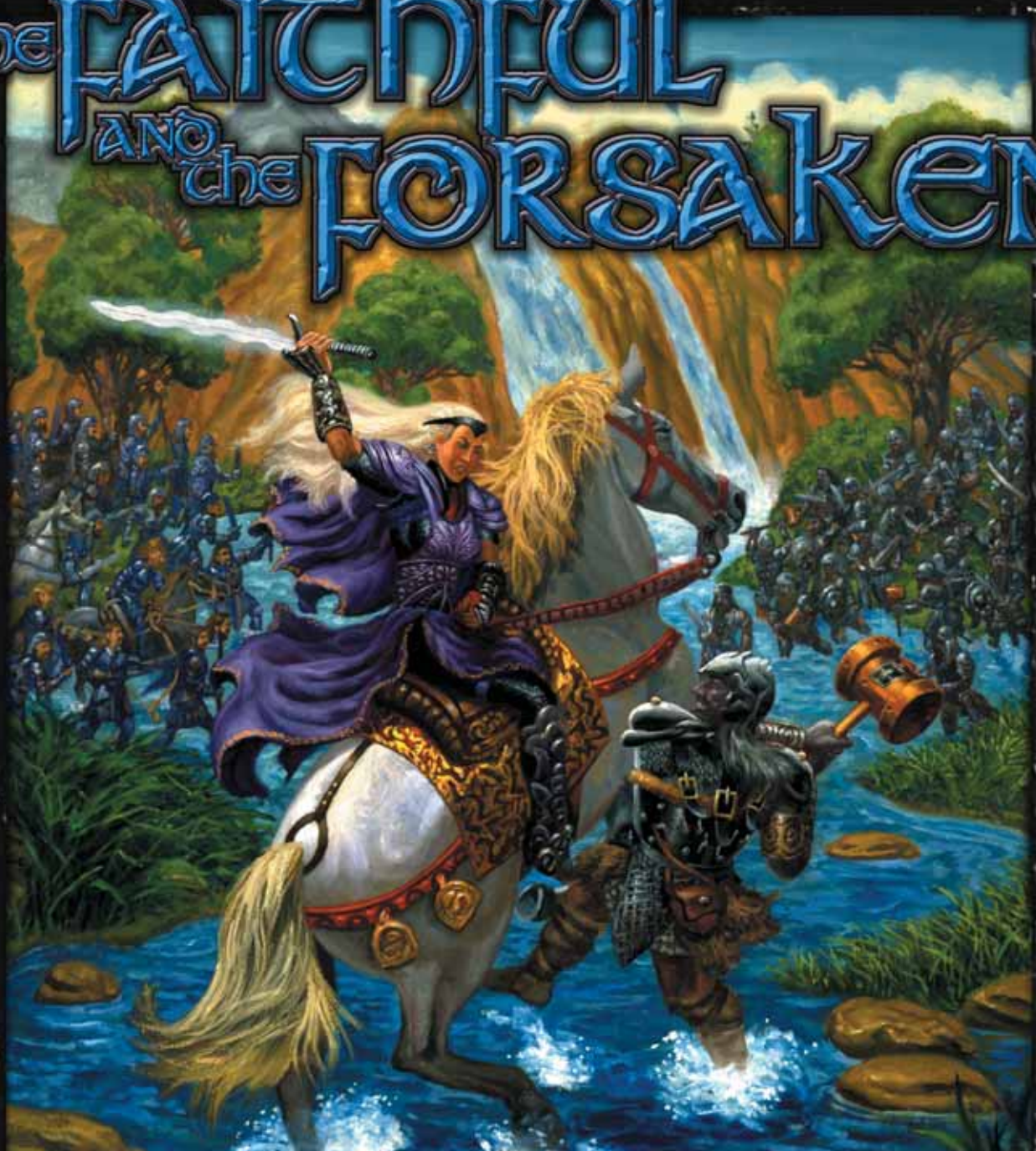


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the FAITHFUL AND the FORSAKEN

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the FAITHFUL AND the FORSAKEN

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Introduction

Since the Scarred Lands campaign setting was first presented to the gaming public, the charduni dwarves and the forsaken elves have held enormous fascination for d20 players and GMs. Dark shadows of their noble dwarven cousins, the charduni are a race of warriors, bent on conquest and determined to regain their god's favor. Likewise, the fatalistic and amoral forsaken elves present a wicked reflection of the kindly, ethereal high elves of traditional fantasy games.

Both races captured the imagination of gamers everywhere. Many questions arose — where was Chorach? Who was the One in White? What was the identity of the lost elf god? Would he ever return, and if so how would such an event affect the forsaken elves?

The answers lie in this book. The elves are in turmoil, for the lost god Jandaveos has indeed returned, and the forsaken elves are forsaken no longer. The charduni, on the other hand, have sunk into a

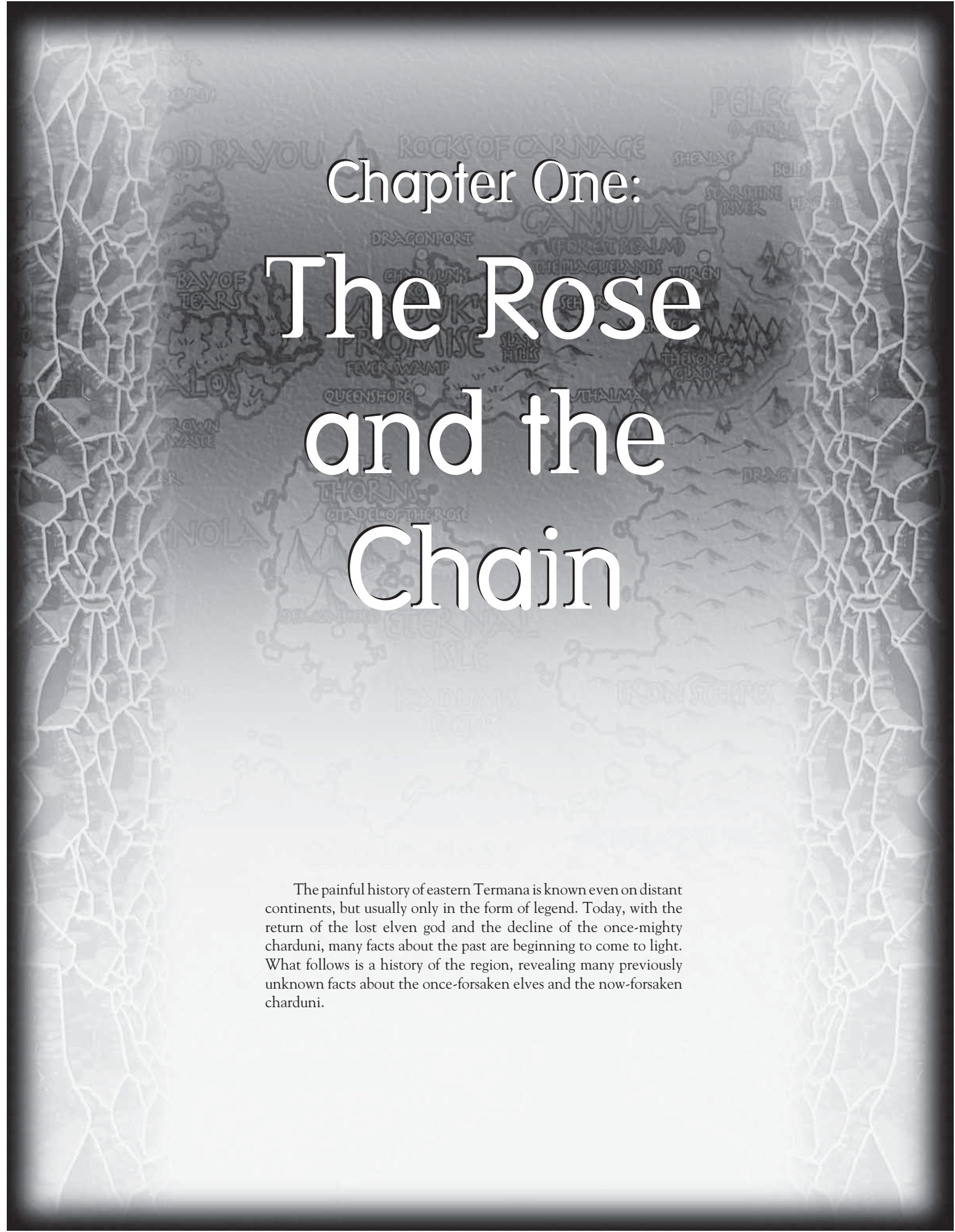
grim determination to recapture ancient glories. With this book, gamers can experience this new world and see firsthand what happens when the roles of the faithful and the forsaken are reversed.

Join me and writers Ben and Rhiannon in pulling aside the curtain of secrecy and mystery and take a long look at this distant and strange realm, where gods die and are reborn, and empires rise only to crumble.

In closing, I wish to note that **The Faithful and the Forsaken** represents my last project as the developer for the Scarred Lands setting. Working with such skilled writers, editors and developers has been a memorable and thoroughly enjoyable experience. I wish to thank all those who have helped create the Scarred Lands, and also thank the fans and readers who have made the last three years so exciting and gratifying. As I return to the role of writer, I leave the Scarred Lands in the capable hands of Joseph D. Carriker, Jr., whom I am pleased to call colleague and friend.

Best wishes to all.

Anthony Pryor
Scarred Lands Developer



Chapter One:

The Rose and the Chain

The painful history of eastern Termana is known even on distant continents, but usually only in the form of legend. Today, with the return of the lost elven god and the decline of the once-mighty charduni, many facts about the past are beginning to come to light. What follows is a history of the region, revealing many previously unknown facts about the once-forsaken elves and the now-forsaken charduni.

The History of the Rose

As with most of the Scarred Land's races, the elves were created by the titans, those beings of immeasurable size, power and above all fickleness, which first moved them to create and later attempt to destroy their works. Unlike many of their shorter-lived cousins, however, the elves are ancient in the extreme. Though humans are often hailed as the most adaptable of all races, the elves make a good claim on that distinction as well. Theirs is a story of repeated glory and despair, and of shifting loyalties born not of treachery but the relentless will to survive. Perhaps this is why few can match the elves' arrogance, and perhaps why it isn't arrogance at all.

The First Dynasty (? to -22,000 OC)

If no evidence survives as to the nature of civilization in the murk of prehistory, scant more describes what elven scholars term the First Dynasty. Widely derided by non-elves as speculation and self-aggrandizement, the First Dynasty was supposedly an era of philosopher-monarchs. They were distinguished not so much for their rule but for the advances in civilization that they brought into being. Seven in all, these kings and queens are collectively named the August, and for much of the elves' early history they served as the models by which the elves gauged themselves. Though the reverence for these essentially mythical (rather than historical) figures has waned in the modern era, all but the most ignorant (or merely irreverent) high elf is unable to recite their names and deeds in full.

Beyond the overwhelming presence of its rulers, the First Dynasty was a formative era when magic began to permeate all aspects of elven life. It was at this time that the elves began to worship a new patron, the titan "Ma-Thos" (almost certainly an archaic form of Mesos, the titan of magic and Sire of Sorcery). The elves learned with fantastic speed the various arcane arts. So adroit was their skill that it is said these early spellcasters were privy to more than the eight modern magical schools.

For all their magical glory, however, the August and their subjects were not impregnable to corruption. Whether this was due to foul play on the part some of the titans (such as Chern, the lord of disease) or merely the result of inherent flaws in the elven race, the First Dynasty was betrayed by its seventh king, the infamous Essu.

Essu's excesses were legendary, as was his penchant for driving others toward similar vice. He is credited with such acts as the destruction of the royal libraries and the squandering of generations of history and lore. High elves would thereafter remember Essu as a villain, to the point where some eras struck his name from virtually all texts. Yet likewise in other times (the modern age among them) Essu is remembered as the Seventh August, no less a paragon despite all his "evil." Such devotees argue that Essu is a reminder that nothing is bereft of flaws and that all things must inevitably come to an end. Proponents of

The August

The seven August, as described by the high elves, are as follows.

Ammeranta — The First Queen: Also known as the Lady of Plenty, Ammeranta, first monarch of the elves, was also mute, able to communicate only through her smile and tears. It is said that this supposed lack taught her to listen to all points of view, and through her wisdom, gained from listening, she unified the elves and gave them civilization.

Moad — The First Archer: The Bow Master, Moad is credited with the invention of the bow and arrow, and many elves still hold to his belief that archery is the highest art form to which any sentient being can aspire.

Te Santru — The King in Gold: Always depicted as a laughing man, the roguish and silver-tongued Te Santru is credited not only with the development of commerce, but also with the beginnings of the traditional elvish view that only a very thin line exists between honest trade and theft.

Vera — The Mother Queen: Mother first and ruler second, Vera is revered both as the first and greatest adherent to the ideals of family and also for her deep devotion to nature and to Denev, the Earth Mother, making her the spiritual mother of all wood elves.

Drendaeos — The Learned King: Born a modest mendicant, Drendaeos' wisdom earned him the task of being chief instructor to Vera's children. When at last it came time to choose an heir, Vera's children refused all attempts to yield them the crown, saying that "he who had taught us so well would make a far better monarch than we." Under Drendaeos, the elves enshrined the position of education, a singular feat which few nations have replicated since.

Eikanta — The Queen of Perfection: Also called the Queen of Queens, Eikanta seemed as though she were incapable of making mistakes, both in her personal conduct and in her actions as ruler. Eikanta's rule is viewed as the greatest single era in history (elven or otherwise). Her philosophy of devotion to personal and societal improvement is still embraced today, and those who believe in the ideals of Eikanta are called Eikantians.

Essu — The Fault in Perfection: Though the elves who dispute Essu's place among the August are never few in number, he *was*, nevertheless, the Shadow that Crowns the Light, and a sobering reminder that nothing (not even the immortality of the ancient elves) is truly eternal.

this theory are dubbed Essuites and are most fiercely opposed by the Eikantians (see Chapter Three). The duality of Essuite and Eikantian thought has marked much of elven history, and the modern age is no different. Whatever one's leanings, one can not deny the mark of the Fault in Perfection, and the tumultuous events that his rule brought at the end of the First Dynasty.

The First Death (c. -22,000 OC)

Until the reign of Essu, no elf had died. In those days of glory, elves were immortal, and their civilization had thus far been free of war. Protected by potent skills and magic, the elves were free of losses since the race's creation. Essu, however, changed all that.

The young king was still new to the throne (and his excesses were still small and easily overlooked) when one day, while walking through the royal gardens, Essu gazed upon a bed of roses and remarked that he did not like their color. The courtier replied that roses were white and only white (for such was their nature in that age). He offered, however, to change the color with magic if it would please the king. Essu replied that such illusions were unbecoming to one of his station, and that no elf should need to live a lie. He continued that if the titans were negligent enough to produce such a beautiful form but left out richness in color, then it fell to him to correct the oversight.

Essu proclaimed a grand feast and invited dignitaries from every race on Scarn. Once they gathered, he murdered them all and ordered that each corpse be buried beneath a different bed of roses. Being a powerful sorcerer, Essu knew that the blood of mortals was not enough to enact the change he desired. With sword in hand he proceeded to murder and bury his elven courtiers as well, so that the variety of the other races' blood would provide the colors he desired, and the immortal blood of his kin would ensure these colors would hold. So it was that the rose gained its bounty of hues, and so were the first elves slain.

Outraged, the races of Scarn declared war against all the elves, and in spite of his other flaws, Essu's leadership and magic allowed the elves to repel all comers. Once a truce was declared, however, they assassinated Essu and brought the First Dynasty to an ignoble end. Never again would the races of Scarn view the elves in the same way, and from that day on, every rose had thorns. Oddly enough, roses have always remained sacred to the elves, reminding them to stay on guard against their own internal "thorns."

Therathose and the First Imperial Age (-22,000 OC to -12,000 OC)

When the elves finally restored some semblance of sanity to their shattered society, it was with the jarring realization that the old dynastic order was lost, likely forever. In its place was a relatively small, relatively inefficient, and certainly less glorious ruling

order based on heredity. This new kingdom was nonetheless a great thing. Graceful, beautiful, elegant and still "perfect" compared to its contemporaries, it was a reflection of what the other races would soon see as "the quintessential elf." Presaging the modern era by millennia, this grand nation is recalled by its old elven name — Therathose, the First Empire.

By all accounts Therathose matured quickly, flowering in a mere two centuries into a nation of remarkable power. Expanding well beyond the original domain of the elves of the First Dynasty, Therathose abutted the vast Asaatthi Empire to the north (which the elves called the Empire of the Lotus) and the minor states of Termama. It had a population in the tens (some records say hundreds) of millions, with an efficient bureaucracy, a devoted military and governmental institutions such as universal education, which had survived from the First Dynasty.

The rule and conduct of Therathose was based on brotherly love and the attainment of honest merriment. Still mindful of the devastating conflicts they had just endured, the elves had little tolerance for anything that might bring them back to that age. Therathosians learned to cherish life, and despite their immortality, the elves of this era took to living with a zeal that they would pass down to future generations.

Chivalry and honor became commonplace, and the elven knights (commonly called "elven lords") were born. Sorcery continued to advance, and the art of the bow was perfected, both reaching heights never again attained by any mortal race. Their poetry and music flourished, and the bardic art was born. The power and glory of Therathose were not lost on the races of the day. One in particular decided it was time to test just how great the elves had become.

The Draco-Elven Alliance (c. -19,000 OC)

In times immemorial the dragons walked the face of Scarn. They were, as the titans, a reflection of its prime motive force. Whereas the concepts embodied by the titans were housed within a single vessel and a single essence, the concepts embodied by the dragons were divided among a race. To dragons fell the great and arduous task of shepherding not the base forces of Scarn, but the sentient life that was soon to cover its surface. In this manner the dragons were not unlike gods.

— From the *Tolma Dracuim*, c. -16,000 OC

It was during the third millennia of Therathose's glory that the dragons decided to do more than just scrutinize the elves. They saw that the creations of the titans had exceeded their original design, and were pleased. Though they were highly individual, the dragon princes shared a common agenda. They hoped to shape the courses of the other races over the eons, shielding them from their titan creators in times of woe, until their fickle parents once more saw the greatness of their works. In so doing, they would make



paradise of Scarn, and on the day these races learned the secrets of creation, the dragons and the titans would pass to the far realms and leave the world to its new inheritors.

The dragons believed the elves held the most promise, and with the correct guidance would be able to further the dragons' design more than any other race. So it was that the dragons sent their emissaries to the imperial court of Therathose.

If it could be believed, the dragons had underestimated the elves. The elven magi had foreseen the coming of the wyrms and their secret agenda. Rather than being insulted, the Therathosians saw the greatness in the dragons' plan and were honored that they among all the races had been singled out to be partners on this grand venture. With the sanction of the Council of Archons, Emperor Eldur of Therathose took the dragon Ganju as his wife, and the Draco-Elven Alliance was born.

The Dragon Princes

There are dragons, and then there are dragon princes, and then there are Dragon Princes. The last refer to a reverently worshiped few among the wyrms who, more than any others of their kind, worked actively alongside the elves and aided them as family. Each Dragon Prince has left a potent legacy which is

evident in the elven derivations of their names. Some such derivations even remain in wide use among other races. More tangibly, all the Dragon Princes mated freely among the elves, and the potency of their bloodline is still apparent after these long millennia.

The Dragon Princess of Forests in Spring and Summer was one of the oldest of her kind. Her philosophy of nursing the lesser races to maturity inspired the rest of her race, even the evil dragons. Instrumental to the creation of the Draco-Elven Alliance, Ganju went so far as to mate with the emperor of Therathose to consecrate the alliance (she loved Eldur very much, so this was hardly a sacrifice). Cerul, The Dragon Prince of Deep Waters, delighted in mysteries and concealing things from the scrutiny of others. Pele-I, Dragon Prince of the House of Discourse, was the last of the Dragon Princes to depart to the far realms at the conclusion of the First Elf-Charduni War. Many among the elven upper class claim to trace their bloodlines back to him.

Syla, also known as the Kindly One, was the daughter of Ganju and Eldur. She was hailed as the Dragon Princess of Meadows even though she was half elven by blood. Kasia, Dragon Princess of Stars, was a red dragon who reveled in chaos and destruction. No fool, Kasia at least *appeared* to honor the Draco-Elven Alliance, and, like Essu, she is remembered by elves despite her failings. Her mate, Lok-I, was the Dragon

Prince of Lore and the Sky. Also known as the Master of the Chimes of Ore and Stone, Lok-I was an artificer of near-titanic ability, mentoring generations of Eldura-Tre's greatest craftsmen. Finally, Ehito was the Dragon Prince of Shores, whose moods changed as fluidly as the waters upon his coastal dominion. Though said to have inspired generations of poets across the millennia, he is most remembered for his creation of the ship.

The First Slarecian War (c. -17,500 OC to -17,000 OC)

The slarecian invasion forced everyone to pause. These strange beings were truly troubling, and their very nature seemed alien and out of place to the elves. Knowing the enemy for what it was, the dragons scrambled to counter their advance, and the elves answered the call. They were joined by the dwarves, the asaathi and even the viren, though only the dragons were aware of the Abandoned's role.

So was forged the Grand Alliance between the first races of Scarn. They countered the slarecians move for move, slowing and even reversing their advances on every front. Across the multiverse this battle spread, until at last the slarecians settled into a more protracted campaign. It would be the later moves of this much longer conflict that most modern races remember (including the humans), as the divine and titanic war against this strange race.

Their common enemy in retreat (or so it seemed), the races of the Grand Alliance once more fell to petty squabbling. For their part, the Therathosians returned to their homeland. The asaathi and dwarves declared open warfare, however, a conflict that would shatter the First Dwarven Imperium. Into the ashes of Kelders the elves expanded. They adapted to the newly vacated tunnels and subterranean cities, building upon the legacy of the dwarves and serpentmen who had been there before. So were born the honorable yet harsh dark elves.

The Citadel of the Rose (c. -16,800 OC)

Though they were victorious, the elves were troubled by the First Slarecian War. Despite the mortal danger faced by their race and the rest of Scarn, the titans had done nothing to aid their worshippers. This threw the Therathosians into a spiritual crisis, as they began to realize the truly uncaring nature of their patrons. Even worse, the titans now seemed wholly absorbed by their newest creation — the gods. It seemed as though it would not be long before even Mesos tired of the elves and deigned it appropriate to wipe them from the face of creation.

Despairing of their fate, the elves resolved to create a bulwark against all future invasion. This new bastion would likewise serve as a symbol of their race's resolve to survive, with or without titanic aid. The dragons fully endorsed this plan. They combined their magic and sum-

moned from across the multiverse the elemental essences of myriad planes. Upon the summit of this gathering, the founders erected a great city — the Citadel of the Rose.

The Citadel quickly became the spiritual heart of the elven empire. Therathosian mages of the highest caliber congregated there. Weapon masters from across the land journeyed to the Citadel to set up their schools, and even non-elven scholars visited the city to learn at the feet of the dragons.

One day, a humbly dressed scribe walked into the central library of the Citadel, seeking employment. He was granted a junior post and set to work. Over the next twenty years he would rise through the ranks, until he was acclaimed by his peers to the Council of Archons. What he said during his introductory speech would change the elves forever.

The Coming of Jandaveos (-16,761 OC)

It was my intention to say goodbye this day, indeed it was my intention to say goodbye many times before. However, each time there was something that brought me back, and now that I see you here before me, I know I will never be able to leave. It is only fair then that you know who I am, what I am, and in what manner I hope to thank you for the love I have been allowed to know.

— Opening words of Jandaveos to the MXVII Convention of the Council of Archons

When the scribe-who-became-archon addressed the Council of Therathose, it was to one of the greatest assemblies in history. The Council of the day included no fewer than seven hundred high elven elders and seventy dragon princes from across Scarn. The delegates expected a simple speech from their newest member, who was known for his industrious zeal and modest ways. One can only speculate at their surprise when the scribe revealed himself to be a god.

Jandaveos told the assembly about the gods and of their reliance on love and worship. He revealed their link to the mortal races and how they empathized with their plight in the face of the careless titans. He told them of his journeys in the guise of a common elf and how over the years he had come to love the elven race. He told them at last of how he did not expect nor require that any of the assembly believe a word he said. He asked instead that he be allowed to prove himself, not as a god, but as one of their own. He would serve his term as archon, and if at the time of his term's conclusion the elves found him worthy, he would become their god, devoted to them in every way.

Some were skeptics, of course, and some even called for Jandaveos' expulsion. Yet Cerul and Kasia counseled the assembly to allow the god to stay, and over the next fifty years Jandaveos did not disappoint. Even the most ardent cynic came to love this young god. So it was that Jandaveos became the god of the elves, and the elves became the first of the divine races.

The Gnolls (c. -13,000 OC)

Everyone remembers he who is first: what he said, what he did and of course his name. No one, however, remembers he who is second. There are few worse ignominies, and few worse betrayals.

— From the *Tolma Szerkanduin*, c. -11,620 OC

The dragons were not the only allies of the elves, only the first. During Therathose's expansion into northern Termana, the high elves came into contact with a proud and deeply spiritual people — the gnolls. In those days the gnolls were devoutly Ushadani, beholden to the spiritualism now mostly relegated to the southern fringes of Termana. Their societies were transitory affairs, built on subsistence and held together by a flexible code of mores and ethics. For several hundred years the two races were content to view each other from arm's length. Even when the elves began building their settlements, the gnolls were unconcerned. The concept of a sedentary society was alien to the dog-men. They were confident that the elves would move on in due course and all would be as it had always been. This passive philosophy reflected the naiveté of the era, when war was still rare. That changed when the Therathosians began importing their religion.

To be fair, it was never the high elves' intention to do any harm, nor were they the only foreigners to bring the gospel of the new gods to Termana. The elves were the first major Ghelspadian power to make its way to the southern continent, however, and so their impact on the spirituality of the south was undeniably the greatest.

Never an evangelical church, the faith of Jandaveos made no special attempt to convert Termanans exclusively to the elven god. Instead, its teachings introduced the gnolls to the entire pantheon. Worship of the gods began to supplant Ushadani and titan worship of its own accord. Two gods in particular — Tanil and Vangal — found wide acceptance among the gnolls.

Tanil's followers became militant matriarchies, focusing on the gnollish value of naturalism, or harmony with the living land. Vangal's followers instead became aggressive patriarchies, focusing on the gnollish love of battle and struggle. The two sides fought openly with one another, creating an era of unprecedented conflict and bloodshed among the dog-men.

It did not take long for the martial gnolls to perfect the art of mutual extermination. Entire villages were wiped out during the wars that followed the coming of the gods. Horrified at the swiftness of the gnolls' decline into chaos, the high elves fortified their perimeters for fear that the conflict would spill over into their territories. Certain elements within the Council of Archons wished to intervene to stop the fighting, but the dragons advised otherwise. The wyrms argued that the coming of the gods' word to Termana was inevitable, and the Termanans would have to deal with the ramifications

on their own terms. Any more interference on the part of Therathose would only harm the Termanans more.

So it was that the gnolls were left to their own devices, consolidating families into clans, clans into tribes, and tribes into nations. These nations each sported armies of impressive size, and so the fighting intensified with each generation. This continued for nearly three hundred years (a relatively short time by elven and dragon standards), until the Therathosians recanted their former policies. If they were responsible for the gnolls' self-annihilation, they would have to set things right.

The Gehan Nor Concords (-12,443 OC)

At the behest of Jandaveos, the Therathosian Council of Archons attempted to mediate a resolution and bring an end to the attrition. Their strategy was simply to admit their (inadvertent) complicity in the sorry state of affairs and offer restitution in the form of material and technological aid.

The elven lords were well received, and the honesty and frankness of the Therathosians impressed the gnolls to no end. Beyond simply accepting the elves' apology and aid, the gnolls pledged that they would stand with the elves for all time, and that in such a way they could "learn the correct virtues of the divine, and not be led astray." So was born the Gnollish-Elven Alliance. The pact was formalized in the sacred grove of Gehan Nor, which in high elven is *Gelnor Llehan*, and which the local humans and dwarves shortened to Gnorllhan. It is from Gnorllhan that the outsider name "gnoll" comes from.

Gehan Nor would be a turning point for Therathose. Though it would usher in centuries of prosperity and cooperation, Therathose would never again achieve the same degree of political or diplomatic success that it had in previous ages. The time of unity and divinely inspired beneficence was coming to an end, and a new age of strife would soon engulf the world.

The Ballad of Lotus and Rose (-12,032 OC to -11,921 OC)

The elves, —chosen of Mesos, and the asaatthi, —chosen of Mormo, were never truly friends. Though both were supreme masters of magic and witchery, the elves had always embodied the wilder aspects of the arcane, while the asaatthi were likened more to its patterns and forms. The serpents' sense of external honor was at odds with the elves' internal honor, and the asaatthi with their matriarchy more often than not found fault with the patriarchy of the elves. Were it not for a fateful spark, these differences may well have simmered untended for eons more.

This "spark" is recorded differently and at times not at all by the other races of the day. For a hundred days and hundred nights the span of the world between Ghelspad and Termana shone as the sun. When the cataclysm was

The Lotus and the Rose

Between the shining sea and sky
Where endless fields and forests lie,
Are mountains tall and rivers wide,
And many towers standing high,
Guarding hallowed Therathose.
Here the builders build their cities,
Drafters wise and masons witty,
Gilt of gold and iron plenty,
Grow the Lotus and the Rose.

Playing playful at the seasons,
Larders full for every person,
Naught a crime to judge nor pardon,
Nary needs nor cause nor reasons,
Live the folk of Therathose.
Sadly mortals, ever wanting
Satisfaction never finding
Seek the thing of their undoing
Schemed the Lotus and the Rose.

Fell the sword and flew the arrow,
On the plains of rage and sorrow,
Come the dusk bereft of morrow,
Hope all seeming false and hollow,
On forsaken Therathose.

While the chosen children plunder,
With their magics wreck and sunder,
Well the wicked wield their thunders,
To burn the Lotus and the Rose.

Screamed the air as drakes and ravens,
Masked the sun and clot the heavens,
Going where their masters bade them,
None can hide, nor find a haven
As died the soul of Therathose.
O'er when was there in errant ages?
Writ in riddles lost on pages?
Spoke or told by bard or sages?
Of war 'twixt Lotus and the Rose.

None! For now but few remain,
And nevermore shall be the same,
A world which saw the blood as rain,
And cursed is now that baleful name,
What once was hallowed Therathose.
As for they, the chosen children,
They who schemed for nary reason,
Joy and glory? Nether knows them,
Not the Lotus, nor the Rose.

over, the races discovered that the oceans had been seeded with vast deposits of adamantium. Ships were dispatched to gather the precious ore, which although abundant was still jealously fought over. Skirmishes soon broke out, and the asaathi and elves in their pride used these as a pretext for war.

For the third time in their history, the elves were engaged in all-out warfare with a civilization of equal power. The Therathosians had had ten thousand years of peace to blunt their sensitivity to it, however. They and the serpent men fought with careless abandon, to the point that they even ignored the counsel of the dragons and Jandaveos.

Not every elf foolishly engaged in this war, which would become known as the Ballad of Lotus and Rose (after the then Empire of the Lotus, the name gave to the Asaathi Empire by the elves; and the Empire of the Rose, the byword for the elven empire of Therathose). The northern wood elves parted ways with the Council of Archons and abandoned Jandaveos in favor of Denev. The dark-skinned mountain elves likewise turned their backs on Therathose and embraced the god Nalthalos, eventually becoming the dark elves of today.

The Diaspora (-11,920 OC to -11,832 OC)

The horrors of this conflict destroyed both the elven and asaathi empires. Therathose was sunk beneath the waters of the Cerulean and Blossoming Seas, and millions of lives would be lost on both sides. The fallout decimated even uninvolved races, as human kingdoms collapsed from stray magic and the combatants' roaming armies, and the gnolls lost many of their number fighting alongside the elves. In the end it was all for naught, as both sides achieved nothing and lost much to the conflict. Broken and scattered, the surviving elves prepared to face oblivion.

Jandaveos, however, had not abandoned them, even if the elves had abandoned him. He had held secret council with the dragons, and under his guidance the elves made their way to northern Termana. There they would rebuild a new home alongside the kingdoms of the dragons.

Eldura-Tre and the Second Imperial Age (–11,832 OC to 0 AV)

For the second time in their history, the elves were made painfully aware that an era had ended and that it would likely never return again. This was enough to shatter the spirit of some elves, but with the help of Jandaveos, elven society endured during the difficult times of the Diaspora. The Dragon Princes and the elven god worked tirelessly to shelter the elves from would-be invaders, repelling the humans of western Termana, the Piscean horde, and finally the ubantu galleons from Asherak. As before, the elves showed remarkable resilience, consolidating their power base and quickly re-establishing many of the lost institutions of Therathose.

They christened their new empire Eldura-Tre, in honor of Eldur, who was now fondly remembered as one of the greatest emperors of their lost empire. It would serve as both an homage to the memory of their lost paradise and a warning to future generations of elves, of what can happen if one allows pride to supersede wisdom. As might be expected, Essuite cults sprang up all across the nascent Second Empire, and it was a while before Jandaveos managed to fish his people out of despair.

To their credit, the elves were mindful of the devastation their war had caused to bystander races. Missions were sent as far away as northern Ghelspad, and the elves were at least in part responsible for the rapid resurgence of the humans. They likewise used their knowledge to help re-establish the Second Dwarven Imperium, and taught their advanced construction techniques to the masons of what would become Aurimar, Vashon and Lave. Kasia and Lok-I personally led the expeditions to rebuild the shattered libraries of the Ghelspadians, helping found ancient Sumara and the Empire of the Flame.

All the while the elves built yet another glorious empire, spanning the whole of northern Termana. Though they would never again join the fold, the wood elves of the Ganjus and the dark elves of the Kelders admitted that their cousins had at least partially redeemed themselves for their short-sightedness in the Ballad of Lotus and Rose. It would continue thusly for a dozen millennia, with the elves finally fulfilling their role in the dragons' design — aiding the other races of Scarn as they worked to improve themselves.

The Second Slarecian War (c. 2000 OC)

With the asaathi broken and the elves scattered across Scarn, the slarecians were perhaps well grounded in their belief that it was time again to set their plans into motion. This time, however, new players were on the field — the humans and the gods — who, in their arrogance, the slarecians had underestimated. Their

campaigns against Eldura-Tre were quashed by human armies, backed by elven steel and magic.

It was a defining moment for the elves, as high, wood and dark elf fought collectively to smite their ancient enemy. When the gods and titans had at last eradicated the slarecian threat, each of the elven races had come into its own. It was likewise a formative moment for the human race, as it learned to shed its status as a "second class species", and joined the other peoples of Scarn as equals. The human nations born of the aftermath of the Second Slarecian War were no longer the small and petty affairs of old, but glorious institutions with vibrant cultures, sage rule and honorable warriors. It is for this reason that human histories begin here, and not earlier.

Seeing their work nearing completion, the dragons began departing Scarn for the far realms. This would be a mistake, as a new and unforeseen threat was about to emerge.

The Charduni (c. 3200 OC)

Of the charduni, much can be said. They are bold, disciplined and loyal. Be that as it may, they are an inflexible rod, the stony fist of tyranny that does not know how to unclench. Until they do, they will never hold anything of value. As for what they do hold, they shall not retain it for long.

— From the *Tolma Chardenuin*, 3622 OC

Still swollen with pride from their success against the slarecians, the elves (and, for that matter, all the other societies of the day) believed themselves capable of anything. The elves' self-assuredness had fully recovered, and twelve thousand years after the Diaspora, they were dangerously bordering on the same pride that had destroyed their beloved Therathose. So it was that they did not see the advance of the dark dwarves until it was too late.

Chorach was well known to Eldura-Tre, as the elves had watched with great interest as Chardun fashioned his new creation. Jandaveos was no less curious, and asked his cousin on several occasions what his intentions were with this new race. Chardun rebuffed Jandaveos, however, and neither the dark dwarves nor their god had much interaction with the elves for decades thereafter. For their part, the elves believed they had little to fear. Their pride aside, the elves were no strangers to dwarves and were in fact quite taken by their industry and loyalty. Eldura-Tre fully expected that these "charduni" would make fine allies.

The First Elf-Charduni War (3621 OC to 3667 OC)

The charduni finally did come, and the elves welcomed the dark dwarves into their lands without any opposition. Counting on this miscalculation on the part of the elves, the charduni caught the high elves unprepared and shattered the southern defenses of Eldura-Tre before the elves could react. Were it not for the lightning-fast reaction of the gnolls, the high elves may well have

been conquered, magic and draconic allies or no. The gnolls, however, bought precious time with their lives, and Eldura-Tre prepared a massive counter offensive.

The plan was daring, seeing the commitment of hundreds of thousands of elite elven soldiers. Not since the Ballad of Lotus and Rose had such forces been arrayed. While the charduni had prepared for such a counterstrike, they had never before encountered a force the equal of the elves. Though they were fewer in number than the human armies, the elves had a martial and mystical mastery, millennia older than the dark dwarven race. They were also aided by gnollish irregulars and by the Dragon Princes, each one the equal of an entire army. Jandaveos ensured that Chardun would not personally interfere with the conflict (and the gods were concentrating on their plot to destroy the titans in any case), so this time it was the charduni who suffered staggering defeat.

The charduni decided to circumvent rather than directly assault Eldura-Tre, and the elves and dark dwarves settled into an uneasy *détente*. The departure of the last of the Dragon Princes struck the elves with doubt. Additionally, Jandaveos had intimated that the elves' energies might soon be diverted to a far greater enterprise, and so the First Elf-Charduni War ended. Even when the charduni invaded Ghelspad, the elves remained ensconced within their borders. It was only when the dark dwarves dared to attack Vera-Tre that the high elves' wrath was loosed again.

The Second Elf-Charduni War (3671 OC to 3682 OC)

When the wood elves issued the call for help, the high elves responded with a massive invasion of the Charduni Empire. Simultaneously, the elven galleons and Ehito's descendants hunted down and shattered the supply ships of the dark dwarves. This multifront attack was as fierce as any invasion the charduni had launched themselves, and the dwarves admired the elves, even as they hated them.

Unlike previous wars, the elves were bereft of much of their greatest magic. Perhaps Mesos had sensed impending danger and had reined in the mystical energies of Scarn as a result. The departure of the Dragon Princes following the first war had likewise weakened the elves, and their most powerful spellcasters had congregated at the Citadel of the Rose on the advice of elven oracles. Neither side made much headway, and the stalemate may well have lasted many decades were it not for the onset of the Divine War.

The Divine War

The story of the Divine War is well known. Angered by the callous ravages of the titans, the gods rose up against their parents and brought them low. They united in one brief, terrible conflict and destroyed the titans one by one. Only Denev, the Earth Mother, who in her wisdom had sided with the gods, was spared.

In accordance with the Divine Truce, Jandaveos and Chardun ordered their peoples to stand down from their war, and the high elves and dark dwarves fought against the titanspawn, if not together, than at least to the same end. Neither race intended to allow the other to survive, however, and each waited for the right moment to commit xenocide. Kadum's Deluge seemed to be just that opportunity. When the Mountain Shaker's body was hurled into the ocean, it sank northern Termana and drowned most of the charduni army. The elves prepared to assault Chorach and only at the last moment were recalled. Chern, the Last Great Suffering, was coming.

Chern and the Curse

What happened next is also well known. Warned of Chern's approach by a sudden missive from the Citadel of the Rose, the elves redirected their forces upon the Cliffs of Promise. This 40-mile stretch of coast, riddled with reefs and rising vertically by 300 feet above the waters below, was to be the titan's landfall on Termana. That is, if the elves permitted it, which they resolved they would not. Chern, however, planned for just such a defense and had already taken steps to break it.

Having planted the seed of betrayal in the soul of Jandaveos' herald, Chern slew the elven god through base treachery. He then took the herald and snapped him in twain, allowing the rotting worms, which Chern had used to corrupt the emissary, to shower down and decimate the elves. Against any other people, the titan's plan may well have worked. Instead, the elves, enraged and with the full force of thirty thousand years of history and pride, fell upon the titan.

The massed array of the knightly orders of Eldura-Tre stretched farther than even elven eyes could see, and the masts of her ships were like a forest on the sea. With so many powerful elves in one place, the magical energies of Scarn itself realigned upon the Cliffs of Promise. In the great battle thereafter, more than half of the elves were slain, joined by almost all of Chern's forces. As for Chern himself, the Last Great Suffering had underestimated what mortals could do, just as he and his peers had underestimated the power of the gods. His death would be the second deific destruction on the Cliffs of Promise that day, and the cathartic release of those two events mars the region still.

The elves were victorious, but with his dying breath the titan cursed the race that had slain him. The high elves became sterile and melancholy, their bodies and spirit condemned to waste away. So were born the forsaken elves.

Division and the Principalities (0 to 150 AV)

In the aftermath of Jandaveos' death came great chaos. The Divine War was still raging, but Eldura-Tre was never again seriously involved. Just prior to the coming of

Chern, the Citadel of the Rose was also lost, enclosed in a powerful magic calyx so as to contain the demons there.

The titans avoided the elven empire, perhaps out of fear of what had happened to Chern, and the gods were likewise wary of the site where one of their own had died in so gruesome a manner. As for the elves, they were too morose to care, and Eldura-Tre collapsed upon itself. Knowing that their civilization was lost, the elven elders decided to split Eldura-Tre. It was hoped this new arrangement would make it easier to govern the elven territories. It might also ensure that even if one elven nation were lost, others might survive. It was an imperfect plan, but one that seemed appropriate to the sad logic of the time. By the end of the Divine War, Eldura-Tre was dead.

Over the next century and half, the once near-mythical history of the high elves would become the prosaic tale of the forsaken elves. Some even go as far as to call it "the Second Death," though only a fool would mention it openly with an elf in earshot. The elves would soon engage in the practice of kidnapping and slavery to bolster their numbers, and a race once known for its enlightenment would be reviled and feared. All the while the charduni would rebuild and make ready to finish off their most hated enemy. This period, though officially nameless (to reflect the fact that Jandaveos' name was itself lost during this time and he was called simply "That Which Abides"), is sometimes referred to as "the forsaken age." Never since the day of Essu had the elves fallen so low.

Sensing the end would come without radical action, the former high priest of Jandaveos broke from his melancholy and set about to accomplish what seemed impossible.

Vladawen and the Return of Jandaveos (151 AV)

Vladawen, the Titanslayer, third son of Malratheon the Poet of Geltois, took the death of Jandaveos far worse than most. Being the high priest to Jandaveos, Vladawen's close connection to the fallen god condemned him to the severest of agony. Yet this very link also meant that he, and he alone, had a

chance to resurrect That Which Abides. He journeyed to Darakene, converting the province of Wexland to the worship of his fallen god. Then, gathering to him a band of heroic humans, elves and dwarves, Vladawen finally succeeded in restoring his beloved deity. Almost overnight, the forsaken elves were restored. Yet even as they rejoiced, the elves realized that once again an era had ended forever.

The high priest received no small help from Hollowfaust, Burok Torn and the Vigils. For this reason, the elves are now allied firmly to these nations. This has caused a great upheaval in the halls of power throughout Ghelspad and Termana, with repercussions that even the astrologers of the Skysight Realm cannot fully divine.

The Divine Empire of the Rose and the Third Imperial Age (present day)

The return of Jandaveos caused a massive realignment in elven society. Once devoid of hope, the elves were whole once more. With this came the horrific realization of what they had done in the name of survival. Their petty principalities were a smear against the memory of the glorious nations of their past, and the half-elven progeny who dotted the countryside were a living testament of elven amorality. Nonetheless, Jandaveos offered his healing to all who would accept it, and elves from across the principalities flocked to his banner. Under Kathalema of Sylavael and Glitheval of Ehitovael, the elven territories began to unite. In a few short months of startling epiphany, a new imperial age was founded, creating the Divine Empire of the Rose.

Some of the elven realms have declared for the new empire, but the Third Empire is far from firmly established. Among its strongest internal opponents are some magi enclaves of the Skysight Realm and the traditionalists of the Ganjulael. Division remains strong even in such heartlands as the Midrealm. So it is that the elves are a mostly, but not entirely, reunited people; outsiders nervously watch to see what becomes of this new divine empire. If their history has taught us anything, though, it is this — the elves will always endure.

History of the Land of Chains

The following is excerpted from the Lex Charduni, Book I, Chapters I and II. The Lex is the holy book of the charduni, said to have been written by Chardun himself.

1.1.25. AND AS I DID OBSERVE THE PEOPLES, I DID SEE THAT THEY WERE DEEPLY FLAWED, EVERY ONE. DISOBEDIENCE, CHAOS, AND COWARDICE DID I FIND WITHIN THEIR SOULS, AND THEY DID REVERE WEAKNESS AS A VIRTUE AND DID NAME IT BY MEANINGLESS WORDS SUCH AS KINDNESS AND MERCY AND LOVE.

1.1.28. I SAW AT ONCE THAT THE WRITHING MASS OF FEARFUL STUPIDITY, FOR THAT WAS THE TRUE NATURE OF THE PEOPLES OF SCARN, COULD NEVER SERVE ME, SAVE BE IT THROUGH THE STERN GUIDANCE OF A PEOPLE FAR GREATER THAN THOSE I OBSERVED — A PUISSANT AND DISCIPLINED PEOPLE WHO COULD CONQUER THEM ALL ONE BY ONE AND COULD BRING THEM BY FORCE AND DILIGENCE TO MY GREAT FOLD.

1.2.14. AND I DID TAKE UP MY POWER AS THE GREATEST OF ALL GODS, AND DID CREATE A RACE OF PERFECT BEINGS THAT WOULD SERVE ME WITH OBEDIENCE, ORDER AND COURAGE AND THAT WOULD REVERE ONLY STRENGTH AND WOULD CALL WEAKNESS AL WAYS BY ITS PROPER NAMES, THE NAMES OF VILE FOOLISHNESS AND SINFUL WASTE.

1.2.17 AND I DID COMMAND THESE CHARDUNI TO BRING TO ME THE WORLD, AND TO LAY IT AT MY FEET, THAT THROUGH ME THEY MIGHT PERFECT THE IMPERFECT PEOPLES AS WELL, EVEN AS THE CHARDUNI WERE PERFECT, AND THAT THEY MIGHT STRIVE IN MY NAME UNTIL ALL THE PEOPLES WERE NOBLE LIKE UNTO THEM, AND UNTIL ALL THE WORLD MERITED TO KNOW THE GLORY OF MY SERVICE.

Journal of a Charduni Slave

Pexan the Younger is the niece of the famous charduni rebel philosopher Pexan Drechard. A devoted charduni priest and historian, Drechard's radical doctrines (calling for the worship of all the gods, with Chardun simply revered as their lord and as chief patron of the charduni, highest of all races) earned him considerable disapproval from other charduni priests and historians. When he was publicly observed to offer a short prayer to Hedrada (as a small portion of a lengthy dedication speech for a new legal building), he was arrested and executed for heresy. Many of

Drechard's closest followers were sentenced to a lifetime of slavery for supporting him, including his niece.

Pexan the Younger eventually escaped the Land of Chains and made her way to the city of Hedrad, where she lives today and has recorded her memoirs, including her own enlightening interpretations of charduni history. Though Pexan Drechard remained staunchly faithful to Chardun to the end of his life, his niece and her followers are much more radical in outlook, Pexan herself being a follower of Hedrada. The following text is excerpted from the introductory chapter of a work entitled Chardun's Forsaken: a History, a book entirely banned in Dunahnae and the Calastian Hegemony for blasphemy against Chardun. In the Land of Chains, possession of any of Pexan's works is grounds for immediate execution.

The charduni were created by the god Chardun. No one knows whether he fashioned our first ancestors from the already existing titan-born dwarves or created us entirely. Certainly we have a great deal in common with other dwarves, much to the dismay of both peoples. It is said that Chardun wanted his chosen people to be tough and strong, as that made us more efficient slaves and soldiers. He also admired the dwarves' connection to earth and stone, for the same reasons. Indeed, everything about the charduni revolved around Chardun's desire to create a perfect race of servants to carry out his will on Scarn.

A Race of Blessed Slaves

In thought and demeanor, as in body and ability, Chardun continued to fashion his new people into what he saw to be the perfect slave race. He made us naturally orderly and deliberate in thought and action, as well as obedient to superiors. He gave us intelligence but little imagination, and taught us to strive always to fulfill our assigned roles as best we were able, regardless of the hierarchy in which we were placed. He made it difficult for us to deal with new ideas and situations, so that it would be nearly impossible for any of us to question our devotion to him or to allow any other god to take his place as our master.

Chardun believed that all races should be slave races, and so, in creating the charduni as the perfect servitors, he felt that he was creating the highest and greatest of all races — the race that would rule all others. He taught us that we were the least flawed creations in all of Scarn, and that we had nothing whatsoever to learn from the world's other peoples. We were the greatest among them, and as such deserved to rule all of Scarn in his name. To aid us in taking our proper place as first among slaves, he gave us vast military knowledge and a talent for battle, strategy and metal-working.

Once he finished creating and teaching his perfect slave race, Chardun directed us to conquer and enslave other peoples, bringing him ever more slaves

and leaving ever fewer free nations to oppose his divine will or worship any beings beside himself. Our obedience to these instructions was complete, and at first we took great joy and pride in our master's approval, as conquest followed conquest and the might of the Charduni Empire grew with each passing year.

The Empire in Termana soon reached its greatest extent, but we were stymied by the magic-wielding elves and their dragon allies, as well as the grim resistance of the primitive humans.

Chardun's disappointment in

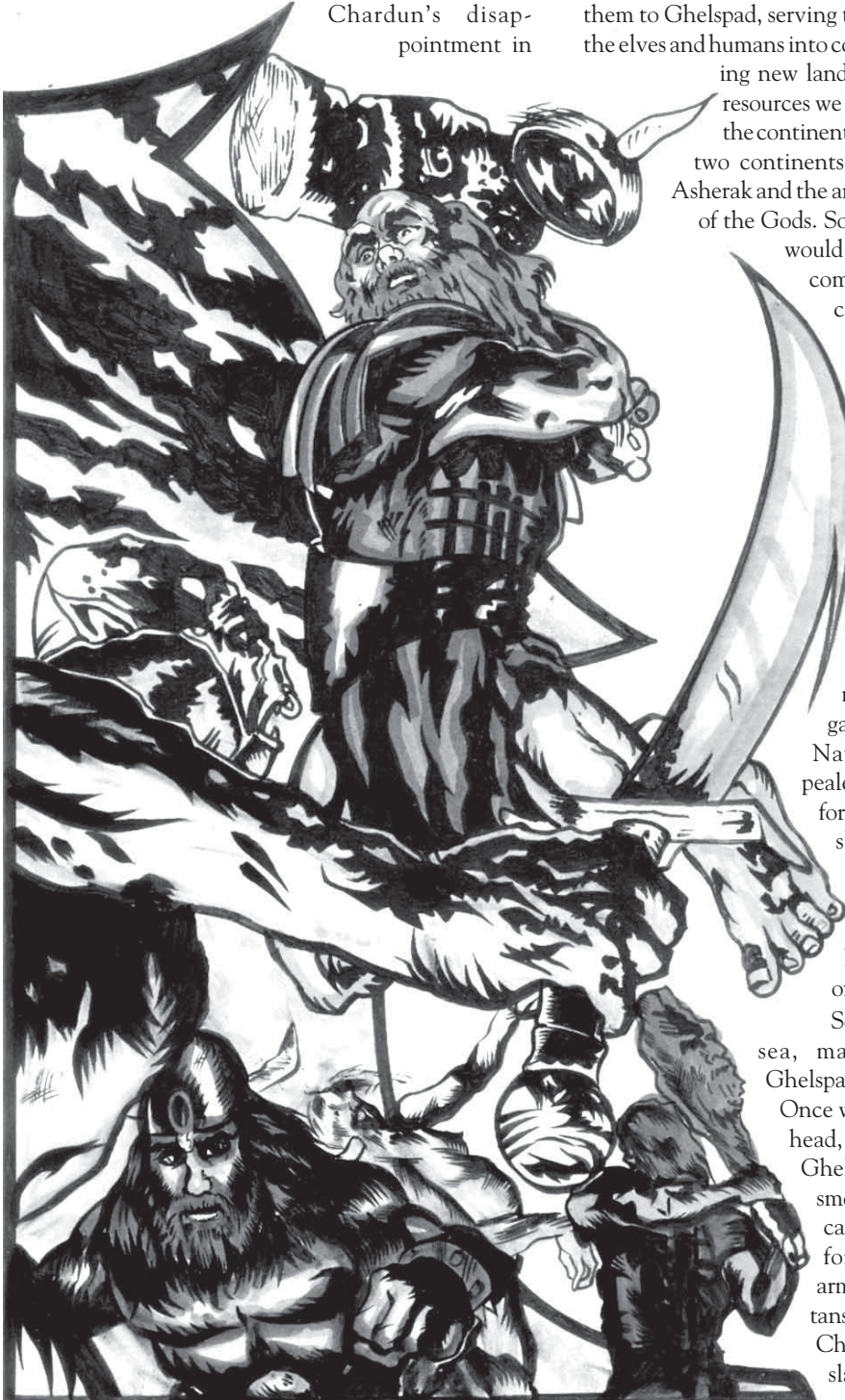
his chosen people was an especially bitter blow to us, but our leaders lacked the imagination to take any other course of action. Doggedly, we continued to throw our forces blindly into the fray, battering ourselves against elven citadels and human armies entrenched in their mountain fastness. At last, Chardun himself bid us set our gaze elsewhere.

