

Glorantha

THE SECOND AGE



TROLLS

A GUIDE TO THE UZ

RuneQuest



RuneQuest

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A GUIDE TO THE UZ

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to *Trolls: A Guide to the Uz*, one of the race-specific tomes dealing with the many sentient species on Glorantha. The book you are reading now sheds new light on a race that is much-maligned and often misunderstood in Glorantha's complicated history. Trolls are seen as monstrous aggressors from the underworld, violent invaders that kill others in wars of conquest and brutal primitives devoid of any higher culture.

The truth is not a million miles away from this. At least, these perspectives are partially true. For every troll berserker, there is a troll martyr who fights not for love of bloodshed but to avenge great wrongs done to his people. No other race has suffered so grievously in the face of Chaos. No other race has had to bear such vile curses upon their bodies, rotting their wombs and ensuring the future of the race is nothing but stunted, sickly, stupid wretches.

No other race has quite the bitterness or the melancholy of the uz. Yet they are defiant, even now, as the glorious Imperial Age of Glorantha sees them slipping further and further into a decline they will never recover from. They are a people with their glory days long in the past, faced with a future of twisted descendants and empires that will rise and fall with barely a glance from other races. No matter how hard the uz fight – and they fight *hard* – their fate is sealed. Even now the numbers of trollkin vastly outnumber the true trolls. Even now the uz are driven from Dragon Pass and are forced to fight the imperial soldiers of the Dragonlords in order to retake their homeland. Even now, the great goddess Kyger Litor lurks in the deepest, darkest bowels of the Castle of Lead, saying nothing to her people and turning away from her worshippers.

It is a dark time for the uz, made worse by the empires of prospering humans. Yet the uz fight as they always have, using the secrets of a culture much deeper and more detailed than most humans would ever believe. Though time may see the trolls crushed and mostly ignored in the coming ages, the uz are not out of the fight just yet. They still have stories to tell and enemies to kill.

What's in this Book?

This book hopefully contains everything any Games Master or player needs to add interesting and believable uz characters to any Glorantha campaign. The breakdown of chapters is as follows:

Chapter One: The Uz

Chapter One contains a detailed overview of the trolls' culture, personality and physiology, as related from the perspective of an imperial Dragonspeaker cultist preparing a lore scroll for his fellows. This document is designed to be given to any EWF soldiers or ambassadors that must deal with the uz, whether in peace or war.

Chapter Two: Troll Communities

Chapter Two contains an outside look at the way trolls of various regions live and how they organise their culture. It focuses on the regions of the Opal Seer Caverns in Dagori Inkarth and the Camp of the Crooked Spear in the Shadow Plateau.

Chapter Three: Playing the Uz

Chapter Three is the character creation chapter, detailing the various troll breeds and their racial characteristics. It also contains lore on the effects of integrating certain runes, as well as a section on how to roleplay a troll character and advice on creating his background.

Chapter Four: Uz Religion

This fourth and final chapter details the myriad uz cults and the legends of their gods. It includes new spells, cult mechanics and possibilities for heroquests based on the gods' deeds.

THE UZ

'We are the Folk. We came first of all the mortal races, whether they celebrate in darkness or look up to a bright sky. We were the first. Curses thin our blood and seed, ancient hexes that sour our bloodlines and breed whelps of unnatural creatures. Yet we persevere. Our days of dominance are behind us. Yet we persevere. The world around us is the plaything of empires we do not understand. Yet we persevere. We are Uz: the Folk, the People. Neither Fate nor the malice of unholy gods has crushed our race. What hopes do bickering empires of men have?

I say none.'

— Bakrom the Disemboweller, uzko mercenary

This is a perfect example of trollish defiance and the resolve of the uz race. At least, it is in instances where the creatures have intelligence enough to formulate such thoughts. This treatise on the species looks to present the facts of the uz without bias or rancour, instead focusing on the known truths and quantifiable elements of their existence.

I am called Shanrigo Seven-Blades. In quoting this text, you will make attributions to Lord Seven-Blades of Orin Jistil, Wyrms' Talon Disciple of the Siblings of Immaculate Flesh and Soul. I commit these words to paper under the wise order and watchful eyes of my hierarch superiors.

For certain sections, I have attached the notes of my companion, Jandred the Flayer, Wyrms' Talon Disciple of the Osseous Circle. His knowledge was used to supplement my own in areas where his skills were necessary in the study.

This treatise is designed for inexperienced diplomats and soldiers of our glorious Empire to use in dealing with the uz. The knowledge on these pages is to be used to glorify our work and honour the Great Dragon

To Come. Whether one finds himself under imperial mandate to negotiate with the uz or kill them where they put up pockets of resistance to the new ways, this document will be invaluable in understanding the trolls.

The Troll Race

The uz are a race with no shortage of unique aspects. Spiritually chief among these is that they believe themselves to be the somehow incarnated mortal part of a goddess, their deity Kyger Litor, the Mother of All Trolls, who is referred to as the 'troll queen' in many of the imperial texts that deal with the matter of mythology. As I understand it, she is referred to as the 'mother of monsters' by many God Learners. So say the HeroQuesting tomes we have plundered from Justelan temples and stripped from corpses, anyway. To some of the uz, she is simply Uzbirther.

'Uz' means 'the folk' in their own tongue, though the meaning has connotations beyond this. As the mortal part of the goddess that bore them, the trolls see the very concept of 'uz' as the centre of all their existence. Individual trolls will take names and be born of different breeds, but uz as a concept encompasses all of the myriad variations. This is a bond that can often transcend boundaries of cult allegiance and geographical import. This does not occur always, but it certainly occurs often enough to matter. Few other races, especially not we humans, can lay claim to such a concept of unification.

Grammatically, it therefore makes some measure of sense to refer to the trolls as a gestalt whole, saying 'the uz is' and not 'the uz are.' I doubt any scholar in Glorantha would be willing to give the trolls the benefit of such consideration, though, and I am certainly not about to start.

The uz are divided (or rather cursed) into several subspecies. These have resulted from centuries of magical evolution, divine hexes and other curious interferences with their natural procreation. The list of variants is as follows, with attached diagrams.

the uz

Uzuz: The Ancients

'The uzuz are the 'the folk of the folk.' Your loremasters know them by other names on the few instances when you are even aware of them. To you they are Mistress Trolls, Matriarchs and most commonly – Ancients. To the uz, they are simply the uzuz. We uzko are born wrong. The uzuz are Kyger Litor's love for the uz made manifest and untainted. Our race used to be perfect. The uzuz still are.

You pink-skins cannot understand what this means to us. Our seers tell us of the death you will bring to the world with your magic in a Time To Come. You bear the blame for your own curses. Those curses are deserved. Ours were given by malicious gods. Ours are not deserved. Do you see?'

— Harthak Bones-of-Stone, troll shaman and healer

A fallacy surrounds these 'first trolls.' Some of the names the other races have applied to them infer a uniform female gender, though these names are perhaps better interpreted as 'life-giver' rather than 'mother' in the sense that these creatures were the progenitors of the troll race. It is from these original beings that all the subsequent curse-affected spawning has taken place.

Mistress Trolls are exceedingly rare in our age. They are mostly a remnant of more prosperous times for the uz, when the species bred true and untainted in times of antiquity. In the mists of history, these creatures once constituted the entire troll race. Due to a supernatural (and utterly divine-based) event that wracked the troll goddess Kyger Litor, the Mistress Race began to breed what we commonly know as Dark Trolls instead of their own pure-blooded Ancients. This first warping of the troll life cycle is perhaps the most damning, for it precipitated the long and bitter decline of the uz.

Matriarch trolls are unlike the common uz we see across Glorantha today. What few encounters our scholars (and admittedly, our soldiers and draconic mystics) have had

with the Ancients lead us to believe that these creatures are more intelligent than their common cousins and have divergent physiologies.

The Ancients often reach two and a half metres in height and usually have well-developed musculature despite little physical activity. Like all trolls, the uzuz are hunched creatures, appearing more comfortable bending over than standing straight. Indeed, from the war wounds I have inflicted myself and the dissections of my more scholarly brethren, it seems the troll skeleton and supporting musculature is actually designed to be at its most efficient when the creature is slightly bent over in a 'natural' (for trolls at least) hunch. For most mortal creatures, this reduces the flow of energies throughout the body and retards breathing to some degree, detrimentally bunching up the internal organs and other innards. For the uz, the slouched posture is natural and comfortable, born of a curved spine and muscles that support such a skeletal anomaly. It can make facing the uz on the field of battle a challenging prospect, since gauging their height and body development is not always easy given their inclination to hunch up and mask their 'true' physique.

The minds of these Matriarch trolls, however, tend to be more suited to complex thought. Most possess no shortage of intelligence, though such mental faculties are often applied to base survival rather than philosophy or complex matters of spirituality. The lightless lives of the Ancients do not make for wise creatures – even their faiths are relatively simple by the standards of today – despite how naturally intelligent the Matriarchs might be.

Matriarch trolls possess underdeveloped eyes which are black-orbed and able to sense little more than light and darkness with almost no capacity to determine details. These trolls rely on other senses to interact with the world around them, most notably their sonar. In the lightless depths where the Matriarchs dwell, it must be noted that keen eyesight would be useless. Mistress Race uz are much less suited to living on the surface than their flawed progeny, the uzko.

The Ancients possess the strongest affinity for what is commonly referred to as 'Darksense.' All trolls possess Darksense to some degree, including the repulsive trollkin who have it so weakly it is almost overlooked

by the creatures themselves except on an instinctive level. Darksense allows all trolls to make out the world around them when their other weaker senses fail. It is a sense based on the concepts of echolocation, allowing the uzuz especially to discern their surroundings in eerie, blind clarity. The source of this sense, as in all trolls, is the elongated snout, which is described as 'dog-like,' 'wolf-like' or 'alligator-like' by various sources.

Curiously, this snout does not appear to heighten a troll's sense of smell. It is primarily the source and receptor for Darksense. The snout produces near-undetectable sounds with each breath a troll takes, which then reflect off the troll's surroundings and relay the information to its brain via the creature's receptive ears. It is for this reason that the uz speak not in terms of leagues or miles, but in 'beats of the heart.' They measure distance by how many heartbeats it takes for their sensory information to register their surroundings, be it almost no time at all in a closed room to as much as thirty heartbeats for a distant tower on the horizon. Information that takes one heartbeat to return seems to

connote a distance of 200 or so metres; two heartbeats relay a distance of over 400 metres and so on. It is difficult to tell for certain, since a troll with its blood up is likely to have a thundering heartbeat which makes reliable information harder to attain. However, trolls' large hearts and sluggish blood-flow keep their pulse relatively regular compared with humans in stressful circumstances.

Darksense is a supreme advantage for trolls. I have seen it firsthand and can testify to the utter failure of blinding magic to stop a troll or even slow it down. It took my slaves three days of work to get the scores out of my armour from that fight.

Due to the extremely developed Darksense among Ancients, their snouts are longer than seen among common uz. Their Darksense is their primary sense, many times more keen than human eyesight. It seems that the uzuz can focus Darksense even over large distances, perhaps up to a few miles if the troll lore I have studied is true. As would be expected with superior Darksense, the hearing of the uzuz is near-legendary. I am sure many scholars with an eye for the uz have heard myth-like tales of explorers' breath being heard half a mile away from the lair of an Ancient. These are unlikely to be just stories, it seems.

The Ancients are the faded shadows of Glorantha's past. This cannot be denied. They are so rare these days that sighting one is likely to be a momentous event for any community – and a potentially lethal one given the bodyguards these creatures often have. Understandably, the uzuz are defended by other trolls who think nothing of giving their lives for their race's pure-blooded progenitors, especially given the fact that Mistress Trolls are the one breed of the species that are immune to the so-called Trollkin Curse. The Ancients breed truer (though not fully true) and produce dark trolls – the uzko. They never give birth to trollkin – at least, no uz has ever admitted to such an occurrence.

The cynic in me wonders at whether this is an attempt to hide even further shame from the world, though one must admit that the uz have always bore the brunt of their misfortune with stoicism in the past. It seems an unlikely thing to lie about.



the uz

Uzko: The Second Race

'There was a time before now, a time of the Seven Sacred Ancestors and the era of Wonderhome. I am not sure I can put this into your words so that you may perceive it as I do, but I shall try my best. Wonderhome was in the blackness of the underworld, where no light shone and the passages of the earth were freshened by the cool breath of Glorantha herself.

The Seven Sacred Ancestors were the first uz, deified by their very nature. The tale told to me is simple. The Seven Sacred Ancestors were the first uzuz, born of our goddess, Kyger Litor, who mixed her life force with the Man rune. It was no more than that, until the time of the first great change within our blood and our bones. The change brought the uzko – the trolls of Now – who the soft-skins call the Dark Trolls.

When the Armies of the God-Emperor of the Sun invaded Wonderhome, Korasting of the Seven Sacred Ancestors, the Goddess of Fertility, was killed by Lord Yelm. Kyger Litor, in the divine passion of a goddess, harmed us all with her sorrow at losing her first daughter. From that day the uzuz have bred sour. From that day, the uzko – the pained folk – are the trolls of this world.'

— Harthak Bones-of-Stone, troll shaman and healer

The uzko are the dark trolls; the creatures we know today as uz. Among uz culture they refer to themselves as the truebloods. They are the result of their race's first great disaster, when one of their ancestor-goddesses was butchered in Yelm's fall into the Underworld, which heralded what the Orlanthe refer to as the Storm Age. It seems the trolls' 'Wonderhome' was a realm of pure blackness near the land of the dead, and as the slain Yelm travelled to his resting place, his armies of light and fire laid waste to the armies of trolls that rose up to defend their sacred lands from the burning light of the sun. A misunderstanding? Perhaps. A tragedy for the trolls? Undoubtedly.

From that day the uz have never bred an Ancient again. All the litter of the increasingly rare uzuz are uzko. This is the result of their goddesses' sorrow. Allow me a moment to point out the futility in the worship of such a flawed divine being, given what her rewards for her loyal followers have been. The trolls argue that their Mother did not mean to curse them as she did and that with her blessing they still seek a way to repair the supernatural damage she unwittingly inflicted upon her children.

Not all opinions appear to be equally received among the dark trolls. Here are the words of a wanderer whom I encountered on the edge of the Shadow Plateau's borders.

Dark trolls commonly reach between two and two and a half metres in height, taller than most humans. They also sport more natural musculature than humans, along

You reptile-kissers have been told wrong. Our mother created the uzko. We were not born of a mistake or a curse upon uz. When the Sun God brought light and fire to the Wonderhome of the Ancients, they died in their legions. Their blood was turned to red steam. Their eyes turned into liquid-like tears, leaving empty sockets in their skulls. Their bones turned red-hot and their flesh caught fire. All muscle ran from their bones like boiling juice falling to the ground.

The under-kingdom was thick with black smoke as the uzuz burned. It was as if even in death, the bodies of the Ancients wanted to blot out the sun, choking it with dark mist. Many escaped. They fled into funnels and secret passages to the surface. Here in the Hurlplace, under the great sky that no troll had seen before, the Mother reshaped many of her surviving children into the uzko. We dark trolls were ready to live on the surface. We were not so blind or as fearful of the sky as the Ancients were.

We are not the Mother's accident, nor her curse. We are her plan.'

— Fynral the Bitter-Blooded, warrior of the City of Lead

with the curved spine and slouch that characterises their race. Unlike the velvet-smooth and night-black skin of the Ancients the uzko are better adapted to the surface world and their skins are various shades of grey often mottled in a slightly different colour. Dark trolls are thick-boned and this is a skeletal feature shared by most of the uz.

Dark trolls possess poorer Darksense, which suffers greatly over distances more a few heartbeats away, than their true-blood ancestors. However, to compensate for this and as a result of their adaptations to life on the surface, dark trolls' eyes are significantly more developed than those of the Ancients and a powerful sense of smell that dwarfs practically all other sentient mortals in the world. Uzko are essentially colour blind, seeing in shades of grey with only faint hints of colour, but beyond this their sight almost approximates that of a human. It is more common for a troll to recognise people by scent than sight, however, at least for the first few seconds in their presence.



Like their Ancient cousins, the uzko sport vicious rows of shark-like teeth and their mouths are dominated by four lengthened incisors. The incisors in the top row are chunky, long fangs, while those in the lower jaw are more accurately described as small tusks which can sometimes grow to reach just under the troll's eyes. At the back of an uzko's mouth, densely-packed molars are used for grinding tough food to be swallowed. In the front of the mouth, the two rows of teeth are like pointed animal fangs and though they are not as long as the incisors, they are used mainly for scissoring meat from the bone and mutilating enemies in extremely painful ways. I can attest to this also – I lost a hand to the bite of the last troll I fought, and he crunched it down with no more effort than a man swallowing a grape.

Dark trolls make up the majority of what is now commonly accepted as the 'pure-blooded' troll population, though the numbers of tainted trollkin are growing day by day. In this aspect, the uzko (and by extension, the uz) are a race in decline. While the empires of our age rise, these children of the darkness gods dwindle and succumb to their succession of curses.

The spawn of dark trolls are either more dark trolls or, increasingly as the years pass, creatures known as trollkin. When a female uzko is pregnant, there is an even chance that her child will be born premature and be considered trollkin. Females who have never birthed tainted children are accorded great respect by other trolls. Females who have mothered a litter of trollkin are considered unclean in the eyes of their fellow uzko and in some regions must take an oath not to reproduce again for at least another year in order to 'cleanse' themselves of their impurity.

The source of this defect in the bloodlines of uzko is the second supernatural disaster to befall the race, when Gbaji the Deceiver cursed the trolls in the horrendous wars that raged across the world's surface in the First Age. Such was the might of the created god that his hex upon the uz ravaged their bloodlines even further, souring children in mothers' bellies and ensuring that half of all trolls born from that moment on would be stunted and half-formed.

These are the trollkin.

Enlo: The Cursed Kin

We wanted no part in the raising of a false-born god but the younger races would not listen. We warned of the dangers within your 'great plans' but such prophecies are like the wind against a mountain – no sound penetrates the rock, just as no wisdom penetrated the minds of men when they brought about Gbaji the Chaos Child. We all paid for the mistakes of that era, though the uz suffered greatest of all. We rose to baffle the madness caused by the younger races. We stood by the dragonewts and wielded clubs and blades alongside them in an army that defied Chaos Itself. We saw through the lies of this Nysalor as he besieged us. We summoned our most secret ally, the vengeful and dark spirit Black Eater, whose wrath was so potent that he rendered the sun blind and still. We showed our rage at Chaos again trying to take the world. We lost.

In our tongue, we call them the enlo – the 'little twisted ones.' They are the curse for our failure, born of Gbaji's bile and reminding us all of our defeat that day. For losing, we gained a new bane. A bane that might be the death of the uz.

When the soft-skins call us monsters and ask us why there is no nobility in our souls, I tell them this story. Some of them – not all – begin to see the answer to their question after I have spoken.'

— Harthak Bones-of-Stone, troll shaman and healer

This rather dispiriting piece of lore brings us to the trollkin – an aberration of trollish nature that I am sure any of my contemporaries or their adventurous agents reading this have encountered at one point or another. Stunted and stupid, the enlo are not true trolls at all. They are the half-shaped children that lacked the grace to die in the womb, and who were born premature and malformed. The truth behind Gbaji's curse is not that it causes trolls to breed a new race of weaker cousins but that half of all trolls sired today are born when they are only half-formed and stunted.

Before the onset of the curse multiple birth trolls were considered to be special and a blessing. The troll heroes Gore and Gash, for example, were twins. Since the curse was inflicted, however, all multiple troll births have been considered enlo despite any evidence to contradict this. Over the years a sizable number of uzko have been so classified, despite their size and intelligence marking them out from their stunted cousins, many never fulfil their potential, being prevented from doing so by their own society. A few individuals have managed to rise above this disadvantage but they are few and far between.

Enlo are dark trolls that never had the chance to grow as nature intended. It would be as if all mothers in Imperial lands suddenly gave birth to their children after only four months in the womb. Such infants could survive, though the odds would be firmly against the possibility. The trollkin are likewise often stillborn or too unformed to live past a few days, though Gbaji's curse interferes further, allowing a great number of them to survive into adulthood and grow into new, unnatural forms.

Something happened to this 'Black Eater' of the trolls, and the stories conflict. It is said by many that the Black Eater – also called the Dark Eater – was Kyger Litor made manifest, and the Trollkin Curse arose from her own defeat under the hands of Gbaji. Other tales attribute a direct responsibility after the actions of Gbaji: Nysalor the White Light somehow infused this dark god-spirit with his own essence. It turned upon the trolls and spiritually tore out Kyger Litor's womb either in maddened fervour or as directed by Nysalor. Finally, it is said by some among the uz that the Black Eater would not fight for the trolls without payment and sacrifice, and the ability to breed true is what the uzko sacrificed for their ultimately wasted chance at victory. No matter which of a dozen variations on the theme one believes, the fact remains that the trolls paid for their boldness that day.

After giving birth to a litter of trollkin, a troll mother traditionally abstains from sex for a year and a day in order to spiritually purify herself. I have no evidence to say whether this abstinence is anything but a worthless ritual, though I suspect there is some power in the uzko mothers' sacrifice and that any subsequent birth is likelier a dark troll.



Trollkin are the wretched lowest caste of uz society. They are without rank, considered property and slaves for their entire lives, though because they are significantly weaker than true trolls they are pathetic even when set to manual labour. The enlo's general uselessness means that they occasionally serve as food for the true-blooded trolls when supplies are low and hunting is poor. This cannibalism of still-living trollkin is not considered a sin. In fact, among trolls, it is not even considered cannibalism. These accursed creatures exist only to serve their true-blood masters, even if such service is little more than a quick trip down a gaping mouth, to die suffocating and crushed in the hot, pliant walls of a troll's belly...while being dissolved by white-hot stomach acid.

Trollkin are usually between one and one and a half metres in height, and possess musculature approximate to that of a young human of adolescent age. They are rarely as strong as an adult human, let alone ever rivalling the might of a dark troll. Though their appearances vary greatly, most take the form of embryonic-seeming dark trolls, since this is essentially what they are. Their senses are poorer than dark trolls and they lack the

famed trollish constitution for digesting practically any material as food. Their skin is thinner, akin to a human's, though enlo do possess the same variety of skin hues as their pure parents. Their Darksense is so weak as to almost not exist. Their senses are often less keen than a human's, especially since their underdeveloped eyes react badly to sunlight.

The onset of Gbaji's curse coincided with the crushing defeat of the uz and heralded the beginnings of their retreat under the earth. The uz of the era became increasingly desperate about the future of their race when the Deceiver's hex upon them flowered fully and began to lay waste to the next generation. Initially, the Trollkin Curse led to the births of single enlo to each dark troll mother that failed to carry a pure troll to term. Several hundred years ago in 612, an Ancient known as Naxili Garang – also called the Mother of Kin in dubious honour of her pale achievement – was one of the many trolls that took it upon themselves to fight against this latest taint in the blood of their race. Through near-endless HeroQuesting, she fought the battle against the Chaos hordes of the Deceiver again and again and again, seeking each time to kill Gbaji, turn the tide of the battle, and ultimately break the curse before it could ever fall upon her people. Through her mystical preparations that coupled ancient fertility rites with traditional defensive magic, she sought to repel Gbaji and restore true breeding to her people by teaching ways of resisting the curse.

As with the later attempts to circumvent the banes placed upon the uz, she was only partially successful and claimed naught but the bitterest victory. Through her rituals, she allowed her people to birth litters of trollkin rather than single children. With the increased numbers of slaves being born, the uz entered our modern age with the illusion of growth among their people. The rot is evident to anyone who knows the truth, of course. The uz shore up their dwindling numbers with cursed, unnatural children, hiding their true decline from the world.

The second attempt to break the curse came over a hundred years later, well into what our scholars are already terming the glorious Imperial Age. This resulted in the birth of the uzdo.

Uzdo: The Great Mutation

'And now we come to the age of birth for the Second Slaves. They are the Great Ones, the uzdo – 'big folk,' though they are not great in all ways. Towering like the uzuz, mighty in flesh and bone and sinew but weak in spirit, flawed of heart and possessed of childish minds, the uzdo mutation was a failure. The uzdo were raised as useful slaves, not true members of the uz.

Many of the uz see the work of Cragspider as a good thing. I do not. We are cursed with another bastard tribe of the People, akin to a mule and often just as unable to breed. I curse her for birthing more impurity among the Folk. By sewing the souls of trolls to black-limbed, dark-thinking Dehori spirits, the Mother of the Great Mutation created only more impure slaves and more sorrow for true-blooded parents.

She lives now in the region of Cliffhome. One day I hope I will meet her. On the night of that day she will rest easy in hell.'

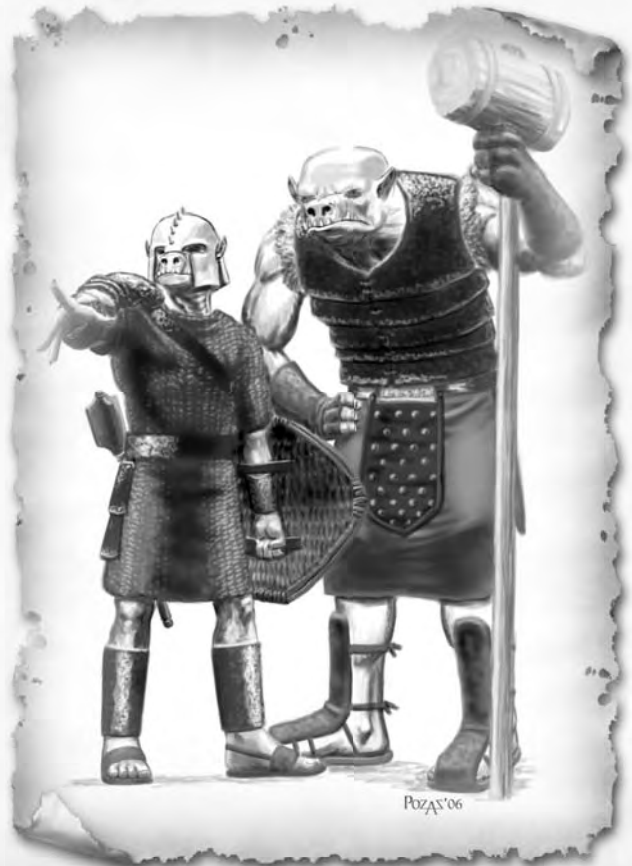
— Harthak Bones-of-Stone, troll shaman and healer

723 was the year of the troll Cragspider's shamanistic experiment. From what I have gathered, a powerful cultist was responsible for merging some kind of darkness spirits with strong-bodied trolls who were to serve as parents. In blending these Dehori spirits with the purest dark trolls, Cragspider hoped to banish the 'Womb-Biter Curse' and breed a new generation not only free of trollkin, but also with the births of uzuz brought back to the troll race.

This latest attempt by the uz to break the hexes that violate the wombs of their females resulted in the relatively successful creation of the uzdo – the great trolls. These colossal brutes share many physical similarities with the Ancients, towering over the dark trolls and reaching between two and a half and three and a half metres in height.

Perhaps most notable about this subspecies, all great trolls are male. Fully half of these appear to be sterile and those that are able to sire children produce single dark trolls or litters of trollkin. Actual great troll children are exceedingly rare.

The main weakness in the uzdo breed is that they are almost uniformly moronic. The cleverest among them are rarely more intelligent than a human child or a stupid dark troll adult. The overwhelming majority of uzdo can be taught simple tricks – usually involving violence and bodyguard duties – but are good for nothing outside combat and intimidation. For these matters, they are favoured as 'pets' and slaves by dark troll leaders or as guardians of uz settlements. Beyond such brutal and simple application, they are essentially useless. It is not difficult to see why Harthak speaks so derisively of them, even if those of my brethren that have faced uzdo in battle speak of them with fear in their otherwise serene voices.

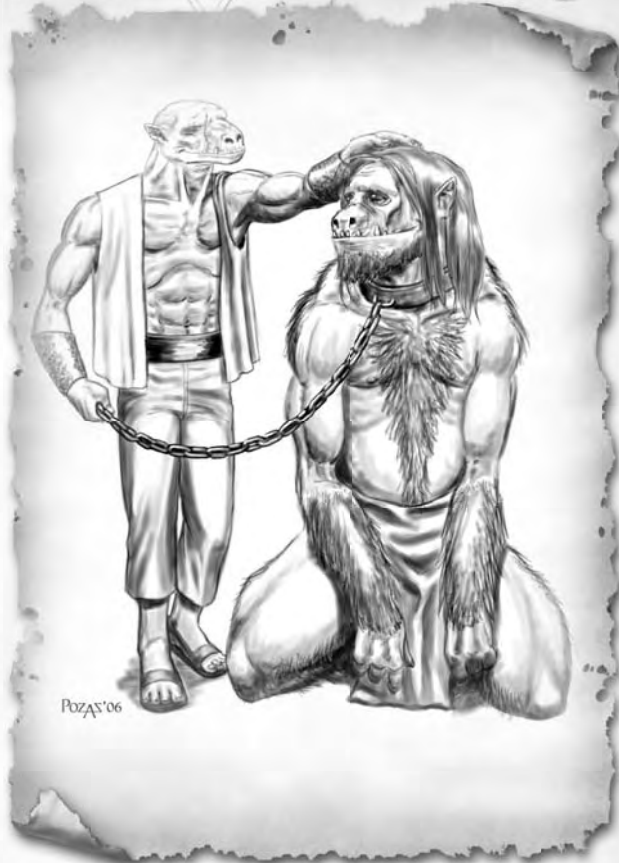


It must be noted that Harthak's viewpoint appears to be unusual among his people. The great trolls are clearly not the success they were designed to be but they are popular among many communities as powerful and useful slaves.

'Harthak is a fool. He speaks of What Should Be and not What Is Now. Too much human reason has sickened his honest thinking. Uz are ever in the Now, not the Maybe. Maybe is stupid. Maybe goes nowhere. Maybe is for the younger races who ask dangerous questions and do foolish things.'

'The big folk are a step toward pure blood. They are broken and stupid, stupider even than many true uz and even some ento. But they are still a step on the path to purity. They have their uses like all good slaves. Their lives strengthen uz. Uz is stronger with the uzdo. It is simple, yes? Listen not to Harthak's bile. He talks in lies to tell a story of tragedy. Uz are stronger than that.'

— Fynral the Bitter-Blooded, warrior of the City of Lead



the uz

Romal: The Chaos-Touched

'The Chaos-touched are not of Uz as we are. Even ento are more Uz than romal. Even kin can learn things. Romal are stupid, stupid, stupid. They think evil thoughts. They think of cannibalism instead of community. They war because they are too feral to know when peace is wise.'

'I spit on them. They would eat their own mothers if the chance arose – not out of hate or anger – but because they are too twisted to know it would be wrong.'

— Fynral the Bitter-Blooded, warrior of the Castle of Lead

Lastly in the initial section of this treatise, we reach the cave trolls. I find the divisions within the uz intriguing. This variation is perhaps most interesting of all.

I was surprised to learn that the uz I met with did not consider these beasts to be trolls at all, ranked even below the hated ento though they share the physical bulk and height of great trolls. Whether drawn from the ranks of the uzuz, the uzko or even both breeds, the romal were touched by the Chaos entity Pocharngo the Mutator in antiquity and have faced discomfort (often being forced into exile from troll-held lands) since that fateful era. It seems likely that cave trolls are mutated from dark trolls, as they also suffer the Trollkin Curse while no uzuz in living memory has ever felt this particular bane.

Physically, cave trolls exhibit monstrous aspects beyond the standards of dark trolls. Elongated snouts have inefficient sonar but are crammed with rows of spiky – and often uneven – teeth that tend to be more jagged than standard uz fangs

'In the wars against Chaos, the harm of the womb-hex was not the only curse laid upon the Folk. Armies of our warriors were rendered foul and corrupt by the spells of the Mutator, Pocharngo, who wove void-born magic over the souls and bodies of Ancients that survived the burning invasion of Wonderhome. The cosmic cancer touched many of the trolls that reached the surface world, fainting them with his breath. These wretches are the romal – the nose lopers – whom you soft-skins call the mountain trolls or the cave trolls.

These creatures earn our pity, not our rage. Though we have always and forever loathed Chaos, these primitives are victims of a curse, not willing subjects of evil. Still, they are apart from us. Apart from Uz.'

— Harthak Bones-of-Stone, troll shaman and healer

and are prone to breakage, albeit with subsequent regeneration. Fingernail-claws are blackened and bone-hard as on all trolls, though they can grow erratically and curve like sickle blades. Greyish skins are often covered in patches of bristly black fur which is like rough animal hair to the touch. Cave trolls' eyes are swollen and overdeveloped, much like many embryonic-looking trollkin, leaving the romal pained by bright light. Most also exhibit some kind of greasy sweat which is part of a natural perspiration for any uz but gives off a rancid odour of spoiled meat when leaking across a romal's skin. My companion Jandred the Flayer informs me that this sweat is from unnatural inconsistencies within the glands of these warped uz.

These beasts are rarely found within troll communities. When they are, their primitive, feral intelligence reduces them to the status of pets or slaves, accorded far less respect than the uzdo but at least pitied more than the enlo. Some are taught simple tasks; others are herded into packs like wild animals and form an unintelligent reinforcement for the community's warriors and hunters. These trolls are generally violent as well as stupid, which is a relative statement when discussing the uz; however, both violence and stupidity are more focused and prevalent among these trolls.

Part of their curse has 'blessed' them with the natural ability to regenerate damage to their bodies. Whether it is flesh or bone that has sustained damage, the romal's body is capable of healing over time in ways few other mortal beings are able to mimic without the application of magic. Flesh literally seals closed and reforms whole. Bruises fade. Bones knit together and regrow missing chunks. Combined with their intimidating size and prodigious strength, this innate ability makes cave trolls among the most fearsome uz to face in battle. However, their attacks are primitive and untrained, and often lacking in weapons. The species lacks the intelligence to forge metal into blades or create anything beyond a rudimentary spear and club arsenal.

Troll Diet

'I hear talk of this when I travel through the lands of the soft-skins. Always there are questions and fear and whispered wondering. 'Will he eat us?' 'Will he eat our homes?' 'Will he eat the rocks upon which our homes are built?' It is strange the fascination you humans have with our eating habits. I care nothing for what you put in your mouth.'

— Harthak Bones-of-Stone, troll shaman and healer

Even above their fearsome prowess in battle, the troll propensity to eat practically anything is what most people know the race best for. The troll diet is legendary, with endless rumination on just what an uz is capable or inclined to swallow.

I turn here to the attached notes of the estimable Jandred Skell, called the Flayer, a bone-singer and healer of the Osseous Circle dragonspeaker cult. His notes dwell a great deal on in-depth anatomical specifics such as the colour and position of the duodenum, the lumen and other digesting pouches. Here are the abridged generalities to enlighten laymen and imperial soldiers.

The Abridged Notes of Jandred the Flayer, Concerning the Digestive Tract of the Uz

...understandably cautious, even when we are dealing with a lifeless troll. Their stomach acid remains corrosive until the corpse is thoroughly desiccated. I suspect this is something of a shock for carrion birds that peck through the stomach lining of any uz corpses they chance across.

This subject was evidently slain by a blade which pierced through the open jaws and punched through the roof of the mouth and into the brain. Death was instantaneous. Evidence of scoring – including flakes of chipped obsidian from Shanrigo's klanth blade – still shows signs of wet blood behind the top two rows of teeth. It seems Lord Seven-Blades' sword dragged against the bone and reinforced cartilage of the skull on the way out.

The first incision requires severe application of force to pierce the layers of hardened grey skin, though it finally ruptures when I call upon my runes for strength. The resulting cut allows wedges of insulating red-orange fat to be heaved from the body. The subject had the traditional 'troll belly' that results from such a complicated digestive system, excessive eating and a habitual hunch. Beyond this, the subject is powerfully muscled, with even his torso and stomach protected by bunched muscle structure under the fat. A second incision splits these muscles, again with a strength given me through runic manipulation.

The second incision completed and both fat and protective abdominal muscles removed, the vapour from the cavity is foulness unrivalled, punctuated by the quiet hiss of stomach acid still performing its digestive function after the host's death. Anatomically-speaking, what I am looking at is a marvel of nature.

The digestive system appears relatively similar to the human structure, though with marked differences that mainly involve additional support glands, ducts and pouches. It is also of a much larger size, of course. The process for actual digestion clearly varies on the nature of the food swallowed, as linking passages of flesh appear to be suited to breaking down different types of matter.

The previous meals of the subject are still in evidence, most notably what appears to be a mostali skull in one of the stomach cavities along with several small pebbles that look as if they were much larger rocks before the stomach acid ate at them, plant matter (various greens and a portion of wood) currently stored in the caecum section attached to the intestines and lastly some bile-like mostly-digested meat reduced to chyme mush. This latter meal is Black Virlish, Wyrms' Face Believer of the Siblings of Immaculate Flesh and Soul, lost in battle last night to this very subject that managed to escape our retribution until earlier this afternoon.

