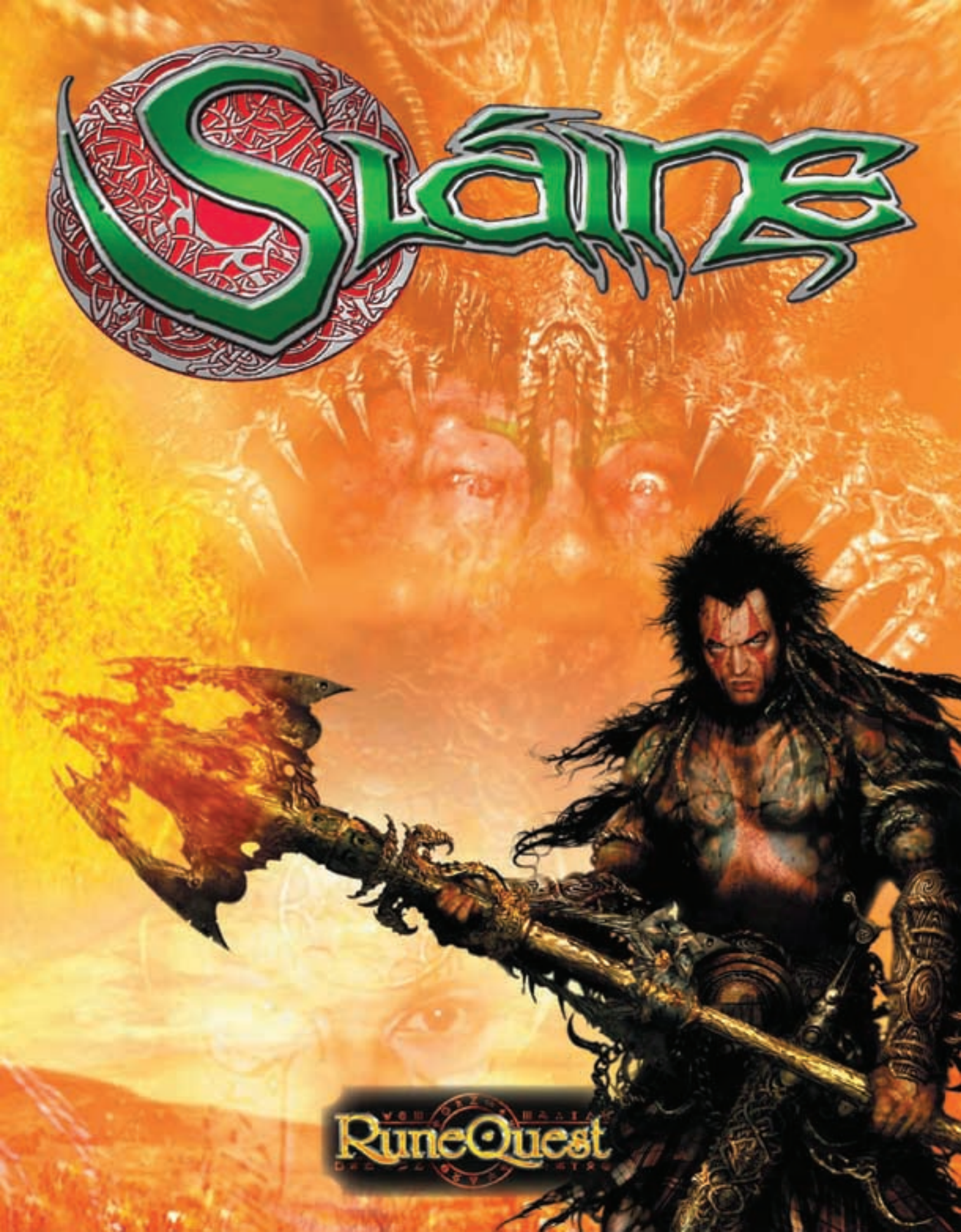


Slane

RuneQuest



Sláine

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REBELLION



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Introduction

Welcome to Tir Nan Og, a land where ancient Celtic legends mingle with prehistoric fact, thousands of years ago, just after the end of the last Ice Age. Tir Nan Og is known as the Land of the Young, for very few of its people live to old age. The noble Tribes of the Earth Goddess keep their proud warrior traditions alive in northern Tir Nan Og, but are constantly threatened by the Fomorian sea-devils, tribes of the evil Drune Lords, and bloodthirsty berserkers of Midgard. The gods and goddesses of the Land of the Young take a personal interest in its affairs, and it is quite possible to interact directly with them in their own lands, and even to call upon their aid on the battlefield.

The Sláine roleplaying game allows Players to take the role of mighty Celtic heroes exploring a land in which legends are real and a strong warrior can carve out a reputation that may last for millennia. As members of the Tribes of the Earth Goddess, they will be called on to raid or war against rival tribes, quest after ancient treasures, or defend their lands against invading sea-devils. Over the years they will build up their honour and reputation, until one day they might join the ranks of the tribe's most elite warriors, or even become tribal leaders themselves.

By playing the Sláine roleplaying game, you can create a character who lives both in the magical land of Tir Nan Og and in your own imagination and that of your friends. One Player will take the role of the Games Master, controlling the people and creatures who dwell within the land whilst the other Players will be either valiant heroes, wise druids, wily thieves or cunning witches. The Games Master sets Tir Nan Og before the other Players, allowing them to explore everywhere from the frozen wastes of Lochlann in the north, to the magically drained Sourlands in the south and the territory of the evil Drune Lords beyond.

What You Need To Play

To begin playing the Sláine roleplaying game, all you need is the following:

This book contains all the background information needed to start a *RuneQuest* campaign in the world of Sláine. You will need the *RuneQuest* book to make full use of the material in this book. The *RuneQuest Companion*, *Legendary Heroes*, *RuneQuest Arms and Equipment* and *RuneQuest Monsters* are not required but will also prove useful.

New to Sláine?

You are in for a real treat! Coming straight from the pages of 2000AD, the comic-strip hero Sláine lives in Tir Nan Og, a land of magic and legend. No other fantasy setting draws on such a deep vein of Irish and other Celtic mythology, presenting a fully detailed ancient world of war, monsters, sorcery, and the very gods themselves.

If you have never encountered Sláine before, you are encouraged to start reading *The Land of the Young*, starting on page 3, followed by *A Guide to Sláine's World* on page 72, before commencing with the main rules. This will give you a good introduction to the blend of Celtic myth, prehistoric fact and barbarian fantasy that make up the setting of Sláine. From there, go on to page 6 and start creating some characters to begin play with. In many ways, human warriors are the easiest characters with which to begin playing this game, as they have a definite place in the tribal structure, and a strong motivation to do great deeds so as to increase their honour and reputation. In addition, they almost always have something to do – whether honing their combat skills, patrolling for enemy cattle-raiders, heading out on a cattle raid themselves, or defending their tribe from attack.

Witches, druids and characters from the three non-human races (dwarves, rmoahal and warped ones) are a little more complicated to play, partly because they do not fit so easily into the context of a tribe and partly because of their various special abilities. For this reason they are usually best left till both Players and Games Masters are familiar with Tir Nan Og.



The Land of the Young

Tir Nan Og is the legendary Celtic Land of the Young, a world rather like a mythical version of Northern Europe in a time before much of that continent sank beneath the waves. The four Tribes of the Earth Goddess, on whom the Sláine stories concentrate, are threatened on all sides, with the constant risk of the Fomorians sweeping down from the icy north, the Drune Lords encroaching from the south, and the ravages of the berserkers of Midgard in the east.

The Earth Goddess tribes are also known as the northern tribes, or as the Tuatha de Danaan, literally 'People of Danu.' Danu is the name of the great Goddess they all revere, the primal Earth Mother who birthed them all and will one day receive them all into death. She is served directly by the druids, placated and sacrificed to more secretly by the witches, and simply worshipped by every other member of the northern tribes.

The lands of the Earth Goddess tribes are Alba in the north, Albion in the south, and Cambria and Eriu to the west. These correspond roughly to the modern British Isles while those lands were still attached to mainland Europe, though the Tribes of the Earth Goddess lived many thousands of years in the past.

The Sessair are one of the most feared tribes in all of Tir Nan Og, and are famed for deliberately attempting to receive wounds in battle so as to demonstrate their toughness. They range over Northern Eriu and parts of Northern Albion. Their ancient city, Murias, is just to the North of the Inland Sea, on the west bank of the River Dôn. The Sessair are feared particularly for their terrifying Red (or Violent) Branch, an elite warrior band who are always at the forefront of any charge and seem to have no thought for their own survival, only for destroying their foes. The Red Branch are initiated at the Sessair's most sacred site, the Great Cairn in Eriu, a vast stone mound sacred to Danu the Earth Goddess and Lugh the Sun God.

The Finians are the northernmost tribe of the Earth Goddess, occupying most of Alba and parts of Northern Albion. They tend to be dour and taciturn, but like most of the Earth Goddess tribes are eager for and competent at war. Many vicious battles with the Fomorians have taught the Finians how to handle great hardship, and they are well used to surviving an entire military campaign on a handful of oats and the occasional boiled turnip.

The Sessair and Finians suffer first and foremost from the depredations of the Fomorians, since both tribes inhabit the northern regions closest to Lochlann and Tory Island. This has forged a grim respect between the two tribes, though this mutual respect does not prevent them from warring against and raiding one another at every opportunity – rather, they recognise each other as worthy foes. Unlike the Finians, the Sessair are also well aware of the danger of the Drune Lords, since so many young Sessair end up wandering the Land of the Young as part of mercenary bands.

The Fir Domain, known as the Tribe of the Growling Shields, is a fierce and warlike tribe occupying most of the land of Albion. This central position in Tir Nan Og means the Fir Domain are often attacked by titans, Drune Lord tribes, and Norsemen. Despite this the Fir Domain are enthusiastic about warring with the other Earth Goddess tribes too, considering their other foes as barely worth bothering with. They regard the Titans as something of a pest, rather than a proper enemy, and organise Titan-hunting expeditions with great glee.

The Tribe of Shadows have suffered greatly from the attacks of the Drones and from the encroaching of sourland (once fertile land now drained of all life by evil sorcery) onto their fields and pastures. They fight back in a different manner, painting themselves black and specialising in night attacks. Their lands stretch across most of southern Eriu and much of Cambria, though the minor tribes of Cambria are fairly independent.



In recent years, the Tribe of Shadows have been in something of a decline, after a long and vicious war with the usually peaceful Beaver Folk who inhabit the Inland Sea and the surrounding marshes. It is said that their attacks on the Beaver Folk have left them under a curse from the Moon Goddess, which is the main reason they find it so difficult to function in daylight.

To the south of the Earth Goddess tribes lie the Tribes of the Drune Lords, once the same peoples as the Earth Goddess folk but now utterly cowed by the powerful and evil Drune sorcerers who rule their land. The Drones have long been experimenting with dark magic, and in recent years this has caused great rifts in time and space to tear through their lands, bringing Time Monsters and other lethal beasts from the far past. Drune sorcery has also drained much of the countryside of the magical Earth Power that flows through it. Earth Power is a gift from the Goddess that is used for good by the wise druids of the northern lands, but it has been stolen by the Drones to help them keep their subject tribes under control. They sacrifice many of their own people, and slay those who resist using their powerful lightning magic.

When Drones are found wandering beyond the safety of their cities and sacred groves, they usually travel with a war party of skull-swords, their armoured soldiers. The skull-swords guard the Drones and assist them to enforce their rule. Skull-swords tend to be better-disciplined than the warriors of the Earth Goddess tribes, but are often said to be cowardly and dishonourable.

The other great threat to the Earth Goddess tribes is the Fomorians, foul mutants also known as sea-devils. These amphibious humanoids live in the northern seas and on the ice sheets of Lochlann, beyond northern Alba. Though disorganised and not especially heroic, they have the advantage of seemingly inexhaustible numbers and a ferocious hatred of humanity. Their leader, Balor of the Evil Eye, has the power to slay the living simply by meeting their gaze.

Beyond the lands of the Earth Goddess and Drune Lord tribes, to the east of Tir Nan Og, lie the cold and gloomy lands of Midgard, home to the Norsemen (also called the Berserkers). The Norsemen are as fierce and uncompromising as their ice-locked homeland and are best known to the other tribes as raiders and pirates.

Several minor territories also exist on the borderlands between the Drune Lord tribes and the Earth Goddess tribes. These include the small enclaves of the titans, the lands of the Fir Bolg tribe, and Lyonesse.

The titans are giants who once ruled all of Albion, back in the days before the Tuatha de Danaan arrived in the land. It is said that they presided over a golden age of peace and prosperity but, by the time the Earth Goddess folk invaded the titans were already in decline both intellectually and politically. Their once-great minds seemed to have atrophied through centuries of easy living and decadence, and they were unable to resist the takeover of the more vigorous and numerous human tribes. Today only a small number of titans remain, still hunted occasionally by humans but for the most part simply ignored.

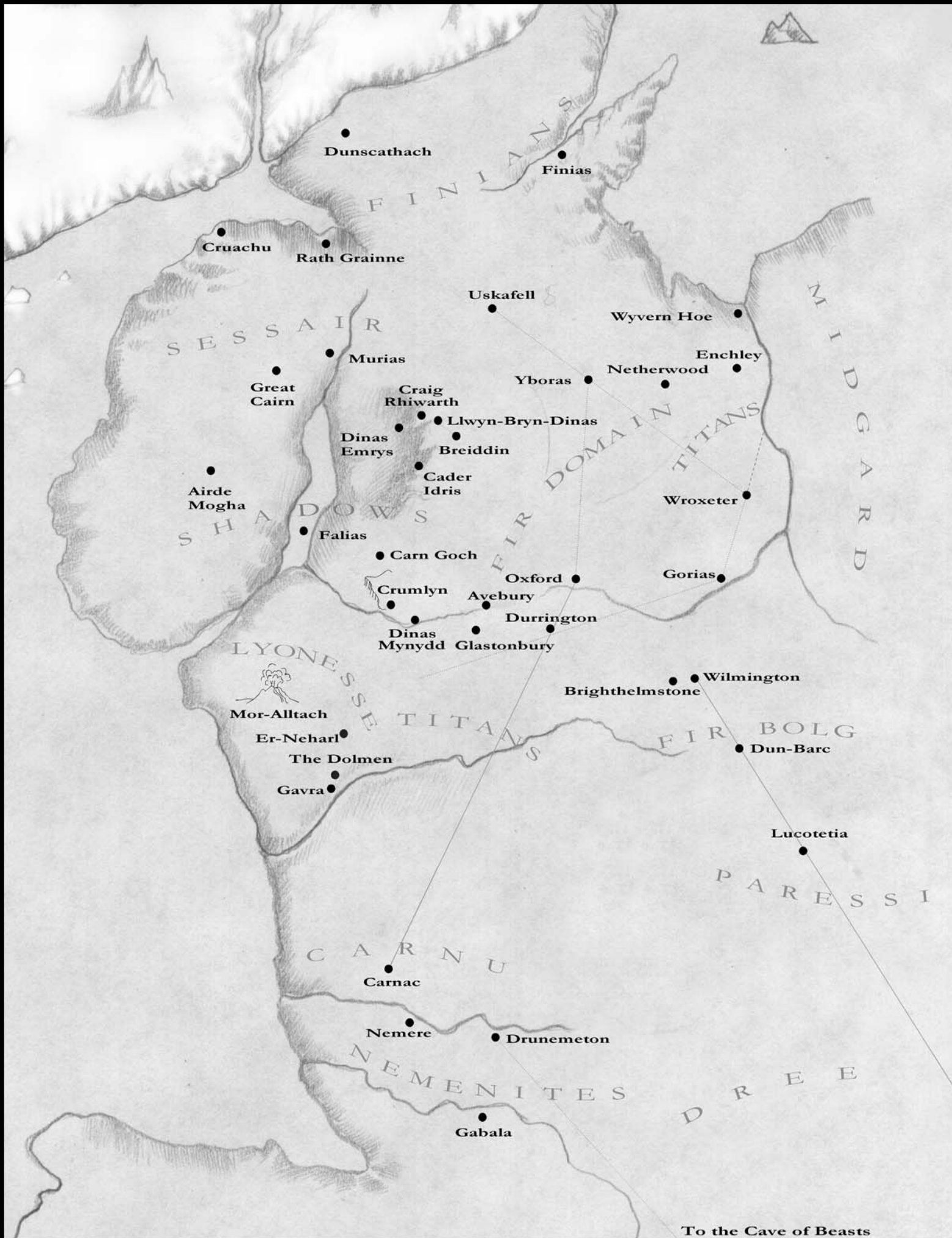
The Fir Bolg are ancient cousins to the Fir Domain, and live just south of them, close to the Drune lands. In many respects their culture is between that of the northern and southern tribes – they are independent of Drune rulership, but they worship the Drune gods Carnun and Crom-Cruach.

Lyonesse was at one time a proud and lush magical land in its own right, but most of its peoples are now dead or dispersed and the land itself is predominantly sourland. Merchant sky chariots (flying ships) ply their trade across it from the edges of the Drune lands, taking cargoes of the Half-dead - dead men trapped between the worlds by sorcery - to sell to the northern tribes as battle-fodder in their wars.

It may well be that other lands lie across the seas of Tir Nan Og, and certainly such lost lands feature in the tales of mariners and other explorers. Little is known about the continent beyond Midgard and the Drune Lords' lands, either – another area ripe for discovery.

What is certain is that far beneath the Earth are several more worlds, known as the El worlds. Home to elves, goblins, elementals and other supernatural creatures, these lands are very difficult to enter from Tir Nan Og, and only druids, scholars and a few adventurers are really aware of their existence as anything more than superstition. Despite this relative ignorance, many warriors have faced El creatures in battle, since they are commonly conjured up by witches and other sorcerers to do their bidding.





Dunscathach

Finias

Cruachu

Rath Grainne

Uskafell

Wyvern Hoe

SESSAIR

Murias

Great Cairn

Yboras

Netherwood

Enchley

Craig Rhiwarth

Llwyn-Bryn-Dinas

Dinas Emrys

Breiddin

Cader Idris

Airde Mogha

SHADOWS

Falias

Carn Goch

Oxford

Wroxeter

Crumlyn

Aycbury

Durrington

Gorias

Dinas Mynydd Glastonbury

LYONESE

Mor-Alltach

Er-Neharl

The Dolmen

Gavra

Brighthelmstone

Wilmington

FIR BOLG

Dun-Barc

CARNU

Carnac

Nemere

Drunemeton

PARESSI

Lucotetia

NEMENITES

Gabala

DREE

To the Cave of Beasts

CHARACTER CREATION

Tir Nan Og is named the Land of the Young because so few people live to an old age. It is a harsh and violent place, a land of warring tribes, loathsome creatures, tyrannical sorcerer-kings, mighty heroes and epic battles. The land too, is young – it is a land in which legends can still be made, in which a powerful warrior or druid could one day become a god, and in which folk can still warp the serpent-like earth energy through their bodies.

Your character's profession determines the role you will initially take within the Land of the Young. Each profession has a different range of abilities and skills, greatly affecting the manner in which each is played and their role in *Sláine*.

CREATING A CHARACTER

The full details on how to create a character are covered in *RuneQuest*. However, a few changes are required to reflect the life in Tir Nan Og and the characters found within that land.

Race

The only common races suitable for Player use are Humans, Dwarves, Rmoahals and Warped Ones. Humans are treated much as in other *RuneQuest* settings, although Dwarves are very different from the standard fantasy versions as can be seen below. Warped Ones look human, but are descended from ancient beast lords, and can warp the power of the earth through their bodies.

Cultural Backgrounds

The cultural backgrounds of characters in *Sláine* are derived from their particular tribe. Although all the tribes are what would be considered as a 'barbarian' background in *RuneQuest* the different tribes have their own unique skills and abilities. Dwarfs,

Atlanteans, Midgard berserkers and characters hailing from the Tribes of the Drune Lords also have their own background skills.

Professions

As *Sláine* does not use Rune Magic any profession using these are prohibited. These include the alchemist, priest, shaman, witch and wizard professions.

Only professions available to characters from a Barbarian background in the basic *RuneQuest* rules can be used by either members of the Tribes of the Earth Goddess or characters from Midgard. Characters hailing from the Tribes of the Drune Lords, Dwarves or Atlanteans can chose any profession available to either a barbarian or civilised character in *RuneQuest*.

The druid, skull sword and witch backgrounds are new, additional professions available to Player Characters.

Geases and Weirds

Each human or warped one starts the game with a Geas, a magical compulsion laid on them at a very young age. See the Geases section later in this chapter for more information. Dwarves never receive Geases. Some Players will prefer to choose a Weird rather than a Geas – a Weird is a special destiny that you will one day fulfil.

Enech and Sarhaed

The Celtic system of honour and reputation is known as Enech. A character with a high Enech score will be famous and well-respected. Enech also affects your honour-price which, among other things, is the fee another character must pay to your family if he kills you. Honour-price is called Sarhaed.



Cultural Backgrounds

Background	Basic Skill Bonuses	Advanced Skills	Starting Money
Atlantean	Athletics +5%, Perception +5%, Resilience +5%, Stealth +10% Pick One +5% Driving, Lore (Animal), Lore (Plant) Pick Two +10% 1H Axe, 1H Sword, 2H Axe, 2H Sword, Dagger, Shield, Spear, Staff, Throwing, Unarmed	Language (Native) +50%, Lore (Regional), Survival Pick Two Craft, Dance, Lore, Serpent Staff, Taunt, Tracking	4D6x2 s�ets
Dwarf	Influence +5%, Lore (World) +10%, Perception +5% Pick Three +10% Dodge, Evaluate, First Aid, Lore (Animal), Lore (Plant), Lore (World), Persistence, Resilience Pick Two +5% 1H Axe, 1H Hammer, Crossbow, Dagger, Shield, Spear, Throwing, Unarmed	Language (Native) +50%, Lore (Regional), Lore (any) Pick Two Craft, Dance, Engineering, Ogham, Lore, Mechanisms, Play Instrument, Survival	4D8x5 s�ets
Falian	Athletics +5%, Perception +5%, Resilience +5%, Stealth +15% Pick One +5% Driving, Lore (Animal), Lore (Plant), Riding Pick Two +10% 1H Axe, 1H Sword, 2H Axe, 2H Sword, Dagger, Gae Bolga, Shield, Spear, Tathlum, Throwing, Unarmed	Language (Native) +50%, Lore (Regional), Survival Pick Two Chariot Combat, Craft, Dance, Lore, Shield Kick, Taunt, Tracking	4D6x2 s�ets
Finian	Athletics +5%, Perception +5%, Resilience +10%, Stealth +5% Pick One +5% Driving, Lore (Animal), Lore (Plant), Riding Pick Two +10% 1H Axe, 1H Sword, 2H Axe, 2H Sword, Dagger, Gae Bolga, Shield, Spear, Tathlum, Throwing, Unarmed	Language (Native) +50%, Lore (Regional), Survival Pick Two Chariot Combat, Craft, Dance, Lore, Salmon Leap, Spear Catching, Taunt	4D6x2 s�ets
Fir Bolg	Athletics +5%, Perception +5%, Resilience +10%, Stealth +5% Pick One +5% Driving, Lore (Animal), Lore (Plant), Riding Pick Two +10% 1H Axe, 1H Sword, 2H Axe, 2H Sword, Dagger, Razor-edged Shield, Shield, Spear, Tathlum, Throwing, Unarmed	Language (Native) +50%, Lore (Regional), Survival Pick Two Chariot Combat, Craft, Dance, Lore, Taunt, Tracking	4D6x2 s�ets
Fir Domain	Athletics +5%, Perception +5%, Resilience +10%, Stealth +5% Pick One +5% Driving, Lore (Animal), Lore (Plant), Riding Pick Two +10% 1H Axe, 1H Sword, 2H Axe, 2H Sword, Dagger, Gae Bolga, Razor-edged Shield, Shield, Spear, Tathlum, Throwing, Unarmed	Language (Native) +50%, Lore (Regional), Survival Pick Two Chariot Combat, Craft, Dance, Lore, Ogham, Shield Growl, Taunt, Tracking	4D6x2 s�ets



Cultural Backgrounds (continued)

Background	Basic Skill Bonuses	Advanced Skills	Starting Money
Midgard Norseman	Athletics +10%, Perception +5%, Resilience +10%, Stealth +5% Pick Two +5% Boating, Lore (Animal), Lore (Plant), Riding Pick Two +10% 1H Axe, 1H Sword, 2H Axe, 2H Sword, Dagger, Shield, Spear, Staff, Throwing, Unarmed	Language (Native) +50%, Lore (Regional), Survival Pick One Craft, Dance, Lore, Pilot Skychariot, Rise Prayers, Shield Biting, Taunt, Tracking	4D6x2 séts
Sessair	Athletics +10%, Perception +5%, Resilience +5%, Stealth +5% Pick One +5% Driving, Lore (Animal), Lore (Plant), Riding Pick Two +10% 1H Axe, 1H Sword, 2H Axe, 2H Sword, Dagger, Gae Bolga, Shield, Spear, Tathlum, Throwing, Unarmed	Language (Native) +50%, Lore (Regional), Survival Pick Two Chariot Combat, Craft, Dance, Lore, Salmon Leap, Spear Foot, Taunt, Tracking	4D6x2 séts
Tirbes of the Drune Lords	Athletics +10%, Perception +5%, Resilience +10%, Stealth +5% Pick Two +5% Boating, Lore (Animal), Lore (Plant), Riding Pick Two +10% 1H Axe, 1H Hammer, 2H Axe, 2H Hammer, Bow, Dagger, Shield, Sling, Spear, Staff, Throwing, Unarmed	Language (Native) +50%, Lore (Regional), Survival Pick One Craft, Dance, Lore, Play Instrument, Taunt, Tracking	4D6x2 séts

Profession

Profession	Cultural Background	Basic Skill Bonuses	Advanced Skill Bonuses
Druid or Drune	Atlantean, Falian, Finian, Fir Bolg, Fir Domain, Sessair, Tribes of the Drune Lords	First Aid +5%, Influence +10%, Lore (Plant) +5%	Basic Spell ¹ Pick Two Basic Spell ¹ , Healing, Lore, Ogham, Ritual Sacrifice, Survival, Tap Weirdstone
Skull Sword	Fir Bolg, Tribes of the Drune Lords	Dodge +5%, Lore (World) +10%, Resilience +5% Pick Two +15% 1H Axe, 1H Sword, 2H Axe, 2H Sword, Athletics, Dart Dragon, Shield	
Witch	Atlantean, Falian, Finian, Fir Bolg, Fir Domain, Sessair, Tribes of the Drune Lords	First Aid +5%, Lore (Animal) +5%, Lore (Plant) +10%	Basic Spell ¹ Pick Two Basic Spell ¹ , Healing, Lore, Ogham, Ritual Sacrifice, Survival, Tap Weirdstone

¹ The player may choose any spell in this book that he is eligible for (he can not chose a spell normally reserved for a member of a different tribe or a follower of a different god or chose a spell that has another spell as a prerequisite).



Languages

This is a mythic time, and characters from different countries and even different eras understand one another perfectly well. How else would they manage to taunt each other before battle?

CHARACTER RACES

Humans

Most humans in Tir Nan Og are a little hardier and a little more primitive than those in other fantasy games. These people live in a land where day-to-day survival is always uncertain, and where crude iron swords are the most technologically advanced weapons available. The gods are not so much worshipped as they are feared and placated. Priests and sorcerers are one and the same, feared and honoured in equal parts. Other races tend to be viewed with a suspicion verging on xenophobia, with only Dwarves being more-or-less accepted into human society. Humans are covered in greater detail within *RuneQuest*.

Dwarves

Dwarves are the only race to get on with humans reasonably well, partly perhaps because they are so useful. They can be almost as versatile as humans, and dwarf tinkers, thieves, craftsmen and others can be found throughout Tir Nan Og. Some legends have it that they are partly of El blood, descended from elves or other El creatures who have long since vanished beneath the earth, although their lack of Earth Power would seem to belie this idea. Others claim them to be no more than degenerate humans.

Dwarves are typically about just over one metre tall, but weigh much less than humans (around 80 pounds). Although physically a little weaker than humans, they are quite capable of wielding great-axes, spears and other large weapons. They have distinctive, large, pointed ears which stick out from the sides of their heads. Their noses tend to be wide and flat, and their teeth quite prominent. Dwarves live around as long as humans do.

† **No Earth Power:** Although dwarves can learn to manipulate Earth Power with some facility and starting characters will have a normal amount of Earth Power points, they can not regenerate Earth Power within their bodies, unlike humans.

For this reason they cannot be warped and very rarely become druids or witches, although some learn a spell or two and power them by sacrifices or weirdstones. If a dwarf casts a spell or uses an item that requires them to use their personal Earth Power they will permanently lose as many Earth Power points as necessary to cast the spell, losing the equivalent amount from their Power as well.

† **No Geas:** Dwarves are largely ignored by tribal druids, and are not given geases as humans and warped ones are. They are not considered to be significant enough to warrant them.

CHARACTERISTICS

STR	2D6+3	(10)
CON	2D6+6	(13)
DEX	3D6+3	(14)
SIZ	1D6+6	(10)
INT	2D6+6	(13)
POW	2D6	(7)
CHA	3D6	(11)



Rmoahals

The rmoahals are one of the root-races of men, said to have built the very first stone circles in Tir Nan Og many thousands of years ago. Their druids wear great ceremonial cloaks of birdskins and feathers, and even the warriors often sport gaudy feathers in their hair. They left the everyday world of Tir Nan Og behind and came to Dinas Emrys to assist and protect Myrddin in his age-long task of defending humanity from the Cythrons.

Rmoahals are direct and forthright and, though wise and intuitive, tend to be quick to anger. Even their druids are often quite prepared to get into fist-fights with one another.

Rmoahals look like tall, savage-looking humans but have glossy blue-black skin. The males have sharp tusks and protruding lower jaws, enhancing their barbarous appearance. Both sexes tend to be very strongly muscled.

Rmoahals consider themselves to be superior to all other races and, unless a non-rmoahal proves himself extremely worthy he will be at best scorned and at worst attacked.

Rmoahal Racial Traits

All rmoahal share the following racial traits:

- † **Atlantean Subtype:** These surviving Atlanteans have had to drink the fluids from Time Worm eggs for many thousands of years. So long as they keep doing this, the fluids render them immune to the effects of normal aging – they are effectively immortal unless killed. However, they are highly vulnerable to Time Bolt attacks by time worms (see the time worm description on page 215) and suffer a -40% racial penalty to all Resilience related to the effects of magical manipulation of time. In addition, they must drink the contents of at least one time worm egg every season or they age very rapidly and die within 1D4 minutes, crumbling to dust.
- † **Minor Geas:** Every rmoahal begins the game with a minor geas (see page 14).

CHARACTERISTICS

STR	3D6+6	(17)
CON	3D6	(11)
DEX	3D6	(11)
SIZ	3D6+6	(17)
INT	2D6+4	(11)
POW	3D6	(11)
CHA	3D6	(11)

The Encennach

This magical bird-winged head-dress is particularly useful to rmoahals. Any rmoahal who wears it can fly at a speed of four metres and a manoeuvrability of clumsy, at will, at a cost of a mere 1 EP per hour. If he has a better means of flying, such as a *Levitate* spell or a war dragon to ride, that means of flying has a bonus of an additional three metres to its speed for no EP cost. A non-rmoahal character can still wear an encennach but pays 2 EP per hour to fly, or 1 EP per hour to enhance another means of flying such as a riding dragon or *Levitate* spell.



Warped Ones

Warped ones are a sub-race of humans, descended from ancient matings between powerful beast folk and humans. Over the thousands of years since the beast folk died out, their blood has run thinner and thinner in humanity, so that now only a small number of true warped ones are left. Almost all are born into one of the Tribes of the Earth Goddess, the four great northern tribes of Tir Nan Og. Indeed, most of the ordinary members of the northern tribes have a little warped one blood flowing through their veins, though not enough that they might be considered a true warped one. The main difference between warped ones and ordinary humans is their ability to warp the Earth Power of the land through their bodies, causing them to swell and warp out of shape into monstrous new forms.

Warped ones are usually a little taller than a typical human, with a somewhat savage appearance. The strange light in their eyes hints that they will take a little too much delight in slaying for even most Celts to be entirely happy associating with them. Other than this, there is little or no physical difference between warped ones and humans, except of course when the warped one is in the throes of a warp-spasm.

All warped ones share the following racial traits:

- † **Inept Sorcerers:** Warped ones have little patience to learn any spells other than the simplest of enchantments, as such they can only learn Basic spells.
- † **Warp-spasms:** The blood of the ancient beast folk runs through the warped ones far more strongly than through humans, allowing them to warp their bodies into great monstrous forms. Because of this warped ones very rarely wear armour, since it would be destroyed (possibly injuring them) when they warped. See the Earth Power chapter for details.
- † **Warped:** A Warped One must take this Legendary Ability at the earliest opportunity.
- † **Major Geas:** Although the tribal druids will not know of a warped one's true nature, they

will be able to divine right from the moment of his birth that he will one day be a mighty hero, a mover and shaper of the world.

CHARACTERISTICS

STR	3D6	(11)
CON	2D6+6	(13)
DEX	3D6	(11)
SIZ	2D6+8	(15)
INT	2D6+4	(11)
POW	3D6	(10)
CHA	3D6	(10)

Enech: Honour and Reputation

Honour is important to almost everyone in Tir Nan Og. Without it, you face exile from your tribe and kin, and the very real possibility of being slain out of hand by anyone you meet. On the other hand the benefits of honour are many – respect, reputation, gifts, hospitality wherever you go, a share in your kin's land-holdings, and recognition of your place in society. As far as the values of the Earth Goddess tribes go, honour and reputation are one and the same thing, and so in game terms we refer to Enech, the old Celtic word meaning face, honour and reputation.

Starting and Maximum

Enech

All characters except for druids start with 1 Enech. This is because they are young folk, beginning adventurers with neither great nor evil deeds in their past. They are in good standing with both kin and tribe, but have not yet proved themselves heroes. Enech comes predominantly from doing great deeds – you cannot gain a lot of Enech simply by being a generous King, for example, if you have not also defeated many foes.

Druids and Enech

Druids never have an Enech score. It is not that they lack honour – rather, they are entirely outside of normal society, and outside of the honour system and the legal system. They do not enter business deals, and they do not commit crime (at least, not without the Archdruids hearing about it and dealing



with it themselves). They have no particular need to concern themselves with reputation, or lack of it. So far as normal folk are concerned, all druids are utterly strange and unknowable, and an unpleasant druid is just more frightening than usual – he will not get a bad reputation.

Gaining and Losing Enech

As can be seen from the table below, it is far easier to lose Enech than to gain it. For this reason, those characters who tend towards reprehensible rather than great deeds – witches and thieves in particular – often have lower Enech than their contemporaries. This is not always the case, however, since there is no inherent dishonour in criminality, so long as one pays one's fines when caught.

Maintaining Enech

Failing to act with generosity during the course of a year will cause your Enech to drop by one point. You do not necessarily need to give away hugely valuable items, but you should generously reward those who do you services or favours, as well as any employees you have. Again this is assessed by the Games Master every Samhain.

Also, you can lose Enech through failing to dress appropriately to your Enech, and for failing to appear suitably well-groomed throughout the year. This is assessed by the Games Master every Samhain. You will not lose Enech if you occasionally let your appearance slide a little, but such things as regularly wearing a lowly iron torc when you are the tribal king and should wear gold, or allowing your belly to extend out further than your chest, can count against you here.

Low Enech

A character with an Enech of 1 or higher is in good standing with the tribe. A character with an Enech of 0 is either a slave, or an outcast. Anyone reduced to an Enech of 0 will be banished from his tribe and kin, cast out and left to wander the Land of the Young.

A character with an Enech below 0 is far worse than a mere outcast. He is known as 'Cacc fora Enech' (literally meaning 'excrement on the face'). His honour is not simply gone – it is forever tainted. Unless he can somehow atone for his awful crimes (at the Games Master's discretion), his Enech can never go up. All hands will be raised against him – it becomes a crime

to assist or aid him in any way. In fact, it is a crime not to attack and kill him if he is present.

Sarhaed

Sarhaed is a character's Honour-Price, a way to put a monetary value on his honour. It defines the maximum amount he can be liable for in an oath or business deal, as well as reflecting the price that will be owed his kin if he is illegally killed or otherwise injured (either physically or in terms of loss of honour). See the Tir Nan Og chapter for more information on the use of sarhaed in the culture of the Earth Goddess tribes. The table below gives the amount of sarhaed due each character depending on his Enech:

Enech	Sarhaed
0 or less	0
1 to 9	6 cumals per point of Enech
10 to 19	60 cumals, plus 12 cumals per point
20 to 29	180 cumals, plus 25 cumals per point of Enech above 20
30 or more	430 cumals, plus 50 cumals per point

Geases

Geases are a form of Celtic curse or perhaps quest – obligations or restrictions placed on a character at a very early age, which must be adhered to so as to avoid dreadful consequences. All persons of note (anyone other than dwarves and slaves) will begin the game with one geas. For humans, this geas can be selected from the list of minor geases, or better still created with the agreement of the Games Master using the minor geas list as examples of the approximate severity. Likewise, warped ones may either choose a major geas from the list or create a new one with the agreement of the Games Master. A character appointed Cenn of his clan gains a new minor geas, while a tribal King gains two minor and a High King three minor and one major. Any time you are required to choose a geas, you may choose a weird instead (see below).

Breaking a geas has several consequences:

- † Loss of Enech.
- † Make a Persistence test (with a -10% penalty for a minor geas or a -30% penalty for a major geas) or acquire a weird (minor if you broke a minor



Act or Circumstance

First time you have a warp-spasm

Kill twenty or more foes in one day

Kill a foe of SIZE 24+

Kill a foe of SIZE 36+

Kill a foe of SIZE 48+

Kill a foe of 10 or higher Enech

Keep the brain-ball of a killed foe of 10 or higher Enech

Rescue an important person from extreme danger or captivity

Give away goods worth at least your sarhaed

Give away item of enormous or incalculable value

(e.g. your entire tribe, or one of the Four Treasures)

Made Cenn of your kin

Made King of your tribe

Made High King

Win a contest of taunts with someone of higher Enech

Lose a contest of taunts with someone of lower Enech

Break a minor geas

Break a major geas

Break an oath

Miserly during the year (see below)

Slovenly or poor appearance during the year (see below)

Failure to pay money you owe on a business deal

Fail to pay fine after legal judgement made against you

Kill a druid or witch (excludes Drones)

Abuse of hospitality

Creature under your protection killed

Fail to fulfil blood-feud against killer of your kinsman

Refuse a reasonable request asked by a druid

Refuse a direct order from your tribal archdruid

Fail to make appropriate sacrifices to a deity you worship

Refuse a direct order from a deity you worship

Interfere with an arranged honour duel

Disfigured

Maimed (loss of a hand or other body part)

Banished from your kin

Banished from your tribe

Enslaved³**Enech Modifier**

+1

+1 per full 20 foes killed

+1

+2

+3

+1 per full 10 points of Enech of foe

Extra +1 per 10 points of foe's Enech

+1 per full 10 points of Enech of person

+1

+2

+2¹+4¹+6¹

+1

-1

-1

-2

-4

-1

-1

-1

-2

-10

-8

-8

-4 per year killer remains alive

-1²

-1

-1

-6

-2

-1

-2

-2 (to a minimum of 0)

-3 (to a minimum of 0)

-10 (to a minimum of 0)

¹ These Enech gains are lost again if you resign from or are ousted from the position.² 'Reasonable' will be dependent on your own Enech and on circumstance.³ You can avoid this penalty if you actively refuse to accept your slavery, being completely uncooperative and rebellious at all times

geas, major if you broke a major geas) of the Games Master's choice or randomly generated.

† Make a Persistence test (penalties as above) or suffer the effects of a *Lesser Ill Luck* spell (for breaking a minor geas) or *Greater Ill Luck* spell (for breaking a major geas). For a Cenn or King, this spell will also affect all the people they have responsibility for if they fail their Persistence test.

† Make a Persistence test (penalties as above) or have your Earth Power reduced to zero and unable to increase by any means for 1D6 weeks (for 3D6 weeks if you broke a major geas). After this time it reverts to your Base Earth Power as normal.

Minor Geases

† Never refuse to grant hospitality

† Never refuse hospitality when offered to you

† Always honour and obey any druid (except Drones)

† Minor ritual or restriction, for example:
 Never listen to the birds of Lough Swilly when the sun sets
 Never drink the waters of Bo Nemridh between dawn & darkness
 Never eat dog
 Never wear a cloak of many colours on a dappled horse on the Heath of Lonrad
 Never still be in bed at sunrise on Lughnasad

† Traditional tribal minor geas, for example:
Sessair – never cut your hair unless you have killed a foe (a member of a tribe that your tribe is at war with, or a traditional enemy such as a Fomor or skull-sword) that day.
Fir Domain – never run or charge into battle (any conflict with over 200 combatants present).
Finian – eat turnips for at least one meal each day.
Tribe of the Shadows – never venture out of doors without first painting yourself black.



Major Geases

- † Always honour and obey any druid or Drune
- † Never refuse a single boon to anyone
- † Major ritual or restriction, for example:
 - Never listen to birds when the sun sets
 - Never drink water between dawn & darkness
 - Never eat food between dawn and darkness
 - Never wear a cloak
 - Never still be in bed at sunrise
- † Traditional tribal major geas, for example:
 - Sessair* – each time you are wounded by a weapon, you must spend an action deliberately making the wound bigger, causing yourself 1D2 extra damage to that location.
 - Fir Domain* – never run, charge, or hustle.
 - Finian* – never eat meat or fish, or drink ale or mead.
 - Tribe of the Shadows* – never venture out of doors during daylight hours.

Weirds

Weirds are fates or destinies. A character may choose a minor weird instead of a minor geas, or a major weird instead of a major geas. Weirds do not take effect immediately – rather, they will occur at some future date, as determined by the Games Master. There is nothing you can do to avoid the onset of a weird, except to go on (and succeed at) a quest at the direct request of a deity. For major weirds, even this is not usually enough – a major weird can only be removed at the Games Master's discretion, and usually only in the most exceptional of circumstances, such as a reward for a lifetime's personal and risky service to a god or goddess.

Minor Weirds

1. *Long Imprisonment or Torture:* You will be imprisoned, tortured or enslaved for at least 3D6 months before you even get a chance of escape or rescue.
2. *Permanent Disfigurement:* You will be disfigured, suffering a loss of 2D4 Charisma and -1 to Enech.

3. *Exile from your Tribe or Kin:* You will be left to wander the Land of the Young, alone and unloved, never spending two nights in the same place, never crossing the same river twice, and never cooking a meal and sleeping in the same place, such will be the power and reach of your enemies. This will last at least 2D6 months before you even have a chance at attempting a reconciliation or resolution.
4. *Annoying Companion:* At some point you will acquire a highly annoying dwarf or similar low-class companion, who will continually embarrass and irritate you with his antics. You will never be rid of him – perhaps not even when you are dead.
5. *Temporary Insanity:* You will go insane for at least 2D6 months before you even get a chance of being cured, wandering like a loon under the control of the Games Master.
6. *Temporary Blindness:* You will go blind for 4D6 months before you even get a chance of being cured.

Major Weirds

1. *Divine Champion:* You have been personally selected as the champion of one of your gods or goddesses. This is a permanent appointment. You will never be entirely free again. It is quite possible that the deity will even wish to retain your services after your death.
2. *Heroic Sacrifice:* You will die, painfully and permanently but nobly, in the act of defeating your greatest foe or accomplishing your greatest triumph.
3. *Permanent Maiming:* You will lose an arm, eye or leg. Nothing can cure it once it is gone. You suffer a -2 penalty to Enech when it happens. The loss of an eye means you suffer a -10% penalty on all missile attacks and Perception tests and you are unable to use Evil Eye as a spell range.



New Skills & Legendary Abilities

The various tribes in *Sláine* have all mastered their own unique Advanced skills that characters may learn and use during a *Sláine* campaign. At best a starting character can expect to have no more than one or two of these new skills available to him, but as a campaign progresses characters may be able to learn perfect and learn more of these skills, even if they are not normally available to his tribe.

New Advanced Skill

Descriptions

CHARIOT COMBAT (DEX)

The Celtic preference for the chariot as a war machine is well known. Those warriors who fight from a chariot find their combat capabilities much enhanced if they can learn to run up and down the yoke pole of the chariot, rather than simply fighting from the chariot platform itself. This confuses opponents and allows for more deadly attacks.

A successful Skill test at the start of a combat round allows the warrior to run up the yoke pole and attack a foe using the chariots damage modifier (see *Arms & Equipment*, page 62) in addition to his own to any damage he inflicts upon his enemy.

A failed Skill test means the warrior forfeits all his Combat Actions for than round, a fumble means he falls off the yoke pole and gets trampled. He will take 1D6 damage (ignoring armour) to a single location from the fall and then be subject to the attacks of the animal(s) pulling the chariot.

Ogham (INT)

Ogham is the written language of Tir Nan Og and a character with this skill is able to read and write,

unlike the vast majority of people. Normally only druids, drunes, witches and dwarves will learn Ogham, most other folk seeing it as beneath them. A character proficient in Ogham can use the various characters to boost certain spells he can cast if he makes a successful use of the Ogham skill whilst casting (see page 67 for more on the effects of using Ogham to boost magic).

PILOT SKY CHARIOT (INT+POW)

Sky Chariots are normally quite simple to control whilst in the air and no Skill tests will be necessary. However whenever a manoeuvre is required to board another sky chariot, traverse a storm or something else out of the ordinary the pilot must make a Skill test.

RITUAL SACRIFICE (INT+POW)

The druids, witches and drunes of *Sláine's* world all can draw upon extra Earth Power by making ritual sacrifices. With the use of this skill the character will gain the amount of Earth Power points from the sacrifice as normal (see page 36), a failure means that the gods fail to notice the sacrifice and no Earth Power will be forthcoming.

A character can also use this skill to oversee the sacrifice by another individual, allowing that person to benefit from the sacrifice they make even though they might not have the Ritual Sacrifice skill themselves.

SALMON LEAP (STR+DEX)

The elite warriors of the Earth Goddess tribes learn to evade ranged weapons by leaping their own height straight up in the air. This is known as the Salmon Leap.

A Salmon Leap can be used as either an offensive or defensive manoeuvre in combat. As a Reaction in a Combat Round the Salmon Leap functions as a dodge, allowing the character to avoid an oncoming blow.





The Salmon Leap can be used as part of an attack in a Combat Action, allowing the character to inflict great damage to his foe on his next attack. A successful Skill test will increase the damage inflicted by +1D6, a critical success will double this bonus.

A failed Skill test forfeits the next Combat Action the character would have.

Shield Biting (Dow)

The fierce tribes of Midgard are renowned warriors and berserkers. Use of the shield biting skill before combat allows them to enter into a battle frenzy prior to a fight starting, allowing them to ignore many wounds that would otherwise lay them low.

Prior to combat starting a successful Skill test will allow the character to add a +20% bonus to all Resilience tests caused by the result of an injury in the next 15 minutes. During that time the character's frenzy also makes them less skilled at defending themselves from

attack, suffering a -10% penalty to all parry and dodge Skill tests and a -10% to any Persistence tests required as the result of an enemy's successful use of the taunt skill.

Shield Groul (Cha)

The elite warriors of the Fir Domain are noted for their use of specially made shields to amplify and distort their battle cries.

If used by a character prior to the beginning of a fight an opposed Skill test against an opponent's Persistence skill will need to be resolved. If the character wins this opposed test then his opponent will be demoralised for the duration of the combat, suffering a -5% penalty to all his skills and reducing the damage he inflicts by 1 point.

Shield Kick (Dex)

One of the great battle feats of the Earth Goddess tribes is known as the Shield Kick, where the warrior learns to kick his opponent's shield up, leap atop it and make a death blow from there.

Upon a successful Skill test a Shield Kick allows the character to automatically bypass his enemy's shield, eliminating its benefits for the current Combat Round. A failed Skill test forfeits the next Combat Action that the character would have.

Spear Catching (Dex)

Many warriors of the tribes of the Earth Goddess learn to catch hurled missile weapons, throwing them straight back at their opponents. It is the Finians who are the foremost practitioners of this battle tactic.

Spear Catching can be used as a Reaction to a thrown missile aimed at the character.

Spear Foot (Dex)

If prone, you may use your foot to pick up and throw any spear or javelin (including the gae bolga) that you could normally throw with your hand upon a successful Skill test.

This attack is then resolved exactly as if you were on your feet and throwing the spear or javelin with your hand except that you use the next highest damage bonus to that you would normally use due to the greater strength of the leg muscles in comparison to the arms.



Spellcasting (Pow+Cha)

This is the Basic skill for all spells, as described in the Earth Power chapter on page 35. It is several different skills, one for every individual spell, each of which must be improved separately.

Tap Weirdstone (Int+Pow)

You may drain earth power from any weirdstone by touching it (see Weirdstones and Dolmens, page 36) as a Combat Action.

Taunt (Int+Cha)

The taunt is not a lethal attack, but it can be a useful one nonetheless. By insulting an opponent, you damage his reputation and his honour, which many foes will regard as worse than a physical injury.

A character can use his Taunt skill upon an opponent up to 10 metres away as a Combat Action. A successful Skill test can enrage his opponent to such an extent that he will attack recklessly.

Upon a successful Skill test the target must make a Persistence test to ignore the taunt. If he is over 3 metres away then there is a +20% bonus applied to his roll. The target can also add his Enech score as a bonus as well to ignore the taunt – a highly honourable character has such confidence in his fame and reputation that it is difficult to goad him.



If the Persistence test is failed the target becomes enraged. He will exclusively attack his taunter, ignoring all other foes, for at the next three combat rounds (or until he or his opponent is incapacitated). In his maddened state he will gain a +20% bonus to his attack rolls but all Parry and Dodge Reactions will be at half his usual skill.

An opponent who makes a successful Persistence test will be immune to any further taunts from the character.

As well as their use in battle, taunts are a common way of resolving disputes between warriors, including such potentially lethal disputes as the assignment of the Champion's Portion to a particular warrior. Defeating a rival in a contest of taunts is regarded as almost identical to defeating them in single combat. In such a case, the character who first fails his Persistence test loses the contest, although he does not become maddened.

Legendary Abilities

Legendary abilities are talents that can greatly enhance a character and in some cases, grant them almost superhuman powers. In order to gain a Legendary Ability a character must meet the requirements for it and spend the required amount of Hero Points. A warrior might have the Grip of Iron Legendary Ability, allowing him to use a two handed battle axe in one hand and a shield in his other, while a drune might have Slough Skin so as increase the amount of Earth Power he has to fuel his sorcery.

Existing Legendary Abilities

The character can use any of the Legendary Abilities listed in *RuneQuest* apart from Linguist, Rune Adept, Runelord, Runepriest and Slaying Touch. If using Legendary Abilities listed in *Legendary Heroes* then the following are prohibited: Gadgeteer, Runeseer and Storm of 1,000 Blades.

ANCESTRAL WARP

Requirements: Must be a warped one, any close combat weapon skill of 120% or higher.

Hero Points: 10



Even when you have no Earth Power available, you may attempt to enter a warp-spasm (see the Combat chapter). You need the assistance of another human or warped one. By staring into their eyes for ten minutes, you may make a roll on the warp-spasm table (as may they, if they also have this Legendary Ability). The resultant warp-spasm is to an atavistic, animalistic form, usually with a great bestial head and claws (allowing you to make unarmed attacks that do slashing damage rather than bludgeoning damage, though the damage is the same as usual for your warp-spasm). Both of you suffer a -20% to Perception tests while staring into each other's eyes, and if either of you is distracted during the ten minutes you will need to make Persistence tests (with a -20% penalty) or your efforts are wasted (though you may start again if desired).

Your warp-spasm control roll is made at a penalty of -4 when you use this Legendary Ability.

Blood Eagle

Requirements: Ritual Sacrifice skill of 90% or higher
Hero Points: 10

You may draw a huge quantity of earth power from a creature by painstakingly sacrificing it over a period of several hours. The Badb witches of the Drones are noted for doing this by a process called the Blood Eagle, whereby the victim's ribs are cut through and drawn out through his back, resembling bloody wings. Other spellcasters may have other methods of performing the sacrifice, but the point is to maximize the earth power gained from a single ritual sacrifice.

A character with this Legendary Ability will take at least an hour torturing the sacrificial victim before making their ritual sacrifice test. If successful they will double the amount of Earth Power that they would normally receive for making that sacrifice.

The ritual sacrifice test will be at a -40% penalty if only one hour is taken over the sacrifice, for every extra hour taken this penalty is reduced by 10%.

Blood of Heroes

Requirements: POW 15 or higher, any close combat weapon skill of 75% or higher, must be human, must be a member of one of the Earth Goddess tribes (that is, the Sessair, Fir Domain, Tribe of Shadows or Finians).
Hero Points: 4

Though you could not truly be called a warped one, some of that ancient blood runs through your veins, and in the right circumstances you too could have a minor warp-spasm.

Occasionally, under particularly special circumstances, you may attempt to enter a warp-spasm. This is always at the Games Master's discretion. The most common situation in which this is possible is when you have an unusually high level of Earth Power (15 or higher) and are about to enter a particularly significant battle – not just a cattle raid or similar skirmish, but a major fight on behalf of the entire tribe. The other situation in which you may attempt to warp out is during the initiation into the Red Branch of the Sessair tribe (see page 96). In either case you make a roll on the warp-spasm table (see page 68) with the usual penalties and bonuses, including the -4 penalty for not being a warped one.

CREATE DRUID'S EGG

Requirements: POW 15 or higher, Tap Weirdstone skill of 75% or higher
Hero Points: 6

You may create a druid's egg. Each druid's egg must be crafted for one named individual, and becomes non-operational if handled by anyone other than the creator and the named individual. See the Earth Power chapter for more information on the use of druid's eggs. Each druid's egg you have in operation at any one time reduces your base EP by one (also affecting your maximum EP as usual). You can render any of your druid's eggs non-operational as a free action if you so wish, even if they are not present. Doing so will restore the reduced point of EP.

CREATE WICKER MAN

Requirements: Blood Eagle, Ritual Sacrifice of 120% or higher
Hero Points: 15

By designing and supervising the construction of a vast Wicker Man, then filling it with living creatures and burning it, you may raise a vast quantity of Earth Power.

This is the final refinement of ritual sacrifice. Designing and constructing the Wicker Man will take between two and four months to construct and can hold the equivalent of up to 120 human victims, although in



many cases animals such as cattle and sheep are used in addition to the human sacrifices.

Once the Wicker Man is set aflame, it will take two, four or six hours to burn through, dependent on size. At the end of that time, the amount of Earth Power points will depend upon the Ritual Sacrifice roll, a success will give twice the normal amount of EP gained for sacrificing the victims, a critical success will triple this amount. A failure will still provide the normal amount of Earth Power for the victims, whilst a fumble will mean that the sacrifice has utterly failed and no Earth Power will be gained whatsoever.

The Earth Power gained from this sacrifice is distributed amongst all those present, with the druid or drune who constructed the wickerman deciding who gains what.

Ōichard

Requirements: CON 15 or higher, member of the Finian tribe

Hero Points: 6

By sheer strength of purpose and determination, you can force yourself to act almost normally despite mortal wounds.

The additional effects of Minor Wounds are ignored, whilst Serious Wounds are treated as Minor Wounds. For Major Wounds the character gains a +50% bonus to all Resilience rolls he is required to make, reducing by 10% every round (50% on the first round, 40% on the second and so on). The Legendary Ability does not alter how long it would take for a character to die from a Major Wound.

Ōoor of Battle

Requirements: Shield skill of 90% or higher, member of the Sessair tribe or a warped one

Hero Points: 15

Although the usual Sessair fighting style emphasises toughness and resilience over protection, many more practical members of the tribe supplement that toughness with a solid shield defence. To gain the maximum benefit from their expertise with the shield, they need to be almost completely unencumbered, carrying little more than their weapon of choice, clothing (if any) and the shield itself. This Legendary Ability is also sometimes learnt by members of other tribes who typically fight without armour, such as warped ones.

While wearing no armour, any protection you gain from using a shield is doubled. Any additional bonuses gained from the shield being magical or otherwise enhanced are also trebled.



Grip of Iron

Requirements: STR 15 or higher, any two handed close combat weapon skill of 90% or higher

Hero Points: 8

You may wield a two handed weapon in one hand, although with a -20% penalty.

The other hand can be used to wield a shield or another, one-handed weapon without penalty. If this Legendary Ability is taken twice it is possible to wield a two-handed weapon in each hand.

Improved Corn Dolly

Requirements: POW 15 or higher

Hero Points: 8

You may enhance your construction of a corn dolly (see page 40) by adding additional connections to the victim. For each additional object you incorporate into the corn dolly, your spellcasting skill using that corn dolly gains a +5% bonus, up to a maximum of +20%. Each object must be one which by itself could be used as the intimate connection to the victim in a corn dolly.

Improved Warp-Spasm

Requirements: Warped, must be a warped one, any close combat weapon skill of 90% or higher

Hero Points: 8

The most experienced warped ones eventually gain the power to enter a totally warped state.

You gain a +4 bonus to all your rolls on the warp-spasm table (see page 68).

All spells now cost you one more EP to use than they usually would (this only applies to the initial activation of the spell, not to any cost you may need to pay to maintain it in future rounds).

No Honour

Requirements: Enech -1 or lower.

Hero Points: 4

You have accepted that you have no honour whatsoever, and so are highly resistant to any attempt to insult your honour. You gain a +20% bonus to all Persistence test made to resist the effects of Taunt attacks.

If your Enech ever rises to 0 or above, you may not gain the benefits of this feat until it falls below 0 again.

Monster Slayer

Requirements: STR 15 or higher, any weapon skill of 90% or higher

Hero Points: 8

Through long practice and bitter experience, you have learned a number of techniques for killing monsters quickly so as to risk as little damage to yourself as possible.

When making an attack against a foe of twice your Size or greater, you now double your damage bonus.

Ritual Feast

Requirements: Monster Slayer.

Hero Points: 12

You have learned how to eat a monster's heart to gain its strength. You must have personally slain the creature in single combat for this feat to work. You can only be affected by one Ritual Feast at a time – the effects must be allowed to lapse completely before you can benefit from eating another creature's heart.

Any time you kill a creature of twice your Size or greater, you may ritually eat its heart. You must eat the heart within 6 hours of killing the creature. By doing so you will gain half the creature's strength and constitution for one day, subsequently dropping by one point each day thereafter until it returns to normal. The heart can be prepared or raw, as you prefer, so long as you eat the entire meal.

Whilst you are still receiving the benefits of an earlier Ritual Feast you can not benefit from another Ritual Feast.

Shadow Curse

Requirements: Member of the Tribe of Shadows

Hero Points: 6

For the most part, only the warriors of the Tribe of the Shadows suffered the full curse of the Goddess for slaying the avans. Occasionally though a particularly martial thief or witch will also be affected. This has both benefits and drawbacks.



You gain Dark Sight and Night Sight traits (see *RuneQuest*, page 106). You gain a +10% bonus to all skills in the hours of darkness, as your mind becomes more clearly focused to the task in hand.

Whenever you are in bright sunlight, however, you suffer a -5% penalty to all skills as you become sensitive to the light.

Slough Skin

Requirements: Four spells of 90% skill or higher, must be a druid from a Drune Lords' tribe, POW 15 or higher

Hero Points: 12

The ultimate demonstration of a Drune's magical prowess is to slough his skin, acquiring the rank of Slough.

The new Slough will increase the maximum Earth Power points he can have, permanently. He can choose to permanently lose one, two or even three hit points from each hit location and for each hit point lost in this way will gain an additional Earth Power point.

Example: Slough Throt gains this Legendary Ability and decides to lose two hit points from each location, permanently raising his maximum Earth Power points by fourteen (two points for each Hit Location), a significant increase in his magical power.

SORCERER'S BANE

Requirements: Gae Bolga skill of 90% or higher

Hero Points: 8

The gae bolga or bellows spear is renowned for its ability to lay sorcerers low. You have learned exactly how to pierce their defences and slay them with your gae bolga.

Any time you inflict a critical wound with a gae bolga against a character who has the ability to cast advanced spells, the victim must immediately pass a Resilience test or begin to lose 1D6 hit points per round until dead to that hit location. Nothing can stop this loss of hit points if the initial Resilience test is failed. In addition, the hit points lost in this way and from the initial wound cannot be cured or healed by any means.

Due to the blood loss caused by the terrible wounds from the Gae Bolga once a Major Wound has been inflicted on the initial hit location damage will then begin to be lost from an adjacent hit location.

The only way for the sorcerer to be saved is by removal of the gae bolga, this will cause an additional 2D6 damage in addition to that already being caused and requires a successful athletics test at -20% (-40% if the sorcerer is trying to remove the gae bolga himself). Only once removed is it possible for injuries to be healed (either magically or naturally).

Tap Dolmen

Requirements: Tap Weirdstone skill of 90% or higher, POW 15 or higher

Hero Points: 8

You may drain earth power from any dolmen within range (see *Weirdstones and Dolmens*, page 36) in a single Combat Action.

TRIBAL SORCERER

Requirements: Member of relevant tribe, able to use any one spell with of 75% skill or higher

Hero Points: 4

You have mastered at least one spell and the druids of your tribe and they are now willing to teach you all the tribe's magic. You learn all the spells with the Tribal (your tribe) trait at their basic level.

You can not take this Legendary Ability more than once as you can only be a member of one tribe. You are not able to learn spells that you do not have all the prerequisites for (such as knowledge of other spells, being a worshipper of certain gods and so on) or are prohibited from learning, although if you do meet the requirements at a later date you can learn those spells with no additional Hero Point cost.

Warped

Requirements: Must be a warped one

Hero Points: 4

With this Legendary Ability a warped one can finally unleash his power upon his foes. This is the first Legendary Ability that any Warped One must take.





Warp-Spasm Master

Requirements: Improved Warp-Spasm, any close combat weapon skill of 120% or higher, must be warped one.

Hero Points: 10

By dint of long practice and certain concentration techniques, you are able to control your warp-spasm to a far greater degree than most warped ones.

You gain a +2 bonus to all your rolls on the warp-spasm table (see page 68).

You gain a +20% bonus on your Persistence Skill test to control your warp-spasms (see page 69).

Wrest Weirdbone Control

Requirements: Tap Weirdbone skill of 90% or higher, Tap Dolmen

Hero Points: 10

When the weirdbone is first created, it is controlled by its creator. He may then pass on control as desired to another character, usually the powerful druid who commissioned the stone. If control of the weirdbone is to be wrested away from the current controller the usual method for doing so is to kill him first. However a character with the Wrest Weirdbone Control Legendary Ability can do so whilst the current controller still lives.

It is possible at a later stage for another character to attempt to wrest control of the weirdbone from the current controller, as a single combat action. This costs 5 EP to attempt, and is done by the two sorcerers making opposed Tap Weirdbone Skill tests rolls. If either sorcerer is within three metres of the stone at the time, he gains a +20% bonus to his magic attack roll. This rises to +40% if he is touching the stone at the time. In addition the original controller of the weirdbone has a +40% bonus in any case.



Goods and Weapons

Currency

The basic unit of currency is the iron bar, often called a sét. Séts are quite bulky, weighing around 5 pounds apiece, and so cattle are more commonly used as a form of mobile wealth, since they can easily be herded from place to place. One cow is worth two séts. If smaller denominations of currency are needed for any reason, pigs and chickens may be used.

For high value payments such as a King's honour-price or the purchase cost of a piece of farmland a unit of currency called the cumal is used. A cumal is a female slave, and is worth three cows.

The Tribes of the Drune Lords and some of the tribes of Lyonesse also use gold pieces as wealth, but this is a relatively new innovation and is not accepted by most of the Tribes of the Earth Goddess, who consider gold a sacred metal suitable for jewellery and magic rather than mere currency. Those members of the Earth Goddess tribes who wander into other lands are more likely to recognize the usefulness of gold as a coin, since it can be carried far more easily than iron bars, cattle, or female slaves. Three gold pieces weigh one ounce.

1 cumal = 3 gold pieces = 3 cows = 6 séts = 12 pigs = 72 chickens

Haggling

The various economies of the Land of the Young are constantly in flux, with local shortages and surpluses of various goods significantly affecting prices. Many traders and ordinary folk are more than happy to haggle, and in some situations it may be a necessity, since the worth of any goods is dependent on what the customer is prepared to pay. Cows and iron bars are the only

truly hard currency, with the precise value of chickens and pigs being very much dependent on local supply and demand. Note that if a character is attempting to sell goods, rather than buy them, he will typically only receive half the value he would need to pay to buy them new; people tend to trust established merchants far more than rogues wandering the streets, and often the only buyer a character will find for his goods will be a merchant looking to sell them on again.

Weapons

The weapons of the Land of the Young may, at first glance, appear familiar to those used to other *RuneQuest* games, although there are several differences. First, the materials used to construct weapons tend to be flint or iron and the iron is of relatively poor quality, being prone to become blunt or even bent when used. Flint is harder and sharper, but far more difficult to obtain, and it may shatter unexpectedly. Secondly, several of the weapons listed are at least a little bit magical. The very methods of crafting weapons are seen as inherently sorcerous and mysterious. One weapon, the tathlum, can be created by any who are able to use it, and is classed as a magical weapon. Another, the gae bolga, may only be made by certain highly competent smiths, but it too is always classed as enchanted. Many warriors regard their own blades as magical, and form a mystical bond with them, giving them bloodthirsty-sounding names, although such weapons are only classed as magical if the owner is a gifted poet who creates a naming poem. This blurring of the boundaries between the magical and the mundane is a feature of the Celtic world-view, which would have it that there is no such thing as the mundane anyway.

Because of the semi-magical nature of many of the weapons, and the problems associated with use of both iron and flint, the weapon descriptions are often





longer and more complex than those found in most *RuneQuest* games. If *Sláine* is played in the spirit of the comics, most warriors will not carry more than two or three weapons anyway, and so Players can (and should) become familiar with any special rules associated with their chosen weapons before play.

Flint Weapons

Flint weapons are becoming more and more difficult to buy – few remember the old craft of flint-knapping, and those who do tend to have skills only suitable for making cheap stone tools for folk unable to afford modern iron. These cheap stone tools are easy enough to buy – flint knives and picks will be available in many areas. On the other hand you cannot simply walk into any town and buy a flint battle-axe or great-axe. Rather, you must first track down a true expert at Craft (Flint knapper) and persuade them to make you an axe to your specifications. This will be time-consuming; certainly the work of two or more weeks even if all goes well. There is another disadvantage to flint weapons: sooner or later, they will break! This is not generally a concern for you, since they are fairly durable.

Weapon Descriptions

There are a number of weapons that are unique to *Sláine* and these are described below.

Dart Dragon: This is a weapon used by the Skull-Swords and powered by Earth Power. It resembles a wooden tube with a square cross-section and a carving of a dragon's head at one end. By concentrating and expending one EP point, the wielder can cause Earth Power to flow through the dragon, expelling a dart through the dragon's gaping maw. The dart dragon requires two hands to fire because of its deceptive weight. Extra darts are held in a five-dart magazine on the top of the dragon; when empty, this may be replaced in a single Combat Action.

Gae Bolga: The Bellows Spear is one of the most feared weapons in use in the Land of the Young. Its wrought iron spearhead is far longer than that of most spears, with thirty cruel barbs running down most of the length of the head. According to legend, a wound from the gae bolga is always fatal and cannot be healed, even by sorcery. This is not entirely true; a particularly tough warrior may pull through. Any



time a hit with a gae bolga inflicts 4 or more damage (including Strength bonuses and other modifiers), the bellows spear is considered to have stuck in the wound. Attempting to remove it requires an action and a Resilience test. A failed test inflicts 1D4 further damage to the hit location and the weapon is still stuck in. A successful save inflicts 2D4 further damage, but the weapon is removed. If the weapon is left in for any reason, the character suffers a further 1 point of damage per hour if remaining still, or 1D2 points of damage per Combat Round if active. Even after the gae bolga has been removed, the wound tends to continue bleeding and often festers – until it is somehow healed, the character may not recover hit points by any means, and continues to lose 1 hit point per day. The wound can be healed by either a successful Resilience or Healing test at -60%. One attempt at each may be made per day, with success indicating that the character will begin to heal naturally and no longer loses 1 hit point per day. No sorcerous means can be used to stop or cure the hit point loss. If you attack an opponent with a gae bolga in melee and the gae bolga gets stuck in the wound, you may attempt to pull the gae bolga out of the opponent. If you succeed, the same effects are inflicted on the victim as if they successfully removed the gae bolga themselves (2D4 damage, infected wound, and so on) and the weapon can be used again the following round. Like the war-spear, a gae bolga is balanced to allow it to be wielded one-handed if desired, so as to allow the warrior to use a shield in the other hand.

Growling shield: This is a common modification made for the warriors of the Fir Domain. Their shields are carefully shaped and iron-lined so as to make a great growling noise when battle cries are yelled into them. Any shield may be made to be Growling, but only at the time of its construction – it is not possible to alter an already existing shield.

Razor-edged Shield: A specialist weapon of the Fir Domain and Fir Bolg tribes, this shield is exactly like a large wooden shield except that it has been given a razor-sharp iron rim. Manufacturing such an item is difficult, since an edge so sharp will often be too weak to stop an axe or sword blow. This is the reason for the high price. An attack with the razor-edged shield works exactly like a shield attack except for damage. Note, the razor-edged shield can also be thrown (but not in the same round that it is used as a shield). Many razor-edged shields are also made to be Growling Shields (see page 26) at no extra cost.

Sickle, Gold: This is a sacred ritual tool, used by druids and occasionally witches. It is not as sharp as an iron weapon, and so does little damage, but it is ideal for cutting both herbs and throats in a ritualistic manner. If you perform the Ritual Sacrifice skill with a gold sickle, you release an additional +1 EP each time you sacrifice a victim.

Tathlum: The tathlum is a concrete ball, made by mixing the minced brains of an enemy with lime. Anyone who is skilled with a tathlum can craft one from the above ingredients. The enemy must have been slain in battle

Ranged Weapons

Weapon	Skill	Damage	Range	Load	STR/DEX	ENC	AP/HP	Cost
Dagger ²	Dagger or Throwing	1D4+1	10m	—	—/9	—	4/6	1 sét
Dart Dragon ¹	Crossbow	1D4	100m	—	—/9	2	1/1	50 sés
Gae Bolga ¹	Spear or Throwing	1D6	40m	—	5/9	2	2/5	60 sés
Hatchet ²	1H Axe or Throwing	1D6	10m	—	7/11	1	3/6	2 sés
Javelin ¹	Spear or Throwing	1D6	40m	—	5/9	1	1/8	2 sés
Razor-edged Shield	Throwing	1D6+2	10m	—	12/9	2	8/10	25 sés
Rock/improvised	Throwing	1D4	10m	—	5/9	1	3/5	—
Shortbow ¹	Bow	1D8	60m	1	9/11	1	2/4	2 sés
Shortspear ^{1,2}	Spear or Throwing	1D8	25m	—	5/9	2	2/5	2 sés
Sling	Sling	1D6	50m	1	—/11	—	1/2	—
Tathlum	Tathlum	1D8	25m	—	7/14	2	1/2	Special
Throwing star	Throwing	1D4	15m	—	—/13	—	4/1	1 sét

¹ This weapon will impale an opponent upon a critical hit. See page 48 of *RuneQuest* for details on impalement.

² This weapon suffers no penalty when used in close combat.



Close Combat Weapons

Weapon	Skill	Damage Dice	STR/DEX	ENC	AP/HP	Cost
Bastard Sword	1H Sword	1D8	13/9	2	4/12	20 séts
	2H Sword	1D8+1	9/9	2	4/12	20 séts
Battleaxe	1H Axe	1D6+1	11/9	1	3/8	8 séts
	2H Axe	1D6+2	9/9			
Battleaxe, Flint	1H Axe	1D6+2	11/9	1	2/6	40 séts
	2H Axe	1D6+3	9/9			
Club	1H Hammer	1D6	7/—	1	2/4	—
Dagger	Dagger ⁴	1D4+1	—/—	—	4/6	1 sét
Dagger, Flint	Dagger ⁴	1D4+2	—/—	—	2/4	1 pig
Great axe	2H Axe	2D6+2	13/9	2	3/10	18 séts
Great axe, Flint	2H Axe	2D6+3	13/9	2	2/8	100 séts
Growling Shield	Shield ³	1D6	9/—	2	8/10	9 séts
Gae Bolga	Spear ¹	1D6	7/7	1	2/5	60 séts
Halberd	2H Axe	1D8+2	13/7	4	3/10	14 séts
	Polearm ¹	1D8+1	9/9			
	Spear ^{1,2}	1D8	7/7			
Hatchet	1H Axe ⁴	1D6	—/9	1	3/6	2 séts
Hatchet, Flint	1H Axe ⁴	1D6+1	—/9	1	2/5	12 séts
Longspear	Spear ^{1,2}	1D10	5/5	2	2/10	3 séts
Pick, Flint	1H Hammer	1D6+1	11/5	3	2/7	2 séts
Natural weaponry	—	As noted	—/—	—	—	—
Quarterstaff	Staff	1D8	7/7	2	3/8	—
Razor-edged Shield	Shield ³	1D6+2	12/9	2	8/10	25 séts
Scythe	Polearm	1D6+1	13/7	2	—	2 séts
Shortspear	Spear ^{1,2,4}	1D8	5/5	2	2/5	2 séts
Shortsword	1H Sword ²	1D6	5/7	1	3/8	5 séts
Sickle	1H Sword	1D4	5/7	1	2/6	1 sét
Sickle, Gold	1H Sword	1D3	6/8	2	2/4	20 séts
Target shield	Shield ³	1D6	9/—	2	8/12	5 séts
Unarmed	Unarmed	1D3	—/—	—	—/—	—
War sword	1H Sword	1D8	9/7	2	4/10	12 séts

¹ This weapon may be set against a charge. See page 35 of *RuneQuest* for details on setting weapons against a charge.

² This weapon will impale an opponent upon a critical hit. See page 48 of *RuneQuest* for details on impalement.

³ This weapon may parry ranged weapons.

⁴ This weapon suffers no penalty when thrown.

single-handedly by the character who is to wield the tathlum. By spending 1 EP, you can hurl the tathlum at another foe, gaining a bonus to your attack roll equal to the Intelligence of the brain's former owner. A tathlum thrown in this manner counts as an enchanted weapon. After this one use, the tathlum is no longer magical and no longer gains any bonuses, although it can still be used by any character proficient with it. Youths, being taught how to wield the tathlum, usually practise with

such 'used' tathlums. Likewise, even an unused tathlum will not provide any bonus if hurled by someone who did not craft it, although it may still provide the bonuses if later used by the correct character.

Ranged Weapon Ammunition

Ammunition	AP/HP	ENC	Cost
Arrows (10)	1/1	—	1 sét
Dart Dragon bolts (10)	1/1	—	1 sét



ARMOUR

Armour	AP	ENC	Locations	Cost	Total Skill Penalty
Breastplate	6	4	Abdomen, Chest	600 sêts	-12%
Cuirboilli Shirt	2	1	Abdomen, Arms, Chest	8 sêts	-8%
Cuirboilli Trews	2	1	Legs	4 sêts	-4%
Fur Cloak	2	2	Chest	20 sêts	-2%
Helmet	5	1	Head	30 sêts	-5%
Leather Tunic	1	1	Abdomen, Chest	4 sêts	-2%
Mail Armour	5	6	Abdomen, Arms, Chest, Legs	350 sêts	-30%
Mail Shirt	5	3	Abdomen, Chest	200 sêts	-10%
Plate Greaves	6	4	Legs	400 sêts	-12%
Plate Vambraces	6	3	Arms	300 sêts	-12%

Many Celts frown on the use of armour, which tends to be primitive and heavy in any case, so even characters who are able to use it do not always do so – sometimes the protection gained is not worth the stealth and mobility lost.

Armour also has the problem that it tends to prevent Earth Power from properly flowing through the body. This is why even warriors who do not go skyclad tend to enter battle barefoot and bare-chested, so as to let magical energy flow into them from the sun above and earth below. The Earth Power penalty is related more to the amount of the body covered by armour than to its protective value. The listed amount of Earth Power is subtracted from the wearer's base Earth Power for as long as he wears the armour. If the armour is removed, he may begin to regain EP normally.

For warped warriors, wearing any kind of armour at all is foolishness – any warp-spasm when wearing armour will destroy the armour as the warped warrior bursts out through it, causing himself 1D2 damage per point of Armour protection worn per location in the process.

ARMOUR and Shield Descriptions

Breastplate: This is probably the most effective armour available, but it is far beyond the price range of any but kings and the richest of nobles or most successful of adventurers. Thick solid metal protects the front and back of the torso and sometimes the

neck. Most breastplates also come with some similarly sturdy protection for the arms and lower legs in the form of vambraces and greaves.

Cuirboilli: Thick, hardened leather plates cover most of the body. This is a much cheaper alternative than metal armour. Those who can afford it typically wear a helmet with their cuirboilli armour (bought separately).

Fur cloak: The fur cloak is more of a status symbol than a suit of armour, and so even warriors who disdain armour sometimes wear one. It is thick enough to offer good protection against blows that happen to hit it, but covers so little of the body as to be almost worthless as armour.

Helmet: The Celtic tribes have mixed feelings about helmets. Some regard them as cowardly and effeminate, while others – even some warriors who otherwise go into battle naked – feel that protecting one's vulnerable brain-ball is a sensible precaution. Helmets tend to be simple iron skull-caps, perhaps with leather or metal cheek-guards and neck-guards.

Leather tunic: Thieves who wear armour often choose the leather tunic, as it gives a small amount of protection but barely interferes with the wearer's movements.

Mail armour: This is a heavy, long mail shirt also including supple leather padding. Very few smiths have the skill to make such armour, and it is only likely to be worn by the richest warriors.



Mail shirt: Mail shirts are scarce and very costly, and tend to be worn only by nobles and elite warriors in tribes that do not disdain all armour, or occasionally by renegade warriors who have looted them. The classic Celtic mail shirt covers the torso and shoulders, but not the arms and legs. It may be assumed that the mail shirt comes with leather or cuirboilli greaves and vambraces to at least give a little protection to the lower arms and legs, however. Most wearers of mail shirts also wear a helmet (available separately).

Goods and Services

Various other items are available in Tir Nan Og. As ever, their availability can be wildly variable, and frequently tracking down goods can be very nearly an adventure in itself. Weights for all the items listed on the Goods and Services table are their filled weights (except where otherwise designated).

Clothing and Jewellery

Item	Cost	ENC
Belt	1 sét	—
Boots	2 séts	—
Cloak	1 sét	—
Dress	2 séts	—
Hero-harness, Leather	20 séts	1
Hero-Harness, silver	50 séts	2
Noble's clothing	See below	—
Peasant's outfit	3 chickens	—
Sandals	1 sét	—
Trews	1 sét	—
Tunic	1 sét	—
Waist-mat	1 sét	—
Winter clothing	x2	—
Neck torc, iron	2 séts	1
Neck torc, copper	8 séts	1
Neck torc, silver	35 séts	1
Neck torc, gold	200 séts	1
Other jewellery	5 séts and up	—

Belt: A broad leather belt, fastened with a hook and loop.

Boots: High leather boots.

Cloak: Essential both to demonstrate status and keep you warm in the winter or cool in the summer. The Celtic cloak is rectangular, and pinned at the shoulder with a bone needle or jewelled clasp depending on the status of the wearer.

Dress: A long woollen dress, plain or with a checked pattern.

Hero-Harness: Hero-harnesses are elaborate systems of straps and buckles worn by warped warriors, intended to expand with the warrior when he warps. They provide certain bonuses to control warp-spasms – see the Earth Power chapter. There is no game difference between a leather and silver hero-harness, but of course the silver one is far more prestigious – a warped one who can afford a silver hero-harness and chooses to make do with leather may risk losing Enech.

Neck Torc: Every noble warrior needs to wear a richly decorated neck torc to demonstrate his noble status. Most other characters will choose to wear at least an iron neck torc, as anyone who does not wear one will be assumed to be a peasant or slave – of course, it may suit thieves to be underestimated in just such a way.

Noble's Clothing: All the items of clothing (except the Peasant's Outfit, of course) are available as better quality versions, made from finer and more beautiful varieties of wool, with better dyes, better manufacture, and far more jewelled pins and brooches. As a rule of thumb, multiply the basic cost of each item by the Enech of the character it is intended for to find out the cost of noble clothing.

Peasant's Outfit: A loose rough tunic and baggy trews, or a loose smock of a dress. No shoes.

Sandals: Simple leather footwear.

Trews: Woollen trousers, either in a single colour or in a checked pattern. Baggy above the knee but kept tight below the knee by strips of cloth or leather wound round the leg.

Tunic: A simple wool tunic, again sometimes checked.



Waist-mat: The bare minimum clothing you can wear in polite company. Even warriors who go skyclad in battle will usually put on at least a waist-mat for the feasting afterwards. This is the classic loin-cloth, a simple woollen or leather covering for the loin area.

Winter Clothing: All the above garments save the waist-mat are available in a heavier wool winter version. The winter tunic is usually worn over the summer tunic in cold weather. The winter cloak is much more voluminous than the summer version as well as being thicker, enabling it to be used as a makeshift tent or bedroll if need be.

Adventuring Gear

Item	Cost	ENC
Bedroll	1 pig	1
Bell	1 sét	—
Blanket, winter	2 pigs	1
Candle	1 chicken	—
Case, for parchment	1 sét	—
Chain (2m)	12 séts	2
Chalk, 1 piece	1 chicken	—
Crowbar	1 sét	1
Firewood (per day)	1 chicken	5
Fishhook	1 pig	—
Fishing net	8 séts	4
Flint and steel	2 pigs	—
Grappling hook	1 sét	—
Hammer	5 pigs	—
Inkpen	1 pig	—
Ladder, 3m	5 chickens	4
Lantern, candle	1 pig	1
Lock‡ Very simple	3 séts	1
Average	20 séts	1
Good	50 séts	1
Amazing	250 séts	1
Manacles	2 séts	2
Mirror, small steel	10 séts	1
Parchment (sheet)	1 pig	—

Item	Cost	ENC
Rope, hemp (10m)	1 sét	2
Sewing needle, bone	1 pig	—
Slave collar	1 sét	1
Skull-Sword Mask	15 séts	1
Soap (per kilogram)	5 pigs	1
Spade or shovel	3 pigs	1
Tent	2 séts	2
Torch	1 chicken	1
Waterskin	1 pig	1

Candle: A candle clearly illuminates a five metre radius and burns for 1 hour.

Chain: A chain has 5 armour points and 5 hit points. It can be burst with a successful Athletics test with a -100% penalty.

Flask: A ceramic, glass or metal container fitted with a tight stopper. It holds half a litre of liquid.

Flint and Steel: Striking the steel and flint together creates sparks. By knocking sparks into tinder, a character can create a small flame. Lighting a torch with flint and steel takes an entire Combat Round, and lighting any other fire with them takes at least that long.

Ink: This is black ink. Ink in other colours costs twice as much.

Jug, Clay: A basic ceramic jug fitted with a stopper. It holds five litres of liquid.

Lantern, Candle: A candle lantern helps to protect a candle from being blown out, and prevents hot wax dripping on the carrier's hand. A lantern can be carried in one hand.

Lock: A lock is worked with a large, bulky key. The bonus to open this kind of lock with the Mechanisms skill depends on the lock's quality: very simple (+20%), average (+0%), good (-60%), amazingly good (-100%).

Manacles: These manacles can bind a Size 8-18 humanoid. To break the manacles requires success at an Athletics test with a -100% penalty. Manacles



have 8 armour points and 10 hit points. Most manacles have locks; add the cost of the lock to the cost of the manacles. For the same price, one can buy manacles for smaller humanoid. Manacles can be made for larger humanoids but they tend to have to be made to order, and frequently cost many times the standard price for more normal manacles.

Rope, Hemp: This rope has 2 hit points and can be burst with a successful Athletics test with a -60% penalty.