The Great Invasion

Chardun commanded us to build ships and sail them to Ghelspad, serving the dual purpose of lulling the elves and humans into complacency, and conquering new lands that would provide the resources we needed to finish pacifying the continent of Termana. Beyond these two continents lay the mighty lands of Asherak and the ancient riches of the Cradle of the Gods. Soon, Chardun decreed, we would rule an empire that encompassed all of Scarn. These commands may sound daunting, but to us they were nothing less than a blessing. We charduni are never happier than when given a challenge by a superior.

We eagerly set to work building a mighty navy. With help from books and information extracted from captured elven sailors, we became masters of sailing and navigation within a generation. Navigation especially appealed to the orderly charduni, for in our minds we were enslaving the very sea and wind to our master's glorious will, and even recruiting the stars of the heavens to the furtherance of Chardun's glory.

So it was that we took to the sea, making landfall in the Ghelspadian realm of Dunahnae. Once we had secured our beachhead, the initial conquest of Ghelspad proceeded far more smoothly than our original campaign in Termana. Before our well disciplined armies, the chaos of the titans' reign collapsed quickly. Chardun was pleased with his slaves once more, and the



charduni gloried in his approval. These were the greatest days for our people — our god treasured us, our superiority to other races was apparent in the ease of our victories, and we knew in our souls that Termana and Asherak would soon fall before us.

But after a time, resistance in Ghelspad stiffened, and we stumbled on our glorious road of conquest. Most notably, we were stopped by the furious resistance of our own cousins, the mountain dwarves of Burok Torn. The sight of these beings — so like us in appearance, but so unlike us in demeanor — was a blow to our notions of uniqueness and superiority. The mountain dwarves, much more numerous and powerful in those days, defended their strongholds against our invasion without powerful mages or extraplanar aid as the elves had done. Even the dwarven god was weak, for Goran was young in those days, and his priests were far less powerful than the Great General's own clerics.

Despite this, the dwarves matched us measure for measure, driving us back again and again — defeating us even at the very walls of their great citadel. Conquered lands saw the dwarves' defiance and rose up themselves, coordinating their efforts with their new dwarven allies. Soon, our mighty empire was in disarray.

The core of our faith was shaken. What were these other dwarves? What were the charduni in relation to them? What if we were not truly Chardun's children, but merely a race bred to his liking from ordinary titanspawn? If we were the greatest and most worthy race in all of Scarn, how could there be another race so like ourselves that did not worship Chardun and yet was able to repel our finest warriors?

Charduni morale began to falter in the face of the dwarves' resistance, and rumors (hotly denied by the charduni themselves) claimed that some of the invaders actually defected to the dwarven side, renouncing Chardun in favor of Goran. Slowly, as dwarven resolve grew stronger and charduni defeats accumulated, the tide began to turn, and to their horror, the charduni found themselves actually being pushed back.

The Retreat

Given time, perhaps the charduni might have prevailed, but time was not something they were granted. With the destruction of Mesos, the Divine War began, and the charduni armies were commanded to face the vast threat of the Asaatthi Empire. As they battled the snake-folk, slave uprisings broke out across Ghelspad, and within a few years charduni authority had all but collapsed. Beset on all sides, the charduni were forced to abandon their Ghelspadian possessions altogether. Our far-flung armies returned to Termana, where the hated elves and dragons had launched a new war against us.

The Great General himself was deeply disappointed in his creations. Though the asaaththi were defeated, the cost had been far too high, and Chardun

commanded us to end the war with the elves, make common cause with the other divine races and drive the titanspawn from Termana. The charduni obeyed, incorporating the thousands of troops evacuated from Ghelspad into their Termanan forces and enlisting vast hordes of Chardun-slain undead. Borrowing tactics from the formidable Ghelspadian dwarves, we threw ourselves wholeheartedly at the titanspawn. That we now fought on the same side as our old foes, the elves and humans, was a fact that we preferred not to consider.

The reinforced charduni armies proved themselves a force to be reckoned with, smashing the titanspawn in battle after battle. Once more, Chardun looked upon his children with pride, going to far as to fight personally on their side on several occasions. He gloried in every battle, especially where a charduni victory indebted some of the other gods to his intervention. He reveled in the humiliation that the dark dwarves rained upon their titanspawn foes. To Chardun, the Divine War itself was cause for celebration and revelry, and he once more passed his blessings to my people.

The Deluge and After

Our renewed glory proved short-lived. When Kadum was defeated and his bound body thrown into the sea, a mighty wall of blood-stained water rushed across northern Termana, drowning kingdoms and destroying nearly two thirds of our armies. Had Chardun been beside them, they might have escaped, but without him they were doomed — a sad and meaningless fate for the bravest and most faithful warriors who ever lived.

The blow to our empire was enormous, but greater still was the loss of Chardun's favor. Blaming us for a tragedy that we could not possibly have anticipated, he cast us aside like a broken toy. In the wake of the terrible deluge and the loss of Chardun's support, we were quickly beset by the enslaved nations. The humans and elves rose up and drove us back. My people fought, but what could they truly do? Bit by desperate bit they were driven back to their homeland in the Chained Mountains, shamed and defeated by the wily ingenuity and impassioned individualism of the other races, cruelly combined with our creator's capriciousness and simple bad fortune.

In miserable confusion and self-hatred, the charduni were forced to admit that they had failed their god. To the charduni, created to serve above all else, this admission was torment beyond Vangal's own hells, and Chardun's silent disapproval of his creations tore at the souls and minds of the dark dwarves like the talons of vultures. Suicide was common in those days as the whole of charduni culture fell into a deep depression.

Unfortunately for us charduni, however, our contrition seemed only to further alienate our creator, as if our desire to make amends and regain his favor was proof that we were weak and fatally flawed. Perhaps he realized that he had made a fundamental error when he created us. We were created as slaves and, hence, obedient and eager to serve. After all, a willful slave is rarely of practical use to its master. Yet the very qualities that make a good slave do not make for a good race of independent conquerors. As long as things were going well and conquests were frequent, the charduni were everything that Chardun wanted. Once their fortunes fell, they became angry, ineffectual and dispirited, desperate for leadership and guidance, and unable to provide it themselves.

Perhaps when Chardun was faced with these uncomfortable realities, he began to believe that we were, after all, nothing more than a failed experiment. In contrast to his new and utterly arrogant young disciple — an ambitious boy named Virduk of Calastia — we seemed weak, unimaginative and dependent.

Yet despite Chardun's disappointment, we were as he made us, and we had no alternative but to continue. To worship and adore Chardun was our nature, whether he loved or hated us. Chardun could not be bothered to give us new instructions, and so — against our own instincts — we took initiative on our own and began to lay plans for new conquests in yet another effort to attract the Great General's attention.

Since the Divine War

Recent history has seen many changes in our hearts and minds, however. The darkness that fell over our hearts after our abandonment never truly left us and, though many optimists believe that we will someday recapture our lost glories and once more become Chardun's favored, most approach the future with grim fatalism. Tormented by the idea that Chardun will never take us back and that our only future is blood, death and eventual extinction, we nevertheless soldier on, for this is how we were made and it is how we shall always be.

Perhaps the optimists are correct. Certainly, many new weapons and battle tactics are being tested and implemented, and careful plans for future conquests are being laid.

Our clergy are in ferment as well. Some of Chardun's most fanatical priests emphatically deny that their god's attention has wandered from his creations at all. Some of these clerics still claim guidance in the form of visions and dreams sent by Chardun, and claim to carry the standard of the ancient empire, but the unity of purpose that once held the priesthood together is no longer in evidence. Priests bicker among themselves and vie for power, each claiming his own direct connection to Chardun, with visions and prophecies that often directly contradict one another.

Factions form where once was always consensus, with each side grumbling about the other. No one has yet openly made accusations of heresy or false doctrine, but to many observers it is only a matter of time before the conflict explodes into full view.

The Heresies

Another phenomenon has also begun to surface among the charduni since the end of the Divine War. Though as yet it represents a tiny fraction of the charduni population, it is nevertheless of paramount importance to our culture as a whole, because it suggests that, however painful it might be, we are capable of independent thought and action.

Certainly this is not the sort of movement that anyone outside the Land of Chains — even in the orderly city of Hedrad — would even notice. The first recorded example of charduni rebellion took place in the priestly city of Aardunnus in the year AV 78 when seventeen young religious students simply refused to attend a particular class on the fifth chapter of the third book of the Lex, because they disagreed with the instructor, a respected and powerful priest. They had read of a recent vision by one of the instructor's rivals that made some of the instructor's arguments seem questionable, and the students were so convinced by the rival's article that they refused to attend their lessons, even when directly ordered to do so by their parents and superiors.

The seventeen young men and women missed only a week of the offending instructor's classes before publicly apologizing to the old priest and submitting to any punishment that the authorities felt appropriate. The punishment was severe — after a public flogging, the offending students were forever forbidden to continue their study as priests or to join the army, —effectively barring them from mainstream charduni society. The ringleaders were stripped of all rank and family privileges, then cast out of Aardunnus. Though the penalty for this minor infraction might seem excessively harsh, it is good to remember that these seventeen scholars may well have been the first charduni in the empire's history to disobey their superiors openly.

Word of the "rebellion" spread quickly throughout the empire, reaching even the ears of the One in White, who was personally consulted on the students' punishment. Waves of dissent passed through slave communities, and although none of them revolted as a result of the students' misdeed, many charduni masters detected greater willfulness and disobedience in the days following the incident.

Despite the students' contrition, the One in White confirmed their punishment and even encouraged their families to impose their own penalties. In the end, public opinion was surprisingly forgiving, and the instructor who had insisted on the punishment was

blamed for lacking discipline in even allowing the "rebellion" to take place. For their part, the students accepted their punishment with something akin to relief, took their (greatly reduced) places in charduni society and — with a single exception — vanished from history.

The long-term effects of this seemingly minor incident were to have lasting significance to charduni society at large. Not only had we discovered that some charduni were capable of disobedience, but with the proper contrition and punishment, it could even be forgiven. Though no major incidents of organized rebellion were yet been recorded for many decades, minor examples of disobedience continued and even increased over the intervening years. The most infamous of these incidents involved my uncle, Pexan Drechard.

Today in the empire I am told that many claim that the Drechard family was touched by heresy and disloyalty and deserved its fate. This is not surprising, given both the suspicious charduni mindset and the fact that my mother — Pexan's sister — was a leader of the infamous seventeen original rebellious students.

Though his sister was banned from the clergy, Drechard himself was not, and like most young charduni in Aardunnus, he sought to take his place in Chardun's grand plan through priestly studies, a vocation at which he excelled. Between his own aptitude and our family's many centuries of high standing in the church, Drechard rose quickly through the ranks and began to act as mentor to new initiates while relatively young.

Drechard never once in his life directly disobeyed a superior, and he made it clear to all that he believed completely in respect for tradition and authority. His sister's identity was a dark family secret, one which was not openly discussed. Drechard's priestly powers remained significant until the end of his life, and he submitted willingly to his own execution. He was not even the first respected priest to suggest that worshipping other gods would not be blasphemous, as long as Chardun was always revered as the rightful lord and emperor of all beings, divine and otherwise. In the reactionary climate following his sister's rebellion he was, however, the first to pay for it with his life.

Drechard never intended rebellion of any kind in his teachings, but his followers, including me, grew to feel different after his death in 112 AV. In an attempt to wipe the stain of heresy from the empire, our entire family was condemned to slavery — considered by all charduni to be a fate worse than death. We and all those like us were not even to be considered charduni. So it was that my disgraced family and I were reduced to the most pathetic beings on Scarn — lower than the slaves of slaves.

Fortunately for us, all was not lost. Others had been condemned to similar punishments for their heresies, and in time our heresy took on a name. We

were called "deists" — those who revered all the gods, not only Chardun. Of course, Hedrada the champion of law was the most popular of these, though an odd few actually paid homage to Belsameth. The other gods were acknowledged and respected, but few openly worshipped them.

In 115 AV, a secret coalition of deists was founded, — this one the most heretical and dangerous of all. If deists were not considered charduni, then they were exempt from charduni law, and could even go so far as to aid in the escape of condemned deist slaves. This scheme proved phenomenally dangerous — the first three major escape attempts ended in the painful deaths of all those involved at the hands of the overseer hounds.

After several years of mixed success, the deists made contact with two important allies — the Sisters of the Sun, an order of Madrielist paladins dedicated to freedom and mercy, and a band of Tanil-worshipping elves and humans who had devoted their lives to freeing slaves from under the noses of their masters. Initial encounters between the deists and these groups were uncomfortable, for traditional charduni xenophobia prevented them from fully cooperating with outsiders. After a few years, however, a grudging respect and sense of cooperation emerged, and today both the sisters and the Tanilists work with the deist underground to aid in freeing slaves throughout the Charduni Empire. Needless to say, the deist underground assists only in the escape of condemned charduni, who remain few in number despite the growth of their heresy.

Though a handful of escaped charduni — those driven mad by their captivity — have gone so far as to join with the Tanilists and even (it is rumored) begun to worship the Huntress herself, these are rare. Most escaped charduni slaves fled to Ghelspad, and most of them have settled in the city of Hedrad, where the careful order and complex legal system allow them to retain their sanity and begin to rebuild their lives.

The rebels make up less than one percent of all charduni, of course, but the deist movement continues to create havoc throughout the empire. In 121 AV, several traitorous officials were discovered aiding deist slaves to escape, leading to a titanic uproar. Many charduni became convinced that the empire was hopelessly corrupt. Without Chardun to guide them, the dark dwarves could not agree on what to do, or even exactly what was wrong with the empire. Factions began to form, each claiming to be the true followers of Chardun's will.

The most heretical of these, the White Axe, is actually a highly conservative organization that believes in returning to the ancient traditions of battle, conquest, honor and obeisance to Chardun. They strayed into blasphemous territory, however, when they claimed that the One in White was not fit to rule,

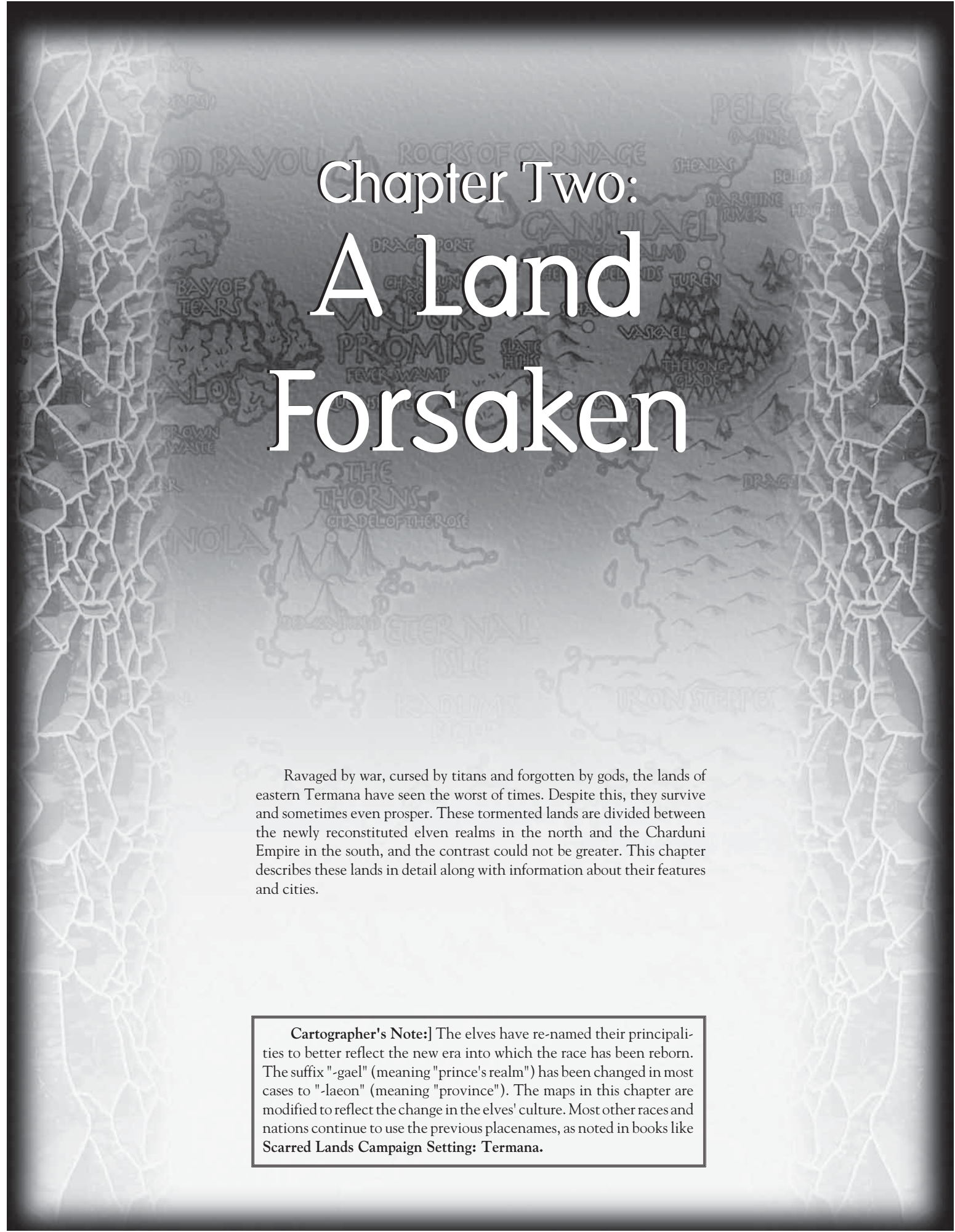
and that it was our leader's incompetence and lack of faith that led Chardun to abandon us. The One in White wasted no time in hunting down and punishing those White Axes who could be found, but all this did was force the movement underground. Today, the White Axe continues to grow, especially among young charduni who desire a return to the glories of the past.

The Return of the Enemy

Even as the One in White and the charduni rulers plan a return to the path of conquest and seek to strengthen their armies, the empire itself begins to fray as, without the divine guidance of their creator, the charduni seem about to fragment into multiple competing factions, while their slaves grow more restless and such outside enemies as the Sisters of the Sun continue to apply more and more pressure to the empire.

How interesting, then, that now of all times is when the dead god of the charduni's oldest and direst enemies, the once-forsaken elves, has risen and is both lovingly and attentively reunifying his shattered people. How unsurprising that the number of charduni deists have grown enormously since Jandaveos rose from the grave and returned to his elven people. The One in White and the other charduni know that conflict between the two empires is all but inevitable. Dwelling in the black heart of even the most fanatical charduni is the suspicion that perhaps Chardun has forgotten them and that they will never regain his favor. With the return of Jandaveos, some charduni have begun to wonder if it is perhaps their people who are truly forsaken.

The future is filled with uncertainty for the dark dwarves of Termana's Chained Mountains, and for the charduni, nothing in all the Scarred Lands could be more frightening than uncertainty.



Chapter Two: A Land Forsaken

Ravaged by war, cursed by titans and forgotten by gods, the lands of eastern Termana have seen the worst of times. Despite this, they survive and sometimes even prosper. These tormented lands are divided between the newly reconstituted elven realms in the north and the Charduni Empire in the south, and the contrast could not be greater. This chapter describes these lands in detail along with information about their features and cities.

Cartographer's Note:] The elves have re-named their principalities to better reflect the new era into which the race has been reborn. The suffix "-gael" (meaning "prince's realm") has been changed in most cases to "-laeon" (meaning "province"). The maps in this chapter are modified to reflect the change in the elves' culture. Most other races and nations continue to use the previous placenames, as noted in books like **Scarred Lands Campaign Setting: Termana.**

The Divine Empire of the Rose

From the easternmost peninsula of Termana to the Slate Hills of the gnollish moothomes stretches the greatest elven nation in the world. Yet it is a frail and nascent thing, a faint echo of its forbears. Optimists call it the Third Empire, the heir to the glories of Therathose and Eldura-Tre. Others call it a pretender, a haphazardly fashioned contrivance meant only to bolster the personal wealth and ambitions of a few elves. Even the pundits and cynics, however, cannot deny the extreme shift in power that this new nation represents. From shining capitals to their streets underfoot, all who have heard of this "Divine Empire of the Rose" know beyond a doubt — the high elves have returned.

Since the Resurrection

The Divine Empire is new, born in the aftermath of Jandaveos' resurrection. Yet the idea of reunifying the disparate elven principalities has been considered with varying degrees of enthusiasm since their founding after the Divine War.

The greatest proponents of elven unity during the forsaken era hailed from Ehitovael. Even in their forsaken state, the sailors of the Southsea Realm held strongly to their elven pride. To them, the idea of dissolving Eldura-Tre had always been a mistake, akin to rats abandoning a sinking ship. The creation of the Southsea Realm was all but forced upon them, and without the political clout to say otherwise, the Wave-King and his ministers had no choice but to comply. Glitheval kept the hope of reunification kindled in his followers, however.

When it finally came time to push for reunification once more, Glitheval's greatest supporter would ironically be the one elf who, during the forsaken age, had been the greatest opponent to reunification. Queen Kathalema, High Marshal of the Shield Realm, had until then always argued against reforming into a single nation. She pointed out the tactical wisdom in spreading elven resources among several states, ensuring that even if one realm should fall to the charduni, others would have a chance to survive. When Jandaveos returned, however, a need no longer existed to create "back-up" elven nations. With the support of the Shield Realm's potent military, Glitheval had the martial and political strength he needed to enact his vision.

Ehitovael and Sylavael's desire for imperial restoration was only spottily replicated in the other realms. Gangulael was mired in an existential crisis, uncertain if it should continue in its drive to embrace its "forest roots" or return to the fold. The situation was even more complex in Pelegael, where the prideful elves of Phadalera declared themselves the capital of a restored Eldura-Tre. That decision splintered the Midrealm into half a dozen minor states, which over the course of a few months went from squabbling to civil war. Worst of all though was the fate of Kasiavael, where the rebirth of Jandaveos convinced the demonic influences that they

needed to act if they were to seize power. The resulting bloodshed in the Skysight Realm continues today.

In all, roughly 80% of the old elven territories have joined the new Divine Empire. Their population once more on the rise, and their morose depression lifted by Jandaveos' return, the elves have much to do. The next years will be pivotal in determining if this new nation will survive. Also of concern is what impact the Divine Empire will have on its neighbors. Already it has allies and enemies across the three continents.

It is clear the elves have as their priority the restoration of their old imperial order. Already work has begun in Anchoer, transforming the city from a military port into a true capital. Regional debates have begun to select a new Council of Archons, and Kathalema has been crowned the First Empress of the new empire. The Divine Theocracy has been reestablished, and though sorely reduced in number, the surviving high magi have begun to congregate, going so far as to recreate the Order of the Rose. By all accounts the elves are off to a good start.

Geography

The landscape of the Divine Empire of the Rose is varied, both geologically and politically. Warmed by the currents of the Blood Sea and buffered from extremes of temperature by its proximity, the empire is mostly temperate grasslands and forests. Many of the creatures that populate this region have been converted into their pre-Divine War benevolence by the return of Jandaveos. Of the dangers that remain, the reestablished elven orders and the Divine Theocracy are rapidly bringing them to heel. With the return of elven expatriates and the emancipation of the half-elves, the countryside is once more bustling with activity. Fallow land has been transformed into farms in the past few months, and neglected roads are being tended to by a nearly fanatical engineering corps. Forests that were once wild and untamed have been tempered by the renewed magics of the high elven clergy. It is as if the land itself is rediscovering the meaning of beauty.

The Once-Forsaken

Divine intervention or not, a people do not change overnight.

When Chern fell and cursed the high elves, they were not instantly forsaken as many have been led to believe (and, indeed, as many of the high elves themselves believe). It was an admittedly fast but gradual process, whereby the spirit of the elven people was crushed and corrupted. Also, the high elves were already in decline millennia before their battle with Chern, weakened spiritually and morally by the departure of the Dragon Princes and the constant warfare with the charduni. The expansion of Lede and the coming of the Silver Circle did not help, as Eldura-Tre was forced to witness the destruction or conversion of many formerly friendly human nations by these mili-

tary juggernauts. The devolution of the gnolls under Khanughu was the proverbial last straw, and by the start of the Divine War the elves were a weary people.

Nevertheless, the elves may well have recovered from this nadir had Jandaveos survived the war. His death, and the subsequent decimation of the elven population by Chern, shattered what foundation elven society had left. Generations of elders were slain on the Cliffs of Promise that fateful day, creating a loss of high elven culture not witnessed since the Diaspora.

To say that the universe was unkind to the elves is a cosmic understatement. The elves, rarely ones to roll over and die (as Chern discovered to his dismay), returned the favor in kind. Their idealism, they reasoned, had made them soft and naïve. Even the gentlest of Eikantians decided to focus what spirit their people had left and harden it as the world obviously wanted it to be. Essuites among the fragmentary Council of Archons found wide support among the surviving populace, and those clerics not left half insane from the death of their god likewise embraced the dark philosophies of the Seventh August. It would be this new, hardened race of forsaken elves that would resolve to splinter their once-beloved empire and live on as disparate principalities.

As the century and a half following Victory wore on, the elves became more and more comfortable in their new rule. Rather than rebuilding their empire as they had in ages past, the survivors wallowed in self-pity and grief. With time, this became in equal parts anger at the rest of the world, and ennui. The high elves had slain a titan single-handedly, and they were forsaken for it. Even their mastery of illusion, however, could not mask their decline forever. The charduni were rebuilding to the south, the petty humans of the west were at their old games again, and far to the north in Ghelspad, the Calastians were on the move. In past generations the elven solution would have been to redouble their resolve, gather their resources and prepare to drive the ill-doers back on the plains of battle. Not this time.

Instead, as history now sadly recalls, the elves began "procuring" humans and other races for breeding stock. This started off innocently enough. The elven principalities offered rich payment (and they had treasure to spare, now that so many of their number were dead) to anyone who would fulfill the role of surrogate parent. This slowly changed to indentured servitude, as waves of refugees from the Black Dragon Throne's expansion sought sanctuary in the elven realms. Slavery and kidnapping seemed the "natural" extension. True to their new Essuite leanings, the forsaken elves used the ends to justify the means (if and when they felt justification was necessary at all). Only in a few places, in particular Ehitovael, was the slide into moral ambiguity slowed in any fashion.

It should come as no surprise, then, that Jandaveos' return did not instantly restore the elves to their "benevolent former selves." Eldura-Tre was still gone (Phadaler's pretense notwithstanding), and the barbarity the elves

had stooped to during their forsaken state was evident everywhere in the form of human slaves and half-elves.

The high elf of today would shock his forebear. Today's elves have a more utilitarian view of life, willing to do anything as needed to ensure their well-being. Modern elves still *try* to uphold the ideals of old but abandon them as reality dictates. They do not fly in the face of tradition whenever it becomes inconvenient, however, and this alone keeps them from losing all sense of ethics. They are practical idealists, if such a thing can exist, doing what a pure idealist would hesitate to do in order to ensure their ideals survive. Thus, what remains unchanged is elven tenacity, which, as it has for thirty thousand years, still drives the elves to persevere — regardless of the cost.

Independent Cities

Two major cities exist as autonomous states, outside the structure of the new elven empire. Anchoer, the new capitol, has been granted special status due to its increased importance, while Dolamean's status as a center for trade has helped it stay separate from the empire while at the same time providing vital services and security.

Anchoer

Even in the days of the principalities, Anchoer was something of a symbol of elven unity. Ehitovaen ships were a common sight in this Sylavaen port, and together mariners from both nations cooperated to keep dangerous sea creatures at bay. It was a logical choice as the new capital of the Divine Empire of the Rose.

Anchoer is an ancient city, founded when the first Therathosian colonists made their way to Termana. In its function, the port has changed little and still makes a brisk trade in goods between the two continents. When Sylva departed the material plane and her kingdom became the Shield Realm, Anchoer continued to play a vital role, acting as a major production site for weapons and naval vessels. Even today, one can find just about anything of martial worth in the markets of Anchoer, and nowhere outside of Ehitovaeon can one find a better shipwright.

Except for the massive construction underway throughout the city, Anchoer is a very peaceful and safe place to live. The newly restored imperial magistrates patrol its streets constantly, renewed elven magic enhances its defenses, and the presence of the Divine Empire's best legions ensures hostile parties stay clear of its boundaries.

The population of Anchoer has likewise been boosted by the Divine Theocracy's attempts to emancipate the half-elves and their nonelven parents. Now afforded equal rights as high elves, under the Anchoer Concord, many of these former "second-class citizens" have made their way to the Divine Empire's new capital. There they can find land and resources prepared for them, and many have taken to their new home well.

The House of Sagacious Discourse: Though incomplete, this future home of the Council of Archons already exceeds the size of most structures across Termana. Magically constructed by members of the Council of Magi, the House incorporates a unique blend of styles from across the Divine Empire of the Rose.

North Maritime Quarter: When complete, this new quarter will have some of the largest dry-docks in the world. It will also handle the bulk of industrial drayage to and from Anchoer. Beyond its mercantile significance, the north maritime quarter will be responsible for rebuilding the new high elven navy.

South Maritime Quarter: In contrast to the Spartan design of its northern counterpart, the south maritime quarter is designed to receive foreigners in "traditional high elven style." Restaurants and pubs line its wide boulevards, with flowering trees and fruit stands scenting the air with their sublime aromas. Fountains and parks festoon the quarter, and discreet magistrates ensure safety even during the night.

Rose Garden: Resurrecting the old Therathosian tradition of having a large public garden in every major city, Anchoer will be the first to have a bona fide rose garden worthy of the high elven name. Spanning two square miles, this botanical masterpiece will contain hundreds of varieties of roses, support a new botanical university, and be open to all visitors around the clock for no charge. It is widely believed that the much-anticipated ambassador from Vera-Tre will make his residence here.

Dolamean

The Free City of Dolamean, formerly the chief trading port of Kasiavael, remains a key link between the Divine Empire (and, for that matter, the whole of Termana) and Ghelspad. It has also become a bulwark against the advance of the Shining Horde, repelling incursions from Abadonius on a daily basis. As a result, the first thing travelers see as they sail into its enormous harbor (still under construction) is flotillas of elven warships and the rising battlements of the fortress-city.

A large contingent of dwarves from Burok Torn now resides in Dolamean, lending its advanced stone working to the reconstruction of the city. Many native Dolameaners aren't sure how to react these newcomers, though many agree their engineering expertise has been indispensable. The problem is their outward resemblance to the charduni. While the elves are perfectly aware no relation exists between these emissaries of King Thain and their hated enemies to the south, prejudice is never rational or easily set aside.



Ganjulaeon

Population: 23,800 (high elf 55%, half-elf 36%, still-forsaken 3%, gnoll 2%, human 2%, other 2%)

Government: Imperial Province

Ruler: Lady Shaalla, the Weaver of Wrath and Sensibility (*female high elf Rgr13/Wiz3, CN*)

Capital: Vaskael

Formerly the principality of Ganjulael, the Forest Realm, Ganjulaeon is the Divine Empire's chief producer of lumber and other woodland goods. It is also the westernmost territory under the Rose Throne's direction control, and the high elves' link to the newly reestablished gnollish mootomes.

It was once the spiritual heart of the imperial realm, where Emperor Eldur of Therathose wedded his beloved Ganju, the Dragon Prince of Forests in Spring and Summer.

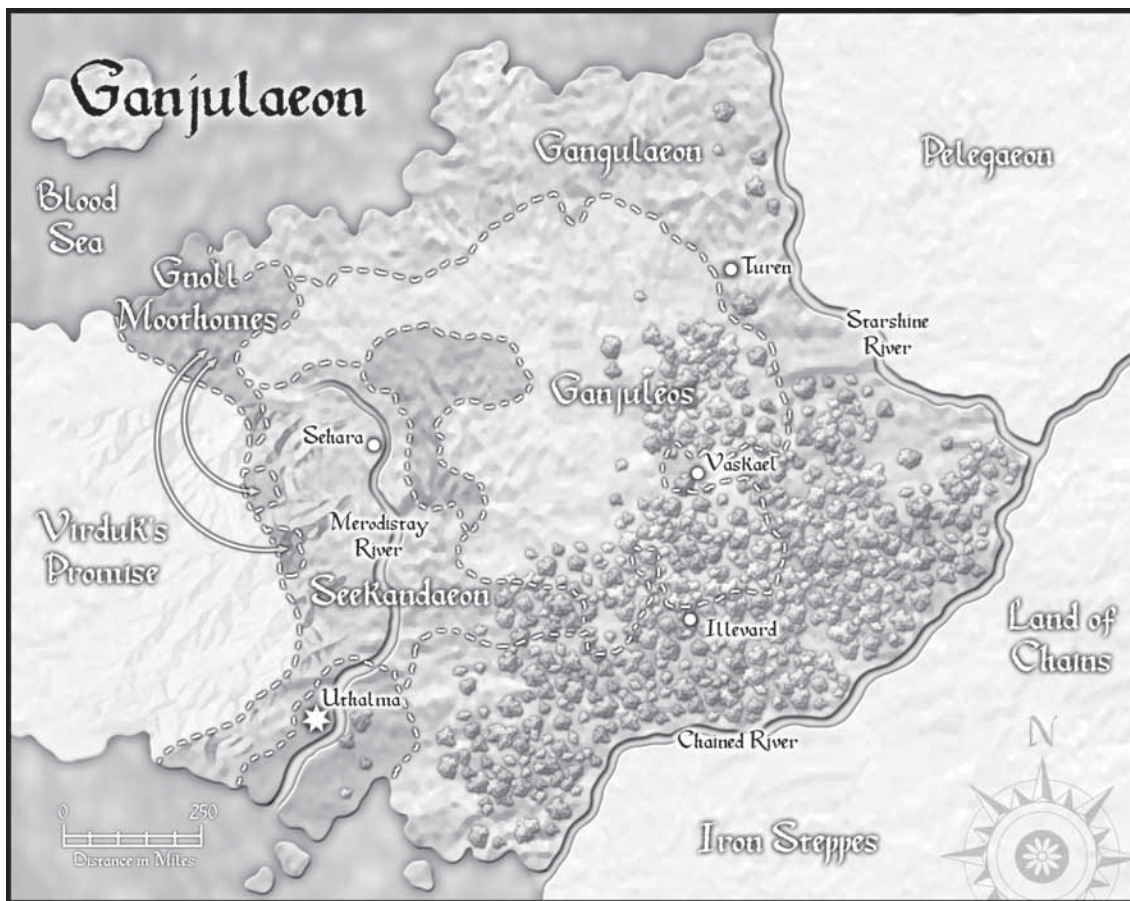
With the death of Jandaveos, the ancient spirit of the region collapsed and its people turned completely to "the old ways," embracing nature in a manner superficially similar to the Vera-Treans. Their tribes warred constantly with each other, threatening to decimate their already low populations. This was accompanied by rampant slavery, as tribes captured humans to breed new warriors. Ganjulael became a feared place for elf and nonelf alike.

Then Jandaveos returned, and the realm was divided. Prince Shendael, the Keepers, and much of the urban populace supported reunification. The elven tribes did not. Their refusal split the lands of the Forest Realm. Ganjulael was divided into the modern imperial province of Ganjulaeon, the still-forsaken state of Ganjuleos, and the gnollish mootomes of Szerkandaeon. Uthalmas was declared neutral territory.

Geography

Still sparsely populated, despite the influx of half-elven and nonelven settlers, Ganjulaeon remains a wild place. Like the still-forsaken state of Ganjuleos, it comprises mostly untamed forests and thick grasslands. Much of the remainder of Ganjulaeon is rich alluvial lands bordering Pelegaeon and the rogue, self-proclaimed Eldura-Tre.

Unlike Ganjuleos, the Forest Province has a healthy network of roads, elegantly built so as to obscure them from casual inspection. Nature lovers can walk the length and breadth of the province and not realize it is inhabited at all. Hamlets and small towns (the only real urban "centers" the province has) are like-



wise concealed, their architecture designed to mimic the textures, materials and plants of the surrounding countryside.

The idyllic atmosphere ends at the Plaguelands, the horrific northern coastal territory comprising the province's northern half. The air is thick with contagion, and vermin of all manner live there. Worse, it is home to many of the Last Great Suffering's creations and empowers these titanspawn with the foul energies left after the titan's demise. Few call it the Cliffs of Promise anymore, not even the high elves.

The greatest single feature of the province is undoubtedly the Zenith Tree, an enormous arbor with few equals in the world. Said to be the gift of Denev, it stands at the border between Ganjuleos and Ganjulaeon, a deliberate attempt on the part of the elves to ensure that good relations between the two continue.

People

During the Diaspora, the high elves who fled to Ganjulaeon were mystics and faithful of unusual convictions. They chose to land in the cultural heart of elvendom, because it was only here they could quench their sorrows. They also chose it because they were especially moved by the fall of Therathose, and, believing their society fatally flawed to have allowed it to happen, resolved to purge themselves of these flaws. The result was the creation of

several orders of monks, uniquely high elven in esthetics, though bearing some resemblance to the asaathi warriors with whom their race had just warred.

The folk of Ganjulaeon try to be as outgoing and open as they can, almost as if they were trying to mellow the harshness of the Ganjuleosians. They import the newest fashions from foreign lands, enjoy foreign food and even go so far as to learn the languages of other races. This policy has some practicality. Ganjulaeon is critically underpopulated. In an effort to attract half-elves and former human slaves from other regions of the Divine Empire, Ganjulaeon is trying to present itself as the "province friendly to nonelves."

Vaskael

The newly appointed capital of Ganjulaeon was a minor trading post in the days of the principalities. That is no longer true, and a massive metropolis has sprung up around the once-sleepy hamlet. Vaskael is important both as a hub for overland travel and for being the "western gate" to the Divine Empire. Caravans heading eastward from Uthalma invariably pass Vaskael, and many high elves consider the city their last stop before stepping into the "wild lands" of western Ganjulaeon.

Hall of Magistrates: As the regional hub of the imperial magistracy, Vaskael boasts one of the largest meeting halls the organization now possesses. This or-

nate marble building is modeled after meeting halls of the Eldurian era, with long colonnades and high-rising atria.

Temple of Nemorga: A clear sign of Ganjulaeon's "open door" policy is the enormous shrine to Nemorga, under construction in the city's north quarter. A gift from the elves to the soon-to-arrive emissaries from Hollowfaust, the temple is tastefully constructed from limestone and opal.

Tower of High Magus Thenlos: Thenlos is the ranking member of the Order of the Leaf and makes his home in this modest (by high magi standards) abode. His presence and willingness to teach at the local college of magic have attracted aspirants from across the empire and made Thenlos into something of a folk hero.

Braggan's Mess: Headquarters of the province's most prominent mercenary band (though they claim it to be a society for like-minded adventurers), Braggan's Mess is a solidly built complex of Darakene design. This is in part because many of Braggan's Band are veterans from the Wexland civil war who have moved to the Divine Empire to better understand the homeland of their god.

Other Cities

Turen: Turen remains mostly unchanged from the forsaken age, a mix of military outpost and mercantile hub. Its population has swelled, however, composed mostly of would-be heroes hoping to make names for themselves in the Plaguelands. Due to the often foolhardy quests of these brave souls, the Order of the Morning Sky and Order of the Leaf have opened extensive healing facilities in the city.

Illevar: The hamlet of Illevar is nonetheless the second largest base for Veshian Vigils in the region. Its proximity to the Zenith Tree makes it an important rest stop for pilgrims and is in part why the vigilants have congregated here as well.

Thoranvar: In an attempt to reclaim the Plaguelands, a band of elven clerics and incarnates recently founded the warded city of Thoranvar. Even though it is only half a mile into the corrupted area, the settlement is assaulted by titanspawn and mutant creatures on a nightly basis. Were it not for the incredible abjurative magic of the village's inhabitants, it would have been lost long ago. Vladawen the Titanslayer frequents Thoranvar on occasion, though the priest's motives for doing so remain unclear.



Pelegaeon

Population: 176,000 (high elf 70%, half-elf 18%, human 7%, still-forsaken elf 2%, other 3%)

Government: Imperial Province

Ruler: Lord Faustus, the Walker in Scepters and Thrones (*male high elf Wiz15, CN*)

Capital: Haethea

The modern Middle Province has always been a place of extremes. Even (and perhaps especially) during the forsaken age, the primacy of appearance took precedence above all other concerns. Admittedly, however, those were dark times, when the pursuit of beauty was genuinely hollow — an insult to the realm's achievements in past eras. Now that the capital has been moved to Anchoer, the Pelegaeonians breathe a bittersweet sigh of relief. The center of the elven world is no longer theirs to enjoy, but neither are the heavy burdens of rule. In the aftermath of Jandaveos' rebirth, the region is busy reinventing itself, and in true Pelegaeonian style, the residents are doing it with gusto.

Pelegaeon was the old heartland of the elves, when the capital of Eldura-Tre (the real one) was Phadalera. Grand cities housed the elite of elven society, and the pursuit of beauty was venerated above all else. The death of Jandaveos tipped the realm into true decadence, however. Some blamed the meddling Enkili for the collapse of Pelegaeon morality, while others felt it to be a result of the loss of spiritual direction in the years following the Divine War.

Regardless of the actual cause, the moral degeneration of the Midrealm became so severe that when Jandaveos returned some among the realm actually renounced him. Queen Brigetta was dethroned, and Pelegaeld descended into an exceedingly brief and strangely nonviolent civil war. Out of this conflict emerged four new powers. The loyalists, backed by the Order of the Eagle, reunified central and eastern Pelegaeld with the Divine Empire, readopting its Eldurian-era name of Pelegaeon.

Phadalera would not yield, however, and annexed the duchies surrounding it, declaring the region "Eldura-Tre" and denouncing the Divine Empire as a traitorous usurpation. Shealas likewise wished to remain independent, its stated reason being that neither the Divine Empire nor Phadalera had proven itself worth to lead the new elven age. It founded the Shealas League. Finally, the nobles of Beldani seized control of local garrisons and declared independence, dubbing themselves the Kingdom of Diamonds and Gold.

Pelegaeon today remains an uncertain place where loyalties are quick to change. Only the Order of the Eagle and the Rose Throne can stabilize the region, and they do so through constant vigilance. To their credit, the people of the Middle Province have made good of a bad situation, and given time may regain their past position of glory.

Geography

Already a small realm in the forsaken age, the splintering of the still-forsaken kingdoms has made Pelegaeon a dwarf of a province (a description one would be unwise to speak in front of Pelegaeonians). Still, it remains one of the more peaceful of lands, and so remains well populated and maintained. Much of Pelegaeon is temperate forest and gently hilled grasslands. Rivers and streams are shallow and clear, offering fresh drinking water without risk of sudden attack by malign aquatic beasts. Much like Ganjulaeon, the roads of the Middle Province are artfully designed but well marked by columns and other accoutrements, that a traveler need never fear getting lost.

The greatest hazards in recent days are thieves who patrol the highways. Striking and leaving without their quarry ever realizing their presence, these criminals have made Pelegaeon unpopular among merchants and caravan runners. Despite the imperial magistracy's best efforts, these thefts continue unabated, which has left

some to believe that the magistrates are either inept or corrupt, or that some outside influence is at work.

People

Pelegaeonians are not morally bankrupt hedonists who wallow in excess and scheme against the empire. *Those* elves now reside in "Eldura-Tre" and the Kingdom of Diamonds and Gold. True Pelegaeonians wrested much of their realm for the Rose Throne. They are industrious and dedicated, and elevate art for its beauty, enlightenment and ability to strengthen the imperial cause. One need only suggest otherwise to be proven wrong, as the hot-tempered high elves of this region are quick to challenge and never back down from a duel. Also, they have abandoned all of the foolish posturing of the forsaken age, revealing that when not drunk, the "master swordsman" is a master swordsman after all.

That said, Pelegaeon is a friendly place, relatively open to outsiders and tolerant of all comers, regardless of race. Though its residents broach no nonsense, the Middle Province is laxer than its counterparts in enforcing the laws of the Rose Throne, willing to make allowances as long as one tries to keep within the "spirit of the rules."

A great diversity of belief can be found in Pelegaeon, a holdover from its less inhibited days in the forsaken age. During that time, heresies of all sorts



abounded within the region, and though some of these have been reincorporated into the Divine Theocracy, nonorthodoxy remains strong through the province. The priests of Jandaveos are not concerned by this (to be frank, they are too agog with joy to be much concerned with anything) and maintain a strong presence in Pelegaeon to observe how this religious tolerance will pan out. Interestingly, it has created a sizable minority of secular elves, perhaps an outgrowth of the region's fascinations with "all things Hollowfaustian" (Pelegaeonians consider the macabre dance of the necromancers to be "classy," and ghost masks are all the rage currently).

Haethea

The enchanted city of Haethea is an apt helm for the new Middle Province. It is a place of wonder and magic, headquarters of the Order of the Eagle. Yet its massive energies are fiercely reigned in, disciplined by the training of the magi. This is much the same for Pelegaeon, also full of wonder and energy, and also trying very hard to channel it constructively.

Haethea has undergone massive reconstruction in recent months. Unlike the other new capitals of the empire, it has always been an important center of art and learning. Therefore, Haethea remains recognizable to older elves, with its lily motifs and vast archways.

Avian Hall: The citadel of the Order of the Eagle, Avian Hall is a vast, ring-shaped building of tourmaline archways and adamantine affectations. It is instantly recognizable for the mystical fulcrum it is, and even the more reckless of thieves know better than to trespass. It is tempting, though, for within the Avian Hall are kept some of the greatest mystical artifacts of the previous imperial ages.

Palace of Sublime Musings: The Duke of Haethea was gracious enough to vacate this Eldurian-style palace, which now serves as the legislature and regional base of Pelegaeon's magistrates. The sumptuous public galleries are almost always full, as students and junior bureaucrats try to observe the archons and gain experience with governmental functioning.

The Fountains of Fortune: Nine hundred mystical fountains are scattered across the city, part of a vast network of magical walls that can, in an instant, be raised to protect the city.

Other Cities

Theran: As the only other major city to remain loyal to the imperial cause, Theran has become the mercantile hub of the

province. Trade and other such "mundane business" are limited by decree within Haethea, and so have congregated in Theran. The city's meteoric growth has also been fueled by the massive influx of human and half-elfen migrants from Sylavael.

Tepardis: The garrison town of Tepardis was once a stabilizing factor in the turbulent days of the forsaken age. Now it serves that purpose again, keeping careful watch on the machinations of Phadalera and the self-styled Eldura-Tre. It is said spies from the still-forsaken kingdom are kept here, and it is to prevent their rescue that the city is as guarded as it is.

Varlau: The town of Varlau is fast becoming a city, and despite its citizens' best efforts, it is becoming a city with a bad reputation. Its close proximity to the Shealas League and the Kingdom of Diamonds and Gold has made it a popular stopover for people traveling to and from the still-forsaken kingdoms. Among the many inns and "comfort palaces" that have been recently built are many gambling establishments. Still, Varlau serves as a useful rumor mill, and the imperial magistracy has begun planting agents throughout the city.

Sylavaeon

Population: 200,000 (80% high elf, 15% half-elf, 4% human, 1% other)

Government: Imperial Province

Ruler: Lord Oten, the Ten Despairs (*male high elf Ftr8/Mnk10, LN*)

Capital: Ulamakhe

An elf from Eldura-Tre would have difficulty recognizing Sylavaeon. During the Second Imperial Age it was a pastoral paradise, loved along with the Forest Province for its peaceful pace of life.

Now it is one of the most heavily fortified regions in the world. The center of the Divine Empire of the Rose, the Shield Province Sylavaeon stands ready to march into its future with sword in hand and crown on brow.

Sylavaeon is named for the Dragon Princess Syla, who was known for her benevolence and love of the land. Once devoted pastoral pacifists, the folk of the region were devastated by the first Elf-Charduni War, and in its wake took up arms and became the finest warriors in the empire.

Jandaveos' death extinguished what compassion was left of the region's spirit. As such, when it was renamed the principality of Sylavael, the elves called it the Shield Realm. For the next century and a



half, the Sylavaens fought for the survival of their race. Constant war with the charduni winnowed down their forces. Grim and pitiless, the elven warriors of Sylavael were regarded with apprehension even by their fellow elves, something which remains unchanged today.

It is ironic, then, that the Shield Province has become the new heartland of the reborn Divine Empire. Once peaceful farmers, the folk of the province are now a harder, stronger people, vaunting warfare and martial prowess as the highest of elven virtues. The massive changes taking place within Sylavaeon are proof of this change, and observers fear rightly as to what this might mean.

Geography

Growth has been so rampant in the past year that the Rose Throne has had to issue edicts setting aside portions of Sylavaeon's forests. Otherwise, nothing may well be left in a decade or two. The countryside is crisscrossed by wide, well paved roads, many of them enchanted to aid the swift movement of troops. Virtually every hamlet and city is walled to some extent, equipped with magical and mundane lookouts for possible enemy activity. Hills are kept free of vegetation, and many are half excavated to make defensive locales and for the ore they contain.

All this has given the landscape a hard, chiseled appearance, mirroring perhaps the militant culture of its people. Ironically, it is only within the tainted domain of the Bleeding Fields, itself an ancient battlefield, that "peace" and quiet can be found (this is of course not entirely true, as powerful undead and outsiders roam the place, guarding the treasure said to be hidden there). Here vast swaths of blue gray moors lie perpetually ensconced in fog. Even at high sun only a pale glow reaches the ground, and plant life has been usurped by fungi as the dominant vegetation in the region.

It is the Rose Throne's intention to enter the Bleeding Fields and wipe it clean of corruption. Its proximity to Anchoer mandates this, as does its potential use by the Shining Horde as a beachhead to the Termanan mainland. These plans remain on hold, however, until at least the capital is complete.

People

The Shield Province has eased its stance somewhat since the forsaken age. Her people once more take to fighting with love (perhaps too much) rather than grim conviction. Visitors are only kept under surveillance in certain key areas (the Charduni front chief among them), though foreigners are still discouraged from coming without good reason.

Sylavaeonians consider it a great honor to be the new heartland of the empire. Their pride is palpable and has served to bring dignity to the frenzy of reconstruction. Duty and loyalty remain the chief virtues an

elf can aspire to in these parts, though being curt and aggressive has crept into the common psyche.

