

The Rising Dark

An Introduction to Agraphar
By Nicholas Torbin Bergquist

The Rising Dark: An Introduction to Agraphar

*A World of Grim and Gritty Survival Resting in the Shadow of Eternal Chaos
Compatible with the Swords & Wizardry Rules*



Written by Nicholas Bergquist; Published by Zodiac Gods Publishing. Copyright 2011 by Nicholas T. Bergquist, all rights reserved. Published under OGL 1.0a. Playtesters include Dima S. Drygas, Mark Coleman, Jody Bergquist, David Black and others, thanks for your input! Artwork features public domain artwork by Gustav Dore and others. Some art from the Cerberus Royalty Free Clip Art pack. Hand drawn maps by Nicholas Bergquist with apologies.

“Swords & Wizardry, S&W, and Mythmere Games are trademarks of Matthew J. Finch,” and Nicholas Bergquist and Zodiac Gods Publishing are not affiliated with Matthew J. Finch, Mythmere Games™, or Frog God Games.

Contents

I. Welcome to Agraphar	2
II. The Myths	3
III. The Gods	5
IV. Corruption	12
V. Languages	14
VI. Races of Agraphar	15
VII. Overview of the Land	20
VIII. Gazetteer of Aruthain	22
IX. The Doom of Zeremath	36
Map of Calithar Province	37
Encounters in Calithar	41
Map of Aruthain	46

What This Is

The Rising Dark: an Introduction to Agraphar is an experiment in creative setting design. The premise of this book is to provide a sandbox-style setting for use with the Swords & Wizardry Complete rule set and other old school fantasy systems. *The Rising Dark* is designed to serve as a useful guide and toolbox of plot ideas for game masters interested in a world and campaign environment that offers just enough detail to provide a useful backdrop to his or her adventures, but not so much detail that the setting proves overwhelming.

This volume looks at an overview of the world and its denizens, as well as a gazetteer in two parts: being the broad northwestern region of Tariach, and the more detailed northern province of Aruthain, as well as a variety of plot and encounter suggestions.

If you would like to see more material set in the world of Agraphar, write the author and let him know!

toribergquist@gmail.com

I. Introduction

Welcome to Agraphar, lands of ancient mysteries and buried secrets. The world of Agraphar is a fairly large place, although most of its civilized lands are centered on the island-continent of Tariach. The land is divided among a number of smaller kingdoms and city-states; long ago it was united under the banner of a great king, who is believed to have been deified after death, and after whom the world is named, but no great empire has arisen since that bygone era.

Agraphar is steeped in ancient magic which carries the legendary duality of corrupting chaos and calming order. Its gods are venerated and both feared and respected, but they are remote, and do not grant any special boons to followers usually. Anyone who seeks to can practice sorcery if they have their wits about them, but those who do sometimes go mad and are themselves corrupted in to foul beings of chaos.

Agraphar is also rooted to the mysterious Fey Lands, from which elves, faeries, Halflings and other kin hail. The Fey Lands are tethered to Agraphar like roots in soil, and some believe that this nebulous region gains something profound but unexplained from its connection to the mortal realm. The Fey Lands are also believed to be part of the greater domain of the Dream Time, a mysterious realm that all touch upon in sleep, a shadowy counterpart to creation itself. Strange and terrifying things as well as wonders unimagined sometimes seep from the Dream Time in to the mortal world of Agraphar.



II. The Myths

The Myth of Creation

In the proto-darkness of the old world, it is said that three ancient hags known as the **Sisters of Misery** gathered together to witness the creation that the mighty god **Ymaltar the Sun Fury** had wrought upon the perfect landscape of chaos. They were impressed at his power; many gods had stirred to life from the seething maelstrom of chaos, but he was the first to create anew. Ymaltar drew forth from the emptiness of the maelstrom and revealed a world, powerful and ancient, filled with magic. He seeded this world with living beings, and breathed life in to all. The Sisters who watched were intrigued; they reached out, and touched upon the world, creating tethers between it and their own realm, the Fey Lands of the Dream Time.

Then other gods rose from the formlessness of the void beyond the maelstrom and sought to destroy this living creation. They sought to rip it asunder, but Ymaltar called forth and filled the world with his first kin, the younger gods. The younger gods forged armies, creating the first entities of the world, including the seraphim, the dragons, and the elder lords. In turn, the chaos gods produced their armies, dark and malevolent, filled with demons and aberrations of madness.

The battles upon Agraphar lasted for eons, it is said. In this time mankind and other mortal races were but simple pawns, getting in the way of the fury of these primal forces. Eventually, though, these men and their kin rose to power, and became proficient at magic. They took sides, and like the celestial beings in the sky, they fought. It was when one man, the great king called Agraphar, arose that the tides turned. In one generation this man, who came to be called the One King, turned the tide against those who served chaos, and drove them deep beneath the earth. When Agraphar at last fell, it is said that the valkyries of the gods took him to the celestial kingdom and made him an immortal. There, his spirit was so mighty that just as the mortals of the world had at last driven the minions

of chaos underground, so too did Agraphar lead the charge in the celestial battle, to vanquish the armies of demons. Peace reigned at last, for a time.

