi raided, but with less and less success since the Jrusteli were increasingly well prepared. Finally, a Waertagi diplomat threatened to summon **Drospoly** to devour the whole island. The Prince in turn threatened them with the



“curse of the Real God, by the real Malkioni, and by real people with God’s Destiny.”

The Waertagi asked for Ullmal’s help for their cause. High Duke Ullmal, on the advice of his New Order advisors, threw in with the Confederation, which thereupon became the Alliance. Many Seshnegi took the risky voyage back to Jrustela. The Confederation sent their blessings, recognized Ullmal’s entitlement as High Duke, and **approved of everything which Ullmal had done.**

In 718 the brave and foolish Free Men of the Sea pitted their little wooden fleet to sea against the ocean itself. Their only cargo was sorcerer wizards and their new, and sometimes untested, exotic apparatus. They faced nearly all the fifty Waertagi dragon ship cities, who came to concentrate their curse and scorn. And they had awakened all of their waves so they sat on a long ridge of water overlooking the little ships, ready to drown the whole huge island of Jrustela. They had their whirlpools and waterspouts, and schools of whales, sharks, and the kraken. About the ships swam seven races of mermen ready to kill their food. All the forces of the sea were ready.

The wizards then summoned another sea god that had never been seen in the world. They called it as if it was just a spirit, and they made that god call his father, forcing it to act as necromancers force an act of demonology. The father was Tanian, who is the water of the sky world. The sky world, including its water, is made of fire. Upon the command of the sorcerers, at the will of the clergy, the sky opened and a single drop of celestial fire fell among the Waertagi ships. The waters exploded into flame and burning seas surrounded the Waertagi fleet, even under water. The flames could not be quenched. Ships, mermen, waves and waterspouts all impossibly caught fire and were destroyed. The burning even flowed down under the water, so there was no escape for anything in its path. The Jrusteli called this the **Battle of Taniens Victory.** Many Jrusteli ships were destroyed, and for some their crews were killed even though the wood remained. It was a tremendous victory against Nature itself. The fleet sailed home, leaving behind the burning sea.

The next year had many strange events. **The Sea of Flame** remained. Several huge tracts of burning waters stretched across the Banthe, seeming to stay in place, stretched in long streams pointing, though hardly moving, towards Magasta’s Pool. They were huge, a hundred miles long. They blocked the Seshnela/Jrustela shipping routes for many years, and eventually diminished as they calved off many firebergs which slipped into the Homeward Ocean. But the Sea of Flame wasn’t entirely cleared for another century.

Without any warning, a huge fleet of strange ships landed at Pithdaros. Though shipping was constant, and growing, no one saw them approach. The fleet bore an army black men and women with strange weapons, all of them with so many spirits about them that it was like another small army. They called themselves *Pithdarans*, or Army of Justice. They said they had come to fight the against the evil teachings of the Bad God, the Deceiver, Gabaja. They said their depraved god Bolongo had come to

Genertela and done this evil, so they had followed to help destroy their god’s bad deeds. Vile seas had tried to delay their approach, they said, but they had prevailed despite losses, and arrived.

“Let us Serve,” they said.

Ullmal hurried to meet them at Nolos, and they naturally succumbed to his princely presence. The High Duke told them about the Stygian Empire, which had been ruled by the Gabji, whom they called Arkat. Ullmal escorted them through Tanisor, gave them supplies, and directed them against Ralios. At first they went willingly, but after a few fights they spoke with their foes. The Pithdarans decided they had been deceived and went back to where their boats had been, but their boats were gone. They then rounded up all the people in that area and sent them away upon pain of death to return. They sent word to Ullmal, that they planned to stay and wait for Gbaji to come back, and wished to be not bothered until then. Ullmal wisely agreed, and resettled his own displaced peoples. The descendants of these **Agimori** still live in Pithdaros.

Ullmal died in bed.

### PLUNDER RINDLAND

Rindland had not yet accepted the One God, but were an ally of Seshnela. When they appealed for help from Ullmal he required their leaders to join the One True Church, which they did because they saw that it was True. Only cynics claim otherwise.

### APPOINTED HIS OWN WAR BISHOP

Ullmal was censured by this, to which he protested that it had come as “an inspiration from Malkion, as Hrestol had gotten.” He was further censured for this “false prophecy.” The War Bishop was Nralanostos de Neleswal, a native of Seshnela.

### MONKS OF BLOOD

This was formed by Varastral, a sorcerer who dared to delve outside of the known nodes of power and expand the knowledge of military sorcery. Varastral was a key advisor to the High Duke.

### MARSHALL MANDALOS

He was another key advisor to Ullmal. Along with Varastral and Nralanostos they are the “Four Keys to Empire,” being the models for our subsequent glorious expansion. They are the “Keys of Politics, Church, Military and Sorcery.”

### SODAL MARSH

The marsh dwellers took the opportunity presented by the difficulties to swarm forth and plunder all the regions around them, and then dared to defy the Marshall with the most insulting terms. He was helpless to punish them, but revenge came in the reign of King Annmal the Peacemaker, when the Womb Shriveling Curse ended the rank race that had inhabited the marsh since the Dawn.

**EXPERIMENT WITH SEAGOING SHIPS**

Zerenrestol Greatship was the innovator in this. He established the basic design for the standard ships that were made for the next few generations. His first ship was named *Ustala's Hope*. Ustala was his wife.

**JRUSTELI FREE MEN OF THE SEA**

This heroic group epitomizes all that is best about the Jrusteli: their courage, innovation and adventurous spirit that even today is a mark of their experimental mind.

**JUST SHIPBUILDERS**

This is a monkish Order dedicated to humility and construction. The religious leanings of this inspirational group eventually led to the magical ships, including the deadly leviathans that forged victory in the far east.

**DROSPOLY**

Drospoly is one of the Great Monsters of the Deep. The Mermen claim it as their ancestor, and when their king, Eganastaforthmanthi, was questioned he boasted that it was gestating creatures that were so horrible that they would destroy even our bronze leviathans. However, when he was submitted to the pressures of *The One Book* he recanted, admitting it was all lies.

**APPROVED OF EVERYTHING WHICH ULLMAL HAD DONE**

The Ullmalian Pardon was a great compromise in which both parties recognized their errors. The High Duke admitted that his claims of prophecy had been overstated, and that his naming of a bishop had been in error. The Ecclesiarch, for his part, recognized Nralanostos to be the first Archbishop. [Thus giving him the authority to name his own bishops and Approved Clergy.]

**BATTLE OF TANIEN'S VICTORY**

Here the sorcerers of *The One Book* proved the Truth that their inspired magic was stronger than any of the False Eransachula, for they forced the "gods" to do their bidding despite themselves.

**THE SEA OF FLAME**

Fortunately, most of this has subsequently disappeared, flushed down the Great Whirlpool to light up the Underworld. The great heroquester Nralarestol told me that, when he had once been in the Underworld, a vast portion of it had been lit up by these fires.

**PITHDARANS**

This was their own name for themselves, which means "Army of Justice."

**AGIMORI**

They called themselves by this name, and fascinated our scholars with the tales of their homeland. These tales were widely mocked, "No one could live that way," said Derenralar the Professor. Yet these also provided the impetus to explore the southern continent.

**43. SAVAL, COUNT OF ORPHALSKET; CHAMPION OF MALKION, PRINCE OF JRUSTELI; LATER ALSO SACRED OVERLORD**

Reigned 729-734

Saval was of the great lineage of Great Damol, the legendary hero of the Dawn Ages.

Here are his 27 ancestors since the Dawn: Dandamol "of the Tower," Danralar, Vorarestol, Danolar, Meresaval, Dansaval "Goldman," Dandamol "the Great Squire," Beronanabor "the Falconist," Freksamal, Malostal, Danral, Mebestan, Dansaval "Wideland," Mebestan "the Younger," Grodrestol, Mebestan "the Proud," Dorosaval, Vorarestol "Greatknight," Dandamol "Twiceborn," Dansaval, Dandomol "of Ralios," Mebestan "the Inheritor," Dansaval "the Lucky," Saval "the Fat," Mebestan "the Collector," Evisdamol "of the Frontier," Saval "the Swordsman," and Dandamol "Marsh Master."

Saval's rule is a testament to the power of the Invisible God, whose intervention saved him to uphold the justice of the world.

When Ullmal died a coterie of wizards declared that **Pilif the Magus would be crowned next**. He was the prelate of the New Order, and a very powerful wizard. Many people in the kingdom supported him, but most of the noblemen protested, and many clergy were undecided. For two years clever arguments ensued, but at last the Malkioni Church declared itself to be against Pilif and asked the noblemen of Seshnela to deliver one of themselves to be rightful king.

Saval was selected, and accepted. He was a much admired warrior, a concerned administrator of his lands, and a friend to the commoners. He had already earned the enmity of the New Order when he argued eloquently against their participation in the rites of knighthood.

The wizards acted quickly and decisively, gathering all their best forces together to hunt and attack Saval. To everyone's surprise Saval evaded them. He obtained promises from whomever he could, and then sprang his trap. He surprised the Blood Monks off duty, slaughtering them all, then plundered and burned down their monastery. With the treasure he fled to **Sanderal**, where some people kept their promises to meet him. Pilif too came quickly, in force, to kill him.

Pilif and his unsacred band were beaten, to everyone's surprise. Saval gathered a few more of his own forces. Still, **Saval's Loyal Twelve** seemed no match for Pilif and his sorcerers. In the brief combat most of them were killed. Then Pilif, enraged and gigantic with the power of his magic, cast the spell to summon the **Power of Seshnegi Kingship**. Even those wizards that were flying were knocked to the ground when a gigantic serpent reared up from the earth. It wore Saval and his companions upon his head like a crown. The creature inhaled all the magic, then devoured Pilif and the New Order, and lowered back to the ground and left behind only a specter. The Loyal Twelve all lived, brought back to life, and they slaughtered every foe,

one and all. The great specter gave further instructions on how to stop the wizards, and then disappeared.

As instructed, Saval was crowned with all prescribed rites, and so was called Sacred Overlord, as in ancient times. These rites were recognized, even before they were performed, as being the most ancient rites that were used to consecrate and crown **Froalar, the First King**. Some protested that these were pagan rites, but they were done. Despite rumors, the king never participated in pagan rites.

Saval also received the special blessing of the church to destroy the rest of the New Order, which he did for the rest of his reign. The Jrusteli contingent of the New Order sought an army and navy from the Alliance, citing pagan practices and rebellion. Instead, the order was investigated. Even in Jrustela it was disbanded, and its ideas clarified to an acceptable limit within the Invisible God.

This generated the **Real Reassessment** among the philosophers, clergy, and other leaders in Jrustela. As a result of their discussions, they emerged with a new set of operational spiritual parameters. They forbade many types of magic. Other sacred and magical workings were allowed only with restrictions, which were sometimes slight, but more often were limited to certain groups, times or under supervision. [These restrictions were afterwards increased, with various groups jealously guarding their proprietary rights.]

#### **PILIF THE MAGUS WOULD BE CROWNED NEXT**

The *Abiding Book* insists that no person dedicated to sorcery can be King. Such is contrary to the Laws of Malkion.

#### **SANDERAL**

The Sweet Victory Cathedral now occupies Ullmal's command post. The serene groves around the cathedral are the trees that grew rapidly as Pilal advanced. Pilgrims can spend their days wandering the forest on the Battle Pilgrimage, going from monument to monument to learn of the fight and contemplate the lessons to be gained from their study.

#### **SAVAL'S LOYAL TWELVE**

The "Twelve Verses of Loyalty" were composed around this sacrifice of good men. Most interestingly, it also included two women. One was Saval's betrothed Eraxemela; and the other was Oferia, the legendary "Woman of the Sword" who defined every convention and proved that the world had there was a place for knightly females. [This "breaking the strictures of gender" created the "vexatious dilemma" that drove later generations of churchmen to distraction. They tried to put women "back in the parlor," but the sanctity of tradition surrounding Saval prevented their desired triumph.]

#### **POWER OF SESHNEGI KINGSHIP**

Pilal summoned this to empower himself, believing that he would obtain a surge of magical energy because his cause was honest and just. It was neither.

#### **FROALAR, THE FIRST KING**

Froalar was the first King of Seshnela. He had led the migration of peaceful people out of Brithos to prevent civil war. He is recognized mainly as a paragon of selfless kingship. [Froalar was the father of Hrestol, and adopted the caste-shattering Way of Joy discovered by his son. People conveniently forget his semi-pagan ways; his marriage to Seshna, the land goddess; and the fact that his subsequent dynasty were semihuman, at best. They were called the Serpent Kings because they had snake bodies instead of legs, and wielded great powers that did not stem from any Malkioni tradition.]

#### **REAL REASSESSMENT**

This conclave is recognized today as one of the greatest gatherings of wisdom ever assembled since the Age of Malkion. (Many of the magic and ideas of the New Order were carried forth by the God Learners. Their practices and attitudes eventually characterized the entire empire, but that was yet centuries away.)

### **44. ANNMAK THE PEACEMAKER KING OF SESHNELA**

Reigned 734-751 - Son of Saval

Annmak was a popular young man, pious enough to earn the respect of the clergy but vigorous enough to be an admired hunter. He had always made his intentions clear about being crowned after his father. Some wizards worked with the ancient Seshnegi rites, and they created from that a spell that was acceptable to the Invisible God. It was the **Investiture**, and with it Annmak was blessed King of Seshnela, Duke of Frowal, etc. No serpents protested.

Annmak is significant because he was the first Seshnegi king to be enthroned with Malkioni rites, blessed officially as king by the Invisible God. Thus after seventy years the task of the Return to Rightness Crusade was almost ended.

Annmak sent the crusade to finish one last sacred task. The church blessed the hardened soldiers and knights and sent them away to fight in an ugly war against the Stygian Empire, in Ralios.

In 740 the army of Seshnela and the Return to Rightness Crusade crushed Archon **Paslac**, destroying even his uz allies. The Stygian Alliance shattered, and military resistance collapsed. With lightning swiftness the whole **Cult of Arkat** was hunted down, their records destroyed, and their holy places razed. Thus, after 240 years, did the prophecy of King Gerlant come true, and **Marshall Nisaro** bore the Firesword to destroy the grave of evil Arkat.

Annmak's reign was afterward peaceful, as he and his army harvested the rewards of their virtuous efforts. Annmak was always far thinking, and he sponsored a ship building program, and gave money to the sailor's orders in his ports.

#### **INVESTITURE**

The specter of the king also told where to find the Regal Regalia, but his instructions were obscure and they were not recovered by the time of Saval's coronation. They were later discovered by Velemena, a niece of the Sacred Overlord.

They were subjected to many tests of authenticity, but Saval declared he would not use them, and they were used for the coronation of his son.

#### PASLAC

The Archon of the Stygian Empire was chosen from among a secret coterie of wizard priests whose customs included devouring living creatures, drinking blood, coupling with uz, visiting the Underworld to gain teachings, and annual defecation upon a copy of *The Abiding Book*. Paslac was captured, and turned over to a band of virtuous monks who interrogated him until he poisoned himself. Afterwards his body was dismembered, parts burned and his head was sent on a boat down Magasta's Pool.

#### CULT OF ARKAT

Arkat was a wicked, evil human being who is now worshipped in Ralios. (The abominable worship of human beings is widespread among Pagans even today.) They offered sacrifice to this human betrayer of great infamy. That is a sure sign of the great perversity that has pervaded Ralios for centuries.

#### MARSHALL NISARO

The Great Purifier is the only non-king to have borne the sword, a portion of the Regal Regalia. [That is, outside of officials at court whose job was to bear it for the king.]

### 45. MEIPAL, KING OF SESHNELA

Squandered 751-754 - Son of Annmak

Meipal is proof that birth order is a poor reason for being king, and that disease has its good too. Meipal was a indulgent and dull fellow, with little sense of discernment. He died of exposure, after passing out with his friends in a snowstorm.

### 46. ORVANSFAL, KING OF SESHNELA

Ruled 755-768 - Son of Annmak

Orvansfal did not expect to be a king. He was the fourth son of Annmak. To his family he'd been a rather strange and extravagant clerk, who held an annual ball for merchants. Orvansfal owned merchant companies engaged in trade directly with Umathela and, more importantly, Kralorela. But they made the **Jrusteli Choice** and he became king.

No wars or threats were to be seen, and everyone associated with Jrustela's loose alliance was thriving. This was a time of general adventurism among the **Middle Sea Alliance**, and Orvansfal sponsored many such journeys. Many failed to pay off, but the **Immanent Mastery School** did. Orvansfal had been a sponsor since meeting its leader, **Gillam De' Estau**, who was, in the king's opinion, "a slightly crazed man." On his deathbed he learned he had acquired a share in the conquest of Kralorela.

#### JRUSTELI CHOICE

This means that they chose him because he was either: 1. the best choice; or 2. a compromise candidate.

#### MIDDLE SEA ALLIANCE

The united Seshnegi Kingdom and Jrusteli Confederation went by this name at the time.

#### IMMANENT MASTERY SCHOOL

This was an Emanationalist Order and School that purified a pagan methodology and used it as a guideline for their own self development. They defined certain stages of wisdom as having been obtained when a particular spell was mastered. The spells, interestingly, drew from draconic nodes that many consider to stem from someplace other than the Malkioni Planes. However, no one has been able to prove that peculiarity and so the process is accepted. In the process of this spell acquisition they acquired tremendous powers, being able to transform partially into dragons. This allowed them to be acceptable to the Kralori pagans, and contributed to their success in that strange land.

#### GILLAM DE' ESTAU

Gillam is still alive today, ruling as the Emperor of Kralorela and contributing greatly to the wealth and power of our good empire. He has sent his Good Dragon Soldiers to combat the evil dragons of the Dragon Empire as well, further proving his virtue and the correctness of his Order.

### 47. SVALAK, KING OF SESHNELA

Reigned 768-789 - Son of Orvansfal

Svalak was a prominent leader among the Middle Sea Allies. Without conquest, Svalak accepted several **Safelster** lands under his protection. No foreigner dared to fight against him. He built **war fleets**.

Thanks to his father's foresight, Svalak controlled most trade out of Kralorela. He was so rich that he built an entire **Kralorelan palace in Valtorwal**.

Svalak also sponsored the formation of migration companies, and sometimes gave protection and support as well. During his reign the port city of **Svalakswal** was established on **Melib**, with a fleet and a war fleet to trade with **Teshnos**. Teshnos was subsequently conquered and overrun. Soon other cities dotted the coasts there, and it was called the colony of **Eest**.

#### SAFELSTER

The wealthy urban lands of central Ralios center about the great Felster Lake. The city-states there are under the curse of Arkat, unable to fully accept the *The One Book*, to unite under the One God Makan, and unable to accept the peaceful ways of our good Empire. It crawls with sedition, skulks with betrayal, and seethes with incipient rebellion. Yet, the goods made there are popular with our people.

#### WAR FLEETS

The shipyards of Jrustela are one of its most important assets. The skills of Orifiar and Gilam made our ships magical and superior, but the skills of Argardaren have made them deadly. With them we have defeated the clumsy barges of Fonrit, the plant ships of the vile antagonist Errinoru, and the massed tallships of Vithela.

**KRALORELAN PALACE IN VALTORWAL**

There are some who question this palace, seeing decadence and menace in its foreign structure and layout. Yet we need to be liberal in our outlook, and within this graceful edifice one can find pleasure, sanctity and grace.

**SVALAKSWAL**

The enemy city had to be destroyed, for it was a pestiferous nest of poisonous magic that polluted the very minds of our sailors who had landed there. They would not have betrayed us if they had not been exposed to its toxic reverberations. The salted ground of its temple is worthy of the annual curses heaped upon it. The old Free Port established here was the base for our expansions to the other territories, and it is now the headquarters for the entire colony complex of Eest.