The greatest change since the forsaken age is the attitude of the common soldier. During that dark time, half-elven recruits were often involuntary draftees, forced into service by law. Their pure elven commanders remained forever on top, and morale was maintained only through the most fascist of means. Today, only those who wish to serve in the imperial host patrol the Charduni front, and now that they can look forward to equal treatment, those half-elves who have remained work as vigorously as the rest. Morale has therefore been at an all-time high, boosted in no small part by the return of Jandaveos.

Ulamakhe

This fortress-port remains the megalithic capital of the Shield Province. Its coal-black walls and gray granite buildings are an imposing if inelegant sight. This is quickly changing, though, as imperial engineers work to reface the older buildings, restoring them to their Eldurian-era beauty. Of course, nothing has needed repair, as the city was maintained fully functional throughout the forsaken age.

Beyond its appearance, however, Ulamakhe is changing at its core. Once the central holding place for human slaves and breeding stock, the capital has become a symbol of elven barbarity and amorality. The once large human population has left, along with many half-elves and sympathetic high elves. Swelling the rest of the Shield Province, they have left Ulamakhe strangely empty.

Fortress of Blades: This great keep remains the base of operations for the High Marshal, though her duties elsewhere preclude her from coming often. Instead, it has become the permanent abode of Marshal Linnorm, who personally oversees the renovations of the city from here. Most recently, the Fortress of Blades has been converted into a secret academy for training the elite within the imperial host. The potent abjorative wards and safeguards built into the fortress make it an ideal place to demonstrate and develop new fighting techniques for the imperial host.

The Proving Grounds: Formerly the Slave Quarter, many of the old buildings in this area have been demolished. In their place are several low-capacity arenas, where imperial soldiers can train and commanders can organize battle simulations. The death of a recruit during one such exercise has put into doubt the magical failsafes of the grounds, and some fear the wrack generated during the area's more shameful days may be coming back to haunt the high elves.

The Forge: The smithies of the Forge continue their unending production of weapons for the imperial host. With the Divine Empire trying to rebuild itself, the demand for weapons has only increased. To make matters worse, the standards of the high elves have

gone up since the forsaken age, and anything less than masterwork is no longer acceptable. Thankfully, the restoration of the Divine Theocracy has improved the quality of the Forge's works, to the point that the district now houses virtually all of the city's clerics.

Other Cities

Paesha: The fortress of Paesha remains the heavily guarded western gateway to the Shield Province, though it now sees a constant stream of travelers going both to and from the Shield Province. Many of the humans who left Ulamakhe have settled here, giving the city a distinctly foreign feel.

Fort Ged: Ged remains the keystone to the Charduni front, and is if anything more heavily garrisoned than during the forsaken age. It remains off limits to outsiders.

Utel: The old breadbasket of the Shield Realm, Utel remains an important agricultural center. More recently its logistical role was downgraded, as the imperial host attempted to decentralize (and thus make less vulnerable) the farming operations around the city. Hardly missing a step, Utel has replaced its old food production projects with herding and animal husbandry. It is now the best (if not the largest) source of mounts in all the Divine Empire.

Kasiavaeon

Population: 80,000 (high elf 74%, half-elf 18%, human 8%)

Government: Imperial Province, Magocracy

Ruler: Lady Xanthippe, the Corporeal of Energy
(*female high elf Wiz 13/Archmage 5, CN*)

Capital: High Tower

The Skysight Province has seen better days, though its inhabitants waste little time pondering their loss. Instead they focus their formidable magic on containing the evil of the Shining Ones (see "Daemonius," below) and lending what skills they can to restore the Third Imperial Age. Forever an introspective people more interested in possibilities than realities, the Kasiavaeonians do their best to be the oracular exemplars tradition would have them be. Certainly their hopes lie in the undetermined future, for in the here and now, the outlook is grim.

The northern half of the isle of Eldurathryn has long been venerated for its mystical properties. A preeminent center of magical learning, the Skysight Province soon became so influential that the

Eldurian-era magistracy ceded jurisdiction of Kasiavaeon to the realm's magi, starting a trend that would continue for the next five thousand years. By the time of First Elf-Charduni War, Kasiavaeon was a magocracy in the truest sense, with considerable autonomy from the rest of Eldura-Tre.

The events of the Divine War sorely wounded the pride of Kasiavaeon. Despite their best efforts, the magi had failed to predict Kadum's Deluge, the coming of Chern and the destruction of the elven deity. Blaming themselves for Jandaveos' death, many in the Skysight Province chose to go into voluntary exile, scattering themselves across Scarn and beyond.

Those who remained took poorly to the new forsaken age. Robbed of much of their divinatory powers, the surviving magi worked tirelessly to determine what had gone wrong, finally settling on a plan (some say demon-inspired) to resurrect their lost god. Dissenters to this new plan died from unfortunate accidents, left Scarn or had sudden changes of heart. The new Order and the magi of High Tower had little tolerance for dissent.

Then Jandaveos returned, and yet again the Kasiavaens were caught off-guard. So too, it would seem, were their extraplanar puppet masters, who were forced to act prematurely. The ensuing invasion split Kasiavael — the northern half became the dominion of the Shining Ones, and the southern half became the restored Skysight Province. As for the Order of the Star, it is in the process of purging the evil from its ranks while at the same time fending off the advance of the Shining Horde. Despite past failures, the rest of the empire still looks to the Order of the Star for magical guidance. It would appear the high elves are willing to forgive and place trust in the Skysight's people. The question now is whether the Skysight's people will forgive and place trust in themselves.

Geography

Kasiavaeon comprises gentle foothills south of Mount Syvos, the greatest peak on Eldurathryn and reputed location of a buried archive from the Second Imperial Age. The recent transformation of the Shining Horde, however, has left a thick layer of volcanic ash across the province. While buildings and roads have since been washed clean, the black-gray dust still covers the countryside, giving it a bizarre, petrified appearance.

Despite the Order of the Star's efforts and the imperial magistracy's aid, the wildernesses between the Skysight





Province's few cities remain dangerous places. The coming of the Horde forced many of the north's malign fey to flee southward, and the Horde itself has sent agents who use the province's rural areas to bypass the imperial host. Even the province's roads are unsafe, and visitors are advised to travel in large, heavily armed groups. Only the Skysight River is safe, as the magic radiating from its banks seems to repel the forces of evil.

People

Magic is everywhere in Kasiavaeon, and it colors everything the Kasiavaeonians see and do. The lowest servant has access to the arcane, even if it is only in the form of minor enchantments and items supplied by his master. This is changing, as the Order of the Star has made magical learning the new priority of the province, giving anyone willing to learn a chance to wield magic for themselves. Similarly, Kasiavaeonians are extremely learned, keenly aware of conditions elsewhere in the Scarred Lands and versed in the lore of her peoples.

When not exercising their minds, Kasiavaeonians are not unlike any other people, though their proximity to the Shining Horde makes it difficult to focus on levity. As such, they take extended sojourns to the rest of the Divine Empire

of the Rose, and even farther off to Ghelspad and Asherak. For this reason the people of the Skysight Province are fast becoming the most traveled folk in the empire, sporting a diversity in culture one wouldn't expect given their predominantly elven population.

High Tower

Almost lost to the Shining Horde during the chaos of Jandaveos' return, High Tower now serves as Kasiavaeon's primary staging area against the demon armies. Several new magi towers have been constructed in past months, and the magical defenses of the city have been reinforced by extensive walls of dwarven design. The once huddled masses of the city's lower levels have been replaced by crack detachments of the imperial host, and they in turn are supported by a dedicated population of tradesmen and farmers.

High Tower is also the stopover of choice for adventurers and mercenary bands seeking fame in the Shining Horde's lands. Merchants make a brisk trade with these visitors and provide a wide range of magical tools to combat the supernatural.

1. The First Tower: The First Tower is off limits by imperial decree, as agents of the Rose Throne attempt to plumb it for some hint as to how

to counter the Shining Horde's arrival. Valishan comes here often but has thus far been unable to find anything of use. Sources close to the high magus say that he is even considering asking the aid of foreigners, as Tamaean (the tower's former owner) apparently booby-trapped the tower against high elves.

2. The Old Tower: The multisection wonder that is the Old Tower predates the rest of the city by millennia. Said to be the abode of Protea herself (see Appendix: Prestige Classes, "Weaver of Constellations"), its greatest secrets remain beyond the reach of even the greatest of the high magi. Additional wings are being added to the tower's lower levels and will eventually serve the new public library of High Tower.

Due to its auspicious heritage, the tower's elegant archways and sun-motif designs are being used as templates for the reconstruction of the rest of the city.

3. The Temple of Stars: This once ruined temple is nearly fully restored, as masons from across the Skysight Province converge on High Tower to rebuild it. Originally fashioned from topaz and quartz, the temple was designed to reflect the moonlight onto the surrounding neighborhood, making it appear as though stars were on the ground. The temple's chief deity will of course be Jandaveos, but for reasons he has yet to reveal, each of the temple's two wings will be dedicated to Erias (demigod of dreams) and Drendari (demigoddess of shadows). Though confused, the workers are too happy to question their god; they are simply they have a god once more to rebuild this temple for.

4. The Lapis Tower: Once the meeting place of the Council of Magi, the Lapis Tower had been repaired since the battle for High Tower (during which it was severely damaged). Its famous dome can assume any appearance, include becoming transparent to allow one to view the night sky. It is around the base of the Lapis Tower that the new legislature is being built.

5. The Ruby Tower: The key to High Tower's defenses, the Ruby Tower is well guarded by both the Order of the Star and the imperial host. The destructive magic therein is accessibly only to the most trustworthy of citizens, and the full extent of the tower's abilities

remain known only to the Order and a few among the imperial government.

Other Cities

Riskahel: The Eldurian-age port of Riskahel is now the second largest city in the Skysight Province. It is well guarded both by the imperial host and navy, and is of great strategic importance. The dainty pastels of Riskahel's buildings belie the seriousness of its worth, both as the major port for ships coming from Asherak, and as a maritime bulwark against both the Shining Horde and the Charduni Empire.

Ehitovaeon

Population: 100,000 (high elf 85%, half-elf 15%)

Government: Imperial Province

Ruler: Lord Guulnar, the Water-God of Baedros (*male high elf Wiz10/Ftr3/Swt5, CN*)

Capital: Manaetae

Formerly the principality of Ehitovael, the imperial province of Ehitovaeon is fast becoming the Divine Empire's most prosperous territory. Beyond its military importance as the major bulwark against the Shining Horde, Ehitovaeon's ports now welcome trading ships from Ghelspad and Termana once more.

The Southsea Realm was known as Ehitovaeon, the Southsea Province, in the days of Eldura-Tre. Back then, it was a mercantile center of great importance, receiving ships from the Ledean Empire, the Dwarven Imperium and the far-off lands of Asherak. Her people were cosmopolitan and worldly, with strong opinions and a forthright bearing.

Her ships were the greatest in the world, especially the famous high elven galleons, which thwarted even the great navy of the Charduni. Yet the strength of the elven navy was finite, and during the Divine War, the titans smashed it to pieces, one ship at a time. The greatest loss occurred during Kadum's Deluge, when more than two thousand elven ships were destroyed in a single day. Many of the rest were destroyed in the battle with Chern, so that by the time of the Southsea Realm's founding, its navy was all but gone.

Elven mariners became extremely cautious during the forsaken age. Unlike their kin, the forsaken elves of Ehitovael were utterly opposed to the



enslavement of humans, and their mistrust of magic precluded the use of illusory affectations to mask their realm's decline. The Ehitovaens fell back on their art of crystal growing, a heritage acquired millennia before. Using magical crystals from the Tepuje cities of Gamulganjus, they were able to maintain their ships and cities and retained much of their old elven pride. When Jandaveos was reborn, therefore, the Southsea elves took to his return with the greatest ease.

Were it not for the arrival of the Shining Ones, Ehitovaeon may well have been chosen as the new center for the Divine Empire of the Rose. As it is the Southsea Province is a prosperous and spirited land, and her vast navy is slowly reforming, one ship at a time.

Geography

Spanning the southern half of the isle of Eldurathryn, Ehitovaeon is a land of flower-covered hills, lush forests and pristine rivers. Even its proximity to the Shining Horde has done little to sour the beauty of the Southsea Province, and newlyweds (now that the elves do such things again) journey to Ehitovaeon for their honeymoons. The aptly named Pleasant Hills dominate the province's interior, where it is said the beauty of the pre-Divine War world yet lives.

Many elves here, however, consider Ehitovaeon's maritime expanse more important than her land. West of the province is the Narrow Reach, an easily defensible strait where the last of Kadum's blood gives way to the pure waters of the Cerulean Ocean. The Southsea elves pride themselves on the defense of its waters, and the imperial navy uses the Blood Sea mutants to test and train their junior officers.

South and east of Ehitovaeon is the vast Cerulean Ocean, where it is said a sailor of destiny goes to live and die. For the last century and half it has lain largely unclaimed, violated on occasion by the barges of the charduni. The imperial navy intends to put an end to this and make the Cerulean a bounteous place once more. In the heyday of the Second Imperial Age, the Cerulean Sea was an important source of food and rare salts. Perhaps in a few years it will be so again.

People

Most Ehitovaeonians live by the sea, and all except for a few have seen it at least once. The maritime arts are common here, and a child's first voyage as sail watch or helmsman is considered a hallowed event. For this reason, Ehitovaeonians love to travel, be it to the mainland or farther abroad. Now with the security of the imperial navy spreading across the waters, civilian ships are once more plying the merchant routes of old.

Ehitovaeonians are deeply superstitious and distrust magic not linked to the sea. Only the purity of the waters frees magic of corruption, and land dwellers who wield the arcane must be up to no good. Recognized wizards are therefore clerics, sea witches or magi from the Order of Waves. Even then, spellcasters are afforded none of the respect and awe they normally receive in other lands, and are expected to be competent in day-to-day things (which is to say, sailing a ship), in addition to being adroit at magic.

Another trait that sets Ehitovaeonians apart is their labile moods. Said to mirror the psyche of the dragon prince Ehito, the Southsea temper is as legendary as the Southsea sailors. This isn't to say these elves are ruffians. A Southsea elf would never demean either himself or the name of his ship by resorting to violence. They do, however, have a strong sense of self honor, are easily offended and have a long memory of who wronged them.

Manaetae

Once called the Lily of the Deeps, Manaetae is a magnificent city of crystal and coral, summoned into being much as Phadalera was. Unlike the disgraced capital, Manaetae did not go into decline during the forsaken age. Instead the forsaken elves of the Southsea realm made sure to keep her magical quays and underwater habitats in good repair, a feat which was by no means easy.

When the Divine Empire of the Rose was founded and it became clear Phadalera would not be a suitable capital, much support came for moving the government here. The difficulty in expanding the city to accommodate the new buildings and the desire to choose a less partisan city eventually put Anchoer on top. If the people of Manaetae were offended, they have not shown it, and the city is easily the most important center in the high elven world, second (perhaps) only to Ulamakhe and Anchoer.

Crystal Staircase: The entrance to Manaetae is an enchanted crystal staircase, accessibly only by wading into the sea from the shore. In the past hundred years, Tepuje crystal growers have added a "guest quarter" around the staircase, and it is used today to accommodate visiting dignitaries.

Palace of the Wave-King: The grand palace, so lovingly maintained by Wave-King Glitheval, now houses the provincial legislature and offices of the admiralty. Because of the many treasures within its walls, the palace is perhaps the most heavily guarded structure in all of Manaetae.

The Temple of Waves: Jandaveos' old temple has been fully restored, complete with a special memorial for the fallen of Wexland, Burok Torn, Mithril, Vesh and Hollowfaust, who gave their

lives for the restoration of Jandaveos. The Ehitovaeonians consider it a point of honor to pay tribute to these departed allies. Many of the shrines that once surrounded the temple have been converted into ambassadorial residences.

New Quarter: Though it is not the new capital of the Divine Empire, the trade through Manaetae has increased to the point where her existing infrastructure cannot cope. Thus a new suburb has been constructed on the mainland and dubbed (unimaginatively) the New Quarter. The foreign offices of the Divine Empire's Ghelspadian allies can be found here, including a splendid new guild hall devoted to aquatic necromancy.

Other Cities

Ashiahl: Its strategic location at the mouth of the Skysight River has turned Ashiahl into an important home port for the imperial navy. Its chief complement includes the navy's smaller ships, departing Ashiahl on a regular basis to assault the Shining Horde.

Tahema: Agriculture remains Tahema's chief industry, as it was during the forsaken age. Now that they are one nation once more, Ganjulaeonians come here on pilgrimages, seeking to learn from the many monks and ascetics who live here.

Baenash: Guarding the eastern half of the Narrow Reach, Baenash is critical to the defense of Anchoer and the reinforcement of Dolamean. It also serves as the imperial capital's main link to Eldurathryn and is heavily garrisoned by the imperial host.

Druechol: Like Manaetae, Druechol is an underwater paradise, bathed in the pure blue of the Cerulean Ocean. It is an important center for Tepuje crystal carving, and the major source of Ehitovaeonian-style magical equipment.

Gnollish Moothomes

Population: 7,280 (gnoll 63%, high elf 22%, half-elf 9%, human 5%, other 1%)

Government: Autonomous Province, Tribalism

Ruler: Matsuiklan, the Beast Knight (*male gnoll Brb14/Ftr4, CN*)

Capital: Sehora

In accordance with ancient oaths, the gnolls of northern Termana have rejoined the elves. Their restored moothomes have given new hope to an otherwise directionless people, who until now were dying of cultural genocide at the hands of the humans. Five moothomes have been established in all, correspondingly roughly to the old boundaries of their Eldurian-era nation. The greatest of these

moothomes is the autonomous province of Szerkandaeon, with its capital at Sehora.

In addition to elven provinces and dragon kingdoms, Eldura-Tre also counted several gnollish moothomes within its territory. Indeed, gnollish archons, magistrates, magi and warriors served the Second Imperial Age. Unlike the elves, who were virtually destroyed by the fall of Therathose, the gnolls flourished with the founding of Eldura-Tre, creating a vast and prosperous society they christened Szerkan.

Szerkan was an important military province and played an important role in halting the charduni advance during the First Elf-Charduni War. Indeed, the gnolls' heroic sacrifice during that conflict prevented Eldura-Tre from falling. Their losses at the hands of the charduni shattered gnollish society, however, and with an entire generation slain, the easily impassioned gnolls turned to the "prophet" Khanughu, much to their ruin. After that, the dogmen's culture declined, until they were all but forgotten by the time of Jandaveos' death. Their moothomes were annexed into the new Forest Realm, and they became known only as savages.

The return of Jandaveos was an unexpected windfall, granting them both political and divine aid. Their passions once more inflamed, gnolls from across Termana gathered to rebuild their fallen moothomes. The greatest of their moothomes has become the imperial province of Szerkandaeon.

Geography

The gnollish moothomes border the Merodistay River, which acts an important waterway linking them to each other and with the elves. To the west are the Slate Hills, sparsely populated and supporting only stunted trees and meager hunting grounds. The east gives way to the plains of Ganjuleos and the forests of the Song Glade. Gnolls believe the Glade to be sacred to their ancestors and make pilgrimages to venerate the ushada (totem spirits) that live there.

Gnollish settlements are not an uncommon sight, and some are quite impressive, housing more than a thousand gnolls each. Built of sod, slate and clay, these structures are nonetheless roomy and robust. Travelers hoping for an easy overland trip will be disappointed, however. Gnolls do not permit the construction of roads within their moothomes. They claim it disrupts the flow of magic and is offensive to the ushada.

People

Strength and passion are what define a gnoll. They are a prideful people who value their freedom. They are also lovers of battle and exalt the arts of war. It was these qualities that first set them and the elves on a common destiny, eventually

leading to a close alliance. Though their passion got the better of them during the third millennium OC, the gnolls have grown weary of being the "savage underdogs" of Termana. They truly believe in the Divine Empire of the Rose, if for no other reason than it is their first chance in generations to make something more of their people.

On first meeting, most outsiders find gnolls coarse and intimidating. Szerkandaeonian gnolls tend to be blunt, speaking their mind without heed for tact. Their large build and above average height adds to the effect. The high elves learned long ago, however, that gnolls can be quite gregarious and that a good sense of humor (not to mention an open mind) can help smooth things over.

The dog-men also have a profound love of nature, and many are worshipper of Denev. Some few even venerate Tanil, a fact which came as quite a surprise to the first vigilants to make their way to the region. Now gnollish recruits are even at the Vigil headquarters in Uthalma and Vaskael, and Lave is wondering if it might not be a good idea to open a regional command in Sehora.

Interestingly, the gnoll's spiritual soulmates are the Ganjuleosian still-forsaken elves. Relations between the gnoll moots and the still-forsaken tribes are arguably closer than those between the Ganjuleosians and their high elven kin.

Sehora

Once the gnollish metropolis of Szerkandar, this city was abandoned after the First Elf-Charduni War. The severe losses incurred by the dog-men shattered their society in Ganjulaeon's environs and forced them to retreat further south. Szerkandar was completely supplanted by elven settlers by the time of the Divine War, and by then the glory of the gnolls was widely forgotten.

When the Divine Empire of the Rose was founded, Prince Shendael became Chief Minister of the revitalized magistracy. Knowing that his police force would have no credibility unless it could prove its devotion to all peoples of the empire (regardless of race), he seized upon the opportunity Sehora afforded. With an army of magistrates behind him, Shendael announced the emancipation of the gnollish tribes along the Merodistay River and granted them sovereignty of Sehora. For their part, the gnolls accepted graciously (Jandaveos had extended his healing to them as well, though it is not certain why he did this or how it achieved the benefits it did, since they were not affected by Chern's curse), and Sehora became the new capital of Szerkandaeon.

House of the Deities: This small but beautiful longhouse is of traditional gnollish design and is a restoration of the old House of the Deities from when Sehora was still called Szerkandar. In it one can find altars and shrines to a variety of deities (including Tanil, Jandaveos and Denev), as well as places set apart for honored gnollish ancestors.

Memorial of War: The gnolls are near completing this sacred commons, wherein they have erected close to thirty totems dedicated to the sacrifices made in the First and Second Elf-Charduni Wars. Designed by gnollish and elven druids, the memorial doubles as a druidic place of power and is a common meeting place for devotees of the land.

Tomb of Khanughu: Fashioned to resemble a natural waterfall, the Tomb of Khanughu has stirred no little controversy among both elves and gnolls. The warlord is hated across all of Termana, but the current moot elders believe his tale must not be forgotten. The tomb is therefore meant to be a solemn place of introspection and is maintained by the Order of the Leaf.

The Still-Forsaken States

Not for the first time in their history, the elves enter a new imperial age having lost many of their kinsmen. During the founding of Eldura-Tre, it was the wood elves and dark elves who parted ways. Now it appears not everyone is happy with the return of Jandaveos, and if they are, they have their own reasons for forsaking him. Out of these varied rationales are born the still-forsaken elves and the new nations they have founded.

Ganjuleos remains allied with the Divine Empire of the Rose. Phadaleria is a dangerous enemy. But all of them are reminders that the high elves have been irrevocably changed by Chern's curse, and even with the curse lifted, divisions remain.

Ganjuleos

Population: 36,500 (still-forsaken elf 77%, half-elf 13%, high elf 5%, other 5%)

Government: Tribalism

Ruler: None

Capital: None

The still-forsaken state of Ganjuleos occupies what was once the central portion of Ganjulael. Here live the wild elves of the central plains and the Song Glade, ardent folk who have embraced "the old ways" in their self-appointed mission and exile.

When the emissaries of the Divine Empire came to Uthalma, then the capital of the Forest Realm of Ganjulael, Prince Shendael welcomed them and pledged his support for the Rose Throne. He then warned them that not all of his realm would agree and that the empress might not attain the "complete" success she would have expected. His words were prophetic (or perhaps simply pragmatic and wise), for after learning of the Divine Empire's founding, the elven tribes of the deep forests and central plains ceded from Ganjulael. They founded a nation of their own, rebuffing Kathalema's best attempts to persuade them otherwise. Then, to the shock of their fellow elves, this splinter state renounced Jandaveos and named itself in the ancient tongue — Ganjuleos.

When Jandaveos died, the elves of the Forest Realm arguably took it the hardest. It was a flagrant demonstration of their failure to uphold their self-appointed oath, and with neither god, dragon nor king to lead them, the hardening of their souls which had begun so long ago began once more. They embraced what divinity was left — that spark which resided in the heart of each elf. Many failed and in their despair began turning to "the old ways." It was for this reason that the Ganjulaens reformed into tribes, engaging in primal rites their other forsaken kin found repugnant.

During the Convention of Ganju, the still-forsaken elves' parting words gave the high elves the condition by which they would rejoin the Divine Empire. They were: "We will return when our people can walk once more through the Plaguelands and all of its misbegotten ills. When

we can make that journey without fear, we will meet you upon the cliffs and come home. This is our promise."

By the time of Jandaveos' return, these elves had nigh completed their atavistic transformation. It was evident to them that they could not return, at least not until they had completed what they had set out to do. They were willing to live on the edge of the elven world in the past for their beliefs, and now they were willing to live exiled from both nation and god. To the Ganjuleosians, the Vow at Vaskael is as much their duty as anyone else's to complete. When they are ready, and their spiritual strength is sufficient to the task of protecting the divine, these still-forsaken elves believe they will be able to walk to the sea themselves (Plaguelands or no) and return to their people.

Geography

Ganjuleos consists of the plains south of the Plaguelands and extends deep into the Song Glade, where the majority of tribes dwell. It is a temperate nation, with little in the way of harmful river or upheavals, features which made it a sacred and well loved place in ancient times. Travelers to the region can expect little in the way of titanspawn attacks, but the region is called untamed for good reason. The unwary may well fall prey to the great cats and dinosaurs that roam the wilderness, and the still-forsaken elves have little tolerance for intruders. Still, as long as one is sensible and can get used to the waist-high grass and lack of roads, the "wilds" of Ganjuleos hold little to fear.

People

The elven tribes stopped their overt warfare with the return of Jandaveos, the only "gift" the god could give to his still-forsaken people. They remain as committed as ever to embracing the old ways, however. Today, some three dozen tribes exist, each one serving to protect a different region of their new nation.

These tribes still engage in combat, though it is of a highly ritualized form, designed to prevent death (though injury, often grave, still occurs; the Ganjuleosians believe nothing worth doing is without risk). These serve to hone the still-forsaken's spirit, though some believe it is a disturbing echo of the high elves' ancient need for violence and physical release. This minority believe the Ganjuleosians have become dangerously Essuite in their beliefs, though the still-forsaken have paid such naysayers no heed.

As part of their "returning to their roots" philosophy, many Ganjuleosians have adopted certain Ushadani practices (the spirit worship of Termama). Unlike other adherents of the spiritualistic belief, the elves treat the ushada as equals rather than superior divinities. This "guide" or "mentor" relationship seems to work well, at least as the still-forsaken tell it.

Uthalma

As his final act as sovereign of the Forest Realm, Prince Shendael ordered that Uthalma be declared a free city, and a shared capital for both Ganjuleos and Ganjulaeon. It was

his hope that the city could serve as a meeting place for high and still-forsaken elf alike, where even gnolls, humans and half-elves could feel welcome. Perhaps his hopes were entirely in vain, and Uthalma is fast becoming a crossroads in the western empire. Its large population of nonelves, combined with the city's impressive river trade, have given Uthalma a metropolitan feel it has never known in its long history. Most certainly it is a welcome stopover for itinerants in the region, a place where they can find a wide mix of cultures, goods and jobs, or quick transport by land or sea to any of the free lands of Termana.

Palace of Marble: Once empty and crumbling, this fantastic Eldurian-era building is being restored as a giant indoor commons. Already, merchants and guilds are scrambling for leases, and the elves have had to double the number of magistrates overseeing the palace's restoration.

Docks of Blood: The disorganized construction of these docks (the only significant ones in the region) has only been worsened by the rapid expansion of the human quarter. Several of the warehouses are being converted into consulates for the western kingdoms, with the Karsian keep being (not surprisingly) the most imposing and impressive. Many humans now "lovingly" refer to the docks of blood as "the bloody docks."

Tree of Life: The Order of the Leaf still maintains a presence within this giant marble tree, though many of its members and possessions have been transferred to Vaskael. Those who have remained work alongside still-forsaken druids and have turned the Tree into a de facto hospital of sorts.

The Haven: The old headquarters of the Keepers now serves as the regional base of Uthalma's magistrates. Because of this, many city dwellers view the place as the new administrative center of the city, a misconception the magistraterstry in vain to correct. The beleaguered elves have had to pull resources and workers from other projects to expand the Haven's wings, adding courthouses, offices and commons to accommodate the perpetual floods of petitioners.

Eldura-Tre (The Duchies of Phadalera)

Population: 52,000 (still-forsaken elf 98%, other 2%)

Government: Feudalism

Ruler: Regent Volkair, the Puppet of Phadalera
(*male still-forsaken elf Ftr5/Wiz7, CN*)

Capital: Phadalera

The old capital of the Second Imperial Age has the dubious distinction as being the first group among the forsaken elves to renounce Jandaveos and rebuke unification into the Divine Empire of the Rose. This move was motivated by selfish reasons and has disgraced both Phadalera and the duchies supporting it during the secession. Now "Eldura-Tre," as the audacious nobles of the region call their new kingdom, stands like a blight against the good name of the high elves. It is a place where little has changed since the

forsaken age, except that the still-forsaken there no longer have an excuse to indulge in their misdeeds.

During the Second Imperial Age, Phadalera and Pelegaon became synonymous with beauty. Its people were the most cultured, elegant and educated in all the elven world (and, arguably, all the world), and even the dragon princes often came to the emperor's court in Phadalera. Its beauty could not defend the Pelegaonians from Chern's curse, however, and the elven capital was possibly the worst hit. The dissolution of Eldura-Tre into the principalities was viewed by many Pelegaonians (or Pelegaens, as they were now called) as something of betrayal, and feeling betrayed the Midrealm's people lost purpose and fell to decadence.

They watched as one by one their elven brothers engaged in kidnapping and forced breeding, consorting with demons, and abandonment of their history for some atavistic hope of salvation. All the time their cities fell into disrepair, and far to the south they knew Chorach was lurking. The frustration must have broken the Pelegaens, for they decided they too would abandon their forsaken past, and they embraced their uncertain future with an impressive, if amoral, conviction.

When their god returned, the Pelegaens were unimpressed, neither by Jandaveos himself nor the Divine Empire of the Rose. They rebuked their brethren and their deity, and despite the Divine Empire's best efforts, became the still-forsaken kingdom of Eldura-Tre.

Geography

The countryside surrounding Phadalera has little by way of wilderness. All of it has been converted to farmland, estates and even the occasional hunting range for the elven nobility. This makes for a monotonous landscape, broken only in rare instances by groves of sacred trees and the odd hill.

The farther duchies, especially those bordering the Chain River, are in contrast heavily forested. Settlements are sparse in these locales, owing to the spiritual significance of the wilderness. The forests here are ancient in the extreme, including giant ferns, sequoias and pine, many of which are centuries old if not more. Numerous lean-tos and hidden embankments can be found among the trees, relics from the Second Elf-Charduni War — part of an old defense network meant to protect Phadalera from attack. Now they are mostly abandoned, though they still serve woodsmen well.

People

Phadalrans (or "Eldurians," as the nobles like to call themselves) are a mercurial people who have given up all pretense at morality, and the love of their god, just so they can continue a carefree life. Their once venerated pursuit of beauty has been replaced by empty aspirations for pleasure. Art can be meaningless and poorly constructed, but if it *looks* expensive or is sufficiently shocking, it will fetch a good price in Phadalera. Similarly, the still-forsaken here value pleasurable experiences more than meaningful ones; loyalty can be bought with money, and skill has replaced love in the bedchamber.

To the "new" Eldurian, the ends justify the means, something that flies in the face of 30,000 years of history and teaching. They embrace every opportunity without apology or regret. They know others disapprove and make no attempts to persuade them otherwise. Ethics and group morality are meaningless to these still-forsaken; the only thing that matters is being true to oneself.

Though abhorrent, some throughout the Divine Empire sympathize with, and even respect, the Phadalerans. These "empty" elves have declared openly what many modern high elves follow in secret. All across the Divine Empire of the Rose, the high elves and their allies work toward defined ends, without thought of what comes next or the costs involved. They speak of the nobility of their purpose and the justice of their cause, but in the end, are the high elves not simply trying to secure power and wealth? Perhaps in the old days of Therathose and Eldura-Tre, that influence would be used for truly altruistic ends, but if the actions of the principalities taught the world anything, it is that the elves of today are nothing like their predecessors. Perhaps the hatred the imperials heap upon Phadaleria is not out of some righteous outrage. Perhaps instead it is because they see in the still-forsaken something they hate within themselves, but are too weak or arrogant to acknowledge. Or perhaps this is yet more empty musing on the part of those trying to justify the excesses of the old capitals' nobility. Observers will have much time to ponder these thoughts, for it appears as though "Eldura-Tre" and Phadaleria are here to stay.

Phadaleria

The once glorious capital of Phadaleria now stands in disgrace, controlled by self-centered nobles more interested in playing at monarch than in overseeing the welfare of their people. It is unfortunate that the name Phadaleria has come to be synonymous with "traitor" and maligned with such vitriol that one would imagine it more hated than the charduni.

The Royal Palace: This enormous structure of rare stone and alien metals stretches half a mile in every direction and is surmounted by a dome of pure crystal. Elven lore has it that the palace was created in a century's long true ritual involving the dragon princes themselves. During the forsaken age, it became a plaything and was much abused by the "rulers" that rapidly cycled through its halls. As such, a significant portion of the irreplaceable relics that once adorned the palace halls and rooms have gone missing or have been broken.

Today, the Phadalerans use the palace as a political symbol and have attempted (for the first time in 150 years) to restore it to its former glory. Without the greater resources of the Divine Empire of the Rose, however, their attempts, much like the rest of their still-forsaken land, have been hollow. What concerns observers more is the stream of thieves, spies and other ne'er-do-wells who have taken the opportunity afforded by Phadaleria's decline to loot what remains of the palace's wealth. While the still-forsaken guardians and the wards around the palace make such ventures risky, the potential rewards are enough that many still try.

Other Cities

Kanlonthas: The Duchy of Kanlonthas is outwardly disorganized. Brigetta purposefully maintains this ruse, both to avoid the scrutiny of her peers and also as a defense against the charduni. Kanlonthas has no place where the duchess' agents do not survey, however, and trespassers may find themselves receiving an unexpected (and unwanted) personal audience with Brigetta herself.

The Shealas League

Population: 10,000 (still-forsaken elf 82%, high elf 13%, half-elf 3%, other 2%)

Government: Constitutional monarchy

Ruler: King Ulthedran, the Swordmaster of Aendros Hill (*male still-forsaken elf Rgr 18, CG*)

Capital: Shealas

Not every city in Pelegael threw in with one of the factions during the Midrealm's brief civil war. Some were merely disgusted and turned their backs on the rest of elvendom. They later united into the Shealas League, vowing to stay free of the Divine Empire's politics so as to pursue a "purer" elven life. In reality the League is far from isolated, enjoying trade (at least on a small scale) with her neighboring elven nations. Shealas is a major port of call for imperial ships, and many of the League's gentry even attend the academies of the Divine Empire. Yet philosophically the Shealas League is adamant in its self-determination, and thus far the Rose Throne has seen fit not to say otherwise.

During the forsaken age, the city of Shealas stood as a bastion against the Blood Sea. An oddity of geography meant the port was spared constant threat by the mutants born of Kadum's blood. Nonetheless, its proximity to the sea and the Plaguelands to the west meant her people had to be mindful and prepared. Over the years, the Shealans became quite adept at repelling the monsters, adopting a militaristic stance more commonly found in the Shield Realm. This alienated them from the rest of the Midrealm, and Shealas came to view her sister cities with contempt. When the debacle surrounding Jandaveos' rebirth plunged the rest of the realm into civil war, the Shealans wanted nothing to do with it.

Along with several allied villages and cities, Shealas ceded from the Midrealm. Its citizens made it clear that they wanted nothing to do with any of the new powers forming in the elven world. No one, as far as they could see, had the noble spirit of old, and so the Shealans would continue as they had in the forsaken age, and attempt to find a destiny for themselves.

Geography

Shealas guards the estuary of the Starshine River, a naturally sheltered harbor leading to and from an easily navigated waterway. For this reason, Shealas plays host to many merchant vessels, and despite its neutrality permits the imperial navy to dock there. The lowlands surrounding the city are waterlogged, impossible to traverse by horse except

on several elevated causeways. These serve to transport the millet and wheat grown in the largely agricultural hinterland.

Due to its low population, another feature of this region is the filigree and singing of elven windmills. Majestic and varicolored like giant blooms amid the paddies, the windmills can be seen for miles, marking the locations of nearby settlements.

Ancient limestone caves can be found throughout the area, linking the separate territories of the League via subterranean passageways. Though it is unlikely the Divine Empire would ever try to blockade the League's outlying cities, Shealas has taken steps to map out and reinforce these tunnels (just in case).

People

Shealans are fun-loving but uptight all at once, given to skepticism and critical (some would say overly critical) inspection of those around them. They apply the same exacting standards to themselves and are a very introspective people. They are also a very martial people, a necessity given that their cities are frequently assaulted by Blood Sea mutants.

Shealans are neutral toward outsiders, though they will give newcomers a chance to prove themselves before asking them politely to leave.

Major Cities

Shealas: The port of Shealas has changed little since the forsaken age. Wood and stone buildings line cobblestone streets, where performers and musicians can be found in abundance. Assuming they are willing to teach their techniques, the bow masters of Shealas are famous for their accuracy and would be of great help to a starting adventurer.

The Kingdom of Diamonds and Gold

Population: 12,000 (still-forsaken elves 92%, other 8%)

Government: Despotic Feudalism

Ruler: Lord Corrados, the Eagle Fed on the Flesh of Kings (*male still-forsaken elf, Wiz16, CN*)

Capital: Beldani

Decadence and greed are old bedfellows to Beldani, which is perhaps why it was no surprise that the nobles there went so far as to denounce Jandaveos, just so they could line their pockets with more gold. What they built has become a free-wheeling mercenary state, elven in a sense, and utterly amoral. With its mercenary armies and undeniable ambition, some within the imperial government wonder if the Kingdom of Diamonds and Gold might not be the most immediate threat to the Divine Empire of the Rose.

The Duchy of Beldani was the second to declare independence during the chaotic Pelegaen civil war. Using the diversion caused by Phadaler's secession, the Beldani nobles bribed local garrison commanders and hired hundreds of mercenaries from the human kingdoms of western Termana. By the time Haethea was aware of the treachery, the Beldani

border was too well fortified, and the nobility declared the creation of the Kingdom of Diamonds and Gold.

Since then, the Beldani have used the silver trade to bolster their position, coupled with an extensive propaganda campaign to lure unwary foreigners within shackling range. Kathalema is well aware of the heinous deeds done within this still-forsaken land and even now plots to seize Beldani and cleanse it by force.

Geography

The countryside around Beldani is pleasant and calm. Except for the tint of the sea, one could easily mistake the place as some idyllic resort, complete with scantily clad servants and patrician clients, who overdress despite the heat so that they can snub their noses at onlookers in style. Once one goes farther out, however, the scene changes. The massive silver mines that fuel the Kingdom of Diamonds and Gold festoon the hinterland. They open up on the virgin soil like burst pustules. The waste from these operations has discolored the land, and only spare vegetation now grows in the metal-laden soils.

Visitors should also be wary of the many traps in place, even throughout the wilderness. Many are of Calastian make, and can challenge even the best of rogues.

People

A disturbing parallel can be drawn between the condition of the underclass in Beldani and that of the slaves of the Charduni Empire. High elves would rather not broach the subject, or fly into a frenzied rage when the topic is broached. The nobles' claim that their kingdom is a paradise of riches is true only for a privileged few, and the rest are fodder.

Beldani has therefore become a haven for amorality and mercenary wiles, where people will betray each other for the slightest advantage. In some ways it is not unlike the Gray Isle, and indeed Beldani uses Emernis as a gateway for its slave trade in the human kingdoms. Ironically, it is among the nation's mercenaries that one finds the most loyalty. So long as they are paid, the kingdom's armies will be large, well equipped, and wiling to repel invaders. The Legion of Crimson has a sizeable presence here, though even they find the practice of the still-forsaken elves to be barely palatable.

Major Cities

Beldani: The capital of the Kingdom of Diamonds and Gold, Beldani has an outward civility that belies the corruption beneath. The distinction between rich and poor is staggering, with the nobles and merchants living in palatial estates, and the commoners eking out a meager existence. Many would leave if they could, but Beldani's borders are carefully guarded, and those trying to escape are punished for the delight of the upper class. Rescue attempts are made frequently, though far too often they end in failure.

The Shining Horde Daemonius

In their haste and dedication to resurrect Jandaveos, the high magi of the Skysight Realm spared no option, and shirked no boundaries. They engaged in experiments both sublime and twisted, seeking arcana best left unknown. Some among their number realized the danger, but they were the younger and less powerful of their peers. Without the means to stop their elder brethren, they made ready to contain whatever evil might be unleashed. As history now sadly records, their worries were to prove prophetic.

When Jandaveos returned, the fiends and demons already summoned to Scarn made haste to cast their rituals. Their original intent was to consume the whole of the island of Eldurathryn in the flames of their profane home plane, and then to use it as a staging ground to invade the rest of the world. With the elven god returned, they were forced to act before they were prepared, and though this was a fortunate, it doomed half of the Skysight Realm.

Outsiders broke free of their containment glyphs, as the magical wards designed to coral them proved useless. The magi had never truly "controlled" the demons, but were duped into thinking so. In this way, they would continue on their pathetic research and weaken the gateways between the demon's plane and the Scarred Lands. The demons then corrupted four of the high magi — Tamaean, Vorus, Boraes and Nythael. Their defection caused widespread devastation in High Tower, and the four tried to work their magic to summon the greater demons to Scarn. However, the other high magi were prepared, led by Valishan and Shadalea. The ensuing duels of mystical energy causes tremors to be felt as far away as Baenash, which was the signal king Glitheval had been waiting for. In a moment his armies passed through teleportation circles prepared by Valishan, arriving to reinforce the uncorrupted magi against their lost brethren. In the end the tainted high magi and the demons were forced from High Tower.

Were it not for Valishan's actions, the whole of Kasiavael may well have been lost. As it is, they were only able to stem the tide of evil, not reverse it. The demons completed their initial rituals, and though they could not claim all of Eldurathryn, they annexed the northern half of the Skysight Realm. So it was that the Shining Horde made its way to Scarn, where they remain to this day.

Population: 300,000 estimated to 3,000,000 estimated (<1% greater demons, 75% true demons, 15% true fiends, 10% elementals)

Government: Unknown

Ruler: The Shining Ones (this has been widely accepted to mean "the" greater demons, though other theories include a demonic council, or maybe even some demon god(s) that has yet to reveal itself)

Capital: Daemonius

Deep within the heart of the old Skysight Realm, and encircling High Tower like some spreading malignancy, stretches the Dominion of Daemonius, the heartland of the Shining Ones. Here reside the true demons and fiends, not the corrupted hybrids of Abadonius or Draconius. Though individually potent, the demons of this territory are mindful of their scant numbers. Prevented from completing their rituals by the counteroffensive of the elves following the Battle of High Tower, Daemonius' defenses remain incomplete.

Using magical interrogation and their renewed divinatory magic, the high elves have discovered that the demons now occupying Eldurathryn are in fact quite young. Calling themselves "the Shining Ones," these creatures hail from deep in the multiverse. Despite their power, they are a recent occurrence, having conquered their home world only half a dozen millennia ago. They first learned of Scarn during the days immediately After Victory, and judging it "worthy" of conquest made plans to annex the elves, dragons and then the rest of Scarn.

Attempts to learn more have thus far failed. None of the demons captured seems to be more than the lowest tier of their society. The elves have placed rich bounties on those who might bring to them a more veteran specimen, though to date no one has succeeded.

Geography

To support the greater demons living there (if such beings can be said to "live" as mortals would understand), Daemonius is a burning wasteland of fire wrack and magma. Solid ground is hard to find, and any would-be hero venturing to slay the demons may well have to grow wings. Even then, one has to contend with the ever-present miasma of toxic fumes and the periodic gouts of the same vile substance. These poisons would make even a slitheren cringe and are said to have the potency to overcome the fortitude of dragons.

A series of volcanoes and basalt fields serve as the main staging grounds of Daemonius' inhabitants. Their locations are not all known, but most are believed to line the territory's border with Abadonius. The largest of these is the summit of Mount Yaer, about 50 miles north of Mount Syvos. Once a holy site dedicated to the Dragon Prince Kasia, reports now indicate that Yaer has been converted into a fortress of some kind.

People

Daemonius cannot support any of Scarn's native inhabitants for long. Within days it erodes normal tissues and will kill within a week. As such, the totality of its population comprises demons, fiends and their elemental servitors. Only the half-demons can share Daemonius with the Shining Ones, and corrupted dragons and elves are known to cross into Daemonius frequently.

Little is known of the greater demons that are said to rule Daemonius. At least seven such outsiders are believed to have made their way to Scarn. They are said to be massive in size and power, devouring handfuls of their lesser kin when such whims suit them (though admittedly such accounts come from young adventurers with questionable credentials and a low threshold for excitability). For those who remember (which is to say, all of the high elves), these beings bear a disturbing resemblance to the titans of old.

Daemonius

The "capital" of Daemonius bears the dominion's name and is described as a blazing metropolis of gold and jet. Its streets are lined with magical obelisks, wreathed in flames, and more numerous than can be counted. The air is thick with winged monstrosities, and its inhabitants number in the millions. Almost certainly summoned into being with magic, it is Valishan's hope that magic may also banish it from Scarn.

Tar Taneos: A large oblong structure spans the center of the capital, flanked by pyramids each 500 feet tall. Captured demons have only ever divulged its name, dissolving into screams and ash when forced to reveal more.

Pyramids of Tar Taneos: Despite their efforts, the high magi have only partially scried these massive structures, eight in all. They believe them to be arcane reservoirs of some kind, similar to a magic staff but on a much greater scale. The pyramids have been observed to "open" like a box, from which one of the greater demons emerges. This has led some to believe they are the residences of the leaders of Daemonius.

Elkos Nagnar: An enormous basalt pillar stands in the southeast quarter of the capital, at

least two miles wide and at least as tall. Countless openings cover its surface, and it is believed to be the main staging ground for the aerial demons of the dominion.

Akkeros (formerly Mount Yaer)

Akkeros is described as a temple city, molded from red obsidian and jet. It has relatively few demonic inhabitants but is almost as well guarded as Daemonius' capital. What's more, greater demons often frequent this place, and the hum of dark magic shrouds this place constantly.

Abadonius (Formerly Thoskae)

Population: 5,000 (demon elves 50%, demon men 30%, other 20%)

Government: Monarchy (Tamaean denied this when confronted by Kathalema; he only laughed at her and said, "Such considerations as rule and control are now beyond us.")

Ruler: Tamaean (*male demon elf* Wiz20, NE)

Capital: Abadonius

When the Shining Ones made their pact with the high magi, the elves willingly relinquished the city of High Tower. It was to be the capital of their new demonic empire, with its vast stores of arcane knowledge at the Shining Horde's disposal. When the corrupted magi were exiled from High Tower, however, they regrouped at Thoskae. When the first of the Shining Ones arrived, they sacrificed the city to their new masters, creating the city of Abadonius and the dominion of the same name.

This land belongs to the corrupted high elves. No longer truly elven, they are half-demons forged in the crucible of magic. Granted profane abilities and unnatural beauty, their loathing for their still noble brethren makes them a grave danger to the new Divine Empire.

Geography

Abadonius is a depressing place. It is constantly overcast from the volcanic ash hanging overhead, yet oppressively hot by virtue of the same volcanism. Except for the capital city, no settlements of any kind exist. The remnants of villages and cities lie fallow, emptied of their inhabitants when Thoskae fell. The small forests that once dotted the countryside have been turned to charcoal by the heat, and the "fauna," such as it is, survives only in hybrid demon form.

People

Ta Maios of Bitter Words, the King in Thorns of Jet and Gold, formerly the high magus Tamaean of Kasiavael, now rules this land of corrupted elves. His people are a hateful group, powerful and beautiful yet nothing of their former selves. Each of the two thousand or so who now

inhabit this land have adopted new demon names and laugh cruelly when their old ones are mentioned.

Abadonius is an industrious place, quiet, because so few now live here. The only company that the corrupted elves keep are the other corrupted mortals who are their peers. No slaves live in Abadonius, something Kathalema and Vladawen found most jarring when they breached the dominion's defenses some three months ago. When they attempted to "rescue" their corrupted kin, they were rebuked. It would seem the inhabitants of Abadonius live there willingly now.

Draconius

Population: 4,000 (demon dragons 10%, demons and fiends 90%)

Government: None

Ruler: None

Capital: None, though the flying fortress of Draconius is the nominal organizational center

Not content with the prize of the elves, the demons demanded more tribute to sate their desire to corrupt. So it was that the high magi betrayed their long-time allies, the dragons, and delivered to the demons every dormant egg they could find. The demons then turned these unborn dragons to their wiles, planting the demonic seed within them as they had done with the elves. So were born the demon dragons, and their floating lair of Draconius.

Geography

Draconius comprises the northern shore of the former Skysight Realm. It is here along the broken cliffs that the dragons make their lairs. The cliffs are unapproachable from sea, and the overland passes are guarded by demonic guards. Mariners who have seen the cliffs recall giant petroglyphs of alien design, and weaker-willed sailors have been known to go insane from the sight of them.

People

In all, some 400 dragons live in this benighted land, and more are born every day. Corrupted as they were even before birth, these demon dragons are among the most ardent supporters of the Shining Ones and their plans. These dragons are luckily still young, not nearly powerful enough to pose any real threat. Yet their demonic guards ensure they remain undisturbed as they grow, and the greater demons of Daemonius personally oversee the young dragons' tutelage in the profane arts. All attempts to restore the hatchlings have failed. The subject usually dies (and cannot be resurrected) when one tries to heal him.

Draconius

The floating city of Draconius has never been seen first-hand. A thick, thunderous, black cloud envelops it constantly. Only from the testimony of captured demons do the elves know it is a city at all. Other than the fact that is quite large (three miles in diameter), nothing more is known about it.

The Land of Chains

These tortured lands are the core domains of an empire that once spanned two continents. Ripped and rent asunder by both the charduni and natural forces, the Land of Chains is a nightmarish landscape covered in open pit mines, chasms, roads and endless piles of wrack, mounds of toxic mine tailings and other debris. Sprawling mine complexes, fortified farms and ranches, fortresses and ugly charduni cities are scattered across the region. To an outsider's eyes, the Land of Chains is truly a place of ugliness and ruin. To charduni eyes, of course, it is all for the glorification of the Great General.

Since the Divine War

Today's charduni are every bit as wicked and arrogant as they were in the past. Though some have begun to lose heart, and a few have even flirted with the idea of simply numbering mighty Chardun as first among equals while respecting the other gods the same as other races, the vast majority of charduni feel either that Chardun has not abandoned them, or that all they need to do is once more successfully walk the road of conquest to regain his favor.

The empire is in ferment today, for even as philosophical and religious debates — unheard of a generation ago — grow more and more frequent and the empire seems without direction, the charduni's ancient enemies the high elves have returned, under the shining banner of a newly reborn god.

In some ways, the return of Jandaveos may be just the shock that the charduni needed. Desiring a return to empire, but uncertain how to accomplish it without Chardun's leadership, the charduni now have a real enemy — an old one, in fact, whom they blame for the loss of their first empire.

Today the charduni work together with renewed purpose. Even the heretics believe that the race must once more begin to expand or face extinction. Whether this leads to a return to the old days of empire or to the Land of Chains' final extinction remains to be seen.