Meat is digested very quickly, it seems, and in a way similar to the digestive process within humans. It does appear that a magical element innate to the trollish form speeds up digestion, given the nature of our companion's remains. Plant matter travels through the passages of the stomach and attached organs and is churned into a thick fluid in the duodenum before passing into the intestines. It is kept in the system longer, perhaps because extracting nutrients from such matter is a more difficult process. Stone and earth (and other undigestibles) appear to travel down through a secondary stomach system – a 'rock gizzard' of sorts. Separation occurs at the base of the main stomach. Here the undigestibles are dissolved by stomach acids that are incredibly corrosive and ground together to form a mushy paste, which travels on through a secondary intestine. The osseous remnants of our companion and the unknown mostali are testament to the efficiency of this process.

With this digestive system trolls are capable of eating anything, especially given the innate magical element in the innards of the uz. The resulting waste from this system, with all its variety, is bound to contain many nutrients left unabsorbed by the troll and 'manufactured' as it were, into a substance edible by the weak-stomached trollkin who possess much more primitive digestive systems.



Uz Culture

My experience among the uz in peacetime is greatly limited, though I have collected notes from hired explorers and have consulted several of the uz on this matter. Like most races, the trolls vary culturally by region. However, generalities remain in the species that cross border lines and local allegiances. Uz history is little more than a succession of battles and emigrations, the latter of which always seem to be a direct result of losing the former.

It is worth noting also that the troll tribes who once dwelt in imperial lands were offered the chance to join our Empire at the EWF's foundation. They refused en masse and were either expelled by force or left willingly, as if afraid of us or bitter at the proto-empire's citizens throwing off the shackles of the rule of the troll lord, Ezkankecko, Overlord of Lead. This creature still lives today, ruling from the Shadow Plateau and revered by the uz of the modern age as the Only Old One. This honorific arises from his status as perhaps the only Mistress Race troll alive today who met the Seven Sacred Ancestors. Either way, he is seen as something of a demi-god.

Chaos: The Principal Misconception

'I am strong, like all uz. Yet I am wounded by claims of uz standing with Chaos, born of evil like the braying beast-people or the sickening gods that harm and harm and harm because they can do nothing else. We lost more blood and souls against Chaos than any other race in the Hurtpace. We took terrible wounds from the anger of Chaos again and again and again, in war and in the wombs of our mothers. Those who call me Devil-born will die for their ignorance. This I promise.'

— Durgur Mexil, uz Runelord of Boztakang

In many of our legends pertaining to the God's War and the rise of Wakboth, the uz are considered enemies of the world and grouped with the hordes of Chaos. This both is and is not a fallacy. The trolls are born of darkness, not Chaos, though this certainly did make war upon the surface races when the opportunities arose in prehistory.

The uz are not Chaos creatures by any definition. Their culture opposes Chaos more vehemently than most other societies and they have a long history of suffering under the influence of Chaos when it has entered their lives. Though it can be a difficult for humans of the current age to make in regards to these ancient mythologies, there is a gulf of difference between creatures of darkness and creatures of Chaos. The former, such as the uz, reject the sunlit world and often exist in brutish societies that are founded on worship of black-hearted gods. The uz are the societal and genetic opposite of the creatures born to light gods, such as the aldrymi, for example.

Chaos creatures are born of gods that command powers which threaten Life itself. The Devil and his god-minions swarmed from the void, bringing powers antithetical to the world's natural function. The gods of the uz, such as Zorak Zoran and Kyger Litor, are associated with many of the Chaos deities in history because of their actions in the God's War and the misunderstandings of men. We have tales which state that even when the world fell to Chaos and Glorantha plunged into the

Great Darkness, gods like Zorak Zoran still opposed his light deity counterparts. Based on these tales, these gods are often grouped with the Chaos deities due to their harmful behaviour.

The God Learners hear these tales. We know they do. They plunder the hero realms of every lore and story they can acquire, and it grieves the uz that the Jrustelans steal power from their god-myths. Whether the gods of the uz are painted and noble darkness warriors opposing Chaos or pawns in the armies of Wakboth, the God Learners find merit in the rewards of the tale, not the moral accuracy. Yet the point must be made. The uz are born of the darkness and man runes, not the Chaos one.

Chaos in The Current Age

Chaos is an evil mostly consigned to mythology and the mists of history. We still feel its presence, of course. The aftershocks of the Darkness and the manifestation of Gbaji the Deceiver will likely ripple through time forever, perhaps collating into a greater threat in the future. Barring the misconceptions of darkness gods aligning with Chaos gods, the true energy of the void and the Devil are largely banished to the past where they belong. In this age of empires, the world is shaped not by the echoes of demonic invasion but by our Empire and the misguided Jrustelans and their God Learner Alliance.

The trolls do not see things as we do. Their Runepriests and Runelords have told the dragonspeaker hierarchs many times that they foresee a terrible destruction in the empire's future. They regard our ascendance as largely ignorable outside of the disputed territories. The lion's share of their hatred is not directed at warring empires but at their memories of Chaos and the potential future threat it presents.

It is for this reason that Chaos-bane gods, such as Boztakang the trollish equivalent to Storm Bull, see an unusually high rate of worship among the uz of the modern age. Urox especially has had his cult degenerate into Orlanthi bullies and bravos with little of the ancient nobility present in their ranks. While once Runelords of the cult sought to emulate the god that threw a mountain at the Devil himself, now lesser

men holding the same ranks as the heroes of the past piss in prison chamber-pots and wipe the sweat of bar brawls from their foreheads.

As ironic as it might sound, the uz represent a very real link to the glories of such cults' pasts. The trolls are like sentries in this regard, fighting Chaos wherever it is found, hunting its influence, destroying all evidence of its touch and looking to an uncertain future with the grim gazes of suspicious guardians.

Troll Names

Like most Imperial subjects trolls possess a first name and a surname. The first name identifies the individual; the surname refers to the creature's bloodline. However, it is increasingly common for uz to adopt a 'deed name' based on their previous notable actions or particularly memorable aspects of their character.

Deed names are part nickname and part title, and are either bestowed by others in the troll community or adopted out of choice. Harthak Bones-of-Stone, one of the creatures I consulted many times in the creation of this treatise, took his name from his incredible resistance to harm in battle. In contrast, Fynral the Bitter-Blooded was given his name because of his melancholic temperament and his long-winded denouncing of the imperial forces that now hold Dragon Pass. He was given this title (he admits this without rancour) by his own family, who grew tired of his endless sour threats.

Many of the greatest trolls seem to leave their bloodline name behind and either adopt their first name as their only name or use their deed title as their one and only form of address. Examples of this in our own Imperial Age would be the demi-god Ezkankeko, who is also known to outsiders as the Overlord of Lead, and the troll Cragspider who sought to undo the Womb-Biter Curse several hundred years ago. One of the many difficulties for non-trolls is determining what names are actually deed titles and which are simply first names.

Speaking uz names is not always easy. The names of many dark trolls and Ancients rely heavily on the guttural and grunting sounds of a deep trollish oesophagus, and even the thicker saliva of a troll's

mouth can alter sounds to produce names correctly. Humans and other races are unlikely to ever pronounce a troll's name exactly right, though few take offence at this.

Great trolls are given names that are easy enough for their primitive minds to remember and their tusked mouths to pronounce. These are often monosyllabic utterances that resemble grunts and other simple sounds. A few are given deed names (or demand that others recognise them) based on their battle prowess or some other trait.

Enlo are generally nameless in any real sense. They are referred to by physical characteristics (Ugly, One Eye, Runt, Long Nails...) or by a much more commonly growled 'You.' The trollkin do appear to name themselves, however it is unlikely any uz would acknowledge what his property is calling itself, especially given the short life spans of the sickly and twisted little creatures. To do so would make for a great many names to remember over the course of a lifetime. A lot of trolls lack the patience to remember all these monikers. Others lack the inclination. The rest lack the intelligence.

Slavery among the Uz

'Why do humans keep slaves? Because they need slaves. Cultures need slaves for the dirty work, for the bad things strong people do not wish to do. Oh, humans do not always say the word 'slave.' Sometimes it is 'conquered people' or 'worshipper' or 'subjugate.' But they are still akin to slaves, feeding a culture they hate but without the strength to stop.

Same with uz. We keep slaves because we need them. Sometimes they see this truth and they rise up against us. Most times the enlo are grateful for what little they get. We could just kill them all.

— Harthak Bones-of-Stone, troll shaman and healer

The uz have slavery etched into the very bones of their culture. It must be this way for the race to continue, given the gods-poisoned wombs of the troll females. With each year, more and more enlo are born in place of true uz. With each mystical manipulation, a dark troll is replaced by a sterile and idiotic great troll. These beings are born into slavery to serve a culture that their own presence is slowly strangling.

On one level, it is tragic. Many of my companions and brethren within the dragonspeaker cults speak of finding a way to help the trolls – or at least they would if the lessons of Vistikos Left-Eye did not speak so firmly against using our powers outside of bringing about the Great Dragon To Come.

On another level, a race should know when it is defeated. If the best efforts of troll heroes in the past have only created failures and bare semi-successes in removing their race's great hex, perhaps the uz should face up to the fact they are a flawed and doomed people. In an age where we are shaping faith into the greatest dragon ever envisioned and while the God Learners plunder the myths of a hundred cultures, the uz cannot even breed properly.

Since the trollkin now make up a sizeable percentage of the troll population, destroying all the stunted creatures would decimate the uz race beyond recovery. While it could be argued convincingly that the species is already on a slow decline into oblivion because of the enlo, the trollkin stem the decline significantly. At least live slaves, no matter how weak and stupid those slaves might be, have their uses.

Trollkin are considered property from the moment they are born. In the case of litters, which commonly range between two and seven, half of the enlo are considered the property of the mother while the other half are given to the tribe. These latter trollkin are considered the property of the clan matriarch, though they will take orders from any uz that demands something of them.

Enlo slaves are fed leftovers and, disgustingly, the solid waste of true uz, even from birth. They grow to maturity slightly faster than humans, reaching adolescence after a decade and reaching their dubious physical primes in their early 20s.

True uz have an average lifespan of almost a century, much like humans. Enlo tend to die after 30 or so years, usually ground down into death from a life of overwork. While troll funeral rites can be complicated depending on the cult membership of the deceased, dead trollkin are usually eaten within hours of their demise. In some cases, if the slave is particularly unappealing for some reason or if his fellow slaves do not wish to see their cohort consumed, they drag his body away from the community and leave it to rot out of sight. More likely, though, some underground beast or wilderness scavenger will make a meal out of the little creature's corpse.

Enlo slaves are grouped into four categories, decided in the creature's infancy and depending on what the community requires or the mother desires. From what I understand of this caste system, failure to live up to the responsibilities of any of the three toiling castes (enlokiz, enlokurgi and enloruk) ensures a quick banishment to the fourth caste, the enlorez.

Enlokiz - 'Blade Slaves'

'Is the kin stupid? Does he obey all orders? Is he stronger than other, lesser enlo? If yes, then he becomes enlokiz. He feeds the community with his blood.'

— Urgurra Broken-Tusk, troll clan matriarch

These trollkin are trained for battle by the true uz of the community. They are instructed in the use of weapons and common Rune Magic and serve as a militia of sorts, grouped in either skirmishing hordes on the battlefield or small groups sent to patrol underground tunnels. Enlokiz are usually referred to as blade slaves or, more simply, 'fighters.'

These slaves tends to be the most numerous in most troll communities, especially where the uz are involved in regular conflict. The death rate among enlokiz trollkin is staggering by any standards, with these troops often used as sacrificial pawns in pitched battles and as food if they fail to obey orders or show no skill with their weapons.

In some regions, the enlokiz are grouped together in a sword-carrying ragtag collection of arrow fodder that can only be called 'warriors' in the loosest sense. In others, the trollkin regiments are more akin to organised soldiers, who although they do not fight for pay are still trained to surprisingly high standards. In some communities, these highly trained enlokiz are frequently sold to the highest bidder in temporary (and occasionally permanent) mercenary bands, often led by an enlokurgi advisor who serves as the aide of the winning buyer.

Note that from a tactician's standpoint it is not the aim of the uz to create ineffective warriors. Enlokiz trollkin must be loyal and unquestioning, first and foremost, though being handy with a lead-tipped spear and a short sword of beaten bronze is a close second in terms of importance.

Particularly rabid or skilled blade slaves stand out amongst other trollkin as heroes. In the past, many of the major and lesser trollkin uprisings have been



led by enlokiz. As long as the 'hero' does not have any leanings toward rebellion, the uz welcome such effective warriors among the ranks of their slave fighters. If the kin lets his new status get to his head, he is promptly killed and eaten for his presumption, unless he manages to flee into exile and work on his insurgency outside of the community.

Trollkin that show cunning and intelligence above their fellows – whether they have any real skill in battle or not – may be drawn from the enlokiz into the loose ranks of the enlokurgi.

Enlokurgi - 'Valuable Slaves'

Valuable slaves (often just 'values') are groomed for a grander existence, by trollkin standards, than their warrior or worker brethren. These enlo display cunning, reason and in some cases even *wisdom* and are moved into a caste where they serve their masters on more social and intellectual matters than simple spear-toting slaves.

Values serve the community as liaisons to the tribe's trollkin hordes, as ranking cult members that serve as examples to their lesser, stupider brethren and occasionally as shamans or magicians that contribute a great deal to uz society. I have heard it said that several communities were blessed with values so intelligent that a few of the trollkin could even serve as advisors to the uz family matriarchs, though this has never been confirmed by sight and practically every troll I have discussed it with denied it flatly and with much laughter.

Since enlokurgi are more valuable than most other trollkin, they tend to be fed better and treated – if not well, then at least *less badly* – than their cousins. Given the nature of uz society and the beatings all trollkin receive, this is a relative statement.

Enloruk - 'Work Slaves'

In most communities, even those that beat their warrior slaves to toughen them up, it is the enloruk – the workers – who are treated worse. These trollkin display no notable talent with a weapon and lack the intelligence or intuition to serve as values. A great many female trollkin end up in this caste, in contrast to the numbers of males that become warriors.

The jobs of the workers are as menial and labour-intensive as would be expected. They essentially do all the work that the true uz have no wish to do personally. Therefore, worker teams dig endlessly to extend underground troll communities, haul supplies, carry the kills of uz hunters back to settlements, mend clothing, gather edible mushrooms and insects, build new homes for the uz and do everything else that can be done with no skill.

In times when a community is in need of few workers, the enloruk are the first to make the short change to food slaves. Even in prosperous troll settlements, enloruk must tread carefully lest they be noticed and eaten by a hungry troll, since the enloruk are considered expendable. A few of this caste will manage to become enlokurgi. Most will die of their toils or be consumed. The justification for eating the worker caste so often is that it is easy to bring some warriors back into the enloruk if a shortage appears.

Enlorenz - 'Food Slaves'

'We eat them because we can. We eat them because they taste good. We eat them because it is the way of things.'

— Urgurra Broken-Tusk, troll clan matriarch

This is grotesquely self-explanatory. Although any of the enlo can become food in a moment of anger, hunger or simple boredom, there are always born those who are immediately marked as food slaves. They are herded like animals, given troll waste to feed and grow on, and given no chance to ever better their lot.

In some cases a band of enlorenz will be temporarily assigned work detail to attend to, or thrown against the blades and spells of an invading enemy if there is no other resort. Usually, their days and nights are spent eating filth, living in their own waste and being watched over by one of the community's true uz, who acts as some kind of cannibalistic shepherd.

Marking Chattel

Traditionally, trollkin are marked by their assigned caste and with an indication of the tribe that owns them. The most common method is a technique that has spread across Glorantha in our age: marking the faces of trollkin with various notches, decorations and brands indicative of caste, bloodline and clan. Some mothers never wish to mark their trollkin children with any acknowledging symbol, so these enlo are marked with a sign of the tribe they belong to and given over to the tribe's queen. Most kin are marked with their caste, the family that owns them and the tribe to which that family belongs. Generally the marks are made on noses and ears.

The marking of trollkin ears ensures a permanent sign than few enlo can ever be rid of and allows instant perception of what talents the creature has and who own him. Most trollkin would never remove their own ears to hide their slave marks, especially given that a one-eared trollkin is the clearest sign of an escaped slave and likely to be eaten by the first uz he comes across. Some enlo are desperate enough to do it anyway. Others are simply stupid enough.

A tribe's markings are very distinctive and many clans seek outlandish tokens to adorn their slaves' ears and noses so as not to resemble any other local tribal markings. Nose rings and earrings are the most common tokens, often made of lead or copper to save any valuable metals for more important purposes. Rarely, particularly worthwhile values will be given earrings of bronze or some other substance slightly more valuable than the basic rings.

From these rings, a selection of additional tokens dangle, usually tied by hair or fine gut thread. Feathers of various birds, shells of dead insects, the bones of tiny animals like rats or lizards, small wooden carvings and even runic markings on metal or wooden slivers – all are commonplace. Among the largest troll communities, some of the uz slavemasters take more care in the artistic decoration of their chattel than they do in keeping their slaves alive.

Notching ears with knives is also a well-used method of marking ownership, with various slices or patterns marking the trollkin under a particular caste or owner. Branding with heated blades or irons – often on the cheek – is also common.

Language of the Uz

'We speak without speaking in many ways. A threat need not be spoken but still scares a rival. Sounds can tell others what we intend without words. It is complicated. Humans do this instinctively, as we do, though our silences and sounds say more than yours. In the dark all life is blind, and it 'sees' by hearing what is around instead. We are the people of darkness. This is why our language is so complex and can sometimes sound like a primal music to human ears. There is more to see in our sounds.'

— Harthak Bones-of-Stone, troll shaman and healer

'The Ancients speak simple. They were born in a simpler time and they need fewer words for ideas and things that we of the uzko deal with. When trolls talk, you say it sounds like growling and hawking and spitting and barking. But the talk of the Mistress Race sounds like singing, even to humans. Not many humans get the chance to hear the song, though. Even fewer get to tell others afterwards. Manflesh is tasty, especially to the bitter Ancients who still blame Mangods for the destruction of Wonderhome.'

— Urgurra Broken-Tusk, troll clan matriarch

The uz communicate in ways other than speech, like any sentient being. However, their body language and non-worded sounds are as much a part of their acknowledged language as their vocabulary. This is a key factor to remember when dealing with trolls, especially in delicate negotiation. If one pays attention only to what they say, he will be missing much of what is being communicated.

I turn here to the observations of Klemal the Confronter, Wyrms' Talon Disciple of the Adepts of Inhuman Mastery, who attached the following notes to my project. His experience in interacting with the uz in both diplomatic and combat situations is invaluable.

The Abridged Notes of Jandred the Flayer, Concerning 'Uz Body Language

Trolls generally stand upright, though with a natural curve to their spine that ensures a slight hunch. This is the posture trolls adopt when they are completely at ease, which is why so few humans ever see the uz standing tall. When ill at ease, trolls hunch further, and bunch their powerful leg muscles like an animal ready to spring. This is their general battle stance, which is intimidating enough even when the hulking creature is otherwise silent. Battle stance, or a cautious hunch close to it, is what trolls tend to adopt when in the presence of non-uz.

This caution around other races is an ingrained, perhaps genetic, mistrust. It does not indicate any fear of the non-trolls present, except in the case of trollkin (who fear practically everything). These wretches are more likely to adopt more cowering, deeper bows or show their throats like submissive predator animals in the wild.

In social situations, the uz unconsciously adjust their posture depending on their perceived position within the group. Among tribe meetings, the dominant warriors and the more influential females will stand taller than their peers, while the less worthy members of the gathering will stand closer to a deferent hunch. A troll with its eyes closed can appear submissive or thoughtful, though the opposite is true.

In my observations, eye closing is purely a dark and great troll phenomenon. The uzko and uzdo close their eyes to signify they are angry, relying on their innate 'Darksense' for two reasons: they no longer wish to look at the other creature any longer and they are falling back on their most primal, instinctive sense to react to a potential threat. This is a powerful sign to change conversational tack, run for safety or re-evaluate the situation before striking.

In mixed company, such as a wandering band of mercenaries, intelligent trolls tend to adjust their stance depending more on mood than perceived social hierarchy. In these cases, the uz will stand taller when making a firm point or disagreeing with a companion, and may bow his head or turn his face to the side to indicate compliance. Their hunched posture grows increasingly distant from having anything to do with how the trolls see themselves among these 'equals'. They recognise that non-uz will miss the subtleties of body language, so adapt their postures to suit the senses of their allies.

Trollish intimidation is easy enough to determine. You can tell when a troll is truly enraged by the way he cracks his knuckles or parts his jaws slightly, enough that his breath starts to whistle ominously through the gaps in his tusks and fangs. A troll that closes his eyes is warning you that he is ready to kill you for what you are saying and that you should stop immediately. A troll that cracks his knuckles or parts his jaws is letting you know that you have crossed the line already. This is the moment to run, expend energy in immediate spellcasting or ready weapons.

The Abridged Notes of Jandred the Flayer, Concerning 'Uz Speech

The greatest difference between troll communication and human tongues is the sheer degree of non-worded vocalisation that occurs among the uz. Grunts, whines, clicks, growls, howls and even different exhalations all mean different things based on the situation and the tone of the sound.

The apex of vocalised communication without actually resorting to use of traditional vocabulary is the 'hunting tongue' of the uz. This language is instinctive to the race, much in the same way dogs or wolves can communicate through howls and barks without ever 'learning' to do so. This hunting tongue is a dizzying array of monosyllabic grunts, breaths, whines and clicks of the epiglottis in the back of the throat - many of which are so soft as to be inaudible to human ears or pitched

out of the human hearing range. The hunting tongue can convey practically any information required on a hunt, from the direction, type and number of prey to the distance of reinforcements, the need for additional weaponry and anything else the troll might need to communicate without ever speaking a word.

'When in good spirits, a troll's laughter will howl out like a wounded bear's roar. When nervous, an eerie series of throaty clicks accompanied by a rumbling chuckle is referred to as the 'liar's laugh' - recognisable among uz but generally seen as genuine chuckles by humans and other outsiders. Uz, when they do lie to members of the other races, use the liar's laugh because it is less intimidating than their belly laughs and can only be seen through by experts on troll culture.

Anger is commonly shown in body language but imperial soldiers have long referred to the 'uz whine' with a healthy dose of trepidation in their hearts. This battle howl actually begins before the fight is joined, with an inaudible growl deep in the throat that rises to the tongue and is vocalised in a rumbling roar that finally erupts into a howling roar. Without protective magics in place, the sound can be extremely unnerving, especially when sounded from the throats of dozens, hundreds or thousands of trolls. The sound reaches its highest intensity just before each troll strikes with its weapon, so the individual facing the creature is confronted by a towering monster that is roaring so loud he is almost deafened as he tries to fend off its attacks.

Speech

Trolls speak a close variant of the language we call 'Darktongue. Many of the words are abbreviated or altered, but it remains a complex language with a vocabulary almost as large as most human tongues. It does not suffer any drawbacks of terminology or conceptualisation - I speak it fluently and can express myself in uz as well I can in any other language excepting our holy Auld Wyrnish.

'While trollish 'Darktongue can seem simpler than other languages on the surface it has tonal aspects that complicate matters phenomenally, with the same terms meaning different things depending on the volume, pitch and tone of the speaker's words. This additional dimension makes the uz language significantly harder to learn than most natural human tongues. The human ear is not always well tuned to discerning the differences in troll words, either. One mess of krrh, ghk and jhv sounds much the same as another to the untrained ear, no matter what tone it is spoken in and many troll words are similarly constructed.

Trolls understand the difficulties others have with their challenging tongue. They tend to look favourably upon those who make the effort to speak 'Darktongue and in my experience are patient in repeating themselves to be understood or supplying words for the speaker. This is a remarkably generous and conscientious behaviour from such a brutish race.

I have never heard an Ancient speak. This grieves me from a completion and curiosity standpoint, as I gather that their vocabulary is much more limited than the dark trolls and the tonal aspects of their language are much more pronounced. The uzko I have dealt with explain that Mistress 'Race trolls sound almost like they are singing and that the sound is pleasant to human ears.

Intelligent trolls have little trouble learning human tongues, since all trolls have well-developed lips, vocal chords and a similar vocal physiology to humans. Dark trolls tend to speak human languages best, with great trolls and trollkin usually being too stupid or possessing maw's full of fangs that inhibit all speech anyway.

The Mindset of the Uz

It is a fact of existence that all life has certain requirements in order to survive and prosper. In the cases of animals, this is no more than food, breeding and occasionally shelter. In cases of higher beings, the more intelligent the creature, oftentimes the more it requires to satisfy itself. Humans for example need sustenance and shelter, but they also desire religious enlightenment, personal power and often victory over their enemies. Ideals, beliefs and codes of conduct add layers of considerations to the most basic and primal needs, which makes the requirements of sentient beings, especially humans, a frequently complex affair.

The uz are no exception to this, despite their reputation for unintelligence. The principal need of any troll is sustenance, which conjures all kinds of additional notes right from the outset given the legendary uz appetite. Trolls have well-developed taste buds and are all, to some degree, sensationalists. The uz seem to crave the taste of almost any food or edible material, though they are able to joylessly subsist on rock, metal and bones if they have no other choice. Trolls do not entirely lack the taste receptors that allow the brain to register something as tasting foul, though it seems that these receptors were intentionally created dull by Kyger Litor, at least when compared to other races. Very little tastes *bad* to the uz; at worst, things are bland and flavourless. Chaos creatures – on the rare instances a troll would consume such – are probably the only exception to this rule. The trolls I have met acted as if such consumption would be foul-tasting beyond anything imaginable.

Like any mortal beings, the second consideration in the uz mindset is the need to procreate. This element to the troll lifestyle and psyche has a much darker and severe aspect to it than among other sentient beings, given the curses the trolls have suffered over the centuries. Breeding is a physical and cultural necessity tainted by the banes of uz existence.

As such, many trolls do not look forward to starting families for fear that they will bear trollkin litters. However, pressure from the matriarchal society and the queens that oversee each tribe mean that frequent breeding does occur. If it did not, the troll population would dwindle even faster, with fewer dark trolls born

to populate the true society and fewer trollkin born to support it by slavery. For a female, nothing is more important than bearing healthy children and keeping her bloodline free of trollkin births. For a male, nothing is more important than acquiring a fertile and healthy female and breeding uzko children with her.

These are the two innate desires of all mortal beings. The last great urge of the uz is a more personal and violent desire. Unlike many of the more enlightened cultures that relegate Chaos to the annals of the past, the uz loath Chaos with a primal and intense passion. They desire little more than to kill Chaos creatures, one by one, by the hundreds, by the *legion*. There is no shortage of troll tales and legends that deal with the salvation of their race lying in the eventual destruction of Chaos. It is a recurring theme in the culture, to say the least.

The uz have a history entwined with the depredations of Chaos; that much is obvious to any outsider. When one peels back the layers of the surface stories, however, the results are most illuminating. Other legends exist, citing fanciful tales of recovering ancient artefacts that will heal the wounds of their race through other means. All have at least a root in the Darkness, of course, or the era of Nysalor.

The most important of these ‘artefacts’ is a verse of the primal uz race birth song that Kyger Litor sang when she bore the first trolls from her body into the world. Many uz believe that by discovering this lost verse and singing it during pregnancy, the babes born afterwards will always be Mistress Race trolls. This holiest of holy songs is believed to have been stolen from Kyger Litor by a god from another race – perhaps even a Chaos god – which is why so many uz pay a surprising amount of attention to the music of other cultures. They are among the faithful that believe their forgotten song can be found somewhere within the songs of others.

The second of the lost artefacts is actually something of a blasphemous item that the uz desire only to destroy: the paired metal claws of Gbaji the Deceiver, which the false god used to rend apart the womb of Korasting and sicken the uz with the Trollkin Curse. The uz believe that if these items are discovered and destroyed by

the uz in offering to Kyger Litor and the memory of Korasting, the Womb-Biter Curse will lift immediately. Others believe that recovery of the items is enough and that merely possessing the weapons will allow the troll pantheon to heal the wounds the claws once inflicted.

In a race so grievously wounded by the influence of Chaos upon Glorantha, it is perhaps easy to see why the uz are still so obsessed.

Battle

'Honour is in victory. If you walk away and your enemy does not, you are the honourable one. Men call us brutes and primitives, monsters who rely on raw strength and ambushes to achieve our ends rather than any sense of skill. All I know is that I am alive because of the way I fight and all of my enemies are dead. I care nothing for the opinions of either the defeated slain or the cowardly living. Honour is in surviving.'

— Fynral the Bitter-Blooded, warrior of the City of Lead

The troll attitude to conflict is very simple. They care for nothing except winning. No trick is too dirty, no tactic is barred and no style is forbidden. In fact, these matters do not even rate as considerations. The only consideration in a fight is to survive it by any means possible and stand over the body of the foe at the end.

The uz are exceptionally fond of ambushes. If there is a way to render a fight unfair or tip the odds in favour of the trolls, they will take it. It is hard to argue with this logic, though it derives from cowardice as often as sound tactical leadership. Nevertheless, the uz are often superb guerrilla fighters. It is one of the main reasons imperial forces loathe clashing with the creatures.

Despite their bulk and generally brutish natures, trolls fighters are often very skilled at moving silently through the wilderness, either underground or on the surface

world, in order to arrange lethal ambushes or avoid fights that they consider beyond their abilities to win. When an ambush is sprung, the trolls are fast and merciless in the execution of their assault. A favourite tactic is to creep alongside enemy forces and wait until the foes make camp. As the cook-fires burn, armour removed and the men ready for sleep, the trolls make their move. When the attack is unleashed, it is delivered with a blend of magical spells and mundane weaponry – trolls rarely hesitate to expend their Rune Magic in a fight. The assault is fast and brutal, with the aim of inflicting as much damage on the disorganised forces as possible before making a quick retreat. If the trolls cannot strike their foes at such a time, the uz will choose similarly disorganised moments, such as when convoys enter a narrow pass. Trolls prefer to make an immediate strike before an enemy even has his blade drawn. The uz are noted for their ability to win fights and not all of this talent lies in their great strength.

Many uz prefer to fight after nightfall, though this is commonly misbelieved to be because sunlight hurts the eyes of dark trolls. The truebloods are as uninhibited by Yelm's brightness as any human, since their Darksense works equally well no matter the illumination of their surroundings. There is the matter of troll eyes being less efficient than human eyes in daylight but not to a large enough degree that many trolls would shirk from a fight if the sun was in the sky.

There are other factors involved in the uz preference to shed blood when the world is dark. These aspects of trollish warfare revolve around the weaknesses of the tainted races – the enlo and the uzdo. Both species have overdeveloped eyes that mean the creatures can suffer in bright sunlight. For the great trolls this is no more than a minor annoyance. For the enlo, it is another matter entirely, an altogether more serious and disabling one. Most enlo are irritable, distracted and even frightened in the sunlight. With bands of already unreliable trollkin, the uz take whatever measures they can to ensure that their slaves are as trustworthy as possible before and during a battle. If that means waiting until after sunset to strike, so be it.

'Bleed them. Kill them. Eat them.'

This is a famous troll expression, summing up their attitude to a fight very clearly. It highlights the threefold nature of any successful uz battle. It also states the fate of any imperial troops that are on the losing side against the uz, so take note: if one still lives after a skirmish with the trolls it is unlikely his bones will be buried in the lands of the Empire – if they are ever reclaimed at all.

The first phase of any battle where the uz have the advantage of forethought, planning or even just enough time to gather their wits, is called the *bleeding* by imperial troops that have come up against it. At the onset of most battles, the uz will do their level best to disable or disadvantage their foe before the killing really starts. This is simple logic – panic and weakness make the butchery easier.

The aim of a bleeding is to have the defenders expend their magical strength and suffer wounds that will soften the force up before the true attack to come. In the disorganisation that follows, the uz roar as one, charging in right behind the rolling wall of sound from their throats. This is enough to break even veteran units of men – injured from the bleeding and now confronted with monstrous foes whose very roars deafens them. This can make retreat seem a very palatable option, especially if the troops are undisciplined, drawn from the ranks of mercenary fighters or not reinforced by skilled leaders and powerful magicians. Imperial soldiers are renowned for holding ranks in such situations, of course.

As the mass roar reaches its apex and the trolls reach the enemy lines, the *killing* begins. Here is where the defenders face the true battle, pitting their own skill and spells against the battle magic of the uz and their overpowering strength. Uz tend to loathe protracted engagements and if a quick victory becomes unlikely, they will retreat to prepare another plan for a successive attack. Although trolls' strength allows them to fight for longer than most humans, the uz lack the numbers to endure long battles where the weight of the foe's numbers will tell. In most regions, the uz also lack the population to sustain horrendous casualties in any conflict and absorb such losses easily. Communities will fall if enough warriors and hunters die, so they seek to retreat before too many grave injuries are suffered.

I've been bled by the trolls plenty of times. Sometimes it'll be a horde of shrieking, screaming trollkin swarming over us with spears that survive just long enough to wound a few of us and weaken us for the onslaught of the true uz. Once it was an hour of slinging; stones the size of my fist came down regular as a heartbeat, cracking into heads and knees with savage accuracy. We tried to fire back but we couldn't see them in the shadows of the trees. A day later they struck us from the backs of giant wasp-creatures, dropping stones and casting spells while their insect steeds dodged most of our arrow fire.

In my second month of this latest rebellion against the reptile lovers I work for, the uz priests summoned strange, black-skinned spirits that howled all night before a battle so that none of us caught a wink of sleep.

On another occasion we 'enjoyed' a rainstorm of boulders hurled down from the canyon walls above us only moments before a second force engaged our column's rearguard. After the fight – which we eventually won – the dragonspeaker leading us had to turn into a dragon to dig the survivors out from under the rubble.

Say what you will about those bastard uz; they sure know how to fight. If there were more of them, maybe they wouldn't lose so much.'

– Farl of the Orlanthi, volunteer scout for the imperial army

If they are forced into a situation where they must make a last stand, they sell their lives dearly. Little I have encountered is more frightening than a cornered troll that knew there was no escape. It sent men flying with each swing of its two-handed maul. Most were dead before they hit the ground.

The *gorging* is a result of an uz victory and its details are obvious. The fate of too many imperial soldiers over the decades has been to meet a final end as meals for trolls.



It is worth noting that due to cultural dominance and military style, any EWF force is likely to outnumber the trolls they are fighting and that individually, while they may never match an uz in raw strength, our troops have training and skill that has allowed them to conquer half of the known world. Do not fear the uz – their packets of resistance are mere footnotes in our ascendance.

Stone, Lead and Bronze

Imperial soldiers facing well-prepared uz warriors often remark on the nature of their arms and armour. Stone clubs are viciously intimidating, hefted in mighty troll arms and brought with the force of a thunderclap. Hammer-beaten bronze weaponry has a tendency to bend in protracted battle but remains notably sharp for extended periods of time and is immune to rust; with a troll's strength a cutting blow can easily sever a limb.

It is lead that draws most of our fascination, however. It is one of the heaviest metals in the world, apparently sacred to the uz, yet used for an endless array of both holy and seemingly trivial uses. It is heavily mined by

the uz of most regions, especially the Shadow Plateau trolls, which goes some way to explaining why it sees so much use in their culture, even as a form of currency they call the bolg. The lead bolg was supposedly invented by the darkness deity Argan Argar, though I have found no mythological confirmation of this beyond the stories of Bakrom, Harthak and several other trolls.

Either way, it seems a profane use of a sacred material. Lead is used for holy icons as one would expect, be they life-size statues or personal tokens like figurines or jewellery with religious significance. In contrast to this, exemplifying their lack of taboo in using their holiest metal, the uz also use lead for mundane items such as their vicious-looking carving knives for food and drinking tankards large enough to fit a human head inside.

One trollkin I encountered who was unreasonably belligerent as well as surprisingly intelligent, informed me that on some occasions it had seen true uz even eat lead. It was unclear as to whether this repast occurred

'Stone is simply there. It is here. There. Everywhere. We use it for weapons, chip it into shape for axe heads or hammers, simply because it is so easy and common. It is also effective. It is also arrowheads and sling missiles. Bronze is strong and satisfying to use, carried by the skilled, the wealthy and the powerful. But it is just another metal, like many metals. Lead alone is holy. Lead is the metal of darkness. It is a rune metal, and darkness runes are often formed from chunks of holy lead.'

'You are scared of metal. You cry at the touch of the cold fruits of the earth and shriek that they are the bones of dead gods. To uz, lead is sacred like dragonbone is to you. Your laughter at our heavy armours and our metal money is like a ghost pissing air into my ears. It means nothing. You speak lots but know little, I think.'