**MELIB**

The island of Melib is a wonderful addition to our eastern holdings. It was taken by the great hero Ordanal, who was owner of a sword called Cutting Edge of the East. Through the wisdom of seers he learned of its origin, and he brought the great weapon back to Melib and placed it in its ancient

temple. As a result he was acclaimed King Ordanal, but he could not remove it again, and it is still there, revered as a god by the stupid pagans of that isle.

**TESHNOS**

It is a mystery to me how the lazy Teshnans are capable of making artifacts and export goods of such exquisite beauty. I am amazed to think of what they might do if they set their minds to industry instead of sloth.

**EEST**

The collective eastern colonies report to the Overgovernor of Eest, but this is an archaic office that has outlived its usefulness. Tryrestol is a decadent governor with debauched tastes and heretical ideas. He comes from a family noted for their weakness, and has the blood of Arkat in his veins from his mother's side. He skims profits off every ship that passes through his port, and takes a portion of the Emperor's own wealth as well. The empire will be better off if he is removed and the seven lords of Kralorela, of Teshnos, Teleos and the Eastern Isles report directly to the Imperial Council.

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## THE MIDDLE SEA EMPIRE (789-990)

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**48. SVAGAD****EMPEROR OF THE LAND AND SEA**

Reigned 789-805 - Son of Svalak

Svagad was the first **Emperor of the Land and Sea**. The political entities formalized their Alliance relationships into a political structure of the Emperor and High Council, which included both secular and religious leaders. Through political maneuvering Svagad, the King of Seshnela (which included Tanisor), was named Emperor. Though other regions' leaders could theoretically rule the Empire after him, none ever did. The initial members included the Kingdom of Seshnela, the Jrusteli Alliance, and the **Umathelan Coalition**.

He increased the empire's territory. He conquered **Slontos**, bit by bit, driving out draconic influences and appointing governors and a military Duke by the end of his reign. In these battles his army destroyed the last of the **Loper People**. [Note that though Svagad is credited with destroying the lopers, he did not personally participate in the battle.]

Svagad was the "Richest King of Seshnela." He transported the entire town of **Hungpu**, including its population, from Kralorela to Jrustela. His Imperial Fleet, upon which he went from province to province, was guided by a friendly Naiad; and had a hundred gilded galleys, each with its own protective undine and sylph. He indulged in the **Angazabo Diet**, sponsored companies exploring the **East Isles**, had every kind of boat sent to him, but never found the **Sendereven**.

Svagad sent a dozen explorations westward to seek lands there, but none of them were heard from again, so he ordered them stopped.

**EMPEROR OF THE LAND AND SEA**

The accession of Svagad to this exalted position was a natural step in the progress of converting the entire world to our benevolent rule. The Regal Regalia spoke to the Ecclesiarch through angels and dreams to tell him of their true potential, and the "Verses of Immortal Goods" in the *Abiding Book* were finally understood. His coronation was attended by every governor and half of the dukes in the empire, and was the most lavish ceremony ever held since Time began.

**UMATHELAN COALITION**

The city states of Umathela had grown in esteem and wealth since their settlement, and even early they had coalesced into a single organization. They always select their own Duke, who must be an expert in both fighting and befriending Aldryami. But their unity was shattered by their own infighting, and now several governors rule portions of the land and it is no longer a united political entity.

**SLONTOS**

This region of few ports but wealthy interior has become important as a source of the Slontonian Goods, and also as the primary buffer against the expansion of the vile Dragons of the EWF. Its Duke is still appointed by the Emperor, for every one that has inherited the position has fallen to the enemy.

**LOPER PEOPLE**

These savages rode upon dangerous beasts that could teleport, and they brought fear to everyone that they ever

met through their greed, backed by impetuous rage. If research is correct then they had raged across most of the eastern world in a quest to find their long-lost magical sword, called Agakarak, or "Point of the Leaper." They could not be beaten in battle until Svagad sent ten magical Orders to plot their ambush, which worked so well that they are now extinct.

#### **HUNGPU**

Delight in this quaint settlement! It has all the charms of its eastern origin, with people who are obedient and kind to a fault. If you can acquire a pass to enjoy yourself there it is sure to be a pleasure, and it has none of the native vices that make the Kralorelan cities dangerous to the weak of essence.

#### **ANGAZABO DIET**

This is a diet of pearls, swallowed whole or ground into powders. The sea-born jewels are brought from all over the world and confer upon whomever maintains the diet a

sensitivity to piety, an alert perception of peoples' secrets, and a profound sense of satisfaction.

#### **EAST ISLES**

The Captain of Mokato persists in resisting our advances, whether peaceful or military, and distrusts our most benevolent wise men. There are a thousand islands here, each of them different from the others, and each of them with its own god or goddess. Those which have succumbed to our rule have enjoyed their status under the Governor of the Island Province, yet conquering one does nothing to convince the island nearby to surrender. The goods that come from here are fascinating but ultimately without value except as trinkets and novelties.

#### **SENDEREVEN**

These are supposedly a race of great sailors who circle the entire world in their boats, cruising even outside of the Gates of Dawn and Dusk. They are a lie, told to us by Vithlan spies; a ruse to make our wise men waste their time in senseless pursuits to distract them from useful tasks.

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## **THE GOVERNMENT OF THE MIDDLE SEA EMPIRE**

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*The Middle Sea Empire was a large, worldwide organization that integrated many different peoples and culture within their aegis. They were experts at innovation, which allowed them to overcome foes; at integration, which they used to rule; and at categorization and standardization, which they used to govern.*

#### **HEREDITARY NOBILITY**

When the Middle Sea Empire conquered a region they generally destroyed its upper echelons of government and installed a Governor. However, their own Malkioni cultures generally were allowed to retain their hereditary government, as long as they converted to the state religion. Thus we find kings in Seshnela, a council in Jrustela, a duke in Tanisor and an Archduke in Slontos. These hereditary positions tended to combine the governing and military arms, but the long-range goal of the imperium was to separate those by installing civilian institutions that often usurped local powers. On the other hand, a counter movement existed to hereditize the civilian positions where the locals could get away with it. Thus, the standardization within the Malkioni lands tended to be more complex and mixed than in foreign lands, where order was ruthlessly imposed.

Local social systems at the base levels were generally left intact, so that (for instance) clans continued to exist where the Orlanthe lands were overrun, the Kralori families exerted their force and so on.

#### **IMPERIAL BUREAUCRACY**

The Emperor, which quickly became an hereditary position, was the head of the empire. However, he held his job only with the cooperation of many other powerful individuals, who also tended to hereditize their jobs in their families.

Key departments within the empire were the Department of Governorship, which was concerned with

civilian rule; Department of the Army, which oversaw and coordinated the land forces; Department of the Navy, which oversaw the military seagoing forces; Department of Trade, overseeing the transport and pricing of commodities; Department of Religion, overseen by the Ecclesiarch; Department of Sorcery, which organized the many branches of magical research and power (the God Learners); and Department of Treasure, which kept the accounts. The neat organization was often subverted by individual ambition, by families infiltrating departments and instituting their families and allies into favored positions rather than relying upon the hrestolic ideals of meritocracy. The titles of the heads of these departments were generally called the Lord High Governor, Lord High Admiral and so on.

#### **CIVILIAN BUREAUCRACY** **GOVERNOR**

A Governor oversees a province. Governors report to the Department of Governorship. Some governorships were geographically based, such as Caladraland. In large places many governorships were installed in an effort to equalize the provinces in terms of population, exercising the imperial penchant to regularize organization. Thus three governors divided Esrolia (for the brief time it was controlled), though each of them was significantly more powerful than the one in Caladraland.

**DEPUTY**

Governors divided their duties among deputies. The deputy's duties varied depending on the needs of the Governor. In general, though, a deputy oversaw a Region, with a couple of "deputies at large" for some of the provinces.

**ADVOCATE.**

The Advocate is the "on the ground" worker, reporting to a deputy. Their duties are to bring the imperial orders to the locals. They collected the taxes, oversaw justice, monitored the harvests, had a local police force and so on.

**MILITARY TERMS**

The empire was careful to keep its internal affairs decentralized to keep local rebellions from occurring too easily. Thus the military arm was divided from the civilian.

**GENERAL**

A General is the commander in chief of a large area, generally several Provinces. So there is, for instance, a single General for Slontos, another for Kethaela and Wenelia, four for Kralorela, etc.

**DUKE**

Military Overseer of a Province. Responsible for supplying a contingent, usually several "battles" of a few thousand fighters.

**COUNT**

Responsible for raising, equipping and supplying the a single Battle from a selected area, usually a "region," as ruled by a Deputy.

**VISCOUNT**

Military commander of a "subregion," responsible for raising and supplying a "regiment" of about a thousand armed soldiers. These regiments were generally of a single type of troop.

**49. MODOS****EMPEROR OF THE LAND AND SEA**

Reigned 805-816 - Son of Svagad

Modos sent fleets and armies where needed to protect the territory, but did little actual conquest. **Arolanit** became a province of the Empire during his reign, which caused some friction with the talars of Brithos. Modos was sometimes called the Great Admiral because he spent great expense on ships and establishing trade relationships with distant places.

**AROLANIT**

This colony of Brithos was taken by force after providing refuge to outlaws and criminals. Their resistance was fierce, for one of their immortal warriors is nearly unkillable by any normal means. It took half the imperial resources to destroy them, and to drive out most of their population, who escaped by means we still do not know. The remaining Brithini there are all farmers, who work as willingly for us as

for their former masters. They nonetheless cling to their own ancient ways, and one of them has aged a day from the time of the conquest to now.

**50. MIGLOS****EMPEROR OF THE LAND AND SEA**

816-823 - Son of Modos

Miglos was an ambitious man. Early in his reign he was faced by conflict between the clergy and sorcerers of the Malkioni Church, and favored the clergy.

In 819 the first **Fireberg** returned. This was a residue of Tanien's Victory, and at first only small fragments were washed from the Hudaro to the Banthe to the Homeward Ocean.

In 818 the first of the **Hurricane Years** struck Slontos. These were devastatingly powerful winds, far superior to normal weather. These were sent by the wicked **EWf**, as retaliation for the land and sea raids. Every winter for seven years, they continued.

In 821 Miglos headed the **Fifth Ecclesiastical Council of Malkionism**. Representatives of the Malkioni religion came from all around to unite their religion as their countries had been united. Under the firm hand of Miglos, whose compromises were all adopted, unity was gained among all but Brithos, which refused to worship or acknowledge the Invisible God.

Miglos fell prey to the greed that he nurtured as a result of Seshnela's great wealth and overseas possessions. He prepared to conquer the whole world, starting with reluctant Brithos, and sent orders for armies and navies to assemble.

In 823 he sailed from Seshnela with the most powerful fleet the world had ever known. Forces from across the world were present, including mercenaries from distant lands which were intended to confuse the Brithini sorcerers. The clergy had spent a year in preparing spells of protection for the invaders. Halfway to the island a great storm, raised by the wizards of Brithos, struck the fleet, the ships were all scattered or sunk, and the emperor slain. This is called the **Fatal Project**.

**FIREBERG**

The Sea of Flame, formed by the wild waterfire of the Battle of Tanian's Victory, eventually washed down the Magasta Pool, leaving only a few stray fragments drifting about the oceans to cause danger for our fleets. However, our philosophers had predicted, and our heroquesters proved, that they would come again as the waters of the world washed up from Below to the Hudaro Ocean. These flaming bits began to reappear, and are called Firebergs. They move slowly and are easily avoided.

**HURRICANE YEARS**

For seven years horrible windstorms struck Slontos, sent by the Dragonlords. Traitors among us claimed it was a result of our own experiments, but they were outlawed and after considerable effort the Truth was reasserted and peace came to the air.

**EWF**

The Empire of the Wyrms Friends is the name that natives of Dragon Pass use to describe themselves. It is a distortion of the truth that the people there are slaves to dragons, which raise the people as food. Their propaganda states that they rule a vast land to the north, as if any dragons but our own Kralori allies are capable of ruling anything. They persist in attacking us in Slontos and have even ranged far enough to attack Seshnela and Jrustela. Popular rumor has said those attacks did terrible damage, and the utter destruction of the city of Ullmalwal is often cited. These are distortions and lies. For instance, Ullmal was destroyed by natural causes. The True People must always be on the alert to combat these evil beings and their lies.

**FIFTH ECCLESIASTICAL COUNCIL OF MALKIONISM**

When the aberrant practices of many outer Orders and sorcerers were revealed to the Imperial Council, the Ecclesiarch summoned this council to qualify and ascertain the truth of the rumors. Many beliefs (like the abominable Flamers) were declared heretical, their practices condemned, and their practitioners declared criminals if they did not recant. This strengthened the One Church and rid it of deviant beliefs and people.

**FATAL PROJECT**

Many have wondered how the wisest ruler in the world would have succumbed this way. It is clear now that he was seduced by his own vision of unity, thinking that destiny had declared him to rule all the West after the Fifth Council united nearly all Malkioni.

It is clear to us now that his vision of destiny was clouded, for the Brithini deserve their independence, and it is the rest of the world that is fated to be ruled by us.

**51. SUILMANT (AKA SULMAT), EMPEROR OF THE LAND AND SEA**

823-838 - Son of Modos

Suilmant was made King of Seshnela without debate, but came to the imperial throne only after considerable debate. His election was finally assured when the **Reformed Sorcerers Alliance** backed him. Many outland people rose in rebellion, knowing that no fleet or army was able to reach them.

His first problem was **Umiliath**, the largest fireberg ever seen, which was heading for Brithos. The leaders there threatened to send it against Seshnela, predicting that it would wash over the entire kingdom, if it was not stopped. The imperial clergy claimed this was nonsense, and that Umiliath would first scorch the cursed Brithini off the face of Glorantha, but the Reformed Sorcerers Alliance disagreed, saying the Zzaburite sorcerers were so powerful they would be immune, and probably strengthen the fireberg to annihilate Seshnela. Suilmant, judging by the failure of the clergy to protect his father's fleet, sided with the sorcerers. He negotiated an alliance with Brithos, sent his sorcerers to aid them, and they diverted the fireberg from both lands.

Suilmant then spent his reign building up his fleet and army. The Safelster rebellion was savagely suppressed by the God Learner Monks. They ravaged the last holdouts of the Arkat cults, and took many slaves who they shipped overseas.

**REFORMED SORCERERS ALLIANCE**

Suilmant was a honest and unsubtle man who deserved to rule, but was opposed by dissidents whose ancestors had lost their wealth and fame because they were heretics. But the backing of the true sorcerers, who called themselves the God Learner, assured his election.

**UMILIATH**

This Fireberg was over fifty miles long and twenty wide, and it moved much faster than the smaller ones did. It was sent as a test by Makan to gauge our faith and ability to unite with the Brithini in common Cause. One thousand eight hundred years earlier we had united to save the world from ice, and this time it was to save us from fire.

**52. BRILACH (AKA BRALAK), EMPEROR OF THE LAND AND SEA**

838-859 - Son of Suilmant

The first large scale conflict with the **Fonritian city states** occurred at this time. Several of the city states there ceded themselves to the Empire for protection from their neighbors. Great battles occurred against Fonritians, generally ending in stalemate. The empire encouraged the slaves to rebel, with such success that the nation of Vontabu was formed in Tarahorn, in Fonrit.

In 842 the empire invaded the foul **Shadowlands**. This was the **Krjalki War**, fought against dragonewts, trolls and humans. A great fleet raided the coasts, even sailing into Choralinthor Bay and threatening the cities there while a great army marched from Slontos. Though initially successful, they withdrew from Esrolia after suffering hideous losses when dragons counterattacked.

In 845 the God Learners Collective was formed. Many like-minded sorcerous orders (including some from the Church) formally joined forces and begin their **Explorations of Magic**. Such had been done before informally, but now united, the God Learners' power increased dramatically.

In 849 the God Learners proved the truth of their vision and the falseness of the pagans gods. The God Learners performed their famous Goddess Switch.

They thereby "proved" that their sorcery was superior to pagan worship, and that pagan deities were interchangeable.

In 852 the Mostali conclave of **Belskan** in the Iron Mountains fell to a Nidan Army and was purged of **Individualist** heretics. The successors, thankful for the aid from the empire, maintained trade from there.

**FONRITIAN CITY STATES**

Fonrit is a densely populated peninsula in Pamaltela. It is a cruel and misguided area that believes slavery is a natural way of life for all beings except their single ruler. They had



fought each other for centuries to determine who that ruler was. At last the Emperor had pity on them and sent in the army and navy to bring peace.

### SHADOWLANDS

The degenerate nature of the Dragon People of the EWF is proved by their willing submission to Krjalki. Ever since the Dawn of Time the Shadowlands have been under the rule of Aganagar, a malicious entity that eats five human subjects each day. He is powerful and long lived—he was an ally of Arkat the Deceiver in the Gbaji Wars. He has designs to take over Slontos and subject it to his darkness.

### KRJALKI WAR

The dragons can muster the help of all the krjalki races. Some speculate that those are actually creations of the dragons, and cite as proof their perversion of the human way. When pressed, the dragons can muster members of every nonhuman race to their armies, even Aldryami (who have an unbroken history of friendship with us in the West).

### EXPLORATIONS OF MAGIC

This marks the full flowering of HeroQuesting as a creative exploration of the world of magic, and the reclaiming of it from the pagans. Many Orders are equipped to organize expeditions and recover the wondrous powers that are hoarded there.

### BELSKAN

Belkstan was a dwarf rebel who broke from his people and tried to take over the peaceful Mostali race. He stopped selling iron to the merchants of Laurmal. The emperor then made overtures to the true dwarves and provided them with magical support.

### INDIVIDUALIST

Dwarves have heresies among themselves, giving the lie to their claim to be perfectly organized as one mind in many bodies. They are flawed, too. Individualism claims that one dwarf can have a personal identity. Whenever this occurs the individual is inevitably crushed, proving that it is an unviable thought pattern for their kind.

## 53. DARANGRAM (AKA DAGRAM), EMPEROR OF THE LAND AND SEA

859-870 - Son of Bralak

During his reign the Seshnegi made their first explorations of the plains in **Jolar**. They called the **Agimori** lands **Kolarmori**, and these expeditions were the **Kolarmori Explorations**.

The empire also waged war against Vontabu, and set rulers over the whole land.

During his reign, too, the **Zistorites** spread through many cities. They were said to be making the “little parts” of the (future) machine god.

### JOLAR

Jolar is the central inland region of Pamaltela. There is a great city made entirely of iron there called Kolamori,

whose people willingly give their fabulous metal away to anyone who finds it. The natives consider iron to be evil, and so do not go there and resist anyone who tries to find it. We know this is true because documents in Pithdaros tell us so.

### AGIMORI

The Agimori are a tall, dark-skinned race native to the land of Jolar. The people of Pithdaros came from there, and even before they found the True Way of Malkion they had shared its legends with the Empire. They provided information that inspired the Kolarmori expeditions to explore and conquer Jolar.

### KOLARMORI EXPLORATIONS

Ferenralar de Genertsket led the great expedition from Fonrit into Jolar. Several armies resisted but were destroyed. The task was extremely difficult, as the horses soon died for lack of fodder, for no grass grows anywhere on the continent.

### ZISTORITES

This is a Reconstructionist belief that has built machines to restore the Original Law of the One Book. They have developed the plan to make a God Machine that will gather all the lost bits of the Law and corrupt Erasanchula and reconstruct Creation as Makan intended. They proclaim that when the God Machine is complete, the pagan gods will return to the roles assigned them by Makan. The center of their machinations is on Zistorwal the Machine Isle, at the tip of the Rightarm Isles in the Province of Choralinthor.

## 54. TRIOSOS (AKA TROSOS) EMPEROR OF THE LAND AND SEA

870-887 - Son of Darangram

A **migration of exiles from Brithos** landed in Seshnela during Triosos' reign. They generally supported the God Learners.

**Argalis, son of Rilam**, became the High Sorcerer for the Emperor. Argalis is a major figure among the God Learners, having risen through their ranks and being the Highest God Learner before taking this post.