Geography

Ancient history suggests that the Land of Chains was once richly forested, with fertile lands and mighty rivers. Today's charduni empire could not be further from that. From the River of Chains in the north to the Wall of Clouds in the south, the empire is a wasteland, with little in the way of distinctive terrain or variation. Hills have been flattened, forests felled, plains transformed into fortified farm settlements. With the exception of the Lastwoods north of Chorach, no free-standing timber exists within the empire's borders. The

rivers are dark and polluted with poisons from the mines and runoff from the denuded hills.

The devastation of the land is seen by most as a warning to cherish and respect Denev's wild lands. The charduni think little of this, for plenty of building material is still available; after all, what good is a river, plain or forest if it has not been turned to the service of Chardun? Most construction is of stone or metal — wood is relatively rare and is recycled into new structures when old ones are destroyed or collapse.

The charduni are a highly urbanized race. Three quarters of the empire's population — a million and a half charduni — live in cities. The half million or so who live outside city walls dwell in military fortifications or act as overseers and managers of slave mines, farms and similar operations.

The empire is divided into four administrative districts, each named for its main city. These districts have distinct characters and serve their own purposes within the empire. Each is ruled by a grand governor, whose authority is absolute and second only to the One in White. Grand governors are assisted by ordinary governors, each of whom is responsible for one of the district's cities. These governors are in turn assisted by subgovernors and hordes of civil servants and slaves.

The following entries detail the individual administrative districts. As they are less distinctive than the forsaken elf principalities, and the charduni far more homogenous, information about history is omitted.

Danachax District

Population: 630,000 (charduni 85%, slave 15%)

Ruler: Grand Governor Calyxar Isendax (*female charduni, Clr10/Ari8, LE*)

Capital: Danachax

The northernmost imperial district has the largest population after the coastal Shaskalcho region. This is largely because more than 80 imperial detachments and numerous smaller elite units are stationed here, facing the ever-growing threat of the Divine Empire to the north. This represents 350,000 troops, more than one third of Chorach's total military strength. A massive force with the potential for both offensive and defensive action.

Geography

Danachax is dotted with grim stone fortresses and even entire settlements whose primary function is to provide logistical support to the imperial military. Beyond this, the place is especially bleak and sad, for no major farms or agricultural lands are here either. Military patrols are constant, and prob-

ing raids across the River of Chains and into high elven territory are frequent.

Crisscrossed by roads, constantly trampled by massive numbers of charduni warriors, this region is even more devastated than the rest of the empire, with the single exception of the Lastwoods, a small forest that the One in White has decreed must stand untouched, acting as a timber reserve for the empire should it ever be needed. The woods are well guarded, and unauthorized entry is punishable by death. Charduni hunters periodically scour the woods to eliminate any dangerous animals or predators, so the Lastwoods themselves remain one of the most beautiful, pristine and safe regions in eastern Termana. This situation may not last should the empire ever go back to war and require large numbers of wooden weapons, war machines or siege engines.

People

The people of the district are grim and dour even for charduni. As the most important province from a military standpoint, Danachax is a stronghold of tradition, martial excellence and nostalgia for the old days of glory. Unsurprisingly, it is also a hotbed of activity by the members of the White Axe, a fanatic band of extremists who believe that

the One in White must be replaced by another who "truly" reflects the will and spirit of Chardun.

The region has a notably small slave population, save for the presence of one of the three Outlander Detachments (the other two, headquartered in Shaskalcho, can be called to defend Danachax on fairly short notice). This is because the One in White and his generals do not wish the charduni military to become too dependent on slave labor, lest they grow soft and indulgent. To be sure, a lot of slaves are here, performing the usual foul and menial tasks that the charduni consider beneath themselves, but for the most part this consists of aiding the military as assistants in the armory and as pages and squires, and tending to the battle rams. Other slaves work in the cities, tending to businesses that cater to the military.

Instead of slaves, the Danachax region is overpopulated with undead. Though no one has ever made a true estimate of the total number of undead, it must be well over a quarter of a million, from shambling skeletons and zombies intended primarily to soak up elven missile fire to the relatively well disciplined and dangerous Chardun-slain who actually make up a significant part of the charduni armed forces. Combined with the slave troops and



undead auxiliaries, charduni military forces total well over a half million in number.

Danachax

This great city is a major military center and is home to imperial research into siege warfare. Many old siege machines are based here, most of which date back to before the Divine War, when wood for construction was plentiful.

Grand General's Citadel: Twenty detachments of charduni troops are garrisoned in and around Danachax, and at any time nearly 40,000 troops are stationed in this black-walled fortress. Grand General Korel Branon (see Chapter Three) commands here, though rival Grand General Telmet Perex (see Chapter Three) has also received a high command and has begun to make his presence felt in calling for a more aggressive stance against the elves.

The citadel is the most important military site in the northern empire, containing extensive armories, conference facilities and facilities for summoning undead and casting high-level military rituals. The barracks also house the Imperial War Academy, where promising charduni officers are trained in tactics and martial wisdom dating back to the days before the Divine War.

Great Stables: Ramrider units make up a significant part of the charduni military. They serve in varying numbers within existing detachments, but to keep them out of trouble (or to keep trouble from spreading to other parts of the military) they are barracked here along with their rams in an area known as the Great Stables. In reality it is a large complex with living quarters and facilities for the animals, but the charduni riders often sleep alongside their animals and vice versa, so the distinction between the two areas is somewhat blurred. Though this is possibly the most raucous and ill-disciplined place in the empire, even the ramriders are lawful charduni, and their idea of raucous behavior is considerably less chaotic than those of other lands.

Other Cities

Derikash: Centrally located, this city is a central supply point for all the northern armies. Extensive warehouses, both above and below ground, contain food, clothing, weapons and other staples. Military forces often march through the city, keeping city inns and mess halls constantly filled. Most of the region's slaves are concentrated here, performing various services for the vast military forces. Outlying fortresses and barracks keep the city well protected.

Choschol: Home to a large military academy, Choschol hosts a large number of charduni ramriders and is consequently considered a rather wild and lawless place (at least by the rigidly moral and upright charduni). Raucous celebrations, loud singing and even (rarely) violent unrest all occur within

Choschol's confines, but so far the authorities have largely ignored the excesses, given the valuable services that the ramriders provide.

Shaskalcho District

Population: 740,000 (charduni 65%, slave 35%)

Ruler: Grand Governor Lyzolis Chalaxa (*male charduni, Ftr15, LE*)

Capital: Shaskalcho

Long ago, the Great General bade his chosen people build a mighty navy with which to assault the distant continent of Ghelspad. Never a powerful maritime force, the charduni nevertheless complied without complaint and within a generation had become fine sailors, with a steadily growing fleet. The city of Shaskalcho, naval capital of the empire, was one important result, and the city still stands proudly despite the decline of the charduni fleet.

Geography

Shaskalcho province, occupying the central portion of the empire, is also the most populous and urbanized region in the Land of Chains, with large cities, extensive roads and a large slave population. In addition to its importance as a coastal province and naval center, Shaskalcho is vitally important for its food production. Nearly half of the empire's farm settlements are located here — vast walled compounds overseen by charduni and overseer wolves, and worked by legions of slaves.

Outside the farms, the land is as grim and dusty as the rest of the empire, where rivers have been reduced to a trickle by artificial irrigation techniques and few trees survive save the most gnarled and hardy growths imaginable.

Beyond the coast lie the endless glittering reaches of the Cerulean Ocean, edged by surprisingly beautiful beaches with rich golden sand. Many charduni cities line the coast, dedicated to large-scale fishing, an endeavor that might have seemed mad before the Divine War but which is now vital to the empire's survival.

People

Inhabitants of Shaskalcho are quite urbane and sophisticated for charduni but lack none of that race's unpleasantness. The region harbors the largest concentration of deist heretics, since most Shaskalchans consider themselves to be erudite intellectuals. Religious and philosophical debate is a growing phenomenon, and though most charduni will not admit it, the very existence of such disagreements shows how truly deep divisions in charduni society are growing.

Shaskalcho

Built at Chardun's orders as the charduni prepared for the invasion of Ghelspad, Shaskalcho is home to the empire's shipbuilding industry and serves as the Land of Chains' only major port city. Given that the days of the great invasion and the charduni's naval adventures are in the past, shipbuilding and sea travel have a lower priority today but remain important nonetheless.

Shaskalcho has a large slave population, a legacy of the days when thousands labored to build the great sea wall and the great towers and citadels that line the shore. The slaves have proven a potent lure to outside troublemakers such as the Sisters of the Sun, who sometimes raid Shaskalcho, seeking to liberate some of the slaves and distract the charduni from their current goal of building a new army of conquest.

Sea Wall: Sunk all the way to the sea floor, this wall serves as both breakwater and barrier against invasion. The Sisters of the Sun have sometimes tested the wall's defenses, but after several bad experiences, they have chosen less direct tactics, confining themselves to diversionary attacks against the wall while launching their main assaults elsewhere.

Docks: Once the docks of Shaskalcho were crowded with ships, their masts as limitless as the trees of a forest. Now the docks are far less busy, save for a dozen or so charduni naval vessels that rarely venture far from port. The dark dwarves do not trade, so merchant ships are all but unknown here.

Maritime Citadel: The largest of the fortresses that line the water's edge, the Maritime Citadel was once home to the charduni naval academy, where mariners learned of ship-to-ship combat, tactics and amphibious invasions. Today it serves primarily as a defensive fort, occupied by several hundred land-bound warriors.

Other Cities

Valkachus: This grim stone city lies in the center of a network of farms, and a small army of slaves moves constantly to and from it, carrying loads of grain, fruits and vegetables. Central warehouses contain a large portion of the empire's food, which is quickly and efficiently distributed throughout the Land of Chains each day. The city's governor, Uxar Labarnakus (*male charduni dwarf, LE, Clr5/Ari10*), is a high-ranking and very influential man, often publicly praised by the One in White for his role in helping keep the empire well fed. Uxar is, however, a secret deist whose views could have him arrested, stripped of citizenship or even executed, should they ever come to the attention of his many political rivals.

Maxanak: The leading fishing city of the empire, Maxanak is home to some very unusual charduni. Professional fisherfolk, these dark dwarves set out on the Cerulean Ocean each day, equipped with long lines or nets, and bring back rich harvests of ocean fish. Though they are aided by slaves, the charduni fisherfolk do most of the heavy work themselves. This type of labor is usually considered beneath the average charduni, but the Maxanakans do not feel that they can trust slaves to take ships out on the high seas, lest they attempt to escape, and so reserve the true labor for themselves.

Borixa District

Population: 325,000 (charduni 60%, slave 40%)

Ruler: Grand Governor Alixiam Thoxos (*male charduni dwarf, Ftr10/Ari6, LE*)

Capital: Borixa

The vast majority of mining operations — including the area known simply as "The Mines" — are found in this region, which is the source of most of the empire's mineral wealth.

Geography

With the possible exception of Danachax, the Borixa District may be the ugliest province in the empire. Harboring enormous mineral wealth, the land is covered with ugly scars from open pit mines, quarries and other excavations, to the point that the land itself has given up, transforming into red and brown dust that blows constantly, staining the clothing and skin of everyone who travels outside the cities.

Central Borixa harbors the Stones of Golthagga, the richest mining lands in the empire. Service here is not as unpleasant as in other mines. This is not because the charduni are any more merciful here, but because labor is in such short supply that unnecessary loss of slaves is frowned upon.

Grim and dismal, Borixa is worst in the Chained Mountains' foothills, where extensive mining operations have cut into the very fabric of the world. Mining cities cluster around ongoing projects, but more than a few have been abandoned when ore veins were exhausted, leaving ugly ghost towns up and down the length of the province. These settlements are avoided but are sometimes briefly reoccupied as the resource-hungry charduni cannibalize their buildings for other structures. Undead and horrors from the Mines are said to haunt these abandoned cities.

People

Borixans are grim and fatalistic. Dissatisfaction and desperation are worst here. Insanity, heresy and even violent crime are increasingly common, though a vast majority accept the harsh reality of

daily existence without complaint. Slaves are everywhere as well, toiling in the mines until they drop or working in the cities and enduring the cruelties of their bored charduni masters. A surprising percentage of these slaves are once-charduni — dark dwarves convicted of heresy or treason and stripped of privileges, rank and even identity. Tanilist rangers from outside the empire sometimes raid this area, hoping to free slaves from bondage — once-charduni often escape along with the other slaves, and some even turn their backs completely on their charduni heritage, pursuing enlightenment in other lands or even other continents.

Borixa

Borixa differs from other charduni cities in that it is almost entirely below-ground, the last surviving example of the dark dwarves' old subterranean architecture.

Stone Gate: The entrance to the underground passages of Borixa is not obvious — to an outsider it appears simply as a square-cut opening in the side of the grim granite slopes of Mount Kashakla. In reality, it is always watched by charduni scouts and contains numerous traps such as pitfalls, murder holes and sally ports through which hordes of charduni troops can emerge to assault invaders. The gate can also be completely collapsed, cutting the city off from the rest of the world.

Great Hall: In the central section of Borixa is a vast, vaulted chamber that serves as a meeting space, practice yard, marketplace and numerous other functions. Governor Alixiam and his family live in a suite of rooms overlooking the hall, from which he can address groups of charduni from his balcony.

Subterranean Farms: When first created, the charduni dwelled in traditional dwarven fashion — today, the old traditions continue only in Borixa, where slaves are set to labor in underground caverns where artificial light allows the cultivation of a wide range of crops. Food animals such as aurox, goats and pigs are also bred and slaughtered here. Operations are managed by the charduni themselves, with aid from overseer wolves.

Other Cities

Fort Akaxikus: This large gray fortress lies near the Mines, and its warriors are charged with keeping the region safe. They are stern professionals, dedicated to exterminating the creatures that emerge from the Mines, and are also frequently called upon to hunt down escaped slaves. Fort Akaxikus' overseer wolves are considered the fiercest and most intelligent in the empire.

Toracha: A sprawling city with extensive slums that are home to thousands of slaves, Toracha is located near a dozen major mines. Silver, gold, tin,

lead and iron all pass through the city — some of this is passed on as ore through the rest of the Land of Chains, but most of it is processed in the city's vast smelters, then shipped out as ingots. Toracha is a hot, dirty and thoroughly unpleasant city, but its governor, Markansha Uxalak (*female charduni dwarf, Ftr6/Exp10, LE*), is considered one of the best administrators in the empire, and her subordinates are utterly loyal to her. Graft, heresy and rebellious slaves have never been a problem in Toracha, for Markansha's police are the very model of lawful evil efficiency.

Aardunnus District

Population: 230,000 (charduni 80%, slave 20%)

Ruler: Grand Governor Malixus Dunachal (*male charduni, Clr12/Ftr6, LE*)

Capital: Aardunnus

The southernmost province of the empire is also the wildest and most dangerous. Squeezed between the southern end of the Chained Mountains and the impassible barrier of the Wall of Clouds, Aardunnus provides both raw materials and food to the empire, but in the end serves primarily as a bulwark against invasion from the south. Its people are a serious and devout lot and include some of the oldest families in all the empire. Despite its antiquity, Aardunnus continues to be the province with the lowest population and, hence, the least disruption to its old natural state.

Geography

Some elements of the region's old character remain in Aardunnus. In the south, some rivers flow clean, some plains still wave in the wind, gold or green with grass, some mountains are unscarred by charduni mines, and the Semdar River flows freely, undammed and undiverted by charduni engineers. This is, of course, not how the charduni want it to be, but the district is relatively underpopulated and lacks enough slave labor to truly exploit its resources.

People

The Aardunnans are known as the most religiously devout group in the nation, worshipping Chardun in the many temples that are scattered across the land. Some of these are actually temple-fortresses and form an important part of the southern lands' defenses. Several charduni monasteries are here as well, where ascetic dark dwarven monks devote themselves to the perfection of their bodies and the glorification of Chardun.

The Aardunnans are proud and grim-hearted, knowing that they represent traditions that go back for centuries before the Divine War. Though

some may believe that Chardun has indeed abandoned the dark dwarves, their faith in him is in no way reduced, and for some it is heightened.

Recently, however, a streak (regrettable to some charduni) of independence has developed among some Aardunnans. From time to time, without explicit orders to do so, charduni adventurers make their way down the Wall of Clouds, or make the dangerous ride along the Semdar River, to explore the jungle wilderness to the south. Others venture into the Chained Mountains, past the Mouth of Gaurak and into the Iron Steppes, where they attempt to trade with the savage tribes that live there. How this will affect Aardunnus' relations with the rest of the empire remains to be seen.

Aardunnus

Perhaps the second-oldest city in the empire, this gray granite citadel-city serves as the religious heart of the south and is also home to no fewer than 16 full detachments of the charduni military (with another 30 scattered in garrisons across the rest of the district).

The General's Wall: Aardunnus' walls are especially thick, crafted of flawless gray granite and set with ballistae and catapults for defensive purposes. The city's defenses have not been tried in nearly four centuries, but the charduni remain as vigilant as if expecting an assault any day.

The White Temple: The largest temple outside Chorach, this structure also serves as a religious training institution and military citadel in the center of the city, occupied by more than three hundred charduni priests. High Priestess Rexel Poret (see Chapter Three) is nowhere near as militaristic as many of her subordinates and focuses primarily on scholarship and history, with less emphasis on combat and tactics.

The Tower of Wisdom: This squat, octagonal tower houses a vast store of charduni historical and religious texts, ranging from ancient tactical manuals to a chronicle of the recent conflicts with the forsaken elves. Almost any fact about Chardun and the Charduni Empire can be found here, though chief librarian Laxala Korchal (*female charduni dwarf, Exp 16, LE*) jealously guards her books, parchments and scrolls. Obtaining permission to study here usually takes more than a year of petitions, paperwork and patience.

Other Cities

Fort Lakaxama: This lonely citadel is perched on the very edge of the Wall of Clouds and is in fact the southernmost charduni settlement. Below, mists rise from the Gamulganjus Forest as the charduni warriors assigned to this somewhat onerous duty gaze bleakly south, scanning the horizon for invasions that will probably never come.

The City of Chorach

The oldest and greatest city in the Land of Chains is home to the near-divine individual known as the One in White and is the center of all charduni activity, both on Termana and beyond. Crouched on the flinty slopes of the Chained Mountains, Chorach is well protected by the charduni military and by the rugged land itself.

1. The Thorn Wall: The outermost defense of the city is an example of some of the ancient magic of the charduni. This living barrier consists of thick, thorn-studded growths that actually rise up to consume attackers. Two full detachments — 8,000 troops — are garrisoned here, adding even more strength to the defenses.

The thorn wall has no gates or regular openings. The charduni can open up corridors through the thorns for normal access to and from the city.

2. Slave Quarters: The city's thousands of slaves are housed in these featureless stone barracks, guarded by charduni warriors and patrolled by teams of overseer wolves. Charduni slaves are usually worked so hard that they don't have the energy for rebellion, so trouble rarely occurs here.

3. Hall of Records: Compulsive record-keepers, the charduni maintain a vast collection of books, scrolls, parchments and even stone tablets from the early days of the empire. Scrupulously maintained and protected even through the disasters of the Divine War, these records stretch back for untold centuries and could provide a treasure trove of information about charduni history, warfare, religious practices, secrets, treasures and even weaknesses. Unfortunately, the labyrinthine depths of the hall of records are well guarded and patrolled, and the obsessive charduni are strangely suspicious of those — even other charduni — who wish to inspect these records, and permission to enter the building is often years in coming.

4. Residences: The charduni themselves live in grim stone buildings featuring little in the way of decoration or comfort. Most of Chorach's charduni inhabitants live in this area, where thousands of such residences line the narrow cobbled streets.

5. Temple of the Scepter: The largest and most important temple of Chardun in the empire rises up near the iron wall, a towering ziggurat of white marble and granite. Here, high priest Godrak Chardesh (see Chapter Three) oversees the spiritual health of his nation and provides religious advice to the One in White and other charduni nobles (and, when no one is looking, works secretly on behalf of the White Axe, of course, but he prefers to keep that aspect of his duties secret). More than 1,000 priests of various levels serve here as well, performing religious services for charduni

citizens, performing rituals and overseeing the slaves responsible for maintaining the building and providing for its occupants.

6. The Iron Wall: Thick, rust-brown iron surrounds the inner regions of the city. The city guard garrison is based on the wall, and the charduni's fearsome dungeons lie beneath, where prisoners and errant slaves receive correction, interrogation and torment. Chorach has no other prisons, for the charduni believe that keeping unproductive captives imprisoned is wasteful.

Numerous protective spirits and elemental creatures are bound to the wall, strengthening its defenses and providing the charduni with offensive weapons with which to engage attackers. In the city's history, these walls have never been tested, but as with the rest of the charduni's defenses they remain ready to repel invaders at a moment's notice.

7. Government Buildings: The various bureaucracies that administer the economy and infrastructure of the empire are located here in a series of identical buildings. Structures include the ministries of agriculture, defense, construction and property (which oversees all of the empire's possessions, including slaves). They are constantly busy with charduni officials and bureaucrats, who are in turn served by numerous highly trusted slaves.

8. The Five Towers: Each of the five grand generals of the empire are headquartered in one of these five tall towers, each crafted of magically enhanced meteoric iron. Though most of the time the generals are in the field — Korel Branon and Telmet Perex (see Chapter Three) both serve in Danachax province — their staff officers and aides remain on duty in the tower, maintaining constant communication with their superiors with officers' medallions and other scrying devices.

9. The First Fortress: The strongest citadel in Termana — and possibly on all of Scarn — the First Fortress houses the One in White and his inner circle of advisors. The fortress' outer wall is made of adamantine-reinforced granite, enchanted never to age or require maintenance. The inner section of the fortress consists of a square of deceptively fragile-looking pylons that support the One in White's Command Chambers — the literal heart and soul of the empire. The pylons are all but indestructible (said to have been created by Chardun himself during the city's construction) and house hidden staircases for access to and from the Command Chambers. Beneath the pylons lie barracks, practice fields and armories that house the White Detachment, a unit of 4,000 elite warriors absolutely dedicated to the security of the One in White.

The Command Chambers themselves would make a mighty fortress anywhere else on Termana. Behind curved white walls lie the One in White's living quarters, audience chambers, meeting and feasting halls, and numerous shrines and small temples devoted to Chardun's glorification. Once chosen, the One in White can never leave the chambers, save in the most dire of emergencies, and is resigned to spending the rest of his life within its confines. Though it is a magnificent residence, the Command Chambers are in reality little more than a prison. On the other hand, the view — stretching all the way from the Chained Mountains to the gleaming reaches of the Cerulean Ocean — is nothing short of magnificent.

10. Barracks: The charduni warriors who defend the city are garrisoned here, in long black stone structures, where they can easily be called up should the city come under attack. The buildings include living and dining quarters, armories, practice chambers and stables for charduni battle rams.

The Mines

While violent and brutally efficient, the charduni are not normally cruel without good reason. A slave who knows his place and performs his duties will not be harshly punished and may, after years of faithful labor, earn certain minimal privileges. They are kept healthy, clothed and sheltered, provided with adequate food and supplies, and are not expected to do the impossible. Ordinarily, though the dark dwarves are certainly wicked masters, they apply discipline with even-handed sensibilities.

This is not the case, however, in the Mines.

The Chained Mountains are among the oldest in the Scarred Lands — older, most suspect, than the gods, and some have dared to hint that the range predates even titanic activity. With mountains as ancient as these, it must be expected that far more is beneath them than mere silver or iron. Long ago, Chardun instructed his charduni servants to delve beneath these mountains and uncover their secrets. The charduni, as always, have done their best to obey.

Magics are in the Chained Mountains which the charduni do not yet understand and have not yet been able to harness, but true to their master's commands they continue to delve, seeking to enslave these ancient powers, as they seek to enslave everything, to Chardun's greater glory. These strange, gaping, magical wounds in Denev's rocky flesh pulsate with dark secrets so ancient that even Denev herself may not know them — these deep and deadly gashes that pierce the mountains to their very core, are in the place known only as the Mines.

Located in the mountainous regions of Borixa Province, the Mines are perhaps the single most horrifying locality in the entire Land of Chains. The charduni army sees to it that no charduni or slaves ever come within 300 miles of the Mines without express permission from the One in White. Just under 100 miles from the site of the actual mine shaft, a camp of government researchers studies the Mines remotely through the use of livestock, slaves and *slave collars* (see the Secrets chapter).

The Mines are worked mostly by mindless undead, not simply because even the lives of slaves should not be wasted, but also because placing too many living slaves within their terrifying caverns has proven dangerous. The powers of the Mines work faster when confronted with more than a very few living bodies at a time, and the dark dwarves question their ability to contain the next "accident."

The full effects of the Mines are not yet entirely understood, and certainly the vast majority of the empire's inhabitants know only that the Mines are dangerous, if indeed they've ever heard of them at all. What is known, however, by those few researchers and government officials whom the One in White has

allowed in on the secret, is that the Mines have a strange, slow, corrupting effect on all living things in their vicinity.

Those happening upon the Mines in these post-war years might assume them to be tainted by some titan or other, like the Hornsaw Forest or the Plaguelands, but the charduni know that the Mines existed long before the Divine War. Even the original tunnels, leading steeply into the earth, seem always to have been there, though they look far too smooth and finished to have occurred naturally.

Every living thing within about ten miles of the Mines is affected in some way by their corrupting power, though usually only in minor ways, such as small mutations, shifts in alignment toward chaotic evil or subtly altered abilities. Beings that actually spend time inside the Mines, however, go through much more dramatic changes. Usually, these changes take place gradually over several years, but when more than 100 living, sentient creatures are inside the Mines at one time, the slumbering power is apparently awakened, and the mutation process speeds up to a few painful minutes.

The charduni have experienced this phenomenon only once — in the days before the Divine war — and then it took nearly six months for the Mines to "slumber" once more and to return to the painstakingly slow mutations of previous years. In spite of their dedication to the study of the Mines' strange effects, the dark dwarves have been loath to risk another such incident, especially since it might very well be worse in future. To guard against such an occurrence, the charduni have since relied mostly on undead to dig rock samples for research and to guard the Mines from intruders.

Research on rock samples and on a small number of natural animals, such as sheep, dogs and rabbits, is performed by low-level slaves (often of a research- or magic-related expert class and usually of good health and strength) all equipped with *slave collars*. At the government research outpost, a safe distance away, the wizards who control the *slave collars* monitor the slaves' research and also catalog their own observations of the long-term effects on the slaves themselves.

When a slave's mutations begin to interfere with his ability to perform research (usually after four or five years), the wizards have him killed by undead and immediately request a replacement from the Ministry of Property. Animals are also killed and replaced whenever they become too dangerous — usually after six or seven years. The slaves are regularly supplied with food and tools by teams of undead, and their recorded findings and communications to the wizards in the research outpost are also carried out of the Mines by mindless undead.

Mine Horror

The mutating effect of the Mines, if allowed to run its full course, produces aberrations of the most horrifying sort. Tentacled and/ or multiheaded beasts with slaving jaws and rearranged anatomies are quite common, even when the original creature was an ordinary human or elf. The charduni government has done its best to keep stories of these creatures secret, but rumors among the slaves are notoriously difficult to control. In this particular case, the rumors about the Mines are horrific enough to make them the single most dreaded place in the Charduni Empire, and rightly so.

From time to time, mutations go undetected by the charduni, and these have been known to escape from the Mines and ravage the surrounding countryside. The area around the Mines is well patrolled to prevent such mishaps, but they sometimes occur nevertheless.

The charduni know that a large number of living things in the mines (usually around 100 living sentient beings) seems to trigger some strange effect that causes mutations to erupt quickly and spontaneously in all the Mines' occupants. This is something the charduni wish to avoid, and so they keep the living population of the Mines low. The charduni's greatest fear is that another trigger to the mutative effect exists, and that some day the Mines will "come alive" again and a wave of mutated horrors will emerge to trouble the empire.

Sample Mine Horror

Mine Horror Dog

	Large Aberration
Hit Dice:	5d8+20 (42 hp)
Initiative:	+3
Speed:	40 ft. (8 squares)
Armor Class:	15 (-1 size, +3 Dex, +3 natural), touch 13, flat-footed 12
Base Attack/Grapple:	+0/+4
Attack:	Bite +5 melee (1d6+3)
Full Attack:	Bite +5 melee (1d6+3), 2 poisonous bites +0 melee (1d3+3 plus poison)
Space/Reach:	10 ft./10 ft.
Special Attacks:	Poisonous bite, trample
Special Qualities:	Damage reduction 5/magic, scent
Saves:	Fort +6, Ref +5, Will +0
Abilities:	Str 17, Dex 17, Con 19, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 4
Skills:	Jump +7, Listen +5, Spot +5, Survival +1
Environment:	Temperate Mountains
Organization:	Solitary
Challenge Rating:	6
Treasure:	None
Alignment:	Chaotic evil
Advancement Range:	—
Level Adjustment:	—

The beast looks somewhat like a gray terrier — though one the size of a large bear and subject to some horrible disease. It has ghastly patches of bald and bubbling yellow skin, and two extra mouths gape from the center of

its chest. Something in the thing's eyes suggest cruel intelligence.

Description

This terrifying beast is the result of the horrific mutations that can befall those who explore too deeply and too far into the Mines.

Combat

A mine horror dog attacks anything that moves, as long as the opponent is of its own size or smaller. If hungry, it makes a full attack every round that it possibly can and flees only if reduced to less than 75% of its original hit points. If killing for pleasure, it usually chooses to trample opponents as often as it bites.

Poisonous Bite (Ex): The mine horror dog has two extra mouths with sharp, poisonous teeth. As part of a full attack, the dog may make secondary attacks with the mouths, inflicting damage plus poison (bite, Fortitude DC 16, initial damage 1d4 temporary Str, secondary damage 2d6 hp).

Trample (Ex): As a standard action during its turn each round, the mine horror dog can literally run over an opponent at least one size category smaller than itself. The mine horror dog merely has to move over the opponent. The mine horror dog's trample deals 2d6 points of bludgeoning damage.

Trampled opponents can attempt attacks of opportunity, but these incur a -4 penalty. If they do not make attacks of opportunity, trampled opponents can attempt Reflex saves for half damage. The save DC is 15.

Creating a Mine Horror

Creature type is changed to Aberration and creature size is increased by 1d3 size categories.

Creating a Mine Horror

"Mine Horror" is an inherited template that can be added to any living non-outsider creature (hereafter referred to as the "base creature"). A mine horror uses all the base creature's statistics and special abilities except as noted here. Do not recalculate the creature's Hit Dice, base attack bonus, saves or skill points if its type changes. Recalculate Hit Dice, AC and base attack bonus for ability and size changes.

Size and Type: Type changes to aberration. Size increases by 1d3 categories.

Hit Dice and Hit Points: +2 Hit Dice per size category increase.

Armor Class: As base creature +1d4 natural armor bonus, adjusted for new size and abilities.

Base Attack/Grapple: As base creature, adjusted for new size and abilities. Do not change base attack bonus.

Attacks: Same as base creature, adjusted for new abilities. Do not change base attack bonus.

Full Attack: Same as base creature, adjusted for new abilities. Do not change base attack bonus.

Damage: Same as base creature, adjusted for new abilities. Increase natural attack damage based upon new size.

Special Attacks: A mine horror retains all the special attacks of the base creature and also gains 1d3 of the following special attacks.

Piercing Shriek (Su): Three times per day, a mine horror can emit a horrifying and painful shriek. All creatures within a 10-yard radius of the creature must make a Fortitude save (DC 10 + 1/2 mine horror's HD) or take 2d6 points of sonic damage and be deafened for 1d4 rounds. Those who succeed on their save rolls take half damage and are deafened for 1d2–1 rounds. Deaf creatures are immune to the deafening effect but still take sonic damage.

Poisonous Bite (Ex): Base creature grows 1–3 extra mouths with sharp, poisonous teeth. As part of a full attack, the creature may make secondary attacks with the mouths at –5 to attack, inflicting 1d3 + Strength modifier points of damage plus poison (bite, Fortitude DC 10 + half the mine horror's HD + the mine horror's Con modifier, initial damage 1d4 temporary Str, secondary damage 2d6 hp).

Tentacles (Ex): Base creature grows 1d6 tentacles and gains the Improved Grab special attack. On any full attack, creature may make one additional attack with each tentacle at –5 to hit, inflicting 1d6+Str

modifier in damage.

If the creature hits with a tentacle, it deals normal damage and attempts to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. No initial touch attack is required, and Tiny and Small creatures do not suffer a size penalty. This improved grab works only against opponents at least one size category smaller than the creature. The creature has the option to conduct the grapple normally, or simply use the tentacle to hold the opponent. If it chooses to do the latter, it suffers a –20 penalty to grapple checks, but it is not considered grappled itself; the creature does not lose its Dexterity bonus to AC, still threatens an area and can use its remaining attacks against other opponents.

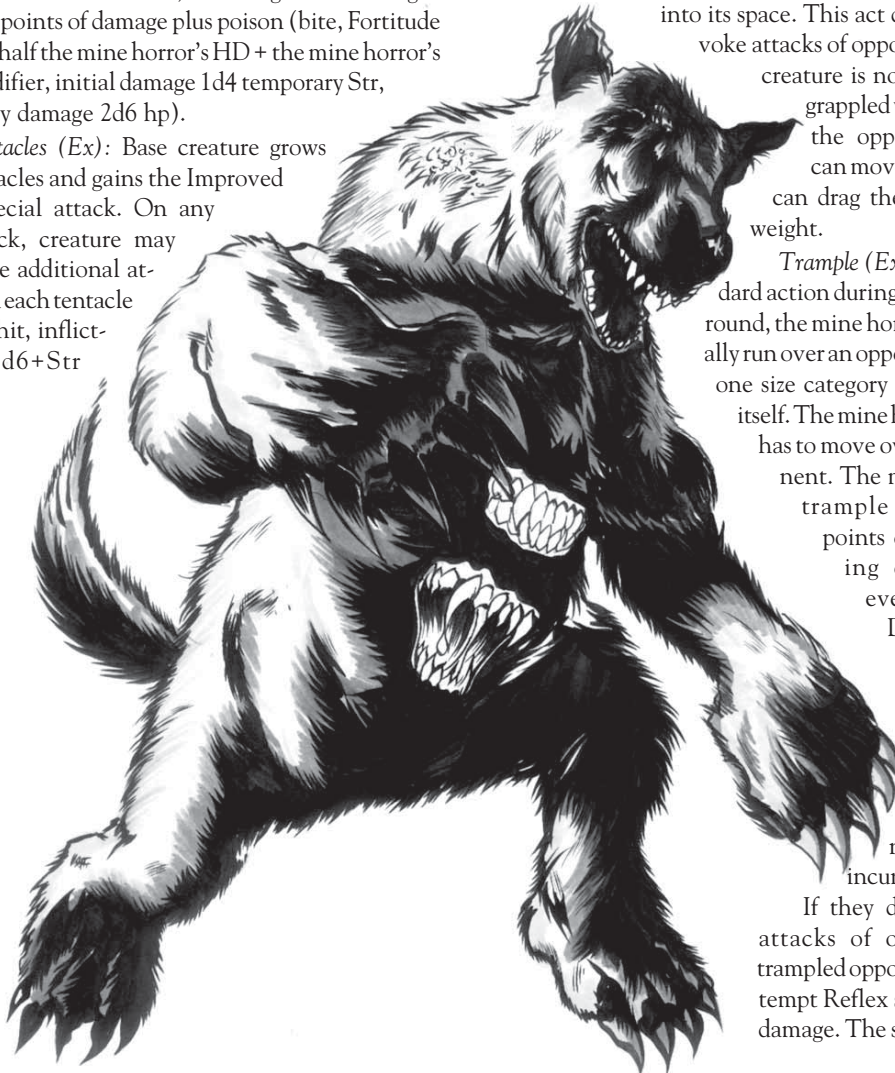
A successful hold does not deal additional damage unless the mine horror also has the constrict ability. If the creature does not constrict, each successful grapple check it makes during successive rounds automatically deals the damage listed for a tentacle attack.

When a creature gets a hold after an improved grab attack, it pulls the opponent into its space. This act does not provoke attacks of opportunity. The creature is not considered grappled while it holds the opponent, so it can move, provided it can drag the opponent's weight.

Trample (Ex): As a standard action during its turn each round, the mine horror can literally run over an opponent at least one size category smaller than itself. The mine horror merely has to move over the opponent. The mine horror's trample deals 1d6 points of bludgeoning damage for every two Hit Dice it has.

Trampled
opponents can attempt attacks of opportunity, but these incur a –4 penalty.

If they do not make attacks of opportunity, trampled opponents can attempt Reflex saves for half damage. The save DC is 10



+ 1/2 mine horror's HD + mine horror's Strength modifier.

Special Qualities: A mine horror retains all the special qualities of the base creature and also gains 1d2 of the following.

Damage Reduction 5/magic (Su)

Regeneration 5 (Ex): Fire and acid inflict normal damage.

Spell Resistance 15 (Ex)

Saves: As base creature, adjusted for new ability modifiers as necessary.

Abilities: Same as base creature with the following adjustments: Str +1d4 per size category increase, Con +1d4 per size category increase, Int -2d4, Wis -1d4, Cha -1d4.

Challenge Rating: Same as the base creature +1 per three additional Hit Dice and +1 per two additional special attacks or special qualities.

Alignment: Always chaotic evil

Acquiring Mutations and Awakening the Mines

Normally, living creatures in the Mines must make a Will save once per month to avoid acquiring the mine horror template. This save begins at DC 10 and increases by 5 every full year that the creature remains within 10 miles of the Mines. Usually, living creatures sent to the mines last several years before being subjected to mutation, at which time they are slain and their bodies sent to Chorach for study.

The Mines appear to be subject to some kind of semisentient malevolent force, however. No one is sure exactly what this evil force is — some speculate that it is related in some fashion to the Slarecians; the charduni themselves believe that the Mines predate the birth of the gods and are not related to the titans. Regardless of their origin, the Mines can be "awakened" by the presence of large numbers of intelligent creatures. If more than 100 HD of creatures with Intelligence scores higher than 3 are in the Mines at any one time, the Mines are then awakened, and the listed effects occur. It is also possible that other factors, such as magic, divine presence or even psionic activity, may trigger the Mines to awaken.

If the Mines are awakened, mutations begin to happen quickly. All living creatures, including those with no Intelligence score and Intelligence scores lower than 3, must make DC 15 Will saves once per minute to see if they are transformed into mine horrors. Unlike the ordinary effects of the Mines, the awakened effects take place only within 100 yards of the Mines themselves — creatures who escape the mines without failing a single Will save remain unaffected.

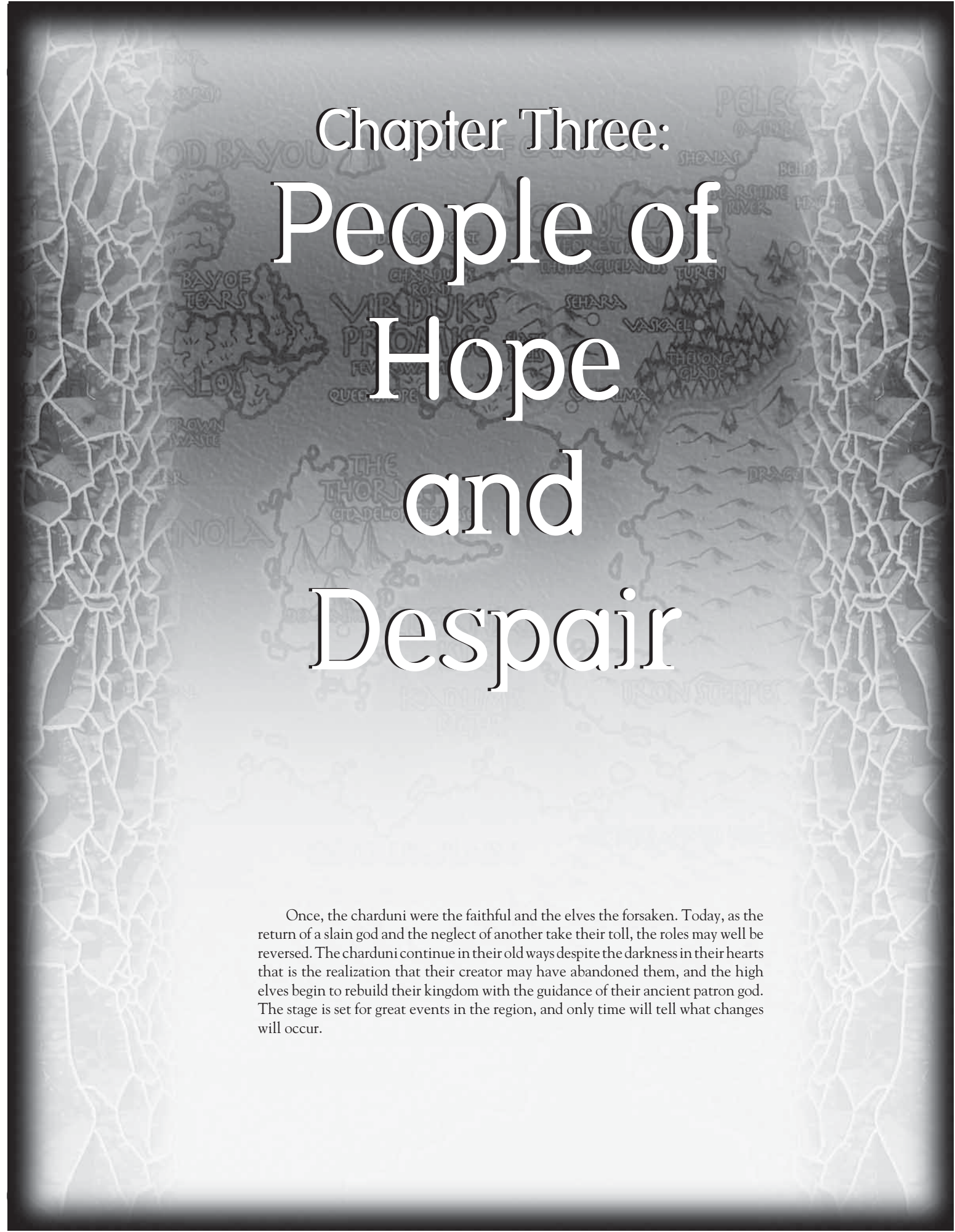
Once a creature fails its Will save, however, it begins to mutate. Creatures so affected must then make a DC 15 Fortitude save or instantly and gruesomely die due to the pain and extremity of mutation. Those who survive the Fortitude save are wracked with pain for 1d6 minutes, during which time they can take no action. At the end of this period, the mine horror template is applied to the creature.

Mutations are permanent, even if creatures are removed from the vicinity of the mines. The charduni have always killed and destroyed mutated creatures rather than attempting to cure them, so it is unknown if the condition is curable, even by magic. It is possible that mutations may be cured with a combination of healing spells, such as a *remove curse* spell followed by a *heal*, *regenerate* or *greater restoration* spell.

Mine Horror Characters

Characters sentenced to labor in the Mines may be forced to take on the mine horror template. Spellcasting characters usually lose some or all of these abilities due to attribute decreases. Any character whose Intelligence or Wisdom falls below 3 immediately becomes an NPC.

At the GM's discretion, it is possible that a character can receive a "partial" mutation as a result of a failed Will save in the Mines. In this case, only a few of the above modifications are applied, and the character retains its Intelligence and may make only a partial alignment shift. In such cases, the mutation may serve the character in a positive fashion, but negative consequences should also be applied. In such cases, it is suggested that characters be able to find a cure for the mutation if they wish, though this could certainly involve an extended quest or series of adventures.



Chapter Three: People of Hope and Despair

Once, the charduni were the faithful and the elves the forsaken. Today, as the return of a slain god and the neglect of another take their toll, the roles may well be reversed. The charduni continue in their old ways despite the darkness in their hearts that is the realization that their creator may have abandoned them, and the high elves begin to rebuild their kingdom with the guidance of their ancient patron god. The stage is set for great events in the region, and only time will tell what changes will occur.

People

The high elves have changed much over the last century and a half, yet even so remain distinct among the races of Scarn. Their proud heritage can be seen in all aspects of life in the new Divine Empire. The elves may no longer be cheerful and pleasant, but they remain undeniably elven.

Government

The organization of the new imperial age has changed little from its predecessors. A powerful, centralized bureaucracy is supported by civil magistrates, the military, trust magi and the theocracy.

The Rose Throne

The supreme authority in the Divine Empire is the emperor or empress, also referred to as the Rose Throne. Currently the position is held by Kathalema, who must ultimately decide all matters of state, religion and war. Though aided by countless officials, the Empress' word is final. Only one elven ruler has ever been countermanded by his followers — Essu.

Council of Archons

In practical terms, the power of the empire rests with the Council of Archons, an assembly of elven elders, acclaimed to the post by fellow citizens. They govern the day-to-day affairs of the empire, bringing more difficult and empirewide matters to the Empress. In this manner they act as a sort of filter and could conceivably subvert the power of the Rose Throne. Again, this is never done; it simply flies in the face of too many millennia of law and tradition.

One tried and true method for ensuring the Council and the Rose Throne never reach serious discord is for the emperor or empress to sit in the Council as an archon. Kathalema has refused to follow this example, however, stating that she is one elf and will fill only one post.

Imperial Magistracy

During the reign of Essu in the legendary First Dynasty, no law keepers existed in the lands of elves. Indeed, no law keepers existed of any kind, and few societies even had a legal code (for Hedrada had not yet been born). As one of his first acts as leader, Essu commissioned a cadre of his most trusted advisors to oversee the execution of his edicts. So the magistrates came into being. Shortly after Essu descended into madness, and when it came time to deal with the August, it was his magistrates who cut him down, ending that fabled age of glory forever. The only purpose from which the magistrates cannot waver is that nothing must be allowed to harm the elven people, not even their emperor.

Since that time, the magistracy (as the formal organization of the magistrates came to be known) took a variety of forms. Before the coming of Jandaveos,

the magistrates included sorcerers and druids of Mesos. Using divination and scrying, they ensured that transgressors of elven law were brought to heel. Jandaveos' appearance and the advent of divine magic changed all that, and clerics became the organization's new core. When the Draco-Elven Alliance was forged and the theocracy became a separate institution, the magistracy was left without many of its former members. Ever since, it has relied on raw skill and elven intuition to continue its work. The magistracy was pivotal for the stability of the elven race during the Diaspora. Within Eldura-Tre, it was the second-strongest military force. Only the elven army could match the magistracy in raw strength of arms, and it certainly wielded it with less finesse. The magistracy worked as information gatherers during both Elf-Charduni Wars and continued to play an invaluable role during the Divine War. With the fall of Eldura-Tre and the founding of the principalities, however, the magistrates were dealt such a crippling blow that they essentially faded from existence.

Remnants of the magistracy attempted to rebuild, albeit on a much smaller scale. The Iron Staves of Kasiavael was founded in 14 AV, with the intention of ensuring the virtuous conduct of the realm's magi. Recruiting was difficult, however, and the magi used their influence to stymie the growth of the organization. By 52 AV, the Iron Staves were all but defunct, and the last of the order were exiled by decree of the magi council in 56 AV.

The magistrates had more success in Gangulael, where Prince Shendael jumped at the opportunity to stabilize the region's warring tribes. Using what they had learned in Kasiavael, the organization reformed under the bailiwick of the Keepers in 86 AV, reaching considerable strength by 92 AV.

Today, the imperial magistracy is well on its way to recovery. Shendael now serves as High Magistrate and has ordered the construction of a new training facility for the nascent magistracy. Slated to be complete by 157 AV in the city of Vaskael, it has already begun receiving applications for entry from worthy elves across the empire.

Imperial Host

The armies of the different principalities have again combined into the elven host, once the most feared and respected force in the world. The imperial host has a reputation for being unmatched, where even the greenest recruit can defeat veterans from lesser militaries. The modern host is certainly well trained and equipped, but it is also undoubtedly understaffed. As such, it has been laxer on who can join its ranks, and former mercenaries from across the Scarred Lands have converged on the Divine Empire to apply for entrance, hoping to benefit from the imperial host's superior equipment and training, and the pres-

tige of being in the elven army. Would-be warriors be warned, however, the high elves are anything but fickle, and demand a life-long commitment from those they accept into their ranks.

The Magi Orders

The magi orders predate the Divine Theocracy by millennia, hearkening to the days when Mesos lorded over the high elves and the gods were as yet unborn. Then the magi were a unified group, dedicated to the pursuit of magic in all its forms. With the coming of Jandaveos, the orders split into specialized branches, becoming more and more disparate with each passing millennium.

Each branch was dedicated to a different elven virtue, which naturally led to them gravitating to different provinces during the Second Imperial Age. Though they cooperated heavily during that era, division became the rule during the forsaken age. Only now, with the reunification of the elven people, are the magi also rejoining their forces.

Divine Theocracy

Though "only" a demigod, Jandaveos has always been celebrated for his hands-on approach to divinity. Throughout his tenure as the patron of the high elves, he has repeatedly stood shoulder to shoulder with his worshippers, answering their prayers and manifesting to aid them far more than his divine station would suggest. It should come as no surprise then that his church is much the same, a well oiled liturgical organization with influence beyond what one might expect for worshippers of a "lesser" divinity.

Since its first incarnation in the days of Therathose, the church has been called the Divine Theocracy. More than merely a church, it serves as the soul of the elven people. It is also fully integrated into the imperial government and even possesses its own elite army. Similar to the charduni, the elves make no distinction between church and state. Unlike the dark dwarves, the high elves see religion as an important part of their being, rather than the be-all and end-all of the Divine Empire's agenda. So while the priests of Jandaveos might command great respect and even power, they remain loyal to the Rose Throne.

To facilitate its duties, the Divine Theocracy maintains an impressive number of temples and shrines throughout the empire. These often double as schools and houses of healing, two other major mandates of the Theocracy. In times of war, the Theocracy uses these buildings as command posts, activating the teleportation circles therein to create a vast and highly advanced transportation network. These contingencies can even be used in peaceful times, though only if the need is great. Therefore, even the smallest chapterhouse can call on the might of the entire church.

Not every elven priest is part of the Theocracy, though the vast majority of them are. Those who are not are usually isolationists, errants or ascetics, who spend their

time in the least populated regions of the empire. In the aftermath of the forsaken age, however, many nontheocrats are clerics who belonged to one of the many heresies of the day. While they have not gone so far as to renounce Jandaveos and become still-forsaken, they naturally find it difficult (or undesirable) to rejoin the Divine Theocracy. For their part, the theocrats bear no ill will against their nontheocratic cousins. Jandaveos is a chaotic god, after all, and it would be out of character for him or his priests to look poorly on priests who don't toe the party line (though some individuals within the Theocracy think otherwise, and this too is in keeping with the tenets of chaos).

The most urgent matter occupying the Divine Theocracy is the reintegration of the heresies born during the forsaken age. Many would like to join the theocrats but have difficulty reconciling the differences in belief. Some of these differences are minor, but some are truly insurmountable. This has caused some dissension within the theocrats' ranks, though for the moment things appear to be on the mend.

Society

Modern high elven society is an amalgam of its former incarnations, including its dilapidated state during the forsaken age. Still, certain things have remained unchanged — the elven love of the beautiful, for example. Others remain outwardly unchanged but radically altered on a deeper, psychological level. The elven attitude toward warfare, for instance, makes many nervous about the rapidly building power of the Third Imperial Age.

Reputation

The notion of face is of great importance to elves and grew as a direct reaction to the bloody internal warfare of the First Death. Hoping to avoid mutually destructive competition in future generations, the founders of Therathose instituted a formalized series of "contests" whereby participants could resolve matters of supremacy in carefully structured and above all safe environments. This was originally quite simple, including competition that even modern observers would recognize, such as duels with stylized swords, poetry contests and many of the individual sports high elves engage in today. Over time, these specific rituals became the basis of a much broader spectrum of intra-elven competitive arts, and these in turn served as the foundation of the modern system of gaining (or losing) face.

