

Leshan

FREEDOM FROM THE EMPIRE

by Anthony C. Hunter

**An Unofficial Campaign Setting for
Wizards Of The Coast's
3rd Edition Dungeons and Dragons Game**

Welcome to the Player's guide to Leshan. Leshan is my setting for my new Dungeon's & Dragon's 3rd Edition Campaign.

Anything printed within these pages can be considered common knowledge available to all player characters.

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Chapter One

Arakai

"Well met, traveler. I am brother Stuart McClain, priest of Reeah, the Mother of Us All, and your guide to the wonders of her world. I will be giving you a brief overview of the world at large before we embark upon our journey to my homeland, the fledgling kingdom of Leshan.

Our world, Arakai, as it is called by those of us who bother to recognize anything beyond our local boundaries, is a roughly "earth-like" world that occupies the fourth orbit of a large, yellow star. Our sun is known to us as Ober, and it is the Eye of Oberon, the father of all the gods. Arakai has one moon, just slightly larger than the moon of your earth, and we call it Sheea, for it is the home of Sheena, goddess of love. Forgive me, I digress, there will be more time later for me to explain the complexities of Arakain religion to you.

The technology of Arakai varies by the region, but overall it is similar to your own Late Middle Ages and Early Renaissance periods. I have seen ships that were powered by harnessed Steam Elementals, and have heard that in the Empire of Coryll, there are even steam-driven carriages that travel on rails of iron through the streets of the larger towns to carry the workers and slaves to their jobs. I will discuss the continents one at a time to familiarize you with them."

Ordahl

The Eastern Hemisphere continent of Ordahl is the home of some of the older human realms of Arakai. The Coryll Empire occupies a large portion of the continent. Also found here are the Principality of Clybari; the harsh, desert lands of Sahabrai; Shorkyle, hidden away behind the forbidding Wizard Wall mountain range; The mysterious lands of Qual; The hostile deserts and jungles of the wild, untamed Orglans; the cold, fertile plains of the Northern Steppes; and the near-frozen islands of the Njordlan; as well as quite a bit of unknown and unexplored territory.

Coryll Empire

The lands occupied by the Coryll Empire cover a large portion of the continent of Ordahl. The Empire is ruled by His Most Divine Presence, Emperor Vladimir IV. The Emperor Vladimir has ruled the Coryll Empire for over one thousand, five hundred years. Very few people actually get to see the Emperor, except for the courtiers and dignitaries allowed into the Palace of the Spheres, his seat of rule. The use of magic is illegal in Coryll, except for those possessing special licenses (*very rare and very expensive*), high-ranking, ordained members of the Imperially-sanctioned churches, and the Imperial Shur-Kai, the special police force of the Empire. Vladimir declared that since the energies of Magic were so unpredictable and unstable, that only those who were ost gifted with the talent for spell-casting (*i.e., those favored by the crown*) would be allowed to serve the interests of the Empire by utilizing thier talents for the Emperor. Unregistered and unlicensed spell-casters do exist in the Empire, but they live in constant fear of discovery.

The Empire is very large, and has colonies and outposts far from the central seat of power. The colony of Lesh, on the continent of Lekarsha recently rebelled against the rule of the Empire and fought a long and bitter war for thier independence. The Empire has had to "withdraw" its troops from Leshian soil, and the rebels have declared themselves victorious and an Independent nation, although the Empire still maintains that Lesh is an Imperial colony and will be returned to the fold.

The Emperor is currently "negotiating" with several large tribes of nomads who roam the steppes near the Empire's northern borders, attempting to bring them under Imperial rule so that he can turn his attention once more to the "upstarts" across the sea. Any non-human or primitive peoples within the Imperial lands are considered to be slave races and have none of the rights accorded to humans, the only (according to Imperial Doctrine) "Civilized" race on Arakai.

"Hmmp, Upstarts, indeed! We fought simply for our freedom to live as we choose, not to live with the fear that a Shur-Kai or a governor will take an imagined offense to something that we may or may not have done. I have seen many innocent people "disappear" because they offended a Shur-Kai or a colonial official. Since the war ended and we crowned Lorcin, you don't see too many people walking around looking over thier shoulders or with their eyes cast toward the ground, afraid to look at anyone.

Coryll is your classic "Evil Empire." True, that may be something of a cliché, but it is unfortunately very true. Reliable sources say that Vladimir has made some kind of pact with his dark god, Kor, lord of tyranny, and that this is why he has ruled for so many years. The Empire considers our friends the Elves, Dwarves, Halflings and Gnomes to be "Sub-Human" and fit only for slavery. They think that humans are the only race with a right to live freely (or as free as those in power allow). Many of us don't agree with that sentiment, non-humans can be fine folk, and most of them are much nicer than most of the Imperial officials that I've met over the years. Zoran, an old traveling companion of mine is a dwarf and a fine fellow. He sees things somewhat differently than I do, but this is because he has spent most of his live as a warrior and a scout, and was raised in a different environment than I was, not because he is inferior. Why don't we take a look at the Empire's neighbors and see what they think about the big guys."

The Principality of Clybari

Clybari lies just north of Coryll, and is a small land, not much bigger than Leshan. The lands of Clybari are ruled by the Merchant Princes. Clybari the world over are generally found running banking, money-lending or some other, profitable merchantile operation. The truly unique thing about Clybari is that they have managed to convince the Empire that there are some things that cannot be taken by force. The Empire began making noises about "absorbing" and "annexing" Clybari into the existing Empire about two hundred years ago and the Clybari bankers and merchants suddenly cut off all trade with the Empire. They sent a representative to the Palace of the Spheres and she explained to the Emperor how costly it would be for the Empire to attempt to control Clybari and all of the Clybari holdings throughout the Empire. She also explained that when the Empire did win a conflict, which probably wouldn't take long, all of the Clybari bankers and all of their money and knowledge of banking and finance would be long gone. The Emperor signed a treaty and trade agreement with Clybari three days later. To this day, it is the longest-honored treaty in the history of the Empire.

Sahabrai

The lands of Sahabrai are mostly desert, and harsh. All of the lands of Sahabrai are hot, and most of them are quite dry as well. Sahabrai has a matriarchal society. Men are free to own property and to participate in politics but may never rise above the rank of Councilman, Knight-Bachelor, or Baronet. All hereditary titles and properties are passed down along the female side of the family. Men in the military are not allowed to rise above the rank of Senior Lieutenant (or Sergeant, if non-commisioned).

Sahabrai maintains an uneasy peace with Coryll that rests upon the facts that Coryll is currently occupied trying to "pacify" the nomadic tribes on thier northern borders, planning the re-pacification of Lesh, and the fact that Sahabrai has one of the most powerful naval fleets in the known world. Sahabrai is ruled by an elected council and by an elected Grand Matriarch. The current Grand Matriarch is Isabella Swiftarrow, who has ruled for the past eight years.

"I met the crew of a Shahabrai "Merchant" ship one day while they were in Marshon after having run the Imperial Blockade. They had brought trade goods and medicinal herbs and poultices that were prepared by their priestesses. They had also reportedly sunk three Imperial Pulla's and damaged a Corsair. I was duly impressed. They were hard-working, hard-playing women, and I would have been proud to serve under the command of any of them."

Shorkyle

Shorkyle is an interesting land. It is home to the only group of people that the Emperor seems to fear, or at least, respect greatly, the Raskani. According to the legends of the area, the Raskani are almost all trained in the arts of magic. The Raskani are a very private people and most stay within the confines of thier homeland, behind the imposing curtain of the mountains known as the *Wizard Wall*. They mostly confine thier dealings with the outside world to the Clybari and with the occasional Njordlan or nomad trader clan. The Raskani reportedly responded to Emperor Vladimir's "proposal" of merging Shorkyle with the Empire by sending back the Shur-Kai "ambassador" in a small box. HIs body had reportedly been changed to that of a toad, and his normal head shrunk to fit his new body. He was still alive and supposedly gave the Emperor a very long and detailed account of the Raskani lands and people. Last rumors of the "ambassador" say that he was occupied with his new post in flying insect control in the Emperor's offices.

"As far as I know, I have never met a Raskani. However, anyone who can make Vladi nervous, has my offer of friendship."

Qual

The island kingdom of Qual is home to a mysterious race of humans. The Qual have had little or no contact with any other civilizations, and seep to prefer thier insular politics. They are known to have conquered several small islands in thier immediate area. Little is known about the the Qual since they allow no foreigners into thier lands, and have only opened one small port city for outside trade. According to what few reports there are from the area, the Qual who live in the free port are considered to be the outcasts and undesirableables of thier culture.

The Orglans

The desert and jungles of the Orglans are home to many Orcish and Goblinoid tribes, as well as home to many other non-human races and monsters, including many Dragons. There is not much known of these wild and and seldom explored lands.

Northern Steppes

The Northern Steppes are home to many nomadic tribes of humans and non-humans. Many of these tribes spend much of their time attacking and raiding the northern borders of the Empire, although there are a few tribes who assist the Imperial troops by acting as scouts and light cavalry. A cold and mostly inhospitable land, it is still coveted by the Emperor and considered home by the hardy folk who seem to thrive in its cold, open expanses.

Njordlan

Njordlan, like Qual, is a large island kingdom that is not truly a part of either continent. Njordlan is a semi-frozen group of Islands near the frozen wastes of the North. The inhabitants of Njordlan include the tall, hardy Njordmen; the fierce tempered northern Dwarves, and the Elven race of the Sindaik; who primarily dwell in the icy wastes of the northern islands.