— Bakrom the Disemboweller, uzko mercenary

the uz

because of a holy rite or because of hunger. Unlike many of his kind, this enlo did not respond favourably to threats and turned out to be skilled enough at arms that he managed to escape me before I could deliver a telling blow. How galling.

In trading with humans, the uz are rarely stupid enough to believe lead holds any real value to we 'soft-skins.' While a lead bolg appears to have an equal value to a silver piece among the trolls, uz traders tend to be aware that humans will often try to swindle trolls by offering worthless lead in exchange for valuable items. Uz are never lacking in lead, despite its value. They are almost never desperate enough for the metal to trade it with humans, since they realise the humans benefit from the bargain a great deal. Offering lead to a troll in exchange for craftwork or services is the fastest way to genuinely annoy an uz. The truebloods take especial offence at this kind of bartering, with trollish sensibilities requiring both parties in a trade to benefit and sacrifice equally, lest the trade be considered deceitful.

The most remarked-upon application of lead in uz culture is the reason this discussion of materials is included in the battle section of this treatise. To wit, as witnessed by countless imperial troops over the centuries, the uz use their holy metal to create armour, of all things. On one level I can appreciate the sentiment – we of the dragonspeaker hierarchies use dragonbone and even wyvernscale in some instances, do we not? On a more pragmatic level, however, this is *lead* we are dealing with. Bearing weapons and armour made from this heaviest of metals can exhaust even the strongest and mightiest of troll warriors.

The advantages are obvious. The morale boost of going to war bearing a spiritualistic icon cannot be ignored. Secondly, the durability of lead armour – which the trolls frequently enchant upon creation – makes it excellent quality protection. In addition, it is generally cheap to produce in lead-rich regions, which is understandably where such displays are most common.

The only drawback is equally obvious, of course. Lead is heavy. Trolls are not creatures with any real love for drawn-out engagements, and a warrior clad in lead armour is slowed a great deal by his load, hindering his

guerrilla abilities, as well as tiring him out much faster. I have seen lead-armoured warriors doing battle. Thick, greasy sweat spatters onto their enemies with each labouring breath and every rise and fall of a primitive weapon.

Trophies & Headhunting

The most common display of victory in battle is to erect a monument in the days afterwards so that future travellers will see evidence of the might of the uz. These pillars are usually made of stone or wood, though a few rare (and longstanding) edifices are constructed of lead.

Pillar markers are generally decorated how the conquering horde sees fit. Skulls of enemies might hang from rough-edged sides, the names of the battle's heroes are etched into the column and any of the dead that are uneaten are buried under the earth around the pillar in a mass grave.

A particularly grisly habit of many troll warriors is the practice of taking trophies from the bodies of the fallen. Some uz warriors take great delight in eating the bodies of their slain foes, as would be expected from the trolls. Others, however, take parts of a foe's body as a keepsake. A troll I met by the name of Bakrom exemplified this tradition by displaying his foes' remains as part of his couture. I was presented with his necklace, made of rope and bearing seven human skulls, each with a brutally short story of how the previous owner became troll jewellery.

It seems an odd thing to note here but the uz are not human. This behaviour highlights that perfectly, for not only do they carry their enemies' remains without a qualm, nothing in their mindset ever allows them to understand what could possibly be considered immoral or dirty about such a practice. Worse yet, they actually find the results attractive. Bakrom was well-pleased with his skull necklace, certainly, but he was prouder by far of the pinkish leather vambraces he wore, which he laughingly admitted to taking after skinning a God Learner who came asking about his legends.

It grieves me that I found some sympathy for one of my most hated enemies in that moment. No one deserves to finish his life as a troll's sleeves.

Critics of our glorious Empire might find it amusing that I can say this yet march into battle wearing magically-shaped armour made from the bones of dragons. I am not a hypocrite. There is a world of difference between wearing our sacred armour and the practice of skinning other mortals for interesting garments. Bakrom could not see it when I explained this to him, though with his trollish intellect, that is hardly surprising.

'I Fought We Won'

'I Fought We Won means more to uz than it ever means to you, lizard-lover. Much more. Humans chopped swords at Chaos and cried to their gods in hope they might survive. For uz, it was personal. For uz, it was another chance to rend and tear and crush and crunch the flesh and bones of Chaos things. My heart hurts to think of it, so truly do I wish I had been there.'

— Durgur Mexil, uz Runelord of Boztakang

Family & Community

As noted previously, uz society is matriarchal in nature. This tradition stretches across regional boundaries and has its roots in the first troll communities. In a race where the creator gods were notably female and the future of the race rests on cursed breeding, it is perhaps no shock to learn that healthy, fertile troll women are prized and treated with great reverence.

Though few male uz (at least among the uzko) are stupid or lack willpower, it seems there is a need to obey the wishes of a female and defer to her in socially. It is never mindless obeying, of course. Uz are still reasoning beings with their own personalities; it just seems as if something in their minds encourages them with an instinctive urge to respect the words of females. It is clear from even my meagre observations of uz culture that high-ranking members of the traditional cults are free to act with whatever authority they desire and answer to no females other than their tribal queen.

Within the community, almost all matters of import are overseen by the females. Much of this responsibility and authority comes from the cult of Kyger Litor, which shapes troll culture from root to tip. The females' duties include holy rituals, trading with outsider visitors and all aspects of judgement and justice – usually revolving around notions of the punishment fitting the crime. Death brings death, theft demands that the victim receives reparations and so forth. Troll justice is brutal and simple, perhaps one of the reasons so few trolls sin against their own people. That and the fact that so few uz within their underground warrens own anything that their brethren would wish to steal.

The ruler of a troll settlement is almost always female, except in exceptional circumstances such as a community locked in an endless war or instances of a male receiving divine favour, such as in the case of Ezkankekko. Female leaders are referred to as queens or matriarchs, though many settlements institute a ruling council of females, sometimes with male advisors, which often traditionally operates as a gerontocracy (rule by a council of elders).

In many communities, trolls are not bound by the human preference for monogamy. Usually it is a ranking female (or an otherwise unusually fertile one) that can claim several husbands, though there are instances where males have claimed several women as wives – especially in regions where the male population has suffered a decline from recent war. With many females having to abstain from sex and pregnancy because of their year-long purification after birthing trollkin, males spreading their seed among several women ensures that breeding within a community is continually taking place.

If females are the heart and soul of the community, males are the fists. They shoulder the majority of the physical workload in regards to hunting and warfare, and while most female uz are more than capable of defending themselves, with the women running the day-to-day business of the settlement it becomes the duty of the males to venture out into the world in search of food and to fight.

When at home, males generally perform whatever tasks their wives set for them. This is rarely menial labour (trollkin carry that burden) but might involve seeing to the more boring tasks of a household, such as overseeing the enlo as they go about their duties. Male trolls are often bored by this inaction and most prefer to be out in the world breaking weapons over their enemies' heads or finding something delicious to eat. As ever, these latter two pastimes are often one and the same.

There is always work to be done within a community. Meat and food must be gathered. Weapons must be beaten into shape. Slaves must be commanded and supervised. Younger uz and trollkin must be trained in the use of arms. Cult responsibilities must always be met. Liquor must be brewed. Whether in the lightless depths of underground caverns or in a night-time forest on the surface, troll communities are as alive with activity and industry as any human settlement. For all their primitive natures and slovenly appearance, the uz are not a lazy people. Even with many of the trolls out hunting or doing battle, the settlement will still have its share of miners, weapon instructors, craftsmen and healers.

Given the uz loathing of fire – many troll metalworkers have learned to shape lead and bronze without flame, light or heat. Spells exist for just that purpose, usually taken from the cult of the enslaved Lodril, and other uz simply resort to their raw strength in order to beat the metal into blades and armour. If a smith works well away from the settlement, he might create a small forge in the way surface-dwellers would understand it, though the practice is apparently very rare.

Clothing

Since sight is not the primary sense of the uz race as a whole, it is easy to assume that clothes are less important to trolls than it is to us. This is – and is not – true. Deep in the stony bowels of the world, couture is meaningless. However, clothes are important to most of the surface-dwelling uz, from reasons of modesty, protection and even a crude sense of fashion in some cases.

Most troll attire is basic, to say the least. I have seen many instances of clothes made of rags, animal fur and stitched-together human garments clearly looted

from the dead and in several encounters I saw uz warriors wearing creamy-peach leather that bore all the hallmarks of human skin. Some of this is notable because trolls are fully capable of eating humans and animals without ever skinning the victim, so to see uz so attired indicates a very clear forethought and a *desire* to dress as they do. Admittedly, it can be intimidating to be confronted with a nine-foot monster wearing skin he peeled from the flesh of people just like you.

Holy robes are common among religious leaders and ranking cultists, though they are unpopular among the general population. Simple trousers and shirts of various cloths are preferred, offering ease of movement – an essential aspect in troll clothing. Colours rarely matter since the uz are truly colour-blind, in the sense that they have no capacity to distinguish all hues and instead see in shades of grey. No matter what a troll is wearing, it will often be hacked up in various places either because of the local heat or to make movement easier. Armour, clothing – all fall victim to this trollish amendment.

Though the uzko are not racially sensitive to the sunlight, many breeds of uz are. Even a dark troll that emerges from his subterranean lair after a long time under the earth will be pained by the light of day. This makes hooded cloaks, helmets and hats of various styles extremely popular among the uz. Since underground-dwelling trolls that venture to the surface are also greatly uncomfortable in surface weather like rain, snow and wind, many of these hats are wide-brimmed to protect the face, of full-faced like a helm. Troll helms are always long-snouted to make room for a troll's jaws and though some uz report feeling slightly uncomfortable when using their Darksense while their heads are encased in metal, it does not seem to hinder them in any significant way.

Funeral Rites

Another great and confusing hypocrisy is found in the uz traditions of mourning and burial. As with eating the enlo, trolls do not regard eating the flesh of the dead to be cannibalism. Once a troll dies, he is no longer considered part of the uz race. It is because of this belief that the practice of eating the remains of loved ones, friends and battle-brothers has arisen over the centuries.

Ostensibly it is a mark of respect and reverence to the departed, despite acknowledging that the deceased no longer has anything to do with the dead flesh that remains. While this is simple enough logic to trolls and their central 'uz' belief of a united pure-blooded gestalt to their race, it translates badly to human ways of seeing things.

At its core, the trolls believe that by consuming the flesh of their dead kin and speaking a simple prayer to their principal deities, the still-living uz release the deceased's shade from all responsibilities to life and bless it for passage into the afterlife. This consumption is also for the benefit of the living; in hungry communities the flesh of the dead can be a welcome feast if the residents are subsisting on dirt and rocks and in kinder terms it allows the relatives and friends of the departed to enjoy spending time with the deceased one last time.

Uz history

Genesis and Wonderhome

Three gods from True Darkness are all that matter to uz. Darkness Woman created these three gods from nof-light. They are Kyger Litor, Mother of Uz, Mother of All; Mee Voral of the darkness plants; and Sokazub of the deep and dark animals.

The truest, highest gods played games with the primal runes. They made all that would follow. When a fire god had a rune, he would make a fire thing. When an earth god had a rune, she would make an earth thing. When a darkness god had a rune, she would make a darkness thing. The first darkness thing, born from Darkness Woman herself, was Kyger Litor, Uzbirther. Uzbirther was perfect and whole, shaped by darkness and the rune of man. Darkness Lady was proud.'

— Jivalaag of the Eternal Hunger, Ancient-breed troll

These words come to me not from personal experience but from the journals of my predecessor, Garas Dalewon, Wyrms' Talon Disciple of the Scions of the Sacred Flame. Unlike him, I have never managed to confront a Mistress Race troll. These extracts are taken from several of his final journal entries, recovered from his remains at great loss of life by the imperial XXI legion from a cavern network within Dragon Pass. The commentary and explanations are in my own hand, however. It seems the concepts that this Ancient, Jivalaag, was trying to get across are difficult in places to understand fully.

Here she speaks of the creation of the world, specifically relating to the Celestial Court's manipulation of the Form Runes to create everything on Glorantha. It seems 'Darkness Woman' – a troll simplification of the primal darkness-concept we refer to as Dame Darkness, created Kyger Litor as something of a masterpiece from the Man Rune.

'Uzbirther' is a savagely abrupt description of the troll creator goddess, though this may be due to poor translation on the part of the late Garas. The notes under the heading 'The Circle of Eight' continues next, referring it seems to Kyger Litor and the Seven Sacred Ancestors.

The rise of the uz from their creator goddess is clearly detailed here. What is interesting is the mention of 'Nakala' the Primal Darkness of which Dame Darkness was a manifestation. In referring to Zorak Zoran's parentage as the Primal Darkness rather than a manifestation of it, it seems Jivalaag is implying a more direct bloodline to perfect, utter darkness than even their Uzbirther or the Mother of Many possessed.

The stories of Zorak Zoran are well-documented in imperial records already. It is known that the darkness-spirit, soon to become the uz God of War, spent a great deal of his time stalking other creatures in the blackness of Wonderhome. There are tales of Zorak Zoran being different, even aloof, from the other spirits of the era, since he had felt the burning touch of light against his eyes and flesh somewhere before. Details on this myth are sketchy to say the least – 'light' being unborn in the Underworld yet still scarring a darkness-spirit is a difficult concept for some mythologies to come to terms with or explain.

'Darkness Lady played more. Then came Korasting, Mother of Many, companion to Uzbirther, Mother of All. Darkness Lady gave the man rune to our Mothers to play with as they saw fit. And play they did.

Karrg Master of Weapons and the Valiant Heart was the first male born to the two Mothers in their games. Their daughter was Vaneekara the Hurler, named for her strength in throwing anything across infinite vistas. Soon it was time for Korasting to create children alone.

Then came Jeset of the Black Water – who learned to guide souls after death. After Jeset Blackwater was Hombobobom Hands-of-Thunder who taught all others to sing and dance and drum and speak. After Hands-of-Thunder came Boztakang Chaos-Killer, who was destined to battle the most evil forces of the void.

Then came others. Then came uz. Uz lived in Wonderhome, in blackness with no light. It was this way for generations. The uzuz were the only Folk. All was pure. In time more darkness spirits came and dwelt with uz in Wonderhome. The most uz-like of these was called Zorak Zoran, who sprang from Nakala the Uffer Blackness full-formed; curious, cunning, strong and always angry.'

— Jivalaag of the Eternal Hunger, Ancient-breed troll

It is also known that Zorak Zoran met with Eurmal and Humakt in the Underworld and witnessed the discovery of the sword called Death. He saw the trickster god deceive in the ruse Humakt, which would eventually result in the death of Yelm at the hands of Orlanth.

In the Lesser Darkness that followed, Zorak Zoran hungered for Death as he observed it doing its work through the hands of other gods. He finally had the chance to wield it himself, using the blade to murder Flamal, a plant god, creating a great starvation in the wake of his slaying. Zorak Zoran was delighted by this new power.

The true changes came to Wonderhome with the death

of Yelm, though. Slain by Orlanth, the God-Emperor of the Sun's own soul streaked through Wonderhome toward its resting place as the cold-light ruler of the underworld. Even though Yelm's living heat and brightness were much drained, it was still a fire god – the fire god – that burned through the Underworld on that day.

The Age of Sun-Death

'We tell tales of a day like no other day. A time when the Emperor of the Universe, the Light of the Hurtplace, screamed through Wonderhome in a wave of shrieking, boiling liquid fire. There was redness in the white flames and this was Yelm's blood, for he was bleeding from Orlanth's blow.

Even blind and burning, our armies rose against this intruder. In his hissing, flaming wake came other light and fire gods and spirits. It was these beings that we battled, yet because of the light and heat we died by the legion. We call this the Battle of Hanroo Field, where the rock of the ground and the walls were burned into black dust from Yelm's trail.

Thousands fled upward to the Hurtplace, where Yelm's murder now made the sky darker than the Underworld. Thousands and thousands died, catching fire, eyes melting, exploding into dust when the water-blood of their bodies dried in a heartbeat. Finally the fire god settled, still bleeding, still shrieking in agony, still giving off waves of light and fire. He was close enough that uz could hear him crying and see his light all around.

To Komor – the Hurtplace – we travelled, looking to one another and reforming our tribes. Many escaped the wrath of pitiful, murdered Yelm. But not all. Not Korasting, Mother of Many. Uzbirther was wracked with sorrow at her sister-daughter's death. Kyger Litor's sorrow was our sorrow and that sorrow turned our children into uzko.'

— Jivalaag of the Eternal Hunger, Ancient-breed troll

Called variously the Lesser Darkness, the Storm Age and the Age of Sun-Death, here we see how Yelm's death affected the troll race. Many of them died either in battle or before they could flee. Korasting, the uz fertility goddess, was amongst the slain.

Whether Kyger Litor purposely altered the uzuz so that they bred uzko or whether the death of Korasting meant that no Ancients would ever be born again, the truth of the matter is that dark trolls were the future of the race from that moment on. The dark trolls became the more populous breed over the following centuries. Their alliances and wars with the other races are the stuff of legends.

At the time, the uz were led by Kyger Litor herself and two great Mistress Race heroes, Helagarl Goretooth and Ulaago Gashing Blade – affectionately known as Gore and Gash. Under such guidance, the uz came to the surface as many darkness spirits had come earlier. Spirits and gods the trolls were familiar with had already carved out their own places on the surface of Glorantha: Zorak Zoran was there, fighting beings of light and enjoying himself thoroughly and Xentha was no longer a darkness spirit but hailed as the goddess of the night.

'The paths to Komor were broken into the three ways. The first way – the way of Uzbirther, was a path through the rocky bowels of the Spike mountain, where we laid for a time in the under-earth halls of Darkness Woman.

The second way – the way of Gore and Gash, was a path through good-hunting tunnels led by our two greatest warriors. During this journey, Gore and Gash saved the life of Asrelia, from Lodril Fire-Spitter, the Volcano God and in return she became our Goddess of Darkness within the Earth.

The last and least followed of the paths was the way of Kogag, son of Jeset, who had his followers sail the black water of the River Styx. They vanish from our tales for a time.'

— Jivalaag of the Eternal Hunger, Ancient-breed troll

It is not that simple. There were further divisions between the troll bands. Once Gore and Gash had reached the surface world, they found themselves in Genertela, where the group split into another three bands of survivors. One of these bands came across the miserable and pitiful land they attempted to call Dozaki's Newhome, though we knew it then and still know it now as the Kingdom of Ignorance.

The northbound group encountered long-lost cousins in the tundra and ice plateaus, joining these snow trolls and bolstering their community. These arctic souls were led by none other than Boztakang.

The final group, led by Gore and Gash, appeared to have limited success at first. They clashed with the elves who drove the uz from the field with colossal magical power. As entire mountains began to fall upon the trolls, they cut their losses and fled the battleground. Deep in Dara Happa, the uz were routed by the forces of Yelmalio himself, who was leading an army of aldryami and sun-worshipping humans. Loss after loss forced the uz north and sent them fleeing to the edge of the Dara Happan lands. Here the group was split again due to infighting.

Half of the trolls vanish into history at this point, legendarily consumed by a sea creature as they trekked further north. The tale tells of a gigantic sea beast deceiving the trolls into walking directly into its mouth, with only an intellectual soul by name of Eristi the Doubter surviving the incident.

I do not believe a word of this. Even the thrice-damned uz are not this stupid. Some of the enlo might fall for such stupidity, and perhaps the uzdo. To believe that an entire colony of Mistress Race trolls would suffer such fragile deception is simply inconceivable. *Something* happened to them, though I have no idea what.

The other half of the trolls, still guided by Gore and Gash, eventually encountered Zorak Zoran in the Dara Happan borderlands. Joining with the warlike darkness-spirit, the uz army attacked Yelmalio's forces at the Battle of the Hill of Gold, and the son of the sun-god was grievously injured. It was for acts such as these that Zorak Zoran was exalted as the troll God of War.

After a further journey southward, the Castle of Lead was eventually established. The legend I have heard from several trolls tells the same story: a troll master craftsman by the name of Gadblag was held aloft by Gore and Gash for many days while he commanded a horde of demons and spirits through an ancient summoning magic. These beings constructed the Castle of Lead, where it still stands today.

The True Darkness

'Among the Folk this was the Age of Blood and Bitterness. Even our victories were fainted by loss. Every Chaos army beaten into a rout inflicted great pains upon uz before they ran from our warriors. Pocharngo, called the Mutator, was defeated by Boztakang Chaos-Killer and his bloody remains thrown across the Chaos hordes. Even this victory came at the cost of losing many, many souls who became roma! – the cave trolls.'

The Age of Blood and Bitterness leached uz of strength but not heart. Ulaago Cashing Blade died gasping, strangled by the tentacles of a Chaos creature, yet his fellow warriors tore his body from the beast's arms for the death rites and Uzbirther stole Cash's soul from the lips of the Devil.

Then came the Wound Fight; the Night of the Bloody Blades; the Great Victory; the Battle of the Black Sun; the Siege of the Spike and a hundred more until I Fought We Won. Four thousand generations passed between I Fought We Won and the final end of the Age of Blood and Bitterness. Uz were never the same after this era, though all races can say this as well without ever lying.'

— Jivalaag of the Eternal Hunger, Ancient-breed troll

It might be argued that the trolls were among the most successful races during the True Darkness, though this is a relative statement given the curses they suffered with their breeding. While all other races strove to recover from the Chaos Wars, the uz had little hope of

doing so. The Mistress Race was declining into a slow extinction and only dark trolls were born. That situation would only worsen in time, when Nysalor was born and inflicted further hurt against the uz.

The most devastating defeat the uz suffered at the claws of Chaos was assuredly the Siege of the Spike. The troll defenders of their race's mightiest kingdom stood in their scattered legions, slaughtering tens of thousands of Chaos ooze creatures that swarmed up the gigantic mountain. Once the first army of evil was repelled, a second was faced and similarly beaten back, though at great loss to the defenders. The Devil himself came with the third wave, and it ended in a near-stalemate with both sides bloodied, battered and close to collapse. Chaos's secret army, laying in wait until that moment, chose to attack while the trolls licked their wounds from the Devil's assault.

The trolls retreated into the mountain before the Devil could launch another wave, but the bulk of the hidden Chaos army had already flooded the inner caves. Inside their own tunnels, the uz were butchered in droves. The Spike fell to Wakboth, and ultimately the entire region was destroyed in the Chaos Wars. Even today, trolls mark it as one of the greatest defeats their race has ever sustained – and the uz have plenty of defeats to choose from.

The Siege of the City of Lead is another tale that rings through the centuries in troll-song and night camp tale-telling.

'Uz were outnumbered like always, fighting long and hard to stay alive and not even sure if winning was possible. I do not count so well but I tell you that I killed many Chaos beasts in the Hero Plane that day. Krarsh was there. You know the Chaos squid goddess? She shovelled hundreds into her maw, dragging warriors from their feet with her tentacles and eating them, shifting out a bloody trail in her wake. Foul beast, she was. I swear we got close to her right at the end, but she used her magic to escape.'

— Bakrom the Disemboweller, uzko mercenary

In the simply-named Wound Fight, a horde of uz warriors were attacked while already retreating from a confrontation with sun-worshipping humans in Dara Happa. The battle earned its name because not a single troll escaped unhurt. This beleaguered army still nursed fire-magic wounds as they were ambushed by ooze-like spirits and demons that fell from the treetops to envelop trolls whole. Zorak Zoran was present at the battle, and his claws dealt terrible damage to the Chaos creatures, finally forcing them to retreat back into the trees, where the blood-maddened trolls actually pursued them to finish the battle once and for all. It is believed that it was another of the battles where the Chaos God of Treason, Krjalk, managed to flee death before his eventual destruction by Zorak Zoran.

Into the First Age

'We were bloodied and mauled by the coming of the Dawning and what humans now call the Great Compromise. Yet uz were still stronger than many of the Younger Races. Uz had a realm of our own. Uz had living gods that did not ever die in the Chaos Wars. Uz was strong.'

We sing a song now about the Compromise, called The Spider's Promise. It tells how the Universe Spider crawled into Kyger Litor's mind and spoke a secret the Mother of All wanted to hear. Our song is a long one, then telling how uz will one day find peace in Wonderhome if uz obey Uzbirther in life. It also tells of how Zorak Zoran hated the choice and said no to the other gods and how Uzbirther magicked him into agreement.

Then the light comes again. The uzuz that remain go under the earth with many of the uzko. Some uzko stay in the Hurplace. And then Time is born. Nothing happens until the foolish Younger Races create the Second Devil.'

— Jivalaag of the Eternal Hunger, Ancient-breed troll

Again, this is an oversimplification. A great deal occurred in the centuries after the resurrection of Yelm and before the rise of Gbaji. The opening decades



the uz

of the Dawn Age saw the naming of many regions of Glorantha as 'Troll Lands,' where the uz held dominance and ruled over strongholds that had survived the Great Darkness intact. Ancient bloodlines oversaw these communities, ruling in the traditional trollish manner and only occasionally ordering the invasion of other lands, which shows great restraint for the uz. The main strongholds were located in the Shadow Plateau, Dagori Inkarth and the eastern Kingdom of Ignorance. The main advantage the trolls had over the other races during this era was the fact that the uz had so many smaller settlements spread across the world, which had survived the Chaos Wars by hiding or clinging to life through successful guerrilla fighting. Due to these territorial claims, the so-called 'Troll Lands' took up a sizeable portion of land and many skirmishes broke out between the uz and other races.

Councils of the various races rose and fell one by one. Each attempt at a world-spanning peace was shattered by increasingly violent war. The trolls were disillusioned with such unity from the beginning anyway and their bitterness only grew as the Mistress Race began to die out. The uzko were now the overwhelming majority of

trolls in the population. Hundreds of dirges and mournful funeral songs have come to use from this era, some of which are pleasant to human senses and are recognised as masterpieces in the imperial court. Others sound like a herd of our Death Kings fighting over food – if you have ever heard the tyrannosaurs doing battle, you will know of what I speak.

The Coming of the Deceiver

'We left the Second Council, as did the dragon-men. We had prophecies that told us of the great doom the new ideas would bring. No one listened before we left and no one cared after.'

Your Perfect One was the Deceiver. A Chaos child in the skin of a light god. Could there be anything fouler than our two banes aligned? We summoned the Black Eater. Our secret spirit, our hidden weapon, unsummoned even in the bleakest hours of the Age of Blood and Bitterness.

And it died. It died under the White Light of the Deceiver and for our wisdom and foresight, we earned another terrible curse upon the wombs of the women.'

— Jivalaag of the Eternal Hunger, Ancient-breed troll

The martyrdom of the uz is almost complete, for here in the Gbaji Wars the trolls suffered the Womb-Biter Curse, also called the Trollkin Curse, and their breeding was poisoned once again.

The impact of the curse cannot be exaggerated. It very nearly wiped the trolls into extinction, for at first the uz slaughtered their twisted little offspring and numbers plunged sharply. The generation following the Womb-Biter Curse was literally less than half of that which came before. Eventually it was decreed that trollkin should be allowed to live and bolster the troll population, though they would be regarded as slaves and treated as such.

It made little difference at first, of course. The population decline took centuries of breeding to counteract, and Gbaji's second assault against the trolls came after only

a hundred years of living with the curse. Only the City of Lead and a few other settlements remained on the surface – the majority of the devastated troll population fled underground. There was little succour there, as the uz soon warred with the mostali under the earth.

What should have been cooperation for mutual survival soon erupted into full-scale war between two races fighting over the same tunnels and underground settlements. The trolls, in typical uz fashion, sought to slay the residents of each under-village they came across and live within the ruins until the food was gone, then move on to the next. The mostali fought back viciously and the two races battled many leagues beneath the feet of surface-dwellers.

The magical assaults of Naxili Garang in HeroQuests and the resulting birth of enlo litters have already been discussed. The resurrected Korasting was once again wounded by enemy gods and the uz once again suffered for it. I will spend no more ink on it here; suffice to say that the latest strike by Chaos, through Gbaji, coupled with this First Age warring in subterranean realms finally ushered in the long decline to potential extinction. The population of uzuz declines yearly, the uzko maintain an uneasy balance, yet all breeds are dwarfed by the swelling numbers of trollkin.

The uz featured significantly in the end of the First Age. The human Arkat made war against the Deceiver and did so with great success. Among his legions – indeed, it is said by many troll tale-tellers that *first* among his legions – were the uz and the host of night-spirits and shadow-spirits that flocked to their cultists' banners. The uz exalted in their roles, whether directed against Chaos or humans who were in the thrall of the Deceiver. The wars raged through Dragon Pass and Peloria, with many among the uz certain that this campaign would be the last flare of glory for their race. In truth, this is exactly right, though the trolls did not die as they feared they might but merely fell into a long decline afterwards.

At a moment when all seemed darkest for Arkat's forces, Kwaratach Kang, a Zorak Zoran Runelord and Arkat's shield-bearer, used his powers to transmute Arkat's form from human to troll. There are always tales of Arkat's transformations with each race claiming him as

'their' hero, though given the fervency and skill in the uz armies against Chaos it seems likely that for the final battle Arkat would assume this race's identity.

With the Deceiver rent apart and the First Age coming to a dramatic close, Arkat rewarded his loyal uz by appointing them rulers of their hereditary lands in the Shadow Plateau, the City of Lead and elsewhere across the world. In time the uz would lose many of these lands and be driven underground once more, though none could know this at the time. The uz never regained all of their lands, for Arkat's own ambitions housed many of his uz warriors in his new kingdom and the troops of Gbaji, still resisted in many parts of the world.

The Current Imperial Age

I will keep myself to the details which I perceive as necessary here. No time or effort need be spent on explaining the geographical losses suffered by the uz in the early Imperial Age, nor does the rise and fall of Arkat's pathetic 'Dark Empire' need any more commentary than one might find in most history books. The trolls entered the Imperial Age much as they had entered the First Age – strong if not dominant. That did not last. With the Trollkin Curse now overwhelming the uzko population, it *could not* last.

The trolls supported Arkat and were supported in turn. Meanwhile they fought sun-worshipping Pelorians, elves and practically everyone else they felt they could beat or who felt they had been wronged in the past by the uz. Even the Orlanthi of Dragon Pass rose against the troll overlords there, in battles over *taxes* of all things. The strength of the early age was leached through war and the uz dwindled to the position they hold today: a minor threat, feared individually but lacking power as a unified force.

The trolls drew back into their ruined strongholds or founded new underground kingdoms away from the light and the victorious surface races. In the shadows they sought to breed back to strength, which was partially successful even if it meant training and equipping huge

bands of trollkin slave-warriors. It was during this time, only 200 years ago, that Cragspider performed her magical ritual and created the great trolls.

Within the last few centuries, new orders rose from the rubble of Glorantha. The trolls feared these new ways right from their founding, which was the reaction of many. The first of these movements was far from the trolls but they felt the rise sure enough. This was the God Learner Alliance. The second of the movements was much closer to troll-held lands and accords were struck once the uz saw the strength of the new kingdom. This was our own glorious Empire of Wyrms' Friends. The trolls would not join us though they vowed cautious friendship. It would be some years before the endless petty rebellions began.

It was also during this time that the trolls fell under the idiotic leadership of a giant, who directed his trollish hordes against the fledgling city of Pavis. Given the seers' belief that Pavis is a city with a great destiny, it surprises no one today that the uz were drawn to such a place. I like to believe it is the unconscious desire of the uz race to leave some great imprint on the world before they are eventually forgotten in Glorantha forever. On their second siege, they broke through the mighty walls and ravaged the city until King Jhoraz Kyrhee led a mercenary army that drove out the uz and their giant allies.

It is no secret that resistance to the spread of the imperial way is growing in some areas. The uz, the Orlanthi and the Pelorians are among the most vocal rebels within their lands, though many of these folk still bend to the yoke we have placed upon them. Depending on your political point of view, they are still either contributing to the good of the Empire or powerless to resist the boots resting upon their throats.

In some cases you will be ordered to fight alongside the uz, be it in the form of the near-worthless trollkin bands we hire as arrow fodder against the Dara Happans or alongside true uz if you are sent to the Machine City siege. It is my ardent hope that this treatise serves you well in imperial service.

the uz

TROLL COMMUNITIES

Trolls are just like humans in that their region and culture has a great impact on how they live their lives. A troll community in the Shadow Plateau is not going to be the same as one in Dagori Inkarth or Halikiv. In most instances, local culture is most heavily influenced by the members of the uz pantheon that receive the greatest portion of the local trolls' worship. More than many other races, the pious uz are shaped by their faith. This is only to be expected, when it is believed their divine mother actually resides in the mortal world and the son of another uz god rules from the Obsidian Tower. In many respects, troll communities look to their deities as a means of resisting the ever-spreading empires of the God Learner Alliance and the EWF.

In instances where the Games Master wishes to plan out a troll community (which are spread across the length and breadth of Glorantha), the most important factor to consider is which gods and goddesses receive the lion's share of the local worship. This choice is likely to affect family structure, local diet and who the uz are willing to go to war against. The uz dwell in Halikiv, the Blue Moon Plateau, Balazar and Garsting, though not in numbers significant enough to impact the rest of the world in any grand manner. They are generally considered 'troll lands' by virtue of the uz having a denser degree of settlements in the regions, rather than by any valid national claim.

The most important trollish strongholds in the Imperial Age are the realms of Dagori Inkarth and the Shadow Plateau. The former is the mortal residence of the immortal goddess Kyger Litor and the location of both the Castle of Lead and the sprawling Redstone Caverns, which are home to dozens of uz tribes – the largest gathering in the world. The latter, the Shadow Plateau, is the location of the Obsidian Tower, where the son of the god Argan Argar rules over his people by divine mandate.

Dagori Inkarth

North of Prax is the troll kingdom of Dagori Inkarth – a region that has ever and always been in the grip of the uz since they rose from their Wonderhome at the death of Yelm and the onset of the Storm Age. To the west is Dragon Pass, so Dagori Inkarth has seen no shortage of troll refugees in the past few decades, fleeing the Wyrms-talker occupation and driving small armies of trollkin before them with whips and curses.

The landscape here is verdant and lush, with a great variety of trees in huge forests, a number of unique plants (occasionally used for poultices and exotic teas) and animal life all spread across the region.

The Indigo Mountains – named for its flowers and vegetation of the same colour which create a thick, cold violet-ish mist – slice through the centre of the region like a rocky backbone. It is within these great mountains that the Redstone Caverns lay, home to a large population of uz. The chief clan here is the Indigo Tribe, who are in turn supported, rivalled and in some cases loathed by the other clans of the Redstone Caverns and the surrounding wilderness. Civil war between the clans is not unheard of, by any means. Rarely does it spill into the complete destruction of one tribe by another but instances do occur. In some conflicts the defeated trolls are inducted into the winning tribe and their trollkin taken as slaves. In other cases the defeated trolls are crushed and utterly wiped out.

Generally, the Indigo Tribe are strong enough that their presence assures an effective peace. It is only in the darkest reaches of the Redstone Caverns that the other clans war with one another, where the disapproving ruling tribe cannot see what goes on.

Other cavern networks exist beneath the surface of Dagori Inkarth, most of which are populated by lesser clans who do not come close to the thousands of trolls

that make up the Indigo Tribe. An average tribe will number between a few hundred trolls and a couple of thousand trollkin. The Indigo Tribe is supposed to number five or six times that, though details never reach the outside world with any reliability. The ruling tribe is named not because of the region's mist but actually because of their warpaint. With oily extracts taken from the violet, indigo and blue plants from the surface, the warriors and ruling females of the clan paint themselves with purple-ish woad that marks them apart from other uz. While many clans adopt war-paint of their own, the jagged patterns of the Indigo Tribe are acknowledged and feared as a matter of respect.

Males of each Dagori Inkarth tribe are duty-bound to hunt during the night on the surface, seeking out meat and vegetation to bring back for the wellbeing of the community. Some are lifetime hunters and do nothing else; others are warriors with a duty to scavenge what they are able each evening. Most clan warriors are well-trained, and this discipline occasionally travels down to the enlo slaves. In truth, the prideful clans of Dagori Inkarth prefer to use their trollkin as worker slaves and food rather than as warriors. The Indigo Tribe are the notable exception to this rule, though few matriarchs among the other clans ever raise the point of honour against the ruling queen.

As mentioned before, not all is sedate here, even though it could be a calm and prosperous region if the trolls did not behave like...well, *trolls*. The biggest disruption during these latter years of the Second Age is the Chaos caused by the influx of refugee clans spilling east from Dragon Pass. In the past decades hordes of trolls scattered across Dagori Inkarth from the east and claimed land for their surviving members. At first their arrival changed nothing. With the passing of years, however, the dynamic of the land altered significantly.

This situation has led to severe competition between the clans for resources. The only reason an 'incomer versus native' civil war has not broken out is that so few of the incomers wish to risk losing any more of their warriors after the defeat at the hands of the dragonspeakers, and the native clans would often rather shed each others' blood than ally with one another.



troll communities

There is also the matter of Kyger Litor dwelling here. Reports that filter to the outside world paint the goddess as utterly silent on the matter of her children nearing a brutal civil war. This is agonisingly true – the deity the trolls call Uzbirther seems wracked with sorrow but determined to have her creations come to terms with their own problems.