The grossest of these contests includes the coronation rites of Pelegael (which have survived in a somewhat muted form in the new Eldura-Tre). While strange to outsiders (and, to be fair, would likely make the elves of old cringe), these oftentimes nonsensical rituals are merely extensions of the reputation rituals developed in the First Imperial Age.

Even between mortal enemies, the system of reputation and face is used before resorting to more blatant (and lethal) methods of conflict resolution.

Therefore, while a casual nonelven observer might scoff at the pretentious displays between high elves, one must never forget that such duels belie the fury of the elven heart. Were they not dancing or reciting poetry, they would be striking with eldritch blades and invoking battle magic.

Rites of Passage

Elves make no attempt to divide their long lives into smaller portions. To a high elf, one's deeds are a continual string of pearls, each one distinct but part of a greater whole. Each experience glides into the other, and the desire to demarcate between them (as the other races are wont to do) seems almost psychologically unsound to the elves (who view it as a sure way to encourage multiple personality disorder).

This is not to say the high elves do not mark off milestones in their lives, but rather that they celebrate events of empirical worth, rather than arbitrary set points based on age. These milestones usually include such things as a youngster's first poem, and the first time they loose an arrow or swing a sword. Marriage is likewise vaunted, as is the first kiss and the first rose offered. Elves of a military bent (which is to say, all of them) mark well the day of their first true death fight, and the first time they slew an enemy or had to watch a friend die. Therefore, those who accuse elves of "taking life easy" and being insensitive to the mortality of others are categorically unfair. If anything, elves are more keenly aware, through ritual and remembrance, of each ephemeral moment of their long lives.

Recreation

There is no rose whose scent does not ensnare, whose thorns cannot cut, and whose shaft, when fashioned into an arrow, cannot kill.

— Eldurian adage

Depending on whom you ask, leisurely activity is either a virtue or a vice. The former argue that the ability to enjoy oneself is a measure of societal development. After all, a poor and primitive culture has neither the resources to engage in pleasure for its own sake nor the skills to do it well. Their opponents argue instead that recreation is a waste of time and energy, a symbol of civilization's decadence. A high elf views both sides as being too narrow. In their eyes, all things worth doing should bring joy (because of their inherent worth), and all things that bring joy should be worthwhile (else they are a waste).

If something appears worthwhile but brings no happiness, it is because it is fundamentally hollow. Alternatively, the person has not yet realized the true worth of what he is doing and so gains no pleasure from it. Yet since he does not realize the true worth of what he is doing, he must be doing it for the wrong reasons, and a man who toils with no understanding of his goal is both inefficient and a fool. This is why some elves

believe Eldura-Tre entered a period of military decline during the Elf-Charduni Wars, a decline that continued to rot during the days of Sylavael. Whereas in past ages an elven warrior fought because he loved it, modern soldiers fight only because "it is necessary," or because they have been ordered to so. Morale falters under such situations, and fighters become mindless killing machines, rather than the enlightened guardians they should be.

If something brings joy but is not worthwhile, then it is a waste. This stems from the elven love of life and beauty. Neither, they believe, is a right. It is instead a privilege and opportunity, a gift of fate, the titans, the gods, whatever, and a chance to make something grand of that gift. This isn't to say elves cannot be decadent. During the forsaken age, the elves of Pelegael engaged in all manner of excess.

Bardic Heaven

Elves are stereotypically known for their love of music and the arts. This view is accurate for the high elves. Even when forsaken, the elves used (some may say "clung to") art to help cope with their tragic transformation. Be it in the salons of Phadalera or the pubs of Baenash, musicians of every caliber would help the elves forget their woes, or inspire them to confront them.

Bards were especially important in that age of spiritual rot, as their craft helped safeguard the loss of elven lore. In fact, with the disempowerment of the forsaken elven cleric, the bards became something of the new clergy. They alone had the will and ability to inspire congregations, and their healing arts, powered by their music, even allowed them to fill the desperately needed roll as mendicants, which the cleric was now unable to perform. For his services a good bard could expect riches and acclaim, and as a result most bards congregated in the crumbling capitals of the elven principalities.

Not all bards, however, were content to stay sedentary. Driven as their kind seems to be to explore and break boundaries, a small but dedicated cadre of bards maintained their errantry across the elven lands. Many of these were warriors, who used their martial focus to protect their surviving but scattered countrymen. Others were former clerics, who embraced the bardic arts so that they might continue to serve in That Which Abide's name, without being seen as turncoats for embracing a foreign god.

With the restoration, some of these errant Samaritans have resettled in the growing cities. Many, however, have taken to their new role and now form the core of the imperial magistracy.

Literature

The elves disseminated the art of poetry to the other races more than twenty thousand years ago (though the asaatthi later perfected it and codified many of the modern poetic forms, especially the *haiku*). This singular contribution serves to underscore the

extreme love of elves for the written and spoken word. Throughout the First Dynasty and well into the latter millennia of Eldura-Tre, one's calligraphic and poetic skills served to grant one as much esteem as being able to shoot well or strike hard with a sword. The result was generations of elven scribes whose literary achievements remain unmatched even today.

Modern high elves have become noticeably more militaristic, a necessity in the Scarred Lands and a reflection of the degeneration the world has suffered. Yet even among the battle veterans of the Shield Realm, soldiers are expected to maintain a minimum literary standard in keeping with their rank. This skill becomes crucial both when interacting with the imperial court and during the many ceremonies of the imperial host. Failure to display adequate skill shame's one's company and is a sure way to derail one's career.

Joys of the Martial Arts

Elves have long esteemed the arts of war, but never before with such zest. Centuries of conflict and the forsaken age have hardened most high elves in an unsettling way.

In kinder times, the high elves celebrated martial training as a way to perfect both mind and body. Martial training grew out of common elven pastimes, with archery and swordplay being the two most prevalent. As time wore on, one's skill at fighting became a reflection of one's attainment of physical perfection. Martial prowess became a mark of distinction coveted by all elves.

Today, many elven soldiers still love the martial arts, not for what they are but for what it accomplish. Simply put, they enjoy the ability to serve death to their enemies and relish the chance to immerse themselves in the pure chaos of the battlefield.

Philosophy

Nowhere have the high elves changed more subtly than in the area of philosophy. Yet here is where the most significant alterations have taken place. The benign elves of old are dead, murdered by the despair of the forsaken age and the barbarity born of it. As with Essu's First Death, the destruction of Jandaveos scarred the elven soul; just how deeply the scar runs is only now becoming known.

Eikantians and Essuites

The previous ages of elvendom may best be described by the Eikantian philosophy. Named for the second last August, Eikanta, this belief system states that "ideals forge reality." Only by having ideals, and working to attain them, can a society survive and grow. Perfection, beauty and the harmony of nature are among the highest ideals, which is why high elves have traditionally displayed aptitude in these things.

The Essuite philosophy, named for the last August Essu, states instead that reality is reality. It cannot

be easily changed just as an iron rod cannot easily be bent. It can be broken and remade, but only through fire and force. Above all else, however, reality is cruel and uncaring. Therefore, compassion and ethics are an illusion, a construct designed to ease the minds of those too weak or unwilling to see the world for what it is. Essuites focus themselves on "breaking free" of that illusion by discarding morality, and seizing the world and breaking it if necessary to survive.

Modern high elves are arguably Essuite, and they were certainly amoral during the forsaken age. In the name of survival, they were willing to take slaves, and force them to bear the children they could not, just so they could thwart Chern's curse and persist into the modern era. What is frightening to those willing to fathom the possibility is that the high elves, given the choice, would do it all again.

Relations and Alliances

The political fallout from Jandaveos' return and the subsequent establishment of the Third Imperial Age are only now being realized across both Termana and Ghelspad. Even in Asherak, the renewed strength of the elven navy is causing concern, though it is still too early to tell how the Asheraki will respond. More apparent has been the response back home, where new alliances and new battle lines are being drawn.

The Charduni Empire

Much speculation surrounds the future of elven-charduni relations, and many of the pundits predict immanent war. One need only point to the two races' short and extremely violent liaison to believe a Third Elf-Charduni War is inevitable. Yet the high elves are themselves unsure.

During the first two wars, the elves truly believed themselves to be on the side of right. After all, they were waging a campaign to liberate Termana and eradicate an intractable enemy, intent on destroying the elves' way of life. But the elves have had their taste of being the slaver, and their hands are now as stained as those of the charduni. Indeed, many elves fear they may have become something even worse than the dark elves. Chardun's chosen at least believed in what they were doing. The dark dwarves enslave because they believe it is their place to do so, and because it brings glory to their god. In contrast, the elves knew very well that what they were doing was morally wrong. Worst, their campaign of slavery was blasphemy and desecration on a huge scale.

Given their questionable moral character, the high elves are less eager to engage the charduni. The dark dwarves are a reminder of what they became during their forsaken days, and the glaring hypocrisy of vilifying the charduni now that the elves no longer need to engage in slavery gives even the most righteous in the imperial host time to pause.

Still, no love is lost between Chorach and Anchoer. Given the opportunity, the Divine Empire would sweep down and annihilate the Land of Chains. With Calastia annexing more and more of Ghelspad, the Jack of Tears extending his hand over the human kingdoms, and Wexland still in a precarious situation, the elves must now seriously consider if the dark dwarves should be their chief concern.

Darakene and Wexland

Empires rarely coexist well, and Darakene and the Divine Empire are off to a bad start. The humans are well aware of the role the elves played in their recent civil war, and many Darakeners still mistrust the elves' motives. Wexland is fast becoming a utopia among human lands, gifted as it has been by the advanced lore of the Divine Empire. This has only deepened the rifts between the provinces, as Wexland's neighbors eye what they see as the misbegotten prosperity of the Wexlanders. Onlookers wonder how long the current peace accord protecting Wexland can hold, and worry as to what a renewed civil war might bring.

Burok Torn

Many within the Divine Empire see the alliance between Anchoer and Burok Torn as an auspicious event. After all, both Therathose and Eldura-Tre enjoyed close relations with the First and Second Dwarven Imperia. It only makes sense, they reason, that the Third Empire enjoy similar relations with the descendants of its former allies. Not every elf agrees, however. The antagonism between the dwarves and Calastia is well known. They fear that by so extending the hand of friendship to Burok Torn, the elves are making a dangerous enemy of the Black Dragon Throne. While the imperial navy could easily stop an invasion from distant Ghelspad, the elves are well aware that King Virduk's power extends beyond the overt. Moreover, the imperial host, while impressive, is still in the process of re-establishing its strength. It is doubtful if the Divine Empire could survive a double assault by both Calastia and the Charduni Empire.

Nevertheless, the dwarves have been made welcome in the new empire, and Kathalema herself is scheduled to visit Burok Torn at an undisclosed time later this year. Rumors are that she will unveil a new proposal for even further cooperation, one that may help remove the mutual charduni threats from the borders of both nations and bring about a new age of prosperity.

Calastia

The Black Dragon Throne has yet to reveal any official stance on the Third Empire's recent establishment. While the Calastians certainly don't approve of Anchoer's support of Burok Torn, no one has openly said Vashon is now hostile to the elves. The response may be tempered by the renewed strength of the elven navy, or perhaps King Virduk, being the consummate statesman, is simply leaving his options open.

Duke Traviak of Lageni has been less diplomatic, arresting any high elves unlucky enough to be found in his domain and summarily executing them as enemies of war. He has whipped his people (and, for that matter, the rest of the Calastian Hegemony) into a feverish mood of anti-elven sentiment.

Hollowfaust

High elves are still leery toward the undead, and despite Hollowfaust's aid in Jandaveos' resurrection, that view remains. The City of Necromancers has more than vindicated itself in the eyes of the Divine Empire of the Rose, however, to the point that the Rose Throne has decreed that any who assault Hollowfaust will incur the wrath of the elves. At the street level, elves no longer speak of Hollowfaust in hushed whispers, proudly pronouncing it (and usually in the same sentence with several adjectives of praise). Some elves have even started calling the city "the Heir to Sumara," a practice visiting Hollowfausters find most peculiar.

Another significant consequence of recent events is the arrival of guild necromancers. They have been invited by the Magi Council, which hopes the collaboration will help the elves deal with the undead that riddle the Plaguelands and Bleeding Fields. Much hope is invested in this venture, and if successful it may herald a new age of collaboration between the high magi and the necromancers.

Karsian

When War Queen Metea first heard of the Divine Empire of the Rose, she is said to have burst into laughter. After she recollected herself, a serious expression came upon her face, and she summoned her generals for a behind-doors council that lasted nearly three days. Since that time, relations between Regama and Anchoer have been superficially congenial, with the large distance separating the two serving to keep the empty pleasantries down to a minimum. Even in distant North Crilos the news of the elves' new nation is well known, however, and speculation is rife as to what Karsian, the preeminent human nation in Termana, will do.

Silverisle

Though far away, Silverisle is well connected with the Divine Empire of the Rose. Several months after the reunion of Ganjulaeon, and the empire's current size had been reached, a contingent of clerics arrived via teleportation at the banks of the Merciful River, outside the main gates to the Citadel of the Sun. When greeted inside, the theocrats disclosed to the Sisters of the Sun that they would stand ready to assist them at any time. When asked for the reasons behind their unsolicited aid, the clerics stated simply that Jandaveos wanted his sister to know that he was back.

Today, teleportation circles link the Divine Theocracy's main temples to every major settlement in Silverisle. The Sisters of the Sun have even begun an exchange program with the Conventiclers of the Rose, helping the Divine Theocracy retrain Jandaveos' clerics in the arts of war.

Vesh and the Vigils

Lave and Anchoer now enjoy a brisk and friendly dialogue, which has included extensive invitations for the vigils to set up shop in the Divine Empire. Cynics believe this is an attempt by the high elves to gain a quick infusion of elite troops. Most Veshians, however, are grateful for the new alliance, one that has brought their nation a much-needed ally in a time when enemies seem everywhere.

As in Darakene, the worship of Jandaveos has begun to take root, though on a much more limited scale. Certainly the Behjurian Vigil considers Jandaveos to be something of a patron, a belief that is fast spreading to the other Vigils.

Belsameth and Her Worshippers

No one is quite sure how to react to Belsameth, which is perhaps exactly how she likes it. Her role in Jandaveos' return changes with each telling, to the point where even those directly involved have trouble keeping the different versions straight. For his part, Jandaveos has been uncharacteristically laconic, couching his responses in esoteric metaphor when asked for an opinion. The Divine Theocracy has likewise been silent. Overall, it is safe to say that offerings to Belsameth (though not necessarily worship) have increased throughout the elven lands. If for no other reasons, the high elves do not want to seem ungrateful for whatever aid the Mad Lady may or may not have given.

Nalthalos and His Worshippers

The Divine Empire of the Rose is officially hostile to Dier Drendal. No dark elven ambassadors are in Anchoer, nor will any likely be in the near future. The high elves' current alliance with Burok Torn precludes any normalized relations. Vladawen and the Divine Theocracy have now been made aware of the reasons behind the fall of the dark elven god, however, and they cannot help but feel partially responsible for the continued plight of the elves.

Unfortunately, Jandaveos has stated that he cannot act unilaterally on the matter. Were he to intervene directly between Goran and Nalthalos, it might well drag the rest of the pantheon into the fray. Though he is not certain what this will eventually mean, Jandaveos has

implicated that it would not bode well. For the moment then, the dark and high elves are enemies, though some high elves (now that they have regained some of their old spirit) have resolved to take action where their god cannot.

Nemorga and His Worshippers

Were it not for Nemorga, the Gatekeeper, Jandaveos might still be dead. As the demigod overseeing the Underworld, only Nemorga could allow Vladawen to call the elven god back. Such an action was not easy for the Gatekeeper, and bordered on contravening his divine nature. But Nemorga allowed Jandaveos to pass regardless, and Jandaveos has not forgotten.

By decree of the Divine Theocracy, Nemorga is now accorded a temple in every major city in the Divine Empire of the Rose. Further, the common high elf has expressed his gratitude by giving brief prayers to Nemorga at funerals and dates commemorating ancestors.

Denev and Her Worshippers

Jandaveos has always walked on eggshells around the Earth Mother, a habit some have attributed to the titan's co-opting of the wood elves. Skeptics need only point out that Nalthalos did the same thing with the dark elves, and the two gods got along just fine. A more reasonable explanation may be his mother's (Mormo's) antagonism with Denev, and Jandaveos can't help but feel somewhat involved in the "family feud." Yet if this makes the elven god uncomfortable around Denev herself, it seems to have little impact on his love for the wood elves and the Earth Mother's druids.

With the coming of the Third Imperial age, the Divine Theocracy is working around the clock to revivify long fallow glades sacred to Denev. Using their clerical magic, its members have even begun repairing the broken monoliths and stone rings used by the regions' former druids. All this is in preparation to receive Denev's soon-to-be honored representatives to the Divine Empire — the Incarnate Order.

Two recent events have stoked the high elves' enthusiasm. First, the formal secession of the elves of Ganjuleos has saddened many, especially in the western lands. It is hoped that by making the new empire as friendly a place as possible to Denev, "lost brothers and sisters" will one day return. Second, Andelais is well known for his contributions to the resurrection of Jandaveos, so it is little wonder that the divine theocrats are quick to show their appreciation.

Prominent Persons

Empress Kathalema the General-in-Blue, High Marshal of the Imperial Host

Class/Level:	Fighter 20
Sex/Race:	Female high elf
Height/Weight:	5'7"/131 lbs.
Challenge Rating:	22
Hit Points:	20d10+40 (150 hp)
Initiative:	+12
Speed:	30 ft. (6 squares), fly 90 ft. (good)
Armor Class:	35 (+8 Dex, +11 <i>Aegis of Eldur</i> , +3 <i>mithral buckler of heavy fortification</i> , +3 <i>high elven ring of life warding</i>), touch 18, flat-footed 27
Base Attack/Grapple:	+20/+23
Attack:	<i>Rapier of icy burst</i> +34 melee (1d6+10+1d6 cold) or <i>mighty composite longbow of icy burst</i> +33 ranged (1d8+8+1d6 cold)
Full Attack:	<i>Rapier of icy burst</i> +34/+29/+24/+19 melee; <i>mighty composite longbow of icy burst</i> +33/+28/+23/+18 ranged
Special Attacks:	Spells, turn undead
Special Qualities:	Damage reduction 3/— (<i>Aegis of Eldur</i>), dark soul of divinity, evasion (<i>ring of evasion</i>), immune to critical hits and sneak attacks (<i>mithral buckler of heavy fortification</i>), immune to the paralysis power of ghosts and negates first three energy drain or ability drain attack per day (<i>high elven ring of life warding</i>)
Alignment:	Chaotic neutral
Saves:	Fort +17, Ref +17, Will +11 (<i>high elven ring of life warding</i>)
Abilities:	Str 16, Dex 26, Con 15, Int 21, Wis 15, Cha 23
Skills:	Bluff +11, Climb +9, Craft (bowmaking) +12, Craft (weaponsmith) +12, Diplomacy +15, Handle Animal +9, Jump +9, Knowledge (Divine Empire) +11, Knowledge (tactics) +15, Listen +9, Profession (soldier) +8, Ride +15, Search +7, Sense Motive +9, Spot +9, Survival +7, Swim +10
Feats:	Alertness, Cleave, Combat Expertise, Far Shot, Great Cleave, Improved Initiative, Improved Sunder, Leadership, Mounted Combat, Quick Draw, Point Blank Shot, Power Attack, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot, Shot on the Run, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (rapier), Weapon Specialization (rapier)
Dark Soul of Divinity (Su):	The "dark blight" in Kathalema's soul allows her to cast spells and turn undead as a 9th-level cleric (she does not gain spell domains, does not need to use a divine focus, but can spontaneously cast <i>cure</i> and

healing spells). It inflicts a -2 profane penalty on her Will saves against spells and powers used by evil creatures, and she cannot prepare or cast spells that are good-aligned.

Possessions:

Adamantine rapier of icy burst +5, *adamantine mighty composite longbow of icy burst* +5, *mithral buckler of heavy fortification* +2, *Aegis of Eldur*, *Circlet Dracuin*, *high elven ring of life warding**, *ring of evasion*, *wings of flying*

Cleric Spells Prepared (6/5/5/3/2/1):

0 — *Clean**, *create water*, *light*, *shockwave** x3

1st — *Bane*, *doom*, *smite** x3

2nd — *Assassin's senses**, *bull's strength*, *hold person* x2, *zone of truth*

3rd — *Invisibility purge*, *magic circle against law*, *searing light*

4th — *Divine power*, *summon monster* IV

5th — *Inquisition**

*These spells appear in **Relics and Rituals** I.

Background

Kathalema of Lacuin was born in 3601 OC and was only 20 years old when the charduni invaded her native Sylavaeon. Her elder brother Darentigus, 131 years her senior, was stationed at Fort Ged (then a farming outpost) and was slain in the attack. Seeking vengeance, she joined the imperial host in 3651 OC and arrived just in time to witness the death of the Dragon Prince Syla, at the Battle of Derovd. Already filled with rage over the loss of her brother, Kathalema vowed to destroy those who had dared defile her home and people. Proving herself a dedicated and capable warrior, she rose quickly in the host's rank, earning her first command in 3666 OC. Her senior officers had misgivings about Kathalema's motives, however. She was cold and harsh, deriving no joy from her mastery of the sword. The only thing that seemed to give her peace was the death cries of her opponents and the roiling tumult of the battlefield. Her second in command eventually had to relieve her of duty, fearing mental instability, and Kathalema was relegated to a hospital in Ulamakhe just two months before the conclusion of the First Elf-Charduni War.

Four years passed, and the clerics of Jandaveos worked to heal the "dark blights" upon Kathalema's soul. Yet the young warrior had no desire for their ministrations and secretly used her own divine magic to counter their efforts. This continued during the entirety of her convalescence, until the call for aid from Vera-Tre forced the imperial host to put her back in the front lines.

Kathalema felt as though she were resurrected from limbo and sated the growing fury of her heart with the blood of her enemies. She had learned during her stay with the clerics that the "dark blights" they so feared were in fact a source of great power. In her attempts to thwart their healing, she had learned to channel this

power, and now she used it to cut down the charduni armies. Her new strength and focus impressed her fellow warriors, and the host's marshals believed Kathalema had indeed been cured. By the end of the Second Elf-Charduni War, she had attained the rank of marshal, an incredible feat for one so young.

Marshal Kathalema was a terror during the Divine War. She possessed an eerie calm that belied her raw passions. Those who recall meeting her in those days describe her as a living flame, held fast in a crystal shell that at any moment might explode. In the name of her god, she slew countless enemies, including the wrack dragon Ringoth of Winter Peak. After Kadum's Deluge wiped out most of the charduni army, Kathalema was the first to redirect her troops against the Land of Chains.

This move would be a mistake, as her forces were too far south when the high magi warned that Chern was heading directly for Ganjulaeon. Though she attempted to reach the Cliffs of Promise in time, she did not arrive until both the titan and her god were dead. She felt betrayed for the second time; denied the chance to see the end of the First Elf-Charduni War, she was denied again, and this time she missed the chance to see (and, in her mind, possibly prevent) the death of her god.

The marshal descended into self-loathing and despair. Only after several near-disastrous exchanges with the charduni was her anger finally spent. The damage, however, had been done. Her blind rage had driven her cohorts to near destruction and her younger brother had to sacrifice his own life to stay her hand before she brought final ruin upon the Shield Realm. Only after his death did she begin to evaluate her own motives, and the dark parts of her psyche from which, up until now, she had drained strength without question.

Roleplaying

Outwardly the Empress is the very picture

of confidence — beautiful, inspiring and possessed of an unshakable conviction. She speaks rarely but with passion, expressing her thoughts in a few short words. Her motions are muted in the diplomatic arena, reduced to nods, brief smiles and the occasional slow blink of annoyance.

For all this apparent strength, Kathalema is a wounded soul. She secretly seeks death, not knowing the true value of her own life. She believes that her deeds up till now have been ill-begotten in hatred, and that she has betrayed the memory of those who have died in her name. A part of her wishes to live on, to atone for what she has had to do in her long life, but in her heart she does not believe she can be saved.

Kathalema will not go quietly, though; she still has too much pride for that. On the day she loses the will to live, she will ride forth into battle to die alone.



Circlet Dracuin (Major Artifact)

Description: Gifted to the elves by the dragon lords, the *Circlet Dracuin* is the revered symbol of wisdom and rule. It is worn by he or she who sits on the Rose Throne and will not tolerate the touch of any other. The lone exception is if the empress (or emperor) should come to an untimely end, in which case a keeper, whom the *Circlet* chooses, will be able to bear (though not wear) the crown. Magically resizing to accommodate the head of its rightful owner, the *Circlet* is made of a strange protean material that changes in appearance to match the character of its owner. It is intricately designed, and carved using long-forgotten arts. Though only one inch wide, the *Circlet's* carvings tell the complete tale of the dragons' first meeting with the elves, and the latter founding of their alliance.

Powers: The *Circlet Dracuin* confers a +5 luck bonus to AC and immunity to all harmful spells of 4th level or lower. Spells of 5th level or higher have a 20% chance of failure. The *Circlet* has Intelligence and Wisdom scores of 21 and a Charisma score of 23. It has an ego of 37 and has the purpose "defend all high elves."

In addition, the *Circlet* bears the psychic echo of the one who wears it and can transform that echo into a fearsome avatar of dragonkind. In Kathalema's case it creates an illusory effigy of Haracthu Nuir, the Sapphire Lord of Duranon Spire, the Dragon Sage of Ghelspad who passed to the realms of Ice millennia ago. All opponents within 500 feet must make a DC 25 Will save or be shaken (-2 morale penalty on attack rolls, weapon damage rolls and saving throws).

Kathalema can call on the avatar's power 7/day (1 + her Charisma modifier, minimum of 1), and the invocation lasts for 10 rounds (3 + her Charisma modifier in rounds, minimum of 3). This is a vision-based, supernatural fear effect.

Yet she will not be alone, for those she commands love her too dearly. Her final act will therefore be to lead her people in one last great charge, and bring ruin not only to them, but to the world.

Combat

Kathalema still loves to fight and will not back down from a challenge. In personal combat she always goes for the quickest, most brutal and most direct attack. Her favorite weapon is her rapier, and she charges into melee whenever possible. She is not too reckless, however, and will defend herself using her expertise and buckler to their full advantage. Once in range, she usually attempts to sunder her opponent's weapon and slay him in the same round, cutting down

nearby bodyguards if within range. Although more than capable with the bow, she uses it only to cover her allies, and is much loved for her attention to her companions even while she is in the thick of the fray.

When fighting with an army at her back, Kathalema truly shines. She has an uncanny skill at figuring out her opponents' plans, and then allows them to half complete them before she crushes them utterly. She spares no one in warfare, believing every civilian to be a potential future soldier. If it is the more efficient to put a village to the sword, then she will do so. She does not go out of her way to cause wanton destruction, however; if sparing the lives of her captives would serve her ends better, she will do it without hesitation.

Aegis of Eldur (Major Artifact)

Description: This lapis armor, resembling petals and leaves fashioned into full plate, was originally crafted for Emperor Eldur of Therathose. It has been in the possession of every elven ruler since, with a brief hiatus during the forsaken age, when it was kept under guard in Phadalera. It was recovered for the Divine Empire by the human assassin Lillatu and presented to the Empress as a coronation present (much to the amazement of all in attendance, as it was widely believed the *Aegis* had been stolen or lost).

Powers: The *Aegis of Eldur* can be worn only by the rightful ruler of the elves. It has Intelligence and Charisma scores of 16 and a Wisdom score of 21. It has an ego of 26, with the purpose "to defend the one who sits on the Rose Throne."

When worn, it confers a +11 sacred bonus to AC and absorbs the first 3 points of damage from all physical sources. Anyone attempting to target the wearer with an attack or malign spell (regardless of range) must succeed on a DC 21 Will save or fail automatically. The *Aegis* also projects a continuous aura of *nondetection*, as the spell cast by a 20th-level sorcerer. Only the wearer, or the *Aegis* itself, can negate the *nondetection* effect.



Wave-King Glitheval, High Admiral of the Imperial Navy

More than any high elf, Glitheval deserves the name. Few other elves have been able to maintain the dignity of old, and they certainly did not have the difficult burden that Glitheval carried as ruler. An ancient even for his long-lived race, the Wave-King began life as a humble sailor who later joined the imperial navy of Eldura-Tre so that he could better see the world.

Mantle of Cerul (Major Artifact)

Description: This ancient armor has been the treasure of Ehitovaeon's rulers since the founding of Eldura-Tre. Appearing as a beautiful mosaic of coral, crystal and sea shells, the *Mantle of Cerul* is said to dissolve into ocean spray when the Wave-King dies, magically reappearing on the new Wave-King.

Powers: On land, the *Mantle of Cerul* acts as a +3 *breastplate of reflection*. When the wearer is at sea (whether swimming or on a ship), the *Mantle's* true powers manifest. First, it loses its Armor check penalty and chance of arcane spell failure, and does not limit the wearer's maximum Dexterity bonus. In addition, it allows the bearer to survive indefinitely when underwater (he can breathe normally, move comfortably and sustain himself simply by drinking the sea water). Finally, it grants him a swimming speed of 200 feet.

Over the centuries he has seen perhaps too much, and the sorrows of forsaken age (not to mention the Divine War) weigh heavily upon him. True to tradition, he still sails out with his officers, leading the great imperial navy in the front lines. Yet everyone, especially the Wave-King, is aware that Glitheval will soon be no more. This does not seem to trouble him overmuch, as he knows many worthy sailors who can take his place. And now that Jandaveos has returned, death holds no fear at all.

Glitheval of Jenoshe, male high elf, Ftr5/Wiz15: SZ Medium humanoid (6 ft. 6 in.); CR 20; HD 5d10+5 plus 15d4+15; hp 81; Init 8; Spd 30 ft. (6 squares), swim 200 ft. (*Mantle of Cerul*); AC 17/27 (+3 ring, +4 Dex/with +8 *Mantle of Cerul*, +2 buckler); Base Atk/Grapple: +12/+12; Atk +18/+13/+8 melee (1d6+7+2d6 holy against evil/18–20, +5 *holy rapier*), +18/+13/+8 melee (1d6+7+2d6 chaos against law/18–20, +5 *chaotic rapier*); SQ Summon familiar; AL NG; SV Fort +14, Ref +14, Will +19; Str 11, Dex 19, Con 12, Int 23, Wis 20, Cha 22.

Skills: Climb +8, Concentration +17, Craft (weaponsmith) +11, Diplomacy +9, Gather Information +12, Jump +8, Knowledge (arcana) +21, Knowledge (the sea) +18, Knowledge (tactics) +20, Listen +8, Profession (sailor) +23, Sense Motive +13, Spellcraft +12, Spot +7, Survival +13, Swim +8.

Feats: Alertness, Beautiful Blade*, Dodge, Expertise, Leadership, Maximize Spell, Mobility, Quicken Spell, Scribe Scroll, Silent Spell, Spring Attack, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (Rapier), Weapon Specialization (Rapier), Whirlwind Attack, Widen Spell.

Possessions: +5 *holy rapier*, +5 *chaotic rapier*, *Mantle of Cerul*, +1 mithral buckler of lightning resistance, +3 ring of deflection, +4 cloak of resistance.

Wizard Spells Per Day: 4/6/6/5/5/4/2/1.

*See Chapter Four.

Prince Shendael, Chief Minister of the Imperial Magistracy

Shendael is the picture of optimism, a (relatively) young high elf who believes a new glorious age is about to dawn. Nothing is impossible, now that Jandaveos has returned. Perhaps the most active of the current leaders, Shendael is fast becoming friends with Coronal Valishan. He also has high hopes for the Divine Empire's new alliance with Vesh and is fascinated with the Vigils. Indeed, Shendael has modeled the revitalized magistracy after the vigilants' own organization.

Unlike his older counterparts, Shendael makes it a point to speak with everyone and



Tamaean, the King in Thorns of Jet and Gold

The being now known as Ta Maios of Bitter Words is widely feared throughout the empire. Common citizens see him as a dark and dangerous elf of great potency, while those in power are unsettled by the corruption of rulership that he represents. A recent attempt to bring back and "cleanse" the former high magus ended in complete failure.

Tamaean knows his powerbase is incomplete. Until such time that he can carry out the goals of the Shining Horde, he will continue to lair within Abadonius, using his magic to find suitable targets for capture and indoctrination. His favorite strategy is to find would-be heroes via magical divination and then to send them "prophetic dreams." These dreams are designed to weaken his targets' psyches and lure them to Abadonius, where they are transformed to serve the Shining Horde.

anyone he can find the time for. He will mingle with common villagers and high-ranking diplomats with equal ease and especially enjoys talking with adventurers (whom he considers to be prime recruitment targets for his growing force of magistrates).

Shendael of Uthalma, male high elf, Rgr6/Wiz12: SZ Medium humanoid (6 ft. 2 in.); CR 18; HD 6d10+24 plus 12d4+48; hp 132; Init +5; Spd 30 ft. (6 squares); AC 18/25 (+3 ring of life warding, +5 Dex/with +5 robe of archmagi, +2 animated buckler); Base Atk/Grapple: +12/+16; Atk +19/+14/+9 melee (1d6+7/crit 15-20, decapitate, +3 vorpal keen rapier), +20/+15/+10 melee (1d6+8/18-20, +4 adamantite rapier of defending); SQ favored enemy (undead, charduni), summon familiar; AL CG; SV Fort +13, Ref +11, Will +13; Str 19, Dex 21, Con 18, Int 17, Wis 16, Cha 19.

Skills: Climb +9, Concentration +14, Diplomacy +11, Gather Information +13, Handle Animal +13, Heal +12, Jump +13, Knowledge (arcana) +8, Knowledge (Divine Empire) +18, Listen +12, Move Silently +13, Sense Motive +13, Spellcraft +12, Spot +13, Survival +14, Swim +8.

Feats: Alertness, Beautiful Blade*, Combat Expertise, Improved Two-Weapon Fighting, Leadership, Scribe Scroll, Self-Sufficient, Silent Spell, Still Spell, Track, Two-Weapon Fighting.

Possessions: +3 vorpal keen rapier, +4 adamantite rapier of defending, +4 mighty composite longbow, +1 animated mithral buckler of medium fortification, boots of speed, robe of the archmagi, high elven ring of life warding.

Ranger Spells Per Day: 2

Wizard Spells Per Day: 4/5/5/5/3/3/2.

*See Chapter Four.

Tamaean-Now-Ta Maios, male half-fiend elf, Wiz13/Archmage 5: SZ Medium outsider (7 ft., 2 in.); CR 21; HD 18d4+54; hp 99; Init +3; Spd 30 ft. (6 squares), fly 30 ft. (average); AC 16/21 (+5 Dex, +1 natural/with +5 robe of the archmagi); Base Atk/Grapple: +8/+11; Atk +16/+11 melee (1d6+10/1d6+10, +5 staff of size alteration) and +11/+6 melee (bite 1d6+2); SA smite good 1/day (+18), spells; SQ darkvision (60 ft.), DR 10/magic, high arcana (arcane fire, mastery of counterspelling, spell-like ability), immunity to poison, resistances, spell-like abilities, SR 28; AL NE; SV Fort +8, Ref +9, Will +15; Str 21, Dex 20, Con 16, Int 26, Wis 18, Cha 20.

Skills: Concentration +27, Diplomacy +27, Gather Information +24, Knowledge (arcana) +28, Knowledge (Divine Empire) +29, Knowledge (the planes) +28, Listen +25, Spellcraft +33.

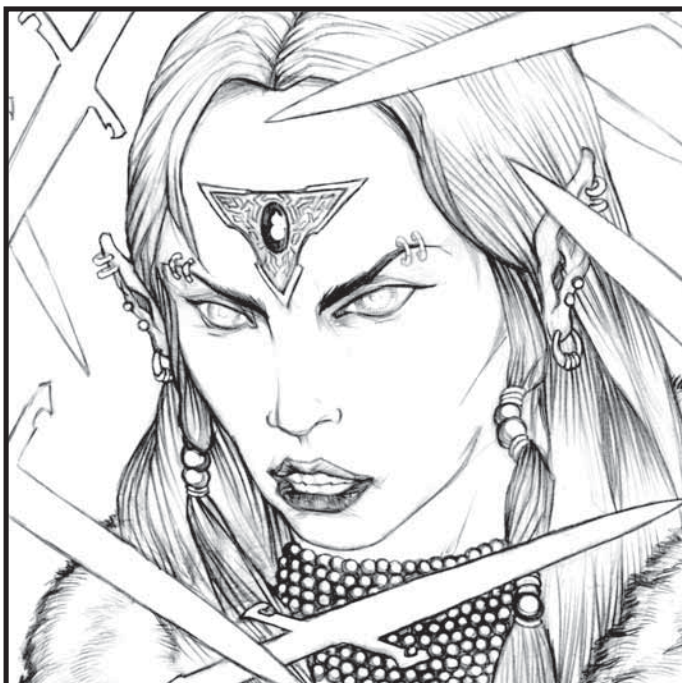
Feats: Empower Spell, Leadership, Maximize Spell, Quicken Spell, Scribe Scroll, Silent Spell, Skill Focus (spellcraft), Spell Focus (Abjuration), Spell Focus (Illusion), Still Spell.

Spell-like Abilities: 3/day — darkness, poison, unholy aura; 2/day — maximized ice storm; 1/day — blasphemy, contagion, desecrate, destruction, horrid wilting, summon monster IX (fiends only), unholy blight.

Resistances: Acid 10, cold 10, electricity 10, fire 10.

Possessions: +5 staff of size alteration, ring of elemental command (fire), ring of three wishes, robe of the archmagi, crystal ball with true seeing, figurine of wondrous power (onyx dog x2).

Wizard Spells Per Day: 6/6/6/6/5/4/3/3/4/1



Brigetta of Kanlonthas

Brigetta was the former (and last) queen of Pelegael, before Phadalera betrayed the Rose Throne and ceded to form the still-forsaken state of Eldura-Tre. While she sympathizes with some of the motives of her countrymen (notably, that the Divine Empire of the Rose is in self-denial), she does not believe they are correct in creating an independent state. Moreover, she is dis-

Slivers of Tejuron (Minor Artifacts)

Description: Originally crafted by the high magus Tejuron, these ornate, red steel daggers are family heirlooms of the women of the Kanlonthas gens. Their hilts are crafted from ivory and gold and are made to resemble females of different races. These females are obviously sorcerers, and their upraised arms produce the blade (which is crafted to resemble a pillar of lightning). Each effigy has tiny topazes set into the eyes, which glow a baleful yellow when the daggers are in use. Nine *slivers* exist in all, depicting a female high elf, wood elf, dark elf, dwarf, human, gnoll, dragon, halfling and gnome.

Powers: Each weapon is a +3 *keen dancing dagger of shocking burst*. The *Slivers of Tejuron* can be loosed as a free action, and will fight independently until their wielder calls them back. Also, unlike normal *dancing weapons*, the *Slivers* can be loosed again after only 2 rounds have passed. The *Slivers* can be wielded only by women. If a male tries to use one of the weapons, it deals 1d6 electricity damage to him each round (Fort half, DC 15) until it is released.

gusted and dismayed at how many of her former colleagues now use their positions to increase their own wealth, rather than setting the philosophical example they claimed to aspire to. Then of course the charduni are ever near, and seemingly forgotten by the clowns now in control of Phadalera.

So it is that Brigetta carefully manipulates the politics of her still-forsaken land, ensuring that Phadalera doesn't completely involute in orgiastic excess, and that defenses are in place should the dark elves invade. Her list of allies, however, is short.

Brigetta of Kanlonthas, female still-forsaken elf, Rog5/Ftr3/Sor10: SZ Medium humanoid (6 ft., 1 in.); CR 18; HD 5d6+10 plus 3d10+6 plus 10d4+20; hp 91; Init +8; Spd 60 ft. (12 squares) (*boots of striding and springing*); AC 24 (+3 *ring of life warding*, +4 *Dex*, +3 *amulet*, +4 *bracers*); Base Atk/Grapple: +11/+13; Atk +14/+9 special (1d4+3+2d10 fire, 9 *Slivers of Tejuron*), +16/+11 melee (1d4+5+2d10 fire, *Sliver of Tejuron*), +15/+10 melee (1d6+4 adamantite rapier); SA *major circlet of blasting*, sneak attack +3d6; SD *cloak of major displacement*; SQ evasion, uncanny dodge (Dex bonus to AC); AL CN; SV Fort+12, Ref+15, Will+16;

Str 15, Dex 19, Con 14, Int 22, Wis 18, Cha 20.

Skills: Bluff +21, Climb +12, Concentration +20, Craft (alchemy) +15, Diplomacy +18, Forgery +13, Gather Information +13, Jump +28, Knowledge (arcana) +19, Knowledge (Divine Empire) +11, Knowledge (tactics) +11, Listen +18, Read Lips +19, Search +12, Sense Motive +17, Spellcraft +19, Spot +16, Survival +12.

Feats: Alertness, Combat Casting, Combat Expertise, Dodge, Empower Spell, Heighten Spell, Improved Initiative, Maximize Spell, Quick Draw.

Possessions: *Slivers of Tejuron*, adamantite rapier, *amulet of natural armor* +3, *boots of striding and springing*, *bracers of armor* +4, *cloak of major displacement*, *high elven ring of life warding*, *major circlet of blasting*.

Sorcerer Spells Per Day: 6/8/7/7/6/4.

Loracedon the Younger, Arch Prelate of the Divine Theocracy

The bookish Loracedon was one of Vladawen's favored students before the Divine War. After the former high priest retreated into seclusion (a protracted withdrawal triggered by Jandaveos' death), Loracedon took over the day-to-day duties of the Titanslayer. Despite his best efforts, the divine theocracy disintegrated over a few short years, with many of his former brethren abandoning the church in their grief.

Rather than give in, Loracedon commanded his remaining peers to lock up and guard the treasures of the Theocracy. No doubt, some would attempt to loot from the church's treasures, now that its members were weak. He then reorganized the theocrats into a far more stream-



High Magus Valishan, Coronal of the Order of the Rose, Marshal of the Armies of the East

Valishan's rise to prominence is outshone only by his spectacular performance. It was the young high magus' foresight that prevented the Shining Horde from taking all of Eldurathryn, and his bravery in the Battle of High Tower saved the city from annexation. Though Kasiavaeon was one of the later provinces to join the Divine Empire, Valishan has been so active that virtually everyone of consequence is well acquainted with him (and he with them). He has used his impressive intellect to further the imperial cause and personally oversees the current collaboration between the Magi Council and the necromancers of Hollowfaust. He has also become

the de facto emissary of the Rose Throne, teleporting to distant capitals to speak with the rulers of other lands.

Valishan of Tenduhn, male high elf, Wiz (Transmuter)
18: SZ Medium humanoid (5 ft., 9 in.); CR 20; HD 18d4+36; hp 53; Init +5; Spd 30 ft. (6 squares); AC 17/22 (+2 ring, +5 Dex/with +5 robe of the archmagi); Base Atk/Grapple: +10/+14; Atk +19/+14 melee (1d6+8+2d6 against evil, +4 holy rod of absorption), +19/+14 melee (1d6+8, +4 rod of enemy detection and speed); AL NG; SV Fort +9, Ref +12, Will +20; Str 18, Dex 20, Con 15, Int 23, Wis 21, Cha 18.

lined force and encouraged them to supplement their now weakened spells with mundane skills. It was because of his efforts that the Divine Theocracy has managed to recover as quickly as it has. The ever scrutinizing Loracedon remains unsatisfied with the restoration, however. Eager to speed things along, he has recently started a massive campaign of recruitment. This has resulted in a large number of Wexlander (and therefore human) priests.

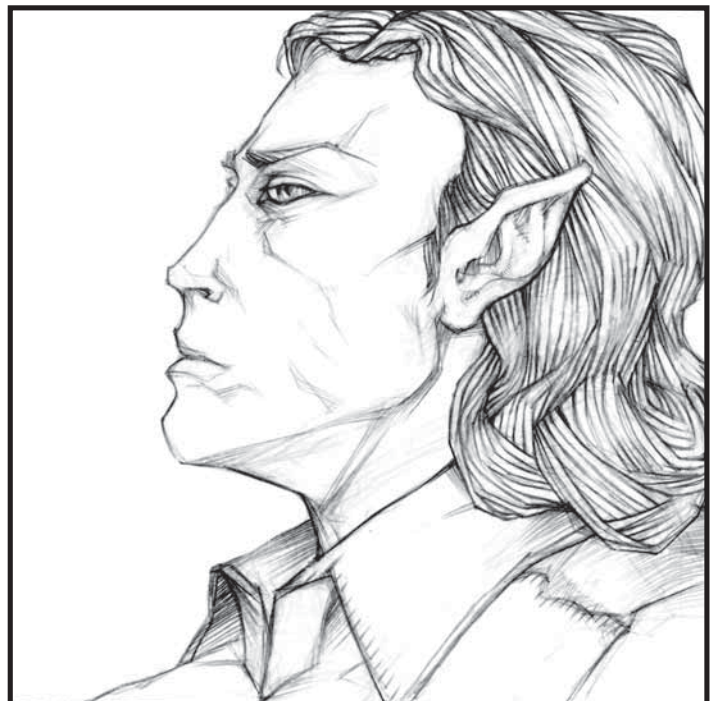
Loracedon of Agramontini, male high elf, Clr17/Ftr1: SZ Medium humanoid (6 ft., 10 in.); CR 18; HD 17d8+51 plus 1d10+3; hp 134; Init +3; Spd 30 ft. (6 squares), fly 60 ft. (good) (winged boots); AC 16/29 (+3 ring of life warding, +3 Dex/with +10 mithral full plate); Base Atk/Grapple: +13/+17; Atk +22/+17/+12 melee (2d6+14+2d6 if evil +2d6 if lawful/17–20, +5 holy keen chaotic greatsword); SA turn undead; SD vestments of faith; SQ spell domains (chaos, good); AL CG; SV Fort +18, Ref +11, Will +19; Str 18, Dex 16, Con 16, Int 17, Wis 23, Cha 17.

Skills: Concentration +23, Diplomacy +16, Gather Information +15, Heal +26, Knowledge (religion) +23, Listen +10, Ride +8, Sense Motive +16, Spellcraft +11, Spot +12.

Feats: Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Craft Wondrous Item, Leadership, Power Attack (Cleave, Great Cleave), Quicken Spell.

Possessions: +5 holy keen chaotic greatsword, +5 mithral full plate of heavy fortification, high elven ring of life warding, medallion of thoughts, vestments of faith, winged boots.

Cleric Spells Per Day: 6/7+1/7+1/6+1/6+1/5+1/5+1/3+1/2+1/1+1.



Skills: Concentration +19, Diplomacy +15, Gather Information +14, Knowledge (arcana) +21, Knowledge (Divine Empire) +22, Knowledge (tactics) +15, Knowledge (the planes) +10, Profession (scholar) +16, Sense Motive +18, Spellcraft +23, Spot +10, Survival +8.

Feats: Craft Rod, Craft Staff, Craft Wondrous Item, Leadership, Quicken Spell, Skill Focus (Sense Motive), Spell Focus (Abjuration), Spell Focus (Illusion), Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (Club).

Possessions: +4 holy rod of absorption, +4 rod of enemy detection and speed, figurine of wondrous power (serpentine raven x2), robe of the archmagi, +2 ring of deflection, ring of elemental command (water).

Wizard Spells Per Day: 4/6/6/5/5/5/3/3/2 (+1 transmutation spell per day; prohibited schools: conjuration).



Vladawen the Titanslayer

Looking at the man, one might mistake Vladawen for an exile. He lacks the accoutrements due one of his station, and his appearance is unremarkable (for a high elf). He journeys the length and breadth of Scarn, without agenda or direction. And always by his side is his love and companion, the lady Lillatu of Wexland. It only takes a few more moments, however, for one to realize the sheer power that made Vladawen "the Titanslayer."

Vladawen is honest and kind, exactly what a paragon of Jandaveos should be. He still regrets what he had to do to bring his god back and remains mired in an existential crisis of faith. His self-imposed asceticism is an attempt to find the answers he lost during the forsaken age. Be it in the grungiest dens of Ghelspad's taverns or among the wild lands and their primal inhabitants, one always has a chance of running into the errant priest of Jandaveos.

Vladawen of Geltaois, male high elf, Clr22/Ftr7/Rog7: SZ Medium humanoid (6 ft. tall); CR 22; HD 22d8+44 plus 7d10+14 plus 7d6+14; hp 230; Init +4; Spd 30 ft. (6 squares); AC 14/19 (+4 Dex/with +5 mithral chain

shirt); Base Atk/Grapple: +28/+36; Atk +37/+32/+27/+22 melee (1d6+13/18–20, +5 rapier), +37/+32/+27/+22 melee (1d4+9/19–20, +5 punching dagger); SA sneak attack +4d6, turn undead; SQ evasion, uncanny dodge (can't be flanked); AL CG; SV Fort +22, Ref +19, Will +31; Str 26, Dex 19, Con 15, Int 19, Wis 23, Cha 21.

Skills: Bluff +15, Climb +18, Concentration +20, Diplomacy +25, Disable Device +14, Gather Information +17, Handle Animal +8, Heal +13, Hide +14, Jump +18, Knowledge (arcana) +29, Knowledge (Divine Empire) +9, Knowledge (Ghelspad) +9, Knowledge (religion) +29, Listen +20, Move Silently +14, Perform +9, Ride +14, Search +20, Sense Motive +26, Spellcraft +29, Spot +20, Survival +11, Swim +18.

Feats: Alertness, Combat Casting, Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Dodge, Expertise, Heighten Spell, Improved Two-Weapon Fighting, Improved Unarmed Strike, Investigator, Leadership, Quick-draw, Quicken Spell, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (punching dagger), Weapon Focus (rapier), Weapon Specialization (punching dagger), Weapon Specialization (rapier).

Possessions: +5 rapier, +5 punching dagger, +1 mithral scale mail.

Cleric Spells Per Day: 6/7+1/7+1/6+1/6+1/6+1/5+1/4+1/4+1/4+1

People of the Charduni Empire

From the *Lex Charduni*:

2.5.37. AND MY people DID ORGANIZE THEIR CITIES AND THEIR HABITS IN EXACTLY THE MANNER THAT I MADE THEM TO DO. INDEED LIKEWISE WITH THEIR ARTS AND THEIR FASHIONS, THEIR SCHOOLS AND THEIR COURTS, THEIR BUSINESSES AND THEIR HOUSES OF ENTERTAINMENT, YEA EVEN IN THEIR HOMES DID THEY ARRANGE THEIR LIVES TO REFLECT MY WISHES FOR THEM.

"The charduni are undoubtedly the most arrogant and hideously cruel people I have ever encountered. When one has seen their cities, however, one can only pity them, for they are, in some ways, far crueler to themselves. It amazes me that any charduni child ever fails to die of despair in her first decade of life. Their will and courage must be even greater than I had thought."

— Shantalean, elven general during the sack of Danachax, circa O.C. 2750

The charduni are changing and growing in our times far more quickly than I ever thought possible as a child. My dream for my people, of course, is that they will change sufficiently to outgrow their dependence on Chardun, who has certainly abandoned them.

— Pexan the Younger, historian, revolutionary, charduni expatriate

Charduni Culture and People

The charduni are a particularly dour people, even for dwarves, and this shows in nearly every aspect of their culture and traditions. When outlining instructions for his charduni people, Chardun made it very clear that he wanted them to have no distraction from worshipping him and furthering his goals, leaving the charduni with the most ascetic and static of cultures. Though they are hated and feared throughout the Scarred Lands, the charduni are certainly a resilient and determined people. It cannot be denied that very few people could retain their sanity under such conditions.

Law and Government

Charduni law and government — as with almost every other aspect of life in the Land of Chains — is drawn directly from the *Lex Charduni*, the massive four-volume work penned by the Great General himself. Even the charduni, with their obsessive attention to detail and rigid social structure, cannot remember all of it, so aspects of enforcement are left to legal specialists, schooled in the administration of various sections of the Lex and given authority within the charduni bureaucracy.