The Njordmen are farmers, raiders, warriors, merchants, and/or pirates; the description depends upon who you ask (and the Njordmen proudly claim to be all of these and more). The Njordmen are blood enemies of the Coryll Empire, with the enmity going back more than a thousand years. The Njordmen are distantly related several of the nomad tribes of the Northern Steppes. The Njordmen have established colonies along the coast of the western continent, and on several small islands in the Coryss Ocean.

Cazadi

Cazadi is located about 75 miles to the west of Shorkyle. It is a small, independent island, that is ruled by the High Captain of Cazad. Cazadi is on good terms with Shorkyle and Clybari, and has strong ties among the Njordmen, as there are many Njordic clans with extended families upon Cazadi. Cazadi has managed to avoid the unwanted attentions of the Emperor of Coryll due to the fact that it is so small and has such powerful allies..

Lekarsha

The western continent of Arakai, Lekarsha is the home to several settlements, and countries, including the kingdom of Leshan.

Artali

The land of Artali is the ancestral home of the Artagili Elves (called "Grey" Elves by some). The Artagili are on friendly terms with most of their neighbors. They trade with the Njormen, ever since they repelled a Njordic Viking force and spared all their warriors. The humans of the Bullash colony are also allied with the Artagili. Artali is comprised mostly of evergreen forests, with the Klynar trees found there growing as tall as 150 to 200 feet in height and as large as 20 to 50 feet in diameter. Many Artagili homes are built in the boughs of the Klynar trees, although the majority of the Artagili settlements are found on the ground.

Hardan

Hardan is ruled by the Dwarvish King, Torash One-Eye. The population of Hardan is comprised primarily of Dwarves, Halflings, Gnomes and Humans, although other races are found there as well. The Kingdom of Hardan was allied with Leshan during its war against Coryll. Hardan has as large a variety of terrain as it does citizens. Slavery is illegal except as punishment for a crime, and then it is for a pre-determined sentence, dependant upon the crime involved.

Bullash

Allies of the Artagili of Artali, Bullash was originally founded as a religious colony by followers of the Njordic god of Artifice and Knowledge, Trowlfar. The followers of Trowlfar wanted to live separately and to follow the teachings of their deity. Bullash is a Njordic colony and is governed by the leaders of the Church of Trowlfar. Spell-casters are very uncommon in Bullash, and are required to follow certain restrictions when visiting the colony. The Bullashi are responsible for the development of the repeating crossbow and many other devices.

Higari

Higari is home to the Higari Elves, who guard their borders and their privacy with a zeal that borders upon xenophobia. Their borders are only open to other elven races and many of those races have reported that they feel as if they are being looked down upon the entire time that they are there. The Higari have reportedly created beautiful towns of magically grown crystals and magically sculpted, still-living trees. The few Higari who have ever left their homelands are reportedly very arrogant and condescending to those they interact with.

Sindaras Forest

The Sindaras Forest is the original home of the Sindari Elves. A group of them left several thousand years ago to build another home in the Elvar forests of the southern peninsula (what is now Leshan). The Sindaras is home to many Sindari, Halflings, Gnomes and a few humans of one type or another. The Sindari build their homes to best complement and enhance the natural beauty of their surroundings. The Sindari of the Sindaras Forest allied with the rebels of Lesh during the war against Coryll. Many of the humans found within the borders of the Sindaras were originally refugees from the tyranny of the Empire. The Sindari of Sindaras are ruled by a council which is chosen by popular majority. The members of the Council all represent a different profession or specialty, and number one hundred and thirteen individuals. The council members are elected once every 100 years.

Vuldar Empire

The Vuldar Empire is home to the Vulari and their allied races. The Vulari have not had much contact with the humans of the Eastern coast of Lekarsha, since there is over two thousand miles of mostly unexplored wilderness separating the two areas. The only knowledge anyone has of the existence of the Vuldar Empire is from the rare Vulari scout or outcast who has survived the long trip across the continent.

Nyrodd

The small kingdom of Nyrodd on the west coast of Lekarsha is ruled by a being known as Nyros, who claims to be a god. Nyrodd is reportedly a cesspool of evil and decadence. Beyond this, little is known of this (thankfully) distant land.

Kybani Plains

The Kybani Plains are home to many varied races, including the Kybar, a group of semi-nomadic humans. The Kybar are divided into clans very similar to the divisions among the Kylari, to whom they are apparently related. Several Kybar tribes assisted the rebels of Lesh during their war against Coryll. A few tribes were also recruited by Imperial forces to serve as scouts and light troops (i.e., cannon fodder). There are also many non-human groups to be found wandering the plains or having settled into a home of some sort.

Kylarr

The hilly and mountainous lands of Kylarr are home to the clans of the Kylari hillmen. and early Imperial governor of Lesh declared the Kylari to be Barbarians and "primitive" and therefore "Sub-human" and ineligible for the privilege of Imperial Citizenship. Many Kylari were lost to the Imperial slavers. The Kylari were very quick to offer assistance to the rebels of Lesh during their war for independence. The Kylari, contrary to the Imperial opinion of their status, are neither primitive nor barbaric. They are an aggressive people to whom honor and dignity is very important. They are divided into many different clans, each ruled by a King. Each of the kings has to answer to the High King, who is chosen by the priests of all the clans. The position of High King is not hereditary, and there have been many named High King who were not born of the "nobility." The choices of the priests have never been questioned in the recorded history of the Kylari.

Kylarr remains a firm ally of Leshan to this day, and they have allowed the Leshians to establish several forts and outposts within their borders, each with a small Kylari garrison housed within as well. These forts are for the benefit of both countries. Kylari who wish to live in Leshan are eligible for citizenship, as those from Leshan are sometimes asked to join a clan if they live among the Kylari. There are several clans of Dwarves who are well established within the political and social structure of Kylarr, and other non-human races can be found walking the streets of Kylari cities and towns as well.

Formasai

Formasai is a small, independent island kingdom that lies in the Kyla sea off the western coast of Leshan. There is only one major city on the island, Kalari, which is the seat of government and the home of 90 percent of the population of the island. Formasai is governed by a mysterious individual known only as "The Commodore." The island of Formasai has a very large fleet of ships, most of which are apparently the property of "The Commodore" or privateers operating under his letters of marque. Many of these ships helped the Leshians during the war, harassing Imperial shipping and blockades.

Elvar Forest

The Sindari of the Elvar were the original inhabitants of the southern peninsula that is now Leshan. They received the initial ill treatment from Imperial troops and the various Imperial Governors, finally withdrawing from the open lands and closing themselves off from contact with humankind within the borders of the Elvar. Over the 200 year period from the time that the original outpost of Lesh was established until the time of the Rebellion, the Sindari determined that not all of the human intruders were cut from the same cloth. The growth of spell-casting in Leshan is a direct result of the Sindari and the Dwarves teaching the humans that the energies of magic could be manipulated by anyone of sufficient intelligence and desire to learn. The Sindari of Elvar were in some ways the instigators of the rebellion against the Empire of Coryll. They wished to be able to live in peace within the lands that were first theirs, and they wanted to share the joys of magic with the humans who wished to learn. Elvar is governed by a Council of Elders. Fifty Elders are chosen by the Sindari once every 100 years.

Sea of Dust

The Wasteland known as the Sea of Dust is a mystery to all but some of the most Elder of the Elves and Dwarves in the area. What little has been told by these folk indicate that a great, fertile land once existed within the area, and that it was destroyed by the gods over five thousand years ago. They say that one of the old gods hurled a gigantic spear of stone from the sky at his evil adversary, driving him deep into the ground and pinning him within the earth, unable to move. It is said that the Godspear can still be seen sticking up from the massive canyon it created when it struck the evil one. There are nomadic tribes of humans and other races who live within the wastes and who make their living from trading, working as guides, and occasionally raiding others.

City-State of Clest

Clest lies in a small area bordered by Leshan, Hardan, the Coryss Ocean and the mountains of the Dormani Range. The City-State is ruled by the High Patriarch of Clestia and has a variety of citizens. The laws of the City-State are said to be very strict, but fair. The basic theories of magic are taught at all three of the schools found within the walls of the City-State itself, and many of the officials of the area are at least moderately skilled in magic, including divination. The Chief Inspector of Clest is rumored to be highly skilled in spell-casting and is said to be a formidable foe to the potential law-breaker.

Leshan

Last, newest, but not the least, the fledgeling kingdom of Leshan occupies most of the southern peninsula of the eastern seaboard. Leshan is governed by the Half-Elven hero known as "Lorcin the Black," and his Council of Thanes. The rebels of Lesh finally took the Imperial seat of power in Lesh about two years ago, and declared itself an independent kingdom under the rule of Lorcin and his Council. Leshan is still recovering from its war for independence from Coryll and is making diplomatic gestures towards its neighbors and beyond in the hopes of developing allies. Leshan is divided into five major Duchy's, which are briefly described below.

Duchy of Lesh

The Duchy of Lesh is the seat of government for the kingdom, with the King having his main castle and his capital in the City of Lesh. The day-to-day governing of the duchy itself is handled by the Duke of Lesh, Keris Longaxe. Keris was the leader of a special squad who attacked and captured an Imperial Galleon that was bombarding the city of Lesh after the governor had been run out of the city. Keris has proven to be a very fair and even-handed ruler, who is capable of delegating authority to those who have more skill in an area than he possesses. He is said to spend a great deal of time with "advisors," experts on various subjects. His advisors are reportedly tutoring the Duke on the many subjects within their realms of knowledge. The city of Lesh boasts a University, which teaches a variety of subjects to those willing to pay the price for knowledge. Lorcin and Duke Keris are attempting to coax a few spell-casters into offering training at the University as well.