This myth tale is known to most Agrapharians, who take the name for their lands from this legendary king, who is seen now as a lesser god in his own right. They still believe that he, and the many other gods, fight the good fight, insuring that the armies of chaos are put down, to keep madness and destruction at bay. They have plenty of evidence that this myth tale is rooted in truth; the world is littered with ancient ruins and fortresses devastated by eons-old wars, and the historians say that the man Agraphar was born five thousand years ago, a period in which many ancient documents record his deeds. If you find one of the many dungeons or caverns that wind deep in to the earth, vast armies of goblins, ogres, trolls and other more vile creatures lurk, dwelling in ancient communities, waiting for the time when they will have a champion who leads them against the light. Indeed, some scholars report that the underworld denizens are certain that it is only a matter of time before chaos gets its own True King.

Myths of Death and Undeath in Agraphar

The people of Agraphar believe that when you die, you either reincarnate if your soul has not yet advanced enough to ascend, or you are taken to one of two places. If you have led a good and virtuous life, you are ascended; valkyries of the heavens descend, and you are taken to the cosmic landscape of the Beyond, where the gods dwell, and you are cast in to the role of soldier in the never ending war between the light and chaos. Most often, a man who has proven himself a virtuous or determined soul who is a master of his craft is believed to ascend as such to the heavens. If, however, you are a vile and wicked person, and you revel in misery, then you are most likely cast down, dragged by the shadow demons of the underworld to the underworld below even the subterranean realms of Agraphar, where you are shaped in to one of the nameless demons of the horde of chaos, turned in to an undead being, or worse. A few wicked souls go willingly, and they are

often promoted, it is said, to sadistic roles as arch-demons and lords of undeath. Some people lose their way, or are so tangled with the affairs of their living self that they come back as ghosts and spirits to haunt the land; some demonic beings have powers so vile that they can cause this to happen to otherwise good souls, severing the celestial cords that bind the soul to the heavens of the afterlife.



The Myth of the Dragons

Dragons in Agraphar are said to have arrived early in the era of the war between Chaos and Order, during the untold eons before the birth of the True King. The dragons were led by the powerful draconian lord named Arikantos, and in these early ages it is said the dragons were mercenaries, playing to whichever side offered the greatest goods. The dragons, being true hoarders, coveted the powerful treasures and devices manufactured during the endless war, and used their strength and guile to acquire as much loot as possible.

In the end it is said that the dragons gave up all pretenses of neutrality and invaded the world from whatever foreign dimension they heralded from,

seeking to eliminate both sides of the ancient conflict. The dragon lords were put down after much battle, a period when, for curious moments, forces of both the light and dark were united against a common enemy.

Today, the dragon lords who survived that early era are said to lay slumbering, waiting for their strength to return, while their lesser kin and minions carry on the draconic traditions and wait for their time to come.

Speculation on the History behind the Myth

Some scholars, especially in the enlightened empire of Kalidante, have studied the pervasive myth tales that are commonly believed by most Agrapharites. They have surmised a few bits about the history surrounding these myths:

1. The myths clearly propagated during the reign of the True King; the ancient empire of Malidantos once united the whole world, and it is during this era that the commonality of stems from.
2. Whether the myths are allegorical or literal, it is a known fact that magic leads to corruption and possession if not practiced carefully. That alone proves that there appear to be demonic entities just itching for an excuse to enter our plane of existence, given the chance.
3. The gods seem to grant miraculous powers to their mortals, and shield them from the corruption (some do, anyway). This proves the existence of the gods, most feel.
4. A handful of scholars have bravely studied the planar realms, and spoken with outsiders, beings from those realms. They have learned that the conflict is clearly between "light and dark" or perhaps "order and chaos" but not necessarily good and evil, for beings like the devils are evil, but live an ordered society and oppose the actions of the demons.
5. Planar scholars have tried to communicate with powerful or long-lived outsiders. They have been given more riddles than answers about the myths of the great conflict, and the only certainty they have come to believe in is that whatever mankind thinks it knows about the lore of the gods and the age old



battle between light and dark, it is either only a tiny portion of the truth, or a gross misrepresentation of the facts. Those few scholars who have dared write about such outside of the ideologically open halls of Kalidante's universities are usually tried and hung by the priests of Ymaltar as heretics. So they avoid talking about it.

III. The Gods of Agraphar

Here are a few of the Gods of Agraphar; there are many more, including a bewildering variety of fierce and unusual deities unheard of throughout the many dimensions of the cosmos. Although the gods of order were part of the pantheon of the Young Gods formed by Ymaltar, many other entities which sprang from the primal chaos exist outside of the normal order, and more than a few have seeped their way in to the moral realm seeking worship.

Some gods (especially neutral gods) have special abilities that they grant their clerics. These abilities replace the normal Turn Undead ability clerics have. Other deities have religious cults that teach different weapon skills, or offer other unique benefits, described below. If a deity has no special notation on followers, its clerics are assumed to default to standard S&W class rules.

Agraphar, patron of warriors

Alignment: lawful

Profile: civilization, hope, strength, war

The legendary warrior-king who was elevated to the status of demigod in his time, Agraphar has remained the focus of worship among militants of all types, including warriors, paladins, rangers and more. The warrior cults are surprisingly selective in their higher order membership, and most of Agraphar's true temples are actually built in carefully constructed subterranean temples, often located beneath major military sites or under the location of famous battlefields.