The charduni government is an absolute theocracy, headed by the One in White, Chardun's chosen, whose word is absolute law. Below the One in White are the grand lextors — learned advisors who special-

ize in various aspects of Lex law and practice. Other "ordinary" lextors serve throughout the empire as living resources and advisors regarding legal and social matters. Beneath the grand lextors are the grand governors, governors and subgovernors who administer the provinces and cities of the empire. All of these individuals are appointed for life by the One in White, who can also remove an official should he so desire.

Law enforcement within the empire is carried out by local militias and city watches. As the charduni are by their nature a law-abiding group, these individuals are primarily called upon to hunt down or discipline escaped or unruly slaves or to locate interlopers from outside the empire. Service in patrols or militias is considered one of the lowest rungs on the charduni social ladder but is a vital function nevertheless.

The important legal activities in the empire are carried out by the One in White's most dreaded servants, the Lawgivers. An elite corps of fighters, spellcasters and even rogues, these individuals have absolute authority over the civilian population of the empire. They can arrest and question anyone, enter any building, seize any property and even mete out summary justice, as long as they are ready to justify their actions to the One in White.

Even more dangerous — but less well known — than the Lawgivers are the assassins known as Chardun's Mercy. Though one might expect a lawful government to shun the use of political killers, even the One in White sometimes needs to have an enemy disappear, and when such disposal is needed, Chardun's Mercy under the command of its ruthless leader Vekran Bokmal (see below) is called into action. They specialize in the quick and surgical removal of those who trouble the One in White, and when a charduni vanishes, other dark dwarves have learned not to ask too many questions.

The right of the One in White to execute anyone he needs to is enshrined in the stanzas of the Lex. Many other crimes and punishments are listed, but they all end up adding up to the same thing. A slave who disobeys is killed and, if necessary, raised up as a member of the undead to continue service. A charduni who breaks the law is usually fined and socially demoted, but lawless behavior among the dark dwarves is rare. The harshest punishments are reserved for heretics and traitors — in such cases, death is considered far too lenient a penalty. Such criminals are stripped of their citizenship, declared to be no longer charduni and sent to die as slaves.

Slaves can be judged and punished by any charduni so long as it is done within the tenets of the Lex. Charduni are taken before lextors, who consult the Lex if necessary and pass judgment, usually within a few minutes of the criminal's arraignment. The idea of a trial or presumed innocence is not only alien to the charduni, it is downright laughable. In fact, the notion of "accusing" someone

of a crime is unknown, for the notion of accusation implies that a question of guilt or innocence exists. Anyone arrested is a criminal and must be punished. In this, charduni law is brutal and efficient.

Art and Music

The charduni are allowed two subjects for their works of art, music and literature — religion and history. The government prefers a combination of both, of course, and keeps a careful watch on what kinds of creative works are being produced. In the last few decades, those who dare even the slightest heresy within either acceptable subject are punished severely.

Naturally, being a charduni artist can be a nerve-racking experience, but odd as it may seem, little shortage exists of young and sincere charduni eager to obtain sanction as official artists. In some cases these individuals test the limits of official tolerance, while others slavishly follow ancient tradition, creating heroic portraits of Chardun, the charduni and their past glories.

The most common types of charduni artwork include public sculpture dedicated to celebrated leaders and functional ceramics depicting legendary scenes. Music is typically minor in key and includes mostly all-male choirs and a complex instrument known as Chardun's bells, consisting of numerous hammers, drums and bells of different sizes, shapes and materials. Songs are long, bombastic and impassioned. Those who have heard them say they are unimaginative and lacking in rhythm, adhering to strict established rules of musical theory and structure. Literature is typically rigidly metered epic poetry or philosophical works based on the principles of the Lex. Theater, dance and public performance by females are reserved for religious occasions and subjects.

Cities and Architecture

Charduni cities are all built along the same basic plan. Slate, basalt and unadorned iron are the most common materials in charduni architecture, and buildings tend to be squat, sturdy and identical to all other buildings around them. Charduni cities are almost identical, each built around a central, easily defensible circular grid for government, military and religious buildings. This is easily the most beautiful area of the city, including occasional public statuary and the temples of Chardun — the only buildings where charduni architects are allowed any room for artistry.

Though typically fashioned of the same dark materials as the rest of the city, these temples are of surpassing beauty and grace, crafted with a rare skill that even the greatest enemies of the arrogant charduni must admire. Inside the temples, all is gold and white marble, and the skill with which the walls are sculpted and decorated is at times heartbreakingly beautiful.

Outside the city center, charduni cities are laid out in a perfect square grid, organized according to

social rank. High-ranking priests and generals live close to the city center, while farmers and artisans live further away, closer to the slave enclosures. Each neighborhood has its own small, orderly markets, schools, religious meeting houses and certain other official buildings as befits the neighborhood's station.

Inns and taverns are unheard of in charduni cities. Those visiting other cities either stay with friends or in military barracks befitting their stations. All public gathering takes place in one of three places: military mess halls, religious buildings and outdoor amphitheatres.

Education and Upbringing

Charduni must obtain official permission from a lextor in order to have children. As the government wishes to increase the empire's population and breed new armies of warriors, this permission is usually granted, though those from high-ranking noble families or proven warrior stock usually obtain permission more quickly. Most charduni are allowed (even encouraged) to have as many children as they wish, but must still officially petition their lextor for permission.

Charduni children are subjected to intensive schooling and exams until the age of 24 (early pre-adolescence), when they are removed from their parents' homes and assigned to their future careers based on their exam results and their parents' social standing. Schooling continues in military-style boarding schools for an additional sixteen to twenty-four years, after which a young charduni is assigned a dwelling and allowed to marry if desired.

The most important subjects in charduni education are personal combat, endurance, tactics, religious studies and law. Those who show exceptional talent for creative, magical or scientific works may be allowed to pursue artistic, wizardly or research-intensive careers. Exceptionally beautiful students with very low test scores and low-status parents are often reduced to near-slavery as prostitutes. Most average students are assigned to work as laborers, craftsmen and the like, though those with talent for authority become slave wardens, and particularly skilled students may be chosen as teachers in their professions.

Students who test very high in early childhood are allowed to continue in more general schools and choose for themselves whether to enter the military or the clergy — the only two routes to power in charduni society. Military and religious students enter their chosen fields at positions appropriate to their parentage, but advancement is based solely on performance.

Food and Dress

The charduni spend little effort or thought on their food and garb. Charduni clothing is dull in color, ranging through various grays and undyed serviceable fabrics. The military wears black, and the clergy dresses primarily in white. Clothing styles are comfortable

and practical, and most are largely uniform with any given class and profession.

Food among the charduni is extremely nutritious but almost completely lacking in flavor. Spices are never employed unless they have medicinal or other useful properties. Candy and desserts are unheard of, and particularly flavorful fruits and vegetables are looked on with disapproval, because they might tempt a person to gluttony. No such thing as a charduni chef exists, and cooking professionally (such as in a military mess hall or a slave enclosure) is considered to be a very lowly and distasteful profession.

Holy Days

Each Charday, ceremonies are held in every population center throughout the empire. Charduni are expected to attend regardless of circumstances — the only valid excuse is for those who are recuperating from battle wounds, and even they are expected to be tended to by priests. Those who miss a ceremony without valid excuse are questioned by the military, while those who miss two or more are liable for arrest. Tithes are also mandatory; one tenth of a charduni's income is the minimum expected, but most give more. Charduni compete with their neighbors over who can contribute the most.

The entire month of Charder, during which self-deprivation, fasting and prayer are expected of all charduni, is an especially holy part of the year. Divinities Day, commonly called Warday among the charduni, is also significant, as it marks the beginning of a month of athletic contests and other competitions dedicated to strengthening the race and glorifying Chardun.

A traditional holiday that is lately falling out of favor is Ram's Day. On Denday of Chardot, or the very last day of the month of contests and challenges, a drunken revel traditionally celebrates the culture of the ramriders and their battle rams. This event has recently become frowned-upon by the increasingly conservative charduni establishment as displaying conduct unbecoming the truly favored of Chardun. Ram's Day is still celebrated, but the loud and raucous events of the past have become more and more subdued.

While not strictly a holy day, the third Chardays of Belot, Hedrot and Hedrer, called Evaluation Days, are significant nonetheless. On these days, each charduni receives a progress report from his immediate superior. Good evaluations are always cause for celebration, and the charduni are so devoted to their work that most of them look forward to Evaluation Days eagerly. An especially good evaluation in Hedrer particularly is often grounds for promotion in the following year. Poor evaluations can have a variety of results, from simple lack of promotion to outright demotion, investigation by security forces and even arrest.

Faith and Religion

Chardun is a jealous god, and he long ago instructed the charduni to praise him always. According to Pexan the Younger, at the time that Chardun created the charduni, he told them never to allow more than an hour to pass without whispering a prayer of thanks and praise to their god, regardless of circumstances. Pexan theorizes that Chardun was experimenting to see if worshippers who were twice as devoted would give him twice as much power. Chardun seems less directly involved in the charduni's day-to-day existence now, but the charduni continue to worship him with a level of faith that would put the average paladin of Corean to shame.

In addition to daily prayer and regular services on Charday, charduni dedicate large parts of their daily lives to the contemplation and glorification of their absent creator. Each day begins and ends with public prayers, and idle time is dedicated to study of the Lex and the discussion of Chardun's decrees and desires for the race. Those who grow lax in their devotions may find themselves reported to and investigated by the Lawgivers.

Religious ceremonies are led by charduni priests and include exhortations to greater effort in the name of Chardun, group-chanted mass prayers, dirgelike hymns and long sermons based on sections of the Lex and other government-sanctioned religious texts (most of them supposedly written by Chardun himself). After the meeting, a long quiet period is dedicated to meditations on one's faults and failures. Clerics are available during this period to advise suitable self-punishments for various sins, which can range from fasting and deprivation to acts of self-flagellation.

Sex and Marriage

Charduni are expected to marry and raise families as soon as they are capable of doing so. Once a charduni has obtained his official status as an adult, marriage to a partner of suitable social status follows, usually arranged by the couple's families. As previously noted, charduni must obtain official permission to bear children but are also expected to raise many offspring to increase the race's population and further the One in White's plans for conquest and expansion.

Romantic love is unknown among the charduni. Most consider it nothing more than a sign of fatal weakness, and some clerics treat it as a sin against Chardun, since charduni are expected to devote all their love to their creator. Indeed, even loving one's own family is considered to be inappropriate, as it might lead to the spoiling of children and allowing spouses to grow careless in their duties. Within marriage the notion of sex for pleasure is considered dangerously heretical and decadent. Charduni have sexual relations for procreative purposes, and any enjoyment derived is a wholly unwelcome side effect.

Though nonprocreative sex is discouraged, the charduni know enough to realize that it is a biological drive that sometimes must be satisfied. As pregnancy outside of marriage is severely punished — the parents are imprisoned and the child taken into military institutions for training — those who can acquire magical or herbal forms of birth control are allowed to engage in sexual activity outside of marriage, but most charduni who wish to satisfy their "baser" drives do so in officially sanctioned brothels. Since sex itself is considered wasteful, these brothels carry a certain degree of social stigma, but they are nevertheless kept busy by charduni from the middle and lower classes. Mobile field brothels accompany charduni armies on campaign as well.

Only charduni serve in brothels — sex with noncharduni is considered a perversion of the lowest and most repulsive kind. Prostitutes are beautiful lower-class charduni of either sex who did poorly in school or whose parents were convicted of heresy, treason or other high crimes. As such, they may be stupid, cowardly, lazy, naturally weak and sickly or "victims" of a problem that the charduni government officially defines as "moral dysfunction." Morally dysfunctional prostitutes may be insane, habitually disobedient or simply too imaginative and artistic to do well in the highly structured charduni school system.

Such people are magically or surgically sterilized, and, after a few years of training, sent to serve in the brothels, where they are required to perform any service requested within the government's loosely defined boundaries of safety and health. Fees vary depending upon the prostitute's popularity, attractiveness and other factors, but usually they are allowed to keep the equivalent of only one silver coin per transaction. Deism and other forms of rebellion are common among charduni prostitutes, and in recent years the government has become highly suspicious of the brothels. Because of this, questioning and arrest of prostitutes is at an all-time high.

Social and Economic Structure

To understand charduni culture, it helps to understand the charduni economy. Like most civilized nations, the charduni use a gold-based market economy, but it is not by any means a free and open economy.

Charduni receive a wage based on their household's social rank, profession and past performance, occasionally supplemented by a small stipend for personal needs, depending on circumstances. Working more hours or making good sales for a few months may earn a clerk or a merchant a salary increase or even an improvement of rank at the next Evaluation Day, but immediate rewards for merit are uncommon. Charduni believe that hourly or even daily pay encourages inefficient work habits and also that allowing a merchant to keep his earnings causes wasteful greed.

Merchants are required to turn their entire income, along with detailed accounting books, over to their superiors, who then submit them to government accountants, who then disburse fixed salaries. All monies are considered the property of the government, to be distributed as the One in White decrees. In such a system, it is obvious that the only way to become wealthy is to increase one's social class, a goal that requires constant diligence and patience.

Given this system, it is easy to see the rigidity of class boundaries in charduni culture. No way exists to buy power, because only the already powerful could possibly afford to. No way exists to rebel openly, because those who try are punished severely, and repeat offenses lead to either slavery or death. The only way to improve one's station in life is either to earn it through hard work and obedience or to leave the Land of Chains altogether.

Charduni society is a pyramid with the One in White alone at its apex (a case might be made that Chardun himself is at the top of the social pyramid, of course, but currently the Great General is something of an absentee). Below the One in White are various high-ranking government officials, military and clerical leaders — in fact, most government officials hold positions in both the military and the church.

Next come civilian priests and the secular military, followed by the most highly skilled experts and artisans, such as architects, ship builders and weaponsmiths. After these come the artists, musicians, scientists, wizards and other "lesser" craftsfolk and experts. Merchants are next, followed by militiamen, city guards and those who must manage the slaves, such as farmers or mine overseers.

Lowest of all is the "failed" class, including prostitutes and those who are not sufficiently beautiful to become prostitutes. Only one step up from slaves, these charduni perform menial tasks such as cooking, cleaning and manual labor.

Each class has its own internal levels of rank and authority, ranging from apprenticeship to common workers to teachers to major organizers. Though sometimes the highest-ranking member of a given class is more prosperous and has more authority than lower members of the next most influential class, charduni are always expected to be aware of their stations. It is typically not wise or polite for a well favored artist to try to give orders to a young novice priest or soldier, for example, but such an artist may receive a higher salary and more privileges than the other two.

Elderly charduni can hold any positions that they are capable of. When a charduni can no longer fulfill his assigned purpose, he is expected to kill himself rather than to burden the economy with his continued existence. This is usually done with poison or more traditionally by slitting one's wrists in a warm bath. Those who fail to do so are executed as painlessly as

possible, but it is considered far more honorable to die either in battle or by one's own hand. Even the One in White can theoretically be executed in this manner, but as far as any charduni know, this has never happened. Painless execution (and possible resurrection as Chardun-slain) is also granted to warriors who are too badly injured to continue to fight.

Female charduni can hold any rank or position save that of the One in White. Charduni mothers are allowed to take time to raise their children, but those with the means to do so are expected to leave these duties to paid nannies drawn from the lower classes. Any charduni woman with three or more children living at home is permitted to remain at home without loss of rank or authority, but only the most wealthy can afford to do so.

Armed Forces

Though not known for their imaginative tactics or flexibility, it cannot be denied that the Charduni Empire controls the single most disciplined, obedient, determined and courageous army in all the Scarred Lands. Charduni armies have never broken in fear or made a disorderly retreat, nor have they been known ever to retreat at all unless it was tactically advantageous. When led by Chardun personally, the charduni were nearly unstoppable, even when outnumbered. Though today they are a mere shadow of their former glorious selves, with proper leadership even that shadow can present a serious threat to any enemy in the Scarred Lands.

The charduni are by their very nature a martial race. Their strategies and tactics have been honed over centuries until war has become both art and science. Originally, charduni formations consisted entirely of foot soldiers, which limited their tactical flexibility somewhat. Mounted foes such as Vangal's horsemen proved challenging foes, and during the invasion of Ghelspad, the charduni were actually defeated at the hands of some nomadic or mounted groups. Though such defeats were vexing, they did not dissuade the charduni from their goals, for they focused primarily on civilized nations and on taking cities, an endeavor in which they excelled. With the advent of the ramriders, a more mobile mounted element has been added, granting charduni armies greater flexibility and more tactical options.

In the field, charduni gain their greatest advantages from their discipline and the strength of their formations. Even with the ramriders, they are still primarily an infantry force, with ordinary foot soldiers trained to hold the line and not break, even in the face of strong enemy opposition. Charduni armies are often preceded by large numbers of undead, raised by necromancers and sent to absorb initial enemy assaults and attacks by missile weapons. Ramriders provide scout-

ing, a mobile force to blunt enemy cavalry advances, encircle flanks or exploit breakthroughs.

The charduni are most at home when besieging cities, however, and have a wide range of siege engines available to them. Many of these are quite old and highly prized, for most of the free-standing timber of the empire has been cut down. Siege towers, catapults, ballistae, springals and similar engines are carefully maintained and protected from harm, as the charduni hope one day to use them against the cities of the hated high elves of the Empire of the Rose.

Organization and Training

In contrast to the complex *Charduni* class system, the organization of their military is quite straightforward. All charduni receive basic combat training in school and can be called into military service with only minimal notice if needed. As the charduni military is the fastest and surest path to social advancement, this draft has only been necessary once — in the chaos following Kadum's Deluge. Otherwise, the army never has a shortage of able-bodied charduni willing to give their lives for the greater good.

The majority of those serving in the army are from the secular military class, while higher-ranking officers are usually both fighters and priests. These warrior-clerics are known as the ones in gray and are devoted to both the material and spiritual health of their troops. The highest-ranking generals and elite warriors are always priests of Chardun as well.

Basic units are organized in squads of four (for cavalry) or eight (for foot soldiers). Companies are made up of ten squads — cavalry companies number 40 individuals, while infantry number 80. Some elite units such as the White Fists are organized into "houses" of 10 individuals and operate independently of higher military structure.

The largest unit in the charduni army is the detachment (or "division"), which typically numbers 4,000. The organization of a division was decreed by Chardun himself in the Lex — three foot or mounted companies and a house of ten white fists make a battalion, four battalions are combined into a column, and four columns form a detachment. Detachments/divisions vary in organization and composition depending upon their intended missions, and the charduni military currently contains more than 200 such units, for a total regular military strength of more than 800,000.

Military training begins almost literally from birth, as every parent wants nothing more for her children than to see them succeed in either the military or the clergy (or both!). All charduni receive combat training from the moment they can hold weapons, and the most promising of these are singled out for intensive military and religious education. By age 24, the leading candidates are assigned to specific military or

religious programs. The most coveted of these, which incorporates both types of training, is reserved for those considered suited to high command.

Ordinary foot soldiers are trained with the short sword, a charduni version of the dwarven urgosh called the charduni axe, the shortbow and both the light and heavy crossbows. Those who choose to specialize in certain types of warfare are also trained in appropriate arms and tactics.

The charduni's best-known weapon, the warscepter, is considered nothing short of a holy symbol of their god and treated with great reverence. When a warrior is assigned his permanent unit, a warscepter with a head crafted in the shape of the warrior's own face is commissioned by the unit's armorers and becomes that individual's own weapon for the remainder of his career. Loss of this weapon in battle is not considered dishonorable (unless it was lost as a result of cowardice or similar pusillanimous conduct), but the warrior must pay to have a replacement made.

Warscepter		
Exotic Two-Handed Melee Weapon		
Name	Cost	Damage
Warscepter	30 gp	1d10
Critical	Weight Type	
x3	15 lb.	Bludgeoning
Charduni dwarves treat warscepters as martial weapons, rather than exotic weapons.		

Charduni military formations are often reinforced by large numbers of undead, ranging from ordinary skeletons and zombies raised by charduni necromancers to elite Chardun-slain, mummies, ghouls and similar creatures. The undead are usually deployed as mindless arrow-fodder, intended to absorb casualties and allow the other troops to advance unhindered.

Command and Communications

Because of the charduni's rigid social structure, good communication in battle is absolutely necessary. Chardun did not create his favored slaves with a great deal of personal initiative — charduni leaders cut off from their superiors have been known to simply hold their positions, neither advancing nor retreating, until they starve or are overwhelmed. To prevent such wastefulness, the charduni employ several forms of communication.

Every charduni officer is equipped with an *officers' medallion*. Aside from declaring an officer's rank and unit affiliation, the *medallion* is enchanted to allow all officers to communicate with both their superiors and subordinates. Lower-ranking *officers' medallions* have a range of less than a mile, while higher-ranking commanders have commensurately greater range. An *officer's medallion* is passed to his immediate subordinate if he is killed.

If magic or other conditions cause the *medallions* to malfunction, the charduni can relay orders using flags, trumpets or heliographs. All of these communications use a unique code that is changed regularly so that the enemy cannot decipher them or — worse still — send false orders.

In absolute emergencies, when a unit is completely cut off, the charduni are equipped with blast rock charges that can be used to signal their position. Blastrock signals are certainly impressive to look at, and sometimes even cause foes to hesitate. When such a signal is sent, commanders will — when possible — try to send orders to the trapped unit, though from time to time they are simply left where they are since conditions are bad elsewhere on the battlefield.

Defenses

Armies of slaves toil on the walls of charduni cities. Slave teams work their way around the walls continuously, constantly repairing and maintaining them, even expanding them to accommodate increased population. Charduni cities are all built as perfect squares. Walls are all exactly 80 feet in height and built of seamless, steel-reinforced granite. Cities each have a single main gate and three lesser gates, one per wall. Gates are kept open from dawn till dusk unless the city itself is under attack. After dark, all gates are closed, and access is allowed only through one of the minor gates.

Cities are expected to maintain supplies and resources to withstand siege for a full year. These are hidden in subterranean vaults, some of which have been expanded into a tunnel network for escape, incoming supplies or ambush of besieging forces. All cities are also equipped with substantial numbers of war machines to repel invaders.

Entering these cities even in times of peace can be a tricky proposition, for all approaches are guarded by squads of charduni warriors and overseer wolves. Anyone approaching the gates is required to show proof of identity and any official documents that they carry. Noncharduni are always attacked unless escorted by charduni with valid identification and orders.

The Ramriders

Like their dwarven cousins, charduni do not ride horses or other traditional cavalry animals. This role is taken by an elite corps of cavalry called the ramriders. This is the only charduni force with hereditary membership. They are notable for their mighty battle rams (see **Creature Collection III: Savage Bestiary**) and their somewhat unorthodox social practices. Today, the increasingly conservative charduni leadership has begun to treat the riders with increased suspicion and doubt, but as the only truly effective cavalry force in the empire, they remain an important part of the charduni military.

Unlike other charduni, ramriders are inducted into their unit based upon their parentage rather than test

scores, though a potential ramrider who scores poorly on Evaluation Day might still be barred from joining the force. Once inducted, the recruit has little contact with the outside world — the ramriders form their own separate society, distinct from charduni culture at large.

A ramrider is paired with his own battle ram. The two live and work together constantly, forming a bond that is closer than any between charduni. Their past success and the important role they played in the creation and maintenance of the empire allows ramriders slightly more latitude in personal conduct — they are well known for their long drinking binges and raucous celebrations, activities that are all but unheard of in charduni society at large.

In battle, the ramriders are fearless and fight with a ferocity that puts ordinary charduni to shame. Shouting the praises of Chardun, they sweep down upon foes, nimbly circumventing flanks, striking stragglers, attacking from unexpected directions, then falling back, leaving foes milling in confusion.

The ramriders' role as semi-independent raiders and mobile support allows them more autonomy and initiative than other charduni units. Creative tactics are rewarded, and a ramrider commander who acts without orders is usually not punished, especially if his actions result in success for the charduni.

The Outlander Detachments

One of the most unusual formations in the charduni military are the units called the Outlander Detachments. These are detachments made up almost entirely of slaves, commanded by charduni officers. Born and bred specifically for military service, these slaves are well treated and utterly loyal to the empire. Most are human, but a few are halflings, many of which are organized into missile-armed skirmish detachments. Dwarves and elves are considered far too willful and independent-minded to serve in the charduni military, while orcs do not take well to charduni-style discipline.

Currently three outlander detachments exist, numbering more than 10,000 slave-warriors. The charduni themselves debated whether to create the detachments, but in the wake of the Divine War and Kadum's Deluge, it became clear that charduni numbers alone were insufficient to maintain the empire's security. Only the most obedient, skilled and loyal slaves were allowed to join these units, and to this day no major incident of disobedience has occurred in their ranks. Often even tougher and more suicidally brave than ordinary charduni soldiers, the outlander troops hope that if they prove themselves in battle, Chardun will perfect them to be more like charduni in the afterlife. Ordinary charduni soldiers tend either to ignore the outlander detachments completely or to treat them with fond condescension, such as members of other races might treat trained monkeys.

Slaves

As the only truly perfect race in the Scarred Lands, the charduni see it as their sacred duty to enslave all lesser peoples in the name of Chardun the Great General. In their minds, being a slave of the charduni is one of the greatest honors that they can bestow — after all, they themselves are slaves, and their greatest dream is to be allowed to serve Chardun after death. That other races resist being accorded this "honor" continues to baffle the charduni.

Unfortunately, as a result of this practice, the charduni have become dependent upon their slaves. All menial work in the empire is performed by slaves, and has been for so many centuries that very few charduni even know how to farm, mine or perform many other important tasks. Today, only those who manage the slaves know how these tasks are accomplished, and most of the time instruction is left to other slaves.

The Life of a Slave

Absolute obedience is expected of a slave. Disobedience of any kind is punishable by instant death. As the charduni believe that they can breed obedience and docility into slaves, the killing of willful individuals is seen as a useful culling of the herd. Slaves are treated with the same consideration as domesticated animals — in the charduni mind little difference exists between the two.

Despite this, obedient and skilled slaves ("those who know their place" in charduni parlance) are not normally mistreated. Most are, in fact, well cared for, since the abuse of useful animals is considered wasteful and counterproductive. Far too practically minded to mistreat their livestock, the charduni see to it that the slaves are well fed ("work like an ox, you'll be fed like an ox"), given adequate (if simple) housing, and kept clean and healthy. Slaves are clothed in rough cloth tunics and given warm clothing in winter. Though they are not allowed to keep weapons (even touching a weapon without permission carries the death penalty), they are supplied with all the tools and implements that they need to accomplish their assigned tasks.

Disobedient slaves are considered an impediment to efficiency. Those who simply disobey out of spite or are considered incapable of alternate work are simply killed out of hand and resurrected as undead. Though docile, undead are not considered as useful as living creatures, so unruly slaves who might still be able to contribute labor are sometimes shipped off to the mines, which are generally considered the worst work in the empire.

Some mines, such as those located in the Stones of Golthagga, are better than others, but the worst by far, and the place that most slaves fear being sent to with stark terror, are simply known as the Mines. Here, it is said that strange forces are at work, and ordinary

creatures are transformed into beasts. The charduni have great interest in the Mines and the forces at work there, however, and a small number of slaves — equipped with *slave collars* for obedience — are always sent there to supplement the work of undead miners. For more details on the Mines and their fell effects, see Chapter Two.

The charduni understand how to manipulate the emotions of their slaves as well. A lazy slave may be beaten, though the charduni have found that beating a slave's spouse, children or friends has an even more positive effect on the slave's attitude. Outright sadism is discouraged, however, since unnecessary punishment damages slave morale and causes production to fall. While some charduni enjoy watching others suffer, self-control is a valuable charduni quality, and the infliction of pain is reserved for occasions when it has a practical purpose.

Slaves are encouraged to breed, for it creates a greater, more docile slave population. In most cases, children born into slavery make far better slaves than their parents. Like the charduni themselves, slave children are taken from their parents and raised in slave schools, taught the joys of obedience and subservience by favored slaves who have fully accepted the charduni worldview. As a result, a large number of slaves become completely domesticated and come to accept their status as the natural order of things. Such slaves refuse to escape, even if offered freedom by the Tanilists or the Sisters of the Sun.

The Once-Charduni

Death holds no terrors for the charduni. In fact, many look forward to the opportunity to join with Chardun and the chance of returning as an undead soldier of the Great General. On the contrary, charduni truly dread continued existence as outcasts or — worst of all — as the despised class of slaves called the once-charduni. Even dishonorable death fleeing from battle is preferable to this sorry fate.

These unfortunate individuals are dark dwarves whose crimes have earned them the harshest punishment that the charduni know. Heresy, treason, destruction of public property, rebellion, disloyalty — all these crimes are worse than murder in the charduni mind, and all can earn the dreaded sentence of once-chardunihood.

The criminal is stripped of all identity and declared to be no longer charduni. This sentence is absolute — no appeal and no forgiveness. Ordinary charduni see these wretches as the most thoroughly despicable life forms in the entire Scarred Lands. Even titanspawn can at least claim barbaric ignorance, but the once-charduni were born perfect dark dwarves and had the gall to reject their own perfection deliberately.

Once-charduni are treated as lower than the lowest of slaves. When once-charduni are seen in public, even the busiest and most hard-working of citizens seem to be able to find time to spit on or beat them. Children throw rocks and offal. Parents make little effort to deter their young children

from throwing rocks and debris. On occasion, this abuse is so frequent and extensive that it causes public projects to be delayed by crowds of angry stone-throwing charduni.

Once-charduni are also at risk from their fellow slaves. As members of the hated masters, these individuals are often insulted, assaulted or beaten by other slaves, and in these cases the overseers and charduni supervisors don't do much to break up the fights. The overseer wolves themselves seem to instinctively hate the once-charduni as well and usually single them out for especially harsh attention.

Still rare, the numbers of once-charduni have nevertheless increased in the years since the Divine War. The productivity problems that they cause has led the One in White to decree that they be placed together whenever possible. Though once-charduni are never allowed to make up more than half of a given slave gang, this decision has nevertheless allowed the once-charduni the opportunity to form alliances and begin to work together. All the same, these individuals usually represent the dregs of charduni society and so cooperate very poorly. From time to time, such individuals are freed by the Tanilists or the Sisters of the Sun and usually end up taking the long voyage across the Blood Sea to the lawful city of Hedrad, where they make new lives for themselves far from the empire.

The Heretics

Heretics are rare in charduni culture, and all must fear constantly for their lives. Heretical organizations of any kind must be highly secretive and far more cautious in their daily activities than other charduni. Rebellion of even the most innocuous kind — the sorts of "self expression" that most other cultures take for granted — usually represents a one-way ticket to a swift death or, worse, status as a once-charduni.

From this it must be understood that even the largest and most popular heretical organizations in the Land of Chains hold little power and very few members. Disobedience is a very new and secretive thing among these dour people, but because it is so new, it is important. It marks a profound mental shift that could lead almost anywhere, but it cannot be forgotten that this shift is still in its infancy, and any one of a thousand things could see it die out completely and disappear without a trace. Charduni heresy is an historical pivot point, and only time will tell the direction of the swing.

Belsamites

The Belsamites are an offshoot of the deist movement. Initially they favored the general view that all gods should be honored, but they rejected the notion that Chardun was supreme and instead proclaimed their primary devotion was to the neutral evil Belsameth. Most of the deists, being loyal to Chardun at their hearts, were horrified, and the two factions split after only a few meetings.

It is thought that the Belsamites still hope to convert all the Land of Chains to the worship of the goddess of murder, so that the might of the dark dwarven armies can be led by a wicked empress instead of a bloody general. Rumor has it that Belsameth (known among the eight major gods for her meddling) has even appeared in person to her faithful new charduni worshippers. Certainly it would amuse her to wrest control of the charduni forces from her pompous brother, but this could lead to conflict between the two deities, further weakening the tattered Divine Truce.

The rise of a Belsamite cult could spell disaster for the empire. Though its charduni members remain as steadfastly lawful as the rest of their race, such practices as assassination, poisoning, intrigue, blackmail and other secret activities are all but unknown to charduni society at large. In addition, Belsamites have few qualms about mistreatment of slaves, and many indulge in sadistic excesses that would normally be frowned upon as decadent and wasteful. These radical changes in charduni culture could topple the current regime and even cause the entire race to switch its allegiance to a different god — one who actually deigns to take notice of the charduni.

Deists

The largest and oldest heretical charduni organization, the deists have been active far longer than the charduni government realizes. The first convicted deist traitor was Pexan Drechard, executed in 112 AV for daring to offer a brief prayer to Hedrada in addition to the 30-minute devout prayer he had recited from the Lex at the dedication of a new courthouse. Pexan Drechard was far from the first deist, however. After Drechard, the first deist to publicly pray to another god, most earlier deist works were destroyed by the charduni government, but almost before the Divine War ended, deism was creeping into the written works of charduni philosophers.

Initially, respect for other gods seemed relatively harmless. The other gods obviously existed — the charduni had fought alongside most of them — and most of them seemed better at some things than others. None dared to suggest that Chardun was not the greatest of them all, but they did dare to consider that a little extra help from some of the others on occasion didn't hurt. The government watched these early deists closely and often denied them promotion, but they were not otherwise persecuted.

In the wake of the Divine War, charduni society grew more conservative and paranoid. Sentiment began to build against the deists, and careful review of the Lex suggested that even acknowledging the power of other gods was an unforgivable heresy. When Drechard dared to pray to another god in public, the One in White lost his temper. Drechard was executed and deism was declared treasonous and heretical. Hundreds of known deists were stripped of their ranks as charduni and enslaved as outlanders. Others con-

tinued to practice deism in secret, while many others realized the "error" of their ways and repented.

The most dedicated of the deists was the group of once-charduni led by Pexan the Younger, a strong and willful woman who continued to pursue the deist cause in the name of her martyred uncle. Along with several other once-charduni, she escaped from slavery and eventually settled in the city of Hedrad. There, she and the other freed slaves have committed the foulest heresy of all — they have accepted Hedrada as their primary deity and now rank Chardun alongside the other gods. Today, Pexan the Younger works in the Great Library of Hedrad, where she and the other charduni exiles spend their time writing detailed histories and studies of charduni culture.

Back in the Land of Chains, deists remain a small group, increasingly secretive and persecuted. All the same, recent changes in the world and in the empire have made the idea of deism far more attractive to the average charduni. Change is slow, but in many cases it may be inevitable.

The White Axe

The heresy known as the White Axe is quite different from the others. Formed in 121 AV, the White Axe declared that the One in White and other authority figures had failed to live up to Chardun's ideals and were themselves responsible for the Great General's neglect. Not only did the rebels dare to question the authority of their superiors, they even went so far as to say that the One in White did not merit the position he held, and that if a "true" One in White were in power, the Great General would once more take the charduni as his chosen people.

As might be expected, the One in White and his advisors did not react well to the White Axe's assertion and tried to hunt them to extinction. The White Axe melted into secrecy, however, escaping the worst of the retribution. Only a few members were actually caught and executed, while the rest continued to organize in more private and subtle ways. Surprisingly, dozens of powerful charduni came forward to join the organization. Too cautious and savvy to show public support for such a radical group, they were nevertheless moved by the White Axe's arguments. The notion that traditional charduni society was not lawful enough and that greater devotion to Chardun might save the empire was an appealing one, and today the heresy remains a potent — if secret — force.

The Belsamite cultists, tainted by association with the goddess of murder, are the White Axe's chief rival. If it were not for their assassins, the White Axe would be closer to its goals, and the other heretic groups would be in far worse danger than they already are, but even regular and carefully targeted assassinations have not stopped the White Axe from occupying many important positions throughout the empire.

Prominent Persons

Authority and strong leadership are essential for charduni society to function. Charduni are not taught to think for themselves nor really to do anything that they were not directly instructed, at some point, to do. As such, it can be argued that every single dark dwarf who holds even the lowliest authority position is just as important to the function of charduni society as the One in White himself, and it can be just as convincingly argued that the One in White is the only leader worth noting at all, since all orders can — directly or indirectly — be traced back to him. A few charduni leaders stand out as being particularly noteworthy, however, and should be described in more detail.

The One in White

Class/Level:	Cleric 20
Sex/Race:	Male Charduni Dwarf
Height/Weight:	4' 3"/210 lbs.
Challenge Rating:	22
Hit Points:	20d8+120 (210 hp)
Initiative:	+2
Speed:	20 ft. (4 squares)
Armor Class:	35 (+2 Dex, +8 natural, +5 arcane, +10 breastplate), touch 12, flat-footed 33 +15/+18
Base Attack/Grapple:	+24/+18
Attack:	+24 melee (<i>White Scepter</i> , 1d10+9)
Full Attack:	+24/+19/+14 melee (<i>White Scepter</i> , 1d10+9)
Special Attacks:	Spells
Special Qualities:	Charduni dwarf qualities, DR 10/—, SR 20, resistances
Alignment:	Lawful Evil
Saves:	Fort +17, Ref +8, Will +20
Abilities:	Str 18, Dex 14, Con 22, Int 17, Wis 22, Cha 24
Skills:	Concentration +16, Craft (scribe) +13, Diplomacy +17, Heal +17, Knowledge (arcana) +13, Knowledge (history) +13, Knowledge (religion) +23, Profession (priest) +13, Sense Motive +17, Spellcraft +18
Feats:	Combat Casting, Empower Spell, Iron Will, Leadership, Scribe Scroll, Silent Spell, Still Spell
Soul of the Nation (Su):	When chosen, the One in White takes on the ceremonial vestments, weapons and armor of his rank. Upon donning the <i>General's Breastplate</i> and taking up the <i>White Scepter</i> , he then is granted this powerful special quality. Once per day, the One in White can draw upon the strength of the entire charduni race. This can have a number of effects, at the One in White's Discretion: <i>Heal:</i> The One in White is affected as if by a <i>heal</i> spell cast by a 20th-level cleric. <i>Accuracy:</i> The One in White's next die roll is considered to be a 20.

Protection: The One in White gains a +20 profane bonus to his AC for 1d4 rounds.

Critical Strike: The One in White's next attack automatically hits and inflicts a critical hit.

Speed: The One in White is affected as if by a *haste* spell cast by a 20th-level wizard.

White Scepter, General's Breastplate, charduni amulet of armor, warrior's vambraces**

Law, War

Possessions:

Domains:

Cleric Spells Prepared (6/7+1/7+1/6+1/6+1/6+1/5+1/4+1/4+1/4+1):

0 — *Detect magic, detect poison, guidance, inflict minor wounds, light, resistance*

1st — *Bane, bless, cause fear, command, deathwatch, doom, inflict light wounds*

2nd — *Aid, bull's strength, darkness, death knell, desecrate, inflict moderate wounds, spiritual weapon*

3rd — *Bestow curse, contagion, dispel magic, inflict serious wounds, prayer, summon monster III*

4th — *Discern lies, divine power, freedom of movement, inflict critical wounds, poison, summon monster IV*

5th — *Flame strike, greater command, inflict light wounds (mass), righteous might, slay living, summon monster V*

6th — *Dispel magic (greater), harm, inflict moderate wounds (mass), summon monster VI, symbol of fear*

7th — *Blasphemy, destruction, regenerate, word of chaos*

8th — *Create greater undead, fire storm, inflict critical wounds (mass), summon monster VII*

9th — *Implosion, miracle, storm of vengeance, summon monster IX*

*See **Relics and Rituals II**.

Background

It is considered treasonous to utter aloud the given name of the One in White. All charduni believe that the One in White gives up his individual identity to Chardun's service when he takes his place at the head of the empire, and many even go so far as to claim that every One in White throughout charduni history is, in fact, always a reincarnation of the very first One in White, the first charduni ever created by Chardun's hand.

Nevertheless, the One in White (whose name Pexan the Younger has revealed to have been Devok Chekor) is a distinctive individual with a childhood and life history like any other, and for a supreme leader of the charduni, the current One in White is distinctive indeed. Originally declared in childhood to be only barely fit for the clergy, certainly not of the joint clergy and military stock that made up the leaders of the charduni government, once Chekor reached adulthood, his talent and dedication saw to it that he rose through the ranks of the clergy like a hawk taking flight. Eventually he was granted an honorary place in the military and served as

an officer in-gray for a few small battles — just enough military experience to grant him entrance to a government position.

Working so hard that he rarely even slept, the dark dwarf now known as the One in White increased his government ranking even faster than he had his religious position, until he was the personal advisor of the One in White at that time, as well as holding the governorship of Chorach, a position previously unheard of for a charduni with so little military practice under his belt. Having attained the highest position possible for any charduni while a competent and healthy One in White held power, one might think that our dedicated and ambitious Devok Chekor would have relaxed into his authority and remained content for many years. Not so for Chekor's way of thinking. The charduni who became the One in White in the year AV 74 did not grant himself a moment's rest but made himself completely indispensable to his master, continuing to work just as hard as if he were still no more than a low-ranking but ambitious local priest.

By the time the aging One in White (who was half mad from leading his people through the horror of the Divine War) realized it was time for him to step down, it was obvious to all charduni who would replace him. As expected, the old man's final "vision" was that his advisor, the governor of Chorach, Devok Chekor was to take his place as the One in White upon his death. Though this decision was long expected, it was not universally liked, almost entirely because of Chekor's lack of military knowledge and standing. Nevertheless, no one dared to question their new leader's authority, and the new One in White quickly proved himself to be a wise and efficient leader.

Needless to say, the White Axe cites his lack of expertise in battle leadership as one of the main proofs that he should not be ruling the Empire of Chains. Those who

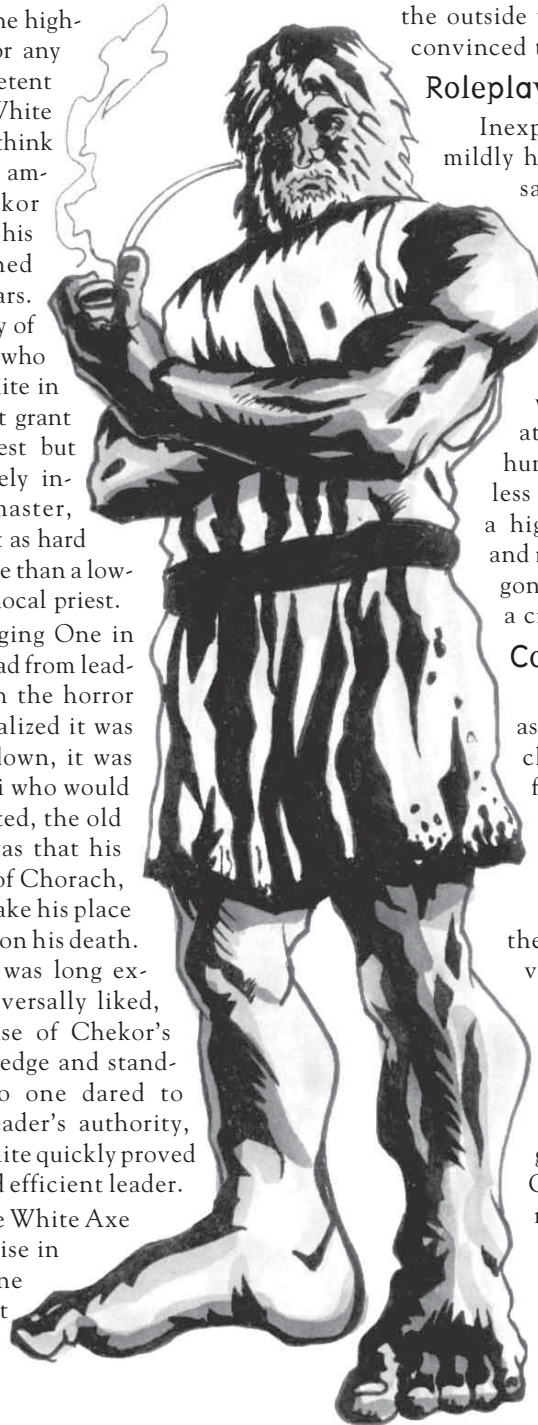
dare to question him wonder that all known cases of premeditated rebellion have taken place under his reign. The One in White is far from ineffectual or lax in his care of the empire, however, and as he has always done, he almost never sleeps, too devoted to his position to rest for more than a few short hours every night. It is Pexan's opinion that he is one of the greatest rulers the empire has ever seen, and she feels that he, if anyone, is capable of leading the charduni people into a new age of harmony with the outside world — if only he could be convinced to do so.

Roleplaying Notes

Inexplicably likable in spite of a mildly homely face and a distinctive sadistic streak, the One in White is known for his impatience, his exceptionally high expectations of those who work for him, and his uncanny ability to convince almost anyone to agree with his view of a given situation. He has little sense of humor, but for a charduni he is less humorless than most and has a high appreciation for the arts and music. Pexan the Younger has gone so far as to state that "He is a cruel man, but fair."

Combat

The One in White, though as skilled in combat as any other cleric of Chardun, does not fight, ever. He is surrounded at all times by a hand-picked house of the best and bravest white fist knights, and if threatened would support these noble warriors with his divine spells and the powers of the *White Scepter* for as long as possible. If an enemy were to breach this final line of defense, he would likely kill himself in shame rather than give any enemy the pleasure. Certainly it must be stated that no enemy yet has ever gotten close enough to the One in White to even dream of threatening his white fists, much less his person.



White Scepter (Major Artifact)

Powers: This weapon acts as a +5 *warscepter*, +6 vs. non-Chardun worshippers. In addition, it gives the user the following abilities as long as it is wielded (these statistics are taken into account above):

- +2 to Strength and Constitution.
- +5 arcane bonus to AC

The *Scepter's* wielder may use the following abilities 3/day (spell effects are cast at 20th level):

- *haste* as the spell
- *flame strike* as the spell
- *blade barrier* as the spell

Once per month, the *Scepter's* wielder can automatically restore all of his divine spells as a free action, recovering all of his spells without the need for prayer or preparation.

General's Breastplate (Minor Artifact)

Powers: This item acts as a +5 *breastplate*. In addition it provides the wearer with the following benefits:

- Damage reduction 10/—
- Spell resistance 20
- Cold, fire and electricity resistance 15
- Acid and sonic resistance 10

Pexan the Younger

Pexan the Younger, unofficial leader of the charduni deists, has clear iron-gray skin, dark eyes, long raven hair and a striking bearing. Though serious and intellectual in speech and manner, Pexan is nevertheless quite passionate and intense about her revolutionary ideas. As revolutionaries go, Pexan is quiet, polite and careful in her speech. As charduni go, she is extremely open-minded and considerate, though it must be remembered that she is still a charduni and occasionally behaves with great arrogance.

Pexan loathes being the center of attention, unless she is teaching or lecturing fellow students. In truth, she enjoys nothing more than historical research, closeted alone in a library. Her many works on charduni history and culture, as well as her philosophical works about the nature of law, religion, morality, slavery and the future of the Charduni Empire, are becoming increasingly popular among scholars throughout Ghelspad.

Sentenced to a life of slavery simply because she was from the same family as the heretical Drechard Pexan, she began to come into her own as leader of a group of deist once-charduni slaves. Though she could have escaped much sooner, Pexan remained a slave for nearly two decades, spreading deist ideals and encouraging the weak and weary. In AV 129, however, her activities were noticed by the charduni government, and she was threatened with execution. She escaped the Land of Chains just as the military came to claim her and has been living in the city-state of Hedrada ever since, a convert to the worship of Hedrada and a respected employee of the city's largest library as well as of a small local university of history.

Pexan the Younger, Historian, Female Charduni, Rog3/Exp11: CR 13; SZ Medium humanoid (4 ft.); HD 14d6+42; hp 91; Init +1; Spd 20 ft. (4 squares); AC 13 (+1 Dex, +2 natural); Base Atk/Grapple: +10/+11; Atk +10/+5 melee (1d6 light mace); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA sneak attack +2d6; SQ charduni dwarf qualities, evasion, uncanny dodge; ALLN; SV Fort +7, Ref +7, Will +11; Str 10, Dex 13, Con 16, Int 18, Wis 17, Cha 15.

Skills: Appraise +9, Bluff +3, Craft (scribe) +14, Decipher Script +16, Diplomacy +6, Disable Device +8, Escape Artist +6, Forgery +12,



Gather Information +20, Knowledge (Asherak) +9, Knowledge (charduni) +22, Knowledge (Ghelspad) +12, Knowledge (history) +16, Knowledge (religion) +13, Knowledge (Termana) +14, Knowledge (titans) +10, Listen +5, Move Silently +3, Open Lock +4, Profession (historian) +10, Profession (scholar) +16, Profession (writer) +18, Search +7, Sense Motive +12, Sleight of Hand +5, Spot +4.

Feats: Diligent, Investigator, Once-Charduni, Skill Focus (gather information), Skill Focus (knowledge [charduni])

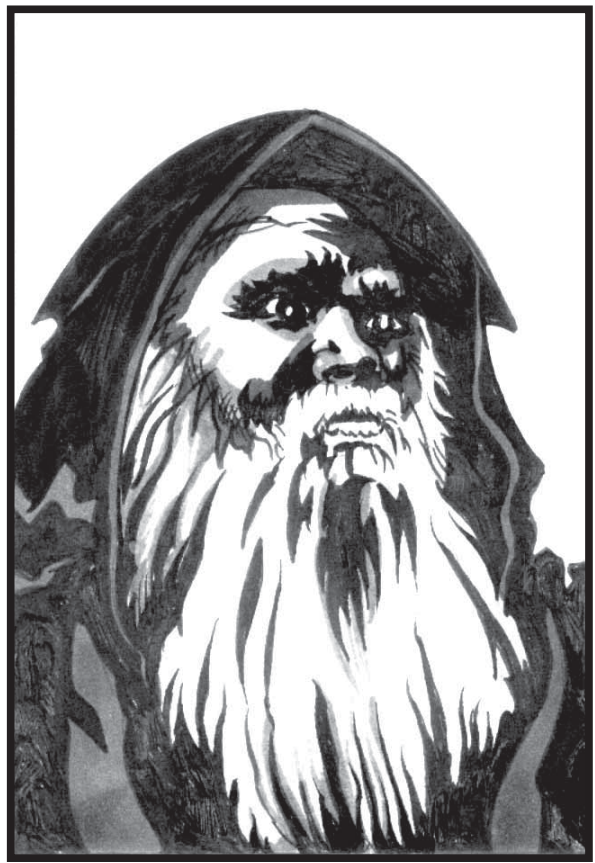
Possessions: Pexan has few of the ordinary possessions beyond the basics that she needs for comfortable survival. Her single unusual magical possession is a thick leather-bound volume from before the Divine War that automatically transcribes her words as she speaks. She is using it to create a definitive history of the Charduni Empire.

Godrak Chardesh

High priest of Chorach, Godrak is the highest-ranking member of the charduni clergy after the One in White himself. His strictly conservative doctrines are quite popular among the charduni people, and when he issues decrees or discusses charduni religious doctrine, even the One in White listens avidly.

What no one knows, however, is that Godrak Chardesh is also the leader of the treasonous organization known as the White Axe. Knowing that his views will earn him nothing more than a quick and painful death, Chardesh is exceedingly careful in his speech and actions, but his loyalty to the One in White is, in reality, entirely false. Chardesh believes that the One in White does not merit his position and is not, in fact, the true chosen prophet of Chardun. Though cautious in all that he does, Chardesh is nevertheless a passionate fanatic, ready to stop at nothing to achieve his goals.

Naturally, Chardesh believes that he himself is meant to be the One in White and Chardun's chosen prophet. He dreams of returning the charduni race to its former glory and position as Chardun's favorite servants. Though shrewd and intuitive as both a spiritual and a military leader, Chardesh is also surprisingly naïve in his simplistic views of charduni society and history. It is arguable that if placed at the helm of the Empire of Chains that he might be the single worst One in White to rule in more than four centuries. He does, however, make an



excellent high priest of Chorach under the One in White's continuing authority.