Duchy of Marshton

Marshton is governed by Duchess Lena Bortran. Her husband's father was the first Duke of Marshton, appointed by Lorcin. He was killed in a hunting accident a mere four months after the coronation of Lorcin. Lena's husband, Karl, was named Duke of Marshton at that time. About two months after Karl had taken over the ruling of the Duchy, Lena accidentally discovered him plotting with a Marquis from Coryll. Both men chased her from the room and into the crowded main hall, where she grabbed a rapier from the belt of a courtier and attacked both men, denouncing them loudly to all gathered there. She managed to kill the Marquis, and the guards subdued her husband after she had seriously wounded him. She then personally delivered her husband to Lorcin's throne room. Impressed by the honesty, courage and strength of character of this woman, Lorcin gave the lands and title of Marshton to Lena.

Duchy of Coll

Coll is governed by Joshua Bluefire, a Sorcerer trained by Lorcin. He had taken a Kylari wife during his years of hiding from the Empire, and Lorcin felt that he would be the best choice for the Duchy that borders the Kylari Lands. Joshua has managed to negotiate a treaty with the Clans of Kylarr and with the High King that allows Leshan to build and staff shared military outposts within Kylarr borders.

Duchy of Myddin

Myddin is governed by Jerimiah Cage, a former privateer who was very successful in the harrasing of Imperial shipping during the war. Captain Cage and his men managed to increase Leshan's naval power during the war by capturing and re-outfitting several Imperial warships. Duke Jerimiah's former first mate, Arvand Collanx, was named Admiral of the Navy and advises Lorcin and the Council on all naval-related matters.

Duchy of Fontaine

Fontaine is governed by Duke Aeric Darksbane, a towering warrior with a beautiful singing and speaking voice. The city of Fontaine was relocated to it's current home about 100 years ago, when the swamp reclaimed the area where the old city had stood. Rumors abound that the rising of the swamp was either the actions of Sindari Druids striking back at the Imperial Garrison on the outskirts of the city, or the actions of the mysterious serpent folk that are rumored to exist in the swamps on Serpent Island, just off-shore from the ruins of Old Fontaine.

Chapter Two

A Brief History of Leshan

The current campaign year is 2515 C.Y. (Common Year). Until about 300 years ago, the peninsula where Leshan now exists was the home of Sindari Elves, Dwarf clans, and several smaller groups of other races. The Sindari were the undisputed masters of the area. Around this time, the Kylari became more civilized and began establishing cities in the hilly lands in the Northwestern corner of the peninsula. Not long afterwards, about 200 to 250 years ago, in or around 2265 C.Y., a group of humans arrived from across the Ocean to the East. These humans built an outpost on the coast in a sheltered bay near the southern end of the peninsula and called it Lesh. Before long, the outpost of Lesh had grown into a large, walled city and other human towns and outposts were being built along the peninsula.

At first the Sindari and the other races occupying the peninsula were quite willing to accept the newcomers and welcome them to the land. However, after encounters with Imperial Troopers and the official Imperial attitudes towards non-humans, the Sindari and their neighbors declared war upon the interlopers.

In 2272, a Sindari/Halfling/Dwarf/Gnome delegation presented itself to the Commandant of Lesh, requesting that the humans constrain their lumber-cutting activities to lands not claimed by the other races, and to accept their help in the training of reforestation techniques. The entire delegation, with the exception of one Halfling diplomat was slain by order of the Imperial Commandant and returned to their lands as answer to the "request." This action marked the beginning of the first Leshan war.

Emperor Vladimir responded to the hostilities by sending more troops and colonists (generally undesirable, in both cases) to Lesh to bolster the colony. He also issues a general proclamation that the unprovoked hostilities are irrefutable proof that the non-human races of Leshan are nothing more than barbaric animals that should by divine right be ruled over by the Corycc peoples. The Emperor assigned Earl Garal Martail to Governorship of Lesh.

The first thirty years of the Imperial presence on the peninsula were marked with constant conflict and death. Finally, around 2290 the Sindari withdrew to their homes within the Elvar, where none could follow if the Sindari did not allow them. They bolstered their natural defenses with their magik and swore to kill all humans who dared to trespass into their homeland. The Empire finally gave up on assaulting the impenetrable forest home of the Sindari and left them to their own devices. The Khazal and the other Elven folk of Leshan responded by following the example set by the Sindari and closed their doors to the humans. The non-humans who were unable to escape the grasp of the Empire wound up as slaves serving the Empire or the wealthy and powerful.

For many years, the non-human natives of Leshan waged guerrilla warfare on the humans, however, they quickly restricted themselves to attacking only military targets, or those individuals or leaders who showed themselves to be cut from the standard Imperial mold.

In 2293, an outbreak of Pueric Fever killed a large number of the inhabitants of Harrad, Dorlw, Mokal and decimates Marshton and Shyrak. Imperial Governor Martail declares that the plague is the work of Sindari "Warlocks," and orders 500 Sindari slaves to be publicly executed to show the Sindari that "Humanity will not bend a knee to the barbarous threats of the forest demons."

In 2297, while touring his personal holdings near Fountaine, Governor Martail is assassinated by a single arrow fired from the nearby forest. The assassin, thought by many to be a Sindari "Warlock," was not found by diligent searchers. General Liam Kalles was appointed Governor-General of Leshan and ordered by the Emperor to execute 2000 Sindari slaves in retaliation for Martail's death. The new Governor-General ignored the order, and reported to the the Emperor that it had been carried out.

Governor-General Kalles restricted expansion into "uncontrolled" territories and concentrates his efforts into building up existing towns and regions under Imperial control. He reduced the Imperial Garrisons in many towns, giving the Thanes and Mayors more control over local issues.

There were many among the colonists, and even among the Imperial troops who felt that the taking of home, freedom and life from beings who had lived in these lands for centuries before the Empire came their way was wrong. They found that these beings whom the Emperor claimed were "sub-human" and "no more than animals" had lives, loves and ambitions much like their own, and that most of them were quite fine people in their own right. Over the years, more and more of the colonists who lived in the more remote areas, away from the daily scrutiny of the Imperial troops and the Shur-Kai began to trade with the free non-humans, and to learn of the things that they could teach them. The Sindari, the Khaz-Luraz and Khaz-Dorax all began tutoring willing and talented humans in the secrets of spell-weaving and the science of alchemy.

In 2340, a major earthquake originating in the hills west of Marshton. It's power was such that it completely destroyed several nearby villages, and caused damage to buildings as far away as Lesh. Imperial officials, upon investigation, discovered a crevasse, nearly a league long, and over 200 feet wide at it's widest point in the area where the 'quake was believed to originate. About a month after the 'quake, southern Leshan was hit with an outbreak of the Yellow Straint plague. Many die and many more are left crippled or weakened in its aftermath. Pirates attack Marshton and several other coastal towns in the aftermath of the plague, looting, killing and burning with few able to resist them.

In 2345, Governor-General Kalles is recalled to Coryll, and Prince Sharit MaKae is installed as Governor of Leshan. Governor MaKae was a fanatical follower of his father, the Emperor and immediately began tightening down on all of the laws and customs that Governor-General Kalles had let pass by without notice. A reign of terror that lasts for nearly thirty years ensued as Governor MaKae requests more squads of Shur-Kai from the Emperor to aid in his quest of rooting out "traitors" and "potential threats" to the Imperium. The Shur-Kai gain a stronghold in Leshan during this time, and are given full reign to the use (and abuse) of their powers. Not even members of Noble households are safe from the threat of the Shur-Kai.

In the spring of 2372, Governor MaKae was staying at his castle in Fountaine when disaster struck, literally overnight. During the dark of night, the nearby swamp suddenly began to encroach upon the walls of the city. The guard sounded the alarm, and in the ensuing panic, the citizens fled, taking whatever they could carry with them. The Governor and his personal entourage of Shur-Kai were not seen after everyone else was accounted for, and no one was willing to explore the newly enlarged swamp to search for them. Thane Tasal of Fountaine, who had spent the night with many of his advisors in the nearby festival grounds, declared that the city would rebuild upon the site of the festival grounds. The Thane sent word to Marquis DuPak, head of the Shur-Kai contingent in Lesh, who sent word to the Emperor of the death of the Governor in a "natural disaster." The Marquis declared himself acting governor and ruled Lesh for two years, until more troops arrived in the winter of 2374, along with the new Governor-General, Albrecht Yanner.

Governor-General Yanner, more circumspect than Governor-General Kalles had been, managed to keep a semblance of control over the Shur-Kai during his thirty-five years as Governor. His time as Governor was marked as being among the most peaceful periods in pre-revolution Leshan. During his Governorship, which ended with his death by natural causes (at age 69) during the Laviss Fever outbreak of 1409, he managed to direct the Shur-Kai and the Imperial troops towards the problem of piracy. Before his appointment, Imperial administrators had simply reacted whenever pirates attacked a town or ship, usually by making a half-hearted effort at chasing them down. Governor Yanner sent Shur-Kai (many of whom were lost in the effort) to the isle of Formasai, and to the City-State of Freeport to find the source of the pirate attacks, and the legendary High Captain of the pirate fleets.