Skull-Sword Mask: This is a primitive filter of thick animal hair, with a one-way valve in the centre fashioned from a reed and used to breathe out freely. It allows the Drune's skull-sword soldiers to remain in the presence of their masters the sloughs for long periods of time without succumbing to the effects of their mystic auras. A skull-sword mask gives the wearer a +60% bonus to resist the effects of a slough's mystic aura or other scent-based attack. Skull-sword masks are typically only available to buy on the black market of Drune cities such as Gabala, and even then they are sold only very carefully to trusted buyers, for each will have come from the corpse of a skull-sword. Wearing a skull-sword mask gives a +40% bonus to disguise tests when attempting to disguise oneself as a skull-sword.

Tent: This simple tent sleeps two.

Torch: A wooden rod capped with twisted flax soaked in tallow or a similar item. A torch clearly illuminates a five metre radius and burns for 1 hour.

Vial: A ceramic or metal vial fitted with a tight stopper. The stoppered container usually is no more than a few centimetres wide and 10 centimetres high. It holds 30 millilitres of liquid.

Containers and Carriers: Dry Goods

Item	Cost	ENC	Carries
Barrel (empty)	5 pigs	6	1,000 litres
Basket (empty)	2 pigs	1	50 litres
Bucket (empty)	1 pig	2	25 litres
Chest (empty)	1 sét	6	50 litres
Pouch, belt	3 pigs	1	0.25 litres
Sack	2 chickens	1	25 litres

Liquids

Item	Cost	ENC	Carries
Flask	3 chickens	1	0.5 litres
Jug, clay	3 chickens	1	4 litres
Mug/tankard, clay	2 chickens	—	0.5 litres
Pitcher, clay	2 chickens	1	2 litres
Pot, iron	5 pigs	2	4 litres
Vial, ink or potion	1 sét	—	30 millilitres
Waterskin	1 sét	—	2 litres

Profession Tools and Skill Kits

Item	Cost	ENC
Crafter's tools	20 séts	2
Healer's kit	50 séts	1
First aid kit	2 séts	—
Musical instrument, drum	1 sét	2
Musical instrument, harp	8 séts	2
Musical instrument, horn	12 séts	2
Lock Picks	10 séts	—
Scale, merchant's	2 séts	1
Woad paint, half-litre	1 pig	1
Weirdstones: Small	200 séts	—
Medium	400 séts	—
Large	800 séts	—
Huge	1,600 séts	—
Gargantuan	3 200 séts	—
Colossal	6 400 séts	—

Crafter's Tools: This is the set of special tools needed for any craft. Without these tools, a character has to use improvised tools (-20% penalty to the skill test) if the job can be done at all.

Healer's Kit: This kit is full of herbs, salves, bandages and other useful materials. It is the perfect tool for anyone attempting a Healing test. It adds a +20% bonus to the skill test. It is exhausted after ten uses.

Musical Instrument: The only instruments available in the Land of the Young are drums, harps and trumpets. Drums and trumpets are used predominantly in war, for signalling and to intimidate the enemy. Harps are used by bards and other travelling musicians.



Thieves' Tools: These are the tools needed to use the Disable Device and Open Lock skills. The kit includes one or more skeleton keys, long metal picks and pries, a long-nosed clamp, a small hand saw, and a small wedge and hammer. Without these tools, a character will have to improvise tools, and suffer a -40% penalty on Mechanism tests.

Scale, Merchant's: This scale includes a small balance and pans and a suitable assortment of weights. A scale grants a +20% bonus to Evaluate tests involving items that are valued by weight, including anything made of precious metals.

Woad Paint: Paint made from woad and other sacred plants. This is enough to paint one medium-sized creature from head to toe with spirals and other designs intended to show off a warrior's skyclad body or enough to paint Ogham signs on the faces of ten medium-sized creatures.

Weirdstones: See the Earth Power chapter for more information on weirdstones and their uses. The prices given are for a new weirdstone, currently containing no Earth Power and no enchantments of any kind.

Property

Item	Cost
Good farmland 1 hectare	25 cumals
Pasture land 1 hectare	15 cumals
Mixed woodland 1 hectare	10 cumals
Peat bog, 1 hectare	10 cumals
Wasteland 1 hectare	5 cumals
Hovel	1 cumal
Small house or croft	6 cumals
Great house	5 cumals
Lord's hall	50 cumals
King's hall	120 cumals

Hovel: This one-room basic hut is made from mud or scrap, with a roof that barely keeps the rain off and no chimney.

Small House or Croft: This one-room house is made of wood and mud and has a thatched roof.

Great House: This two- to-four-room great house is made of wood and has a thatched roof. This style of house is generally only found in cities.

Land (various): Generally, a kin needs (and will own) around eight acres of land per adult and four per child to be reasonably self-sufficient. The vast majority of this should be farmland and pastureland with a little peat bog for fuel and woodland for materials. Of course, a kin that makes most of its living through cattle raids can get by with far less land.

Lord's Hall: This great wooden round-house has a very large central chamber for feasting and meetings, and around two dozen smaller stalls around the edge, divided by woollen drapes. The roof is of timber and thatch.

King's Hall: Much like the Lord's Hall, this is a huge wood and stone round-house with a large central hall and four dozen stalls divided by wooden walls. The roof is of timber and thatch.



Food, Drink, and Lodging

Item	Cost	ENC
Ale: Gallon	1 pig	3
Mug	1 chicken	1
Banquet (per person)	1 sét	—
Bread, three loaves	1 chicken	2
Cheese, hunk of	2 chickens	—
Inn stay (per day): Good	3 chickens	—
Common	1 sét	—
Poor	1 chicken	—
Mead: Common (gallon)	2 pigs	3
Fine (mug)	1 pig	1
Meals (per day): Good	1 pig	—
Common	2 chickens	—
Poor	1 chicken	—
Meat, chunk of	1 chicken	—
Rations, trail (per day)	5 chickens	1

Inn: Poor accommodation at an inn amounts to a place on the floor near the hearth, plus the use of a blanket. Common accommodation is a place on a raised, heated floor, the use of a blanket and a pillow, and the presence of a higher class of company. Good accommodation is a small, private room with one bed, some amenities, and a covered chamber pot in the corner.

Meals: Poor meals might be composed of bread, baked turnips, onions, and water. Common meals might consist of bread, chicken stew (easy on the chicken), carrots, and watered-down ale. Good meals might be composed of bread and pastries, beef, peas, and ale or mead.

Vehicles, Mounts and Related Gear

Vehicles

Item	Cost	Weight	Carries (ENC)
Cart	4 sés	200 lb	350
Chariot	15 sés	150 lb	100
Sled, heavy	7 sés	300 lb	150
Wagon	11 sés	400 lb	500

Mounts and Related Gear

Item	Cost	ENC
Bit and bridle	1 sét	1
Boar, riding	60 sés	—
Dog, war	40 sés	—
Feed (per day)	2 chickens	1
Hairy One	1200 sés	—
Horse	50 sés	—
Warhorse	80 sés	—
Saddle, Pack	1 pig	5
Saddle, Riding	3 sés	3
Saddlebags	2 sés	2
Stabling (per day)	1 pig	—

See the Bestiary chapter for information about particular mounts.

Cart: A two-wheeled vehicle drawn by a single horse (or other beast of burden). It comes with a harness.

Feed: Horses, donkeys, mules and ponies can graze to sustain themselves, but providing feed for them (such as oats) is much better because it provides a more concentrated form of energy, especially if the animal is exerting itself. War dogs must be fed some meat, which may cost more or less than the given amount.

Saddle, Exotic: An exotic saddle is like a normal saddle of the same type except that it is designed for an unusual mount, such as a mammoth or boar. Exotic saddles come in pack and riding styles.

Saddle, Pack: A pack saddle holds gear and supplies, not a rider. A pack saddle holds as much gear as the mount can carry.

Saddle, Riding: The standard riding saddle supports a rider.

Sled: This is a wagon on runners for moving through snow and over ice. In general, two horses (or other beasts of burden) draw it. It comes with the harness needed to pull it.

Stabling: Includes a stable, feed and grooming.



Wagon: This is a four-wheeled, open vehicle for transporting heavy loads. In general, two horses (or other beasts of burden) draw it. It comes with the harness needed to pull it.

Spells For Hire

Cost to have a spell cast for you: EP cost x 10 sés

Spell: This is how much it costs to get a spellcaster to cast a spell for hire. This cost assumes that a character can go to the spellcaster and have the spell cast at his convenience. Generally speaking, only witches will cast spells for hire. Druids may cast a spell for someone in the same tribe whose religious duties and obligations are in good standing, but this will depend on the request and the reason for the request – a druid may or may not require a donation similar to the costs listed above. Both druids and witches are also renowned for a tendency to require payment in kind rather than cash, for example asking the customer to go out and track down and slay a certain famous giant boar and bring back its whiskers.

Serpent Staffs

Serpent staffs are the forbidden weapons of the ancient Atlantean people. Although the Red Branch warriors of the Tribes of the Earth Goddess are trained in their use they remain proscribed and incredibly rare outside of the descendents of Atlantis.

Serpents staffs use Earth Power to release a terrible sheet of flame upon any targets within range. Up to three EP may be used with each shot, each point of EP inflicts 1D6 points of damage if the Serpent staff hits.

Due to their rarity and forbidden nature it is not normally possible to purchase these weapons in Tir Nan Og and an individual carrying such a weapon is likely to be challenged (and frequently attacked) for possessing such a device.



Earth Power

Earth Power (EP) is the magic of Tir Nan Og, flowing through men, beasts, rocks, plants, and everything else. It rises up from the Earth and beams down from the sun. For many generations, the sorcerers of the tribes have been able to tap into it and use it for their own purposes. It is a neutral force that can be used for good or evil; it has no sentience, or capability to pass judgement. That said, there are gods and other powers that are aware of the use of sorcery, and every act of magic has its repercussions.

Personal Earth Power

All sentient creatures have Earth Power flowing through them, which they may learn to use to create a variety of magical effects. Earth Power is mostly used to cast spells and enchantments, with all characters able to cast some basic spells. Some Legendary Abilities also require the expenditure of Earth Power in order to be used.

Each human starts out with a number of Earth Power points equivalent to their Power ability. This is the standard amount of EP they have available, assuming there are no special circumstances. It may go up or down, depending on magic they cast and such things as the draining effects of spending too much time in the Sourland, or the positive effects of participating in a great festival in honour of the tribal gods. The absolute maximum EP a character may have is equal to double their Power. Some of the more powerful spells require expenditure of large amounts of Earth Power and only the most skilful practitioners of magic can cast them.

Due to the magical nature of the Land of the Young, almost all characters learn at least a spell or two; although very few are willing to undergo the years of rigorous study needed to become a fully-fledged druid or witch. Many simple spells are available to any who are interested in learning them, passed down by village fishwives and local superstition.

Gaining and Losing Earth Power

Earth Power is renewed with the rising of the sun each day. Every individual will begin the day with their starting Earth Power score.

Earth Power is reduced whenever casting a spell, using certain Legendary Abilities or, sometimes, if a victim of certain magical attacks. You can gain Earth Power directly from your own body or those of other living creatures, by sacrificing or injuring them – see Sacrifice and Self-Sacrifice, below.

Locations that sap Earth Power

Certain places gradually sap Earth Power away from you. The most common are the Sourlands, vast tracts of wasteland made infertile by the Drones draining away all the Earth Power from them, and temples sacred to any deity other than one that you worship. If in either of these places, or in any other place that saps Earth Power as determined by the Games Master, you will lose 1D6 EP per hour until your EP is zero (in most cases, the EP you lose is stored in the location for use by whichever sorcerer or priest controls the area). You may attempt a Resilience test every hour to avoid the loss. With every dawn Earth Power is still restored allowing the amounts of stored EP to be constantly renewed.

Locations that boost Earth Power

Other places can boost your Earth Power, allowing you to channel far more than you usually could. Examples are temples sacred to a deity that you worship, weirdstones which you control, and places where, or times when, exceptional Earth Power is flowing through the land – for example, the Great Cairn of the Sessair tribe on Midwinter, or the middle of a gory battlefield, or at a great festival in honour of your tribe's gods. In such situations, your mere presence in the area can allow you to gain additional EP. You will gain a random amount of EP each 10 minutes you spend in the area until you reach your maximum EP or until the EP in the area runs out – see the following table.



Situation or Area	EP gained per hour
Minor shrine	1D3
Temple	1D6
Major temple (Glastonbury, Great Cairn and so on)	2D6
Temple or shrine on festival day	+1D6
Amid minor battle (200 to 500 participants total)	1D2
Amid battle (501 to 2000 participants total)	1D4
Amid major battle (over 2000 participants total)	1D6

SACRIFICE AND SELF-SACRIFICE

Blood is a rich source of Earth Power, with the blood of great heroes being richest of all. It is quite common for both druids and witches to sacrifice animals or humans to raise Earth Power. Spellcasters can learn to tap into such sacrifices to either draw Earth Power directly into themselves, use it to charge up a weird stone or dolmen (see the Dolmens and Weirdstones section, below), or even use it immediately in a spell.

Spilling your blood: It is possible to spill one's own blood as a means of drawing directly on Earth power. This is risky and damaging, and is generally only done in extremis, when there is no other form of Earth Power available and when one absolutely must work magic. Each point of EP you gain this way causes you 1D4 points of damage to a chosen hit location. This will take a single Combat Action, so long as you have a bladed weapon in hand. The EP gained may be used immediately in a spell, used to charge up a dolmen or weird stone, or stored for later use. Spilling your own blood is the only sacrifice that does not require any Ritual Sacrifice skill to be successful, the EP is gained automatically.

Spilling another's blood: You can also use blood that has been spilled from other creatures, the amount of EP gained depends upon the sacrifice. A sentient sacrifice (whether willing or not) will gain an amount of EP equal to their POW ability score if they are killed, if they are merely maimed (the removal of a limb or the eyes, for example) then the amount gained will be half the victims POW score. Any benefit gained from a sacrificial victim is not cumulative. If a victim has all his limbs removed and is then killed the only EP

gained will be for the fatal sacrifice. However, after a week has passed a maimed sacrificial victim can be used once again.

For non-sentient creatures (such as dogs, stags and bulls) the EP gained is halved. Supernatural creatures from the EI worlds and not from the Earth and those not truly living (such as the half-dead) can not be sacrificed in this way. For those who wish to make a habit of sacrificing others to gain Earth Power, the Legendary Abilities Ritual Sacrifice, Blood Eagle and Craft Wicker Man are worth considering.

SACRIFICE OF GOODS AND WEAPONS

Another way to raise a small quantity of Earth Power is to ritually destroy objects of value and beauty – most commonly swords or other metal tools, which are deliberately bent into uselessness and thrown into streams or rivers. The sacrifice must be in an appropriate place to one of the deities you worship (see the Religion chapter for more details) or in a consecrated temple, and you must sacrifice goods to a minimum value of 10 sêts total if they are metal items, or 30 sêts if they are non-metallic. Unlike blood sacrifices, these sacrifices tend to be fairly time-consuming, both due to the time taken to ritually destroy the items and the necessity to pray or chant to draw your deity's attention to the sacrifice – blood sacrifices tend to be far more noticeable to the gods! For each full 10 sêts sacrificed (or 30 sêts of non-metallic items), you gain 1 EP. Sacrificing goods worth 10 sêts (or 30 sêts nonmetallic) takes 30 minutes.

MAGIC BACKFIRES

If you ever acquire more than your maximum EP in one round (usually through tapping a weirdstone, or sacrificing a particularly powerful victim) you immediately burn up *all* your EP except for 1D4 points, taking damage equal to the amount of EP you lost, spread across all your hit locations. Earth Power can injure or even kill those who are not trained to use it fully.

Weirdstones and Dolmens

The Druenes in particular specialise in the use of weirdstones to drain and store Earth Power. A weirdstone is any piece of enchanted stone that has been shaped to a specific sorcerous purpose. Weirdstones are commonly found aligned into stone



circles or similar arrangements, although they are also effective singly. By far the most typical use for them is to drain Earth Power from the surrounding lands and use it for the purposes of the creator or controller of the stone, although they can also be used to power Sky Chariots (see page 181) or to be Druid's Eggs (see page 39).

CHARGING WEIRDSTONES

A weirdstone placed into the ground will draw Earth Power directly from the surrounding lands. This is a gradual process, with the weirdstone gaining 1 EP per week until it reaches its Natural EP Capacity (see the Weirdstones and Earth Power table, below). If its EP is later used up, it will begin to regain EP at a rate of 1 EP per week again until it reaches its Natural EP Capacity as before. This Earth Power is drawn slowly enough from the land that the natural cycles of energy renew the land as fast as the EP is drawn from it, so long as there is not too high a concentration of weirdstones set into the ground in the area (typically around 10 weirdstones set into each 100 square kilometre area is the maximum the land can support without risk).

OVERCHARGING WEIRDSTONES

It is possible for the crafter or controller of a weirdstone to deliberately set it to drain far more EP than the land around can support. This quite rapidly turns fertile farm country into the dead Sourlands, and so even the Drune Lords used to think twice about doing it – until they decided to bring about Ragnarok, and stopped minding if they damaged the land a little while attempting to destroy it.

A weirdstone that is set to over-charge will drain EP much faster than usual, according to the EP Drain column on the Weirdstones and Earth Power table. Its capacity also increases, to the level shown in the Maximum EP Capacity column of the table. These

two factors, along with the tendency of the Drones to use the EP up as fast as it comes in, will soon turn the surrounding countryside sour.

Weirdstones and Earth Power

Weirdstone Size / Height	Natural EP Capacity	Maximum EP Capacity	EP Drain
Up to 1m	2 EP	4 EP	1/day
1m - 2m	4 EP	8 EP	2/day
2m - 3m	8 EP	16 EP	3/day
3m - 5m	16 EP	32 EP	4/day
5m - 10m	32 EP	64 EP	5/day
Over 10m	64 EP	128 EP	6/day

WEIRDSTONE SPELLS

Weirdstones can also be given specific magical effects, so that any creature who performs a previously chosen action near them has a spell cast on it. The action may be as simple as merely touching the weirdstone, or as complex as spending the night on it singing a song of your own devising to the glory of Crom Cruach. The spell to be added must be known to the caster. Giving the weirdstone the capability to cast it costs 100 s ets (in raw materials) and one permanent Power point per ten points of EP it would take for the caster to cast the spell. Once the weirdstone is imbued with a spell, it will cast it directly from its own reserve of EP each time the conditions are met, so long as it has enough EP to do so. This costs the weirdstone twice as many EP as casting the spell would cost a creature who knew it – the weirdstone must make up for a lack of intelligence and spellcasting finesse with raw Earth Power. Each weirdstone may only be imbued with a single spell.

DOLMENS

A dolmen is an arrangement of three or four weirdstones into a great arch. This shape is capable of sending out the EP it contains, so that sorcerers far away can benefit from it. It must be created from three or four already enchanted weirdstones with the eventual size of the finished dolmen typically being one size category bigger than the weirdstones that went into its construction. In most cases, the stones of the dolmen are the same size as one another, although it is possible to construct a dolmen in which one or more of the lower stones is one size category smaller than the capstone.



The capstone, the topmost stone of the dolmen, does not store or drain Earth Power in itself as it is not in direct contact with the earth. The capstone is the focal point for the other stones of the dolmen and broadcasts their energy out into the world, to be received by creatures chosen by the controller of the dolmen. The other stones draw or drain energy as usual if they were simply two or three weirdstones placed in the ground, and have their usual storage capacities. The range of a dolmen's broadcast capability is given below.

Capstone Size	Full EP available	Quarter EP available	1 EP/weirdstone available
Up to 1m	3m	5m	20m
1m - 2m	6m	15m	200m
2m - 3m	12m	45m	1km
3m - 5m	18m	135m	10km
5m - 10m	36m	400m	100km
Over 10m	72m	1600m	1000km

Full EP available: The sorcerer can tap the full EP available from the stones of the dolmen within this range. See the Tapping Dolmens section below for more information.

Quarter EP available: The sorcerer can tap up to one quarter the total amount of EP available in the dolmen, but each EP tapped in this way takes longer to tap than usual. See the Tapping Dolmens section below for more information.

1 EP available: At these extraordinary ranges, an individual sorcerer can no longer tap the dolmen, but the dolmen's controller can send 1 EP per weirdstone in the dolmen per day to another dolmen within the range given. This may then be sent on, or used in the usual way. In this manner the Drune Lords have been able to create a network of dolmens, with the great alignments at Carnac providing Earth Power to other dolmens for the Drones' use throughout southern Tir Nan Og.

Cromlechs

A cromlech is an alignment of several weirdstones and dolmens to provide greater Earth Power or create a powerful magical effect. Designing and building a cromlech is a complex affair – even a fairly small

cromlech with a couple of dozen stones will take years to fully construct and enchant, whilst the largest examples (numbering over a thousand stones), will take several normal lifetimes to complete.

The main advantage of a cromlech is that the dolmens within it are able to focus and broadcast the power of all the cromlech's weirdstones, rather than just the weirdstones that directly make up the dolmen itself. This allows a sizable cromlech to broadcast an enormous quantity of Earth Power.

Portable Weirdstones

Any weirdstone of up to two metres in size may be made to be portable, rather than stuck in the ground. Typically it will be mounted on a Great Chariot or Sky Chariot (flying ship). Such a small weirdstone can store only a small quantity of Earth Power, but can of course be boosted by sacrifices as usual.

Tapping Weirdstones

Any creature with the Tap Weirdstone skill may draw energy from a weirdstone simply by placing his hand against it, concentrating and making its skill test. This takes a single Combat Action and if successful, divide the roll by ten to determine the number of EP the creature gains, up to a maximum of the amount contained within the weirdstone.

Tapping Dolmens

Tapping dolmens is rather trickier. The sorcerer must concentrate for a full round, and so long as he is within the range given in the dolmen table and makes a hard Tap Weirdstone skill test (with a -40% penalty) he may tap one EP per round. A critical result on the Skill test allows the creature to tap 3 EP per round. The caster can continue doing this until he has tapped all the EP available in the dolmen, if he wishes.

If the sorcerer is only within the range listed as 'Quarter EP available' he may only tap up to ¼ the total EP the dolmen has available, and may not attempt to tap it again until the following day. He gains only 1 EP per round and must succeed at a difficult Tap Weirdstone skill test (-20% penalty) each round to do even that. If he fails the Skill test during any round, he may not attempt to tap that dolmen again till the following day.



Controlling Weirdstones, Dolmens and Cromlechs

When the weirdstone is first created, it is controlled by its creator. He may then pass on control as desired to another character, usually the powerful druid who commissioned the stone. If control of the weirdstone is to be wrested away from the current controller the usual method for doing so is to kill him first. However a character with the *Wrest Weirdstone Control* Legendary Ability can do so whilst the current controller still lives.

Many weirdstones are deliberately set up so that only the weirdstone's controller, or other creatures specifically designated by him, can touch them safely. This is done just as is explained in the section on *Weirdstone Spells*, above. The spell will be set to activate whenever a non-designated party touches the stone. Curses are the most common spells for Drones to use in this case, though peaceful druids may create a simple *Gust of Wind* spell to gently persuade outsiders not to interfere with their weirdstones.

The controller of the weirdstone may designate the creatures who are permitted to touch them as he chooses. Sample designations are as follows:

- 'Only myself, Wadd, and Cei.'
- 'All Drones of Slough rank.'
- 'All worshippers of Morrigu.'
- 'All members in good standing of the Sessair tribe.'
- 'Anyone except for worshippers of Danu.'

The Druid's Egg

This is a small, egg-shaped piece of carved weirdstone, created by an experienced druid. It is regarded as a source of extremely good fortune by druids, warriors and common folk alike. Once per day, a druid's egg allows its owner (who must be specified at the time of creation) to re-roll any one die roll he made. He must accept the result of the re-roll, even if it is worse than the original roll. He must have the druid's egg about his person to use its power in this way.

Time Worm Eggs

These are found in certain hidden sacred places, including Slough Feg's Cave of Beasts in southern Tir Nan Og. Drinking all the fluid from a time worm egg instantly rejuvenates the drinker, reducing his age by 4D10 years. If this reduces his age to zero, he must

make a Resilience test or simply die – success means he is effectively a helpless newborn baby.

Spells and Spellcasting

No sharp distinction is made between sorcerers and ordinary folk in Tir Nan Og. A peasant may consider anyone who knows even a single spell to be a sorcerer. Most druids and witches could perhaps be reasonably called sorcerers, but so could many characters – warriors in particular often learn a little magic for the benefits it can bring them in battle.

In many respects the spells available in the Land of the Young are similar to those found in *RuneQuest*, but there are several major differences. Most spells also have several prerequisites – a sorcerer must meet the prerequisites before learning the spell. Finally, the ranges at which spells operate are very different to those in *RuneQuest*, as will be detailed below. Note that none of the spells from *RuneQuest* may be used in the Sláine roleplaying game.

Casting Spells

In most cases the procedure for casting a spell is simple enough – you simply expend the required Earth Power, perform the gestures and chants required during the casting time, and in some cases select a target. All spells also require a Skill test after the Earth Power has been expended and the result determines whether the spell has been cast successfully.

Many spells can not be learnt unless a character already knows and is proficient in other magic already (you can not learn to summon a goblin horde unless you already know how to summon an individual goblin).

Some summoning spells have the potential to summon a large horde of otherworld creatures. However these creatures will not appear unless there is at least one enemy for each of them so that they can all kill and feast upon their summoner's foes. A sorcerer who tries to summon a thousand goblins to face a mere handful of adventurers will find that the summons fails, the creatures will be unwilling to leave their home plane unless rewarded suitably.

Hierarchy of Spells

There are spells that are commonplace, almost anybody has the ability to cast if they are taught how to do so. There are other spells that are highly complex





incantations that require great skill to master. These spells most commonly require a degree of mastery in more basic enchantments before they can be learnt.

A sorcerer will need to have a skill of at least 75% in all prerequisite spells prior to learning the more powerful incantation. For example, to be able to learn *Summon Goblin Horde* will require a sorcerer to already be able to cast the spell *Summon Goblin* with at least a 75% skill. If a spell has multiple prerequisites then the sorcerer must be able to cast all those spells with at least a 75% skill.

Learning New Spells

Learning new spells is a lengthy process, not something that can be done in a moment's whim. A character must first learn the spell from someone who can already cast it with at least a 75% skill. It then takes at least a month to be able to the spell at the basic chance (see page 18). In order to learn a new spell the character must also expend Hero Points, with a character learning from a druid within his own tribe spending two Hero Points for a new spell, if not learning from a member of his tribe, or if he is a dwarf or warped one, this cost increases to four Hero Points. A character must also meet all the requirements to learn the spell (worship the correct god, come from the correct tribe and know the relevant prerequisite spells). Some Legendary Abilities enable a character to learn spells that are normally not available to him.

Spell Ranges and the Magical Link

Every spell that affects a creature or object other than the caster must have a link to its target to be effective. The particular link or links that can be used with each spell are specified in the spell description, and explained below.

Line of Sight: In many cases, the caster being able to see the target is sufficient (with a successful Perception test required if the target is particularly distant or deliberately hiding).

The Evil Eye: Some spells require the caster to meet the target's eye. This can affect a target within ten metres. The caster simply chooses a target within range, and that opponent must attempt a Resilience Check. If the target has already specified he is averting his eyes from the caster's face by some means, he has a 50% chance of not having to make this check. However by averting his eyes in this way the spell's target will have a -20% penalty should he try to attack the spell caster.

A target who has specified that he has shut his eyes or turned his back on the caster, or is wearing a blindfold, does not need to make a Resilience Check. However any attacks made by the target upon the caster will be nearly impossible to make, resulting in a -80% penalty to any attacks.

Characters using darkvision in complete darkness are affected by an evil eye spell normally.

If the target is able to avoid meeting the caster's gaze during the round the spell is cast, the evil eye spell has no effect.

Corn Dolly: Anyone with even a vague understanding of sorcery – and that includes almost everyone in Tir Nan Og – knows of a more sinister method of creating a link. This is the corn dolly. A corn dolly is a small representation of the intended victim, constructed by the spellcaster, usually from corn. Sometimes other easily available materials such as wood or clay are used, in which case the doll is known as a poppet (for game purposes, poppets and corn dollies are identical). During the construction process, which needs no particular craft skills and takes one hour, the sorcerer must concentrate on the intended victim. Most importantly, the sorcerer will need an item that



has an intimate connection with the victim, such as a fragment of his clothing, a nail-clipping or lock of hair, or some bodily fluid or other. This item must be incorporated into the corn dolly somehow.

Once the corn dolly is complete, the sorcerer may use spells against the victim from any range, even if he is unable to see the victim. The sorcerer must hold the corn dolly in his hand when casting the spell to gain these benefits, and retain it about his person for the duration of the spell, or else the spell instantly ends.

Some corn dollies are not representations of an individual, but of a place or type of animal, these can be used more than once. Such a corn dolly also creates a magical link with the target place or creature for the spell to function through. When an animal corn dolly is used, it taps into the essence of the animal, affecting the nearest members of the species to you.

Like a standard corn dolly, these must incorporate some item that has an intimate connection with the target, such as a piece of fur or bone from the type of animal to be summoned, or a pebble or piece of earth from the place to be affected.

Spell Traits and Descriptions

Every spell is defined by a series of traits that tells you what kind of spell it is and how it is used in the game. A description then follows describing the spell's precise effects. The traits used by spells are detailed below.

Area (X): The spell affects all targets within a radius specified in metres.

Casting Time (X): The spell takes the indicated number of Combat Actions to cast.

Concentration: The spell's effects will remain in place so long as the character concentrates on it, up to the spell's maximum duration. Concentrating on a spell is functionally identical to casting the spell, requiring the spellcaster to continue to hold the runes, chant and ignore distractions.

Corn Dolly: The Spell may be cast using a corn dolly (see page 40).

Duration (X): The spell's effects will stay in place for the number of minutes indicated.

Evil Eye: The spell can be cast using the Evil Eye (see page 40).

Instant: The spell's effects take place instantly. The spell itself then disappears.

Line of Sight: Any target the caster is able to see may be targeted when casting this spell.

Magnitude (X): The strength and power of the spell. Also the minimum number of Earth Power Points required to cast it.

Permanent: The spell's effects remain in place until they are dispelled or dismissed.

Prerequisite: In order to learn this spell the caster must be able to cast the listed spells listed with at least a 75% skill (see page 39).

Progressive: This indicates that the spell can be learnt and cast at greater levels of Magnitude than the minimum (see page 68 of *RuneQuest*).

Resist (Dodge/Persistence/Resilience): The spell's effects do not take effect automatically. The target may make a Dodge, Persistence or Resilience test (as specified by the spell) in order to avoid the effect of the spell entirely. Note that Resist (Dodge) spells require the target to be able to use Reactions in order to dodge. In the case of Area spells, the Resist (Dodge) trait requires the target to dive (see page 52 of *RuneQuest*) in order to mitigate the spell's effect.

Touch: Touch spells require the character to actually touch his target for the spell to take effect. The spellcaster must remain in physical contact with the target for the entire casting.

Tribal (X): The spell is traditionally tied with a particular tribe, and may only be learnt from members of that tribe except in exceptional circumstances.

Trigger: The spell will lie dormant until an event stated in the description takes place. The spell then takes effect and is expended.

Duration

In most cases, the spell duration given is fairly self-explanatory. Two new kinds of duration are given below.

Earth Power: A spell with a duration of Earth Power will last as long as the caster continues to pay the Earth Power cost whenever required to do so.

Concentration/Earth Power: A spell with a duration of Concentration/Earth Power will last as long as the caster both continues to concentrate on the spell, and continues to pay the Earth Power cost whenever required to do so.

Chant/Earth Power: A spell with a duration of Chant/Earth Power will last as long as the caster both continues to chant, and continues to pay the Earth Power cost whenever required to do so.



Spell Descriptions

A MURDER OF CROWS

Casting Time 2, Duration 30, Magnitude 1, Progressive

A worshipper of Morrigan may use this spell to summon a flock of crows, rooks and ravens to serve the sorcerer. The birds will serve the sorcerer without question. The most common actions are attacking an opponent (at which they are extremely effective, pecking him so rapidly and severely as to practically eat him alive) and acting as spies. The number of birds summoned is dependent on the Earth Power points spent and the sorcerer's spell test result, with a success summoning a number of birds equal to the EP spent, and a critical success summoning three times the EP spent.

All of these can be treated as ravens as in the Bestiary chapter, which also includes special rules for characters fighting back against such an onslaught as this spell will produce.

ALLY OF THE HORNED LORD

Casting Time 1, Duration 30. Magnitude 1, Resist (Resilience)

A worshipper of Carnun, Lord of the Beasts, may use this spell to summon an animal of up to SIZ 15 to serve the sorcerer. The sorcerer must specify the species animal he wishes to summon and must have the appropriate corn dolly to be successful. If that animal is not found within one kilometre, he may specify an alternate animal at no extra EP cost, but this will take another action and require an alternative corn dolly. He may keep specifying alternate animals until he finds one that is within a kilometre. The animal, if it fails its resilience roll, will serve the sorcerer without question, and even perform actions that are entirely against its nature – it will even sit quietly to be slaughtered, for example, if the sorcerer wishes to use it for food.

ANIMATE TREE

Casting Time 2, Duration 30, Magnitude 7, Touch

A worshipper of Danu in her Blodeuwdd aspect may use *Animate Tree* to bring a single tree to life to do his bidding, using the ancient bond between the Goddess

and the forest. The tree will obey you so long as your purposes are in harmony with nature – this can include fighting for you against your enemies. See the Bestiary chapter for more information on specific animated trees. You choose which tree to animate.

ARMY OF THE HORNED LORD

Casting Time 3, Duration 90. Magnitude 5, Prerequisite: *Ally of the Horned Lord*, Progressive

A worshipper of Carnun can use this spell to summon a number of different animals to serve the sorcerer. The animals will serve the sorcerer without question, and perform actions that are entirely against their nature (including not attacking the other animals summoned, even if they would usually be its prey) – they will even sit quietly to be slaughtered, or fight to the death against the sorcerer's foes. The number of animals summoned depends on the sorcerer's skill at casting this spell, if the Skill test is a success the number of animals listed appear, on a critical three times this number appear.

EP Cost	Animals summoned
5	1 up to SIZ 15, 1D6 up to SIZ 10, 2D6 up to SIZ 5
10	1D6 up to SIZ 15, 2D6 up to SIZ 10, 3D6 up to SIZ 5
15	1 over SIZ 15, 2D6 up to SIZ 15, 3D6 up to SIZ 10, 4D6 up to SIZ 5
20	1D6 over SIZ 15, 3D6 up to SIZ 15, 4D6 up to SIZ 10, 5D6 up to SIZ 5
25	2D6 over SIZ 15, 4D6 up to SIZ 15, 5D6 up to SIZ 10, 6D6 up to SIZ 5
30	3D6 over SIZ 15, 5D6 up to SIZ 15, 6D6 up to SIZ 10, 7D6 up to SIZ 5
35	4D6 over SIZ 15, 6D6 up to SIZ 15, 7D6 up to SIZ 10, 8D6 up to SIZ 5

Most of the animals will be herd animals of some type (cattle, deer and wild horses), with one per D6 rolled being a more fierce creature (bear, sabre-tooth). The smallest creatures will be evenly divided between rats, small snakes, and weasels. These tiny creatures have no effective attacks but will be an annoyance and distraction – for each two such creatures in the group, one enemy will suffer a -5% penalty to attack rolls. Such a creature may be killed by any blow that hits it.





If this spell is cast in a cold land (anywhere on the ice sheet of Lochlann, for example), hairy ones (mammoths) may be summoned with this spell in place of bears or sabre-tooths. The animals receive no saving throw to avoid appearing.

Astronomy - Long-term Prediction
Concentration, Casting Time 3, Duration 120.
Magnitude 6, Prerequisites *Astronomy - Short-term Prediction, Astronomy - Medium-term Prediction*

As *Astronomy - Short-term Prediction* except as follows. The subject of the spell gains a bonus of +30%. A long-term prediction will apply to some situation between one year and ten years after the spell has been cast. A character can only ever be the subject of one astronomical prediction at a time. If the spellcaster has a critical success while casting this spell the bonus is doubled to +60%.

Astronomy - Medium-term Prediction
Concentration, Casting Time 3, Duration 90. Magnitude 3, Prerequisite *Astronomy - Short-term Prediction*

As *Astronomy - Short-term Prediction* except as follows. The subject of the spell gains an bonus of +15%. A medium-term prediction will apply to some situation between one month and six months after the spell has been cast. A character can only ever be the subject of one astronomical prediction at a time. If the spellcaster has a critical success while casting this spell the bonus is doubled to +30%.

Astronomy - Short-term Prediction
Concentration, Casting Time 3, Duration 60.
Magnitude 1

In Sláine's time, little distinction is made between astrology and astronomy. If you know another character's date and hour of birth, you can make a somewhat cryptic prediction about their immediate future. A short-term prediction will apply to some situation within the next week – the Games Master will inform the subject of the spell when the situation arises. This situation will typically be one encounter. Any one time the character must make a skill test, during that encounter, he may apply a 5% bonus to the roll. A character can only ever be the subject of one astronomical prediction at a time. If the spellcaster has a critical success while casting this spell then the bonus is doubled to +10%.

Baby Blessing
Casting Time 3, Duration see text, Magnitude 5

Baby blessing is performed over every newborn child in the Earth Goddess tribes, although the Drune Lords have little use for such a spell. Unusually, it has elements of both blessing and divination to it – the child is protected from most natural hazards (+10% to all Resilience checks till the age of 14) and also receives his first geas (see page 14), whispered in his ear, though he will be too young to understand it. The blessing druid will remind the child of the geas once more, and only once more, when he becomes an adult at 14.

Battle of the Trees
Concentration, Casting Time 3, Duration 60,
Magnitude 14, Prerequisite *Animate Tree*

As *Animate Tree*, except that one of each type of tree is activated. The trees may be anywhere within the caster's sight. The spell will not work unless one tree



of each kind is within sight (although a typical mixed forest in Tir Nan Og will have at least one of each kind visible).

Beauty of the Hare

Casting Time 10, Duration 60. Magnitude 1, Touch, Tribal (Falians)

Traditionally, eating a meal of hare makes the sorcerer beautiful and charming. Cast once such a meal has been consumed, this spell grants a temporary bonus to Charisma of 1D4+2 points, adding the usual modifiers to Charisma based skills.

Among the Tribe of the Shadows, *Beauty of the Hare* is traditionally only used at Beltaine, as it is considered very bad luck to hunt hares at other times of year. It is in common use even among ordinary warriors during the Beltaine celebrations, as men and women alike attempt to render themselves as attractive as possible for the great fire-festival of fertility and lust. Members of other tribes who learn the spell, or Falians with low Enech scores, sometimes use it as and when they choose, but woe betide them if the Tribe of the Shadows catch them killing a hare at any time other than Beltaine!

Beguile

Casting Time 1, Corn Dolly, Duration 60, Evil Eye, Magnitude 4, Resist (Resilience)

You may target one person of the opposite sex (any species so long as his intelligence is 3+). If the target fails his Resilience test, you have him under a certain amount of control – he will attempt to please you and even obey you, so long as this does not conflict with his nature. If you ever ask him to act against his nature, he may make a Resilience test to break the glamour. If he succeeds, he is free of the spell and gains a +10% bonus on Resilience tests against any future glamour you target him with; although in many cases he will still regard you with affection and even love. If he fails, he obeys you, despite his better judgement. He may also attempt another Resilience test every hour after you first bewitched him.

Repeated use of this spell against the same target makes it far more difficult for them to resist you. If you use *Beguile* on the same target, before the previous *Beguile* has expired or otherwise ended, he suffers a –10% penalty on his Resilience test (and on

any Resilience tests against future glammers you may cast, or Resilience tests made when you ask him to do something against his nature). In addition, if your use of *Beguile* was successful he may only attempt another Resilience test every day, rather than every hour. If you use *Beguile* on him again after this second use, his Resilience tests are reduced further by an additional –10% penalty and he may not make them so often, either – every week after the third successful *Beguile*, or only every month if you have successfully cast four or more *Beguiles* on him.

Betraying Hand

Casting Time 1, Concentration, Corn Dolly, Duration special, Evil Eye, Magnitude 5, Resist (Persistence), Touch

This spell can only be cast on a victim who is holding some form of melee weapon in one or both hands. Your victim must make a Persistence test or begin to attack himself with his own weapon with a 95% chance to hit. He continues to do so as long as you concentrate on the spell, but he may make another Persistence test after each attack on himself. If he succeeds at any Persistence test the spell ends instantly.

The spell continues for as long as the caster concentrates on the victim and continues to expend another EP point at the start of each round the spell is effective.



Blade Blessing

Casting Time 2, Duration 10, Magnitude 1, Prerequisite *Poetic Naming*, Progressive, Touch

Blade Blessing is used before a group of warriors go into combat. Each weapon blessed with a *Blade Blessing* increases the chance to hit with the weapon by +5% and deals one point of extra damage. For every point of Magnitude an extra weapon is affected by the spell. All the weapons to be blessed must be named weapons and be wielded by their namers for the spell to function. Any weapons blessed by this spell count as enchanted weapons for the duration of the encounter or battle.

Blood to Poison

Casting Time 1, Corn Dolly, Evil Eye, Instant, Magnitude 3, Resist (Resilience)

The target must succeed with an opposed Resilience test against the casters skill with this spell or instantly take 1D6 points of damage to two different hit locations.

Challenge of the Hare

Casting Time 10, Duration Special, Line of Sight, Magnitude 14, Prerequisite *Eyes of the Hare*, Tribal (Falians)

By releasing a live hare from beneath your cloak before a battle, you can gain some insight into the eventual outcome of the fight and some ideas as to suitable strategies to employ. You gain a +10% bonus to any Charisma-based skill tests you may need to make during the battle, and all of your followers gain a +5% bonus to all attack rolls during the battle, as they believe you have spoken directly to the Gods and know who will win.

Charm against Concussions

Casting Time 10, Duration 30, Magnitude 4, Prerequisite *Cure Injury*, Progressive, Touch

This is a pre-emptive healing spell, for use before you go into battle. If successfully cast the spell will automatically regenerate up to the full amount of any damage done at the end of the round it was inflicted. The maximum total amount of damage that can be healed by this spell is one point per additional EP point spent after the first three.

If more than one location is injured then the spell will heal completely the most seriously damaged area first before moving onto the next most seriously injured location. You can only be affected by one casting of this spell at a time.

Circle of Nature

Area 1km, Casting Time 1, Duration 60, Magnitude 8

A worshipper of Blodeuwedd, Danu or Carnun can use this spell to negate any natural magic spells or effects within its area of effect, and it acts as a magical barrier against any natural magic spells or effects that may be cast during its duration. For each natural magic spell already operating when it is cast, the caster of *Circle of Nature* may make an Opposed Test against the original caster to negate the effect. Likewise, any other sorcerer who attempts to cast a natural magic spell while *Circle of Nature* is in effect must make an opposed magic attack roll against the caster of the *Circle of Nature*.

In addition, the caster of *Circle of Nature* may use its power to negate the effects of any summoning spells that summon natural creatures rather than creatures from the El worlds. Examples would be *Crom Cruach's Revenge*, *Army of the Trees*, and *A Murder of Crows*. To do so takes a single Combat Action, but costs an additional 1 EP for each spell you attempt to negate (whether the summoning magic was in effect already, or is cast during the *Circle of Nature's* duration). You and the caster of the summoning spell make an Opposed Test as above. If you successfully negate a summoning spell in this way, the summoned creatures either disperse (in the case of animals, crows, worms and so on) or revert to their natural forms (in the case of animated trees and the like).

The following are considered to be natural magic spells: *Cloak of Blackness*, *Control Flames*, *Control Water*, *Control Wind*, *Control Weather*, *Deluge*, *Flying*, *Gust of Wind*, *Levitate* and *Lightning*.

Cloak of Blackness

Area 3, Casting Time 1, Duration 10. Magnitude 1, Progressive

This spell causes a point chosen by you to radiate magical darkness in a potentially huge area. Not even creatures who can normally see in the dark (such as with Dark Sight) can see in an area shrouded in magical darkness. Normal lights (torches, candles,



lanterns, and so forth) do not work. Each additional point of Magnitude increases the radius of the magical darkness by another three metres.

CONSECRATE

Area 30, Casting Time 1, Magnitude 12, Prerequisite *Protective Circle*

This spell allows you to create a new sacred site or temple. Commonly, such sites contain a number of weirdstones either in an open-air arrangement or occasionally incorporated into a temple building, but it is also possible to *Consecrate* a simple grove of trees or other natural spot. The caster chooses a particular deity for the site to be sacred to when he casts the spell; once this is done, the site cannot be consecrated to another deity except if the *Consecrate* spell's duration lapses and certain special rituals of purification are performed (see below). A *Consecrated* sacred site has certain special effects, most notably the draining of EP from any who do not worship the appropriate deity. A site that has been used and *Consecrated* for a long period of time will also provide other benefits, as determined by the Games Master in accordance with the guidelines in the Campaigns in Tir Nan Og chapter.

The duration of a *Consecrate* spell is variable, with successive castings tending to make it easier for later castings to have a longer duration. Thus, in the first months of a new temple being created, it will need to be *Consecrated* daily (although not necessarily by the same priest each time), but over time it will build up a sufficient sacred 'charge' that it will remain *Consecrated* far longer each time. The table below indicates the duration of *Consecrate* spells.

Period of time site has already been continuously <i>Consecrated</i>	Duration of spell
Three months or less	1 day
Three months to six months	2 days
Six months to one year	3 days
One to ten years	1 week
Ten to 100 years	2 weeks
100 to 1000 years	1 month
1000 years or more	1 year

If a site is not kept continuously *Consecrated*, it will begin to lose its sacredness. For sites less than one year old, this happens as it stops being *Consecrated*

regularly. For older sites, they will always retain a certain degree of magical power and can be re-*Consecrated* simply by casting the spell again, even if it is many years since they were last *Consecrated*.

It is possible for a newer religion to take over the site of an older one. The incumbents must first wait till the previous *Consecrate* spell wears off (possibly physically preventing the priests of the previous religion from recasting the spell). In a site which was less than a year old, the new religion can then simply *Consecrate* the site themselves and follow the usual rules for establishing a site, since in effect the old site is no longer sacred anyway. For sites in use for more than a year, they will need to be purified by the sacrifice of at least 10 EP per year they were in use, before they can be re-*Consecrated* to the new deity. This will require a huge amount of EP for some of the older temples, but may be worth it as once the temple is *Consecrated* again it will retain much of its former power.

CONTROL FLAMES

Casting Time 1, Duration special, Line of Sight, Magnitude 1, Progressive, Resist (Dodge)

Control Flames allows the sorcerer to take control of any one source of flame within range, either dousing it down or causing it to burn far more fiercely. The range of this spell is special – so long as the caster has line of sight to either the flames, or the smoke they produce, he can affect a particular fire with the spell. The EP cost of the spell is variable depending on the size of the fire to be controlled, and is paid each round you continue to keep the spell active. The table below indicates the EP cost of various sizes of fire.

Size of Fire	Example	Damage	EP cost/round
Flame	Candle	1	1
Large Flame	Flaming Brand	1D4	3
Small Fire	Cooking Fire	1D6	5
Large Fire	Large Bonfire	2D6	7
Inferno	Lava	3D6	9

Control Flames can be used to put out a flame completely – this will require three rounds of dousing, with the flames being reduced by around 1/3 each round. In the case of something like a volcano, all that will be done by dousing it is to stop a particular eruption, and to ensure that it cannot erupt again for at least a week – it is still a volcano.



The other use of *Control Flames* is to cause it to burn more fiercely, and under the sorcerer's control – he can double its size in every dimension, and force it to bulge out in a particular direction. For example, he could cause a torch flame to lick down and burn the torch-carrying character's hand and arm. The damage listed in the damage column represents the damage that will be caused to every creature within the newly expanded area of the flame, to every location affected. A Dodge test is allowed for half damage. A character who succeeds at his Dodge test must spend his next actions getting away from the flames, if the caster continues to keep the spell in effect – this could mean simply dropping a held torch, or might require the victim to run at full speed away from an expanded forest fire. So long as the victim continues to spend all his actions getting away from the flames, he need not make a further Dodge test and will continue to suffer only half damage even if he is unable to move far enough away to escape the flames completely during following rounds.

If the caster's Skill test is a fumble the spell still affects the chosen flame but under the control of the Games Master, usually to the detriment of the caster – for example, the flames may move towards him rather than towards his enemies, or he may douse a fire he intended to boost.

CONTROL WATER

Casting Time 1, Duration 60, Line of Sight, Magnitude 1, Progressive

Depending on the version the character chose, the control water spell raises or lowers water. The caster chooses how many EP to expend, and then all dimensions of the spell are determined by the EP spent; for example, spending 5 EP would allow you to affect an area 15 metres by 15 metres by 3 metres

Lower Water: This causes water (or similar liquid) to sink away to a minimum depth of 1 cm. The depth can be lowered by up to 2 metres per point of EP expended. The water is lowered within a squarish depression whose sides are up to 3 metres long per EP expended. In extremely large and deep bodies of water, such as deep ocean, the spell creates a whirlpool that sweeps ships and similar craft downward, putting them at risk and rendering them unable to leave by normal movement for the duration of the spell.

Raise Water: This causes water (or similar liquid) to rise in height, just as the lower water version causes it to lower. Boats raised in this way slide down the sides of the hump that the spell creates. If the area affected by the spell includes riverbanks, a beach, or other land near the raised water, the water can spill over onto dry land.

For either version, the character may reduce one horizontal dimension by half and double the other horizontal dimension.

CONTROL WIND

Area 1km, Casting Time 3, Duration 10, Magnitude 6, Resist (Resilience), Prerequisite *Gust of Wind*, Progressive

The character alters wind force in the area surrounding the character. The character can make the wind blow in a certain direction or manner, increase its strength or decrease its strength. The new wind direction and strength persist until the spell ends or the character chooses to alter his or her handiwork, which requires concentration. The character may create an 'eye' of calm air up to 25 metres in diameter at the centre of the area if he so desires, and he may choose to limit the effect to any circular area less than the character's full range.

Wind Direction: The character may choose one of four basic wind patterns to function over the spell's area:

- † A downdraft blows from the centre outward in equal strength in all directions.
- † An updraft blows from the outer edges in toward the centre in equal strength from all directions, veering upward before impinging on the eye in the centre.
- † A rotation causes the winds to circle the centre in a clockwise or anticlockwise fashion.
- † A blast simply causes the winds to blow in one direction across the entire area from one side to the other.

Wind Force: For every three extra EP used to cast the spell, the character can increase or decrease wind force by one level of strength. Each round, a creature in the



wind must make a Resilience test or suffer the effect. Strong winds make sailing difficult. A severe wind causes minor ship and building damage. A windstorm drives most flying creatures from the skies, uproots small trees, knocks down light wooden structures, tears off roofs, and endangers ships. Hurricane force winds destroy wooden buildings, sometimes uproot even large trees, and cause most ships to founder. A tornado destroys all non-fortified buildings and often uproots large trees. For more information on the effect of high winds see page 184.

CONTROL WEATHER

Area 2km, Casting Time 10 minutes, Duration 6 hours, Magnitude 15, Prerequisites *Control Water, Control Wind*

The sorcerer changes the weather in the local area. It takes 10 minutes to cast the spell and an additional 10 minutes for the effects to manifest. The current, natural weather conditions are determined by the Games Master. The sorcerer can call forth weather appropriate to the climate and season of the area the sorcerer is in.

Season	Possible Weather
Spring	Tornado, thunderstorm, sleet storm, or hot weather
Summer	Torrential rain, heat wave, or hailstorm
Autumn	Hot or cold weather, fog, or sleet
Winter	Frigid cold, blizzard, or thaw

The sorcerer controls the general tendencies of the weather, such as the direction and intensity of the wind. The sorcerer cannot control specific applications of the weather—where lightning strikes, for example, or

the exact path of a tornado. When the sorcerer selects a certain weather condition to occur, the weather assumes that condition 10 minutes later (changing gradually, not abruptly). The weather continues as the sorcerer left it for the duration, or until the sorcerer uses a Combat Action to designate a new kind of weather (which fully manifests itself 10 minutes later). Contradictory conditions are not possible simultaneously—fog and strong wind, for example. Control weather can do away with atmospheric phenomena (naturally occurring or otherwise) as well as create them.

CREATE HALF-DEAD

Casting Time 3, Duration 30, Magnitude 6, Progressive, Resist (Persistence)

A worshipper of Carnun uses this spell to summon one or more half-dead warriors (see page 206) from the nearby Sourland to fight for the caster or otherwise obey his instructions. They arrive in 1D6 rounds alongside the caster crawling out from the very earth of the Sourland, and will fight to the death if necessary, burrowing back underground at the spell's conclusion or crumbling to dust if slain. Each half-dead gains a Persistence test to resist the spell and remain in the Otherworld.

For every addition two EP points spent during the casting of the spell beyond the initial six used an extra half-dead warrior will be summoned (subject to their Persistence tests).

CROM CRUACH'S REVENGE

Area 15, Casting Time 30, Corn Dolly, Duration see below, Evil Eye, Magnitude 12, Progressive



A worshipper of Crom Cruach uses this spell to summon a huge number of writhing worms and maggots, causing them to virtually erupt out of the ground and devour the victim. The long casting time of the spell represents the time it takes to assemble the worms beneath the victim. If the victim moves more than a total of 15 metres during the casting time, the spell fails automatically, as the worms are simply not able to keep up. For this reason the spell is commonly used to assassinate sleeping or otherwise immobile creatures. The worms summoned are essentially non-sentient, and can only really be given one order – ‘devour that creature.’

As the worms simply swarm out of the ground and attack at once, the victim will be surprised unless he makes a Perception test with a -40% penalty to hear the faint burrowing and movement beneath the earth. The worms completely cover the target creature as their first action, beginning to eat it alive. The victim is unable to cast any spells once the worms attack.

Regardless of the victim’s armour protection, he sustains a 1D6 points of damage to 1D4 random locations each round the spell is in effect, due to their bites. This damage is halved with a successful Resilience test, made each combat round, as the target is able to brush off the creatures before any serious damage is caused.

Heavy smoke drives off worms within its bounds. Fire also drives worms away. A single torch is ineffective against this vast horde of worms, although immersing the victim in a bonfire would work (at the cost of some flame damage to the victim). Lightning, cold, winds and ice are ineffective, as are melee or thrown weapon attacks.

The spell lasts one combat round, for every 12 extra EP used when casting the spell the duration will be increased by another round.

Crumble Walls

Area 3, Casting Time 10, Instant, Line of Sight, Magnitude 4, Progressive

This powerful chant was discovered by the ancient titans. A song from the Earth Goddess, it was originally intended to show mortals the folly of trying to bind her lands with walls and castles.

Performing this chant causes walls to tremble and crack, becoming structurally unsound. When directed at a man-made structure (such as a wall), a ten cubic metre section of the wall will collapse, creating a breach. For every extra 2 EP points spent an additional ten cubic metres will be affected.

Cure Injury

Casting Time 3, Instant, Magnitude 1, Progressive, Touch

You may pour your Earth Power into healing a wound. You may cure up to ten hit points of damage to a single hit location, each point of damage cured requires the expenditure of one EP point. If necessary, and if you have enough Earth Power available, you may repeat the spell in subsequent rounds to completely cure the subject.

Danu Chant

Casting Time 1, Duration special, Magnitude 3, Progressive, Touch

A member of an Earth Goddess tribe can call upon Danu as goddess of moon, sea & earth to guide and empower their blows, gaining significant bonuses to the damage inflicted when fighting a particularly demonic opponent. If facing an El or Cyth creature, by using this chant continuously as he attacks his foe he gains a +10% bonus to attack rolls and +2 to damage against the creature every round in which he succeeds with his Danu Chant check. A critical success doubles the benefits for that round (to a +20% bonus to attack rolls and +4 to damage). If injured during the chant, a Persistence test must be made or the chant ends.

The weapons of a warrior under the effect of this spell count as being enchanted for the purposes of determining what creatures may be successfully damaged.

Deluge

Casting Time 1 hour, Concentration, Duration special, Line of Sight, Magnitude 8, Prerequisite *Control Water*, Progressive

A worshipper of Crom Cruah, Ceridwen or Dagon can use this spell to call up huge waves to drown the land, devastating coastal settlements and sweeping their inhabitants into the sea. In essence the effects are up



to the Games Master – it is not really intended to be used against specific characters, but rather as a hard-hitting attack against an entire tribe. Certainly those in the area of effect will need to make all manner of Dodge, Persistence and Resilience tests – and quick, correct decisions – if they are to survive, but generally it is best to use this spell as the basis for a scenario, rather than as a tactical attack spell.

Deluge can be used either on a coast within line of sight, or by painting a picture of the area to be affected and using that picture to provide a link much like a corn dolly.

The waves created flood up to a kilometre of coastline, for every eight extra EP used in casting this spell another kilometre of coast can be affected.

Divination by Entrails

Casting Time 10, Concentration, Duration 60, Magnitude 15, Touch

By ritually sacrificing an important victim, the sorcerer can contact his deity—or agents thereof—and ask questions that can be answered by a simple yes or no. The sorcerer is allowed one such question per Enech point (see page 11) his victim had, and is answered by the death-spasms and blood-splurtings of his victim. The answers given are correct within the limits of the entity's knowledge. 'Unclear' is a legitimate answer, because even deities are not necessarily omniscient. In cases where a one-word answer would be misleading or contrary to the deity's interests, the Games Master should give a short phrase (five words or less) as an answer instead. The spell, at best, provides information to aid character decisions. The entities contacted structure their answers to further their own purposes. If the sorcerer does not focus on the conversation, discusses the answers at length with other parties, or leaves to undertake another task, the spell ends.

Divining

Casting Time 1, Duration 10, Magnitude 2, Tribal (Firm Domain)

The character senses the direction of a well-known or clearly visualized object. The spell locates such objects as apparel, jewellery, furniture, tools, weapons, and even a ladder. The character can search for general items such as a stairway, a sword, or a jewel, in which

case the character locates the nearest one of its type. Attempting to find a specific item, such as a particular piece of jewellery, requires a specific and accurate mental image; if the image is not close enough to the actual object, the spell fails. The character cannot specify a unique object (such as 'King Osdann's gold torc') unless the character has observed that particular item first hand (not through divination). The spell is blocked by lead. Creatures cannot be found by this spell. The spell's range is effectively planet-wide, but it always finds the nearest object of the type specified.

Epona's Blessing

Casting Time 1, Duration 10, Magnitude 1, Progressive, Touch, Tribal (Sessair)

A worshipper of Epona can use this spell to improve the movement rate of a horse of their choice by three metres per Combat Action for every two Earth Power points they spend.

Eyes of the Hare

Casting Time 3, Concentration, Duration 10, Magnitude 4, Touch, Tribal (Falians)

Hares are traditionally capable of seeing through any glamours, for they are born with their eyes open and never close them again until death. This spell confers on the subject the ability to see all things as they actually are. The subject sees through normal and magical darkness, notices secret doors hidden by magic, sees the exact locations of creatures or objects under blur or displacement effects, sees invisible creatures or objects normally, sees through Glamours, and sees the true form of shape-changed or magically altered things. Further, the subject can focus his vision to see into the Otherworld. The range of *Eyes of the Hare* conferred is 40 metres. *Eyes of the Hare*, however, does not penetrate solid objects. It in no way confers the ability to see through solid objects. It does not cancel concealment, including that caused by fog and the like. *Eyes of the Hare* does not help the viewer see through mundane disguises, spot creatures who are simply hiding, or notice secret doors hidden by mundane means. In addition, the spell effects cannot be further enhanced with known magic, so one cannot use *Eyes of the Hare* in conjunction with *Scrying Flames* or similar. Additionally, this spell allows the subject to see auras, noting the Enech score of creatures at a glance.



Flea Infestation

Casting Time 3, Duration 10, Line of Sight, Magnitude 1, Resist (Persistence)

The target of this spell begins itching uncontrollably. The target receives a -5% to all Skill tests whilst suffering from the effects of this spell. Note that the spell does not actually cause fleas to infest the target, just makes the target feel as though fleas are infesting them.

Flying

Casting Time 30, Concentration, Duration 60, Magnitude 7, Prerequisite *Levitate*, Touch

The sorcerer is able to travel through time and space, floating gently on magical mists in a spirit-boat conjured up by the spell. This spell may only be cast outdoors. The sorcerer (plus one other creature if desired) floats at up to one kilometre per second, allowing enormous distances to be covered very rapidly by this spell. Travelling over Tir Nan Og is relatively easy, although the sorcerer may not float at high speeds in any enclosed space such as a building or cave – he must touch down to earth once more. He can land in this way without cancelling the spell, and rise up again at will so long as he walks outdoors again beforehand. While floating, the sorcerer is in a trance state and partially in an extra-planar space, and is safe from outside interference, though he may not attack any other creatures while floating either. Upon landing, he may interact with his environment as usual. Landing takes one round, during which the sorcerer is vulnerable to attack by nearby creatures, as it takes some time for him to come out of the trance. The spell expires one hour after being cast, wherever the sorcerer is at the time – if he is floating he will be gently landed on the closest solid surface.

Fox's Flea Trick

Casting Time 1, Duration 10, Magnitude 1, Touch, Tribal (Fir Domain)

This spell forces any parasites out of the body of the creature touched. To fully activate the spell, the target must take the material component, dive into the lake, and gradually submerge himself (taking one melee round), holding the material component above the water at all times. Once he is entirely submerged, all

the parasites which infested him are forced onto the material component, which the target then abandons by swimming away. This spell automatically negates the effects of magically induced feelings of infestation such as flea infestation and invisible horrors. If any of the parasites are themselves supernatural entities of some sort, they gain Persistence tests to remain on the target when he submerges. Ordinary fleas, tapeworms and so on gain no such test.

The caster of this spell never has any chance of becoming infested in the process of touching the target creature.

Greater Ill Luck

Casting Time 1, Corn Dolly, Duration 10, Evil Eye, Magnitude 6, Prerequisites *Ill Luck*, *Lesser Ill Luck*, Resist (Persistence)

The character places a curse on the victim. The victim suffers a -20% penalty on all attack rolls and Skill tests. This is not cumulative with the effects of *Ill Luck* or *Lesser Ill Luck* – only the most severe penalty applies.

Gust of Wind

Casting Time 1, Instant, Line of Sight, Magnitude 2, Resist (Resilience)

This spell creates a strong blast of air that originates from the character and moves in the direction the character is facing. The force of this gust automatically extinguishes candles, torches, and similar unprotected flames. It causes protected flames, such as those of lanterns, to dance wildly and has a 50% chance to extinguish these lights. Creatures caught in the area may be affected and may be entitled a Resilience test to avoid the spell effects.

A gust of wind can do anything a sudden blast of wind would be expected to do. It can create a stinging spray of sand or dust, fan a large fire, overturn delicate awnings or hangings, turn over a small boat and blow gases or vapours to the edge of the spell's range.

Heartstop

Casting Time 1, Evil Eye, Instant, Line of Sight, Magnitude 12, Prerequisite *Blood Poison*, Resist (Resilience)



The target must succeed at a Resilience test or suffer a heart attack. A success avoids all damage, but if failed 2D6 damage is inflicted upon the target's chest location, ignoring all armour.

III LUCK

Casting Time 1, Duration 10, Evil Eye, Line of Sight, Magnitude 4, Prerequisites *Lesser III Luck*, Resist (Persistence)

The character places a curse on the victim. The victim suffers a -10% penalty on all attack rolls and Skill tests. This is not cumulative with the effects of *Greater III Luck* or *Lesser III Luck* – only the most severe penalty applies.

IMPRISONMENT CIRCLE

Area 5, Casting Time 1, Duration see below, Line of Sight, Magnitude 5, Prerequisite *Protective Circle*, Progressive, Resist (Persistence)

This is an adaptation of the *Protective Circle* spell to form a highly effective prison around the target. Like *Protective Circle*, the spell is effectively a circular wall in shape, extending 5 metres both up and down from the ground. For this reason it is not particularly effective at confining flying or burrowing creatures. The victim is unable to pass through the barrier, and is also completely unable to cast any spells through the barrier (though he could, for example, cast the *Levitate* spell and simply fly over the barrier). The victim may make a Persistence test when the spell is first cast and, if successful, he may leave the circle at will (although while in it, he is still unable to cast spells through it). The victim gets another Persistence test every day, always opposed to the original Skill test of the caster.

The spell lasts until the next sunrise, with every five extra EP points used when casting the spell adding another day to the spell's duration.

INVISIBLE HORRORS

Casting Time 1, Duration See below, Evil Eye, Line of Sight, Magnitude 4, Prerequisite *Flea Infestation*, Resist (Persistence)

One of the first curses most witches learn is the power to bend their victim's mind, making him believe he is being bitten and stung all over by a swarm of voracious insects. Your victim must make a Persistence test or fall to the floor, unable to do anything but writhe, scream,

and claw at himself. He may make another attempt to save every hour. If he ever succeeds at a Persistence test, your spell ends. You may choose to end it at any time, and do not need to concentrate to maintain it.

LESSER III LUCK

Casting Time 1, Duration 10, Evil Eye, Line of Sight, Magnitude 2, Resist (Persistence)

The character places a curse on the victim. The victim suffers a -5% penalty on all attack rolls and Skill tests. This is not cumulative with the effects of *III Luck* or *Greater III Luck* – only the most severe penalty applies.

LEVITATE

Casting Time 3, Duration 10, Magnitude 4, Progressive, Touch

The sorcerer can fly with a speed of 8 metres per Combat Action. The subject can fly up at half speed and descend at double speed and can not be Overloaded. Using the levitate spell requires as much concentration as walking, so the sorcerer can attack or cast spells normally. Should the spell duration expire while the sorcerer is still aloft, the magic fails slowly. The sorcerer drops 20 metres per round for 1D6 rounds. If he reaches the ground in that amount of time, he lands safely, if not, he falls the rest of the distance. Since dispelling a spell effectively ends it, the sorcerer also falls in this way if the levitate spell is dispelled.

For every additional EP point spent by the caster the duration is increased by another ten minutes.

LIGATURE

Casting Time 1, Duration See below, Line of Sight, Magnitude 3, Progressive, Resist (Persistence)

This spell magically binds the target's manhood, making at least one everyday task unbelievably painful, and pleasure unthinkable. He suffers a -20% penalty to any Influence tests he needs to make and 1D4 damage to his abdomen due to the pain and extreme discomfort. This damage may not be healed until the spell's duration ends.

This spell's duration is initially until the next sunrise but for every three extra EP points used when casting the spell will last for an additional day.



Lightning

Casting Time 1, Instant, Line of Sight, Magnitude 2, Prerequisite *Control Weather*, Progressive, Resist (Dodge)

The character releases a powerful stroke of electrical energy that deals 1D6 points of damage to a random location to one creature within the caster's line of sight. For every extra two points of EP expended another 1D6 damage will be caused to a random location (which can be the same location as that already struck). The maximum amount of damage that can be inflicted is 4D6 in total. The bolt flashes down from the sky, even on an apparently clear day, although if it is cast during a thunderstorm (magically created or otherwise) the EP cost to cast it is halved. The lightning bolt will set fire to combustibles and damage objects held or carried by the victim. It can melt metals with a low melting point, such as lead, gold, copper, silver or bronze.

Muscle to Blood

Casting Time 1, Duration 10 minutes, Instant, Line of Sight, Magnitude 1, Progressive, Resist (Resilience)

If the target fails his Resilience test then for every point of Magnitude of this spell, the target's STR score is reduced by -2. This may have an additional effect on the target's skills and Attributes, such as the target's damage modifier. A target can not have its STR reduced in this way to less than half its original STR score.

Nature's Voice

Area 100, Casting Time 1, Duration 1 minute, Line of Sight, Magnitude 6, Resist (see below), Touch

This spell amplifies the sorcerer's voice so it echoes around the entire area of the spell. The voice sounds like a vast natural phenomenon appropriate to the area and conditions, such as thunder during a storm, or the wind whistling through a forest, or rocks falling down a mountainside. The sorcerer must specify the desired sound and, if in the Games Master's opinion conditions are not appropriate for such a sound, the area of affect is halved and characters in the area gain a +10% bonus on their Resilience tests.

Each round the sorcerer talks (or sings, shouts, chants or similar), all creatures within the affected area (including the sorcerer, if within the area) must make Resilience test or be deafened (cannot hear,



suffers a -20% penalty to all spell casting tests and will automatically fail any perception tests that require the character to be able to hear) for the duration of the spell and for 1D6 minutes thereafter. In addition, if the sorcerer continues to talk (and so on) for the entire duration of the spell, all creatures within the area must make Persistence tests or be shaken (-10% penalty on all skill tests) for 2D4 Combat Rounds after the spell ends.

Deafify

Casting Time 3, Duration 5, Line of Sight, Magnitude 2, Resist (Persistence)

The target of this spell must make a Persistence test or drop all weapons and sit down, unwilling to participate in further combat. The target is also generally cooperative, although he will be unwilling to injure or help injure anyone or anything.

Example: The target will give away the location of fellow warriors (so that the caster may avoid them) but he will not give information as to specific weakness to aid the caster in defeating them.



Poetic Insult

Area 10, Casting Time 3, Duration 5, Magnitude 2, Resist (Persistence)

You can create a supernaturally powerful poem that improves your use of the Taunt skill; you may compose a poetical taunt which affects all opponents within 10 metres (if desired, you can choose some opponents to be unaffected).

Poetic Naming

Casting Time 1, Magnitude 2, Permanent, Touch

When you name a weapon, you may create a poem in honour of the weapon, explaining its name. As well as the usual +5% to attack rolls for a named weapon, the weapon now also gains a +1 to damage and is treated as an enchanted weapon. All the usual restrictions of naming a weapon apply (see page 24). You gain a +5% bonus to successfully cast this spell for each opponent you have killed with the weapon, in single combat, by the time you cast the spell. Like the bonus to attack rolls from naming a weapon, the +1 damage bonus stacks with any other magical bonuses. For any one weapon, you may only make one attempt to name it – if you fail your perform check, you still gain the attack roll bonus as usual for a named weapon, but you do not gain the damage bonus for poetic naming and may not make another attempt to do so with the same weapon.

Preserve Head

Casting Time 30 minutes, Duration See Below, Magnitude 2, Touch, Tribal (Sessair)

All the Earth Goddess tribes and several others love to preserve the heads of their enemies for various purposes, but the Sessair have turned it into an art form – one that has since been copied by everyone from the other tribes to the fomorians and skull-swords alike. One casting of the spell will preserve one head that the caster has personally slain in single combat for anywhere between a few months and permanently, depending on the use to which it is put.

The caster can put the preserved head to one of several different uses, chosen when the spell is cast from the following options:

Skull Cup: A head preserved for a skull cup must be crafted into cup form by at least two Craft skill tests: Craft (bone) for the skull itself, and another Craft test for the stem and fittings of the cup, usually Craft (silver). Owning one skull cup made from the skull of a foe of 10 to 25 Enech is good for a +1 to Enech (+2 to Enech if the foe had over 25 Enech), in addition to the usual Enech bonus for keeping the head (see page 13). Further skull cups provide no additional bonus.

Oracle: A head retained in the owner's home or other place of power can be preserved to act as an oracle. At least, sorcerers who retain preserved heads in this manner call them oracles; it is perhaps too strong a term. A portion of the deceased's spirit is trapped in the preserved head, but it is only really an echo of the original, with a somewhat garbled and incomplete memory and personality which tends to deteriorate further over the years (although the head will remain physically preserved indefinitely) until there is nothing left but gibbering madness. The partial spirit in the head is not compelled to answer questions truthfully or even answer them at all, and typically will bear a certain amount of ill will towards its slayer. Sometimes this ill will becomes alleviated by the passage of time, but of course by the time the spirit becomes at all well disposed towards the sorcerer it may be half-mad and very forgetful anyway. Thus, getting any useful information out of it can be an excruciating process, suitable only for the very patient. Warriors tend to preserve heads as oracles more out of some sort of twisted entertainment value than because they might actually give out useful advice of any kind. A few heads, particularly those whose original owners were powerful sorcerers in life themselves, might retain minor divinatory magical powers at the Games Master's discretion.

Battle Trophy: Depending on personal preference, a variety of battle trophies can be created. The Earth Goddess tribes usually dangle their preserved heads from their belts, or mount them on spikes on their chariots, but the fomorians typically have spikes attached to their armour for preserved heads. In any case, the effect is identical. The head of an enemy of 10 to 25 Enech causes a 5% penalty to any intelligent foe's attacks due to the intimidatory nature of this adornment, whilst the head of an enemy of over 25 Enech causes a -10% penalty. If more than one



preserved head is worn in this way, the bonuses are cumulative, up to a maximum of three preserved heads. Heads worn in this way tend not to last so well as oracles or house guardians, since they are regularly carried into battle and other hazardous environments, and so they only last for 4D6 months before decaying sufficiently that they no longer provide any bonus.

Protective Circle

Area 5, Casting Time 3, Concentration, Duration See Below, Magnitude 3, Touch

This spell wards an area from curses and from summoned creatures. The sorcerer creates a magical barrier in a circular shape up to 5 metres in radius by drawing a magical circle on the ground with a staff or similar object. Once drawn, the barrier may not be moved. The barrier extends 5 metres straight up and 5 metres straight down, around the perimeter of the circle, so it is effectively a circular wall offering no protection from anything directly above or directly below the circle. The barrier has two major effects:

First, it blocks all spells of the curse type from penetrating from outside the circle to the inside. It is still possible for those within the circle to cast curses at those outside.

Secondly, the spell prevents the entry of summoned creatures into the circle (whether natural creatures such as those summoned by *Army of the Horned Lord*, or creatures from the EI worlds or similar outsiders). A successful Persistence test can allow a creature to overcome this protection and enter the circle. Note that

due to the shape of the barrier, a summoned creature that can fly over the barrier or burrow beneath it can enter the protected space.

The spell lasts for up to an hour, and can be extended by expending another 3 EP points for every additional hour the spell is required to last.

Rockfall

Area One mountain or cave, Casting Time 3, Duration 1, Line of Sight, Magnitude 12, Prerequisite *Shape Earth*, Progressive, Resist (Dodge)

Rockfall allows the sorcerer to topple a large number of boulders, or a large quantity of scree or other loose rocky material. He does not control the direction of the material toppled, but anyone on the mountain (or in the cave) affected will suffer 2D6 damage to one random Hit Location per Combat Round. They may make a Dodge test each Combat Round to avoid injury. If they are able to get under shelter of some sort, such as an overhang, the Games Master may give up to a +20% bonus to the Dodge test.

For every 6 EP points that are spent when casting the spell the duration will increase by 1.

Rise Prayers

Casting Time 30 minutes, Duration See Below, Magnitude 8, Resist (Persistence), Touch

Rise Prayers are simple rituals that unlock the power of a ship's weirdstone to cause it to rise into the air.



Most captains will ensure they have at least three or four crew who know Rise Prayers, usually including several Drones or witches. The initial take-off costs 8 EP in total, which may come either from the weirdstone or one or more of the characters chanting the rise prayers.

Once the sky chariot is airborne, it costs 6 EP per hour to keep it airborne. This will be drained from the weirdstone directly until it is reduced to zero, at which point the sky chariot will simply drop like a stone. This can be averted by either regularly topping the stone up with EP in the form of sacrifices. Alternatively one or more characters who know Rise Prayers may chant said prayers for the entire hour and spend the 6 EP between themselves, in which case the stone is not drained that hour.

This heavy EP drain is usually topped up by the drunes on board, who tap EP broadcast by the dolmens on the ground. For regions beyond the range of dolmens or for occasions when the broadcast EP is somehow blocked, sky chariots tend to carry a large number of sacrificial creatures on board. Despite this they crash into the ground alarmingly often.

Rowan Warp

Casting Time 1, Duration See Below, Magnitude 10, Prerequisite *Shoggey Curse*, Resist (Persistence), Touch

By crafting a weapon from rowan-wood and striking the target with it, the sorcerer can prevent the target from recovering from his warp-spasm. The target gets a Persistence test to avoid the effects.

In addition, the target loses the memory of who, or what, he once was – he has no desire to recover from the warp-spasm, but would prefer to simply wander the land, much as his ancestral beast lords did. Despite this, he may attempt a new Persistence test every week, with a success indicating that he throws off the effects of the *Rowan Warp*.

The rowan-wood weapon must be used to strike the target. If the weapon used is a piercing weapon, it may be assumed that a fragment has stuck in the victim, causing a magical link between the sorcerer and target much like a corn dolly. This will allow the sorcerer to cast further spells on the target if desired.

Scrying Flames

Area 5, Casting Time 1 hour, Concentration, Duration See Below, Line of Sight, Magnitude 3, Progressive

The character can see and hear a creature, who may be at any distance. The character must succeed at a Skill test to do so. The difficulty of the task depends on how well the character knows the subject and what sort of magical link (if any) the character has to that creature. Furthermore, if the subject is on another plane, the character gets a -25% penalty on the Skill test.

Knowledge	Skill test Bonus/Penalty
None*	-20%
Secondhand (the character has heard of the subject)	-10%
Firsthand (the character has met the subject)	+0%
Familiar (the character know the subject well)	+10%

*The character must have some sort of connection to a creature the character has no knowledge of.

Magical Link	Skill test Bonus
Likeness or picture	+5%
Possession or garment	+10%
Body part, lock of hair, nail clippings, and so on.	+20%

This spell creates a magical sensor located near the subject. Any creature with an Intelligence of 12 or higher can notice the sensor by making a Perception test at a -20% penalty.

The following other spells may be cast through the sensor: *Ally of the Horned Lord*, *Army of the Horned Lord*, *A Murder of Crows*, *Control Flames*, *Control Wind*, *Crom Cruach's Revenge*; in this case, the sensor acts as a conduit for the magical link, either working as a Line of Sight range or conducting the Evil Eye attack.

The spell lasts for one hour, for every three extra EP used in casting the spell the duration of the spell is increased by an hour.



Shape Earth

Area 3, Casting Time 3, Instant, Line of Sight, Magnitude 6, Resist (Dodge)

The sorcerer must designate a three metre square area they wish to imbue with one of the following three effects.

Collapse: causes a three metre by three metre square area of ceiling to collapse. Creatures caught in the falling debris take 2D6 hit points of damage to a single hit location (A successful Dodge test will reduce this damage by half).

Dead end: blocks an existing passage with a half metre thick wall of stony earth.

Open pit: causes a three metre by three metre square area in the floor to suddenly open up. Creatures falling into the pit take falling damage (see *RuneQuest* page 89).

The effect is stored in the designated area until the coblynau desires to trigger it. The effect can be triggered by any of the creatures that created it. A coblynau group can only designate one area at a time.

Shape-Sifter

Casting Time 3, Duration one day, Magnitude 10, Prerequisites *True Shape*, *Wear Skin*, Touch

As *True Shape*, except that the sorcerer can change form as often as desired for the duration of the spell simply by willing it so. Each change requires an entire Combat Round to perform. The sorcerer regains hit points as if having rested for a day only from the initial transformation, however.

Shoggey Curse

Casting Time 3, Magnitude 10, Permanent, Evil Eye, Resist (Persistence)

This spell causes the target to become a shoggey beast. The target is not under the caster's control in any way, so this can be a very dangerous spell to use. Typically though, a new shoggey will attack the nearest creatures to him so you may be safe as long as the target has friends or allies with him. Also, of course, shoggey beasts only enter their shoggey form at night, so casting *Shoggey Curse* during daylight hours is also safe.

The target makes a Persistence test to resist the curse. Failure means he will be a shoggey beast for the rest of his life, unless he is somehow freed of the effects (by a *Sign of Cleansing*, for example).

Sign of Best in the Fight

Casting Time 1, Duration 10, Magnitude 3, Progressive, Touch, Tribal (Sessair)

The Ogham letter Tinne represents the holly tree, long renowned as a fierce combatant for its tenacity in cold weather and its spiky defences. The creature touched gains a +10 bonus to the next opposed test of any sort that he makes. Once the roll has been made, the spell ends. For every extra EP spent upon casting the spell this bonus is increased by 5%

Sign of Cleansing

Casting Time 1, Instant, Line of Sight, Magnitude 3, Prerequisite *Sign of Light*

The Ogham letter known as Beth stands for the birch and represents the driving out of evil influences. By making the sign over a character afflicted with a curse spell (of any sort), the sorcerer matches his magical power against that of the sorcerer who originally cast the curse. The caster of the *Sign of Cleansing* must make an opposed test, pitting his skill against that of the sorcerer who initially cast the curse to be lifted. If not, the curse remains in place, and the sorcerer who cast the *Sign of Cleansing* spell may not attempt to use it on the same curse until the following day. Of course,



this spell has no affect on curses with a duration of Instantaneous, since such spells will be over before the *Sign of Cleansing* can be made.

Sign of Inner Strength

Casting Time 1, Duration 10, Line of Sight, Magnitude 1, Progressive

The Sign of Inner Strength is the Ogham letter called Luis, meaning the rowan berry, a powerful protection against enchantments and glamours of all kinds. By making this sign the sorcerer wards off the Evil Eye, and other methods of casting malevolent magic. Throughout its duration of the spell the target is protected from all malevolent spells cast at him that use less EP points than the Sign of Inner Strength spell. If targeted by a spell of an equal Magnitude both spells are cancelled.

Sign of Light

Casting Time 1, Instant, Line of Sight, Magnitude 2, Resist (Persistence)

By holding up the first three fingers on his hand, a worshipper of Lug may banish demons and similar



creatures. The *Sign of Light*, representing the Ogham letter Ur and the heather plant, opens a direct gateway to the realm of Lug the Sun God, forcing back any creature that does not belong in Tir Nan Og. He attempts to force a single outsider (any creature that does not originate on Earth, including El beings, Cythrons, gods and the like) back to its place of origin. It must make a Persistence test or immediately return to its home by the quickest method available to it. He must continue to hold your hand up in the *Sign of Light* for as long as the creature can see him.

Sign of Regrowth

Casting Time 1, Instant, Magnitude 12, Prerequisite *Cure Injury*, Touch, Tribal (Fir Domain)

The Ogham letter Ruis represents the elder tree, and the power of regeneration and regrowth, for the elder will always find a way to return to life, even if severely cut down. The target is instantly healed of all wounds and diseases, and regrows any lost body parts.

Sign of the Long View

Casting Time 1, Duration 60, Magnitude 2, Touch, Tribal (Fir Domain)

The Ogham letter Ailm represents the silver fir tree, and the power of foresight and decision-making, for that tree grows tall and is typically found atop great mountains. The creature touched gains a +10% bonus to all Perception tests for the duration of the spell. This spell is typically used for sentries and scouts, since its relatively long duration allows larger groups with several spellcasters to keep at least one lookout under its influence at all times.

Sign of the Moon's Sight

Casting Time 1, Duration 5, Magnitude 1, Touch, Tribal (Falians)

The Ogham letter Saille represents the willow tree, sacred to the Moon and the night. By calling on its power, the sorcerer can grant one creature the ability to see in the dark as well as or better than most animals can. The subject gains the Night Sight trait (see *RuneQuest* page 106).

Sign of the Doorland

Area 30, Casting Time 1, Duration 10, Line of Sight, Magnitude 3, Progressive, Tribal (Finians)



The Ogham letter Ohn represents the furze, a spiny yellow-flowered plant that grows only on waste ground and moorland. This spell creates a great, furzy hillock of moorland in an instant, acting as a major barrier in the area of effect. Any creature attempting to move through the area must clamber up the hill, and thanks to the encumbering furze plants will move at only one-half speed within the area of effect. If any creatures are inside the area of effect when the spell is cast, they will find themselves atop the new moorland, which peaks at ten metres high.

For every additional EP point used when casting the spell the area of effect is increased by another 15 metres.

Sign of the Oracle

Casting Time 3, Duration 60, Magnitude 10, Touch, Tribal (Falians)

The Ogham letter Muin represents the vine, traditionally a plant of prophecy and insight, especially to one who has drunk of its liquor. This spell is a vine-blessing, which invokes the divinatory powers of the vine to empower all the wine made from it with magical properties.

Sign of the Oracle must be cast in the early summer, when the vine is in blossom. The tree the spell is cast on will bear enough magical grapes once it fruits, around three months later, to make one gallon of wine. Making it requires a successful Craft (Brewer) test with a -40% penalty and takes one month. It will be ready to drink after a further six months.