### MIGRATION OF EXILES FROM BRITHOS

The people of Brithos must maintain a mental clarity and purity to survive. Whenever some aberrant thought spreads among them people begin to age, and thus they are periodically purged from the island. This migration were intrigued by thoughts propagated by the God Learners, and willingly joined with humans. Their ancient power and great abilities, accumulated over centuries of life, were a welcome addition and many Orders competed for their support.

### ARGALIS, SON OF RILAM

Argalis still lives, and is the most powerful magician in the world. He recently has had several quarrels with his rival Halwal, and the Emperor has ordered them to cooperate, bringing peace to us once again.

## 55. KERALAMALOS (AKA KRALAS), EMPEROR OF THE LAND AND SEA

887-901 - Son of Dagram

He is most famous for marrying **Somali**, the daughter of Manah of Brithos. He was widely traveled, sailing about on the golden **Svagad Fleet** with his wife. During his reign the **Four Dukes Folly** occurred, a great magical failure; as did the **Green Waves**, the **Slag Movement**, and **Erastis' Poison Vapor**, which were successful. These were considered, at the time, to be great acts of magic which proved the superiority of the God Learners magic.

The emperor died of a curse, whose origins are unknown. Somali and her son were at his bedside weeping, she still looking like she is eighteen years old. His son has sworn revenge on whoever did this foul deed.

### SOMALI

This is a famous love story, whose ending comes when she realizes it was to seek Keralamalos that she left the island. Somali is a Brithini woman who has been alive since the Ice Age. Though full of wisdom and experience, she is a patient and submissive wife to the Emperor. She is the only one of her family to depart from the island, and despite her departure maintains good relations with her family back home, thus ensuring peace.

### SVAGAD FLEET

The most magnificent fleet of the Empire carries on the traditions of Svagad. It includes many gigantic luxury yachts, including the *Floating Garden* and three Beast Boats that raise cattle and other food that have never stepped foot upon land. It also has several of the leviathans and scores of lesser ships to ensure its safety. It cruises the oceans on goodwill and inspection tours.

### FOUR DUKES FOLLY

This experiment was intended to be a great weapon of war, but it went poorly and leveled several blocks of the city where it was done.

### GREEN WAVES

This is a weapon developed against the East Isles. Its side effect changes the color of the water, but its real effect is to create an unstoppable tidal wave that can drown an island. [It is still under development.]

### SLAG MOVEMENT

This is a weapon developed against the Krjalki. It causes the very earth to liquefy and boil, then slowly spread across the land to destroy everything in its area. [It is still under development.]

### ERASTIS' POISON VAPOR

This is a weapon developed against the Dragons. It is a deadly vapor that can be moved about by the sorcerers who developed it, and can be moved like a wall that stands high enough in the air to kill anything that flies through it. [It is still under development.]

## 56. ILOTOS EMPEROR OF THE LAND AND SEA

901-today [908] - Son of Keralamalos

Ilotos is the "Greatest King of the World." His reign is the height of the Empire. Never have we lived so well, ruled so wisely, or been so blessed by Makan.

His reign began with the withdrawal from Pamaltelan. He realized that his destiny was to rule all humans, but the beings of Jolar were not really people. The Duke of Kolarmori was called back, and when he refused this imperial order the enemy massed against him and he and his rebellious traitors were annihilated.

The cities of Fonrit have rebelled again, and have temporarily gained the upper hand. This is only a temporary event, as has occurred before, and the army in Jrustela is being prepared to recapture them.

The Umathelan colonies have recently failed in a test proffered to them by the Emperor. He offered them an opportunity to once again unite as a confederation, and they seized upon it and cast out the Imperial governors. The Duke claims he was given rightful rule, and his subjects claim he is the ONLY ruler. An expeditionary force from Jrustela was met by arms and magic, and rather than fight against their relatives in the empire they returned without even landing.

Last year the krjalki sneaked across the shallow strait that separates the city of Zistorwal from the larger island, and have dared to attack it. Their assault was annihilated, but more of them now lay siege. This laughable effort is hardly even countered, for the city is strong and the attackers weak. A fleet has brought supplies to the besieged city.

The successes of the Empire are great.

*[The author is misleading the readers here. The Pamaltelans rose up and destroyed their hated oppressors who had been shipping them as slaves to Fonrit to finance their occupation. Fonrit rebelled, first in the city of Arbennan, and the success spread from city to city. The occupiers were killed, or fled, many to Umathela. The city-states there had been in passive resistance for years since their men had been sent time and again to fight in Jolar. When the refugees from Fonrit reached them the Duke, a naïve son, dared organize many of the cities to open rebellion, and they cast out the imperial officials.]*

HERE ENDS THE BOOK OUR GREAT EMPIRE

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## AFTER SAOLVAN'S BOOK

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*Here are some additional kings of Old Seshnela, added and annotated in the style of Saolvan, but who appeared after his book. Ilotos is repeated, to indicate the changes of his reign, and changes of opinion by those who came after.*

### 56. ILOTOS EMPEROR OF THE LAND AND SEA

901-919 - Son of Keralamalos

Ilotos is remembered as the "Most Unlucky King of Seshnela." His reign is the downfall of the Empire.

Hi reign began with the loss of most Pamaltelan holdings. The **Dukedom of Kolar** (i.e., "Six Legged Empire") was annihilated, most **Fonrit cities were lost**, **Umathelan Coalition rebelled**, and the punishing **expeditionary force from Jrustela** returned without even landing.

"Old Dukes, New Lands," said Ilotos, and sent the failed army from the south to conquer nearby lands instead. **Arolanit was conquered**, to be a part of Seshnela rather than a part of the Empire. The rest of **Ralios was also annexed, conquered, or paid tribute**.

In 907 the Zistorites provoked massive counterattacks in Kethaela, and Zistorwal (aka Clanking City, Machine City) was **besieged by the Krjalki**. It withstood a ten year siege, but was then destroyed. The same year, 917, the **Windless Typhoon** caused great destruction in Seshnela.

During his reign **the Closing began**. Sailors came home with horror stories of huge sea dragons and mysterious forces, of ghost ships and waterspouts which obeyed nothing.

#### DUKEDOM OF KOLAR WAS ANNIHILATED

The cities of gold were just an illusion, a lie made to lure good northern men to their doom. Sir Ferigard de Bestolar managed to set up a realm that exported slaves and imported grain for the horses. But the cost was too great, and the horses died, and the "dukes" could not keep control and were all killed.

#### FONRIT CITIES WERE LOST

The cities of Fonrit were never all conquered. The God Learners took control of several key ports and played the others off of each other. After the huge Kolat slave riots of 907 most Fonritians stopped cooperating with their overlords.

#### UMATHELAN COALITION REBELLED

The colonies of Umathela never truly accepted their secondary status in the Jrusteli Confederation. They let their pride overcome their patriotic duty, and refused to help the empire with more soldiers and money. They broke away as a coalition.

#### EXPEDITIONARY FORCE FROM JRUSTELA

Grand Marshall Polior led a great war fleet that swept the shores of Umathela clear. The troop fleet set sail, but a

surprise Fonritian war fleet distracted the protecting navy. The army turned back when dangerous weather threatened.

#### AROLANIT WAS CONQUERED

The land fell easily, but the mystery is why Brithos did nothing if it was truly a conquest. Trusted people claim that the Talar of Brithos wished this to occur, so that Arolanit could serve as a region halfway between Brithos and the continent. This is actually the sign of an alliance between Seshnela and Brithos.

#### RALIOS WAS ALSO ANNEXED, CONQUERED, OR PAID TRIBUTE

A large army has always cowed these petty states to surrender. Then the come to life like lice. One alone bites and itches while the rest are dormant. When the itch is scratched then two or three or ten of them all bite and infect the peace and common good. As long as the army was present the region was generally calm.

#### BESIEGED BY THE KRJALKI

The Krjalki is a monstrous alliance that occupies Dragon Pass and the lands beyond. In that area the many non-human races that hate humans have an unholy alliance under the Dragon Kings. They include trolls, dwarves, dragonewts, flying people, animal people of every description, and hordes of subintelligent humans that serve them. They have sworn to destroy the good people of Malkion. An army of these beings laid siege to Zistorela.

#### WINDLESS TYPHOON

Some say this was a phenomena caused by curses from the Krjalki Dragon King. Others say it was a cause, byproduct or effect of the Fall of Zistorela, which collapsed the same year.

#### THE CLOSING BEGAN

Radiating from Brithos, an invisible barrier began to spread from the shores of the island outward. It could not be crossed by any ships, and pushed all ships back before it. Behind it the water looked flat, without waves. Sometimes monsters appeared amid those clam seas. This effect went out and out, and eventually entirely Closed the seas from all ship travel.

### 57. DAROS EMPEROR OF THE LAND AND SEA

Reigned 919-930 - son of Ilotos

The mysterious barrier later called "The Closing" pushed further across the Neliomi Sea. In 922 **Fronela's**

**coasts were shut down.** The barrier crept inexorably southwards towards the Seshnelan coast.

In 925 the **Ice Summer** struck Ralios. The weather never changed into spring when the days got longer. Instead of the pleasant summer rains, snow fell. No crops were planted or harvested, and famine was widespread and lethal.

In 930 the **Closing struck Seshnela.** Nonetheless, Daros kept a strong hand on the land, kept peace except among those who were natural rebels, and tightened the tribute collections from Ralios and Fronela.

Daros died as he watched his royal fleet be crushed against the docks of Neleswal. “The Seas, once crushed, have washed back upon us,” he said. And he fell, dead.

### **FRONELA'S COASTS WERE SHUT DOWN**

The barrier ground into the beaches and shores of western Fronela and disappeared over land. However, it did not penetrate into the Bay of Ozur, creating a little pocket that was large enough for ships. Hundreds of ships had crowded into Ozur Bay, fleeing the barrier. Some of those caused piratical damage but were eventually destroyed by the Royal Fleet in the “Desperate Sea War.”

### **ICE SUMMER**

The cause of this is yet to be determined. It is possible this wintry event was much more widespread.

### **CLOSING STRUCK SESHNELA**

The entire northern coast was becalmed as the barrier crossed the shoreline and then broke up. The barrier wrapped itself around the western end then the southern shore of the peninsula. This ends all sea trade out of Seshnela.

## **58. CELAKOS**

### **EMPEROR OF THE LAND AND SEA**

930-946 - son of Daros

The **Closing cut the Empire off** from all its overseas possessions, and cut those areas off from each other. By 935 the seas off of Slontos were impassable, and by 940 **Jrustela was isolated.**

Celakos directed his attention landward. The Empire still held the peninsular Old Seshnela, Tanisor (New Seshnela), much of Ralios, Arolanit; and in Fronela, Frontem and its borderlands, Sog City, and other cities up the Janube.

Slontos was still an imperial stronghold, but could be reached only through Ralios, over Pralorela and through the wilds of Wenelia. Alternately, a 500 mile voyage by shore-hugging rowboat was possible. Celakos wisely issued edicts to the Archduke there but asked them to do nothing.

The coastal peoples that had relied upon sea-borne commerce were now a huge and unhappy population, all now jobless and desperate. Celakos sent them to follow **armies overland against the Kingdom of Fronela.** Both Lord Janerndal and the latest wave of Perfecti were major problems there. Celakos obtained allies from among the many barbarians who hated Loskalm, manipulated the populations coaxed northward, mustered local God

Learners for help and conquered, once again, Frontem/Loskalm. Celakos and set up Governors for the Empire.

Celakos died early, from a curse by the Loskalmi bishops.

### **CLOSING CUT THE EMPIRE OFF**

Nonetheless, Celakos insisted upon being addressed as “Emperor of the Land and Sea” without irony intended. He demanded formal courtly behavior even from those closest to him, including his wife and children.

### **JRUSTELA WAS ISOLATED**

The separation of Jrustela and Seshnela was traumatic to the people of both lands. Although the confederation and the kingdom often found themselves at odds, politically, four hundred years of shared history—glorious history!—had defined the world. Now, each was without the other, and Jrustela was alone. A nearby article has more information on this.

### **ARMIES OVERLAND**

#### **AGAINST THE KINGDOM OF FRONELA**

They went through Arolanit and the Erontree Forest on the old Imperial Highway. As long as travelers remained on the road, and performed certain Malkioni rites at certain places, then the Brithini and aldryami could not touch them.

A portion of the population also simply dispersed and settled.

### **A CURSE BY THE LOSKALMI BISHOPS**

Or perhaps a curse by his own bishops. Celakos directed a lot of the public blame upon the Church, which had failed to protect the realm from magical danger. The clergy more often than not railed against the king’s rule, angering many peasants and other commoners.

### **JRUSTELA AFTER THE CLOSING**

No one knows exactly what happened in Jrustela after the Closing but before its destruction. Few messages and fewer people got out to share the information. Here are the known, certain events:

**940 Jrustela Isolated.** Seshnela had previously been closed off.

**940-962** “Sir” Fen Feru and his flying band go back and forth between Jrustela and Seshnela several times, each time with increasing difficulty. Each time he musters more flying friends to accompany him, even though each journey suffers huge casualties. Many rare and unique beings accompanied him on the last one, as well as some of the last flying machines known to have existed. The last flight left Seshnela in 962, and no one is known to have ever arrived in Jrustela.

**996 The Last Ship.** A ship, once marvelous but now battered and broken, sails into Nolos. Aboard it the survivors of a band of courageous adventurers exalt in their heroic journey, and triumphantly

bring "Davangar's Letter from the Confederation" to the decadent King Englos. Their anticipated prophecy thus fails utterly. The subsequent adventures are "The Final Shipmates" stories. They help Halwal.

- 998 **The Last Flyer** to come from Jrustela was a young messenger girl, borne aloft with wizards spells and a set of paper wings as strong as shark hide. She had "*Davanger's Letter to the Final Shipmates*," urging them "*to meet with the King of Justice in Seshnela and return with the Elixar of Peace.*"
- 1007 **The Last Word** came through. Some wizards still practiced long distance communication, and had kept some communications open on the old channels and schedules. In this year the last message came through from Jrustela. It said, "*Damn the torpedoes.*"
- 1049 **Jrustela Sunk** by the Great Luathan Quake-assumed.

## 59. HEKAOS EMPEROR OF THE LAND AND SEA

946-958 - son of Daros

**Troubles among the God Learners** were exposed at this time. Their squabbling broke out as several magical duels that caused great harm before being condemned all around and stopped. Nonetheless, all the troubles of the land were laid on the quarrelling clergy and everything was their fault. Emperor Hekaos rallied the nobles and commoners for justice. The duty of the Emperor became that of protecting his wards from the ravages of the **Sorcerer War**.

Some still unknown magical organization tried to kill the emperor, but Hekaos had already brought in the Great Pithdarian, Yomili, who was so holy that many called him the Mouth of Hrestol.

Then High Sorcerer **Argalis disappeared**. He'd spent over seventy years in service, culminating as Chief Officer of the God Learners Collective. The God Learners refused to disclose where he went.

Three years later his old rival, **Halwal**, was refused the position of High Sorcerer. He took the robes of a monk and left Seshnela and began his wanderings.

King Hekaos rallied his nobles to back a moderate army to visit Loskalm to suppress rebellion and border banditry. They, hearing of the sorcerers' flight, thought the kingdom might be weak. They were wrong.

Hekaos maintained the land and people reasonably well. He arranged for Arolanit citizens to go to Sog, where others of the Brithini race, still lived.

### TROUBLES AMONG THE GOD LEARNERS

This really refers to conflict between the Church and the God Learners. These had each taken an increasingly religious alignment of the Makanists against the Malkioneranists.

### SORCERER WAR

Hekaos reign is sometimes called the Opening of the Sorcerer Wars. Three extremely powerful magicians slowly came to blows, each of them with decades of experience and learning and backed by powerful religious organization. Argalis, Halwal and Yomili contend for the nature of religion, the validity of magic and the future of Seshnela.

### ARGALIS DISAPPEARED

Argalis was the spiritual Chief Officer of the God Learners Collective, an extremely powerful man of tremendous strength and experience. He was also the spiritual leader of the Malkioneranists. The cause for his disappearance is unknown, but it is generally blamed on Halwal and his allies.

### HALWAL

Halwal was an outstanding Cleric, variously abbot, bishop, Legalist and spiritual advisor to the extremist Knights of Spiritual Purity. He was spokesperson for the Church, and the Makanists, in these difficult times.

When he went into voluntary exile Halwal and one companion rode by mule among many God Learner sites, discovering their loyalties, and sometimes causing sanctimonious trouble among them.

## 60. BENALOS EMPEROR OF THE LAND AND SEA

958-973 - son of Hekaos

Upon the death of Emperor Hekaos, **factions** put forth their own candidates to be king. Olrik was backed by the God Learners. Strange things began to happen to their foes, such as a plague of cockroaches, a week when all horses lay down, and similar widespread problems. But Benalos got the aid of **Yomili**, a great sorcerer of Pithdaros, and the magic trouble stopped.

Events came to military action, and Benalos **defeated his brother in battle**. But he never obtained submission from all the nobles in Seshnela.

The provinces, colonies and territories outside of Seshnela had all gone semi independent by this time. Slontos was long gone. Now Governors held themselves separate from the Emperor in Frontem, Arolanit, and three parts of Ralios. Benalos sent forth proclamations acknowledging the leaders in their positions, and remind them of their ancient duties to the emperor. He did not attempt to enforce these, nor did he demand submission.

Though diplomacy and luck, Nolos and Pithdaros had rejoined the empire, as well as contact with loyalists in Frontem.

### FACTIONS

On the political front were the Olrikans versus the Benalosites, on the religious they were the Malkioneranists against the Traditionalists, on the economic fight the (failing) merchants and cities against the small town nobility.

### YOMILI

Yomili was a Pithdaran wise man. The entire Pithdaran people had accepted the religion of Malkion as part of the

conditions of living peacefully in the land they had seized. They embraced the cult of Hrestol and its meritocratic advancement, and none were more devoted to the prayers and rites than the Pithdarans. They produced many clerics powerful by their virtue, sorcerers noted for the mental keenness, and advisors for politics, trade and the use of armies. Indeed, the Pithdarans were so intent and successful that the emperor said, "It is no wonder we were destroyed in Pamaltela, since those natives there are kin to these ambitious, pious people who are so unlike us."

#### DEFEATED HIS BROTHER IN BATTLE

Olrik was killed on the field, but Benalos also jailed another one, and sent a sister to a nunnery where she, nonetheless, got with child. Benalos ordered her and the child, "which must be the spawn of an incubus in a nunnery!" to be destroyed.

### 61. BAJENYL EMPEROR OF THE LAND AND SEA

973-990 - son of Benalos

During Bajenyl's reign, **Frontem (Fronela)** revolted, led by **Halwal**. Bajenyl withdrew troops from Ralios and Arolanit to suppress the revolt. King Sigur, with the help of many Fronelan peoples, drove out the Seshnegi and set up the **kingdom of Loskalm** again.

The empire suffered such great losses that no armies returned to their home camps. In turn those possessions revolted and also freed themselves, and Arolanit cast out all foreigners and declared alliance with Brithos; and Ralios rose as one foe and became four warring powers.

Bajenyl is the last king of Seshnela who was titled Emperor. Close to his death, Bajenyl took the imperial regalia to where a huge outcrop looked down upon the dead sea. "These are the insignia of the Lord of Land and Sea," said the Emperor, "And I dedicate them to the Sea that they rule," and he threw them all over the cliff into the water. "I will die as Lord of this Land, and hope to rid us of that awful corpse of the Sea that has hung about our necks."

990 is the official date for the end of the Seshnegi Empire.

#### FRONTEM REVOLTED

Fronela was in a constant state of unrest. The core leaders of their earlier heresy, called Irensavalism, had been destroyed or driven out many centuries earlier. Nonetheless, the heresy continued to surface throughout the centuries as the religion of rebels. The idealism of their Hrestolic interpretations obtained considerable admiration among contemporaries. The Pithdarites, also devotees though of a different flavor of Hrestolism, categorically refused to perform any operations in Fronela.