Armacus, Lord of Battle

Alignment: neutral

Profile: strength, war, strife

Armacus is a god of strength and fury, and especially favored among fighting men of all creeds. His image is always depicted in gladiatorial circles throughout the lands of Agraphar, and many prayers are variously uttered in his name before a great battle. None know if Armacus is truly a god of the light or chaos, for it seems that both sides pray to him equally. His ceremonies usually involve wrestling angry bulls to the ground and snapping their necks, a task that usually leads to many deaths before the deed is done.

Clerics of Armacus: As one would imagine of a god of strength, clerics of this god must have a Strength and Wisdom of 13 or better to gain a +5% experience bonus. Clerics of this deity may use any weapons or armor without exclusion, as they train in battle as fighters do. Armacus does not grant the power to Turn Undead, however, and instead grants a unique boon: the *Strength of Armacus*. Once per day the cleric may call upon Armacus to enhance his own strength to 18 for one hour. If the cleric already has a Strength of 18, then this boon grants an additional +1 to damage and attacks (for a total of +2 damage and attacks, as they are still clerics and therefore do not gain the fighter Strength bonuses).

Balragda

Alignment: lawful

Profile: freedom, change, luck

Balragda, god of dance and ceremony, is a jovial god and favored by bards and skalds abroad. Most taverns seek his blessing with a small shrine, as do vineyards and brewers. Balragda is considered a benevolent deity, though he is also regarded as a fey god, and possibly is worshipped by satyrs and nymphs as well. Balragda is regarded by the Halflings as their patron deity.

Clerics of Balragda: Clerics of Balragda are rare but function as other clerics do, with one additional ability: once per day the cleric of Balragda may turn one pint of water per level of experience in to wine or another alcohol of choice.



Draesul, god of darkness and death

Alignment: neutral

Profile: darkness, earth, death, fate

Although many men of the surface world think that Draesul is one of the dark chaos gods, Draesul is in fact not a member of the destructive faction. The god of darkness is a mysterious being, a shepherd for the souls of men through the shadow realms, either to reincarnate or ascend, depending upon how they have fared in life.

Draesul dwells in eternal darkness and has no form or shape to speak of, existing only as shadow. His priests are almost without exception brooding and relentlessly morbid individuals.

Dymachas, Lord of the Darkness

Alignment: chaotic

Profile: arcana, darkness, strife

Dymachas is believed by the cult of Ylmatar to be the oppositional god, a dark instigator who drives the other gods of chaos and their demon hordes forth to do battle on the cosmic fields of war. Dymachas is said by the underworld to be a mysterious savior, one who promises to engulf the world in darkness and remake it in to a land more suited for his followers, the monsters of the darkness. Surprisingly, some humans, usually diabolists, also follow him, as they receive whispered promises of power in dark visions from this god.

Unsurprisingly many wizards seek the worship of Dymachas, realizing that there is great additional potential power in recognizing this deity. Other servants include clerics who feel they have been divinely inspired by Dymachas, as well as sorcerers.

Followers of Dymachas: Unsurprisingly many wizards seek the worship of Dymachas, realizing that there is great additional potential power in recognizing this deity. Magic users, who worship Dymachas may automatically succeed at one learning check to comprehend a new spell once per level of experience. Clerics of Dymachas do not gain Turn Undead, but instead gain the ability to cast *Fear* as per the magic user spell once per day at 1st level, twice per day at 4th level, three times per day at 8th level and four times per day at 12th level.

Enariko, The Pit Lord

Alignment: chaotic

Profile: torment, darkness, destruction

Enariko is believed to be a chaos god, and he is a vile, primal entity described in most imagery as appearing to look like a vast pit of burning tar that engulfs his enemies relentlessly. Many underworld tribes pray to Enariko for victory, and his shrines are noted for always having deep pits filled with burning pitch or tar in to which sacrifices are thrown. Though none can comprehend the minds of the slime lords, it is believed these underworld terrors fancy themselves direct offspring of the dreaded Enariko.

Clerics of Enariko: The chaotic priests of Enariko may summon demons in place of the Turn Undead ability. Once per day the cleric may perform this summoning; the effect lasts one minute per three levels of experience (so 1 minute through level 5, 2 minutes at level 6, 3 minutes at level 9, and so forth). He may initially summon 1 hit die demons, specifically a Manes, and may summon 1D4 hit dice worth of demons at level 5, then 1D8 hit dice worth of demons at level 9, and at level 13 may summon 1D10 hit dice worth of creatures. By level 17 he may summon 1D12 hit dice worth of demons.

When the cleric summons the demons, he must make a saving throw versus magic with a +2 bonus (the GM has the option to roll this in secret). If he fails, then at the end of the summoning period the demons are not immediately dismissed, instead remaining for 1D6 more minutes during which they turn on their summoner!