Many successes were reported by the town hawkers and in official speeches, but the successes seemed to be of little effect to those who lived in coastal towns and cities.

Governor Haraxxi, a "retired" Shur-Kai and adept of Kor, was appointed Governor upon Yanner's death and took over in Lesh in 2415. As a former Shur-Kai and Adept of the Lord of Hatred and Tyranny, Haraxxi's short rule was not a pleasant period for the Leshians. Small groups of dissidents began to grow as they learned the arts of spell-weaving and other "forbidden" lores from their non-human friends. Many dissidents who were discovered fled into non-human held lands and took up residence in areas where few humans had ever been allowed to go.

It was not long before Sindari and Human couples found out that they were biologically compatible and a few half-Sindari children were born. One of these children was born from the union of a human alchemist and a Sindari geomancer who was one of the Council of Weavers around 2474. This child, named Lorcín, grew into a powerful and charismatic warrior and spell-weaver. It was Lorcín, called The Black because of his jet-black hair and eyes, who finally managed to gather together those who wanted freedom from the tyranny of the Emperor.

When Lorcin was 35, in the spring of 2509, the Rebel army struck its first major blow against the Empire. Lorcin led a group of 12 men and women, of various races, on a raid against an Imperial Frigate that was docked off the coast, just outside of Lesh. Together, they managed to sink the ship, killed four Shur-Kai and made off with an impressive cache of weapons. The rebellion grew as it was intended to, and after four years of bloody and bitter fighting, The Empire was driven out of Leshan. The Imperial governor, his personal staff, and those who wanted to remain within the "protection" of the Empire were loaded aboard a "declawed" Imperial frigate, given escort over half way and sent on home. The message was sent with the former governor from Lorcin that "... the free folk of Leshan will not be subjected to the monstrous villainy and bigotry of a tyrant from across the sea..."

The rebel forces were able to win the war due to the help that they received from their neighboring countries, none of whom wanted to have the Emperor for a neighbor. The Emperor, having to deal with situations closer to home, like the northern nomads, and the Matriarchy of Sahabrai, decided that he would bide his time and deal with the rebels at a later date.

The populace of the newly independent Leshan called for the Half-Sindari hero and leader of the rebellion, Lorcin the Black to be their ruler. The Council of Thanos coronated the reluctant hero on the fifth day of Thanos in the year 2213 C.Y. Lorcin agreed to serve as Mage-King on the condition that the Council of Thanos remain in place to advise him and to help temper his decisions with their wisdom and experience.

The coronation of Lorcin I as Mage-King of Leshan is seen by most as the beginning of a new era. Lorcin divided Leshan into five Duchys; Lesh, Marshton, Fountaine, Coll and Myddin. The Thanos of each of these areas presented themselves to Lorcin at his coronation and swore their fealty to the new ruler.

In the two years since Leshan has declared herself an independent nation, many changes have come about. Many towns and cities are still cleaning up from the effects of warfare in their streets, many folk are still learning to cope with their new-found degrees of independence and freedom from fear. There have still been occasional small skirmishes fought when a pocket of Imperial resistance is found, and acts of sabotage and terrorism here and there, but by and large, Leshan is learning what peace and prosperity are like.

New treaties and agreements have been signed with most of her neighbors. New laws have been enacted, some laws have been changed, and some have been completely stricken from the books. Many political prisoners have been released from the dungeons of Lesh. This is a brand new kingdom with lots of opportunities for those who have the spark of adventure in their blood.

Hello there, it's me again. The war was a very long, bloody affair, not the days of glory and chivalry that the bards paint it to be with their pretty songs. I served with a ranger force that was under the direction of then-general Lorcin. We saw the aftermath of many Imperial attacks on innocent villages, and many times we attacked Imperial Encampments under the cover of darkness, slaughtering Imperial troops while we had the element of surprise. Blood and death are not pretty sights, but winning the freedom of your homeland made it a necessary, if unpleasant task.

Chapter Three

Player Character Races

Humans

There are several distinct cultural/racial groups found on the world of Arakai.

Corycc

Humans of Corycc background are those whose families came over from the Coryll Empire. The complexions of Corycc humans tend to range from pale to dark brown. Corycc have a tendency towards wavy or curly hair that ranges in color from blonde to black, with red hair being very rare. Their eye color typically ranges from light gray to deep, walnut brown.

Height (Male): 60" + 3d6" (Female): 57" + 3d6"

No ability modifiers. Racial benefits as per Players Handbook.

Automatic Languages: Ordas (30% chance of Kybas, 20% chance of Lekari)

Kylari

The Kylari are indigenous to the continent of Lekarsha. They are typically found in and around the nation known as Kylarr. The complexions of the Kylari tend to range from pale to darkly tanned or reddish-brown. The Kylari typically have dark eyes and view those who have light colored eyes as having been blessed by the gods. The Kylari generally have straight or wavy hair, ranging in color from reddish blonde to midnight black. Kylari males tend to cultivate elaborate mustaches and view well-kept and trimmed beards as a sign of virility and class.

Height (Male): 62" + 3d6" (Female): 58" + 3d6"

No ability modifiers. Racial benefits as per Players Handbook.

Automatic Languages: Kyba (70% chance of Ordas, 30% chance of Lekari)

Njordman

The Njordmen are natives of the Njordic Islands of the North. Some Njordmen have found themselves as far south as the Leshian peninsula and fought alongside the Leshians to help them win their independence. Njordman complexions are light and their hair color ranges from white to fiery red, with light colors being common. Njordic eye color ranges from light, icy blue to bright, emerald green.

Height (Male): 68" + 3d4" (Female): 64" + 3d4"

No ability modifiers. Racial benefits as per Players Handbook.

Automatic Languages: Njordic (70% chance of Ordas, 60% chance of Lekari)

Clybari

The Clybari are native of the Principality of Clybari, but can be found all over the civilized world, since they are known as being the foremost merchants and moneylenders/bankers in the world. Clybari tend to be somewhat stocky of build, and have dusky tan to ebony black complexions. Thier hair tends to be either straight or wavy, and is generally thick and full-bodied, as well as being dark in color. Darker colored eyes are most comon amongst the Clybari, although there are occasionally blue or green-eyed individuals. Clybari (both males and females) generally wear long (knee or ankle length) robes over blousy pants and sleeveless shirts. Most of thier robes are are heavily embroidered, although the amount of embroidery is typically conversely related to thier actual wealth and power (A Clybari in a plain, unadorned robe is one to be very wary of). They also wear short-topped boots and fur-trimmed hats. The favorite weapon of the average Clybari merchant is hired mercenaries or guards.

Height (Male): 64" + 2d4" (Female): 60" + 2d4"

No ability modifiers. Racial benefits as per Players Handbook.

Automatic Languages: Clybar, Choice of two others (should be based on region the character lives in)

Sahabrai

The Sahabrai are natives of the harsh deserts south of the Empire of Coryll. They have a matriar-chal society, with a powerful navy and army. These desert dwellers have complexions that range from dark olive to deep, walnut brown. The most common hair colors are blonde, red and light brown. Darker colors are very rare. Thier eyes also lean towards the lighter colors, with green and gray being most common. All Sahabrai, both male and female, have wide shoulders and narrow hips, and thier legs are somewhat longer, proportionately, than most other human types. The standard dress among the Sahabrai are loose, flowing robes, with headgear that includes facial covering being standard among those who travel the desert regularly. It is customary for all married males to cover the lower portion of thier faces when in public, and all Sahabrai wear gloves when dealing with outsiders. Common weapons among the Sahabrai are the scimitar, falchion, the short spear, the longspear, the Krisha dagger, and the composite shortbow. Other weapons can be found being used by Sahabrai, these are just the most typical.

Height (Male): 60" + 3d6" (Female): 63" + 3d6"

No Ability modifiers. Racial benefits as per Player's Handbook

automatic Languages: Sahai, (80% chance of Ordas)

Non-Humans

Sindari

The Sindari are indigenous to the region that now includes Leshan. They were the undisputed rulers of the area before the incursions of the Coryll Empire. Sindari complexions range from a light brown to a light green, with hair that ranges from light brown to dark green or even black. Sindari eye color ranges from light gray to medium blue, with violet eyes being very common.

Height (Male): $58'' + 3d4''$ (Female): $55'' + 3d4''$

+2 Dex, -2 Con. Racial benefits as per Player's Handbook

Automatic Languages: Elvish, Ordas

Halflings

Halflings are found in various areas throughout the world. Halfling complexions range from pale to dark brown. Hair tends to be thick, curly or wavy is most common, and ranges in color from blonde to jet black. Halfling eyes may be of any color, with mid range brown most common.

Height (Male): $32'' + 2d4''$ (Female): $31'' + 2d4''$

-2 Str, +2 Dex. Racial Benefits as per Player's Handbook

Automatic Languages: Halfling, One other of choice

Half Elf

Half Elves may take the characteristics of either parent.

Height (Male): $55'' + 2d8''$ (Female) $55'' + 2d8''$

No Ability Modifiers. Racial Benefits as per Player's Handbook

Automatic Languages: Elvish, local human language

Half Orc

Found anywhere Orcs and humans can be found. As per descriptions in Players Handbook

Height (Male): $58'' + 2d10''$ (Female): $52'' + 2d10''$

+2 Str, -2 Int, -2 Cha. Racial Benefits as per Player's Handbook

Automatic Languages: Orcish, Local Human Languages.