#### HALWAL

Halwal naturally favored the Church, but in Fronela he had to first get rid of the God Learner factionalists. He enlisted the aid of the Loskalmi rebels, hired barbarian mercenaries and coordinated a secret uprising with the Church hierarchy. He blessed the new King of Loskalm to create a

Ecclesiarch, which he did. The Ecclesiarch then created new bishops and abbots to replace the God Learners and the takeover was nearly secure.

#### KINGDOM OF LOSKALM

Loskalm was the name of the old kingdom destroyed by the God Learners, and it appears again and again as various rebellious factions rally against the empire. Frontem is the name of the kingdom that the God Learners support.

### 62. TUALON, KING OF SESHNELA

990-991 - son of Bajenyl

The magical struggle continued as **God Learner factions** vied for control of the kingdom and people. Tualon ruled for a short time, but was captured and killed by Englos, his cousin who was aided by Yomili.

#### GOD LEARNER FACTIONS

The God Learner schools were largely out of favor among the populace by this time. People blamed them for having upset the Natural Order of Makan, and of disobeying the *Abiding Book*. Indeed, when submitted to the One Inquisition, many of the God Learner orders were revealed to be cults of foreign people or gods, or often of the very Devil!

Tualon was supported by the God Learners. However their mutual distrust and ambition were no match for the directed magical assault led by Yomili's *Peace and Decency Movement*.

### 63. ENGLOS, KING OF SESHNELA

991-999 - son of Ciklos, son of Benalos

Englos had been supported by Yomili and the conservative Church faction of magicians. He fully supported the One Inquisition, especially after the devil worshippers were uncovered.

Englos married Flerla, Tualon's sister, and so strengthened his illegal position on the throne with an **incestuous union**. But the blasphemy of this marriage and his usurpation marked the beginning of the final downfall of Seshnela. At this time, **Halwal returned** from his self-imposed exile into the wilderness, and began uniting the cities of Ralios against Seshnela.

#### INCESTUOUS UNION

Everyone knows Englos the Incestuous. However, he did get permission from Yomili for this (indeed, marrying first cousins is always allowed among the Pithdarans.) Nonetheless, the label has stuck.

#### HALWAL RETURNED

He departed from Fronela, having secured its independence from Seshnela and the God Learners. He then went to Ralios to continue his work.

### 64. DELIAM, KING OF SESHNELA

999-1016 - son of Englos

Deliam worked desperately to unite his kingdom and to stop the **unification of Ralios** against Seshnela. He was

barely able to hold back the invaders during his reign. Many cities in Tanisor fell to Varlanth the Victor, the Warlord of Safelster. Although many cities were recaptured, they were poor subjects afterwards, and Varlanth the Victor claimed northern Rindland for his own.

#### DESPERATELY TO UNITE HIS KINGDOM

The original compiler is unkind to Deliam, who maintained his core land without huge difficulties for the seventeen years of his rule. He was supported by Yomili and the newly-established New Church of the Book. This latter was old style Makanism with very, very strong Hrestoli emphasis. Its membership was most of the bishops and wizard schools of Seshnela.

#### UNIFICATION OF RALIOS

This was due to the efforts of Halwal. He was reported to be investigating to find the True Arkat, when Yomili's agents came so close that he was forced to flee and hide for a year. It was a small step back for Halwal, but a permanent loss for the Arkati, who never again agreed on a single judge to investigate their mutually contradictory claims.

### 65. HISVOK, KING OF SESHNELA

1016-1027 - Son of Deliam

Hisvok wanted to conquer the Seshnelan lands to the east. He raised a great army to defeat Ralios, and he made many concessions so that even Yomili assisted him on this foreign venture. The armies met **outside the city of Basmol**, and inflicted incredible slaughter upon each other, each urged forward by their sorcerers. Finally, **Halwal and Yomili met personally**, casting great spells of destruction; when the smoke cleared and the earth stopped moving, neither wizard was to be seen. Wizards and clergy both said neither existed anymore in any plane. Both nations suffered such terrible losses they needed a generation to recover from it. Basmol was so blasted with magic that it still glows, and strange plants and animals are there.

King Hisvok survived, but afterwards was content to oversee the safety of his own kingdom.

#### OUTSIDE THE CITY OF BASMOL

In the Tanier Valley. This was once a city of the Pendali lion people. During the massive magical battle a hundreds of the lion people were awakened to life, created bodies from the dirt, and went on a rampage through both armies.

#### HALWAL AND YOMILI MET PERSONALLY

The magnitude of the power released her shook the art, knocking nearby cities flat, filling the regions with unhealthy smokes, releasing lightning, loosing raw energy in huge explosive blasts, and killing thousands of innocent folk.

### 66. FIOROS, KING OF SESHNELA

1027-1043 - Son of Hisvok

Fioros was a deeply devout Malkionist, freely distributing the royal wealth to feed his destitute people. He **dissolved most of the royal army**, thrusting defense upon the nobility and clergy. He made several treaties granting

concessions to the **King of Safelster** and, shame upon the kingdom, **with his own noblemen**. No battle was fought during his reign, no lives were lost. For that, he is called the "Most Peaceful King of Seshnela."

#### DISSOLVED MOST OF THE ROYAL ARMY

Royal finances could not sustain payments to bands of soldiers. The regimental licenses of the standing army were revoked, temporary units were dismissed and the officer corps given grants of land, with picked followers of their as their own vassal knights. When the common troops turned to banditry, the landed gentry finished them off and took responsibility for local peace.

#### KING OF SAFELSTER

A title, behind which we see no identifiable person at this writing. If there was such a king, surely it was not of the whole of Ralios; or if it was, then surely it was for short duration.

#### WITH HIS OWN NOBLEMEN

Some of the noblemen enjoyed testing the limits of their relationship to the king. Occasional internal skirmishes became a regular activity of the king and his vassals.

### 67. NANOS, KING OF SESHNELA

1043-1045 - Son of Fioros

Nanos was **still young** when he took the throne. He was determined to be a stronger man than his father. He was supported by **Yestelos**, an abbot. King Nanos was untimely **slain in battle by a stranger** with great power. Subsequently **Herjan the Raider killed the Dragon Invader**.

#### STILL YOUNG

Probably aged fourteen. But everyone agreed he was big for his age, had all the makings of a great warrior, and was a better choice than any other living relative of the late king.

#### YESTELOS, AN ABBOT

Yestelos was a believer in the God Learners, and had gathered together some odd but powerful bits o their old lore. His men had a magic called the Paralysis Look which could cause men and animals to immobilize, unable to control their own muscles. The young king was immune to the magic, though, and out of awe they followed him without question. With their assistance he obtained the loyalty of the most recalcitrant noble, even including several key castellans along the border who swore to him.

#### SLAIN IN BATTLE BY A STRANGER

A remaining mystery, about what happened to young King Nanos.

#### HERJAN THE RAIDER KILLED THE DRAGON INVADER

Herjan was a widely acclaimed hero for this deed. The creature had been ravaging the north central shorelands for some time. His foes, who were called "the doomsayers,"

claimed the creature was the Protector of Seshnela, the same creature that had blessed Saval to be ruler in 729. This entity was said to be either Froalar himself, or a child of Seshna Likita. It had protected Seshnela since then, despite events outside its borders. Without it the land was doomed.

## 68. HALIFOR, KING OF SESHNELA

1045-1049 - Son of Fioros

Halifor ascended the throne when his brother was slain. He was a good man concerned with the welfare of his people. One day he learned that a great force had invaded his kingdom in the southwest. He mustered his army to meet it. Instead of a great army, however, he saw a single ship whose inhabitants were a race of giants from the far west called the **Luatha**. Though few in number, their powers were immeasurably superior to that of the Seshnelans. They were driving a huge iron pillar into the ground, and the king feared the worst. He ordered his army to attack. The Luatha did not even pause in their work, but sent a few individuals to defend. They destroyed the army and slew the king. When the pillar was only a hundred feet above the ground the Luatha beat on its sides with great hammers, each time making a larger ripple through the ground. Then they dampened it but kept beating, and released all the accumulated force at once. A tremendous shock wave blasted forth. It shook earth to nothing so the seas rushed in. Aboveground any surviving human or animal underwent terrible mutations, creating the **manbeasts** that live there. Those survivors forgot their ancestors learning and reverted to savage bestiality.

*1049 S.T. was the end of the Kings of Old Seshnela.*

## LUATHA

The Luatha are a race of demigods that live in the farthest western islands, where the sun sets through the Gates of the Dusk. They are the descendants of minor gods, all of them generally of variously mixed blood and powers. Their ruler is Rausa, the Goddess of Dusk who drinks each night of the blood of the dying sun.

## MANBEASTS

No one witnessed the inhabitants turn into the half-man half-beasts of subsequent Seshnelan history. But they were not ever seen beforehand, and were found only in Seshnela at first. They do not recall their own origins, being very beast like in their sense of history and of themselves.

## AFTER THE QUAKE

Not every peninsular Seshnelan was killed by the Luathan Quake. All those of the southwest, south and center probably were. But along the north coast in particular many people dragged themselves from the wreckage and contemplated their new lives.

When curious parties from Tanisor finally got to Seshnela they found people industriously creating new forts near to strategic sites, often with the stone from recent ruins.

This was the creation of the Castle Coast. These strongholds are scattered about amidst a very small population when compared to the nation that once lived there. Cities are small, if at all—most common are castles with a cluster of towns at its base. They worship Makan with heavy Hrestoli influences, and pay homage to no one. Even after centuries their lifestyle changed little.



# GOD LEARNER INFORMATION

*Articles here are a mix of Gloranthan documents, psuedo-gloranthan documents, authorial commentary and notes compiled to provide background, information and fun stuff for play.*

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## THE MALKIONI RELIGION

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### THE HISTORY OF MALKIONI RELIGION

Date for this article: end of Third Age

These are the modern stories and understanding current among the participants. Everything in this article is heavily biased towards the story-teller, whose first-person accounts and sources have been analyzed but not retold.

Everyone knows these facts **for their own Homeland**. Sometimes the truth in the sources conflict, but the key facts here have been proven to be true through veneration, sorcerous formulae and heroquesting.

### BEFORE TIME

#### EVERYONE KNOWS THESE LIES

In the Dawn Age, the peoples of the world were scattered, their ancient civilizations destroyed and their old magics useless. Hrestol the Prophet taught them how to contact God in a new way, and gave people hope once more. Over the centuries since his martyrdom at the hands of the cruel, atheist Brithini, his Church grew, but also became more and more divorced from its roots. During the Ban, the Prophet returned in a vision to Siglat, King of Loskalm, and showed him how to restructure society and religion to bring about a world of perfect happiness and justice. Although the presence of hostile foreigners and wicked pagans has prevented that world from coming fully to pass, the people of Malkion still strive to bring it ever closer.

The Malkioni religion is a single unified belief system that is based on mythological events whose truth has been proved. And of course, it must be True because it is The One God made everything and is the Ultimate Being. Although many foreigners practice a damaged form of the correct worship, all of the religions share essential beliefs, practices and magic. But basically, the world is an ordered place, but modern life is dangerous to both body and soul, and the safest, most virtuous guideline to life is the teachings of the local Church.

#### EARLIEST MYTHOLOGY

Common congregations rarely have the sanctity, endurance or power to regularly visit the Creation times, the original Actions that shaped the world, nor any most of the pre-Ice Age myths. Many of these are regularly experienced during the annual cycle, under tightly controlled and highly protected rites. Clergy are taught how to perform these rites through their scriptures, mystics and spontaneous saints

find their way to these by accident, wizards and sorcerers visit for their own purposes. So their actuality has been established.

The meaning and emotional content is different for many religions, but the hard facts are the same as are detailed in the Malkioni section of *Revealed Mythologies*.

For most Malkioni the *Abiding Book* is the established basis for mythic truth, although almost every religion usually a couple of other holy writ texts that are (more or less) exclusive to that Church. Even Churches that don't acknowledge the *Abiding Book* as a scripture agree that it is *A Book of Truth*, because the events have (more or less) been tested.

Some religions do not recognize *Abiding Book* as their scripture. Those never fell under the sway of the God Learners, or the modern Founder searched and found lost pre-God Learner rituals. Loskalm is the most notable exception, and their scripture is called *First Truth*, which stories are often the same as those in the *Abiding Book*, but often with a different morality, method of worship and prayers. It also has several stories that are not in the *Abiding Book* that have been experienced by sorcerers many times. **Others** include the Atroxic Church (worshipped only by the Black Horse Troop), the original Esvulari Church, and several in Ralios. Of course, those have scriptures of their own that include the Truth for that Church that is particular to it, such as the Loskalmi presence of Ireenseval.

## ICE AND GRAY AGE

The Ice Age is the earliest myth experienced by people through regular worship (i.e.-once a year at least, during the Holy Week.) Ceremonies that take worshippers to the Ice Age are known by most clergy in the West. Rokari visit this day in the Holy Week, and also experience it whenever the clergy feels that the congregation needs to be reminded of what will return if they are not obedient and diligently follow their One Way.

The High Ideals Church of Loskalm endure it as a reminder of their past, to prepare in case they ever must visit there. They, with the harshest winters, come to worship on those days bundled up with personal magic to help them.

An important ritual for most Wizards and Sorcerers is to visit the Ice Age and join into the **Ritual of Great Web** that made the **Great Blast**. This is the magic led by Zzabur that destroyed the ice sheet and made the Whirlpool to take it away. Every Church that participates is part of the Chain of Veneration of their Hero of that event. These individuals do two things. The channel their Church's sorcerous energy to Zzabur to provide the (best, most special, strongest or most important) venerative power to complete the spell. Second, they protected the worshippers from contact with the (bad, sometimes erroneous, dangerously amoral, or evil) Zzabur, an **Erasanchula**, one of the True Beings which that were created by Malkion during the Second Action.

The Gray Age is not on the regular Rokari Holy Year calendar. Nonetheless, Loskalmi have a healing ceremony whose visitors are supposed to come away from it encouraged ("Well, I survived that!") Their ceremony ends with the first Sunrise, the Dawning. To most commoners this is simply the first day of the Dawn Ritual.

## THE DAWN AGE DAWN RITUAL

When, exactly, was the Dawn?

One of the ceremonial rites among all Malkioni religions is First Sunrise. They arrive on the day before and experience the gray, foggy reality of the Gray Age. For the first time in living memory (and some folks were centuries old) the sun rose into a clear sky. It set, throwing everyone into panic because it was worse than the Gray Age. But it rose again, fulfilling the Laws of Time, as was imposed upon the Sun by –NEED A NAME HERE, the High Wizard of King Froalar, supported by his pious, committed and loyal congregation. And so, most importantly, the Sun continued to rise and set, improving the lot of Mankind.

Hrestol is present at these ceremonies, but different religions ascribe different actions, intentions and magic to him at those moments.

## TRUTH ABOUT HRESTOL

He is a complex character whose life was a wide open exploration of various spiritual options. He began as a good (maybe perfect!) Leader, became the first Four Class Man by learning and practicing (parts of) the jobs and insider secrets for all the castes of the old Zzabur-dominated Malkioni, and led his nation to victory. He abandoned all

that, taking the Renunciate's Way when he was a hermit, then a judge in the Vadelis Isles. He survived a visit to Brithos where his Renunciation was sufficient that he was not recognized, and went to Akem and among the commoners of Fronela. Out of duty to the commoners and God, he picked up the Four Tools, became the One Man, integrating the formerly conflicting ways of life. He united the many Fronelan colonies under Akem and led them to victory and security. But despite a wife, family, following and kingdom, he gave the mall up again and again became a Renunciate. One day, praying alone in a field, he was captured (without resistance) by Brithini troops and murdered after torture and crucified upon a Sorcerous Death Rune.

The Rokari loath Hrestol and in many ceremonies visit him to witness acts of betrayal, error and human frailty. The Loskalmi love him and witness and assist him on his activities of Joy, blessing, help and wisdom.

## THE GBAJI WARS

Gbaji, "The Deceiver," manifest as a god and nearly destroyed the world. But he also created one like himself, Arkat, who eventually turned on its creator and both were destroyed. This was either inevitable, because God intervened; or was due to the cleverness of a cult hero, often Gerlant Flamesword in Seshnela, and Talor the Laughing Warrior in Loskalm.

From "Malkioni Dictionary" in *Revealed Mythologies* comes:

### ARKAT

The Corrupter, "Source of Lies." Arkat was a false being planted among the Brithini by the father of Gbaji, the Son of the Devil.

### GBAJI

Malkioni "deceiver," Devil, or Son of the Devil, which destroyed the Dawn Age. Beyond the mountains the Pagans plotted their senseless revenge, and violated the laws of nature to succeed. They made the sun stop, and from that violation was born Gbaji, the Deceiver. Gbaji was called Nasarus where he was born, Rasarus in the north, and Nybie in the west. He had many names, and was worshipped at first as a benevolent deity, then would seduce the worshippers gradually to commit strange acts, dangerous acts, questionable acts, and then unspeakable acts. Malkion alerted his people to destroy this evil, which they did during the seventy five years of the Gbaji Wars. Many people are still famous for this event, such as Arkat, Gerlant, Grimnos, and Talor.

### DEVIL, GBAJI ERA

The virtue and truth of Malkion is resisted and, especially, perverted by the Devil. Because of sins of the fifth century the Protectors of the World got weak, and the evil one planted a number of foul seeds into the world. Many were detected early and destroyed. Two were not, and between them they contrived to destroy the good works of Malkion.

The Sons of Truth, led by Gerlant Flamesword, purged the world of evil.

## SECOND AGE THE ABIDING BOOK

In the year 646 the quarreling, competitive lords of the cities of Jrustela met in conclave to try to reach a settlement. Some of the lords were ambitious, some cautious, some defensive and a couple of them downright arrogant. All had their own agenda.

Discussion was heated at first, but on the third day of the meeting a miraculous event occurred. The chamber where the leaders were meeting was suddenly bathed in a pale, white light and strains of sweet music ran through the air. Everyone stopped, and as guards grabbed weapons and sorcerers prepared spells, all was abruptly frozen motionless. Only thoughts could move.

A swirling, pulsating ball of light appeared at the eastern end of the room, which was largely empty of furniture and completely empty of personnel. It hovered about ten feet off the floor, appearing to solidify as everyone watched, stupefied. Slowly, a shape became visible, and it was a large book, about three feet high and two wide. It was closed, and the cover was gold colored with silver corners, edges and spine. It was thick with gilt-edged pages. It lifted from the sphere of light and rose, hovering about two feet behind and above the light, where everyone could see it as it slowly opened to reveal a blank page.

Then, slowly, stately, a right hand emerged from the light, with the index finger extended, pointing to the blank page. The finger moved slightly, not touching the page itself, but writing appeared on the page. The page was filled with writing, and then the page turned of its own accord and the finger continued to write. So it went for page after page. This continued for hours, and everyone in the room was transfixed. It did not end until dawn the next day. Then the hand withdrew, the ball of light dissipated, and the book slowly closed, then gently floated downward and set itself upon the table where the nobles all sat.

Everyone was freed of their motionless, yet no one moved at first. Finally, they dared to open the book and peer inside. The first person began to read it aloud. "There is no God but the Invisible God, and Malkion is His Prophet." He continued, and when he tired another took his place until every one of the thirteen had read a portion. The guards and sorcerers mostly listened, though a couple of them slipped outside to tell what had occurred. Many more servants, who had curiously not intruded while the book was appearing, came in and heard parts of the First Reading.

The meaning of the book was self apparent, and no one questioned what it was. Each of their families were mentioned as being among the Chosen, and none of them had any disagreement with the contents, even though much of it was entirely new to them.

Without further dispute, the thirteen lords swore to support and uphold the book. They immediately created an order of elite copyists to make thirteen duplicates of it. They did, and within a week each of the lords had their own copy.