Example: Tharadan is a 7th level cleric of Enariko activates his summon demons ability. He can summon demons that last 2 minutes before being banished. He can summon 1D4 hit dice worth at level 6. He rolls a 4, and decides to summon one Manes (1 HD) and one Lemure (3 HD). The GM rolls against Tharadan's saving throw (9) applying his +2 save modifier against the control of the demons; he only needs a 7 or better and the GM rolls 14, so Tharadan retains control of his dark minions...this time!



Enom, the Dream Lord

Alignment: lawful

Profile: freedom, luck, moon

This enigmatic being dwells in the Dream Time, and is seen as a god by most elves and faeries. His missives in the dream realm are taken very seriously, and it is believed that he is opposed to the erosion of the walls between the Fae Lands and the mortal plane. Enom is regarded by human dreamers as a curious mystery, though a small cult dedicated to interpreting his strange missives has arisen in many cities of the Agraphar.

Clerics of Enom: Human and demihumans both worship this deity, seeking his guidance. Clerics of Enom do not get Turn Undead and instead gain the ability to perform Clairvoyance or Clairaudience once per day each at 1st level. At Fifth level they gain the ability to Contact other Plane as the spell once per week. At 10th level they may Contact other Plane twice per week. Elves may be clerics of Enom if the GM allows it, with no level limit to advancement (or level 10 limit if the GM prefers level caps, with level 11 for Wisdom 17 and level 12 max with Wisdom 18).

Etah the Traveller

Alignment: lawful

Profile: fate, protection, freedom, knowledge, creation

Etah is an enigmatic deity who claims to have come to this universe from other realms beyond existence, and that his is a spiritual harbinger of prophecy, foretelling of the doom of all beings if they do not rally; the priesthood of Etah travels the land, speaking their tales of doom, and of how countless other worlds before this one fell to chaos. Some of the wizards who follow this god have learned the mysteries of dimensional travel, and seek to understand the greater significance of the war with chaos on a grand scale across many dimensions. These wizards do, indeed claim to have seen worlds where chaos won, and are ever striving to find worlds where the light prevailed. The priests of Etah are often at odds with those of Ymaltar, for they

contend that existence extends beyond the current mortal plane, and that this plane of existence is not the first, which is in direct contradiction to the assertions of Ymaltar's cults that their deity was the first to create a mortal realm.

Clerics of Etah: The clerics of Etah function as normal clerics do (including gaining Turn Undead), but they add three wizard spells to their clerical spell list: Dimension Door (as level 3 spell), Passwall (as a level 4 spell), and Phase Door (as a level 6 spell to this cleric type).

Far'gronath

Alignment: chaotic

Profile: strength, tyranny, war

The god of giants, ogres and trolls in Agraphar is primarily worshipped by the beings he is patron to, as well as lesser races such as orcs and goblins who crave this deity's strength. Far'gronath is one of the lead chaos gods, and regarded as the source of strength that the chaos armies must pray to for victory.

Fazan'tyr, god of gnomes

Alignment: neutral

Profile: freedom, luck, earth, trickery

The fey god of gnomes is Fazan'tyr, an earth spirit and minor deity elevated to godhood by the unseelie king and queen. Gnomes revere this deity as a patron of both their own kind and many lesser fey races, and see him as protector of the hearth and home.

Most of Fazan'tyr's followers are gnomish druids, and his temples can be found deep in the woods, carefully set within sculpted trees and landscape such that it is almost impossible to find by non-fey.

Maca, the Mistress of Lost Spirits

Alignment: lawful

Profile: love, hope, life, creation

Maca is a benevolent goddess who is said to care for the sorrows of all, and seeks to alleviate the pain of those who have been caught between the worlds of death and life. Her followers are quiet but



dedicated priests who seek to destroy or lay undead to rest, and who preside over funerals and other events in which the bridge between life and death is breached.

Maligaunt, god of the undead

Alignment: chaotic

Profile: undeath, torment, vengeance

Lord of the undead, Maligaunt is an enigmatic being who is said to have been the first mortal of Agraphar to master the existence of undeath. Maligaunt seems to serve as a patron of the undead without any specific desire to do more than propagate his vile kind, and followers of Maligaunt tend to be sentient undead such as ghouls and wights, who seek to appease the dreaded god's dark will, which in turn allows them a moment's respite from the pain of undeath.

Mincordas, patron of sailors and the ocean

Alignment: neutral

Profile: sea, storms strength

Mincordas is a lesser god of the turbulent oceans and those who sail upon them, a deity who is most often represented in ports of call, with shrines and temples regularly frequented by sailors in search of the god's blessing. Most ships in the lands of Agraphar maintain shrines to this deity somewhere on deck, for good measure.

Nereza

Alignment: lawful

Profile: creation, protection, life

Nereza, goddess of women and childbirth, is a benevolent household goddess. Almost every home in the land can claim at least a small cubby hole or shrine where offerings are presented to the goddess for her blessing. The goddess is said to be served by small household spirits called Pechs, tiny gnomes who serve as her eyes and ears in the world.

Nereza's clerics function much as other clerics do, but they generally take a vow only to protect hearth and home, so meeting adventuring clerics in the service of Nereza is unusual, though not unheard of.

A paladin or cleric of Nereza might be questing to protect other homes and towns, for example, if they have none of their own to defend, or if their own home was destroyed and they subsequently joined the order to seek guidance.