Godrak Chardesh, High Priest of Chorach and Leader of the White Axe, Male Charduni, Clr20: CR 20; SZ Medium humanoid (3 ft., 4 in.); HD 20d8+80; hp 170; Init +0; Spd 20 ft. (4 squares); AC 30 (+13 full plate, +4 shield, +3 natural); Base Atk/Grapple: +15/+16; Atk +21/+21/+16/+11 melee (1d10+6, warscepter); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SQ charduni dwarf qualities, turn or rebuke undead; AL LE; SV Fort +16, Ref +6, Will +16; Str 12, Dex 10, Con 18, Int 14, Wis 18, Cha 16

Skills: Concentration +12, Craft (weaponsmithing) +12, Diplomacy +12, Heal +10, Knowledge (arcana) +12, Knowledge (history) +12, Knowledge (religion) +17, Knowledge (the planes) +12, Profession (priest) +14, Sense Motive +6, Spellcraft +11.

Feats: Combat Casting, Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Improved Critical (warscepter), Leadership, Negotiator, Power Attack, Skill Focus (Concentration)

Possessions: Boots of teleportation, full plate +5, heavy steel shield +2, warscepter of speed and shock +5.

Domains: War, Law

Cleric Spells per Day: 6/6+1/6+1/6+1/6+1/5+1/4+1/4+1/4+1/4+1



Vekran Bokmal

Vekran Bokmal is the highest-ranking member of the elite cadre of assassins known as Chardun's Mercy. Bokmal is a hard and unforgiving man who lives in denial about Chardun's waning interest in his people. Slightly mad, Bokmal seems endlessly able to convince himself that Chardun still speaks directly to him in dreams and visions, and that every act of Chardun's Mercy is decreed by the god himself. It is interesting to note that any suggestions made directly in Bokmal's presence implying that Chardun's Mercy is no longer directly carrying out Chardun's wishes have been followed shortly afterward by the "accidental" deaths of those who dared utter such suggestions.

Vekran Bokmal, First Distributor of Chardun's Mercy, Male Charduni, Clr10/Asn9: CR 19; SZ Medium humanoid (3 ft., 6 in.); HD 10d8+40 plus 9d6+36; hp 142; Init +7; Spd 20 ft. (4 squares); AC 24 (+3 Dex, +3 natural, +3 amulet, +5 bracers); Base Atk/Grapple +13/+16; Atk +16/+11/+6 melee (1d6+6 plus special *wormtongue*), +16/+11/+6 ranged (1d8+3, crossbow); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA sneak attack +2d6, smite good 2/day; SQ aura of despair, aura of evil, command undead, dark blessing, detect good, poison use; AL LE; SV Fort +18, Ref +10, Will +15; Str 17, Dex 16, Con 19, Int 15, Wis 18, Cha 12.

Skills: Balance +12, Bluff +6, Climb +6, Concentration +6, Disable Device +10, Disguise +7, Escape Artist +8, Gather Information +6, Hide +15, Knowledge (arcana) +4, Knowledge (religion) +8, Listen +6, Move Silently +17, Open Lock +6, Search +3, Sense Motive +7, Sleight of Hand +6, Spellcraft +4, Spot +7, Tumble +4.

Feats: Agile, Combat Casting, Improved Initiative, Silent Spell, Skill Focus (move silently), Stealthy, Still Spell.

Possessions: Amulet of natural armor +3, bracers of armor +5, light crossbow +3, wormtongue*.

*See **Relics and Rituals**.

Domains: Law, Strength

Cleric Spells per Day: 6/5+1/5+1/4+1/4+1/2+1

Assassin Spells per Day: 5/5/4/3

Telesh Nexal

Known to be one of the most influential and beautiful women in the entire Charduni Empire, Telesh Nexal also fully merits her position as marshal of all charduni ramriders and battle rams. Though slightly less strict than most charduni officers, Nexal is nevertheless fiercely loyal to the One in White. She has never been bested in combat nor yet even participated in a single losing battle throughout her career. If she were not a member of the elite ramrider bloodline, she might have made an excellent general and one of the most powerful charduni females in the history of the empire. As things stand, she will probably remain Ramrider Marshal until her death, and the ramriders are perhaps in even better fighting trim than they were at the time of their formation during the Divine War.

Telesh Nexal, Ramrider Marshal, Female Charduni, Ftr9/Ram10: CR 19; SZ Medium humanoid (3 ft., 3 in.); HD 19d10+57; hp 161; Init +6; Spd 20 ft. (4 squares); AC 21 (+2 Dex, +5 *rhino hide*, +3 *ring of deflection*, +2 natural); Base Atk/Grapple +19/+23; Atk +29/+24/+19/+14 melee (1d10+14 plus 1d6 fire, warscepter); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SQ healing bond, life share, mount link, rider's intuition, summon mount; AL LE; SV Fort +14, Ref +8, Will +8; Str 20, Dex 15, Con 16, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 18.



Skills: Climb +10, Craft (animal husbandry) +8, Handle Animal +22, Intimidate +18, Jump +7, Ride +20, Swim +7.

Feats: Cleave, Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Great Cleave, Greater Weapon Focus (warscepter), Greater Weapon Specialization (warscepter), Improved Bullrush, Improved Critical (warscepter), Improved Initiative, Improved Sunder, Leadership, Mobility, Mounted Archery, Mounted Combat, Power Attack, Ride-By Attack, Spirited Charge, Spring Attack, Trample, Weapon Focus (warscepter), Weapon Specialization (warscepter), Whirlwind Attack.

Possessions: *Drums of panic, flaming ghost touch warscepter* +3, *rhino hide, ring of protection* +3.

Other Important Leaders

Other important leaders are the other three high priests and the four grand generals:

Tasrek Tamor (*male charduni, Clr15/Ftr4, LE*) is the high priest of Borixa. He is very old and likely soon to perform the honorable suicide that will free his position for a younger, stronger priest. His expected replacement is as yet unknown. In the meantime, the clergy of Borixa tends to run itself based on decades of habit and sheer practicality rather than the skills of its aging leader. It is lucky that Borixa is well within the empire's borders, for it is unlikely that the city's clergy and military clergy would currently respond well to any kind of attack.

Melesh Tiran (*male charduni, Clr11/Ftr8, LE*) is high priest in the city of Danachax. Quite the opposite of Borixa, Danachax's clergy boasts a young, strong leader and perfect discipline. In addition, of the high-ranking clergy in the empire, Tiran holds the highest military rank and the most battle experience. He concentrates now on the religious aspect of his career, and his rank has become largely honorary, but little doubt exists that he could still hold a high military position if he chose to do so. Melesh Tiran is quite traditional in outlook and loyal to the One in White.

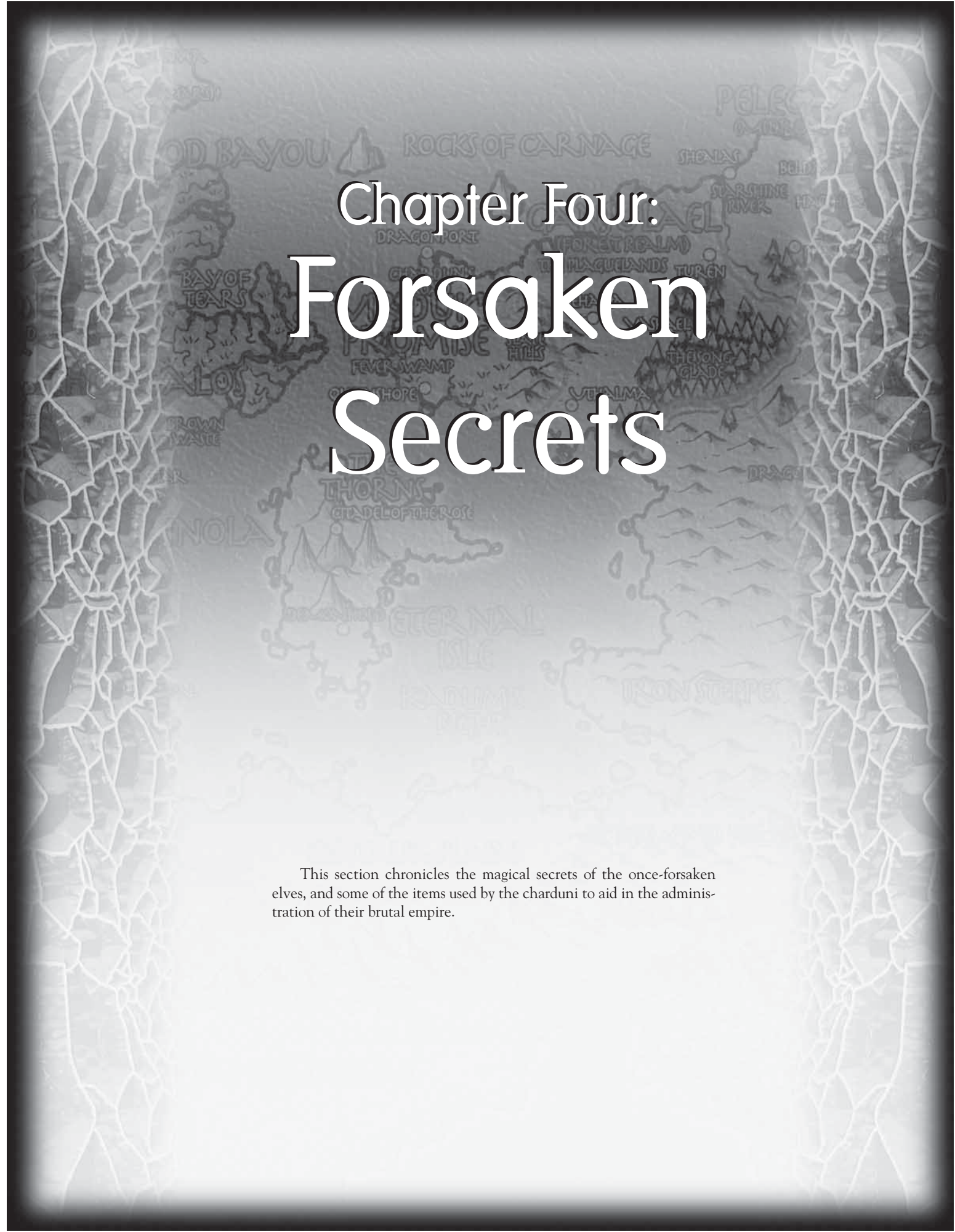
Rexel Poret (*female charduni, Clr16/Ftr3, LE*) is the high priest of the religious training school in Aardunnus, the city of temples. As is traditional, Poret is the least militaristic of the four high priests. She operates and teaches well within the strict boundaries of charduni doctrine, and as the only female among the high priests is careful to accede to their decisions under most circumstances. Nevertheless, it is probable that, were it safe and legal to do so openly, Rexel Poret would quickly admit to deist sympathies — provided, of course, that traditions were respected and that Chardun was always lauded as emperor of all the gods.

Korel Branon (*male charduni, Clr3/Ftr16, LE*), Grand General of Empire Defense, is a tough and seasoned warrior. Possibly the most imaginative and flexible of the four current grand generals, Branon has thus far proved more than equal to the latest excursions from the elven shield realm. In light of the recent return of the elven god and the subsequent surge in elven military might, Branon has been granted the temporary status of High Grand General, and he currently has a certain degree of command over all forces in the empire. He is taking little advantage of the influence inherent in this position, using his temporary authority solely in the service of the proper training and positioning of all troops for the most efficient defense of the Charduni Empire. Nothing is known about Branon's political affiliations.

Telmet Perex (*male charduni, Clr4/Ftr15, LE*) was recently named Grand General of Empire Expansion. He is still quite zealous in his new position and is impatient with the current concentration on defensive action only. One of many charduni who refuse to believe that Chardun has lost interest in them, he feels strongly that the charduni could easily crush the elves given a few good battles, Jandaveos or no. He is probably mistaken, but his passionate conviction is such that the White Axe is eyeing him as a potential recruit. They will certainly approach him before he thinks to disobey orders openly and render himself useless to their cause.

Arit Haksol (*female charduni, Clr6/Ftr13, LE*) is the Grand General of Law. Considered a general in spite of the fact that she controls only the few resident detachments assigned in each major city to the preservation of order and the rooting out of dissent and heresy, Haksol takes her position very seriously. Though a serious menace to the conservative White Axe and all more liberal heretics alike, Haksol is actually fairly liberal herself, taking the position that order and justice outweigh all other concerns in the true service of Almighty Chardun.

Saxalar Maktun (*male charduni, Clr5/Ftr14, LE*) has been the Grand General of Training and Discipline for more than a century now. His skin is just beginning to show the blackening of age, but his agile vitality betrays it not one whit, and though young soldiers often hate him in the first rigid years of their weapons training, all grow to respect his wisdom and experience in time. If the charduni army is not what it once was, the blame can in no way be laid at the feet of Grand General Maktun, an occasionally cruel but always fair man, dedicated completely to the proper training and preparation of all young charduni soldiers.



Chapter Four: Forsaken Secrets

This section chronicles the magical secrets of the once-forsaken elves, and some of the items used by the charduni to aid in the administration of their brutal empire.

Once-Forsaken and Still-Forsaken

With the return of Jandaveos, Chern's curse is fading and the once-forsaken elves are returning to their old ways. If an elven character wishes to return to the fold and once more worship Jandaveos, the *curse of the forsaken* penalty is removed, and elven clerics can once more cast divine spells normally.

Not every player will want his forsaken elf character to be restored. Nor will every DM wish her forsaken elf NPCs to return easily to Jandaveos. The following optional rules can be used to apply the effects of still-forsaken legacy.

Though this is a time when much of the old forsaken age is being swept aside, some elves remain who, for a variety of reasons, have not been fully restored. These "still-forsaken" elves are as varied as the reasons barring their complete redemption, but they are universally feared and mistrusted for what they represent.

Some of the still-forsaken remain so by choice, having renounced Jandaveos and his attempts to restore them. Many of these are selfish and petty creatures, intent on preserving the old social order (and the power that comes with it). Not every still-forsaken elf is malign, however. Some choose to remain forsaken for philosophical reasons (for example, this is what "I am"), out of a sense of guilt (in other words, "I deserve no second chance"), or even out of a sense of martyrdom ("I must remain forsaken to remind my kin of the depths to which they once plummeted"). These still-forsaken elves willingly choose to forego Jandaveos' healing and retain their forsaken status.

Other still-forsaken remain so because of a strong titanic legacy. The elves have always been unique among the divine races for their open-minded (some would say traitorous) outlook on the titans. In particular, they are known for their respect for fallen Mesos, the Sire of Sorcery. While the vast majority of elven sorcerers (those directly touched by the titan) died when he was destroyed by the gods, some endured. Moreover, elves descended from sorcerers, yet who were not arcanists themselves, also survived the titan's death. Their heritage and allegiances did nothing to spare them of Chern's Curse, but they did alter Jandaveos' healing effect upon them. These still-forsaken elves remain outcast because their link to the titans is too strong — Jandaveos cannot fully embrace them.

Finally, some still-forsaken owe their existence to the veil between worlds. Just as the dimensional barriers surrounding the Citadel of the Rose protected the high elves therein from Chern's Curse, so too can the natural barrier between worlds prevent Jandaveos from restoring one who is forsaken. Forsaken elves

New Feat: Beautiful Blade [General]

The high elves believe all things must be done beautifully, even something as abhorrent as taking a life in battle. Thus they learn to fight like an artist: their armaments become their paintbrushes, and their enemies become the canvas. Their beautiful blades are enough to inspire their allies and strike fear into their enemies.

Prerequisite: Elf or half-elf, Dex 13, Int 13, Combat Expertise.

Benefit: When you use the attack action or full attack action in melee, you can take a penalty of as much as -5 on your attacks. You may then confer a morale bonus equal to that penalty to all allies (excluding yourself) within 30 feet, affecting all attack rolls and Will saving throws. Alternatively, you can inflict a morale penalty equal to your penalty to all opponents within 30 feet, affecting their attack rolls and Will saving throws. This is a visual, mind-altering effect.

Special: A bard using Beautiful Blade is considered to be performing for the purposes of maintaining her bardic music; a deaf bard doing so does not suffer the standard 20% chance of failure.

who left Scarn after the titans' defeat are still-forsaken, though luckily for them Jandaveos took this into account. While they are not fully restored, they are not as cursed as they were before.

The outcast kingdoms of old Eldura-Tre represent the largest concentrations of the still-forsaken. Elsewhere, the still-forsaken make residence where they are able, though this is difficult. Most outsiders, even sympathetic high elves, often see the still-forsaken as pariahs. As a result, they lead lonely, itinerant lives, subsisting on charity, crime and mercenary employ.

Running a Still-Forsaken Character: Chern's curse no longer affects still-forsaken characters. The following qualities are added, however.

- *Lingering Curse:* The still-forsaken are old, lingering from the time of Jandaveos' death, when they were transformed into forsaken elves. As a result, they typically begin play as middle-aged or older characters (see *Player's Handbook*, Chapter 5: Description: "Vital Statistics") and must be at least 150 years old.

Also, the still-forsaken are true to their name and are unable to forge a bond with any divine entity (with few exceptions, see below). Regardless of clerical level, they may never cast divine spells above 2nd level.

- *Imperfect Restoration:* The still-forsaken have partly regained the ability to sire and bear healthy progeny with each other, though 50% of the time the attempt still results in only failure and grief. Also,

while their mental and physical health has been mostly restored, a still-forsaken's skin remains somewhat paler than a high elf's, and eyes remain jet black with brightly colored irises.

- **Outcast:** The still-forsaken are feared and loathed with few exceptions. Even in distant places (such as other worlds) where their origins are unknown, their unusual appearance, and the palpable sense of deific loss that hangs around them, is enough to make any mortal uneasy.

They gain a -2 racial modifier to all Diplomacy checks when not interacting with other still-forsaken. Further, NPC attitudes toward the still-forsaken always begin one category worse than they normally would (friendly becomes indifferent, indifferent becomes unfriendly, unfriendly becomes hostile, and the character shouldn't even think about approaching those who are hostile).

The Arrows of Eldura-Tre

High elven arrows have always been the greatest in the world — stronger, faster and more easily used than their "lesser" counterparts. The elven art of fletching was said to rival the lower tiers of Golthagga's abilities, to the point where their arrows were called the "splinters of heaven." At times even Hrinruuk,

titan of the hunt, used arrows of elven make — the only ones other than his own that he ever let fly.

Though greatly diminished in its present form, the elven art of arrow-making remains unimaginably elevated above that of its peers. Now with the rebirth of their god, the elves have rediscovered their passion for these "splinters of heaven" and may well, given time, surpass even the lofty heights to which they once aspired.

Special and Superior Mundane Arrows

The true epitome of skill, these missiles need neither magic nor artifice to function. Instead, they are the result of millennia of design and revision, creating "mundane" arrows capable of near-mystic abilities.

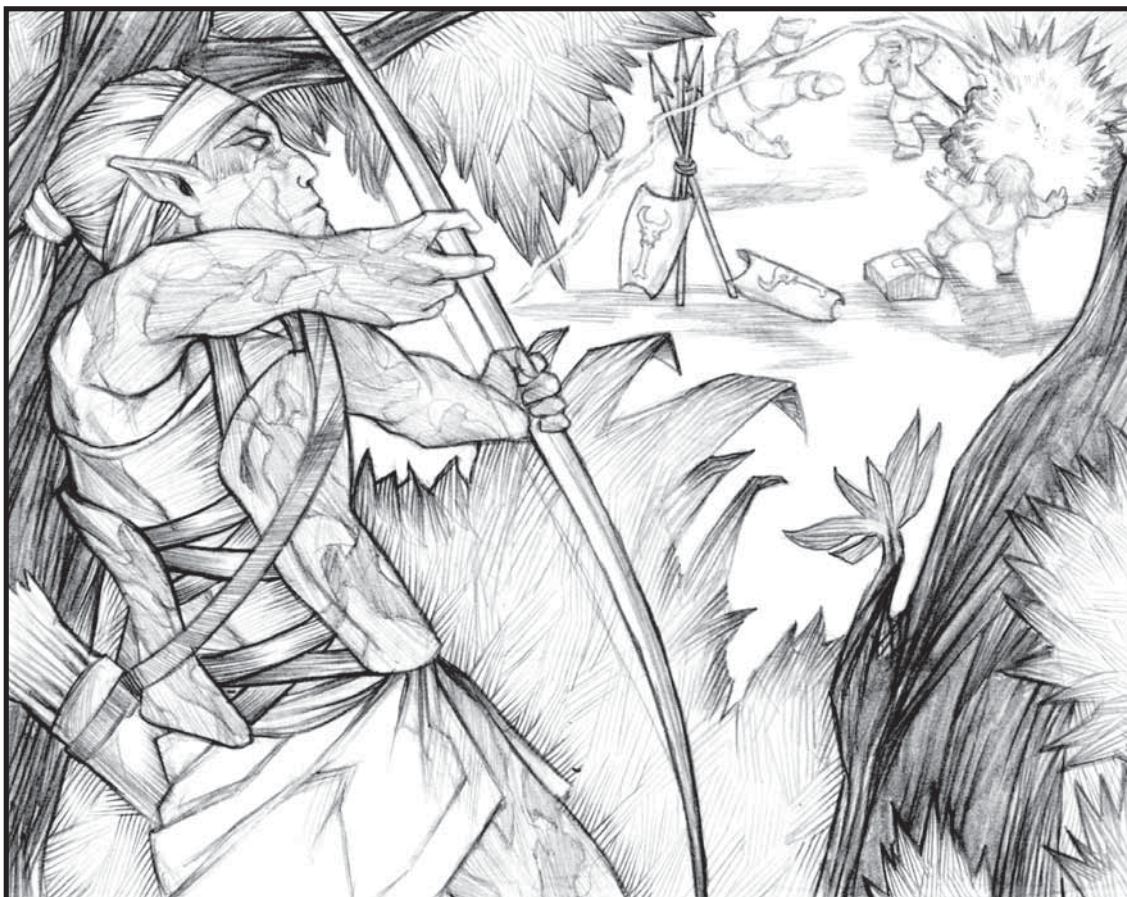
A character needs only the Craft (bowmaking, fletchery or woodworking) skill to create these arrows. High elves and half-elven offspring of high elves gain a $+4$ sacred bonus to these rolls.

Maelstrom

Description: Impregnated with nutty and wooden oils, maelstrom arrows are designed to be easily drawn and fired in rapid succession.

Powers: Maelstrom arrows confer a $+1$ circumstance bonus to all attack rolls, but only when more than one such arrow is fired in a round.

Market Price: 75 gp (quiver of 20); **Craft DC:** 25.



Skysight

Description: Designed to fly with near-perfect accuracy, these arrows have always been popular in the lands of the Skysight River, where they are traditionally made.

Powers: Skysight arrows double the effective range increment of the bow with which they are used (along with the attendant maximum range).

Market Price: 75 gp (quiver of 20); **Craft DC:** 25.

Steel-Shaft

Description: Crafted entirely from elven steel, these arrows can better utilize the strength of the archer's draw, using the added weight and momentum to devastating effect.

Powers: These arrows add half the archer's Strength modifier to their damage.

Market Price: 120 gp (quiver of 20); **Craft DC:** 20.

Wrath of Dujan

Description: Named for the mythical elven hero Dujan the Many Eyed, these arrows were supposedly created to penetrate the defenses of an armored abomination during the second epoch of Golthagga.

Powers: Targets of these arrows lose their damage reduction (Fort negates, DC is the attack's attack roll result). They have no effect if the user's Dexterity modifier is less than the enhancement bonus normally required to penetrate the target's damage reduction.

Market Price: 100 gp (quiver of 20); **Craft DC:** 30.

Alchemical Arrows

The high elven science of arrow-making is evident in these elegant missiles. Crafted from rare earths, distillates and essences, alchemical arrows are oftentimes as scarce as true magic arrows.

A character requires the Craft (alchemy) skill to create these arrows. A high elf or half-elf offspring of a high elf gains a +4 sacred bonus to these rolls.

Blood Rage

Description: Imbued with potent medicinal agents, blood rage arrows foment a barely controlled frenzy in their targets. While originally conceived as a potion, elven fletchers adapted the formula to their arrows, so that friendly archers could grant their allies a "boost" from afar.

Powers: Blood rage arrows deal no damage if shot within 30 feet of the target by an archer with the Precise Shot feat. Otherwise, the target suffers 1 point of damage as the surgical tip of the arrow bites into his flesh. The target temporarily gains +2 Strength (Fort negates, DC 15, harmless). This lasts for 3 rounds, after which the target takes 10 points of subdual damage, as his body reels from the unnatural metabolism it has been forced to

endure. Targets can be affected by multiple blood rage arrows at the same time, though they may well collapse from the metabolic "penance" afterward.

Market Price: 300 gp (quiver of 20); **Alchemy DC:** 25.

Constellation

Description: Even the eyes of an elf cannot pierce total darkness, and so their alchemists created these arrows. They burst apart in midflight, creating a dazzling panoply of shimmering lights that hang in the air and illuminate an area.

Powers: Constellation arrows are fired as normal, but the arrows always explode in midair and never deal any damage. A circular area, centered anywhere within one range increment of the archer, and with a maximum radius of (10 feet x the archer's attack roll result), becomes illuminated as if by the light of a full moon. Constellation arrows are powerless against magical darkness.

Market Price: 50 gp (quiver of 20); **Alchemy DC:** 17.

Death Ward

Description: Death ward arrows are similar to blood rage arrows, but they instead slow their targets' metabolisms, keeping them from dying until help arrives.

Powers: Death ward arrows deal no damage if shot by an archer with the Precise Shot feat within 30 feet of the target. Otherwise, the target suffers 1 point of damage as the surgical tip of the arrow bites into his flesh. If the target is not yet unconscious, it is immediately rendered unconscious (Fort negates, DC 30). The target immediately stops taking damage from bleeding, poisons and drowning (and similar effects based on metabolism, at the GM's discretion). The target remains unconscious but protected in this manner for 24 hours. Alternatively, the effects of the arrow can be reversed by a DC 15 Heal check.

Market Price: 240 gp (quiver of 20); **Alchemy DC:** 17.

Flare Burst

Description: Similar to conventional alchemist's fire, flare burst arrows are highly volatile. Their ease of construction and use has made them among the most popular alchemical arrows in existence.

Powers: Flare burst arrows deal 1d6 fire damage on a direct hit and 1 point fire damage to all targets within 5 feet. On the following round, the target suffers an additional 1d6 fire damage, unless he takes a standard action to put out the flames (Ref save, DC 15, +2 circumstance bonus to the check if rolling on ground). Flammable items in the area of effect will catch on fire.

Market Price: 340 gp (quiver of 20); **Alchemy DC:** 18.

Fog Bane

Description: Fog bane arrows were developed by the Dragon Prince Ehito and gifted to the first Wave-King to sanctify the dragon's patronage of elven sailors. They instantly destroy fogs and vapors.

Powers: Fog bane arrows deal no damage. Instead, they instantly destroy all gases, vapors and mists along their trajectory. This can be used either to create 10-foot-radius, 100-foot-long shafts within an encompassing fog, or to target against some singular vaporous target (such as a billowing cloud of poison gas). Nonmagical targets are instantly destroyed (up to a maximum volume of 1,000 cubic feet). Magically created targets (such as by the spell *solid fog*) require an attack roll on the archer's part (DC 11 + the target's caster level).

Market Price: 100 gp (quiver of 20); **Alchemy DC:** 17.

Hungry Chrysalis

Description: A cruel and horrific invention, hungry chrysalis arrows were banned by the Eldura-Tre Concord; unfortunately, some disreputable fletching houses still make these arrows. They contain unstable salts that react on impact to imprison the target in large salt crystals. They then continue to grow, eventually shredding and crushing the target to pieces.

Powers: Hungry chrysalis arrows deal no damage on initial impact. The target must however succeed on a DC 17 Reflex saving throw or be encased in salt crystal. Each round thereafter, the arrow inflicts 2d6 damage (Fort negates, DC 17) as the crystalline prison continues to grow inward and crushes the target. The victim can attempt to break free, which requires a DC 27 Strength check. Alternatively, the chrysalis can be destroyed (it has 15 hp and 5 hardness). The victim cannot move or speak while imprisoned.

If a target is struck by multiple hungry chrysalis arrows, the arrows work in concert to create a sturdier and more deadly chrysalis. The DC for resisting the chrysalis' effects increases by +2 for each arrow beyond the first, and the damage suffered each round increases by 1d6 for each arrow beyond the first. The chrysalis also becomes stronger, gaining 15 hp for each arrow beyond the first.

Market Price: 50 gp (per arrow); **Alchemy DC:** 24.

Magical Arrows

The rarest of the splinters of heaven, magical arrows are prized by elf and nonelf alike. They make a brisk trade in any market and are feared on any battlefield.

A character requires the Craft Magic Arms and Armor feat to create these arrows.

Golden Arrows of Theolieda

Description: Theolieda of Mantua was the captain of the Knights of the Thorns during the later millennia of Eldura-Tre. Her duty was often confounded by the slowness of physical motion. Yet training all of her guards in teleportation magic was impractical, and so she prevailed upon the Council of Magi to create these magic arrows. With them, an archer is magically transported along the arrow's flight; where she targets becomes where she will be.

Powers: This arrow deals no damage. Instead, the archer may designate any location she could normally hit with the arrow and instantly transport there when the arrow strikes that location. Both the archer and her equipment disappear into the Astral Plane when the arrow is loosed, reappearing only when the arrow arrives at the target location.

If for some reason the archer targets a location that is already occupied by a solid body, the arrow shatters while still in the bow and its magic fails. Similarly, the arrow fails if it targets a location in an *antimagic field* or traverses such a location during its flight. If the arrow is somehow destroyed during midflight, the archer reappears at her original location and suffers 2d6 points of damage (Fort negates, DC 15).

Moderate conjuration; CL 7th; Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *dimension door*; Price 1,400 gp.

Morning Daylight

Description: These arrows were created by Vladawen the Titanslayer and are now the pride of the Divine Theocracy. They transform into shafts of golden sunlight, creating an effect that is both potently destructive and sublimely inspiring.

Powers: *Morning daylight arrows* deal all of their damage with divine sanction, negating all manner of damage reduction, resistance, immunity and regeneration. They are however subject to spell resistance.

Allies who are within 30 feet of either the archer or the target at the moment a *morning daylight arrow* is fired receive a +1 morale bonus to all attack and damage rolls for the remainder of the round.

Faint enchantment; CL 5th; Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *prayer*, *searing light*; Price 350 gp (per quiver of 20); Weight 3 lb. (per quiver).

Spectral Prison

Description: A potent device, this arrow is the pinnacle of "subduing" missiles. It produces an explosion of prismatic tendrils that immobilize the target.

Powers: The arrow deals no damage on initial impact. Instead, the target must succeed on a DC 23 Reflex save or be caught in a spectral prison. The target is immobile (considered flat-footed and unable to move), though it can still gesture, speak and turn its head(s). This imprisonment lasts for 1 hour.

The target can still teleport, be teleported, and even be attacked while held by the spectral prison.

Moderate evocation; CL 15th; Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *force cage*, *prismatic wall*; Price 5,000 gp.

Spirit Ally

Description: These arrows were created after the Diaspora, when the distraught elves of what would become Ganjulaeon turned temporarily to native Ushadani spirit worship. They employ the act of loosing an arrow to focus the archer's spiritual essence, allowing her to call upon potent spirit allies.

Powers: The arrow deals no damage. Instead it transforms in midflight into a spectral animal of light and magical energy. The summoned creature is totemic to the archer, drawing on her subconscious desires and her strength of will.

The summoned creature (always of Medium size) has the same alignment as the archer and will obey her commands. Its ability scores are all equal to the archer's Wisdom score. It has 1/2 the archer's hit points. It has an AC of 15 + the archer's Wisdom modifier, SR of 10 + the archer's Wisdom modifier, and damage reduction (the archer's Wisdom modifier)/-. It has the same base attack bonus as the archer. It has a base damage of 2d6 holy damage on all melee and ranged attacks (range increment 30 ft., as a bow weapon).

If shot at the ground, the creature will have a speed of 60 ft. If shot into the air, the creature will have a speed of 30 ft., fly 30 ft. (perfect). If shot into water, the creature will have a speed of 30 ft., swim 30 ft. The spirit ally remains for 10 rounds or until it is killed or dismissed.

Moderate conjuration; CL 10th; Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *summon monster V* or *summon nature's ally V*; Price 3,000 gp.

Void

Description: Imbued with the antithesis of creation, *void arrows* drain away magic and the vital energies of life.

Powers: The arrow deals no damage on initial impact. Instead, the target must succeed on a Fort save, DC 23, or suffer 1d4 temporary damage to all his abilities. Further, magical effects within 30 ft. of the impact are instantly ended (though any *antimagic field* remains unaffected). Magic items in the area of effect must make a DC 20 Will save or become normal items (magic items being worn or touched can use their bearer's Will save or their own, whichever is greater).

Strong necromancy; CL 17th; Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *harm*, *disjunction*; Price 7,500 gp.

Quivers

A bow is nearly useless without arrows, which is why over the generations the elves have designed a variety of quivers to mitigate this weakness.

Masterwork Quiver

Description: Woven of fine cottons, silk and mithral thread, masterwork quivers are true treasures, even if they aren't "magic."

Powers: Masterwork quivers have an increased holding capacity of 10% (round up) and are equipped with artfully placed spacers so that many different arrow types can be housed together and still be accessed easily.

Market Price Modifier: +300 gp.

Double Quiver

Description: Much as their name suggests, these quivers are simply larger versions of their normal kin.

Powers: Double quivers hold 40 arrows.

Market Price: 50 gp.

Eldurian Quiver

Description: After the Diaspora, quiver design became more compact and simple. The Eldurian quiver holds no more arrows than its normal counterparts but allows adept archers to draw missiles more quickly.

Powers: An archer using arrows taken from an Eldurian quiver gains a +1 circumstance bonus (stackable with all other circumstance bonuses) to attack rolls, but only if he is firing more than one such arrow in a round. Eldurian quivers hold the standard 20 arrows.

Market Price: 200 gp.

Therathosian Quiver

Description: The largest quivers ever designed, Therathosian quivers were gaudy affairs with inlaid gold and interwoven flecks of semiprecious stone. Modern versions are more austere but remain structurally unchanged from their predecessors.

Powers: Therathosian quivers hold 100 arrows. Although well designed, their sheer mass inflicts an armor check penalty of +1.

Market Price: 150 gp; **Weight:** 1 lb

Miracle Feats

The following are some of the rediscovered (or simply re-empowered) benefices common to the priests of Jandaveos. As with all miracle feats (see Chapter One in *Relics and Rituals II: Lost Lore*), these abilities are unique ways in which clerics can channel positive energy and always use up one of the practitioner's daily turn attempts.

Benediction of Divine Wrath [Miracle]

Jandaveos' priests often work alongside faithful wizards (even sorcerers) and are in some cases adepts of the arcane arts themselves. This miracle allows them to cooperate more closely to battle unholy scions with divine magic.

Prerequisites: Cleric class levels, ability to channel positive energy (turn undead).

Benefit: By expending a turn undead attempt while a spell is being cast within 60 ft. of him, the cleric can transform half the damage dealt by the spell into divine energy and therefore not subject to being reduced by resistance against the spell's normal damage type. Alternatively, the cleric can expend two turn undead attempts simultaneously to completely convert the target spell's damage wholly into divine energy. Using the *Benediction of Divine Wrath* is a free action.

Benefice of Arcane Antithesis [Miracle]

An early miracle granted by Jandaveos, this feat was vital during the schismatic wars between those elves loyal to Mesos and those who renounced the Sire of Sorcery in favor of their new god. By channeling positive energy like a cleansing breeze, the cleric can grant partial protection from hostile magic.

Prerequisites: Cleric class levels, ability to channel positive energy (turn undead).

Benefit: By expending a turn undead attempt, the cleric may channel positive energy by touch, granting the recipient a sacred bonus to all saving throws equal to the cleric's Charisma modifier (minimum of +1). This bonus lasts for 1 round per cleric level.

Special: Belsameth grants her clerics a similar miracle known as the *Malediction of Arcane Ruin*, which uses negative energy to pervert hostile magic until it is an impotent wreck. It otherwise functions identically to the above feat.

Benefice of Bountiful Beauty [Miracle]

God of the exemplars of beauty, Jandaveos created this gift millennia ago, and it has taken on a whole new significance in the aftermath of the Titanswar. Though primarily bequeathed by the elven god and his sister Madriel, it is also used among the adherents of Tanil and her daughter Idra, who like their patronesses still love to bring beauty to the world. Beyond the Scarred Lands such a miracle might be the purview of any good-aligned god, though it is less likely to be taught by those with a martial bent.

Prerequisites: Cleric class levels, ability to channel positive energy (turn undead).

Benefit: By expending a turn undead attempt and touching a target, the cleric can instantly remove all effects that would make the target ugly (such as Charisma ability damage, grime or an infestation of fleas). If the source of this ugliness is supernatural then the cleric must succeed at a turning check and effectively turn a creature of Hit Dice equal to the Hit Dice or level of the source of the ugliness.

If successful, the target becomes pleasing to the senses, gaining a +1 sacred bonus to all Charisma-related rolls that relate to social interaction (*i.e.*, not feinting in combat or turning undead). Nonsentient

targets (such as plants, animals and daggers) become similarly beautiful, increasing their worth by 100 gp x the cleric's Charisma modifier.

The effects of this feat last until the next sunset, and while it is theoretically possible for less scrupulous clerics to beautify items and then sell them to unsuspecting merchants, such actions will likely make the cleric anathema in the many and well connected markets of Scarn.

Special: By expending 100 xp when she uses this feat, a cleric can make the effects permanent. No more than one application of this feat can be active at any time on a single target, be it the permanent or temporary usage.

Blessing of Divine Strength [Miracle]

While the most famous recipient of this miracle is none other than Vladawen, the High Priest of Jandaveos, many others have received this common benefice of the elven god. Devotees of Vangal and Corean both claim that it was their patrons who first taught this skill to the demigod, though those elves who care to respond claim that it was the Dragon Princes who first gave them the feat.

Prerequisites: Cleric class levels, ability to channel positive energy (turn undead).

Benefit: By expending a turn undead attempt and touching the intended target (which may be herself), the cleric grants a +20 sacred bonus to the target's Strength on its next action. If the next action is not one for which Strength is important then the effect is wasted. Similarly, the opportunity to use the effect of this feat lingers for only 1 round per cleric level and vanishes after the elapsed time, regardless of whether it has been taken advantage of or not.

Essence of Holy Light [Miracle]

This feat is a modern development, the result of Jandaveos' recent close encounter with the forces of shadow. Perhaps it is also a tacit reminder to his sister Belsameth that though they are related, he still cleaves to the side of good. Outside the Scarred Lands this power might be available to any clerics of a good deity, be they unassuming mendicants bringing light to a darkened world or crusaders wielding it as a righteous brand.

Prerequisites: Cleric class levels, ability to channel positive energy (turn undead).

Benefit: By expending a turn undead attempt the cleric can bring forth a corona of light that extends from her to a distance equal to her Charisma modifier x 10 feet. This instantly defeats all natural darkness and no shadow exists in the affected area. Against magical shadow, the cleric must succeed at a turning check to effectively turn a creature of Hit Dice equal to the level of the character who created the darkness (or equal to the encounter level of the area if the

supernatural darkness is a facet of the malign environment and not the result of a particular entity). This feat has no effect on creatures of shadow whatsoever. The light lasts for 1 hour and can be ended by the cleric at any time as a free action.

Special: The light created by this feat is true sunlight and affects creatures in its area of effect accordingly.

Final Act of Consecration [Miracle]

The first and only god to return from the lands of the dead, Jandaveos owes much of his existence to this truly wondrous miracle. Able to imbue an item with a fragment of the practitioner's life force, it was this feat which the elven god used to create Vladawen's divine weapons (the keys to his resurrection).

Prerequisites: Cleric class levels, ability to channel positive energy (turn undead).

Benefit: This feat takes effect automatically and instantly at the moment of the cleric's death unless she wills it otherwise (no trickery short of divine intervention can force the cleric's hand during this choice). A nonmagical weapon or item on the same plane of existence as the cleric becomes suffused with the last of her life energies, becoming a divine talisman. It becomes a magical version of its mundane self and can have abilities appropriate to an item worth 5,000 gp

per character level of the dying cleric (chosen by the cleric).

This item can be used in place of all components in any spell designed to restore the cleric to life. The effects of this feat are permanent or until the cleric is restored to life, at which point the targeted item returns to its preconsecrated state.

Special: Such items are sure to attract a lot of attention, and unscrupulous allies who stall the restoration of their former friends just so they can keep a magic item may well receive a personal audience with Jandaveos' avatar.

Mariners' Blessing [Miracle]

Popularized during the dim days of the Diaspora, this miracle is favored among sea-loving elves. Through it, a cleric can bring blessings of opportune winds and repel the forces of corruption from the sea.

Prerequisites: Cleric class levels, ability to channel positive energy (turn undead).

Benefit: By expending a turn undead attempt while on the deck of a ship, the cleric can negate unfavorable winds and summon a light breeze to speed the ship along its intended course; this increases the ship's speed by 50%. Even inclement weather can be dispelled, though in this case the cleric must succeed on a turning check and effectively turn a creature of



Hit Dice equal to the encounter level of the region the ship is currently in.

Also, the water around the ship to a distance of 50 ft. from the hull becomes free of contaminants (including salt), making it fit to drink. The effects of this feat last for a number of hours equal to the cleric's Charisma modifier (minimum 1 hour).

Special: This feat has no effect against supernatural perils, such as storms summoned by hostile magic or the corrupting blood of Kadum in the Blood Sea.

Mariners' Greater Blessing [Miracle]

A more potent form of the Mariners' Blessing, this miracle has the ability to defeat even supernatural corruption and weather.

Prerequisites: Mariners' Blessing, cleric class levels, ability to channel positive energy (turn undead).

Benefit: This feat functions as the Mariners' Blessing but can negate nonnatural obstacles. To do so, the cleric must make a turning check and succeed at effectively turning a creature of Hit Dice equal to the Hit Dice or level of the source of the negative effect (if it is a creature), or the encounter level of the region (if it is a facet of the malign forces at work in the area).

The region of water purified by this feat now extends 500 ft. from the hull and even includes creatures within that range. Small fish and the like are instantly freed of all contamination or corruption, making them fit to eat, while malign creatures will be turned, similar to the effects of a successful turn undead attempt (no roll is necessary, though the GM may require a turning check against particularly potent or dogged foes).

Prayer to the Faith Renewed [Miracle]

Though not the master of the arcane that his predecessor Mesos was, Jandaveos is nonetheless a god of magic. This feat allows his clerics to channel positive energy to restore an expended spell. Outside of the Scarred Lands this feat is most common among deities of magic, mysteries and the arcane.

Prerequisites: Cleric class levels, ability to channel positive energy (turn undead).

Benefit: By expending a turn undead attempt the cleric can immediately reprepare a cast spell as though she has not yet cast it. The only restriction is that the spell cannot be a *harm* or *inflict* spell, as these invocations call upon negative energy.

Special: A dark counterpart of this feat exists which uses negative energy. This feat is otherwise identical, except that it can be used to reprepare *harm* or *inflict* spells but cannot renew *cure* or *heal* spells.

Sacred Act of Perfection [Miracle]

The elves strive for perfection, so it is little wonder that their god long ago granted his priests the ability to bless them on their way to that goal. Those benefiting from this miracle perform miraculously,

acting with such divine grace that the influence of supernatural power is unmistakable.

Prerequisites: Cleric class levels, ability to channel positive energy (turn undead).

Benefit: By expending a turn undead attempt the cleric may grant a +20 sacred bonus to any one roll made either by himself or a willing target within line of sight during the following turn. So great is this benediction that even a natural roll of 1 is not immediately counted as a failure, and the result is still compared (as normal) to the DC of the roll.

Special: Belsameth (among other evil deities) anoints her priests with a dark counterpart to this feat known as the Malign Curse of Ignominy. It is otherwise identical to the above feat but inflicts a -20 profane penalty to the target roll. Also, a natural roll of 20 is not immediately counted as a success, and when used against an attack roll the attack cannot achieve a critical hit. Finally, the Malign Curse of Ignominy requires the cleric to succeed at a turning check, effectively turning a creature of Hit Dice equal to the level or the Hit Dice of the target; failure means the turning attempt is expended with no effect.

Uncion of the Forest Hallowed [Miracle]

Forests are among the most beautiful of things, and the forests of the elves are the greatest of all. This miracle is part of the reason why, a gift by Jandaveos to his children that they may make good these places of their love. Outside the Scarred Lands this feat might be granted by elven gods, or by those that watch over forests and ensure they are the vibrant, goodly things they should be.

Prerequisites: Cleric class levels, ability to channel positive energy (turn undead)

Benefit: By expending a turn undead attempt the cleric can temporarily create a *hallow* effect as per the spell. This effect radiates as a 10 feet x the cleric's Charisma modifier burst centered on herself and lasts her Charisma modifier + 3 turns.

Special: This positive energy can be negated by any creature capable of channeling negative energy if the creature makes a turning check and rolls high enough to effectively turn a creature of Hit Dice equal to the cleric's character level.

Charduni Secrets

The grim and doctrinaire charduni are nowhere near as creative and imaginative as their elven counterparts in the north — their strength is in their sameness and their utter devotion to the lawful path set down by their god. Accordingly, they tend to use established spells, magic items and the like, making few of their own, lest the creator be accused of excessive pride and independent thought. A few items and spells are unique to the charduni, and these are listed here.

New Feat: Once-Charduni

A few charduni have committed the ultimate crime — they have turned their back on the One in White or, worse still, Chardun himself. Those who have committed heresy, treason or other high crimes are sometimes stripped of their citizenship and identity and declared to be no longer charduni. These wretches usually labor in the mines until they die (or are killed by charduni or other slaves), but a handful have escaped and found lives outside the Land of Chains. In such cases, an interesting thing happens — as they no longer consider themselves charduni, they appear to be free to select their own alignment and religion independent of charduni tradition and racial requirements. Most such charduni turn to the lawful neutral Hedrada, but a few have chosen to follow other gods such as the neutral evil Belsameth. A tiny number have taken even more radical steps, turning to gods as diverse as the chaotic evil Vangal, the lawful good Corean and even the neutral good Madriel and the chaotic good Tanil. Few if any are known to worship chaotic neutral Enkili, and none has yet taken the ultimate step — turning to Denev or one of the other titans.

Prerequisite: Charduni dwarf.

Benefit: Charduni dwarves with this feat are free to select any alignment. They gain a +1 to their Strength score due to the harsh work expected of them, but are penalized –1 on their Constitution score because of the unhealthy conditions and constant abuse they suffered.

Normal: Charduni are normally lawful evil in alignment.

Special: This feat can be taken at character creation if a player wishes to have a charduni dwarf whose alignment varies from lawful evil. As such, the GM can also grant it as a bonus feat.

Charduni Equipment

Blast Rock

This rough black "rock" looks and feels similar to coal, only much harder and heavier. Though suspected to be coal formed from an ancient ironwood forest, blast rock has never yet been mined outside the Chained Mountains. Whether this is due to the magical or natural forces involved in creating the substance or simply because only the charduni have thus far learned how to find and mine the often-dangerous veins of blast rock, it cannot be denied that blast rock gives the charduni a distinct advantage in battle as well as in such mundane efforts as mining, quarrying and even city building and maintenance.

Blast rock is highly explosive when exposed to flame. Charduni typically affix an oiled rope fuse to a hunk of blast rock to allow a few moments to propel the rock toward an enemy or simply to dive for cover. Each inch of fuse delays an explosion by one round. A blast rock explosion is impressively bright and loud in addition to being highly destructive.

Each pound of blast rock has a 5-ft. primary blast radius and a 10-ft. secondary blast radius. Those caught in the primary blast radius take 1d8 points of damage and are blinded and deafened for 1d4 rounds per pound of rock. A Reflex save at DC 15 + 1 per pound of blast rock halves damage and the duration of the deafness effect and avoids the blindness. Those in the secondary blast radius take 1d4 points of damage and are blinded and deafened for 1 round per pound. A successful Reflex save at DC 10 + 1 per pound halves this damage and eliminates both blindness and deafness.

Market Price: Blast rock is normally unavailable outside the empire. Amounts captured by the elves can sell for as much as 300 gp per pound. Within the empire, the charduni government places strict controls on blast rock, and it is never available for sale.

Charduni Magic Items

Charduni Officers' Medallion

Description: *Officers' medallions* appear to be simple iron medallions on thick iron chains. Each *medallion* displays its owner's rank and unit affiliation. Aside from its function as a badge of rank, an *officers' medallion* is an invaluable tool for communication during battle. They allow instant verbal communication between a charduni, his superiors and subordinates, but from time to time these items are found in the hands of adventurers, who use them to provide secure communications between party members.

Powers: An *officer's medallion* is linked to the *medallions* of its bearer's immediate superior and his subordinate officers, allowing instant verbal communication over a distance of up to 100 miles.

Faint divination; CL 5th; Craft Wondrous Item, *clairaudience*, *whispering wind*; Price 30,000gp; Weight 1 lb.

Slave Collar

Description: The charduni have many different ways of controlling their slaves. Most are fairly mundane, such as pain or fear, but a few of the tasks that charduni require of their slaves require coercion of a more absolute variety. Particularly in the dreaded Mines, charduni require a means of keeping their slaves obedient without endangering themselves. Fortunately for the slaves of the



charduni empire, these items are expensive and so are used only in the most extreme of cases.

Powers: The wearer of a *slave collar* is affected as if by a *dominate person* spell cast by the *collar's* creator, but the Will save required to resist the *collar's* power is DC 25. A wearer who resists the *collar's* effects is immune to them for 24 hours but is usually taken away and given another *collar* a day later. Once under the *collar's* control, the wearer can make a DC 25 Will save once per month to overcome its effects. If the wearer can move out of range within 24 hours, the *collar* has no further effect. Otherwise, the wearer must make a new saving throw 24 hours after overcoming its effects or be once more under its control.

The *collar* is effective over a range of up to 100 miles from the creator. In addition, the creator can order wearers to seriously harm or endanger themselves, but this grants the wearer a DC 15 Will save to resist the order. If this save is successful, the wearer is immune from self-destructive orders for 24 hours but is still under the control of the *collar*.

In addition to the normal awareness of the target's experiences that the caster feels with a *dominate person* spell, a wizard using a *slave collar* can also see and hear (but no other senses) through the slave's eyes and ears for up to four hours per day. While using a slave's sight and hearing, a wizard can take no other action except to command the slave telepathically.

A *slave collar* can be removed only by its creator, or by a *wish* or *limited wish* spell.

Moderate enchantment; CL 10th; Craft Wondrous Item, *clairaudience/clairvoyance, dominate person*; Price 100,000 gp; Weight 2 lbs.

Traitor's Collar

Description: *Traitor's collars* have a variety of uses in the charduni empire. They are worn by randomly chosen slaves in disobedient work groups, placed on slaves who are considered an escape risk and even used on squads of unsuspecting slave soldiers who are then driven toward the enemy, where the *collars* are set off to devastating effect.

Willful slaves are sometimes equipped with *traitor's collars* as punishment. If they behave themselves for a specified period, the *collars* are removed. Otherwise, should an unfortunate wearer disobey an order, the *collar* is detonated, killing the slave (and often some of those in the immediate vicinity).

Powers: A *traitor's collar* is secured with a lock. A DC 25 Open Lock roll is required to remove the lock, but a failed roll triggers the lock's *firestorm*. A DC 30 Disable Device check will remove the trap, but failure on this roll will also trigger the explosion.

Each collar has a unique command word, which can be used over a range of up to 500 yards. If this command word is uttered by anyone within range, the *traitor's collar* explodes with a 15d6 *firestorm*, centered on the wearer. The explosion destroys the *collar*.