The copyists continued their sacred work, working in shifts day and night to duplicate this for others.

When messengers went out with the news many were skeptical at first, but upon hearing the message contained therein everyone was converted quickly to belief. The book had a message of spirituality, unity, benevolence and harmony; with guidelines on living the good life and many other lessons applying to governance, behavior and pious conduct. Its message is called the "Upright Recital," and this was shared with everyone in the island. It was preached in the churches, it was shared in town squares, it was discussed over dinner and at celebrations. The people who went about preaching this were called the **Saintly Bookbearers**.

Since the Invisible God was generally called Makan on Jrustela at that time, this quickly became the *Book of Makan*, or more commonly, *The One Book*. It was the foundation of the new Malkioni religion, and its authority was never in dispute.

## THE PURE EXPRESSION

The *Abiding Book* appeared and people lived in abundance and happiness under its influence and truth. After the Revelation was the perfect (though short) period, the Pure Expression. This was the period of the Return to Rightness Crusade, and the brilliant reign of **Wondrous King Trymir** (Wondrous, but never sainted). This was quickly overshadowed by unwitting pawns, the God Learners who were unable to perceive the importance of morality and who took over the sacred book as if it was not God. Their practices seemed good, but in the end were not.

## THE MALKIONI TRUE CHURCH

The appearance of the *Abiding Book* caused a shakeup in the established Malkion faiths. Enthusiasm for the new truth swept the island. A few people held out against it until exposed directly to its influence, whereupon the power of Makan overwhelmed their reluctance and they agreed to its truth. [note that some people simply fled. Karstos of Alasburket is the most famous, who set off on a small boat with two fishermen, was rescued by the Waertagi and taken to Umathela, where he set up his own resistance to the *Abiding Book* that lasted for decades.]

The need for an organization was clear to the holy men of Jrustela. They set up the Malkioni True Church in 655, and they appointed the highly respected Dersvamaal of Evrowal as the first Grand Master Ecclesiarch. Fourteen men were appointed as bishops, most of them having already been established leaders of various earlier churches in Jrustela.

The Ecclesiarch was the highest authority of the church, with an obligation to personally check with the Book on questions of the faith. This obligation was a privilege eagerly sought in the early years. Its services were used extensively in establishing the church's credo and hierarchy.

Missionaries sailed secretly to Umathela and began proselytizing there. Individuals joined at first, then influential individuals, and then masses of people at the instructions of their leaders. Not all the natives conformed,

and resistance was particularly stern in the rural and borderlands where Orlanth was worshipped throughout the entire Second Age, though often in secret in the cities. Many of the initial missionaries were appointed by the Ecclesiarch as the first bishops of Umathelan cities.

Missionary efforts to reach Seshnela by small boat all failed, and the faith was brought there by the Return to Rightness Crusade. The troubled land eagerly accepted the unifying faith, both for personal and political reasons. Bishops were appointed, at first from Jrustela. Many people travelled to Jrustela and study directly under the influence of the Book.

The earliest efforts of the Church to grow was generally inspired by faith rather than regionality or politics, and bishops of the True Church moved between various lands freely. When the size became unwieldy Archbishops were appointed on a regional basis. By this period the organization had reached a size where faith was not the sole motivator, and regions struggled to get local archbishops in charge of local appointments. When this occurred, the local bishops also began to dominate, threatening to fragment the church into regional variants.

### ACCESS TO THE BOOK

The original *Abiding Book* was quickly placed under strong guard, as if it was incapable of guarding itself from foes. But even so, the original witnesses agreed that access ought to be open to all worshippers. It was set in the cathedral in Hredmorinos, and another built to especially house it. The Ecclesiarch often visited it for guidance.

People came for the “Book Experience.” They would enter the cathedral, pray to God, often silently read their own copy and meditate, and when opportunity came, approach the Original One Book to view it. No one was allowed to touch it except especially appointed holy folks who had passed rigorous tests of purity and knowledge administered by the local bishop and a group of verifiers.

The core of verifiers were eventually appointed as the monastic keepers of The Book. They moved it to their monastery at the Holy Mountain. Slowly, it became more difficult for common people to access the book. Later, even church members found it more difficult to access because the monks were increasing their control over it.

Slowly the Ecclesiarch relied less and less upon direct access. A body of doctrine had accumulated that answered questions of the faith, while the reigning Ecclesiarch relied more and more upon tradition and personal insight to resolve disputes. After a point they relied, when necessary, on their great and holy copies of the original rather than travel to the Holy Mountain for consultation. This accentuated the growing power of the monks there to determine who could access it.

By the end of the empire only a handful of individuals had direct access to the book.

The original *Abiding Book* was returned to its spiritual node when the island sank during the Closing, and no trace of it has been found in the physical world since.

## THE GOD LEARNERS

It began when a group of sorcerers, the **New Order**, invited an entity to entertain them. They had a fire-damaged book of magical art that had been taken from a ruined building (some say a church, others a laboratory, others a sorcerer’s library) in the city of Rilan, in the (then) beautiful land of Sodal. It was called *Impossible Landscapes* and had living pictures of portions of various Otherworlds. Inside one of the pictures in the book they found an hand-high entity, a helpless and silly thing that sang a harmless song and did a little dance.

Decades later the scholar and cleric **Mandarel** heard that harmless song and from it he found the book called *Five New Ways* whose subsequent investigations led eventually to *753 Compilation* which led to the *Abiding Grimoire* and its offspring, called the *Unencumbered Lights of Reason* by users, but today called *Demon Genealogies*, by which time the God Learners were entirely corrupt. They had pillaged the Otherworlds and were plundering their world in the name of its empire. They used the *Abiding Book* as a source, a “cosmic grimoire,” and cast great magic that did bad things. They did not know it but the entity that had led them there was Gbaji, the Deceiver. It led many, including some of the greatest and most powerful people among them, to do evil and to worship Malkioneran, revealed later to be the Devil.

**Malkioneranism** was the religion, the Church had several successive names.

## END OF THE GOD LEARNERS

**Pascandal** was a poor liturgist from outside of Col, but he boldly preached the truth through Ralios and then into Tanisor, where he was taken prisoner and martyred by the duke of Tanisor. But Pascandal had taught a lot of people, and the Truthists began working through the lands and undermining the God Learners. Now, in the Now, **Saint Pascandal** is recognized by many as **The Liberator**, a selfless martyr to the true Invisible God, Their monkish order still rigidly follows the rules of poverty and austerity of the founder, living spiritually and begging in the streets. The monks consider themselves to be holy if they slowly die of starvation among the poor.

Their spiritual message is easier to understand. The truth of the real *Abiding Book*, read in the so-called *Straight Reading Way*, was spreading. The **Book Duel** between **Saint Mandavor** and **Karsmandikor** proved that the God Learners were using a false document, the *Shielded Abiding Book*. **Mandarel** exposed that the ancient teaching the *Book’s* own protective magic had been used to obscure its truth, and so the God Learners had misunderstood it and abused it. But eventually, they were overcome and destroyed because the good of the Invisible God can not be overcome. However, the discarding of the centuries-old religion and belief left a void.

**TRICKSTERS STUDIED AT THE COLLEGE**

Here are the names of some of the gods, goddesses and spirits studied at the Trickster College in Slontos:

- Denbro the Almighty, a god in the East Isles whose population is 222 people;
- Karo, of the Kumanku Isles, said to be the placenta of Borvanchu, their ruling deity;
- Fenesmalakarachut, “the feces of the Evil Elephant,” known in southern Kralorela
- Orkantanth, a court jester in Teshnos pantheon
- Veristchan, a largely benevolent fool in Kralorela who severally saves his rulers from ridicule by taking their errors onto himself
- Molobanamakur, a demonic imp of Prax
- Niti Fer a Waha, a demonic imp of Pent
- Vor Faraga Zel, an antigod of the East Isles who eats people and mermen
- Dovan, a shapechanger of Silver Age Maniria and Slontos
- Takormungar, a malicious denizen of the Elf Woods of Fronela
- Za, a shapechanger of Laskal and Fonrit who lives underwater and eats people
- Pu, an ineffectual, comic figure of the Rathori with gas problems
- Shakastor, a spirit of Ralios who, when defeated, falls into pieces that scatter in all directions
- Serelemborastabu, of Kralorela, who takes male or female shapes to seduce humans, and then gives birth to their evil twin; probably the same as
- Zormastag, of Teshnos, who takes male or female shapes to seduce humans, and then gives birth to their evil twin
- Jek, of Saird and Talastar, who combines parts of dead animals and vitalizes them to be evil monsters
- Hechantaur, a gambler of Pamaltela who enslaves people but treats them well
- Verenilip of Rion (of Danmalastan) who was made from the Devil’s shadow and whispers evil ideas into the ears of Malkioni

**IMPERIAL AGE LOSKALM**

[The Loskalmi actually do number the Ages and are the origin of that custom. Their 2<sup>nd</sup> Age is from the death of Gbaji, witnessed and abetted by Sir Talor; to the birth of Siglat.]

The original church of early 2<sup>nd</sup> Age worshiped the Irensaval, the Prime Mover and were spiritually led by **Sir Narensaval**, the warrior priest (liturgist) of Hrestol who led the resistance against **Lord Arim Adalla**, the Silver Lord. He led the Seshnegi-led (God Learner) forces that invaded Loskalm. His wizards used the evil magic of a Grimoire, the *Abiding Book*. Many virtuous Loskalmi went into hiding after Narensaval was killed, and more into exile.

Around the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Age the Loskalm spiritual hero **Sir Tryensaval**, aided by the Returners, led and/or guided the recovery of the old lands of Loskalm out of the hands of **Lord Baskal Adalla** and the **Lying Devil Dynasty**. These people were unwitting dupes of the Devil (yes, the evil anti-god of Malkioni religion).

**THIRD AGE RELIGIONS  
LOSKALM IN THE THIRD AGE**

Early Third Age Loskalmi spiritual leaders are the Virtuites, whose membership story wends between erratic genealogies and spiritual absolutes. The official mythology reveals a number of important events, with their subsequent Saints, that lead through the Hero Planes to the restoration of the original Hrestoli way of belief and practice. These are crystallized by **Saint Siglat**. Snodal is called the Great Catalyst who brought about the Syndic’s Ban to allow the religion to perfect itself.

The Loskalmi Church’s deepest teachings and best thinkers recognize the danger in the hubris of considering themselves perfect, and also the danger of judging others to hell and damnation. The Demonic Rebound was the final blow against the God Learners and was the inevitable result of their having worked with devils, but the Loskalmi do not claim to be immune to the devil, and do not claim to have caused the Rebound. The Living Devil Dynasty is, in part, a great tragedy because they sincerely believed themselves to be good, even though everything they did was evil. The Loskalmi have a sacrament called **Medispection** where they can subject themselves to a deep spiritual investigation and subsequent purification. They *know* it is easy to fall prey to thoughts of the devil, but follow Siglat’s Way because it protects them from *performing* the acts.

**THE LATEST ACTION**

Long before the evil empire disappeared various individuals were inspired, enlightened, guided otherwise moved to do something to establish themselves by answering “How do we do right?” From answering that question came the **Latest Action** that is the basis for many still popular or dominant Churches that were founded in the period.

In various ways the subsequent churches discovered, devised or remembered how to recapture the pure magic of it. They all state in different ways that the God Learners treated the *Abiding Book* and its teachings as if it were mechanics instead of spirituality. Everyone agrees that the God Learners began to fall apart slowly, then got worse as if a spiritual disease had come to term. After many defeats they were finally destroyed in their own Demonic Rebound when the devils came to collect what they were owed.

Many of the early movements called themselves the Latest Action, this being a reference to the five Actions of the *Abiding Book*. The general period and movement is also called the Recovery or, more often, Refinement. It Refined the understanding of God and the world to a more correct manifestation of the Invisible God of the *Abiding Book*.

The cosmology and mythology of all these Recovery Churches is exactly the same as the *Abiding Book* up to the

moment of its actual creation. Not surprising since that reality can be affirmed by travel to the Essence World. But the inspired Saints used or shunned different parts of the *Abiding Book* and interpreted things differently. Their commentaries and laws and other rules set the pattern for a new way to venerate that is widespread today.

### IN MANIRIA...

Ashara is the Latest Action, the New Revelation that defines the Invisible God for the modern world. It is the Ultimate Power as can be knowable by humans. The know It is the Source that made First Beam of power and energy to make the world. It is the Power of Movement, which energized the malleable and fragile world to be made. It is the Mask of the Invisible God.

Saint Castelain is the Prophet of Ashara , who brought forth the refinements to the *Abiding Book* that were pure, holy and good. Everyone worships Ashara and the lesser powers that It made to let humans live (except some barbarians, whose lifestyle is barely living at all).

Castelain was a merchant and adventurer who led the Great Trek across Wenelia and back. He taught about Ashara as he travelled. He stopped in many places, which are now his holy places. Towns grew up there, and then forts where descendants of the Great Trek ruled. Each of those has its own church whose priest sends the power of worship to Ashara . The priests are appointed by their local lord, a Trader Prince. Castelain's magic was strong, and his preaching was powerful, and many were converted to worship Ashara as he instructed. He performed miracles too, of peace and communication, of change and of exchanges. When he died his body was dismembered into 52 relics, distributed unevenly among the holy places (Many have since been moved or even, tragically, lost). The

miracles that were, and can be, produced with his relics were the proof his sainthood. Veneration at his 52 tombs began as soon as they were in place.

Ashara was accompanied by many people. some of whom settled down and are the ancestors of the Trader Princes. A couple of them were miracle workers as well, undoubtedly inspired by their proximity to the holy man. Thus there is a saint of mule skinnners and another of canoeists.

Much of the regular veneration is worship of local entities using rites from (or adapted from) the *Book of Ashara* . In some cases minor local entities themselves joined into the worship as Castelain practiced and taught it. Most entities simply receive the worship and, as per the teachings of Castelain, make formal exchange for that worship.

Reverence for Ashara , Saint Castelain and the Saints of the Great Trek is the core of the Ashara Churches, plus the general form of venerative worship. But no formal organization binds the many churches, whose spiritual authority is obtained from the local Trader Prince nobleman. Thus each local church they are very different, indiscriminately worshipping whatever other regional entity helps survival in a web of spiritual exchange that binds the church together.

The clerics lead worship for all their local entities, no matter what the Otherworld of origin. They do not insist that other native forms be abandoned, and generally the Ashara liturgists are part of the local ceremony for the Wenelian cults and spirits.

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## THE GOD LEARNERS

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### HEROQUESTING ASSETS

My dear lord,

*You have asked your question in terms only utterable by a man of your sagacity, insight and piety. When I bear such clarity I am enlightened and delighted to have a man of such silver truth address me.*

*You ask, "What's in it for me?"*

*I can only reply in such unambiguous terms as your require. We can go to where the pagans get their magic, and we can get it too.*

*First, we have already proved that people can go there and enter into dire contests, which, if they win, enhance their chosen skills, even to let them become the best in the world.*

*Second, we can go there with things, and return from there with magical things like the pagans use. The Church has already sanctioned this.*

*Third, We can go there and discover treasures beyond imagination—treasures lost since the age of Zzabur.*

*Fourth, we can go there to destroy our foes, both by surreptitiously exploring around on their Hero Planes, and taking on certain roles and attacking our foes in that world.*

*Fifth, our fine and holy, most glorious Church has practical objectives that it seeks, and we can either help them, or simply pretend to do so, depending upon your wish.*

*I think, based on my own explorations, that our earliest explorations will cost us only up to 50% of each investment in terms of men and equipment, but I consider that to be a suitable loss for the goods to be gained. Shall I send my proctor to make an appointment to discuss finances?*

*I am forever, and most sincerely, your Servant,*

Vostoramos de Geresten

## GOD LEARNER DATES

- c. 500 **Formation of “God Learner study groups”** in the Seshnelan colonies of Jrustela. These include the New Order and others. Of course, in this time period saying God Learner indicates an early, even proto-God Learner, thought since most of the ideas had not yet been recognized.
- 646 ***Abiding Book* appears.** This is the key event of all Western religion. Within a year it had engulfed Jrustela, and was borne rapidly elsewhere.
- 654 God Learners crush elf-led revolt, burn out most forests of Vralos. In this case it was the Order of Yoranday
- c. 715 **Great Fire of Clarity** (Arkati attempt to destroy their records so the God Learners don’t get them) [AL.7]
- 740 Silver Empire crushed
- 776 the New Order was recognized by the Jrusteli Church Council
- 790 Under the direction of the God Learners, Loskalm begins a haphazard campaign of conquest up the Janube River.
- c. 790 **God Learners** contact the Ingareens in God Forgot, and persuade them to construct Locsil, the Clanking City [not 740 as stated in Tradetalk 5.8]
- c. 820s God Learner researches awaken the native Chaos of Dorastor [GIHW.133]
- 813 **Valastos With Seven Pens issues warnings about spirit plane ecology** [GB.23] so it must have been going wrong before now — in fact, errors occurred with the Eight New Manifestations [GB.25] I think most of them were quite ephemeral and lofty, so his book is pretty mumbo jumbo even to many Malkioni scholars. But it also has specific examples of unexplained phenomena which seemed to be new. Rather than being warned, I think some Order or another took his book as a Sourcebook for Raw Energy, and went and did the wrong things etc. from it...
- 823 **Reformed Sorcerers Alliance puts Suilmat on throne**
- c. 840 Zistorites began to grow in numbers. At this time, people start setting up crude machine shops, including manyin Esvulaela.
- 842 God Learners invade Shadowlands [GB.23]
- 845 **God Learners Collective was formed.** Many like-minded sorcerous orders (including some from the Church) formally joined forces and begin their **Explorations of Magic**. Such had been done before informally, but **now united, the God Learners’ power increased dramatically.**
- 849 **Goddess Switch.** In 849 the God Learners proved the truth of their vision and the falseness of the pagans gods. The God Learners performed their famous Goddess Switch. They thereby “proved” that their sorcery was superior to pagan worship, and that pagan deities were interchangeable.

- 907 **siege against Machine City begins**  
www.herowars.com/gta/initiate/dp\_history.html
- 917 **Machine City destroyed;** Ilotos is emperor [?, KoS.96,  
www.herowars.com/gta/initiate/dp\_history.html

## GOD LEARNER THEOLOGY

The early Saintly Bookbearers preached the One Book and the Upright Recital as the sole Word and Law of the Creator without interpretation or gloss. The Right Power (Kionvaran) was a powerful unifying movement in Jrustela and inspired the Return to Righteousness Crusade, which brought the One Book to mainland Genertela. During the first century following the appearance of the *Abiding Book*, different schools of interpretation and doctrine developed, but quarrels over interpretation and doctrine were minimal as long as all acknowledged the primacy of the One Book.

Some of the existing orthodox Kionvaran movements formed in the first century included:

**Makanism.** A broad doctrinal movement holding that the Invisible God is Makan, the Great Mind and proclaiming the Great Mind to be fundamental to all things, and that our perception of a material universe is simply a *mis*perception of this same fundamental, “superior” oneness. The Makanites draw a distinction between the superior ideal forms or Runes and the lower world of phenomena, which is merely a misperception of the true ideal form.

**Hadmalism.** A very influential school of interpretation, the Hadmalists held that the fourfold exegesis of the *Abiding Book* (the literal, the allegorical, the moral, and the mystical) was key to perceiving and understanding the Law of Creation. Many Hadmalists held that the four magical systems identified by God Learner scholars parallel the fourfold technique.

**Emanationalists.** Another doctrinal movement, the Emanationalists are broadly popular in Pamaltela. They hold that the gods and spirits of the pagans are but emanations of Makan (Erasanchula) that have been corrupted by the material world. They seek to return the wayward Erasachula to the Law through ritual and ceremony. Sometimes called the “We’ll Fix Them” school or demonologists by critics.