Clerics of Nereza: Nereza's clerics function much as other clerics do, but they generally take a vow only to protect hearth and home, so meeting adventuring clerics in the service of Nereza is unusual, though not unheard of. A paladin or cleric of Nereza might be questing to protect other homes and towns, for example, if they have none of their own to defend, or if their own home was destroyed and they subsequently joined the order to seek guidance.



Nom'hakar, god of the beasts

Alignment: neutral

Profile: wilderness, death

The unrelenting wilderness and the beasts that dwell in the unexplored reaches of the world are all said to be within the domain of this neutral deity. Nom'hakar has few priests who worship him, although some shamans and druids in more primitive societies, such as among the barbarians of



Kadoskar, maintain impressive wilderness temples primarily to appease this god.

Nelispar, the Seelie King

Alignment: neutral

Profile: freedom, luck, protection, sun

The eternally beautiful king of the seelie court is the revered patron of all fey kind, including elves, high elves and many more. Nelispar is seen as the bringer of the sun and protector of the fey realm. Most of the enigmatic cities of the high elves have temples to Nelispar at their heart.

Shamanzat

Alignment: lawful

Profile: creation, skill, strength

Shamanzat is both the forger god and the god of craftsmen in general. Lord of creativity, discovery, and invention, Shamanzat is often enshrined within the toolsheds, crafting halls, forges and other locations where workers and creators carry out their tasks.

Skarvus

Alignment: chaotic

Profile: darkness, undeath, war, destruction

Skarvus, the Thousand-Headed God of abominations, this dreaded entity is said to exist deep in the darkest corners of the underworld, serving as a terrible gate keeper between the mortal realm and the Abyss. Skarvus is said to produce many of the stranger and more aberrant monstrosities that roam the world, churning out terrors like mortal men produce sweat.

Most of Skarvus's followers are monsters, but there are human

cultists as well, drawn to the overwhelming sense of power they gain from his worship.

Cultists of Skarvus: Most of his followers are monsters, but there are human cultists as well. Clerics of Skarvus do not Turn Undead, instead gaining the ability to Summon Monsters as per the spell once per day. At 1st level the ability works like Monster Summoning 1, but at 4th it functions as Monster Summoning II, at 8th level as Monster Summoning III, at 12th level as Monster Summoning IV, at 16th level as Monster Summoning V, and at 20th level Monster Summoning VI.





Sortor, The Grim Grey God

Alignment: neutral

Profile: wilderness, earth, storms

Sortor is a dark god said to embody the spirit of the mountains and the dull gray clouds of the sky. He is in the rocks and the earth, in the clouds and the rain. He is a god who tests and challenges the souls of men for hardiness, by subjecting them to the harshest storms, the coldest climes and the steepest cliffs. If you find your journey to be perilous and arduous all at once, Sortor is testing you. His priests are both rugged survivalists and flagellant, for they must show that they are capable of suffering even greater pains than most!

Clerics of Sortor: Clerics of Sortor treat Constitution as a prime attribute and must have 13 or better in both Constitution and Wisdom to get a +5% experience bonus. Clerics of Sortor are hardier folk than normal, and receive +1 hit point per level.

Thanofar, the Black Beast of Greatwood

Alignment: chaotic

Profile: destruction, torment

Thanofar, the Black Beast of the Greatwood and god of the dark woods and their spirits, called also the Maker of Monsters, is yet another abyssal god of chaos which seeks to propagate monsterkind. It is said in some religious texts that Thanofar was once a favored priest of Skarvus who was worshipped with a shard of divinity, and that over time he became the legendary Black Beast of the Greatwood.

Three Sisters of Misery

Alignment: chaotic

Profile: darkness, fate, trickery, madness

The Three Sisters, Yag-Hatha, Inrymar and Gisulta are three ancient unseelie of great power from the Fae Lands. Though not as powerful as true gods, they nonetheless stir up trouble like such, and are believed to be responsible for tethering their realm with the mortal plane. Those elves and faeries of the seelie court despise the Sisters, for their land was believed to be an immaculate, perfect realm before this tethering, and is now lessened for it. Those of

the unseelie court seem to grasp that there is a great and secret destiny before them, which the Sisters are methodically behind. They strive to insure that the walls of reality between the Fae Lands and the mortal plane are weakened whenever possible, to aid the Sisters.

Followers of the Sisters: Among humans druids commonly recognize the sisters for worship, but among the elves of Agraphar there are some of unseelie nature who may become clerics in their service. Such clerics (if allowed as PCs) can reach level 10 and do not gain Turn Undead, instead gaining the ability to cast Sleep and Phantasmal Force each once per day at 1st level. These clerics may reach level 11 if they have a Wisdom of 17, or level 12 if they have a Wisdom of 18.

Tonadaskar

Alignment: lawful

Profile: civilization, protection

Tonadaskar, lord and protector of the home is the male counterpart to Nereza, and serves as a patron household god figure to merchants and businessmen as well as the more mundane professions such as farming and animal husbandry.

Tonadaskar has clerics, but they are normally never trained in any martial combat and perform mostly minor magic and benevolent spells; they are an order of peaceful penitents, and are almost never found adventuring, lacking the skills or desire to do so.