Dwarf

Use the descriptions per Player's Handbook.

Height (Male): $46'' + 2d4''$ (Female): $44'' + 2d4''$

+2 Con, -2 Cha. Racial Benefits as per Player's Handbook

Automatic Languages: Dwarvish, local human languages.

Gnome

As per Player's Handbook

Height (Male): $36'' + 2d4''$ (Female): $34'' + 2d4''$

+2 Con, -2 Str. Racial Benefits as per Player's Handbook

Automatic Languages: Gnome, local human languages.

Chapter Four

Religions of Leshan

The pantheon of Leshan is the same, basic Pantheon that is worshipped in Imperial Lands, although the emphasis of the "official" and popular deities is somewhat different than it was in the Empire. Certain deities (or aspects of the deities) that were worshipped in the Empire are now proscribed in Leshan.

Corycc Pantheon

Oberon

Oberon is worshipped as the ruler of the sky, father of the gods. The sun in the sky, Ober, is referred to as the "Eye of Oberon," watching the world as he passes through the sky every day.

The church of Oberon sponsors several orders of Church Knights, who in addition to defending the holdings of Oberon, also protect the followers of Reeah.

In the Coryll Empire, Oberon is considered to be a minor sky god who answers to Kor, god of Tyranny.

Alignment: NG Domains: Good, Healing, Strength, Sun, Air

Reeah

Reeah, the wife of Oberon, is the Mother goddess. It is her bosom that nurtures humanity and the animals, providing warmth, shelter, water and food. Worship of Reeah is very popular in Leshan, and her following is quite large and influential, with even the King, Lorcín, having a priestess of Reeah among his staff of advisors. The Church of Reeah has no knights of her own, but relies upon the protection of the Church-Knights of Oberon, specifically the Order of the Orb. Reeah is a minor goddess in the Empire, her worshippers generally found only among the peasants and agricultural slaves. Many of the clergy of Reeah are Druids.

Alignment: N Domains: Air, Animal, Earth, Fire, Plant, Water

Thanator

The god of Death, the church of Thanator is one that has undergone drastic changes over the last 10 years. The aspect of Thanator that was worshipped in the Empire is that of the Lord of Assassins and Murderers, a demon-god who delights in the taking of life. This aspect of Thanator has been proscribed in Leshan. The Leshian aspect of Thanator is that of the protector of the dead and Lord of the Unliving. Thanator is not a popular deity in Leshan, even with the official changes that have been wrought in the church. Many people still fear a priest of Thanator, with their death's-head mask that they wear when in public in an official capacity. There are rumors that there are several of the "old-style" priests of Thanator still practicing their old ways as assassins and murderers. The church of Thanator in Leshan has one order of Church Knights, the Undefined. The Undefined guard cemeteries and act as guards during funeral processions, wakes and while the deceased is lying in state. Some of their number also function as "Vampire Hunters," or "Liche Banes," tracking down undead and returning them to the open arms of Thanator.

Alignment: LN Domains: Death, Protection, Sun, War.

Myshin

Myshin is the pacifistic goddess of healing. Her followers are expected to never strike a blow in anger, and to provide help and healing aid to all who are in need, no matter what their belief or race. Priests of Myshin will only use their skills for the healing and assistance of those in need, and never refuse aid to anyone, or any creature. Priests of Myshin are respected by almost all who know of their ways. The followers of Myshin refuse to accept the protection of Church Knights, politely and repeatedly insisting that the presence of the Knights only provokes violent reactions from others. The only recorded instance of anyone purposely harming a priest of Myshin is when a Shur-Kai Terror Squad attacked a remote hospice of Myshin in southwest Leshan and slaughtered everyone within. In Coryll, the church of Myshin is a peasant and slave religion similar to that of Reeah. The Noble houses actually encourage the peasants and slaves to follow the teachings of Myshin, hoping that a weak, pacifistic goddess will keep them subservient and tractable.

Alignment: NG Domains: Healing, Good, Protection

Tempesh

The Lord of the Oceans and Seas, Tempesh is the tempestuous ruler of the waves. Those who must travel the seas often sacrifice a small, but valued item to him before embarking upon a journey. Those whose loved ones are at sea likewise pray to Tempesh to provide them with safe passage home.

The Church of Tempesh sponsors two orders of Church Knights, one of whom sail the seas, the other order are more like standard Marines, serving both on land and water.

The church of Tempesh is much the same in the Coryll Empire as it is in the kingdom of Leshan, except that in Coryll, Tempesh is portrayed as somewhat darker, more dangerous to travellers.

Alignment: CN Domains: Air, Water, Luck, Travel

Daar

Daar is the god of smiths and other artisans. He is responsible for giving mankind the secrets of fire and metal-working. The church of Daar receives protection from the Church Knights of Tempesh and Oberon, whom the Priest-Smiths of Daar provide with weapons and armor. The priest-smiths of the Church of Daar in Coryll are prohibited from creating magical items, except for the Order of the Sphere, which is housed in the Palace of the Spheres in Cor and who are only allowed to create for the Emperor and those he favors.

Alignment: LN Domains: Magic, Strength, Earth, Fire

Staal

Son of Reeah and Oberon, Staal is the Lord of Agriculture and Harvest. He is usually worshipped in conjunction with Reeah and is most often represented in farming communities. His followers receive the protection of the Church Knights of Oberon in the same manner as the followers of Reeah. Staal is an almost unknown deity in Coryll, being considered a very minor aspect of Reeah.

Alignment: NG Domains: Plant, Animal, Air, Water, Healing

Sheena

Goddess of the Moon, love, passion and beauty. In the Empire, Sheena was portrayed as a harlot, but most of her followers in Leshan follow the aspect of the maiden of innocent love and natural passions. The church of Sheena in Leshan has moved away from the tradition of the Corycc orders to only allow the most physically attractive petitioners into the ranks of the priesthood. Instead, the emphasis has been to train the priests and priestesses to emphasize their good traits, and minimize their less attractive traits. The Church of Sheena does sponsor an order of Church Knights, whose sole purpose is the protection of her temples and her adherents.

Alignment: NG Domains: Good, Protection, Healing, Trickery, Knowledge

Arik

God of War and StormLord, Arik is a popular deity among soldiers and mercenaries on both continents. Priests of Arik are generally seasoned warriors in their own right, often serving as front-line chaplains and medics in times of war. The church does not sponsor an order of Church Knights, instead expecting any priest to be able to defend himself and his followers and to not hide behind the armor of others.

Alignment: N Domains: War, Healing, Protection, Water, Air, Strength

Anthrax

Demon-lord of disease and poisons, the worship of Anthrax is proscribed in Leshan. Officially it is proscribed in the Empire, but there is a thriving business in poisons there, especially among the noble houses. The church of Anthrax is not known to sponsor any orders of Church Knights.

Alignment: CE Domains: Chaos, Evil, Trickery, Plant, Death, Destruction

Muulah

Muulah, god of commerce and trade, is a Clybari import to the Corycc pantheon. The church of Muulah has found a new upswing of interest recently in Leshan. This is mostly due to the fact that the King is encouraging trade with other lands. Priests of Muulah are often found at the sealing of any official business transaction, and are quite knowledgeable in the laws of the lands where they attend to the needs of the commercial spirituality.

The church sponsors its own order of Church Knights, who protect the wealthy temples and priests of Muulah, and also many of the deities wealthy and powerful followers (for a price, of course).

Alignment: LN Domains: Law, Knowledge, Protection, Travel

Shanna

Twin sister of Sheena, Shanna is the goddess of the Hunt. Her church has one order of Church Knights, comprised entirely of women. This order, the Huntresses, have a reputation for being relentless in tracking down those who have committed wrongs against the innocent. A quintet of Huntresses tracked down the Shur-Kai Terror Squad that had destroyed the Hospice of Myshin, and brought each and every one of them to a "swift" justice. The leader of the Shur-Kai squad was kept alive to be brought before the King for trial. The justice of the King was equally swift.

Shanna is a very minor deity in the Imperial Pantheon, as it is illegal for any but the Noble Houses to hunt in the Imperial forests and fields. The order of the Huntresses in Coryll are used as foresters and are under the orders of the Emperor to kill any who hunt without right within his forests.

Alignment: NG Domains: Good, Protection, Travel, Animal, Plant, War

Æriss

Æriss, called the Peacemaker, is the god of negotiation and tranquility. Unlike the pacifistic followers of Myshin, however, the priests of Æriss are more than able to lift a sword or axe in the defense of justice, if that seems to be the only way to resolve a situation. If violent measures are used, however, a priest of the Peacemaker will spend many hours in meditation, reflecting upon how they could resolve the situation more efficiently the next time it is encountered. The church sponsors one order of Church Knights, the Marshals, whose sole responsibility is to act as traveling judiciaries and mediators. The church of Æriss has very few followers in the Empire, with negotiations there usually being won by the person with the fastest dagger or most power and influence.

Alignment: LG Domains: Law, Good, Protection, Knowledge, Strength, Travel

Kylari Pantheon

Kylarus

The father of the Kylari people, Kylarus is also the creator of the world and exists within the hills and land of the world. Kylarus is the deity of everything that exists and the ruler of all the gods. He is neither good nor evil, he simply is. Many Priests of Kylarus become hermits or wanderers, contemplating the messages that the god sends them. These priests are treated with great respect by all Kylari, and are offered hospitality by all Kylari who come into contact with them. Most of the priesthood of Kylarus are Druids.