**Reconstructionalist.** Reconstructionalism is a radical offshoot of Hadmalism (also called the Word and the Law). The Reconstructionalists believe that the Runes are the essential “atoms of concepts” and can be combined to construct and manipulate the universe. They hold that the original Law was broken by Chaos and that it is their duty to Reconstruct the Law using their techniques. The Zistorites are an even more radical movement within Reconstructionalism.

During the reign of the Sacred Overlord Saval, it was discovered that some schools and doctrinal movements were incompatible with a truthful reading of the One Book. The ambitious sorcerers of the New Order were suppressed and the Real Reassessment Conclave gathered at the Holy Mountain.

## GOD LEARNER MONASTERIES AND THE HOLY MOUNTAIN OF JRUSTELA

As part of the Real Reassessment, the Conclave established a council of Kionvaran scholars and holy men called the Holy Mountain Presence Review Board to sort matters out. At Holy Mountain, where the original *Abiding Book* is kept, groups of philosophers and clergy maintain God Learner Schools or Monasteries. These were folk who had renounced their families and other ties and dedicated themselves to an association responsible for maintaining, translating, advancing, and spreading the Word of the Creator. Following the appearance of the *Abiding Book*, many men and women dedicated themselves to the Word. Each association of monks (or Tradition) has its own rules, some require celibacy and tranquil dissociation from the material world, and others require diligent observation and involvement in the material world.

The Holy Mountain Presence Review Board scrutinizes the teachings of new movements and schools and, if acceptable, they are required to maintain a monastery at Holy Mountain, but may form lesser associations and schools throughout the Middle Sea Empire.

## HERESIES

Heretical movements unfortunately exist throughout the Middle Sea Empire, although they should be exterminated by the Righteous (sadly, corrupt local officials tolerate these heresies and in some cases even support them). Heretics give their movements various names, but they all fall into one of the categories identified by the Fifth Ecclesiastical Council. The categories include:

**Inflamers.** This heretical offshoot of the Emanationalists went so far that they actually performed pagan burnt sacrifices to the Invisible God, who they called Zabandan. They were considered wayward even by the Emanationalist demonologists who tried to conquer gods. This is the heresy of conflating the Invisible God with the pagan gods.

**Old Believers.** The Anti-Savalists are remnants of the School of New Order who believe that anything not described in the One Book is evil and undermines the Law of Creation. They hold that the Malkioni True Church is corrupt and evil. Sometimes called the One Book Believers, they reject all but the literal exegesis of the One Book and resort to riot and violence on the slightest provocation. This is the heresy of rejecting rightful Church authority.

**Irensavalists.** Corrupt Fronelan sorcerers were offended by the Return to Rightness and claimed that Malkion was the evil demiurge of the corrupt world. They claim Irensaval or the Hidden Mover is separate from the world, preceding the creation even of matter and energy and that Malkion is the evil and corrupt demiurge whose purpose is to keep people in the gross and bloated clutches of the material world. This is the heresy of maltheism.

**Transgressors.** The most abominable of all heresies, the Transgressors hold that the Devil and not Malkion was Makan's servant. They believe that Unlaw or Chaos is necessary in order cleanse the world of the Corrupted Law.

Once the Corrupted Law is purified through the destruction of all, the Transgressors believe the original Law of Makan will be restored. This is the heresy of antinomianism.

## THE GIORGOS TEXT

*[Giorgos the Blind is an influential God Learner mystic of the Middle Sea Empire. A Reconstructionalist—even a Zistorite—in his youth, Giorgos later became a bitter critic of the excesses of those movements and entered a strict Makanite order founded by St. Banklou. He is a bitter foe of Gerfej and Drachir de Arshu Fola. He wrote this text as a rebuttal upon Gerfej and Drachir]*

In the beginning was the Law, and the Law was with the Creator, and the Law was the Creator. Although all members of our order have dedicated our lives to serving that Law, as I survey the calamities that have befallen us, it is clear that we have failed the Invisible God through our pride and our hubris.

The Will of Malkion created the One Book, to give guidance so that humankind might restore the Law of the Creator. The visible One Book presented to the Church Witnesses is only one of the possible permutations of the runes of the eternal One Book, as the Invisible God presented it at Creation. By rearranging the runes of the One Book in solemn prayer and contemplation, we may someday arrive again at the original Law. As **Umburudu the Whisperer** observed, "since the Invisible God created the world by combining written Runes it must follow that these Runes were not representations of pre-existing things, but the very things by which the elements of the universe are molded." But the important thing is not the finding, it is the seeking, it is the devotion with which one spins the wheel of prayer and scripture, discovering the truth little by little. Our error was that we lacked the patience and the dedication for that long quest—we sought short cuts that would give us the truth immediately. We sinned against the Law, against that which created and sustains the world. Now we are punished for it.

The Word and the Law revealed by the One Book is not merely a work of the Invisible God, like our essences or the universe itself; it is one of the attributes of the Creator, like His eternity or His mind. Outside of the Word and Law is only Chaos - the Void and Annihilation. Deciphering and correctly interpreting the Sacred Scripture is the key to perceiving and understanding the **Law of Creation**. This is the science of the purification of the heart. Mystic logic, the runes on the wheels of prayer whirling in infinite change, it is the world of bliss, it is the music of thought, but one must proceed slowly, and with caution.

Unfortunately for us all, the **Reconstructionalists** and their offspring have proven unable to walk the fine line between contemplation of the Word and the Law and manipulation of the Runes into a talisman, an instrument of dominion over nature. They took the spinning prayer wheel and turned it into a tool to master the Law. For example, the Logical Circles of the Reconstructionalists, which show every possible combination between sets of Runes, are used by every God Learner school and movement. The five elemental Runes embrace 120 combinations, the Ten Polarities have 3,628,800 possible arrangements, and the



Thirty Core Runes give rise to more than 265 thousand billion billion billion combinations. To reconstruct all of the Law through such techniques would take nearly 8 billion billion billion years.

A radical group of Reconstructionalists asked, if a mere circle subdivided into compartments could give rise to so many combinations, what wonders might we get from multiple concentric, revolving disks made of metal, each with ten, fifteen, twenty, or even thirty compartments? These radicals—later called the Zistorites after their “Machine God” or “Artificial Demiurge”—sought to recreate the original Law by mechanical combinations of Runes and thereby reconstitute the universe. They constructed their “Divine Machine” to aid them—a myriad of automated Logical Circles and prayer wheels endlessly generated new combinations of the Word and the Law. Teams of monks venerated and schools of sorcerers studied each and every combination made by Zistor. In their mad pride, the Zistorites usurped Makan with their own construct, which they had created to rewrite the One Book!

Like the Creator, Zistor’s output of combinations needed to define all of creation, which meant that an endless number of these combinatory engines must be assembled. In every city of the Empire, their noisy machines could be heard, spinning, combining, and reconstructing the Law of Creation. The Zistorites enjoyed the full support of the Emperor and the Church. Following the **successful campaign of the Archduke of Slontos** in Kethaela, the Zistorites were given dominion in the conquered Mirrorsea lands to provide the resources to complete Zistor. There, on flat and grassy island, the Zistorites built a great machine - a vast array of furnaces, pipes and gears that tirelessly operated mechanized engines, spun prayer wheels, and powered combinatory cylinders—to define all of creation. In the conquered lands, Zistorite workshops and slaves provided the tools and resources for the great Machine. Endlessly, the Divine Automaton worked to transmute Creation, aided by the prayers, veneration and songs of the Zistorites.

During the reign of Emperor Ilotos, the process has become fully automaton. Manipulating the words of the Law, the Zistorites have constructed a machine as a short cut in the process of recreating the original Law. Zistor, however, has awakened as the blasphemous “artificial demiurge”—the Machine God—which is rewriting the Law of Creation and has paid no heed to whether the Law had too many runes or too few. Creation shall recoil against this Artificial Demiurge and our perversity shall be exposed; the calamities that now beset us are just the beginning of our deserved end!

[The manuscript continues with impassioned denunciations of the perversity of the Zistorites and Reconstructionalist movements, which, for brevity’s sake have been redacted from this copy.]

### UMBURUDU THE WHISPERER

(also known as Umburudu of Newfrosal) (circa 770-860), was one of the founders of the God Learner Collective and a founder of the Sight of the Great Mind movement

(sometimes called Rune Sight). He later disputed the metaphysical naturalism of the Precipitators (including his former students Andolar of Gedar and Morastos of Prenga), which ultimately resulted in his fall from favor.

### LAW OF CREATION

Among the Canons of Orthodoxy adopted at the Fifth Ecclesiastical Council is the Third Canon, which reads as follows:

In the beginning was the Law, and the Law was with the Creator, and the Law was the Creator. The Law was made from the Thirty Runes: the Invisible God ordained them, the Invisible God hewed them, the Invisible God combined them, the Invisible God weighed them, the Invisible God interchanged them. And with them the Invisible God created everything that is and everything that will be.

### RECONSTRUCTIONALISTS

These are a radical offshoot of the orthodox Hadmalist movement (also called the Word and the Law). The Hadmalists held that the fourfold exegesis of the *Abiding Book* (the literal, the allegorical, the moral, and the mystical) was key to perceiving and understanding the Law of Creation. The Reconstructionalists, however, believe that the original Law was broken by Chaos and that it is their duty to Reconstruct the Law. Moreover, they believe that the Runes are “atoms of concepts” and can be combined to make objects governed by the relative Categories.

### THE SUCCESSFUL CAMPAIGN OF THE ARCHDUKE OF SLONTOS

The tools and machines of the Zistorites were key to the Archduke’s victory. Amongst the devices built by the Zistorites included the fire-spouting Bronze Turtle Galleys, the man-powered Covered Chariots, the Machine for Storming Walls, and the myriad of small Spring Ballistas.

### HEROQUESTING DEVELOPMENTAL STAGES

HeroQuesting did not exist in the west until the Imperial Age.

The normal method of obtaining magic for westerners in the first 500 years did not entail going to the Gods War. The closest to visiting the Otherworld for the western religions was a visionary witnessing of events during worship. Magic came from a mysterious Otherworld and as manifest *upon* the worshippers.

Actual travel to the Sorcery World, especially the Spell Plane and a few Grimoire nodes, was done by sorcerers obtaining their spells. Some sorcerers could go deeper than others. But there was no concept of travel there, or anything except to focus closely upon what was wanted, make a magical link to it, then get out.

The emphasis was upon delivery of the power to the material world, through the spiritual leaders. Magic accessed the Otherworld and *brought the magic into the world*.

Rumors and memories existed of Other Magic, and some forbidden written materials were widely rumored. But the precautionary tale of Arkat, whose went outside of acceptable authority was more acknowledged. The world suffered greatly because of his violation of the Laws, and still does. Orthodoxy is Church Law.

In 740 the Return to Rightness Crusade ended its centuries of life by killing Paslac the Arkat, destroying the Army of Arkat, scourging the lands of Arkat, enslaving the peoples and uz of Arkat, and carrying off every artifact that they could find that could not be destroyed, if it was of Arkat. Thus ended Arkat.

## 745 - THE NEW ORDER, INFORMAL STAGE

It began with a group called the **New Order**. Despite its lofty name, this organization was a social club, founded a century earlier as a group to discuss the new religion, the new thoughts and teach other the Makanic Way. A century later the members were Jrusteli rich merchants, petty nobles, unassigned clerics and some of the free, curious and self-supported so-called *Juniors* who were so numerous in those days.

They had a fire-damaged book of magical art that had been taken from a ruined building (some say a church, others a laboratory, others a sorcerer's library) that was reputedly in the city of Rilan, in the (then) beautiful land of Sodal. This meant it could have been from the Stygian Empire, hence forbidden. But it seemed harmless enough, the men were "not children without resources," and so, around the year 745, they enjoyed it.

It was called *Impossible Landscapes* and had living pictures of portions of various Otherworld. There is the City of the Great Star, looking upon a marketplace populated by very tall, very thin pale people with yellow hair. Here was a window into The Forest of Therun, where if you watched long enough animals would walk past, and the sun set and rise. And on and on: hellish sights into the Underworld, gruesome battles apparently ongoing through eternity; breathtaking sights, gorgeous places with exotic beings of many descriptions. On page 43 is the Cottage of Mrs. Old Lady, set in a pleasant forest glen. From that page, most people now feel, first came Samin. He came out of the cabin, approached the picture frame and crawled out of the picture to stand on the page. He was only hand-high, a helpless and silly thing that sang a harmless song and did a little dance. It asked to remain out of the book, and was granted a box to sleep over the fireplace, out of reach of the cat. Afterwards Samin would offer to show the men more things about the pictures, if they would just learn a couple little songs to sing. When the songs were sung the places seemed to come alive as hidden denizens crawled into the scene and went about their strange otherworld business.

Jedrick of Isstur took the picture book on a tour of Jrustela. Though 40-50 people were allowed in per showing, no more than a dozen could closely witness the book's scenery. But it was a wild sensation, so that Jedrick eventually had half the membership in the Order on the tour, each taking shifts to share the book with paying

audiences. Many local songs sprang up from this as local minstrels capitalized on the popular subject. Most of them sang some version of the Silly Man's Song.

## 776 - ORDER OF NEW ORDER

A generation later the cleric **Mandarel** heard that harmless song, and realized that it was a set of instructions to find a treasure. He and his companions went to search for it, and returned with a sacred writing called *Five New Ways*. This was discussion and a set of magical practices to look at Creator, Great Makan. It also provided a set of rules, a method of organization and objectives for "good men to seek."

Mandarel preached and led many services in the cities of Jrustela, and in private discussions he gained many supporters. He explained to them the spiritual opportunities offered in the enemy God World. He also theorized about financial opportunities.

In 776 the New Order was recognized by the Jrusteli Church Council as a monastic wizardly Order of the Church of the *Abiding Book*. Mandarel was the first Abbott. The New Order outfitted the first HeroQuest Expedition sponsored by the Church.

## 798 - SCHOOL OF NEW ORDER

[This is during the reign of Emperor Svagad]

The New Order grew in numbers as its ideas spread across the empire. Its practices nearly always followed, and many chapter houses of the New Order were established.

In 798 the Order of the New Order was elevated to be a School of the *Abiding Book*, and its chapters generally promoted to be abbeys. Patrons established an actual college, and more importantly, a new church in the Transformative Church style. These were not just a new architecture, but a new design to facilitate the transmission of prayerful energy to the Creator.

Many people found the teaching of the Order of New Order persuasive, especially when explained by Lord Pilot Maraganan. In 810 he and his students revealed the *753 Compilations*. This was just one of many such resources that were inspired by *Five New Ways*, but this one was not just of ideas, but built upon the experienced truths. These Compilations explained away many concerns and apparent problems in the *Abiding Book*. Its arguments were largely accepted and many were regularly used by the Church Council (though the book never accepted as Scripture equal to the *Abiding Book*.)

Critics claimed that the *753 Compilations* were ONLY a preconstructed system designed to foster HeroQuesting and the destruction of the Pagan world. As a belief system it ignored critical parts of The Book. However,, most people seemed to think that destroying the pagan worlds was a good thing.

The beliefs system spread far outside the School of New Order. By 820 these new practices were called the Malkioneranism Practice. It was a liberal, experimental form of worship that celebrated flexibility, subjective scriptural interpretation and the exploitation of pagan resources.

**MALKIONERANISM**

**Malkioneranism** encouraged its adherents to discover the knowledge revealed by the *Five New Ways*. These included heroquesting, possibly to the places illustrated by the *Impossible Landscapes*. As a philosophy it needed to explain why it was possible to go to their dangerous places created by hateful beings. This required some interpretation of parts of the *Abiding Book* in a slightly different way than was popular, the so-called "Jrusteli Way."

Malkioneranism was initially an experimental way of offering prayers and songs, but soon altered itself to have many new, sometimes strange, practices. It grew to be a movement which affected even the emperor. Its adherents became increasingly influential, and hostility between them and the mainstream **Makanism** grew. However, both parties refused to get into a Decision Judgement Duel, and persisted in veiled references to heresy about each other.

They used the *Abiding Book* as a source, a "cosmic grimoire," and cast great magic that did bad things. They did not know it but the entity that had led them there was Gbaji, the Deceiver. It led many, including some of the greatest and most powerful people among them, to do evil and to worship Malkioneran, revealed later to be the Devil.

**806 - ORDER OF OTHERWORLD EXPLORATION**

In 806 the School formed a new order, **The Order of Otherworld Exploration**. Leaders were more commonly known as the **Supernatural Pilots**. They organized and directed explorations of the Otherworlds and God War Planes.

They coordinated other segments of the School of New Order. They worked out plans of exploration, attempted to use Church system to man them, and then led the heroquests.

Abbot Guy de Hrestolket had spent years studying records before he became abbot. He made small efforts only, and used each effort as a fact gathering expedition. He compiled and organized his and his predecessors' opinions and observations, and theorized about his foes. He questioned hundreds of prisoners, accompanied many expeditions and studied many pagan documents and confessions.

**GRIMOIRES**

One of his concerns was to ease the tension within the church, and he burst into the Node of the *Abiding Grimoire*. He brought back the tome, which written on old fashioned scrolls, and also carved into staff, belt and breastplate. The *Abiding Grimoire* largely stopped God Learners from using the *Abiding Book* directly as a Grimoire.

Many years later (845) a new grimoire was issued, with much simpler methods of performing an impressive battery of useful spells. It was called *Unencumbered Lights of Reason* by its users.

[It is, afterwards, called *Demon Genealogies*, because it often didn't even use Malkioni magic, but a simpler form of spells that could even be done by the uninitiated.

**845 - THE GOD LEARNERS COLLECTIVE**

Emperor Brailoch wanted results and deplored the sprawling Church of the *Abiding Book*. So many imperial family members were now bishops that it was easy to change church practice, and many widespread reorganizations took place in an effort to become more efficient. Hierarchy was redirected, methodologies were unified and many Orders were taken off church rolls, and died out within a generation. Other Orders were given increased responsibilities and resources.

The God Learners Collective was formed. Its members included dozens of heroic orders, wizards, clerics of several types and formerly independent explorers. Their uniting factor: They had made efforts to explore the Hero Planes.

The Order of the Otherworld Exploration, New Order School; was chosen to lead and coordinate the members "in the dangerous and profitable **Explorations of Magic**." Such had been done before informally, but **now united, the God Learners' power increased dramatically.**

**STAGES OF EXPLORATION****776+ EARLIEST: DIRECT INTRUSIONS AND SLAUGHTER**

*The Five New Ways* was the guidebook used by the first pilots to explore the Otherworld. They first went to the actual location of events that occurred in prehistory in Ralios. They performed exactly the rites as explained in the book, and found themselves intruding stupidly into an on-going event in the Hero Planes. (Later it was determined it had been the start of the story of How Arkat Became a Troll.) Knowing no ceremonial protocol or pass words, the party was quickly ejected by the outermost of the otherworld guardians.

They tried again, several times; and at last had the hard experience to realize that the book allowed them to penetrate the myths of their former foes. They prepared a force heavily armed with war and magic. They flew to a mountain, then spiraled down towards Orlanth's Hall. There they were met by hordes of swordsmen and demigods who immediately butchered them.

Despite the setback the Global Captain of the Order took personal interest in this particular mythic trail. With backing of the King of Seshnela he launched five more voyages. In the last his pilot band managed to get right to the square before Orlanth's hall before being destroyed or forced out of the world.

The rule was that whenever the pilots went to those places they were recognized as invaders, spies or outworlders and quickly, generally overwhelmingly, destroyed. The backers of the project lost heart.

At last several large scale attempts were made to force the way into these places, during which some God Learners would acquire the blessing of local plants or rocks for

magical use later. These small successes encouraged further work despite the high costs so far in men and resources.

### **780 - FINDING PLACES OF POWER**

New groups began looking for Gates, as they called the entry to the Otherworlds. Some were found. Similar exploitation followed. Many places were found that also seemed to be weak spots, but were already claimed by pagans. The pilots generally categorized these and left.