True Rule

Set in the north face of the Indigo Mountains, formed out of dense metal and born from a god's toils, is the Castle of Lead. In truth the structure is almost a city unto itself, though built upwards rather than spread across the land. Here, deep in the black bowels of the catacombs, Kyger Litor dwells in lightless sorrow.

Uzbirther has no contact with the rest of her race with the exception of the Eldest Kin, also known as the Eldest Queens, who serve Kyger Litor as a ruling council for the realm and – if the rumours are true – act as her confidants down there in the black depths of the Castle of Lead. The Eldest Queens are all uzuz trolls, none of which have ever felt the touch of the Hurtplace's air on their skin or seen the light of the resurrected Yelm in the Gloranthan sky.

For all their distance from modern Glorantha, the Eldest Kin are not blind to the workings of the world. This council of elderly Ancients devise grand schemes and movements in the name of their Uzbirther goddess, usually involving the manipulation of the region's tribal matriarchs. The machinations of these Mistress Race trolls are inhuman and nigh-incomprehensible. Each one has risen to the highest ranks of Kyger Litor's cult; each have their tendrils of authority spread incredibly far across the world, with agents hidden in the most surprising places carrying out orders or waiting for commands.

The tribes of Dagori Inkarth answer primarily to their own matriarchs and queens, though every troll (and even the wretched trollkin) observes the overall rule of Kyger Litor, even through her current silence. Adventurers, wanderers, imperial agents and wilderness scouts will likely encounter one or more warriors from the various tribes. Each tend to claim that their clan is the most important or the 'most blessed of Uzbirther,' though that honour actually falls to the First Tribe, who are the blood descendents of the first trolls to dwell within the Castle of Lead when it was newly-constructed by Lodril centuries ago.

The Black Banner Tribe, the People of the Sundered Eye and the Starmetal Eaters are the only tribes that dwell exclusively on the surface. The Black Banner Tribe have a foul habit of skinning their human prey and dyeing the flayed flesh black to use as leathery war banners. They are followers of Zorak Zoran and are almost always hostile to humans that trespass in their lands in the south of Dagori Inkarth, near the loose border with Prax.

The People of the Sundered Eye dwell within the redwood forests in the east of the realm, and are generally open to trade since so many of their ranking males are within the Argan Argar cult. Their symbol is a white eye split down the middle by a red sword, referring to their founding matriarch, Grival Slice-eye who was blinded by Pocharngo the Mutator in the Chaos Wars.

The Starmetal Eaters have a sinister and bizarre attitude towards iron. They see iron as unholy – the spiritual opposite of lead's purity – and cite as evidence the effect it has on many magic-users. To this end, they

believe that if they eat all the iron in the world (or at least their own region to begin with) they will be rewarded in the afterlife by a secret goddess unknown elsewhere on Glorantha, whom they refer to as the Mother of Purity. The God Learners are perplexed as to what they could be referring to and the dragonspeakers regard the Starmetal Eaters' conviction as a sad joke. Both empires avoid crossing paths with the numerous Starmetal Eaters, however, since they are renowned as vicious fighters and, in the case of the God Learners, tend to devour any iron weapons or armour the soldiers are carrying. Since the EWF forces rarely employ iron or any other metal for that matter, they only have to deal with causing offence at territorial violations.

The Opal Seer Caverns

'Outsiders may enter, yes. You bring trade? Weapons or food? Information, maybe? Good. You go on in. If you cause trouble, you die. Just a warning, human. Hey, human, before you go, I tell you this for free: Watch out for Ravager, hey? Ravager is hungry. Had no flesh in three days now. Go careful.'

— Voday the Black Spear, uzko guard of the Severed Claw clan

One such place where the tensions of Dagori Inkarth are reaching a critical juncture is the Opal Seer Caverns, set in the foothills of the western hills not far from Skyfall Lake. This location is detailed below for Games Masters and players to explore, learn more of the local culture and perhaps even set stories in the hopes of quelling or fuelling the flames of war.

The general geography of the caverns follows a downward spiral that is popular among the uz of the Dagori Inkarth region. Where natural caverns may once have existed in a random pattern, due to the efforts of trollkin and great troll slaves and the guidance of tribal leaders, the rough layout of the Opal Seer Caverns has become a spiral that bores deeper into the earth. Most of the uz have their own passages to the Hurtplace, kept a secret from the other tribes, or post dutiful guards at the openings if their passageways are known to the other clans. In times of war, when one level battles against

another, the personal tunnels can become vicious battlegrounds where enemy warriors seek to enter their foes' passageways.

The first thing to note about the spiral design is that even though it is only a vague layout, it is supremely unpractical from a human standpoint. The clans on the top must walk through the territories of the tribes on lower levels to reach the communal areas such as the marketplace or the largest caverns where much of the community's food is stored. This is intentional, though arranged for reasons few human minds will appreciate.

The higher a tribe is placed in the Opal Seer Caverns, the less power it holds both socially and militarily. This is why the Severed Claw tribe are found on the first level and the Opal Seer clan on the lowest habited tier, deep under the ground, furthest from the sun and closest to all the caverns of fungal food.

The First Level

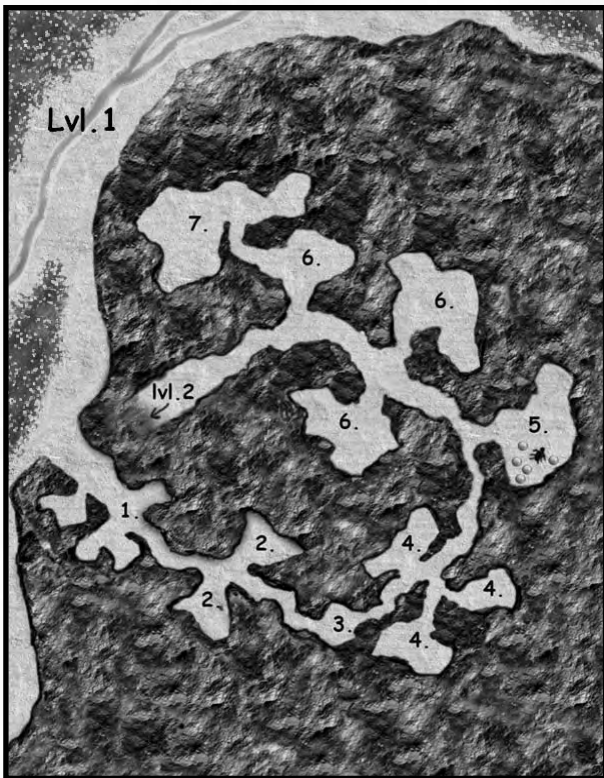
1. The First Caves: this tunnel is the main entrance that leads from the Hurtplace down into the first level of caverns. It is a wide tunnel that extends into the earth from a large cave opening. Troll warriors from various tribes usually guard the tunnel or lurk outside in the wilderness, setting sentries to watch the opening.

2. Sentry Caves: At the beginning of the spiral, the first caverns leading away from the main path are reserved for warriors on sentry duty. Male uz from each clan spend several days a month here, forming part of a force of mixed-tribe guardians. The rooms are sparsely furnished, since much of the time the warriors only gather here to play dice games or have contests of strength to pass the time. They still tend to sleep in their own caverns below.

3. Ravager's Cell: Here the great troll known as Ravager is kept chained by enchanted lead bindings. The creature is as stupid as most uzdo but is also crazed beyond reason. In three instances within the past decade, he has also shown himself to be cannibalistic by eating three uzko he murdered. He belongs to the Open Eyes tribe further down the spiral, though he is always kept here, chained to the wall of a small cavern, in case the Opal Seer Caverns are ever invaded by other races.

Ravager is fed on leftover fungus and, more frequently, any unfortunate trollkin that have disobeyed orders one too many times. The howling and feral grunting of the great troll reaches down the first three levels of the spiral, and the sounds are a constant fearful reminder of potential fate for the enlo who steps out of line.

4. Severed Claw Trollkin Area: The pathway begins to dip down here, leading down into the first caverns of the Severed Claw tribe. These initial cavern rooms are for the tribe's trollkin slaves to gather and sleep. They are uniformly filthy and never cleaned-out, with waste all over the stone floor and little furniture to speak of. The dirtiness is actually necessary, since the Severed Claw matriarch never feeds her slaves. The rats and insects drawn to this area by all the waste serve as the only meals the tribe's trollkin ever eat, unless they are desperate enough to eat each other.



Several times in the past, Severed Claw trollkin have attempted to flee their hideous living conditions. Those who take flight to the Hurtplace are generally killed by uzko slingers on guard duty. The enlo that flee deeper into the cave system are either eaten by other tribes or ransomed back to the Severed Claw.

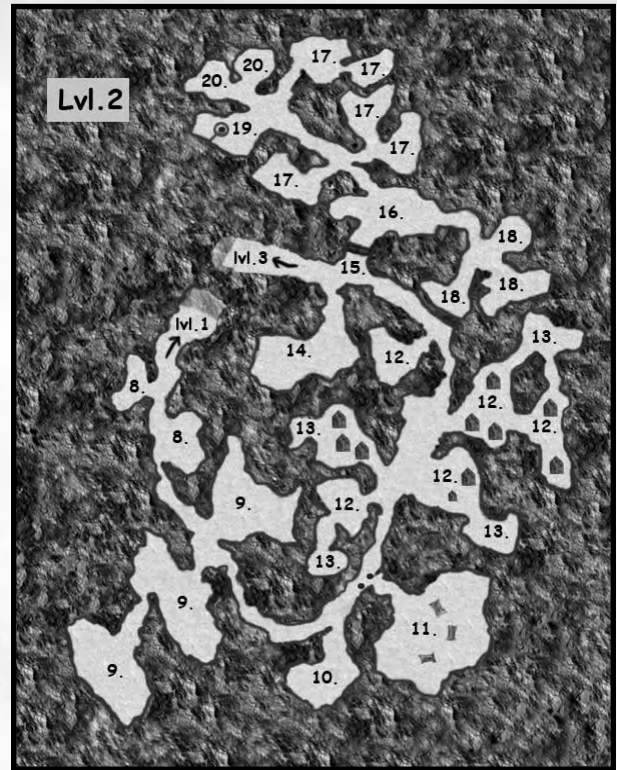
5. Gorakiki Ritual Chamber: This cavern is guarded at all times by members of the Gorakiki cult, drawn from all tribes. It is one of the largest chambers within the first level, providing a place of worship for the cult of Gorakiki among the tribes of the first few tiers in the spiral. Since the cavern is in Severed Claw territory, the tribe's matriarch is offered a tribute of insect food for her clan, taken from the insects, grubs, eggs and spawn that breed and grow in the huge chamber, once a month.

6. Severed Claw Dwelling Areas: These three chambers are the communal caves of the three dozen or so Severed Claw uz. The central chamber is used for meat storage and is where the fruits of the hunters' toils are kept.

7. Matriarch's Chamber: This is the chamber of the Severed Claw matriarch, the uzko Yaragah Slave-Killer, who has a reputation for cruelty in all matters and earned her name through obvious brutalities against her clan's enlo. Yaragah's chambers are spartan as befits the leader of the poorest and humblest clan in the Opal Seer Caverns. A battle banner, once used by an ancestral warrior in the Gbaji Wars, is now a food-stained, bloodstained rug for her stone and wood throne. These chambers are also used as a place for her tribe's rituals, as she is a high-ranking member of the Kyger Litor cult.

The Second Level

Down the spiral onto the second level, a traveller comes into the caverns of the Bloodied Spear tribe – a small but militant group that are best known for their warriors' rigid training. The Bloodied Spear are led by an uzko matriarch known by her deed name of Kraal Maiden-of-War. She is often found in the lower levels interacting with the matriarchs of more powerful clans who hire Bloodied Spear hunters as mercenaries for scouting or additional food gathering.



The Bloodied Spear tribe are low on the social hierarchy but are rich in lead coins and trollkin slaves, both of which they take as payment for the loan of their warriors. The fact that they are mercenaries fighting for other clans rather than their families means the warriors of the tribe are feared but actually end up giving their own tribe a bad name as money-grubbers.

Trollish elitism means the Bloodied Spear clan will stay high up in the spiral unless they can buy their way to prestige with their stockpiles of wealth. Currently, the matriarch is content to use her warriors as freelance blades in the growing tensions, knowing that if the food in the Opal Seer Caverns begins to run out, she will have the resources to purchase what little remains – or enough slaves to eat to survive the hardest times.

8. Guard Chambers: In these first two chambers, Bloodied Spear guards watch the highest tunnels for any sign of Severed Claw treachery. On several occasions, Severed Claw trolls have sought to steal Bloodied Spear trollkin. Any such attempts result in pitched battles where the fearsome Bloodied Spear warriors always emerge triumphant.

Rather ingeniously (for trolls) the standard ‘warning bellow’ in case of a raid has been replaced by a heavy bronze bell, which is rung in cases of emergency and guaranteed to wake every living being on the first five levels. This bell was a gift from the dragonspeaker ally Delecti the Inquirer, who travelled for several years across Glorantha with the matriarch’s son, Gravlak Dragonfriend. When offered payment, Gravlak asked for a great bell of bronze to rouse all within his clan territory when under attack.

9. The Slave Chambers: The slave area belonging to the Bloodied Spear tribe is extensive, with modest bedrolls and a washing pool available for the trollkin kept here. Trolls are not human, so from a human perception it is difficult to see how these creatures could possibly consider anything here to be being ‘well-treated’ – especially given that their main source of food is the dung of the clan’s uzko – but the Bloodied Spear enlo are generally happier than many other clans’ slaves. Due to the amount of space they have and their sheer numbers they have formed their own community.

They consider warrior prowess of absolute importance and a matter of honour. The Bloodied Spear’s slaves use the largest of their five chambers for weapons practice, since they are also among the best-trained trollkin in the Opal Seer Caverns.

10. Forge of Langred Roaring-Hammer: Perhaps the most unique aspect of the Bloodied Spear territory is the presence of an experienced metalworker, the uzko Langred Roaring Hammer. Langred generally works with lead, making armour and weapons for the warriors of his clan and religious icons for the matriarchs of other clans in and outside the Opal Seer Caverns. These latter items are goodwill gifts from the Bloodied Spear matriarch seeking to buy favour or gifts made for friends.

Langred works for food, lead bolgs, outsider coins – practically anything. He has a small forge set up in his chambers and rolls a boulder over the front entrance to his antechamber when it is in use. This forge has a chimney that reaches the surface, though climbing it is impossible for anything larger than a small cat.

11. Ritual Chamber: This is the chamber in which Bloodied Spear holy services are conducted. The entrance is flanked by two troll-size lead statues of Kyger Litor. Lain across the floor of the chamber are thick rugs of cured bear and tiger fur. These are kept for comfort, not appearance, since little light penetrates this far into the spiral.

12. Bloodied Spear Dwelling Area: These six communal chambers house the stone shelters used by the Bloodied Spear uzko and their most important value slaves. One of the stone houses – by far the smallest – is the home of the trollkin value slave Jezmek the Thinker. This enlo is considered the most intelligent trollkin any of the clan has ever seen, and the little creature is called in for counsel on many matters. He is considered the tribe’s property, not his mother’s.

13. Storage Chambers: These chambers, connected to the dwelling areas rather than the main concourse, are where the tribe’s meat and scavenged resources from the surface world are kept. Food occasionally goes missing from the stores here, though to date no magic or sentry has got to the bottom of the mystery.

14. The Stupid Traders’ Chamber: This cavern is the traditional place for outsider (non-troll) traders to bring their wares. The name stuck when the traders were offering their best wares to the trolls of the highest tiers rather than to the powerful, influential and wealthy clans in the depths.

The Opal Seer Caverns still sees some trade, usually from unaligned Genertelan merchants seeking a side-profit or weapon-runners and ore-traders. However, after a trader’s first visit to the Opal Seer Caverns, he usually discovers he has sold his entire stock to the least wealthy members of the settlement and the ones least likely to be able to buy from him again when he makes a return trip. Most traders venture down into the depths of the spiral and trade with the important clans after their initial mistake.

The Stupid Traders’ Chamber is set directly between Bloodied Spear tunnels and the territory of the next tribe on the same level – the Baleful Howl clan.

15. Gate of the Baleful Howl: Unlike the other clans in the spiral, the territories of the Baleful Howl are not set along either side of a concourse that spirals down, but are a series of smaller chambers that are only accessible by one route.

The gate is ugly by any species' reckoning – a towering set of double doors inscribed with the names and crude etchings of each matriarch to live within the past several hundred years. The gates are guarded at all times by several Baleful Howl warriors, most of whom have battle experience. The clan matriarch is careful about appointing inexperienced fighters to such important posts.

16. The Welcome Chamber: This open chamber is a place for formal tribe gatherings, rituals, weapons training and welcoming representatives from other clans (or from the surface) on important matters. Torches are left unlit in wall sconces, to be lit only if a respected visitor lacks Darksense.

This chamber sees a lot of use because of its communal nature. Yet it is largely silent, for the male dark trolls (and all trollkin) are forbidden to speak in the area upon pain of death. The matriarch is an obsessive devotee to Kyger Litor and believes that males should never speak in clan business. Hence, in the cavern where the majority of the tribe's important business is discussed and dealings with outsiders are held, no male of the clan may utter a word.

17. The Communal Dwelling Area: These caverns mirror the living quarters of other clans' holdings. Obviously, males are allowed to speak here. The smallest cavern is the armoury, which also features a winding and twisting route up to the surface world.

18. Trollkin Chambers: The trollkin of the Baleful Howl tribe are kept in forced silence for most of their lives. Most are kept as food slaves, work slaves or values serving males of the clan, with few trained for war. No enlo is ever allowed to speak to a female uzko, lest he be consumed immediately.

In these chambers, the trollkin are allowed to whisper amongst themselves in the dark. Theirs is a grim and joyless existence even by the standards of enlo slaves.

19. The Shrine to Uzbirther: This relatively small chamber is largely taken up by the 20-foot tall stone statue of Kyger Litor and is where the clan females come to pray. Males are expected to worship in their own ways and are barred from worshipping here.

The statue itself depicts Uzbirther as an almost demonic figure: a towering, hateful trollish entity that rages down at her children for all their failings. During religious penance rites, the wails of the priestesses sound throughout the tunnels. This dark adherence to their perverted faith is the reason the clan gained their name in centuries past. The advantage to such twisted piety is that many Baleful Howl warriors and priestesses become experienced HeroQuesters in the hopes of finding a cure for the Curse of Kin.

20. Storage Chambers: The meat of the hunters' efforts is brought here to be kept on hooks and stone slabs.

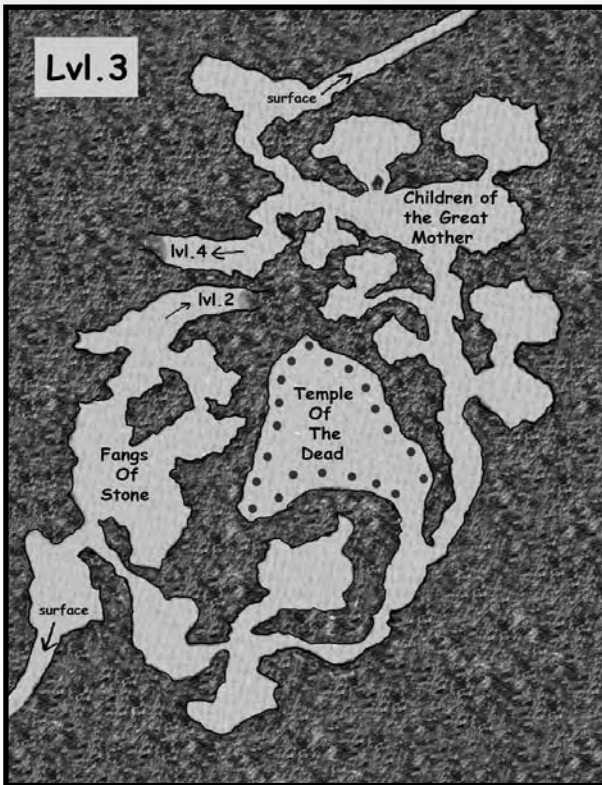
The Third level

Down on the third level, the clans are larger and more prosperous than their first- and second-level cousins. The spiral widens to allow for greater traffic and larger communal areas on the main spiralling concourse. The Fangs of Stone tribe and the Children of the Great Mother are found here.

The former are named for their founding matriarch, the great uzuz Chaos Wars hero -Jaagh Mountain-Eater. It is said that the Chaos gods feared her so much that they imprisoned her inside the bowels of a mountain and she had to eat her way through miles of solid rock in order to escape.

The latter tribe is named for the views of its successive queens. Each ruler of the Children of the Great Mother insists that her tribe members are related by blood to both Kyger Litor and Zorak Zoran, with tribal legends claiming Uzbirther mated with the troll God of War and the offspring was a spirit in uzuz form called Rigaash Pureblood. This uzuz, apparently born after the troll race could no longer produce Ancient uz, founded her clan and spread her divine lineage through her faithful converts.

The spread of these clan territories is vast indeed, with both taking up the majority of the spiral's third tier, which in turn is significantly greater in span than



those above, twice again the total area of the second tier. Much of the clan holdings here mirror those of the tribes above.

21. The Temple of the Dead: In a huge chamber that itself actually reaches further into the depths of the earth, the uz have a communal ritual hall filled with statues, minor magical items used for summoning and binding ghosts and spirits, possessions of honoured ancestors and family heirlooms. This is the Temple of the Dead, where most of the Opal Seer Caverns' ancestor worship occurs. It is situated between the territories of the Children of the Great Mother and the Fangs of Stone clan. The spiralling concourse tunnel outside is wide enough that travellers can safely bypass both territories without offending either tribe's guards on patrol.

The chamber's entrance is distinctive. Across the floor are hundreds of minor keepsakes and heirlooms – nothing of any value except sentimental, cast here by relatives of the fallen as a way of asking the dead

for good luck. Theft of any of the items found here is punishable by the offender having his hands removed and being cast out to die in the Hurtplace. In reality, opportunistic thieves can attempt to bribe the guards here, who are drawn randomly from several tribes at once, but bribes cost more than most of the trinkets are worth and few guards are willing to risk the certain death that awaits them should they be caught taking bribes.

Inside the grand arch of a doorway, the traveller enters one of the largest halls in the Opal Seer Caverns. Statues of trolls, crudely carved from stone (or in some rare cases, lead) line the walls and fill the floor space like some kind of grim, silent army. The army of statues reaches back into the pitch darkness seemingly without end, and there always seems room for another several dozen.

When any uzko or uzuz member of the Opal Seer clans dies, his tribe-mates construct an effigy in his honour, which will vary in quality depending on the crafters' skills, the material used and the expense of the piece. Generally, the most loved or respected members of a tribe have death-statues of a higher craftsmanship made in their memories. These statues are then placed at the rear of this great chamber, with the dead of all the clans standing in a silent and near-endless army.

Shamans come here to perform their spirit worship and other uz come simply to pray. It is a cold, discomforting room – especially for non-trolls. At some point every year, uz shamans – and any other shamans for that matter – within the Opal Seer Caverns will begin to have hideous nightmares of all the evil, sinful things they have done in their lives. These nightmares last exactly three nights, and every single shaman has them. Word spreads through the tribes with great speed at this annual occurrence. On the third night of these crippling nightmares, the Temple of the Dead is sealed with great boulders that are rolled into place by the gathered shamans, who then disperse to the Hurtplace until dawn. No uz has ever violated the boulder-seal of the temple during this evening – called Thirdnight by the Opal Seer clans. However, all uz on the second, third and fourth tiers can hear great laughter and hellish shrieks from within the chamber, echoing eerily through the dense rocks.

The Fourth Level



After the mystical eeriness of the third level, the fourth tier returns to more traditional clan holdings, unbroken by great temple-caves. The spiral is now so wide that the four clans here share the tier with an extensive cave network that reaches away from the tribal territories, and is guarded at all times by warrior-priests of Gorakiki.

Three of the four tribes that dwell here make up the Council of the Deep, the ruling body of the Opal Seer Caverns. Each of these tribes can muster hundreds of warriors, though three-quarters of these will be enlo. Each also claims many high-ranking cult members among their number and shrines within their clan grounds. Temples to Kyger Litor are among the shrines kept private from other clans.

22. Clan Grounds of the Storm-Roarers Tribe: These follow the conventional spread of caverns, though on an increasingly grander scale. The Storm Roarers are led by a male uzko, not a female matriarch, who is known only by his deed name – Vomiter-of-Storms, which derives from an apparent use of Uroxi Divine Magic to

physically vomit a thunderstorm into the skies above a battle in the Gbaji Wars. Vomiter-of-Storms believes his advanced age (yet youthful vigour) is the result of near-immortality gained from drinking the blood of Pochango the Mutator when the Chaos god exploded into divine mush. He also claims to enjoy favour from the Storm Bull, and is a Runelord in the Urox cult. He is barred from the Council of the Deep because of his gender and his religion.

Warriors of the Storm-Roarers tribe each wear vambraces of lead with the lightning bolt symbol of their chieftain. They are among the most proud and demanding warriors in the Opal Seer Caverns, and many leave the caves in order to spread their tribe's renown across Glorantha.

23. Clan Grounds of the Opal Seer Tribe: The tribe that founded the caverns are here on the fourth tier and are among the most powerful of the native clans. Their first uzko matriarch, Harak Juugruth, still lives and rules over the tribe, though she is rumoured to be too ancient to move at all. It is for her that the clan (and the settlement) were named, for she possesses magical orbs made from opals set into her eye sockets, replacing the eyes she lost to the aldryami in the God's War. Consequently, her tribe loathe most elves and have a habit of slaying them on sight.

The tribe's sub-leader, the uzko Kalav Juugruth – the Opal Seer's daughter – rules in her mother's stead on the Council of the Deep.

24. Clan Grounds of the Banesky Tribe: The Baneskies are devoted Gorakiki worshippers, many of whom make daily pilgrimages to the temple on the first tier for their rituals, while others spend their time in the legion of 'bug pits' in the Banesky tribal territories. In these bug pits, uzko warriors and enlo slaves alike rear and train giant insect steeds for riding on the surface world. In the centre of the clan holdings, a great chimney opens up hundreds of metres above into the Hurtplace, and it is through this wide, earth chute that the insect-riders take to the sky. The Baneskies are, for all intents and purposes, the air power of the Opal Seer Caverns' army. The cavernous entrance to their holdings from the surface is guarded by a host of enlo insect-riders that patrol the region at all times of day and night.

This effective air force also means the hunters of the Banesky tribe bring back exceptional catches, often flown back from regions of Dagori Inkarth too distant for warriors and hunters from other tribes to reach on foot. The Banesky are not generous with their hunting bounties – they charge extortionate rates of lead and slaves for bringing back exotic meats and plants, which they sell at the Great Market.

The last matriarch of the Banesky clan was slain in battle with a surface tribe of trolls seven years ago. The tribe is currently leaderless, unrepresented on the Council of the Deep, and is in danger of being moved to the third tier and replaced by the Fangs of Stone. Several priestesses of Gorakiki are feuding over the throne of the tribe, with the clan divided along lines of loyalty to each of the candidates.

25. Clan Grounds of the Lead Lords Tribe: The clan calling itself the Lead Lords have been misnamed for centuries. Once their warriors were clad in great suits of lead armour and fought battles in the Chaos Wars, now the clan's wealth and power lies in the vast fungal chambers within their territories. The fungus and underworld fruits grown in these vast subterranean vaults are plentiful enough to feed the huge tribe with surplus sold in the Great Market.

The matriarch of the Lead Lords is a young dark troll called Valla Blacktusk, named for her rotting tusks which no magic is able to heal. She is in constant pain from the decay and this leads her to be waspish and bitter, though she always manages to keep her clan's interests in mind during negotiations.

26. The Great Market: This is the vast trading chamber used by the uz and the outsiders that bring their wares to the Opal Seer Caverns. Its depth within the earth unnerves most non-troll traders, which is exactly the effect the uz like to have on their merchant guests, enjoying the fact the outsiders seek to make a profit quickly and return to the surface as soon as possible.

On any given day, the Great Market is bustling with hundreds of trolls and several outsider traders. Enlo slaves race here and there to gather purchases for their masters, warriors come looking for armour and weapons to trade for and trolls seek fungus, insect flesh and surface animal meat for food.

27. Temple of Zorak Zoran: This huge chamber dedicated to the warrior-god Zorak Zoran is part-temple, part-training ground. Hordes of uzko fight here, ostensibly in training but with very real and savage injuries frequently inflicted, especially since the warriors of rival tribes often use their training fights to wound one another as seriously they can.

Statues of Zorak Zoran, some made from stone and others from lead, stare down into the pitch-dark chamber. Most are between five and fifteen-metres tall and depict the War God in various battle poses with a feral, vicious expression on his features. The ringing clash of weapons and the howls of rage and pain that echo through the fourth circle originate from here.

This is also the place where the priests of Zorak Zoran perform their rituals, which have often in the past taken the form of bloodsports between uz warriors or sacrificial enlo slaves.

28. Shrine of Xiola Umbar: Xiola Umbar is not a popular god in the Opal Seer Caverns, though her faith does see occasional resurgences depending on the shifting faiths of members of the more powerful clans. Worship of her is usually undertaken by lesser clan members, served by their trollkin slaves. Her shrine is modest, with the sizeable chamber often being left bare and the ramshackle 'clergy' assembling their cult's trappings and furniture each time they arrive for their sporadic rituals.

The Fifth Level

The very deepest pits of the Opal Seer Caverns are barred to the enlo. The concourse down to this lowest tier is guarded by the elite warriors of the four fourth-tier clans. However, the Storm-Roarer tribe offers no warriors to stand sentry here, since the Vomiter-of-Storms is denied a place on the Council of the Deep.

30. Pit-Temple of Subere: This chamber is kept absolutely dark, hence its location in the bowels of the cave network. There are seventeen statues of Subere spread across the chamber, each revealed to be a masterwork but only detectable by touch.

31. Chamber of the Deep Council: This chamber, connected through lightless secret passages to the matriarch chambers of the fourth-level clans, is the meeting place of the Council of the Deep. Here the most important matriarchs of the tribes gather to discuss matters of security and religious observance for the trolls of the Opal Seer Caverns.

32. The Heartbeat Room: In the deepest recesses of the Opal Seer Caverns, a great chamber is filled with drums of all shapes and sizes. Chimneys and air-tunnels weave throughout the cave system from this 'heart' of the cavern network, for it is here that the trolls gather for their greatest rituals and celebrations, deep in the darkness, and beat their drums to a primitive, inhuman rhythm.

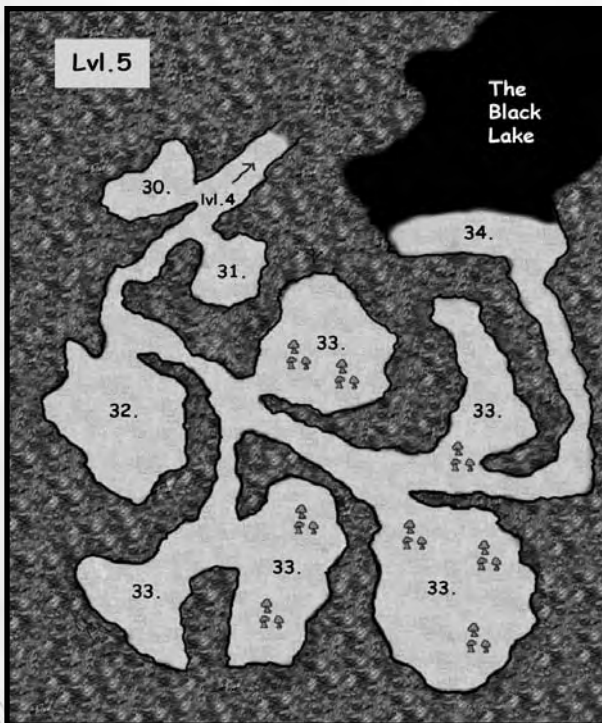
On several occasions in the past, when a mass of allied surface clans sought to steal the desirable Opal Seer Caverns for themselves, the elderly and youngest uz are sent down into the Heartbeat Room. While they are protected from the battles that rage through the tunnels above they pound on the drums and fill the defenders with confidence at the heartbeat of their home, while at the same time intimidating the attackers.



33. The Fungus Caverns: Here are more caverns for the growing and harvesting of fungus. These vast caverns are worked by uzko who either have free time or no other work to attend to.

34. The Black Lake: This colossal underground lake whirls and sloshes with eerie tides, as if the water is being churned by huge beasts below the impenetrable black waters. Darksense reveals naught but vast living 'shapes' roiling around in the depths here, though no uz has yet discovered what these beings are, nor have any swimmers or boaters returned from setting out into the water.

The water of the Black Lake is always hot to the touch, so hot that it nears boiling at times. Those who have tasted it say it tastes salty, though with the salt-taste of sweat, not seawater.



The Shadow Plateau

Within the Genertelan land called Kethaela is the strongest bastion of uz territory remaining on Glorantha. This is the Shadow Plateau – a region where the bulk of the world's uz gather and seek to recover their strength in the sight of their demigod, Ezkanekko Only-Old-One, the son of the troll god Argan Argar.

In the Shadow Plateau is the Obsidian Tower, a great structure of Sorcery and black glass. It is from this dark spire that the Only Old One rules in defiance of the invading God Learners that were recently repelled and the Dragonlords that demand a great tribute and receive only a token pittance.

All is not defiance and strength, however. Historically, all of Kethaela and more of Genertela beside were considered the domain of Ezkankekko. Now the demigod's territory stretches to the lands around the Obsidian Tower, the Shadowlands and little else. Like much of troll glory, the Shadow Plateau is a dark echo of former greatness.

Ezkankekko is a cunning ruler. Some say that his humbling in the presence of the dragonspeakers has crushed the fight from him but those with the sight to see the truth witness the demigod's machinations within the façade of subservience. Firstly, the tribute demanded by the Empire of Wyrms' Friends is never met, with a volley of thin excuses and lying promises deflecting retribution just as solidly as the Obsidian Tower's sizeable uzko, uzdo and enlo army. Secondly, the Only Old One is working to pit the EWF against the God Learners without suffering losses among his own warriors. Ezkankekko has his dark trolls aid the EWF only when they absolutely must in battles between the empires, preferring to rely instead on regiments of trained trollkin to reinforce the dragonspeakers.

The main bulk of the Shadow Plateau is taken up by the expansive plains which are home to the enlo hordes that make up a significant majority of the region's population. They are organised into their own clans, though many are subservient to their parents' bloodlines and obey the overall rule of Ezkankekko Only-Old-One.

The plateau itself is a raised platform of land many dozens of miles in each direction from the great spire. Curiously, the soil of much of the Shadow Plateau is actually charcoal-black and lukewarm to the touch, like the ashes of a fire that has been dead for a few minutes. Investigation as to whether this is a natural occurrence or an after-effect of the Chaos Wars have turned up

many stories that each offer a conflicting tale – usually involving the baleful influence of some Chaos deity or the death of a troll hero colouring the land forever after as if Glorantha Herself seethed with pain at the loss.

The enlo have the run of the surface, though many tunnel mouths and cave openings exist in the landscape. The dark trolls occasionally emerge from these openings to scavenge from the trees and plants that grow in the fertile soil or to make war upon nearby humans. The hunting on the Shadow Plateau is particularly good, troll hunters drag a massive amount of dead fauna back underground with them each time they come up for food.

Culture

In the Hurtplace, most enlo communities are villages ruled by rare trollkin elders or uz overseers from the tunnels underneath the plateau's dark soil skin. None of the trollkin are truly *free* in the sense understood by non-troll races or in the sense the enlo believe themselves to be free. For example, they never leave the boundaries set upon them by their masters, even though the dark trolls dwell far underground. Individual troublemakers crop up as regularly as in any enlo gatherings but overall, the surface communities are stable.

This is because the trollkin of the surface are considered by the subterranean uzko to be the 'excess' and do not want them clogging up the tunnels. There are already enough slaves under the earth with the uzko and the surface enlo are largely ignored. These surface trollkin are trained into loose regiments for sale as mercenaries or left alone until they are 'needed,' at which point their dirty little villages are raided and the residents are either bundled into food sacks and bashed against the rocks or handed spears and told which direction to walk and what enemy to hurl themselves at.

Slavemasters lurking on the surface ensure that no communities ever get too out of line. Infiltrators – trained 'value' slaves from the uzko tunnels – also work within these surface tribes in order to stem any tides of revolt. The stories of what happened to the 'last tribe that tried to beat their oppressors'

always makes for scary retelling, and is often no word of a lie. The uz have been known to scatter the bones of an entire village worth of trollkin outside the doors of other enlo hamlets that are rumoured to be considering an uprising.