Alignment: N Domains: Air, Animal, Earth, Fire, Plant, Water

Dralli

Dralli is the consort of Kylarus and rides the winds and the clouds, keeping the heavens in their appointed places and overseeing the children of Kylarus. There are few temples to Dralli, although all reverent Kylari will ask for her blessings when traveling, as will most Kylari mothers, when they must deal with their own children and mates. The goddess also brings the rains which bring life to the hills of Kylarr, and to the crops which must feed the children of Kylarus. Most of the priesthood of Dralli are Druids.

Alignment: NG Domains: Air, Water, Sun, Good, Plant

Balkar

Hunter and slayer of the dreaded Dragon-Wyrm, Desiccaria, Balkar is the patron of Kylari hunting and trapping efforts. The viscera of a kill is sacrificed to Balkar to obtain his protection and blessings on future hunts. The clan with a priest of Balkar serving to their needs considers itself blessed indeed, for they are seldom without fresh meat and hides.

Alignment: LG Domains: Animal, Law, Good, Protection, Knowledge, Healing

Xavinor

Xavinor is the son of Dralli and Kylarus, and governs the sea and the rivers and other waters of Kylarr. Coastal villages and towns generally have at least a small temple to Xavinor, and the priest is present every morning to bless the fishermen before they leave to seek the bounty of the waters. As with the clergy of his parents, many of the priesthood are Druids.

Alignment: CN Domains: Water, Air, Travel, Animal, Sun

Sarissta

Mate of Desiccaria, Sarissta is the god of mischief and retribution. Those seeking vengeance against another will ask for the blessing and assistance of Sarissta. Sarissta is also considered to be the patron of uncontrolled fire and destruction. The adherents of Sarissta are particularly violent when they confront the adherents of Balkar.

Alignment: CN Domains: Chaos, Strength, Trickery, Destruction, Fire

Pantheon of the City-State of Clest

Clestia

Patron goddess of the city-state of Clest, Clestia is the only deity worshipped by the Clestians. Foreign deities are not proscribed in Clest unless they practice sentient sacrifice or some, similarly anti-social rites. Clestia is the goddess of everything, she is the creator of the world, protector of the city and provider of all that there is.

Alignment: LN Domains: Law, Knowledge, Sun, Strength, Air, Water, Earth, War, Protection

Elvish & Halfling Pantheon

The Elves & Halflings do not have quite as complex a pantheon as that of Leshan. Their religious beliefs generally extend over into everyday life as naturally as breathing, and they do not make a big "show" over religion, with the exception of certain ceremonies held on special occasions.

Shairait

Father-god of the Elves & Halflings, Shairait is the god of sunlight, healing and Magic. Many human spell-caster in Leshan have taken to the worship of Shairait, or at least pay homage to him.

Alignment: NG Domains: Sun, Healing, Magic, Knowledge

Mirama

Mate of Shairait, Mother-goddess, creator of all that exists. Mirama is the Elvish counterpart of Reeah, and the followers of both have found that their tenets and beliefs have many parallels with one another. Lorcin, whose grandmother is a high-ranking priestess of Mirama, believes that the two are aspects of the same goddess. There is much cooperation between the Sindari churches of Mirama and those of Reeah.

Alignment: N Domains: Air, Animal, Earth, Fire, Plant, Water

Kiri

Kiri is the Elvish goddess of love and fertility. She is considered to be an aspect of Mirama by many Sindari. Her priestesses are often called upon to bless unions of the physical or spiritual kind.

Alignment: NG Domains: Healing, Knowledge, Protection, Good

Warlin

Warlin is the Elvish god of poetry, art and song and artifice. All works of an artistic nature are considered to be a tribute to Warlin, with the god being the only true judge of the value of a piece of work.

Elvish artists and artisans are taught that all creative attempts are successful, and all are beautiful, if not to themselves, or to others who view it, then to Warlin himself, for the expression is what matters most. Elvish weapons and armor are quite lovely and are often very ornate and fragile-looking, though this is seldom the case.

Alignment: CN

Domains: Chaos, Knowledge, Magic, Trickery

Dwarvish & Gnomish Pantheon

Most Dwarvish gods and goddesses are stolid and practical, with a few, notable, exceptions.

Dorman

Dorman is the High-King of the Dwarfish pantheon. He is the god of the Mountains and the Stones, and is said to have created the Dwarves by sowing the mountains with his teeth. One notable aspect of the followers of Dorman is that their high-ranking priests can be identified by the fact that their two, upper front teeth have been replaced by steel teeth. It is said that during a ceremony of advancement within the hierarchy of the church that the priest is required to remove the teeth himself, using a pair of smith's pliers.

Alignment: LG

Domains: Law, Good, Earth, Protection

Luranko

Luranko is the twin brother of Dorman, and is ruler of the forests and meadows of the world. He carved his followers from the branches of the True Tree and placed them on Arakai to guard his forests and meadows. The highest ranking priests of Luranko are said to be able to talk to the trees and to travel through them. The priesthood of Luranko is comprised entirely of Druids.

Alignment: N

Domains: Air, Animal, Earth, Fire, Plant, Water

Alor-Kal

Battle-god and patron of Weaponsmiths and Armorers, Alor-Kal is said to be a fierce and unmerciful god who expects his followers to face challenges head-on. Followers of Alor-Kal also follow a very strict code of ethics and honor that rivals the most strict of the human knight-hoods. Rumors say that the highest ranking of the god's Warrior-priests have actually embedded weapons and armor magikally into their flesh, making them into living weapons.

Alignment: LN

Domains: Law, Protection, Strength, War, Fire, Earth

Delair

Lord of Gems and Metals, Delair is the younger brother of Luranko and Dorman. Content to live among the glittering minerals and gemstones that he loves, there are those who say that Delair himself can often be found wandering around in the deepest and richest of mines, examining his charges, and often, enhancing their quality if he finds them lacking.

Alignment: LN Domains: Earth, Law, Luck, Protection

Torbytt

The "Black Sheep" of the pantheon, Torbytt is the one-eyed lord of mischief and chaos. Always choosing to do the unexpected, Torbytt is a bane upon the eternal lives of the other Dwarvish deities.

Followers of Torbytt are likewise unpredictable, just as likely to change sides during a conflict, or to begin attacking themselves or each other. Priests of Torbytt have a disconcerting habit of inflicting almost as much damage upon themselves in combat as they do upon their enemies.

All members of the priesthood wear a jeweled or gilded eyepatch over one eye to signify their devotion to Torbytt (although they may switch the patch from eye to eye at any moment). Many fanatical, higher-ranking priests have been known to remove their own eye in a frenzied, unannounced act of reverence (and to quickly call for the aid of a healer immediately afterwards).

Torbytt himself has reportedly decided to "drop in" and lend his "assistance" in mortal affairs from time to time. Several botched diplomatic missions and military missions have been blamed upon the untimely and unwanted interference of this meddlesome deity. The phrase "may the blessing of one eye be upon you," is considered quite a nasty curse and insult amongst the Dwarvish, for it is a fate that they generally would only wish upon their worst enemy.

Few mortals will knowingly utter the name of Torbytt, for fear that he might decide that he is being called upon and decide to answer.

Alignment: CN Domains: Chaos, Trickery, Destruction, Travel.

Chapter Five

Customs and Laws of Leshan

Common Customs of Leshan

These are a few of the common customs of the Corycc Humans of Leshan. Non-Humans in Leshan have their own customs, some of which are similar to those of the humans, and some of which are completely different. These will enable the traveller in Leshan to survive encounters with polite (and occasionally, not-so polite) society.

Greetings and Formal Introductions

"Well Met" is the polite response to an introduction or when meeting up with an acquaintance.

Men are expected to clasp one another by the forearms with both hands when meeting and/or greeting a stranger or acquaintance. When greeting a friend or family member, men generally clasp one another by the shoulders, or if fond of the person, embrace.

Women, when being introduced to females or when meeting with acquaintances, are expected to clasp both hands with one another. Close friends or family members of the either gender are occasionally embraced, although it is considered ill-mannered for a man to initiate an embrace with any female other than his life-partner, intended or mother.

When a man is being introduced to the life-partner of another, it is customary to bow from the waist while taking her offered hand in his and politely greeting her with the response of *"honored"* or some other customary greeting.

When being formally introduced to a single female, men are expected to go down on their left knee, and to take her offered hand in both of his and respond as to the life-partner of another, while the woman curtsies.

Customs of Travel and Travellers

To take leave of another without some acknowledgement is considered most ill-mannered and has actually been the cause of more than a few feuds. Even if the person leaving is angry or the enemy of the other, a curse is considered more acceptable than to leave the person's presence without acknowledging the other. It is believed that if a person dies and he or she was not acknowledged by the last person who left their presence, then their spirit must forever remain in the presence of the other.

When a friend, family member or acquaintance is embarking upon a journey, "*Good Travels*," or "*Swift Passage*" are considered polite phrases of leave-taking. "*Fare Well*" or "*Pleasant Day*" are common rejoinders uttered when taking leave of an acquaintance, or even someone whom you dislike. If you are leaving the presence of a social superior, then "*by your leave*" or some means of "asking" permission to leave are considered to be the most politic way to go.