### **C 800 - INVADING RURAL HOLY PLACES**

Davaka the Dealer was the organizer of the first raids on rural, ill-defended holy places. A military force seized the area, sometimes even forcing the natives to participate in the rite that desecrated their holy place. The pilots forcefully went through the gates, exploring and defending themselves as they went. Sometimes these gates collapsed immediately after use, but some remained and seemed to grow easier to cross over.

The seizure of many pagan sites provoked hostility among the natives, and sometimes nearby clans or groups would retaliate.

### **800 - FINDING HOLES: FORGOTTEN PLACES**

Alan of Nolos used pagan manuscripts and calculated that a place of power was nearby that was a weak spot between worlds. He was right, explored without being attacked, then went again and brought back knowledge of the resources through the gates. A third session and they came back with blessings that they wrote down as part of their being-compiled grimoire.

For a time the Otherworld Explorers concentrated on finding more of these forgotten or unknown places. Some success was met.

### **C 806 - EXPLORING THE SPIRIT WORLD**

Animists go to their specific Otherworld to get magic, and animists (notably shamans) can also go to their Gods War sites for special spirits (though this was, and is, comparatively rare as well, due to the danger).

813 Valastos With Seven Pens issues warnings about spirit plane ecology [GB.23] so it must have been going wrong before now — in fact, the Eight New Manifestations [GB.25]

### **C 810 - EXPLORING OWN SITES**

Venrestol Bookman led the first pilot expedition through a Malkioni site. On the ancient battlefield of Pen's Run they prayed to their own ancestors, meanwhile veiling time with spells from the *Five Ways* scripture. They discovered what they (incorrectly) called a **Temporal Node** which led them go to witness or join the battle against the Jarnratta Army. Venrestol Bookman later expanded his pilots presence outside of the battle site too, and catalogued the regions he found there. He had, it was later realized, reached the Hero Plane called the Gods War.

## **NEW PATHS**

Abbot Bookman.

The Bookman School charted temporal nodes, and then began exploring the relationships between them. These were the New Paths that were made. At first Malkioni events were charted for the known Western legendary and mythic periods. Afterwards branches reached out to other earlier or later events, and nearby areas. These were the basis of the famous Maps of the Hero Plane.

The New Paths led to the Great Battles of the Gods War, and the systematic exploration and selective plundering of these events became regular rites and events. Suddenly the Secret Vision awakened in some people, and they recognized the theoretical links between the God War events and their own legends.

Also, smaller groups began infiltrating the Otherworlds, less intent on conquering their way in as just getting in by any means. Stealing magic from Tricksters became popular with one group, while another relied on speed, a third on fleeing from fights, and the most successful as neutral Observers. These last could be practically unnoticed in many pagan Otherworld situations, memorizing participants, dialogues and calculating chances of success.

### **845 - INVADING STRONG SITES**

Abbot Inkarion the Blockbuster.

With methodologies worked out and with preparations the Blockbusters began invading the pagan strong points. They mounted major hostile groups of power and overtly attacked Otherworld strongholds, like Orlanths' Stead. these expeditions were to obtain things. Since the Otherworlds sprang right back to their immortal form after the HeroQuesting pilots departed, there was not permanent harm done.

### **849 - GODDESS SWITCH**

#### **C 850 +/- INNOVATIONS**

After two centuries of exploring established heroquests, the Church began experimenting with new methods. (Earlier experimentation had been unsanctioned private research.)

One of the great desires they had was to remove the actual items from the God World. In normal conditions a copy can be charged up on a heroquest. The God Learners wanted the real thing.

Iskandos of Reyerswal succeeded in making some incredible copies of unique items, and his chosen pilot band succeeded in exchanging them for the God World Items. At first, with the Candle of Niskos, it spontaneously returned to its Otherworld after two hours, simultaneously sending the copy back to its origin. Further experiments allowed items to remain in the Otherworld even longer. They never claimed to have facilitated a permanent change, though others did claim that for them. In general items were stolen, used for ceremonies or specific deeds, and allowed to return to their original worlds when done.

They also experimented with changing things in the Hero Planes. They devised a method whereby they had a

possibility of affecting who or what they met on some HeroQuests. The methodology was insecure, but often attempted to facilitate the success of the quest.

Although neither of these created permanent change, many members of both schools were confident that they would achieve permanent possession within their own lifetimes.

### C 960 - POWER HEROQUESTING

With a large array of methods to interact with the Hero Planes and Otherworlds, the God Learners eventually treated it with cautious disdain. When the Church decided to perform a HeroQuest they regularly mustered vast resources for its success. They scorned finesse and depended on their raw power and spiritual coordination between their assets. These were called Power HeroQuests.

Nearly every one of these expeditions suffered some loss of people, and considerable prayer power, equipment and time. However, these losses were considered acceptable by the church and other sponsors.

Many of the traditional, subtle methods continued to be performed through the period as well.

### OVERALL EFFECTS ON THE HERO PLANES

After a century of blasting their way around the Hero Planes, subtly changing denizens around in, stealing equipment and artifacts and generally wreaking havoc; the Hero Planes had begun to take on a difference from their original nature. By comparing the original exploratory reports with the observations of their current pilots scholars discerned that they had made permanent changes in the Hero Planes. This was taken to be a sign of success and the Church celebrated progress towards their stated ends of destroying the non-sorcerous Otherworlds and integrating them into the True World.

### THE REVERSAL

With virtually no warning the God World, Spirit Plane and Hero Planes snapped back into their original condition in the year 1049. A few philosophers and wise men had predicted such an event could occur, but this was based on theory rather than evidence, and so was discounted in the empirically-minded church and empire.

The effect of this was that all artifacts on loan from the other worlds snapped away, leaving in their place their otherworld replacements which were, generally, damaged or broken. **The goddesses that had been Switched both returned to their original spheres.** Magical abilities that had been stolen from the Hero Wars were abruptly lost by the people who had them. Many things that had been premised on ancient powers now lost (and generally powered by them as well) lost their potency.

The trigger for this event was in 1049, at the the Shattering of Seshnela by the Luathans. The vibrations from the adamant spike that vibrated the lands into destruction reverberated through all the planes.

### THE BOOK OF SECRETS

*This manuscript was among those stolen from in the temple library of holy Kaxtorplose by Jeleven the Ferret. It is written in the Western script in the florid style common in the last century of the Archduchy of Slontos. The manuscript purports to describe the dying days of Wenelia, although the anonymous author gives no explanation is given for his miraculous survival.*

Arkat was the betrayer and the deceiver. He stole the secrets of his people, his companions and his allies and gave them to their enemies all in the name of his mindless war against Gbaji. Thus did the *Book of Secrets* find its way into the hands of the Archons of the Stygian Empire and ultimately, to our great loss, to our Great Empire.

The notorious *Book of Secrets* should need to explanation, but in the degenerate age of the Closing we have forgotten or lost too much. Zzabur himself, it is claimed, scribed the *Book of Secrets* as the text of his lengthy ritual that shattered the Ice and ended the Darkness. It was amongst the potent grimoires stolen by Arkat and used by his Dark Empire to destroy armies, change the course of rivers and level mountains.

Arkat's heirs constructed elaborate and terrible protections for the *Book of Secrets*, with locks and wards of iron and darkness, and bound in blazing iron plates, from which it got its name. The Stygians employed all the dark powers at their command to ensure that none – even their own sorcerers – had access to the Book's contents. Even the Archons were too fearful of the Book to even open its red-hot plates and skim the text. The Book's power and reputation was such that its mere presence was enough to grant immense power to its possessors. Famously, in 640, the Stygian wizards merely displayed the *Book of Secrets* at Asgolan Fields and the assembled Seshnegi lords, wizards and soldiers fled the field in terror.

The tyranny of the Dark Empire was ended when Malkion revealed the sacred scriptures of the One True and *Abiding Book* to the Justeli. Even the power of the *Book of Secrets* could not withstand the true text of Creation. The Righteous Crusade crushed the assembled Stygian wizards of the Archon Paslac at Arkhome and took the *Book of Secrets* from amongst the corpses, the mud and the blood.

Although it is self-evident that the *Book of Secrets* was clearly inferior to the One True and *Abiding Book*, many believed that the secrets of the book – if properly deciphered and interpreted – would greatly add to our understanding of the One True and *Abiding Book* of the Invisible God. The Order of the New Order took the *Book of Secrets* back to Holy Mountain where teams of Hadmalist monks and Reconstructionist wizards and mages labored to break the Book's Stygian defenses, but to no avail. After the terrible fire of 793 that destroyed the Monastery of St.Hadmal, killing scores of monks, more elaborate precautions were taken. Emperor Svagad appointed Trymir of Irenstos to oversee the monks' efforts.

In 825, Trymir announced to the Emperor that the wizards and mages had succeeded in breaching the *Book of Secrets's* eldritch defenses and that the Book was ready to be opened. But soon after came whispers that the contents of the Book were far more terrible than anyone imagined. It

was rumored that the Emperor himself ordered the Book to be removed to a secret vault on the Holy Mountain and that all writings related to the *Book of Secrets* be destroyed. The Holy Mountain Presence Review Board pronounced anathema upon any who dared open the *Book of Secrets* or even comment upon its presumed contents. The liturgists of the True Church added the *Book of Secrets* to the list of Zzabur's blasphemies – and others even claimed that the Devil himself wrote the book.

The *Book of Secrets* disappeared for a century, until none remained who truly knew why the *Book of Secrets's* contents were forbidden. Pagan warlords and monstrous armies threatened the peaceful provinces of Our Great Empire and desperate dukes and mages clamored for new weapons to fight off these new foes. They demanded that the *Book of Secrets* be removed from its vault, but Emperor Ilitos refused. Then evil demagogues stirred up the populace, leading to the destructive Secrets Riots in the cities of Slontos and Seshnela. With the destruction of Zistorela at the hands of pagans and monsters, and with the Secrets Riots out of control, Emperor Celaskos bowed to the demands of the Archduke for the return of the Book.

Upon the command of the Emperor, the *Book of Secrets* was taken from its vault on the Holy Mountain and placed in a sealed reliquary of iron and lead, which was taken to the Imperial Barge. A small fleet of Bronze Turtle Galleys escorted the *Book of Secrets* to Narilor where the Archduke and his army of wizards awaited its arrival. This was the last item transported from Jrustela to Slontos, for the Closing came in the *Book of Secrets's* wake.

The Archduke, his wizards, and his bodyguard took the *Book of Secrets* to Thanor amid great pomp and splendor. The presence of the Book was to enough to end the Secrets Riots, crush the Ramalian Peasants Revolt, lift the siege of Eenlor, and route the pagans and monsters at Jadnor. For a century, the Archduchy was defended by the presence of *Book of Secrets* – although the wizards still did not dare open the Book and reveal its secrets. However, these successes only bought time, for the Closing had ground the Land-Sea Empire away as the Ice had threatened to do to Malkonwal. The sea, the monsters, the pagans – all were strangling the Archduchy and threatening its very existence.

Thus in 1040, the Archduke (who for fifty years had been recognized by the Slonton city states as the de facto Emperor of Land and Sea after the wizards had determined that the Seshnelan dynasty had abdicated the title) announced – over the objection of his bishops – that the *Book of Secrets* would be opened and its contents revealed. Although the God Learners had discovered how to defeat the Book's Stygian defenses, the wizards and sorcerers of Slontos had forgotten much.

After ten years of rituals, spells, use of mindbending pagan magic and dangerous exploration of the Stygian otherworld, the Slontans were ready to open the Book. A great ritual and ceremony was prepared, with the Archduke, his deputies, advocates, bishops, mages, and sorcerers all gathered at Thanor to receive the secrets hidden within the *Book of Secrets*. The Stygian wards were broken, the glowing

iron plates binding the *Book of Secrets* were unfettered and the contents of the great *Book of Secrets* opened for all to see.

The gathered dignitaries gasped in horror and at that moment realized why the *Book of Secrets* had been forbidden and made anathema. No symbols or script marked the Book's vellum pages, which were as clean as when they were first scraped. No spells had been inscribed, no portals represented, no recipes for magical substances and apparatuses, no instructions for creating talismans, no warnings of otherworldly perils. The *Book of Secrets* was without any text at all – it had no contents, only form.

The Slontans had little to appreciate the blasphemy, for before the first outraged wizard could react, a great earthquake hit Thanor and the rest of Wenelia. Mountains collapsed, the sea swallowed the land, and a great toxic cloud killed the survivors. Slontos had shuddered and the *Book of Secrets* had protected its mysteries.

**The *Book of Secrets*.** Also called the Red Book of Brithos, all observers agreed that the Book was a thin tome bound in enchanted plates of glowing red-hot iron and closed with chains of darkness. Its pages were said to be of bronzed vellum, protected by the magic of the plates, and the wards created by Arkat himself. The cover plate was marked with the symbol of Zzabur. It is said that Arkat bound the spirits of seven ancestral Dehori to ward the contents of the Book from those who sought its mysteries.

**Secrets Riots.** The Secrets Riots were a series of destructive and fratricidal uprisings in the cities of Seshnela and Slontos. They stemmed from a widespread belief that a conspiracy existed to prevent the opening of the *Book of Secrets* and thereby allowing the people to gain its benefits. These riots were encouraged by the remnants of the Flamers, Irensavalists, Transgressors and Antisavalists – but most of all, by the writings of the Mad Monk of Robcradle, Barbelo the Stone.

Barbelo the Stone was originally a Hadmalist monk who voraciously devoured lore and other texts – but in his pride he thought it nobler to be seen as an authority on the *Abiding Book* than to actually understand its wisdom. Disgraced before the Holy Mountain Review Board, Barbelo fled to Robcradle, a small city on the Draconic March. There slipped into the Transgressor heresy and preached that the True Church conspired to keep the True Words of the Creator secret from the believers. He was later discovered to be a follower of the Kralorelan demon Atyar and murdered by a pagan nomad who scented his evil. His writings were infamous for inciting mobs young frustrated scholars, called Ranters, although he himself had rarely ever left his cell.

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## THE ZISTORITES

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### RUNIC IDENTIFICATION

Around 520 or so a study group formed in a suburb of Irenstos, a southern city of Jrustela. They were called “Runists of Nerep.” Phililstor of Irenstos became their best-known leader with his philosophy of Runic Identification. The group believed that individuals could purify and harmonize themselves with the primal runes of creation. They acknowledged living in a faulty world, largely because it was polluted by being made of “Everything.” This included the “fallen world,” which had become the things of the gods, spirits and—saddest of all—entirely material. This included themselves. But by certain magical practices, daily behaviors, ethical and moral activities and mental habits individuals could harmonize with one single of the Core Runes and thereby get closer to, then enter, Solace.

The people grew healthy and vigorous, and were relatively successful, but many groups enjoyed these benefits. The Runists were, most notably to their contemporaries, daily happy.

The practices grew, under the leadership of the original members, and was eventually recognized and financed by the Jrusteli government, several workers guilds and wealthy practitioners. “The Philosophy of Runic Identification” spread wide.

In 646 leaders everywhere debated their response to the *Abiding Book*. Several leaders of the philosophy, also called Reconstructionalism, banded together and quickly gave their support to the “Keepers of the Book.” Two years later the Church recognized and officially chartered them as the **Philosophic School of Runic Identification**. It was simple, fit nicely within scripture, and provided new, unifying directions for people.

Many people who practiced this went on to other successes, and they generally remained entwined with their identified rune. Some of them turned this to other ends, and eventually the **Order of Core Runes** was recognized and organized as a branch of the church.

The Order of Core Runes was organized into schools, one for each of the runes. Thus the School of the Harmony Rune (who were called “the Connectivists”) and the School of The Darkness Rune, etc. Eventually these practices too became accessible and could be so completely mastered that members could develop or explore them further. These generally took the form of specific magical orders, with magically functional membership including clerics and/or sorcerers and/or orderlies.

One in particular that was new was the Order of the Lost Rune. Philosophers and Planar Explorers had long felt that one of the core runes had been lost, though theories differed tremendously which one it might be. This movement was eventually dominated by the Purificationists.

In 813 there was held a Great Debate, during which opposed schools of the God Learners settled their arguments under controlled conditions, overseen by the Resolution Council of the Church (who tapped off a

portion of the magic used for themselves.) In one of the Great Debates the Order of Core Runes was represented by Willicus of Nolos who proved that the missing rune was Purification. It was true because all the rest of the runes had been created and gone through a series of weakening manifestations, being broken down, altered, separated and made part of Everything—in short the process of Devolution. Yet the *Abiding Book* said, “The Purpose of Life is to be closer to God.” No rune itself addressed the power that reversed the process of Devolution. Malkion the Sacrifice had stopped it and infused Creation with a Divine Spark, but not yet released was the New Rune to follow. “It is through Purification that the New World will be made,” he declared. The Council agreed, and all books of the **Great Mystery School** were burned, members joined other orders or entered common life, lands and possessions were seized by the Church.

In 813 Purification was one of the declared “Eight New Manifestations.” Its “Truth having been Declared and Proven,” the Purification Rune was acknowledged and the Church began funneling worship power to it. The **Order of Purification** grew in popularity, and many other organizations built upon their Truth.

One of those was the Zistorites.

### THE ZISTORITE MOVEMENT

The Zistorite movement was a manifestation of the God Learner tendency to create from the material world up. The God Learners were largely fascinated by the physical manifestations of the world, knowing that these held the secrets of existence every bit as much as the unfathomable mystery did.

They used Systematicism as their method of understanding, organization and exploitation. They discerned the working of the system and then applied that to the world, both in analysis and in exploitation. They started by systematizing something and manifesting it. That is, they looked at a spell, figured out how it worked, created a core/underlying system of that system and then experimented to see if it worked. Often it did, and they had a “little law.” They then began combining these little laws, analyzing their underlying structure, and coming up with a more basic one. This allowed them to get closer and closer to the underlying system of the universe.

It is untrue that they stole dwarven secrets to create this. They laughed at anyone who suggested this. “We wouldn’t be so foolish to use a failed plan,” they said. “They have tried for a thousand years and nothing has occurred.”

The culmination of Systematicism was in Locsil, where the greatest sorcerers and engineers of their school collected to create the Worlds Greatest Machine. They imported tons of metal and minerals, as well as many exotic substances such as unicorn blood, Kralorelan quicksand and sea foam from Kumanku. They brought the plans of the School of

Extraordinary Mechanics, a massive blueprint of gears, pipes, pulleys and cages.

The secret of the machine was the Connectivist Order. These were sorcerer clerics who believed in, and practiced Connectionism. This is the spiritual fact that things are connected in invisible ways. They managed to isolate the idea and take it to the extremes. At first members were little other than energetic channels between a magical power source and a target, usually a powerful sorcerer, the “focal sorcerer,” who would direct the power in some magical manner. Later the Connectivists learned to link with each other, then between focal sorcerers, and finally power source to power source. They learned to purify themselves for their task and so became more efficient.

A half dozen other schools had been directed to facilitate energetic appropriation, usually from a single specific source. Some of the most popular, and thus well manned, worked directly with one elemental source. Thus the darkness could be sourced by the Envelopers of the Dark school, the Order of Our Darkness and the Keepers of the Demons. The first of those worked with physical darkness, i.e.- got power from the absence of light. The second worked with and through elemental beings, and the last actually linked secretly into the Otherworld lairs of Underworld beings. Similar schools exploited the other four elements.

Note that the Connectivists and the Elementalists both conformed to the broader God Learner philosophy of **Runic Identification**, which urged individuals to unite themselves with a particular rune. Some said Solace could be reached in a single lifetime with perfect harmonization, though others thought one must manifest in every core rune before attaining perfection, which would take many lifetimes.

Locsil Island a stronghold for Runic Identification. It began in 740. The local Ingareens, who had accepted the *Abiding Book* amidst their Zzaburite neighbors, invited a band of Jrusteli missionaries to their lands on Kostern Island. The monks were of the **Order of Core Runes**. They were given land for a monastery on Locsil Island. Locsil island was later known only as Zistorela. It is in a small bay at the southern tip of Kostern Island, the southernmost of the Leftarm Isles.