Camp of the Crooked Spear

This typical surface settlement is located three-dozen leagues from the Obsidian Tower and only three miles from the underground troll settlement called Blackhome. Blackhome's three clans 'own' the trollkin of the Camp of the Crooked Spear, though most of the trollkin here are not aware of it. Enlo Player Characters from this settlement are considered freeborn, for example.

The three clans of Blackhome appoint watchers and spies among the trollkin here, in order that the enlo do not ally with the forces of the God Learners or the dragonspeakers. On several occasions, the Justelans have sent in 'ambassadors' with an aim of learning more about uz theology from these ill-informed enlo. Not wishing to risk even a fraction of truth escaping to these inquisitors, the uz and their trollkin value slaves within the settlement bring all human visitors to a swift end if they appear to be asking the wrong questions. Considering its position in the northeast of the Shadowlands, not far from the Lead Hills, the camp of the Crooked Spear sees an occasional trickle of travellers passing through the strange-soiled region. Most of the trollkin are outwardly friendly to members of other races, though there is always an element of wariness and fear lurking behind their smiles.

1. King's Hill: This large mount is approximately 30 metres in height and riddled with tunnels, each no bigger than one and a half metres tall. The tunnels connect to various small earthen chambers that are decorated with animal fur rugs and primitive paintings and the entire structure is the home of King Saravam the Blade-God, the trollkin 'ruler' of the Camp of the Crooked Spear.

Saravam's prowess with a sword is the stuff of legends for the trollkin of the settlement. Dubbed 'Blade-God' out of a fearful and utterly impressed populace, he is unmatched in skill by any other enlo of the village, and he is tested often since trial-by-battle is how the creatures here determine their new leader. Subjects of Saravam actually believe their king has real power in Glorantha and will achieve great things.

In actuality, Saravam is thoroughly manipulated by his two councillors, the enlo Zabel Longtalker and the uzko priest of Xiola Umbar, Irag Greatbite. Both of these advisors are from Blackhome and are the true rulers of the Camp of the Crooked Spear. However, to the nine hundred enlo gathered here, these two are simply valued advisers to the great king. Even the dark troll Irag is considered to be an unthreatening member of the community.

Saravam himself is content with this arrangement, for he possesses a viciously fast intellect that is fuelled by cunning and a powerful fear of death. This makes



Saravam see the benefits of his false rule and helps him appreciate the fact he gets to stay alive on account of his obedience. No matter what they say about him back in Blackhome, he relishes his position and lords it over the enlo of his community.

Saravam greets visitors to the community by having his stewards usher strangers into his presence. If the Blade-God is feeling particularly magnanimous (or he has a large audience of his own people) he will challenge the outsider to a sporting duel, purely to prove his prowess. However, each attempted duel will be interrupted before it begins by either Irag or Zabel begging for their master's attention. The trick here is that none of the trollkin of the Camp of the Crooked Spear have ever seen Saravam fight.

The legend of the Blade-God is founded on a lie. This lie, created by Zabel Longtalker and Irag Greatbite, took off like wildfire through the community because of well-placed 'refugees' who were actually enlo values from Blackhome telling of the incredible deeds they had seen this 'god of swords' perform against the dragonspeakers, the God Learners and any other race, nation or people the heralds could think of. After several months of rumour-mongering, Saravam arrived to a great celebration hastily thrown up in his honour. The



reality of the matter is that he was a Blackhome worker slave of middling intelligence, used by the uz there as a figurehead ruler for this settlement. Confused and still not entirely aware what was going on, he walked into ownership of the humblest 'kingdom' in Glorantha.

2. The Feast Hall: This is the largest building in the Crooked Spear Camp, serving as a communal hall for revelry, feasting and other celebrations. The Feast Hall is large enough to hold 300 enlo (and other guests) at any one time. A large but humbly equipped kitchen area is manned by cooks who work to make food for the residents of the small village. The rule of communal sharing and living holds fast throughout much of the community usually because Saravam (or his puppetmasters) decide on it. Hunters and scavengers bring back food for their families first, but hand over any excess kills to the Feast Hall cooks to provide meals for the rest of the settlement.

Rather disgustingly, the Camp of the Crooked Spear has an arrangement to 'muck out' the caves of Blackhome in periods of famine. Each day during such times, teams of trollkin from the camp head overland to Blackhome and cart back piles of troll dung to feed the enlo community. During such times, no visitors from other races will choose to dine in the Feast Hall if they can help it.

3. The Hive of Gorakiki: This towering edifice is exactly as it sounds – a large hive of sorts, made of dried mud and emitting the muffled din of hundreds of giant insects all day and night. It makes sleeping in the Camp of the Crooked Spear a difficult task, though the trollkin get used to it readily enough.

The Hive is part stable and part temple. The enlo beastmasters keep their mounts fed on tiered levels carved into the mud, but generally the insects have a free run of things and use the hive tower as their haven from ill weather. Dotted around the inside of the structure are several shrines to many of the 'aspects' of Gorakiki. Games Masters should not feel restricted in putting any specific insect shrine here if they feel it is appropriate, because it assuredly is.

The enlo ride these insects into battle when they must, and occasionally hunt with them as steeds. The big bugs are rarely eaten, however. The Hive of

Gorakiki is overseen by Baral Forktongue, an enlo in the middle ranks of the Gorakiki wasp-cult and a renowned liar when telling of the 'heroic' deeds in his 'adventuring past.'

4. The Temple of Uzbirther: This simple building resembles a large hut and is the only building in the settlement that is constructed of stone. Scrawls honouring Kyger Litor and giving (often incorrect) explanations of her deeds in the God's War are etched into the stone walls both inside and outside the temple. Within the hut, which is large enough for 50 worshippers at a time, a large lead statue of Kyger Litor stands by a wooden altar gazing down benevolently. It is tended by low-ranking enlo in the Kyger Litor cult, all of whom are value agents from the uz of Blackhome.

5. The Gladiatorial Pit: Saravam is a cruel little bastard at heart. He delights in sending his hunters out into the wilderness in teams in order to capture fierce specimens from the local wildlife. These are then brought back to the camp, starved for days in lead-reinforced wicker cages and unleashed against each other in this large, walled, dug-out pit in the centre of the settlement. There are only a few seats above the action – for Saravam and several guests – though there is standing room for up to 100 others around the low wall.

The pit itself, a bowl of loose soil about 50 metres in diameter, is a 3-metre drop from the top of the wall. Occasionally animals like tigers or bears that are not completely weakened from starvation manage to batter down the wooden walls or even leap over them. Hunters armed with poison-tipped arrows wait nearby for just such an occurrence. Animals killed in the pit are usually scrawny and rangy but will provide a meal for some trollkin at the Feast Hall.

6. Home of the Outsiders: This cabin on the edge of the settlement contains enough room for 20 bedrolls laid out on the floor, each in various states ranging from 'a little dirty' to 'crawling with filthy vermin.' This is where the trollkin offer to put up travellers that enter the Camp of the Crooked Spear. When occupied, the cabin is guarded as a sign of warm regard and hospitality by Saravam by two trollkin selected at random from the settlement's hunters. These enlo also serve as guides

to the village, making the position a well-desired one since travellers often pay for the services of the guides. The trollkin here are as desperate for coin as any among their race.

7. The Crooked Spears: This loose palisade of spears appears to be a ring of crooked, awkward teeth thrusting out of the ground in a rough ring around the settlement. The butts of spears of various lengths are driven into the ground with their tips pointing upwards, towards the sky. Occasionally the heads of enemies are placed on the hundreds of spears that mark the camp's boundaries, though often they are left crooked where they stand, serving no tactical use at all and simply drawing the eye of any observer.

8. Bloodfire's House: This is the tumbledown wood and mud house of Gerd Bloodfire, the master brewer of the settlement. He prefers his title to be Gerd Beerlord – a title that most enlo will use, at least to his face. Behind his back, he is named after his drink: Bloodfire. The drink itself is brewed from the blood of the animals killed in the gladiatorial pit. During the brewing process, which no enlo has yet seen but which is alarmingly loud judging from the noises in Gerd's home, something is done to the blood to make it alcoholic and fizzy. It is served after being boiled over a fire and tastes absolutely disgusting to anyone without a trollish (or trollkin) palate. It tastes exactly as if an inhuman little creature has added alcohol to animal blood and then taken a piss in it. As it happens, this is not a million miles away from Gerd's recipe.

Bloodfire takes two days to 'brew' and is given out freely with the meals in the Feast Hall. The only two souls within the settlement that do not drink Bloodfire (not counting travellers with a modicum of sense) are Irag and Zabel. Saravam is quite the addict, and secretly supplies Gerd with a continuous supply of animal, human and even trollkin blood in order to keep a constant supply at his private table. He accomplishes this by tasking his most trusted hunters to act as sometime assassins.

9. Irag's Home: This is the dwelling of Irag Greatbite, one of Saravam's puppetmasters. The only three key differences between this rudely-constructed cabin and

the others are that it is built taller to accommodate the resident's height, it has a door of lead-reinforced wood that can be bolted securely and is nigh-impossible to break down and it contains a trapdoor under a bearskin rug that leads into a tunnel back to Blackhome.

10. The Sentry Tower: In a surprising moment of intelligence, Saravam ordered the construction of this tower at the northern end of the village. It is almost 15 metres high, making it a daunting climb for anyone with a fear of heights. A small platform was erected under his command, whereby a trollkin can view the surrounding region for several miles in each direction.

11. The Carrion Cellar: Trollkin are often considered pathetic and humorous by other races. This basement under a purposefully abandoned home is a secret testament to why the enlo are more monstrous than the other races often realise.

The mud and wood cabin has stood abandoned for the past three decades, since the large family that lived there were murdered and eaten during a particularly vicious season of famine. The floorboards of this hut have been torn up and used in construction elsewhere, and a large hole has been dug in the ground. Here, the trollkin of the Camp of the Crooked Spear bring the bodies of their enemies slain in battle and dump them into the pit to rot. This is a strange custom, but it has a purpose.

On the occasions when a travelling outsider offends Saravam or breaks one of the impromptu laws (which change all the time), he is captured and cast into the carrion pit, and the door of the building is sealed for seven days and seven nights. By the time the door is unbolted, the victim has usually gone mad, died of starvation or survived by eating the rats, maggots and rotting bodies. The vast numbers of fly maggots and rats that breed in here supply the trollkin with additional food.

12. The Barracks: This hut is large enough to hold 50 rickety wooden beds and has a sizeable training area for weapons practice. Saravam maintains a small standing army for defending the settlement, though usually the day-to-day military matters are dealt with by the hunters. The 'soldiers' of the barracks are summoned from the several hundred male enlo of the camp in random selections. They go through several weeks of

training under the instruction of Zabel Longtalker, who unlike Saravam the Blade-God can actually wield a sword with some skill. At any given time, there will be between 15 and 40 enlo here, sleeping or training.

Snow Trolls & Jungle Trolls

Of lesser import but equal interest are the creatures that call themselves snow trolls and jungle trolls, which dwell spread across the frozen northlands by the White Sea and the lush jungles of Pamaltela, respectively. Though neither nation is a 'power' in the greater scheme of things, each has a small population of uz that do not fall clearly into the divisions of the traditional breeds. More than this, they are largely undiscovered by the God Learners and dragonspeakers who each have little business in the realms these beings call home.

Playing Snow and Jungle Trolls

These are rare breeds of the uz species. While exact numbers would be hard to come by and might conflict with individual Games Masters' views of the setting, the ice uzko and mura represent a tiny percentage of the overall troll population. In short, they are unlikely to be seen outside their respective northern and southern homelands.

That disclaimer aside, nothing is stopping Games Masters and players from inserting these uz breeds into their own campaigns. Rules for portraying jungle troll characters can be found in Chapter Three.

The Frozen North of Genertela

The uz of the northlands are generally found around the region close to the White Sea and the Western Ice Shelf at the very northernmost tips of the Genertela continent. Technically there is little physical difference between snow trolls (called uzhim) and dark trolls – merely cultural differences that arose from the climate and the snow trolls' distance from traditional troll communities.

Only a few thousand trolls exist this far north, perhaps ten or 15 thousand at most. They are the descendants of the uz that ventured north to fight Chaos or emerged from the subterranean tunnels and wandered into the northern blizzards to avoid the other races after the Womb-Biter Curse began to cripple troll society and strip it of its dominance.

The north has no delicacies: food is caught to be eaten to stave off death. Starvation is an ever-present fear for many northern communities, and males and females alike use skill and magic to bring home gulls, seals, walruses and whales to feed themselves and their clans. One of the reasons the trolls go hungrier compared to their southern cousins is that unlike other uz, the snow trolls do not eat their enlo. In fact, trollkin are considered family here, and contribute to the clan just like any other troll. However, lacking the insulating layers of fat and muscle, many enlo die of exposure in the north and do not survive. Since so few humans ever meet snow trolls, even fewer humans chance across snow trollkin. This leads the few God Learner and EWF scholars aware of the 'ice uz' to wonder if these creatures have even suffered the Trollkin Curse.

It can be a surprising sight to see a snow troll encampment. Snow trolls are nomadic creatures, setting up their modest tent-villages on the tundra and the ice fields as they move across the north, settling only to endure another winter season of bitter snowstorms. Sealskin tents are oiled and treated against the cold, or frozen solid so as to prevent collapse under the pressure of mounting snow.

The uzhim use tools made of bone or rare metal, make leather out of the skins of their own dead or the animals they prey upon and are almost always clad in thick animal furs to help against the cold. Lead tools or weapons are considered the prized weapons of ancient bloodlines of tribal chieftains rather than the possessions of frontline warriors. A tradition has grown that each warrior among the ice uz carries a single lead-headed arrow or small lead pellet for a sling, which he may only use to save the life of a clan-mate. Any troll found to have used this missile for another purpose is likely to suffer exile from his clan and faces a slow, painful death freezing solid on the arctic tundra. This is a perfect example of how precious and holy lead is to these northern trolls.

The favoured weapon of the snow trolls is the spear as it is both a conventional hunting weapon and a fishing tool; fish make up a large percentage of the ice uz diet, after all. Spears are also lightweight, which is a significant factor for the nomadic snow trolls who are already clad in layers of treated furs and hides and carry their yurt tents on their backs as they move across the tundra. Most uzhim carry their own yurts or bedrolls, though the strongest males within a clan might be lumbered with the materials for a larger communal tent if the tribe creates such a structure. Most, however, do not.

Pamaltela

The jungle trolls of the southern Pamaltela continent are unique among the uz, and not simply because of their distance from their Genertelan cousins. The 'mura' trolls' origins are found in the incredible legend of the uzuz warrior Moorgaki Hunter-of-the-Sun. This Mistress Race troll raided the surface jungles of Pamaltela in the era of Wonderhome. He was a strange-hearted uz, apparently fascinated with the elements of the surface and dedicated to killing the sun itself just to see how cold it would make the world. The sun died as a result of Orlanth's strength and Eurmal's treachery, not Moorgaki's army of ice demons and passionately devoted uzuz warriors.

The Pamaltelan entity called 'Son of Earth' by the southerners was the spirit that finally defeated Moorgaki and his raiders from the Underworld. Pamalt the Son of Earth took his friend Lodril's spear and punched it clean through Moorgaki's heart. Hunter-of-the-Sun used his magic to stay alive but was a shattered remnant of the uz he once was.

Somehow, though concerns of physical distance are surely irrelevant, the trolls that followed Moorgaki were unaffected by the Trollkin Curse when Nysalor ravaged the trolls' fertility. This is likely because the jungle trolls (who it must be said had next to nothing to do with the Gbaji Wars) are all mura, not technically uzko. These trolls are not true uzuz but neither are they exactly the same uzko as their Genertelan cousins. The specifics of the matter are mystical and are likely to remain a mystery for all time. The likeliest explanation, sung down the years through various Pamaltelan legends, is that Lodril's spear – wielded with Pamalt's power – warped Moorgaki's descendants into a variant

of the uzuz rather than another breed of uzko. This has a touch of truth to it, at least on the surface, since the senses of the jungle trolls resemble the senses of the uzuz to some degree.

The mura have evolved to suit their environment. Over the centuries they have changed to adapt to the jungle and the searing heat of their new homeland, shedding layers of fat to appear much slimmer and muscularly defined than Genertelan uzko. Rather than bear heavy weapons of war, jungle trolls tend to favour light spears, poison darts and blowpipes. Similarly, the mura wear little to no armour, instead relying on the natural grey-green of their skin to provide camouflage.

The Gathering at Spearpoint

Not far from the Maidstone Mountains just south of Valind's Glacier, an uzhim meeting site has existed for several hundred years. This a region of flat tundra where several uzhim tribes meet every seven years on an agreed-upon date, which varies with each meeting. Tribes from as far as the Keniryen Sea come to this traditional site, trading with other nomad snow troll clans and the small groups of traders from the southlands that make the irregular journey north to trade with the trolls.

The gathering at Spearpoint is named for the central area of the region where the troll tribes arrive to meet. Thrust into the earth are eleven uzhim spears of enchanted, un-melting ice. These are the weapons of the tribal leaders who first agreed to the gathering. The weapons have been sacrificed in this spot to mark it forever as the territory of the uzhim.

Spearpoint is considered neutral ground for the snow troll tribes. No uzhim may harm a member of another clan for the three days and three nights that the gathering takes place, though non-trolls are not protected by any such law. Any creatures (human or otherwise) that come north from Winterwood or Tastolar should be

cautious in the vicinity of several hundred uzhim and the Hollri ice demons that accompany their gathering. These latter creatures are usually summoned to ward off the threats of rival clans who might break the oath of nonaggression (all gatherings are tense affairs). Occasionally bands of these ice demons will come south from Valind's Glacier, drawn by the sounds and scents of revelry among the living.

A great deal of drinking, merrymaking and marriage goes on at any given gathering at Spearpoint. In an ice-blasted realm that far north, Spearpoint meets are the height of the uzhim social calendar.

1. The First Eleven Spears: This is the patch of earth where the spears of long-dead tribal matriarchs and patriarchs from eleven different clans were plunged into to the ground. To remove one of the spears from its rightful place is considered grounds for exile or, if used against another troll, death. Some trolls and trollkin touch the spear that corresponds to their tribe for luck. Tribes that have come to Spearpoint but are not one of the 'founding' clans are still welcome. Their leader must drive the clan's spear into the ground among the First Eleven Spears and reclaim it when the gathering is over.

2. Shrine to Valind: This statue is of the Winter God, Valind. It is made of rough-hewn black stone and stands facing the great glacier to the north. Its fist raised in the air and its noble head is lifted high.

3. Temple of Himile: One of the few permanent temples in Himile's honour, (at least, one of the few constructed by the uzhim) this is a wood and stone building large enough to house up to 100 trolls at any one time. Crudely-carved gargoyles of ice are made from chipping away at Valind's Glacier every time a gathering is called. These ice sculptures are then set up on the temple's walls. They are enchanted to prevent Hollri from entering the temple, effectively warding the building against the murderous ice demons.

4. Southern Traders' Area: This area is set aside for the traditional contingent of wagons and tents that belong to the traders from nearby lands who risk the

venture to the gathering in order to turn a profit. In return for weapons and items of metal or magic, they trade rare furs, exotic scrimshaw and northern ivory from the uzhim.

5. Frost-Talon Area: This is the area traditionally claimed each seven years by the Frost-Talon clan. They were one of the First Eleven and are among the few clans that have managed to maintain a position of power among the uzhim. The Frost-Talons are a strong and numerous tribe even today, unlike many of the First Eleven who either declined over the years or died out completely in the harsh frozen northlands. Any clan that takes the traditional area of the Frost-Talons will have to answer to the prideful, wrathful warleader Zhovak Kuhkruuk, who is a spiteful and hot-headed uz when he is deep in his cups. The clan that stands behind him is strong enough to obliterate almost any other

6. Coldblood Area: Though the Coldbloods were not among the First Eleven, they have risen to great stature among the disparate tribes of uzhim. They do almost as much trade with the southerners and other snow troll tribes as all the other clans put together – such is their eagerness for making connections and dealing with outsiders.

Hezik Coldblood, the matriarch of the huge bloodline, is a respected shamanic priest of Himile and has recently demanded that she be allowed to enchant an ice spear to be thrust into the ground alongside the founders' weapons. Though the remaining founder-clans shout her down each gathering, the Coldblood star is on the rise and Hezik swears she will ask Himile directly for permission before the next gathering at Spearpoint.

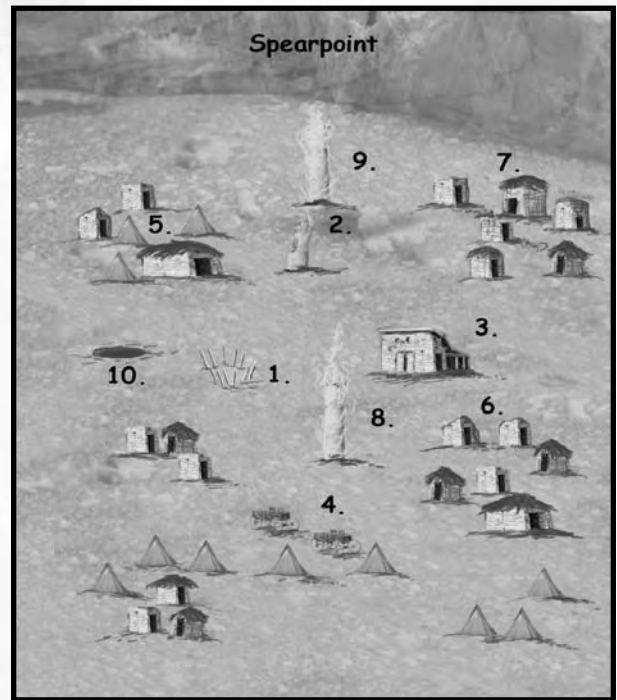
7. Zogurad Area: The Zogurad bloodline has withered to almost nothing in the last few hundred years, as a result of continuous war against human nomads in northern Genertela. They are accorded this place out of respect for their past glories, not because they actually have the strength to earn it now.

8. Pillar of the Dead: This thick stone pillar stands over 15 metres in height and features many handholds for climbing. Every seven years, the attendees at the gathering write the names of all kin who died since

the last gathering. Although the pillar is a memorial of those who have passed on to become ice demons in the afterlife, it is believed that once a name has faded through weathering and erosion, the soul whose name was written can be peacefully, honourably forgotten and no longer mourned. In truth, there are so many names on the Pillar of the Dead that it can be difficult to tell individual etchings apart.

9. Pillar of Life: Alike in size and structure to the Pillar of the Dead, the Pillar of Life stands at the opposite end of Spearpoint and serves to record all the births since the past gathering. It is a place where uzhim leave offerings to Kyger Litor and Himile for invoking their favour in pregnancy and childbirth, as well as the site of most of the marriages that occur at each gathering.

10. Bear Pit: A carved-out bowl in the ground, this pit is where the uzhim tribes pit their trained polar bears against one another. In a setting where uz is forbidden to raise weapons against uz, the vicious, raging fights between these giant bears make for bloody and satisfying substitutes for rival clans who would otherwise just love to be at each others' throats.



PLAYING THE UZ

The rules for creating uz characters are presented in this chapter in all the detail Games Masters and players will require to create either troll Player Characters or Non-Player Characters for the players to meet.

Readers will find the rules for enlo, uzko, uzdo, uzuz, mura and snow trolls here. Unintelligent cave trolls, because of their Chaos natures and their place outside of traditional uz society, are not considered uz for the purposes of this chapter.

Uz Characteristics

The following mechanics are to represent uz Player Characters in your Gloranthan campaigns. The variations here might create issues of 'play balance' between Player Characters, since a troll character will likely be stronger than any human characters in a group and will possess traits that members of other races may lack, such as Darksense. There are two positive ways of looking at this: Firstly, any such imbalances may be so minor as to be ignorable at the gaming table. Secondly, other characters may focus on methods of increasing their power via other means, such as acquiring Sorcery or other powerful magic to balance the competence of their uz ally.

The third way, which is technically unofficial but still bears mentioning, is that life in Glorantha is not fair. All the races are *not* created equal. Of course, a troll character will suffer prejudice and troubles in many regions, even if he accompanies a group of non-uz on their travels. Some might consider that the social difficulties of being a troll outside of troll lands is enough of a balance given their improved Characteristics. Trollkin suffer the flip side of this coin, however. They have the social difficulties to overcome in addition to being generally weaker and stupider than humans and other races.

Games Masters' Note: Minor aspects of these rules will contradict other sources. This information *replaces* that which is contained within the *Player's Guide to*

Glorantha. Games Masters are free to choose which rule set to use, though what is presented here is official in regards to uz characters, taking priority over the rules within any previous publications. Note that for the purposes of monster encounters and enemy antagonists, the rules presented in *RuneQuest Monsters* serve perfectly well. *Trolls: A Guide to the Uz* presents the following information as it pertains to troll Player Characters, though Games Masters are free to use these rules to replace those within *RuneQuest Monsters* if they so choose.

Trollkin

The hated little bastard children of uz society, enlo are weaker and less intelligent than most sentient races on Glorantha. An enlo character will still find a place within most adventuring parties (if he manages to escape slavery), but the drawbacks in trollkin Characteristics means that Games Masters and players might only feel comfortable allowing trollkin Player Characters in all-enlo games, where every Player portrays one of these often treacherous, usually cunning and frequently vicious slave caste creatures.

STrength: Roll 3D6, ignoring the lowest number rolled, and total the remaining dice. Add three to the final result.

CONstitution: Roll 2D6 and add six to the result.

SIZE: Roll 1D6 and add six to the result.

INTelligence: Roll 2D6 and add three to the final result.

POWER: Roll 3D6, ignoring the lowest result, and total the remaining dice. Add one to the final result.

DEXterity: Roll 4D6, ignoring the lowest result, and total the remaining dice. Add three to the final result.

CHARisma: Roll 2D6.

Dark Trolls

Unsurprisingly, the true uz of the Second Age are represented by far better mechanics than mere trollkin. That is not to say a troll character will always excel in the parties' deeds, though his superior mechanics might give him an advantage. When creating rare characters such as jungle trolls and snow trolls, use the dark troll racial mechanics.

STrength: Roll 4D6, ignoring the lowest number rolled, and total the remaining dice. Add six to the final result.

CONstitution: Roll 4D6 and add four to the result.

SIZE: Roll 4D6, ignoring the lowest result, and total the remaining dice. Add eight to the final result.

INtelligence: Roll 3D6, ignoring the lowest result, and total the remaining dice. Add three to the final result.

POWER: Roll 4D6, ignoring the lowest result, and total the remaining dice.

DEXterity: Roll 4D6, ignoring the lowest result, and total the remaining dice.

CHARisma: Roll 4D6, ignoring the *highest* result, and total the remaining dice.

Ancient Race Trolls

These creatures are the purest of the pure – born before any spiritual and magical corruption set into the troll race. As such, they are more gifted physically and mentally than other uz. They are incredibly rare in the second age and most have attained vast power over the centuries, they are included here for Games Masters who wish to allow Players the opportunity to roleplay using these creatures.

STrength: Roll 4D6, ignoring the lowest number rolled, and total the remaining dice. Add eight to the final result.

CONstitution: Roll 4D6 and add six to the result.

SIZE: Roll 4D6, ignoring the lowest result, and total the remaining dice. Add ten to the final result.

INtelligence: Roll 3D6, ignoring the lowest result, and total the remaining dice. Add four to the final result.

POWER: Roll 4D6, ignoring the lowest result, and total the remaining dice.

DEXterity: Roll 4D6, ignoring the lowest result, and total the remaining dice.

CHARisma: Roll 4D6, ignoring the *highest* result, and total the remaining dice. Add two to the final result.

Great Trolls

Although born with physical bodies close in size to the uzuz, the uzdo are less intelligent than most other trolls and are mostly content with their role as slaves and bodyguards in uz society.

STrength: Roll 4D6, ignoring the lowest number rolled, and total the remaining dice. Add seven to the final result.

CONstitution: Roll 4D6 and add five to the result.

SIZE: Roll 4D6, ignoring the lowest result, and add total the remaining dice. Add nine to the final result.

INtelligence: Roll 2D6 and add one to the final result.

POWER: Roll 3D6, ignoring the lowest result, and total the remaining dice. Add one to the final result.

DEXterity: Roll 4D6, ignoring the lowest result, and total the remaining dice.

CHARisma: Roll 2D6.

Special Rules

In addition to their variant Characteristics, troll characters possess additional abilities lacked by other races, primarily to represent the trollish methods of perception. The three traits unique to uz characters are Darksense, Trollhide and Tusks.

Darksense

This innate ability possessed by all trolls allows them to use echolocation to visually perceive exactly as humans perceive. Any character that possesses Darksense is completely unaffected by the rules for blindness or visibility in dark and lightless conditions. All dark trolls, Mistress Race trolls, snow trolls and jungle trolls possess this ability.

Trollkin and great trolls, however, have very poor senses compared to their purer cousins; their senses are much more comparable to human perceptions. Accordingly, to represent the Darksense of these impure creatures, all enlo and uzdo characters possess Night Sight, Dark Sight and Earth Sense as detailed in *RuneQuest*. They do not possess the Darksense trait, though obviously the other three traits mimic their poorer Darksense in game mechanic terms.

Trollhide

Troll skin is notoriously thick and tough and exudes a foul greasy sweat that other races find repellent. This hide makes uz extremely resistant to damage. This benefit may be stacked with armour, making a well-armoured troll warrior something of a nightmare to face in battle. Imperial dragonspeaker soldiers often call on rune-strength or Dragon Magic in order to possess the physical power necessary to injure an armoured troll. Dark trolls, jungle trolls and trollkin all have a single point of natural armour, ancient race trolls, great trolls and snow trolls all have two points. This natural armour does not have any skill penalties associated with it.

There is a downside to this thick skin. The grease exuded by all troll skin smells foul to other races, though other trolls simply recognise it part of their kin's scent and do not find it offensive. The smell is not the traditional 'sweat' smell of human exhaustion, but rather the blood-soaked scent of an unhealthy animal. While this musky, coppery smell is only really repulsive within arm's reach of the troll, it makes tracking uz by scent slightly easier, giving any such scent-based trackers a modest +5% to all rolls to hunt the troll. The clear grease sweated out by trolls is a product not simply of their exertions, but of their semi-magical constitutions working to digest the myriad types of food in their systems. Trolls sweat

a lot, but it is relatively subtle – they have moist, damp skin at most times of day or night, rather than floods of sweat drops running off their flesh.

Some scholars have theorised that the smell is simply just the scent of any inhuman creature and is actually no more offensive than the scents of a variety of other nonhumans or beasts. What makes the uz truly uncomfortable to be around is their formation in prehistory from the man and darkness runes. This sinister genesis heightens unfavourable reactions to fear and disgust, with the feral musk of a troll simply being the most obvious thing to blame for the feeling of revulsion it inspires.

Tusks

A final aspect to the uz physiology that bears noting in game mechanics is their Tusks trait. Trolls have a pair of curved tusks projecting from their lower jaw which lengthen with age, some of which can reach up to a foot in length among the eldest trolls. In some communities, these tusks are decorated (or enhanced) by lead or bronze spikes capped onto the end, though usually they are left bare and used as weapons in moments of desperation.

All trolls (though not enlo) may use their Unarmed skill to make a close combat attack that inflicts 1D4+2 damage to a target. Critical Successes on these bite attacks sink the tusks deep into the enemy's flesh and use the rules for impalement as found on page 48 of *RuneQuest*. An uz with his tusks impaled in a target's body suffers a -10% penalty to his rolls because of his awkward positioning.

He may, however, automatically inflict an additional two Hit Points of damage to the same hit location on the target, for every turn he continues to impale the enemy. This requires no roll and therefore suffers no penalty, as it represents the troll grinding his jaws together and goring his foe with his tusks. Maintaining a gore-bite in this way applies the two Hit Points of damage per Combat Action. *For example, a troll impaling his foe and receiving two Combat Actions this turn would apply four Hit Points of automatic damage if the enemy failed to shake the troll off.*

Uz Backgrounds

The racial background of an uz character is a vital determining factor in how the character's statistics will eventually appear. Players are free to choose (within the established parameters of their campaign) between the following Uz Backgrounds to represent their characters' troll breed.

Uz Background

Background	Basic Skill Bonuses	Advanced Skills	Starting Money
Trollkin - 'Enlo' (Free-born)	Athletics +10%, Perception +5%, Resilience +10%, Stealth +5% Pick Two +10% Dodge, First Aid, Influence, Lore (Animal), Lore (Plant), Persistence, Stealth Pick Two +10% 1H Hammer, 2H Hammer, Shield, Spear, Staff, Throwing, Unarmed	Language (Native) +50%, Lore (Regional) Pick Two Craft, Healing, Lore, Martial Arts, Play Instrument, Streetwise, Survival, Tracking	4D6x10 silver
Trollkin - 'Enlo' (Slave-born)	Athletics +10%, Perception +5%, Resilience +10%, Stealth +5% Pick Two +5% Dodge, First Aid, Influence, Lore (Animal), Lore (Plant), Persistence, Stealth Pick Two +10% 1H Hammer, 2H Hammer, Shield, Spear, Throwing, Unarmed	Craft (any labour), Language (Native) +50%, Lore (Regional), Survival Pick One Craft, Healing, Lore, Martial Arts, Streetwise, Tracking	4D6x5 silver
Dark Troll - 'Uzko' (Male)	Athletics +10%, Influence +5%, Resilience +5% Pick Two +10% Dodge, Lore (Animal), Lore (Plant), Perception, Persistence, Riding Pick Two +10% 1H Flail, 1H Hammer, 2H Flail, 2H Hammer, Shield, Throwing, Unarmed	Language (Native) +50%, Lore (Regional), Survival, Tracking Pick One Craft, Lore, Martial Arts, Play Instrument, Streetwise	4D6x50 silver
Dark Troll - 'Uzko' (Female)	Influence +10%, Perception +10%, Persistence +10%, Resilience +10% Pick Two +5% Dodge, Evaluate, First Aid, Lore (Animal), Lore (Plant), Riding, Sleight Pick Two +10% 1H Flail, 1H Hammer, 2H Flail, 2H Hammer, Shield, Throwing, Unarmed	Language (Native) +50% Lore (Regional) Pick Two Craft, Healing, Lore, Play Instrument, Streetwise, Tracking	4D8x50 silver

Background	Basic Skill Bonuses	Advanced Skills	Starting Money
Mistress Race Troll – ‘Uzuz’ (Male)	Athletics +5%, Influence +15%, Resilience +10% Pick Two +10% Dodge, Lore (Animal), Lore (Plant), Perception, Persistence, Riding Pick Two +10% 1H Flail, 1H Hammer, 2H Flail, 2H Hammer, Shield, Throwing, Unarmed	Language (Native) +50%, Lore (Regional) Pick Two Craft, Lore, Martial Arts, Play Instrument, Streetwise, Survival, Tracking	4D6x50 silver
Mistress Race Troll – ‘Uzuz’ (Female)	Influence +15%, Perception +10%, Resilience +5% Pick Two +5% Dodge, Evaluate, First Aid, Lore (Animal), Lore (Plant), Riding, Sleight Pick Two +10% 1H Flail, 1H Hammer, 2H Flail, 2H Hammer, Shield, Throwing, Unarmed	Craft (any domestic), Language (Native) +50%, Lore (Regional) Pick Two Craft, Healing, Lore, Play Instrument, Streetwise, Tracking	4D8x50 silver
Great Troll – ‘Uzdo’	Athletics +10%, Resilience +20% Pick Two +10% Dodge, Influence, Lore (Animal), Lore (Plant), Persistence Pick Two +10% 1H Hammer, 2H Axe, 2H Hammer, 2H Sword, Polearm, Shield, Staff, Throwing, Unarmed	Language (Native) +50% Lore (Regional) Pick Two Craft, Survival, Tracking	2D6x10 silver
Jungle Troll – ‘Mura’	Athletics +10%, Perception +10%, Resilience +10% Pick Two +10% Dodge, First Aid, Influence, Lore (Animal), Lore (Plant), Persistence, Stealth Pick Two +10% 1H Hammer, 2H Hammer, Blowgun, Shield, Spear, Staff, Throwing, Unarmed	Language (Native) +50% Lore (Pamaltela) Pick Two Craft, Healing, Lore, Martial Arts, Play Instrument, Survival, Tracking	3D6x10 silver
Snow Troll – ‘Uzhim’	Athletics +5%, Perception +10%, Resilience +5% Pick Two +10% Dodge, First Aid, Influence, Lore (Animal), Lore (Plant), Persistence, Stealth Pick Two +10% 1H Hammer, 2H Hammer, Shield, Spear, Staff, Throwing, Unarmed	Language (Native) +50%, Lore (Regional), Tracking Pick Two Craft, Healing, Lore, Martial Arts, Play Instrument, Survival	3D6x10 silver

Uz Professions

Trolls use the professions found in *Runequest*, *Runequest Companion* and *Player's Guide to Glorantha*. However a few backgrounds are unavailable to some troll species. Great Trolls and trollkin will not be able to choose the following professions: alchemist, courtier, knight, physician, scholar, scribe or wizard. All other types of troll do not suffer from these restrictions and can choose any profession they please.