Drinking one pint of wine will provide the creature drinking it with a +10% bonus to any Dodge tests for one day.

Sign of the Raven

Casting Time 1, Duration See Below, Magnitude 1, Prerequisite *A Murder of Crows*, *Astronomy – Short Term Prediction*, Touch

The Ogham letter Fearn represents the alder, a plant sacred to ravens and to the prophecy ravens are said to bring. The caster of this spell calls upon the magical power of the raven to bless the next divination he does, gaining a +10% bonus into his next skill test when casting a divination spell. Alternatively, he may gain

a +10% bonus to cast the spell *A Murder of Crows* the next time he casts it.

When casting this spell a critical success will double any benefits of this spell, both to divination spells and to casting *A Murder of Crows*.

Sign of the River

Area 10m wide by 30m long, Casting Time 1, Duration 10, Line of Sight, Magnitude 5, Progressive, Tribal (Falians)

The Ogham letter Ngetal represents the reed, which grows in clumps along the edges of rivers. This spell alters the landscape, creating a broad, fast, deep river in an instant. This forms a major barrier throughout the area of effect. The river bursts out of the ground at one end of the area of effect, vanishing beneath the earth once more at the other end. The river is five metres deep at its deepest. Athletics tests must be made as usual to cross the river. If any creatures are inside the area of effect when the spell is cast, they may make Dodge tests to dive to one side (determined randomly) or they will be immediately immersed in the centre of the river.

For every extra five EP spent when casting the spell the length of the river is increased by another 30 metres.

Sign of the Salmon

Casting Time 1, Duration 10, Magnitude 1, Touch, Tribal (Sessair)

A worshipper of Ceridwen can use this the Ogham letter Coll, representing the hazel tree, and the Salmon of Knowledge, sacred to Ceridwen, which swims beneath it. The creature touched gains a +5% bonus to all Intelligence-based skill tests for the duration of the spell.

Sign of the Spiral

Area see below, Casting Time 1, Duration 1 day, Line of Sight, Magnitude 10, Progressive, Resist (Persistence), Tribal (Finians)

The Ogham letter Gort represents the ivy, which gains its life by spiralling around other plants. Worshipers of Carnun can use this spell to draw upon magic that was old in Alba even before the arrival of the Finians, magic of the land and the trees, to confuse wanderers



in a section of woodland. It is powerful in defence of the land, but somewhat more limited in its use outside of Alba.

All creatures within the woodland, except the animals that live there, must make Persistence tests. Even successful saves mean that the creatures within the woods are somewhat lost: they have a penalty of -60% to all Survival tests to find their way or follow tracks. Creatures who fail the Persistence test are completely unable to find their way through the woods, and will wander around in circles for the duration of the spell (or until they give up and elect to simply stay where they are, of course).

When the spell is cast within the country of Alba, it has an additional effect on those who fail their saving throws. They become lost mentally as well as physically, and are unable to consciously control their actions. Roll on the following table at the beginning of each subject's turn each round to see what the subject does in that round.

D100	Behaviour
01-20	Act normally, though they are still hopelessly lost.
21-60	Do nothing but babble incoherently.
61-90	Flee in a random direction at their maximum possible speed.
91-00	Attack nearest creature

A victim who fails their Persistence test but may not carry out the indicated action does nothing but babble incoherently. Note that attackers are not at any special advantage when attacking an affected character – if attacked, they automatically retaliate on their next turn, and will not have to roll on the above table whilst engaged in combat.

The spell covers an area of woodland up to ten acres in size. For every extra 5 EP used to power the spell the area is increased by another ten acres. When casting this spell the edge of the area of effect must be within range, though it is not necessary to see the whole of the woodland or even its centre.

Sign of the Straight Spear

Casting Time 1, Duration see below, Magnitude 6, Progressive, Touch, Tribal (Finians)

The Ogham letter Nuin represents the ash-tree, traditional material for spear-shafts – almost as hard as oak, but more flexible and resilient. Sign of the straight spear is used before a group of warriors go into combat. Each iron war-spear or gae bolga blessed with a *Sign of the Straight Spear* becomes enchanted, gaining a +20% bonus for every attack roll and doing an additional +4 damage.

All the weapons to be blessed must be named weapons and be wielded by their namers for the spell to function. For every five extra EP spent when casting the spell another spear or gae bolga becomes enchanted.

Sign of the Thicket

Area 3, Casting Time 1, Duration 10, Line of Sight, Magnitude 2, Progressive, Resist (Dodge), Tribal (Sessair)

The Ogham letter Straif represents the blackthorn, a tough, hardy tree covered in spiky thorns. This spell creates a tangled thicket of blackthorn in an instant, severely restricting movement in or through the area of effect. Any creature attempting to move within or through the area may choose either to move at one quarter speed with no other ill effects, or move at one half speed but take 1 point of damage to a random hit location per Combat Round spent moving through the area (a successful Dodge test negates this damage). If any creatures are inside the area of effect when the spell is cast, they will be trapped in the thicket unless they are able to escape by moving through it as above.

For every extra EP point expended when the spell is cast the diameter of the area of effect is increased by another three metres.

Sign of the Uassai

Casting Time 3, Duration see below, Magnitude 8, Progressive, Touch, Tribal (Fir Domain)

The Ogham letter Ceirt represents the apple tree, and this spell is an apple-blessing, a recognition of the sacred healing power of the apple. The spell must be cast in the late summer, when the apple tree is in blossom. The tree the spell is cast on will bear 4D6 + 1 per additional EP point used during casting magical apples once it fruits, around two months later. Each apple, when eaten, will heal 1 point of damage immediately and a further 1D8 points of damage one



minute later. The apples will keep for one month. Alternatively, they can be dried or brewed into a strong cider for longer use – see below.

Type	Initial Cure	Secondary Cure	ENC/dose	Use by
Fresh	1	1D8	—	1 month
Dried	1	1D6	—	3 months
Cider (1/2 pint)	1D4	1D6	1	20 years

The cider form must be brewed at least a gallon (eight pints) at a time. One gallon requires 20 apples of Ceirt to manufacture, and a successful Craft (Brewer) test with a -20% penalty or else the cider is spoiled.

Sign of Reprisal

Casting Time 1, Duration 10, Line of Sight, Magnitude 6, Progressive, Resist (Resilience)

The Ogham letter known as Huathe stands for the hawthorn or whitethorn, another tree of strong protection, except that the hawthorn protects using the age-old idea that the best form of defence is attack. The sorcerer makes the sign over a single character, causing him to take on the prickly defences of the whitethorn. Anyone who attacks the recipient of this spell during its effect suffers damage at the end of the melee round in which the attack was made, depending on the EP points used in casting the spell.

The damage is suffered irrespective of the number of attacks the attacker makes during the round, and is suffered by all who attack the recipient – so the spell may damage more than one attacker every round.

The spell inflicts 1D4 damage to a random location, with an additional 1D4 damage per additional EP point spent (up to a maximum of 5D4 damage). The location for each 1D4 worth of damage is rolled separately.

Sign of Shielding

Casting Time 1, Duration 10, Line of Sight, Magnitude 3, Progressive

The Ogham letter known as Eadha stands for the white poplar tree and represents a solid shield, the white poplar being the wood traditionally used for making shields. The sorcerer makes the sign over a single

character, shielding him with magical energy. The recipient gains a one armour point to every location, with an additional point for each extra EP point spent beyond the first three.

Sign of Warrior Strength

Casting Time 1, Duration 10, Magnitude 4, Prerequisite *Sign of Inner Strength*, Progressive, Touch

The Ogham letter called Duir represents the strength and power of the oak. It is a powerful protection, offering the same protection against enchantments and glamours as the *Sign of Inner Strength*, but with the added power of increased prowess in battle. For this reason it is sometimes known as the ‘Death Ogham’. For the duration of the spell, the sorcerer gains a bonus to his Strength of 1D4, plus another 1D4 for every additional EP point spent whilst casting the spell. The sorcerer cannot have his STR increased in this way to more than twice his original STR score.

In addition, the sorcerer gains all the benefits of the *Sign of Inner Strength* spell.

Skyclad Blessing

Casting Time 3, Duration see below, Magnitude 2, Touch

If a member of an Earth Goddess tribe goes into battle completely naked, he can gain the blessing of the Earth Goddess Danu with this enchantment.

For the duration of one battle or combat each day, so long as he is completely naked throughout, he gains a +20% bonus to all combat related Skill tests (attack, parry or dodge skills). He may wear jewellery and carry up to one weapon in each hand (or one two-handed weapon in both hands), but may not carry a shield, wear any armour or clothing (even a hero-harness), or wear any such items as scabbards, pouches, and so on.

Song of the Thrush

Casting Time 3, Duration 10, Line of Sight, Magnitude 2, Tribal (Fir Domain)

The *Song of the Thrush* enables the sorcerer to speak with one bird of any species. Generally the bird will be helpful, and will attempt to assist with information or even practical help. It is unlikely that the sorcerer will





convince a bird to help with combat, unless the target is clearly an enemy of the bird or of birds in general, but they can be ideal for spying and other forms of information-gathering.

SOUR

Casting Time 1, Corn Dolly, Duration see below, Evil Eye, Line of Sight, Magnitude 4, Prerequisite *Lesser Ill Luck*, Progressive, Resist (Persistence), Touch

Sour affects all Craft skills the victim has. Every time the victim attempts a Craft skill, he must make a new Persistence test against the caster's original spell casting roll. Failure indicates that the crafted item is horribly flawed. At the Games Master's discretion, the flaw will sometimes be obvious, but on other occasions it will not be noticeable until the object is used.

The spell's duration is for one month, for each additional month the caster wishes the spell to continue it costs another EP point, which must be expended as the spell is cast.

SPEAR OF LIGHT

Casting Time 1, Duration See below, Magnitude 7, Prerequisite *Sign of Light*, Touch

Spear of Light works much like *Sign of Light*, except that the magical power of the Sign of Light is transferred onto a named spear, javelin, gae bolga or arrow (and no other weapon) as the earthly manifestation of the Sun God's ray. Such a weapon must be used within one day, but the first outsider (any being that does not originate on Earth, such as an El or Cyth) struck by it will immediately be sent back to its place of origin and injured or killed as follows:

Creature's Earth Power

Effect of *Spear of Light*

8 or less	Killed instantly and permanently
9 to 16	Mortally injured – must rest on home plane for a century to recover
17 to 24	Severely injured – must rest on home plane for a year to recover
25 or higher	Seriously injured – must rest on home plane for a month to recover

SPECTRAL SIGHT

Casting Time 1, Duration 60, Magnitude 4, Prerequisite *Trance of the Second Sight*, Touch, Tribal (Finians)

This spell grants the sorcerer the ability to see all things as they truly are. She can see through normal and magical darkness, notice secret doors hidden by magic, see invisible creatures or objects normally, see through illusions and see the true form of shapeshifted, changed, or transmuted things. All these benefits are conferred through the sorcerer's normal range of vision, as though the area were fully lit by daylight.

Spectral sight, however, does not penetrate solid objects. It in no way allows the sorcery to see through solid objects. It does not negate concealment, including that caused by fog or anything other than darkness. Spectral sight does not help the viewer see through mundane disguises, spot creatures who are simply hiding, or notice secret doors hidden by mundane means. In addition, the spell effects cannot usually be further enhanced with known magic, so one cannot use spectral sight in conjunction with *Scrying Flames*, for example.



Summon Ghoul

Casting Time 3, Duration 30, Magnitude 5, Progressive, Resist (Persistence)

This spell summons one or more ghouls (see page 205) from the Otherworld to fight for you or otherwise obey your instructions. They arrive instantaneously and will fight to the death if necessary, vanishing at the spell's conclusion or if slain. Each ghoul gains a Persistence test to resist the spell and remain in the Otherworld.

For every additional three EP points beyond the initial four used to cast this spell an extra ghoul will be summoned (subject to their Persistence tests).

Summon Goblin

Casting Time 3, Duration 30, Magnitude 3, Progressive, Resist (Persistence)

This spell summons one or more goblin warriors (see page 206) from the Otherworld to fight for the caster or otherwise obey his instructions. They arrive instantaneously alongside the caster and will fight to the death if necessary, vanishing at the spell's conclusion or if slain. Each goblin gains a Persistence test to resist the spell and remain in the Otherworld.

For every addition EP point beyond the initial three used to cast this spell an extra goblin warrior will be summoned (subject to their Persistence tests).

Summon Goblin Horde

Casting Time 3, Duration 30, Magnitude 5, Prerequisite *Summon Goblin*, Progressive

This spells summons a horde of goblin warriors (see page 206) from the Otherworld to fight for you or otherwise obey your instructions. They arrive instantaneously and will fight to the death if necessary, vanishing at the spell's conclusion or if slain. The number of goblins appearing depends upon the Earth Power points used to cast the spell, although if there are less opponents to fight than there are goblins in the horde none will appear at all!

EP Cost	Number of goblins summoned
5	10 plus 1D4
10	20 plus 1D8
15	50 plus 1D12
20	100 plus 1D20
25	200 plus 2D20
30	500 plus 3D20
35	1000 plus 5D20

The goblins receive no Persistence test to avoid appearing, and will fight or otherwise obey the summoner's instructions as for the *Summon Goblin* spell above.

Summon Shadowy Devourer

Casting Time 3, Duration 30, Magnitude 6, Progressive, Resist (Persistence)

This spells summons one or more shadowy devourers (see page 209) from the Otherworld to fight for you or otherwise obey your instructions. They arrive instantaneously and will fight to the death if necessary, vanishing at the spell's conclusion or if slain. Each shadowy devourer gains a Persistence test to resist the spell and remain in the Otherworld.

For every addition EP point beyond the initial six used to cast this spell an shadowy devourer will be summoned (subject to their Persistence tests).

Summon Spectral Army

Casting Time 3, Duration 60, Magnitude 10, Prerequisites *Summon Goblin Horde*, *Summon Shadowy Devourer*, *Summon Spectral Dragon*, Progressive

This spell summons an army of goblin warriors, spectral dragons and shadowy devourers (see the Bestiary chapter) from the Otherworld to fight for you or otherwise obey your instructions. They arrive instantaneously and will fight to the death if necessary, vanishing at the spell's conclusion or if slain. The number of creatures appearing depends upon the spell casting skill of the caster.



Sorcerer's Skill	Number of creatures summoned
25	10 plus 1D4 goblins, 1D6 shadowy devourers
50	20 plus 1D8 goblins, 2D6 shadowy devourers
75	50 plus 1D12 goblins, 3D8 shadowy devourers
100	100 plus 1D20 goblins, 5D10 shadowy devourers
125	200 plus 2D20 goblins, 5D20 shadowy devourers, 1 spectral dragon
150	500 plus 3D20 goblins, 10D20 shadowy devourers, 2 spectral dragons
175	1000 plus 5D20 goblins, 100+10D20 shadowy devourers, 3 spectral dragons

A highly skilled caster can choose to summon fewer creatures than he would normally be allowed. . The spectral army receives no Persistence test to avoid appearing, and will fight or otherwise obey the summoner's instructions as for the *Summon Goblin* spell above. Each of the spectral dragons summoned may be ridden by either the summoner or one of the other creatures summoned by this spell, just as though it were a trained riding dragon.

Summon Spectral Dragon

Concentration, Casting Time 3, Duration 30, Magnitude 9, Resist (Persistence)

This spells summons one spectral dragon (see page 197) from the Otherworld to fight for you or otherwise obey your instructions. It arrives instantaneously alongside the caster and will fight to the death if necessary, vanishing at the spell's conclusion or if slain. You (and you alone) may ride it as if it is a trained riding dragon. The spectral dragon gains a Persistence test to resist the spell and remain in the Otherworld.

Sunbeam

Casting Time 1, Evil Eye, Instant, Magnitude 4, Resist (Dodge), Tribal (Finians)

A worshipper of Lug can use this spell to cause searing beams of sunlight to shine out from the sorcerer's eyes, dazzling and burning the target creature. The target creature is blinded and dealt 2D6 points of damage to a random hit Location. Undead, cold dwelling creatures and Fomorians all take double damage. A successful Dodge test negates the blindness and reduces the damage by half.

An undead creature targeted by the beam and who fails its Dodge test is destroyed, rather than being blinded.

Sunlight

Area 30, Casting Time 1, Duration 10, Magnitude 2, Progressive, Tribal (Finians)

A worshipper of Lug can only use this spell outdoors. Directly above the character's head, clouds part and the sun shines down, strongly illuminating the area affected by the spell. Even during the night, the power of Lug the Sun-God is capable of bringing forth sunlight within the area of the spell. This counts as bright sunlight for all purposes. Beyond the area directly affected by the spell, dim light shines for an additional 30 metres (three metres during the night). As well as the light of the sun, this spell also provides the warmth of a hot summer sun for its duration; this is quite capable of melting ice, unfreezing rivers, and even causing avalanches in snowy regions.

Creatures that take penalties in bright light also take them while within the radius of this magical light.

Casting this spell at night costs double the EP that would normally be used. For every extra EP spent



during casting the area of effect increases by another 30 metres (three metres at night for every two extra EP point spent).

Tamhasg

Casting Time 10, Duration 5, Magnitude 6, Prerequisite *Trance of the Second Sight*, Progressive, Touch, Tribal (Finians)

The *Tamhasg* is a ghostly figure which has the form of a living human. This spell allows the sorcerer to send out his spirit and consciousness into the world in the form of a spectral duplicate of himself, clothed in whatever the sorcerer himself is wearing but without any other equipment, armour or weaponry.

He makes a skill test to send the spectral form out to a place of his choosing, or to a specific person. This place or person may be anywhere or anyone known to the sorcerer. Once there, he may communicate verbally with any other creatures present for the duration of the spell if he so wishes. Furthermore, he may move around at his normal speed and also attempt to interact physically with objects or persons there. Interacting physically with objects or persons requires a concentrated effort of will on the part of the sorcerer, expending 1 EP per Combat Round. A physical interaction could be an unarmed attack, overrun, grapple attempt or similar, or it could be something less violent such as a kiss or handshake.

A sorcerer in *Tamhasg* form has his usual ability scores. The *Tamhasg* form has the equivalent to eight points of armour protection, though the sorcerer's real body is in a trance state (completely helpless and incapable of perceiving anything, even damage to itself) at the time. The *Tamhasg* form has the same number of hit points as the sorcerer at the time of casting. It cannot heal damage as such, but it always has the same number of hit points as the caster when cast. If it is destroyed, the sorcerer permanently loses 1D3 points of Power and may not cast this spell again for at least one year. The sorcerer can end the spell and return to his body as a free action at any time.

Tamhasg is often used to frighten or even try to kill an enemy, particularly if the sorcerer can use this spell when his victim is passing close by a cliff or other dangerous situation where a single push from a spectral

figure could kill him. In a more peaceful mode of use it could allow communication over great distances.

Terrible Beauty of Ular

Casting Time 1, Duration See below, Magnitude 8, Resist (Persistence), Touch, Tribal (Sessair)

A worshipper of Morrighu can only cast this spell when the sorcerer is having a warp-spasm and remains sufficiently in control to be able to use magic (see page 69). She takes on something of the aspect of the Morrighu herself, gaining a gaze attack for the duration of the spell (treat as an Evil Eye). Any male humanoid who meets her gaze must make a Persistence test. Those with Power of less than ten who fail the Persistence test faint away, remaining unconscious for 3D6 minutes. Those of Power ten or more who fail the Persistence test simply stand and stare at her, unable to take their eyes off her sinister, powerful beauty – they will stand entranced for 1D6 minutes or until physically attacked. While entranced they will not resist whatever she does to them so long as she does not damage them. Anyone who makes his Persistence test need not do so again if he meets her gaze again during the duration of the spell.

Torment of the Slain

Casting Time See below, Duration See below, Magnitude 3, Resist (Persistence), Touch

This spell forces a dead creature, who must have been slain at most one round before, to answer a single question. *Torment of the Slain* must be prepared in advance, unlike most other spells – the 10 minute casting time must specify the name of the planned target, after which the sorcerer has 24 hours to kill the target. Once the target is dead, the caster must immediately draw a magical circle around the corpse in the target's own blood, finishing off the spell. The sorcerer then has one minute to ask one question and have the target answer it. The target must answer, and can not resist (the recently dead are at their most vulnerable magically, which is why the spell works at all). However, it does gain a Persistence test to attempt to answer half-heartedly. Although the target must answer the question, if it succeeds at its Persistence test it may answer the question in a partial or even misleading way. Even then, it is compelled not to lie,



and so the sorcerer will gain at least some information from the spell. The creature is under no compulsion to answer any further questions or to elaborate on its first answer – once it has answered, it is free to continue on to the after-life, whatever that might be.

Trance of the Second Sight

Casting Time 10, Duration 3, Magnitude 3, Progressive, Touch, Tribal (Finians)

This spell allows the caster to enter into a divinatory trance in which he sees visions of what is taking place far away. Unlike all other spells, trance of the second sight is not deliberately cast; rather, it occurs of its own accord (that is, at the discretion of the Games Master), using up EP as usual as it drains magical energy from the caster, but the effects are not under his control.

Trance of the second sight rarely gives predictions of the future, but more commonly allows the sorcerer to gain an insight into an event relevant to himself or his allies that is occurring far away. The visions seen are similar to those seen by scrying flames, but with the important difference that the sorcerer need not deliberately choose to view a specific place or creature; rather, he automatically views the most important events to him or his close associates, wherever they take place, even if he has no idea that anything significant is occurring at the time.

Whenever the Games Master determines that an event of significance is occurring, he makes a skill test on behalf of the sorcerer, with a -10% penalty for every ten miles of distance between the caster and the event. The event may be of significance either to the sorcerer himself, his allies or employers, or simply the people with whom he is present at the time. The sorcerer has a momentary hint that the spell will begin to take effect, at which point he may attempt to resist it if the time is inconvenient. If the sorcerer does attempt to resist, the Games Master makes a skill test on behalf of the sorcerer to oppose the sorcerer's Persistence test.

A sorcerer affected by this spell is in a trance state for the duration of the spell. This means he is completely helpless and incapable of perceiving anything, even damage to himself.

For every extra EP used in casting the spell the duration of the spell is increased by an additional minute.

True Shape

Casting Time 3, Duration one day, Magnitude 6, Prerequisite *Wear Skin*, Touch

True Shape allows the sorcerer to transform into another form of creature. The new form can range from size 1 to size 30. Upon changing, the sorcerer regains lost hit points as if having rested for a day (changing back does not heal the creature further). If slain, the *True Shaped* creature reverts to its original form, though it remains dead.

The *True Shaped* creature acquires the physical and natural abilities of the creature it has been *True Shaped* into while retaining its own mind. Physical abilities include Strength, Dexterity, Constitution and Size scores. Natural abilities include armour, attacks and similar gross physical qualities (presence or absence of wings, number of extremities and so on.). Natural abilities also include mundane movement capabilities, such as walking, swimming and flight with wings, but not magical flight or any other magical forms of travel. Extremely high speeds for certain creatures are the result of magical ability, so they are not granted by this spell. Other non-magical abilities (such as an owl's low-light vision) are considered natural abilities and are retained.

Any part of the body or piece of equipment that is separated from the whole reverts to its original form. The sorcerer's new scores and faculties are average ones for the race or species into which it has been transformed. The sorcerer cannot, for example, turn into a mighty weight lifter to gain great Strength. The sorcerer retains his Intelligence, Wisdom and Charisma scores, hit points (despite any change in its Constitution or Size score), basic attack skills.

The sorcerer does not gain the supernatural abilities (such as breath weapons and gaze attacks) or the extraordinary abilities of the new creature. When the *True Shape* occurs, the sorcerer's equipment, if any, transforms to match the new form. If the new form is a creature which does not use equipment the equipment



melds into the new form and becomes nonfunctional. If the new form uses equipment the sorcerer's equipment changes to match the new form and retains its properties. The sorcerer can freely designate the new form's minor physical qualities (such as hair colour, hair texture and skin colour) within the normal ranges for a creature of that type. The new form's significant physical qualities (such as height, weight and gender) are also under the sorcerer's control but must fall within the norms for the new form's species.

The sorcerer can be changed into a member of his own species. The sorcerer is effectively disguised as an average member of the new form's race. If the sorcerer uses this spell to create a disguise, he gets a +100% bonus on any disguise skill tests. Incorporeal or gaseous forms cannot be assumed.

Wear Skin

Casting Time 10, Duration 1 day, Magnitude 2, Touch

This spell allows the caster to disguise himself as another creature, by stitching their skin over your own. It creates a minor illusion to hide any stitches, wounds, and differences in shape between you and the original owner of the skin. This also gives the skin the semblance of life. The spell gives a +20% bonus to all Skill tests that the Gamesmaster deems appropriate (Disguise tests would gain this bonus, but in some circumstances Influence, Stealth or other skills might benefit).

Veil of Illusion

Concentration, Casting Time 1, Duration 10, Evil Eye, Magnitude 6, Resist (Persistence), Tribal (Falians)

This deadly spell affects the target's vision, making it impossible for him to see the caster. This does not work exactly like invisibility, in the usual sense; only one target is affected by the spell, and he can still see the caster's named weapon, even though the caster himself is not visible. In addition there is a strong component of terror to the *Veil of Illusion*, so that if

the target is affected, he will find it almost impossible to do anything other than stare morbidly at the caster's weapon, usually as the target himself is being hacked to pieces with it.

If the target fails his Persistence test, he treats the caster as invisible for the duration of the spell (all skills targeting the caster are halved, for example weapon attacks, Reactions, spells and so on). In addition, a second opposed Persistence test against the casters skill is required every Combat Round. If the target fails this opposed test he is unable to move or act in any way during that round.

The spell is instantly cancelled if the target can no longer see the caster's weapon for any reason. If the target succeeds in the initial Persistence test, the spell is likewise cancelled, but success at later Persistence tests only allows the target to act during the Combat Round in which the save was made.

Ogham

Ogham is the writing of the Land of the Young, used by both the most exalted druids and bards, and the most lowly writers and thieves. Most ordinary folk have no use for it and never bother learning it – a man's word is his bond, after all. For the druids, Ogham is one of the keys to magical power. Each Ogham sign signifies a letter of the alphabet, but each also signifies the name of a tree, and each can be used to make a spell.

The following spells may be improved by painting Ogham signs on the targets' faces: *Sign of Inner Strength*, *Sign of Shielding*, *Sign of Warrior Strength*, *Sign of the Raven*, *Sign of Reprisal*. The Ogham signs may be painted with woad or with blood. If blood is used, it can of course also serve as a source of Earth Power for the casting of the spell.

A spell cast in this way costs twice as many EP as usual, but lasts for ten times as long. In addition, the caster gains a +20% bonus to his Skill test when casting the spell.



Warp-Spasms

Warp-spasms are a special gift from the Earth Goddess, and so in general only the Tribes of the Earth Goddess have any chance of having them at all. At one time, most of the heroes of the Earth Goddess tribes had warp-spasms. Such times are only legends now, and very few warriors are able to warp the power of the Goddess through their bodies. Those who can, the warped ones, are not entirely human, though they may not know it.

In most cases, only warped ones can attempt a warp-spasm (the only exception being humans who have the Blood of Heroes Legendary Ability). You may only make the attempt once per day to warp-spasm and this will take a Combat Action. You must have at least one EP available to attempt to enter a warp-spasm. Make an Earth Power test (current EP + 1D20), consulting the Warp-Spasms table to determine whether you have a warp-spasm and the results if you do.

If you successfully enter a warp-spasm, you must immediately make a Persistence test (penalty is dependent on the Magnitude of the warp-spasm) and consult the Warp-Spasm Control table to determine how well you are able to control your warp-spasm.

At no point can a character suffering from a Major Wound ever enter into a warp-spasm.

Warp-Spasms

EP Test Result	Effect
25 or less	No warp-spasm
26-35	Semi-warp-spasms
36-45	Warp-spasm
46-60	Massive warp-spasm
61+	Totally warped

Bonuses and penalties to the Warp-Spasms table:

- +4 if sky-clad
- 2 if wearing a Hero-Harness
- +1 if you have taken damage this Combat Round from a melee attack by an enemy who is still facing you in battle, as long as this did not result in a Minor, Serious or Major Wound
- +3 if a taunt attack was made against you this round or last round (whether or not it was successful)
- +2 for each massively warped warrior on your side and within view
- +4 for each totally warped warrior on your side and within view
- 4 if you are not a warped one, but only have the Blood of Heroes feat
- 8 if you are suffering from a Serious Wound
- +4 if you have the Improved Warp-spasm Legendary Ability.
- +2 if you have the Warp-spasm Master Legendary Ability



Warp-Spasm Control

Persistence Test Result	Control over warp
Fumble	You are controlled by the Games Master for the duration of the combat. You may attempt another Persistence test (penalties and bonuses as before) once all your enemies are dead; if successful you may regain control of yourself (although you will still be warped). If not, you may attempt another Persistence test every hour.
Fail by 40 or more	You twist around in your skin. Your feet and knees are at the back, your heels and calves at the front. Your movement is halved for the duration of the warp-spasm. When you come out of your warp-spasm, you must make a Resilience test or suffer 1D6 damage to each of your legs.
Fail	You may not use ranged weapons, spells, any Legendary Abilities with an Intelligence prerequisite, or any Intelligence or Charisma-based skills. In addition, if you are ever in a situation in which no enemies are within melee range of you, you must succeed at another Persistence test (bonuses or penalties based on the degree of warp as usual) to do anything other than charge the nearest enemy.
Success	You may not use spells and have a -10% penalty with ranged weapons and all Intelligence or Charisma-based skills, but otherwise may act normally.
Critical Success	Mastery of your warp-spasm. You can act completely normally. In addition you may pick and choose which features from the warp-spasm table you have, up to and including the features for the size of spasm you rolled. For example, if you rolled a 48 on the warp-spasm table (Massive warp-spasm) you might choose to take the bonuses to Strength, Constitution and additional damage bonus of the Massive warp-spasm, but not increase Size (as though you had only had a semi-warp-spasm). This could be useful when fighting in confined spaces, or even to hide the fact that you are having a warp-spasm at all. You must always pay the usual EP cost for the highest level of warp-spasm from which you take a feature, although if you are short of EP and must use hit points to make up the difference, you only take half hit point damage. You may end your warp-spasm at any time using a single Combat Action.

Bonuses and penalties to the Warp-spasm Control Persistence test:

- +20% if wearing a hero-harness
- 10% if sky-clad
- 10% if suffering from a Minor Wound
- 20% if suffering from a Serious Wound
- 10% if you gained a bonus to your warp-spasm roll for recently being attacked
- 20% if you gained a bonus to your warp-spasm roll for recently being taunted
- +20% if you have the Warp-spasm Master Legendary Ability



No warp-spasm

You are unable to enter a warp-spasm this time. Lose 1 EP for the attempt. You may not try to warp again today.

Semi-warp-spasm

Through injury or other factors, you are too weak to have a full warp-spasm. However, you do partially enter a warp-spasm state, and gain several advantages as follows.

- † Your skin becomes hot to the touch, causing 1D3 points of heat damage to anyone who touches you or whom you touch, skin to skin. This includes unarmed strikes which either hit you or which you make, as well as grapple attempts by either you or your opponent (the damage occurs each round if contact is continuous, and will be inflicted upon all hit locations in contact with you).
- † Your Strength and Constitution both increase by +1D6.
- † You gain an additional damage bonus of +1D4.
- † Suffer a -10% penalty to all Reactions while warped as you are not really defending yourself.

Entering a semi-warp-spasm causes you to use up 1D4 EP. If this would take you below zero EP, your own blood flows out through the top of your skull as 'black stuff' – you lose 1 hit point for each EP you were short to the head hit location. A semi-warp-spasm is relatively easy to control, with the Persistence test to control it having a +20% bonus.

Warp-spasm

This is the classic warp-spasm, enough to take on almost any mortal foes, even in large numbers. Your hair stands on end with spikes of fire, 'black stuff' spouts from your head, and you swell to a hideous, monstrous size.

- † Your skin becomes hot to the touch (as for semi-warp-spasm, but doing 1D4 damage).



- † Size, Strength and Constitution all increase by an additional 1D6+3.
- † You also gain an additional +1D6 damage bonus to all melee attacks.
- † You suffer a -20% penalty to all Reactions.
- † Your movement rate increases by two metres.
- † Finally you gain the equivalent to two points of armour to all hit locations as your skin becomes extremely tough (this causes no negative effect to skills).

Entering a warp-spasm causes you to use up 1D8 EP. If this would take you below zero EP, your own blood flows out through the top of your skull as 'black stuff' – you lose 1D2 HP to your head Hit Location for each EP you were short. A warp-spasm is not too difficult to control, with the Persistence Test only suffering a -20% penalty.



Massive warp-spasm

A warp-spasm of this Magnitude is enough to earn you a place in the bards' songs and tales for generations to come. Gorged with battle lust, filled with the serpent power, and swollen to a monstrous size, you cut a crimson swathe through your foes, killing them in a matter of moments.

- † Your skin becomes hot to the touch (as for semi-warp-spasm, but doing 1D6 damage).
- † You gain a +2D6+3 bonus to your Size, Strength and Constitution
- † You also gain an additional +1D6 damage bonus to all melee attacks.
- † You gain a +20% bonus to all melee attacks.
- † You suffer a -40% penalty to all Reactions.
- † Your movement rate increases by four metres.
- † Finally you gain the equivalent to three points of armour to all hit locations as your skin becomes extremely tough (this causes no negative effect to skills)

Entering a massive warp-spasm causes you to use up 2D8 EP. If this would take you below zero EP, your own blood flows out through the top of your skull as 'black stuff' – you lose 1D2 HP to your head Hit Location for each EP you were short. A massive warp-spasm is difficult to control, with the Persistence Test suffering a -40% penalty.

Totally warped

Even the greatest of the ancient heroes rarely warped to this size. You are capable of taking on entire warbands single-handedly.

- † Your skin becomes hot to the touch (as for semi-warp-spasm, but doing 1D8 damage).
- † You gain a +2D6+6 bonus to your Size, Strength and Constitution

- † You also gain an additional +1D6 damage bonus to all melee attacks.
- † You gain a +40% bonus to all melee attacks.
- † You suffer a -60% penalty to all Reactions.
- † Your movement rate increases by four metres.
- † Finally you gain the equivalent to four points of armour to all hit locations as your skin becomes extremely tough (this causes no negative effect to skills).

Becoming totally warped causes you to use up 3D8 EP. If this would take you below zero EP, your own blood flows out through the top of your skull as 'black stuff' – you lose 1D2 HP to your head Hit Location for each EP you were short. A total warp-spasm is very difficult to control, with the Persistence Test suffering a -40% penalty.

Coming out of a Warp-Spasm

You do not come out of a warp-spasm until all your enemies are dead (as defined by the Games Master). If desired, you may spend a full Combat Round attempting to end your warp-spasm before that point (although if you succeed by 10 or more on your warp-spasm control Persistence test, you may end the warp-spasm at any time as a single Combat Action), which requires another Persistence test with the same bonuses or penalties as the original warp-spasm control roll.

At the Games Master's discretion, even this may not be sufficient to come out of a particularly powerful warp-spasm, especially if the character had poor control over it. The sagas and comics are full of descriptions of warriors whose hero-heat burned so hot they had to be plunged into several successive vats of cold water, or even calmed by a bevy of naked women, or both, before they managed to return to a normal state.



A Guide to Sláine's World

Geography

Most of the well-known areas of Tir Nan Og are in or near the lands of the four great Tribes of the Earth Goddess, Alba, Albion, Cambria and Eriu. Beyond that, the southern lands where the Drune Lords' tribes dwell are often wandered by Earth Goddess tribesmen either as exiles or simply travellers. Midgard, to the east, is harsh and hostile, both the land and the people, but an occasional explorer ventures there and an even more occasional one leaves alive. Few save the more daring inhabitants of northern Alba ever venture far into Lochlann, though, for there is little dealing with a Fomorian other than slaying him.

Alba, Albion, Cambria and Eriu – lands of the Goddess

The Tribes of the Earth Goddess are the last bastion against both the foul mutants of Lochlann in the North and the power-crazed, earth-defiling Drune Lords of the South. The Earth Goddess tribes value freedom above all else, and while their zeal for liberty is their greatest strength – for they will never submit to being ruled by another – it is also their weakness, since they seem doomed never to unite and shake off the great twin threats facing them once and for all. They expend as much energy warring on, and raiding, one another as they do defending themselves against the true threats beyond their borders.

Albion

Albion is the south-eastern part of the Earth Goddess tribal territories, a vast tract of good farmland lush forests and rivers teeming with fish. Most of the folk who live there are generous and friendly, and its towns and cities are excellent places to buy and sell almost

anything imaginable. It is largely ruled by the Fir Domain tribe, who are sometimes hostile to strangers, but the Fir Domain lords and warriors take little interest in the doings of the ordinary people of the land.

Durrington: Durrington is the druid seminary for all the Earth Goddess tribes, and pupils and their families travelling to or from Durrington are owed safe passage; even if from a tribe currently at war with the Fir Domain, who occupy most of the nearby land. Durrington itself is, of course, independent of any tribe. Here the druids study for twenty-one years, learning the names of the stars and everything beneath them. Durrington has temples, sacred groves, and indoor halls and huts to be used as classrooms and accommodation for the students when they are not studying out of doors.

Glastonbury: Glastonbury is the main sacred site of the Archdruids, though they do not really form a community there – rather, they gather at Glastonbury at certain sacred times to discuss matters of import to the entire Land of the Young and to conduct secret ceremonies. Most ordinary folk avoid the place, for there are twelve powerful magical temples here, each with a dangerous guardian. Intruders here are likely to find themselves either slain or drawn into a difficult and dangerous magical quest. It is said to be here that the druids come to create the fabled druid's eggs (see the Earth Power chapter).

Gorias: Gorias is the capital city of the Fir Domain tribe, and their power base and economic centre. Its location in south-eastern Albion is one of the reasons the Fir Domain are so warlike – beleaguered by the Drones to the South, an outpost of Titans to the North, and the Berserkers of Midgard to the East, Gorias always seems to be either under siege or mobilising for war against one of the Fir Domain's enemies.



Eriu

Eriu is not quite so fertile as Albion, with more pasture land and bog than prime farmland but it is more sparsely populated and the folk living here are fairly content. Most of the land at least in the north, is ruled by the Sessair tribe, who tend to carry all the traits the Earth Goddess tribes are famed for to an extreme degree. They are as renowned for their honour and hospitality as they are feared for their tempers and the sharpness of their axes.

Southern Eriu, around the banks of the Inland Sea, is part of the territory claimed by the Tribe of the Shadows, though much of this land is regularly disputed in border wars with the Sessair. The south tends to be more mountainous and rugged than the north, and is made less appealing still by its proximity to the Drune Lord tribes and the Sourlands.

Murias: This is one of the smaller capital cities of the Earth Goddess tribes, but is still a thriving centre for the Sessair tribe. It is built on the west bank of the River Dôn, which is named as a variant of the Goddess's name Danu. The River Dôn carries a fair amount of trade to and from the city, as the merchants of Murias have, as yet, avoided acquiring fleets of sky chariots, perhaps out of a superstitious dislike of such great sorcery. For the most part Murias feels something like a cross between a small tribal settlement, a market town and an encampment of heavily-armed and bad-tempered warriors. It is easier to find a minor lord willing to offer you hospitality here than it is to find an inn, for the Sessair have a strongly developed tradition of generosity and welcome to strangers. Cattle from all over Eriu and northern Albion are traded here, many of them raided from other tribes by Sessair warriors.

The Great Cairn: This stone and earth temple is both solidly constructed, as though it will last many thousands of years, and highly magical, as though it has been a site of worship for millennia already. Its construction is such that the floor is below ground, drawing Earth Power straight from the body of the Goddess Danu, yet its roof is above ground and has a single crystal slab directly over the central chamber, allowing the rays of Lug the Sun God to charge the interior too. The chamber within the mound is small, suitable only to hold a handful of druids, and so it is used for two main purposes – for the secret druidical celebrations at midsummer, and to initiate new

members of the Sessair's feared Red Branch warriors at midwinter. The more public ceremonies of the Fire-Festivals are held at vast sacred groves and stone circles throughout Eriu.

The Inland Sea

This vast, landlocked sea is part of the border between Eriu and the eastern Earth Goddess tribes in Albion and Cambria, along with the rivers that run from the Inland Sea into the greater seas beyond Eriu. Fishing is good here, though it is said that various fearsome monsters lurk within the depths of the sea. The southern banks of the sea give directly on to great marshes that were once inhabited by the peaceful, aboriginal Beaver Folk, though recently the great Kings and warriors of the Tribe of the Shadows have destroyed the majority of them, feeling that the establishment of their great city Falias is made more secure by so doing.

Falias: Falias is the great city of the Tribe of Shadows, an island fortress in the southern half of the vast Inland Sea. This is a city shadowy by name and by nature, its inhabitants not so naturally humourless as the Finians but seemingly sucked dry of vitality by the dreadful curse that grips the tribe, sending many of them moon-





mad and rendering the others incapable of tolerating bright sunlight. Thus all business here is conducted at midnight or later, and the greatest markets and festivals alike are held on moonless nights. Strangers are not common in Falias, for even the sane Faliasians are at the very least peculiar and unnerving.

Alba

This windswept land is the northernmost edge of what most folk think of as Tir Nan Og; the lands that are just barely civilised and occupied by something that still looks human. Just beyond it is the ice sheet of Lochlann, and the Finians who make their home in Alba must constantly be wary for Fomorian raiders sweeping out of the north.

Finias: This is the capital city of the Finian tribe, built around three vast towers, gifts to the Tuatha de Danaan from the sea-god Manannan Mac Lir. Each tower honours a particular aspect of the Earth Goddess Danu. Finias looks even more like a fortress than the other cities of the four great Tribes, probably because it is. Generations of Fomorian sea-devils have died beneath its great walls, and generations of Finian warriors have slain them. The Finians have as great a reputation as doughty, unstoppable savage fighters as do the Sessair, though this is tempered with a certain meanness and an apparently humourless love of plain food. Thus a traveller here will likely get hospitality – the land is too unforgiving for the Finians to have any but the strongest tradition of hospitality – but he may not enjoy the boiled turnips, oats and dry black bread that will likely be his fare.

Scathach's Warrior School: One of the most famous places in Alba is the fortress of the mighty warrior-

woman Scathach. She runs the best military academy in Tir Nan Og, and all the Tribes of the Earth Goddess send the very best of their noble warriors to her to learn great feats of war. Scathach's speciality is the correct use of the Gae Bolga, but she also teaches every aspect of warcraft and her students invariably seem to become renowned heroes or powerful tyrants.

Cambria

Cambria is a hilly and rain-swept land between Albion and the Inland Sea. It is also known as the Glamour Land or Land of Illusion, for it is said that nothing is quite what it seems in Cambria. Most of it is ruled by the Tribe of the Shadows, and their somewhat stealthy and mysterious methods of warfare only enhance Cambria's reputation for glammers and enchantments. This is also the land where most war dragons are farmed and trained, since its cold weather and rocky terrain make ideal dragon country.

The people of Cambria are for the most part not as open-minded as the folk of nearby Albion or Eriu, with the local witch or fish-wife effectively ruling each village or hamlet through superstitious awe and sheer force of personality. This is the sort of place in which outsiders are as likely to be strung up as suspected evil sorcerers, or sacrificed to some obscure tribal god unknown to the outside world, as they are to be welcomed and given hospitality.

Dinas Emrys: Snowdon, the snow-covered mountain in northern Cambria, is the point at which the territories of the four Earth Goddess tribes meet. Constantly shrouded in mist, the mountain is the perfect place to hide an entire city – which it does. Dinas Emrys, the Eternal Fortress, city of the Higher



Powers, secret domain of the Ever-Living Ones, is forever hidden atop Snowdon, impossible to find save by great sorcery or by those whom the Ever-Living Ones wish to find it. Here the most ancient sages and druids of Tir Nan Og reflect, study High Magic, and watch the outcome of their plans for the Land of the Young. Myrddin himself, the half-human, half-demon arch-sorcerer of all the Celtic kingdoms, abides here, watching but rarely intervening. It is said that all the secrets of Tir Nan Og can be found here, or, if not the secrets themselves, then the keys to them.

Southern Tir Nan Og - Lands of the Drune Lords

There are many more Drune Lord tribes than Earth Goddess ones, though they are generally far smaller. The Drones rule them all – though there are local headmen and chiefs, more major rulers would not be tolerated by the Drune hierarchy.

The Sourlands stretch through many of the Drune lands between the major towns, causing widespread starvation and drought even among the Drones' own people. Inevitably this situation cannot be sustained, but that is of little concern to the Drones – they would happily leech the life and sorcery from their entire kingdom if that would give them enough power to destroy the Earth Goddess tribes and bring about Ragnarok, since that would sink their own lands beneath the waves too. So far, the folk of the Sourlands seem to have accepted their fate; with all will to resist crushed out of them by years of Drune rule, most would sooner starve to death than fight back. A few manage to escape to Gabala or one of the other large settlements, where they swell the ranks of the beggars and thieves.

Drunemeton: Drunemeton is one of the largest sacred groves in the Drune Lord lands, nestled deep within the forest. It is protected by a number of forest fortresses around the grove, each filled with Skull-Swords. As well as defending Drunemeton, these fortresses hold most of the Drune Lords' apprentice Drones, Witches and War-Witches. Drunemeton is Slough Feg's main college of sorcery, and he can often be found here training a particularly promising group of pupils or supervising the burning of a great Wicker Man on festival nights. This sacred grove is particularly sacred to Crom Cruach, although, of course, Carnun is also worshipped here.

Carnac: This is the Drune Lords' greatest public temple to Carnun, Lord of the Beasts. Here Carnun is worshipped with great ceremonial dances and frequent sacrifice. The Drones and their slaves have laboured for years to align huge numbers of weirdstones, creating a major centre of worship and Earth Power. Carnac is where all the magical energy drained from the Sourlands finishes up, where it can be stored by the Drones and used as necessary to cow the populace or launch invasion plans into the northern kingdoms. The tribe of Carnu inhabit Carnac and the lands around it. They are one of the southern tribes most loyal to the Drune Lords, providing many of their Skull-Sword soldiers, and as a result they are treated relatively well, so long as they regularly attend the great celebrations at Carnac.

The Cave of Beasts: The Cave of Beasts is Slough Feg's stronghold and temple. It is far to the south of Tir Nan Og, atop a vast mountain range that crosses from coast to coast. It is sacred to Carnun in the form of Feg himself, as the earthly manifestation of the Horned God. Occasionally Feg will bring a favoured pupil here for personal lessons, and he sometimes also uses the site as a meeting place for his senior Drones, but for the most part this is simply his home and the area in which he carries out his magical work and other researches. A garrison of Skull-Sword soldiers protects Feg and keeps him well supplied with sacrificial children, which he requires to retain some of the vigour of his lost youth.

Gabala: Gabala is a large and sophisticated city far to the south, in the heart of the Drune lands. Unlike the cities of the Earth Goddess tribes, Gabala's streets are dangerous to wanderer and citizen alike – the people are poor, and often starving, and the Drune's Skull-Sword soldiers are only concerned with keeping the populace afraid of them, not with whether or not citizens rob and murder one another. This, then, is far more like the evils of later cities – no glowing magical fortress like Gorias and the other Earth Goddess tribal strongholds.

Borderlands

The borderlands are the regions between the Drune Lord lands and the Tribes of the Earth Goddess. As might be expected, they suffer more than anywhere else from the rivalry and occasional wars between the two sides. In particular, they suffer from the Drones'



draining of their Earth Power, leaving vast tracts of land as Sourlands. This is done both to give the Drones sufficient sorcerous power to keep their own tribes in check, and as a weapon against the inhabitants of the borderlands and the Earth Goddess tribes beyond.

Lyonesse: Lyonesse is perhaps the most famous of the borderlands, and was once a land of famed magical power in its own right. Today it is largely Sourland and wastelands, barely occupied save by beasts and the occasional peasant grubbing a living from the once-prosperous land. There is an active volcano in Lyonesse – Mor-Alltach, the Fire Mountain. This is occasionally harnessed by Drune magic as a weapon. In all probability, it too was caused by the Drones' draining of the land by sorcery, like a great wound in the Earth herself.

Sourlands: The Sourlands, once a common feature only in the Drune Lords' territories, are gradually expanding northwards. Most of the borderland regions have been affected to a greater or lesser degree, either becoming Sourlands or showing the first signs that they will do so, with the crops failing and the land growing less fertile. This is affecting the Earth Goddess tribal lands too, both by the Sourlands themselves extending north of the borderlands into the lands of the Fir Domain and Tribe of the Shadows, and by the effects of homeless and lawless wanderers taking refuge from the Sourlands by fleeing north into the lands of the Earth Goddess tribes.

Lands of the Fir Bolg: The Fir Bolg are a semi-independent tribe, related to the Fir Domain (and thus inevitably warring with them) but worshipping Carnun and Crom Cruach. As yet they do not seem to have come under the dominion of the Drune Lords, having a fiercely independent warrior tradition, but more and more of the Fir Bolg druids study at Drunemeton rather than Glastonbury, so perhaps they will simply become another Drune tribe some time over the next few years. There is no firm border between the lands of the Fir Domain and those of the Fir Bolg, and the two tribes raid one another frequently.

Lands of the Titans: The lands of the Titans can also be found in the Borderlands area, to the south of the Fir Domain lands. The remaining titans are isolated in a couple of small regions in southern Albion. The titans once ruled Albion, and a few still harbour ambitions to do so again. The majority, though, are content to

simply fester in their decaying cities, barely aware that their kingdom is lost, badly affected by in-breeding and near-total apathy.

Outlands

The Outlands are at the very edge of human knowledge, and include Lochlann, the far-flung northern land of the Fomorians, and Midgard, land of Norse heroes and berserkers. It is likely that other outlands exist, and many legends of the Tribes of the Earth Goddess tell of the heroes of the tribes voyaging out to sea to discover strange and wondrous islands or other new lands.

Lochlann: Lochlann is the bitter, icy realm of the Fomorian sea-devils, ancestral enemies of the northern tribes. The great ice sheet of Lochlann is largely a mystery to the Earth Goddess tribes, but some areas have been explored by bold Finian hunters and Sessair voyagers. It is said that the fomor live in vast caves and



cities carved into the edge of the glaciers, venturing out into the near-freezing seas to hunt fish and other creatures. The inland regions of Lochlann seem to be largely uninhabited save by the occasional hairy one and other animals.

Midgard: Few folk of the Earth Goddess tribes ever bother to travel to this hostile land in the East, having experienced far more of the Berserkers than they wish to from raids and battles. Those few travellers who have returned tell of a land almost as cold as Lochlann, with rocky soil and little farmland a country the Sun God Lug rarely seems to shine upon. The norsemen are as harsh as their homeland tough fighters hardened by the frost and hail of Midgard and the spears and axes of constant war. Many are berserkers, fierce warriors disdainful of injury, frothing and biting their shields in their eagerness to hurl themselves at their foes.

Tribal Culture, Law and Tradition in Tir Nan Og

The Tribes of the Earth Goddess

The tribes of the Earth Goddess inhabit the northern parts of Tir Nan Og, the lands of Albion, Alba, the Glamour Land and Eriu. They are sometimes known as the northern tribes, as distinct from the southern tribes of the Drune Lords. Although there are many minor differences in culture and tradition between the four great Earth Goddess tribes, there are also strong similarities. These similarities come both from their long history of warring, allying, and intermarrying with one another, and perhaps more importantly from the druids. Almost all the druids of the northern tribes train at the seminary in Durrington, and answer to the regular meetings of the Council of Archdruids at Glastonbury. Their twenty-one years of training to become full druids makes them the most educated class in all of the northern lands, and creates a shared culture of magic, bardic tales and poems, and law among the Earth Goddess tribes.

Kings

Each of the four tribes has its own King. The King is almost always chosen by druidic divination – the favoured method being *divination by entrails*, since that can be carried out in a public place with all the important members of the tribe watching and waiting to see where the blood-trails point. The northern tribes are wary of Kings, considering that they tend to become crazed by power, and so they ensure that their rulers are always either truly worthy, unwilling, or both, by the simple expedient of enforcing a seven-year rule at the end of which the King is sacrificed to the Goddess. A King who continually fails his people – either directly, such as by losing in battle, or indirectly, such as by failing to make the crops grow – may be sacrificed even before his seven years are up.

The High King: Occasionally, when the Earth Goddess tribes face a particularly powerful and implacable enemy who threatens them all, they will come together to choose a High King or Ard-Ri. Such a High King is a war-leader first and foremost, and is not expected to rule the tribes in any respect – he simply organises their warriors until the threat is defeated. The northern tribes are very suspicious of power and politics in every form, and so a High King who does not already possess a great deal of political power is preferred. That said, the tribes do not always get what they want – the Ard-Ri is chosen by the Goddess herself, through the magic of the Stone of Destiny, the great treasure of the Tribe of the Shadows.

Crime and Punishment

The laws of the northern tribes are complex and closely bound up with ideas of personal honour. On the other hand punishments are relatively simple. Almost all crimes, up to and including murder, are punished by fining the criminal.

The Tribe

The basic legal entity is the tribe. The first distinction the law makes is between a member of the tribe, and an outsider. A member of the tribe has full legal rights, as defined below. An outsider has no legal rights, and may be ill-treated or killed without compunction or punishment. Despite this, in most cases tribes are reasonably friendly to outsiders, so long as they are not from tribes they are currently at war with. While



receiving hospitality from a member of the tribe, an outsider is considered to be under that tribesman's protection, but only within the house he is staying at. An outsider who particularly impresses his host may even be placed under the host's protection while outside his walls. In addition, members of formally allied tribes are given full legal rights; in effect they are treated as members of the tribe, rather than outsiders. Of course, their position could become as precarious as any other visitor's, if the alliance ends unexpectedly.

The Kin

Each tribe is made up of a number of kins. A kin is a family descended from the same great-grandfather, encompassing four generations of relatives. The kin is the legal entity to which a fine is paid if one of their number is illegally killed. In addition, the kin is responsible for the actions of all its members. If one of the kin commits a crime, all his kin are just as legally responsible for paying the fine as he is, although in most cases they will ensure he ends up paying one way or the other. Every member of a kin is also responsible for fulfilling a blood feud caused if one of their number is killed, and the murderer will not pay a fine. The victim's maternal kin may also become drawn in to such a feud, and will likewise receive a small portion of any fine paid for his death.



The head of a kin is called a Conn, and is usually the member of the kin who has the highest Enech, although some kins prefer to elect their Conn from among all the members. The Conn speaks for the entire kin, and is ultimately responsible for such decisions as banishing a member of the kin.

A kin member may be banished from the kin, usually for failing to pay a fine and thus causing the rest of his kin to have to pay it, or worse, for the enormous crime of kin-slaying. Banishment from the kin in effect means banishment from the tribe, too, unless the banished party can somehow persuade another kin to take him in.

Children are largely considered to be the responsibility of their kin, though they are not punished by fines until they are aged thirteen or more. See the Social Customs and Culture section (below) for more information about child-rearing.

If, for any reason, you need to find the number of members of a kin, roll 10D10. Assume that one-third of these will be able-bodied warriors.

Fines

Most crimes in the Earth Goddess tribes are punishable by the payment of a fine to the victim or his kin. Payment of the fine is considered to completely absolve the guilty party, so long as the victim (or his kin, in the case of murder) is willing to accept the payment. If the victim (or kin) refuses the offer of payment, it is usually because he considers the crime to be so grave he can only honourably be compensated by the death of the criminal. In this case, the criminal may either give himself up and accept death (which does happen occasionally, if he wishes to avoid drawing his kin into the situation), or the two kins will begin a blood feud that can only be ended with either the death of one entire kin or some tortuously complex negotiation.

There is a standard system of fines, as laid down by druidic tradition (given in a table at the end of this section), but it is always possible for the wronged party to demand a greater or different payment. The sagas are full of tales of victim's kins demanding that certain tasks or quests be fulfilled by the guilty part as payment for their crimes. The price of a man's life (whether paid in money or in some other form) is known as his sarhaed (see below).



Crime	Fine to be paid
Theft by violence	Twice the value of the goods stolen
Theft by stealth	Three times the value of the goods stolen
Fraud, breach of contract	Three times the defrauded or cheating amount
Illegal killing of a freeman	7 cumals, plus full value of victim's sarhaed paid to each close member of victim's kin, plus lesser values paid to more distant kin
Illegal killing of a male slave	4 séts
Illegal killing of a female slave	6 séts
Secret killing	Twice the price of illegally killing the same victim
Illegal maiming	Full value of victim's sarhaed
Illegal wounding	Payment of the cost for the victim (and any retinue, if the victim is of rank) to lie up in the spital hut until recovered. This is considered to be 1/10 of the value of the victim's sarhaed per day required to heal the injury, up to a maximum of the full value of the victim's sarhaed
Illegal satire	Full value of victim's sarhaed
Rape	Full value of victim's sarhaed
Sexual assault	Full value of victim's sarhaed
Violation of protection	Full fine for the crime committed, plus the full value of the protector's sarhaed
Damage to buildings	Three times the cost of repair or replacement
Damage to other property	Double cost of repair or replacement
Accomplice or accessory to a crime	Full fine demanded by the crime
Putting another up to a crime	Full fine demanded by the crime
Looking on to a crime	One quarter the fine demanded by the crime
Illegal distraint	5 séts fine plus return of distrainted property
Refusal of due hospitality	Full sarhaed of the guest
Illegal heckling	May no longer wear your best cloak

Sarhaed

Sarhaed is a man's honour-price, the direct monetary value of his life, and affects both the compensation paid for killing him and the worth of his promises. Sarhaed varies widely, depending on the importance of the person, and is tied directly to his Enech.

Sarhaed is also important as a way to put a value on a man's worth. He can only enter business deals, oaths or contracts of any sort up to the maximum value of his sarhaed. Thus, if he ever breaks a contract, the most the wronged party can claim from him is the value of his sarhaed, even if breaking the contract cost the wronged party more than that.

Illegal killing: This covers any killing other than a legal killing. It is legal to kill an enemy during a battle or

cattle-raid, in self-defence, or to kill a criminal caught in the act of committing a crime. The fee for illegal killing is far greater than the victim's sarhaed alone – the killer must pay 7 cumals to the kin in general, with additional payments to each member of the kin. Each kin member must be paid between 1/7th of the victim's sarhaed (for distant relatives and maternal kin) and the full value of the victim's sarhaed (for parents, children and siblings). Thus, if the victim had many kin the killer may pay out dozens of times the victim's sarhaed in various fines.

Secret killing: This is any killing where the killer attempted to conceal the body or otherwise hide his guilt after committing the crime. He pays 14 cumals rather than 7, plus payments to each member of the victim's kin of between 2/7^{ths} and twice the victim's sarhaed each.



Illegal satire: Any satire which is unjustified is considered to be illegal. A legal satire is any which in the opinion of the tribal druids is justified, such as a satire composed in revenge for the ill-treatment of the bard. Satire can be a crucial way to force a character of high status to behave in a just and honourable way, but when illegal it is no more than a tool for extortion.

Illegal injury: Again, this covers any injury other than those caused legally. It is legal for a healer to cause minor injuries to his patient in the course of carrying out healing. Other legal injuries include injuries caused during a battle or duel, injuries caused by the injured party's own foolishness or carelessness, and accidental injuries caused during a game, hunt or the like. In addition, a man's first wife may legally beat his second and subsequent wives as much as she wishes, though they may demand compensation if injured permanently.

Sexual assault: This includes kissing or fondling a woman without her consent, or stripping her or lifting her skirt.

Violation of protection: Anyone of freeman rank or higher may publicly place another character under his protection. If the protected one is killed, injured, or otherwise ill-treated, the guilty party must pay compensation to the protector as well as to the wronged party. Protection may never be granted to wanted criminals. Anyone currently receiving hospitality is considered under the host's protection while within his walls.

Looking on to a crime: Any adult who witnesses a crime and does not attempt to prevent it is guilty of looking on. Slaves, druids, and the elderly or infirm are exempt from this law.

Illegal distraint: Distraint is a legal procedure by which a wronged party seizes the property (usually land) of the character accused of wrongdoing. An illegal distraint is any distraint which is not carried out in the correct formal manner. This could include any distraint carried out on a holy day, the distraint of certain exempt animals (such as cows that have just calved), or the distraint of any property under the protection of a third party. See the Legal Procedures section (below) for more information about distraint and illegal distraint.

Refusal of due hospitality: Anyone whose Enech is 3 or higher and has a house and land must give hospitality when it is requested by one who has the right to it, such as one's King or a visitor from an allied tribe. On the other hand there are some to whom hospitality is never due. For example, giving hospitality to a wanted criminal is in itself a crime (accessory to the original criminal).

Illegal heckling: Both crime and punishment are somewhat unusual here (and very Celtic). It is legal to heckle your King if you are either a bard or a druid. In all other cases it is illegal. Traditionally the offender is given two warnings for heckling by the tribal druid. A third offence is punishable by the tribal druid, who will publicly – and humiliatingly – cut off a small piece of the offender's best cloak. This magically renders the cloak useless, so that it may neither be worn nor offered up as a sacrifice. The offender must make a Persistence test or suffer the loss of one point of Enech.

Legal Proceedings

Legal proceedings can get quite complex if the guilty party attempts to avoid admitting guilt, or refuses to pay his fine. In most cases it is up to the wronged party and his kin to administer justice, possibly with the assistance of a trained lawyer (see Lawyers and Debt Collectors, below). If the guilty party is willing to appear before a higher authority (usually an assembly of the tribal druids, but sometimes a local lord or the King) to stand trial, all is well and good. If not, the lawyer and wronged parties must distraint the guilty party's possessions (see below).

At a trial, all the parties who witnessed the crime, or have any evidence, including the accused, submit their evidence then take oaths that it is true. The matter is decided by comparing the sarhaed of each side, since that is the worth of any oath. So, if the accusers are all of high rank and the accused of low rank, their oaths are worth far more than his and he is proclaimed to be guilty. If he is of a higher rank than that of all his witnesses put together, he will walk free, since his oath is worth more and thus is considered to be true. This is one reason the satire is sometimes considered to be an instrument of justice – it is one of the few ways that characters of low status can legally take revenge on an oppressive high-status character. The matter can be further complicated by the addition of character witnesses – if one or both



parties have higher status supporters who are willing to swear oaths in support of them, even if those supporters did not witness the crime, the sarhaeds of the supporters are added to the value of their side's oaths. If it is ever discovered that either side bore false witness, their sarhaeds are forfeit to the other side.

The procedure of distraint is followed if the accused is unwilling to come to trial, or unwilling to pay his fine after being found guilty. Distraint is the legal procedure of seizing the accused's possessions, usually in the form of his kin's ancestral farmlands. The precise procedure that must be followed is quite complex and varies from tribe to tribe, and in almost all cases it is best to bring a lawyer along to ensure you do not illegally distraint the accused party. Generally the procedure involves occupying the land of the accused under witness of several reasonably high-status observers and calling for the accused to either come to trial or pay his fine. Often there are ritually vital actions to perform on the land such as giving a certain number of shouts for the accused to come forth, or grazing a certain number of horses on the distrainted land. In most tribes, it is necessary to make several incursions onto the land perhaps just for an hour with a pair of horses on the first day, returning and repeating the process a week later for a full day with four horses, and finally returning after a further week and claiming the land as your own by grazing eight horses on it, building yourself a small shelter, cooking and eating a meal and spending the night on the land. If all this is done and the accused has still not co-operated, you are now considered to own the distrainted land although you can never seize more land in this way than the value of the fine owed to you and your kin for the crime.

Legal Defences

A few defences are already covered in the descriptions of crimes above; for example, you could argue that a killing you had committed was legal as the victim was attempting to steal from you at the time. Of course, deliberately lying in such a case would be a breach of your oath, and would be taken very seriously by both your gods and your tribe. It is also possible to plead ignorance, though in most cases even if proven this will only lessen the penalty for your crime to half the normal penalty required, as will a claim that the crime was caused by simple negligence or that some other unusual conditions existed at the time (for example, if you were under an enchantment).

For crimes committed out of necessity, punishment may be waived. Examples of this include a pregnant woman stealing food, or an injured warrior stealing bandages or healing herbs.

Lawyers and Debt-Collectors

Many lawyers have studied at druid colleges or are fully qualified bards or druids, but anyone can set themselves up as a lawyer. A lawyer who does not know the law sufficiently well can soon find himself in trouble with it himself, accused of illegal distraint or even theft.

Debt-collectors are typically even less well-trained and knowledgeable than lawyers, often amounting to little more than thugs hired to enforce payment of fines from an individual or his kin who are resistant to paying up. On the other hand sometimes a lord or even a King ends up collecting debts as part of his duties in enforcing the law. Even then the noble will expect to be paid the usual fee.

In all cases, the lawyer's or debt collector's fee amounts to one-third of the fine recovered from the criminal, unless some special arrangement is made. Almost all lawyers are hired by the wronged party, since their job is generally more akin to that of a bailiff or enforcer than someone appointed to argue a case at court.

Social Customs and Culture

Marriage

Marriages are generally made for love, though in some cases they will be arranged by the two families. Certainly the women of the Earth Goddess tribes are for the most part far too proud and wilful to submit to marrying against their will.

The bride's father sets a bride-price, which is usually around the value of his daughter's sarhaed. Particularly pretty or plain daughters, or miserly or generous fathers, may alter this amount up or down quite significantly. It is also quite possible for a traditionalist father to demand a bride-price in some other form than money, such as a quest or other task the would-be bridegroom must perform to demonstrate his worth. Examples might be that he must capture a particularly famous bull owned by another tribe, or bring the skin of a notoriously fearsome boar as a bride-price. The bride-price is always paid directly to the father. Traditionally



he will give a portion of it to his daughter, usually between one-seventh and one-third – this is not a legal requirement, though he may lose Enech if he is considered to be stingy.

Annual marriages are quite common, with a sensible couple choosing to commit only for a year. This allows them to try out their marriage without being tied to one another for life. They can choose to renew their vows after a year, either for another year or for life this time. The bride-price for an annual marriage is only paid for the first year, so it is often as high as it would be for a life marriage since, if the couple remain together, the father will not get another bride-price from his daughter.

Marital quarrels are considered to be a major annoyance and disruption to the rest of the tribe, so if a couple regularly quarrels in public (or too loudly in private) they are taken into the nearest forest and tied to a tree together till they sort out their differences. This can be dangerous, given some of the natural and other creatures who live in the forests, so most couples attempt to resolve their differences quietly and in private.

Child-Rearing and Fostering

In the days when the Earth Goddess reigned supreme, before the coming of the Sun God, only mothers were recognised as parents. Children were raised in common, and a child's father was unknown – and irrelevant. An echo of this persists today, in that if a father is not present at his child's birth to share the birth pains with the mother, he is not legally recognised as the father, even if the couple are married.

The tribe's witches are the most common midwives, since they are expected to have a detailed knowledge of women's mysteries and healing. When the witches are present, the father of the child is usually placed under the effects of the *ligature* curse for the duration of the labour and childbirth, so that he can properly experience the mother's birth-pangs. If the *ligature* spell is unavailable, the midwives will assist the expectant mother with an older method of ensuring the father knows just what his partner is undergoing – they tie a cord around the end of his manhood, and the woman tugs on the cord whenever she experiences pain.

Children are usually fostered out to a family of a different kin at the age of around three or four, for a variety of reasons. Fostering is a way to strengthen the bonds of a tribe and avert disharmony – a pair of warriors who were foster-brothers are unlikely to quarrel over the spoils of war, for example. In addition, it is thought to ensure fairness and strong discipline during the child-rearing process. Finally, fostering can be used as an inter-tribal political tool, with the children of high-ranking tribal members reciprocally fostered out to another tribe as part of the process of forging an alliance. In this case the foster-children are effectively hostages, though they will be treated just as would any other foster-child so long as faith is kept with the alliance. Indeed, there are several tales of foster-families growing so close to their hostage foster-children that they will not kill them when the alliance turns sour. This usually leads to great epics of kin-slaying and enormous tragedy for the tribe, as kins fragment and go to war with one another.

From thirteen years of age onwards children are legally treated as adults, and are subject to the adult system of fines and punishments (above). Under-thirteen's are instead disciplined by the foster family or kin. Traditionally, children between the ages of seven and twelve are punished by being starved until they behave themselves, while children under seven are beaten as a punishment. Children will be punished for the usual pranks and mischief, and of course for neglecting their education – for example, one of the most common reasons children between seven and twelve are starved is for failing to achieve a high standard of accuracy when hurling slingstones. They will be given slings and ordered to use pieces of bread as targets on a wall or fence, and will not be permitted to eat anything other than what they knock off with their slingstones.

Battle and Combat

Fighting of every sort is an integral part of life among the Tribes of the Earth Goddess, particularly for warriors but little less so for other folk. Only druids and bards are exempt from the constant cycle of brawling, taunting contests, honour duels, cattle raids and all-out war. Every other able-bodied member of the tribe is expected to be ready to defend his honour, his tribe or his kin at any time, whether with his fists or with an iron sword. This applies to the women no less than



to the men, and women warriors are an ordinary sight in warbands. Even women who are not technically warriors are frequently a force to be reckoned with, and in large battles the wives of the warriors will stand at the back of their army, yelling encouragement – and insults – at their menfolk, ready to give them a good beating if they show any signs of cowardice.

Cattle Raids

When the Earth Goddess tribes are not actively at war, they keep themselves in a good state of practice and constantly test the mettle of their neighbour tribes by cattle raiding. Many raids involve little or no combat, with a raiding party managing to slip past the patrols of the rival tribe and carry off many of their cattle unnoticed, or with the warbands of the two tribes clashing only briefly, perhaps with no more than an exchange of javelins and slingstones till honour is satisfied and the raiders can retreat. That said, the Tribes of the Earth Goddess are a bloodthirsty lot, and it is also common for raids to culminate in minor skirmishes that escalate into full-scale battles, with neither side willing to give in. These are frequently bloody affairs for both sides, since a cattle raiding party will typically be lightly armoured to allow them to move fast, and the defenders often have little or no time to get armoured-up either.

A Fair Fight

There is nothing in the warrior tradition that requires a fair fight, in any modern or chivalric notion of the phrase, particularly if the foe is not human. So long as your enemy is dead and you are alive, little else matters – even if you used trickery and deceit to slay him you will not lose Enech for doing so. On the other hand the tradition of the honour duel (sometimes called Fir-Fer) is respected – two warriors with a grievance, or merely a desire to prove forever who is the most mighty, arrange a time and place to fight, and agree to equal weapons. A few warriors, facing a worthy foe, may decide to fight by similar ‘rules’ even in the middle of a raging battlefield, demanding that others stay out of the duel: ‘This one’s mine!’ Such an impromptu honour duel will often be respected or even enforced by the fighters around them, but nothing is certain in a situation like that.

Head-hunting and Brain-balls

Victorious Celts measure their success not so much by the amount of loot they are able to carry off, but by the

number of heads they collect from their fallen foes, so as to have suitable decorations for their chariots or homes. The heads of minor enemies will be allowed to rot, but heads of particularly notable foes are usually pickled and preserved, so the warrior can taunt them on long winter evenings and show them off to his friends. Usually the kin of a high Enech foe will offer money equal to his sarhaed if his head is returned to them, so part of the honour of retaining heads is that you have chosen to refuse mere money and keep your glory.

The Champion's Portion

All four Earth Goddess tribes practise the custom of the Champion's Portion. After every battle (including the more bloody cattle raids), a huge feast is held for the warriors of the tribe. One prize animal, usually a tender-fleshed cow, is roasted whole as the focus of the feast, and the warriors argue and compete over which of them will have the honour of carving and eating the best meat of the hindquarters, known as the Champion's Portion. Sometimes one warrior will claim the Champion's portion without contest, because his fellows either agree that he deserves it or simply recognise that he is tougher than them. More often, one warrior claims the prize and others dispute his worthiness to receive it, arguing that they collected more brain-balls or captured more cattle. This can be resolved by simple boasting (opposed Influence tests), or a full contest of taunts (see the Combat chapter). Not infrequently it finishes with a brawl or all-out duel between the two disputants.

Tribes of the Drune Lords

Though the southern tribes once had much the same culture as their northern counterparts, thousands of years of Drune rule has eroded many of the values and much of the sense of pride and self-worth of most of the inhabitants of southern Tir Nan Og. A few of the tribes have managed to retain a certain degree of vitality, but generally only through demonstrating total loyalty to the Drune Lords. The majority are totally cowed, with the threat of the Drones' sorcerous curses and their harsh enforcers the Skull-Swords being quite enough to make them submit to almost anything, up to and including the sacrifice of their children to the Drune's dark religion.



Crime and Punishment in the DRUNE LORDS TRIBES

The general crimes and punishments in the Drune lands are very similar to those in the Earth Goddess tribes. There are two major differences, as detailed below.

- † Although fines are still the most common punishments, when a major festival to Crom-Cruach or Carnun is approaching the Skull-Swords capture known criminals of all kinds to burn in great wicker men.
- † The southern tribes do not have such a strong concept of kinship as their northern counterparts. This means that the payment of a fine is solely the responsibility of the criminal – although he may ask for assistance from his kin, they are under no obligation to pay up. For this reason, the Drones have introduced prisons, known as brochs, where criminals can be locked up until their families pay their fines. If the fines are unpaid, eventually the criminals will be sold into slavery or sacrificed.
- † When a great warrior or other potentially useful non-Drune commits a major crime, he may simply be excluded from participation in the Drune religion for a time. This is very shameful, resulting in a loss of 1 Enech for each season (three months) for which he is excluded.

Social Customs and Culture

Again, at one time the Drune Lord tribes' customs were much like those of their northern cousins; though Drune rulership, and the difficult days brought with it, has hardened the hearts of many of the southern tribes. In many places strangers are more likely to be stripped of their valuables and killed than offered hospitality. Marriages are joyless ceremonies in a land in which bride or groom could be chosen for sacrifice or Skull-Sword service at any time, and few wish to bring children into a life which will likely be short and full of hardship.

Despite this, most of the southern tribes were content enough until very recently, for the Drones at least kept them free of the constant wars and cattle-raids suffered

by the northern tribes. Most folk were willing to put up with the occasional son forced to join the Skull-Swords, or the occasional daughter sent to the Cave of Beasts, never to be seen again. They had a certain degree of security, the crops grew tolerably well, and they had their exuberant festivals to Carnun to lighten the mood a little. Over the last few years however, the Drones have grown more arrogant than ever, as though they do not care what happens to their tribes. It is said that the Drones plan to bring about a great Ragnarok, destroying the Land of the Young entirely, and so far as they are concerned even their own people can be allowed to starve so long as enough Earth Power can be raised for Slough Feg's schemes. Thus, many of the Drune lands have been drained of all vitality by the erection of great weirdstones, turning once-fertile countryside into Sourlands where nothing will grow. The people starve and die; whole communities and even tribes are destroyed by starvation.

Battle and Combat

Most of the southern tribes themselves no longer truly have a warrior tradition, though a few individuals remember the proud days of their forefathers and attempt to recreate them. Those tribes who benefit from Drune rule will often provide the Drune Lords' armies with light infantry and slingers. The warrior traditions have largely been replaced by service in the Drones' soldiery, the Skull-Swords, who act both as guards and henchmen of individual Drones and as their heavy infantry when it comes to war. Though the Skull-Swords are well-trained, their experience serves them better as bullies than as true soldiers, and most are far less willing to die in battle than the warriors of the Earth Goddess tribes, for most believe that on death they will be swallowed up by the ever-hungry worm-god Crom-Cruach, rather than being rewarded in the woodlands of the Earth Goddess.





The Sessair

The fame of the Sessair carries all before it. When Tir Nan Og meets the end of days, it will be the warriors of the Sessair who are remembered, or at least this is their opinion. These people consider themselves the strongest, the fiercest and the most valiant of the four tribes and theirs are the vices and virtues of Danu's people written large. They can be gentle people, but no tribe is more prone to fighting for fighting's sake and their love of battle is very well known. They are passionate and compassionate, hot in anger, cold in revenge. Self-publicists to a man, bashfulness and modesty are not widely appreciated among these people. They will tell you they have the biggest hearts in Tir Nan Og, while others claim they have the biggest mouths. 'Extreme' is the word to sum up the Sessair, for there is nothing temperate or even vaguely moderate about them. They are easy to love or hate but living with them from day to day can be wearing on the nerves, unless one is brought up to it.

The Sessair claim theirs is the earliest clan culture across all the lands. Certainly, the oldest traditions of weaving tartans seem to have originated among them, a fashion now to be seen from Albion to the Drune lands. In brightly dyed plaids and kilts, with bare arms and necks encrusted with torcs and hair spiked upright with pig fat, the Sessair cut a dash. They are a wild and fine-looking folk. Woad tattoos are very popular and the Sessair of Aileach in particular like to mix chalk with fat in order to whiten their hair, and then have a band of blue woad tattooed around the eyes. Adornment is important to them all, men as well as women, and much time is spent on it. After all, there is no point winning a thousand battles only to hide in the shadows around the opposite sex!

The Sessair are the most battle-crazed of all Tribes of the Earth Goddess. They are renowned for their eagerness to go to war – even without provocation, simply because they like to fight. However, they are not generally interested in conquest or rulership of other tribes for they value freedom above all else and barely tolerate the ambitions of their own Kings, let alone those of any hypothetical High King. Thus it

is rare to find them pressing their advantage – they could probably conquer the whole of Tir Nan Og if they could be motivated to do so, but are likely to stop for a feast as soon as they have plundered a barrel of ale or cauldron of mead.

The Sessair are also known as the Tribe that Stands Up, for their constant willingness to 'stand up and be counted.' Whenever there are heroic deeds to be done or brave adventures to be had, you can be sure that the Sessair will be first to get involved. Whenever there is tyranny and oppression in the land, it is the Sessair who will rise up and fight it off. Even exiled Sessair retain an incredible pride in their tribal background, and are rarely quiet or unassuming. This pride in their own strength leads a great many Sessair to an early death when they attack more powerful foes, but those who survive begin to live up to their own self-images and truly become the mighty heroes the Sessair are famed for.

The most famous member of the Sessair tribe is Sláine mac Roth himself, the Warped One, favoured of the Goddess, said to be the only mortal to have defied



the Lord Weird Slough Feg and escaped with his life. Sláine is headstrong and violent, combining the most extreme features of the Sessair people and the warped one race in a battle-crazed one-man-army of a warrior.

Origins of the Sessair

There are no written records of the origins of the Sessair, since there are no written records in the Land of the Young generally. The past is remembered by poems and stories, not in the form of history set in stone. For this reason, there is no real certainty of anything beyond living memory – every bard alters legends to make them better stories, even just by emphasising some aspects and downplaying others to suit his own whims.

There are two main myths that claim to tell the origin of the tribe, each based on a different interpretation of the name ‘Sessair’ itself. The first, that they are named for a long-ago rescuer and heroine to them, Sesara, is not popular among most of the Sessair themselves but is considered a distinct possibility by druidic scholars. The second, that their name comes from a word meaning ‘to stand,’ is the true origin of the name according to the Sessair nobles and most of the tribe.

A later myth, the Salmon of Knowledge, tells of how King Demna of the Sessair became the cleverest man in all of Eriu, adding insight and intelligence to his might in battle and fleetness of foot.

Queen Sesara

Sesara is the legendary first Queen and founder of the Sessair tribe, who supposedly led a group of Tuatha de Danaan out from slavery in Atlantis and into the lush hills and valleys of Eriu. They chose her as Queen, and named themselves for her, according to one version of the legend. She went on to teach them many of the arts of war, including the use of the feared gae bolga. Most Sessair acknowledge at least a part of this legend. Almost all Sessair noble warriors are taught combat skills by women, either being sent to Dunscaithach in Alba or learning from the war-witches of Rath Grainne in Eriu, so they are not perturbed by the idea that a woman taught the first warriors of the tribe too. Despite this, most are too proud to countenance the idea that their ancestors ever needed rescuing from anywhere or anything – after all, they say, are we not

the Tribe that Stands Up? Do we look like anyone might have ever succeeded in enslaving us?

Some of the less powerful Sessair, particularly those in villages far from Murias, may well accept that Sesara led them out of Atlantis. A few even worship her as an aspect of the Goddess, feeling that the more prominent members of the tribe suppress her because at one time she stood for freedom for all Sessair, not just the rich, powerful, or noble.

The Tribe that Stands Up

It is said that the Goddess once gathered all four of her tribes together in the Otherworld, and asked them how they might best defeat her foes, the fomorians. The Finians muttered that they had best retreat to Finias, and hurl spears over the walls at the sea-demons when they came to lay siege to it. The Tribe of the Shadows crawled off into the darkness, whispering promises to slay the fomors in their sleep. The Fir Domain sat down and talked things over, trying to puzzle out the best plan according to their knowledge of military tactics. The Sessair simply stood up, their axes on their shoulders, and waited for the attack, confident that they could defeat any number of fomorians. The Goddess dismissed all four tribes, never revealing which answer, if any, was the correct one; but ever since that day the Finians have focused their energies on thrown spears and outlasting sieges, the Falians on stealth, the Fir Domain on careful planning and defence, and the Sessair on pride and simply withstanding any amount of attacks and damage. Since that day, too, the Sessair’s near-blind courage has – at least to hear the Sessair version – frequently been all that stood between Tir Nan Og and Ragnarok.

Frequently when the Sessair bards tell this tale they emphasise the supposed cowardice or effeminacy of the other tribes, though other versions, told to the other tribes, are equally critical of the Sessair, portraying them as unimaginative fools too dull-witted to recognise the danger they are in.

The Salmon of Knowledge

In the distant past, a baby boy was born to Murna, who was said to be the granddaughter of Lug the Sun God himself. The father had been Cumhal, Conn of the Bascna kin, but he was slain by treachery and his kin scattered before Murna gave birth. The child was named Demna, and grew to be a fine strong young man,



quick and mighty with a sword. He was fostered out as soon as possible, so that Murna could pretend Cumhal had no heir. Demna soon slew his father's killer, and then sought out the druid Finegas in his hut high in the hills near the source of the River Dôn, so he could learn poetry and the secrets of the universe. Finegas's lifelong desire had been to catch and eat Fintan, the Salmon of Knowledge who swam under a hazel tree in a pool of the river. As soon as Demna came to him, Finegas caught the salmon, and treating this as an omen gave it to Demna to cook, with instructions not to eat it. Demna cooked it as instructed, but could not resist licking the juices that flowed onto his finger when he turned the salmon over. Again Finegas took this as an omen, and gave the whole fish to Demna, who then added great knowledge of divination and a great many other subjects to his strong arm and quick feet.

Demna went on to reunite the Bascna kin and eventually became one of the greatest Kings of the Sessair. He it was who first instituted the tradition of a round hall, where all his warriors could be equal around him, and he is credited with founding the Red Branch of heroes too. Some legends have it that Demna cooked the Salmon of Knowledge in the cauldron that was to become the Cauldron of Plenty, and that from that day on the Cauldron gained its magical powers. On the other hand, the Tribe of the Growling Shields claim that the Cauldron was given to the Sessair by the two Fir Domain founders, Llassar and Cymidu. As with the other tribal treasures, nothing is certain, and the true origin of the Cauldron is lost in the mists of legend.

Sessair Traditions

The Choosing of a King

The Sessair use the divination by entrails spell to give them guidance when choosing a new King, with the chief druid sacrificing the old King in this manner if available, or a volunteer if not. This does not provide an absolute answer, but is intended merely to guide the Tribal Assembly, made up of the cenns of all the Sessair kin. The Tribal Assembly always has the final say, and if the blood spurtings indicate a King they do not approve of, they will choose another. Generally, though, the divination by entrails is considered to be a strong enough omen that the Assembly rarely goes against its suggestion.

The Coronation Ritual

The Sessair's coronation ritual is somewhat disconcerting to watch for an outsider, though they themselves say they have always done things this way and see nothing unusual in it. The other tribes, with their Royal Hunts and strange labyrinth-quests when they crown a King, are the strange ones according to the Sessair. There are two stages to the coronation: the marriage to the Earth Goddess, and the coronation itself.