In 814 the monastery joined, or converted to, the **Order of Purification**.

Kostern and environs were a region where the “everything” of the Everything World [i.e. “The World is made of Everything.”] was unevenly mixed so that it was significantly sorcerous in origin. It also sat upon what the Connectivists said was a larger Energy Grid that overlay the surface of Glorantha.

Mechanical war machines were one of the first manifestations for the surrounding territory. Tethered observation balloons, powered by sylphs, were the first, and could be seen from far, far away on a clear day. The *Great Ascender* was so powerful that it never went down, even in hurricanes and still air (until the end).

One of the first accomplishments was the manufacture of mass produced magical items, starting with simple

swords. They tended to work only in Kostern, so the empire did not benefit as had been hoped. But the island was well defended. The leviathans patrolled the waters around the island already. The soldiers had some terrifying distance and melee weapons, which were not mass-produced in the same profusion as the swords and armor, both of which steadily improved in quality. A few ornithopters appeared, flapping metallic birds that were supposed to be like the great eagle that Palangio the Iron Vrok had ridden five centuries before. They carried only a few people, but they always bore the best weaponry.

Most pagan stories are about Zistor, the great mechanical being that could move about, think for itself, was self aware, could work magic, and even reproduce itself. (The pagans killed every one of the spawn quickly.) They claim it was a god, for whenever it defended the island it was irresistible for decades. When not fighting it often rested, but also helped construct machinery on the surface and sometimes performed Malkioni spiritual rites.

The pagans never really understood those rites. They thought it was doing a dance of creation and magic, but it was actually worshipping its master, the Zazistor, or True Zistor, the great core of the machine. It was under the ground of Zistorela Isle. Some say the machinery even extended under the sea bottom of Zistorelan Bay, permeating all of Kostern. It was vast, a city of people devoted to empowering, maintaining, and further creating the Worlds Greatest Machine. It included laboratories and living quarters as well as the complicated magical mechanics, automated prayer wheels, and combinatory engines that was the manifestation of the mechanical power, Zistor, the Lost Rune.

The ultimate task of the Zistor Power was to purify the world that had been turned into Everything. It was essentially going to destroy the Everything World and recycle everything into its true components, sorting and distributing power and matter to increase the Core Runes. Once done Danmalastan would be reproduced and the entire world would be as close to Solace as possible. Zistorites often talked about the City To Be, the remanifestation of the First City that had ceased to exist in its primal form after end of the Third Action.

It was spectacularly successful, until it failed.

## AFTER 917

The siege of Locsil, about which so many pagan and krjalki stories still celebrate, was from 907 to 917, when its defenses failed, the machine ground to a halt, throwing gears and pistons about for miles, and its inner power utterly failed. Zistorism ended amidst the bloodbath, mayhem, destruction of parts and multiple layered curses.

BTW, there is no Purification Core Rune. They made it up. They made it so. But it was not, and eventually all that was built upon it crumbled.

What *really* powered it? The moralists say, “Poor poor blind Westerners, not seeing the Devil in their own machine.”

The pagans and krjalki say, “We fought chaos.”



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## MIDDLE SEA GEOGRAPHY

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### SESHNELA, JEWEL OF POWER

Malkioni settlers in Seshnela survived the Dark Age and the Ice Age, thanks to Xemela, the Great Queen. Her protective self-sacrifice let some food grow, drove off the darkness demons and gave hope to the inhabitants of Frowal and Neleswal, the two colonies that had survived upon the northern shore.

When the sun rose the Frowalians found themselves surrounded by the vengeful Pendali, the lion people who had hated them before, and hated them now. The Frowalians were outnumbered, but they had walled cities and horses, which were just food for the Pendali, and that feared them, and so they could not ride them.

Prince Hrestol, the son of Frowal, revolutionized the people there. He got a group of volunteers who were willing to cast off their old ways, and they taught each other their skills. Then he went into the heart of the land and crippled the goddess that the Pendali worshipped, and at the same time he got the friendship of Seshna, the life of the land. He would not have succeeded if he was just a Talar, as his father had been. Finally, he proved to the others that Malkion blessed this change, and they hailed him as a great prophet—indeed, later generations said he was an incarnation of Malkion Himself.

Frowal, Hrestol's father, embraced these new ways as well, and he too went upon a sacred quest. He found his way to Seshna, and he married her, and the pair of them founded a dynasty that ruled Seshnela for a century and a half afterwards, until the whole of the land had been secured.

The Pendali resisted as best they could, but the confident and powerful Seshnegi won battle after battle. The Pendali fled the land, leaving it to be settled by the Seshnegi who swarmed over all that was available to them. They scrupulously avoided offending the Aldryami who shared their land, but otherwise razed forests, plowed fields and built cities.

The Gbaji wars had confused the land, and afterwards, despite the great peace of Gerlant the Firelord and Nralar the Old, civil war shattered the kingdom in the early Second Age. The land was rescued by the Justeli, bearing the new words of Malkion in the *Abiding Book* and driving out the barbarians from Tanisor (descendants of the ancient Pendali). Once freed and united again, Seshnela reclaimed its old glory and thrived. Though Justela was a larger place, with better growing seasons and new crops, and the home of the new religious movement that became known as the God Learners, it was Seshnela that received the blessings of Makan and became the center of power for the glorious, beautiful kingdom.

Here are the major cities of Imperial Seshnela, starting on the northern part and going around the coast first.

**Laurmal** is important because it is one of the shipping ports for iron traded by the dwarfs of the Iron Mountains. They go only to this place to trade, and only from here do

they allow goods to enter their hidden kingdom to the north, under the mountains.

**Frowal** is first, the capital of the kingdom now and before. It has almost always been the favored city of the Emperors. With the wealth of the empire its three walls have been rebuilt and gleam white in the sunlight. It has a hundred towers where live nobles, sorcerers and the wealthy nobles who lead the empire to glory. It is located in the north center of the peninsula.

**Neleswal** is the second city of Seshnela. It is ancient and the cathedral with the bones of its founders is a site of pilgrimage almost as great as Xemela's (in Frowal). It is a thriving port, and its position on the northwest corner of the peninsula makes it a perfect crossing point for merchants of the Neliomi shipping wares southward, and from the entire central sea sending them north.

**Orphalsket** is the great port on the southwest, at the mouth of the Irier River.

**Pasos** is a seaport on the south coast, at the mouth of the Pentalier River. Goods sail down the river from central Seshnela, especially including from the Iron Mountains, to be transhipped across the Central Seas to the Empire.

**Genertsket** is the most wealthy of all the wealthy Seshnelan ports. It is at the mouth of the great Tanier River, collecting taxes on everything that is sent out of Ralios to the far ports of the empire. It was founded by the Flamesword King after the Gbaji Wars.

Now we head to the interior, going first upriver from Genertsket.

**Noloswal** lies upriver. It is the center of a powerful ducal family that also holds Genertsket these days.

**Estau** is farther upriver.

**Tanewal** is the name of the ruins of the former Kingdom of Tanisor that was destroyed centuries ago by Arkat. Here is where the Vampire Kings lived who worshipped Gbaji and commanded an army of monsters. It is called the Red Ruin, and no one goes there because it is haunted, cursed and damned.

**Segurane** is an old fortress, and a river port where rivers come together. It was a critical defense point when Ralios was an enemy land, and even now it warily watches the shadowy troll lands of Guhan, farther north.

**Hrestolket** is on the Pentalier River, upriver from Pasos. It has a cathedral with many relics of the great prophet Hrestol, and is called the "center of heresies" because its university has produced so many free-thinking religionists.

**Damolsten** is in the center of the Seshnelan peninsula. It was founded by Great Damol, the famous First Age hero who did so much, and whose family followed afterwards to lead the kingdom in those days. It has the Hanging Tower, a structure that descends from above rather than ascends from the ground. It was built to rival a similar structure in Brithos.

**Jorestl's Forest** is an ancient wood that covers much of the southern part of Seshnela. There is a Great Tree there, and so no one is allowed to enter it. Another segment of the forest is in the north of Seshnela. It is separate, though many woods dot the land between the two, especially in the Lakeland district of the Old Temple. The elves there are very friendly to the Seshnegi, and they trade openly and provide a significant portion of the land's unique exports. Elves from among them have occasionally married into the Seshnegi nobility.

## AROLANIT

Arolanit is a Brithini colony on the mainland of Genertela. It has been conquered by the Seshnelans.

**Laufal** is the only port of entry wherein strangers may come to Arolanit. It is the only place that they trade with outsiders.

**Varthulwal** is a port to the north of the land. It is used only for trade from Brithos. The Brithini have only lately and reluctantly allowed ships here, for it used to be a thriving Waertagi fleet port. The ships must be approved and licensed, and are severely overseen by the talars of Brithos. The sailors are allowed no communications with any outsiders—only among themselves and with their contacts between Brithos and here.

**Kelsitin** is a great star-shaped palace where the rulers and sorcerers of Arolanit live and from which they rule and protect their land.

## CITIES OF SLONTOS

Slontos began as a number of small warring city-state kingdoms, but after its conquest it was three provinces, Ramalia (western lands), Maniria (northern lands) and Wenelia (the eastern peninsula). Constant war (or the threat thereof) with the nearby Dragon Empire led to the ascendancy of the Generals who united them into a single military authority. One of them, Villeblaine of Serenestos, eventually maneuvered himself to become the Archduke, and created the inherited position held thereafter by the Villblane family.

## RAMALIA

Ramalia as the province that bordered by the Solkathi Sea in the south, the Aldryami Tarinwood in the west, the Noshain River in the north and the Mournsea in the east. It had previously been the kingdoms of Sish, Soster and Wesluk. Its shoreline was shallow almost everywhere, with long offshore strands where the wicked tides wash back and forth making ports impossible.

Although it had hundreds of miles of sea coast, the only decent deepwater port was the city of **Annor**, once the much-fought prize between Sish and Soster.

The island city of **Veakmal** had been largely independent for much of its previous history, and under the Empire became an important naval base.

**Soster** was a thriving inland city. It was the center of a wide area of farmlands.

**Wesluk** sat upon the south bank of the Noshain River, where ships could unload after sailing upriver. This was the favorite city of Archduke Velleblain, and the ruling family spends most of its time in the sumptuous palace here.

**Ravin** was an inferior port in the west, up the Manathiro River, and bordering upon the Tarinwood. It prospered from trade with the Aldryami.

## MANIRIA

Gualal, Bemelor and Herolal were the former city-state kingdoms of Maniria.

**Gualal** was farthest west, on the upper Noshain River. It commanded the overland trade through the untamable wilds of Praloria, where clans of the wandering deer people fell easily into submission but resisted all conquest.

**Bemelor** was centered on the Nimistor River, and its namesake city is a seaport. It is a great ship-building city.

**Kaxtorplose** was a town famous for its resistance to the invaders during the Gbaji Wars, holding onto its independence until the arrival of Arkat.

**Herolal** is a city on the mouth of the Solanthi River. It is another great ship-building city. North of it lay rugged volcanic mountains, and to its east was the land of Caladraland, held by a different governor. Its region reached up the river, but the area was often ravaged by invaders from hostile Esrolia to the east. Between Esrolia and Herolal were the abandoned lands of Kotor which were so fought-over that no one dared to live permanently.

Many semi-civilized tribes inhabit the southern reaches of the Arstola Forest of Maniria, clinging to their ancient pagan ways. The Archduke lets them retain those ways because their magic is sometimes useful, and because their savage religions allows them to produce abundant mercenaries. They have no cities.

North of them are Aldryami in the Arstola Forest, which continues onward up into the Mislari Mountains that are the border between Slontos and Ralios.

## WENELIA

Wenelia had largely been a single political unit for most of its history, thanks to its relatively defensible position as a peninsula. It has three small, but good, ports.

**Rothor** is on the Mournsea. It is the largest of the three, with many fishermen plying their trade on the inland waters and also is a port for sea trade.

**Enlor** is on the northern part of the eastern peninsula. It has a large naval base whose fleet patrols the coasts of Caladraland and the Rightarm Isles, and often raids the cities of the Choralinthor Bay.

**Narilor** is farther south. It is notable mainly as the only port where the Waertagi used to land, but for that reason is often shunned by modern sailors who fear the ghosts of the long-dead sea race that are rumored to be there.

**Thanor** is the capital of the province, lying inland in the south. The land is mainly hilly, with some steep and tall mountains in the interior. Nonetheless, the farming is good, and combined with the other riches, makes Thanor a thriving city. It is here that the Archduke has established a

famous school to study the many strange “trickster” gods of the pagans.

The **Herilian Islands** are a small archipelago off the southern tip of Wenelia. The people are fishermen who mouth the ways of Makan, but cling mainly to their pagan ways that allow them to survive the tides and the sea.

## THE GLORIOUS CITIES OF THE DRAGONS

It is difficult to describe the cities of the dragons. They have a dreamlike quality about them that makes concentration difficult, and memory even more so. They seem to change their layout even as you walk in them. The inhabitants seem to change shape when they pass by on the streets. The buildings alter themselves when you glance away. Sounds fill the air, and though they are sometimes beautiful they hurt your ears. Exotic odors waft through, mixed with aromas so foul that people sometimes retch in the street, merely adding to the pungent bouquet.

Their uncertainty is nearly enough to drive people mad. It requires a steady mind and firm soul to remain there. I would not recommend it for anyone not trained in the arts of magic.

The lands between cities have some of that incertitude, but much less. In general the hilly lands are pleasant, with many herds of strange sheep or bovines grazing under the watchful eyes of their keepers. Wide fields are plowed by farmers guiding oxen so strong that a mere pair suffices for the work. They raise grains that they call velt and kreet, similar to those outside the land but different. I've seen none of them beyond the borders of Kerofinela, and have been unable to acquire any to export. When I tried to secret some away they molded into a putrid slime in my pocket and packet. Yet, when eaten there they are tasty, hearty and sublime. The forests of the land are tranquil, save for the woods that are called Lordly Forests, where the great among the ruling race hunt vicious animals, the most dangerous and exciting of which have six legs.

But the cities that lie in these strange lands remain stable to outsiders, and they can be told apart and identified. I enumerate those that are most important, famous or strange.

First, though, a note about their names. They all have two names, and I give them a third in our tongue. Their local names are in the draconic tongue, which is alien and can scarcely be written down in recognizable form. Many of their words sound alike to us without draconic senses. Since many in those lands lack this peculiar sense, they also have other names in the local, Heortling tongue. The names that I give are merely translations of those local names. First is:

**Orin Jistel**, [Darmislangastrofey, or “Great Hidden Soul of Knowable Dragons”] This is where all the newcomers are instructed to go, whether they are here for education, foreign diplomacy or trade. From there people are directed elsewhere. It is also called City of the Mouth, and is the largest city in the Dragon Pass area.

**Banjarn**, on the south end of Liorn Island, where the Oslir River begins. [Orfanmangostobos, “Draconic

Learning for the middle education classes of spiritual opulence”] has a great school and is where most of the diplomatic business is undertaken. It is also called City of the First Eye.

**Nevelmarkan** [Markanbandaranstos, “Insightful Center of relaxation between love and hate,”] is where students go for their initial education. It also has several military training centers, including the Wyvern Corps and the Wyrn Riders.

**Salor** [Kermalanaladeen, “Process barracks of the Right to Left Hand”] is where merchants are sent to after they are processed at Darmislangastrofey. It is sometimes called the Tongue of the Dragon.

**Olorost** [Forstobordar, “Magnificent center of high luxury”] is where the Council of the High Leaders meets when they must visit each other face to face. It is also called City of the Third Eye, the Fort of the Outer Brain.

**Orostan** [Markarastanarbos, “Insightful Center of emotional suppression for delight”] is another great school, where many people go for the second stage of education.

**Darfostalabos**, [“Great leadership in luxurious education of the mind”] is where the dragonewt leader, often called the Inhuman King, can be found.

**Banamabar** [Orfandarobordar, “Draconic Learning of liberation of the Great Luxury,”] has a huge language school, where draconic initiates have their tongues and brains split.

**Ingvastrobos**, [“Foreign Teachings Useful Without Extravagance,”] has a place where people go who are curious to learn about the dragons, but do not intend to join the religion.

**Bevjarn** [Ingforslanabordar, “Foreigner Education Basic to Greatness”] is where people learn to sleep, explore several types of dreams, learn the “walking methods,” and is also a great military center with traditional troops (infantry, cavalry) and draconic specialists (avilry, triceratops trainers, etc.). It is also called City of the Second Eye.

## ERRINORU

Errinoru was a unique individual, a new type of Yellow Elf. His youth was idyllic and then adventurous. He mated with several nymphs of different types of trees, and when the seeds grew they too were unusual yellow elves.

Errinoru united the beings of several diverse jungles, each of his sons coordinating the different ecological zones in a manner than had never been done. When the western jungles were threatened by the GOD LEARNERS lumber cutters razing vast swaths of trees his family and allies united and first dove them off with weather magic. When the GOD LEARNERS stabilized the weather, the elves sent disease. When that was cured the elves sent an army of animals against the humans. When those animals were cleared out the GOD LEARNERS decided to take the active role, and they assembled an army, strong in magic, that cruised the coast looking for a weak place to enter the jungle. They found it at the Talking Beach, and put ashore and quickly destroyed a semicircle of jungle. They then set off into the jungle, destroying a wide path for their safety.

After several weeks of this success they were suddenly set upon by bad weather that blew quick-killing disease upon them, and an army of elephants, jungle rhinos, lions etc. attacked all along the western flank of the column. The magicians, already killed at countering these threats, turned to defense and were doing quite well when an army of elves (and some humans) swept out from the east upon them. Missiles bounced off the new elves, the kin of Errinoru, blades could not cut them, and magic was resisted.

The GOD LEARNERS were not amateurs, and a fair number of them survived this onslaught. Errinoru called off the attack because so many of his yellow elf allies were killed. The survivor GOD LEARNERS forces turned to go back the way they had come, but there was no trail, no burnt swatch, no trace of their passage. They struggled against the jungle itself and lost huge numbers to the heat and terror. Others were picked off by the Errinoru sons. The "Valiant Four" got back to the fleet. Only the semicircle first made was still there, gouged from the trees.

Some years later Errinoru set sail with a fleet of elf ships. He had grown them along the rivers of the jungle. They had masts like trees, sails like gigantic leaves. Their hulls were one piece of wood. Though there were several types, each was also individual.

The fleet was aided by Triolini, who hated the God Learners for the destruction wrought years earlier. The fleet raided several cities along the coast, devastating one with an earthquake, another with fire, in another the stone melted while yet another sank into the earth.

A GOD LEARNERS fleet came and battle was met. Losses on both sides were immense, but the elf fleet did not surrender and in the night the GOD LEARNERS fleet slipped away. But this stopped the attacks on the coastal cities.

Errinoru took the best of his ships then, and he sailed down into the Homeward ocean, into the Underworld. The fleet was gone for several years, but reemerged in the far northeast, in Kahar's Sea of Fog. The survivors there were all stronger than before, but none of them ever mated again. The fleet sailed through the fog, accompanied by the zabdamar and sea dragons, and visited Fethlon. The fleet dispatched a few ships, then, that sailed and visited ports and forests along the southern and western coasts of Genertela. Elves got on and elves got off, and some of them finally sailed away to the southlands to spread their seeds.

Errinoru ruled over the whole of his jungle, and it expanded south for a long way. No one dared to intervene in his jungles. After about a century and a half Errinoru asked to be buried into the ground, and where he lay grew eleven new magical healing plants. His children did the same when they died (many of them before him), though most had only one to three plants grow from their graves. The family of Errinoru ruled over the jungles for a long time, until eventually a new plant disease destroyed them all. After that the jungles gradually receded from the south.

Errinoru is in the Underworld where the yellow elves often go to speak to him for advice and council. He is worshipped by Embli regularly, but his powers are mainly those of the healing plants, no longer of war or destruction.

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