Interestingly, the followers of Tonadaskar who learn some martial talent come from the rare but notable monasteries that revere the god for his peacefulness. These monasteries are where militant monks train primarily to channel unwanted aggression away from their minds and hearts to become closer to Tonadaskar. Some of these monks may end up adventuring, either due to a vision received by the god, or perhaps because their own aggression is so great that the master of their order sees fit to send the young monk out in the world to “exercise the anger from his spirit.”



Yerzin-Vul, horse god

Alignment: neutral

Profile: wilderness, freedom, war

The Kadoskar worship many primal gods, but Yerzin-Vul is one of the beast gods that they feel is a benefit to their kind, a protector of mounted soldiers, a keeper of horses (seen as sacred), and a deity which grants boons to both in battle. It is very common for the barbarians of the north to swear on the name of Yerzin'Vul during battle and to honor this god with many sacrifices of enemy prisoners after a great victory.

Ymandra, the seelie Queen

Alignment: neutral

Profile: darkness, hope, life, moon

Ymandra is the seelie queen, mistres of the moon and goddess of the fey realm. Ymandra is a patron to elvish and high elf women, though male elves seek out her blessing of hope before battle as well.

Ymaltar The Sun Fury

Alignment: lawful

Profile: civilization, justice, protection, sun

Ymaltar is the lord of light, the god who crafted the world and spawned the lesser gods of creation. According to his priests he was the first of the many immortal spirits born of chaos to conceive of an elaborate creation rather than slinking off to wallow in the void beyond the maelstrom. Ymaltar has many temples throughout the land, and a dedicated order of knights who serve as templars to the priesthood of this god. Ymaltar is believed to represent justice and righteous vengeance all at once. In those lands where his templars rule, laws are often exacted at painful cost for even the smallest of misdemeanors.

The classic cleric and paladin are archetypes of those who worship Ymaltar, who grants his priests the boon of turning undead, and his templars the holy might of paladins. Crusaders of Ymaltar are especially prevalent, known as servants of the god who do great good and expect nothing in return save perhaps posthumous sainthood one day.

Followers of Ymaltar: The classic cleric and paladin are archetypes of those who worship Ymaltar, who grants his priests the boon of turning undead, and his templars the holy might of paladins.

Yoz'modan, god of plagues and blight

Alignment: chaotic

Profile: poison, torment

The dreaded patron of plagues and blight is seen as a vile chaotic antithesis to the goddess Maca, for the goal of this god is the perverse destruction of mankind through disease. The priesthood of this vile deity takes great pains to develop resistances and immunities, though often as not his followers are abominations and outsiders of the worst kind.

Yvak, The Wild Hunt

Alignment: neutral

Profile: wilderness, winter, animals

Yvak is a powerful hunter and a primal being; men tell of how he was there when they were first formed, wielding simple stone tools, and how Yvak challenged man to become more than a beast, lest he hunt them with equal ferocity. This dreadful god is always accompanied by great hunting animals, be they wolves, hounds, bears or lions, and he is revered by hunters, rangers and men of the wild.

Many druids worship the Wild Hunt, and seek patronage to this god, as do some men at arms such as rangers and fighters.

IV. Corruption

The Corruption of Chaos and Magic

Wizards in Agraphar practice a trade that borrows the sorcerous energy of chaos and applies it to the order of the mortal realm, with magical effect. Unfortunately, this means that anyone practicing sorcery has a chance of developing a taint of corruption from the relentless dark energies of chaos.

Of the four sources of magical effect, the following have potential for corruption:

Magic Users and Arcane Casters: all arcane casters are subject to corruption.

Bardic Magic: If you are using the bard class, bards receive their magic from the Seelie court of the elves and are so protected for their enchanted music by King Nelispar and Queen Ymandra; they are never subject to corruption checks with bardic magic. Most bards can practice magic in the lands of Agraphar without fear of reprisal for this reason.

Elves, and other Fey: they are resistant to corruption, drawing on the Fey realms to weave their magic; for this reason, all fey gain a +2 save bonus against resisting corruption.

Clerics and Divine Magic: all divine magic is a form of sorcery handed down from the gods. Divine casters of good nature are immune to the corruption, protected by their deities. All others suffer a risk, and the worshippers of darkness often welcome it, seeking the extra surge of power possession brings. Clerics of chaotic gods receive a -2 penalty to saving throws against corruption.

Druids and Primal Magic: primal magic is extremely risky and closer to chaos than arcane magic; all users of primal magic risk corruption, but druids receive a +2 save bonus against corruption, however, due to a close affinity for the fey realms.

Magic Items

Even magic items can be corrupted or cause corruption. When a magic item is used, it will suffer an episode of demonic taint if the activated power results in a "20" just like regular powers (see below on Checking for Corruption), temporarily rendering

the item more powerful or just as likely rendering it useless in spectacular fashion (often summoning or releasing demonic spirits in the process). Only devices created in the name of the gods of light (such as Ymaltar) tend to be immune to such effects, but devices of such power are rare, and they contain the spirits of seraphim; they will, however, melt down in the hands of chaotic beings.