If a stranger approaches your campsite or home before sunset and asks for hospitality, it is customary to feed the person, and to provide them with a place to sleep for the night. It is your responsibility to keep them safe to the best of your ability while they are under your hospitality, until they have broken their fast on the following morning (or noon if they are fasting). At this point your obligation to them is complete. This custom is observed by all honorable folk of Leshan and the Empire of Coryll, even if the one asking for hospitality is your sworn enemy. The person requesting hospitality is likewise obligated to observe the peace until noon of the following day.

Priests of Myshin, known to all to be pacifists and honorable physicians, are generally treated by all with kindness and respect. As the adepts of Myshin are forbidden to strike another, and are charged with the healing of any who are in need, regardless of their beliefs or politics, they are considered to be beyond reproach. It is ill-mannered to turn one away, even if you must give up your own meal and bed to accommodate them.

Customs regarding Meals and Food

Before dining, the men will stand and wait for any women present to sit and then for the eldest male to be seated before sitting themselves. When the meal is finished, it is customary for the ranking male (or a priest, if one is present) to ask the general blessings of the gods for the food and the people present. It is considered impolite to depart the table before this blessing is asked. It is considered poor manners to bring harm to one with whom you have shared a meal on the same day as the meal was shared. If you are invited to join someone in a meal, it is ill-mannered to offer payment, unless you offer stories, news, or other, intangible entertainment in return.

Customs of Courtship and Marriage

The folk of Leshan consider it perfectly acceptable for courtships, liaisons, or marriages to be initiated by members of either gender. When asking a person for their company for a particular function or time, the requester (male or female) will generally send a third party with the request for the pleasure of their company at a certain time or place. When asking the desired partner to become one's life-partner, it is considered most proper to do so in private, with the offer of a small token of affection and esteem accompanying the request. Regardless of the deities followed by the life-partners, all marriage ceremonies involve the gathering of friends and relatives while the couple publicly declare their love and their intent to become life-partners. Assuming there are no objections, which must be answered to the satisfaction of those present, a priest, friend or relative will then ceremonially bind the right wrists of the couple together to signify their union. *A bracelet or bracer is usually worn by the life-partners, it's design and style dependent upon their religions, wealth and social status.*

The Calendar of Leshan

The calendar of Leshan is the same as the one used by the rest of the "civilized" world. The current year is 2515 C.Y. (Common Year). Leshan has kept some of the festival days that are observed in the Empire, has dropped a few, and has added several new ones, including some Elven and Dwarvish festivals.

The Calendar year is broken up into twelve months, each with thirty days. There are five feast days allocated between last day of Ober and the First day of Arikna as the MidSummer Fest, and five feast days between the last day of Thanas and the first day of Sheen, with the First day of Sheen marking the beginning of the new year. This gives Leshan a year that is 370 days long. The Winter months are Thanas, Sheen, and Tempes. Ree, Mysha, and Daarnas are the months of Spring; and Ober, Arikna and Korysa mark the hot, summer months. Obnas, Shadnas and Stahlna are the months of autumn. There are 10 days in the week, with three weeks in each month. The days are simply referred to by number, with festival days being referred to in the manner, "Third day of MidSummer."

Feasts, Festivals and Holidays

There are several major feast and festivals observed by the people of Leshan. The First week of Sheen is the Festival of Beginnings, celebrating the beginning of a new year. During this week, many people exchange gifts with their families and friends, wishing them health and prosperity in the coming year. There are not many outdoor activities associated with the Festival of Beginnings, since the ground is usually covered with snow at this time.

The MidSummer festival in the five days between Ober and Arikna, is the most widely celebrated festival in the lands of Leshan. It is marked by fairs, tournaments, feasts and the like.

The last day of Tempes, which is also the last day of winter, is marked in some areas by processions of local children, wearing green robes and striking whips into the air as they walk from one end of the village or town to the other. This is done to drive the spirits of wintertime from the world until the following Thanas. Gifts are given to the children who participate in the ceremony, and they are given the places of honor at their dinner tables that evening.

Birthday celebrations in Leshan consist of a person's friends and families gathering together with him or her, since on the anniversary of a person's birth, it is supposedly easier for evil spirits to harm a person who is alone or lonely.

The second night of each full moon is Sheena's Day. Sheena is the goddess of the moon. This day is celebrated by her followers as a holy day. Ceremonies include the bringing of a large white cake, decorated with candles around it's edges, to represent the moon, to the altar of the shrine or temple. The adherents of Sheena then spend the next two hours until midnight singing their praises to her. At midnight, the cake is sliced, and the celebrators all partake of a piece of the moon's spirit.

Coronation Day and the Festival of Freedom are both celebrated on the Fifth day of Thanas. This is to commemorate the coronation of Lorcin the Black as Mage-King of Leshan, and the beginning of freedom from the Empire of Coryll.

Harvesttide is celebrated during the last week of Shadnas, after the harvests are all in, and everyone is preparing to "button down" for the coming winter.

Laws of Leshan

Although Leshan is basically a feudal society, her laws are different than the strictly feudal laws of the Coryll Empire. Many of the laws of Leshan were adopted from Elvish and Dwarvish laws. All of the laws of Leshan apply to both citizens and visitors. One of the distinctions of Leshian law is the division between High and Low Justice. Low justice may be meted out by Lairds and Magistrates, as well as by a few, select Marshalls appointed by the King.

Low Justice is limited to fines and terms of imprisonment not to exceed 10 days. If a person feels that he was unfairly judged, then he may appeal to the local Lord or other representative of the Crown for High Justice. The person is then re-tried, and if he or she is still found guilty, then they are dismissed from the court. If the person is found to have been unfairly judged, then the Court may award the person a wergild to compensate for the fine or imprisonment.

Only a noble of Baron rank or higher, or a special Magistrate appointed by the Crown may administer High-Justice. The only exceptions to this are certain special Law-Enforcement Officials appointed by the King, who have been granted the powers of administering High Justice. The person sentenced has the right to appeal his or her sentence *One Time*. He or she makes a plea to a higher ranking Noble or Magistrate, who will then hear the case. The decision of this Noble or Magistrate is considered final.

Nobles of Leshan, unlike those of the Coryll Empire, do not receive any special treatment from the law in regards to having more rights than the "common" folk. A Noble who commits cold-blooded murder is treated exactly like the street punk who commits the same act. Nobles are not allowed to mistreat non-Nobles simply because they feel "superior" by rank or accident of birth.

Social Status in Leshan

Leshan, as with all societies, has a social structure. Unlike many societies, a person in Leshan is not restricted to remain in the same social strata all of their lives. The fortunes of some people carry them from mundane middle class life, to the upper strata of society, and then back down to live amongst the poorest of the poor on the street. Nobility is not even restricted solely by circumstance of birth. The Mage-King may grant lands and title to any family he so desires to honor, or he may remove the lands and titles of a family in the same instant. Slavery is illegal in Leshan, except as a prescribed sentence for certain criminal acts. As a punishment, slavery sentences are set to a defined length of time.

Rankings of the Nobility

The structure of Leshian Nobility is strictly structured. Each rank of Noble owes fealty to a superior of the next highest rank, and all owe fealty to the Mage-King. Below are listed, from lowest to highest, the ranks of Leshian Nobility.

Laird/Mayor

The Laird is borderline Nobility at best, and not considered to be Nobility by those of higher rank. Lairds are the leaders of villages or hamlets. In a town or city, the leader is known as Mayor, but otherwise the positions are the same. Lairds and Mayors are appointed by the Lord whose fief the hamlet, village, town or city lies within. The position of Laird is not hereditary, and it is not guaranteed to be a lifetime appointment. The Laird or Mayor is responsible for the day to day governing of the people of the area. They are responsible for enforcing the laws, appointing constables, and dealing with minor problems that can be handled with Low Justice.

Knight

The lowest rank of Nobility above Laird (and considered by many to simply be the lowest rank of Nobility, period), the Knighthood is a non-hereditary title that may or may not include lands. Knighthood may only be bestowed upon a person by one of the authorized Orders of Knighthood recognized by the Crown, or by a Noble of Marquis or higher ranking. Church Knights of the various Orders supported by the Churches of Leshan are not considered Nobility, and are instead treated as members of the Priesthood.

Thane

The Thane is the ruler of a Thegne smallest sized of the fiefdoms. Most Thegnes include 4 or 5 villages at the most, and perhaps a small town, if the Thane is favored by the Crown or by the Count to whom he owes fief.

Count

There are usually four or five Thaners who owe fief to each Count, occasionally as many as six or seven.

Viscount

Viscounts usually rule over one or more counts.

Marquis

A Marquis usually rules over one or more viscounts.

Duke

The ruler of a Duchy. Each duke usually has one or more Marquises under his rule. The Dukes answer directly to the Mage-King and the Council of Thanos.

Mage-King

The ruler of Leshan. The first (and so far, only) Mage-King of Leshan is Lorcin the I, known as Lorcin the Black. Lorcin is considered to be the ultimate arbiter of High Justice, and has a strong voice with the Council of Thanos. However, it is possible for the Council to overrule his decisions, and to modify laws and judgements that he sets forth.

Trials and Law Enforcement

The majority of legal cases are presided over by a single official, be it the local Laird or the Knights of Justice, Marshalls who travel the lands in the name of the Mage-King. Knights of Justice are given the power to administer low justice, and also have the right to interrupt any proceedings being judged by any Noble or Laird and to bring the proceedings to the attention of the High Court in Lesh, if he or she deems it necessary.