New Equipment

Trolls use much the same weaponry and armour as the other Gloranthan races. Two specific differences exist in the form of the blowgun and suits of lead armour. These are detailed here so that players can use the traditional armory of the uz race for their own characters.

Blowgun

This weapon is favoured by the Pamaltelan trolls and is used as a means of hunting in the lush tropical jungles of their homeland. It also serves as a decent weapon of war against the enemies of the mura.

The real damage done by the blowpipe is in the poison coating the darts rather than in the darts themselves. The most common poison used by the jungle trolls is called Baneleaf. Baneleaf is harmless to trolls but works as a paralysing agent to any creature not of troll blood. It can be gathered by succeeding in Lore (Plant) roll in the jungles of Pamalt.

Baneleaf

Type: Ingested or Smearred

Delay: Immediate

Potency: 70

Full Effect: Two Hit Points of damage to the hit location struck; minus 10 to target's STR and DEX.

Duration: 1D20 minutes

Lead Plate Armour

The trolls consider lead a holy metal, though that increases its use in uz culture rather than seeing it reserved for rare and sacred items. Lead armour is

something only a troll would be pious (read: crazy) enough to wear on the field of war. Its weight marks it out as the heaviest and most difficult metal to wear; yet it is cheap, effective and holy – these things matter to troll warriors. In regions where lead is more scarce than in traditional troll communities, its cost will be significantly higher.

Most troll warriors will seek to wear at least some lead armour. Most often this takes the form of traditional community 'decoration.' For example, the trolls of the Castle of Lead attach a great traditional significance to breastplates of dark lead, acid-etched with a list of the warrior's deeds and those of his bloodline. The surface hunter trolls of the Opal Warden Caverns customarily wear thick vambraces of lead on their muscled forearms, light enough to hunt with stealth but strong enough to block the sword blows of any foes they encounter on their patrols in the Hurtplace.

Armour	AP	ENC	Locations	Cost
Plate Helm	4	3	Head	100 SP
Plate Vambrace	4	4	Arm	120 SP
Plate Greave	4	5	Leg	140 SP
Plate Girdle	4	4	Abdomen	150 SP
Plate Breastplate	4	6	Chest	200 SP

Runes

All life, all matter, is born from the form runes. Runes are the underpinning of Glorantha's existence: the foundations, the anchors and the magical glue that bind the universe together. The trolls, made by Uzbirther manipulating the darkness and man runes, are irrevocably tied to the powers that allowed their creation. Other runes also resonate with the uz, through the connections the troll race has with various aspects of reality. These are governed by the runestones a character attunes.

Weapon	Skill	Damage	Range	Load	AP/HP	Cost
Blowgun	Blowgun	1D2	15m	1	1/4	30 SP

This section details the seven runes that have unique effects on troll characters that attune themselves to them.

Fire, Heat and Light Runes

Some runes can not be attuned at all by most trolls. Light, fire and heat runes in almost all circumstances can not be attuned by any troll. Worshipers of Gadblad and Zorak Zoran can attune both the fire and heat runes in order to learn the spells associated with these two runes, but they will not receive the runic benefits associated with them. Mura do not suffer any limitations with either the heat or light runes, and can use them freely.

Man & Darkness Runes

Runes of man and darkness are tied to the creation of the race. Unlike other races born by the man or the darkness rune, the uz are no longer the pure creations that were melded together by the gods in prehistory. The trolls of today – largely uzko and the reviled enlo – are no longer as strongly tied to their primal creation as the uzuz were.

When any non-uzuz troll character attunes a man rune, he receives no runic benefit for doing so. He may still learn the spells associated with the rune, but he gains none of the benefits detailed in *RuneQuest* for attuning the rune. Similarly only uzko and uzuz both receive the runic benefits from the darkness rune, but not the other types of trolls.

Metal Rune

Lead is a holy metal to the uz and they prefer their metal runes to be made from it, viewing such discoveries as a sign of fortune from the gods. Troll sorcerers and priests seek out lead runes for the strength the lead gives to the powers of the runes. When a troll character attunes a metal rune formed of lead, he gains the runic benefit listed in *RuneQuest*, as well as +5 Magic Points to his total score. This effect lasts as long as the rune is attuned.

The trolls themselves believe it is simply another principal of their blessed metal having significance to their race. The God Learners have conflicting theories about the matter, though each hypothesis counters

another and few Justelans care enough to delve too deeply into the matter. ‘A blessing from their foolish gods’ seems to be the consensus.

Chaos Rune

No race has warred with Chaos quite like the trolls. They have spent more blood, more energy and more lives in fighting the forces of the Devil than any other beings in Glorantha. The insidious sensation of attuning a Chaos rune is like letting foul tendrils of entropy within a character’s own mind – it stands to reason then that many trolls would avoid even the slightest touch of their race’s mortal enemy.

This is and is not true. Many trolls would feel disgusted at the thought of attuning a Chaos rune, seeing it (quite rightly) as a manifestation of the dark element that threatens to unmake the world. It is not always that clear-cut, though. The trolls have always and forever been at war with Chaos, and any warrior knows that the first step in winning a battle is to know your enemy. Attuning Chaos runes allows that to happen; by taking a minute portion of the Great Foe’s foulness into oneself allows on to gain an advantage over the enemy. Trolls do not attune Chaos runes to manipulate Chaos, but instead to understand and resist it.

This is not without sacrifice, however, and in the eyes of many uz, what a troll must give up to receive the benefits of a Chaos rune far outweighs the rewards for doing so.

Troll characters that attune a Chaos rune gain the benefits as noted in *RuneQuest*, as well as the following additional benefits, which represent the knowledge and instinctive resistance to Chaos gleaned from the attuning:

- +10% in all combat rolls against Chaos creatures
- +10% to all rolls to resist any spells with the *Resist* and *Chaos* traits
- +1 to Strike Rank when facing creatures of Chaos

These are significant and valuable benefits, but there is a potent downside to attuning a Chaos rune. It is a downside that, for the uz race already in steep decline, is a price too heavy for most to pay. The trolls have been scarred and mutilated by Chaos on

the deepest levels of their existence. Echoes of those past hurts flow through the trolls that attune Chaos runes even now.

Every troll that attunes a Chaos rune becomes infertile. The troll becomes incapable of siring or carrying children – *even trollkin* – for the entire duration of the attuning. Pregnant trolls attuning a Chaos rune miscarry immediately. While the effect is nullified once the rune is no longer attuned, it is still a sacrifice that can ostracise a troll from his kin and community for making. To attune a Chaos rune is to state to all other trolls that the character is utterly dedicated to slaughtering the Devil's influence, which is certainly admirable and in some cases even heroic. However, it also states that the troll is willing to add to the savage curses already suffered by all uz, in that he is willing to *contribute* to the decline, since he chooses not to have any children.

Roleplaying the Uz

The uz are not human. This is an obvious statement but an important one. They do not think like humans and they do not always act like humans. In a world as alien and magical as Glorantha the trolls are not the only inhuman creatures with their own religious, ethical and social codes of behaviour, though they are still quite unlike anything else in the setting.

Acting

Gaming groups have varying degrees of how much 'acting' goes on at the table. Some Games Masters will think nothing of putting on voices, talking in character for a whole night or acting out facial expressions for each and every Non-Player Character the characters come across. Others rely on their descriptions to convey the game world to the players without resorting to acting much out. Many groups lie somewhere in-between these extremes.

Acting out a character can serve immersion in the game session, or it can come across as hilarious and help everyone enjoy the session all the more. Depending on the group in question, one of these reactions might be what the Games Master and the Players desire. Others will worry about the potential of funny acting derailing the session.

Acting like a troll obviously need not be something that tests the patience of the others around the table. A Player can convey the brutish nature of his character without standing on his chair (to represent height) and dropping a pile of books onto the tabletop (to represent the fall of a club swing). Subtlety can go a long way.

Trolls do not speak the languages of other races well. They need not be unintelligent – in fact, they might have a total grasp of the language they are speaking – but uz are rarely eloquent when talking the tongues of other regions and races. The shape of their skull and palette, along with the great tusks that interfere with speech, have an effect on any such communication.

When speaking as a troll character, a Player should consider projecting his lower jaw a little, giving himself a hint of an underbite. This does wonders for reducing the ease of speech and the accurate pronunciation of words, and is as close to copying the tusk-filled mouth of trolls as humans can get without going all out and using prostheses.

Lowering one's voice is another way of conveying troll-speech. Players may not wish to try accents, seeing as no obvious comparisons exist between human accents and the speech of the uz. Simply lowering one's voice is likely enough to get the point across.

Gritting one's teeth as one speaks is another good way of presenting a primitive and violent attitude. It also serves to represent the intensity of talking to a troll. Uz are creatures that are almost constantly ready for battle – a suspicion revealed in their posture, which is so often hunched over and physically close to their battle crouch. In short, trolls are eternally suspicious of the threats others might become and of a fight breaking out around them. Clenched teeth are a subtle and effective way of pointing out the suspicious, on-the-edge awareness of a troll dealing with other races.

In regards to lexicon, trolls have a vocabulary as large as any speaker of the language they are using. The difference is that many trolls prefer the simplest words one can use for any explanation or concept. That makes them sound primitive and unintelligent when speaking other languages but the truth of the matter is that trolls are talking with inhuman-shaped mouths and around two mighty tusks, as well as rows of jagged teeth.

Add this to the troll ability to read body language instinctively through Darksense and it is easy to see why trolls prefer not to wax lyrical for long periods of time. Some are faking it, of course, actively attempting to seem foolish or inept to lead others to underestimate them. Many among the Ancients dislike 'lowering' themselves to using the tongues of other races, though such prejudices are dying out as the Mistress Race falls into sharp decline.

Behaviour

Many trolls are easily angered, giving an element of truth to the stereotype of the primitive brute that typifies the uz race. Troll culture is based on the notion of sustenance before all else. Trolls want to eat in order to survive and they want to eat a great deal, during many of their waking hours. Troll culture is based on principles of wanting something and doing all one can to secure it, and if possible doing so through the efforts of slaves.

It is also why trolls are often short-tempered and easily aggravated when they are away from their own people. Simply taking what a troll wants, or killing anyone who offends him, is likely to arouse the ire of the local law enforcement or break local customs in some way. For a troll to enter another community, he has to speak another language that is hard to frame with his mouth, put all the benefits of an obedient slave herd out of his mind to do his own toil and delay any wrath against those who besmirch his honour. This is not even taking into account the fact he may not simply eat what he takes with his own strength. In a world where almost everything is food, it can be a trial for a troll to sit hungry in a tavern, sweating and uncomfortable in lead armour, struggling to keep track of the languages his 'allies' are speaking, when all he wants is to taste the elf's delicious flesh. It is a lesser creature, after all. Who will care if it dies?

Trolls usually understand and obey local and cultural laws of social conduct, but they rarely like them. It is never easy to comply with the confusing laws of lesser beings, especially in situations when a troll has

the strength to break the rules and fight his way out of punishment. As it happens, that is a great many situations.

The typical uz is not an adventurer-born. He may be born of a powerful species and raised with a superb set of skills that would allow him to excel as an adventurer, but general troll culture creates fewer wanderlust-stricken individuals than most human cultures. Perhaps because of the grievous magical curses the uz have suffered, family is practically *everything* to the trolls. This can make a life away from relatives and away from the community the troll was born to serve seem like a selfish indulgence rather than a glorious adventure.

Reasons do exist to adventure, else it would never happen. Sure as Yelm rises above the world, troll adventurers do exist, with perhaps as many reasons for their wandering ways as there are trolls themselves. What follows is a selection of different possibilities that can be applied to your own characters, be they Player Characters or Non-Player Characters.

If a troll does leave his home and kin behind, there is likely more than a simple, single reason. Games Masters and players should feel free to chop, change, mix and match all the details here and any more besides into a final equation that suits the characters they are creating.

For Religion

A compelling reason to tread across Glorantha's face is cult religion. Followers of any deity can find a reason to take to the open road, whether to advance within their cult's ranks or to advance the cause of their chosen god or goddess. Followers of Zorak Zoran or Boztakang will always have reasons to make war and commitments to destroy certain enemies. Followers of Kyger Litor or Xiola Umbar might embark on great and epic quests in order to bring the troll race back to pre-eminence, travelling through uz communities the world over spreading word of holding strong against the rising empires and assuring the defeated, bedraggled trolls that there is hope at the end of this difficult age.

Uz on these faith-based adventures are akin to crusaders or mendicant preachers, taking their faith, their teachings and their magical powers to further the causes of their gods in realms and ways that might otherwise see little of the deity's influence.

There is also the possibility of divine inspiration, of course – quests or journeys that are undertaken at the behest of a divine being or one of its servants. Perhaps the uz gods (who are always active compared to many other deities) have a specific destiny in mind for a certain troll, whether it is Zorak Zoran charging a troll to bring death to a certain foe that the god is prevented from harming directly, or Gorakiki demanding of her cult that they send assistance to a venerable, ancient giant insect queen who is sickened with plague.

Holy tasks may be exceedingly rare in Glorantha but they can make for some fantastic plot and roleplaying opportunities, as well as having the potential to tie into HeroQuesting for deeper insight. A troll who must perform a mighty deed for his faith – but first needs the experience of HeroQuesting in his god's footsteps – is in for an epic adventure that uz taletellers will speak of for generations.

FOR COIN

Trolls, like all sentient mortal beings, have a sense of value and the concept of ownership, which means that the uz use money like most other intelligent races. Wealth is a powerful lure, whether it is acquired for the pursuit of selfish ideals or to benefit the clan who remain back in the community.

It is the Imperial Age and mercenary warriors march in the name of decadent empires; these warriors earn coin by shedding the blood of those who dare to believe different from their wealthy employers. In the EWF especially, troll warriors are often welcomed (though rarely trusted) and paid handsomely for their toils in the imperial army. While the conquering of Dragon Pass has enraged many trolls and reduced the majority to bitter despondency, a great number of uz recognise that the conquerors pay very well indeed. So they serve. Not gracefully or passionately, but certainly willingly, for the great rewards in coin.

FOR REDEMPTION

Exiles from uz society are those that have wronged their families or communities so grievously that they are cast out into the world and their names cursed forever after. For some crimes, including rape, betrayal that leads to the destruction of a community, the murder of a pregnant female, heresy against Kyger Litor – the criminal is offered execution or exile. Most take exile, for in being cast out there is always the chance of redemption.

Some of the troll heroes now spoken of in reverent whispers to young uz were exiles that earned back their right to walk among their people, after years of selfless deeds and aiding the plight of trolls. One uz hunter was welcomed back to his community after completing a full year of HeroQuesting the deeds of Kyger Litor and receiving a magical idol of lead that allowed any uzko touching it to conceive a dark troll rather than a trollkin.

These quests can leave great legacies. Several clans warred over one relic of the hunter's efforts, *The Mother's Touch*, in the early decades of the Second Age, though it is now the property of a clan within the Castle of Lead. It is believed the artefact has only nine uses before it expires forever, and it has already been used seven times. Currently, the Mother's Touch is among the most sought-after objects in Glorantha, with troll clan mistresses wanting it of themselves and mercenaries from the other races hoping to steal it in order to barter it back to the trolls for colossal sums of wealth.

FOR SALVATION

In the Second Age, with the magical ravaging of their wombs still relatively recent, the uz are still in a sharp decline because of the curses that run in their blood. It is surely the ardent hope of every member of the race that their divine hexes will be lifted some way, somehow, before their race can fall into further depths of corruption.

This is the era to try. Great magics sweep the world, commanded by the most powerful mortals ever to live. If ever there was a time to seek to heal the bloodlines of the uz, it is now. Trolls take to the adventuring life in droves, seeking answers to the simple question: 'How can things be made right?'

Uz leave their communities to seek the answer and look in a great many places. Perhaps the God Learners know the answer. They have the magic powerful enough to alter the gods, as well as magic powerful enough to drain thousands of legends day after day after day through repeated HeroQuesting. Does logic suggest that the Jrustelans can also use their arts to heal the wounds suffered by a goddess? No troll knows for sure, though it is likely many are trying to find out. Of course, to consider giving aid, individual God Learners would no doubt ask for great sacrifices in return for sharing even scraps of their lore, but what price would a troll pay to be the one who finds the answer to the bane of his people?

It is likely that much of the God Learner knowledge regarding troll myths came from those tempted or hopeful enough to believe that the Alliance sorcerers would help heal their race in return for speaking of the secret myths of the uz gods. Some would decry such uz as traitors. Others, knowing that it is perhaps the best chance the trolls have in this age, would commend such visionaries for their sacrifices in the name of their own kind, even if they are ultimately doomed to failure.

Others seek the salvation of their race elsewhere, hoping for healing through the world of myth. These are the uz HeroQuesters who live through the old myths over and over again, seeking answers in the events of the past and in the actions of the gods and demons that originally played in these mythological performances. The power to HeroQuest is relatively rare outside the echelons of the God Learners.

Yet think on this: not every Jrustelan sorcerer needs to be determined to rape a species of its legends and stories. For every God Learner poisoned by his own ambition, there are nine who just want to make their way in the world, learn all they can or improve the life of their own people. Some of these will travel with trolls, forging close ties of companionship over time. It is perfectly valid for these magicians to see the trauma that is slowly strangling the troll race and feel moved by the uz plight.

A surprising number of adventuring groups venture into the ancient troll myths because of a God Learner's magic, not to plunder it but to seek an answer to the

banes placed upon the uz race. There will always be the possibility that such altruism is another form of deception; perhaps the sorcerer sought outside aid in accessing the myths, or an otherwise loyal friend could not resist the potential for magical rewards in such a quest.

Beyond HeroQuesting and Sorcery's potential, other magicians may offer answers for the uz. Remember that while canonically there is never a 'cure' for the womb-curses, there is the old Player trope to fall back on: *It is your game*. Even if this leaves a foul taste in a group's collective mouths, individual cures – even temporary ones – are worth their weight in diamonds to the uz. An artefact that protects against trollkin births would be worth fighting wars over. What of other legendary healings? These are sought with endless fervency, such as a powerful one-use spell that taps the loosed energies of Korasting that still echo around the cosmos, allowing an uzuz to be born to a single parent...but only once in every generation. The uz are desperate enough to die in the pursuit of such legendary cures, even knowing they are temporary at best and false at worst.

Some compelling tales can be told around the stories of uz seeking the salvation of their race. The tragedy can only be increased when considering that destiny will thwart the major attempts time and again. However, those that struggle on should be considered defiant, not naïve, and their actions noble, not futile. There are times when it does not matter whether evil can be beaten, only that it is opposed. For many uz, that time is now.

FOR BLOOD

Of course, nobility is not found everywhere and in all things. Trolls are a primitive race by human standards. While not at the level of beasts, in some regions they are not considered too far distant from animals, usually because of raiding and the wanton slaughter that uz warriors are capable of. At the very least, even among enlightened and learned folk of civilised lands, trolls are considered less intelligent than the average Gloranthan sentient, which is often true. Among those uz that wander from traditional troll lands are those that leave not to seek salvation or to find a benefit for their people, but who walk in foreign lands to shed blood. These are the truly brutal uz that many Gloranthans know by rumour



or eyewitness – stories of these degenerates tend to spread like wildfire make it easy to see why the people misconstrue the entire race as savage brutes.

With a strength rarely matched among mortal Gloranthan races, the violent among the uz tend to stand out from the crowd. The warrior who laughs as he slaughters his foes, actively killing his way to the heart of the battlefield; the hunter with a collection of skulls hanging from his belt, taking pride in his prowess at butchering ‘lesser’ beings; the berserker who applies woad war paint made from the blood of his enemies and eats his foes in the heat of a battle: these are the troll warriors that men see and fear. Such images can rarely be forgotten.

Many trolls feel great pleasure in knowing there are none stronger than they, knowing that all who dare stand against them are weaker and doomed to die. It is for this exultation and for the satisfaction of testing oneself against others that so many trolls acquire reputations as murderous marauders when they enter foreign lands.

In a race so cursed compared to the other species of Glorantha, a pervasive sense of hatred saturates the hearts and minds of no few uz. These are the trolls that shed blood not for the pleasure of testing skill or revelling in strength, but because from the blades in their hands to the depths of their cores, they loathe the other races. They loathe the way the lesser beings escaped the darkest eras of time unscathed, they loathe the increasing dominance of the human empires and they loathe anyone and anything that stands in the way of the uz way of life. It is common for these trolls to be found lurking in ruins of destroyed uz surface villages, slaying all those who come near or attempt to establish settlements nearby.

To survive on hatred alone is a hard life. Local communities will hire mercenaries or rely on their own law enforcement to slay any troll raider that preys upon their trade routes and their homes, and if the uz is powerful enough – be he a warrior, shaman, priest or magician – the local bastions of the God Learners or Imperial dragonspeaker cults might take an interest in hunting the creature down for good.

FOR GLORY

The nobler side of the same coin as seeking bloodshed is the notion of leaving a community to seek glory, hunting out wealth, victories and ultimately fame through one’s deeds. Individual uz can be just as desirous of respect and renown as any human. Moreso in some cases; trolls are so shunned by most of Glorantha and it can be a powerful urge to earn the admiration of those who disregard them. Yet this is not about self-esteem issues or a weakling’s cry for attention. This is about personal glory, and earning it through great deeds, battles and accomplishments. Trolls that want the rest of Glorantha to see the truth of their race (or at least see that they as individuals should be respected) are likely to show a nobler aspect than many other wandering uz.

Self-sacrifice, enduring hardship, fighting at the chaotic nexus of a battle – these are the acts of courage and strength that exist in hundreds of troll mythological tales. In living up to them now, especially in the apex of the bright and hopeful Second Age, the uz are defiantly demonstrating that their race is not dead yet. Decline is not extinction, and there is a lot of honour and bravery left in these creatures. The trolls that manage to prove this point to those around them are remembered for years afterwards, and rightly so.

Due to their history and the legends of the trolls there are some who are more specialised when seeking glory. They see the destruction of Chaos especially glorious and many hunt down these dangerous foes almost to the exclusion of all other opponents. In addition to the glory achieved through these victories this is also often seen as fulfilling religious duties as well.

FOR SECRETS

It is an age of war. No one can deny this. Those who intend to survive at the top of the pile are those who are willing to take chances and learn all they can of their enemies. It is an unappealing prospect for many uz to venture into the great wide world on a mission of espionage but a few brave souls will still make the attempt. These are the trolls that will take any work that allows them to infiltrate even the lowest tiers of either imperial society, slaving away on battlefields as mercenary warriors or scouts for the Dragonlords, or as bodyguards for God Learner magicians who travel a great deal and are otherwise unaccompanied by their sorcerous brethren.

As a general rule, trolls make unsubtle spies and few reach the exalted halls of highest power within either the God Learner Alliance or the Empire of Wyrms Friends. Exceptions exist in all things, though. A character may not overhear the whispered words of Lurghalos regarding the failing Goddess Switch, or the metamagical ramblings of the near-deranged Vistikos Left-Eye, but he could be placed as the cultural advisor to an EWF force commander in a region heavily populated with trolls, or as the shamanic companion of a HeroQuesting God Learner.

Leaving a community to spy on the dealings of the God Learners, the Dragonfriends or any other enemy usually works most effectively if a troll has a tale of exile for past wrongs or a hatred for some aspect of uz society that convinces humans he was right to leave and is now a firm supporter of any who oppose his former people. For example, troll culture can sound shockingly oppressive if the matriarchal facts are highlighted to some human males. Even in these enlightened times, sexism exists in certain regions and in the hearts of certain men and women. Troll characters, with the fact

of their matriarchal society one of the few outsiders know about the race, are in an advantageous position to exploit the prejudices of others to their own advantage.

FOR KNOWLEDGE

The quest for knowledge does not always lead into spying or stealing secrets to win a war. Sometimes the pursuit of knowledge leads to its own adventures, undertaken for that wisest of courses: simply to learn more.

While it is fair to say that most trolls are not scholars of any given subject, loremasters charged with remembering the accumulated wisdom, stories and deeds of the community's heroes since time began exist within most communities. This can be a role as sedate and emotional as it sounds or as violent as any mercenary or warrior career, since many of these loremasters will carry their clan, family or community's battle standard into battle, showing their pride – as well as using it to bludgeon should the need arise.

Adventurous trolls with a mind to learn all they can of Glorantha are not as rare as one might believe. Some cults promote the notion of experiencing the world outside troll society, though most often this choice comes down to a personal curiosity and a desire to be enlightened through witnessing things firsthand. While it can seem a less dramatic and noble aim than, say, travelling to crush the influence of Chaos that remains after the God's War, the accumulation of wisdom, education and experience is just as appealing to some trolls as it is to beings of any other sentient race. Trolls with these aims are often welcomed into human society much more readily than others, provided their aims are not achieved in overly violent ways (such as killing educated people and stealing their records and tomes, which has been known to happen).

FOR FREEDOM

For some trolls the responsibilities of their bloodline, clan or community weigh too heavily to bear. Some leave their homeland behind because they felt like they never really belonged there anyway. Perhaps they plan to return one night. Perhaps they plan to live their entire lives seeing what the world will offer. Perhaps their minds are unmade on the matter.

Others will feel stifled. Male trolls might resent the matriarchal nature of troll society, though this is a trope of sorts and is not always fun to run with if a Player has no interest in conforming to the stereotype in this case. In some communities, the females may lord it over the men like tyrants, making such defection more likely. In other regions, especially in areas where clans are struggling to survive, male warriors and hunters can feel oppressed by the sheer weight of their duties. They fight the enemy, scout the territory, hunt for food...their work is dangerous, draining and extremely difficult. No wonder then that some trolls turn their backs on their kin and venture to seek a life elsewhere. There is great appeal in only working to feed and protect oneself, though of all reasons to leave a community, this is likeliest to be viewed as an honourless betrayal.

Female uz seek freedom from the constraints of clan loyalty as well. Such treachery (or independence, depending on how one views the self-exile) is not only undertaken by the traditional warriors and hunters of the communities. A high priestess, slavemistress, matriarch, village elder or any other female uz in a position of responsibility has enormous amounts of pressure on her to ensure the prosperity of those beneath her. Consider the family matriarch who struggles to feed her kin when her warriors are slaughtered by the EWF or her hunters find too little game in the wilds. The wellbeing of all under her authority is her responsibility.

Other Races

The old Gloranthan proverb states: 'Trolls divide the world into two categories – that which can be eaten and that which cannot. And there is precious little that falls into the second category.'

Uz reactions to this will proverb vary depending on the troll who hears it. Nodded agreement and predatory, animalistic stares are likely, as are amused, rumbling chuckles or derisive laughter. It is not unknown for trolls to take great offence at their culture being ground down into these vague, churlish terms. Bloodshed frequently follows its utterance, which some might say lends a certain air of credence to accusations of uncivilised reasoning or behaviour.

As a general attitude, the trolls tend to consider the other races of Glorantha to be inferior to their own kind. In defence of this belief, the disregard is not without cause

– at least according to the uz themselves. The trick to relating to this mindset when playing an uz character is to ask the following questions, since these are the facts and beliefs that every troll in Glorantha has grown up with:

- What other race can boast such victories against Chaos?
- What other race has suffered martyrdom so thoroughly against Chaos?
- What other race is biologically strong enough to draw sustenance from practically everything in the world?
- What other race is as strong and physically gifted (with senses like Darksense) as the uz?
- Which other races deserve respect for foreseeing the corruption within the Great Deceiver?
- What other races can survive equally well in the lightless depths of the earth and the surface world?

Individual uz will probably find reasons to add to this list of questions. A follower of Zorak Zoran will look with scorn upon the Dara Happan people, for allowing themselves to be conquered by the lizard-kissers and of his god's humiliating defeat of Yelmadio in the God's War, no matter how minor a deity Yelmadio is for most Dara Happans.

Troll society rewards purity over deceit or corruption, and they are proud of it. Faithful priests and priestesses are community leaders, females who have pure births without trollkin litters are respected above others and rarely does a troll rise to command respect or gain leadership through deception or manipulation of a community. As a general rule, uz are proud of their honest purity in these regards.

On the other side of the coin, uz see corruption throughout the hierarchies of other cultures, especially the humans with their empires of staggering size and near-infinite ambition. This propensity to slide into corruption is yet more evidence for the trolls to put their way of life above that of the other races.

While the uz are not openly hostile because of these opinions, those that cling to them are likely to feel at least a little superior to the other races.

UZ RELIGION

This chapter reveals many of the intricacies in troll religion and provides knowledge for players and Games Masters to take their players on HeroQuests through troll mythology. *Cults of Glorantha* already dealt with the largest troll religions in detail, such as Zorak Zoran and Kyger Litor, yet there are still things to be spoken of regarding these gods and their cults.

This chapter is designed with two aims in mind. Firstly, to provide troll characters with an in-depth background for the religions and gods of their race, so they may join the cults they wish to join and follow their chosen deity. This is the chapter's obvious and primary function. However, secondly, Games Masters and characters (most likely either trolls or God Learner sorcerers or allies of the Justelan Alliance) will find a wealth of story hooks within these pages to assist them in HeroQuesting through the legends of trollkind.

The chapter is essentially the primer of a noted Alliance scholar, broken up by notes of cult mechanics, new creatures pertaining to the cults and new spells wielded by cultists. Note also that *Magic of Glorantha* hinted at the notion some troll gods have been perceived as Chaos deities. Here, that metaphysical misdirection is examined by the God Learners themselves, who HeroQuest into these false myths seeking power.

The Primer Begins

– The Compiled Notes of Revary Hirsul, Justelan Loremaster of the God Learner Alliance

I have tremendous respect for the uz. Their religion is a mutable one, resistant to many of our intrusions, with spirits and gods interchanging positions in a complex web of historical fact and mythological license. The legends of their gods are epic, with many deeds beyond the abilities of inexperienced HeroQuesters. The trolls also have a tremendous wealth of gods and spirits with no shortage of deeds that are open to reliving, and many of these journeys focus on conflicts with the forces of Chaos in the Great Darkness. This in turn means that successful HeroQuesters return with powerful rewards.

Matters of Chaos

Some of my peers espouse a connection between the uz and Chaos, having discovered myths in which the uz swarmed from the Underworld with the arrival of Chaos and assaulted the surface races. Such myths are lies, yet they are there.

While there was no shortage of conflict between the trolls and those races that lived on Glorantha's surface, these battles were irrespective of the touch of Chaos. While it is clear that Kyger Litor and Zorak Zoran, as well as other troll deities, are not Chaos beings, the HeroQuests based on false legends where troll gods *are* Chaos gods are fruitful and rewarding. They are also more difficult to pursue, because the legends are incomplete, fractured and flawed, but the rewards are bountiful.

These legends often fall apart in mid-HeroQuest, when conflicting details render the myth too incomplete for emulation or even improvisation to finish. It is my calculation that approximately 50% of these trolls-as-Chaos myths shatter at the first mistake made by the sorcerers involved. This is further proof as to the falsehood of the stories, though few of our kind care about that when the rewards of even these flawed myths are as valuable as they are. One of my apprentices has entered a myth of Xentha as a Chaos warlord at the head of a troll army seven times as of the moment of this writing. On the two times she has managed to complete the HeroQuest, she has returned with a powerful blade that reflects spells based around the principles of Law and Light, as well as a Chaos rune that makes casting Chaos-based Rune Magic significantly faster.

Scholarly speaking, however, these legends are false. I have consulted with Lord Lurghalos on this expansively and he assures me he has instigated his own investigations into the matter, for he suspects an attempt to sow discord by the Alliance, perhaps even in the work of that traitorous bastard Delecti. 'Someone has been lying and hoping we'll take the bait,' the Arch-Sorcerer said to me during our last consultation. I suspect one of his aptly-named 'kill-teams' will be doing their duty before too long.

The problem is that a small number of God Learners *are* taking the bait. My own apprentices venture into the ‘cracked’ myths for exploratory and scholarly purposes, yet others hear the myths and perceive them as a path to new powers. Perhaps because of the blasphemous nature of these flawed myths, they do not simply fail as do other legend-lies – they shatter and harm those within them.

When a flawed HeroQuest shatters, those involved do not always return. Again, I would estimate that perhaps one in four sorcerers involved simply vanishes into the ether. If the tempting but deadly legends were created for this very purpose, then perhaps Delecti or some troll high priestess is involved. If not, they are simply one more in a long line of anomalies were must codify and control.

I do not hesitate to recommend that any HeroQuesting concerning these myths be based upon whatever research is possible with the flawed legends, and that it is conducted by hired agents in case of severe casualties due to the instability of the myths.

HeroQuesting

The uz are among the most reluctant of races when it comes to sharing their secrets. They have lied to us, misinforming us on many occasions which has lead to the pursuit of false legends and attempts to HeroQuest into deeds that were never done. Most cultures and races resist sharing their secrets to some degree but the uz hold a special place in my attentions as the guiltiest offenders.

Yet that is all in the past. Now we have the lore required to engage fully in the project and we uncover fresh secrets with each passing night.

In almost all of my lectures here the Eradinthanos University which involve discussion and instruction in the area of uz mythology, students hold a fascination for what deeds the troll gods performed and what rewards one might expect from successful HeroQuests. More so than any lectures I give on the Orlanthi or the Pelorians, it seems that the uz capture the imaginations of our younger sorcerers.

I speculate that this is because of the troll’s inhumanity, which is reflected in their monstrous pantheon, as well as the fact that unlike the aldryami, the dragonewts and the mostali, the uz have a sense of primal instinct about their race. Their ostensible simple nature and primitive cultures appeal to the scholarly senses of educated souls such as we Jurstelans. In the elves, the dwarfs and the dragonmen, we see similar cultures reflected back at us with their own complications and depths. Exploring those depths is fascinating, certainly, but also reveals the similarities between our societies. In the uz, few such similarities exist. It is a matter of observing an inhuman society that is also primitive and brutal in thought, deed and mythology.

I have prepared this primer for students with an eye to learn more of the uz. I am of the mind that one cannot over-prepare for the journeys ahead in the Hero Plane, especially if one wishes to provide a significant benefit to the Great Project. What follows are the compiled extracts of my notes detailing the various important uz deities, along with their attributed deeds and aspects of their associated cults. In some cases, such as in the mortal lineage of the god Argan Argar, such information is extremely relevant to the face and shape of Glorantha today.

It might also be prudent to have an edited version of this document available to whatever mercenaries the Alliance hires to do the legwork in the Hero Plane. Even our subordinates and regular sell-swords will benefit from a little enlightenment.

This primer details the following deities in uz culture, with less extensive notes on some of the other important uz deities:

- ☒ **Argan Argar** – God of Darkness on the Surface
- ☒ **The Black Sun** – False God of the Kingdom of Ignorance
- ☒ **Gorakiki** – Goddess of Insects and Anthropoids
- ☒ **Himile** – God of Cold
- ☒ **Kyger Litor** – Goddess of All Trolls
- ☒ **Subere** – Goddess of the Inner Dark
- ☒ **Xentha** – Goddess of Night
- ☒ **Xiola Umbar** – Goddess of Compassion
- ☒ **Zorak Zoran** – God of War and Hatred

ARGAN ARGAR

*In fire. In light.
In air that burned.
He rose as he had sworn.
Behind him trailed legions of the shapeless.
Legions of the lightless.
Legions of the sunless.
His blood and divinity mixed.
His role as champion fixed.
And the Prince of the Night ascended to rule.'*

— Extract from a troll ritual chant devoted to Argan Argar

Overview

Argan Argar is the troll god of Darkness on the Surface. He is also known as the God of Succour in the Hurtplace and most commonly as the Son of Night.

He is the son of the goddess Xentha, divided from her essence after she ascended to the surface following the fiery fall of Yelm. With Orlanth's deed done and Yelm reigning close to the trolls' 'Wonderhome' Xentha bore the first god of darkness to taste life upon the surface world. This being was Argan Argar, appointed from the moment of his birth to the position of god of Darkness in the Hurtplace.

Even now, Argan Argar is notable among darkness gods and the pantheon he stands amongst as the only deity of night and darkness that is considered friendly to all life on Glorantha. He is commonly depicted by trolls as a muscled, dark-skinned uzko with white eyes that see all in the blackness of night. In his left hand is a spear, which often serves as the symbol for his cult. His right hand is empty, usually held outward in a welcoming gesture.

Mythology

Argan Argar's deeds during the Storm Age and the True Darkness are well-documented by our imperial loremasters. It seems that Xentha's son was quite the activist, working tirelessly to assist those who called upon him no matter what the species of the mortals in

need. He aided humans, aldryami, mostali...but his favoured race were the uz, for they were beings of the darkness just as he was. It was the trolls he stood beside and granted haven to more often than any other race, and such actions led to great reverence from the uz.