GMs can decide what happens when a magical device suffers a corruption event, or roll on the following chart to see what happens:

D20 Roll	Magic Item Corruption Event
1-6	Device immediately replenishes its expended spell (if any)
7-12	Backlash; power will affect activator as well as target(s)
13-16	Device makes a save (add item modifier then roll 10+ on D20) or it burns out
17-20	Device must make a saving throw (add its modifier, roll 10+ on D20) or it is also destroyed, releasing the demon within as it melts down or explodes. The demon will be a creature of equivalent hit dice approximately to the device.

Passive use items (that provide modifiers without requiring activation) do not normally experience corruption; these are considered too weak through use to be of much notice to the corruption of chaos.

Checking for Corruption

In Agraphar, whenever a character casts spells, there is a very slight chance that the corruption of chaos will set upon them. Any time the spell caster casts a spell he should also roll a D20. If the dice rolls a natural 20 then two things happen. First, the spell is executed as if the caster were one level higher than his current caster level (which might improve the spell effectiveness) and the target, if eligible for a saving throw, suffers a -2 penalty on its save. Second, there is a chance of corruption. The caster must make a saving throw (based on class level;



magic save bonus do not apply). Each time the caster fails a save, he gains one corruption mark. A corruption mark can be removed by resting for one whole day without casting any magic. If a caster gains three corruption marks before getting any removed, then he suffers from corruption. Saving throws to avoid corruption receive a -1 penalty for each corruption mark already on the caster.

Magic items that require a roll when a power is activated experience corruption on a natural 20 as well; if no roll is required, the GM should roll a D20 and see if one comes up. A magic item is automatically corrupted if it fails one save; it does not get corruption marks like PCs do.

If the mage experiences corruption, then the dark energy of chaos floods in to his body, and all previously expended spell slots are immediately recovered (new spells may be chosen to fill them immediately at the GM's discretion, otherwise they replenish with whatever spells were previously known). Furthermore, the spell caster immediately recovers a number of hit points equal to his current level as a side effect of the magical surge in his body.

However, the character is now under the possession of a demonic force, and while he still retains his mind, he loses his sanity and all moral reason, becoming *utterly, inimically evil* (alignment changes to chaotic). The character can make a saving throw (charm modifiers apply) each morning, and if he fails three times, then the effect is permanent. Once permanent, then the character will slowly begin to change over time, gaining the physical appearance of a demonic or undead being, moderated at the discretion of the GM. Allies can try to help the character with these saves by restraining him (since the possessing anima does not have an interest in leaving) and trying to channel positive holy energy in to the possessed sorcerer's mind. At any point along this process (of dealing divine magical damage from cleric or druid spells) if the character drops to 0 hit points and is rendered unconscious then the demon is purged. Spells of exorcism can also work to drive the demon out. If a cleric can use turn undead against evil outsiders like demons, then it can also affect the possessed character as well.

A creature that has been possessed for more than a year is beyond redemption.

There is one exception to the rule of corruption, and that is gnomes: for some reason, they are never corrupted by the taint of chaos (some think they already are!) and so never make such checks.

The Stigma of Sorcerers

In certain lands the practice of sorcery is regarded as a necessary evil, one which must be tolerated and even accepted, but likewise mages are expected to regulate themselves carefully for this reason. The most open of places for the practice of magic is in Kalidante, or in cosmopolitan locales such as the city of Carnash. More remote regions are usually quite fearful of mages, and some places such as among the jarls of Kadoskar actively hunt and persecute them. As such, spell casters must be careful to avoid revealing their true natures when necessary.

The Rarity of Magical Devices

Magic items are extremely rare as a commercial object because the world of Agraphar lacks a central industry in support of their creation. Likewise, magic devices have a chance of becoming corrupted. For this reason, common magic items are difficult to find in towns and cities abroad.

Still, the ancients who fought the great and ancient battles used magic in plenty, and relics from that bygone age are coveted amongst those who harbor no fear of the potential consequences of their use. Lesser magical devices are desired as secret (and sometimes outlawed) treasures for this reason, due to the relative safety of their use. Greater devices are considerably more powerful and therefore much riskier.

Among denizens of the underworld the story is different: there is a professional art among the cultures of goblins, orcs, trolls and ogres in the manufacture or artifice of magical devices, and they covert such demon-imbued devices. For this reason, magical devices in the underworld of Agraphar are much more common, and are often vigorously traded. Such devices do, of course, have a habit of finding their way to the surface world, often by way of hapless adventurers!

Ignoring Corruption

GMs who do not want to deal with the issue of corruption among PCs can choose to simply ignore the rules, and assume that the PCs are sufficiently cautious or talented that they are not at risk of corruption or possession. GMs can still employ corruption as a story/plot element, springing it at inconvenient or unusual moments in conjunction with NPCs to keep players on their toes.



V. Languages

There are many languages in Agraphar, but the Common Tongue, sometimes called the Imperial Tongue, is a language derived from the dialect of the Old Empire of Malidantos. Most people speak this language, as well as their regional dialect and a few racial dialects. All faerie and elf kin tend to speak the same language (elvish) and most dragons and their kin speak the Dragon Speech. There are a medley of underworld languages, although the lingua franca of monsters is the Goblin Tongue.