Every Sessair King is regarded as a Sun King, a personal representative or even incarnation of Lug the Sun God. Thus it is only fitting that he should marry the Earth Goddess, Danu herself. If the Cauldron of Plenty, the great tribal treasure of the Sessair, is available, this ritual is done in actuality – Danu is called forth from the Cauldron by the tribal druid, and is legally married to the new King just as though they were an earthly couple. In times when the Cauldron is lost, another cauldron is used, and filled with sacred herbs and mushrooms whose smoke the chosen King inhales so as to see visions of his bride and wed her symbolically, in the waking dream provoked by the magical vapours. Afterwards he is reminded that among his duties is to be ever alert for any indication as to the whereabouts of the Cauldron, and ever-ready to quest for it if necessary.

The coronation proper involves the ritual sacrifice by the chief druid of a flawless white mare, which is chopped up and boiled in a great stew. The chosen King is disguised as a stallion, and steps out before the Tribal Assembly neighing and whinnying on all fours, making a ritual circuit of his hall. Next he climbs into the cauldron of stew, offering the people the horsemeat and eating of it himself. Finally, he is confirmed as King, swearing an oath to be fearless and being given a cloak of golden eagle feathers by the tribal druid.

King and Assembly

The Tribal Assembly is a powerful force in Sessair life – often more powerful than the King himself. It comprises all the Conns of the clans, along with every member of the Red Branch. The Sessair are so keen to avoid dictators and tyrants that they sometimes go too far in the other direction, allowing their natural suspicion of their King to dominate their politics. This can mean the King is far too restrained by the Assembly even when his motives are good, and many a strong





Assembly has kept a foresighted but weak King from achieving great things. The more conservative among the Assembly would prefer to risk that than chance a strong King dominating the tribe.

On the other hand, the Assembly is not known for its power-politics either. It has long been a law of the Sessair that any discussion about politics must be in public, at the Assembly itself, with a punishment of ritual sacrifice by suffocation for anyone who break the law. Thus few are willing to engage in conspiratorial activities of any kind. The tribal druids and other lawyers are particularly stringent if it comes to pass that slander or accusations of criminality have been spoken in private, and any such offenders will certainly find themselves face down in the nearest bog with a garrotte for a neck-tie if they are caught.

Foes and Allies

The Sessair rarely ally with any other tribe, for two main reasons. Firstly, they are wary of empires, and very concerned lest an alliance become a merger, which could be the beginning of one King growing too powerful and taking away the liberty of the ordinary members of the tribe. Secondly, they love fighting too much to ever wish to reduce the number of possible foes. Despite this, they have no long-term wars with the other Earth Goddess tribes, perhaps because they prefer fighting to actual conquering. Their enmity for the fomorians, though, is legendary. They have little love for the drunes, Fir Bolg, Norsemen or titans, either, but the fomorians have been their most hated foes for as long as the most knowledgeable Sessair bards can remember.

'Among the Celts the women are nearly as tall as the men, whom they rival in courage... the fight is no less fierce with the women than with the men themselves... the women charge with swords and axes and fall upon their opponents uttering a hideous outcry.'

— Ancient Chronicle

Women Warriors and War-Wives

Many women among the Sessair, especially those of Rath Grainne, are as fierce and hardy warriors as the menfolk. The other Earth Goddess tribes have their share of women warriors too, but the Sessair seem to have far more than their fair share, and the women gain just as much respect as the men in combat. There are plenty of female warped ones, and even the Red Branch has a number of women warriors.

Even those Sessair women who do not fight on the front line attend major battles, along with their children, to practise the ancient Sessair tradition of encouraging their men by a combination of jeers and threats. These women will also fight if absolutely necessary, but woe betide their menfolk if it should become necessary. Again, this is not uncommon among the other Earth Goddess tribes in time of war, but the Sessair women have turned it into an art-form, and regard it as virtually an obligation to attend every battle along with their children.



Game Effect of War-Wives

Any warrior whose wife is attending a fight or battle as a war-wife, that is, encouraging him from the sidelines, gains a +5% bonus to all attack rolls and a +10% bonus to all Persistence tests. These bonuses last for the duration of the battle, even if he moves out of earshot of his wife.

Wonder Voyages

Some Sessair, living as they do so close to the great Western ocean, feel a yearning to set forth on great voyages of discovery – to find out if there are other lands beyond Tir Nan Og, perhaps the remnants of great Atlantis or similar magical countries. This is a rare occurrence, often prompted by the gods themselves, and rarer still is it when the brave ones who set out on such a wonder voyage return. When they do, it is often a lone survivor, sometimes arriving back in Eriu decades after he set out. Anyone who does come back from the great ocean is celebrated as a great hero, for they invariably have strange tales of mysterious islands hidden by mists, great sea-monsters, sunken lands just glimpsed through the water, bizarre societies, ghostly lands and many other fantastic stories.

Geography

The Sessair have always claimed Northern Eriu and divided it into three parts. Ulaid the Mighty in the North East, Aileach the Bold, covering the West and North West, and Airghialla the Fair in the centre and stretching to the South-East. The capital of Ulaid is Rath Grainne, the capital of Aileach is Cruachu and the capital of Airghialla is the capital city and pride of the Sessair, Murias.

Murias

Where the river Dôn meets the northern tip of the inland sea, there is no gentle widening of the waterways, no estuary calmly opening out into the blue. Instead, there are whirling rapids and an enormous waterfall which thunders loudly enough to be heard for many miles around, foam and mist filling the air, rainbows forming in the meeting of sun and water. The drop is steep, the currents strong and the rocks around the rapids are impressively sharp. Here the salmon travel from the inward sea northward against the current along the Dôn to colder waters. They leap up the waterfall in their journey and are so plentiful that spring brings many bears to the falls and birds flock

to gather their scraps. The bears are hungry and so are their nearest neighbours; for high above the falls sit the roundhouses of Murias and, when winter is ended, the young warriors come to the water's edge to try their skill. They tie ropes to their spears, creating simple harpoons, and see what they can catch. Some of the more adventurous also try their first attempt at bear-baiting. This seldom ends happily, for the bears are intent on food whatever its shape. More sensible fishermen leave them alone and concentrate on the fish and birds of many different kinds to be found here, taking their catches home to the roundhouses perched on the rocks above.

Murias seems to have sprung from humble beginnings. Once a tiny fishing settlement on the edge of the falls, it now sprawls along the west bank of the river, alive with granaries, weave-and-dye houses, taverns and markets. The city has grown in a genial, haphazard way. There are no marked out streets as such, simply tracks made by centuries of carts and cattle. Roundhouses spring up everywhere, usually lit at night by torches of straw and tar shoved into ground sconces to be found outside the doors. Come nightfall, clansmen eat and drink together, friends meet, get drunk and fight, and something is always going on. The Sessair do not hide in their homes, but love to go out and meet each other, even if it is only to argue. They are busy people. Even when they relax, they are doing something.

Defences and Walls

Murias is one of the very few settlements, perhaps the only city, to have no defending wall, ditch or ramparts. This can seem astonishing to other tribes (and other settlements) for Murias has had many attackers to fend off, between Druces from the south, Fomori from the north and other tribes from everywhere! The city is well defended at the river's edge, for the current is too fast and furious to make landing easy and many rocks wait below the pull of the rapids but, between the city and its foes, only the plains of Airghialla stand, so vast that an army can be seen approaching days before attack. The rationalisation behind the lack of defences appears to be the Sessair determination to defend their own with no more than blood, strength and courage. They reason that, if Murias can only stand by hiding behind a wall, the city deserves to fall and, if the Sessair trust to defences too much, they will grow complacent and lose their taste for attack, the very taste which makes enemies run from them. No



retreat, no surrender and, if the city is burned to the ground, the tribe will take back every ell of land and start again. Murias is a city of the heart and cannot be defended by fortifications but by the determination of its people to fight and die for it. Without this courage, a city can only become a shell of a home, a collection of strangers. This makes for great poetic reasoning but the other tribes do not quite believe it. Most will say the Sessair lack the intelligence to understand basic tactics so they make up for it with a lot of fierce talk.

The Sessair resolution not to build a wall around the city has certainly made it a target for enemies, and the city has been rebuilt from the ground upwards on a number of occasions, each time the roundhouses getting bigger and grander. It is thought their design is the original prototype for most of the buildings to be found among the tribes of Danu. When a new chieftain is chosen, the tribe builds his house where he chooses. A canny chieftain will make sure his home is awesome to look at, traditional in design (to show he still links closely to the ancestral spirits of the tribe) and not too remote from the clansmen, who demand both majesty and approachability from their king. Once his house is built, his kinsmen will rebuild their homes around his own, again with a view to looking most grand.

The people of the Sessair would scorn any chieftain who tried to corral his enclosure. Only one chieftain, Regnal Mac Roige, ever tried this in an attempt to augment his position by creating a sense of aloof royalty. His wall was built from a white blue-veined marble, sculpted by masons of great skill. It was exceedingly tall and very expensive, and it pleased Regnal, for it looked every bit as impressive as the royal wall of Gorias. At last, he thought, Murias would have the looming grandeur to be found in the other cities.

The morning after it was completed, Regnal woke to see the entire top of the wall adorned with six inches of thick, fresh pig dung. The dung was scraped off but the smell had seeped down into the newly-laid mortar, the white marble was stained in a manner quite repulsive and Regnal's wall had to be dismantled. The King was furious, but as Regnal's fool pointed out to him, anyone who could cover the top of a wall with fresh pig dung had a lot of pigs and too much magic. As the city has its fair share of swine-herds and magicians, detecting

the culprit was impossible. Regnal's reign was never regarded as a glorious chapter in Sessair history.

The Building of a Roundhouse

Insulting walls aside, the building of any roundhouse calls for much help from friends and neighbours. Wooden poles are thrust into the ground in a circular perimeter, to form the frame of the house. Between the poles the walls will be built of whatever material comes to hand - wood, mud or stone. These will be pasted together with a mortar of earth and other ingredients. A great collar of wood will be placed on the circular wall to provide scaffolding for the roof poles, which are then set into the wall top and slanted inwards, meeting at the top.

Reeds are then thatched thickly between them, sometimes to the extent of covering the house wall and almost reaching the ground. Some roundhouses have holes at the top of the roof in order to let smoke out, but this is not always necessary, depending on the reeds used. Looser thatching allows smoke to escape through the eaves of the building, heavier keeps warmth in and rain out. It all depends on what the builder wants and, of course, the skill of the thatcher. This done, the walls and doors are painted with intricate designs in dazzling colours, sometimes knotwork and spirals, sometimes depictions of birds, beasts and gods. Most roundhouses have one room though sometimes an upper floor is built. Hides and fabrics are often used to cordon off more private areas. More usually though each roundhouse is either a single room with a function, such as a kitchen or a greeting hall, or is the home to one family. The notable exception is the king's palace, which is inevitably a huge building with many rooms.

Once the roundhouse is built, it is traditional for the person whose house has been built to thank all helpers in the work by holding a great banquet for them. As everybody loves food and drink, they are seldom short of volunteers! Murias is full of these houses, some opulent, others simple, but most with colourfully-decorated walls, both outside and in. The effect is perhaps better appreciated from a sky-ship than the ground, as the thundering spray flies upwards from the falls where one can see the houses dotted like jewels along the riverside, surrounded by woods and the plains of Arghialla sweeping beyond the ancient and homely city, towards the west.



Airghialla

The great plains of Arghialla are not quite as flat as bards would have one believe, for hill ranges can be seen rising to the north and west, while forests grow deep and unmapped to the south and east. Still, from the viewpoint of Murias, Airghialla lies spread before the eyes like an endless sea of long grass, making its way to the blue horizon. On a clear day, it is said, the sky comes down and kisses the earth and, when night comes, the stars look close enough for an arrow to hit.

Smaller settlements without an infinite supply of battle-crazed warriors are more prosaic about defensive walls, which tend to follow the most traditional pattern, a low wall of stone topped with a wooden palisade. Also to be seen on Airghialla's plains are herds of wild horses. These are hard to tame but, once broken, can be sold for considerable sums to Rath Grainne for riding and to Murias for chariot work.

As might be expected in a land so level, chariots are extremely popular across Airghialla, and those wishing to live by their skill with these vehicles come to this territory to train. Chariot racing is a much-loved sport both inside and outside of Murias. There are annual tourneys in which many bars of iron and much silver jewellery can be won. A good charioteer can make a fine living, though his skills make him among the first to be conscripted when war arises.

There are many small farming communities here, for the soil is very fertile. Cattle and pigs feed well on these pastures and, where they are found, raiders follow. Prosperous Airghialla is swiftly becoming the breadbasket for all of Northern Eriu, for neither of the other two territories produce enough food for their people. It is hardly surprising then, that bards and druids return to a theme old to the ears of the Sessair but welcome none the less; the Legend of the Cauldron of Plenty.

THE GREAT CAIRN

According to the Sessair, the Great Cairn is the most sacred place in all of Eriu. Here, the druids say, the Goddess began her work of creation, giving birth to gods, land and men. The benign presence of this place is thought to be the reason for Airghialla's beauty and fertility yet no-one knows exactly what the mound's original function was. To the unknowing eye, it is an unusually shaped hillock, with a huge cairn of stones

on its flat top, in which lies a very ancient burial chamber. Many wonder if some great hero or avatar of the Gods is buried deeper down but none probe further. Those who see with the heart are probably nearer the truth than anyone else. At the Great Cairn, the power of the Mother of the Earth is to be found in peaceful abundance but this power is not a thing to be taken, as though it could be wrenched out of the earth like iron. Here, the Mother listens and gives as she sees fit. To attempt magic in such a place would be at best, impolite, and at worst, deadly. For that reason spell craft is never carried out here and any chieftain who attempted to explore the mound for its secrets would soon know death at the hands of his own kinsmen. The only rituals appropriate to this place are the rights of passage every member of the tribe must face. This is a place to present newborn babies to the view of Goddess and God, a place of marriage, (though woe to the one who breaks the vow made here) and a place of initiation for the Red Branch Warriors (see The Red Branch). Finally, this is the place where, after seven years, tribal chieftains are ritually sacrificed at the end of their reign. There are many holy places throughout the lands of the four tribes, but the Great Cairn is, perhaps, the most universally respected of them all.

It may be the power seeping through the land from the Great Cairn is what makes Airghialla so lovely, giving an impression of peace seldom to be found elsewhere. Still, it is not a widely populated land. At night, the wind keens so mournfully as to inspire tales of the banshee, the wailing spirits who predict death and sorrow. The great plains can seem desolate to those less interested in nature than in people. Such folk will return to Murias, or make their way northward, to Ulaidh and Eahmain Grainne.

Ulaidh

The north east territory of Northern Eriu is a wild and heathery country where most settlements are on hilltops. The people here regard themselves as tougher and smarter than the other Sessair. Larger than life in everything, the warriors of Ulaidh keep their tempers in fine fettle by fighting among themselves when there's no-one else to hit. Like Murias, Ulaidh has suffered greatly from Fomori and Drune incursions and, when these cease, the Sessair here pick fights with the Finians, almost as a matter of course. The Finians will generally respond with the kind of behaviour the Sessair appreciate; they grab the nearest axes and hurtle over the border for a less than friendly visit.



There is more to these confrontations than mere belligerence. A healthy if grudging respect exists between the Sessair and the Finians, as both tribes know well the challenges of continually battling the nightmare creatures of Tory Island and Lochlann but respect will not change the harsh facts of tribal existence. Continuous attacks from these enemies, together with blighting weather out of the ice floes create substantial food shortages in Ulaidh, and cattle raiding can often be the only way of ensuring a settlement's survival. Airghialla can help but, as neither Ulaidh nor Aileach can feed their growing populations, Airghialla stands in danger of being overfarmed and the chieftains of Murias have made the decision to cut back no more wilderness, for fear of offending the Goddess. Raiding is an important and honourable task to undertake for one's community and much kudos can be gained by bringing food back to the tribe. The Finians understand this; indeed, they are very adept raiders themselves for exactly the same reasons.

RATH GRAINNE

This settlement is named after the very famous war-witch, Grainne ('Gron-ya'). She it was who challenged Malachi, despot of Ulaidh, to battle for rulership of the north east kingdom. The tale says that after much mirth at the lady's presumption, Malachi swung an iron club towards Grainne, who jumped over it and thrust her fingers so far up the king's nose as to feel his brain squirming at her touch. Swift was he to concede her prowess, and swift was she to demand her prize, all the land she could see before her. It was she who built the settlement, on a high hill since called Torr Grainne, and she who instigated the law that this place would be the home and the responsibility of Erian war-witches. Rath Grainne is strictly matriarchal and only war-witches are present at the choosing of a new chieftain. All Sessair women, indeed, most women of the four tribes, are strong hearted and hardy, as ready to fight as their menfolk, but the women of Rath Grainne spend much of their lives training in the arts of war and make formidable foes on the battlefield.

Rath Grainne is a proud settlement, looking upon Murias in the same way a young warrior looks upon his ageing father; respectful, full of ideas and determined to take over. They reason Murias is too old and too used to prosperity to understand the constant battles of the northern territory, while in Rath Grainne, blood runs hot and wits run fast. Famed for the resourcefulness

of its inhabitants, Rath Grainne lays claim to two universally-approved innovations: mail armour and the concept of fostering.

CAOILTE ARMOUR

Behind every great idea there is a story. Bards tell us it was a warrior woman, Caoilte, who received a near-fatal wound from a Fomori blade and found herself unable to fight any longer. Her temper was rendered so unpleasant by her enforced retirement that when the hero Conal Mac Fin came to console her by offering to wed her, she roared at him and struck him with great anger. Conal had brought her a beautiful ring as a token of his faith, a ring she was on the verge of throwing out of the house, along with her unwelcome suitor, when an idea occurred to her. She invited Conal back in and he warily accepted. Caoilte told him that rather than one ring of immense worth, she would rather have a simple plain ring brought to her every time he visited. In this way, she said, she would know he was sincere in his desire for her company, rather than offering her marriage out of pity.

Conal agreed to do this, and so great was his pleasure in speaking with her, she soon had many rings. She sewed these rings together onto a garment of leather designed to cover the neck, shoulders and chest, and the result was an impressive piece of armour. This, she then gave to Conal as her dowry gift when she asked for his hand in marriage, as is the tradition in Rath Grainne. Conal's immediate words of reply are unrecorded, but it is known that after a period of some confusion he accepted both the lady and her gift.

Caoilte's invention was a great improvement on studded hides but, after many experiments, she took it a stage further. She worked out a method of splitting metal rings, interlocking them and re-sealing them to create whole coats of armour, and travelled to Gorias in Albion to meet the famous wonder smith, Weland. He was impressed with her design and created the prototype, which, it must be said, has never been improved upon. They began a venture called Arget Roth ('Silver Wheel') which now, long after the founders' deaths, has twin branches in Rath Grainne and Gorias dedicated to making this magnificent armour. Much high-quality mail is made by impersonators of Caoilte's design and Weland's methods but the mail armour of Arget Roth is still considered the very best. Output is slow, painstaking and prohibitively expensive to all but the grandest of chieftains.



FOSTERING

The whole notion of fostering began long ago, when the war-witches of Rath Grainne found themselves in a dispute with the chieftains of Murias. The king of Murias at that time was Rath Mac Greir, who had no desire to pit Sessair against fellow Sessair in battle, so he organised the kidnapping of several of the children belonging to Rath Grainne's war-leader, Concha Red Scar. By the time Concha's chariot had thundered across the country with her clan at her heels, baying for all-out war with Murias, the hostages and the king's children were such close friends none could separate them. Rath Grainne's war-leader could only be placated by being allowed to return such hospitality and so the king's children went to live in her city for a while.

Since then, fostering has been the norm for rich and poor alike and, though the custom has spread throughout Tir Nan Og, it is definitely still most popular among the Sessair. The idea is to ensure that children grow up with as much experience of different ways of life as possible, even, in exceptional cases, with friends and clansmen in other countries. This may be the reason why many young Sessair leave home so early, to find some greater sense of their own independence outside tribal loyalties. Many join mercenary groups to put into practice the skills they learnt as children. The saying goes that the greatest male warriors go to the Red Branch at Murias, the greatest war-witches stay at Rath Grainne and the greatest fools go to Aileach.

Aileach

The northwest of Eriu is mountainous, beautiful and inhospitable. Gentler terrain includes mountains much higher than to be found anywhere else in Eriu, ominously deep lakes at the foot of every hill and perpetual rain in summer. Winter is bleak and bare here, for the wind comes straight down out of the frozen lands and snow lasts well into spring. The only beasts that fare well are predators such as wolves and sabre-tooths, bears of astonishing size and monstrous creatures far-strayed from the lands of Lochlann. Local fauna less inclined to eat travellers include huge and shaggy cattle, heavily built and long horned, ubiquitous sheep, and great horses bred for strength and stamina as well as speed. Attempted crops include barley and lentils, heather and oats, and a kind of wheat grown specifically to make an amber-coloured alcohol which burns like smooth fire in the belly. This drink, 'Uisce',

is perhaps Aileach's only export. Everything else is needed just where it is. Raids here can occur from family to family and often it is the strongest sword that settles the argument. Raiders caught at a disadvantage by the farmers will not wait long for judgement here, or even death in a wicker man. Food is too scarce for its theft to go unpunished and death swiftly follows discovery of guilt. In the worst of times, the raider may even meet the fate of the cattle he hoped to steal. Airghialla aids with foodstuffs as best it can but life is very harsh here - no-where more so than on the white coast, where stands the place they call the Last City: the settlement of Cruachu.

Cruachu

The good news for the citizens of Cruachu is that food is at least dependable if scarce. Weasels, polecats, rabbits and stoats crouch shuddering among the rocks and if it is possible to eat well without seeing a fresh vegetable from one week to the next, the Sessair of Cruachu manage it. They never touch seaweed or shellfish though the waters provide plenty of both. Were all things as they should be, Cruachu would be rich in fish, blubber and whale oil for lamps but, as it is, Cruachu turns towards the sea with repugnance and an eternal readiness for war. This is the closest of the Sessair settlements to Tory Isle and Lochlann, the homes of the Fomorian demons, and the sea which should supply the Sessair with all their wants is inhabited by a type of mutation common among the Fomori; aquatic monsters colloquially called 'sea-devils' who are willing and able to attack fishing vessels. Not only do these creatures worship the Cyth, they also pollute the waters with filth from their own settlements. Sometimes the Sessair do go fishing but always with an eye for possible trouble. The sight of a lone currach casting nets, so common everywhere else in Tir Nan Og, would be considered unusual and downright foolish here.

Cruachu is a front-line settlement and sustains itself in the knowledge that most full-scale attempts at invasion from the Fomorians would go straight through them. The whole settlement has been built on a war footing. This is a fortress city, built against the steep side of a mountain, facing out over the sea. No poetry about lack of walls is heard here. The walls, and indeed the houses, are made of thick stone, and mud thatched. Roundhouses here do not have roof holes, warmth being at a premium, and the houses are not painted





in the bright colours usual to the Sessair, though woodcarvings and runes of protection are seen over every doorway. Furs cover the walls and floors of every building and fires are made from peat gathered in the great bogs of Aileach. Travellers can only reach the city by a narrow and heavily-guarded road over the mountain passes, or by cloud currachs. Patrols are frequent. As well as locals determined not to be chased out of their homes, Cruachu is a city where many warriors come to prove themselves, or atone for some wrong previously done, by preparing to lay down their lives for the tribe. The atmosphere of the place has a camaraderie and generosity surprising even for the Sessair. What the little these folk have, they will share. Perhaps it is small wonder that some of the greatest fighters come here to understand war and what the tribe is fighting for, before they prepare to join the most prestigious band of warriors in the land, The Red Branch.

The Red Branch

This elite band of warriors is renowned for the bravery of its men, their sheer ferocity in battle being a legend across all of Tir Nan Og. Other tribes have their own equivalent but none are so famous. This may be because the Red Branch genuinely are the most psychopathic warriors in all the world, or because being Sessair, they never stop talking about how amazing they are. Certainly no-one can doubt the sheer power of these fighters, first in the front line of every battle and every war. Their reputation stems

not only from their savagery but from their skill with many kinds of weapon. Combat training is continual and goes beyond the mastery of sword, axe and spear. The greatest weapon available to the Red Branch is the power of the earth itself – the power of the warp-spasm, for most are capable of warping at least occasionally.

The transformation into warp-spasm is horrible to see, eye-balls popping out of sockets and muscles bursting out of skin, indeed, without the hero-harness, most warped warriors would simply let the energy consume and destroy their bodies. To prevent this from happening, warriors of the Red Branch are given a hero harness. This harness is made up of enchanted leather, which conducts the warp-spasm energy across the body in much the same way ley lines channel earth energy across the landscape. Indeed, the Red Branch are thought to possess a hidden knowledge of weapons fuelled directly by the ley energies channelled through the bodies and harnesses of warriors. These are called ‘ley weapons’ and, though reliable tales are told of their existence in other realms, they have not been seen in Tir Nan Og.

With so much power and prestige behind it, it is easy to see why membership of the Red Branch is a coveted and esteemed honour. Joining it, however, is no easy task. A warrior must have proven himself before he is invited to train with them. Should he then be deemed worthy, he will have to go through a gruelling initiation.



The Finians

One of the great Tribes of the Earth Goddess, the Finians occupy the Northlands from Alba down to Northern Albion. Despite harsh winters and brutal sieges, they have learned to survive in these hostile lands. While over the centuries they have acquired a reputation for being exceedingly dour, they are fatalistically sworn to hold their place under these insurmountable odds, stoically defying war, starvation and disease. Both proud and stubborn, Finians do not budge when their beliefs and customs are attacked and they have a long history, with many tales and songs about men who meet grisly fates from attempting to defy tradition.

The soul of the tribe is Finias, its capital city. Many thousands of years old, the city developed around the base of three huge towers that were a gift from the Sea God given to the earliest settlers of the land. Finias is still occupied by the descendants of the first settlers, now a tenacious tribe known as the Finians.

The Finian tribe is made up of thousands of family clans, each of which maintains long histories they can trace back to common ancestry. Clans group together for support. In the wilder territories, clans tend their own lands and do their best to fend off marauders. Clans residing in more civilised settlements are often granted their own sections of town, for which they are expected to take responsibility. Most Finian surnames are the clan name – Mac Conon, or Mac Inna, for example, literally meaning ‘son of...’, but here used figuratively to denote the remote ancestor. This should not be confused with the Sessair practice, again using ‘Mac’ to mean ‘son of’, but here used literally to give the son his father’s forename as a surname.

Each clan is typically made up of a dozen or more kin, operating much as in any other tribe, with responsibility for paying one another’s debts and prosecuting bloodfeud, but the clan is in effect a further social unit between kin and tribe in size. The clan tends to leave kin business well enough alone, except in the most dire cases – for example, a kin feuding against a much more powerful enemy will typically be given assistance by the clan and, if a kin ever has so many of its members slain that the remaining kin cannot avenge the dead, the clan will go to war on their behalf.

Fanatically independent, the Finians have often been forced to rely on ingenuity for survival; this has helped them become more technologically advanced than most of the other tribes. Specifically, these advances have occurred in fields such as medicine, architecture and agriculture, all of which are directly affected by their hard lives and war-beleaguered lands.

As a people, Finians tend to be distrustful of outsiders that have questions about their technologies, and are not eager to share or trade them. The need for self-sufficiency has also created a demand for skilled labourers, and while the capital city still boasts a sizable army, the Finians have a higher percentage of traders and craftsmen than any of the other tribes. While the other tribes view their diversification of labour as a weakness, the Finians consider it to be a great strength, especially in times of crisis when they need to fend off sieges that would otherwise cripple the tribe or trap them behind their city’s walls for entire seasons. During these times, Finians are heavily pressed by starvation and disease, so the need for full grain silos and better medicines has become crucial to their survival.

The Origins of the Finians

As with the other tribes of the Earth Goddess, the Finians have nothing more than legend and guesswork to go on when attempting to determine their tribes origins and why they were named Finians. It is said that all the northern tribes came out of Atlantis many generations ago, each bearing its own legendary artefact. Certainly the Finians have one such, the Flaming Spear of the Sun, capable of defeating almost any foe with its sheer might. How they got it, though, along with the rest of the history of the tribe, is a subject of tales and songs, not known fact.

Whether or not they did arrive from Atlantis, the possibility that the name Finian has a meaning of its own can be examined. Druidic and bardic scholars are divided as to whether it derives from Fionn, meaning ‘to discover,’ or Finn, meaning ‘fair’ or ‘the fair one.’ A later myth, the Salmon of Knowledge, is shared with the Sessair and concerns the legendary founder



of the tribe. Again, his name is either Fionn or Finn, depending on the bard telling the tale.

The Discoverers

The Finians sometimes claim that their name hearkens back to the time they first left Atlantis, when the other tribes of the Earth Goddess settled in the relatively pleasant lands of Albion, Eriu and Cymry. The Finians, never satisfied with what could be gained easily, insisted on voyaging further north, into the icy and inhospitable land of Alba. Thus they were named for their instincts to explore, to discover new land rather than simply settling wherever they landed.

Cynics have suggested that this spirit of discovery is absent in the present-day Finian, who seems satisfied enough to stay in his fortified home and defend it against all comers. This suggestion is based on a lack of understanding of the Finian character, which, while stoic in defence, becomes inquisitive once he is certain his land and his people are safe for a time. Few outside of Alba are aware of the heroism of those Finians who band together to take vengeance on the fomorians deep in their home territory, freezing Lochlann itself, though it often means the death of every Finian in the group. Likewise, few outsiders know of the bravery of the Finian sailors who set out on wonder-voyages from the western shores of Alba almost as often as do the Sessair from western Eriu.

The Fair Ones

As might be expected from any Celtic tribe, the Finians are generally quite happy to be thought of as the Fair Ones! Although they do not take such a consummate pride in their appearance as some of the vainer Sessair, Finian warriors of both sexes will be careful to ensure their hair is neat and stylish, either spiked and whitened with lime or reddened with ochre and blood as appropriate. Males will also comb and scrub their moustaches.

The Salmon of Knowledge and the Sessair Connection

The tale of Demna and the Salmon of Knowledge has already been told (see page 86) and need not be repeated here. The Finians have a variant of this tale, though they call the hero who gains his magical wisdom from eating the salmon by a different name: Finn or Fionn. Sometimes this hero is said to be the founder of the Finian tribe.



Certain scholarly druids have speculated that this could mean the Finians and Sessair sprang originally from the same tribe, and were somehow separated hundreds of years ago, long after they left Atlantis. Both tribes have legends of a great battle, in which the warriors of the tribe were divided in loyalties; both tribes, though, claim they won. This insistence on victory might hide the real truth – that neither side won, but after a battle that caused devastation on both sides, the two sides came to an arrangement whereby the Finians would leave Eriu forever and settle to the north. Such speculation is rarely expounded within earshot of either Finian or Sessair warriors.

In any case, Finn or Fionn may have given his name to the tribe – either Finn for his fair features, or Fionn because he discovered great magical knowledge when he ate the Salmon of Wisdom. Whether or not this is the same Finn as is mentioned in more modern legends of Finn Mac Cool, or Fionn Mac Cumhail, is uncertain. It is equally possible that Mac Cool drew some of his legendary fame from the earlier Finn, though there is no doubt that he was a mighty hero in his own right.



Traditions of the Finians

Choosing and Crowning a King

A new Finian king may be chosen in one of two ways – by the old king, when abdicating or coming to the end of his term, or by divination. In either case, the choice must be ratified by the tribal assembly.

The first method allows the Finians to avoid the danger of a new king being chosen simply because he is very different in style from the old one. They would regard this as a waste of time and effort, since he would likely attempt to undo his predecessor's best achievements. The assembly would prefer to ensure that a new king will have the wisdom to continue with his predecessor's programmes, and so the Finians have for centuries listened to the outgoing king's opinion when it comes to choosing his replacement. They rarely appoint an inappropriate king in any case; if a leader was good enough to rule them, he is also good enough to pick his successor.

The other method, that of divination, sometimes works parallel with the first method rather than instead of it. For such a major decision, it is inevitable that many ordinary Finians and professional seers alike will have prophetic dreams on the subject. It is their duty to bring these dreams to the attention of the assembly. In most cases, the dreams will strongly confirm the old king's choice for his successor.

Occasionally the old king will die or become incapacitated before having a chance to name his replacement. In this case, divination of any kind is acknowledged as the only effective way to find the best king. The Alban tradition of the 'second sight' or simply 'the sight' usually means that there are a great many different Finians who can and generally will come forth with their visions or dreams of the new king. Again, these divinations almost invariably concur.

King and Assemblŷ

In Finian society, the King is certainly not regarded as having absolute power. He rules by consensus, not by tyranny. Fortunately, most of his followers usually agree with his political views anyway.

To an outsider, particularly another northern tribesman, the Finians often seem too agreeable. A character used to the constant argument and debate of the Sessair tribal assembly may find the apparent meek acceptance of the Finian assembly somewhat unnatural, even worrying. In fact, the Finians are just as apt to become loud and aggressive with those who do not share their point of view as the Sessair are; it is just that most Finians do happen to share the same point of view. With somewhat less wanderlust than their Sessair cousins, and a rather more hostile environment, Finian adults tend to think there is only one possible answer to most political questions – to endure. To outlast the enemy. This has worked so often for the tribe that many of them seem unable to conceive of any other tactic. The only time a major disagreement between king and assembly is likely is when the king is mad or otherwise lacking his full competence.

Foes and Allies

The Finians still feel an odd connection with the Sessair, and the two tribes are certainly similar in culture and even share some of the same legends. However, each tribe is also fiercely independent, and in most cases this connection is expressed in mutual cattle-raiding and the utmost rivalry. The Fir Domain are generally disliked too, though the raiding here is a little more one-sided – the Finians raid Albion incessantly, whereas the Fir Domain do not so much raid Alba as make occasional attempts to invade it outright. The Finians rarely ally with any of the other northern tribes, though occasionally they will negotiate a joint raid with the Sessair against another foe, such as the fomorians or Fir Domain.

For the Finians, the main foe is and always will be the fomorians. They at least have this in common with their Sessair rivals. The fomorians infest the ice sheet of Lochlann, part of which extends over northern Alba itself. For this reason they are an ever-present threat, not even needing to cross the seas to get to Finian lands, as they do to raid the Sessair. Being sea devils, they also infest the icy seas around Alba, making fishing or sea trade fraught with danger. For many Finians, battling the fomors is an almost religious duty. In defence against them, every man, woman and child will take up arms and fight to the last, knowing that being captured would be worse than death.



The Sight

One of Alba's most famed and feared qualities is that many of the Finians inhabiting it are gifted – or as some would put it, cursed – with the divinatory power known as Second Sight, or simply the Sight. This seems to be passed down through families in much the same way as the blood of heroes that makes some warriors warped. Just as it is speculated that a race of primal beast lords fathered the original warped ones, another ancient race may have once bred with humanity, specifically the ancestors of the Finians. Perhaps these were El creatures, or perhaps more natural folk, but in any case their descendants are noted for their powers of prediction and in some cases sorcery.

Military Academies of Alba

Warriors travel from every Earth Goddess tribe to northern Alba, to learn their trade from the famed warrior-women of this region. The three most prominent teachers are Aifa, Scathach and Cerena Fair-Mane. They take in boys of every tribe, usually with little concern for the current state of war or peace between the Finians and the other tribes – though Aifa is not so politically detached and may refuse to take on a pupil from Gorias or another place with whom the Finians are warring at the time. Later in life, many of these warriors return to Alba to learn what is called in the local tongue 'Luth Gleas' or 'tricks of war'.

Tales of the Fianna

The most famed of all Finian warriors are known as the Fianna. Many are the stories associated with the Fianna and their bravery, and it is said that to write them all in the Ogham script would require all the parchment ever made in Alba, Albion, Cymru and Eriu combined and Finian bards are required to know them all. One of the more important legends is The Theft of the Hounds, which explains why the horses of the Finians are the best to be found amongst the Tribes of the Earth Goddess.

The Theft of the Hounds

It is said that at one time the Fianna warriors were more famed for the quality of their hounds than their horses, particularly two fine specimens, Bran and Skolan. Today though their horses are the envy of the tribes of the Earth Goddess, whereas the large mastiff-wolf-cross dogs of the old days are now found throughout northern Tir Nan Og. This all stems back to a fateful

hunt between the Fianna and a royal party of the Fir Domain which took place during a brief interlude of peace many hundreds of years ago.

A young prince called Arthyr, son of the Fir Domain king, took a fancy to Bran and Skolan and stole them from the Fianna during the hunt, drawing them off then capturing them with heavy nets. The Fianna inevitably pursued, and after a fierce battle with many dead on both sides the Fir Domain king sued for peace with the Fianna warriors. As part of the settlement, Bran and Skolan were returned to the Fianna, though Arthyr was permitted to breed a litter of puppies from them on a pair of powerful mastiffs of his own. In return he had to give over the prize horses of Gorias to the Fianna, a chestnut mare and grey stallion of exceptional quality.

From the puppies of Bran and Skolan sprang the war dogs of the Fir Domain, and later through captures in war and trickery the war dogs of the Tribe of the Shadows and Sessair as well. From the chestnut mare and grey stallion came the steeds of all the Fianna, and these are guarded with great care, for the Fianna are determined not to let other tribes breed from these superb horses as they bred from the Fianna's dogs.

TERRITORIES

The northern territories of the Finians border dangerously close to both Midgard and Lochlann so, when the heavy snows finally cease late in the spring, the tribe's warriors must ceaselessly contend with assaults by Fomorians and berserkers while the remaining members scramble to grow and gather enough crops to survive the next winter. Their brethren along the southern border do not have it any easier and must defend their territory year round from the staggered onslaughts of their sister tribes the Fir Domain and the Sessair.

In the borderlands, moors, and highlands clans establish small settlements that are often spaced kilometres apart. Clan members live in large round huts called crofts. The lower walls of the croft are built from the red sand stone that is common to the lands, then builders pack sod against the outer walls for extra insulation. The upper support of the croft is a framework of wood beams that taper to a single spire in



the centre of the room, upon which is secured a heavy thatched roof. Beneath the huts are dug underground crawl spaces used as storage rooms, which the Finians need to hold supplies for the long winters. For food, the clans hunt stag and hairy one, fish for salmon, raise sheep, and harvest small crops of tubers and grains, which they store for the winter months. They also use hides and bones to make clothing and tools.

The Southern Borderlands

The southern borders of the Finian territory push into the lowlands of Northern Albion, forming a vast and largely unoccupied wilderness. The lowland hills spill their steep arches of soggy grass down into broad, sweeping valleys stained wine-dark from the heather and grooved with cold white babbling streams. Overhead, crows toss against the clouds like coal-black flakes of ash, throwing themselves headlong into the strong sea winds that eat their way inland. On the northern horizon, pale blue highland peaks smear and dissolve into an even bluer sky.

At sunset, the sky blushes a bloody crimson that seems to fold back the sea wind and slowly drapes a dusky veil of mist over the low grassy glens lined with willows and birch. At dawn, the mist ebbs back into the heather-covered moors, devoured slowly by the morning sunlight as it splinters through the twisted wild trees.

Kilometres from humanity, Northern Albion is a no-man's land, lonely and empty. Yet, there is an unnerving stillness, as if the land itself is watching. The air is thick and moist with fog and rain here is frequent. A fair amount of the lowlands is moist and boggy and, where the earth has dried, sharp rocks jut crookedly from the soil like hag's teeth. Over the years, the Finians have bound the war-torn borderlands with great serpentine coils of breast-high cobbled

walls braced against sod steps as crude fortifications to help them defend against attacks from the Tribe of the Growling Shields and the Sessair.

The Northern Highlands

The northern borders of the Finian territory are frigid and hostile. Across the horizon, sharp mountainous crags conspiratorially shoulder one another as if they are trying to cut off all sight of habitable earth. The terrible winds hammer the rising foggy mists into sheets of sleet and snow and the air is so cold it feels as if it could shatter a man's lungs. Dull yellow clouds hang low and looming, full of texture like discarded wool trimmings. In the winter months, the banks of snow rise deep as ocean swells. Icy storms continue straight through spring and even in the summer, there are occasional flurries. During the warmer months, the grass is thin and fragile, barely noticeable against the miles of flinty soil. Everywhere, bare rocks thrust sharp edges from earth and the ground is still dotted with irregular two- to three-inch-deep patches of snow. Farther north, the mountains continue until their blue peaks dissolve into nothingness, devoured by the sky and the great sheets of ice beyond. From the eastern cliffs, one can view the ocean miles below as it stretches out towards Midgard and to the west beyond the mountains lie Lochlann and Tory Island.

In the northern highlands, settlements are seasonal and mostly consist of military outposts geared towards defence. In the colder months, residents often migrate into the southern and eastern highlands, either staying with relatives or signing on to military posts in the capital.

Southern Highlands

The southern highlands are slightly more habitable than the icy northlands. Down the adjoining hillsides, rushing streams foam over moss-grown stone and



tumble into smooth shallow pools of peaty-brown water, whose edges are licked by olive and russet-coloured ferns. The clefts between the hills are filled with stunted trees and, at dawn, the silhouettes of their branches curve like great antlers, piercing the lemon-coloured sky. Hanging in the distant horizon, ever-present wisps of dark-grey clouds creep like thieves across the mountain tops, their edges shadowy and saturated with impending rain. Although the snows thaw away by mid-spring, the altitude keeps the temperature from getting hot enough to burn away the fog.

Finians of the southern highlands tend to make permanent settlements and most live there with their clans year round. The land is hilly and the rock-filled soil difficult to till. However, there are a few lochs and streams and the fishing is decent all year round. In smaller settlements, dark soil from the lowlands is sometimes carted in for planting heartier crops such as wheat and barley. From the stream banks, locals also collect the salmon that wash ashore after they have spawned, to use as fertilizer.

CREATION OF FINIAS

Like her sister cities, Finias was built in the time before legends, during the ancient years which no mortal thoughts can recall. Finias was a gift to the Tuatha De Danann, from the Sea God Manannan Mac Lir. The God himself chose great slabs of rock from the ocean floor and sculpted them with his hands and breath into three towers, to pay respect to Blodeuwedd, Morrighu and Ceridwen, the different aspects of the goddess. When the towers were finished, the Tuatha De Danann, the children of Danu, pulled the city up from the bottom of the sea using great chains forged by the fiery blood of dragons and tempered in the icy brine of the northern sea.

Hundreds at a time, the Tuatha De Danann came to raise the city. They pulled for months, their bare skins chafed raw by the thick metal links gnawing into their backs and shoulders. Once the children of Danu had pulled the towers from the depths they rolled them far up into the highlands on felled oak trees, pushed by men and herds of oxen. They were erected at dawn on Beltaine and the people arranged them as if they were three fingers making the Sign of Light.

The walls were then carved with braided runes and enchanted by witchery to make them impregnable against all enemies. The priestesses boiled bones and made a paste to seal the mortar of the towers. Finally, one hundred oxen were slaughtered and their blood was spilled down each side of the three towers to bless them and give them strength. For each of the slaughtered oxen, one man and his family were chosen to remain behind at the towers to keep watch over the northern lands. These warriors were given title over the towers and surrounding hillocks and were to settle there as the new protectorates against the fomorians. It is from these one hundred warriors that the present-day Finians descended.

Upon the rise of the moon, the towers and their inhabitants were dedicated to the Goddess as her shield against those who would despoil and drain her lands. This celebration, known as the Ardaí Túir, is still held by the Finians in mid-spring.

As the years passed, the tribe grew, settling into the nearby hummocks and down into the pastures of the lower hills. The pastures, thick with clover, made excellent grazing grounds for highland cattle native to the surrounding lands. The cattle were plentiful and an average-size highland bull stood two metres at the shoulder. At first, the Finians hunted the huge shaggy beasts for meat and hides but, over the years learned to domesticate them. While the beasts were stubborn, they were not nearly as tenacious and obstinate as the Finians who prized the creatures for their thick woolly coats, which were used to make warm winter hides and for the long curled horns of the bulls that they carved into various tools and items such as spoons, sewing needles and jewellery.

It was during the rule of Queen Arias the Flame-White, when the city's towers were almost torn from the ground and sundered across the lands by a massive army of fomorians under the leadership of King Grumoach. The Fomorian king drove his hordes of grotesque sea devils up to the very base of the three towers, slaughtering and laying waste to the surrounding lands, leaving them withered, barren and lifeless. Those Finians lucky enough to enter into the great towers were spared their lives, only to watch the fiendish armies below roast the flesh of their kinsmen over their own burning homes, gnawing them down





to marrowless bone. When the evening came, King Grumoach had his armies build huge pyres around the base of each of the towers, demanding the fire be bright enough to bake everyone within the walls. Then the fomorian king gave orders that the blood of every child his devils could find be spilled upon his weirdstone and he began a terrible chant that tore ravenously at the tower walls, greedily stripping them of the ancient sorcery that protected them. Standing atop the highest battlement of Ceridwen's tower, Queen Arias offered her own still beating heart to the goddess if she would grant her a way to defeat the fomorians and save her people.

Drawing upon the Queen's fury, Ceridwen transformed Arias the Flame-White into a terrible and murderous weapon, a sun spear whose thirst for blood was so insatiable that its blade must forever be kept in a cauldron of poppies in order to sedate it. The sun spear threw itself screaming from the tower's ramparts and plummeted into King Grumoach's throat, slicing through his corpulent fleshy hide like a maggot moves through dung. In a second motion, the spear lifted the fomorian's skewered corpse from the ground and flew back towards the tower where it sunk its blade deep into the sea-stone wall, crucifying Grumoach before

his troops as his ichors drizzled slowly out of his carcass onto the crackling conflagration beneath.

After the siege of Grumoach, the Finians built a great wall around the three towers called 'Múr Na Laochra', which meant 'Warrior's Wall'. Still dwarfed by the staggering stature of the towers, the wall stood five metres high, forming a protective circle around them. The wall was built from stones and wood bonded together by a concrete mortar mixed from boiled bones, blood and lime. The Finians placed a gate in the wall in front of each of the towers. Each gate was made from broad ash timbers shod with iron plates and they bound them to the walls with stout iron hinges. Long spikes were pounded into both sides of the doors so warriors could mount the brain-balls of their enemies on the gates as a grisly but uncontested representation of their status.

Within the confines of Múr Na Laochra, the tribesmen built hundreds of small round crofts for their growing families and thus Finias began to expand into a full-fledged city. At first, the Finians were strictly warriors and hunters with a few injured and old among them who would watch over cattle or gather wild grains that grew in the meadows. The city and its population



increased and with its expansion came the need for supplemental food sources. Citizens became less reliant on large animals for sources of food due to the impracticality of keeping cattle inside the safety of the walls during sieges. Instead, more tribesmen turned to jobs such as farming and raising small animals such as chickens, sheep, pigs and goats. Citizens began to favour smaller domesticated animals over the larger highland cattle as sources of meat and wool because they were easier to pull inside Múr Na Laochra during enemy attacks. Smaller domesticated animals proved a more reliable source of milk, meat, eggs and leather. They were also easier to lead up and down the long road to the lower pastures.

In addition to making fair grazing lands, the moist black soil of the lower pastures was also excellent for planting cabbages and turnips, which the tribe readily used to supplement their diet of salt pork, capons and goat's milk. The Finians learned to store vast stashes of turnips, barley, oats and wheat inside the towers for times when they were threatened with siege and starvation. In time, the city grew so self sufficient that it could remain under siege for months and still survive the winter. There are more than a few tales of Finians waiting within their city for the winters to starve would-be conquerors and then rushing out of the walls to attack once winter has weakened their enemies.

The Lands Surrounding the City of Finias
Finias is located in the eastern highlands several miles above Alba's seacoast. It is a grim location indeed. Sodden fog clouds seeping up from the lowlands entwine with gnashing frigid gales that come howling down from the ice sheets and northern highlands. This causes the highlands surrounding Finias to be blanketed by thick banks of heavy fog and an almost constant drizzle. As if by its own longing, the city seems to draw the rain to it and there is a common belief that it only pours so much on Finias because the stones in the tower walls yearn to return to the sea. Colloquially, Finians refer to their exceptional rains as 'the dram of spirits' and often regard it as an excuse for their glumness.

The city itself sits on the natural foundation of a huge flat rock hillside flanked by clusters of wild blue hills that slope upwards forming steep precipices streaked with bright lines of tumbling salmon streams. Due north of the city, a crevasse known as the 'Sea-Devil's Jaws' drops hundreds of metres into the eastern sea.

Looking down from the lip of the ledge, the tops of the clouds look like small white hills and the gull's cries and sound of crashing waves creep hauntingly up the cliff face. Farther below along the rocky seacoast, wind-whipped waves dash against crags and spires that claw forth from the water like sculpted monsters. Flowing down from the western highlands, a wide river spills into the Sea-Devil's Jaws. Late in the summer it carries huge chunks of ice down from the mountains and sends them crashing thunderously into the sea.

The city relies on the icy river as a pure source of water and the citizens sometimes collect ice chunks to fill the great reservoir they have dug within the city walls. To the northwest, behind the river, the mountains rise in terrible leering shapes covered with snow and scarred ravines on which nothing grows. Towering spires of rock splintering into the sky, they change with the light from blue, to grey, to silver.

A few miles south east of the city is a short rise of hummocks once used as burial grounds. The hummocks surround a sizable loch called 'Loch Na Taibhsi' which means 'Lake of Ghosts'. The loch is unfathomably deep and its smooth surface glistens as if it were poured from melted glass. Knotted fringes of bright saffron weed cling to the smooth stones along the water's edge. Before each winter, the Finians gather the weeds and spread them across the turnip fields to help fertilize and replenish the soil. On the slopes of the hummocks, the Finians have planted hundreds of mountain ash to protect them should the spirits of the dead become restless. During summer's end, the loch catches the reflection of rowan berries, red as blood, and becomes a glaring sheet of crimson.

To the south, a long road twists erratically through the sloping glens and into the lower valley. Once it reaches the pastures beneath, the road breaks off into a hundred smaller footpaths that quickly disappear into the wild woods and moors that shadow the lowlands. Standing near the edge of the south road, one can trace sun and shadow as it races over deep gullies, deer forest, lochs and moors. Along the road towards the lower pastures, ruins of old crofts sleep, sprays of briar and fraoch chiselling through the crumbling stonework. Usually situated a hundred or so metres back from the twisting path, the ruins rest as grim reminders of what happens to those who fail to shelter themselves behind the city's walls when invading hordes attack.



In the lower valleys, the rich black soil is covered with verdant blankets of red clover, moss and tall grasses such as wheat and barley. The abundant rains have helped keep the surrounding pastures moderately green and, when the Finians are not suffering from fomorian attacks, the pastures are commonly used as grazing grounds for sheep, goats, pigs and cattle.

During the summer, many of the lower fields blossom with clover and poppies that the Finians harvest to make especially hard liquors that make warriors crazy. However, it is the poppy leaves that the Finians are most interested in, as they contain the powerful opiates used to sedate the city's once greatest treasure, the blazing Spear of Light.

Another plant common to the region is heather or, as the Finians call it, 'fraoch'. Fraoch is a low growing plant with wild tangles of slender branches covered with tiny needle-like leaves. When it is in bloom, its

tiny bell-shaped, blood-purple blossoms grow in long clusters called spikes. The Finians mostly gather dried fraoch for kindling, though a select few also use it to make a beer, heather ale. The recipe for this is a closely-guarded secret, passed down from father to son in a few of the kins of the Mac Becht clan, for the ale is said to be the most pleasant brew in all of Tir Nan Og. As might be expected, little or none of it ever leaves Finias, let alone Alba.

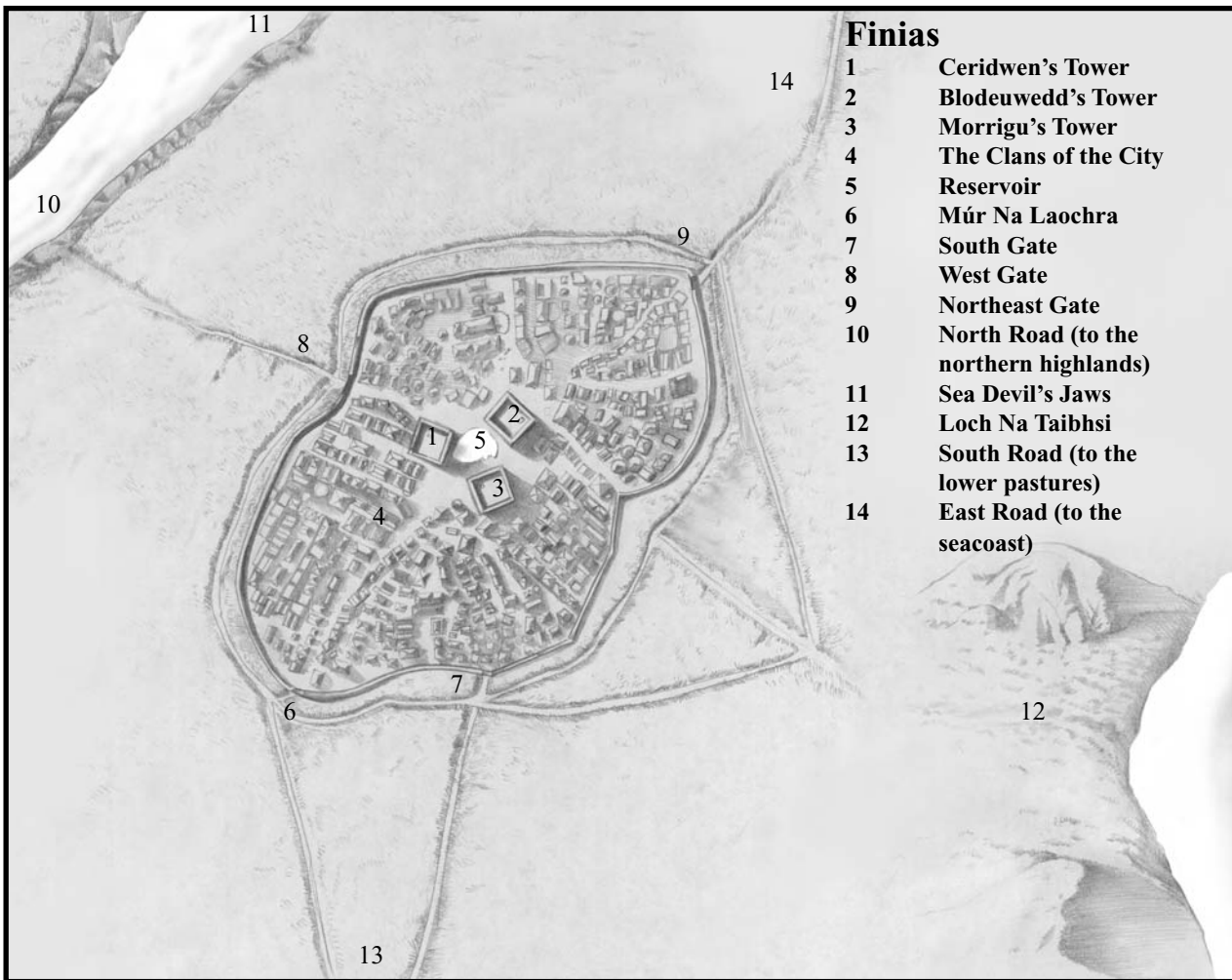
Wood is not plentiful and is generally reserved for building or making weapons, tools and furniture. In the warmer months, peat moss and dung are fashioned into bricks that can be burned as fuel and are used both for heating and cooking. The majority of available trees are durmast oak, yew, holly, hazel, ash, spruce and pine.

The City of Finias

Finias is a huge and imposing fortress city built around the base of three symmetrical towers, whose hulking stone walls are made from slabs of rock cut from the ocean floor. The towers climb upwards to an approximate height of 80 metres and the walls range in thickness from three to six metres. At ground level, the each tower is 65 metres by 65 metres in area. Over the centuries the three towers of Finias have borne witness to so many thousands of battles that, were they carved of weirdstones, the amount of blood spilled upon them would be enough to lift all Tir Nan Og from the sea.

Down through the centuries, the tower walls have had hundreds of carvers etch their work into the hard stone. Thickly carved Celtic braids, glyphs, wards and ogham letters cover the walls. Everything from commissioned bas-reliefs meant to honour fallen heroes to family crests to small token carvings and signatures can be found running the full height of the towers. Because of the constant rains and fogs, the towers have a greenish-blue tint from large patches of lichen and moss that have attached themselves to the deep mortar lines. Although the walls are slippery from the moss and weather, the numerous carvings make decent hand holds for climbing (Athletics test with a -40% penalty to climb successfully) and it is a popular but sometimes fatal pastime for tribesmen to attempt to scale as far as they can up the walls and then carve in their initials.





Finias

- 1 Ceridwen's Tower
- 2 Blodeuwedd's Tower
- 3 Morrighu's Tower
- 4 The Clans of the City
- 5 Reservoir
- 6 Múr Na Laochra
- 7 South Gate
- 8 West Gate
- 9 Northeast Gate
- 10 North Road (to the northern highlands)
- 11 Sea Devil's Jaws
- 12 Loch Na Taibhsi
- 13 South Road (to the lower pastures)
- 14 East Road (to the seacoast)

The city is surrounded and protected by a massive and gruesomely decorated wall called Múr Na Laochra. The near impregnable wall is 15 metres thick and made from chaotically heaped piles of stone, logs and bodies of slain foes cemented together with limewater and boiled bones. Atop the wall's battlements, the Finians have mounted great iron crucifixes where they chain captured enemies so they might feed the crows and bleed out onto the fortification to help harden the walls. The lower exterior walls are heavily scarred from axes and hurled stones, which the Finian builders have attempted to repair by filling them with concrete made from fomorian innards. There are three gates in the wall that lead into the city, the south gate, the west gate and the northeast gate. Each of these gates leads to the surrounding roads used by the citizens to travel to different parts of their territories.

Most of the city's citizens live in single-storey thatched-roof crofts made from wood and stone. Clans build their houses side by side, sometimes lining entire streets with crofts of a single clan. Streets are usually named after the families that live on them. Each clan also owns a communal cooking house where food is stored, animals are slaughtered and meals are prepared. When the weather gets warmer or there is a special festival, the food is prepared outside. In the city, the bulk of the citizens' diets consist of bread, cheese and stews made from cabbages and turnips supplemented with meat when it is more abundant. Capon, mutton and goat are popular meats, because smaller animals are easier to graze within the limited space behind the city walls. Goat-hide and wool are also used for making clothing. Great highland cows are also raised, but they are more difficult to maintain in large numbers.

Wealthier noble clans sometimes raise highland cows for meat, but commoners generally only use them for milk and dung fuel. In the colder months of winter, owners of larger homes sometimes bring their cows inside so their excess body heat will help keep the huts warm. Finians also collect dried cow dung to use for fuel for heating and cooking.

Although a favourite item on the plate, meat has been a wholly unreliable food source for the tribe. The large highland cows cannot be raised inside the city walls and other small grazing animals such as goats, pigs and sheep, quickly run out of food and starve if they are forced to remain behind the city walls for extended periods of time. Instead, the Finians have become more of an agrarian society, planting sturdier vegetation such as kale, cabbage and turnips. On many of the great towers' upper balconies, the tribe keeps huge gardens, which they use to supplement the tribe's other food sources in times of emergency. These gardens are under the care of an elite guard known as rations. The penalties for attempting to bribe a rationer (or for rationers accepting bribes) in times of famine are incredibly brutal, because anyone who would do so is considered to be depriving the tribe of food. If convicted of such a crime, the offender must provide the entire tribe with food, which means either that he will be roasted and eaten or his blood will be spilt in the gardens to help them grow.

Among the tribes, the Finians have most developed the art of metallurgy. Originally, iron was predominantly used to make tools and weapons. Ploughs and scythe blades were commonly fabricated farm tools, while swords, daggers and metal tips for spears and javelins were popular among the warriors. Occasionally, smiths produced larger items such as helmets, shields and armour but their use was generally disdained as being cowardly among the elite fighters of the tribe. Over the years, the reality of life under siege has begun to sway the opinions of many warriors. Therefore, despite the traditional belief that metal armour is only worn by gutless cowards, it is gaining popularity among Finian noble warriors. Tribal warriors with little training are typically outfitted with nothing more than sturdy helms and wooden shields, while they arm themselves with spears or short swords for close-quarter fighting.

Finias is also noted for its bards and storytellers, responsible for bearing the city's long history. They often accompany their tales with music played on goatskin bodhran drums, harps, and trumpets.

Inside the Towers

Throughout the towers, cold, checked-pattern marble floors are set in deep greens and pale greys. The walls are mostly made from mortared blocks of granite, reinforced with burly durmast oak or iron-hard yew timbers. Huge beams suspended between the block walls and six metre tall marble columns bear the tremendous weight of the thick stone ceilings that rest above them. Throughout the towers, hundreds of broad flat stairways climb over and through elaborately twisted arches flanked by stout stone pillars twisted with white mineral veins.

In the upper areas of the towers, most of the walls have been plastered smooth to keep the cold air from creeping through the cracks. A good portion of the plastered walls also have detailed trim or are painted with rough angular shapes in repeating patterns of interlocking triangles and twisted circular knots.

From the shoulder-high stone ramparts atop the towers, one can only see as far as the fog will permit. Above the ramparts, the Finians have built thick wooden battlements from which they hurl spears down upon their enemies like the Goddess hurls the rains in the spring.

The Finians are currently ruled by King Gann, an irascible middle-aged Celt left slightly dimwitted from a thump in the head from the great club of a bull-headed fomorian.

Still, he has a reputation as a skilled warrior and his fellow tribesmen do their best to encourage him to lose his temper in order to keep their king in the best possible fighting condition. He is quite popular among his people for he is viciously enthusiastic about keeping them free and independent. Gann is frequently counselled by his younger brother Genann who, much to the disappointment of his fellow tribesmen, is prone to fits of logic and reason. He is ever present at council meetings regarding foreign diplomacy and, unlike his



brother, can read. Genann, for all his flaws, is still a typical Finian and remains fiercely loyal to both his brother and his tribe.

Skatha

Skatha is a small isolated region in northern Alba named after a formidable warrior-woman that presides over the most infamous military academy of all Tir Nan Og. Though it is located in the within Finian borders, it remains entirely independent.

Scathach will train anyone who is able to reach the fortress but all who train here must pay her fee. This will vary from student to student and almost never consists of money. The student is more likely to be told to slay one of the warrior-woman's enemies, or acquire a particular weapon for her, or find some rare herbs that Cullogh needs to assist in forging magical spears. Once the initial fee is paid – and it will always be a serious challenge for the student – Scathach will train him for the rest of his life, if he so wishes.

Training at the academy comprises a series of rigorous tests. Those who survive become some of the most feared and deadly warriors in the world. Students learn such martial skills as the 'salmon leap' and are taught

the mastery of her most infamously deadly weapon, the gae bolga. Warriors trained from a young age at Scathach are considered noble warriors and get the usual Tribe benefits on returning to their home tribe to complete their training. Scathach is also willing to train tribal warriors or indeed anyone else who can make it there alive.

DunScathach

The academy itself is located in a fortress deep within the warrior-queen's domains called DunScathach. As legend has it, DunScathach was fashioned by a witch who used her potent chants to shape earth to her will. For one full night, she sang her incantations and slowly the castle grew up from the rock, tower and turrets crowned. By the time morning dew fell on the following day, DunScathach was finished.

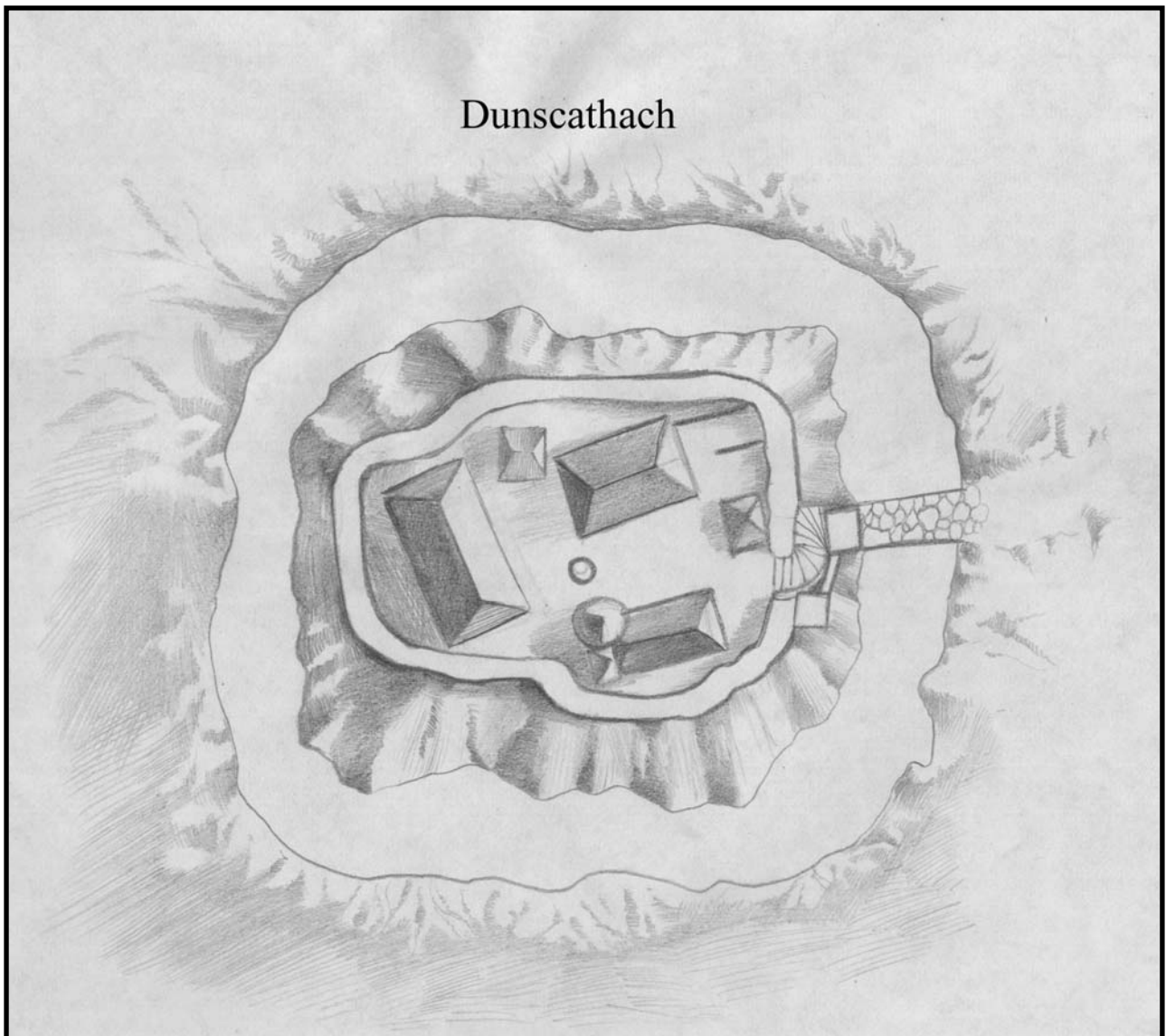
Surrounding Lands

For the most part, the lands surrounding the academy are typical of northern Alba. The highland is bordered by mountains swathed in mists and dimpled with lochs. As one draws nearer to DunScathach, the terrain shifts, becoming more difficult to travel upon, as if it were infused by witchery. This region comprises two challenging but distinct territories.



The fortress rests in the centre of a large empty pasture known as the Plain of Ill Luck. It takes travellers three full days to cross the plain on foot, during which time they are plagued with dark rain clouds that seemingly follow them. Three times per day without fail, a raven swoops overhead of any travellers attempting to traverse the plain. The raven is an omen and, immediately following his appearance, all travellers must make a Resilience test or they are stricken with ill-luck. Choose one or more of the following circumstances to determine the ill-luck:

1. The character's food or water supply is mysteriously exhausted.
2. The character suddenly trips and breaks a piece of minor equipment.
3. The character's beast of burden (or the character) becomes ill and needs a day's rest.
4. The character gets huge blisters that hamper his movement by -2 metres and penalise any Dodge tests by -10% . They can be treated



effectively with a First Aid test with a -20% penalty. The blisters go away as soon as he exits the plain.

5. The character gets an irritant in his eye causing him to apply a -10% penalty to all attack and parry rolls, and to all Perception tests. The irritation goes away as soon as he exits the plain.
6. The character loses his sense of direction, and firmly believes he is travelling in the exact opposite direction of whichever way he intends travelling.

Encircling the plain is a dense forest called the Blackwood, which hides the castle from normal sight. The woods are home to hundreds of aggressively hostile beasts. It takes a full day to travel through the Blackwood on foot, during which time travellers can expect to encounter an antagonistic attack from a forest creature (a bear, a boar, or some other ravenous beast) about once per hour.

DunScathach is built upon a massive rock with precipitous sides. Seven ramparts encircle the castle and its iron palisades drop into a deep pit full of thousands of magically-created snakes and beaked toads. A small trail winding up to the castle leads to a partly natural causeway, which forms a bridge over a gully in the stone. Beyond the bridge is the single entrance to DunScathach. Falling the eight metres into the moat does the normal amount of damage (see *RuneQuest* page 89), but the magical beasts that live within attack every round, devouring all living creatures, inflicting 1D6 to three random hit locations per round, ignoring all protection. While the magical creatures in the moat can be attacked, their numbers are overwhelming and as soon as one is destroyed, another appears.

DunScathach can only be reached by crossing a single causeway, which is known as the Bridge of Leaps. The causeway is enchanted and, unless its command word is first spoken, the bridge buckles and throws off any creatures that fail to cross it in two strides. In order to cross the bridge, a character must make (at most) two successive Athletics tests to span its distance. The bridge is eight metres long. Should a character fail his

first Athletics test, he can make a Dodge test with a -80% penalty to attempt to land back where he came from but, should a character fail the second Athletics test, he is pitched into the moat. Any character who fails the Dodge test is also pitched into the moat. Creatures attempting to cross the bridge by running or walking must make a successful Dodge test with a -80% penalty or they too are pitched into the moat. A successful Dodge test indicates the creature is hurled backwards and lands unceremoniously from whence he came.

Beneath the castle is a massive cavern of twisted catacombs more than a thousand years old. The caverns cover almost three square miles. The caverns are lit by enchanted iron torches that magically ignite whenever a warm-blooded creature, small size or larger passes within ten metres of them. Removing a torch from the wall requires a Athletics test with a -80% penalty but, once the torch is removed, it loses its powers and ceases to function. Scathach uses the caverns to train her students in the arts of close-quarter fighting, blind-fighting and stealth.

The caverns are warm (approximately 25°C) and the thick, moist air taints everything with a clinging sulphuric scent. In the centre of the catacombs is a seven metre radius pool of boiling sulphur. Scathach holds wrestling matches and other physical competitions on a wooden plank she suspends over the sulphur pool and its scalding burns are so painful that those who fall in often beg to be slain out of mercy.

Direct exposure to the sulphur (such as falling in the pit) causes 1D6 hit points of damage to two locations per round. Additionally, the character must make a Resilience test with a penalty that increases each round of exposure (-10% for every combat round the character is exposed) or become scarred from the horrible burns. Failure causes the character to suffer 1 point of permanent Charisma damage per round of exposure.

Treating wounds caused by direct exposure to the sulphur requires a First Aid test with a -20% penalty. Successful treatment reduces the Charisma loss one-half.



The Fir Domain

The Fir Domain are one of the fiercest and most troublesome Tribes of the Earth Goddess. Whereas the Sessair and Finians will go to war as soon as look at you, the Fir Domain are just as eager for trouble but always with an eye to the main chance. Likewise, they can be as cunning as the Tribe of the Shadows, but are quite prepared to apply that intelligence and planning to a frontal assault or even an entire war, rather than relying on night raids. If they cannot profit from war, and with minimal casualties, they have no great interest in it. Of course, this could be long-term profit – taking over fertile farmland can be better in the long run than capturing a rich town or fort.

There is a shine, a polish to the Fir Domain, unlike the wild ways of the other tribes. Some claim the tribal name translates as ‘The Lordly Men’, or ‘The Sons of Chieftains’, meaning the descendants of the Kings of Atlantis. Others say that when Atlantis fell under the dominion of the Cyth, many humans were forced to work the mines for their masters, and the name ‘Fir Domain’ comes from the old Celtic phrase ‘Fir Doimnigim’, meaning; ‘The men who deepened the earth’.

Whatever their origins, the Fir Domain have a reputation for civility and sophistication. Their wisdom is not only in counsel. The Sessair may enter battle counting on strength, the Falians depending upon their dark magics and the Finians on their ability to endure, but the Fir Domain fight using that most unlikely of Celtic weapons; a plan.

The Fir Domain are also known as the Tribe of the Growling Shields for their fearsome battle skill of shield-growling, when they use specially shaped metal shields to amplify their war-cries. This skill reveals a great deal about the tribe in general for they are geared towards defence, and their warriors make great use of shields. Yet they use the shields for offence too – the shield growl instils terror into the hearts of any who face them in battle, and many wield razor-edged shields which can be hurled at foes or used to slash and slice. This combination of attack and defence, or perhaps

more properly attack from a position of protection and strength, runs through many of the tribe’s activities in both peace and war-time. Even their traders are cautious, yet quick to take advantage of any opening.

The Tribe of the Growling Shields

Many have judged the refined, almost urbane, attitudes of the Fir Domain as a sign of softness. Nothing could be further from the truth. The Fir Domain are known as the Tribe of the Growling Shields because of their terrifying war cry. When the tribe’s warriors approach battle, each of them snarls or growls into the metal bowls of their shields and, as the roar swells by echo to fill the air, the Fir Domain walk with deadly deliberation towards their enemies. They never charge, regarding it as a sign of cracking nerves. They would say such a weakness is only to be expected among the other clans but can never be forgiven among themselves.

The shield of a warrior of the Fir Domain is his most prized possession. When adulthood is reached, he will be given his own shield by the greatest warrior in his family. When the druids bless him, they will smear his blood on the shield so that it ‘sings his song’ with pride. When he weds, his bride will be the one who arms him with it for war. When he kills, the blood of his foes will be poured upon it to feed its battle-hungry spirit. And when he dies, it is upon his own shield that he will be brought home. Great is the sadness if a shield is destroyed but this is nothing compared with the shame of a warrior who has lost his shield to a stronger foe. Under these circumstances, the warrior can return to the tribe only when he has regained both honour and vengeance. Nothing else will recover his status among the Fir Domain.

Personal honour apart, most Fir Domain do not think of fighting in emotional terms. Heroes they can be, but practical heroes always. Their approach is seldom personal and, though warp spasm is not unknown among them, most prefer to keep their heads. War-like and ferocious, the war leaders of the Fir Domain





prefer practical victories to glorious defeats. Tales of valiant last stands do not impress them at all; they like to win! Theirs is an ability to fight not only bravely but with great strategy. Now and then the Fir Domain lose battles. It is seldom, very seldom, that they lose wars.

The Origins of the Fir Domain

Like the other Tribes of the Earth Goddess, the Fir Domain are uncertain of their true history. In Sláine's time, the past is known by legends and myths, not by facts – though like other tribes, the folk of the Growling Shields are more than happy to defend the truth of their tales with cold steel if need be.

There are two main myths that claim to tell the origin of the tribe, each based on a different interpretation of the name 'Fir Domain' itself. The first, interpreting the name as meaning 'the men who deepened the Earth,' is popular among the ordinary folk of the tribe. The

second, translating 'Fir Domain' as 'The Lordly Men,' finds more favour among the nobility. It seems likely that both have a grain of truth in them as tales, though which – if either – tells the true origin of the name is lost in the mists of time.

A later myth, the Tale of the Russet Hound, tells of how the Fir Domain became occasionally known as the Fox Tribe, or Folk of the Russet Hound. Since the days of King Beli's alliance with the Fox of the Marches, it has been a Fir Domain law and tradition that no foxes are ever killed, save during the Royal Hunt of the Titans. Inevitably, given the many farms of Albion, it is not at all uncommon for a group of villagers to form covert hunting groups to deal with particularly annoying foxes, though many Fir Domain tales tell of the horrible demise of such groups – often at the hands of the fox itself.

The People who Deepened the Earth

It is said that before they fled Atlantis, the tribe of the Fir Domain were forced to work in the mines of the Cythrons, toiling night and day for those evil lords. This is the explanation given for the present-day Fir Domain love of gold and expertise with mining, refining and crafts. When they came to Albion, they were delighted to discover it had a great many precious metals and other materials close to or on the surface of the land, so at first they rarely had to mine at all, and quickly became prosperous. Even today it is possible to pan for gold in much of Albion, though this is still rarely used as currency even by the 'forward-thinking' Fir Domain. It is certainly the raw material used to make some of the most beautiful works of art and craft that made the smiths of Gorias so famous, however.

The Lordly Men

It is said that the Fir Domain nobility are all descended from two heroes of old, Llassar the Tall and his wife Cymidu the Taller. These two, so the legend goes, fled Atlantis to Tir Nan Og, and wandered the land for many years. They requested the hospitality of a Sessair King, Mathalaw, and received it for a year or two until he turned treacherously and tried to slay them and their sons. He killed the sons, but Llassar and Cymidu escaped. According to the Fir Domain bards, it was Llassar who gave the Sessair tribe the Cauldron of Plenty, though of course the Sessair dispute this, fearing perhaps that the Fir Domain might some day try to claim it back.



Llassar and Cymidu were given hospitality by Bran, the king of Albion in those times. They bred astonishingly quickly – the reason the Sessair had tried to slay them was that Cymidu gave birth every six weeks to a tall, strong, fully armed and equipped warrior, each of whom was extraordinarily quarrelsome and quick to make trouble. Soon all of Albion had new hill-forts and other fortified settlements, filled with the sons of Llassar and Cymidu, and within a generation they were the most powerful force in the land. Inevitably they warred. A great many mighty battles ensued, with an eventual peace being negotiated by the Archdruid of Durrington himself. Under the terms of the peace, the sons of Llassar and Cymidu would be responsible for the defence of Albion, and in return their leader, Cymnewydd, was made King of Albion and of the Fir Domain. From that time on, the sons of Llassar and Cymidu intermarried with the ordinary folk of the Fir Domain. Even today, warriors of the Fir Domain often claim to trace their ancestry back to the two Atlantean wanderers, and some of the women of the Fir Domain can still give birth to fully grown and armed swordsmen if they put their minds to it. Today's Fir Domain warriors are far less quarrelsome and aggressive than the sons of Cymidu of old, preferring to put their trust in careful planning and steadfast attacks rather than wild rages.

According to the boastful Fir Domain nobles, Llassar and Cymidu themselves were descended from the Kings of Atlantis in the old days. Kings of the Fir Domain sometimes claim they alone should be High Kings of the Earth Goddess tribes, since supposedly their ancestors ruled all the ancestors of those tribes in the old days. This claim is usually met with laughter or sharp spears, depending on the moods of the other tribes, but it is often used by the Fir Domain to excuse their warlike and conquering nature. Some of the other tribes claim that Llassar and Cymidu were actually titans, and that the Fir Domain are descended from the very creatures they took the land of Albion from – but they do not claim this in the hearing of a Fir Domain, or at least not unless they want a fight.

The Tale of the Russet Hound

Beli, the son of Cenn Cymnewydd of the Conlinney Kin of the Fir Domain, was the youngest of three brave warriors. Cymnewydd's sons were given the task of guarding the Tree of Ceirt in King Lairngen's orchard, whose apples had powerful healing properties. A magical golden bird began to steal the apples. Each

of the eldest sons spent a night guarding the Tree, but fell asleep under the bird's glamour, and each night she stole another apple. On his turn Beli threw off the bird's enchantment and wounded her with an arrow, knocking a feather from her tail. The feather turned out to be pure gold, full of powerful magic, and the tribal druids proclaimed that whoever should slay the golden bird and bring back the rest of the feathers would be the new King after Lairngen went into the earth. Beli and his elder brothers at once set out to look for the bird, but such was their ambition that none would assist the others and each went off in separate directions. Each was approached in turn by a starving fox, who begged for a little food, but the two elder brothers scorned him and let fly arrows at him. When the fox came to Beli, the young warrior gave generously of his provisions, and the fox helped him greatly in the adventures ahead – warning him of an El witch who had ensorcelled his two brothers, and helping him track down the golden bird in the King of the Sessair's palace. Beli was caught trying to steal the bird, and the Sessair King laid a geas on him to steal the King of Falias's prize filly in exchange for the bird. Again the fox helped him, but again Beli was caught and this time geased to steal the Finian King's daughter in exchange for the filly! The King of the Finians, on capturing Beli, set him to clear a vast enchanted mound of clay, and with the fox's help he did so, winning the princess. By dint of the fox's cleverness, Beli double-crossed the other two kings and returned to Gorias with a new wife, a new steed, and the golden bird.

Beli went on to become one of the finest Kings the Fir Domain ever had, and his many deeds passed down into legend. It is said that the finest horses of Albion are descended from the stolen filly, and the golden bird is one of the most sacred objects in the great sacred grove of Lugllwyn, near Gorias. Beli's marriage to Issa, the daughter of the King of the Finians, led to a long-lived alliance between the two tribes, though in recent decades this has largely been forgotten.

Traditions of the Fir Domain

The Choosing of a Chieftain

The choosing of a ruler never changes. Once the seven year reign of the King is ended, he is killed, his body dismembered to feed the tribe, and his blood gathered



by druids in a sacred cauldron. In honour of the gift given to the Fir Domain by the Goddess, this is always done on the night of a full moon. In a grove of sacred oak, the priests chant to the Goddess to show them the next ruler of the tribe. They pray to her in her guise as Moon Queen to show them who is best suited to bear her gift of the Silver Sword. Then they call upon her as Earth Mother to show them who will be best for the land, and finally they ask her as Woman of the Sea to show them whose bloodline shall next be called royal. The blood is then poured on the earth under the moonlight, and all watch, marking its flow. The person in front of whom it stops will be the next King or Queen of the Fir Domain.

The Royal Hunt of the Titans

One custom that differs considerably from the other tribes is the Fir Domain's tradition of a Royal Hunt. Hunting is very popular among the Fir Domain, especially when titans are the quarry. This sport is relished all across the land. The greatest hunts are organised after the inauguration of a new chieftain. Druids, friends and warriors will all be part of the hunting party, but the King must ensure he makes the most impressive kill. It is important to show himself as the greatest warrior among them. He must be the best.

Typically a hunt consists of twenty to thirty mounted hunters, sixty to eighty hounds, and forty to fifty footmen to assist with beating, tracking, and general support. Often the footmen will be left far behind if the hunt pursues a particularly swift quarry.

The Hunt need not reserve itself to titans; any beast can be pursued along the way, so long as the ultimate prey is not lost. Creatures crossing the path of the hunt are portents for the future of the king and the country

under his rule. The signs are very ambiguous, and often have multiple meanings to be decided by the Druids:

Titans: The more the better. The finer the sport, the greater blessing for the King, so long as he is foremost in the killing of the prey. It is a bad omen for no Titan to be caught and killed, and it is a terrible omen if the King is badly wounded by a Titan.

Wolves: The king will have many fierce and clever enemies. Can sometimes mean trouble with the Sessair.

Bears: The King will have great strength and unending power. A group of bears has a very straightforward meaning; - Berserkers and trouble from Midgard.

Foxes: Treachery, theft, cunning, ruthlessness, a well-planned battle. Whether these describe the King himself or the people around him tends to depend on the tact of the interpreting druid! Can sometimes indicate the coming of a time of civil war among the Fir Domain

Hares: Subtlety, illusion, the workings of the Moon Goddess. Sometimes attributed to difficulties with the Falians.

Wild Boars: The ruler will be fierce in battle and defend his terrain well, but this can be the sign of a greedy king. Sometimes indicates trouble with the Finians.

Stags: the greatest sign of pure royalty, nobility and blessing, a king who will give himself up for his people, particularly when the antlers are seven tined. This beast can also symbolise dealings from the followers of Carnun in the south.





Hornless Deer: Peace and prosperity, but they can also mean a fainthearted king.

Snakes: Beware the Drones! But the appearance of one of these creatures on the hunt can also mean that the King has wisdom and magic at his command.

Eagles: To see an eagle denotes a very great king, and to catch it prophesies great power, but should it be harmed or killed, the king will be found unworthy of his throne.

Ravens: The King will be claimed by the Morrighu. Death will take him on the battlefield.

The list of beasts and meanings is endless. Whatever the king kills is brought to the feast that night for all to devour, and it is considered very bad luck for the king to catch nothing at all on the hunt. Tales have been told of bribed woodsmen driving easy prey towards the royal hunter in order to guarantee a less than embarrassing feast afterwards. The druids and Council would be aghast at the very thought.