The most famous deed in Argan Argar's mythology was the humiliating defeat of Lodril, the Pelorian volcano god. Lodril was as fiery-tempered and volatile as the element he influenced, in stark counterpoint to the shadow god's calm demeanour and cool reason. The two gods duelled on several occasions, though during their final meeting Argan Argar manipulated the shadows around the fire god and enveloped Lodril in tendrils of icy darkness through which no heat or light could escape. Leeches of strength, Lodril was forced to yield.

Argan Argar was not satisfied. As penance he demanded that the God of Volcanoes use his powers to slave away and create several structures of black glass as homes for troll warleaders and their clans. This duty of the defeated resulted in the creation of – among other towers – the Obsidian Tower in the Shadow Plateau, where Ezkankekko, called the Only Old One, still rules to this day. It is said in related legends that Argan Argar ordered the creation of this poetically-referenced 'palace of black glass' so that he had a palace within which to win the heart of the earth goddess Esrolia. Whatever the truth of the matter, the courtship was successful and Ezkankekko Only-Old-One, the troll demigod, was born of this divine parentage.

The triumph over Lodril is the greatest but not the only deed of note performed by Argan Argar. It is known that the Son of Night infiltrated a Chaos army at rest and rescued the uzuz warrior Jargorish Scarweaver from being fed to a devil-beast of some kind. This is a popular HeroQuest though most certainly a trying one. Among a thousand and more battles against demons, the conflicts that stand out the most are those that refer to Argan Argar protecting the mortal races of Glorantha, often hiding their armies under his deceptive cloak in readiness for an ambush or shielding defenceless communities from the onslaught of the Devil's forces by bathing them in shadow so that Wakboth passed them by completely. To accomplish such deeds with our Sorcery is difficult but not impossible.

Though Argan Argar is not as warlike as the majority of the troll pantheon, he also faced his share of powerful demons during the God's War, fighting for his life on the field of battle. Braznofstel was one such creature – a towering prince among demons that took the god three nights to destroy with every shred of magic he possessed. The sites of these legendary victories are often pilgrimage sites for the uz of the modern age.

In several tales, Argan Argar meets Yelmlio and lesser light gods in conflict, though rarely in pitched battle. His dislike of the sun and fire gods – especially the Dara Happan pantheons – is well-established. In an incident that nearly led to his death, the Yelm-son Golden Bow attempted to slay the darkness god with a volley of flaming arrows, which Argan Argar only escaped by hiding himself within a summoned sea of magical shadows.

A peculiar series of tales all deal with Argan Argar and a group of his favoured darkness spirits – the Six Shadows – who aided any being that called the god's name. The group would appear to travellers and besieged fighters, arrange and conceal the mortals' escape from the clutches of Chaos and immediately travel on to the next needy soul. Actions like these gained the Son of Night a powerful and devoted following that stretched out into the years after the resurrection of the sun god, Yelm. The foundation promise of the cult was that all Argan Argar's loyal followers would become pure night-time shadows after their deaths, joining with the black cloak of Xentha that draped across the land at the end of every day.

Initially, Argan Argar's cult spread like wildfire among the uz and even the other races. Primarily this was due to the dominance of the trolls after the Great Compromise, as they had come through the Chaos Wars in a position of relative ascendance. The cult of the Son of Night was immensely popular among the uz, whose warlords encouraged (and often enforced) worship of Argan Argar in their realms. However, most mortals came to the cult by choice.

At its core, the cult was based around principles of communication and peace. In his role as a powerful god within the uz pantheon, Argan Argar took it upon himself to encourage his mortal children to relate to

the other races in peace and to seek prosperity through trade, travel and diplomacy. Soon Xentha's son was considered not only the god of Surface Darkness but the troll god of Trade and Communication. His followers excelled in helping relations between the uz and the other races, brokering trade agreements and peace treaties.

Argan Argar has always believed that civilised skills matter a great deal to the future of the troll race. To further allow uz and other mortals to blend together, he created the bolg, in mimicry of the currency used by the humans in various regions.

A vast amount of reverence was paid to Argan Argar in the Stygian Autarchy, which was also known as Arkat's Dark Empire. With the decline and fall of this kingdom, worship for the darkness god has dwindled around the region, though as long as his mortal son sits on the Obsidian Throne in the Shadow Plateau, Argan Argar is guaranteed a secure place in the most popular ranks of the uz pantheon. Perhaps with a touch of poetic license, what we know as the Shadowlands is referred to as the Kingdom of Night by Argan Argar cultists.

The Prince of the Night has had a significant impact on uz society even in the last few hundred years. It is believed that he either manifested personally or acted through the minds of his most favoured priests in order to enlighten the uz in the wake of the Womb-Biter Curse laid down by the false god Nysalor. Although the spear is decidedly unfashionable among dark trolls Argan Argar argued for its use as a weapon for the trollkin, making up for their poor reach and compensating for their lack of strength. Pious followers of the darkness god have been known to wield spears in battles in reflection of their god's preferences, though it remains a rarely-used weapon by trolls outside the cult.

A rough translation of an alleged quote made by Argan Argar at the time of the first enlo instruction is as follows: *'A dozen spears may strike where only two or three swords can reach. Enough spears striking at once will bring down even the mightiest foe.'* Clearly the god saw the potential in hundreds of trollkin using cheap, effective militia weapons, the use of which requires little training.

It is because of this idea that the uz now command swarming hordes of trollkin soldiers which are often loaned out as mercenaries. While these enlo are only skilled with the sling and the spear, their numbers and vicious fervency make up for their lack of fine weaponry. The dragonspeakers seem inordinately fond of recruiting trollkin bands of mercenaries to hurl against their own insurrectionists as well as any God Learner forces nearby. Additionally, in a delightful piece of trollish irony, the lead bolg that forms their currency are also usable as sling stones. In writing it might sound humorous but I have seen it firsthand on the field. There is nothing funny about the sky going dark because a thousand nuggets of heavy lead thunder onto one's head and helmet. The survivors never laughed, anyway.

An alliance of sorts exists between the traders loyal to Issaries and the traders loyal to Argan Argar. When one is taking trade goods to the territory of the other, such as a troll hoping to deal his wares in an Orlanthi settlement, the loyal follower will seek out his opposite compatriot for talk and business. Many of the humans who come to uz communities enjoy immunity from being killed and eaten because they are Issaries-worshippers.

Within a community, the Argan Argar priests often serve the tribe as advisors, councillors, loremasters and tale-tellers. Since almost all Argan Argar worshippers are talented diplomats they are the trolls that are usually sent to deal with outsiders that the clan does not wish to battle. They are also the communal teachers that educate the younger uzko and the enlo about the world outside the immediate territory.

The cult of Argan Argar is found in *Cults of Glorantha II*.



The Black Sun

For there to be a God-Emperor of the Sun there must also be a God-Emperor of the Shadow. Yelm's own dark shadow, spiritual, invisible, yet palpable. He has enjoyed our worship for hundreds of years. Not the anti-sun, for that implies un-light. No, the Black Sun is the darkness in Yelm's wake, without truly being touched by night. You tell us that even our troll warlords believed that the Black Sun was false? I call you a liar, God Learner. You will say anything in order to hear my explanations and steal my secrets. You name us the humans of the 'Kingdom of Ignorance,' but I believe ignorance is your crime, not ours. Leave Churn Durel and may the uz let you do so alive. At least we have gods, Jrustelan. At least we have gods.'

—Last words of some nameless peasant in the Kingdom of Ignorance

Overview

The residents of the Kingdom of Ignorance are extremely testy in regards to any criticism of their god. Yet the origins of Black Sun worship are found in the rather comedic beginnings of history, when God-Emperor Yelm had 'competition' in those that were jealous of his rank and believed that the exalted position of Ruler of the Universe should be theirs rather than his. One of these beings was called Basko Pale-Sun, who was a weaker, stupider cousin of Yelm with little real power. In fact, the very first time he met the God-Emperor, Basko died instantly. It was after his death that he became the Black Sun, now revered by the people of the Kingdom of Ignorance to the north of Kralorela.

Humans and trolls alike worship the Black Sun. The people of the Kingdom of Ignorance (or 'Churn Durel' to hear them say it) see the Black Sun as Yelm's shadow. Not an anti-sun, for that implies consummate darkness but rather the shadow in the sun's wake. It is a complex and strange philosophy.

Mythology

Basko's legend ironically begins with his pathetic demise. It is known that he was an upstart light spirit that sought to defy Yelm. To this end he equipped himself with the items he believed necessary to bring about the death of the God-Emperor, which amounted to rocks and sticks for weapons and dead fish for use as scale armour. With these preparations made, he went to confront the God-Emperor and take the throne of the universe before Yelm could ascend. When Basko met Yelm the foolish light god burned black in a heartbeat under Yelm's brilliant aura. Since the few Dara Happan legends tell of Yelm's initial ascension and fail to mention Basko at all, it is likely that the God-Emperor never even knew he had competition from such an idiotic and weak relative. In the mystical and mythological death, the Pale Sun became part of Yelm's shadow.

Basko was leeches of all fluid, dehydrated and charred on the spot and reduced to a tiny seed – the shadow of a seed, even – rather than a true god or spirit. This seed, which still contained the potency of a god, albeit a weak and useless one, found its way into the soil of the Fields of Doubt in what is the modern day Kingdom of Ignorance. When Yelm died and the shadows grew over the world during the Storm Age, Basko – as part of Yelm's shadow – also grew. He grew into his new form, the black reflection of Yelm and finally sprouted into life as a community of trolls led by the uzuz Dozaki entered the surface world from their ruined Wonderhome. In following the dark figure of Basko, the uz settled in the largely human realm of Churn Durel and attempted to name it Dozaki's Newhome. As evidenced by most maps of Glorantha, this name failed to hold or overtake 'Kingdom of Ignorance' in common use.

The humans of the region did not see things quite the same way. They had operated for generations under the principles of the sun in their sky undergoing fundamental changes throughout its existence. The arrival of the trolls and their 'Black Sun' was tied into some sort of vague prophecy about the sun turning dark and black fire filling the sky. The native humans accepted the newcomers by welcoming them as rulers and adopting their patron spirit as a new god. The uz claimed many of the ancient ruins on the land and became both the ruling and religious castes to the ultimately foolish humans.

As part of their ruling laws, the uz established traditions of blood sacrifice to ensure that the humans remained cowed and oppressed (all in the name of 'appeasing the Black Sun' of course) and a regular supply of food. As rulers, the uz did not let their sacrificial human victims go to waste in the ground. The troll overlords also created the region's renowned gladiatorial contest which is a custom more famous than the god of the kingdom itself. In this act of worship to the Black Sun and other solar gods, the deaths of the beaten are considered sacrifices to the god while the innards of each loser are traditionally eaten by the victor if the victor is a troll. All sizeable temples dedicated to the Black Sun feature a courtyard for these gladiatorial bouts.

The Kingdom of Ignorance went to war against Chaos during the True Darkness. At the two battles called Winter's Win and the Glory of the Black Sun, the kingdom's soldiers inflicted punishing losses in the ranks of the Devil's minions. One of these battles, when the uz and their human allies met the army of the headless Chaos god Tien, is renowned today as one of the eerie, rare battles against Chaos that occurred with both sides fighting in regimented, orderly units of troops from start to finish. Our agents have HeroQuested many times to examine the whys and wherefores of this oddity, though no answers have been forthcoming as yet.

The Black Sun is next to useless for HeroQuesting, though taking the roles of heroes that have fought in his name is much more satisfying. A wide variety of warriors and killers have fought for the Black Sun in the Chaos Wars.

The uz have significantly lost their grip on their 'new home' region and any following of the Black Sun religion is largely behind the troll race now. The Black Sun, traditionally referred to as Zerel Fan by the human natives, is worshipped mostly by the humans that remain in the nation. Until these humans' recent expulsion by outside forces, much of Black Sun worship filtered through the culture as perversions of the Dara Happan solar religions, occasionally with aspects of Kralori beliefs mixed in. It is clear to anyone outside the realm that the Black Sun was no more than the godling Basko used by the uz to deceive the human residents. The

idea behind the Black Sun was to have the uz rule over their human allies, though many holy men and women took the uz seriously when they claimed to be the dark reflection of solar cultures like Peloria, dedicated to preserving the balance between the sun and its shadow. Curiously enough, the culture of the uz within Churn Durel was patriarchal, not matriarchal. The Black Sun is a perfect example of the mutable and false nature of the gods revered by other cultures.

Runes: Illusion, Shadow

Pantheon: Troll (Kingdom of Ignorance)

Worshippers: Uz, humans of Churn Durel

Worshipper's Duties: To oppose Chaos; to oppose any sky god cult that threatens to reveal the truth of the Black Sun

Initiate Membership

Requirements: Characters must sacrifice their own blood in order to join the cult and appease the Black Sun. This blood loss is enough to permanently reduce the character's STR by one point. Initiates must also donate 10% of their income to the nearest Black Sun temple.

Acolyte Membership

Requirements: Characters must donate half of their time and income to the closest temple, which often tasks members with fighting Chaos, spreading the word of the Black Sun to the exiled trolls of Churn Durel or participating in gladiatorial battles.

Rune Priest Membership

Requirements: Characters must dedicate 90% of their time and income to the nearest temple. Each Rune Priest must bring at least 100 new members into the cult every year (along with their sacrificed blood) or be stripped of his rank and exiled from the cult for incompetence.

Cult Skills: First Aid, Heal, Influence, Lore (Churn Durel), Stealth

Cult Spells: Countermagic, Darkwall, Extinguish

Common Divine Magic: All

Special Benefits: Any member of Acolyte level or above can always find a teacher within a cult temple to teach him both Divine Magic and Spirit Magic as they pertain to the Black Sun. Both of these disciplines focus heavily on magical spells that deal with darkness, shadows, deception and the destruction of Chaos.

Acolytes and Rune Priests gain a +15% and +30% bonus to Influence tests with other worshippers or any residents of Churn Durel that hold follow the Black Sun cult.

Gorakiki

'The Queen of Many Faces is among our holiest goddesses. In the days before Sunfall she fed uz in Wonderhome. In the Chaos Wars she grew strong and baffled the Devil as friend and patron of uz. Uz owe her much, I think. That is why uz respect the beetles and moths and the wasps of the Hurtplace.'

—Ragzen, uzuz prophets

Overview

Here we have the Goddess of Insects, revered by the uz because of her great services to the trolls. The goddess Gorakiki began her existence as a lesser godling, a slave deity that existed only at the behest of more powerful gods. She bred her children for the trolls to eat and ride and even train against on the hunt and in war. This all changed with the death of Yelm. When the uz burned in their Wonderhome, Gorakiki was one of the many gods that fled to the surface. Once in the Hurtplace she declared that she was free of her servitude and claimed that insects would thrive and multiply on the surface world.

This was so.

Gorakiki is a powerful figure within the modern uz pantheon, as she allows the uz to both eat her children and domesticate them as pets and steeds.



Any of our hirelings or the respected God Learner fellowship that have faced the uz in battle can attest to the deadly nature of the trolls' insect-riding 'knights.' It is alarming to say the least when a dark troll mounted on a colossal wasp thunders overhead and the beast's heavy beating wings buzz so loud one swears he is hearing the roar of the sea.

Mythology

The uz raise temples and shrines to Gorakiki in their lands. These temples are made of mud, rock and even the harvested chitin of dead giant anthropoids like cockroaches or centipedes the size of several men. These shrines are devoid of any metal in their construction, which Gorakiki regards as an insult to her worship since she was wounded by Orlanth in the True Darkness, struck by his metal axe in a spiteful attack. The Storm God apparently believed the Insect Goddess was a demon of some kind when he first set eyes upon her immense ugliness.

The tales of Gorakiki are as splintered as the cults that worship her. Stories of her cunning in the God's War and her viciousness in defeating Chaos creatures vary with each telling since trolls of various insect cults describe her virtues as if she were the insect they worship.

Sub-cults exist for every insect and associated creature found in Glorantha. The four largest cults found in the Shadowlands and Dagori Inkarth are the wasp, beetle, moth and locust cults. The beetle cult is generally the largest among the troll race as a whole, though each region varies considerably.

The cults can create a great deal of trouble for members of other races that live near a Gorakiki temple, commonly referred to as a Nest. Local humans will often become members of these cults, even if only to ward off the goddesses' attention. A locust plague every few years is bad enough. One every year, consisting of hundreds of giant locusts, would be beyond the pale for any community.

The wasp cults of Gorakiki focus on the deeds of their goddess as the queen of her kind, telling tales of her deeds at the head of great armies against Chaos. Groups of wasp-worshippers will leave their temples on cult orders and work as a dedicated and skilled team in order to do the goddess' work. In some regions the wasp cult is the most dominant, in others the bee cult reigns supreme. Both operate in a similar manner, answering to their queens, who in turn answers the words of Gorakiki.

The beetle cults rely on independence and individual physical might. It is notoriously hard to issue orders to these uz, as they are fiercely resentful of authority. They work alone more often than not, considering it a sign of weakness to ask for aid. They even attempt to train themselves in magic when they are able, rather than receive formal training. The deeds they tell of Gorakiki in the God's War paint her as a lone warrior, valiantly enduring all hardships and punishments Chaos forces inflict upon her.

The moth sub-cults enforce their independent natures less harshly than the beetles, though many are still loners by nature. Just as moths flutter alone yet are drawn in groups to sources of light, so too do the moth-cultists wander alone, seeking out sources of Chaos or injustice against the troll race and spreading the word to others of their kind to take action at the corruption they have discovered. Their greatest duties are to safeguard the nest-temples of all Gorakiki's worshippers, even those of rival sub-cults. Signs of imperial aggression or the threat of Chaos against any nest are what the

moth-cultists seek out. Individual moth-worshippers respect the privacy of others but know the advantages of working together to achieve their aims. The tales that tell of Gorakiki have the goddess largely absent from the God's War, moving across Glorantha and watching, investigating and taking word to the other troll gods far more often than interfering in battles.

The locust cults are the marauders and berserkers of the religion. They are also mostly independent, stalking the world and seeking out signs of Chaos or corruption, much as the moth-cult. Though where the moth-uz are defensive, searching for threats against their kind, the locust cult are aggressive, hunting across Glorantha for Chaos or dangerous human presences in order to destroy them *before* they can become threats. It is the way of the locust-worshippers to carry the fight to the heart of the enemy and create as much havoc and injury to the opposing forces through any means possible, rather than defend established troll territory. The deeds they tell of Gorakiki focus on her legends of terrible conflict with Chaos and light gods alike, at the head of vast troll armies, fighting for territory that the cult (and all uz) might then claim for themselves.

Beyond these regional and sub-cult variations, the duties of most worshippers revolve around the breeding of their insects, both for food and, in the cases of giant insects, as steeds and allies in battle. The cult's holy days are based upon regional preferences, such as the day of a famous shaman's death, the birth of a new insect queen in the Nest or a great victory in battle.

Many of Gorakiki's myths from the Chaos Wars portray her as a caring matriarch who sought to shelter the trolls from harm, offering them her children has food as well as fighting Chaos foes that came near their communities. A great deal of the HeroQuests that my fellow sorcerers in the Alliance work through are based upon these very myths.

Runes: Beast, Darkness

Pantheon: Troll

Worshippers: Trolls, intelligent insects, humans near a Nest-temple

Worshipper's Duties: Breeding insects, protecting local Nests, opposing Chaos (varies by sub-cult)

Lay Members (Eggs)

Requirements: All lay members are considered 'eggs' in relation to their place in their religion. To join the cult, a character must provide a single lead bolg worth of food to the closest Nest each week. Failure to do so results in expulsion for disrespect.

It should also be noted that all unintelligent insects are considered lay members in the cult, though they obviously bypass such donations.

Initiates (Larvae)

Requirements: Larvae must have a Lore (Insect) skill of at least 40%, representing their knowledge of an insect's biology, habits and intelligence, as well the basic details of breeding and care of such creatures.

At this stage an initiate must choose his path in the cult: that of the guardian or the worker. Guardians spend three weeks of every season working to defend the Nest from attack, though they are most commonly charged with venturing out to serve in the surrounding area. Workers toil in the breeding pens and the hives of the temple, which can make for backbreaking work. This must be performed at least one week per season and more in regions where the cult has few members. Guardians and workers may change their positions if they wish, though the temple leader must be informed. Although the rank of worker sounds less glorious than that of a guardian, it is a violation of Gorakiki's teachings for a guardian to rise to the rank of Nest-overseer. Only workers may have that honour, as thanks for their toil and expertise with the insects.

Intelligent insects are automatically considered Larvae.

Acolytes (Pupae)

Requirements: Pupae must have the skills Lore (Insect) and Riding at 60% or more, representing their burgeoning expertise with these creatures.

The benefits and duties are standard for cult acolytes, as laid out in *RuneQuest*. Once a member has reached Pupae rank, he may petition the cult leaders to learn shamanic spells, though only if he has been a worker for the entirety of his larva and pupa stages.

Shamans (Imagoes)

Requirements: Imagoes must possess Lore (Insect) and Riding at 90% or above and must be able to cast Spirit Magic. As soon as a character possesses the skills necessary and the ability to cast Spirit Magic, he is immediately recognised as an Imago.

Shamans must spend 90% of their time attending to the duties of the temple. Much of this time will involve quelling rivalries with other insect sub-cults in the local area (whether by negotiation or destruction) and selecting candidates for advancement among the cult members who wish to become Imagoes.

Imagoes are forbidden to intentionally kill any insect, unless it is to be eaten.

Cult Skills: Lore (Insects), Riding

Cult Spells: Any Beast rune spells

Common Divine Magic: Insect Form spells

Common Spirit Magic: All

Special Benefits: Members of Larvae rank and above may learn all the Rune Magic and Divine Magic temple elders are willing to teach, at standard costs and Magnitudes. Members of Pupae rank may learn Spirit Magic, though only if they are workers and only if they have the favour of the temple Imagoes.

Members of Imago rank gain +20% to all Influence rolls with other trolls.

Insect Form Spells

These Divine Magic spells are used by each of the sub-cults, though the exact effects depend upon the cult in question. For example, a member of the moth-cult

would cast Moth Head, Featherscales and Mothflight when calling upon this magic. All characters with Transform Head spells active can automatically speak to insects of a corresponding nature as if they had 100% in the Language skill of that species.

Transform Head

Duration 15, Magnitude 1, Ranged

The troll's skull swells and elongates as the flesh warps into an insectoid shape.

- ☒ **Beetle's Head:** The uz gains six armour points on his Head hit location, though he loses the benefits of trollhide and can no longer wear a helmet. The character also gains +50% to his Unarmed attack skill when making bite attacks. These bites deliver 1D8 damage in addition to his standard damage modifier.
- ☒ **Wasp's Head:** The uz gains four armour points on his Head hit location, though he loses the benefits of trollhide and can no longer wear a helmet. The character also gains +20% to all Perception tests to see anything that moves. Due to his large mandibles, the troll gains a further +30% to his Unarmed attack skill when delivering bite attacks, which deliver 1D4 damage in addition to his standard damage modifier.
- ☒ **Moth's Head:** The uz gains one armour point on his Head hit location, though he loses the benefits of trollhide and may no longer wear a helmet. The character also gains +60% to all Perception rolls involving sight, hearing or touch and gains the Life Sense trait as detailed in *RuneQuest*.
- ☒ **Locust's Head:** The uz gains three armour points on his Head hit location, though he loses the benefits of trollhide and can no longer wear a helmet. Due to his large mandibles, the troll gains a further +30% to his Unarmed attack skill when delivering bite attacks, which deliver 1D4 damage in addition to his standard damage modifier. Additionally, he gains the Life Sense trait and +20% to all Perception tests.

Transform Body

Duration 15, Magnitude 3, Ranged

The troll's skeleton cracks and warps while his flesh ripples and changes under the spell's magic, taking a new shape pleasing to that of his goddess.

- ☒ **Beetle's Carapace:** The troll's flesh darkens to deep blue, brown or black and forms into a carapace, giving the character an AP rating of seven on all Body hit locations (not the Limbs or the Head). This bonus stacks with the AP bonus of trollhide but all armour must be removed before the spell is cast. The shell infers a -10% Skill Penalty for the duration of the spell and adds three to the character's SIZ rating.
- ☒ **Wasp's Stinger:** The character's lower body swells into a giant wasp's abdomen and his legs split into four separate, thin insect legs each with a thin layer of chitin. The character gains +20% to his Unarmed attack skill and the ability to deliver a poison attack with each successful Unarmed attack. This poison functions akin to giant wasp venom (see below) except that the potency is equivalent to the character's current Magic Points + 10. The Abdomen and each Leg gain three armour points that do *not* stack with any bonuses from trollhide or armour.
- ☒ **Moth's Featherscales:** No armour may be worn while this spell is in effect. When cast, the troll's Body hit locations (but not the Head or Limbs) become covered in dense, feathery clouds of loose scales akin to the furry flesh of a moth. While these scales add only two armour points to those afforded by trollhide, they have an incredible advantage in combat. Any weapon that lands on one of the affected hit locations – even without doing damage – becomes blunted and ineffective, gummed up by sticky scales from the troll's body that cling to the weapon's killing or striking side. The weapon does half-damage until the wielder spends a Combat Action to clean off the clogging fur-scales.
- ☒ **Locust's Chitin Flesh:** The troll's flesh is encased in a stone-hard chitin shell which gives six armour points on all Body hit locations (but not the Limbs

or the Head). This bonus stacks with the AP bonus of trollhide armour must be removed before the spell is cast. The caster may choose the colours and patterns on his chitin-skin. For the duration of the spell, the character's SIZ increases by two points.

Transform Limbs

Duration 15, Magnitude 2, Ranged

The troll's limbs bend and warp to new insectoid shapes, giving the troll powers of his chosen cult-creature.

- ☒ **Beetle's Arms:** This spell gives the troll a second pair of arms that sprout from his sides just under his natural arms. In most ways, they are identical to his natural arms, though these additional limbs are sheathed in AP 7 chitin. The uz gains an additional Combat Action per arm, per turn. The arms use the same skill ratings as the character's natural arms.
- ☒ **Sprout Wings:** The caster's shoulder blades sprout delicate wasp wings twice as long as the character is tall. These can be folded against the back or extended to allow flight. Through the magic of this spell, the troll can fly at a speed of 12m (considered Light Activity) with a penalty of -1m for every three points of ENC he carries. The wings emit a loud buzzing drone when they beat, reducing Stealth tests by -50%. Combat damage to the character's Body hit locations has a 20% chance of striking the wings, which have four Hit Points. If they take more damage than this, they are considered useless until healed.
- ☒ **Mothflight:** The character's shoulder blades sprout delicate, soft moth wings twice as long as the character is tall. These can be held folded against the back or extended to allow flight. Through the magic of this spell, the troll can fly at a speed of 10m (considered Light Activity) with a penalty of -1m for every six points of ENC the character carries. The wings make a windy swishing sound when they beat, reducing Stealth tests by -20%. Combat damage to the character's Body hit locations has a 20% chance of striking the wings, which have five Hit Points. If they take more than five Hit Points of damage, they are considered useless until healed.

☒ **Locust Limbs:** The troll forms tiny bony spines on his forearms which can be rubbed together, creating a crackling, creaking drone that other locust-cult members above the rank of Lay Member can understand perfectly. Using this spell, trolls can communicate in this strange language without risk of eavesdroppers. Additionally, the character's legs warp and twist to have backwards knees and become capable of incredible leaps. The character can jump STR x 10 metres, with a penalty of one metre per point of ENC carried.

Speak to Insects

Duration 30, Magnitude 1, Ranged

The troll emits a series of quiet clicks and rumblings deep within his throat, communicating with any nearby insects.

This spell allows a character to speak directly to insects through clicking and growling throat sounds that imitate the various sounds the tiny creatures make. For the spell's duration, the troll may communicate with any nearby insects he chooses to speak to and understand them in return.

Giant Insects

The following rules represent the insects that trolls of Acolyte rank or higher in the sub-cults of Gorakiki can own as steeds and pets.

Giant Wasp

These creatures are the trolls' steeds and allies within Gorakiki's wasp sub-cult. Many are larger than an average troll, making them big enough to carry one uz warrior (or three or four trollkin) as they fly.

These creatures are unfailingly loyal to their hive queen back at the Nest-temple, though they also obey the orders of the trolls they serve as mounts. They are intelligent enough to understand single-word commands in human or troll tongues as long as they are trained to do so, though most uz use a Speak with Insects spell to get their points across. Carrying a troll counts as Medium

Activity for giant wasps and carrying a trollkin or a human counts as Light Activity. Carrying an uzko that is wearing lead armour counts as Heavy Activity.

A giant wasp will live for over a decade if the creature is well cared for in its Nest-temple. The wasps used as steeds by the uzko are generally larger and more intelligent than their wild cousins, due to skilled and divinely-blessed breeding.

CHARACTERISTICS

STR	6D6	(19)
CON	3D6+8	(17)
DEX	3D6+6	(19)
SIZ	8D6	(24)
INT	4	(2)
POW	1D6+6	(9)
CHA	5	(5)

Giant Wasp Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1	Right Rear Leg	4/3
2	Left Rear Leg	4/3
3	Right Middle Leg	4/3
4	Left Middle Leg	4/3
5-7	Stinger	4/7
8-9	Abdomen	4/9
10-13	Thorax	4/10
14	Left Wing	3/2
15	Right Wing	3/2
16	Right Front Leg	4/3
17	Left Front Leg	4/3
18-20	Head	4/6

Weapons

Type	Weapon skill	Damage
Bite	35%	1D6+1D8
Sting	50%	1D8+1D8+Poison

Special Rules

Combat Actions: Four

Strike Rank: +10

Movement: 6m, 10m when flying

Traits: Poison, Wall Walking

Skills: Athletics 45%, Dodge 40%, Perception 55%

Typical Armour: Chitin (AP 4, no Skill Penalty)

Giant Wasp Venom

Type: Ingested or smeared

Delay: One Combat Round

Potency: 65

Full Effect: 1D3 Hit Point damage to location struck, applies -8 penalty to victim's CON

Duration: 6D10 minutes

Bloodback Beetle

These beetles are a breed of the Karrg Beetles usually used by trolls, as described in *RuneQuest Monsters*. The principal difference is that Bloodback Beetles have never been found in the wild. They are the chosen mounts of the highest-ranking and most powerful priests and troll warriors of Gorakiki. Due to the skill of thousands of generations of care and breeding, no larger or stronger beetle can be found in the world – the giant beetles used by the uz are the pinnacle of their kind and the Bloodbacks are an elite breed among even these. Bloodbacks are more tenacious and vicious than their Karrg cousins, snapping at nearby beings with their great jaws and feasting on the remains of their dead enemies with glee.

These giant beetles range in colour from grey through brown and black, much as any Karrg Beetle. Bloodback Beetles are named for the blood-red smears of colouring on their shells that mark them out as the 'alphas' of beetle existence. All other beetles, even the largest Karrgs, instinctively shy away from Bloodbacks and defer to them in their own clicking, incomprehensible ways.

The creation of Bloodbacks is rumoured to be the work of Garzaki Farsight, a great Imago of Gorakiki who pleaded with the beetle incarnation of her goddess for power that would aid her community against Chaos. The assistance came, though in a different form than expected. All Karrg Beetles born for the next year were dark-shelled and mottled with streaks of redness, growing to be more ferocious and capable of greater flying distances than their standard Karrg-kin, as well as having thicker, gnarled chitin.

In any Nest of Gorakiki, 5% of the Karrg Beetles will be born as Bloodbacks. They are kept as ferocious defenders of the temple or given to the most promising and powerful uz as steeds. These creatures are not graceful flyers by any means. A Bloodback Beetle may fly for double its CON score in metres before being forced to land, which counts as Heavy Activity for the beast's Fatigue.

CHARACTERISTICS

STR 5D6+12 (29)

CON 4D6+6 (20)

DEX 2D6 (7)

SIZ 5D6+12 (29)

INT 4 (4)

POW 1D6+6 (10)

CHA 2 (2)

Bloodback Beetle Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1	Right Rear Leg	7/8
2	Left Rear Leg	7/8
3	Right Middle Leg	7/8
4	Left Middle Leg	7/8
5-9	Abdomen	7/11
10-13	Thorax	7/12
14	Right Front Leg	7/8
15	Left Front Leg	7/8
16-20	Head	7/10

Weapons

Type	Weapon skill	Damage
Bite	60%	1D8+1D12

Special Rules

Combat Actions: Two

Strike Rank: +4

Movement: 6m, 4m when flying

Traits: Trample

Skills: Athletics 40%, Dodge 45%, Perception 50%, Resilience 80%, Tracking 45%

Typical Armour: Chitin shell (AP 7, no Skill Penalty)

Wolf Locust

Wolf Locusts are bred by the trolls of the Gorakiki-as-locust cults. Used as watchdogs and bloodhounds by the uz who keep them as animal companions, they are far more common than locust steeds. Their senses make them alert and skilled trackers. When cornered or otherwise endangered, a wolf locust responds viciously; however, wolf locusts are only rarely bred specifically for combat on the battlefield.

An average wolf locust is the size of a large dog or a wolf. Its shell is the grey of a winter sky, though many wolf locusts are bred with darker chitin shells. A few rare examples are born with white shells and red eyes. These are considered blessed by Gorakiki though they display no differences in size and intelligence.

CHARACTERISTICS

STR	2D6+12	(19)
CON	3D6	(11)
DEX	3D6+6	(17)
SIZ	2D6+3	(10)
INT	3	(3)
POW	1D4+6	(8)
CHA	2	(2)

Wolf Locust Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1	Right Rear Leg	4/2
2	Left Rear Leg	4/2
3	Right Middle Leg	4/2
4	Left Middle Leg	4/2
5-9	Abdomen	4/2
10-13	Thorax	4/2
14	Right Front Leg	4/2
15	Left Front Leg	4/2
16-20	Head	4/2

Weapons

Type	Weapon skill	Damage
Bite	30%	1D8+1D2

Special Rules

Combat Actions: Three

Strike Rank: +9

Movement: 4m, 10m when jumping, 5m when flying

Traits: Wall Walking

Skills: Athletics 75%, Dodge 80%, Perception 50%, Resilience 25%, Tracking 60%

Typical Armour: Chitin shell (AP 2, no Skill Penalty)

Companion Moth

These moths are the product of the Gorakiki moth-cult's breeding ingenuity. They are as large as a raven, owl or eagle and accompany trolls as winged messengers or lookouts. As insectoid creatures go, these companion moths are relatively intelligent, capable of communicating what their heightened senses perceive in the surrounding area. Generations of selective breeding have imbued these beings with a rudimentary ability to sense life in their vicinity, making companion moths invaluable pets of a sort.

Most of these creatures appear to have skin of dark, furry chitin, though it is light enough to offer only minimal protection and never hinder flight. The moths range in colour from black and brown to grey and white. A rare few sport what seem to be simple images in the patterning of their backs or wings, resembling weapons, skulls or even clan symbols. Breeding such images into the flesh of the companion moths is considered an art among Gorakiki cultists.

These moths are loyal allies and talented scouts, though they have no capacity for causing harm to others. Even at their size, their mouths are so small and awkwardly placed on their insect heads that no companion moth can deliver anything more than a harmless bite.

CHARACTERISTICS

STR	1D3	(2)
CON	2D3	(4)
DEX	3D6+18	(27)
SIZ	1D2	(2)
INT	5	(5)
POW	1D6+3	(6)
CHA	2	(2)

Companion Moth Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-5	Right Wing	-/2
6-10	Left Wing	-/2
11-16	Body	1/4
17-20	Head	1/3

Special Rules

Combat Actions: Four

Strike Rank: +15

Movement: 2m, 8m when flying

Traits: Life Sense, Wall Walking

Skills: Dodge 70%, Perception 80%,
Stealth 90%

Typical Armour: Thin furry chitin on head and
Body hit locations (AP 1, no Skill
Penalty)

Himile

'In the north we most often answer to Himile, not Valind. Valind is lord only over a single season, while this far from the hot lands, it is Himile's touch that is on everything around. The trees are naked and the water is ice, all because of Himile's breath. To not respect such power is the way of fools. When I die, I will become part of Himile's breath, for I serve him faithful and true in life. The way back to Wonderhome was forgotten by my people thousands of years ago.'

— Iruark Jendak, snow troll hunter

Overview

This is a cold, heartless religion for a cold and heartless god. Himile, to the trolls, is the one true power in the frozen north of Genertela where the snow trolls dwell in their nomadic hunter-clans. Himile appeals to these trolls because of his strength and dominance over the region but there is also an element of appeasement in the worship he receives from them. In a way, it is a sad tale: the Himile cultists worship the God of Cold because they are so far gone from Wonderhome and turn to him to offer an afterlife in their new, frost-racked homeland.