Moderate evocation; CL 15th; Craft Wondrous Item, *firestorm*; Price 5,250 gp; Weight 2 lbs.

A stylized, cracked map of a fantasy world, possibly the Empire of the Rose. The map is rendered in a light, almost white color against a dark background, with a prominent crackle or stone-like texture. Various geographical features and place names are visible, including 'BAY OF TEARS', 'ROCKS OF CARNAGE', 'SHARAH', 'VASAEL', 'THE THORNS', 'CITADEL OF THE ROSE', 'ETERNAL ISLE', and 'IRON STEPPES'. The text 'Chapter Five: Adventures' is overlaid in a large, white, serif font, centered on the map.

Chapter Five: Adventures

Adventures in the Empire of the Rose

The Divine Empire of the Rose is immense, and its heartlands are as fraught with dangers as its scarcely known frontier. Political schemes, spies and assassins lurk within the glittering cities of the high elves. Once more a nexus of culture, the nascent Third Empire has become a contested (though supervised) battleground of interests, from the hegemonistic designs of the Black Dragon Throne of Calastia to the greed-inspired plots of Phadalera's nobility. Below are a series of adventure hooks, divided into those best suited for before and after the rebirth. A sidebar should guide GMs and groups on how to navigate this critical juncture in high elven history, so that starting forsaken or restored will be simple to execute.

Seeds Before the Rebirth

The following are some ideas for adventures set prior to the return of Jandaveos.

An Elder's Death: An elder elven relative dies under mysterious circumstances and bequeaths to you a potent family treasure. It is said to hold the key to a vault, buried within one of the ruined temples in the countryside. Even before you have time to mourn, the treasure vanishes. Was the death truly Chern's curse, or was it something even more sinister?

Ill-Gotten Goods: Just your luck. Your mercenary band has been hired to oversee and guard a shipment of slaves to the elves. Do you go through with it, or are there some things gold just can't buy?

A good way to make this hook compelling and personal is to assume the role of a soon-to-be-slave NPC and make him someone your characters would gravitate to. Perhaps it is a child who is about to be orphaned by this callous capture. Perhaps it is a young man or woman who reminds one of the PCs of her brother or sister. Perhaps it is an older prisoner who reminds someone of his parent. Or perhaps it is an old friend. In any case, by forcing the characters to empa-

thize on a personal level with a slave, you can plunge your group more deeply into the troubling morality of the forsaken elves.

(No) Justice of the Forsaken: You (a forsaken elf) hear word from your home village that one of your old childhood friends is to be executed for desertion. Do you stand by your friend in his time of need, or do you toe the line set by the elders?

A simple variant to this hook involves the same set-up, except that the character's friend/relative has been convicted of a crime in a non-elfen land. This is a demanding variation which deals with the horrible prejudice many forsaken elves face in foreign nations.

Secrets None Must Have: The yuan-ti (or is it the slitheren, or the undead?) have set up shop in an abandoned elven fortress. Now they've unlocked its vaults and are readying to reap of its treasures. You must clear them out before they gain any more power.

This is a quick and fun "standard" hook, complete with dungeons, clear villains and bountiful treasure. It is best suited for an elf-heavy team. Play up the number of racially specific powers and treasures in the fortress. This gives your elven party the edge it needs and

Using the Rebirth

The Rebirth of Jandaveos is a pivotal nexus on the road of elven history (and even the history of Scarn). This could just as easily mean that it is an impassable boulder that blocks your stories, or an overbearing signpost that overshadows everything. This does not have to be.

Here are some ideas on how to play around and with the Rebirth. Time, after all, stands still for no one. Ride the tide, and enjoy!

As a Preamble

Every high elf currently alive (except perhaps those in the Citadel of the Rose) can remember a time when, not so long ago, they were still the forsaken elves. Using the pre-Rebirth material to set a preamble to a modern-day campaign will give players many opportunities to develop their characters and understand the historical basis for their psyches.

We Were There

As with every milestone, the "big story" is never the complete story. Rather than having the Rebirth "just happen," involve your troupe in some way. Perhaps they aided Vladawen recover some key artifact, or fought off a party of titanspawn that would have killed the elven priest and his allies. Perhaps they sat in the gallery of Hollowfaust and by their sound counsel convinced the ambivalent necromancers to support Vladawen's ventures. Or maybe they were guards in Burok Torn, in charge of guarding the elf's party from assassins. See the **Dead God Trilogy** for ideas.

A Dark Alternative

What if Vladawen had failed in his mission and Jandaveos remained dead? The elves would have remained forsaken, and all would be as it was in 150 AV — dark, dank and bereft of hope.

Though Jandaveos does return in the canonical storyline, as a troupe you can decide that he does not. Another alternative is to delay the resurrection of Jandaveos. You can continue using the forsaken elves as they were until you feel it is time to bring their god back into the fray. This lends itself well to the "We Were There" option.

presents the PCs with unique treasures that simultaneously teach them of their heritage.

Something Evil This Way Comes: A demon enters the forsaken realms after a particularly violent magical storm. At first it seems merely mindless in its destruction, but after certain magi towers are attacked while others are spared, you begin to wonder if its appearance was more than an accident.

Though time-consuming, this arc, if well developed, makes an excellent way for Kasiavaen characters to play an important preamble. Your group will have a chance to participate in the events that lead to the coming of the Shining Horde.

The Messenger's Warning: You come upon an elven messenger, badly injured and dying. With his last breath he speaks of an impending charduni attack and hands you a small parcel containing the proof and information. Can your party complete his mission in time? Or will you succumb to the charduni hunters sent to stop you?

Seeds After the Rebirth

The following are some ideas for adventures set after the return of Jandaveos.

Disaster on the Marvalay: The high elven galleon *Marvalay* has gone missing in the Cerulean Ocean. Its last message stated the ship had suffered damage from an unknown source and that repairs were underway on the sails. No word has been heard from them for nearly three days now. You, among others, have been charged with finding and, if possible, rescuing the ship.

Though easily run as a standard adventure, those of you with a taste for horror can easily exploit the unknown nature of the hook. Finding the remains of the elven galleon in tatters and splattered with blood will quickly set the mood. This is especially true if the *Marvalay* sits derelict in a perpetually overcast dead zone, where no ocean currents and infinitely black waters make it seem as though time itself has stopped.

Mad Pilgrim in the Song Glade: A pilgrim to the Zenith Tree goes berserk and stabs an enchanted dagger into it. To everyone's horror, the tree begins to sicken. You must find where this madman acquired his weapon and find a way to save the tree before it is too late.

An alternate version of this hook reveals the "madman" as an agent of the Charduni Empire (or Calastia, Dunahnae, Dier Drendal, Glivid Autel or any number of factions that now have reason to bear ill will against the high elves).

If the madman is truly a madman, driven by visions or simply failing age, you may wish to consider playing up the sympathetic nature of this character. This lends itself to some interesting challenges, as wild elf commandos will certainly be tracking him down to slay him. If the characters are made to think he is innocent (but criminally senile), they will have to try

convincing the feral elves, and fight them in a nonlethal fashion if conflict erupts.

The Novitiates and the Plaguelands: A small band of novitiates from the Divine Theocracy, accompanied by vigilants and Hollowfaust necromancers, entered the Plaguelands and failed to return. You're part of the rescue effort, assuming anything is left to rescue.

Due to his somewhat frequent sojourns to the Plaguelands, this hook is a good way to introduce the characters to the signature NPC Vladawen. Remember, Vladawen is ungodly experienced but lacks masses of magical equipment and support. Therefore, the characters can (and should) feel pivotal to the former high priest's mission(s) and may even play a role in keeping him alive.

The Veshian Ambassador: The Veshian emissary to Manaetae seems to have become a little too cozy in her new surroundings. She now dresses more evocatively than your average pleasure worker in Shelzar, and she's even propositioned a few high elves in recent days. You've been assigned to put her back on track and figure out what in blazes has made her this way.

Which of These Dwarves Does Not Belong?: The magistracy has become aware of a spy within Anchoer. Masquerading as a worker from Burok Torn, this dwarf is in fact a charduni agent. The high elves are at a loss after several magistrates sent to investigate have ended up dead or missing. They've called upon you to solve the case.

You can easily modify this hook so that it takes place in any major elven city. It is an excellent way to introduce your party to a particular location, and a fast and easy method for them to gain allies and contacts (assuming, of course, that they succeed). Also, if you play the quest to find the charduni agent as a protracted campaign, you can spin this hook into a Sherlock Holmes-style set of adventures, with the charduni playing the part of Moriarty. The advantage of this is that it allows you to run wild with just one location, introducing characters to play their roles in each self-contained vignette.

As the target is charduni, he may well try to escape back to the Charduni Empire with the knowledge he has stolen. Assuming he is successful in crossing the border, this gives the party a good reason to enter the dreaded home of the dark dwarves, and an instant hook into adventures set there.

Adventures in the Land of Chains

Similar to the elven realms, the Land of Chains is also in ferment in the wake of the elf-god's return, but unlike their rivals to the north, the charduni dislike chaos and disruption and so tend to keep such distractions well hidden. The following adventures can take place in the Land of Chains either before or after

Jandaveos' return. Some are appropriate to bands of outsiders sneaking into the empire, while others — as noted — are suitable to groups of charduni characters.

Scouting the Frontiers: The elves of the Shield Realm are concerned. Charduni forces have been building up along the frontier recently, and they need to know if this presages a new invasion. A force of elves entering the Land of Chains is likely to attract unwanted attention, so the adventurers are recruited to surreptitiously scout out the charduni build-up and report back. The party can do this in several ways—dwarves can disguise themselves as charduni, and the other party members as slaves, for example — but the charduni are especially vigilant now. Several reasons can exist for the military build-up — a slave revolt, extradimensional invasion, normal army maneuvers or even preparation for a full-scale invasion — but regardless of their motivation, the charduni will not take kindly to the intrusion.

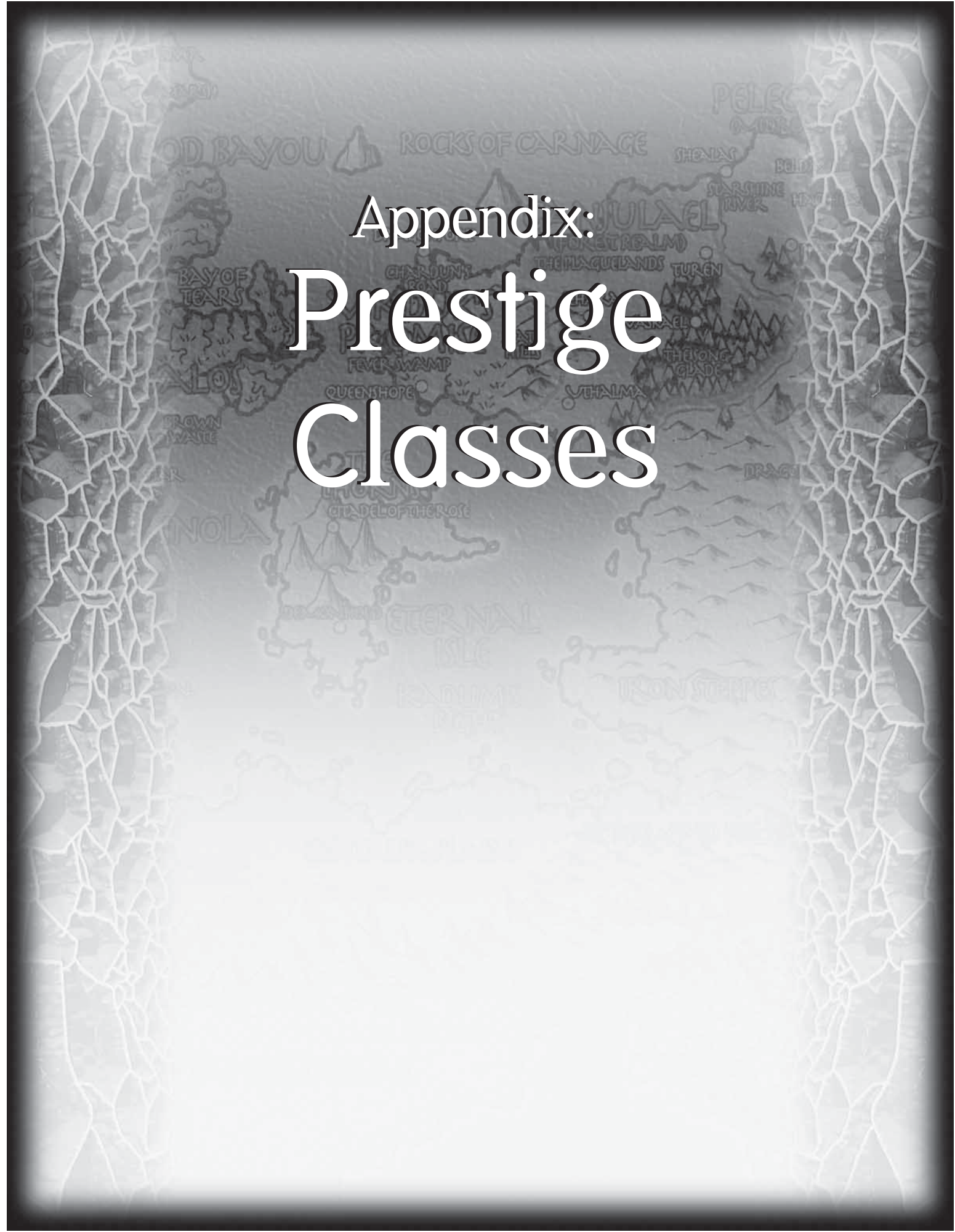
Liberators: A group of would-be liberators — the Tanilists, the Sisters of the Sun or another bunch of do-gooders — wishes to enter the Land of Chains and free some of the charduni's desperate slaves. They ask the party to aid in the attack, providing back-up and assisting in the assault or diversionary activities. Player characters may be motivated by the charduni loot that they might obtain, by a basic desire to do good or to liberate a friend, comrade or fellow character who has been enslaved by the charduni. This may also give adventurers a chance to meet the odd once-charduni — dark dwarves who have been rejected and enslaved by their own culture and are now able to select their own alignment and faith. Meeting a lawful good charduni among the liberated slaves is a priceless roleplaying opportunity.

The Mines Erupt: The Mines remain one of the most mysterious and frightening lands in all of the Charduni Empire. The characters may be freelance

adventurers investigating the Mines, or they may be a group of charduni sent to check out a disturbance there that the wizards who control it cannot fully investigate. In either case, the party is caught unawares when the Mines come alive, mutating the slaves and creatures that dwell there. If actually in the Mines when the disaster happens, the characters must avoid the mutating effects of the place and escape; if outside the Mines, they must contend with a sudden explosion of mutated creatures. In either case, the characters will have their hands full in escaping from the area.

Slave Raid: The charduni frequently send armed parties outside their borders to capture new slaves. Such a party usually consists of several heavily armed charduni warriors, some spellcasters and a body of overseer wolves, and it descends on poorly defended villages or nomad camps. Characters involved in this action may be young charduni out to prove themselves, or an adventuring party caught in the struggle as charduni slavers appear hoping to drag off defenseless victims. In the latter case, the raiders may get more than they bargained for when the adventurers decide to defend themselves.

Into the Jungle: The ancient and proud charduni of Aardunnus District sometimes exhibit a streak of independence that many charduni consider unbecoming. In this case, a charduni noble has heard a rumor of an ancient artifact linked to Chardun hidden somewhere in the Gamulganjus jungle to the south. As he does not wish to draw undue attention to himself or his family, the nobleman hires outsiders or young untested charduni to aid in an expedition down the Wall of Clouds and into the treacherous reaches of the southern jungle. Unfortunately, several other groups — most notably the elves — have heard of the artifact's existence as well and have sent their own parties of adventurers to retrieve or destroy it rather than let it fall into the charduni's hands.



Appendix:
Prestige
Classes

Constellation Weaver (Tattuodaren)

High elven dress has long been known for its daedal designs. Even during the forsaken age, such motifs instantly distinguished the elves as people of learned wealth, a distinction which often earned them unwanted attention when venturing abroad. Less known is the magical tradition underlying the art of elven weaving (*aryn*) and the modern practitioners of it, the *tattuodaren*, or "weavers of constellations."

Elven magicians have been incorporating designs and imagery into their spells for millennia. Indeed, elven lore credits the Therathosian magus Protea with the initial precepts of pattern magic. The accounts go on to tell of how Protea perfected her theories with the help of Lok-I, creating a feud between himself and Kasia, who (due to her chaotic nature) found the entire notion appalling. Kasia was said to have gone so far as to curse Protea and all those who would dare follow in her "foolish" methods, though it is widely accepted that the red dragon princess withdrew her malediction. Over time, the Precepts of Protea grew in popularity, leading eventually (as high elf history claims) to the creation of tattoo magic, and the creation of spells with somatic components. The modern descendants of Protea's craft are constellation weavers.

Tattuodaren are mixtures of crafters and magic users. They are universally adroit at creating the enchanted embroidery once so famous to the former Skysight realm. Their advanced techniques link into the tattoo magic of Vera-Tre and Dier Drendal. As a rule, however, high elves refrain from inscribing imagery of any kind on their bodies (the major exception being the Ganjuleosian still-forsaken), preferring instead to work image magic through proxies (such as clothing). Besides, the canvas of the body can only hold so much, a restriction the art-loving high elves find intolerable.

Hit Die: d4

Requirements

To qualify to become a constellation weaver, a character must fulfill all the following criteria:

Race: Any elf or half-elf

Feats: Craft Wondrous Item

Skills: Craft (any) 9 ranks, Knowledge (arcana) 9 ranks

Special: In order to advance to the 5th level and beyond in this prestige class, a character must addi-

tionally possess the Inscribe Magical Tattoo feat and Craft (tattoo) at 9 ranks or more.

Class Skills

The constellation weaver's class skills (and the primary ability for each) are Appraise (Int), Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Knowledge (arcana), Spellcraft (Int) and Survival (Wis).



Skill Points at Each Level: 2 + Int modifier

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the constellation weaver prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Constellation weavers gain no new proficiency with weapons or armor.

Spells per Day: Constellation weavers continue to advance in spellcasting ability. When a new constellation weaver level is gained, the character gains new spells per day as if she had also gained a level in a spellcasting class she belonged to before she added the prestige class. She does not, however, gain any other benefit a character of that class would have gained. Essentially, she adds the level of constellation weaver to the level of some other spellcasting class she has, then determines spells per day and caster level accordingly. If the character had more than one spellcasting class before she became a constellation weaver, she must decide to which class she adds each level of constellation weaver when she gains the new level.

Mastery of Forms: Basic to the constellation weaver's abilities is the use of patterns and designs to enhance somatic magic. At 1st level, she may cover the surface of a magic item with intricate designs, allowing it to function as though it were at +1 caster level. This effective caster level bonus increases by an additional +1 for every two levels in this prestige class. Patterns and emblems the constellation weaver creates with her prestige class ability automatically benefit from her mastery of forms.

Mark the Cloth: At 1st level, the constellation weaver learns to work her image magic upon nonliving, inanimate targets. When crafting a wondrous item, she can convert it into a pattern rather than fashioning it in its standard

form. The pattern must be imprinted, carved, woven or otherwise copied onto an item, which must be of at least masterwork quality and cannot be alive or animate (though it can be an intelligent item). The market price for the "wondrous pattern" is double that of the original wondrous item, as are the attendant creation costs in time, resources and xp. The pattern covers 1 square inch per level of spell in the original wondrous item's creation prerequisites. The effects and activation of the wondrous pattern are unchanged from those of the original wondrous item. If the effect is dependent on the shape of the original item, an appropriate facsimile made of glowing, mystical energy leaps forth from the pattern when activated.

Essentially, this allows the weaver to create wondrous items that are embroidered on clothing, placed on other mundane items, etc. As such, the newly created wondrous item does not take up an equipment location, leaving the bearer free to carry other items. This ability has a limitation, however — the total caster levels for all the items carried by an individual can be no more than twice the character level of the bearer. A 12th-level character, for example, can bear no more than 24 total caster levels of items created when using the mark the cloth ability. This is a supernatural ability.

Emblems of Magic: At 4th level, the constellation weaver learns to create patterns that replace the need for somatic components. She chooses a spell she wishes to cast more easily and fashions a pattern (the emblem) onto a nonliving, inanimate item (usually clothing, though jewelry, hilts of swords and even musical instruments are not uncommon). This requires a minimum of 5 minutes per level of the spell (though certain media, such as stone carving, should take longer), followed by a Craft (as

Table A-1: Constellation Weaver (Cww)

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Spells per Day
1st	+0	+0	+0	+2	Mark the Cloth, Mastery of Forms +1	+1 level of existing class
2nd	+1	+0	+0	+3		+1 level of existing class
3rd	+1	+1	+1	+3	Mastery of Forms +2	+1 level of existing class
4th	+2	+1	+1	+4	Emblems of Magic	+1 level of existing class
5th	+2	+1	+1	+4	Mastery of Forms +3	+1 level of existing class
6th	+3	+2	+2	+5		+1 level of existing class
7th	+3	+2	+2	+5	Mark the Flesh, Mastery of Forms + 4	+1 level of existing class
8th	+4	+2	+2	+6		+1 level of existing class
9th	+4	+3	+3	+6	Mastery of Forms +5	+1 level of existing class
10th	+5	+3	+3	+7	Emblems of the Earth Mother	+1 level of existing class

appropriate) check, DC 15 + the level of the spell. If successful, the emblem now contains the somatic component of the spell. As long as the constellation weaver is wearing or holding the item carrying the emblem, she can automatically cast the chosen spell as though it were enhanced by the Still Spell feat. Creating the emblem and the emblems themselves are supernatural abilities.

Mark the Flesh: At 7th level, the constellation weaver learns to work her image magic upon the living and animate. She can now impart her wondrous patterns on living or animate targets. This causes the target to permanently lose a number of hit points equal to the combined level of the spells in the item's creation prerequisites.

Emblems of the Earth Mother: This ability's allusion to Denev is in reference to the belief by some that the Earth Mother is Scarn. This is because this ability allows the constellation

weaver to search for mystical emblems extant to the world, wielding them as though they were spells, tattoos or wondrous items. Such emblems are everywhere, and weavers have been known to summon their power from the scattering of leaves, the crests of waves, even the wrinkles on the skin of their enemies.

At 10th level, the constellation weaver may attempt a Spot or Search check at DC 20 + the level of the desired spell. She may even attempt to find the emblem for a spell that she does not know, though doing so increases the DC by +10.

If successful, she may lose a number of hit points equal to the level of the spell to cast it as normal. This requires no preparation and does not count toward the number of spells the character can cast per day. For the duration of the spell, the items forming the emblem flare with mystical energy, brightly enough to illuminate a small room and visible for 100 feet for every level of the spell.

Divine Archer

Elven clerics of old were no less masters of the bow than their more secular kin and learned over the millennia to enhance their prowess with holy might. They first made their appearance alongside Jandaveos, who taught the elves the art of divine archery so that they might better protect the newly built Citadel of the Rose. Today most divine archers serve under the Divine Theocracy, though a few are directly beholden to the elven god.

A divine archer learns to channel divine energy through his bow, using it as both a focus and a conduit for his spells. Divine archers are particularly feared by the undead and other scions of the unholy.

Hit Die: d10

Requirements

To qualify as a divine archer a character must fulfill all the following criteria:

Race: Elf or half-elf

Alignment: Any non-evil

Base Attack Bonus: +6

Feats: Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Weapon Focus (any bow other than a crossbow)

Special: Ability to cast divine spells

Class Skills

The divine archer's class skills (and the primary ability for each) are Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Knowledge (religion) (Int), Listen (Wis), Sense Motive (Wis), Spellcraft (Int) and Spot (Wis).

Skill Points at Each Level: 4 + Int modifier

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the divine archer prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Divine archers are proficient with simple and martial weapons, and light and medium armor.

Divine Bow (Ex): At 1st level, the divine archer deals an additional +1d6 points of holy damage when attacking with a bow. He deals an additional +1d6 points of holy damage for every two additional levels in this prestige class. This holy damage affects only evil creatures. This is an exceptional ability.

Also, any non-evil bow can now serve as a divine focus for the archer's divine spells.

Archers' Benediction (Sp): At 2nd level, once per day, the divine archer can impart his arrows with a prepared area affect spell from his cleric spell list, even those that

can normally only be centered on himself. The spell's effect becomes centered on where the arrow strikes and uses the bow's range rather than its normal range. Casting and shooting the arrow is a standard action, and the arrow must be shot on the round it receives the benediction or the spell is lost. This is a spell-like ability.

Spare Innocence (Sp): At 4th level, the divine archer subconsciously guides his attacks with his faith, and his divine bow will not harm those he wishes to spare. Any time the divine archer strikes a non-evil target with an arrow, he may choose, as a free action, to have the attack deal subdual damage or be negated altogether. This is a spell-like ability.

Healing Arrow (Sp): At 6th level, the divine archer can target his healing spells

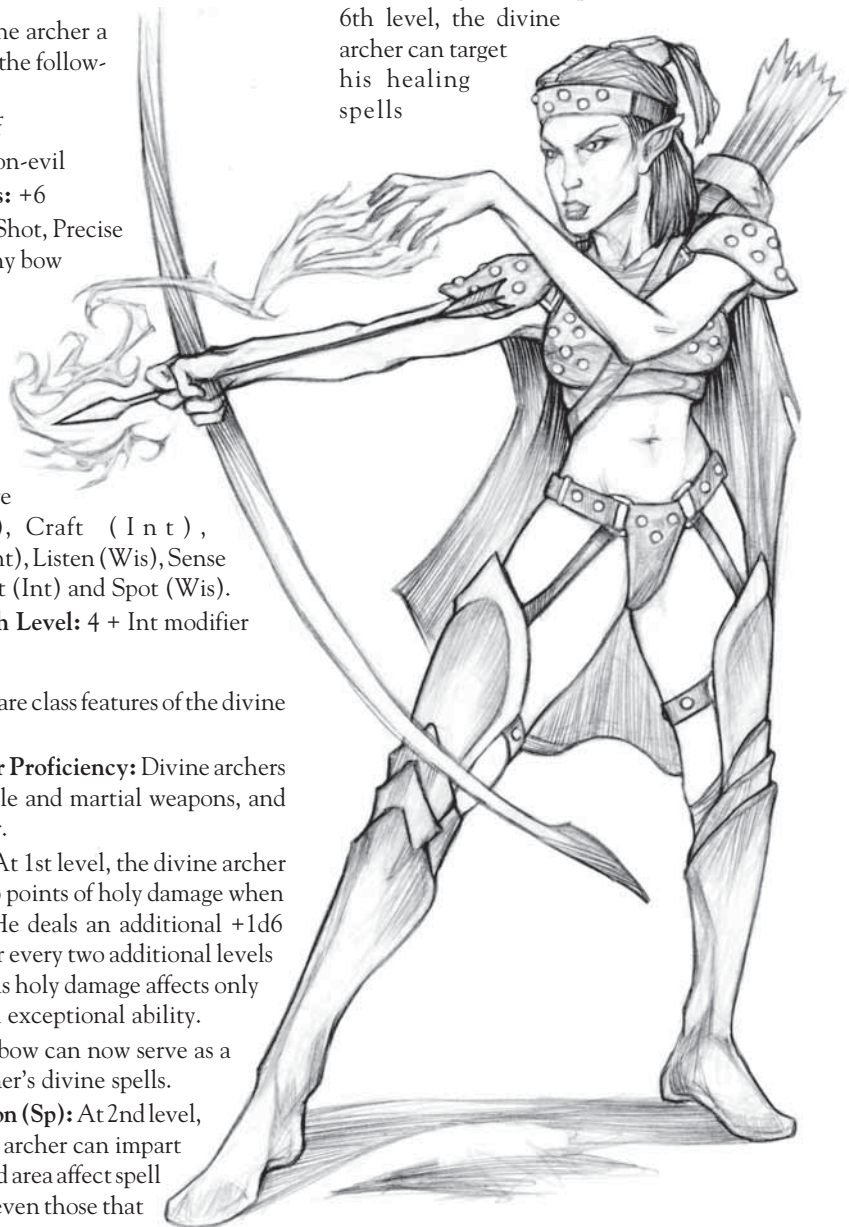


Table A–2: Divine Archer (Dva)

Class Level	Base				Special
	Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	
1st	+1	+2	+2	+0	Divine Bow +1d6
2nd	+2	+3	+3	+0	Archers' Benediction
3rd	+3	+3	+3	+1	Divine Bow +2d6
4th	+4	+4	+4	+1	Spare Innocence
5th	+5	+4	+4	+1	Divine Bow +3d6
6th	+6	+5	+5	+2	Healing Arrow
7th	+7	+5	+5	+2	Divine Bow +4d6
8th	+8	+6	+6	+2	Holy Arrow
9th	+9	+6	+6	+3	Divine Bow +5d6
10th	+10	+7	+7	+3	Arrow of Life

using his bow. Similar to archers' benediction, the healing spell is triggered when the arrow strikes its target; the arrow deals no damage. Casting and shooting the arrow is a standard action, and the arrow must be shot on the round it receives the benediction or the spell is lost. This is a spell-like ability.

Holy Arrow (Sp): At 8th level, once per day, the divine archer can summon into being an arrow forged from his faith. The conjuration requires a standard action after which a glowing arrow appears knocked on his bow. This arrow deals no damage and instead *heals* its target. Every round thereafter, and for a number of rounds equal to the archer's level in this prestige class, the target receives a *cure light wounds* spell. Both effects are as per the spell cast by a cleric of level equal to the divine archer's character level. This is a spell-like ability.

Arrow of Life (Sp): At 10th level, the divine archer can create a potent arrow which has the ability to restore the dead to life. The creation of the arrow consumes 5,000 gp worth of sanctified components and requires a day of work. The arrow remains empowered for a year and a day and functions only for its creator. A divine archer can have only one arrow of life at any time.

If placed in the hand of a dead body, the arrow disintegrates in a flash of warm light and the target is restored to life. Alternatively, the arrow can be shot at any undead. If the arrow wounds the target, it must succeed on a DC 20 Fort save or be restored to life instantly. If the undead had no life before its profane existence, it is instead destroyed. The arrow's resurrection magic cannot affect a target which has been dead for more than 10 years.

Ramrider

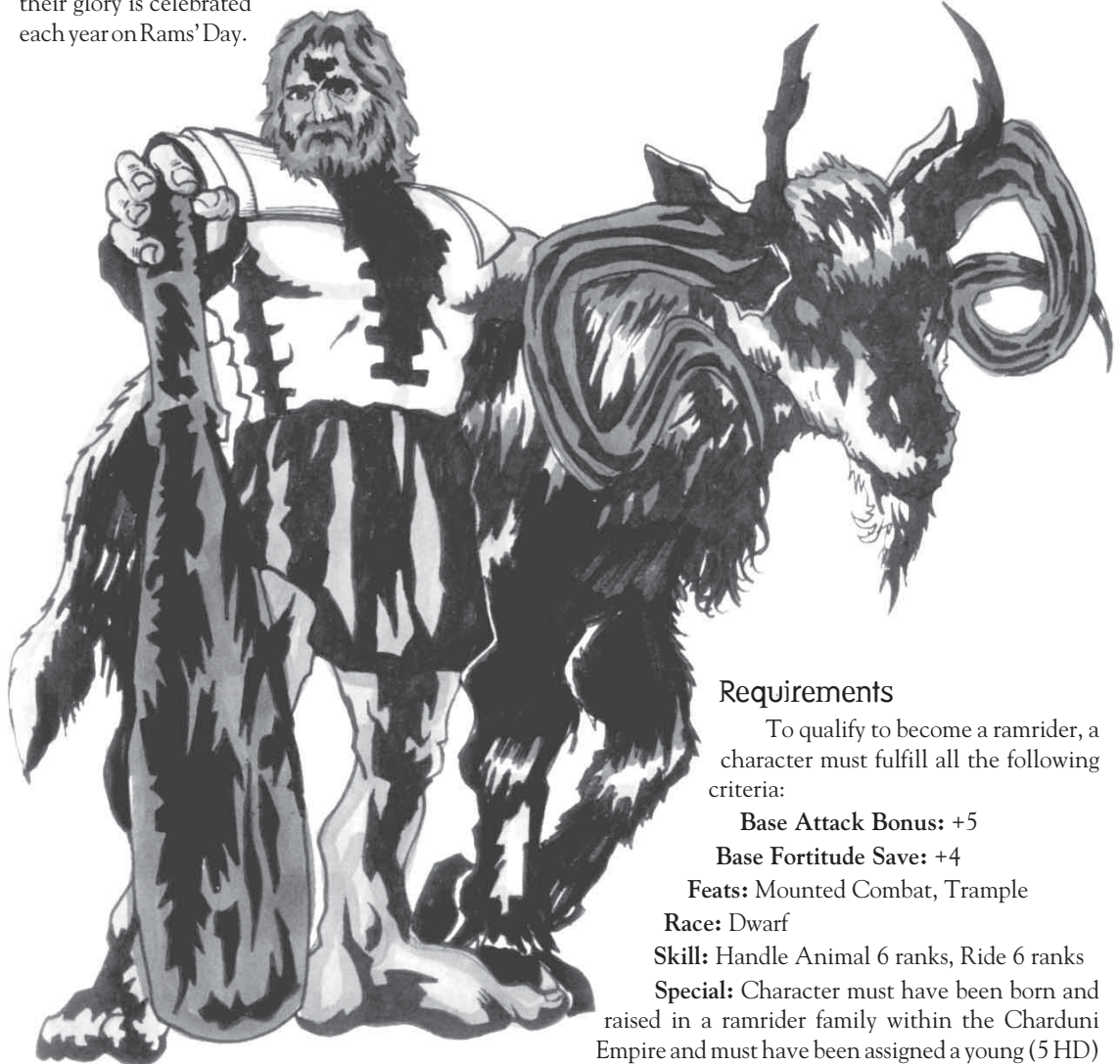
A relatively new addition to the ranks of the charduni army, the ramrider cavalry was first created by Chardun during the Divine War. According to the histories of the period, the charduni were at one point drawn into a fierce pitched battle with a horde of goblins mounted on fierce worgs. Surprised by the strength of the goblins' resistance, the charduni found themselves taking heavy losses, until they called upon Chardun for aid and guidance.

Legend holds that a great charduni hero known as the Ram told Chardun that if the dark dwarves were granted mounts they would route the goblins immediately. Since the Ram offered to carry his brother soldiers on his own back, Chardun transformed him into the first charduni battle ram and honored the bravest among the charduni by transforming them into battle rams as well. Those charduni who volunteered to ride the rams were magically bonded to their mounts and the goblins were soon routed. The ramriders became the most honored warriors of the empire, and their glory is celebrated each year on Rams' Day.

Today's ramriders remain the elite of the charduni military and engage in surprisingly unorthodox behavior. They are devoted to Chardun and loyal to the One in White, but the bond between ram and rider is a deeper and truer love than most charduni ever allow themselves to feel for anyone, even their own children. In spite of this deviation from the charduni norm, it cannot be denied that they are of inestimable value on the field of battle, and the weakened post-Divine War charduni armies would be almost utterly lost without the aid of the courageous ramrider cavalry.

Ramrider status is hereditary — most start out as fighters and if they are found worthy are allowed to join the ranks of the riders. Those who fail to live up to the ramriders' high standards are nevertheless allowed to continue in the charduni military, but as ordinary warriors.

Hit Die: d10



Requirements

To qualify to become a ramrider, a character must fulfill all the following criteria:

Base Attack Bonus: +5

Base Fortitude Save: +4

Feats: Mounted Combat, Trample

Race: Dwarf

Skill: Handle Animal 6 ranks, Ride 6 ranks

Special: Character must have been born and raised in a ramrider family within the Charduni Empire and must have been assigned a young (5 HD)

charduni battle ram (see **Creature Collection III: Savage Bestiary**) as a mount.

Class Skills

The ramrider's class skills (and the primary ability for each) are Climb (Str), Craft (Int), Handle Animal (Cha), Jump (Str), Ride (Dex) and Tumble (Dex).

Skill Points at Each Level: 2 + Int modifier

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the ramrider prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Ramriders are proficient with all simple and martial weapons, all armor and shields.

Bonus Feats: At 1st, 3rd, 5th, 7th and 9th levels, a ramrider receives specified bonus feats. If a ramrider character already has one of the feats listed, the player may instead choose any bonus feat from the standard list of bonus feats for fighters.

Mount Bond (Su): Beginning at 1st level, a ramrider develops a supernatural bond with her chosen battle ram. She is able, at will, to sense the general direction and distance of her ram for up to 3 miles and is always able to communicate her own general location to her ram for up to 3 miles. Similarly, over the same distance, ram and rider are always aware of one another's general state of health (*i.e.*, lightly, moderately or badly wounded, sick, fatigued, near unconsciousness or simply healthy). Both ram and rider know instantly if the other has died.

A ramrider can bond with only a single ram in her lifetime, so if a mount dies, the ramrider effectively loses this ability and all other abilities based on this bond.

Mount Link (Su): At 2nd level, a ramrider's link to her mount grows stronger and duplicates a druid's Link ability. The rider can handle her ram as a free

action or push it as a move action. The ramrider gains a +4 circumstance bonus to all Handle Animal checks made regarding her battle ram.

Ram Advancement: All charduni battle rams begin their fighting careers with 5 Hit Dice. At 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 6th, 8th and 9th levels, a ramrider's extensive experience and training act to improve her ram's abilities as well. At each of the levels listed, a ramrider's bonded ram gains one Hit Die.

Rider's Intuition (Ex): At 2nd level, a ramrider becomes so attuned to her mount's every move that she receives a +10 bonus to every Ride check made while riding her bonded battle ram.

Life Share (Su): By the time a ramrider reaches 6th level, she is so closely bonded to her ram that she and her mount are able to share one another's pain. Three times per day, a bonded battle ram and ramrider are able to redistribute wounds between themselves in order to maintain maximum combat efficiency for the ram and rider team. Either ram or ramrider may lose up to half its current hit points and pass an equal number on to its partner. This ability is a standard action, and ram and rider must be within 100 feet of each other.

Summon Mount (Su): Once per week, a ramrider may magically summon her ram. As long as the ram is not imprisoned and is on the same plane as the ramrider, the ram will appear within 25 feet of the rider within 1d10 rounds, regardless of the intervening distance.

Healing Bond (Su): At 10th level, the bond between a ramrider and her battle ram is so profound that the bond itself has healing aspects. Once per day, a ramrider who is in direct physical contact with her ram may access these rejuvenating forces to actually cure wounds and allow both ram and rider to continue that much longer in their struggle against the enemy.

As a full round action, both dwarf and mount are affected as if by a *cure serious wounds* spell cast by a cleric of a level equal to the rider's ramrider class levels plus the mount's total HD.

Table A—3: Ramrider (Rrd)

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+1	+2	+2	+0	Mount Bond, Ride-By Attack bonus feat
2nd	+2	+3	+3	+0	Mount Link, ram 6 HD, Rider's Intuition
3rd	+3	+3	+3	+1	Mounted Archery bonus feat, ram 7 HD
4th	+4	+4	+4	+1	Ram 8 HD
5th	+5	+4	+4	+1	Spirited Charge bonus feat
6th	+6/+1	+5	+5	+2	Life Share, ram 9 HD
7th	+7/+2	+5	+5	+2	Weapon Focus (warscepter) bonus feat
8th	+8/+3	+6	+6	+2	Ram 10 HD, Summon Mount
9th	+9/+4	+6	+6	+3	Ram 11 HD, Weapon Specialization (warscepter) bonus feat
10th	+10/+5	+7	+7	+3	Healing Bond

White Fist

Legend has it that when Chardun first laid eyes on one of Corean's paladins, he was filled with jealous rage that his cousin should have such shining, powerful and devoted servants. Determined to steal and corrupt some for his own, Chardun eventually succeeded in turning one of Corean's proud defenders of justice and compassion to the cause of evil, creating the first blackguard. At first, Chardun was pleased with his blackguards, but soon jealousy once more grew in his heart.

It troubled the Great General that his blackguards were so inherently selfish. As evil knights, they served Chardun not out of duty or righteousness, but instead for their own ends. Corrupted paladins especially gave up all sense of duty and honor when they left Corean's service. Chardun felt that the blackguards were dedicated to self-glorification and not to him.

When Belsameth, after a quarrel with her lawful evil brother, began to make a sport of converting Chardun's blackguards to her own service and then learned how to empower her own blackguards without Chardun's aid, Chardun was enraged. Belsameth, delighted, taught her cousin Vangal to do the same, spawning several violent wars that ravaged the land in the days before the Divine War.

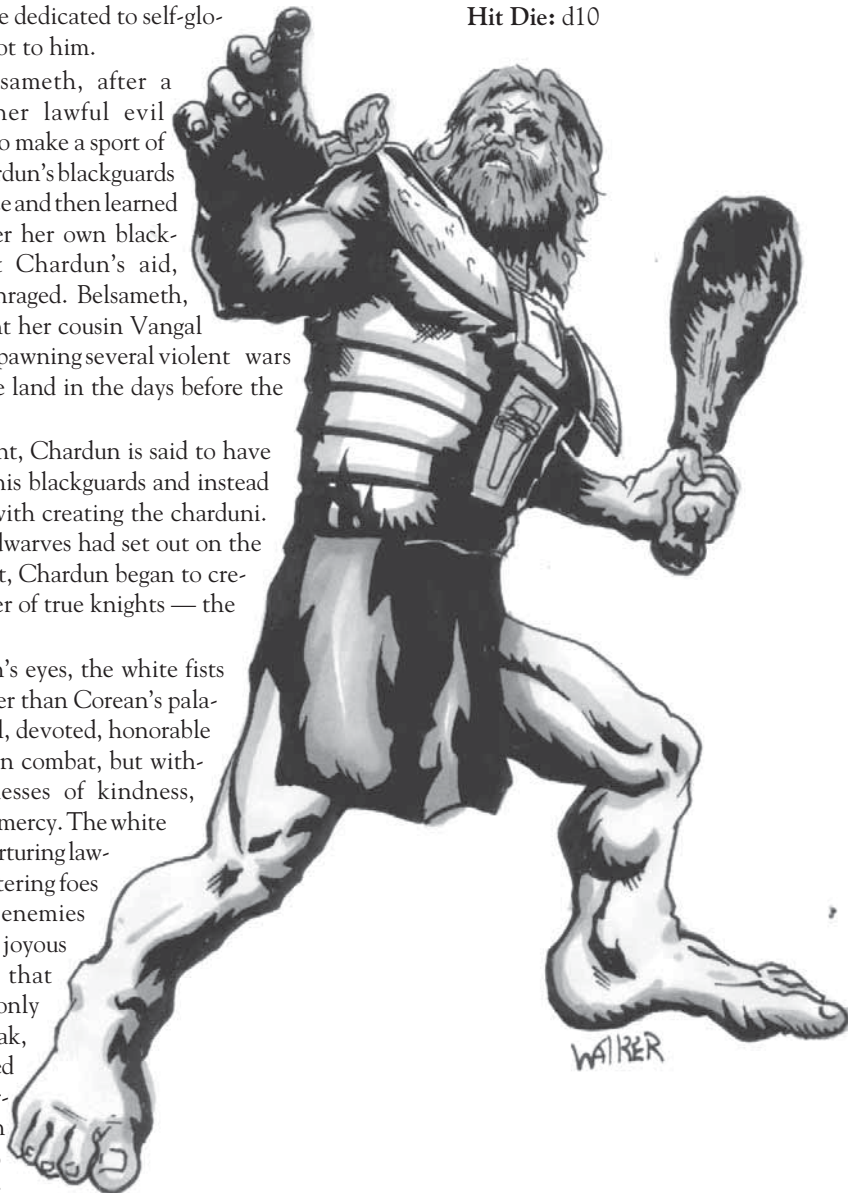
At this point, Chardun is said to have lost interest in his blackguards and instead busied himself with creating the charduni. Once the dark dwarves had set out on the road to conquest, Chardun began to create his own order of true knights — the White Fists.

In Chardun's eyes, the white fists were even greater than Corean's paladins — powerful, devoted, honorable and invincible in combat, but without the weaknesses of kindness, compassion and mercy. The white fists knew that torturing lawbreakers, slaughtering foes and enslaving enemies were noble and joyous activities, and that love and mercy only made people weak, lazy and distracted from more important pursuits such as devotion to their god. The

white fists flourished among the charduni and quickly became an integral part of their culture. Eventually the order began to spread all over Scarn, including Chardun-worshippers of many races and not only charduni.

Over time, Corean taught the goddess Madriel and the lawful neutral Hedrada to create paladins of their own. Soon, Chardun had reconsidered his attitude toward blackguards and as the charduni fell from his favor, he began to favor the human blackguards of Calastia and other lawful evil realms. Nevertheless, the white fists' devotion to their master has never wavered, and they continue to play an important role in the Charduni Empire, hoping one day to help their people regain their favored status in the eyes of the Great General.

Hit Die: d10



Requirements

To qualify to become a white fist, a character must fulfill all the following criteria:

Alignment: Lawful Evil

Race: Dwarf

Base Attack Bonus: +4

Skills: Knowledge (religion) 3 ranks

Feats: Cleave, Power Attack

Special: A white fist must swear to follow a strict code of conduct and never to perform a single chaotic act in his life. Deviation from this code will lead to a loss of all white fist prestige class special powers and abilities.

Class Skills

The white fist's class skills (and the primary ability for each) are Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Handle Animal (Cha), Heal (Wis), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (religion) (Int), Profession (Wis), and Ride (Dex).

Skill Points at Each Level: 2 + Int modifier.

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the white fist prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: White fists are proficient with all simple and martial weapons, all armor and shields.

Code of Conduct: A white fist must be of lawful evil alignment and loses all special class abilities if he ever willingly commits an act of chaos. Additionally, a white fist's code requires that he respect legitimate authority, act with honor (no lying or cheating, no use of poison, etc.), aid those who serve Chardun (provided they do not use the help for chaotic ends) and punish those who behave in a manner contrary to the teachings of Chardun.

Associates: While he may adventure with characters of any lawful or neutral alignment, a white fist will never knowingly associate with chaotic characters. A white fist will not continue an association with someone who consistently acts against the edicts of his patron, Chardun. This can sometimes even include good characters, as "rewarding" weakness with aid and succor is abhorrent in a white fist's worldview, and mercy is considered sinful. A white fist may only hire henchmen or accept followers who are lawful evil.

Spells per Day: White fists continue to advance in divine spellcasting ability. For every 2 new white fist levels gained, the character gains new spells per day as if he had also gained a level in a divine spellcasting class he belonged to before he added the prestige class. This essentially means that he adds 1/2 his levels of white fist (round down) to the level of some other divine spellcasting class the character has, then determines spells per day and caster level accordingly.

If a character had more than one divine spellcasting class before he became a white fist, he must decide to which class he adds each level of white fist for purposes of determining spells per day when he adds the new level. One half of a character's levels in this class (round down) do stack for the purpose of rebuking undead.

Chardun's Grace (Su): Chardun has always been of the opinion that might is right and that power should be rewarded with power, weakness with pain. For this reason, at 1st level the white fist gains a divine bonus to all saving throws that is equal to his Strength bonus. A Strength penalty does not subtract from the white fist's saving throws.

Table A—4: White Fist (Whf)

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Spells per Day
1st	+1	+2	+0	+0	Chardun's Grace, Chardun's Protection, <i>detect chaos</i> , Hands of Judgment	
2nd	+2	+3	+0	+0	Aura of Courage, Smite Chaos	+1 level of existing class
3rd	+3	+3	+1	+1	Extra Rebuking, Punish	
4th	+4	+4	+1	+1	—	+1 level of existing class
5th	+5	+4	+1	+1	Special mount	
6th	+6/+1	+5	+2	+2	Punish 2/week	+1 level of existing class
7th	+7/+2	+5	+2	+2	Mount advances in abilities	
8th	+8/+3	+6	+2	+2	Punish 3/week	+1 level of existing class
9th	+9/+4	+6	+3	+3	Mount advances in abilities	
10th	+10/+5	+7	+3	+3	Mount advances in abilities, punish 4/week	+1 level of existing class

Chardun's Protection (Su): At 1st level, Chardun's divine power wards his white fists from harm, granting them immunity to critical hits and sneak attacks. A critical hit or sneak attack scored against a white fist counts simply as a normal hit.

Detect Chaos (Sp): At will, at 1st level a white fist can *detect chaos* as a spell-like ability. This ability duplicates the effects of the spell *detect chaos*.

Hands of Judgment (Sp): Never a forgiving deity, Chardun has imbued his white fists with the power to punish wrongdoers with a simple touch of their hands. Beginning at 1st level, once per day, a white fist can make a touch attack that inflicts a number of hit points equal to his Strength bonus x his level. Alternatively, he can heal a like number of points in the same fashion as the paladin's *lay on hands* ability.

Aura of Courage (Su): Beginning at 2nd level, a white fist is immune to fear (magical or otherwise). Allies within 10 feet of the white fist gain a +4 morale bonus on saving throws against fear effects.

Smite Chaos (Su): Once per day, a white fist of 2nd level or higher may attempt to smite chaos with one normal melee attack. The white fist adds his Strength modifier in addition to his normal attack bonus (even if this means that he adds his Strength modifier twice) and deals 1 extra point of damage per total character level. If the white fist accidentally smites a creature that is not chaotic, the smite inflicts only normal damage but it is still used up for that day.

Extra Rebuking (Su): Much like the feat Extra Turning, this special white fist ability allows a white fist to rebuke undead four more times per day than normal. This ability is gained at 3rd level.

Punish (Sp): Beginning at 3rd level, a white fist may visit a grievous punishment on those he sees as wrongdoers. Once per week, with a successful touch attack, a white fist can make use of this dire special ability, granted by Chardun himself. If the touch attack succeeds, a white fist rolls on the following table:

Roll (d10)	Effect
1	Target is blind for 3d4 minutes.
2	Target is deafened for 2d4 days.
3	Target is paralyzed for 2d6 rounds.
4	Target suffers a loss of 2d8 hit points.
5	Target is mute for 2d10 days.
6	Target loses 1d4 points of Str, Dex or Con (white fist's choice) for 1d4 days.*
7	Target loses 1d4 points of Int, Wis or Cha (white fist's choice) for 1d4 days.*
8	Target is affected as if by a <i>fear</i> spell cast by a sorcerer of the same level as the white fist's total character level. No saving throw applies.
9	White fist's choice.
10	Roll twice, ignoring duplicates.

*Attribute in question cannot be reduced lower than 1. Lost attributes return to normal after the specified period.

The white fist can use this ability more often as he advances in levels. At levels 6, 8 and 10, he gains one additional use of the Punish ability per week. "Punishments" can be alleviated before the effects of the Punish ability wear off, through the use of any spell that would normally cure such ailments if they were nonmagical. Multiple punishments on a single target do not stack — if the white fist rolls the same effect twice, roll again until a different result is obtained.

Special Mount: Upon or after reaching 5th level, a white fist can call an unusually intelligent, strong and loyal steed to serve him in his crusade against chaos. This mount is usually a heavy warhorse (a charduni warhorse has the same statistics as normal but is shorter and broader, like the charduni themselves). Should the white fist's mount die, he may call another one after a year and a day. The new mount has all the accumulated abilities due a mount of the white fist's level.

A white fist's mount is identical in abilities and advancement to a paladin's mount (see *Player's Handbook*, paladin class description), with the following exceptions: A white fist's mount has eerie eyes that glow red in darkness; unless given direct orders not to, a white fist's mount will immediately attack anyone aside from its master who attempts to touch or handle it; and lastly, a white fist's mount advances in abilities when the white fist reaches levels 6, 9 and 10 (as opposed to a paladin's mount advancing when the paladin reaches levels 8, 11, and 15 — see the Paladin's Mount sidebar in the *Player's Handbook*).

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