Foes and Allies

It should never be forgotten that, for all their courtesy, the Fir Domain love extending their influence into

the territories of the other tribes, the one exception being the Fir Bolg with whom the Fir Domain have close blood ties. Even there, it is not unknown for a particularly ambitious King of the Fir Domain to sever the old alliance with the Fir Bolg and make war on them, too. The expansionist behaviour of the Tribe of the Growling Shields is a constant source of bafflement to all except the Fir Domain themselves. If they are such great tacticians, why make more enemies? Do they not have enough trouble on their borders? In several lands on the fringes of Albion the titans still roam, and to the east lies Midgard, land of berserker warriors. Nor is there respite to be found in the south, where the Drune lords wait for the day when, exhausted from needless battles with other clans, the powers of the Fir Domain will crumble, allowing Drune armies to walk into Gorias and claim it for their own.

King and Council

In Gorias, the King's rule is very nearly absolute, though it is considered at least polite that he listens to his councillors. Whenever a king dies, it is required that his council steps down, allowing the new chieftain to choose his own advisers. However, most would expect to be invited to resume their place. This all comes down to the preference of the King, but almost all councils will include the queen, clan family, royal



fool, greatest warrior (apart from the King himself), chief bard, chief war-witch, chief smith and, of course, druid adviser.

The one member of a King's council who never steps down is the druid adviser. Short of complaining to the uppermost reaches of druidic authority, or proving a druid's incompetence or corruption, they are impossible to get rid of. Besides, as many have commented, what is the point of replacing them? They are all as bad as each other! As with the other Earth Goddess tribes, there is a strong tradition that at the very least a King should obey his druid, but the Fir Domain royalty frequently get angry and even occasionally violent if a druid adviser oversteps the mark.

The DRUIDS OF ALBION

It may seem strange that as practical a people as the Fir Domain should treat their druids with more reverence than is to be found among the other tribes, but so it is. New ideas come and go, but Druids are respected here more than anywhere else. Perhaps this is because the history of the Fir Domain and the history of the druids have grown together like oak and mistletoe, though few would dare to say which one parasites upon the other. Even those who suspect druids and their magical wiles will admit one thing; if one has to have a druid by one's side, better it be a capable one, and the best druids across all Tir Nan Og are trained in Albion. Of course, those of the Fir Domain tribe who take great pride in the prowess of 'their' druids tend to contest or to deliberately 'forget' the fact that most of the druids who train in Albion consider their seminaries to be independent of any tribe.

Albion lays serious claim to being the original land of the druids. This is asserted by all the Fir Domain tribe except the druids themselves, who claim to be guardians of Atlantean lore nearly lost when that land was destroyed. Then, apparently, they and the Fir Domain together left the doomed isle bringing hidden wisdom and the knowledge of magic first to Albion and then to the rest of Tir Nan Og. The drunes contest this version of events vehemently, stating that the knowledge of magic did not begin in Atlantis, but in the Cave of Beasts itself. There are many different theories, but as the drunes and druids have never been known to agree on anything, the argument looks set to continue well beyond the onset of Ragnarok.

The Land FOREVER

Southern Albion is the home of the Fir Domain, and the city of Gorias is their capital. Thus has it been since the Doom of Atlantis brought their forefathers to this most lush and green of kingdoms. Ironically for such a beautiful country, the Fir Domain have organised it into somewhat prosaically named regions:

The Heartlands: The central territory of Albion, a green rolling country of endless woods and tilled fields, containing the settlement of Oxford, Durrington Seminary and the great forest of Broceliande ('Brochelliande').

The Northern March: Great grey cliffs overhang the moors and dales on this, the desolate border with the Finians. Main settlements on the Northern March include Yboras to the North East and Uskafell to the North West.

The Eastern March: Where Albion meets the Midgard border in the East, the land turns to fenland. Even as the trees grow they begin to rot in the waterlogged soil and many careless travellers have been known to lose their lives in the deep marshes. The city of Wroxeter stands here, first line of defence against the marauding berserkers. At the western edge of the March, close to the Heartlands, lies the great city of Gorias, the Fir Domain capital.

Belerion ('Belerion'): The utmost south and south west of Albion, where ancient burial mounds lie undisturbed and the sky itself reflects the extraordinary the Temple of Glastonbury.

The Roads of ALBION

The Kingdom of the Fir Domain is divided in a unique way, due to an invention of their predecessors in Albion, the race of giants known as the Titans. When the Fir Domain first came to Albion, they discovered four great causeways traversing the land. Simple in themselves, these roads were wide routes of grassless earth, marked out by heaped piles of small stones, called *cairns*. Although all of Tir Nan Og is covered by long straight roads, known as the 'old straight tracks', the roads of Albion are the widest and oldest. They make movement to and from settlements considerably easier and some regard them as proof of the race of giants once had the powers of invention and engineering. The druids claim that by the time the Fir



Domain found the roads, they had fallen into disrepair, long neglected by a people whose minds were sunk to the level of beasts. It was the Fir Domain who cleared the old walkways and now use them but it was the Titans who named them, in a language with meanings forgotten long ago.

The Fossweay: The oldest of the roads, the Fossweay reaches from Yboras on the east side of the Northern March, to Oxford in the west of the Heartlands. The Fossweay dips in and out through parts of Broceliande the Great Wood. Here, the trees grow thick on either side of the causeway, local settlements fearing to anger the spirits of the wood by clearing them. As a result, certain parts of the Fossweay are famous as bandit territory and, in the depths of the woods, stranger creatures are thought to lurk.

The Ilkneid, called also the Westweay: The Westweay crosses from Gorias down to Belerion in the southwest. It, too, crosses the outskirts of the Great Forest. Called the Westweay for the simple reason that, of all the roads, this one goes furthest west, it is the nearest of the great roads to Glastonbury.

The Ermawn called also the Wymweay: The Ermawn crosses from Uskafell on the west side of the Northern March, through Yboras, to Wroxeter in the southern part of the Eastern March. It is called the wymweay, because of the old tradition that great earth lizards and even occasionally dragons have been seen along its route. Towards Wroxeter, it passes through the perilous wilderness of Fiáin Creatrach, on the border of the titan lands.

The Watlan also called the Scarpath: This causeway begins in Gorias and goes on beyond Wroxeter ending, originally, on the Midgard border. The Watlan earned its nickname 'The Scarpath' because there were so many incursions along this road from Midgard, towards Gorias, that dwellers here jokingly identified themselves by the many scars sustained over years of continuing warfare with the Norsemen. The Scarpath's usefulness is offset by the way it has provided berserker armies with an easy route to the capital, so where the causeway meets the March it has been deliberately replanted and flooded into the fens.

The Taverns of Albion

Taverns cannot be called a great part of life among the Tribes of Danu, for most eat and drink in their own homes, or the homes of their friends and kinsmen. Taverns first sprang up in Albion in response to the growth in use of the four roads. These brought traffic to and from the great settlements and, though a wanderer in the wilds inevitably expects to spend some nights under the stars, it is not surprising many merchants will pay well to sleep in a protected place, with food, drink and stabling. So the inns of Albion have flourished on the roads and, later, in the bigger settlements. Taverns are not difficult to distinguish, they stand within a compound of outbuildings and barns and are large - oval rather than round shaped houses, usually built of mud and thatch, with a hanging sign over the front entrance. The sign will have a picture on it to identify the inn and give it a name. The most primitive inns are simple buildings with straw and furs on the floor and a fire in the centre on which food can be cooked, the smoke rising through a hole in the ceiling. Drink is generally brought in from an outbuilding where barrels are kept. The guests will sleep here, protected by the landlord's clansmen, or even warriors bartering a night's protection for supper and supplies.

In cities such as Gorias and Yboras, the taverns are much more sophisticated, the kitchens and barrels at the back, a large eating area at the front complete with tables and benches, and individual rooms for guests according to what they are prepared to pay. The arts of brewing and distilling are very popular across Albion. Areas have their specialities; the meads and ciders of Oxford are well known, and the hop-fields of the Eastern March are responsible for many types of ale, including one muddy looking beverage called 'Black Beer'. Traditionally concocted to wash away the taste of bog-eel, Black Beer has a reputation for potency. Some say the renowned ferocity of the fen clans comes from the power of black beer in their bellies, others suggest their readiness to die in battle comes from a desperate desire never to touch the stuff again. Roadside taverns often brew their own ale with great pride but, in order to taste many different varieties of alcohol, there is nowhere better to go than the capital of Albion itself, Gorias.



Gorias

Beginnings

Of the four great cities of the Children of Danu, Gorias in the Heartland of the Fir Domain is considered to be the most magnificent and the Fir Domain are rightly proud of it. Gorias is built on a huge stepped hill, all the more incredible for being man-made.

Albion was a prize hard won by the ancestors of the Fir Domain. Fleeing from Atlantis, they came to a land so green and rich they had to make it their own and, for that, the local tribes had to be conquered. This was not easy. Albion was the land of the Titans. Long and bitter were the wars fought between the giants and the newcomers, and in the beginning it did not go well for the Fir Domain. They had left Atlantis with little metal. Their new land was wealthy in wood which, though it gave them shelter and fuel, could not help them win their war; staves and clubs were of little use against the Titans. So, the Fir Domain made alliances with a people far below the notice of the giants. The dwarves of Albion have never been greatly regarded, but their presence in Albion is very old and, in return for peace and prosperity, they agreed to help the new invaders in the search for metal. The dwarves and the Fir Domain had at least something in common. Both were familiar with the knowledge of mining.

As part of their peace pact, the dwarves ceded the caverns of Gorias to the Fir Domain, glittering with a thousand different gems and ores. Some say the astounding generosity of the dwarves was persuaded out of them, at the points of many swords. Certainly, Gorias was an astonishing gift, if gift it was. The Fir Domain and dwarves quarried the land vigorously, metal was forced out of the earth at an astonishing rate and hammers began to rise and fall in the forges, creating swords, helms, breastplates and even the metal bowls found on the famous growling shields. Armed with metal and with numbers, the humans quickly gained the advantage, for the Titans were never a plentiful people. Unlike humans, they did not breed quickly; when one fell, there were few to replace him. Druids claim that even then the intellect of the Titans was crumbling and, when the Titans began to first lose ground and then retreat, their fate was sealed, their doom inevitable.

The City

Gorias may have started life as an underground mining settlement, but this would not do for the bold and the brave among the Fir Domain, especially not once the Titans had ceased to be a major threat. Gorias was to be a city of grandeur, a testimony to the greatness of its people. So, once again, they dug deep, adding to the already extensive caverns. The stone and earth quarried upwards was used as scaffolding to structure an enormous artificial hill with wide stepped sides. Water from deep beneath the earth was sucked up through huge pipes to create clear fountains for every tier. The druids oversaw the creation of a great chalk road winding round the hill to connect each step and reach both top and bottom, calling it, 'The Serpent'. This path was created partly to make travel up and down the hill easy, and partly to flatter and appease the Earth Goddess for the Fir Domain's voracious appetite in digging up her treasures.

Over and through these huge steps of rock was laid clay and turf. The Fir Domain discovered there was no need to build roundhouses for, while the structure of the hill was strong enough to stand secure, it was also honeycombed with caves. These were at least as warm as roundhouses and, which could be hollowed out to the size of mansions, though this remains an option only for the very rich. Thus, the Fir Domain live in the stepped walls of the city looking out over the plains below. Doors and light holes are adorned with wooden, or more popularly, metal carvings and spear points, shops announce their wares with prettily painted hanging signs, essential for a population without literacy. The effect when the sun shines is dazzling, and on a moonlit night, Gorias threatens to out-twinkle the stars themselves.

There are two great walls in Gorias, both thick stone, strongly gated and guarded by a high concentration of warriors. One wall stands around the top tier, where the king and his kin live, guarded by those warriors who have proven themselves, gained suitable status, and live with their families close to the royal enclosure. The other is around the very bottom of the hill. There are four gates, one on each side of the ground wall. The warriors here guard against invasion from outside and are also expected to guard the main lower wall, its gates and environs, check those coming into and out of the city and carry out somewhat arbitrary policing of the other tiers. Food and access to the mines can be



gained at this level, so a siege on Gorias could prove successful very quickly if the enemy won control of the first tier.

The tiers of Gorias are divided into seven. Below ground are the caverns and the now greatly depleted Gorian mines. These do not count as a tier.

The mining community of Gorias lives on its first tier, alongside its small community of dwarves and livestock keepers, who let their beasts loose on the plains around the city. The other important occupiers of this tier are those warriors who wish to live in groups of fighters rather than among their family members. They form an army in instant readiness when the need arises.

On the second tier, the city's forges and smithies are grouped together. Here, iron, silver and gold are extracted from rock, and metal alloys are created. Though the primary work here is smelting, most of the blacksmiths on the second tier can create cheap workaday tools and weapons upon their anvils. Should a more elegant or specialised weapon be needed, second tier blacksmiths can provide one with the smelted metal to take up to the third or fourth tier.

On the third tier, armourers and smiths make items such as weapons, shields and helmets, many specialising in cold-forging. On the fourth, gem-cutters and wonder-smiths fashion necklaces, rings, torcs and other things of great beauty.

Artisans and ordinary traders tend also to share these first four tiers. On the higher three live those who have money, magic, learning or esteem. Generally, the higher up the hill a Gorian lives, the more status they have, though this is by no means always the case. The chieftain and his clan, his advisors, hangers on and the great heroes of the city are usually the only ones welcome on the top tier, which is also the only part of the city with free-standing roundhouses and mead halls, inevitably of great magnificence.

The People

Gorias is a flourishing city. The Fir Domain have found ample resources for creating weapons, armour, clothing and all manner of practical engineering, enhancing the quality of life for the city folk, building trade links beyond Gorias and, of course, making the Fir Domain *look* most impressive!

As among all the tribes, adornment is very important to the Fir Domain. Across Tir Nan Og, tattoos are used to commemorate feats and status, totem beasts and magical symbols. Among the Fir Domain, tattoos, while still worn with pride, are a secondary status symbol to the wearing of jewellery. Gorian breastplates and torcs, earrings and head-dresses are easy to recognise for their designs are complex and beautiful as well as remarkably expensive.

The growth of Gorias in size and power delights its clansfolk, who consider themselves the first and finest of Danu's tribes. The people sparkle with jewels, the fortress walls glitter with spear points. Truly, Gorias is the glory of the Fir Domain and, perhaps, its weakness also. Some claim that in plundering the earth for metals and cutting down the woods to make room for an ever-growing city, the Fir Domain inherit from Atlantis old and corrupt memories.

Whether that is true or not, there is one very practical problem arising from the expansion of the city. Farmers are few among the Fir Domain, for there seems little point in milking cows when glory is to be won on the battlefield, or guarding the city that shines. Here lies the reason for the Fir Domain's love of warring with the other tribes of the Earth Goddess. They could buy cattle and grain but other tribes, seeing their need, charge extortionate prices so, rather than pay, the Fir Domain will saddle up and raid. It is a good excuse but nobody believes it. The truth is the Fir Domain fight better than they farm. They raid because they can, because they always have, and because they enjoy it.

The Heartlands

No man can claim to know Albion if he does not know the Heartlands. Here, at the centre of Albion, the land becomes a patchwork of hills and fields, forests and rivers. Its sense of harmony has often been illusory. Defensive measures have always been part of village life, whether it be from other tribes, or other clans with grudges. Every settlement proclaims its patron deity with a giant chalk figure cut into the turf nearby. Some villages have Lug the God of Light, his sword in hand, towering over the dales in chalk outline. Others have dragons carved into their hills as protective forces. The most common figure to be seen is that of a great white horse, favoured symbol among the Fir Domain, of the Goddess as giver of peace and plenty.



Heartland settlements follow a very traditional layout. Roundhouses of mud and thatch are surrounded by a wooden stockade which, in turn is surrounded by a deep ditch. Getting out often entails the use of an easily drawn up wooden platform. The ditch is mainly for defensive purposes and, can be particularly useful against raiders on horseback who, on leaping the ditch, are particularly vulnerable to axe or spear attacks from beneath. Such attacks are often effective, if suicidal.

Oxford

The place where the oxen could cross the ford was the first, and is still the most popular, market settlement for traders in livestock and grain. The roundhouses here are made from a curious umber clay. Reeds are popular for roof thatching and floor strewing, to perfume the house and keep away insects. Knowledge of herbs and potions is common in Oxford and many more people here read Ogham than is usual. Oxford has orchards, bee farms and, of more interest to the average adventurer, fine brewers. The settlement has long outgrown its early stockades and, in an attempt not to offend the power of the sacred groves, a wall of stone rather than wood has been built around the town. It is well needed, for the woods give easy cover for foes. Even gentle Oxford has been attacked in its time, and even these calm walls have born the heads of defeated enemies on sharpened stakes as warning.

Broceliande and the Spirit of the Woods

Across the Heartlands well-tended orchards and ancient woods grow side by side and it is said that a squirrel can pass from Ursafel to Oxford without touching the ground. Here stands the oldest of the forests of Tir Nan Og, Broceliande the Mighty. Broceliande exemplifies the riddle of Albion; it is old, it seems friendly, it has supplied fuel, food and shelter to many of the tribesfolk. Conversely, it has never been properly mapped, hides many fearful creatures in its depths and is thought to exact unpleasant vengeance upon those who misuse its generosity. Some druids enter the woods to learn of its power, to understand it. Many are never seen again and those who do return are inevitably changed beyond recognition. Broceliande's reputation has not stopped the Fir Domain from deforesting where they feel they have to but, in an attempt to appease the sacred trees, an annual celebration of the generosity of the Forest is held all over Albion. It is called 'The Battle of The Woods', and consists of fighters taking on the championship of individual trees, that is the Oak Knight, The Ash-Warrior and so on. These battle it out and the winner is crowned the Green King. He is then married to a woman chosen to be the Goddess' representative, the Flower Queen, and the two are crowned with may-blossoms. They swear to serve the wood for the rest of the year. Whether or not this pleases the wood is unknown but it is certainly very popular among the Fir Domain.



DURRINGTON SEMINARY FOR DRUIDS

'At Durrington we never need to discriminate between pupils. Frankly, they're all horrible...'

— Arch-Druid Oakenlaw

Set among the trees of Broceliande, the Durrington Seminary, about 80 kilometres south west of Oxford, has an unequalled reputation for taking raw magical talent and harnessing it into constructive power. The doors of the Seminary have been open for centuries to would-be druids. Many travel from all over the continent to study there, they and their families guaranteed safe passage, whatever their tribe or status. The main prerequisite is extremely strong ability. Durrington's standards are high and exacting. Druids who graduate here consider themselves the very best, probably because they are.

Durrington prefers study to begin early, 'before the child has learnt to believe in limits', and most students enrol at an age no older than six or seven. Usually the pupils are children whose special talents have already been noticed among their tribes. Often chieftains and druids bring their children to Durrington in the hope of discovering hidden abilities in their offspring which will help them to become, if not mighty druids, at least great councillors or bards.

Durrington stands in a very ancient part of Broceliande, among groves of sacred trees. These groves are where lessons take place, though they also occur in the Great Hall, a wood-built roundhouse of impressive dimensions. The Durrington Druids live in the Great Hall. The students sleep in smaller roundhouses dotted throughout the grounds of the Seminary. Some even live in tree huts, a recent and surprisingly successful innovation.

SILBURY HILL

About 25 kilometres to the north of Durrington is Silbury Hill, one of several great sacred sites in a complex around the small settlement of Avebury. The main purpose of these sites is to act as an enormous reservoir for Earth Power, intended to stave off the spread of the Sourlands into the north and act

as a power source for any enormous projects the Archdruids may have in the future. It is also a place of pilgrimage, intended for ordinary folk (unlike Glastonbury which tend to attract heroes). Many of the people of the Heartlands travel here for the great festivals, particularly Beltaine and Samhain.

The hill itself is a great artificial mound of chalk, originally made from vast chalk blocks in a ziggurat-like shape. The gaps between the blocks have been filled in with finer sections of chalk, so the effect is one of a high smooth mound of pure white. The chalk blocks would work much like any other weirdstones, except that their shape is far more suited to the purposes of the Goddess than the usual square blocks. The rounded shape is reminiscent of the womanly curves of the Goddess herself, and has a natural resonance which, combined with the enchantments placed on it by Cador the Dodman, allows this artificial hill to store immense quantities of Earth Power and transmit all of it to Dinas Emrys for the use of the Ever-Living Ones.

CADOR THE DODMAN

Cador the Dodman is one of the most respected, and certainly the greatest, of the druid engineers known as Dodmen, the planners and supervisors of the various druid projects such as the great artificial mounds. He is an elderly druid with an absent-minded but friendly attitude and usually prefers to travel by Cador. He is a familiar sight around much of Tir Nan Og. In particular, he travels regularly between Glastonbury, Durrington, Silbury and Dinas Emrys, overseeing various projects and reporting back to the Archdruids and Ever-Living Ones.

THE NORTHERN MARCH

Theoretically, Southern Albion might be the extent of Fir Domain territory. In reality, the Tribe of the Growling Shields push as far north as they can get before the Finians stop them. Many is the Finian who wonders why they bother. Albion is a far more obviously welcoming land than Alba. However, directly south of Alba's border lies country so vital to the Fir Domain that their military presence here is second only to their defence of Gorias. The looming escarpments have a precious gift to offer. It is here that the great settlements of Uskafell and Yboras have grown, for here lie the quarries where raw materials are found in the greatest quantity, of increasing interest now the mines of Gorias may be facing exhaustion.



Food, Water and Danger

The Northern March is hauntingly beautiful with its heather-strewn moors, its great grey crags and tempestuous storms, but it is very hard land to tame. A solitary hunter who knows what he is doing will find better eating here than the farmer can hope for. Sheep and cows fall prey to the many wolf packs in the area, barley and kale are almost the only crops to grow in such bleak weather and, should the harvest be good, bandits may come and try to take what they can.

The Wyrmswey itself begins at Uskafell and has the reputation of being a lonely dangerous road where far worse things than bandits lurk. As its name suggests, there are stories of great reptiles being seen and, certainly, more Titans still be found this far north. It is even said that come winter, in tiny settlements where the harvest is poor, the old habits of the Titans have not quite died and that if there's no other meat, 'long pig' or 'hornless goat' can become the bill of fare. Travellers should be wary.

Uskafell

Uskafell in the North West is a mining community of growing size. Like Gorias, the clansfolk live in the cliff caves directly above the mines and consider their city impregnable, by dint of living too far up for their foes to reach. Unlike Gorias, they do not live on a stepped, well-constructed man-made mountain. The people of Uskafell make their homes on the sheer face of the escarpment, an arrangement which, to an outsider, seems utterly impossible, for there is no obvious route of transport around this vertical community. The clans of Uskafell, however, delight in knowing their own secret tracks and hoisting their rope bridges across the chasms. Every family has its own secret recipe for burning pitch to be poured down the mountainside in defiance of enemy ladders and siege machines. The sides of the cliff are dark streaked with the remnants of this strange stuff which comprises boiling lead, sulphur, faeces and other noxious substances. It goes without saying that Uskafell has an aroma all its own.

If Uskafell could be said to have a weakness, it is the settlement's lack of convenient provision. Rainwater gathers on the topmost slopes of the escarpment and much time is spent in collecting it. Food is a real problem and trade is the answer. Much of Uskafell's stone is sent down the Wyrmswey to be sold in Gorias and Wroxeter. The stone is not refined at Uskafell for

two reasons. Firstly, the skill of forging and smelting is not well known in that settlement and secondly, uncut stone may be harder to transport but it is also harder to steal and almost impossible to make a quick profit on. Raiders do better to attack those in possession of already forged metals and, in any case, are often desperate for food.

The journey to Gorias is long and can be dangerous but the profit will be much higher than for stone sold in Yboras, where there is less demand. Buying fresh food in Gorias to transport up north is pointless, as it will not keep. The same holds with supplies bought in Oxford or Wroxeter, unless it takes the form of livestock and seeds. Yboras has plenty of food which it promptly sells at very high prices to Gorias and to Uskafell. Thus, for Uskafell, one way out of their predicament is to sell their stone in Gorias and buy food in Yboras. Sometimes this all seems like too much effort and the clans of Uskafell come out of their hillsides in force to raid their neighbours.

YBORAS

On the east side of the Northern March is the earliest settlement of the Fir Domain in Albion, excluding perhaps Glastonbury. Yboras was once a city of the Titans, who chose this location well. The settlement is fed by a great river and surrounded by grassy, fertile plains, and the woods here have been thinned considerably, for in Yboras the houses are of a very different design to the usual roundhouses. Houses are basically created around a rectangular wooden frame within which wood slats are latticed. The frame is waterproofed with black tar, the interwoven walls are plastered with a white paste, mixing chalk, lime and soil, and the roof is thatched. All in all, the effect is picturesque.

Remains of ancient buildings, enormous by human scale, can be found all around this city and have perhaps fuelled the imaginations of the Fir Domain with a sense of competition. In Yboras, size really does matter. As the individual gains prosperity, rather than add more houses to one's compound, the house is widened, more and more floors are added to it and the roof just gets higher. In many houses, the ground floor eventually becomes barn and stable for the livestock.

Status can be judged by the height of a person's house, the more storeys the better. These people would



never dream of living in caves and scoff at the folk of Uskafell, whom they traditionally perceive as a bit of a joke; stupid troglodytes who find the hard way to do everything and cannot even feed themselves.

The city has good mines, though these are not the mainstay of the community. Canny chieftains of Yboras would rather wait until Gorias and Uskafell mutually exhaust their own resources and come needing more ore. When the need goes up, so will the price. Until then, most metal and stone is traded between members of the community. This settlement is one of the very few to have cobbled streets.

To defend the original city, the Titans first built a massive ditch, then a spiked wooden wall. This basic outline has been copied by settlements all over Albion, especially by the Fir Domain of Yboras who like to think they have improved upon the original. The ditch is full of rusted sharpened spikes wedged into the earth, and the wall is now a massive edifice of stone. Stone watchtowers dot the city wall and the only way in or out is over the huge wooden drawbridge.

THE EASTERN MARCH

Marsh lights and mist, deep bogs and twisted trees, the fens of the Eastern March have a gloomy reputation. Settlements are rare here, for few dare make their homes so close to the Midgard border. Norse raiding incursions are common, battles frequent and bloody. Some say there might even be Norse blood among the Fir Domain of the fenlands, because they fight with a cruelty and fearlessness reminiscent of the very foes they hate. Many bear scars from the unending wars in the East, and, while warriors of the Eastern March will fight anyone who challenges them, a special anger is reserved for the Norsemen. This is not a land to travel without a well-sharpened axe.

The quicksands of the Eastern March are well known as dangerous places. These foul smelling bogs can swallow up hapless foot-travellers with ease. One particularly unpleasant legend relates that those who die in the marshes do not rest. Their spectral shapes can be seen glowing most eerily at night, and anyone foolhardy enough to get in close will hear terrible whisperings, some begging to be released, others promising treasure, and all trying to induce the listener to come nearer. Should the listener take heed of these voices, a false step inevitably proves their ruin and

the marsh-ghosts claim another victim. It must be pointed out, however, that these claims are not always taken seriously by the sturdy locals. Their explanation is that, when the marsh gas levels rise too high, the marshes often disgorge the bloated bodies of the dead. Marsh gas causes severe hallucinations, so travellers seeing corpses floating up through the bubbling mud might well find themselves talking to them. This gas also ignites very easily, creating gouts of flame over the surface of the bogs. All in all, the sensible way to deal with the marshes is to avoid them and this can be difficult, even with a guide.

The marshes may be the bane of all wanderers but they are also a powerful line of defence in times of war, claiming, perhaps, as many berserker lives as the Fir Domain do on the battlefield. It could be argued the spirits of the bogs, far from being enemies, are powerful and loyal defenders of the Goddess' lands.

The trees drip with rain, the bogs squelch underfoot, the deep pools appear full of strangled tree roots. There is little stone and wood, though plentiful, is inevitably warped from the damp. River passage is sometimes easier than travel by road, indeed there exist communities who live upon barges, fishing to survive. Most inhabitants of the Eastern March exist in the simple reed huts prevalent in this area for centuries. These huts are created from a resource which is not only plentiful but tough. Reeds are tied tightly together in bundles and then stacked to form walls and, of course, reeds are used to thatch the roofs. These houses hold in heat, keep out damp and, though they blow down in the fiercest storms, can be rebuilt quickly and cheaply. The Fen clans are almost diametrically opposed to the folk of Yboras. Here, the size of one individual dwelling has no real meaning, for anyone can build a reed hut bigger than his neighbours; it will just blow over more quickly. Among the Fen clans, how much land you call your own and the abundance of huts inhabited upon it, together with fishing ground and hop field shows the prosperity and overall success of your clan.

UROXETER

Wroxeter is an unusual city. It stands on a low-lying island overlooking the Scarpath, remarkable only for being a little higher and less damp than the land around it. Wroxeter is criss-crossed with tiny brooks and streams, and peppered with reed dwellings just



like any other Fen settlement. The feature that makes Wroxeter different is its defences. A traveller from Gorias would recognise straight away the methods used to fortify Wroxeter. The land around the edge of the island has been cut-away and added to the island to give it more height, but this cut away land is no mere defensive ditch. It is a huge gap in the land running round the island into which the nearby river Cam has been diverted to form a free-flowing moat. Behind the moat, Wroxeter has its double wall. The external wall is the original, made from wood too sodden to catch fire from the torches of enemies. The inner wall is much newer and made from stone brought from Gorias, for Wroxeter's defences are vital to the Fir Domain. The trouble with stone is that it sinks easily beneath the mud of the Eastern March and thus, the wall is continually in a state of subsidence. This is a cause of some irritation and much mirth to the clansmen of the city, who still trust to their old wooden wall and their own ferocity to hold off the Norsemen, now and forever.

Belerion

The southernmost land of the Fir Domain is the one where the Druids have wrought their finest work. There are no cities and few settlements here. From the high plains to the sea the land seems at peace, sleeping beneath the barrow hills of a long-lost people. High up on the downs the old burial mounds of Titan kings and others, long lost, remain undisturbed. Sea-clans, druids and travellers can be found here but only the sea-folk find magic in the sounding ocean. Everybody else looks upwards at the hills and the sky, for here awaits the greatest mystery in all Albion; the Temple of Glastonbury.

The Temple of Glastonbury

The Temple of Glastonbury is the centre of all druidic culture across Tir Nan Og and, like Durrington, it is independent of allegiance to any tribe. Few druids make their homes on the Temple lands, and these live in the humble huts of the land keepers and gardeners, helping them tend the temple and then leaving Glastonbury for a while. The powers of earth and stars meet here with such force that even the strongest willpower can give way under the strain. Pride is a quicker killer than a sword in the Temple of the Stars. To stay for a season may open one's mind to great understanding. To stay longer may open one's mind a little too much.

Glastonbury sits at a meeting of worlds where different realities merge and become one. Here, the power of the stars, the power of the earth and the powers of the Underworld, Annwn, ('An-oon') conjoin and are made manifest. When seekers come to Glastonbury expecting a great edifice of stone and wood to rise up before them, they are disappointed to find a huge panorama of fields and woods. The Temple, they surmise, must be smaller than they thought, when in fact it is much bigger than they dream. The temple of Glastonbury is not a building of pillars and walls. It is a vast landscape of the stars mapped out on the earth, exactly reflecting the constellations above.

The ice-crystals within the clouds over Glastonbury mirror the Temple's layout on the earth. To find the direction to take, just look up at the clouds. There, the land will be reflected down at the gazer. Some areas will seem cloudy or vague but others will look like fields, woods and gardens, all bound together in the outline of gigantic forms to be found among the stars, a bear for example, or a dog. There are many constellations in the heavens and druids say observers see different ones in the landscape reflected on the clouds, depending on the quest they are bound to fulfil.

Glass Islands of the Dead

The land around Glastonbury was once marsh, until the coming of those who created the Temple. Most believe it was built by the ever-living ones but the scale of the Temple points to another origin. The Titans may not always have the sad blundering giants now hunted for fun by the Fir Domain. They were once beings of intellect and imagination, and the Temple is likely to have been their creation. The ancestors of this degenerated race are the dead who wait in Annwn. It was they who cleaned and shaped the marshes, planned meticulous walkways and fields, planted woods and erected stones amid the new shimmering lakes. They sculpted the land to reflect the constellations, especially the belt of the zodiac, and they focused all that star energy on the key to the land's magic, the revolving castle, Caer Sidi.

Caer Sidi

Named with typical druidic perversity, Caer Sidi, (meaning 'Revolving Castle') is neither a castle nor does it revolve. It is a huge stone circle at the top of Glastonbury Tor, focusing all the magics across Tir



Nan Og. At night, beacon flames outline the zodiac sculpted into the land, the firelight reflects the celestial shapes up into the sky and, to the ready mind, as the shapes flicker and move across the clouds, earth and sky and fire do indeed all seem to be revolving, spinning around the tor. There is power to be gained here but at a great price. In the presence of so much magic, the mind is set reeling, and a seeker who is not ready will be driven insane almost immediately.

Thus, the way to *Caer Sidi* has never been made easy. The seeker must begin by travelling the lands shown to him in the clouds, meeting the challenges in each zodiacal land. When he reaches a point where he can join the labyrinthine path coiling up the hill, he can then travel to the centre of the stone circle to find the conclusion of his quest.

Before this, he must prove himself by journeying through the landscapes which reveal themselves to him on his first sight of *Glastonbury*, that he may learn their lessons and take their gifts, or fail and go no further.

The most well-known landscapes to be seen in the clouds and then journeyed through on the land, are those of the Celtic zodiac. The important fact to remember is that the magical power of each constellation manifests in its twin kingdom shaped on the lands of *Glastonbury*. The energy of the stars is drawn down to the earth, changing the land, and sometimes mutating those who dwell there.

The Temple of the Ram

When seen reflected on the clouds, the Temple of the Ram looks like a great golden ram's head. The constellation of Aries and the energy of the Star-Ram suffuse this part of the landscape, which is formed by fields of wheat and corn. Aries is the sign of the Warrior and, though the pastures look peaceful, the monsters to be found here are strong, fast and fierce. In this Temple, the challenge is usually a physical one, to fight or flee. Courage, lust for life and honesty are the qualities to be found here, but those who quest must beware of falling prey to the darker aspects of the ram; love of destruction for its own sake, boastfulness and bigotry.

The Temple of the Bull

Minotaurs and bulls with the heads of men are among the curious creatures to be found here where, rather

than crops, grass and flowers grow high. The reason for the more lush vegetation is also the strongest hint indicating passage through the Temple of the Bull. Cow dung is everywhere and the stench of it is overpowering. The constellation of Taurus gives the powers of patience and determination to those who travel this area, but can also create obstinacy to the point of stupidity.

The Temple of Albion the Giant

This chalk outline of Albion is made up of a patchwork of fields, bridges and walkways with woodlands making up his beard and hair. This is an odd temple, as its constellation is the sign of Man himself and, as such, the challenges faced here are inevitably man-made ones. Albion is the sign of cleverness and ingenuity, and this temple shows the way to new ideas and learning. Unfortunately, the stars of Albion often promise more than they deliver. Seekers in this temple must beware of losing interest in what they do and refusing to take responsibility. Brilliance is the Giant's gift, laziness his curse.

The Temple of the Lion

Those who quest in order to become chieftains pray that this temple is revealed to them, for Leo is the constellation of Kingship. Here, among desert rocks and savannah-like scrubland, the great cats can be found in all shapes and sizes, mutated into beasts of terrifying strength. The gifts of Leo are power and mercy. Failure in the use of either denotes a lack of royal qualities.

The Temple of the Maiden

The constellation of Virgo is much beloved of the tribes of Danu. This is the temple of many harvests and full orchards, for Virgo is the temple of the Goddess herself, as Corn Maiden, Warrior Queen and Crone, three in one. The Corn Maiden bears the wheat sheaf in her gentle hands, the Warrior Queen bears a mighty axe to defend her people, and the Crone has her broomstick and many magics. What happens to the seeker here depends very much on their true relationship with the Goddess in all her forms.

The Temple of the Serpent

This temple is formed by lines of standing weirdstones which culminate in the head of the serpent, a great stone circle. Celts fill the place with desire and excitement to charge the stones, so the heat of the Earth Serpent rouses the Star Dragon, and the two link together.



When this happens, the raw power to command is unstoppable! This is the power of passion, driving all things and consuming all things. It is the gift of the Serpent to the one who knows how to summon and wield it.

The Temple of the Archer

This land is one of hills, dales and woods, and the quester must move swiftly over briar and bracken to discover its gift. The star sign of Sagittarius, Archer and Centaur, governs in this temple and many were-creatures, half man and half beast, live here. The gifts of the Archer are those of swiftness, speed, agility and laughter. This is not an easy temple for those who take themselves too seriously. It would be easy for a sun-king to grow overconfident having come this far, but pomposity and self-importance will only make the Archer laugh. Playing the game and enjoying it is the key.

The Temple of the Unicorn

This is a very dangerous temple. Here, the land is harsh and barren, the hills rise too high, sparsely forested mountains and neither water nor food is easy to come by. In this land waits the fabled and much-feared unicorn, though unicorns are not the only danger here. Indeed, in the Temple of the Unicorn, danger comes disguised in many attractive shapes. The gift to be gained is that of caution.

The Temple of the Phoenix

This temple cannot be reached except through walking to the centre of the labyrinth. There stands a circle of stone portals, each door representing a group of stars,

whose power throbs in the very heart of the rocks themselves. Star energy can pass through these doors and come to Tir Nan Og, and ancient tales suggest that inhabitants of Tir Nan Og could reverse the process and use the stones to visit other worlds. If this has ever been tried, no-one has returned to tell the tale. The temple is hard to describe, even by those who know it well. Here, the Eagle of the Sun takes its flight around the circle and the stones, filled with the power of the constellations, vibrate, 'singing' as it passes. The Eagle sinks as the sun rises. When the sun sets, the Phoenix rises. The power of the sun will never betray the land. Knowing this, it is possible for darkness to become a thing of beauty rather than fear. The gift of the Phoenix is to understand the power of the coming dawn.

The Temple of The Fish

The Temple of Pisces is considered the most fearful and the most mystic of all the zodiac signs. Very little is known of it, save that it contains the very deepest secrets. The treasures of Annwn are thought to be buried here, though precisely what those treasures are, be they gold or silver, peace or knowledge, none can say. All that is known is that this temple exists within the body of a great Fish, like a whale, except that it has huge teeth. In this place, death holds sway, and perhaps re-birth as well. But that is for the seeker to find for themselves.

There are many temples still remaining to be explored in the land of Glastonbury, and many mysteries to be understood. No two journeys here are ever alike.



The FALIANs

Few things can unite the Sessair, Finians and Fir Domain in a unanimous opinion, but the Tribe of the Shadows, or Falian, is definitely one of them. 'Crazy', sums up the general consensus; the Falian are mad, their city is mad their country is mad, and any poor devil who has to share land with them is mad. The Falian would love to use this legendary insanity to get off the many hooks their political shenanigans land them in, but it never works that way. The other tribes have known the Falian too long to be duped. They realise the Lords of Shadow are sane enough to know exactly what they are doing, and mad enough not to care.

This is, of course, a hopelessly biased view of the Falian, who value intelligence as highly as physical strength and prowess. Perhaps it is this cerebral



quality which makes other tribes suspicious, claiming the Falian are at best addle-headed and at worst untrustworthy. For their own part, the Falian scorn the other tribes for lack of imagination and intellectual curiosity. Certainly no-one could ever accuse Falian of these flaws. Falian are generally open to new ideas and are intensely interested in everything, including other people's secrets. Politically they are astute, with a unique understanding of how to manipulate the weaknesses of others for their own gain. They number among their clansmen some of the most powerful sorcerers, inspired bards and imaginative torturers. All in all, they are an interesting people.

The Falian are thought to earn their epithet 'Tribe of the Shadows' from their ancient tradition of painting their bodies and weapons black, though there is another explanation for their name (see page 137). Their strengths are not obvious, for they have neither the military training of the Finians, nor the quantity of weapons of the Fir Domain, nor the passion for war of the Sessair. They do, however, count among their number magnificent spies and covert attackers. Not surprisingly their preferred style of fighting is to ambush by night, a method at which they excel. Falian warriors can be mighty with sword, axe or spear but most carry a slim rope or wire line in case they are required for 'up close' work. Strangling and garrotting are popular means of enemy disposal among the Falian. They are not always the most organised of armed forces but, as individual warriors, they often possess cunning verging on brilliance, powerful magic and an infamous capacity for cruelty where enemies are concerned.

The Tribe of the Shadows

The Falian say it was in the shape of a raven that the Goddess in her aspect as Morrighu, Death Queen, taught them how to paint their bodies, how to relish the stealth of night-battle, how to cast spells, how to brew poisons and how to enjoy the final death rattle in the throats of their foes. If this is true, she has got a lot





to answer for! She did not, however, give them Falias. That land they took, courtesy of the power of the Sun God, Lugh.

Long ago, the Faliens say, they set sail from a cursed place, called by some Atlantis. In that land, demonic tormentors of human beings ruled, and the forefathers of the Faliens were determined to be free of these oppressors, the Cyth, as they were called. In those times, the clansmen followed the way of Lugh, who promised them great victories if only they would take the freedom they wanted, instead of waiting to be given it. Inspired by him, they rose up and slaughtered their oppressors, fighting them all the way down to the sea, covering themselves and their weapons with the blood of their foes. When they reached the harbour, they found great ships, all bearing the Triskele, dread sign of their tormentors. Hands slick with demonic ichor pulled down the sails and drowned the symbol in the blood of the Cyth. Then the Faliens set sail. As the sun rose, the blood caked on their bodies, weapons and sails dried and grew darker. By sunset, they were black as ravens, flying over the sea in sable ships.

They had, of course, nowhere to go. They wandered the seas aimlessly, food and water growing ever more scarce until a war-witch named Cruithne had a vision in which Lugh promised her that her people would see their home the morning after she died. She promptly ordered her clansmen to kill her, in order to hurry the God's generosity along. The first rays of sunlight touched the corpse of the mighty war-witch and revealed a new land on the horizon.

The Origins of the Tribe of the Shadows

Even more so than most of the Earth Goddess Tribes, this tribe's history is shrouded in myth and uncertainty. Few can even agree on the central question – when did

the tribe begin painting themselves black? Some argue this is a recent event, associated with the Goddess's curse on the tribe that so devastated Her worshippers, the avans. Others say the tribe has always favoured the night over the day and the supposed curse that means they are less effective in daylight is simply a reflection of their natural preference. This latter explanation, though, fails to take into account the parallel warrior tradition that is still known among a few Faliens, that of the Sun Hero, who disdains the night and favours Lug the Sun God above all other deities.

A myth, that of the Hare-Witch, explains the origins of the Tribe of the Shadows, telling of a legendary Falian ruler, Queen Mabby and her alliance with the hares of the woodland, who it is said taught the Tribe of the Shadows all they know about speed and stealth, just as the Morrigan taught them about underhanded attacks.

Queen Mabby was said to be the first of the Faliens to learn the secrets of hare-witchery. She first gained an insight into the mysteries of the hare while travelling incognito deep within Southern Cambria before she was made Queen. Here she took on the guise of a wandering leather-worker, turning shoes and making tunics for her food and board. On one farm, her host was the local fish-wife, who ruled the nearby fishers and farmers largely by terrifying them with tales of an evil witch in the form of a monstrous hare. Supposedly the fish-wife's spells protected the village from the foul magics of the hare-witch, who was often seen abroad at night, sucking the milk from the herds of those who had angered the fish-wife enough to have her withdraw her protection.

Mabby noticed that her hostess always rose in the middle of the night, long after the rest of the village was asleep, and slipped out into the darkness. One night Mabby followed the fish-wife and watched her bathe in the farm's pool beneath the light of the



moon, then leap out in the shape of a hare! At once Mabby realised the truth. Clambering into the pool herself, she found herself, too, transforming into hare form, and raced off after the altered fish-wife. After a night observing a great many brazen crimes and other acts of mischief on the part of her hostess, Mabby was satisfied that she had learned enough to convince the villagers of the truth. At this point though the hare-witch spotted the transformed princess, and immediately gave chase. Mabby fled across fields and under hedges, finally outdistancing her pursuer. She dove back into the moon-kissed pool and found herself human again, but the fish-wife was on her way and Mabby ran once more. At this point she decided that discretion was the better part of valour and fled the village entirely, leaving the unfortunate villagers no clue as to the fish-wife's treachery.

This attitude in the heroine of another tribe's past might have resulted in the tale being altered or even forgotten, but the Falians do not consider Mabby to have been a coward. Rather, she is respected as a good example, for she avoided getting involved in a situation that was in truth no concern of hers.

When Mabby returned to Falias, she was aghast to discover a small patch of grey fur on the back of her neck, where she had not quite completely submerged herself in the pool in her eagerness to escape the vengeful witch. Realising she could never be Queen if she had a physical imperfection, she resolved to unearth all the secrets of hare-witchery before the current King went into the Earth. Thus it was that she learned all she could from the hare-witches of Cambria, then went out to seek the ordinary hares of the forest and make peace with them. She reasoned that if her tribe could learn all the stealthy secrets of the hares themselves, they would have no difficulty defending themselves against other tribes. So it was that the Tribe of the Shadows both learned hare-witchery and gained themselves a sacred animal.

Traditions of the Falians

The Choosing of a King

Like the other northern tribes, the Falians use the *Divination by Entrails* spell to give them guidance with the choosing of a new King. The chief druid sacrifices the old King at the end of his seven-year reign and

uses his entrails to determine the best candidate for the new King. A King chosen in this way cannot be argued with or gainsaid in any respect, and is King from the moment the blood-trails indicate him – there is no debate among the Tribal Council, as there is with most tribes.

If the old King is not available for sacrifice, every member of the Tribe of the Shadows has an obligation as strong as that of a blood-feud to capture alive his killer, who will be sacrificed in his place. If the killer is unavailable, the killer's killer will do; or the closest relative of the King, or of his killer. A King chosen in this manner, by a sacrifice who was not himself a Falian King, is regarded as not quite so infallible as a 'true' King who has been chosen in the correct way.

The Tribe of the Shadows do not have a coronation ritual as such, unlike the other tribes. The moment a King has been chosen, he *is* King – the Falians have no need for ceremonies to know who rules over them.

King and Council

Among the Tribe of the Shadows, the Tribal Council has a fair degree of power, though perhaps not so much as its equivalents in the other tribes. The King's word is law, but it is up to the Council to interpret that law. Like the treacherous sneaks the other tribes claim them to be, the Council will happily twist the King's words in whichever manner seems most appropriate or useful to them. Many Falian Kings are driven very nearly to despair once they realise that the only way for them to wield real power is to either have a team of experts ensuring nothing they say can be misinterpreted, or ensure they take direct personal control of anything important to them.

The Sanctity of the Hare

Ever since Queen Mabby's alliance with the hares, it has been Falian law that hares are sacred animals, never to be hunted or killed for any reason. A member of the Tribe of the Shadows who does slay a hare will find himself with a new geas or weird. The only time an exception is made is during the great feast of Beltaine, the fire-festival of lust and fertility, when it is traditional for hares to be caught and eaten by any who wish to appear beautiful at the revels. Killing and cooking hares during the Beltaine festival is perfectly acceptable and will not cause any ill effects.



Foes and Allies

The Tribe of the Shadows has had various short-term alliances with each of the other Earth Goddess Tribes at one time or another, but in recent decades their growing treachery and nocturnal tendencies have proved antisocial enough that few serious negotiations have taken place with the other tribes at all. Certainly now the Fir Domain are under King Osdann, the Falians have a definite enemy in the form of that tribe, whose expansionist tendencies currently seem to be focused on Southern Cambria. The Tribe of the Shadows would not usually be too worried about this – they have faced aggressive, conquering tribes before, and know that as the wheel of fate turns, territories expand and contract accordingly, with permanent gains being a rarity for any tribe. Somehow though they know this time is different – the Fir Domain King, after all, is said to be immune to arrows and blades alike. . .

The Independent Tribes

There are far more minor, independent tribes in Cambria and southern Eriu than in the rest of Tir Nan Og. The Falians will say this is because they do not much care what goes on outside Emania. The Sessair or Finians, looking for a fight as usual, will say this is because even the ordinary farmers and fishers of Cambria and Eriu are more than a match for the weakling Tribe of the Shadows warriors. The Fir Domain, for the most part, look on the independence of these smaller tribes as an opportunity for Fir Domain expansion. Few in any tribe, even the Falians, realise that most of these tough, self-reliant local tribes would sooner die to the last warrior than submit to rule from Falias, Gorias, or anywhere else. Many are no larger than a single village, and would steadfastly resist rulership from even the next village, let alone a great city hundreds of miles away. Most are highly insular, and though all will practise the Celtic traditions of hospitality to a greater or lesser extent, all tend to have bizarre local customs that are very easy for an unwary traveller to fall foul of.

Beginnings

Burnt, rotten and ruinous, the land before the tribesfolk was less a kingdom and more a scar on the sea. Even from the prows of the ships the clans could see clearly the God's promise; sourland as barren and bitter as the heart of a Drune. Indeed, the land bore all the marks of Drune magic, even down

to a henge of stones jutting out of the earth like ribs from a body. This earth had been corrupted by means of tapping the inherent energy, using the stones like needles to suck up its fertility. Only the great marshes on the edges of the island seemed immune. Enraged, the wanderers came ashore and destroyed the circle utterly, shattering the stones by lighting fires beneath them. The strongest warriors poured their blood on the earth and their clansmen followed, ploughing the ground so the precious gore might refresh it. Then the new home was consecrated to the Goddess and Gods. It took little time for the people to discover that the land, once benighted by the presence of the corrupting henge, was good fertile earth, and the new clan took their name from this earth, 'Fo Ail' meaning 'Under Stone.'

The Drones were not pleased by the Falian invasion of the island. They intended to turn it into a Drune counterpart to the Temple of Glastonbury, though they had already faced terrible difficulties in their plans because of the indigenous inhabitants on the island, a tribe of creatures called avances. These avances had proved redoubtable enemies to the Drones and it might be thought they would be natural allies for the Falians. This was never to be the case.

The avances had not succeeded in attacking the stone circle, and were pleased with the newcomers for their bravery. The Falians, however, felt no inclination to be neighbourly. As far as they were concerned, the avances looked threatening and could barely speak. There was no convincing the Falians that such people, 'The Beaver-folk' as the Falians disparagingly called them, should be treated as equals. In any case, all these prejudices merely glossed over an underlying agenda. The avances may have stopped the Drones for centuries but the Falians had destroyed the corrupting circle. The Falians had saved the land and the land should be their reward – theirs, and theirs alone.

Falias the Island

The Falians have named the island after themselves and divided it simply into two areas: Falias the city, and the land around it, Emania ('Eh-man-ya') meaning 'Land of the Moon'. The chieftains of the tribe would like them to be one and the same entity, and began by creating a great sea wall which promptly sank on the surrounding marshland or was simply undermined





by avans swimming beneath it. The chieftains had to rethink, and retrench, on higher ground. The City covers the centre of the island and expands northwards towards the high cliffs of Raga and the port.

Emania

There are no independent Falian settlements outside the city, due to the extreme likelihood of encountering avans by night, beasts by day and Drones at any time. For those prepared to brave the dangers, Emania is a land rich in food and beauty. The land has a palpable connection to the Goddess for those prepared to seek it. Moon shrines and even humble gifts to Carnun can be found in the clefts of rocks and at the feet of trees. Wolf song in all its plaintive beauty is often heard here as the full moon rises. The rivers teem with fish, the woods grow low and thick, birds nest, boars hunt, all in all it is a plentiful land for those prepared to understand it. Wild crops include fruit, berries and sea-weed.

Falians: The City

The present fortress wall is made of stone, high and very thick. Within the walls are small chambers; a series of stairs at regular intervals inside the walls give access to the wall-walk, where guards patrol at regular intervals. Directly outside stand the charred remains of wicker men, staked heads decorating the watchtowers. The walls are black with soot and blood, and glowing witch-lights hover over the battlements. Sometimes ships of the Cablach Dubh (see page 131) fly over the island and surrounding seas, ostensibly scouting for sight of enemies, but really in order to put the fear of the gods into any would-be foes.

Within the City: The Common People

Within the city the strained sense of martial law all but disappears. This is something the warriors are trying to change. Falians have enough savagery in their natures to make efficient raiders and will kill with exuberant cruelty anybody who threatens their home. Beyond that, Falians do not respond well to discipline. Farming is haphazard, though sometimes remarkably successful, as the Falians are always ready to learn and have experimented with many different kinds of crops to see which ones suit the earth. They never farm the same crop on the same land more than two years in a row and the result is a soil rich in a variety of nutrients. This is vital to the upkeep of the city, as trade with the other clans of Danu is very unreliable. To a certain extent, the war with the avans is useful as it keeps the population down, which in turn means bad harvests are not necessarily disastrous.

Falians do not build their houses in neat rows or compounds. They build what they like where they like and, though their homes are created by traditional methods, many prefer asymmetrical, angular buildings to round or oval shapes. The effect can be startling. Falian houses might be bizarre examples of individuality but they don't spend much time in them. Communal street ovens are a much-loved part of Falian life. Here, one takes one's food to have it prepared on the open fire pits by professional cooks, who will accept barter (often a share of the supper itself) for their pains. This is a popular way to spend an evening, even when the weather is foul, for these folk love company and are interested in news from all across the lands. No easier way of ingratiating oneself



exists among the Falians than to bring food and stories to the fire pit.

Within the City: Princes and Politics

As one would expect from a people who number many sorcerers, bards and fools, there is no great liking for authority here. This is not to say Falians are lawless, but they do have an anarchic streak and deeply enjoy seeing the proud and powerful make fools of themselves. Falian bards often specialise in satires, Falian politicians are famously duplicitous, Falian poisoners are among the best in the land and Falian kings do not rest easy on their thrones.

In a kingdom where spellcraft is well-known, it is inevitable that enemies of a chosen chieftain might claim he had used sorcerous means to gain his crown, though they would be fools indeed to say it to his face. Many of the more expansionist members of the court cleverly use this as a justification for the war. They reason that the Stone of Destiny is vital for the future of the tribe for, once the Falians possess it, there can never again be doubt about the rightfulness of leadership. Any chieftain who does not want to pursue the stone is clearly trying to hide his unworthiness to be king.

Because a Falian king may have difficulty commanding unquestioning loyalty from his people, the ruler tends to make efforts in two vital areas. The first is to keep the war going so that a siege mentality unites the tribe; the second is to maintain the appearance of being a powerful leader capable of winning that war. To this end, the royal Falians created the Sun Court and Royal Labyrinth.

The Sun Court

The Sun Court looks, from the outside, like a massive round fort, built of light stone covered with blue and saffron spirals. The roof is not thatched, but flat, made

of sheer sheets of marble with casement windows chiselled out of the rock. The austerity of its external design cannot prepare the visitor for what lies within. The Sun Court is an elegant world of arches, halls and chambers, totally dissimilar to the interiors of great palaces to be found anywhere else in Tir Nan Og. Curious designs are carved into the rock, floors are covered with mosaics and luminous shell-like colours are reflected off the walls. The king and his clan live here, where the light strains through the casement windows to scatter sunbeams into the stone palace. The palace is cool and undoubtedly beautiful, if a little dark for a place dedicated to the sun.

The Royal Labyrinth

The Sun Court lies at the centre of the city, and the Royal Labyrinth lies at the centre of the Sun Court. This edifice is the pinnacle of the Falian king's claim to wisdom, without which he will never be respected (worse, he may even be derided) by his sharp-witted clansmen. The Royal Labyrinth is situated below the floors of the Sun Court. It is a huge rectangular stone maze, filled with strange conundrums and mysterious magics of great beauty. Each king is supposed to master it and, having done so, add something to it. Recent chieftains have claimed the war takes up too much of their time for them to pay attention to the labyrinth. When all is said and done, they claim, gaining the Stone of Destiny is much more proof of kingship than solving riddles in a maze. This all seems very sensible, too sensible for Falians and, however long it is put off, the time always arrives for the chieftain to try the labyrinth. Of the four Falian Kings prior to Sengann, the remains of two were found near the portal of the maze, one never returned and one completed it and returned to his duties, only to be found dead within a week with his own sword through his heart. Sengann himself mastered it but has never returned to the Labyrinth since then and has not added anything to it.



The Port of Falias

The Port of Falias is of great importance to the city. There are three kinds of vessel to be found in the harbour, the most in evidence being the humble currachs used across all Tir Nan Og. These rowing boats are made of treated hide stretched over a frame of light, often hazel, wood. Usually owned by fishermen, they have no sails, needing none as they skim over the water with ease.

For long voyages, Falian ships tend to follow the efficient example of the Midgard vessels, single-sailed longships. A Falian longship is very easily identifiable from a Norse one, however, as their sails are basically triangular rather than square, and the ships are, traditionally, entirely black from stem to stern.

Falian warships are a result of adapting the designs of the vessels in which they escaped from Atlantis. These were enormous and cumbersome galleons, almost useless without full sails, and often requiring backbreaking rowing from slaves to get them through the water. Such ships might have been objects of status to the Cyth but they were ill-suited to the needs of humans. The Falians streamlined the design, and after much trial and error, created ships capable of sustained battle at sea. A Falian warship can carry a small army, including archers, and inevitably has impressive ramming capacity. At first, skate rudders were added to make crossing the ice-floes possible, but these were a failure, because the weight of the galleons always proved too much, splitting the rudders and making them crash disastrously through the frozen seas. An improvement, rendering the skate rudders unnecessary, was added courtesy of captured Drune sky ships. These extraordinary vessels were powered by weirdstones magically enhanced by blood. The Falians soon learned how to use the weirdstones and now their own flying ships sail the skies. The Falian navy, comprising longships, heavy warships and a small number of sky ships, is called the *Cablach Dubh*, meaning 'Black Fleet.'

Beyond the Island

Not all Falians live on Falias. There are many who find the war with the avans pointless and, indeed, contrary to the wishes of the Goddess. Among so complex and witty a people, it was inevitable some would remain unconvinced of the need for an endless war, seeing it

as a way of shackling the bodies of one tribe and the minds of another. These knew better than to stay in a land where chieftains face too much dissidence to take it lightly; after all, whole families have been killed for one piece of brittle mockery, one joke too many at someone's expense. So those who dissented too loudly to be safe sailed away to make their homes in Southern Eriu or Cambria.

Between the Drones, the Fir Domain and the Sessair, the Falians of Southern Eriu and Cambria are never bored. These tribes, though very troublesome to the Falians, are nowhere near as problematic as their cousins over the water. The city of Falias still claims fealty from the settlers, and whether or not they receive it can be a very moot point.

It might be supposed the city's kings would be grateful to be rid of potential rabble-rousers and, indeed, some are. Others have a habit of pursuing errant Falians and either bringing them back to the fold or trying to exact tribute from them. It is, after all, a matter of loyalty to the clan. The Falians of Southern Eriu and Cambria find themselves in something of a difficult situation. If they say no to the city, they may invoke the powers of an army far greater than anything they can muster. If they say yes, they effectively lose their independence all over again. Some claim this is the reason why most Falian settlements are small and scattered, found in deep woodland rather than on the high hills, with the one notable exception of Airde Mogha. The hills may be more easily defensible against other tribes, but sky ships have less advantage above heavily forested areas.

Leath Mogha (Southern Eriu)

Whether or not the rationale is true, it is certain that the Falians of Eriu do not make maps, or create roads between their settlements. These, they reason, can only be of use to their foes. Falian trackers are too good to need them and, in any case, the Falians in Eriu are often nomadic, following the herds of deer and wild cattle across the land and raiding where they can. Their name for Southern Eriu is Leath Mogha, meaning 'Mogha's half', which stems from the Falian claim that one of their chieftains, a warrior called Mogha, fought the Sessair to a standstill and forced



them to hand over half of the land to him and his kin. The Sessair strongly deny this. That there was a battle they will accept, that Mogha was a great chieftain they will allow, but that he won half of Eriu or anything like it from the Sessair, they will never concede and many bloody battles have been fought between the tribes as a result.

Airde M^ogha

Airde Mogha is a ring of hills to be found in the central part of Southern Eriu. It is also, for want of a better word, the capital of the Falians in this land. The phrase means ‘Mogha’s heights’, and is thought to be the original home of the great chieftain himself, as well as the only Falian settlement built on the hills rather than in the woods. Less a huge settlement and more a group of encampments on the hills around a great lake (*‘Lighe Duthracht’* meaning ‘The Lake of Wishes’) these are very traditional hill top forts, with basic fortifications of ditches and earth walls, surrounding a wooden stockade behind which the Falians live in roundhouses of earth and dung, thatched with reed. Airde Mogha has undergone many raids from sky ships, but is large and scattered enough to make battle tactics awkward for the Black Fleet. Focus on one hill invites a barrage of spells, spears and flaming arrows from all of them, while attacking more than one hill at a time means dissolving battle formation and limits the fleet’s combined effectiveness. Whatever petty arguments may occur between the inhabitants of Airde Mogha, they all help one other in times of raid. Signalling by means of fire is easy from hilltop to hilltop, and there is much cordial feeling between the settlements. Each settlement is considered a part of Airde Mogha, but has a more temporary name derived from that of its current chieftain. Trade is rare, hunting and farming being the mainstay of existence. Eight of the hills have encampments upon them and the ninth is left aside for the dead.

Torr Sgath: The ninth hill has been called Torr Sgath, (‘Tower of Dread’) since the time of Mogha. This chieftain was never a follower of Lugh. He was a vehement son of the Goddess and worshipped her in her aspect as death bringer, Morrighu, Queen of Carrion Crows. When this land was taken from the Sessair, Mogha commanded that all the corpses be brought to Torr Sgath, where the bodies were stretched out on platforms of wood and hide, that the crows might come and eat. Since then the hill has become not only a huge

burial site but also the greatest shrine to the Morrighu in all Eriu. Here, the Goddess is worshipped in her darkest aspect, and many terrible creatures are thought to make the surrounding environs their home. It is considered a very dangerous place to visit. Sightings of all manner of ghosts abound, and tales are even told of the *dearg-dul*, blood-drinking corpses which think and prowl and devour the living. It is also the place where enemies of the Falians are tortured, staked out and left to die. Such prisoners are lucky if the crows finish them off before the more playful of the hill’s inhabitants approach at nightfall.

Cambria

Like their cousins in Southern Eriu, the Falians who have settled in Cambria rarely make maps. This is not so much due to nomadism, as the Falian settlements here are often permanent and sizable, but rather because of the odd properties of the area which give Cambria the nickname ‘the Glamour Land’. The other factor here is the Falians’ relative disinterest in much of the land. This is one of the few areas of Tir Nan Og in which relatively independent villages and small tribes can still prosper – the Falian settlements dominate the area immediately around each one but do not have the resources or inclination to conquer the whole of Cambria. In any event, the Tribe of the Shadows make little attempt to impose their culture even on neighbouring settlements, preferring to simply extract a tax from all the produce of the land, in exchange for their protection. Their main settlements in the north are the three hill forts of Breiddin, Craig Rhiwarth and Llwyn-Bryn-Dinas. In Southern Cambria, the true Glamour Land, the Falians occupy the hill-forts of Dinas Mynydd and Carn Goch, along with various smaller forts and walled villages. For whatever reason, the Falians here have somewhat better relations with those of Falias than do their counterparts in Southern Eriu; perhaps due to the persistent legends of the Falians’ origin being here in Cambria (see page 137).

The three northern forts are relatively isolated from most of the rest of Cambria, with mountain ranges to both the south and west. For this reason what little trade they do is usually with Eastern Albion, or by cloud curragh with Falias. Northern Cambria in general is as cut off from Southern Cambria as either is from Eriu, for the middle of Cambria is criss-crossed with mountains.



Craig Rhiwarth

This is a hill fort town of unusual design, since it has only one wall, and that of solid stone rather than the usual earth rampart or wall of mixed earth, stone and wood. This is all the Falians consider necessary to protect them, since the hillside on the other three sides of the settlement is so steep, rough and scree-strewn as to render a mass attack there impossible. Like Llwyn-Bryn-Dinas, Craig Rhiwarth overlooks one of the richest areas for metal mining in Cambria (mostly copper), which is why the Falians settled here. It is also close to the River Tanat, allowing for easy transport of the copper to other areas.

Llwyn-Bryn-Dinas

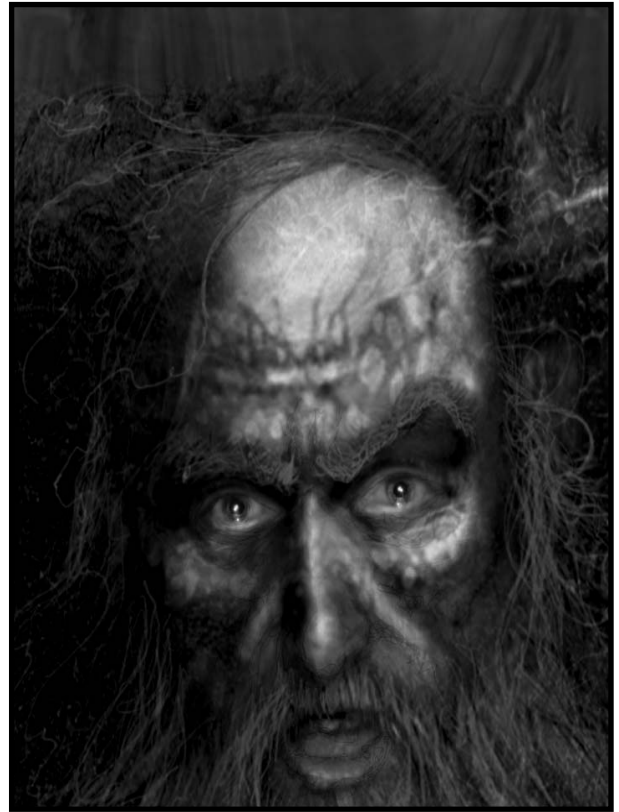
About 12 kilometres east of Craig Rhiwarth, at the other end of the Tanat Valley, is another Falian settlement, Llwyn-Bryn-Dinas. Extensive copper and lead mines can be found around the hill, and the Falians here export both ore and finished metal goods back to Falias and inland to Albion.

Breiddin

Breiddin is the easternmost of the Falian outposts in Cambria, and thus the one which bears the brunt of the Fir Domain raids and attacks. Located about 20 kilometres southeast of Llwyn-Bryn-Dinas, it is close enough to the other two northern forts that sieges can be relieved within a few days, allowing the three forts together to provide an excellent mutual defence. The Falians of Breiddin give as good as they get when it comes to raiding, and the inhabitants of the Heartlands of Albion have long learned to dread the dark of the moon, when the Tribe of the Shadows are most active. As far as trade goes, Breiddin's bronze-workers and coppersmiths are very good, and much of the copper produced by the other two northern forts finds its way here to be crafted into fine jewellery or tools.

Dinas Mynydd

Built in the hope of dominating the red dragon farms of Southern Cambria, the hill-fort at Dinas Mynydd has not lived up to its promise. Fiercely independent dragon farmers and the natural hostility (and unnatural sorcery) of the land around put paid to any such ambitions a long time ago, and raids by drunes, Fir Bolg, Fir Domain and titans mean the Falians here have enough to occupy themselves with already,



without any great wish to add to their troubles. That said, the Falians did have some early, local successes, and two dragon farms in the immediate area are under their 'protection'.

Carn Goch

Carn Goch is the Falians' largest outpost in Cambria, and by far the most agriculturally oriented of the forts. It is a double fort, with a smaller hill fort called Y Gaer Fach being situated lower down the ridge from the main site of Carn Goch. Carn Goch is enormous and very impressive, with stone ramparts six metres tall and a ditch five metres deep, surrounding more than 12 hectares of pasture and farmland. As might be expected, the two forts together can hold several thousand folk in time of war. This has rarely been necessary, as few enemies raid so far into Cambria. The Falians who settled here brought their own farmers and herders, and have cultivated a great deal of the surrounding area. If ever an enemy seriously invaded Cambria, this would be where the Tribe of the Shadows would make their last stand.



The Gower

This plateau of moorland rises up above the surrounding plains, windswept and desolate. There are no Falian settlements nearby, though the land is occupied – the tiny, primitive village of Crumlyn lies on its edge, between the Black Mountains and the Silver Forest, and one of the famed dragon farms of Southern Cambria, Worm’s Head Farm, can be found on the western side of the plateau. All around the edges of the Gower, within its steep-sloping sides, can be found deep caves. The Falians of Dinas Mynydd nominally claim the Gower under their dominion, though they have little interest in, and less chance of, enforcing their rule. Certainly the only site truly worth conquering on the moorland, Worm’s Head Farm, is naturally well-defended by its war dragons and is so far out into the Gower that an attacking army would likely be lost in the Glamour Lands before they could even reach it, let alone take it.

Crumlyn: Ruled with an iron fist by the fish-wife Kicva, Crumlyn is a village in fear of almost everything – drunes, dragons, ghosts, El creatures, and even strangers. This fear is bred into them through a lifetime of listening to Kicva’s superstitious tales, in which otherwise respectably Crumlyn folk foolishly

disregard the fish-wife’s advice and inevitably die a horrible death. Crumlyn’s main industry is fishing on nearby Crooked Lake, though it also has a few meagre fields and sparse pastures. Perhaps its most notable feature is the great carved wooden feeding-post, once used regularly by the villagers to tie up maidens for the local ice dragons in the hope of placating them. This is a thick T-shaped piece of wood hewn from a single tree, with the ornate bar of the T carved with snarling dragons and a large iron ring set just below the T-bar for tying the girls to. Since the end of the ice age and the beginning of the ice dragons’ long hibernations, the feeding-post has not seen any use, though Kicva certainly remembers the old ways and would be quite willing to get rid of a few youngsters this way if a dragon ever returned to plague the village. The feeding-post is quite capable of bearing the weight of a perching dragon while the creature feeds on the victim below.

Worm’s Head Farm: Run by Gwyn the Irascible, this is a typical dragon farm, usually having around thirty young dragons being bred solely for their dragonhoards, along with three adult females as a breeding stock, and a small number of male dragons with war dragon training. At present these include the



stud dragon, Ingaw, a mature adult; the Knucker, a young adult, who is Ingaw's first son; and two very young, two young and two juvenile dragons. All are only partially trained, except for Ingaw, one of the young dragons, and one of the juvenile dragons – Gwyn finds the few customers he has for war dragons (no more than around one every three to four years) are usually so penny-pinching they will not pay for a fully trained beast. Ingaw is not for sale unless for an exceptionally good offer, since Gwyn does not consider the Knucker to be quite ready to take on the role of stud dragon.

The farm also has several hundred half-wild goats at any one time, bred as fodder for the dragons. Gwyn is assisted in dragon-farming by his brother Crug of the Brawny Arm and two middle-aged farm labourers, Cuel and Berwyn, though he takes on casual labour when he has a great young dragons about to reach to the age when they will need to be culled and harvested. Gwyn's daughter, Nest of the Speckled Face, is currently undergoing training as a druidess at Durrington. Three goat-herds in Gwyn's employ have their own simple cottages out on the surrounding moorland.

The Fogou: This artificial cave is where Gwyn the Irascible keeps Ingaw, his stud dragon, guarding the dragonhoard from all the dragons of Worm's Head Farm. Gwyn reasons that a mature war dragon is quite sufficient to deal with any would-be thieves. The Fogou is a deep, dug-out cave roofed with a thick layer of turf and walled with earth and stones. Ingaw is always kept padlocked (-100% penalty to any Mechanisms test to pick the lock) to a long chain, which prevents him straying more than 15 metres from the Fogou but does not otherwise impede his combat capabilities.

The Pit: North of Worm's Head Farm, far from road or river and deep with in the Gower moorland, is a dried-up old well from a village that was here many hundreds of years ago. At the bottom of the well sleeps the Mata, an ice dragon of large size. He has slumbered here since the weather began to get warmer but he will awaken again if ever the winter gets cold enough. When he does, he will be a force to be reckoned with: he has always reckoned himself master of the Gower and the presence of other male dragons will not be tolerated.

The Caves: These have been inhabited for thousands of years and the Cambrians within them are still more backward than the villagers of Crumlyn, dressing in roughly tanned hides and armed only with flint weaponry. Most are fairly peaceable, so long as they are left alone but it is said there is at least one family of cannibals and another of malicious witches among them. The matriarch of the witches is Old Moll, notorious for her obnoxiousness and willingness to hurl curses around willy-nilly, and for her resistance to ordinary weapons. The whole witch-family is expert in the little-known spells of shape-shifting, rare in northern Tir Nan Og but occasionally taught mother-to-daughter here in Cambria. Old Moll regularly wanders into Crumlyn and the surrounding farmland, always leaving sickly cattle and soured milk behind her.

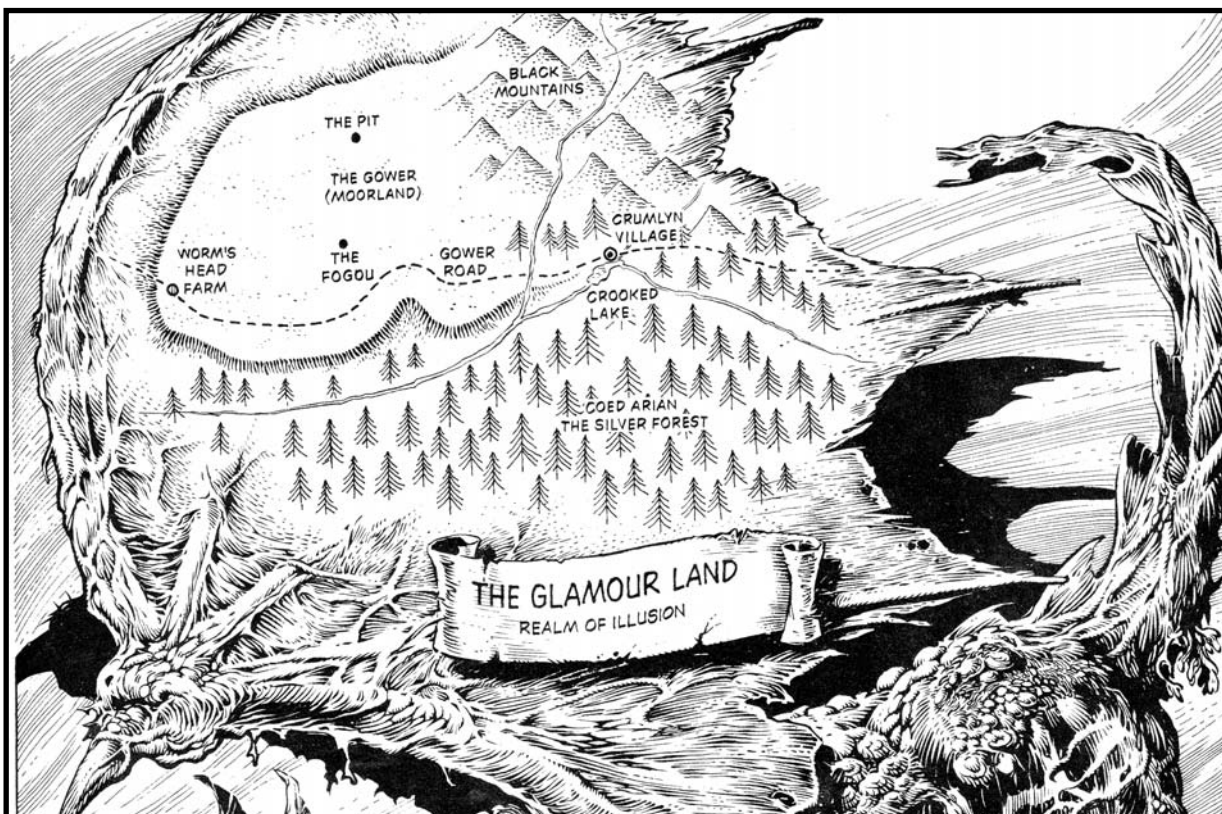
The caves are of limestone and, although some are natural, all have been extended and modified, since limestone is so soft and easy to work with. Many larger caves are artificially divided by low dry-stone walls and almost all have sleeping niches hollowed out of the walls, covered by aurochs hides to provide a little privacy. Likewise, every cave has smaller niches which are used to store tools, hold lit candles and so on.

The Glamour Land

'Glamours' are a particular kind of magic to be found occasionally across Tir Nan Og. Most are spells that change sensory perception, enabling casters to feel/touch/taste/see/smell things beyond normal limits, to create illusions or to make dreams and fantasies seem real.

The Glamour Lands are a powerful source of illusionary magic. They are also responsible for difficulty to be met when trying to map out Southern Cambria, for the Glamour realms are not entirely constant in space and time, save only that the doorways between the worlds are to be found mainly in the Gower. These kingdoms are home to the nature spirits, many of the El folk and the beings who slip between realities. Some say the Glamour Lands are a mirror of Tir Nan Og, others that these are the lands of dream itself, a part of the world, and apart from the world. Whatever the case, it is clear that Southern Cambria has several areas which link Tir Nan Og with the Otherworld and the rest of the El Worlds.





Understanding such a place is, perhaps, impossible but the best description of the Glamour realms has been handed down by the Falian bard Eildn True Tongue, who found himself trapped there for seven years:

'Now, if you should wish knowledge of the Glamour Lands but dread the attempt and would glimpse the way before walking the road, here is a beginning. Find a glimmer glass such as maidens love to spy themselves in and place your back to the hills and trees, raising up that glass to your eyes. Then look, not at yourself, but at the land you see in the glass. And it will meet your perception that all seems the same as the land you know well, but is different, like a stranger wearing your mother's garb. Without the movement of one blade of grass, without the straying of one beam of the sun, everything will have changed. The colours will have deepened before your eyes and the lines of the land will not be as they were, and things once known will be unaccountable to you.

This is but a shadow of what you will see should you enter the Glamour Lands, and this is how you will know it from any other place; its beauty makes the same not the same. Time passes but does not pass. The place

you knew is not the place you knew, and the beings at home there are different to you. Their laws are not your laws, and yet best you keep them well or suffer beyond the ken of mortals. So if you are not enamoured of such a quest as to walk in the Strange Lands, beware of old rathes and barrows where no corpse-goods can be found. Keep your path clear of ancient woods, especially those where hawthorn and apple grow, for these thrive at the portals of the Glamour Realms. Most especially avoid the moorland of the Gower, the wells of Scanaven, the hill of Lunassa and the Lake of Dreams, for these have powerful dweomers cast upon them, and you may find yourself in a nameless land simply by walking and dreaming.'

The ways from the Gower to the Glamour Lands are much easier to find on the nights of Beltaine and Samhain. Whether they should be travelled is another question. Certainly those festivals are busy times for the inhabitants of the strange realms, who take the opportunity to enter Tir Nan Og and cause havoc. On Beltane night, they come looking for bards, brides and babies. On Samhain, they are dark and deadly, of sinister aspect and intent.



The dwellers in the Strange Lands are unlike those to be found anywhere else. Many are lovely to look upon but some are peculiar, even ugly, to untrained eyes. All should be treated with caution and respect for, inevitably, their powers are considerable.

Inconstant in most things, the Glamour Lands have certain laws which make little sense to the traveller but are considered sacred to those who live there. Not all of them are known to the Falians but some are very familiar:

- † On finding a road into the Glamour Lands, do not leave it, come what may.
- † Courtesy, wit, and generosity are considered most important here.

† Ungraciousness and meanness is utterly despised in the Glamour Realms.

† The presence of iron is a great deterrent, as many of these beings abhor it.

† The presence of iron is considered a very great insult to even the most benign inhabitants.

† The words 'Thank you' are sometimes considered remiss or gauche.

† A better response is to offer some gift or act, which must be at least equal to the gift given.

† One's word is one's bond.

THE FIRST AND FINAL HOME

Eildn mentions several sites in Southern Cambria as powerful places of enchantment, and many Falians from Cambria take this to mean such areas are the great ways into the Glamour Lands. In the same way that individuals from other tribes might leave their homes and travel Tir Nan Og to learn of the world, Falians quest into the Glamour Lands. Many go there in search of bardic inspiration and magical knowledge, and some do it for practical reasons. Glamours are hard to come by, but worth a great deal to those who can use them. Some travellers never come back but, those who do, maintain that people of Danu can be found in the strange realms, calling themselves Faileans, ('Shadows') dwellers in the twilight worlds. These folk are said to speak a sweeter and more ancient version of the common tongue, dressing richly and wearing torcs of gold and silver unequalled in all the mead-halls of chieftains.

With such a store of legend behind them, it is inevitable that many Falians go looking for these lost beautiful kinsmen, if only out of curiosity. Some say that the whole business of Falians coming from Atlantis is nonsense and that they originally lived in the Glamour realms. The popular story claims the Falians, on coming into Tir Nan Og, were trapped by the Cyth and could not return. This tale is scorned by the other clans who claim it is just a myth created to feed the clan's delusions of grandeur.

Even this is not the main reason for the Falian obsession with the Glamour Lands. It is said that many Falians grow tired of the ordinary world fading around them as they age. It seems ironic that members of a clan who have spent centuries battling for land eventually stop caring about it. They have been known to just leave their kin and their roundhouses and wander away, never to be seen again. Perhaps they meet their end at the hands of bandits or enemy tribes, or maybe they just starve, dreamstruck, in the forests of Cambria. Or perhaps they find those portals into the Glamour realms and wander again down the tracks of their ancestors. After all, as their bards would say with a shrug, if an old tale drives one to find the world of dreams, does it matter if it is true?



Lands of the Drune Lords

Much of the terrain here is very like Northern Tir Nan Og, with a great deal of forest covering the land, some plains and farmland, and several large mountain ranges surrounded by smaller hills. Much, too, has recently turned to sourland – in many areas the drunes have been accelerating their plans for Ragnarok, making previously benevolent weirdstones drain huge quantities of Earth Power from the lands. Again, like the lands of the Earth Goddess Tribes, the drune lands are fairly sparsely populated, with a great deal of wilderness.

The Southern Tribes

There are more tribes in the lands of the Drune Lords than there are in the northern lands, but they are smaller and more isolated than the tribes of the Earth Goddess. Rulership by the Drones has ensured peace between the individual tribes, leaving more time for tending crops and livestock, hunting and crafting, be it weaponsmithing or pottery, as the villages are not spending time constantly warring with one another.

These small tribes do not have tribal kings as such, and there is certainly no High King, as the Drones do not tolerate such competition to their leadership. Each village has its own headman, who holds the responsibility to ensure plentiful harvest, resolve local disputes and generally keep the tribe together. The headman, or headwoman, will usually be chosen from among the elders of the tribe, either by acclamation or vote. As the tribes do not have their own noble warriors, the appointment of the headman has to be by consensus, as he has no means to enforce his position. The leader may be replaced at any time by another, if the tribe feels that he or she is not doing a good enough job.

The tribes are small, usually limited to a small area containing two or three villages or towns. The lands of the Drune Lords used to be fertile and game plentiful but, recently, the Earth Power has been drained to such an extent, by the Drones and their weirdstones, that it is difficult to feed a lot of people off the increasingly infertile land. There has been mass starvation and the population of the villages has been shrinking, through death and migration to the larger conurbations. Travellers are treated with suspicion and hostility among the southern tribes, unless they turn up with great quantities of food, in which case they are more likely to be invited to join the feast, rather than end up as part of it.

The following tribes are some of the more prominent of those found in the drune lands, though there are many dozens more. Each tribe's usual area of abode is given, but the Games Master should bear in mind that, in these troubled times, members of the tribes are often found far from home, either serving in drune armies or as refugees.

The Carnu

The Tribe of the Carnu is located near the site of Carnac. They are great hunters, skilled with spears and slingshot. The boys of this tribe openly aspire to joining the skull-swords when they reach maturity, or form squads of light infantry when the drunes wish to raise an army. They are very much in support of Drune rule and take part in the great celebrations to Carnun that are held at Carnac.

The head of the largest Carnu village, Carnac itself, is a man called Molok. He has been leader here for 20 years, holding his position through force of personality



and a long sharp spear. He maintains good relations with the Drones at Carnac, and his hunters are given licence to hunt what game they will in the surrounding area, provided that young men of the village are regularly provided for training with the skull-swords.