Himile is generous in that respect, insofar as he answers their hopes for existence beyond death. The snow trolls who join his cult believe that they become ice demons after their demise, taking their homeland as manifestation of Himile's power in return for a life spent in his cult. These ice demons are what imperial records refer to as the 'Holtri.' They are terrible, wrathful creatures formed of black or blue ice that are essentially mindless – slaved to the whims and desires of Himile or powerful uz cultists.

Mythology

I have seen much of the uzhim's worship of Himile firsthand, for which I must say I am honoured and privileged. They were not secretive with their religion, even though I was candid about my intentions. Perhaps the snow trolls I encountered – those that call themselves the Frostheart Clan – were not typical of the northern uz. Suffice to say they insisted that my 'games' in the hero plane would have no effect on the power of Himile in the north, nor would my work ever interfere with what they termed their 'fleshless rebirths:' a reference to their promised resurrection as Hollri demons.

I witnessed great etchings of Himile, cut, hammered, clawed or even bitten into walls of solid ice. They marked locations of shrines or indicated nearby temples to the god, though these northern halls of worship are infinitely more humble than even the primitive uz churches of lands in warmer Genertelan climes. Some were darkened caves filled with trinkets, carvings of rock and ice and small shrines to Himile. Only a few that I saw were made of stone and these were simple affairs, appearing to be little different to the caves in terms of what was contained therein.

I tell you this in all honesty: my breath caught in my throat when I saw the images carved into the walls of ice. Simple in detail but beautiful in their vast scope and size, the memory of them has stayed with me for many years and has never faded with time. Beyond the mythic song-tellings so popular in uz culture, this is the way the uzhim record their god's deeds without written language. I traced my fingertips along the images of scenes almost complicated and precise enough to be called hieroglyphs, so thoroughly did they tell the Himile's stories.

Many of these tales focus on the god testing the endurance of the mortals that live in Genertela's icy northlands. In several such tales, the Hollri bedevil a traveller, bringing him to the point of utmost despair and forcing him to fight against incredible odds in order to survive. One of the ice demons is actually the Cold God in disguise and if the mortal can best Himile in battle, he is rewarded for his prowess. Himile fights with both cold magic and a spear of solid ice, which turns red as it siphons more and more of the target's blood with every wound. In these HeroQuests, several of which I have entered myself, the quester takes the role of the mortal fighting the God of Cold and his Hollri servitors.

Other tales pit Himile against the Chaos gods and their slave-beasts that can endure the killing chill of the north during the God's War. Although Himile spent many battles fighting alongside Valind, Subere and Dehore in various instances, there are plenty of examples where the Cold God fought without other deities, summoning legions of his ice demons and troll followers to crush Chaos armies that sought to defile his frozen realm. In some tales he plays the role of commander, watching and using his magic from a distance to aid his army tactically. In others he wades through the enemy, screaming, freezing the blood of demons with his frost-breath and impaling their hearts on an ice spear that never melts.

The priests of Himile among the uzhim are noted for their independence and their loose mandate from their distant god. Himile seems to be content with his followers opposing Chaos and keeping his cult dominant among the snow trolls.

Runes: Cold

Pantheon: Troll

Worshippers: Mainly uzhim

Worshipper's Duties: Contribute to uzhim society and the local clans, spread the Himile cult across the north, oppose the forces of Chaos

Lay Member Membership

Requirements: All uzhim are automatically considered members with no other requirements.

Initiate Membership

Requirements: Standard

Acolyte Membership

Requirements: Standard

Runepriest Membership

Requirements: Standard

Cult Skills: Athletics, Spear, Stealth

Cult Spells: All cold or ice spells; cult members of Initiate rank or above are barred from ever casting heat or fire spells, and may not attune fire or heat runes

Common Divine Magic: Any cold or ice magic

Common Spirit Magic: All

Special Benefits: For each rank above Lay Member, an uzhim gains +10% Influence in rolls with other snow trolls and to deal with (or intimidate) the Hollri.

All spells that deal in principles of ice or cold cost *half* the normal number of Magic Points. Characters may also attune cold and ice runes without the need for a roll.

The Hollri

The Hollri are ice demons. Vaguely humanoid in shape, though more often resembling an uzko, they are made of solid ice with what looks like liquid white frost 'slush' flowing through their bodies as a kind of 'blood' visible through their transparent ice-skin. Many Hollri sport antler-like horns of ice, or other noticeably inhuman aspects such as red eyes, taloned feet or clawed hands.

These demons are born on Valind's Glacier, often remaining insubstantial and ghosting out into the world in mindless wanderings. When they manifest at the site of a creature's death, they form from the surrounding ice and blood from the body.

Hollri wield spears of ice, which function identically to a permanent Spear of the Cold Lord spell, and which turn dark red as they leech a target's blood with each hit. Hollri may however 'create' a new Spear of the Cold Lord by sacrificing one Hit Point and pulling the ice from their own bodies.

The ritual to summon a Hollri is a *Summon, Magnitude 2, Reusable* Divine Magic spell used only by the cults of Himile and Valind. A summoning magician must bleed three blood droplets on a clear ice surface and chant for Himile's favour for three minutes. The Hollri will manifest from the ice and the blood droplets will form its red eyes. Hollri can only be commanded by the summoner whose blood has formed their eyes. Other than this law of obedience, Hollri will willingly fight each other, and when uzhim tribes clash both tribes are usually accompanied by ice demon allies.

Once a weapon strike has pierced their strong ice-skin, chips of ice-flesh will hew off and fly to the sides with each blow. The real threat in fighting a Hollri lies in the fact that they regenerate two Hit Points of damage per turn, to 1D3 hit locations.

Hollri have many icicles that can quickly form on their bodies. They can break these off and use them as small javelins, hurling them against their enemies. These very rapidly regrow, so they will not run out of these missiles during any combat.

CHARACTERISTICS

STR	3D6+6	(17)
CON	3D6	(10)
DEX	3D6	(10)
SIZ	3D6+9	(19)
INT	1D4	(2)
POW	2D6	(6)
CHA	1D4	(2)

Hollri Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Leg	6/6
4-6	Left Leg	6/6
7-9	Abdomen	6/7
10-12	Chest	6/8
13-15	Right Arm	6/5
16-18	Left Arm	6/5
19-20	Head	6/4

Weapons

Type	Weapon skill	Damage
Spear	70%	1D8+3D6+1D6+1
Antlers	40%	1D8+1D6
Icicle Javelin	50%	1D6+1D6

Special Rules

Combat Actions: Two

Strike Rank: +11

Movement: 5m

Traits: Life Sense, Regeneration

Skills: Athletics 50%, Perception 60%, Resilience 80%, Stealth 30%, Survival 90%

Typical Armour: Ice Skin (AP 6, no Skill Penalty)



New Divine Spells

These two spells are used a great deal by the uzhim in the course of their lives.

Frost-Blooded

Duration 15, Magnitude 2 Touch

Out of the corner of a viewer's eye, the troll's skin seems to pale to crystalline blue, though the uzhim appears completely normal otherwise.

This spell allows the targeted character to live in sub-zero temperatures. For the Duration of the spell, no non-magical extremes of cold will harm the benefactor of the Frost-Blooded spell. The spell renders the recipient greatly vulnerable to heat extremes and fire, with the Frost-Blooded character taking double damage from any such conditions. Obviously, an uzhim hit by a fire spell while under the effects of this spell is likely to die. Lucky then that on the rare instances when the uzhim nomad tribes war upon one another that they are barred from using fire magic...

Spear of the Cold Lord

Duration 15, Magnitude 2, Progressive, Touch

The uzhim's spear is wreathed in a coating of solid, shining ice. The wounds it causes send shockwaves of wracking coldness through the foe's body, and the spear turns red as it siphons a prey's blood.

This spell causes a spear to become coated in magical ice, which raises the damage of a blow to 3D6. For each point of Magnitude beyond the initial expenditure, the damage increases by +1D6. The wielder still gains the benefit of his damage bonus.

As a last bonus, the spear drains a further one Hit Point of damage in blood, which saturates the spear itself and turns it dark red. No matter the Duration of the spell, once a Spear of the Cold Lord has drained five Hit Points of blood (from five successful strikes) the spell expires and must be recast.

A Spear of the Cold Lord becomes immune to magical cold damage. The spell can not be coupled with any spells related to fire or a *Bladesharp* spell.

Kyger Litor

Friend, don't be slow,

*To find the home all life must know;
The goddess will help you go.*

*From the lands that see,
I am bound and you are free;
No longer bound must you be.*

*Of Darkness you learned,
For Darkness you yearned,
To Darkness you are returned.'*

— Extract from the Kyger Litor funeral rites

Overview

Kyger Litor is not the loving, nurturing deity of creation that we humans might expect a progenitor god to be. Instead, the deity known to the trolls as Uzbirther is a primitive, simplistic and feral creature, ruled by her passions and instincts. Worship of Kyger Litor is often simple and grim.

Kyger Litor is the source of the trolls because of her toying with the man and darkness runes, yet she is also the end of existence for the uz, most of whom believe that their eternal destiny lies in Kyger Litor's afterlife: an endless grey expanse of near-darkness populated by edible insects and pools of fine-tasting water. Some say that drinking from certain pools decides what fate the troll will have in reincarnation, though others insist that their deeds in trying to serve Kyger Litor and reverse the womb-curses are the ways to earning a desirable reincarnation.

Kyger Litor's rise to the surface world was not a quick one. With Yelm's fall into the Underworld, Kyger Litor was one of the darkness deities that resisted the slain Sun God and sought to destroy him before he could become God of the Dead. Ultimately, she was defeated and led many of her mortal children to the Hurtplace, but not before many battles against Yelm's followers.

Mythology

Few deities, born of dark or light, share the hatred for Chaos that saturates Kyger Litor's divine soul. Yet before she opposed the Devil in the True Darkness, she waged war against the surface peoples in the Storm Age. The trolls were her foot-soldiers in this and here is where the great animosity between the inhabitants of many regions and the uz rose.

The trolls wanted land for themselves. Under the eyes of their goddess, they took it by magic and by force. During these years, Kyger Litor battled many surface gods herself, beating them to standstills not through skill in battle but through her endless resilience and stamina. It seemed impossible to slay her, no matter how many wounds she bore. It was impossible to wear her down, for all her enemies flagged while she still fought on.

When the Darkness came, Kyger Litor led her people against the Devil's forces time and again. Her endless reserves of strength allowed her to fight on where lesser gods were slain and sent to join Yelm in the Underworld. Yet still, Kyger Litor battled the surface gods as often as she fought Chaos. Her powers did not wane in the years of Yelm's death – in fact, they flourished – so she and her trolls saw little reason to halt their attacks on the races that were suffering in the True Darkness. While Chaos had to be opposed because of its destructive nature, the other races were still considered enemies for the territory they held that trolls wanted. We even have fragments of false myths that paint the uz fighting against the elves, dwarfs and humans on several occasions, seeming to do the work of Chaos as if they were manipulated by a greater, darker power.

The greatest trollish opposition to the advance of Chaos were the Castles of Lead, also called the Cities of Lead by many Alliance scholars who have witnessed their grandeur firsthand through HeroQuesting. These fortresses were established by the goddess on sites once holy to the other races, taken in conquest and altered to become the mightiest troll fortresses imaginable. Only one stands today in its full glory, though ruins and lesser structures can still be found spread across Genertela. This last fortress, now referred to as the only Castle of Lead, is where Kyger Litor herself now dwells, deep in the bowels of the fortresses' tunnel system.

Kyger Litor has a special loathing for the Lightbringers. Orlanth and his cronies who restored Yelm to power did no favours for either the goddess or her troll children. They cared nothing if the sky was dark – they preferred it that way. With the restoration of Yelm, Kyger Litor once more felt the burning light upon her flesh and resented the heroic actions of the Storm God.

Kyger Litor is also the source of the endless blood-feuds between the trolls, the dwarfs and the elves. Through her urging, the trolls see the aldryami and mostali as lesser beings than the trolls themselves. The fact they are edible to the uz – even delicious – reinforces this perception of inferiority. To a troll, an elf or a dwarf is almost a prey animal. Kyger Litor led the trolls into war against the elves and dwarfs so often that an eternal grudge mounted between the three races. The trolls slaughtered countless mostali and aldryami, though in return they suffered horrendous losses of their own.

Winter, with its long nights, is a holy season for the uz. Many of their rites to honour Uzbirther take place in the winter months. In large communities with powerful priests and shamans, these rituals commonly take the form of HeroQuests, usually to the greatest moments and battles of Kyger Litor's years in the God's War. In smaller communities, re-enactments are not magical and instead focus on plays, impressions and telling tales or singing monstrous, growling dirges in the goddess's honour. Her skinning of Thed, Goat-matriarch, Mother of the Broos, is reflected in a ritual where broo are hunted, skinned and their flayed flesh used as skins on ritual drums.

All trolls are considered Initiates of the Kyger Litor cult as soon as they reach adulthood. Members in the highest ranks of the cult carry authority that often belies their position in society, with more pious uz in the community listening to the powerful cultist's words and giving them credence even if they hold no high rank in the region. In most instances, troll settlements recognise no difference between religion and government: priests and shamans are leaders because of their cult and their power. Kyger Litor's followers are accorded respect for their positions in the cult of the troll race progenitor. In many regions, where the rule of strength is considered more important than piety, the strongest and most skilled warriors are also accorded the highest respect alongside the tribal matriarchs.

Kyger Litor herself now apparently sits silent in the deepest reaches of the Castle of Lead. From the intelligence I have gathered, she no longer communicates with her people. Indeed, those that travel into the vast network of catacombs beneath the fortress report that they are no longer able to find the reclusive goddess. On the rare instances when a troll meets with success on such a quest, Kyger Litor is reputedly wordless, silent and pays no heed. Whatever her reasons, this behaviour worries the trolls, who see it as a sign of some cosmic wrongness in the world around them. They are sure their goddess senses something very wrong in the balance of the world – which they attribute to the work of the Alliance and the dragonspeakers. Sadly, this blind superstition is all too prevalent.

Intriguingly, the Kyger Litor cult also holds the secrets for humans and members of other races to actually *become* uz. One assumes it was by these methods that the great Arkat debased himself so thoroughly in adopting trollhood towards the end of his life.

Any human who joins the cult of Kyger Litor adopts certain troll-like features. These are minor, never enough to betray anything overtly unusual or sinister about the cultist, though for scholars or travellers aware of the signs, the person's allegiance is obvious. All trolls are instinctively able to recognise a member of another race who has joined the Kyger Litor cult. Humans often find that their skin darkens slightly, perhaps taking on a hint of a troll's greyish or greenish hue. The incisors situated in their lower jaw might also lengthen, representing stunted, rudimentary tusks of a sort. In a few cases, the eyes of human cultists turn completely black, white or red, as with some trolls. However, these are all the minor after-effects of joining the cult. Becoming a troll is a different matter entirely.

The ritual takes place in a temple to Kyger Litor and may only be performed in the pitch darkness. The trolls find their way around using their Darksense as normal but the human participant is left frightened and blinded in the dark. From all around, questions come at him out of the blackness: questions about his commitment to the troll way of life, his faith in their gods, his knowledge of their pantheon and the deeds of God Time mythologies. He must sing the praises of Kyger Litor and espouse on

her role in the universe as well as her role in fighting Chaos. This can go on for some time. If the questioners are unsatisfied with even a single answer, the supplicant is killed and eaten. If the questioners are satisfied with what they hear in the supplicant's voice, then... Well, the human is still killed and eaten, though in a different and infinitely more painful way.

The trolls take the accepted victim to an altar. His final words must be a prayer to Subere for the trolls to initiate him quickly and mercifully, rather than let him suffer. Once on the altar, he is mutilated according to tradition and the removed parts of his body eaten by the trolls in attendance. The ears and nose of the supplicant, including the internal cartilage, are torn from his body. Cartilage and bone from the noses and ears of dead trolls are brutally wedged inside the wounds. All incisors are pulled from their sockets and oversized troll tusks are pushed into the gums.

It is at this point that the subject usually dies from head trauma, blood loss or both. Those who continue to survive are admired for their fortitude.



The supplicant's organs are removed as is the stomach and digestive tract, which are all replaced with corresponding organs from dead trolls. In the limbs, enchanted sticks are used to replace major bones.

Once this is completed, the corpse of the supplicant is positioned into a foetal posture and wrapped in magical materials woven into silk wrappings from the Gorakiki cults or a blanket blessed by a priestess of Kyger Litor. The magical components in the material are blessed items – one from each troll in attendance, usually a simple keepsake or good luck charm. Occasionally, in the cases of extremely favoured supplicants, the corpse is wrapped holding magical uz weaponry or draped in amulets and furs, also often enchanted to either help the transformation or serve the supplicant when he awakens.

Many never rise again. The corpses rot away inside their wrappings and mouldering bones are all that is revealed when the unveiling hour arrives. All supplicants are left for up to five years, 'slumbering' in the dark bowels of a Kyger Litor temple while the trolls occasionally check to see if there has been any change. Those that rot away are considered to have been unworthy and rejected by Uzbirther.

I have heard it said that two in three souls are destroyed by this grotesque process. The remaining fraction survives to rise again, reborn as uzko trolls. The creature that rises is imperfect, coming to understand its new form and senses through training and experience, not instinct. In most cases, telltale hints reveal to other uz that the person was once of a different race, such as a slightly misshapen skull. Few non-trolls are able to notice the difference.

Perhaps most interesting is the use of this rite to circumvent another of the troll race's curses. Trollkin, those stunted little slave-caste creatures, can actually be transmuted into uzko trolls by use of this rite, though the success rate is similarly dire.

The cult of Kyger Litor is detailed in *Cults of Glorantha II*.

Subere

*In blackness is haven found,
In lightless depths,
In darkest reaches,
Protection, sanctuary, solace.'*

— Traditional uz benediction of Subere's cult

Overview

I have had few dealings with the cult of Subere, largely because the goddess herself is distant, inhuman and apathetic, traits which her rare worshippers share.

Subere is the source of the darkness rune. From her essence all troll life was created, though due to her inconceivable nature and unknowable personality, Subere is second to Kyger Litor in the creator-goddess tales and only rarely worshipped directly.

Mythology

When Yelm came to the Underworld, the darkness deities of Wonderhome and the other areas of the underground world fled the painful light of the God-Emperor. Only Subere remained. As the primal darkness, the darkness from which all other blackness was born, she remained unaltered and untainted by the sun's white-hot light. In the reaches of the Underworld where Yelm's light did not reach, Subere sheltered a great horde of darkness demons, spirits and creatures.

Subere has her secrets. Unimaginable by the mortal mind until they are brought into the world, these secrets have the potential to change Glorantha forever if learned by mortals. Only two of these have ever been brought into the surface world and only one was successfully used. The secret of Death, pulled from Subere's hidden depths, has bred unimaginable sorrow for mortals since it was learned. The second secret was brought forth during the Gbaji Wars, when the uz sought to use the Black Eater in battle. This secret failed, of course, deflected by Gbaji's light.

The afterlife promised by Subere's cult is as cold and lifeless as the deity herself. The priests speak of an existence without event, without awareness, without

personality: mere eternal existence in the primal darkness. Most trolls therefore turn to Kyger Litor and other deities within their pantheon for promises of more desirable rewards after death.

Scholars may spend years or decades delving deep into the mysteries of Subere's eternal blackness, seeking out secrets that no mortal has ever known, even though Subere's cult seems to be a fringe cult in troll society rather than a legitimate, popular religion. Most temples have shrines to Subere but in my many dealings with the uz and wanderings through their lands, I never came across a single dedicated temple in honour of the darkness goddess.

Runes: Darkness, Magic

Pantheon: Troll

Worshippers: A few rare uz interested in their most primordial origins

Worshipper's Duties: Temple upkeep, scholarly research, occasional ritual duties

Initiate Membership

Requirements: Initiates must be darkness creatures or have a darkness rune integrated. They must also provide the cult elders with a single momentous secret about Glorantha, such as the truth of a political assassination or the only poison capable of killing a certain Dragonlord.

Acolyte Membership

Requirements: Standard

Runepriest Membership

Requirements: Characters must have been cultists for seven years and must donate 50% of their time to research and working with darkness magic in order to learn all they can of the creatures sheltered within Subere's blackness in the Lesser Darkness.

Cult Skills: Persistence, Runecasting (Darkness), Stealth

Cult Spells: Any magic or darkness rune spells. Cultists may learn Spirit Magic, though it is never taught by Subere priests.

Common Divine Magic: Attack Soul, any summoning/commanding/binding spells that deal with darkness spirits and entities

Special Benefits: Characters may integrate darkness, shadow and magic runes without the need for a roll.

New Divine Magic Spell

The following spell is used by the Subere cult and may be learned by members during the game.

Attack Soul

Duration 1, Magnitude 5, Ranged

The troll grinds his teeth and tusks together, jaw clenched, as he projects a psychic blast of pure energy of will around his body, charging his attacks against any spiritual foes.

This spell allows a character to attack spirits without becoming incorporeal himself. When Attack Soul is cast, any of the caster's other attacks against the spirit automatically inflict double damage against the creature he is fighting. This counts for physical blows (such as from magical weapons) and spells as well as general spirit combat.

Xentha

'The Night Goddess is rarely loved by uz. She says little. She teaches little. She offers little. To follow her is a trial, for she leads a follower nowhere and demands nothing from him. I follow her to become closer to the first trolls. I need no other reason and Xentha gives me none anyway.'

— Jutark the Just, uzko scholar of the Opal Seer Caverns

Overview

Xentha, the troll Goddess of Night, is a baffling creature, as is the cult that follows her. Evidence of her existence is rare since the first rise of Chaos in the True Darkness. After she led the trolls (some might say fled ahead of the trolls...) to the surface, she is documented in several battles against light gods and their followers, yet diminishes in importance soon after. Conflicting tales say that Xentha went ahead of the uz host an unknowable time before and prepared night on the surface for his arrival. In some legends she is a staunch enemy of Chaos. In others she spends more time raging against Yelm's allies and his fellow light gods. In most, she is simply not mentioned.

Mythology

Just as the Goddess of Night seems to lack any quantifiable personality, so too does her cult lack any real purpose or cohesive structure. I have travelled extensively through troll lands and not once did I see a temple dedicated solely to her. Her religion is widespread, though: in many of the temples to Argan Argar, Subere, Xiola Umbar and Kyger Litor, a modest shrine to Xentha is present, even if several of these shrines seem unkempt and abandoned.

Trolls seem to join with the Xentha cult not for the magical or social advantages, but for the potential to bond with one of the deities that made the Hurtplace more bearable for their ancestors who first walked the surface. In many cases it is a sign of respect rather than a life-altering commitment to worship Xentha. Most members of Xentha's cult are also members of one or more others, which is encouraged by the Xentha priests.

The church is so scattered and aimless that it lacks any formal hierarchies or high-ranking members, instead relying on what few scholars and pious souls decide to explore the teachings of the Night Goddess in addition to their primary cult commitments.

Runes: Darkness, Mastery

Pantheon: Troll (among others)

Worshippers: Particularly pious uz seeking to learn more of their primordial origins

Worshipper's Duties: Support the local shrines, spread Xentha-worship when they are able

Initiate Membership

Requirements: Standard

Acolyte Membership

Requirements: Candidates must never cast any light- or heat-based magic. At each sunset, they gain an additional three Magic Points (never exceeding their maximum), which are lost at sunrise. When the sun rises, they must sacrifice three Magic Points, which they regain at every sunset.

Acolytes must spend at least one week each year completely hidden from the touch of the sun.

Rune Priest Membership

Requirements: There are no ranks higher than Acolyte in Xentha's cult.

Cult Skills: Stealth

Cult Spells: Any darkness, shadow or mastery rune spells

Common Divine Magic: Affix Darkness; any spells of Argan Argar or Subere

Special Benefits: Characters may attune darkness, shadow and mastery runes without an integration roll.

Members are also free to join any other troll deity cult, as long as they never use Fire Magic or Light Magic in their worship.

New Divine Magic Spell

The following spell is found in the magical arsenals of Xentha's cultists and may be learned by characters accordingly.

Affix Darkness

Area 100, Duration (Special), Magnitude 2, Progressive, Ranged

The darkness of night remains fixed in place, bound by the divine power of the spell even in broad daylight.

This spell can only be cast at night, though the Duration lasts until the following nightfall or until it is dispelled. The Area of the spell's effect appears as if it were the middle of the night, including dark skies, reduced visibility and shadows all around, the day following the casting. Until the following sunset, the area remains exactly as it had been the previous night and while the spell area has indistinct edges, its Area is still clearly a patch of eerie, unnatural night-darkness appearing during daytime.

For each point of Magnitude beyond the initial investment, the spell's Area increases by 100m.

Xiola Umbar

'In this age of blood, there must be a way for the peaceful among uz to survive. It must not all be war and death and pain. If uz are to survive into the new age that will come after this bitter era, then uz must find the ways of healing and protection as well the ways of swords and axes. I gain no glory by following Xiola Umbar, but I gain much respect in the quiet hours when the sword arms rest and the cries of the wounded reach to the skies.'

— attributed to Mekgil Coppertongue, uz Rune priest of Xiola Umbar, slain in the God's War

Overview

The deity known as Xiola Umbar is a curious presence within the troll pantheon. All the legends I have been able to scour on the matter name her as the sister of Zorak Zoran, though her exact parentage is unknown and she shares none of Zorak Zoran's warlike tendencies. In fact, her role is that of protector and healer, which puts her at odds with many of the vicious troll deities.

It does not mean she has no worship at all, however. Quite the opposite is true. What it does mean is that those trolls who follow Xiola Umbar's cult are seen as weak and ineffective in regions where the warrior cults hold greatest sway. Yet there is always a need for these healing priests and priestesses, despite how often they are viewed with distaste.

Mythology

Troll legends about this goddess – the goddess of protective darkness – are complicated in the extreme. Humans and other races see her as a goddess for the weak and the oppressed but the trolls focus on her heritage and healing deeds as a darkness spirit. Some place her at the birth of the world's waters, and describe her acting as midwife to the creation of the River Styx in the Underworld. Others cite how she followed Zorak Zoran in his growth from obscurity to godhood, detailing how Xiola Umbar healed those he maimed and wounded along the way, though never healing a true enemy of her brother.

With the death of Yelm, Xiola Umbar was one of the many darkness beings that fled to the surface in order to escape his burning presence. When the God's War raged across Glorantha and the forces of light and darkness alike battled Chaos, Xiola Umbar healed her brother and his troll allies as they fought. Many are the deeds talented Jrustelan priests can HeroQuest through, healing those around them in order to emulate Xiola Umbar.

With the coming of the Gbaji Wars and the Trollkin Curse, Xiola Umbar and her cult worked to shelter the stunted runts among troll society, protecting them from the purges that swept through uz culture. Her followers were a principal reason troll society grudgingly accepting the enlo, though obviously the crippling population decline was a factor as well.

Unlike many troll and darkness deities, Xiola Umbar is rarely hated by the gods of light. This is partly because she did not war against them to anything like the degree of her kin, such as Zorak Zoran, and partly because she is so benevolent compared to so many of her pantheon. Even God-Emperor Yelm is said to view her favourably and though many light gods still feel an instinctive revulsion for Xiola Umbar's nature, they hold no grievance or grudge against her for her deeds.

The cult itself is troll enough to hate Chaos utterly, though many cultists seek out Chaos in order to purify a region and heal those affected by the Devil rather than simply murder the Chaos creatures and leave straight after the bloodshed is done. The greatest wrath of the cult is levelled against those who violate the promise of protection the Xiola Umbar priests have offered to those in their care. Causing harm to those under the oath of protection is a sure way to mobilise all of a local cult's forces against the offenders. What they might lack in battle prowess, the cultists will make up in magical power.

Xiola Umbar has always been a deity that commands a great deal of respect among the trolls. Her temples are small and modest, though she has many shrines spread across any region where the trolls are populous enough to set up holy sites. Even the warlike Zorak Zorani admit that the healing powers of a Xiola Umbar cultist have their uses, just as an arrogant follower of Kyger Litor must admit that the midwifery skills of these cultists are invaluable.

The afterlife promised by Xiola Umbar is not truly an afterlife at all. The priests are taught by the cult that upon death, a painless resurrection is the reward for a life lived according to the tenets of the goddess.

The cult of Xiola Umbar is found in *Cults of Glorantha II*.

ZORAK ZORAN

'Uz want to win wars, no matter what. Battles are hard, even for uz. Other races have more warriors than uz, except when use the useless enlo. But war is not just about battles. Battles just the last and biggest part. Before the battle, a warrior want his enemy scared, fearful of the fight, maybe losing commanders to poison or magic and losing best troops in ambushes before battle begins. Then when the battle comes, uz ready for the kill.

— Vaggal of the Unseemly Nose, uzko Runelord of Zorak Zoran

Overview

Ah, the 'great' Zorak Zoran: a creature that ascended to godhood from the pathetic stature of a darkness spirit. Zorak Zoran is a war god who attains many of his victories through ambushes, unfair fights, uneven odds and assaulting foes who are already wounded.

This does not earn him my derision, you must understand. This shows his cunning, intelligence and appreciation for victory at any cost. He may never be the skilled fighter that Yelm or Orlanth can claim to be but Zorak Zoran is a ferocious killer. This can seem a subtle difference, yet it is a very telling one.

Mythology

In the myths of Zorak Zoran's deeds during the God's War, a HeroQuester is spoilt for choice. We already have hundreds of recorded battles in the Alliance records, tales of ambushes and duels with other gods, spirits and demons of all types. Zorak Zoran fought everything and anything and he did so with cunning, intelligence and boundless rage.

The god stood at the head of troll armies that smashed against Chaos forces as often as he stalked alone across the surface, slitting the throats of demons and retreating unseen. He is a veteran of countless conflicts, each open to us for emulation.

Zorak Zoran's legends contain fights against practically every Chaos god and demon that flooded Glorantha's surface in the Chaos Wars. He beat them through a combination of brute strength, ambush, tactical cunning or simple luck: many were the times he fought enemies who were already wounded and triumphed because of this advantage.

In addition to these battles against the Devil's minions, Zorak Zoran has also fought a great many deities of other pantheons, such as members of the Storm Tribe and the Sky Gods of Peloria. The grudges that exist between followers of Yelm and Zorak Zoran are legendary because of the intense animosity between the two gods themselves. The trolls consider their War God's humiliation of the Sun God's son as a fine victory. The Dara Happans consider Zorak Zoran's ambushing the already wounded Yelm as honourless and predatory.



Ultimately, all that matters to Zorak Zoran is victory: victory by any means with as little cost to him as possible. His followers cling to the same mindset and use either cunning and guile to win their wars or brute strength and a berserker's intimidating rage.

This attitude makes the Zorak Zorani among the most vicious and skilled fighters the troll race has ever produced. In a species built for battle, these are the warrior elite – proven through generations of ambushes and berserker butchery. Clearly, this makes them very useful allies.

Trolls that belong to the god's cult are often proud of their deity's accomplishments in Glorantha's legends. This opens them to manipulation, or at the very least makes them receptive to the notion of joining forces to explore the god's myths through HeroQuesting. A powerful warrior so stupid he does not even recognise when his muscle is being used to loot his own mythology is a valuable tool. Failing that, some Zorak Zorani are

so keen to adventure through the War God's tales that they will accept any companions who will aid them in making their dreams a reality.

The sad truth from our perspective is that while the Zorak Zoran cult has many of the more obvious and well-known myths, the cultists are also the most diligent in hunting down God Learners who 'violate' their god's tales. The trolls who see us as a threat to the holiness of Zorak Zoran are among our more dangerous enemies, especially when they have the brains to side with the hated dragonspeakers as allies of convenience.

The cult of Zorak Zoran is detailed fully in *Cults of Glorantha II*.

The Expanded Pantheon

The uz pantheon is filled with myriad creatures of animal life and primordial darkness, all of which attract some degree of worship from the trolls of various regions. The following deities are recognised in uz culture as divine beings, but do not attract as much worship – either in terms of popularity or widespread reverence – as those already listed.

Arkat

Called the Destroyer of Gbaji; the Chaos-Slayer; and Arkat Kingtroll, this great uz hero is championed by the trolls in grim reflection of how he is largely scorned by the humans and other races. It is said by many other races that Arkat betrayed them and debased himself by transforming his body into that of a troll for the additional physical and spiritual Chaos-hating strength he would need in the battle against Gbaji the Deceiver. The uz do not tell that story; they share tales of how in the hero's final days as a mortal, he revealed his true nature to the world before he went into the great battle to destroy Nysalor.

Orani Mor

Promising reincarnation as a spider in the next life, the arachnid-goddess Orani Mor, also known as Aranea, considers all of her eight-legged children holy. She is feared by most of the uz, who offer reverence to avert her wrath or in the hopes of damning their enemies by diverting Orani Mor's attention upon them.

Zong

In contrast to the unpopular Orani Mor, the hunting-god Zong is well-loved and deeply revered by male trolls of various regions. Admittedly most male uz hunt without a thought for Zong; it is only the most pious trolls and those at one with Nature that revere the Hunter. His cult teaches spells that aid in accuracy with bows and spears, and stealth when stalking prey.

Boztakang

The Chaos-Eater and Chaos-Fighter Boztakang is another of the Seven Sacred Ancestors. It was he that slew and devoured Arrquong, the first and now forgotten Chaos God. Although Boztakang sees little direct worship in the Imperial Age, he is acknowledged as the source of the trolls' great power at fighting and beating Chaos, and local rituals exist to honour and call down his blessing before troll warriors make war against the broo.

Gadblad

Gadblad is known as the Great Smith, the son of Karrg Weapon-Master and a child of the first troll male. He is a very minor deity in the uz pantheon, largely ignored in a race that rarely smithies weaponry at all.

Hombobobom

The god-spirit Hombobobom is one of the Seven Sacred Ancestors and known to the uz as the Great Drummer. She is a well-liked, if rarely worshipped figure for many uz. At the ritual dances and celebrations of the trolls, Hombobobom is invoked to keep the music lively and enjoyable, allowing the troll drummers to connect with the heartbeat of the world itself. Her spirits teach magic tied to her drumming, usually inspiring those that hear it to great feats of courage or strength.

Jakaboom

Jakaboom is remembered with honour as the First Shaman, the Shadow-Dancer, the first troll spirit-deity that understood the separation between material flesh and immaterial spirituality. Though she sees practically no worship at all in the Second Age, she is occasionally invoked by shamans in their dealings with spirits.

Vaneekara

Vaneekara the Hurler is most famous for her physical prowess, and trolls being trolls, they tend to remember her most for the fact she once threw a Chaos god so hard into the sky that he was thrust out of the universe.

Dehore

Father of Shades, Lord of Shadows, Master of Spirits – Dehore is the husband of Subere and the master of countless darkness spirits. Troll shamans working with the spirits bound to their race may not be paying reverence to Dehore himself but they are working with his immaterial children of which the Dehori are his most powerful and renowned.

Jeset

One of the Seven Sacred Ancestors, Jeset is called the Ferryman and the Sailor on the Styx. It was Jeset that created the first boat and, plagued by curiosity, sailed down the River Styx in the underworld, seeking what lay at the end of the journey. Now he takes the souls of dead trolls to the afterlife.

Kropa

Kropa is the Mother of Many, matriarch of Gorakiki and Orani Mor, though she sees less worship than either of her daughters. She was the daughter of Swems, the worm-god, and although this goddess was a powerful being in her own right, with an armoured body, deadly claws and vicious mandibles capable of wounding gods, she is best remembered as the mother of many lesser gods.

Krolar

Krolar was born in the True Darkness, created to be a guardian of the remaining darkness-beings that stayed in Wonderhome after Yelm's fiery fall. In the years since his birth, Krolar has battled Chaos many times, defending the remnants Wonderhome. His cult is small and usually subservient to that of Zorak Zoran.

Karrg

Karrg is one of the Seven Sacred Ancestors and bears the singular honour of being the first male troll. He is known to the uz as Karrg the Weapon Master and Karrg the Perfect Son. Due to his skills at war and his loyalty to the female deities within the pantheon, he is often exalted by both genders of uz.

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Glorantha

THE SECOND AGE

TROLLS A GUIDE TO THE UZ

Ugly, brutish, malevolent and in service to dark powers: the uz of Glorantha have a bad reputation which is all too well deserved. *Trolls: A Guide to the Uz* presents everything Games Masters need to present these brutes as detailed enemies in Glorantha campaigns, as well as including the necessary lore for players to portray uz characters themselves, seeing how it feels to play the 'other side' of things.

Included are expanded details on uz culture and physiology, regional differences between the trolls, as well as new rules for troll magic. The dark magic of troll cults, that reverse many of the most sinister deities ever to walk the face of the world, are also described in *Trolls: A Guide to the Uz*.

As either allies or enemies the uz provide players and Games Masters alike with a race rich in history and legends, a species just and fair one moment and savagely bloodthirsty the next.

Welcome to the world of the uz!



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RuneQuest Companion and *Glorantha - The Second Age*.