Trial by Jury

The trial by jury is available upon demand to any citizen of Leshan who so demands it. The basic form is for the presiding officer to appoint a sworn jury which will hear all evidence that is presented and then give a verdict. Witnesses may be called forth to give sworn testimony in such a trial.

Trial by Judgement

The trial by judgement is where the presiding officer hears all evidence presented and then renders a decision based upon what he or she decides is appropriate.

Warrants and Arrests

The presiding officer of a legal court (a Laird/Mayor, Knight of Justice, Magistrate, or Noble) has the right to issue warrants within his jurisdiction. Warrants may command either the arrest of the accused, or demand his appearance at the next session of the court. The accused might be held in a dungeon for a lengthy period of time, but will usually be brought before the next session of the court.

Torture

Torture is considered an acceptable means to extract evidence in the Coryll Empire, but the Mage-King has forbidden the use of torture. The Sindari and the Khazal consider torture to be an unacceptable means of interrogation, and the Mage-King, being half-Sindari has held to this view as well. The most visible result of this has been the willingness of witnesses to an event to step forward and offer evidence to the authorities.

Death Penalty

The death penalty is carried out in a variety of ways in Leshan. The means is usually determined by the type of crime the accused has committed. The most common methods of execution are beheading and hanging. A particularly heinous criminal may suffer from public crucifixion or being drawn and quartered.

Outlawry

If an accused party evades capture, escapes from custody or cannot be found by the authorities, he or she may still be tried by the court. If the accused is found guilty and cannot be found, then he or she is declared outlaw. A declared outlaw may be slain by anyone without fear of prosecution. Any legal court, down to the Laird of a hamlet, may declare the status of outlawry, even though the declaration may not be acknowledged by the authorities of other jurisdictions. If an outlaw is considered particularly dangerous, a reward may be offered for his or her capture, dead or alive, and this provides the main source of income for Leshan's bounty hunters.

Crimes and Punishments in Leshan

What follows is a brief list of crimes with their appropriate penalties. It should be noted that an "accessory" to a crime will usually receive the same punishment as the actual criminal.

Crimes against the Crown

These are actions against the government of Leshan. These are the most serious of crimes and must always be dealt with by a court capable of administering high justice, and most of these crimes should be brought before the High Court in Lesh.

Regicide

Killing or attempting to kill a member of the royal family. Penalty: Death

Treason

Obstructing, disputing or conspiring against royal authority (with violence), sabotage of crown property, etc. Penalties: Banishment or Death

Forgery

The creation of forged government documents or coinage, possessing or transporting of the same, etc. Penalties: restitution by slavery, imprisonment, restitution, death

Privilege Crimes

These are crimes that abuse or take away some type of privilege, obligation or right. They are crimes against the social order of the people.

Abuse of Trust

The abuse of office or position, including graft, embezzlement, accepting bribes, dereliction of duty, etc. Penalties: loss of office, title, and property, imprisonment, branding, death.

Obstruction of Justice

The hindering of an officer or noble in the performance of his or her duty. Penalties: Flogging, fine, imprisonment, or hanging.

Slander/Libel

False accusation, malicious gossip, etc. (libel is slander in print.) Penalties: public reprimand, restitution, flogging, removal of the tongue.

Crimes of Violence

Abduction

The detaining of another person against his or her will without lawful cause or authority. Penalties: restitution, fine, imprisonment.

Battery

Common assault causing injury to the victim. Penalties: restitution, flogging, restitution by slavery term.

Cannibalism

Eating or skinning of human, elven or khazal bodies. Penalties: death by starvation or burning.

Manslaughter

The accidental slaying of another. Penalties: Restitution, restitution by slavery term to the next of kin, fine, imprisonment.

Murder

Killing another without provocation or with malice and forethought. Penalties: restitution, fine, imprisonment, death

Rape

Sexual assault upon an unwilling partner. Penalties: Castration, death by public stoning, death by drawing and quartering.

Economic Crimes

These are non-violent crimes that cause only economic harm. Crimes that result in the death of parties involved are usually judged in combined form with the violent crime that occurred.

Theft

Taking of that which does not belong to you. Penalties: Restitution, restitution by slavery, flogging, fine, imprisonment, hanging, cutting off of hand.

Piracy/Highway Robbery

Penalties: Fine, Imprisonment, death.

Smuggling

Possessing, selling or transporting any proscribed or otherwise contraband items. Penalties: Fine, imprisonment, hanging.

Tax Evasion

Avoiding payment of lawful tax or tolls. Penalties: restitution, fine, flogging, death (rare)

Religious Crimes

These are crimes committed against a legally recognized church. The officials of the church must bring forth the charges to the local officials.

Impersonating a Priest

Penalties: slavery to the temple, Flogging, burning, impalement, crucifixion

Desecration

The theft of property or relics that belong to the church. The willful damage of the same. Penalties: Flogging, restitution by slavery, restitution, branding, death.

Inheritance Law

The disposition of the property of the deceased. If a written will has been left with the local lord or a priest, then the desires stated in the will take precedence. Otherwise, the estate is generally divided equally among the surviving children if no spouse is alive. If the spouse is living and no will has been brought forth, the spouse receives two-thirds of the estate, with the remainder divided up amongst any living children.

Weapons, Armor and the Law

The following laws concern the carrying of weapons and the wearing of armor.

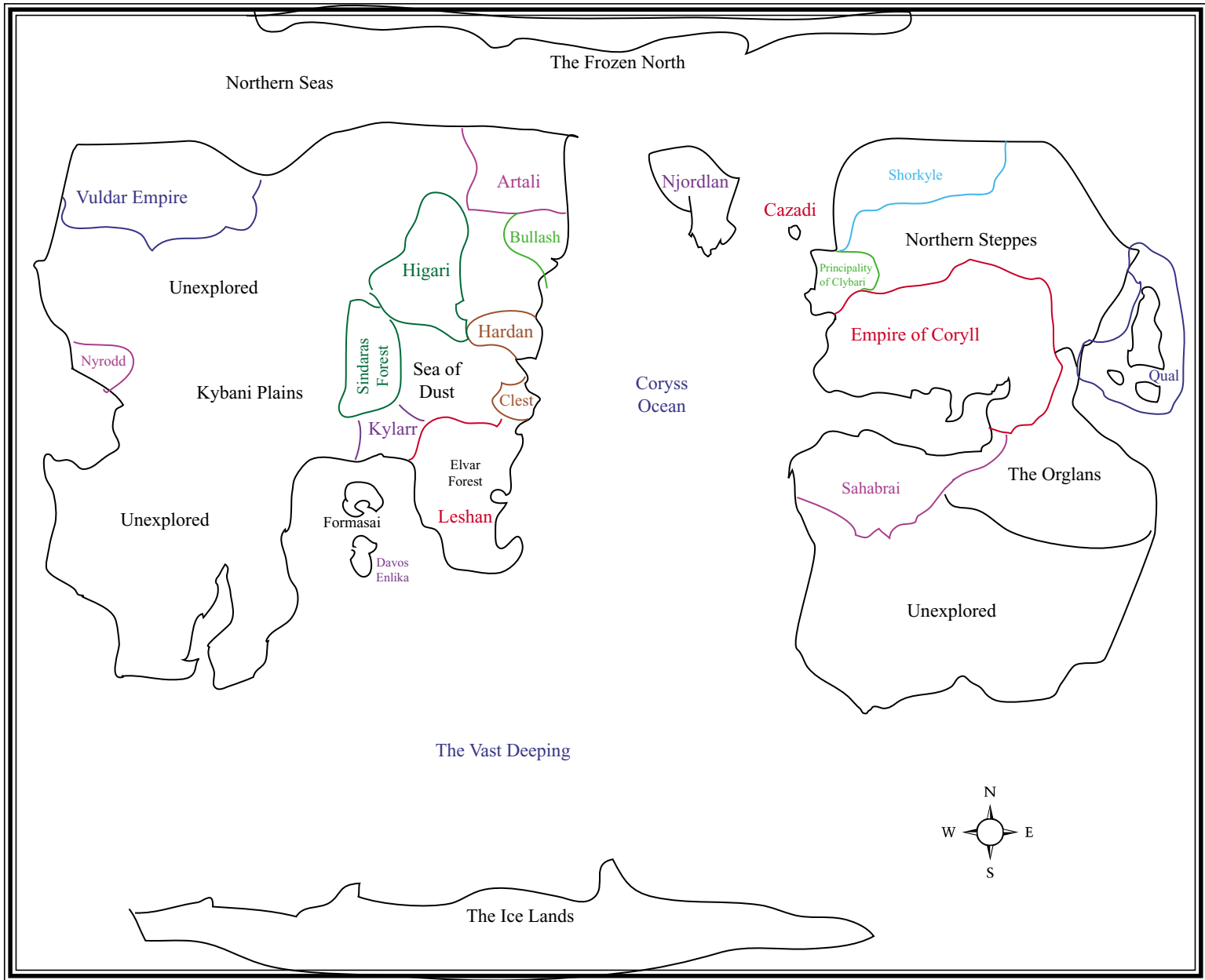
Weaponry

The laws concerning the possession of weaponry within a town or city vary to some small degree, but the general rule of thumb is that all weapons must be peace-strung while carried.

Armor

In general, no armor heavier than studded leather may be worn in towns or cities, except by nobles and church knights. Due to the weight and cost, very few people even own plate armor or plate mail

Map of Arakai





Map of Leshan