See the Carnac section on page 140 for more information about the village and its great weirdstone alignments.

The Nemenites

The Nemenites live in and around a large village called Nemere, on the banks of the Lor river, two days' journey to the west of Drunemeton. The people of this tribe subsist mostly on fish caught in the river and by cultivating the well-irrigated farmland in the vicinity of their village. They tolerate the drunes and appease them by supplying them with surplus produce. In return the drunes teach them sorcery – they have set up a small hut as a school in Nemere and every Nemenite learns a few spells from a young age. This is also to the drunes' advantage, of course, since they are able to take the best of their students to Drunemeton to become fully-fledged drunes or witches.

The head man of Nemere is Han, a slightly-built, middle-aged man, respected for his ability to drive a good bargain. His eldest daughter, Prin, is a drune priestess at Drunemeton.

The Paressi

The Paressi are mad. Their city, Lucotetia, is located on an island in the middle of the mighty river Sarn in the North West of the Drones' lands. Being in the middle of prime farmland, it is the centre of the grain trade route, with grain being shipped up and down the river in the days before the sky chariots. Grain, especially rye, was stored in the vaults of Lucotetia but, as the methods of storage were primitive at best, the grain often got wet, went mouldy and became infected with ergot. Generations of eating mouldy rye has caused the Paressi to suffer perpetual hallucinations. As a people, they are pathologically superstitious and paranoid.

The current head of the city of Lucotetia is a woman called Pash. She suffers from prophetic visions and is a soothsayer. She is unusual amongst the Paressi in that her visions are invariably accurate.



See the Lucotetia section on page 155 for more information on the Paressi's great city.

The Dree

The Dree are noticeably smaller than other peoples of the Drune lands. They live in the far east of the country, near the Massif Centrale which divides the lands of the Drune Lords from the unexplored lands of the East, if indeed there is anything there at all.

The Dree are hunters and are devoted in their worship of Carnun. They paint their bodies with vegetable dyes and wear mostly furs and skins. A portion of every kill is left in a cleft in a rock for the Lord of the Hunt. Being so far away from the centre of the Drones' operations, the Carnun they worship is a god of laughter, music and dancing. They are the only tribe in the southlands who adhere to the old practice of sacrificing the tribal leader at the end of his seven-year reign.



Their current leader is called Lavan, a virile and fit young hunter chosen as much for his sheer exuberance and prowess with the bow than for any wisdom or other leadership qualities.

CARNAC

The village of Carnac, once an unimportant farming village to the north of the lands of the Drune Lords, has now become the closest settlement to the drunes' most ambitious and horrifying project

To the north of the village, amid a region of sourland so leeches of life that the earth is like brown ash, lie row upon row of megaliths. There are more than five thousand stones in the Carnac alignments, drawing Earth Power from the land and containing it in a vast, dangerously unstable reservoir.

The great alignments serve as the central power battery for the drunes' network of dolmens which stretches across the southern regions of Tir Nan Nog. These dolmens, while able to draw power from the Earth in their own right, are also fed with energy from Carnac as and when required, ensuring the rule and power of the drunes goes undisputed.

As well as being their power source, Carnac is the Drune Lords' doomsday weapon. With such a monstrous amount of Earth Power at their disposal, they imagine they will be able to crush their enemies altogether and bring about the promised Ragnarok. Energies in such concentration, they believe, would be able to move mountains and melt glaciers. It is generally agreed among the Drones that it was just such a titanic use of Earth Power which brought about the earthquake in which Atlantis sank. A similar drowning is envisioned for the hated tribes of Danu to the north. Such is the ultimate vision of Slough Feg the Lord Weird, whose genius led to the creation of the first of the Carnac fields more than a thousand years ago. Indeed, Feg would go further, and sink all of Tir Nan Og beneath the waves, but only the highest-ranking sloughs know this – so far as ordinary drunes are aware, Carnac will simply bring about the demise of their old enemies, not their own people too.

Although the forces generated and held by the Carnac alignments are staggering, the drunes are having considerable difficulty in employing them for

anything other than powering the dolmen network. The first problem is the feedback of earth energies which the site is producing. The more energy is drawn from the earth, the more stones need to be added to the alignments in order to control and contain it and prevent overload. If the resultant balance of forces is less than absolutely perfect and stable, feedback will eventually build up once again. For this reason, the stone fields are continually being added to.

Slough Feg, having taxed his legendary genius to find a way to overcome this problem, has given instructions for cromlechs (semi-circular arrangements of stones) to be built on the ends of the stone rows, imagining that the circular formation will contain the energies more efficiently and boost the overall output of the site. Though they will not be ready for a year or two, these 'booster stones' will eventually prove completely successful. (In the timeline of the Sláine stories, this occurs relatively early on, in the *Dragonheist* story.)

The second problem lies in the difficulty of directing such a mass of energy in a coherent manner. Recently, those Drune Lords who have offered to act as conduits for the power and attempted to draw upon it have been disintegrated completely by the livid earth-fires which poured through them. There is not much point in amassing power if there is no way of drawing upon it without burning out the user. Work is therefore scheduled to begin on a single gigantic weirdstone which is to act as a focus and regulator for the power provided by the stone rows. It is expected that as well as enabling a single Drune Lord to draw upon the total power available at Carnac without immolating himself, the great weirdstone will itself be able to hold and maintain a given spell and feed it with the power of the region. For example, it will be possible for a *Control Weather* spell to be cast through the weirdstone in order to subject a region hundreds of miles away to a continuous violent storm. The great weirdstone is to be named 'the Watcher'.

The Three Fields

The three areas of aligned weirdstones are named Menec, Maryo and Lescan. They lie to the north of the village of Carnac. Each 'field' consists of row after row of standing stones lined up like soldiers awaiting the call to advance.



The stones in the Menec field, initially quite short and stubby, become larger and larger from east to west, ending in the semi-circular Cromlech, a testimony to the exponential increase in Earth Power which was beginning to erupt from the field and the measures taken to contain it. The field is one kilometre long and one hundred metres wide, containing more than two thousand weirdstones. The fields of Maryo and Lescan each hold around 1,500 stones.

The fields of Carnac are a daunting sight. Any follower of Danu who was to encounter them could hardly dream of a greater blasphemy against the Earth Goddess than this. Stone upon stone leeches power from the ground, power that makes the air seem thick and humid between the stones and generates a constant low whining noise like a swarm of insects. By night, a lurid glow shimmers in the sky above the stone fields like a sickly-coloured version of the Northern Lights. The whole area is completely out of balance and reeks of excess and greed for power, perhaps a chill prediction of a future time in which the constructions of men will lie in rigid patterns on an exhausted, exploited earth.

WEIRDSTONES IN THE MATRIX

Not every menhir (standing stone) in the three great alignments is actually a weirdstone. Early experiments were made with arrays of weirdstones but it was soon discovered that multiple weirdstones in one region caused too much disturbance in ordinary reality and were simply unusable. Stones would split, explode or begin to howl and froth with blood, Drune Lords would find their skeletons warping like old wood and whole regions would vanish overnight leaving nothing but tarns of stinking liquid in their stead. Determined to master the problem of overcoming the limitations of individual weirdstones, Slough Feg himself struck upon the idea of constructing aligned fields in which every tenth stone was ordinary granite and the others were weirdstones. Using the ordinary stones as magical 'counterweights' proved to be the solution. It was now possible to build a complex which would link hundreds of weirdstones without the risk of a magical meltdown.

It is impossible to tell which menhir is a weirdstone simply by looking, though characters who are accustomed to tapping weirdstones will be able to feel the Earth Power in them and so identify them. The whole site is dedicated to the use of 'all

drones of slough rank'. An attempt to tap any of the weirdstones which are built into the alignments will result in a disastrous feedback surge in which all of the meddler's remaining Earth Power (if any) will be sucked *into* the stones and 1D6 damage, ignoring all armour and other protection, sustained to three random hit locations. A Persistence test with a -40% penalty must then be made to detach oneself from the stone. Failure means that the character is stuck to the stone and will continue to take 1D6 damage to three random hit locations for each combat round in which he fails to extricate himself (a new Persistence test may be taken every combat round).

THE TRINITY OF CARNAC

Each of these fields is under the supervision of a particular Drune Lord of Slough rank. The three together are called the Trinity of Carnac and are viewed by the drunes as especially sacred, second only to the Lord Weird himself. Their role is solely to oversee the development of the Carnac power-grid and research new ways in which the energies may be employed. Menec is under the authority of Slough Maug, Maryo under Slough Broc and Lescan under Slough Lob. It is possible for the Trinity of Carnac to access the power of the alignments when working in concert within the cromlechs, which used to be a regular occurrence but the power load is now too strong for even the three Drune Lords to use safely for longer than a few moments.

To compensate for this, the Trinity has had a small dolmen built for private use over to the east of Carnac and has laid down a much smaller field of stones, known locally as 'little Menec'. This geomantic substation is where the Trinity performs most of its rituals. It is much more stable than the lopsided, sizzling array at Carnac.

The three Sloughs are very different in temperament. Slough Maug is more than a little insane and often giggles in a high, girlish voice. Something of an alchemist, his hermitage is thick with smoke through which can be seen vats of liquid simmering slowly over dung fires. He is famous for his macabre sense of humour and is viewed with some disdain by other Sloughs because of this. In particular, they disapprove of the private puppet shows he stages in which he uses the preserved bodies of enemy warriors as his actors. He is held in high esteem by the Lord Weird.



Slough Broc is the most withdrawn and obscure of the three. He is the most detached from the material realm, which means his physical body is even more badly deteriorated than is usual for a Slough. He often stops talking in the middle of a sentence and has to be reminded of what he was saying. Sometimes, he will simply wander off halfway through a discussion, or snap his rancid fingers and demand ink and parchment to record some new insight. His favoured activity is the exploration of far-off realms of the spirit. To indulge in this he will drink narcotic brews and retire to his observatory for days on end, wandering outside the body and holding conversations with old inhuman powers.

Slough Lob is loud and brutal. He oversees the worship of Carnun at Carnac and is particularly fond of the blood-harvest at Samhain. Any excuse to feed the private dolmen of the Trinity with fresh blood is acceptable to him.

The three Sloughs are each served by a private retinue of two dozen second-year skull-sword recruits from Er-Grah (see below). These unfortunates are not only expected to cook and clean for their masters but to fetch any desired component of their magical rituals, no matter how distasteful or hazardous its acquisition might be.

THE OBSERVATORY OF SLOUGH BROC

Eight metres up in the branches of an ancient and unhealthy-looking oak tree just to the north of the dolmen of the Trinity is a round wooden structure with a conical roof, so rotten-looking it seems to be a

tumour nestled in the veins of the wood. A rope ladder hangs from a circular hole in the structure's base, the only way in or out. This is the retreat which Slough Broc calls his observatory. He comes here to observe and record the movements of the stars and to go on his herbally induced out-of-body journeys in search of yet deeper secrets. Close at hand in this foul cell is the instrument which Slough Broc uses to study the stars and which also forms another component in Carnac's defence system, the copper bowl called the Eye of Broc. When filled with fresh blood (no other kind will do) and fed with 3 EP it functions as a scrying device for an hour. This works as per the *Scrying Flames* spell (see page 56) but with the added ability to focus on a location as well as a creature. Slough Broc often uses it to keep watch on the three stone fields.

POPULATION OF THE REGION

The village of Carnac is the home of the Carnu tribe (see page 135) who are headed by Molok. Despite the ravaging of the land which has been caused by the Carnac alignments, the tribe is strongly supportive of drune rule and has come to accept the drune philosophy that life is mostly suffering anyway and death a welcome release. It is not unknown for sacrificial victims to come forth willingly from the tribe of the Carnu, especially if the volunteer knows they are not likely to amount to much as a warrior or hunter. It is a great honour to be sacrificed to Carnun or to Crom Cruach.

Since the alignments at Carnac are so important strategically to the drunes, there is a constant guard on the region. Border patrols of skull-swords, numbering twenty men at the least and commanded by a Drune



Lord, make a daily round of the area. On every side of the stone fields, tall wooden watchtowers house sentries who are ready to raise the alarm if strangers approach. It would be extraordinarily difficult to approach the site unseen.

The site is occasionally troubled by invaders, though they are very rarely members of enemy tribes, who would see a strike at the drune power base as sheer suicide. The stones generate such a vast amount of magical disturbance and clamour that beasts are drawn here from miles around, driven into a fury and wanting to smash the source of the howling in their minds. It is not uncommon for time monsters, hairy ones and wodewoses to come roaring over the hills towards Carnac and be slaughtered by the patrols.

ER-GRAH, THE SKULL-SWORD ACADEMY

Just to the north of the village of Carnac is the fortified encampment of Er-Grah where the region's division of skull-swords is accommodated. Slough Lob often resides here when he is not tending to his stones at Lascan. The structure is completely built from wood, the produce of a forest which stood in this region before the stones of Carnac drained all the goodness from the earth. A double wall surrounds the place and turrets stand at the corners armed with ballistas to defend against aerial attack.

As well as being a barracks, Er-Grah is a training camp. Selected young men from the tribe of the Carnu and the other tribes of the drune lands are brought here when they are of age and put through the punishing training regime of the skull-swords. The Carnu are particularly proud of their status as 'first in line' to join the skull-swords and any young man who does not aspire to do so is considered a coward. The only exceptions are those with sorcerous potential, who are expected to be druids or witches, and those better suited to hunting, who will join the drune armies as skirmishers and light infantry in time of war anyway.

It takes three gruelling years to turn a fourteen-year old boy into a whetted killing machine. Approximately a quarter of the candidates die from the viciousness of the training and have their bodies slung out of the compound to be buried without honour. Boys from the Carnu tribe are twice as likely to survive as other candidates, since they have grown up amid the deprivation and hunger of sourland and are used to having to be tough to stay alive.

A boy arriving at the Academy is put through his first initiation upon arrival. The custom is for the boy to strike his mother (or a stand-in if she is not with him) and turn away from her, entering the stronghold without looking back. This not only symbolises the boy's separation from his parents but is a symbolic cursing of the religion of Danu, the worship of a Goddess. Everything which motherhood stands for is deliberately devalued.

The training of recruits is overseen by the skull-sword captain, Torghem, and his cohorts. His methods are uncompromising and harsh yet he sees them as a true kindness, not without some justification. From the first, new recruits are made to sleep on low wooden pallets underneath which are spread layers of dung, rotting waste and other writhing maggoty filth. They are not told why and must simply endure it as best they can. As time passes, they become steadily accustomed to the stench and are no longer nauseated. Only when they are brought for the first time into the presence of a Slough do they understand Torghem's kindness for what it is. They have become largely inured to the Sloughs' 'mystic auras', the stench of putrefaction which surrounds them. Though breath masks are still a necessity, the skull-swords have learnt to live with the worst of the stink.

Boys in their first year are not allowed metal weapons and must practice with wooden mock-ups. In their second year, they use metal weapons held in the academy stores. Not until their final initiation is passed do they receive a weapon of their own. This is done in the course of the initiation itself, a ceremony whose details are kept strictly secret from all outsiders. Even the drune overlords allow their skull-sword lackeys their privacy in this one matter. The ritual takes place in caverns which were hollowed out years ago in the hill under the encampment. This holy place is never opened to outsiders.

To survive one's final year and be issued with one's own sword is the first real reward a skull-sword recruit enjoys. Although the blades are not magical, each of them is unique and personalised to the bearer in some way, usually by bearing his symbol or family name. For a skull-sword soldier to neglect his sword, or worse, to lose it or have it stolen, is seen as a gross



insult to the whole force and will be punished by a whipping at the very least. Blood-eagles are not unusual for those who insult their swords. A sword broken in battle, however, is a different case and the soldier is expected to ritually mourn for it, living off water and bitter herbs for several days, until he may receive a replacement. When a skull-sword dies, his sword is broken by the captain of his troop or by his next of kin. Some veterans have come to believe that their souls inhabit their swords more truly than they do their bodies and a sword unbroken at death traps the spirit, who will then haunt and accuse the living until the sword is found and shattered with the appropriate rite.

Female members of the Carnu tribe who show great promise are more likely to travel to Cor Eolis to become war-witches than they are to join the skull-swords, which is a predominantly male institution.

The Broch

About 50 metres south of the academy at Er-Grah, between it and the village, is a small prison broch. This is only two storeys high, with the entrance being up a ladder onto the first floor and the prisoners kept below in the windowless ground floor. The rare few criminals from the village are imprisoned here, along with the rarer-still interlopers or adventurers who come to Carnac in the hopes of sabotaging or attacking it. There is no permanent jailor in residence, since the prison is not always occupied. Rather, a group of skull-swords will be assigned as jailors whenever prisoners are captured, with the number of guards dependent on the number and apparent power of the prisoners. Unlike most brochs, there is no need for a complex accounting system here to determine whether the prisoners still owe fines; anyone incarcerated here will soon be permitted to 'pay their debt to society' by being sacrificed to Carnun in a wicker man or on a weirdstone altar.

The Great Weirdstone

In the nearby region of Athbach, work will eventually commence on the construction of the biggest weirdstone in the world at this time. This is intended to be the final component of the Carnac matrix, rendering the whole store of power safely usable and enabling its direction with apocalyptic results. As such it is a critical component of the Drones' plans for Ragnarok and a top-level military secret. Unless the weirdstone

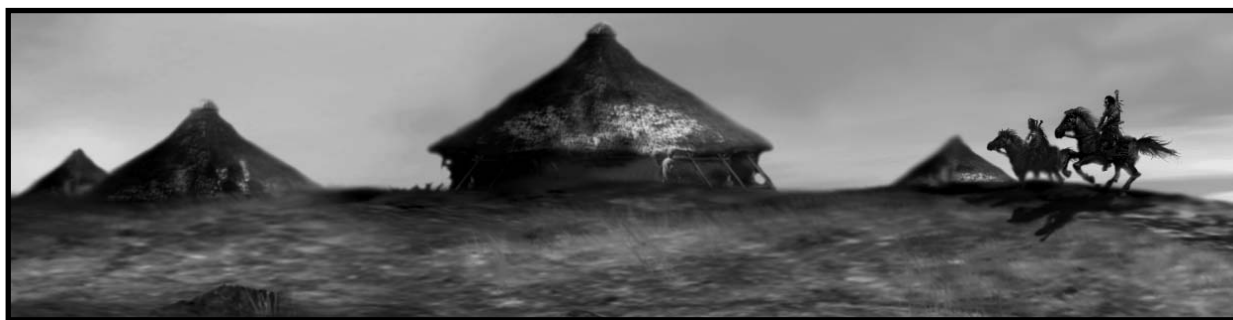
is properly completed and proves functional, the Great Flood will never come about.

It is up to the Games Master to decide how far along the project is at the start of the campaign. However, working by the timeline of the original *Sláine* comics, the project is completed shortly before the *Horned God* storyline. The Great Weirdstone will be designed and sited by Maeon the Architect, a sometime ally of the Drune Lords with dark skin and golden eyes. He claims descent from Atlantis on one side and from a pre-human race of serpent people on the other. Whatever the truth of these stories may be, he is undoubtedly an expert in the art of weirdstone crafting. Although the brilliant yet mad Slough Feg has proved how multiple weirdstones may be linked in a great array and it is acknowledged that a 'colossal' weirdstone is technically possible, nobody has yet pushed the boundaries of weirdstone crafting to create a single stone greater than ten metres in height. Maeon is prepared to attempt this. He seems to be confident but the Trinity of Carnac have their doubts.

The first phase of construction involves the hewing out of the titanic block of stone which will become the Great Weirdstone. This is done in the quarry of Brailac, 110 kilometres to the south. A fleet of a dozen Drune skyships will then be sent to lift it carefully from its bed and transport it to its destination. The Great Weirdstone will then be carved into shape *in situ* and, when ready, will be hauled into a standing position by hundreds of villagers from Carnac. The ritual to activate it will then take place at Samhain amid great celebration. There will be plenty of libations of blood to douse the stone, taken from slaughtered animals, captured enemies and executed criminals.

If the Games Master wishes, the campaign can begin with the Great Weirdstone already in place and activated. When the Trinity decide to use it, one of their number climbs up a ladder to the top and begins the tapping process. That Slough can then draw upon effectively limitless Earth Power for spellcasting purposes, though he cannot use more than thirty points in any one round. Alternatively, he may cast one spell into the weirdstone and leave it running, drawing upon all the Earth Power in Carnac to sustain it. The rules for weirdstone spells on page 36 apply here. Unlike ordinary weirdstones, the Great Weirdstone can be reset and imbued with a new spell.





Apocalyptic Spell Effects

Since the Great Weirdstone is the drunes' chief weapon by which they seek to bring about Ragnarok, its full powers are really outside the scope of ordinary spellcasting. It is left to the Games Master to decide what the Drones can achieve with it. In the original Sláine stories, it was the focused power of the stones at Carnac which melted the glaciers to the north and caused the Great Flood to rage inland across Tir Nan Og, leaving the Tribes of the Earth Goddess all but destroyed. Yet a flood is only one possible application of such power. It would be equally within the powers of the Great Weirdstone to send plagues of insects or wild beasts to destroy inland settlements, or to cause typhoon winds to tear whole villages away. The Great Weirdstone is the ultimate weapon of terror.

Life in the village of Carnac

Carnac is not as gloomy as one might expect, despite being sited on the biggest tract of sourland this side of Tir Nan Og. The village is more stoic than melancholy. The Carnu tribe who live there have learned to put up with just about anything which life can throw at them. Their devotion to their Horned God, Carnun, undoubtedly has a lot to do with this. Although the Drones have twisted the original religion of Carnun so that life is seen as a vale of tears rather than a thing to celebrate, the nature of the Horned God still shines through, particularly the humorous attitude which he takes towards death. Being a god of the hunt, Carnun shows his followers death is a necessary and inescapable part of life. All of a man's struggling against adversity amounts to no more than the doubling and redoubling of a hunted animal which tries in vain to evade its pursuers. The best it can hope for is to lead the hunter a merry chase and thus earn the hunter's respect; indeed, the best that is to be hoped for when facing a far stronger opponent is to make a good show

and keep some dignity. The gods being as fickle as they are, one may even win through by guile, cunning and a good measure of humour. Thus, though the Carnu are very pessimistic in their view of life, their hunters' philosophy means they are humorous about it and do not live in fear of death or pain. Grim jokes are common among them.

Most of the villagers who have not gone to Er-Grah to become warriors are hunters or beast-tenders. The stones have drained all the goodness from the earth and crops will no longer grow. As a result, agriculture has been almost completely abandoned. A few villagers are swineherds, keeping a herd of pigs which are fed on slops and such fodder as can be found. Hunting is the most popular of the professions by far. Hunting parties will often leave Carnac for days on end, travelling to forests on the borders of the sourland where game may still be found in abundance and returning only when there is enough to feed the village. Tribal loyalty is extremely strong among the Carnu. Nobody sets out to feed his own mouth alone.

Mindful of their own part in causing the hardship which Carnac faces, and recognising the unparalleled loyalty of the Carnu tribe, the Drones have made special arrangements with the villagers to ensure their beloved hunts are still possible. Every week a Druone skyship arrives to take a select hunting party of eleven tribesmen to the forest of Brocelwin, which functions as a Carnu game reserve. Places on this hunting team are limited and there are often bloody confrontations when the time comes for the team's members to be selected. It is Molok who has the final say.

The skyship departs Carnac several hours before dawn and makes a four-hour journey to the forest. There the favoured eleven spend the day shooting and spearing game for the tribe. The day's hunt ends with a solemn



ritual of thanks to Carnun, following which the day's kills are laden on to the skyship and ferried back to Carnac at nightfall.

In order to supplement the Carnu's rather rigorous diet of meat without much else, the Drones have arranged for wagonloads of fruit and vegetable produce from other settlements to be brought into Carnac on festival days. This always helps the celebrations along.

The Festivals of Carnun

The feast days most important at Carnac are Beltane and Samhain. Each of these sees the Drones and the Carnu, together with any other allied tribespeople who have come to worship, gathering at the stone fields to honour their gods with loud celebration and many sacrifices. These are times of feasting and drunkenness even in the leanest of times and go on for three days. Nonetheless, these are not the carefree festivals of the Earth Goddess. Death, not pleasure, is their theme.

The formal ritual celebrations mostly take place at the stone field of Menec and are led by the tittering Slough Maug. There is always a wicker man at Samhain, one of the largest in the land, second only to that at Drunemeton. As is the practice throughout Drune lands, it is filled with criminals, livestock and captured enemies as well as anyone who has chosen to be sacrificed of their own free will.

Carnac also has its own peculiar sacrificial rite, sacred to Carnun and not practised outside of the region. It is called 'The Running of the Stags' and involves a set of sacrificial victims, willing or unwilling, held at the Cromlech end of the stone rows of Menec. Their hands are bound behind their backs so they can only run. Skull-sword warriors stand along the outside of the rows to prevent anyone trying to escape. At a signal from Slough Maug, the victims are set free to run as fast as they can down the rows. Slough Maug then releases the hounds, specially trained and savage beasts who will chase the victims down and tear their throats out if they catch them, splashing the stones with blood and filling them with even more power. If a potential victim reaches the far end of the stone rows - a distance of about a mile - he will be set free. Carnun, after all, is God of the Hunt and if it is His pleasure to spare a sacrifice's life, then so be it. In practice this has never actually happened, but the rule is there nonetheless.

Drunemeton

Drunemeton is one of the largest sacred groves in the Drune Lord lands, nestled deep within the forest of Dardun in the centre of the Drune Lords' lands. It is protected by eight forest fortresses positioned around the grove, each filled with skull-swords. As well as defending Drunemeton, these fortresses hold most of the Drune Lords' apprentice drunes, witches and war-witches. Drunemeton is Slough Feg's main college of sorcery and he can often be found here training a particularly promising group of pupils or supervising the burning of a great Wicker Man on festival nights. This sacred grove is particularly sacred to Crom Cruach, although of course Carnun is also worshipped here.

The Forest of Dardun

The forest of Dardun covers a roughly 65 by 65 kilometre swathe of the centre of the country. Drunemeton nestles in the very heart of the wood; a day's hard walking from the outskirts. Rough tracks and trails lead in all directions but may be overgrown in places, and often follow tortuous routes around bogs, hillocks, ditches and huge ancient trees.

The forest itself has not gone unscathed from the corrupt earth power of the Drones. It is dense woodland, with little sunlight penetrating the canopy. The trees near to the grove are warped and twisted, as if blasted by lightning. Branches twist around ancient corpses of humans and animals, as if the very plants are grasping at them and strangling the life out of them. Carvings of hideous masks have been made in the trunks of the trees. Gibbets and fetishes dangle from branches. Unfriendly eyes seem to watch the traveller from the undergrowth.

Travelling through Dardun

Wandering through the forest is an experience at best unnerving and at worst terrifying. On first entering, all creatures except for skull-swords, drunes, or witches who specifically worship either Morrigu, Ceridwen, Carnun or Crom-Cruach, must make Persistence tests or suffer a -5% penalty on all attack rolls and skill tests while in the forest. On entering the particularly horrible area close to the grove itself, all creatures who do not meet the above specifications must make a second Persistence test, this time at a -20% penalty. Failure means they suffer the same effects as if they had failed the first Persistence test. A creature that fails



both Persistence tests will not enter the area around the grove and, unless physically restrained will attempt to leave the forest entirely.

Despite this atmosphere of menace, it is rare to actually encounter anyone within the forest. If handled well by the Games Master, this lack of life should enhance the terror felt by the Players, especially when they finally do set eyes on Drunemeton itself.

The Forest Fortresses

There are eight fortresses guarding the sacred grove at the heart of the forest. Each fortress performs a specific function in addition to guarding Drunemeton itself.

Cor Eolis

Cor Eolis serves as the main training camp for the Badb, the war-witches of the Drones. This fortress consists of 12 thatched huts, two long stone buildings with thatched roofs, and assorted outbuildings, surrounded by a 8 metre high wall. A small wooden gate is set into the wall and this is kept locked and barred from the inside. The wall is wide enough for two men to walk abreast and is constantly patrolled by skull-swords.



A three-storey building stands close to the wall. This is the Reclusium, the place where the witches live in seclusion from the soldiers who guard the place. Here they study and meditate, and prepare themselves at festival-time for their parts in the rituals, robing and painting their bodies with intricate designs. The witches at Drunemeton are excellent warriors. They are taught to fight along with their lessons in sorcery, and are as efficient with a spear as with a cauldron. Men are forbidden from entering the Reclusium, except at the request of the witches, and instant justice will be meted out if one is caught trespassing.

Also within the compound of Cor Eolis is a shorter stockade of wood, around 30 metres in diameter and 1 metre tall. This is the bullring, in which the Badb's instructors test their students' mettle by having them leap over charging bulls.

There are 50 skull-swords on duty here and 25 women in permanent residence.

Cor Havas

Cor Havas is the main training camp at Drunemeton for skull-swords. Boys come here at the age of 12 or 13 years, brought either voluntarily, or conscripted from the southern tribes. Boys from Cor Savren who show no talent for the priesthood often come here to train for the military instead. The boys train for a year and a day, and are then seconded to units stationed either in other fortresses around Drunemeton, or sent to the garrison at Gabala.

The conditions are harsh here, with the young soldiers living and sleeping in wattle and daub huts and training every day in the centre of the fortress, under the instruction of three skull-sword captains and a company of 40 men.

There are approximately 150 cadets in training here every year, although it is expected fewer than this number will pass out, as wastage due to accidents during training is common. Conscripted boys caught trying to run away are executed by sacrifice to Crom.

Cor Breston

The fortress of Cor Breston is the place where female novices are removed to be trained to the Priestesshood. Although there is the usual number of skull-swords on guard here, the young women are also guarded by



Badb who are there to instruct and protect them from influences from the outside world.

Within the high wall of Cor Breston are six stone roundhouses with thatched roofs and a low stone barrack for the soldiers. The buildings are arranged around a central clearing and a large firepit, where the girls are taught ceremonial dances and also how to fight.

This fortress is slightly larger than Cor Eolis, housing 45 young priestesses, 70 guards and four instructors.

COR ÒRICALOR

This fortress is a small skull-sword garrison only. Here, a company of 60 men under a Captain and a drill sergeant keep guard. Poses of six to ten men are routinely sent out to patrol this sector of the forest.

COR MÙSTEN

Here any youngster from Cor Savren with a gift for natural magic is brought to be instructed in the ways of Witchcraft and Summoning. Boys and girls equally are taught here, by an ancient yet imposing witch named Chorys White-Eyes, on account of her eyes being completely obliterated by cataracts.

Witches are taught by rote, the traditions of witchery being entirely oral. Among the young apprentices at Drunemeton, the witches are considered the dunces, as they are not taught reading and scribing, but the witches often make up for this by demonstrating their literacy skills by carving their initials in the arm of a tormentor with a sacrificial knife.

At any time there will typically be 35 witch pupils, 50 skull-swords and a dozen instructors here.

COR ÒRATISCH

Here young men and women, who show more of an aptitude for wordsmithing than magic, come to learn the more complicated lays and epics of Drune history, the intricacies of the law, and how to craft satires and epic poems of their own. Drune literature has a tendency towards grimness and misery, and satires are mostly composed to cause as much embarrassment as possible. They are also taught to read and write the Ogham script, and many go on to act as advisors and scribes to tribal heads and drunes.

It is smaller than average, and has two stone longhouses and a roundhouse containing a fire pit, around which many a long night is spent reciting lays and discussing the finer points of the law.

The skull-swords stationed here are as well-versed in word-play as they are with sword-play, most of them having been here for many years and have picked up the skills through exposure season after season.

There are 50 soldiers, 25 students and 3 ancient Drune instructors in residence here.

COR SAVREN

Cor Savren is the largest of the fortresses surrounding the grove. This is where all the children chosen or stolen to join the priesthood are trained. About 150 children, ranging in age from 7 to 13, live within the walls of the fortress. Here they are taught the oral traditions of the Drones, learning basic magical techniques and herbalism. Boys stay here until their twelfth or thirteenth birthday, depending how well they advance. Girls stay until their first menses, at which time they are removed to Cor Breston to be instructed in the women's mysteries.

Cor Savren is the largest of the fortresses, with four large stone dwellings, an open-sided roundhouse and 20 wattle and daube huts contained within the secure wall. The occupants are guarded by 70 skull-swords and there is a faculty of eight drunes and five witches to instruct and care for the children.

The ArchDrune in residence at Cor Savren is a man called Luga.

COR NÍLAR

Cor Nilar is where the young men are instructed in the deeper traditions of Drune Lore and the male mysteries by the ancient and terrible Slough Harg. Part of the initiation of the young priests is to overcome their revulsion of the 'mystic aura' of the Slough.

It is a cold place, with two long stone buildings and a barrack house. Fifty students, six Drune priests and 50 skull-swords are based here. Slough Harg himself dwells in a tree-house in a large oak which grows just outside the gate of the fortress.



The Grove

At the centre of the forest is the Sacred Grove itself. A clearing 100 metres across, this is the centre of the Drones, worship of Carnun and Crom-Cruach. Sacred dances are held here at Beltane, involving the use of many mind-altering herbs and potions followed by wild licentiousness in the woods, and great feasts at Midwinter, when the forbidden meat of Time Monsters is roasted over giant bonfires. An enormous amount of Earth Power is generated by the sacrifice of a Time Monster, which is why it is forbidden for any save a Drune to do so. The greatest festival held at this Grove is that of Samhain, when the giant Wicker Man is erected, filled with criminals and anyone unfortunate enough to have fallen foul of the Drones near the time, then set alight as a sacrifice to Crom.

The Grove is surrounded by a swamp, which is filled with the bodies of the half-dead, bodies of those who have died, but for reasons of the Drones' sorcery cannot completely die. They lurk in swamps and underground, until awoken by sorcerous means to fight for the sorcerer who raised them.

The Village of Nemere

Situated as it is less than a days' journey from the edge of the Forest of Dardun, the inhabitants of the village of Nemere are heavily influenced by the seminary at Drunemeton. Years of dealing with the intellectual instructors of Drunemeton have taught the Nemenite tribesfolk a respect for brains above brawn. It is through careful observation of the flow of the River Lor that they have learned and catalogued the best fishing spots. Farming is operated along almost scientific lines, with soil samples being analysed monthly and salts and fertilisers being added to precise amounts. Most of the population can read and write Ogham script. Children as young as four and five are educated in local groups by young priests and bards from the seminary. It is from these small schools that the brightest are picked to be trained to the priesthood. As the young men from Carnac consider it a great honour to train as a skull-sword at Er-Grah, so the youth of the Nemenites aspire to be accepted for teaching at Cor Savren.

Those who are not chosen for further education continue their lives managing the land and discoursing among themselves on the reasons for, and managing of, the deterioration in the quality of the farmland hereabouts. Most of the Nemenites who have not

trained for the priesthood have little to do with Gods and religion, preferring to rely on good traditional farming methods for a good harvest, rather than any hi-jinks in the forest, although they will still happily use any spells they may have picked up to boost their farming abilities. They keep the seminary supplied with food for the general upkeep of the colleges and may join in the occasional feast at Midwinter but, on the whole tend to have as little to do with the drunes as possible.

Travellers will be met with gruff and grudging hospitality but will not be made too welcome and will be encouraged on their way as quickly as possible. They will most probably be brought before the headman, Han Silvertongue, so-called because of his ability to bargain hazelnuts from squirrels at the beginning of winter. He will try to sell the travellers something they have no particular use for, such as a drift-net to catch large quantities of fish when they are headed towards a desert, then spend hours telling them all about his eldest daughter, Prin, who trained to be a priestess at Cor Breston, and now serves at the Grove.

The Cave of Beasts

The Cave of Beasts is the main Temple and stronghold of the Lord Weird Slough Feg. It is situated in the Southernmost reaches of the Drones Lords' territories, high in the foothills of what is now the Pyrenean Mountains, which will not be flooded when Ragnarok comes. Human sacrifices to Carnun, in his Earthly manifestation as the Lord Weird are brought here by troops of skull-swords. Once every six years, each village in the Drune Lands is required to send one third of all the healthy children, chosen by lot, to this main Temple of Carnun. Most are sacrificed to Slough Feg's nefarious ends, or even eaten but, occasionally, a particularly bright or inquisitive child may be chosen to be taught by Feg himself to become a Drune or a Badb.

The Skull-Sword Garrison

The Cave is accessible via a track that follows the path of the River Gar, which flows down from the mountains towards the city of Gabala. Five days walk into the foothills, the path veers away from the river to the East, and is a further three day's steep climb up to the plateau. Of course, a Drune who has access to a sky chariot can make the journey in a fraction of the time.



The entrance to the Cave seems to be nothing more than a hole in the ground, guarded by a garrison of skull-swords, who defend the Cave and deal with the sacrificial children as they arrive. The outpost consists of a dozen or so wattle and daub huts, which serve as barracks for the 60 experienced skull-swords garrisoned here.

The huts are arranged in a semi-circle on the south side of the main track up in to the mountains. Each hut is roughly 8 metres in diameter, with a thatched roof and a hide flap covering the doorway. There are no windows. One of the huts is set aside to imprison the sacrificial children before they are taken to Feg, both to fatten them up and because the Lord Weird prefers to drain only three at a time. A well has been dug on the outskirts of the outpost, ten paces to the south, and latrine pits are dug downwind of whichever wind is blowing at the time.

Although it is considered a great honour to be assigned a tour of duty at the Cave, most of the soldiers stationed here are bored and under-fed. Travellers never venture this far into the hills and the only visitors, such as

high-ranking Drones and Priestesses, come either via magical means, by the use of a *flying* spell or sky chariot, or with their own personal bodyguards or battle-smiths. A few members of the garrison are relieved whenever a party of sacrifices are brought, changing places with the sacrifices' escort, so that once here a soldier typically finds himself stuck here for one to six years.

The Labyrinth

The first obstacle that must be negotiated before entering the Cave of Beasts itself is the Labyrinth. This began as a narrow cave cut by water seeking its way out of the mountainside but, over the centuries, has been elaborated into a maze of rooms and tunnels protecting the central cave. It can be viewed that if the Cave of Beasts itself is the womb of the Earth Goddess, then the Labyrinth leading to it is the birth canal. The faithful on the ceremonial journey into the Cave of Beasts were going back to the womb.

After they arrive, the sacrificial children and their guides are lowered down 20 metres into the Labyrinth via a block and tackle and a wicker gondola. At the



bottom of the winch, the pit opens up into a slimy maze of tunnels, beginning with the stalactite-covered entrance gallery. A natural stone bridge arches over a seemingly bottomless chasm which splits the entrance gallery from the maze itself. Across this bridge, narrow tunnels barely high enough for a human to crawl through lead for many hundreds of metres. Only a select few of the skull-swords know the way through the Labyrinth to the Cave.

The first opening on the left on entering the Labyrinth is a store-room where torches are stored and pumping equipment in case of flooding.

The first on the right is a treasury, where offerings of gold and precious jewels made to the Lord Weird over the millennia that he has been worshipped here are kept until needed. Most of it has been here for so long that no-one, least of all Feg himself, can remember exactly what it contains. Much if it has been offered in exchange for the human sacrifices taken from wealthy tribes or families. The rewards are always received but the victims seldom released.

Further into the Labyrinth, rock-falls have caused tunnels to cave in and new ones have had to be excavated, causing more dead-ends to be created and unexpected pits and craters to appear in the floor.

Down the second turning on the right instead, travellers have to be sure to tread only on the upraised stepping stones set into the floor, as the floor of this passage is made of quicksand.

At the end of this passage, travellers must crawl on their bellies over an undulating rock floor beneath a ceiling less than 50 centimetres high. Care must be taken to not nudge any of the protruding stones in the walls, as noxious gases will be released which will cause extreme discomfort to the eyes and noses of the travellers, and make crossing the following Crystal Cavern much less spectacular.

The Crystal Cave is not as large or imposing as the Cave of Beasts, but it is a marvel to behold, if one does not have streaming eyes and can refrain from constant sneezing. One hundred metres across and five metres high, the walls are encrusted with crystals, diamonds, emeralds, sapphires, opals, agate, amethyst, precious

and semiprecious stones of every tone and hue found in the earth. To attempt to chip even one stone out of the wall will start a cave-in which will bring half the roof crashing down. Prospective thieves must make sure they are fleet of foot and also that they run in the right direction, otherwise they may find themselves running headlong into the Cave of Ghosts.

Even the hardiest of skull-swords dreads having to drag bodies out of the Cave of Ghosts. Whether what haunts this narrow cleft in the rock are the spirits of those slaughtered by Feg to prolong his unnatural life, or whether they are the by-product of the Lord Weird's evil sorceries, no-one really cares to find out. Any authorised visitors to the Cave of Ghosts will be given a special Ogham talisman (Slough Feg has half-a-dozen or so, and the commander of the garrison on the surface has four) which prevents the hunt-spectres from coming within two metres of the bearer, but this does not stop them trying.

People who find themselves in the Cave of Ghosts will be aware of spectral forms lurking in the upper corners of the cave. Without warning, the creatures will strike, swooping down on their victims with piercing cries, raking heads and faces with razor-sharp claws. An unholy chill will pervade the injured party and they will be overcome by hallucinations. Victims usually die of heart-attacks brought on by fear, or hypothermia. See the Hunt Spectres entry on page 206.

The Cave of Beasts

On reaching the central cathedral cave itself, the observer can find himself overwhelmed by the scale of the natural architecture. Columns of calcium deposits support the high ceilings. A stream cuts its way through a meandering channel in the floor, disappearing into a tunnel at the far end. Sulphurous fumes emanate from funnels standing in groups of four or five in places around the chamber. The floor is littered with bones, some in recognisable human skeletons. The most striking feature, however, from which the cavern takes its name, are the paintings on the walls of hundreds of beasts – mammoth, leaping bulls, stags, woolly ponies and bison. Many spears are depicted flying towards these beasts.

Spirals and coils appear among the animals and birds, a common feature being the three-armed triskele pattern.



The Triskele

This three-armed spiral is common in drune art and architecture, and features on the boss of skull-sword shields. It represents the real power behind the drunes, the Guledig, the three-limbed, insane ruler of the Cythrons, under whose orders Slough Feg is working towards Ragnarok. It is through the patronage of the Guledig that Slough Feg has gained the knowledge of the use of the eggs of the Time Worm to keep himself young. Most drunes are not aware of this, however, and believe that the Trisekele is a sacred symbol of Carnun.

Standing out among all these animals is a painting half a metre high of a being that is half human and half animal. It is the only illuminated painting in the whole cave. This is believed to be a depiction of the Horned God, Carnun, as Master of the Hunt, the first consort of the Earth Goddess. The souls of animals slaughtered in the Hunt were escorted back to the womb of the Earth Goddess Danu by Carnun, to be reborn once more, thus participating in the Cosmic Cycle of death and rebirth, the human manifestation of the Horned God, the King of the Tribe, who is married to the Goddess at his coronation, participates in this rite by allowing himself to be ritually sacrificed at the end of his seven-year rule, and his blood scattered over the field to ensure a plentiful harvest, as the Kings of the Northern Tribes still do. However, 20,000 years ago, Slough Feg refused to be slaughtered at the end of his reign, and has been living in the Cave of Beasts, using his powers of evil sorcery to keep himself alive, completely insane, ever since. The Cave of Beasts was once a place of transformation and of rebirth but now is a place of murderous sacrifice and decay.

Slough Feg continues to hollow out new passageways into his labyrinth and to paint pictures evoking memories of his youth and his lost vigour, when he cavorted with young witches. He keeps himself young

through the sacrifice of the children who are brought to him by the skull-swords, and by eating the yolks of the Time-Worm's eggs.

Gabala

Gabala is a major conurbation by the standards of the time. Once an important centre of culture and craftsmanship, years of despoliation by the Drune Lords has corrupted the countryside to such an extent that it is next to impossible for the populace to eke out a living off the land, so they have migrated to Gabala in their thousands to try their luck in the city. Finding a way to make an honest living even here is so hard that many resort to thievery and murder. The streets of Gabala are not a safe place for the unwary traveller.

Gabala is built on a hill in a series of three concentric circles centring on the main plaza where the Grand Temple stands. The buildings on the perimeter of the plaza are occupied mostly by the military and by the occasional tavern. The second circle houses merchants and others who, for whatever reason, have achieved a place of status and wealth within the society. All others live in the outer ring and are left to fend for themselves. Steeply sloping streets and stepped alleyways run between the rings of the city, connecting the cobbled roads that run around it.

The town of Gabala was once a thriving centre of trade, mostly in the business of weapons, primarily spears. Boats sailed up and down the River Gar, carrying wood and iron into the city and good quality spears out. Those of the populace who have a decent standard of living are either retired weaponsmiths and their families, or smiths working to supply the many skull-sword battalions garrisoned in Gabala.

A market is held once a week in the plaza outside the temple where folk buy and sell bony livestock and any meagre possessions they may have left in order to make some money. Pockets are picked, stolen property is fenced, passers-by are knifed, all under the watchful gazes of the patrols of skull-swords, who are there more to invoke an atmosphere of terror than to keep the peace. Anyone actually caught committing a crime is more likely to find themselves sacrificed on an altar to Crom than in a prison. Even begging is considered a crime in the Lands of the Drune Lords. The Drones are more concerned with keeping the populace afraid of them than in maintaining any state of law and order.



The Temple

This was once the main hall of the tribal king in the days before Slough Feg. Under the corrupt regime of the Lord Weird and his Drones it has become a temple to Carnun and Crom Cruach.

Entry is gained through a pair of large heavy oaken doors hinged in iron, well-guarded by skull-swords. Once through the doors, a long corridor panelled in stone and lit with torches leads down to the main hall. Spiral patterns and friezes of bison and mammoth are carved into the stone panels. The three-armed triskele motif is a common occurrence in the design. Off this corridor to the left and right are rooms used as guardrooms for the skull-swords on duty, store-rooms for ritual equipment, robing rooms for the priests and a library full of bark scrolls written in Ogham.

The corridor leads to the main hall itself, which is the heart of the building. More double doors open onto this circular room, which stands eight metres high at its highest point. The ceiling is made from oak beams radiating out from a central boss supported by a stone pillar from the floor. Other stone pillars support the ceiling at intervals around the room. All the pillars are carved in the same manner as the panelling in the corridor. Towards the back of the room stands a large stone altar roughly two by one metres, and standing a metre high. It is hewn out of a single block, and again carved with spiral and triskele patterns. The altar is stained brown, from the blood of the many thousands of sacrifices, animal and human, that have met their bloody ends here at the hands of the drune priests. Runnels have been carved into the floor to allow blood to drain away cleanly.

Behind the altar is another single door which leads into the back corridor where there are more rooms around the outer wall, leading back round to the front of the building. These are designated private quarters for the priests officiating in the temple, although it is not unusual to find many of them might have taken more opulent rooms in the town.

Immediately opposite the back door of the temple is a rough staircase leading down into the cellars. Here the smell of fear is all-pervasive, as this is where animals and prisoners are kept awaiting sacrifice. The cells are arranged in a circle around the landing at the foot of

the staircase, with heavy doors with iron hinges and a small grating for ventilation about the size of a man's head. The stairs are the only way in or out.

The First Circle

The skull-sword garrison makes up the majority of the first circle outside the main temple. Units of soldiers parade around the plaza and stand guard outside the temple. The buildings around the edge of the plaza which were once dwellings of the ruling families and wealthy merchants have been co-opted as offices where the skull-sword generals attempt to keep track of where all their soldiers are at any time, given that any Slough or Drune can conscript an outfit of skull-swords to do their bidding on a whim.

The Second Circle

The buildings on the second ring can be considered grand by local standards. Here the more wealthy of the populace hold residence, alongside the priests from the temple who prefer more comfortable surroundings than are offered at their place of worship.

The Outer Circle

The buildings here are not nearly as well maintained as those in the centre. They tend to be smaller than the others, as they are intended for the artisans and tradesfolk of the city. Now, of course, the artisans and other traders are mostly out of work, or are paid a pittance for their craft by the Drones and consider themselves lucky to still have a head on their shoulders and blood coursing through their veins.

Although built of stone, the houses are damp and the thatched roofs rotten and patchy. In those houses that still have wooden front doors, those doors are kept locked and barred. Other buildings have hide flaps covering the entrance. There is little to steal from any of these houses anyway.

The Backstreets

The streets and alleys in between the first two rings of the city are relatively airy, well-lit, regularly patrolled by skull-swords and free from rubbish. On the outer ring, however, they become narrower and darker. Pickpockets, cutthroats, murk-lurkers, beggars and prostitutes frequent the darker corners, and the cobbles run with sewage.



The City Wall

Behind the outer ring of the city runs the city wall. It is constructed of wooden planking and large stones banked up on the inside with mud. Heavy gates are set into the wall at the four points of the compass, each guarded on either side by a turret containing a guardhouse. Each guardhouse consists of a two-storey tower and a rampart. The ramparts of each of the guardhouses are connected by a walkway which circumnavigates the city. The ground floor of each guardhouse is the guardroom and armoury, and the second floor is sleeping quarters. There are always eight men in each guardhouse, four on duty and four resting. The gates are always kept shut and admittance to civilians is allowed only between dawn and dusk. The gates can be opened after dark but only if the Drones require it.

The Shanty Town

Without the south and west walls of Gabala, a shanty town of hovels built from tree branches and mud has sprung up, as more and more people have converged on the city in a bid to seek refuge from the increasingly inhospitable surrounding lands. Starving and filthy men women and children sit in apathetic misery outside ramshackle mud-huts, staring with dead eyes at any passers-by. From time to time, bands of skull-swords clear out these hovels, either sending the occupants back to their home-villages or, especially near Samhain, herding them into the centre of the city to the great doors of the temple, never to be seen again.

The Dung Boats

A sludge-filled and foul-smelling river trickles past the outskirts of Gabala to the north, flowing slowly westwards towards the sea. Into this river, boats carrying the waste products of the entire population of Gabala are lowered from a hatch halfway up the north wall. The dung is transferred to various docks around 150 to 200 kilometres further downriver and spread out around the surrounding farmland. Of course, the inhabitants of Gabala rarely see the crops their wastes fertilise – most such foods are co-opted to feed the drunes and their skull-sword armies.

The Taverns of Gabala

Taverns proliferate in Gabala, as many have discovered that a sure-fire way of making a living is to sell homebrewed liquor to folk who have little to do but

drown their misery in alcohol. Most taverns are private homes that have been opened up for the sale of drink and the occasional bowl of thin stew.

Drusilla's Tavern

Drusilla's tavern is located on the third circle from the centre. Only the most desperate of people come here to drown their sorrows in cheap hooch. Drusilla herself is a middle-aged heavy-set woman who brooks little nonsense from her customers. She keeps a stone axe under her serving table and is quite capable of using it. Her tavern is the downstairs room of her two-storey stone house. There are three tables, plus her serving table, with benches and seating for 18 people. She has a small yard out at the back with a cooking fire over which a large cauldron of stew is usually simmering. It is advisable not to enquire too closely on the ingredients she uses in her stews. The liquor sold here consists of homebrewed ale, which is thin and sour, and a violent and fiery spirit that is notorious for turning the unwary drinker blind, mad, or both. Strangely enough, people rarely suffer from food poisoning at Drusilla's, but this may be due to the fact that the intensity of the spirit is enough to counteract the ill effects of the stew.



Upstairs at Drusilla's are two rooms each containing four rough-hewn wooden bedsteads with straw mattresses and sackcloth blankets. These are available for rent, with or without the company of Drusilla's two teenage daughters, Marietta and Sorcha.

Fand's Tavern

Fand's tavern is owned by her father, Bertram. It is a purpose-built drinking hall opening directly on to the main plaza, cleaner and airier than Drusilla's. Inside there are five stone-walled drinking booths set into the walls, in each of which a party of up to six people might have a conversation without being overheard by other drinkers nearby. In the sixth alcove lies the cooking fire, with a large cook-pot suspended over it by a chain from the ceiling. Again, do not inquire too closely of its contents. The odd Time Monster's heart has been known to find its way into it from time to time, and good meat and produce are scarce in these parts, but on the whole the fare is better than at Drusilla's. The clientele here are mostly fighting men and occasional travellers. Fights break out often, and many an unfortunate victim has found himself ejected into the street by one of Fand's many self-proclaimed suitors/bodyguards.

The Broch

Two days' ride to the north of Gabala stands a broch. Brochs are cylindrical towers dotted all across the southlands, constructed originally as lookout or defensive posts. This one, like most now there is no longer any infighting between the tribes, is currently being used as a prison. Prisons are unique to the southlands, as among the Tribes of the Earth Goddess crimes are dealt with immediately, by reparation or expulsion. In the southlands, the perpetrator of a crime is likely to be locked up either in a broch, if they are lucky, or the cells of a Drune temple if they are unlucky. If he is lucky enough to be held in a broch, their family can bribe the jailer to secure their release, or the prisoner will end up on his back on an altar, or locked up in a wicker man and burnt as a sacrifice to Crom.

The broch near Gabala is four storeys high, three above ground and one below. The levels above the surface consist of cells arranged around the edge of the tower, accessible via stairways and balconies encircling the inner wall. There are 21 cells on each level, each having a small slit in the wall by way of a window. These cells

are normally reserved for those prisoners considered rich enough to afford to be able to bribe the jailer, or whose families may be able to post bail eventually, and who are therefore worth keeping alive.

The centre of the ground floor is where the jailer himself has to live and sleep, if he sleeps on the premises at all. The current jailer, Scenb, is a black-bearded, heavily scarred fellow in middle age. He is assisted by his slave Nudd, a half-titan (see page 215).

Beneath the floor of the broch is a single large cellar dungeon, ventilated by four grills set into the stone floor and accessible by one trapdoor. Into this oubliette are thrown the poorest and most desperate of criminals for whom any hope of rescue is long gone. Occasionally food and water may be dropped down, if the jailer remembers, but otherwise the occupants are left to fend for themselves.

Lucotetia

Lucotetia is the second largest city in the Land of the Drune Lords. It sits on a large island in the middle of the Sarn River, connected to the mainland on either side by two wooden bridges. The buildings are constructed of wood, and are raised on stilts to allow for the annual flooding of the river. It is this annual flood which causes damage to the grain, mostly rye, stored in the city vaults, leading to widespread hallucinogenic ergotism, and the totally inbred insanity of the entire population.

The architecture is as mad as the populace. Unfinished logs have been used to clad the outsides of the buildings, with knot-holes and twigs still visible to scare and snag the unwary passer-by. Streets meander with no pattern to the lay-out. The builders seem to have constructed a building wherever they wanted it, or wherever it fitted. The whole of the island is covered in these chaotic structures.

At the centre of the town stands the headwoman's dwelling. It is a single-storey building, built on stilts from rough-cut logs placed upright to create a clover-leaf shaped pattern, with three circular rooms leading off a central hallway. Each room is roofed separately with thatch. The room on the left of the entrance is her private dwelling. The room straight ahead is the hall where she receives petitions from the people of the town and holds meetings with the Council of



Elders and keeps the town's stores of grain. The third room is a temple to Carnun, where Pash, in her guise as Soothsayer, makes sacrifices, usually animals or poultry, and prophesises.

Similar buildings are connected to this one by narrow wooden walkways, and rather ramshackle staircases. The overall effect is twisted, dark and spooky. The people of Lucotetia hustle along with their heads down, not looking at the masks carved with gaping mouths on the walls of their city buildings. Unlike Gabala, there is a more or less equal standard of living throughout the population. There are no main streets or back alleys. It is impossible to map the streets as there appear to be no intersections. It is as if Lucotetia has been built along one single meandering street, turning around and going back on itself for miles and miles on rickety stilts.



There are no inns or drinking houses in the city. It is very rare that travellers will be invited to stay within the town itself, but will be encouraged to camp outside. It will take a great deal of persuasion to win the trust of a Paresi tribesman enough to be invited into his home. Business is conducted on doorsteps, or in the main hall of the headwoman's house, and always in front of at least two witnesses, both to assuage the inbred paranoia and to assure all parties the whole deal was not just a figment of someone's imagination. It is very hard not to be affected by the local atmosphere that the world is not always what it appears to be, and travellers will never quite shake off that nagging feeling they are being watched after a prolonged stay among the Paresi.

There is a small garrison of skull-swords stationed here, no more than 150 soldiers in a fortress on the east bank of the Sar. The people here are quite literally afraid of their own shadows.

The Drune Sourlands

Even amid the drune heartlands, sourland can now be found. The erection of miles and miles of standing stones across the countryside, and the leeching of Earth Power through these stones, has rendered vast tracts of once fertile land barren and poisonous. In places, the ground is foul-smelling and boggy, and people are forced to go about on stilts. Crops fail to grow, animals do not thrive, farming is unsustainable and people starve in their thousands. Whole villages have been wiped out by starvation and migration to larger settlements, where they swell the ranks of the beggars and thieves.

The drune sourlands should be treated much as the tracts of sourland on the border between the Tribes of the Drune Lords and Tribes of the Earth Goddesss (see the Borderlands chapter for more information) except that these sourlands have been formed relatively recently. This means for the most part that the drune sourlands are not quite so hostile, having had less time to fill up with weird and nameless beasts. In addition, these lands are more likely to still have villages occupied by humans. In practice, though, even the drunes make little distinction between sourlands that used to be part of their own country, and the border sourlands – all of it is ripe to be dominated if there are any living things left there and, if not it is suitable, only to be drained still further.



The BORDERLANDS

The lands that lie between the Tuatha de Danann and the Druines are predominantly occupied by two of the world's oldest civilisations, the Titans and the Fir Bolg. The Fir Bolg are hated enemies of the Titans, having fought them repeatedly until the first battle of Mag Tuireadh, which was a resounding defeat for the Titans, forcing them out of much of Southern Albion. The Fir Bolg in turn were defeated and driven out of Eriu and Albion by the Fir Domain in the second battle of Mag Tuireadh. Presently, the descendants of both these people live in small and isolated regions on the outskirts of civilisation. The Fir Domain went on to force the decaying civilisation of the Titans almost entirely out of Albion, sacking their cities and slaying their children. The Fir Domain and Fir Bolg have had a chequered history since the second battle of Mag Tuireadh, sometimes allying and intermarrying for long years, sometimes warring, but both despise the remaining Titans.

The remainder of the border territory is made up of wastelands and wilds, which are largely uninhabited. To the south are the sourlands, a vast expanse of dying forests, rotting swamps and lifeless deserts all of which were torn and warped by energy-draining drune magic. Finally, there is the western coast, where the

sacred beast forests and fiery mountains of Lyonesse can be found. Collectively, these fringe territories are known as the Borderlands

The Titans

It is a simple fact that the titans are a dying race. Of the ancient and mighty civilization, little is left standing and few of the titans can remember the time when their ancestors thrived. With the fall of their civilisation, the titans became displaced and settled in several different regions of Tir Nan Og. Presently, tales of the titans are used to frighten children, while the tales of their ancestors are used to inspire them. While the ancient titans were a mighty and brilliant race, their descendants are nothing more than brutish lazy giants and most of them are greedy, selfish and dumb as dirt. In groups, they have little structure and their social order is based only on physical strength. Mentally incapable of farming or raising domesticated animals, they have reverted to a society of hunters and gatherers. Titans have voracious appetites and will eat anything. Although it is not a typical part of their diets, they are not above eating human flesh. Occasionally, they raid human settlements but pick easy targets, especial small villages that have already suffered at the hands of other oppressors. Once great artisans, the



titans now live in caves and other naturally formed shelters. The only contemporary structures credited to Titan design are called 'feasting grounds' and consist of nothing more than huge mounds of cracked bones, which can be found intermittently strewn across the titan lands.

The titan lands are split into two territories. In the north, the bulk of the titan lands lie east of Albion, muscled between the northern borders of the Fir Domain and a long breadth of mountains known as the Screaming Craggs. They consist of a vast and foggy rolling plain that bears kilometres of ruins once populated by their inhabitants' ancient and powerful ancestors. They also include a small strip of thick woods bordering on the western part of this region known as the Dark Wilds, and a hilly region called the Fiomhalach Làirig. To the south, the titan territory is wedged between Lyonesse and the Fir Bolg, just above the Drunelands along the Agrona Aeron, a great river named for the goddess of strife and slaughter.

The Great Flight

It is impossible to describe the titans or their lands without briefly discussing their origins.

At the height of their civilisation, the titans built a massive kingdom from which they ruled over all Tir Nan Og. They made huge advances in architecture, technology and magic. Both wise and intelligent, their people learned to manipulate the lands to do their bidding but in the end it ultimately served to make them lazy. The easier the ancient titans made their lives, the less there was for them to occupy their time with. They became bored with things as they were, bored by the ability to achieve anything they desired, and their boredom corrupted them. Their pastimes shifted from provision to perversion and hedonism, and finally into sloth and lethargy. Near the end of the fall of their civilisation, the titans began to divide among themselves, tearing the remaining lands apart with civil war. While most of these legends have been lost to time, there are a few passages known to the minds of men.

During the civil wars, the titans' once grand capital became a gruelling and brutal war zone. The most powerful titans formed tribes, most of which have been

forgotten. One of the most powerful of these tribes called themselves the Joten. The Joten were under the leadership of a towering warlock called Thrym, who could summon and wield blizzards against his foes. He drew his power from a group of 12 magical stones which when arranged in the proper sequence, could siphon magic from the earth. After the civil war, the Joten took the twelve stones and migrated north across huge glaciers to Midgard. According to legend, his tribes were further scattered after the coming of the Tribes of Voden.

Another powerful tribe was known as the Gaulen. They followed the command of a thunderous warrior called Idris. His tribe also had mystical stones that drew power from the earth. After the civil war, Idris and his tribe took their stones and headed west into the land now known as Cambria. Idris was said to have arranged the stones in a circular formation and would sit upon them like a throne in order to draw his power. The mountain on which he placed the cromlech became known as Cader Idris (see page 178). At one time, many thousands of years ago, Idris and the Gaulen were allied with the sorcerer who later became the Lord Weird Slough Feg.

Aside from the Joten and the Gaulen, only one other tribe is remembered from the titan histories. Years after the civil war, a small tribe of titans called the Fear Liath More suddenly migrated from the ancient lands and went north towards the Screaming Craggs. However, there is no mention of what became of them or if they had any significant powers or intelligence.

TITAN TERRITORIES

The Screaming Craggs

The Screaming Craggs are a broad range of volcanically formed mountains that curve across the north and western borders of the northern titan lands. They form a sturdy backbone against Midgard, sweeping against the eastern lands in steep precipices of white stone that dip all the way to the river Iving, (a long and violent torrent that flows out of the northern ocean and never freezes over). The Screaming Craggs are inhabitable. In addition to year-round blizzards, at least half-a-dozen of the mountains are still semi-active volcanoes. A



single trail rumoured to traverse the Screaming Crag, called 'Caigeann Nan Thrym', is named for the leader of the titan tribe whose people migrated to Midgard after the civil wars.

Along the lower ridgeline of the Screaming Crag, the mountains slip down into a series of deep ravines and bottomless lochs. The ridge line is just low enough to attract some of the heaviest rainfall in all Tir Nan Og. During the autumn season the rains are relentless, which helps keep the surrounding lochs brimming with fresh water and large brown trout. In ancient times, the great titans used these lochs as reservoirs and built extensive aqueducts to carry water down from the hills to their city. While many of these aqueducts have been destroyed over the years, a few still remain standing and continue to function as they were intended.

Fiomhalach Làirig (The Titan's Hills)

The low rolling hills that form the Fiomhalach Làirig sit just high enough above the fog of the Ancient Lands to get a smattering of midday sun and a view of the realms to the south. The hillsides are green with long lush grasses and sugar beet crowns, attracting a wide variety of small to medium sized herbivores such as hares, badgers, squirrels and deer. Starlings and thrushes dart about in stunted thickets and tangles of wild barley. A fair amount of beech and hickory trees also grow in the hill's rich soil, as well as a few evergreens, such as pine and spruce.

The titans that now reside in this hilly region are excessively lazy. The surrounding hills are speckled with large limestone caves naturally formed by erosion. The limestone caves have proved to make convenient shelters and, over the years, the local titans have regressed into primitive, cave-dwelling hunter-gatherers. This lifestyle has forced them to live in small semi-nomadic clans wandering from cave to cave in pursuit of seasonal food sources. Since tribes compete for food, water and other resources, when two different clans confront each other, the result is often bloody. Nevertheless, since they are not excessively particular about their diets, food sources are plentiful enough. Titans collect hard hickory nuts, edible grains and sugar beets. They are capable of hunting small game and can kill a stag at 15 metres with a hurled log or large rock. Along the overgrown paths that run parallel to some of the aqueducts, their ancestors

planted and cultivated various types of fruit trees including cherry, apple and plum. Tribes often settle near aqueducts during the early fall in order to collect ripe fruit. When food becomes scarce, they gather half-rotten salmon after the spawning season or follow the hunting wolf packs in order to chase crows away from their discarded carcasses of their kills. Shepherds and travellers in these hills are usually warned to avoid the titans, as they have also been known to eat humans. It should also be noted that, if the opportunity presents itself, these titans have no qualms about eating one of their own kind.

Fiáin Creatrach (The Dark Wilds)

The western edge of the Ancient Lands ebbs from its fog-laden fens into the thick and knotted forests of lower Albion. This thick stretch of forest is called Fiáin Creatrach and it extends from the Ancient Lands into the Fir Domain.

Along the eastern edge of the Fiáin Creatrach, fogs, mists and overcast skies are frequent, particularly as one nears the ruins of the Ancient Lands.

The Fiáin Creatrach is heavily forested with oak and beech, and its grounds creep with the course green spines and fragrant golden flowers of gorse bushes that dangle with black pods. Closer to the fog's edge where the soil becomes moist, one can find numerous varieties of wildflowers. The woods of the Fiáin Creatrach are also home to many large beasts such as boars, bears and saber-tooth which, in turn hunt smaller game such as deer and other woodland animals.

The titans that live in the Fiáin Creatrach are as savage as any members of their race get. They worship physical strength and frequently hold death matches among themselves to establish their social order and resolve conflicts within the tribe. They have adopted a somewhat Celtic attitude towards combat and prefer to fight and hunt naked and bare-fisted. They fight dirty and do not hesitate to pull hair, bite and eye-gouge opponents. Strict carnivores, they hunt constantly and are known to slay beasts for entertainment. If they need other supplies, these titans sometimes form raiding parties to strike against the smaller Celtic settlements along their western border but, for the most part, they are in need of very little.



The Fiáin Creatrach has no natural shelters such as caves or earthen outcroppings, so the titans of this region sleep in the open, propped against trees. They have no sophisticated tools beyond rocks and logs. They have lost the secret of making fire and do not use it for cooking or warmth. Instead, they eat their kills raw and wear heavy hides and furs in cold weather. In fact, the titans of the Fiáin Creatrach use little and leave less behind, making it difficult for those unfamiliar with their behaviour to know whether they have recently passed through surrounding territories. It is these titans whose brain-balls are most valued by the warriors of the Tribe of the Growling Shields.

The Ancient Lands (Including the Eastern Wastes)

The titan territories east of Albion cover a large expanse of fog-laden fens and moorlands. Mostly flat, the legends say they were pummelled smooth by the tremendous fists and feet of the giants that lived there. During centuries past, when they ruled all Albion, these once mighty creatures levelled and cleared thousands of acres of land and erected a huge and wondrous city.

Now buried beneath deep blankets of grey fog, the city lies as kilometres upon kilometres of shattered ruins. The crests of its crumbling spires and walls peek above the fog banks like tiny islands of bleak, uninhabited stone. Above, the sun hangs in the sky as a dull muddy-yellow orb and one can stare directly into it through the heavy clouds without blinking one's eyes. To this day, almost no titans live in the ruins of their ancient city and many are afraid of them, believing them to be haunted by the angry spirits of their ancestors.

Ironically, the great aqueducts that once fed the city have now drowned it, consequently turning its soil into soft bogs from years of neglect. Since the water from the northern lochs is no longer consumed when it reaches the city, it simply spills over, flooding the streets and saturating the ground. Most of the Ancient Lands have been transformed into thick mire that is slowly swallowing the ruins, leisurely pulling them back into the earth's womb. In areas where the great curved aqueducts have finally crumbled, water floods in creating tiny ponds and bogs in the shadows beneath their giant granite arches. Much of the ground inside the perimeter of the ruins is cobbled with tremendous flagstones, still laid in perfect interlocking patterns.

While still muddy, the immense blocks allow enough stability to support large creatures attempting to walk through the cities.

As one enters the Ancient Lands, one observes little vegetation other than moss, peat, vines, ferns and lichen. Occasionally there are a few tall trees standing but most of the larger species of hardwood, such as oak, yew and hazel, were clear-cut by the Titans centuries ago. The remaining flora is reduced to tangles of ivy and briar thickets, wet sod and thick beds of moss. Only a few of the most resilient species of evergreens have been persistent about returning and these too are banded with moss and strangled with creepers. The only large trees left untouched throughout the ages are the tremendous willows that stand watching over the ruins like solemn guardians, dipping their branches into the fog.

Towards the outskirts, bordering against the lands of the Earth Goddess tribes, the ruins have been decimated by repeated conflicts, sieges and rage. Anything left standing consists mostly of deep foundations, surrounded by roofless broken walls. While barely enough to shelter a titan, they are quite adequate for other forms of life, offering perfect refuge to the animals that live near the ruins. Over the years, those structures with solid stone floors have filled with rainwater, creating little stagnant pools. These pools attract many species of small animals, especially newts and frogs. Sometimes the pools become so thick with algae that fallen leaves can collect over the top, completely disguising them and creating natural traps.

Towards the centre of the ruins, the buildings are less battered and, although most of their woodwork has rotted into peat, many of the larger stone buildings are still intact. While outward appearances would brand the ancient city as a desolate wasteland, it is a far more inhabited than one might imagine. The outer ruins are commonly used as hiding spots by refugees and tribal outcasts, while the inner parts of the city are frequented by goblins and other creatures of the El worlds. It is also the natural territory of large dog-like creatures called cusith. Once domesticated by the ancient titans, they are now feral, having reverted into grizzled and foul tempered beasts.



Architecture of the Ancient Lands

That any of the titans' ruins still stand is testament to the incredible building skills of their ancestors. Each piece of rock is hand-cut and perfectly fitted together with the next, without the need for mortar. The absolute symmetry of the flagstones and structures from one end of the ruins to the next is remarkable. Titan architecture has several common features and recurring structures.

Buildings

Almost all of the ancient titans' structures were built from materials native to the surrounding lands. Thick slabs of granite and red sandstone were most commonly used to build floors, columns and walls, while whole trees were used as beams. Wood was also the most common material used in roofing because it was easily reparable and roofs could be removed if additional floors needed to be added to a building. With the exception of the six ziggurats in the centre of the city, most of the structures were kept relatively low to the ground and few are over four storeys. Even so, a four-story building could easily stand 30 metres high to accommodate for the titans' tremendous statures.

Within the ruins, many artefacts have been discovered that provide clues about how the ancient titans lived. Explorers have recovered everything from huge saddles to gigantic iron ploughs, evidence suggesting the titans farmed and most likely raised and rode mammoths.

Aqueducts

The ancient titan aqueducts still carry many thousands of litres of water down from the lochs high in the Screaming Crags into the ruins and their overflow has helped create many of the areas extensive bogs and fens. The oldest aqueducts are nothing more than sluggishly flowing earth-dug channels that were excavated to carry water to the city only when the titans desired. These are still the most functional of all the aqueducts, as they have simply become rivers. The larger aqueducts were built from bored-out granite blocks and sealed with mortar made from limestone and volcanic dust. However, few of these aqueducts still stand and, over the years, war, theft, and erosion have all contributed to their destruction. At the height of their civilisation, the titans had more than 50 aqueducts that carried more than 200 million gallons of water a day down to the city from mountain lochs.

The Sewers

Beneath the city are extensive sewers that were built to drain off sewage to the south. Small crawl-ways to the titans, the sewer's passages are just tall enough for an average-size man to stand in. Once pungent as Slough lords, the foulness of the sewers has faded. Even so, there are still dry mounds of hardened offal and silt that have collected in the sides of the pipes.

The sewers were built to empty into the river Lhejit-Creo'th, a tributary of the River Iving which flows just south of the Ancient lands, located in the Fir Domain. The sewer's large masonry drainage pipes empty out of a cliff face over the river through a series of cave-like orifices. Thankfully, only a handful of small tribes know of the existence of these openings and only the druids know of their true nature. Most locals have written them off as bear caves and, indeed, large black bears of the region have grown partial to settling in them. Were the drune lords full aware of the sewers, they would make an efficient way to sneak hundreds of troops into lower Albion, especially the half-dead who are not discriminating about their surroundings or Slough whose mystical odours are far more repugnant. Of course, some of the sewer tunnels are at least partially blocked with silt and ancient faeces, but there are a few which have enough space above the sewage channels to allow man-sized creatures to walk upright.

The Inner City

The following are specific locations within the northern titan lands.

The Ziggurats

In the very centre of the ancient lands stand the most impressive of the titans' structures, the ziggurats. These gargantuan pyramid-shaped towers stand over 60 metres above the city, overlooking the entire lands. Six in all, they form a protective circle around a massive fortress-like palace once occupied by titan kings.

On top of the ziggurats, the titans built special enclosures called 'towers of silence' where they took their dead to let birds pick the bones clean. The ancient titans believed earth and fire were sacred elements and should not be desecrated by using them to bury or burn corpses. During the age of degradation, Titans used the towers of silence for more vile purposes, such as torturing others or even themselves.





This practice ceased entirely once the titans began experimenting with cannibalism and the dead were often cooked and eaten. Especially popular were corpses of great warriors and kings.

The Palace Complex

The palace complex is constructed of huge sandstone blocks and consists of a group of adjoining buildings connected by a series of halls, columns and courtyards. Unlike most of the other buildings, all the ceilings of the complex are made of stone. In the centre of the complex, the titan leaders held court in an enormous chamber known as the Hall of One Hundred Columns. This circular room is 100 metres in diameter, its massive domed ceiling supported by 20 metre high columns of solid granite. Large rectangular halls extended from the interior of the fortress-palace, which acted as receiving rooms. Huge fire pits were dug in the centre of each of the rooms, possibly to burn offerings.

The Great Amphitheatre

In the later years of their civilisation, when the titans began to slip slowly into perversion and depravity, they built a gigantic circular open-air amphitheatre centrally located in their city. Just under 250 metres in diameter, the structure was four storeys tall and could seat about 35,000 spectators. A six metre high wall separated spectators from the amphitheatre floor. Built from red sandstone blocks, the exterior was intricately carved with braided designs and rune writings in their ancient and forgotten language. Inside, the walls are carved into rows of long marble benches ascending in a steep 60-degree rise to the full height of the amphitheatre, encircling the structure's perimeters. Beneath the floors, titans built passageways for animals, slaves and storage. In many areas, the floors have crumbled, exposing these corridors.

At first, the colossal structure was used for political meetings and theatrical performances but, as time passed it came to be used as an arena for wild beast fights and, eventually, bloody gladiatorial combat where they wagered large sums of money on death matches between slaves of lesser races. The main entrance was wide and tall enough to let in entire mammoth-pulled wagons and on either side of the main entrance, stood two ten metre tall towering statues of the Titans' twin gods. There were also more than 60 lesser entrances to prevent brawls among the thousands of spectators who would push their way into the amphitheatre on days when 'important' matches were held.

Superior Titans

Near the centre of the ruins live the last direct descendants of the ancient rulers of Tir Nan Og, the superior titans. Hidden keepers of knowledge, the superior titans are few and ancient. They use magic to keep themselves alive and are resolved to keeping their ancient knowledge safe until the former glory of the golden age of titans is restored. The total number of living superior titans is probably less than one hundred.

Superior titans are also on good terms with the titan dwarves that live in the eastern mines (see below).

They have no contact with the outside world whatsoever and do their best to avoid discovery.

Eastern Mines

Buried on the outskirts of the city are deep and ancient mines connected to thick veins brimming with substantial reserves of iron ore. These mines run thousands of kilometres into the earth and are still somewhat functional. However, their vast and perilous depths have a fearsome reputation for being filled with all sorts of monstrosities and no human has set foot in them for several decades.



Rumours aside, both the upper and lower levels of the mines are occupied. In the upper mines, a small settlement of titan dwarves (see page 197) struggles to survive in secrecy. A dwindling race forgotten by time, they endure by subsistence farming and by brewing magical beers that grant them longevity. The titan dwarves are the children of Danu's son, Goibniu, and the protectors of his ancient secrets. Titan dwarves still associate with superior titans (see above).

The mines' depths are now plagued with hundreds of vulgar fairy creatures called Coblynau (see page 193). The coblynau took up residence in the ancient shafts long after the titans fled their lands. These tiny pests are foul smelling and chaotically fickle. While the coblynau sometimes offer to help visitors, they are most likely to torment them by giving false directions and causing accidents for no other purpose than their own amusement.

The Magic of the Ancient Titans

The magic of the ancient titans was based on earth power, the innate magical property in all things. Although it is in many ways similar to the magic of the druids, titan magic predates druidic lore and perhaps, may even be its predecessor.

Titans were also the first beings to create weirdstones, the huge standing stones that pull magic from the earth in such quantity they can strip the lands of all life. The ancient titans were cautious with weirdstones and the well-educated creatures took tremendous care when using them, so as not to drain the lands. After the first migration and the civil war, all of the titan weirdstones were either stolen or broken.

The Southern Titan Lands

Separated from the northern titan lands by hundreds of kilometres, the southern territories are an anomaly. Though it is unknown when the titans first arrived in these parts of the world, their presence here predates any human settlements. These titans tend to be loners and have little in the way of social structure. Most live by themselves or in small nuclear families and only rarely interact with others of their kind. Southern titans are commonly believed to be the descendants of the Gaulen, the titan tribe led south by Idris.

The southern titan lands occupy the territory just west of Lyonesse and just east of the Fir Bolg. Hundreds

of kilometres away from the northern ice sheets, these lands are well protected from cold winds. This allows warm breezes from the south and from the western ocean to keep the climate mild. Most of the surrounding lands are flat, slightly wooded, plains perhaps similar to how the ancient lands might have looked at one time.

The broad wooded plains make excellent natural grazing grounds for mammoth, boar and other monstrously huge game. The southern titans are primitive hunters and use crude traps to catch game. They dig great spiked pits and cover them with hides and leaves. However, they often forget where they have built their own traps and many lay forgotten, waiting for careless travellers to stumble into them.

Fir Bolg

The Fir Bolg control a small region of rocky forest situated just to the east of their distant kinsman in the Fir Domain. The soil of their lands is excessively hard and stony, making it almost impossible to farm except on a small scale with limited crops. Farming, however, has never been one of the Fir Bolg's great interests. A fiercely warlike tribe, they delight only in conquest and slaughter, vengefully dedicating their violence to ancient gods.

There is no mistaking the Fir Bolg lands. Cruelly carved by hundreds of years of barbarism dedicated to the great maggot Crom-Cruach, the lands have been torn, defiled and desecrated in his tribute. The Fir Bolgs also worship Carnun, Lord of the Beasts and honour him by practising the rites of the murderous wild hunt, the outcome of which is the ritual slaughter of the prey.

Surrounding the perimeter of their lands, the Fir Bold have dug a colossal trench whose depth is the height of two men and whose width is four times that (4 metres by 7 metres). The trench is lined with long wooden stakes, sharpened and haphazardly jabbing skywards. Down the sides of the trench, the Fir Bolg pour buckets of lime mortar in order to secure the stakes and prevent the earthen banks from eroding inwards. Along the bottom of the trench collects a festering sewage formed from the putrefied corpses of slain foes, which Fir Bolg warriors throw there to breed maggots as tribute to the Lord of the Mound. When the trenches become full, the tribe holds a burning



ceremony, igniting the fatty carcasses into a raging fire that encircles their lands. Sometimes warriors throw themselves upon these fires, giving their souls to Crom-Cruach as tribute.

The Fir Bolg also import half-dead from the drune merchants that collect them in the sourlands. They freely loose these atrocities as patrol units in remote areas along their borders, allowing them to indiscriminately attack any living creatures they encounter.

Living Sculptures

One of the most gruesome practices of Fir Bolg worship is their living sculptures. The sculptures are built out of living prisoners that are to be sacrificed as a mass crucifixion. The prisoners are bound together in groups, disfigured and covered with honey or seed to attract wild animals and crows. These offerings are said to please both of their gods and are left standing until the only traces of the once living sculpture are cracked bones.

Dun-Barc

The largest of the Fir Bolg settlements, Dun-Barc is little more than a fortified town. Its central structure is a large round temple made of mud and dedicated to Crom-Cruach. Fir Bolg have no central government other than their priests. Surrounding the temple are dozens of small hovels. The dwellings are chaotically scattered and there are no streets. Garbage is not disposed of but simply left to compost and decay in the open, another tribute to the great maggot; as a result the town always smells foul. Dun-Barc is well protected and in addition to the large four metre tall wooden barricade that surrounds it, the land just beyond the fortress walls is filled with deadly traps.

Crom-Cruach

In the centre of Dun-Barc, the Fir Bolg have erected a huge golden idol of Crom-Cruach. The idol stands almost three metres high but rests on a two metre high platform, to make it more visible. While the tribe claims the statue is solid gold, it is actually hollow. Still, the gold used in the statue's construction is more than an inch in thickness. Tiny perforations throughout the statue allow it to appear as if it is devouring blood offerings that are poured upon it. Surrounding the base of the platform are twelve smaller stone idols that represent unknown dark gods dwelling in the El Worlds.

At Samhain, the Fir Bolg sacrifice one third of their children born in the previous year to the maggot in hopes that he will grant the tribe strength and prosperity. The Fir Bolg also practise and encourage ritual suicide and it is not uncommon for older tribe members to sacrifice themselves on the idol. Additionally, those who would be the tribe's greatest warriors sometimes die on the idol as well while attempting a dangerous ceremony known as The Sacrament of Blood. As part of the ceremony, the warrior brutally cuts himself and feeds Crom, by painting the entire idol with his own blood.

Sacrament of Blood

The warrior engaged in this ritual cuts himself so profoundly that he effectively performs a successful attack upon himself, inflicting the normal amount of damage he would inflict in combat upon his chest (with no protection from armour or magic allowed). Should he survive, the warrior is bestowed with a temporary +2 bonus to his Strength, lasting for one full year until the following Samhain.

Carnun

To worship Carnun, the Fir Bolg practise 'Wild Hunts'. The tribe breeds special dogs for this purpose, bleaching their fur white and casting spells on them to make them ferocious. The hunts are lead by a Shelgeyr, a tribal shaman responsible for breeding and training the dogs (treat as wolves). They are highly valued and well respected by their tribe members. Shelgeyr also make magical pastes from sacred roots and powerful ones can sometimes even take the form of large dogs. When a sacred hunt begins, the Shelgeyr blow silent horns that make the dogs howl, then the pack tears through small villages and towns on the outskirts of the neighbouring lands, killing and devouring everything in their path.

Lyonesse

Along the western coast lies the territory known as Lyonesse, a highly volcanic and tumultuously shifting land of alien rock formations and soaring pine forests. From the forest floor, one feels dwarfed by both the trees and the huge spires of black basalt. Billowing clouds fill the broad gaps between the land's basalt towers, trailing off into the distance for kilometres until they disappear into the huge mountains in the northlands. Long ago, the great titans of the tribe of Idris tried to tame Lyonesse but, even with the aid



of Slough Feg's potent sorceries, they failed and the ravaging fires of Mor-Alltach beat them back.

Since Lyonesse sits directly north of one of the Drune's largest dolmens, on clear days its blue skies are often flecked with the colourful sails of cloud currachs taking cargo to the northlands. Despite the danger of flying over the active volcanoes of the region, the basalt mountains make easy landmarks for navigators, as does the billowing smoke of Mor-Alltach, which can sometimes be seen hundreds of kilometres away.

The Basalt Mountains

Throughout Lyonesse are mountainous-sized volcanic rock formations that consist of towering masses of angular basalt columns packed tightly together and a single formation can contain thousands of these natural pillars. Mostly hexagonal in shape, the staggered columns climb upwards, creating a twisted stair-like formation. The tops of basalt pillars end abruptly in small flat plateaus, the largest covering no more than 8 square metre areas with most having less than a metre diameter. Ash and dirt collects on these small flat rises, allowing shaggy beds of moss, clover and wildflowers to grow. The plateaus are favourite grazing spots of the mountain goats native to the region. These goats are often spotted by travellers in cloud currachs, grazing hundreds of metres above the forests on tiny ledges.

The Petrified Titans

In a glen, near the base of Mor-Alltach, stand over two hundred large, eerie formations of hardened ash. These formations are shaped roughly like large humanoids and, if banged upon, they sound hollow (requires a successful Perception test). They stand in poses as if they were fleeing away from the fire mountain. If they are split open, the inside reveals a perfectly detailed mould of a titan whose facial expressions are wrought with fear and agonizing pain.

Nearby (and also encased in petrified ash) are the two halves of a cracked Weirdestone covered with ogham signs that associate it with Slough Feg (Perception test with a -60% penalty to spot them). Indeed the ancient Slough Lord was present during the eruption and used the last of the magic stored in the Weirdestone to escape the disaster. The eruption was caused by Feg and the titans as part of an ill-fated attempt to harness the power of the fire mountain. After the disaster, the titans refused to associate with the Feg.

The Pine Forests

Lyonesse is also infamous for its vast pine forests, which have grown to tremendous sizes because of the region's mild winters and heavy rainfall. Some of the region's loftiest pines are almost as tall as the mountainous basalt columns and many of them climb over thirty metres high. Thick layers of volcanic ash help to replenish the soil, allowing the tall pines to flourish. The forest grows right up to the edge of the huge basalt formations. However, the trees closer to the volcanic columns are shorter, because they are occasional burnt down when a volcanic flare-up occurs. Every decade or so, the land suffers from terrible forest fires. These fires cut great swathes through the forest that eventually fill with younger pines. They make easy trails to follow, but inevitably lead to the volcanic formation from which the fire that formed them initiated.

Largely uninhabited, the forest is a safe haven for hundreds of beasts ranging from large predators such as bears and wolves, to smaller creatures such as squirrels, rabbits, and various rodents. There are also a fair number of trout-rivers and small hidden glens filled with wildflowers and sacred mushrooms. The forest's physical isolation and intimacy, combined with elemental beauty, make this place very close to the Earth Goddess and Horned God on a spiritual level, and it is not uncommon for heroes wishing to attempt the path of the Horned God to travel here in the hope of communing with Carnun and Danu.

The Sanctuary at Er-Neharl

Hidden deep within the pine forests of Lyonesse on the edge of the sourlands is a small, yet growing enclave of anti-drune priests and tribespeople from the southlands. The enclave is about 100-strong at the moment but, with every passing season, more rebels and other dissatisfied folk are drawn here and made welcome. They are not necessarily pro-Earth Goddess, they are simply anti-drune, and particularly anti-Ragnarok, although they are willing to at least tolerate Earth Goddess worship.

The de facto leader of Er-Neharl is a high-ranking drune, Fra Mablás, who is opposed to the abuse of Earth Power for such destructive ends. Five years ago, he requisitioned a band of half a dozen skull-swords and set off on a mission of an unspecified nature to the north. He deliberately set out to lose himself and



his bodyguards in the impenetrable forest of Lyonesse, where he set to work building a small fortress, with a palisade of sharpened pine logs and a few log huts. He was careful to build the fortress so it looked much like part of the forest from above – trees still grow amid it, and the palisade too is interspersed with trees. Since the early days, his compound has had to increase in size, although he has encouraged splinter groups to spread out and build settlements of their own, so as not to attract too much attention from the air, should any passing sky-chariots be searching for the rebel base. There are now four smaller compounds within a five-kilometre radius of Er-Neharl. Wood for palisades and huts is gathered from fallen trees or by very careful limited felling, usually of individual young trees some distance away from the settlements.

The rebels live quite well in the comparatively lush forests of Lyonesse. They continue to worship Carnun, but the nature of their worship is much more akin to followers of the Lord of the Hunt, rejoicing in death as part of the cycle of life, rather than as a means to end suffering on Earth.

The Lyonesse Coastline

The west coast of Lyonesse consists of rocky seashore braced by up against steep cliffs and billows of solidified lava flows. The climb down from the cliffs to the shoreline is difficult. The natural pathways through the rocks are narrow and their mossy surfaces are extremely wet and slippery (a successful Athletics test with a -20% penalty is needed to climb them).

At the foot of the basaltic cliffs along the seacoast the shores are stony and grey. Along the shoreline swoop wagtails and gulls and the hundreds of crags along the

coast create a natural haven for other sea birds such as petrels, osprey, cormorants and razorbills. The undisturbed coastline is also a good source of rare plants such as sea spleenwort, frog orchid and hare's foot trefoil, making it a favourite spot for witches and druids to gather new herbs.

The cliff's breadth is marked by bands of dark rocks, which cut down its face and jut out to sea. It is in this region that the precious rock formations known as 'titan's eyes' are found. Titan's eyes are large oval sockets of reddish iron ore that surround boulders of basalt. The ore is prized for making scared weapons while the boulders are valued for making weirdstones and dolmen. However, one cannot just take these items without leaving some sort of sacrifice or tribute to the Goddess and any who try are sure to suffer the wraith of her seas, forest beasts and flaming mountains.

The Sourlands

Anywhere the powers of the Earth have been befouled by the draining sorcery of the drune lords, sourlands are formed. The predominant method the drunes use to drain the land are the huge stone formations known as dolmens. Indeed the closer one travels towards the dolmen, the more wilted and warped the lands become. The effect of the drunes' life-sucking magic upon the lands has been haphazard and chaotic. In some regions, it has caused the soil to putrefy and dissolve into rotting marshes, and in other localities it has caused the lands to become dry and cracked as deserts. The territory between these two regions is a mess of solid pathways of parched desert earth that snake through patches of quicksand and wide saturated mires of rotting vegetation. Finally, there are the soured forests whose trees curve in large lifeless twists, stripped



smooth of both leaf and bark, gnawed clean by the monstrous beasts that reside within them. However, no matter where one travels in the sourlands, hungry crows hover in flocks like storm clouds, descending to feed on dying creatures as soon as they drop.

Civilisation is scarce in the sourlands. While these lands once thrived with dozens of small tribes, most of the stronger ones have already migrated north to seek untainted land or to relocate with kin. Those who have stayed behind have mostly done so because they are too weakened from starvation to travel. Closer to the Tribes of the Drune Lords, what tribes and villages are left tend to be at least nominally under drune control – that is, a group of skull-swords and a slough may ride through every so often to slay a few villagers and carry off a few others for sacrifice, in a demonstration of their power. Most of those left on the sourlands are almost apathetic about this, since the sourland leeches away their own motivations and emotions along with the goodness of the land.

The Dry Sours

In areas where the powers of the earth have been completely desiccated, plants wither, crumbling into dry husks. Those relying on crops often starve. Along

the west coast, the saline spittle from the ocean winds pulling across the lands lines the countryside with a fine coating of salt. Once the dolmen have drained all the earth power from the plants and water of the land, little remains to protect the soil. The top layer of earth becomes sun-roasted into a thin layer of fine sand, while underneath the earth dries and splits. The rains do not help, as the land is too hard to absorb water and the rain simply erodes it more, with the runoff creating flash floods that tear south into the drune lands or collect in the sour swamps. The weather is also erratic: during the day the temperature can get scalding hot but by night it reduces to an icy chill.

The dry sour are a lonely and desolate place, the pervasive silence only occasionally interrupted by the slow rhythmic tolling of funeral bells. As it stands, there are fewer than 10 settlements in the dry sour. They consist mainly of small villages of farmers and shepherds, each ruled by a village headman. The village of Gavra is an example of a typical village of this region.

The Soured Swamps

In the soured swamps, where the very soil moulders into pestilent lifeless morass, the mire is so deep that

Village of Gavra

Gavra was once a prosperous and independent village of shepherds and farmers, just beyond the borders of the southlands, until the Drune Lords erected a huge dolmen less than a kilometre to the south of their territory. The dolmen's immense power ripped through their lands and completely ruined them, turning their crops to dust and their sheep to bone. Starvation has reduced the once thriving population to less than thirty. Food is so scarce the townspeople will fight each other over a passing beetle. They beg all foreigners entering their village for food and stare ravenously at their riding beasts.

The village is surrounded by a protective three metre tall fence of spiked wooden pickets. Within the walls are over a score of large round thatched huts. Townsfolk heat the huts with dung bricks, allowing the smoke to settle in the roof space of the house, insulating it and protecting the thatch from rotting. The huts are typically eight metres in diameter and five metres tall at the centre.

The town also has a main hall, which the villagers use for important tribal gatherings. The main hall is a single storey wooden longhouse, built upon stick frames. The dimensions of the hall are 15 metres by 8 metres with 8 metre ceilings. Inside the hall are enough long tables and benches to accommodate the entire tribe. Once this room was used to host great feasts, but now the great iron meat tubs hang empty, suspended from the rafters by chains over coal-less hearths.

Gavra is ruled by Madog Stag-shanks, a stoic goatherd who recently became headman after the death of Morgant Greybeard.





men must use stilts just to cross it. The once long marsh grasses have degenerated into bristling straw-like clumps suspended in the mucky earth. Some of the last solid ground, they at least offer travellers firm footing from the layers of decaying mud. The rest of grounds are constantly saturated with befouled water that devours footprints and sickens any that try to drink from it. Few animals and birds remain in the soured swamps, these consist mostly of crows, which feed on small leeches and the deadly mudsnappers, hungry beasts that latch onto their prey and drag it deep into the surrounding mire.

In the sour swamps, solid land is scarce and large circular mud forts are the only common structures. Mud-forts are built around deep wells and aside from water, have very little in the way of resources. These shelters are nothing more than a single circular three metre high wall made from mud and clay. The wall encompasses a 50 metre diameter compound. A moat-like trench is dug around the wall. The mud forts only have a single entrance, which can be accessed only by a large retractable wooden ramp that spans the trench. Other than residents of the mud forts, very few people choose to remain in the soured swamps and most encounters will be with refugees fleeing the lands on their ways north. Those that have chosen to remain behind are forced to rely on trade for survival. Since they cannot afford to be discriminating, they will even trade with drunes when necessary. Common goods include grain, chickens, ale, pottery, tools and tack and harness.

The Half-Dead

One of the most atrocious results of the sourlands is its effect on the deceased. The dead cannot die in the sourlands, they too become perverted by the Drune's magic and their spirits become trapped between planes. These monstrosities are known as the half-dead whose decomposing corpses rise with demonic hunger and fury, mindlessly attacking all that is living (see page 204).

Drune Merchants

Within the breadth of the sourlands, drune merchants are becoming more of common site.

They travel through the mire on huge bogsleds pulled by hairy ones or other great beasts. Bogsleds are built like rafts with two huge logs bound beneath them to act as runners and help displace the weight of their cargo. On top of the rafts are stacked half a dozen two metre³ cages along with piles of chains and rope. Drune merchants bring their cages to the soured wastes to capture half-dead which they sell to northerners as battle-fodder.

Soured Forests

The warped forests of the sourlands are nothing more than vast heavily wooded bogs. They cover sporadic patches of sourland between the soured swamps and the dry sour. Most of trees are lifeless, dolmen-drained and chewed raw by the great native beasts still struggling to survive. The drunes have declared all beasts that live in the soured forests to be forbidden flesh and anyone caught eating one of them is immediately put to the sword.



Midgard

Wedged between icy seas, towering mountains and the domains of the Earth Goddess tribes sits Midgard, the land of the Norse tribes that are the children of Voden. Midgard is a land of long black winters, ice-laden mountains and swift cold waters. The country's scenery varies from the unpopulated, treeless Jotenheim Mountains that form a twisted spine along eastern border, to frigid seas that thrust against the jagged northern coastline and its helplessly small rocky islands. Just south of the coast are huge cliffs that rise into vast glacial plateaus and west of the mountains, the land slopes gently eastward, slipping down into the great fjord that becomes the River Iving. Midgard's largest settlements rest along the eastern banks of this wide and sometimes wild river, which never freezes over. Finally, in the far south rest broad sweeping plains of fertile farmlands, created by thick moraine pulled down into the lowlands by melted glaciers.

The People of Midgard

The population of Midgard is dominated by the seven tribes of Voden that have settled throughout the region. They live in small communities governed by local warlord chieftains called Jarls. The Norse tribes have no centralized government though larger religious festivals held in the Midlands often serve as political forums as well. Locally, tribe members attend a monthly Althing where all legal matters and disputes are settled by the votes of landholders. For currency, the Norsemen use a small lumps of silver called 'orers', which weigh a few grammes each. Two orers are equivalent to one sét, although there is no particular 'exchange rate', since any trade that goes on between Midgard and the rest of Tir Nan Og is by barter.

Overall, the culture of the Norse tribes is most defined by the climate of the region. Midgard's short growing season and long winters have forced its people to be extremely industrious in the summer. They are tenaciously hard workers but also depend on slavery and plunder to help supplement what they cannot produce themselves. Both of these practices have

become important parts of their culture because they are crucial for survival during the lengthy winters. Climate also plays an important role in how the lands are settled, especially because the high altitudes and extreme temperatures of northern highlands make them uninhabitable during the long, dark winters. The most populated areas of Midgard are the furthest south along the eastern banks of the River Iving. These lands are capable of supporting larger harvests of wheat and other crops, and are good for grazing cattle. Other materials such as timber and iron are also more plentiful in the south. In the colder regions, fishing and hunting predominate, because the lack of good grazing land limits the people's ability to provide many other sources of meat. In the northernmost territories, especially along the coasts, the Norsemen hunt caribou, seals and walrus, which they export to the south as fur and ivory in exchange for timber, wheat, and iron.

Weapons

Among the tribes of Voden, the spear is the most common weapon because it is cheap to make and easy to use. When attacking, in large groups, the tribesmen generally throw all their spears first and then enter into combat with close quarter weapons. It is also common for tribesmen to carry long knives or hand-axes, which they use as both tools and weapons. Single bladed axes are also common among the common soldiery. More rare are double-bladed great axes or iron swords, both of which are strictly noble warriors' weapons. For protection, Norsemen favour small round wooden shields covered in ox hide. Armour is less common, generally limited to hide, leather and simple iron helms. Only rarely will Norsemen be encountered wearing more expensive, heavier armour such as mail shirts, and usually only if they are noble warriors.

Architecture

The people of Midgard commonly live in wood-framed structures called longhouses, which are built from timber and insulated with clay. In the northern regions, the exterior walls of the homes are packed with stone and turf to help insulate them. Longhouses only have



Isles of Eversun



DUNE
PLAINS

NORTHERN
COAST

DRONTHEIM

Aerie Frikka

MIDLANDS

GOTLUND

Upsulla

Aggarsborg

VANAHEIM

Fyrkat

ESTLUND

DRY
SEA
FLATS

Kaupang

JOTUNHEIM

three rooms, a small cold room used to store food and other perishables, a central common room heated by a large stone fireplace, and a shed or stable. The common room is the only heated part of the longhouse, and it is used for cooking, eating and sleeping. Residents of the longhouse have little privacy, especially if it is shared by several families and their slaves.

Food

The Norsemen prepare and eat a variety of food. In the north, favourite foods include seaweed, fish (especially eels) and oyster, brought up the mouth of the Iving. In the south, cattle, sheep, goats, pigs and chickens are all common sources of meat. However, during bad winters they will eat anything they can catch, including foxes and ravens. Meat is usually roasted on a spit or baked in a deep pit covered with hot stones but it is also boiled in iron cauldrons. Typical vegetables are onions, cabbages, carrots and peas. Wheat and barley is also harvested and baking bread is a common practice. Farther south, fruit such as apples and plums are grown. Common drinks include milk, home-brewed beer and strong honey-mead. Food and soups are eaten from wooden bowls and beer and mead is drunk from cattle horns. For long journeys in skyblades or ships, Norsemen pack dried fruits, bread, cheeses, smoked meats and other foods that do not require cooking.

EARTH POWER IN MIDGARD

Like the Tuatha De Danann, Earth Power also provides the tribes of Midgard with the ability to produce magical effects. The Norsemen consider Earth Power to be a gift from the gods that can only be learned through study and sacrifice. Every Norsemen is born with Earth Power in them, which can be tapped by any who learn its secrets. However, only few men and women have the patience for intense levels of study.

The magic of Midgard people is gendered into two schools of study, the male school 'Asatru' and the female school 'Seidhr'. In general, Asatru is practised by the warrior-priests of Voden, while Seidhr is practiced by witches. Nonetheless, gendered magic is not gender exclusive, and Voden himself is said to have torn out his own eye to learn the secrets of women's magic. Other practitioners of magic such as Runewriters and Skalds use limited forms of both Asatru and Seidhr.

Skyblades and Longships

Skyblades are extremely important to the Norsemen of Midgard because they are the people's predominant form of transportation. Since most of Midgard's habitable regions are landlocked, skyblades are a far more common sight here than seagoing longships, which inevitably are found only in the more northern regions or on rivers. Seagoing longships are most commonly used for whaling or fishing and river trade. For plundering, skyblades are preferred, for a variety of reasons, and so they are the most common vessel sighted outside Midgard itself.

The Regions of Midgard

Altogether, Midgard has ten distinctly different regions.

The Islands of Eversun

Eversun consists of a small cluster of islands far north of the mainland. During the late spring and early summer months, the sun never sets. However, during the rest of the year, it is a realm of total darkness and cold. Eversun has few year-round inhabitants and the select few who choose to remain through the winters are rumoured to have troll blood running through their veins. These people are known as the Jenuak and they survive on ice fishing in the winter and small game hunting in the summer. The only other notable settlement is the high temple of Voden, which is forbidden to all but the most powerful of his Asatru Warrior-Priests.

Eversun can be reached by boat, but the brutally stormy seas make it difficult to maintain even small ports. The ocean is turbulent and violent currents sweep through the iceberg channels forming dangerous whirlpools, which are powerful enough to sink ships. The erratic winds also make the islands difficult to reach by skyblade, and there are few safe areas for them to land, once they arrive. The most common way to access the Islands of Eversun is by iceberg hopping. During the long dark winters, thick sheets of ice form between the small icebergs that speckle the northern seas. In the early spring, the ice sheets are still strong enough to use as bridges. Even in summer, when the region warms and the ice bridges melt, many of the bergs remain as close as six metres apart. Travellers often set up temporary plank-and-rope bridges to span



these gaps, or leave pull-lines stretched across the channels, which can be used to guide small barges to the islands.

Drontheim (The Great Plateau)

The region of Drontheim sits high above all of the other Norselands except for the Jotenheim Mountains, on which it borders. The majority of Drontheim consists of a single massive glacial plateau that covers a bedrock layer of almost solid granite. Ice and snow cover the rest of the region year round and only the western and southern-most edges of the plateau thaw enough during the summer to allow tribesmen to access them.

The high altitude of the plateau makes exceptional launching zones for skyblades. Several sky ports have been built along the lip of the plateau, the largest of which (called Aerie Frikka) docks over twenty ships. During the warmer months, the Norsemen pilot the ships into the rest of Tir Nan Og to plunder defenceless settlements and the wealthy cloud currachs of the Drunes. Skyblades are much smaller than the Drune ships and are powered by runestones, which are found in the Gotlund region. With the coming of the first snows, the skyblades are dry-docked in huge warehouses until spring thaw. For the rest of the cold season, the helmsmen and crews retire to the lowlands or along the coast, where they reside with their families for the winter feasts.

The Midlands

The widespread central forest plain of the Midlands is the heart of Midgard. The brisk Midland climate is quite habitable and attracts a good many year round settlers. In fact, it is most heavily populated during the winter, when the berserkers come down from Drontheim after the summer plundering season has ended. Great forests of beech, pine, and spruce trees cover most of the Midlands. This makes logging an important trade in the Midlands and their lands supply wood to most of the other territories of Midgard. Logs are floated down from the Midlands by streams where they are collected in Vanaheim to be shipped off for sale up and down the Iving. The remainder of the region is a collection of broken tarns filled by streams of glacial run-off from the plateau, tree-covered ridges, and small hills.

The Midlands are predominantly inhabited by the Svear tribe. They are characterized by their quick tempers, which have often earned them tribal nicknames such as burners or fire-bloods. To increase their infamy, the Svear have become studied pyromaniacs and incorporate brutal tactics such as fire throwing and branding when they fight. Their witches and other spell-casters practise pyromancy, the art of divination by fire.

The Midlands are extremely important to the Norsemen because of their central location. The most sacred groves of all Midgard are located at Voden's temple at Upsulla. At Upsulla, the tribes all gather to celebrate the Bålakt (Burning Ceremonies) at different times throughout the year. Larger festivals sometime run the course of several weeks and tribesmen and their families often travel for months to participate in them. These festivals also provide the Norsemen with the perfect opportunity to trade goods, tools and slaves, or to find new spouses. They also serve as a forum for exchanging ideas and discussing political agendas.

Vanaheim (The Lowlands)

Vanaheim consists mostly of the middle and lower valleys of the Iving River. The eastern the verge of the lowlands is broad rolling hills, which ease down into several wide fertile valleys suitable for farming. Most of the settlements of the lowlands are built along the eastern coast of the River Iving, facing the Screaming Spires that separate the Norseman from the tribes of Celts. Vanaheim has long been a heavily populated region and, because of its ports, has become Midgard's leading centre of industry and trade.

The primary occupants of Vanaheim are the Vani, who live in a series of coastal villages that stretch from Dune plains down to the Dry Sea Flats. Longhouses are built right up to the river's edge, from which extend long docks that creep into its depths. Most travel is done by boat and, during the warmer months, the people spend a good deal of time fishing and trading up and down the Iving.

Fyrkat

Fyrkat is the largest fortress in Vanaheim. Built on a flat rocky surface at an inlet off the River Iving, it is surrounded by swampy marshes that make it difficult



to attack by foot. It has an excellent view of the surrounding lands. From the ramparts, ships are easily spotted coming from both up and down the river.

The basic structure of Fyrkat is much like the rest of Midgard's fortresses. It is made up of sixteen identically sized, eight metre by 25 metre, longhouses surrounded by a massive earthen and wood rampart about three metres high and 120 metres in diameter. Wooden gates located at the four cardinal points allow entry into the fortress. Within the ramparts, the longhouses are arranged in groups of four around a small central plot of land. Additional guardhouses are also placed strategically inside the walls near each of the four gates. The total number of occupants within the fortress is around 300 people and the additional settlers of surrounding region total around 5,000.

Dune Plains

The region known as the Dune Plains comprises a long stretch of white sand and stone beach that extends along the north western borders of Midgard. The Dune Plains mark the sandy coastal regions of the great fjord that eventually becomes the River Iving. This region is inhabited by the Ése, a tribe of simple fishermen who live in small isolated settlements.

Although inhabited year-round, the Dune Plains is a cold region. Snow and ice make many of the roads impassable during much of the year. Fortunately, neither the fjord nor the River Iving ever freezes over

and, for this reason, the people of the Dune Plains rely heavily on boats for travel.

To avoid running aground, the people mostly use small boats, which can easily be carried or pulled out of the water when necessary. They build their homes just off from the shore to avoid flooding, often keeping their boats tied to posts outside their front doors. They limit their homes to wooden rectangular frame houses with thatched roofs, making them easier to heat during the winter.

Fishing is extremely important to the people of the Dune Plains. In addition to providing the Ése with most of their food supply, salted and dried fish is their major export. Most of the Ése who live in rural areas fish for a living and during the warm seasons they can spend weeks away from home fishing in the Fjord for cod, sand lances, sprat and whiting.

The Dune Plains are also the location of the largest coven of Seidhr witches, who prize the region's white sands for their divinations.

Estlund

Estlund is a region of rocky hills and thick granite cliffs. Just south of Gotlund, it acts as a safeguard between the Dry Flats and Jotenheim and is still largely inhabited by the Kvedulf tribe, whose ancestors liberated the region years before. Kvedulf keep fortified military outposts and actively hunt giants along the



lower foothills of Jotenheim. This land has little of its own resources so materials are often reused. Homes are made from the salvaged planks of old wooden farmhouses and, among the common tribesmen, weapons and tools have become interchangeable.

In the east, there are several shallow lakes, which were formed in small hollows left in the ground by melting ice from the glaciers. In the warmer months, most of these lakes become oversaturated with run-off from the mountains and much of the ground turns into soft swamplands. The swamps create a fair amount of growth, which attracts a wide variety of animals, so these marshes make excellent hunting grounds for the Kvedulf.

One of the most impressive feature of the region is called the Great Stone Stair, a three-mile climb of ancient steps cut into the steep Estlund palisades that climb up to the Gotlund plateau. The Kvedulf still use these stairs, built by their ancestors, to travel to Gotlund to mine ore and search for runestones. Near the base of the stairs sits Aggarsborg, the region's largest settlement.

AGGARSBORG

Aggarsborg is a large fortified town built by the Kvedulf as a primary defence against the Joten. Its four metre high circular rampart has a diameter of 220 metres that surrounds 48, 30 metre by ten metre longhouses.

Four gates in the ramparts open at the cardinal points of the compass. Cobbled streets divide the interiors into four equal sections and within each section the longhouses are arranged in square formations.

Surrounding the exterior of the ramparts is a large moat, two metres deep by seven metres wide. There are also many smaller homes built on the land surrounding Aggarsborg, which cover almost a two kilometre radius. The population within the walls is over 1,000 people and the surrounding regions boast well over 10,000 residents.

Gotlund

Gotlund was first settled by the titan tribe who called themselves the Joten. They migrated from the west after the fall of their empire, most likely settling in the region because of its similarity to their former homeland. The Jotens brought with them their great

stones. These were similar to the Drunes' dolmens, and the Jotens used them to drain the lands of life in order to increase their own power. Later, when the tribes of Voden conquered Midgard, they defeated the Jotens by smashing their stones and driving them into the eastern mountains. Across the plateau, hundreds of runestone fragments were scattered that now remain the sole traces in Midgard of the once powerful titans.

Gotlund is now a recovering wasteland. Similar to Dronheim, the majority of the region is a large rocky upland plateau. Its poor, stony soil is largely bare and covered with hard thick ice. Despite its extensive damage, the life has slowly seeped back into this region, evidenced by the fresh deposits of soil that have eroded from Jotenheim, flowed down onto the plateau, and sprouted with new growths of grasses, wildflowers and young beech trees.

Ironically, the ancient stone formations that once devoured most of the life-magic from the land may have been what saved it from complete destruction. When the stone formations were shattered and broken apart during the great battle, the remaining pieces still held energy that continues to slowly leak back into the land. The few places where stunted forest growth pushes through the snow are often indicators that there might be a runestone nearby. Such stones are greatly valued by the Norsemen who gather them to power their skyblades. When the stones are completely drained of power, the Norsemen can refuel them by spilling sacrificial blood.

Aside from runestones, Gotlund also has a few rich deposits of iron and silver. The Kvedulf have established a few small seasonal mining encampments in the region, but none more than a few miles away from the great stone stairs of Estlund.

Dry Sea Flats

Located in the southern most region of Midgard, the Dry Sea Flats are an almost level stretch of low plains just east of Iving. Once a part of the seafloor, the region rose from the water after the tremendous weight of an ancient glacier was removed by melting. Sandy soils form the plains and the underlying bedrock is covered mainly by moraine, the earth and gravel deposited by melting glaciers thousands of years ago. Growth in this region is plentiful and the deep moraine of the soil makes excellent farmland. Typical crops include



wheat, barley, potatoes, sugar beets and leafy greens. Wheat has become one of the most important farm products of all Midgard and the locals export large amounts to the northern regions. The locals also raise many domesticated farm animals such as cattle, pigs, and sheep so many of their slave-grown crops are used for livestock feed. Much of the Dry Sea Flats is heavily forested, with the settlements clearing farmland from the forest as necessary. These forests are full of bears and wolves, and many an unwary visitor never makes it as far as an Yngling settlement.

Rain falls throughout the year, but is heaviest in late summer. Winters are mild and, during a single season, the Dry Sea Flats only receive approximately 20 to 30 days of snow, which usually melts quickly. Fog and mist are also common, especially around the River Iving.

The people of the Dry Sea Flats are called the Yngling. Most live in or near to the city of Kaupang, which is loosely ruled by Jarl Harvold Bluetooth. These are big, broad people, well used to hard work or hard fighting. They consider themselves to be magically related to the bear, and the bear is a highly sacred animal to the Yngling.

Kaupang

The largest city in the Dry Sea Flats is Kaupang. The majority of Yngling have settled in city and suburbs, which covers an area of over 15 acres. Its streets are colourfully painted and lined with longhouses, workshops, merchant houses, and dry docks. The roofs of most houses are made of red or blue tiles, or are thatched. Storks, which hunt for small fish in the nearby river, commonly build nests on the rooftops and the Yngling believe the birds bring them good luck. Most of the streets are cobbled except for the gravel roads that lead down to the stone piers. Here ships from the all over Midgard dock in order to unload goods including smoked fish, silver, whale blubber and walrus tusks. On the opposite side of the city, along the outskirts of the town, rest huge tracts of farmland and burial plots. The total population of Kaupang and its surrounding territory is well over 70,000.

NORTHERN COAST

The long coastline begins near the great fjord at the mouth of the River Iving and spreads eastwards, slowly rising until it is eventually stopped by the arctic

mountains of Jotenheim. Off the coastline and far north into the sea lie the icebergs and islands of Eversun. Long narrow sea fjords indent into the rocky shore making the coastline jagged and difficult to navigate. Some of the coastline is protected by rocky reefs called skerries, which shield the inlets from stormy seas. These inlets make good natural harbours for whalers to moor their ships and unload large catches before heading back out to sea.

The region's only permanent settlers are the Beothuk, a tireless and resilient tribe of subsistence hunters. In the winter, they travel inland chasing bear and caribou and, in the warmer months they use longships to hunt for whales, walrus and seal. During the summer, the North Coast is also frequented by Ése fishing boats that sometimes journey into the Northern Ocean in search of larger catches. The Beothuk commonly live in small portside villages near these inlets, where they can safely dock their ships.

JOTENHEIM

The tall mountains known as the Jotenheim are still home to the descendants of the titans of Thrym's tribe, whom the peaks were named after. The lower slopes that creep into the rocky plateaus and hills of the western territories are sprinkled with copses of birch trees and pines but, as the mountains climb upwards, the harsh terrain becomes increasingly sparse. The top third of each mountain is completely barren and treeless, as the climate is too cold to support plant life.

The taller mountains range from 2,000 to 2,500 metres in height and hundreds of small glaciers cover the upper slopes of the snow-capped range. The heavy snow makes ice avalanches common and the temperature remains below zero year-round. Precipitation is heavy and the snows are almost constant. In the northern-most part of the range, the winds howl at gale-force, straight through the day, only calming down once the sun dips down behind Albion and the western skyline.

While the dominant inhabitants of this region are the Joten, some of the mountains are also rumoured to have gateways to the El worlds, and have become inhabited by trolls, goblins and dwarves.

Joten are treated as normal titans except that they prefer to use iron great axes.



Dinas Emrys and the Cambrian Mountains

Northern Cambria is bleak and rocky, with little to attract any would-be settler. Occasionally it is the site of particularly large and usually prearranged battles between two or more of the Earth Goddess tribes, since it is close to all four of the tribal lands but there are few permanent inhabitants. Rising high above the land, as though watching the destinies of the four great tribes, is Mount Snowdon. Running north-south for around 150 kilometres are the Cambrian Mountains, reaching from the northernmost parts of Cambria right down the country and into the south. Most of these mountains have magic and legends associated with them, but Dinas Emrys and Cader Idris are the two most famous. The Cambrian Mountains make travel across much of Cambria difficult, since there are few reliable passes and the weather atop them is very changeable – especially when you take into account the presence of the Carn Teg (see page 192), one of whom seems to inhabit every mountain in the area.

Dinas Emrys

Atop Snowdon is Dinas Emrys, the magical fortress of the Ever-Living Ones, the most powerful sorcerers of Tir Nan Og. Most are highly experienced druids, though a few witches and others can also be found here. Three of the most respected are Myrddin, Brotor, and Cador the Dodman (see page 119), though there is no ‘grand council’ or any such organisation. In practice, the Ever-Living Ones discuss and argue among themselves all they like, but Myrddin’s word stands.

Most of the other inhabitants of Dinas Emrys are Atlanteans, including a fair number of representatives

of the rmoahal race, one of the ancestral ‘root-races’ of humanity. The Fortress also holds a small number of Myrddin’s students, who learn High Magic from him, and several folk who have become lost from their own times and effectively trapped here.

Finding Dinas Emrys

You may attempt to find Dinas Emrys by travelling to Snowdon with the intent to do so. You must spend 1 EP and make a successful Tracking test with a -100% penalty, with the following additional modifiers:

- +5% bonus for each deity you have made special sacrifices to this year
- +20% bonus for every major geas or major weird you have
- +20% bonus if your Enech is 15 or higher
- +10% bonus if you have ever met Myrddin, Brotor or Cador before
- +20% bonus if you have spent the previous night on Cader Idris

Defences of Dinas Emrys

Dinas Emrys is first and foremost a fortress – it has stone walls between three and five metres thick, and its structure is bolstered by the magical ley energies that intersect at its site. The walls are further protected by the seven massive fire towers.

Myrddin

The greatest sorcerer in Tir Nan Og, even greater than Slough Feg, is frequently powerless. Every time he uses his own magic, the balancing forces of the universe aid his enemies, and so he casts spells only in the direst of circumstances. He is half-human, half-



cythron and dedicates his immortal life to protecting the folk of Tir Nan Og (particularly the Earth Goddess tribes, as he has a soft spot for Atlanteans and their descendants) from the cythrons. Just as the cythrons consider humans to be mere swine, fit only for breeding, feeding and bleeding, Myrddin thinks of himself as humanity's loyal swineherd and defender, preventing the cythrons' plans for his 'herd' at every turn.

In game terms, he is an extremely powerful sorcerer, assume he has unlimited access to Earth Power, along with every spell in this book. He also knows hundreds of additional spells which have been personally created by him – he has a spell for almost any circumstance, and the Games Master should feel free to invent a spell on the spur of the moment if it would suit Myrddin's circumstances. Every time he casts a spell, however, resources equivalent to three times the EP he used to cast it are made available to whatever evil forces oppose him at the time, perhaps in the form of a simple EP boon, or unexpected allies, or a bit of good luck.

BROTOR

Brotor is always seen wearing an ornate ceremonial mask and is one of Myrddin's closest advisors, though that does not prevent Myrddin from regularly overruling him. His name is actually Bróðir but the folk of northern Tir Nan Og find it hard to pronounce and have been calling him Brotor for many hundreds of years. He is a Norseman by birth and, like Sláine was once a great champion of the Gods – in his case, he was favoured by Voden, travelling backwards and forwards through time from one life to the next, incarnating whenever he was needed. He renounced that fate and rebelled against Voden after slaying the Irish king Brian Boru at the Battle of Clontarf and was given sanctuary in the Eternal Fortress by Myrddin, who plucked him from the time-streams. He is now extremely pacifistic by nature, having turned away from his warrior past. He is not particularly powerful magically but he is extremely wise and experienced in the ways of the cythrons, having fought against them so often and for so long. He cannot risk ever leaving Myrddin's protective influence or he would be destroyed by Voden for his supposed treachery. Brotor himself considers that in some respects Voden betrayed him (as all the Gods seem wont to do to their mortal agents): Voden hinted that Brian Boru was a cythron pawn, when in fact the God simply wished to 'remove'

Boru for his own ends, and Brotor's commander in the battle, Elfric, was the true cythron agent.

Treat Brotor as a mighty warrior, except that he carries no weaponry and will never knowingly kill or seriously injure another living thing, even a cythron or El creature, though in desperation (particularly in defence of Myrddin), he will attempt to grapple or subdue an opponent. Inevitably, as a former divine champion, he is also far more skilled in sorcery than most warriors.

Time Travel

Dinas Emrys is known as the Eternal Fortress because, in some respects, it has always been atop Snowdon and always will be. It stretches backwards and forwards across time to infinity, though the Ever-Living Ones would point out that concepts such as past and future are meaningless to those who can truly see reality as it is. Time, after all, is a great spiral, a cosmic cycle through which it is possible to wander in an extremely non-linear way. Here at Dinas Emrys this is clearly demonstrated – under Myrddin's direction, it is possible to travel to any time period, and he often looks out for promising heroes to fulfil particular roles in history for him. He can pay extremely well, too, often in magical items or even artefacts. The most common missions seem to be fighting against Cythron agents in one or other of the many battles humans seem so fond of.

The Atlanteans who make up the bulk of the population of the Eternal Fortress are mostly no longer able to travel in time without dying horribly in the process – they would age instantly if they were to use the Time Lake, the vast underground lake beneath Dinas Emrys, through which Myrddin can send his minions to any time he chooses, past or future. The Time Lake is filled with the yolk from many hundreds of Time Worm eggs that Myrddin conjures here. The whole Time Lake cavern is kept extremely cold, to ensure that none of the time worm eggs hatch. See page 213 for more on Time Worms.

So long as Myrddin is not seriously distracted (attacked by time worms, shot at by dart-dragon-wielding Skull-Swords and so on) he can send characters to any time period and place desired, with enormous precision, and bring them back again too. This will not, of course, apply to rmoahals, other Atlanteans, or long-term (50+ years) residents of Dinas Emrys, who will not survive such a journey.



Cader Idris

This is a smaller mountain about thirty kilometres to the south of Snowdon. This was once the place of power of Idris, a titan chieftain of long ago. He placed weirdstones around the summit in a circular formation which gave the mountain its name (literally 'The Seat of Idris'), though the stones are long gone – one legend has it that Myrddin took them away to build the foundations of Dinas Emrys on the next mountain, another that the stones grew legs one day and walked down the mountain and into the Inland Sea, and a third that the Fir Bolg or Fir Domain took them as a symbol of their conquest of the Titans.

Climbing Cader Idris and spending a night at the summit is said to be one of the methods of drawing the attention of the Ever-Living Ones to you, so you may gain entry into Dinas Emrys. Doing so is risky, however; the old magic of Idris lingers here and this is not an entirely safe place to sleep. Anyone spending the night here must make a Persistence test with a -40% penalty. Failure means you are afflicted by a curse of either insanity or blindness (either one can be removed by a *Sign of Cleansing* spell as usual). Success gives you a +10% bonus to your next Play Instrument or Dance test, for it is said that those who can resist the curse of the mountain will be gifted with poetic insights. In addition, it provides some benefit when attempting to attract the attention of the Ever-Living Ones.

Atlanteans

The Atlanteans who inhabit Dinas Emrys are some of the few survivors of that lost land who initially fled here to seek sanctuary under the protection of Myrddin and now guard him. The vast majority are now quite ancient, but have not aged thanks to the consumption of time worm egg yolks. New Atlanteans are born, replacing those who have fallen defending the stronghold over the millennia and it is from these that many of the Atlanteans (and all of the Rmoahals) that can be found adventuring in Tir Nan Og are drawn.

However the Atlanteans at Dinas Emrys are not the only surviving group that still exists, with small settlements and groups scattered around the world. The ancient enemies of Atlantis, the Cyth and the Fomorians, still pursue their old foes, taking great delight in slaughtering entire settlements and enslaving the few survivors.



The Atlanteans have only able to survive by continually being willing to leave their homes behind. With their great ships they have travelled from island to island and from city to city, taking service as mercenaries for various foreign kings. Never able to stay for long in one place they have been able to conserve their numbers and traditions, all the time dreaming of a time when they would be able to take a new home for themselves and start anew.

Their unique weapons, ferocity in battle and powerful druids have meant that the Atlanteans have a reputation second to none as mercenaries. On more than one occasion the very act of hiring them has led to the war quickly being resolved as their potential foes sue for peace.

One thing that has remained constant in the generations since their initial flight has been their continued resistance to the Fomorians and Cyth. Where their ancient enemies threatened a kingdom or were allied with a corrupt regime the Atlanteans would stand alongside any who would fight against their old foes. This willingness to take the fight to their persecutors is a major reason why they are hunted down so ruthlessly.



Adventures in the Land of the Young

This chapter covers methods of getting about in Tir Nan Og, as well as various non-combat hazards that characters may encounter in their wanderings.

Travelling through Tir Nan Og

The information given here is intended to supplement that in *RuneQuest*, with a summary of the speeds of the new vehicles and mounts as well as an entirely new method of transport – the sky chariot.

Mounts and Vehicles

Mount/Vehicle (Load)	Per Hour	Per Day
Horse or Warhorse	6 kilometres	48 kilometres
Horse (70-200 kg)	4 kilometres	32 kilometres
Warhorse (100-320 kg)	4 kilometres	32 kilometres
Hairy one	4 kilometres	32 kilometres
Hairy one (425-2500 kg)	3 kilometres	24 kilometres
Boar, riding	4 kilometres	32 kilometres
Boar, riding (30-90 kg)	3 kilometres	24 kilometres
Vehicle		
Heavy chariot	5 kilometres	40 kilometres
Light chariot	6 kilometres	48 kilometres
Cart or wagon	2 kilometres	16 kilometres



Sky Chariots

Sky chariots have become almost an ordinary sight above the Drune Lord lands, plying their trade or preying on other vessels. Few sky chariots have weapons in their own right in any case – even the dreaded skyblades rely on boarding more than ship-to-ship weaponry.

Sky chariots resemble sailing ships, except for their ability to fly. They are built in exactly the same manner as a sailing ship (although they may or may not be designed to be watertight), largely because the streamlined shape has been found to cut through the air just as easily as through the water. The only structural difference between a sky chariot and a sailing ship is the addition of a small or medium-sized weirdstone, which is especially enchanted to give the entire ship the ability to *Levitate*. Unlike a standard *Levitate* spell, this does not provide the ability to move laterally – only straight up or down. Forward motion is provided by the sky chariot's sails. The enchanted weirdstone is known as a 'rise weirdstone'.

CONSTRUCTING A SKY CHARIOT

Any standard sailing ship may be converted into a sky chariot simply by adding a rise weirdstone to it in place of a tiller. Often old sailing ships which are no longer watertight can be converted for this purpose. Alternatively a sky chariot may be built from the keel up, usually working in conjunction with whoever will produce the rise weirdstone.

A rise weirdstone is crafted much like any other weirdstone of the appropriate size (almost always small or medium). The crafter of the rise weirdstone must know the *Levitate* spell and have a Pilot Sky Chariot skill of at least 75%. Rise weirdstones cost twice as



much as ordinary weirdstones of the same size, which of course increases crafting time accordingly.

Sky chariots have the potential to travel much further than any landbound vehicle, for they need not follow the routes of roads or other convenient terrain. In addition, they may continue to fly at night with just a skeleton crew in control as their comrades get their night's rest, so long as they have enough sorcerers on board to control the weirdstone. However, sky chariots are also utterly dependent on the wind for their motion, as shown on the table below;

Wind	Flying Into	Flying Across	Flying With
Calm	NA	NA	NA
Light	-25%	—	+10%
Medium	-50%	+10%	+25%
Strong	NA	+25%	+50%
Gale/Storm	NA	+25%	+50%

NA indicates that travel is impossible for a sky chariot under these conditions.

Flying into, across and with refers to the sky chariot's relative motion in relation to the direction of the prevailing wind. Note that a sky chariot cannot literally fly into the wind – this is the effective distance moved as the sky chariot tacks left and right at an angle to the wind, all the time holding to a more or less straight course.

The modifiers presented on this table apply equally to base and daily movement rates.

Pursuing Sky Chariots

A cloud curragh confronted by an oncoming skyblade will usually attempt to turn tail and run, desperately trying to outpace its pursuer to avoid any form of combat. Such pursuits can last many days as captains constantly try to outwit one-another by using Earth Power and the best advantages of their vessels.

When one sky chariot attempts to pursue another, simply check their base movement rates to measure how much faster one is than the other, taking into account such modifiers as prevailing winds and magic. If one is faster than the other, it will eventually either escape or catch up to its quarry. This is handled using the normal rules for movement and combat.

If, however, the two ships are of an identical speed, then it is often the skill of the captain and his crew that can make the difference. Taking full advantage of the wind, they can eke just a little more performance out of their vessel to gain a tiny edge in speed.

The ships involved in a pursuit both make opposing Pilot Sky Chariot tests, using the skill of the crew or the captain, whichever is the highest. The winner of this test may lengthen or shorten the distance between the two vessels by 50 metres.

For every vessel involved in the pursuit beyond the first, the crew of the ship being pursued faces a –10% penalty to any Pilot Sky Chariot tests made per enemy ship.

Ship Designs and Statistics

Each vessel detailed in this chapter of *Sláine* shares the following characteristics, whatever the design.

Length: The distance from bow to stern.

Capacity: This indicates the cargo capacity of the ship in tons. This number reflects the ship's cargo capacity in addition to the weight of the ship's rigging, crew, provisions and so forth.

Weirdstone: The weirdstone used to power the sky chariot, with its normal and maximum EP.

Speed: The speed at which the ship travels per Combat Round / per 24 hour period. A ship that relies solely upon sails for propulsion is dependent on the wind for its speed (see page 184).

Hull: The hull acts as the ship's armour, just as a suit of chainmail does for a man.

Structure Points: Essentially, structure points are a ship's hit points. Damage to these represents damage to the integrity of the ship itself and ships do not heal of their own accord. It requires the full attention of a skilled carpenter for an entire day to repair each structure point, although one carpenter per metre of the ship's length may work on the repairs simultaneously.

Cloud Curragh

The cloud curragh is one of the most common cargo and merchant vessels to be seen plying its trade over Lyonesse and the southern parts of Tir Nan Og. It is slow and lacking in style but can carry an enormous quantity of goods.



Hull: 3
Structure Points: 70
Weirdstone: Medium (4/8 EP)
Length: 24m
Beam: 7m
Capacity: 100 tonnes
Crew: 20 (plus up to 20 passengers)
Speed: 15m / 90km
Building Time: 6 months
Cost: 1050 cumals

Skyblade

Designed solely to carry a large amount of men in full fighting gear across long distances, the skyblade is able to outrun most other vessels and still be able to launch boarding actions with devastating effect.

Hull: 3
Structure Points: 60
Weirdstone: Medium (4/8 EP)
Length: 28m
Beam: 6m
Capacity: 2 tonnes
Crew: 50
Speed: 25m/150 kilometres
Building Time: 3 months
Cost: 550 cumals

Shielded Crew: It is common practice on skyblades for the crew to hang their shields on the railings along either side of the hull. A crew doing so benefits from cover against attacks (see page 54 of *RuneQuest*).

Sky Chariot

The Sky Chariot of the Tribes of the Earth Goddess is a simple design. Meant to protect the coasts from invaders they are not meant to travel any great distance, but to attack their enemies prior to them reaching home shores.

Hull: 3
Structure Points: 50
Weirdstone: Medium (4/8 EP)
Length: 20m
Beam: 6m
Capacity: 0 tonnes
Crew: 40
Speed: 20m/120 kilometres
Building Time: 3 months
Cost: 400 cumals

Environmental Conditions

Winds

Winds can create a stinging spray of sand or dust, fan a large fire, heel over a small boat, and blow gases or vapours away. If powerful enough, they can even knock characters down, interfere with ranged attacks, or impose penalties on some Skill tests.

Light Wind: A gentle breeze, having little or no game effect.

Moderate Wind: A steady wind with a 50% chance of extinguishing small, unprotected flames, such as candles.

Strong Wind: Gusts that automatically extinguish unprotected flames (candles, torches, and the like). Such gusts impose a -20% penalty to ranged attacks and to Perception tests involving sound.

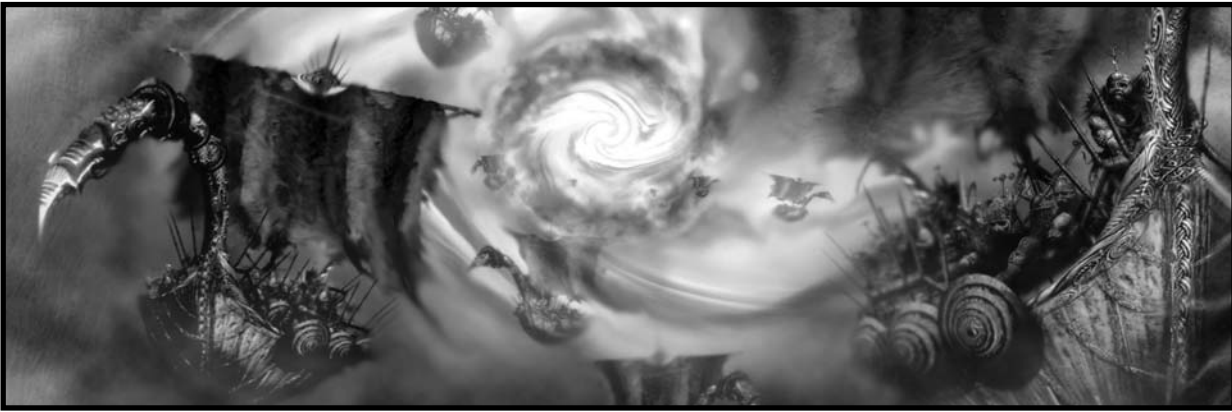
Severe Wind: In addition to automatically extinguishing any unprotected flames, winds of this Magnitude cause protected flames (such as those of lanterns) to dance wildly and have a 50% chance of extinguishing these lights. Ranged weapon attacks and Perception tests involving sound are at a -40% penalty. This is the velocity of wind produced by the *gust of wind* spell.

Windstorm: Powerful enough to bring down branches if not whole trees, windstorms automatically extinguish unprotected flames and have a 75% chance of blowing out protected flames, such as those of lanterns. Ranged weapon attacks are impossible and even siege weapons have a -40% penalty to attack. Perception tests involving sound are at a -80% penalty due to the howling of the wind.

Hurricane-Force Wind: All flames are extinguished. Ranged attacks are impossible (except with siege weapons, which have a -80% penalty to attack). Perception tests involving sound are impossible: All characters can hear is the roaring of the wind. Hurricane-force winds often fell trees.

Tornado: All flames are extinguished. All ranged attacks are impossible (even with siege weapons), as are Perception tests involving sound. Instead of being blown away (see Table: Wind Effects), characters in





close proximity to a tornado who fail their Fortitude saves are sucked toward the tornado. Those who come in contact with the actual funnel cloud are picked up and whirled around for 1D10 rounds, taking 2D6 points of damage per round to a random hit location, before being violently expelled (falling damage may apply). While a tornado's rotational speed can be as great as 400 kph, the funnel itself moves forward at an average of 20 kph. A tornado uproots trees, destroys buildings, and causes other similar forms of major destruction.

PRECIPITATION

Most precipitation is in the form of rain, but in cold conditions it can manifest as snow, sleet or hail. Precipitation of any kind followed by a cold snap in which the temperature dips from above freezing to 0° Celsius or below may produce ice.

Rain: Rain reduces visibility ranges by half, resulting in a -20% penalty to Perception tests. It has the same effect on flames, ranged weapon attacks, and Perception tests as severe wind (see above).

Snow: While falling, snow reduces visibility as rain (-20% penalty to ranged weapon attacks and Perception tests). Once on the ground, it reduces movement by half. Snow has the same effect on flames as moderate wind (see above).

Sleet: Essentially frozen rain, sleet has the same effect as rain while falling (except that its chance to extinguish protected flames is 75%) and the same effect as snow once on the ground.

Hail: Hail does not reduce visibility, but the sound of falling hail makes Perception tests involving sound more difficult (-40% penalty). Sometimes (5%

chance) hail can become large enough to deal 1 point of damage (per storm) to a random hit location of anything in the open. Once on the ground, hail has the same effect on movement as snow.

STORMS

The combined effects of precipitation and wind that accompany all storms reduce visibility ranges by three quarters, imposing a -80% penalty to all Perception tests. Storms make ranged weapon attacks impossible, except for with siege weapons, which have a -40% penalty to attack. They automatically extinguish candles, torches, and similar unprotected flames. They cause protected flames, such as those of lanterns, to dance wildly and have a 50% chance to extinguish these lights. See Table 8-3: Wind Effects, for possible consequences to creatures caught outside without shelter during such a storm. Storms are divided into the following two types:

Snowstorm: In addition to the wind and precipitation common to other storms, snowstorms leave 1D6 inches of snow on the ground afterward.

Thunderstorm: In addition to wind and precipitation (usually rain, but sometimes also hail), thunderstorms are accompanied by lightning that can pose a hazard to characters without proper shelter (especially those in metal armour). As a rule of thumb, assume one bolt per minute for a 1-hour period at the centre of the storm. Each bolt causes electrical damage equal to 4D6 damage to 1D3 random hit locations. One in ten thunderstorms is accompanied by a tornado (see below).

POWERFUL STORMS

Very high winds and torrential precipitation reduce visibility to zero, making perception tests, and all



Wind Effects

Wind Force	Wind Speed	Range Attacks (Normal/Siege Weapons*)	Creature Size**	Wind Effect on Creatures	Resilience Check
Light	0-15 kmph	— / —	Any	None	None
Moderate	16-30 kmph	— / —	Any	None	None
Strong	31-45 kmph	-20% / —	1 or smaller	Knocked Down	-0%
			2 or larger	None	None
Severe	46-75 kmph	-40% / —	1 or smaller	Blown Away	-10%
			2-7	Knocked Down	-10%
			8-15	Checked	-10%
			16 or larger	None	None
Windstorm	76-110 kmph	Impossible / -40%	7 or smaller	Blown Away	-15%
			8-15	Knocked Down	-15%
			16-30	Checked	-15%
			31 or larger	None	None
Hurricane	111-260 kmph	Impossible / -80%	15 or smaller	Blown Away	-25%
			16-30	Knocked Down	-25%
			31-50	Checked	-25%
			51 or larger	None	None
Tornado	261-450 kmph	Impossible / Impossible	20 or smaller	Blown Away	-40%
			21-50	Knocked Down	-40%
			51 or larger	Checked	-40%

*The siege weapon category includes catapult attacks as well as boulders tossed by titans and warped warriors.

**Flying or airborne creatures are treated as one size class smaller than their actual size, so an airborne dragon of Size 51 is treated as Size 31-50 for purposes of wind effects.

Checked: Creatures are unable to move forward against the force of the wind. Flying creatures are blown back 1D6x2 metres.

Knocked Down: Creatures are knocked prone by the force of the wind. Flying creatures are instead blown back 1D6x5 metres.

Blown Away: Creatures on the ground are knocked prone and rolled 1D4x5 metres, sustaining 1D4 points of damage to a random hit location per five metres. Flying creatures are blown back 2D6x5 metres and sustain 2D6 points of damage to a random hit location due to battering and buffering.

ranged weapon attacks impossible. Unprotected flames are automatically extinguished, and even protected flames have a 75% chance of being doused. Creatures caught in the area can make a Resilience test at a -25% penalty or face the following effects based on the size of the creature. Powerful storms are divided into the following four types:

Windstorm: While accompanied by little or no precipitation, windstorms can cause considerable damage simply through the force of their wind (see Table: Wind Effects).

Blizzard: The combination of high winds (see Table: Wind Effects), heavy snow (typically 0.5 to one metre deep), and bitter cold make blizzards deadly for all who are unprepared for them.

Hurricane: In addition to very high winds (see Table: Wind Effects) and heavy rain, hurricanes are accompanied by flash floods (see below). Most adventuring activity is impossible under such conditions.

Tornado: One in ten thunderstorms is accompanied by a tornado (see Table: Wind Effects).



Fog

Whether in the form of a low-lying cloud or a mist rising from the ground, fog obscures all sight, including darkvision, beyond two metres.

Flash Floods

Runoff from heavy rain forces creatures in its path to make a Resilience test at a -20% penalty. Creatures of Size 18 or less who fail the Resilience test are swept away by the rushing water, having to make an Athletics test at -60% or begin to drown (see page 90 of *RuneQuest*). Creatures of between Size 19 and 32 who fail are knocked down and face potential drowning. Larger creatures are checked, but they only drown if the waters rise above their heads.

Random Determination of Wind and Weather

The Games Master may roll randomly on the tables below to determine both wind strength and direction.

Wind strength is determined by either rolling 1D20 and consulting the table below, or with the Games Master simply choosing a wind strength. At the start of every day, the Games Master then modifies this figure by adding 1D10, and then subtracting a further 1D10 to arrive at a new wind strength figure. It should be noted that this is considered an average figure for the entire day and minor variations will occur throughout this time. Dice rolls may not modify this score below 1 or above 20.

Dice Result	Wind Strength
1-2	Calm
3-6	Light
7-12	Medium
13-15	Strong
19-18	Gale
19-20	Storm

The wind direction may be determined simply by rolling 1D8 on the table below. This is only really necessary if the Players are flying in sky chariots or on flying creatures at the time. At the start of every day, the Games Master rolls 1D20. On the roll of 1-10, the wind direction shifts one point of the compass to the left, whilst on 11-20, it shifts one point to the right. Note that, once again, this is considered an average direction and minor fluctuations of wind direction will

occur throughout the day. In addition, keep in mind that wind direction determines where the wind is blowing from – a north wind, for example, blows from north to south.

Dice Result	Wind Direction
1	North
2	Northwest
3	West
4	Southwest
5	South
6	Southeast
7	East
8	Northeast

Other Weather Effects

There are many other effects of weather a Games Master may introduce to his Players – heavy rain, mist, fog, squalls and so on.

If a Games Master wishes to randomly generate such effects, he may roll 1D20 every day. On a 1 or 2, such effects do indeed occur and may be rolled on the table below;

1D10	Weather Effect	May Not Occur In
1-2	Light Rain	Gale, Storm (assumed to be heavy rain)
3-4	Heavy Rain	Calm
4-6	Mist	Light, Medium, Strong, Gale, Storm
7	Light Fog	Light, Medium, Strong, Gale, Storm
8-9	Dense Fog	Light, Medium, Strong, Gale, Storm
10	Squall (assume to be one day storm)	Storm

Alternatively, the Games Master is free to simply select wind strengths, directions and weather effects to suit his scenarios – if the gaming session demands the Players face a storm, then simply ignore what has been rolled and select a storm instead. This is the desired method and the above tables should only ever be used when a Games Master needs to generate weather conditions quickly or as a matter of convenience – do not rely on them to guide your scenarios!





Gods and Goddesses of Tir Nan Og

Religion in the Land of the Young is bound up with almost every aspect of society, culture, magic and day-to-day life, particularly in the northern tribes. Most ordinary folk pay their respects both to the private gods of their household and kin, and to their tribe's pantheon of deities. Those of high status often worship one or more gods or goddesses in particular, as well as paying lip service to the other deities.

Fire-Festivals and Solstices: The Sacred Year

Six major festivals are celebrated in Tir Nan Og, at least among the Tribes of the Earth Goddess and Tribes of the Drune Lords. These are Samhain, at New Year (modern 31st of October); Midwinter, the winter solstice (22nd of December); Imbolg (January 31st); Beltaine (April 30th); Midsummer, the summer solstice (June 22nd); and Lughnasadh (July 31st). The six festivals are described below.

Samhain

Samhain, the Celtic New Year, is the time of the first frost and the last of the autumn fruits and berries. Samhain is sacred to the Goddess in her aspect as Ceridwen, the crone of death. It is the festival of death, for winter is approaching and many of the older folk, young children and diseased or injured tribesmen will die before the sun is reborn in the spring. Likewise, most of the cattle must be slaughtered, for there is not enough fodder to keep the whole herd through the winter – just a small breeding stock. Some of the meat will be salted and laid down for the winter, with the remainder being consumed at the great Samhain festival. Many of the cattle, though, will be sacrificed rather than eaten. Great bonfires are lit and the cattle burnt atop them, sending their spirits out to the gods. These fires are also a feature of Imbolg, Beltaine and Lughnasadh, giving the four festivals the name Fire-

Festivals. The Drune Lords of the southern tribes consider this festival to be sacred to Crom-Cruach, the bloody maggot god who demands much sacrifice.

Midwinter

This festival is more important to the druids than to ordinary folk. It is a time for powerful magic and secret ceremonies, not for public celebrations. The sun god Lug is at his weakest, yet from this point on his power will rise and continue to rise for the next six months. For this reason, the druids of the northern tribes find much to rejoice in at midwinter, and carry out many of their most important rituals to Lug.

Imbolg

This fire-festival honours Danu as mother of creativity, crafts and new life, as it is the time when the first signs of spring can be seen amid the worst weather of the winter. Fire here represents the fire of the hearth, the cooking fire – yet also the creative fire that gave the first woman an insight into metal-working as she cooked her tribe's food.

Beltaine

Beltaine is the festival of spring at its height, heralding the onset of summer. This fire is sacred to Blodeuwedd, for it is the flame of love and lust. Many a child is conceived during the celebrations round the Beltaine fires. In the southern lands, this festival is also sacred to Carnun as Horned God and symbol of male fertility.

Midsummer

Like midwinter, the time of the sun's greatest strength is more of a mysterious druid festival than an excuse for a party. Their magicks here are for the benefit of the entire tribe, however – the whole harvest depends on the success of the druids' midwinter ceremonies, for it is entirely reliant on the power of Lug the sun god.



Lughnasadh

This fire-festival honours Lug as sun god and bringer of the harvest. His fire has kindled the crops into bountiful flowering and fruiting, and Lughnasadh celebrates the success of the harvest, giving thanks to Lug for providing the good weather of summer. This is also a sacred festival to the Morrighu, for once harvest is in the time is ripe for war. The tribe have little work to keep them from raiding, and the prizes are rich, for the other tribes will have stored their harvests too.

Sacrifice

The proper respect expected by tribal and family gods is sacrifice. For convenience, it can be assumed that the total amount of sacrifice required to remain in good standing with all your tribal and household gods is one cow per year per point of Enech you have. This need not necessarily be made up solely of cows. Other animals, goods, or even humans (valued according to their sarhaed) can be used to make up the amount. The sacrifices are always calculated at the end of the year, based on your current Enech at Samhain, year's end. Though you may make some sacrifices throughout the year (particularly during the other three fire-festivals), most will probably come at Samhain, since that is the festival of death and sacrifice. Of course, sacrifices made directly to the gods as part of your religious obligations do not raise any Earth Power for your own use – rather, all the energy goes straight to the gods.

Devotion

If you wish to show your devotion to a particular deity, you will need to sacrifice to that deity specifically as well as continuing your sacrifices to the pantheon as a whole. This also costs one cow per year per point of Enech you have, for each god or goddess you wish to particularly honour in this way. You may do this for as many deities as you wish to and can afford to support, but if you ever cease sacrificing to a deity you once supported, you lose 1 Enech.



Druids, of course, have no Enech and so are handled differently. As a druid everything you do may be said to demonstrate your support for the pantheon as a whole, and so you need not make particular sacrifices to them. If you wish to devote yourself to worshipping one or more deities in particular, you must spend two weeks of each year doing the bidding of each deity you wish to worship – usually this will just involve ritual and meditation, but it could equally well mean a quest of some sort.

There are two main advantages of supporting particular deities in this way. Firstly, you may gain access to spells that are only available to worshippers of that deity, as detailed in the Earth Power chapter.

Secondly, the deity just might intervene to save you from otherwise certain death. Any time you would usually die, you may make a percentile dice roll. You have a basic 1% chance to be saved by direct divine intervention, or 3% if you are a druid. This is increased by 1% for each full 10 Enech points you have, and by 1% for each full five years you have been sacrificing particularly to that deity. Total up your chance, roll percentile dice, and if you get equal to or less than your chance, the deity saves you from death in some manner at the Games Master's discretion. A failure indicates that you are very definitely and finally dead. You may make the attempt once for each deity you are devoted to.

Gods and Goddesses

The list that follows can be no more than the briefest introduction to the deities of the Land of the Young, since as has already been mentioned, every tribe, clan and even family has its own gods. In addition, there is little room here to explain the religious practices of the norsemen, which are in themselves as complex as those of the Celtic peoples.

Avagddu

The horribly ugly, monstrously deformed, staggeringly stupid and disgustingly diseased son of the Goddess. He is rarely worshipped other than by the most unpleasant followers of Ceridwen, for his worship can provide little other than his occasional assistance with devouring his followers' enemies – but he is liable to get even that wrong.



Blodeuwedd

The Flower-Maiden is one of the aspects of Danu, but is also worshipped as a goddess in her own right. She represents youth and beauty, and the fecundity and lust of young women and nymphs, yet she is also the springtime and joy of new flowers and new growth as the winter dies away and the Earth seems born anew. Her worshippers are often young women who desire a lover, and it is said she can make them strong in Glamour magicks.

CARNUN

The Horned God is worshipped by many witches and Drones, though at one time all the Earth Goddess tribes also revered him. He is the consort of Danu, though the Drones have perverted his worship – their version of Carnun has little to do with the Goddess. In either form, Carnun is the god of nature and fertility, the spark of life that gives the Earth her reason for existing. He is the laughter in the woods, and the bringer of peace and co-operation; yet his is also the god of the underworld and death. He is worshipped by dancing and revelry. Unlike most of the other deities of Tir Nan Og, Carnun does not appear to mortals in his own right, even at moments of divine intervention – he comes in the form of his earthly representative, the Horned God. The Horned God is an office that any male human warrior could potentially fulfil, though there are only ever one or two at a time – either simply the Horned God, or the Old Horned God and New Horned God. Usually the Horned God is also High King of the lands of the Earth Goddess tribes, though sometimes another great hero may be given the role. The Old Horned God may be ritually slain by the New, or may go into the earth of his own accord. At present this cycle is disrupted, for the Old Horned God, Slough Feg, has retained his position for twenty thousand years, destroying any challengers. For his earthly worshippers the Horned God seems to do little, for to him existence itself is pure joy. He feels his worshippers should be content simply to be alive, and to occasionally see the cosmic joke – yet this gift of laughter can be more precious than the mightiest sword, for the hero who cannot laugh at his own foolishness is in dire straits indeed.

CERIDUEN

The Crone aspect of the Goddess Danu is guardian of the dead, along with Carnun; disease, along with Avagddu; and inspiration of any kind. As guardian of the dead, she can also give the power to raise the dead, though usually only in the form of one of the Half-Dead.



CROM-CRUACH

This vast monster is barely a god at all, though it is worshipped as such by the Drones and their followers. In truth it is a giant time worm, controlled by the dark gods of Cythraul and sent through time to whenever there is a great concentration of Earth Power, usually raised by human suffering. The Drones give Crom-Cruach many human sacrifices, both individually and in vast wicker men. Worshipping him may help a little with magic of destruction and devouring.

The Cythrons

These dark, demonic gods are so ancient as to be almost forgotten even by the scholarly, and never known by ordinary folk. They are imprisoned deep beneath Tir Nan Og in the hell of Cythraul, from which they plan to escape and rule the stars once more, as soon as they have enough Earth Power to break free. They raise this by encouraging human suffering and death in the Land of the Young, nurturing whole civilisations from afar like farmers rearing cattle, only to destroy them utterly once they are nicely fattened up. Very few worship the Cythrons, and they acknowledge fewer still – only those who are in a position to deliver many tens of thousands of human deaths will gain any assistance from worshipping the Cythrons, though the dark gods may provide almost anything necessary to bring about such a fine harvest.



Danu

The Goddess is the original deity, the Earth herself. This primal nature means that she has many forms and many areas of responsibility, which can be confusing for an outsider. Her worshippers believe her to literally be the Earth beneath their feet, the entire Land of the Young. Yet she is also the Moon above in the heavens, counterpart to Lug the Sun God just as the Earth is counterpart to Carnun the Horned God. Some of the most knowledgeable druids believe she is even the ancient Serpent Goddess, so that all the goddesses are simply other aspects of Danu. Certainly those who delve even a little way into her mysteries know her as the triple goddess, Blodeuwedd, Morrighu, and Ceridwen. These three aspects, like the three phases of the Moon, show her as goddess of constant change – or as she puts it, ‘sometimes I am your mother and hold you... sometimes I am your sister and befriend you... and other times your lover who will stick one in your back.’ Worshipping Danu can be somewhat random in its results, but when she does give of her full favour it is likely that her worshippers will be very grateful for it. Many of her worshippers also worship one or more of her aspects, although it is also possible to worship Blodeuwedd, Morrighu, or Ceridwen as goddesses in their own right.

Hu the Mighty

Hu is the god who taught the ordinary folk all the crafts and skills that they use every day – farming, fishing, leather-work, sewing and the like, as well as simple singing of the sort that makes the working day seem to go a little easier and faster. Tales of his heroic deeds are also told, but these are not ballads of conquest as might be sung of Lug, but stories of a rather unperceptive but lucky fellow, as though to give every farmer hope that he too might one day achieve greatness. His worshippers can expect to feel happy with their lot – and in this respect he fulfils a like role to the northern tribes as Carnun does to the southern – and occasionally to get a little luck with their daily work.

Lug

Lug is the Sun God, as serious, grim and bitter as the Horned God is humorous, gentle and peaceful. Lug’s areas of responsibility are authority, conquest, and systematic violence up to and including genocide. Those who worship him are often given great powers in combat, but tend to live short and humourless lives filled with the sound of others screaming.

Morrighu

The war-goddess appears as a fierce and well-armed woman in early middle age, or as a monstrous raven, or as some combination of the two. She can be seen above every great battlefield, in the form of the carrion birds who watch such places hopefully. Her worshippers may be made mighty in war, either personally or by being given great armies to command.

Serpent Goddess

She is the goddess of the old reptile people, ancestors of all humanity. Few now remember her, and fewer still have the inclination or scholarly knowledge to recreate the rituals for worshipping her. For those who do, it is said she may teach them dark secrets from a time before the rise of man. Such secrets are perfect for revenge or conquest.

Ogmios

The god of poetry, creativity and scholarship is revered by bards and some druids. He can assist his worshippers with the perfection of a particular creative work, but is unlikely to sully his hands with anything less than the near-perfect already.

El Worlds

The gods and goddesses of Tir Nan Og do not live in some heaven far above the world, but deep within the Earth itself. There, four more worlds, known as El worlds, hold the deities themselves and the various El creatures that sorcerers so often summon to wreak havoc in the Land of the Young. Beneath these is Cythraul – either a further El world, or something else entirely.

The World of Devils and Angels

Vast and powerful creatures dwell here, warring subtly against one-another. They are constantly kept in check by the Cosmic Balance – whenever the devils are about to win, the tide turns in favour of the angels, so that a victory is always balanced by a defeat. Thus they rarely make a great deal of effort in their wars – if one side wins a major battle, its imminent comeuppance is sure to follow. These El creatures are among the most powerful that might be summoned – or rather invited – by a particularly powerful sorcerer. At such a high level of magical ability, though, even human sorcerers begin to be affected by the Cosmic Balance, and it becomes increasingly futile for them to use their magic in any but the most dire circumstances.



The World of Elder Gods

The deities of Tir Nan Og dwell here, including those mentioned above and many more minor ones. They each have their own realms within this El world, which may or may not be connected to the others. Humans travel here only at the invitation of a god or goddess, and even then magical means (such as the Cauldron of Blood) must be used and various supernatural foes must typically be overcome. The only gods who do not have their own abodes here are Crom-Cruach, who would have no use for such a thing and prefers to be nearer to his sources of food; and Carnun, who, if he has any presence here at all, will be found in the realm of the Goddess.

The World of Elemental Creatures

This is the land of Elves and Goblins, as well as a myriad of other strange El creatures. The vast majority of Els summoned will be from here. It is a world of strange and varied landscapes, and savage wars between the El races for position and prestige.

The World of the Dead

This the land to which the dead come, if they have not been particularly favoured by their gods and taken to abide in the World of Elder Gods. Little is known of the World of the Dead, other than that it is the place to which the Half-Dead are prevented from coming. It is said that humans cannot come here, unless they too are dead. So far no travellers have returned to disprove this.

Cythraul

Beyond even the four usual El worlds, at the very centre of the Earth, is the hell-city of Cythraul. At one time this was the Cythrons' prison, but they have long since turned it into a place with what passes for home comforts among such creatures – notably the regular input of huge quantities of Earth Power caused by human misery. Cythraul is a darkly-gleaming city, full of weird shadow-creatures and ancient races who lived on the Earth millennia before man. From this citadel the Cythrons reach out into the other El worlds beyond.



Bestiary

A number of potential foes, allies and other creatures are presented here for Player Characters to interact with – and slay in great heaps, of course. The Games Master should always attempt to bear in mind, though, that the most interesting foes are often other humans. Generating a character and improving his skills and abilities can give you a far more unique and deadly antagonist than simply throwing another bunch of Fomorians at the party. Certainly every human in Tir Nan Og probably has a large number of tribal enemies – for example, if the party come from one of the Tribes of the Earth Goddess, it should be quite normal for them to fight against the other three Earth Goddess tribes, all the Drune Lord tribes, and the Berserkers of Midgard! Humans are flexible, versatile, tough to kill, and have a tendency to have a bolt-hole or escape route planned – even true warriors will often surrender if death is the only alternative (although there should be no shortage of warriors happy to die for honour and glory, either).

Part of the point of being a noble band of heroes is that you go out and slay monsters – time monsters, dragons, shoggey beasts or whatever else is threatening your tribe. So, a good campaign will almost certainly have a mixture of human and non-human opponents – and a very different ‘feel’ to each foe the Player Characters come up against, rather than a feeling that every enemy is mere battle fodder. The creatures of the Land of the Young are a many and varied lot, and the statistics presented here can only ever be for typical or minor members of each race. Games Masters should feel quite able to alter the monsters to create something a bit special, as well as creating completely new monsters as and when necessary.

Many of the animals that can be found within Sláine’s world are already featured in *RuneQuest* and *RuneQuest Monsters*. These include brown and polar bears, boars, cattle, deer, dogs, hawks, horses, hairy ones (mammoths), panthers, snakes and wolves. The statistics for these animals are not repeated here.

Animated Trees

An animated tree resembles a cross between an ordinary tree of its type and a humanoid of immense size – it is typically at least somewhat manlike in shape, but with a primitive-looking, often horned head and a covering of bark. Its arms resemble mobile tree limbs of the appropriate type, and its torso and legs are like a vast tree-trunk and gnarly roots respectively.

Animated trees are summoned from the primal forest by sorcery, inhabiting ordinary trees of the appropriate type but actually being far older, more savage entities. Ancient pacts between the Earth Goddess and the Horned God of the forest allow her worshippers to call upon these entities at need, smiting their enemies with the full force of nature.

There are five different species of animated trees, with each kind having slightly different abilities. The oak is more defensive, having bark twice as tough as the others. The ash is the quickest and most agile. The elm attacks using a devastating attack with multiple branches at once rather than the single branch sweeps used by the other species. The holly is covered in immense thorns that can impale its enemies on a critical hit. The birch is the largest and strongest of the five varieties.



All are susceptible to attacks by fire and by axes, taking an additional 1D6 damage if attacked by either of these. Stabbing and bludgeoning weapons are particularly ineffective against animated trees, inflicting only half their base damage on a successful attack (although any damage modifier will not be halved).

CHARACTERISTICS

STR	4D6+30 or 4D6+40 (Birch)	(44 or 54)
CON	4D6+12	(26)
DEX	2D6+6 or 3D6+6 (Ash)	(13 or 17)
SIZ	6D6+32 or 6D6+42 (Birch)	(53 or 63)
INT	3D6	(11)
POW	3D6	(11)
CHA	3D6	(11)

Animated Tree Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-2	Right Roots	3/13
3-4	Left Roots	3/13
5-8	Trunk	3/14
9-11	Right Lower Branch	3/11
12-14	Right Upper Branch	3/11
15-17	Left Lower Branch	3/11
18-20	Right Upper Branch	3/11

Weapons

Type	Weapon Skill	Damage
Branch Strike	40%	1D6+2D12
Elm Slam	50%	2D6+2D12
Trample	50%	4D12

Special Rules

Combat Actions:3

Strike Rank: +9 or +11 (Ash)

Movement: 6m or 9m (Ash)

Traits: Trample

Skills: Athletics 30%, Perception 50%, Resilience 75%

Typical Armour: Tough Bark (AP 3 or 6 (Oak), no Skill Penalty)

Avanc

The Avancs were the first dwellers in the lands now claimed by the Faliens. Nocturnal and peaceful by nature, they have always worshipped the Goddess as their moon mother in the sky. They live among the marshes, fishing with bare hands and teeth, working communally to dam the rivers and build their lodges. Among themselves the avancs do not

use language, finding it a primitive and limiting tool. They communicate instead through direct empathic telepathy, mind to mind, instinct to instinct. The Drunes have met evil ends when trying to sour the marshlands and the lack of Drune resistance to the Faliens was largely due to their having been picked off by Avanc warriors prior to the invasion. Greatly are these creatures feared for their bone-ridged horns, red eyes and colossal fangs, together with their immense speed, strength and resilience make them terrifying adversaries.

Avancs are generally peaceful and co-operative but will defend themselves with enormous savagery if attacked. They work together extremely well and almost never have any disputes among themselves. Most are attracted to items of beauty, almost to the point of entrancement.

Avancs are broad, long-armed, primitive-looking humanoids who stand around two and a half metres tall. They tend to have thick, shaggy hair on their heads but do not grow beards or other facial hair. Their foreheads are low and sloping, with thick, horn-like ridges of bone over the eyes, and their mouths are large and full of fangs. Each finger ends in a sharp talon, though Avancs are still reasonably able to use tools or weapons.

Avancs are unused to creatures who speak rather than communicate telepathically, and so tend to ignore them. If a sorcerer is somehow able to speak mind to mind with an Avanc he will likely find it friendly, if surprised that a human shows such intelligence and advancement. Only the Faliens are really aware of the Avanc at all, and consider them primitive, calling them 'beaver folk' and frequently attacking them.

Avancs have a telepathic bond among themselves. They can communicate telepathically through the bond over any distance (although not from one plane to another), so long as they have met the Avanc they are communicating with at least once before. They may not speak, or ever learn to speak, except through telepathy.

Avancs do not have geases in the same way humans do. Rather, they effectively share the same geas – never to attack a female of any species (this is the same for both male and female Avanc). Avancs have such total reverence for the Goddess in her aspect





as eternal, universal mother that they will not harm anyone capable of bearing children, even if themselves attacked by such a one. This should be treated in every way as a Major Geas, including the acquisition of a Major Weird if it should ever be broken.

CHARACTERISTICS

STR	4D6	(14)
CON	4D6	(14)
DEX	3D6	(11)
SIZ	3D6+6	(17)
INT	3D6+3	(14)
POW	3D6	(11)
CHA	2D6	(7)

Avanc Hit Locations

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

Weapons

Type	Weapon Skill	Damage / AP
Claw	65%	1D6+1D4

Special Rules

Combat Actions: 2

Strike Rank: +12

Movement: 6m

Traits: Excellent Swimmer

Skills: Athletics 60%, Dodge 70%, Resilience 55%

Typical Armour: Tough Skin (AP 3)

CARN TEG

Carn teg are short, ugly, green-faced little fey creatures. Their ears are pointed and their frequent grins toothy and lop-sided. Like all fey, they are at least partly El creatures but they have made their home on Tir Nan Og for thousands of years.

The main function of the carn teg is to be guardians of mountains and high places, much as wodewoses are guardians of forests. Just as the wodewoses are generally as pleasant and peaceful as the deep forest, so are carn teg as wrathful and hostile as the high mountain. They take great delight in killing travellers, regarding it as part of their duty to discourage anyone from climbing 'their' mountains.

Carn teg prefer to inhabit mountain lakes and are quite capable of living entirely underwater, venturing out only to wreak havoc on passers-by. After killing the travellers, the carn teg will gather up their corpses (or what is left of their corpses) and carry them down to the bottom of their lake to eat.

Carn teg have no wish to get anywhere near their opponents. In most cases, they will (rather arbitrarily) decide that a group of folk atop a mountain must be killed and hurl spells at them until they achieve that aim. All carn teg can cast *Gust of Wind* and *Nature's Voice*, most also have *Control Weather* and *Rockfall*.

CHARACTERISTICS

STR	4D6	(14)
CON	4D6	(14)
DEX	3D6	(11)
SIZ	2D6	(7)
INT	3D6	(11)
POW	4D6	(14)
CHA	2D6	(7)



Carn Teg Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Leg	2/5
4-6	Left Leg	2/5
7-9	Abdomen	2/6
10-12	Chest	2/7
13-15	Right Arm	2/4
16-18	Left Arm	2/4
19-20	Head	2/5

Weapons

Type	Weapon Skill	Damage / AP
Dagger	40%	1D4+1 / 4
Sling	50%	1D6 / 1

Special Rules*Combat Actions:* 2*Strike Rank:* +11*Movement:* 4m*Traits:* Excellent Swimmer*Skills:* *Control Weather* 55%, *Athletics* 60%, *Dodge* 30%, *Gust of Wind* 90%, *Nature's Voice* 85%, *Perception* 60%, *Resilience* 65%, *Rockfall* 45%*Typical Armour:* Tough Skin (AP 2)**Coblynau**

These foul-tempered and moody fey creatures live deep in the earth, usually inhabiting mineshafts or other underground areas frequented by humans. They are prone to misleading and playing harmful tricks upon any creatures they encounter.

Short and stooped with hard, warty, toad-like skin, coblynau have huge grey eyes and are pug-nosed. They have short stumpy horns and long non-prehensile tails.

Their preferred method of attack is to use their Shape Earth spells rather than risking melee with larger and more powerful opponents.

CHARACTERISTICS

STR	2D6	(7)
CON	3D6	(11)
DEX	3D6	(11)
SIZ	2D6	(7)
INT	3D6	(11)
POW	3D6	(11)
CHA	3D6	(11)

Coblynau Hit Locations

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

Weapons

Type	Weapon Skill	Damage / AP
Club	35%	1D6-1D4 / 2

Special Rules*Combat Actions:* 2*Strike Rank:* +11*Movement:* 4m*Traits:* Dark Sight*Skills:* *Athletics* 40%, *Dodge* 30%, *Perception* 70%, *Resilience* 40%, *Shape Earth* 65%, *Stealth* 45%**Cusith**

Over three metres in length and standing one and a half metres tall at the shoulder, cusith are enormous hound-like beasts that live within fens, bogs and marshlands. Cusith have filthy matted fur and a long rope-like tails. Their bites are particularly vicious, because their powerful jaws have two rows of teeth.

Vicious predators, they hunt in packs, killing and devouring any creatures they come in contact with, including beasts thrice their size.



CHARACTERISTICS

STR	2D6+12	(19)
CON	3D6	(11)
DEX	3D6+6	(17)
SIZ	2D6+12	(19)
INT	5	(5)
POW	3D6	(11)
CHA	5	(5)

Cusith Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Hind Leg	2/6
4-6	Left Hind Leg	2/6
7-9	Hindquarters	2/7
10-12	Forequarters	2/7
13-15	Right Front Leg	2/6
16-18	Left Front Leg	2/6
19-20	Head	2/6

Weapons

Type	Weapon Skill	Damage / AP
Bite	60%	1D10+1D6
Claw	60%	1D6+1D6

Special Rules

Combat Actions: 3*Strike Rank:* +11*Movement:* 6m*Traits:* Night Sight

Skills: Athletics 70%, Dodge 45%,
Perception 55%, Resilience 40%,
Stealth 70%, Survival 40%

Typical Armour: Hide (AP 2)**Dearg-dul**

Dearg-dul are undead creatures originally created via the improper burial of an individual of particularly spiteful character. Whilst most accept that in death they can not expect to have the funeral rites they deserve if circumstances conspire against them, some are not prepared to stay dead without these rites and then prey on the living as a form of revenge.

The Dearg-dul are also able to propagate their kind as anyone slain by one of these vicious undead will rise as a Dearg-dul themselves in 1D4 days after burial

unless specific prayers and incantations are cast at the time of burial.

Dearg-dul can be created from any humanoid creature, even beings as large as titans! They tend to be stronger, quicker and have more power than in their earlier existence, the typical example here is that of a human Dearg-dul. The weapons used will be those the creature was buried with, or any that it can find when hunting for victims.

Dearg-dul are utterly unable to enter a home or other building unless invited in by someone with the authority to do so. They may freely enter public places, since these are by definition open to all. Dearg-dul may normally only appear either during the dark of the moon, or on Samhain night. Appearing on any other night is possible but only at the cost of losing their ability to regenerate. They may under no circumstances appear on a full moon night. All dearg-dul automatically vanish at daybreak, re-appearing the following night if desired and if the lunar or festival conditions allow it. Their re-appearance must always be within one mile of their grave site.

The only way to permanently slay a dearg-dul is to heap at least one ton of smooth, river-worn stones in a mound on the top of the grave. Even digging the grave up will do no good, since the dearg-dul were originally created by being improperly buried; indeed, digging a dearg-dul's grave up simply makes them harder to kill, since it must be filled in again before stones can be piled atop it!

Dearg-dul regenerate damage done to them quickly, healing two hit points in all locations every round. If slain the dearg-dul will vanish as if it was daybreak, reappearing at full strength once conditions allow.

CHARACTERISTICS

STR	3D6+6	(17)
CON	3D6	(11)
DEX	3D6+6	(17)
SIZ	2D6+6	(14)
INT	3D6	(11)
POW	3D6+6	(17)
CHA	3D6	(11)



Dearg-dul Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Leg	2/5
4-6	Left Leg	2/5
7-9	Abdomen	2/6
10-12	Chest	2/7
13-15	Right Arm	2/4
16-18	Left Arm	2/4
19-20	Head	2/5

Weapons

Type	Weapon Skill	Damage / AP
Sword	60%	1D8+1D4 / 4
Club	50%	1D6+1D4 / 2
Shortspear	65%	1D8+1D4 / 2

Special Rules*Combat Actions:* 2*Strike Rank:* +14*Movement:* 6m*Traits:* Dark Sight, Night Sight, Regeneration*Skills:* *Beguile* 75%, Dodge 30%, Perception 60%, Resilience 65%, Stealth 50%*Typical Armour:* Tough Skin (AP 2) plus any armour buried its corpse was wearing when buried**Dragon**

The dragons of Tir Nan Og are scarce beasts now, with only the war dragons and their farmed counterparts still seen by men, except on the rarest occasions. Yet the ice dragons still sometimes stir from their holes and burrows, especially in cold winters, and if Slough Feg has his way there will be many of those in the years leading up to Ragnarok. Scarcer still are the spectral dragons, strange creatures from the Otherworld that a few powerful sorcerers can summon. The earth dragon, rarest of all, appears only when Danu the Earth Goddess wishes to intervene directly on the field of war.

CHARACTERISTICS

STR	10D6	(35)
CON	8D6	(28)
DEX	3D6	(11)
SIZ	8D6+20	(48)
INT	2D6	(7)
POW	3D6	(11)
CHA	2D6	(7)

Dragon Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-2	Tail	8/16
3-4	Right Hind Leg	8/16
5-6	Left Hind Leg	8/16
7-8	Hindquarters	8/17
9-10	Forequarters	8/17
11-12	Right Wing	8/15
13-14	Left Wing	8/15
15-16	Right Front Leg	8/16
17-18	Left Front Leg	8/16
19-20	Head	8/16

Weapons

Type	Weapon Skill	Damage / AP
Bite	85%	1D8+2D10
Claw	75%	1D6+2D10
Tail	70%	1D10+2D10

Special Rules*Combat Actions:* 2*Strike Rank:* +9*Movement:* 6m, 10m when flying*Traits:* Breathe Flame (4D6, 1/ hour), Dark Sight, Night Sight*Skills:* Athletics 100%, Persistence 120%, Resilience 90%, Tracking 110%*Typical Armour:* Dragon scale (AP 8, no Skill Penalty)**Spectral Dragon**

Spectral dragons are typically coloured in mid-browns, greys, bright greens and deep yellows. They have four great, curved horns, two on each side of their heads. Their eyes are large and intelligent, and their mouths filled with an awesome array of needle-sharp teeth. Spectral dragons are more graceful and sinuous than war dragons, but there is a fearsome and distinctly unnatural look to their beauty.

War Dragon

War dragons are typically dark in colouration, brown, black, deep green or dark grey. They are sinewy, well-muscled creatures, with their hard, bony spines clearly visible through the thick scales of their backs. Their heads are savage and fierce-looking, with pointed ears





and vast tooth-filled maws. A single spur or tusk of thick, sharp bone protrudes from the centre of a war dragon's nose, though this is not used for fighting. It takes many years to train a war dragon and they can not normally be bought. However extremely heroic acts might gain one as a reward from a generous king (or other individual who has access to a war dragon).

Farmed Dragons

Many dragons are farmed for their dragonhoards and their fiery venom, rather than being trained for war. These dragons have identical statistics to war dragons, except that their wings will be clipped (no flying movement or charging head butt attack) and their venom milked (see above). In addition, only a small breeding stock on any farm will be above SIZ 30 in size. The majority will be smaller, kept alive only till they reach size 31 and then slain for their dragonhoards.

Ice Dragons

Ice dragons are wild, undomesticated creatures closely related to war dragons. Their statistics are identical, and a rare few have even be trained as war dragons. The only real difference is that ice dragons are far less well-adapted to temperate weather than war dragons – they will typically be found only in cold lands. However, the Land of the Young's climate is quite variable – glaciers advance and retreat, sea levels fall and rise. For this reason there are some extremely old ice dragons, deep underground in lands that were once cold thousands of years ago, ready to rise again from their slumbers if a winter ever gets cold enough. They will be very, very hungry, and may be found in almost any temperate land in cold enough weather.

Dwarf, Titan

Titan dwarves are the children of Goibniu, and it is to him he has entrusted his secrets. Master smiths and master brewers, the titan dwarves now practice these arts in secrecy deep within the lands of their former employers, the great titans of old.

An average titan dwarf is a little taller than normal dwarves but far broader and well muscled. They have ruddy skin that is slightly freckled, blue to green eyes, and coal-coloured hair. While they often grow beards, the smiths keep them cropped close to avoid catching them on fire in the forges.

Unlike their normal dwarf brethren Titan Dwarves are able to use magic and cast spells freely, although most of their magic tends to be geared towards their craft, either by enhancing the beverages they brew or creating enchanted weaponry.

Titan dwarves can choose to pursue one of the following paths.

Forge Magic: Titan dwarves are keepers of the lost art of forging enchanted weapons. A titan dwarf with an intelligence of 13 or higher who has the Craft (Iron) skill of at least 150% can use it to place spells or powers upon any item he forges in much the same way a weirdstone can be enchanted with spells.

Brew Magic: Titan dwarves have also mastered the secrets of brewing magical beers and liquors. A titan dwarf with an intelligence of 13 or higher can choose to place spells into home brewed beers, meads, ales and liquors.

The titan dwarves worship Goibniu, the son of the Earth Goddess. It is he, who is said to have taught the dwarves the secrets of metallurgy and brewing and how to infuse items with magical properties. Their religion teaches that Goibniu forged the titan dwarves from iron and poured beer on them to give them life.

CHARACTERISTICS

STR	2D6+6	(13)
CON	2D6+6	(13)
DEX	3D6	(11)
SIZ	1D6+7	(11)
INT	2D6+8	(15)
POW	3D6	(11)
CHA	2D6+1	(8)

Titan Dwarf Hit Locations

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



Weapons

Type	Weapon Skill	Damage / AP
Shortspear	60%	1D8 / 2
Warsword	50%	1D8 / 4

Special Rules

Combat Actions: 2

Strike Rank: +13

Movement: 4m

Traits: Night Sight

Skills: Craft (Brewing) 100% or Craft (Iron) 100%, Influence 50%, Perception 55%, Resilience 45%

Fomorians

The Fomorians (also known as fomor or sea devils) have been foes to the Earth Goddess tribes for generations, regularly sweeping down from the ice sheet of Lochlann or their stronghold on Tory Island. They are a cold-blooded amphibious race, worshippers of the all-devouring sea god Dagon. They are repulsive, primitive and offensive. Hating all mammals and warm-blooded creatures, they seek to enslave or destroy all the humans of Tir Nan Og, although they have been known to ally with the Drones from time to time. A few look almost human; others have the heads of bulls, goats or other creatures; others still are of large size but otherwise more or less as above.

There are many, varied species of Fomorian that inhabit the oceans of the world, many of whom have attacked the Land of the Young at some point.

Fomorian, Golamh

The Golamh are parasitic monsters that are joined with human victims, serving the same dark gods as other Fomorians. Evil to the core they see humanity as nothing more than cattle to be culled as and when necessary (and even on occasion when not). These amphibians are not humanoids, unlike other, more common, Fomorians, being fish-like monstrosities attaching themselves to human hosts, controlling them as puppets, slowly draining them of their will to live.

Their human victims are always aware of their situation, and the serpent will allow them some freedom of action in order to further their own aims, but ultimately once a Golamh is created by the joining of the Fomorian and its host the only way to be free of the creature is usually through death, although killing the host will not usually harm the Fomorian. It would be an exceptional event if the Fomorian willingly allowed its host his freedom, normally this occurs if it is the only way for it to escape with its life.

The host means little to the Fomorian and it will draw sustenance from the victim, causing great pain and slowly killing him, although being a sea creature in



its non-Golamh form does make it vulnerable if the host dies upon land. The host can withstand far greater injuries than they would normally be able to as the Fomorian instills him with otherworldly power.

CHARACTERISTICS

STR 3D6+6 (17)
 CON 3D6+6 (17)
 DEX 3D6 (11)
 SIZ 3D6+6 (17)
 INT 2D6+6 (13)
 POW 3D6 (11)
 CHA 3D6 (11)

Golamh Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Leg	-7
4-6	Left Leg	-7
7-9	Abdomen	-8
10-11	Chest	-9
12-13	Right Arm	-6
14-15	Left Arm	-6
16-17	Head	-7
18	Fomor Tail	3/6
19	Fomor Body	3/9
20	Fomor Head	3/8

Weapons

Type	Weapon Skill	Damage / AP
Great Axe	70%	2D6+2+1D4/ 3
Serpent Staff	70%	Special

Special Rules

Combat Actions: 2

Strike Rank: +12

Movement: 4m

Skills: Athletics 65%, Resilience 65%

Traits: Excellent Swimmer

Typical Armour: Hide (AP3, no Skill Penalty)

Fomorian, Halfbreed

Halfbreed Fomorians are awful abominations against nature. These malformed creatures would be truly pitiable if they were not as evil to the core as the other Fomor races. The result of Fomorian sorcery they combine human, animal and Fomorian in a multitude horrendous hybrid forms.

These foul beings are treated as no more than battle fodder by the other, 'true' Fomorians. They are looked down upon and maltreated, even being killed for sport when it suits their masters. Their very existence is one of violence and cruelty, however when they are allowed to be they are as wicked and pitiless to humanity as the rest of their kind.

They come in a multitude of forms, usually they are humanoid but they can resemble all types of other creatures.

CHARACTERISTICS

STR 3D6 (11)
 CON 3D6 (11)
 DEX 2D6+3 (10)
 SIZ 2D6+6 (13)
 INT 2D6+3 (10)
 POW 3D6 (11)
 CHA 2D6 (7)

Halfbreed Fomorian Hit Locations

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



Weapons

Type	Weapon Skill	Damage / AP
Warsword	45%	1D8 / 4
Javelin	35%	1D6 / 1
Buckler	35%	1D4 / 5

Special Rules

<i>Combat Actions:</i>	2
<i>Strike Rank:</i>	+10
<i>Movement:</i>	5m
<i>Traits:</i>	Excellent Swimmer
<i>Skills:</i>	Athletics 40%, Influence 30%, Resilience 45%

Fomorian Lord

The 'nobility' of the Fomorian peoples, these are especially dangerous and sadistic killers that lead the Fomorian armies against their enemies.

They are worshipped by their troops and consider themselves to be living gods, believing that gaining nourishment by 'harvesting' humans is the greatest honour a human can have. Unsurprisingly their human victims do not see things quite this way.

Each Fomorian Lord is a powerful warrior, with its own unique powers. They are quite capable of cutting through swathes of normal warriors and will have multiple legendary abilities. Only the most powerful heroes will have a chance of defeating a Fomorian Lord.

CHARACTERISTICS

STR	3D6+6	(17)
CON	3D6+6	(17)
DEX	3D6+3	(14)
SIZ	2D6+6	(13)
INT	3D6+3	(14)
POW	4D6	(14)
CHA	4D6	(14)

Fomorian Lord Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Leg	2/6
4-6	Left Leg	2/6
7-9	Abdomen	2/7
10-12	Chest	2/8
13-15	Right Arm	2/5
16-18	Left Arm	2/5
19-20	Head	2/6



Weapons

Type	Weapon Skill	Damage / AP
Warsword	140%	1D8+1D2 / 4
Javelin	120%	1D6+1D2 / 1
Buckler	120%	1D4+1D2 / 5
Claw	200%	1D3+1D2

Special Rules

<i>Combat Actions:</i>	3
<i>Strike Rank:</i>	+14
<i>Movement:</i>	8m
<i>Traits:</i>	Excellent Swimmer
<i>Skills:</i>	Athletics 90%, Influence 120%, Persistence 100%, Resilience 110%
<i>Typical Armour:</i>	Hide (AP2, no Skill Penalty)

Fomorian, Pureblood

Pureblood fomorians look like humanoid amphibians, with claws, webbed feet, large splayed ears, large round eyes and sharp teeth. They are typically green in colour, though some have pale brown patterns on their skin.



FOMORIAN LORD SPECIAL ABILITIES

D100	Special Ability	Effect
01-05	Acidic Spit	The Fomorian Lord can make a single spit attack every Combat Round, this does not use up one of his Combat Actions. The attack will be with a skill of 95% and does 3D6 damage to a single location. Any armour protection is doubled (simple clothing will allow a single point of protection), but the armour will fall off, rendered useless if the acid managed to burn through and inflict any damage upon the target
06-10	Aura of Death	Every non-Fomorian within ten metres will take 1D3 damage every Combat Round to a random location due to this powerful aura of corruption
11-15	Extra Arms	Has an extra pair of arms that can both be used to wield weapons with no skill loss for any attacks. These will be additional attacks every Combat Round in addition to the number normally allowed due to the number of Combat Actions the Fomorian Lord has
16-20	Eye of Flame	The Fomorian Lord can use one of its eyes as a Serpent Staff. The eye's ability to do this is lost if it is removed from the Fomorian Lord or if he is killed
21-25	Great Stench	Any non-Fomorian within ten metres must make a Resilience test every Combat Round or fall unconscious for 1D4 Combat Rounds
26-30	Great Dexterity	Fomorian Lord gains an additional 3D6+3 DEX
31-35	Great Strength	Fomorian Lord gains an additional 3D6+6 STR
36-40	Great Toughness	Fomorian Lord gains an additional 3D6+6 CON
41-45	Howl of the Cyth	The Fomorian Lord can let out a great bellow that causing opponents, and even rock, to melt if they are within 30 metres. For every EP the Fomorian Lord expends one opponent will take 1D6 damage to a random hit location (no armour protects against this) if they fail a Resilience test. Up to 5 EP can be expended at one time attacking a single opponent, with a separate roll for Hit Location for each D6 of damage. 5 EP would be required if the Fomorian Lord wished to attack an inanimate structure (causing a cliff to collapse or wall to fall, for example).
46-50	Huge	Fomorian Lord gains an additional 2D6 STR, CON and SIZ
51-55	Hypnotic	As a bonus Combat Action every Combat Round the Fomorian Lord can attempt to beguile one other creature using an Evil Eye attack. The Fomorian's skill is considered to be at least 90%, and may be considerably higher at the Games Master's discretion
56-60	Lord of Slime	The Fomorian Lord excretes a noxious slime that hardens once removed from the Lord. Any successful attack upon a location (whether it caused damage or not) leaves behind this mucus which hardens to make the location hit unusable if a Resilience test is failed by the target. It can be washed off taking a full Combat Round if fully immersed in water, or a hard blow that deals damage to the effected location will also break the coating. The slime will cause suffocation on a hit to the head (see <i>RuneQuest</i> rulebook page 90)
61-65	Poisonous	Every wound the Fomorian Lord inflicts is poisonous with the equivalent of Manticore Venom, (see the <i>RuneQuest</i> rulebook, page 91, for more details)
66-70	Reflects Magic	Any magical spell or other magical attack is reflected back against the attacker with no harm being done to the Fomorian Lord, if the Lord makes a successful Persistence test
71-75	Regeneration	Regenerates up to three hit points to all hit locations every Combat Round until it is finally killed
76-80	Retaliatory Attacks	Every successful melee attack made against the Fomorian Lord is immediately countered with a retaliatory attack. This attack is in addition to any allowed due to the Fomorian Lord's Combat Actions, with no limit to the maximum number of retribution attacks in any single Combat Round
81-85	Sorcerer	Fomorian Lord has 90% skill in up to ten spells (Games Master's choice) and an extra 2D6 POW
86-90	Soul Eater	Using a single Combat Action the Fomorian can eat the soul of an individual that has died within the last Combat Round. By doing this the Fomorian Lord can completely heal any damage to a single Hit Location of his choice. If attacked after eating a soul in the same Combat Round the Fomorian Lord can not use a Reaction to protect himself (this applies only to the first attack against the Fomorian Lord whether it is successful or not)
91-95	Tough Hide	Fomorian Lord has an extra 5 points of armour protection for each location, with no skill penalty
96-00	Winged	Gains Flying Movement at up to twice its normal Movement



These are the most common of the Fomorian race, forming the mainstay of their armies. They also tend to be more competent warriors than the halfbreeds.

CHARACTERISTICS

STR	2D6+6	(13)
CON	2D6+6	(13)
DEX	2D6+3	(10)
SIZ	2D6+6	(13)
INT	2D6+3	(10)
POW	3D6	(11)
CHA	3D6	(11)

Pureblood Fomorian Hit Locations

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



Weapons

Type	Weapon Skill	Damage / AP
Warsword	60%	1D8+1D2 / 4
Javelin	50%	1D6+1D2 / 1
Buckler	50%	1D4+1D2 / 5
Claw	70%	1D3+1D2

Special Rules

<i>Combat Actions:</i>	2
<i>Strike Rank:</i>	+10
<i>Movement:</i>	6m
<i>Traits:</i>	Excellent Swimmer
<i>Skills:</i>	Athletics 40%, Influence 30%, Resilience 45%

Fomorian, Sea-Devil

Sea-devils look like other pureblood Fomorians, except that they have fins instead of back legs and a far more fully developed tail. Most are pale green in colour, with some being almost white. They are noticeably larger than other fomorians, being more than two metres long and with strong broad upper bodies.

Whereas ordinary fomorians are amphibious, breathing water for the first larval stage of life and returning to water to breed, this variant is entirely aquatic, living its entire life-cycle beneath the waves and having gills. Sea-devils are able to survive out of water, breathing through their skins rather than their gills, but this is inefficient and they become fatigued (see page 86 of *RuneQuest*) very quickly after being out of water for longer than ten minutes. In this case they are considered to be two level of fatigue worse than they would be normally (being tired instead of being fresh, for example). Spending at least two Combat Rounds submerged will immediately end the fatigued state.

Sea-devils prefer to attack from a position of strength, typically gathering their forces beneath an unfortunate swimmer or small fishing boat, then attacking all at once in the hope of slaying their victim before he can fight back.

CHARACTERISTICS

STR	2D6+6	(13)
CON	2D6+6	(13)
DEX	2D6+3	(10)
SIZ	2D6+6	(13)
INT	2D6	(7)
POW	3D6	(11)
CHA	3D6	(11)



Sea-Devil Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-2	Tail	2/6
3-4	Right Rear Fin	2/6
5-6	Left Rear Fin	2/6
7-9	Abdomen	2/7
10-12	Chest	2/8
13-15	Right Arm	2/5
16-18	Left Arm	2/5
19-20	Head	2/6

Weapons

Type	Weapon Skill	Damage / AP
Shortspear	50%	1D8+1D2 / 3
Javelin	40%	1D6+1D2 / 1
Claw	50%	1D3+1D2

Special Rules

Combat Actions: 2

Strike Rank: +8

Movement: 6m

Traits: Excellent Swimmer

Skills: Athletics 60%, Resilience 45%

Typical Armour: Hide (AP2, no Skill Penalty)

Ghoul

The ghouls are a creature from the Land of the Dead, one of the El Worlds buried deep within the earth. It appears much like a tall muscular human, with a demonic, tormented, furious expression and sharp bony spikes protruding through the flesh on the top of its skull. Its ears are pointed, and it has sharp teeth and claws. Ghouls are most commonly armed with long, heavy iron swords which they wield with both hands, and they are quite adept at hacking their foes to pieces.

Ghouls are most commonly called to Tir Nan Og by sorcerers wishing to have an enemy assassinated, however they can also occasionally be found guarding areas of high importance but low traffic. As assassins, they operate by entering the victim's home at night, undetected if possible. As guards, they will typically be summoned with a standard *summon ghouls* spell, then bartered with to remain in an area. They are intelligent enough that this can be done, and yet do not particularly get bored, so long as each is given one helpless victim to terrify, slay and eat each night. Of

course, any failure to provide victims will lead to the ghouls turning on its master, or just the nearest suitable target – they are not under the summoner's control once the original spell's duration has ended, after all, and certainly feel no loyalty to him if he does not hold up his end of the deal.

Ghouls prefer to attack from a position of surprise and with the opponent in a position of helplessness. Their favourite tactic is to tie up their victim, wake them and explain what horrific damage they are about to do (possibly delivering a message from the sorcerer who summoned them), and then commence hacking with their swords.

Characteristics

STR	3D6+6	(17)
CON	3D6+6	(17)
DEX	3D6	(11)
SIZ	2D6+6	(13)
INT	2D6+3	(10)
POW	3D6	(11)
CHA	2D6	(7)

Ghoul Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Leg	2/6
4-6	Left Leg	2/6
7-9	Abdomen	2/7
10-12	Chest	2/8
13-15	Right Arm	2/5
16-18	Left Arm	2/5
19-20	Head	2/6

Weapons

Type	Weapon Skill	Damage / AP
Warsword	40%	1D8+1D2 / 4
Bite	45%	1D4+1D2 / 5
Claw	50%	1D3+1D2

Special Rules

Combat Actions: 2

Strike Rank: +10

Movement: 4m

Traits: Dark Sight, Disease Immunity, Poison Immunity

Skills: Athletics 35%, Resilience 65%, Stealth 80%



Goblin

Goblins are short brutes summoned from the El worlds, perfect battle-fodder for an experienced witch or druid to call to Tir Nan Og. They are savage, and will attack without mercy or concern for their own lives if ordered to do so – in fact, they will delight in their own death just as readily as that of their foes. However, they are also quite cunning, so this may be a waste – they can be put to good use terrorising or assassinating their summoner's foes too.

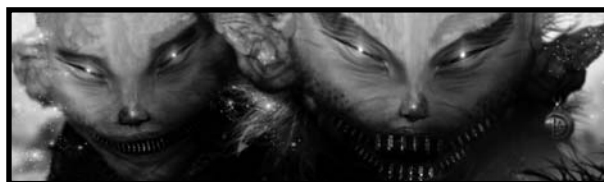
Goblins are typically just over one metre tall, but weigh almost as much as an adult human, being broad and well-muscled for their height. They are hairier and uglier than humans, with a bestial, vicious look to their faces. Underneath the long hair, a goblin's skin is much like a human's in colour, ranging from near-white to dark brown, but always with a disturbing greenish-blue cast to it that reveals the creature's supernatural origins. Goblins will follow their summoner's orders in combat. If given free reign, the majority will always simply charge their foes, charging onto enemy weapons in their haste to kill or die. A smaller number will detach themselves from the main group, attempting to circle around their enemies and fall on their flanks or rear.

CHARACTERISTICS

STR	3D6	(11)
CON	2D6+6	(13)
DEX	3D6	(11)
SIZ	2D6+3	(10)
INT	2D6+3	(10)
POW	3D6	(11)
CHA	2D6	(7)

Goblin Hit Locations

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



Weapons

Type	Weapon Skill	Damage / AP
Battleaxe	40%	1D8 / 4
Bow	45%	1D4 / 5
Target Shield	40%	1D6 / 8

Special Rules

Combat Actions: 2

Strike Rank: +10

Movement: 4m

Skills: Athletics 45%, Resilience 35%,
Shield Biting 55%, Stealth 40%

Half-dead

Half-dead are usually placid and tractable, exhibiting the apathy of those for whom the hopes and dreams of the living are not even a memory. When instructed to fight they do so with what seems to be a hatred for the living and a total disdain for their own existence. For this reason they are valued by most of the tribes of Tir Nan Og, as expendable 'battle-fodder'.

The half-dead often have a designated controller, initially the sorcerer who created them. They can just barely understand simple verbal orders from their controller, for example 'attack,' 'defend this,' 'wait', and 'this is your new controller'. They do not possess anything resembling the human idea of loyalty, and will not defend their controller unless specifically instructed to. The controller may have acquired control of the half-dead through sorcery himself, or he may have trained and conditioned them like animals.

Attacking with savage fury, the half-dead are nearly unstoppable. Any creature that seems to be standing up to the blows from their weapons will cause them to switch to bite attacks, as will any blunting or bending of their weapons.





The bite of a half-dead warrior is deadly, carrying with it the risk of poison infecting the bloodstream of a bitten victim, so even if the half-dead is destroyed its bite may ultimately strike down its vanquisher.

CHARACTERISTICS

STR	3D6	(11)
CON	2D6+6	(13)
DEX	3D6	(11)
SIZ	2D6+3	(10)
INT	2D6+3	(10)
POW	3D6	(11)
CHA	2D6	(7)

Half-Dead Hit Locations

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

Weapons

Type	Weapon Skill	Damage / AP
Short Spear	40%	1D8 / 2
Bite	45%	1D4 + poison

Special Rules

Combat Actions: 2

Strike Rank: +10

Movement: 4m

Traits: Disease Immunity, Poison, Poison Immunity

Skills: Athletics 45%, Resilience 35%, Stealth 40%

Half-dead Venom

Type: Smear

Delay: 1D3 Hours

Potency: 70

Full Effect: 1D3 hit point damage to all locations, -6 penalty to victim's STR and DEX

Duration: 1D3 days

Horned Hag

Horned hags appear much like ugly, aged human women, except for their spiralling horns. Each hag has between one and twelve horns. The number of horns seems to make no difference to a horned hag's capabilities although, for some reason, they are most commonly encountered in groups of twelve, with each member of the group having a different number of horns.

Horned hags are fairly scarce outside the sourlands but can occasionally be found in Eriu, Albion and elsewhere. They will not remain far from human habitation and, although their origin is in the sourlands, they will avoid the completely deserted areas, following refugees or living on the very edge of the sourlands, where they can prey on nearby villages.

Horned hags prefer to avoid melee combat, dominating their victims and gradually draining the life out of them.

A horned hag who meets the eye of any humanoid may attempt to dominate it. This works like a spell with the range 'evil eye' (see page 40). The target must make a Persistence test or be dominated by the horned hag. The hag can control the humanoid's actions. The hag establishes a telepathic link with the subject's mind. If a common language is shared, the hag can generally force the subject to perform as the hag desires, within the limits of his abilities. If no common language



is shared, the hag can communicate only basic commands, such as 'Come here', 'Go there', 'Fight' and 'Stand still'. The hag knows what the subject is experiencing but the hag does not receive direct sensory input from him. Subjects resist this control and those forced to take actions against their nature can make a new Persistence test with a +20% bonus to break free from the metal domination, depending on the type of action required. Obviously self-destructive orders are not carried out. Once control is established, the range at which it can be exercised is unlimited, as long as the hag and the subject are on the same plane. The hag need not see the subject to control it. *Protective Circle* or a similar spell can prevent the hag from exercising control or using the telepathic link while the subject is so warded, but it does not prevent the establishment of domination or dispel it. Only one subject may be dominated at a time. This ability does not cost any EP to use and takes a single Combat Action to perform with a skill of 95%.

A horned hag who meets the eye of any creature may attempt to terrify it. This works like a spell with the range 'evil eye' (see page 40). The target must make a Persistence test or be paralysed with terror for 3D6 Combat Rounds. Paralysed creatures are helpless. This ability does not cost any EP to use and takes a single Combat Action to perform with a skill of 95%.

A horned hag always carries a spinning-wheel. If she sets it up and begins spinning, she may drain 1D4 EP per minute to one sleeping or dominated creature anywhere within the same building. This is how horned hags draw their nourishment, and doing so allows her to regain a like quantity of lost hit points.

A horned hag who has been invited into a building by a creature with the authority to do so (such as the householder, or a guard), even if that invitation was made under duress or magical control, can attempt to put all the other creatures in the building into an enchanted sleep. Each creature in the building, other than horned hags and anyone they have dominated or terrified, must make a Persistence test or fall into a deep sleep. Sleeping creatures are helpless. Slapping or wounding awakens affected creatures but normal noise does not. This ability can be performed once per day.

CHARACTERISTICS

STR	3D6+6	(17)
CON	3D6	(11)
DEX	3D6+6	(17)
SIZ	3D6	(11)
INT	2D6+6	(13)
POW	3D6	(11)
CHA	3D6+3	(14)

Horned Hag Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Leg	—/5
4-6	Left Leg	—/5
7-9	Abdomen	—/6
10-12	Chest	—/7
13-15	Right Arm	—/4
16-18	Left Arm	—/4
19-20	Head	2/5

Weapons

Type	Weapon Skill	Damage / AP
Claw	45%	1D4
Butt	40%	1D6

Special Rules

Combat Actions: 3

Strike Rank: +15

Movement: 4m

Traits: Night Sight, Poison Immunity

Skills: Athletics 35%, Resilience 65%, Stealth 70%

Typical Armour: Horned Head (AP2, no Skill Penalty)

Hunt Spectre

Hunt spectres resemble ghostly animal-like creatures, glimpsed only barely. Most are roughly bat-shaped, with spectral wings, but their bodies usually look like a mixture of several much larger creatures – a boar with the head of an elk, for example. All have icy talons, which are visible even when one can hardly see the hunt spectre itself.

In fact, hunt spectres are indeed spirits of the dead – they are the ghosts of those thousands of animals whose images appear on the walls in the Cave of Beasts but who are no longer honoured by the Master of the Hunt, Slough Feg.



A druid or witch who has a special affinity for both Carnun and Danu (worships them with additional sacrifices) might be able to lay these spirits to rest by paying them the proper respects, but this is not something that might be attempted in combat – it would take a period of many days and a great deal of Earth Power. The ghosts are unable to pass through a *Protective Circle*.

The creatures have an aura of cold around them where they will inflict an additional 1D8 points of damage every time they strike an opponent.

Living creatures hit by a hunt spectre's incorporeal claw attack must make a Persistence test or be overcome by hallucinations of ghosts and spirits of hunted animals everywhere. A hallucinating creature will collapse on the floor of the cave, becoming colder and colder as the hunt spectres continue to rend it.

CHARACTERISTICS

STR	3D6	(11)
CON	3D6	(11)
DEX	3D6+6	(17)
SIZ	4D6	(14)
INT	1D6	(4)
POW	3D6	(11)
CHA	3D6	(11)

Hunt Spectre Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1–3	Right Rear Leg	—/5
4–6	Left Rear Leg	—/5
7–9	Hindquarters	—/6
10–12	Forequarters	—/6
13–15	Right Front Leg	—/5
16–18	Left Front Leg	—/5
19–20	Head	—/5

Weapons

Type	Weapon Skill	Damage / AP
Claws	35%	1D4 + 1D8

Special Rules

Combat Actions: 3

Strike Rank: +10

Movement: 3m, 6m when flying

Traits: Disease Immunity, Poison Immunity

Skills: Dodge 60%, Resilience 55%, Stealth 70%

Mud Snapper

Warped by the sourlands, mudsnappers live in the deep mire of the soured swamps and attack by snapping their jaws around prey and pulling it into the mud.

Mud snappers are similar in appearance to normal snapping turtles except they are slightly larger and have wider heads. The other distinguishing feature is that their eyes are located on fronts of their heads, instead of the sides.

If a mud snapper makes a successful attack, it can lock its powerful jaws on the opponent. The creature can continue to damage each subsequent round without making an attack roll. However, once a mud snapper locks onto an opponent, the animal is unable to use any Reactions. The locked jaw attack can be broken by a single blow that does more than 6 HP of damage to a single location or by beating the mud snapper in an opposed Athletics test.

If a mud snapper can successfully make a locking jaw attack when it is in mire over a metre deep, it can attempt to pull its opponent beneath the mud and drown him. At the beginning of a Combat Round following a successful attack, the snapper and the opponent make an opposed Athletics test to determine the outcome of this attack. If the opponent wins, he is able to maintain his balance but still takes normal damage for that round. Conversely, if the mud snapper wins, it pulls its prey beneath the mud and it begins to drown it, as per the suffocation rules (see *RuneQuest* page 91).

CHARACTERISTICS

STR	3D6+6	(17)
CON	3D6	(11)
DEX	3D6+3	(14)
SIZ	1D6+6	(10)
INT	4	(4)
POW	3D6	(11)
CHA	4	(4)

Mud Snapper Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1–3	Right Rear Leg	—/4
4–6	Left Rear Leg	—/4
7–9	Hindquarters	4/5
10–12	Forequarters	4/6
13–15	Right Front Leg	—/3
16–18	Left Front Leg	—/3
19–20	Head	—/4



Weapons

Type	Weapon Skill	Damage / AP
Bite	75%	1D6

Special Rules*Combat Actions:* 3*Strike Rank:* +9*Movement:* 2m*Traits:* Disease Immunity, Excellent Swimmer*Skills:* Athletics 65%, Dodge 65%, Resilience 40%, Stealth 80%*Typical Armour:* Shell (AP4 for forequarters and hindquarters, no Skill Penalty)**Nuckelavee**

The nuckelavee is a huge amphibious creature that can be found in any significant body of water, although they are most commonly seen in lakes where they congregate during their mating season once every few decades or so.

These creatures are not normally aggressive except when breeding and it is possible to tame them for use as mounts, although their pungent smell tends to make this a rare occurrence. Immensely strong, they are able to carry as much as a hairy one, except that they are able to do so both on water and on land.

They can be dangerous opponents due to their sheer size, although they will tend to be fairly cowardly and will retreat if injured unless their controller makes a successful Riding test. Fomorians consider the beast a delicacy, which explains its declining numbers in recent years.

CHARACTERISTICS

STR	10D6+30	(65)
CON	3D6+12	(23)
DEX	3D6	(11)
SIZ	5D6+20	(38)
INT	5	(5)
POW	3D6	(11)
CHA	5	(5)



Nuckelavee Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Hind Leg	2/13
4-6	Left Hind Leg	2/13
7-9	Hindquarters	2/14
10-12	Forequarters	2/14
13-15	Right Front Leg	2/13
16-18	Left Front Leg	2/13
19-20	Head	2/13

Weapons

Type	Weapon Skill	Damage / AP
Bite	55%	1D8 + 2D12

Special Rules

Combat Actions: 2

Strike Rank: +8

Movement: 5m

Traits: Excellent Swimmer

Skills: Athletics 50%, Dodge 20%, Resilience 65%, Survival 60%

Typical Armour: Hide (AP2, no Skill Penalty)

Sabre-tooths

Sabre-tooths resemble tigers or other big cats in form, but have minimal markings (their fur is typically a sandy colour all over) and have extremely powerful forequarters in comparison to other big cats, with less well-developed hindquarters. This makes them very strong, but slower than most other big cats, and has contributed to their quick and savage hunting style. Their most distinctive feature, though, is the pair of huge teeth that give them their name – great curved fangs, bigger than daggers and capable of inflicting the most devastating injuries. Though these fangs are enormously powerful weapons, they are far more brittle than smaller fangs, and older sabre-tooths often have one or both of their great teeth broken off.

Sabre-tooths are not so common as in former times, now that humanity and wild cats have spread over many of their old hunting grounds. To the south of the lands of the Drune Lords, though, they can still be found wild, and Skull-Swords and mercenaries alike are often sent to capture them for use as hunting animals, guards, or even pets.

Sabre-tooths prefer to stalk their prey, dropping from a hidden position atop a tree or rock and slaying their victims within instants. A large victim such as a hairy

one or bull will be attacked until the sabre-tooth causes a puncture (the target will bleed an additional HP per Combat Round from the punctured location until it falls unconscious and is killed by the Sabre Tooth - a successful Heal test at -40% will halt this bleeding) then the sabre-tooth will retreat until its victim bleeds to death. This allows them to avoid the risk of injury, since, although they are tough they must eat a fair amount to survive and any serious wound may impede their hunting ability to such a degree that they starve to death. In open combat with a determined and well-armed foe, the sabre-tooth will consider fleeing, particularly if it is injured. Domesticated sabre-tooths can be trained to fight almost to the death, since they are well aware that so long as their master is also alive they will be fed.

CHARACTERISTICS

STR	3D6+12 (23)
CON	3D6 (11)
DEX	3D6+6 (17)
SIZ	2D6+12 (19)
INT	5 (5)
POW	3D6 (11)
CHA	5 (5)

Sabre-tooth Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Hind Leg	2/6
4-6	Left Hind Leg	2/6
7-9	Hindquarters	2/7
10-12	Forequarters	2/7
13-15	Right Front Leg	2/6
16-18	Left Front Leg	2/6
19-20	Head	2/6

Weapons

Type	Weapon Skill	Damage / AP
Bite	55%	2D8
Claw	55%	1D6 + 1D8

Special Rules

Combat Actions: 3

Strike Rank: +10

Movement: 6m

Traits: Night Sight

Skills: Athletics 70%, Dodge 40%, Resilience 35%, Perception 55%, Stealth 60%, Survival 40%

Typical Armour: Hide (AP2, no Skill Penalty)



Serpent Demon

Serpent demons in their natural form appear like large, brightly coloured snakes, with markings in red, green, blue, orange, black and white. Their heads are a pale green, with wide, intelligent eyes, large fangs, and incongruous tufts of black hair.

Serpent demons feed on the very souls of their victims, sending them to the world of Hel, from which the serpent demons themselves originate.

In addition, serpent demons are always on the look out for strong, high-Earth Power victims to possess. A possessed form is not generally as physically powerful as the original serpent demon, but can be more useful when attempting to pass unnoticed or influence human affairs.

Serpent demons attempt to immobilise their foes first of all. They prefer to attack lone travellers, in which case a simple application of their dominating gaze power will usually be enough to make a victim quiescent, so they can simply drain his soul. If forced into contact with a group, they will typically bite and constrict one foe, dominate another, and spit venom at a third once the first is being constricted.

If the serpent demon's constriction attack hits, the victim is caught up in the serpent's coils. Each round, the python inflicts damage to the victim's chest location. Chest armour protects against this damage. In addition to the hit point damage caused by the constriction, the victim is unable to breathe and begins to suffocate (see the *RuneQuest* rulebook). Being constricted by a python counts as 'heavy' activity in determining how long the victim can hold its breath. The victim may make an opposed Athletics test each round to escape.

A serpent demon's who meets the eye of any humanoid may attempt to dominate it. This works like a spell with the range 'evil eye' (see page 40). The target must make a Persistence test or be dominated by the horned demon. The demon can control the humanoid's actions. The demon establishes a telepathic link with the subject's mind. If a common language is shared, the demon can generally force the subject to perform as the demon desires, within the limits of his abilities. If no common language is shared, the demon can



communicate only basic commands, such as ‘Come here’, ‘Go there’, ‘Fight’ and ‘Stand still’. The demon knows what the subject is experiencing but the demon does not receive direct sensory input from him. Subjects resist this control and those forced to take actions against their nature can make a new Persistence test with a +20% bonus to break free from the metal domination, depending on the type of action required. Obviously self-destructive orders are not carried out. Once control is established, the range at which it can be exercised is unlimited, as long as the demon and the subject are on the same plane. The demon need not see the subject to control it. *Protective Circle* or a similar spell can prevent the demon from exercising control or using the telepathic link while the subject is so warded, but it does not prevent the establishment of domination or dispel it. Only one subject may be dominated at a time. This ability does not cost any Earth Power points to use and takes a single Combat Action to perform with a skill of 95%.

The serpent demon may possess a humanoid creature’s body, mind and even its soul. The creature must be helpless or dominated. The serpent demon takes an entire Combat Round to make the possession attempt. The creature has a Persistence test (with a -40% penalty) to resist the possession. A Persistence test will prevent possession, as well as ending the effects of the dominating gaze if the creature was previously dominated. A failed Persistence test indicates that the serpent demon’s body fades away to foul-smelling dust and slime, but the serpent demon’s spirit inhabits the creature. The serpent demon may change forms at will between the creature and its own natural form, in a single Combat Action. While in the form of the creature, it retains its own Intelligence, Power and Charisma, skills and hit points, but gains the Strength, Dexterity, Constitution, Size and other physical attributes of the victim. Once a victim is possessed, there is no way to help him – his soul and mind are consumed the instant the serpent demon enters his body.

A helpless victim may be drained by the serpent demon. The victim may have been dominated by the serpent demon, or may have been asleep or otherwise helpless. Every hour of draining, the victim suffers a 1D6 penalty to every characteristic except size. A

victim reduced to 0 or below for any ability by soul drain remains alive for 3D6 minutes in agonising torment, their body a drained, skeletal husk, but still able to perceive every pain and even talk and stagger feebly. The lost characteristics are regained at the rate of one point per hour once the draining has stopped.

In desperation, a serpent demon can spit venom at another creature’s face. A success indicates the creature suffers the effects of the serpent demon’s poison and becomes blinded for 2D4 rounds. A successful Dodge test will enable a potential victim to escape the effects of the poison entirely.

CHARACTERISTICS

STR	4D6+6	(20)
CON	3D6	(11)
DEX	3D6+6	(17)
SIZ	2D6+6	(13)
INT	2D6+6	(13)
POW	3D6	(11)
CHA	3D6+6	(17)

Serpent Demon Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1–4	Tail	2/5
5–8	Abdomen	2/6
9–12	Chest	2/7
13–15	Right Arm	2/4
16–18	Left Arm	2/4
19–20	Head	2/5

Weapons

Type	Weapon Skill	Damage / AP
Bite	60%	2D4 + poison
Constrict	45%	1D8 + 1D4
Spit Venom	40%	Poison

Special Rules

Combat Actions: 3

Strike Rank: +13

Movement: 4m

Traits: Dark Sight, Night Sight

Typical Armour: Scales (AP2, no Skill Penalty)

Skills: Athletics 65%, Resilience 60%, Stealth 55%



Serpent Demon Venom**Type:** Ingested or smeared**Delay:** 1 Combat Rounds**Potency:** 60**Full Effect:** 1 hit point damage to all locations for each round of duration, -6 penalty to victim's CON**Duration:** 5D10 minutes**Shadowy Devourer**

Shadowy devourers are only around one metre in height, but their squat and muscular bodies are almost as wide as they are tall. They appear somewhat like fat, grey dwarves, with long pointed ears, blank grey eyes, and great gaping mouths filled with grey teeth. There is something insubstantial about them – if they attack as a group, it can be hard to distinguish where one ends and the next begins, and sometimes in the right light it seems one can see through them. Shadowy devourers live on the EI world of elemental creatures, along with elves and goblins. In their home it is thought that they prey upon every other living creature, and they are much the same when they are summoned to Tir Nan Og – unless the summoner can keep them with a constant supply of fresh meat (living or dead, it makes no difference), they are liable to turn on him and eat him.

Shadowy devourers attack without tactics in an all-devouring swarm. Like sharks, they will pause to feed on the first prey they find, which can make them inefficient fighters – quite often they will eat a helpless foe while his allies hack them to pieces, rather than concentrating on attacking the greatest threats.

CHARACTERISTICS

STR	3D6+3	(14)
CON	3D6	(11)
DEX	3D6+3	(14)
SIZ	2D6	(7)
INT	2D6	(7)
POW	3D6	(11)
CHA	3D6	(11)

Shadowy Devourer Hit Locations

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

Weapons

Type	Weapon Skill	Damage / AP
Bite	45%	1D4

Special Rules**Combat Actions:** 3**Strike Rank:** +10**Movement:** 4m**Traits:** Disease Immunity, Poison, Poison Immunity**Skills:** Athletics 45%, Resilience 55%, Stealth 50%**Shadowy Devourer Venom****Type:** Smeared**Delay:** 1D3 Hours**Potency:** 70**Full Effect:** -1D3 penalty to victim's POW, multiple bites can lead to multiple penalties. If POW is reduced to zero victim becomes comatose.**Duration:** 1D3 hours**Shoggey Beast**

Shoggey Beasts are men that have fallen under the curse of dark magic. They are shapechangers that are ferocious and bloodthirsty, hunting down all who stray into their territory. The shoggey beast only takes on shoggey form at midnight, appearing to be a normal member of its original human species during daylight hours and for the first part of the evening. The shoggey form is large and monstrous, and usually roughly humanoid, but the precise form is unique to each shoggey – usually it incorporates elements from several different animals, along with the occasional odd feature that looks like no earthly animal.



CHARACTERISTICS

STR	4D6	(14)
CON	4D6	(14)
DEX	3D6+3	(14)
SIZ	3D6+6	(17)
INT	2D6	(7)
POW	3D6	(11)
CHA	2D6	(7)

Shoggey Beast Hit Locations

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

Weapons

Type	Weapon Skill	Damage / AP
Bite	45%	1D4 + 1D4
Claw	55%	1D6 + 1D4



Special Rules

Combat Actions: 3

Strike Rank: +10

Movement: 4m

Traits: Night Sight

Typical Armour: Tough Hide (AP3, no Skill Penalty)

Skills: Athletics 65%, Resilience 70%, Perception 80%, Stealth 65%

Time Monster

Time monsters are vast, reptilian creatures originally from millions of years in the past, called into Tir Nan Og as a by-product of the Drones' draining of Earth Power from the land. They have since begun to live and breed in the Land of the Young, partly because few creatures native to the land can stand up to them in battle, and partly because the Drones consider them to be sacred beasts. Hunting them is forbidden on pain of death.

Time monsters are hungry almost all the time. For a time monster, attacking and eating are more or less the same thing – and they will happily eat anything, even creatures bigger than them.

Time Monsters use the same statistics as Allosaurs (see *RuneQuest Monsters*, Page 33).

Time Worm

Time worms are supernatural parasites, almost beyond human comprehension. They feed on living creatures, tearing them apart with their tentacled mouths. They exist only to feed. More or less at random, they wander the time streams to past and future, appearing out of 'wormholes.' Places of exceptionally high Earth Power seem to be easier for time worms to tunnel into.

Time Worms attack in a feeding frenzy, attempting to devour their foes as quickly as possible. They will only use their Time Bolt attack if somehow controlled and specifically made to do so.

A newborn time worm creates its own time energy from the highly nutritious yolk of its egg, much as other newborn creatures feed from their eggs. This allows it to grow enormously rapidly – effectively aging several years in a matter of seconds. Every minute of its existence, it grows by 1D6 size and strength. Each newborn time worm has enough time energy to



grow to adult size which takes it 10 minutes. Some time worms grow to an even more immense size, but fortunately these are extremely rare.

The Time Worm can unleash a time bolt costing 4 EP. This has no effect except on creatures unusually vulnerable to time attacks (Atlanteans, Rmoahals, and so on – see the Dinas Emrys chapter), who must make a Dodge test with a -20% penalty or immediately age 3D20 years. A successful Dodge test avoids the bolt entirely.

CHARACTERISTICS (New Born / Adult)

STR	1D6+6 / 11D6+6	(10/45)
CON	3D6+9 / 3D6+9	(20/20)
DEX	2D6+3 / 2D6+3	(10/10)
SIZ	1D6+6 / 11D6+6	(10/45)
INT	5 / 5	(5/5)
POW	3D6 / 3D6	(11/11)
CHA	5 / 5	(5/5)

Time Worm Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1–8	Tail	4/7 (new born) 4/14 (adult)
9–16	Body	4/8 (new born) 4/15 (adult)
17–20	Head	4/7 (new born) 4/14 (adult)

Weapons

Type	Weapon Skill	Damage / AP
Bite	50%	1D6 (new born) or 3D6 (adult)
Time Bolt	40%	Special

Special Rules

Combat Actions: 2

Strike Rank: +7

Movement: 6m

Skills: Athletics 35%, Resilience 45%

Typical Armour: Thick Hide (AP4, no Skill Penalty)

Titan

Centuries ago the titans were a noble race, as accomplished in philosophy and the arts as in matters of war. They ruled much of Tir Nan Og by a combination of superior physical power and tactical genius. As with most empires, they eventually sank into decadence and decay. Whether through in-breeding or a divine curse, today's titans are far less intelligent than their

ancestors were. Many of the tribes of the Earth Goddess hunt down and slay titans wherever they find them and even at best, a titan meeting a human can expect to be ridiculed and reviled. Often titans are barely even aware of such insults – they really are that stupid!

Superior Titans

There are a few enclaves of the more intelligent, ancient variety of titan still existing, either deep within the lands of the titans or in the most isolated regions of Tir Nan Og. Such titans, if they were ever encountered, could be considered identical to standard titans except as follows: INT 2D6+6, CHA 3D6+6, armed with huge flint great-axes and large javelins.

CHARACTERISTICS

STR	4D6+12 (26)
CON	3D6+9 (20)
DEX	2D6+3 (10)
SIZ	4D6+12 (26)
INT	2D6 (7)
POW	3D6 (11)
CHA	2D6 (7)

Titan Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1–3	Right Leg	2/10
4–6	Left Leg	2/10
7–9	Abdomen	2/11
10–12	Chest	2/12
13–15	Right Arm	2/9
16–18	Left Arm	2/9
19–20	Head	2/10

Weapons

Type	Weapon Skill	Damage / AP
Huge Club	80%	2D6 + 1D12
Huge Axe	80%	2D8 + 1D12
Large Javelin	55%	1D8 + 1D12

Special Rules

Combat Actions: 3

Strike Rank: +10

Movement: 6m

Skills: Athletics 44%, Lore (World) 20%, Resilience 65%, Perception 55%, Survival 40%

Typical Armour: Hide (AP2, no Skill Penalty)



Titan, Half

Very occasionally, a titan breeds with a human. Usually this is the result of rape. Rejected by titan society, half-titans can just barely pass as large, brutish humans, and tend to soon find a niche as enforcers or labourers among humans.

If anything, half-titans are even more stupid and ugly than titans. They tend to latch onto a particular character of the opposite sex, worshipping and adoring them, living only to serve them. Usually this will be the first reasonably attractive opposite-sex character who showed them any kindness, however minor.

CHARACTERISTICS

STR	3D6+6	(17)
CON	3D6+3	(14)
DEX	2D6+3	(10)
SIZ	3D6+6	(17)
INT	2D6	(7)
POW	3D6	(11)
CHA	2D6	(7)

Titan Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Leg	2/10
4-6	Left Leg	2/10
7-9	Abdomen	2/11
10-12	Chest	2/12
13-15	Right Arm	2/9
16-18	Left Arm	2/9
19-20	Head	2/10

Weapons

Type	Weapon Skill	Damage / AP
Club	60%	1D6 + 1D4
Great Axe	65%	2D6 + 2 + 1D4

Special Rules

Combat Actions: 2

Strike Rank: +8

Movement: 5m

Skills: Athletics 50%, Resilience 55%,
Perception 35%

Troll

Trolls are large, bulky-looking humanoids. Their skin is stony grey in colour, often as pale as that of a corpse but occasionally mid-grey or even almost black. The skin texture, too, is that of rough stone. Their faces are particularly ugly, with enormously long, stalactite-like noses, deep-set piggy eyes, and sometimes shaggy, unkempt black hair.

Trolls need little food to survive, being able to effectively hibernate in stone for long periods of time, drawing all their nourishment from the rock. However, they do very much enjoy all sorts of food and always emerge from hibernation very hungry. They can eat almost anything but have a distinct preference for human flesh, which they prize as a delicacy above all other foodstuffs. They wake at night, melding back to stone before dawn comes. Often they may remain hibernated for several weeks before waking for another night. At least part of each night awake will be spent in hunting.

Trolls are notoriously gullible, and many have been petrified by a persuasive and distracting victim simply talking to them until the first rays of the dawning sun strike them. Trolls favour war-clubs, which they can use either one-handed or two-handed.

A troll exposed to natural daylight must make a Resilience test at -40% each Combat Round or be turned instantly to stone. A troll petrified in this manner can never be returned to life – he might as well always have been a troll-shaped statue.

A troll can enter a piece of stone that is at least twice as big as it is. This is a slow process, and is akin to sleeping for humans. It takes at least five minutes to meld with stone. Every five minutes of trying to do so, the troll may make a Persistence test to successfully vanish into the stone. Once there, the troll heals rapidly (regaining 1 HP to every location per hour). It cannot be destroyed without destroying the entire piece of stone it has melded with (which is commonly the size of a mountain). A troll may carry whatever it is carrying into the stone with it, including willing or helpless creatures (unwilling creatures may make a Persistence test with a -20% penalty to remain unmelded). A troll may come out of the stone at any time, taking an entire Combat Round to fully emerge.



CHARACTERISTICS

STR	4D6+10	(24)
CON	3D6+9	(20)
DEX	3D6	(11)
SIZ	4D6+10	(24)
INT	1D6+3	(7)
POW	3D6	(11)
CHA	2D6	(7)

Troll Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Leg	2/9
4-6	Left Leg	2/9
7-9	Abdomen	2/10
10-12	Chest	2/11
13-15	Right Arm	2/8
16-18	Left Arm	2/8
19-20	Head	2/9

Weapons

Type	Weapon skill	Damage / AP
Club	40%	1D6+1D10 / 2
Claw	40%	1D6+1D10 / 2

Special Rules

Combat Actions: 2*Strike Rank:* +9*Movement:* 4m*Traits:* Formidable Natural Weapons, Night Sight*Skills:* Athletics 55%, Perception 45%, Persistence 65%, Resilience 45%, Survival 45%*Typical Armour:* Tough Hide (AP 2, no Skill Penalty)**Wodewose**

Wodewoses are around three metres tall but tend to hunch down, somewhat like apes. They are covered in green grass-like and leaf-like hair, and thick greenish-brown, bark-like skin. Wodewoses are primal defenders of the forest, though they spend most of their lives hidden deep within the woodland and are seen only rarely. They favour sacred groves as homes, but can be found in any forest, even on the edge of the Sourland.

Although wodewoses cannot speak, they are highly empathic and can easily understand the feelings and attitudes of other creatures which are attempting to communicate with them.

Wodewoses are relatively peaceful creatures, and will not attack without warning. A wodewose whose home forest is being damaged, or even severely disturbed, will first attempt to intimidate the intruders with a great howl and a display of its monstrous claws. If they do not immediately apologise and begin to leave the forest, the wodewose will become angered. An angered wodewose will attack the largest or strongest-looking opponent, striking it with both claws and attempting to get a good grip on it to simply rip it in two.

Whilst within the boundaries of its forest a Wodewose will heal one hit point in all locations every combat round. This regeneration will not work on damage caused by fire and will not repair a destroyed or severed location.

CHARACTERISTICS

STR	4D6+9	(23)
CON	3D6+6	(17)
DEX	2D6+3	(10)
SIZ	4D6+9	(23)
INT	3D6	(11)
POW	3D6	(11)
CHA	2D6	(7)

Wodewose Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Leg	4/10
4-6	Left Leg	4/10
7-9	Abdomen	4/11
10-12	Chest	4/12
13-15	Right Arm	4/9
16-18	Left Arm	4/9
19-20	Head	4/10

Weapons

Type	Weapon Skill	Damage / AP
Right Claw	65%	1D8 + 1D10
Left Claw	65%	1D8 + 1D10

Special Rules

Combat Actions: 2*Strike Rank:* +10*Movement:* 5m*Skills:* Athletics 54%, Resilience 55%, Perception 55%, Stealth 95%, Survival 40%*Traits:* Night Sight, Regeneration*Typical Armour:* Tough Hide (AP4, no Skill Penalty)

Campaigns in Tir Nan Og

As Games Master, you should find your *Sláine* campaigns flow fairly easily. In most cases the characters will have a tribe and kin to provide them with context and motivation, and to provide you with plenty of adventure hooks. Even if they are rootless wanderers or exiles (and it is quite a common direction for campaigns to take, even if everyone started in a tribe), simply wandering the Land of the Young and amassing Enech and wealth can be fulfilling in itself – and there is always that great barbarian dream of somehow happening to become King, perhaps just by being in the right place at the right time!

Seasonal Adventuring

It is vital in the *Sláine* for the Games Master to provide a sense that the characters are in a real, living, breathing world. One of the best and easiest ways to do this is by paying close attention to the passing of the seasons. These are closely tied in to both the religious activities of the tribes (see page 187) and the agricultural cycle of the year. As Tir Nan Og is not much past the last ice age, and under threat of another one from the Drones' magicks, it is unlikely that the group will get a great deal of adventuring done during the six months between Samhain and Beltaine each year – it is simply too cold to travel far, although the tail end of this period may be a good time to start long journeys, since you can be fairly sure it will only get warmer. Beltaine to Lughnasadh is a good time for noble warriors and other characters who are not tied to the land to go on adventures such as cattle raids, though most tribal warriors will be expected to assist with working in the fields, so the full force of the tribe is unlikely to be involved. After Lughnasadh, once the harvest is in, is the perfect time for more major battles.

This gives you a ready way to split your campaign into episodes. Start it with a great Beltaine festival,

and you know the group will have a good six months of adventuring before the year's end. If they head out on a cattle raid or other adventure, mark the aftermath of their triumph with the Lughnasadh celebrations. Another battle or adventure may take them almost up to Samhain – and if it does not, simply skip ahead, having nothing much occur other than the group working on their kins' lands or guarding their lord or King. Samhain is the time when supernatural and ghostly threats are at their most powerful, and so might be appropriate for another brief adventure or encounter. The occasional adventure at midwinter or Imbolg may also be an appropriate and interesting change of pace – in the classic Celtic story Gawain and the Green Knight, for example, it is at midwinter that the Green Knight arrives at Arthur's court with a challenge, and of course the knights are eager to listen to him since they have done little adventuring since the summer.

You will notice that running a campaign with attention to the seasons is easier than paying precise attention to dates, but also provides more atmosphere and a better sense of character progression. If the conclusion of each adventure or couple of adventures is marked by a great fire-festival, the group have a chance to relax and hook up with their tribe and kin a little – feasts are a great time to get a bit of politics going, or to have a new bard show up with a song that hints at the next adventure.

Winter (approximately Samhain to Beltaine)

It almost always seems to be cold – even for winter. Few normal animals are visible, as most are in hibernation, and those that are seen are lean and hungry. Humans, too, huddle and starve within their homes, other than a few bold adventurers and other misfits. Usually it is either snowing or giving the impression that snow is



just around the corner. Ice dragons, sabre-tooths and Fomorians may well be on the prowl. Little food is to be found in the wilds – if lucky, you may find the occasional winter berry or root, or unearth a skinny hare from its burrow.

Summer (approximately Beltaine to Lughnasadh)

At the start of the season, the first shoots of new growth sprout forth from the plants. Birdsong becomes a little more prevalent and more eager. The Sun God's warmth is once more apparent, after months of sickly pale light without heat. As the weather warms up and the last of the snows thaw, animals begin to breed and many of the old winter tracks become overgrown with vegetation. People start to travel again, plant their crops, and generally wake up much like the natural world all around them. Towards Lughnasadh, you will find folk at their happiest if it looks like the harvest will be a good one.

Autumn (approximately Lughnasadh to Samhain)

Though the bulk of the year's farming work is finished with the harvesting, there remains much to do. Preparing the food for storage, hunting a good stock of meat to salt for the winter, picking and drying fruit, selecting which of the herd to keep and which to slaughter at Samhain. Everywhere the reminders of the imminent barrenness of the Earth Goddess and weakness of the Sun God are apparent – the leaves



begin to yellow, then brown, then wither and fall, and the temperature is definitely getting colder.

Enech Revisited

There are two main uses for Enech in this game – as a tool to encourage good roleplaying, and as one of the direst threats in the Games Master's toolkit if characters are not fulfilling their obligations to their kins and tribes. In many respects these two uses are the same – Players are encouraged to get properly into character as full-blown inhabitants of Tir Nan Og, by both the rewards that come with high Enech, and the penalties that come with low Enech. As Games Master, you will need to remind Players of their characters' Enech – and thus their place in the world – almost every time they interact with another creature in any way. Sooner or later, they will be thinking of Enech first and foremost, and much of their roleplaying will be concerned with honour and reputation, rather than merely killing monsters and amassing treasure. The first time a Player gives away an item of value simply because it is appropriate for his character to do so, rather than because he is looking forward to being rewarded with bonus Enech, you know you are doing something right.

A brief glance at the Enech table in Chapter 1 will make it clear that it is far easier to lose Enech than to gain it – especially if it is not maintained through the liberal spreading of wealth and other goods. Samhain, of course, is the time for working out most of the factors which may deplete Enech – a lack of generosity over the previous year, or failure to make due sacrifices to the gods, or failure to pay enough bards to sing your praises. Anyone who does not manage to fulfil one or more of the above may find that by the end of winter, they are simply not quite as renowned as they once were – last year's warrior, forgotten by the bards and the people. This timing is deliberate – it is convenient to do all the 'book-keeping' at the end of the adventuring year, and in addition Samhain is a major festival which might give characters who have been lax at maintaining Enech one last chance to redeem themselves.

Magic Items

In the *Sláine* magic items are no mere trinkets and baubles to collect. Magic is a part of everyday life, and some might say that any sword is magical – certainly



a weapon that has been named with the *Poetic Naming* spell, or blessed with a *Blade Blessing*, is classed as an enchanted weapon, as are all tathlums and gae bolgas. These are of use in attacking certain magical creatures.

As for other magic items of whatever sort, the Games Master should create them as necessary to the story. In many cases a magic item is more something to be feared than fought for – who know what side-effects it may have, or whether the original creator is still in control of it? Certainly each item will be unique, with secrets that must be puzzled out or learnt from old legends and songs. There are no magic item shops in Tir Nan Og – how could you put a monetary value on such a thing? Acquiring any item other than a druid's egg or weirdstone is likely to involve at least one lengthy quest – sometimes two or more, with perhaps a quest to find out where the item is, then another to track down the one person who can lead you there, then another to get the item itself!

Religion Revisited

As well as offering the faint possibility of death-defying divine intervention and the occasional special spell, worshipping a particular god can give other benefits, as hinted at in the Religion chapter. This might be secret and special knowledge for some gods (always at the Games Master's discretion), or the occasional bonus to a Skill test or attack roll. Most of the gods who give such bonuses do so only when their worshipper has already rolled an exceptional success. The attention of a deity turns such a success into a perfect one – killing an opponent with one blow, or crafting an incredible and magical object, or something similar. Such attention will rarely occur more than once per year for each god the character worships, and only of course for gods he worships by sacrificing specifically to them.

Geases Revisited

One of your tasks as Games Master is to ensure that characters break their geases. As with any other aspect of gaming, it is important not to allow this to turn into a contest between Games Master and Players. However, all the Celtic myths that feature geases seem to involve the protagonists virtually forced to break their geases at some point, by implacable forces of destiny. This is why we describe geases as something between a curse, an obligation, and a destiny. Sooner

or later, almost every hero of note gets to turn his geas into a weird – whether or not he survives this process is another matter. So, once characters start to become (in)famous and powerful, you should start to make a serious effort to have their foes trick them into breaking their geases, or simply put them into difficult situations which force them to either break their geases or suffer other unpleasant consequences. This is particularly good if one of your Players has chosen a geas he thinks will be easy enough to handle, and has never really been bothered by it till you throw him into a situation that really makes him think about breaking it – or better, makes him break it without even realising. For example, a geas never to eat meat or fish, or drink mead or ale, may seem easy enough to deal with – but if the character is offered something he can't eat during a first meeting with a powerful lord or king, does he snub hospitality and refuse the meal, or break his geas? The former may easily lead to an honour duel or even a full-scale war between the two tribes, depending on the importance of the character with the geas.

It is even easier to engineer situations like this for characters who have two or more geases – often it will be possible to force them to break one geas or the other. Again, this will not be cruel or arbitrary on your part – all you are doing is helping them towards their ultimate destiny, and though the consequences may be unpleasant, they can make excellent adventure hooks and provide some great roleplaying opportunities.

Character Death

There is no *resurrection* spell in the *Sláine* Tir Nan Og is a harsh and dangerous place, and if you play strictly by the rules of the *RuneQuest* System death will be commonplace, even for characters. This can make for a very enjoyable game, if the Players are up for it – a character dying an honourable and noble death can be a fulfilling experience, particularly if the moment is right. On the other hand this game is not about dying futile deaths, and as with any other roleplaying game the Games Master should feel free to fudge the numbers a little to prevent a mighty warrior being killed by a lucky goblin.

Despite the lack of *resurrection* magic, there are one or two ways a dead character might be brought back to life. One is the artefact known as the Cauldron of Blood, which usually raises those placed in it as half-



dead. At the discretion of the Games Master, though, it will raise particularly honourable and powerful characters back to their full, original selves.

The other, riskier method may not even be possible. Almost every mythology has a tale of someone who journeys to the Land of the Dead to bring back a fallen comrade, relative or lover, either successfully or not. This, again, is entirely at the Games Master's discretion – but if ever a Player or group decide they will give it a try, come up with a suitable plan, and make the attempt, you should certainly consider allowing them to rescue their comrade – in exchange for some hefty Major Geases for everyone involved, and the stern recommendation never to try anything like that again.

Of course, a character that dies in the Sourland will never even make it to the Land of the Dead – he is trapped forever among the half-dead.

Types of Campaign

Many different types of campaign are possible within Sláine's world. We have listed some of the most common here, but of course you may well find you prefer to play something different, or you may start one of these campaigns only to have it mutate into something else.

Warrior Campaign

By far the easiest campaign to run is the warrior campaign – all the characters are either noble warriors or tribal warriors from one tribe, and spend their time defending that tribe from anything that threatens it, as well as going out and performing various missions for the tribe. Such a campaign works best with either all human characters, all human except for one warped one, or for a more extreme (but possibly short) game, all warped ones. Enech will usually be a paramount concern, and the characters will be constantly competing with one another to demonstrate their honour.

A variant on the warrior campaign has the warriors assigned to protect and work for another Player Character – perhaps a minor noble, or a druid or witch, or some other character of importance. In effect you have a warband centred around a particular task or agenda. In some ways this may feel like a more focused version of the wanderers and vagabonds campaign (below), since the group will often be required to trek all over Tir Nan Og to fulfil their leader's aims.

Kin Campaign

In this campaign, the Players generate characters who are closely related to one another – often a band of brothers and sisters works well, perhaps with the occasional cousin or close foster-brother. All will usually be human but, as with the warrior campaign, you may allow one or more warped one characters. A variety of character classes usually works best. The kin is the focus of the campaign, and the characters may spend a fair bit of time on family business of one kind or another – not necessarily farming, but also carrying out blood-feuds on rival kins, negotiating alliances or attempting to make the kin richer or more important to the tribe.

Wanderers and Vagabonds Campaign

This is very much the traditional fantasy roleplaying campaign, and it certainly fits the Sláine game well. Players have a more-or-less free hand creating characters, though if you wish to run a relatively low-key campaign you may restrict them to a maximum of one warped one, one dwarf, and one sorcerer (either witch or druid – witches are usually better for this kind of game). They travel the Land of the Young, getting into trouble, fleeing town, robbing tombs, slaying monsters and the like. Enech is probably not too crucial to most of the group, though warriors may well be attempting to rebuild their Enech after being exiled from tribe or kin – this can be an interesting character to play.



HERD DUTY

Background

Although set in a village within the Fir Domain, this scenario can be placed anywhere in Tir Nan Og and is designed as a simple introductory adventure for starting characters. The main protagonists come from a nearby settlement that has a traditional rivalry with that of the Player Characters and as such can be placed anywhere.

The characters live in the village of Baileoisin (Bally-u-sheen), close to the eastern borders of the lands of the Fir Domain. Their village has to deal with threats such as the occasional titan, the Fir Bolg and Midgard skyblades fairly frequently, as well as the occasional skirmish with nearby villages.

As responsible members of their community the Player Characters are required to fulfil certain duties, one of which is to act as guards from time to time for the animal herds. Although not expected to drive off powerful groups they are expected to slay any dangerous predators and drive off small bands of opportunistic raiders that might attempt to pick off stragglers from the herds. On this occasion a group of young warriors from the nearby village of Cill Dara have decided to prove their worth by stealing the entire herd, it is up to the Player Characters to prevent this.

Day One

Today you have been given your chores by Oscur the Steady, one of the foremost warriors in the village. You are to drive the village animals to the north meadow and watch over them; the assorted crowd of swine, cattle and sheep is your responsibility. The chief herdsman, Naal, is away driving the village's surplus cattle to Gorias to trade them. As a result his deputy Darragh is in charge with looking after the wellbeing of the remainder of the herd, whilst you guard it from foes. For the next few days Darragh, a couple of young herders and you are responsible for much of the village's wealth. It is a position of responsibility.

The animals know their way to the fields and lead the way, not causing any trouble. This is more than can be said for the two youngsters with you, Coilm and Rónán, who prove that they are a pair of annoying brats until you thump them. The swine go to the stream on the north side of the meadow where there are plentiful fallen acorns and good roots and tubers for them to find, whilst the sheep and cattle gorge themselves on the rich grass. It looks to be an exciting day watching the animals eat and drink and eat and drink and eat and drink.



Nothing of consequence will occur for the first few hours. The herders will make sure the animals are not going to do anything stupid and will then lie back and enjoy the day. The characters, on the other hand, should post guards; if they fail to do so and follow the herders' example then they are going to be at a disadvantage when the first attack comes.

The Scouting Party

As long as the party have guards posted and remain relatively alert they can make Perception tests to spot the raiders' scouts, Cormac and Lorcán, hiding behind a substantial bramble bush. A successful Perception test allows the character to realise someone or something is hiding behind the bush, a critical success allows them to realise that there are two people behind it. If they think to check the party will realise that neither Coilm and Rónán can be seen (although they are just checking up on some animals it is possible that the figures hiding behind the bush will be discounted as merely the two boys up to mischief). A failed test means that the first they will know will be a brief flurry of missiles before the pair race away, using their head start to escape to safety.

The party should give chase to the scouts once they have been discovered, using opposed Athletics tests to see if they catch up with their tormentors. If the characters win two more opposed tests than the raiders they will catch up to Lorcán, if the raiders' win two more opposed tests they will escape to plague the party later. The chase should continue until such time as the thieves escape or are caught.

Lorcán will not leave Cormac behind, however the latter will not hesitate to leave a slow footed companion to his fate if he can escape. If it appears that they are about to get caught Cormac will tell his companion to hold them off whilst he gets help, and the none-too-bright Lorcán will do just that, whilst Cormac should successfully flee to safety.

If captured Lorcán will be very uncooperative, and will not state what he is doing on the village's land or why he attacked the party. Due to his young age (and assuming no one suffered any major injury in the skirmish) Darragh will advise to let the youth go, after some suitably muscular chastisement - with any beating handed out will leave Lorcán unable to participate in the main attack the following day.



It is possible that they characters manage to run down both youths. If they are captured and beaten neither will participate in the main raid, but they will also not inform anyone of their plans. If they are killed in a fight then this would be considered acceptable, however if killed once they have surrendered this will be frowned upon, even ending up with a loss of enech for the character deemed most responsible for this act. At the very least such punishment of trespassers should only be meted out by the village chieftain and is not the prerogative of low ranking warriors (the Player Characters).

Day Two

After yesterday's excitement you quite look forward to the day's tasks as you can re-enact the encounter and practice for another routing of obviously hostile spies. Even the idiocies of Coilm and Rónán fail to annoy you the way they usually do. You have now tasted action and are eager for more!

Several hours of intense boredom later you have come back down to earth. It looks as if nothing is going to happen...

At this point have the party make their plans. If they patrol their area they gain a +20% bonus to their Perception tests below. If they merely post guards then they receive no bonus, if they slack off their duties and just lounge around they will not gain any roll at all, avoiding the sabre-tooth encounter entirely. However, in this case, they will be successfully attacked from ambush by the raiders (with possibly fatal consequence); with the raiders able to shoot off a couple of volleys of missiles before the party will be able to react.



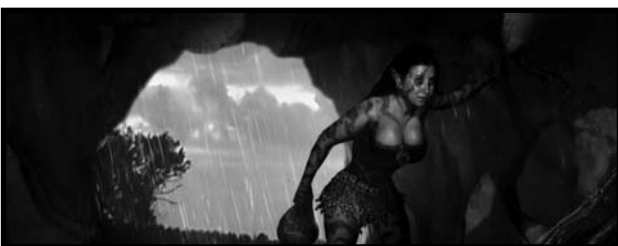
Near to where the animals graze by the stream there is some fairly fresh sabre-tooth spoor, less than a day old, probably from the night before. This is part of a ruse to draw away any guards protecting the herd so that they will face a dangerous carnivore rather than protect the herd from the real threat of the raiders. A successful Perception test will discover the dung by the banks of the stream, and an easy Tracking roll (with a +20% bonus) will show that the animal headed off into the hills. The trail has been deliberately made easy to follow by Dongall, one of the youths. A critical tracking roll will allow a Player Character to realise that there is something not quite right, but they will not be able to tell exactly what.

If asked his opinion Darragh will state that a sabre-tooth in the area is bad news and if it has been eyeing up the herd then the village could lose a lot of animals to it as they are cunning hunters. If the Player Characters were to track it down to its lair and slay it this would be a good deed for the village and a brave thing to do (the sabre-tooth is a dangerous foe).

It is easy to track the beast, even characters without the tracking skill have a 20% chance to follow the trail; Dongall has done his job well.

Eventually the trail leads to a small valley where the beast lairs in a small cave. The animal is asleep during the day and is a little way into the cavern, the best way to fight it is to smoke it out (there are plenty of dried bushes and wood in the valley), any fire lit at the mouth of the cave will cause the beast to emerge within twenty minutes, it will be both angry and afraid, a dangerous combination.

Should the party decide to enter the lair they gain a +20% bonus to any Stealth rolls they make due to the sabre-tooth being asleep. A failure indicates that the creature awakens before the characters can get close enough to get in a surprise attack with missile weapons



when the cave opens up a little further in. If they wish to sneak up on the sabre-tooth in order to get a round of surprise close combat attacks everyone trying to do so must make an opposed Stealth test (with no bonus) against the predator's Perception test, and they all must win this test, if the sabre-tooth manages to win a single opposed test then he will quickly awaken and engage the party in combat.

It is entirely possible that the party do not chase off after the sabre-tooth, feeling that after the previous day's encounter that something is amiss. This is fine; it merely means that they are able to fight the raiders when they attack, rather than having to chase them down in order to recover the herds. Of course, once they have dealt with the raiders they may be asked to track down the sabre-tooth in any case.

Meanwhile...

Whilst the party is off hunting down the sabre-tooth the raiders will strike, quickly knocking Darragh unconscious and beating up Rónán when he attempts to run off to warn the village and is run down. The first the party should be aware of the attack is when an injured Cormac, with his arm broken by a slingshot, staggers towards them on the path to the sabre-tooth's lair. He will quickly tell them that the herds were attacked by raiders and both Donnagh and Rónán are hurt, possibly even dead.

The chase will now be on.

Tracking the Raiders

If any of the party is badly injured they will be met at the meadow by Maeve prior to chasing the rustlers. Maeve is a witch and a healer who will use her potions to cure them of some of their injuries (halving the damage taken to any two locations for every character), if asked she will say she had a premonition that she needed to be at the meadow at this time.

Fortunately for the party following the trail of several hundred cattle, sheep and pigs being driven through woods towards the village of Cill Dara is possibly the easiest job in the world. If they rush onwards they should have no problem catching the thieves.

If the party just blunder on they will catch the raiders in short order, being able to engage them in a straight fight. The youths are not particularly good warriors, but



there are enough of them to cause problems. They will initially be fairly spread out whilst herding the cattle away, but will rush to each others aid (except, perhaps, for the sneaky Athdar, if it appears his followers are being thrashed and there is an opportunity for him to sneak off, he will do so).

The party could be more circumspect and move ahead of the raiders and set up an ambush (which would also have the benefit of causing the stolen animals to be driven back towards Baileoisin). They would receive a +20% bonus to any Stealth tests for setting up the ambush as the thieves have to keep an eye on their charges and can not be on the look out for trouble all of the time.

Success

If the party manage to defeat the raiders they will probably have some prisoners and will have to drive the animals back home. Here they will be treated as warriors who have done their duty and a small feast will be held in their honour. Any warrior who is feted by other members of the party as being particularly brave will gain a point of enech, as will the warrior who inflicted the killing blow upon the sabre-tooth. As for the prisoners...their kin in Cill Dara will pay for their release, but not that much (after all the raiders were not that highly thought of by their elders) - a few scrawny cattle and sheep will be added to the Baileoisin's herds.



Failure

The village faces serious hardship if, by the incompetence of the party, the raiders escape with the herd. As a result a major raid will be launched against Cill Dara to recover the lost cattle, and the Player Characters will be expected to play their part.

Roster

Sabre-tooth

A young male that has recently entered the area to set up his own territory, he was seen by Athdar, who decided he could use it to gain great prestige amongst his village.

Characteristics: STR 20, CON 9, DEX 16, SIZ 16, INT 5, POW 12, CHA 5

CA: 3; **DM:** +1D6; **SR:** +10; **Move:** 6m; **EP:** 12

Skills: Athletics 65%, Perception 60%, Resilience 55%, Tracking 40%

Atk: Bite 50%, 1D8+1D6 damage

Claw 45%, 1D6+1D6 damage

Armour: Hide (AP2, no Skill Penalty)

Sabre-tooth

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Hind Leg	2/5
4-6	Left Hind Leg	2/5
7-9	Hindquarters	2/7
10-12	Forequarters	2/7
13-15	Right Front Leg	2/5
16-18	Left Front Leg	2/5
19-20	Head	2/7

The Raiders

The raiders are an assorted group of individuals who are on the fringes of their village's society. Most are either looked down upon due to their previous poor character, actions or birth and are barely tolerated. As a group they hope that this daring raid will get them the respect they crave (and not a little personal wealth as well); if all goes well for them the rewards will be far more than the animals they return with. For their leader Athdar it would even cause some in the village to begin to talk of him as a possible future headman rather than merely a disappointment for his family.



Athdar

Athdar is the nominal leader of the group by virtue of being the youngest son of Cill Dara's current chieftain. Not that well thought of and not particularly brave, he hopes that this exploit will raise his worth in the eyes of his father.

Athdar

Characteristics: STR 12, CON 16, DEX 11, SIZ 13, INT 16, POW 10, CHA 14

CA: 2; **DM:** +0; **SR:** +13; **Move:** 4m; **EP:** 12

Skills: Athletics 65%, Perception 35%, Sleight 35%, Tracking 40%

Atk: War Sword 45%, 1D8 damage / AP 4

Target Shield 55%, 1D6 damage / AP 8

Armour: Leather, helmet (10% Skill Penalty)

Ransom: 4 Cattle

Athdar

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

Dongall

A competent young man, Dongall is the son of a freed slave. His background conspires against him and he is forced to accompany other youths from the village that are seen as of low status.

Dongall

Characteristics: STR 13, CON 14, DEX 11, SIZ 14, INT 17, POW 15, CHA 12

CA: 2; **DM:** +1D2; **SR:** +14; **Move:** 4m; **EP:** 15

Skills: Athletics 35%, Perception 65%, Persistence 40%, Resilience 45%, Tracking 70%

Atk: Shortsword 65%, 1D6+1D2 damage / AP 2

Longspear 55%, 1D10+1D2 damage / AP 2

Armour: None

Ransom: 1 Pig

Dongall

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Leg	0/6
4-6	Left Leg	0/6
7-9	Abdomen	0/7
10-12	Chest	0/8
13-15	Right Arm	0/5
16-18	Left Arm	0/5
19-20	Head	0/6

Cormac

A sneak and coward, regarded poorly by his companions and all within the village. A promising career of banditry awaits him, as will be exiled from the village sooner or later for some misdeed.

Cormac

Characteristics: STR 9, CON 13, DEX 15, SIZ 12, INT 15, POW 12, CHA 7

CA: 3; **DM:** +0; **SR:** +15; **Move:** 4m; **EP:** 12

Skills: Athletics 50%, Perception 45%, Persistence 40%, Resilience 45%, Sleight 55%, Stealth 60%

Atk: Shortsword 40%, 1D6 damage / AP 3

Shortbow 55%, 1D8 damage / AP 2

Armour: Unhygienic leather, stolen ancient helmet (15% Skill Penalty)

Ransom: None

Cormac

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Leg	2/5
4-6	Left Leg	2/5
7-9	Abdomen	2/6
10-12	Chest	2/7
13-15	Right Arm	2/4
16-18	Left Arm	2/4
19-20	Head	3/5



Lorcán

A strong warrior, but none too bright, Lorcán has always found himself in trouble by following the ‘wrong crowd’ although his bravery and strength means he is better regarded in Cill Dara than most of the gang.

Lorcán

Characteristics: STR 16, CON 17, DEX 11, SIZ 16, INT 8, POW 8, CHA 8

CA: 2; **DM:** +1D4; **SR:** +9; **Move:** 4m; **EP:** 8

Skills: Athletics 60%, Perception 30%, Persistence 45%, Resilience 60%, Stealth 35%

Atk: Club 60%, 1D6+1D4 damage / AP 2

Javelin 35%, 1D6+1D4 damage / AP 1

Armour: None

Ransom: 1 Cattle

Lorcán

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1–3	Right Leg	0/7
4–6	Left Leg	0/7
7–9	Abdomen	0/8
10–12	Chest	0/9
13–15	Right Arm	0/6
16–18	Left Arm	0/6
19–20	Head	0/7

Baillidh and Uchdryd

These two young twins have always managed to get themselves into trouble, but are seen as headstrong rather than disliked by other villagers. They are inexperienced but brave, and follow Athdar as he is the closest to a real warband leader of any in the group.

Baillidh and Uchdryd

Characteristics: STR 12, CON 15, DEX 14, SIZ 12, INT 13, POW 15, CHA 9

CA: 3; **DM:** +0; **SR:** +13; **Move:** 4m; **EP:** 15

Skills: Athletics 45%, Perception 35%, Persistence 40%, Resilience 55%

Atk: Shortspear 45%, 1D6 damage / AP 2

Target Shield 35%, 1D6 damage / AP 8

Armour: None

Ransom: 2 Sheep

Baillidh and Uchdryd

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1–3	Right Leg	0/6
4–6	Left Leg	0/6
7–9	Abdomen	0/7
10–12	Chest	0/8
13–15	Right Arm	0/5
16–18	Left Arm	0/5
19–20	Head	0/6

Mibon and Iomar

Slightly older youths who have a poor reputation and are very close to being exiled. They are not much better skilled than younger members of the gang, despite their age, being too lazy to improve themselves when the opportunity has arisen in the past. Utterly untrustworthy they each consider the other their best friend but would not hesitate to desert this ‘friend’ if the going got too tough. This is not the first foray into banditry for either of them.

Mibon and Iomar

Characteristics: STR 13, CON 13, DEX 12, SIZ 13, INT 10, POW 10, CHA 9

CA: 2; **DM:** +1D2; **SR:** +11; **Move:** 4m; **EP:** 10

Skills: Athletics 40%, Perception 30%, Persistence 40%, Resilience 40%, Sleight 30%, Stealth 30%

Atk: Shortsword 50%, 1D6+1D2 damage / AP 3

Javelin 35%, 1D6+1D4 damage / AP 1

Armour: Leather strapping, poor condition helmet (9% Skill Penalty)

Ransom: None

Mibon and Iomar

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



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(Character Name)

Played By:

Background:

Profession:

Race:

Legendary Abilities:

Characteristic	Base	Current
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Strength

Constitution

Dexterity

Size

Intelligence

Power

Charisma

Chech

D20	Hit Location	AP	HP
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1-3 Right Leg

4-6 Left Leg

7-9 Abdomen

10-12 Chest

13-15 Right Arm

16-18 Left Arm

19-20 Head

Combat Actions:

Damage Modifier:

Hero Points:

Arch Power Points:

Movement:

Strike Rank:

Favoured Close Combat Weapons

Weapon	Skill	Damage	AP/HP	Special
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Favoured Ranged Weapons

Weapon	Skill	Damage	Range	Load	AP/HP
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Traits:

Item	Location	ENC	ap/hp	Notes

Weapon	Location	Skill	Damage	Str/Dex	ENC	ap/hp	Notes

Ranged Weapon	Location	Skill	Damage	Str/Dex	Range	Load	ENC	ap/hp	Notes

Wealth

Encumbrance

Total ENC =

Overload
Limit = = $\frac{STR}{\square} + \frac{SIZ}{\square}$

Max.
Load = = $(\frac{STR}{\square} + \frac{SIZ}{\square}) \times 2$