The easiest way to manage languages is to use the default language rules in the S&W core rulebook, with language slots based on intelligence. Characters who wish to learn more than their allotted bonus languages over time must roll on the “Chance to Understand Spell” value of their Intelligence and spend an appropriate amount of time studying the language (usually 4D6 weeks of immersion in the culture or studies) to do so.

Cultural/Regional Human Languages:

Imperial Tongue (old Malidantic)

Aruthainic (includes Aruthain, Shandros, Eltarion, Eravason)

Kadoskari (includes Aramask, Durilden, Nimdar, Varkosk, Drusalos, Elisfar, Gonden)

The Inner Kingdoms Languages:

Maligonic

Shandroscopic

Eltaric

Eravasic

Elvish Languages:

Tuelic (common elvish)

Natraskai (dark elvish)

Dwarven Languages:

Magduronc (includes Mabduron, Narador, Shar’hadal)

Monstrous languages:

Gorgalic Dialectc (black speech)

Sakarthic (true goblin, the common tongue of the underworld)

Draconic (both high and low)

Other races have racial dialects as normal

VI. Races of Agraphar

What follows is a brief look at several major character races and their place in the world, although Agraphar is still a humanocentric domain and the GM is within his rights to limit players to only the standard races in S&W.

Optional Class Advancement for Demi-Humans

At the GM's option, races can advance in all classes without restriction. The default assumption is that there are no class limitations in Agraphar by race. If the GM feels this could prove troublesome, then enforce the race/class limitations as presented.

Aasimar

Like tieflings, aasimar exist, a byproduct of the infusion of a divine seraphic spirit with a goodly aligned host. Though less common, such children are seen as a blessing of Ymaltar and other benevolent gods such as Maca, and given a place of high importance.

Like tieflings the aasimar have a parent or ancestor with planar blood. Unlike the tieflings, the aasimar have been touched by a divine spark from a good or beneficent being such as a seraph or other angelic entity. A few may even have godling ancestry.

Aasimar are physically similar to humans, but they tend to have perfect skin, white or golden hair and eyes of liquid gold. Their beauty is unrivalled by most other mortals, though aasimar themselves are also often long-lived.

Aasimar adventurers usually learn the Imperial Tongue, plus one other (usually Celestial if they know their divine parent or have access to such lore). All aasimar are gifted with low-light vision and can see in the dark as if it were twilight. They have a divine celestial trait as well, and receive a +2 saving throw bonus against spells cast by chaotic beings. Finally, aasimar are immortal and ageless; any and all effects that work for or against immortals will also affect them.

Aasimar are sufficiently gifted that they can become fighters, paladins, clerics or magic users without restriction, but are limited to level 7 as rogues and level 9 as rangers.

Dark Elves

The dark elves are a splinter sect of elves who long ago defied the Hags and the Faerie Court to side with the lord of darkness, Dymachas. They dwell in their subterranean realms, biding their time while they wait for a True King of Darkness to be born, who will lead the forces of darkness to an age of victory.

Dark elves work as normal elves, but receive can cast *dancing lights*, *darkness 15' radius* and *detect magic* each once per day. Dark elves can be rangers of unlimited level, however...naw, Just kidding.

Dwarves

The dwarves have carved many subterranean cities and kingdoms to themselves, but all dwarves consider themselves a part of their ancient empire, especially when it comes to uniting against the goblinoids. There are several "kingdoms" among the dwarves, however, and each king in these kingdoms consider themselves a true candidate for emperor, though the title is ostensibly only available to a true member of the bloodline, though the fate of the emperor's lineage is currently unknown, as a result of the destruction of Gromdol, the seat of the old empire's throne. Some dwarves suspect the true royal line is now lost, but others believe in a prophecy that states the descendant of the dwarven emperor will return when the time is right.

Dwarves revere Shamanzat, the forger god, as well as Sortor, who is regarded as the "one true god" by many dwarves.

Elves and High Elves

Elves are the fey who have come to dwell in the deep woods and remote wilderlands of the world, in harmony with nature. They eschew city dwelling, even among their more civilized kin, for they have all been touched by the goddess Maca.

The high elves are pure-blood sidhee, fey who have never truly left their connection to the fey realm. High elves are most dedicated to their particular court of power, and revere either the hags or the faerie court for their power or the king and queen of the seelie court. Note that even unseelie high elves still despise the dark elves who worship Dymachas.



Elves function as adventurers as per standard S&W rules, though high elves are able to advance to level 14 as magic users.

Faerie

Faeries are closely related to the many other fey species, to which elves are distantly related. They are easily mistaken for other members of their kind, including pixies, brownies sylphs and others, but faeries are a proper species in their own right, apart from these cousins.

Faeries are also capable of coming from either the seelie or unseelie courts of the fey realm, reflecting the nature of the faerie's interest in the mortal world. Among the seelie, the mortal world is a curious playground of constant wonder. Among the unseelie, the mortal plane is a playground, but one full of playthings that make funny noises when you poke them hard enough. A faerie's appearance and aspect is a reflection of their connection to either of these courts.

Actual faeries periodically leave the fey realms to explore the domain of men. Such faeries are notoriously troublesome to those they latch on to. Although few faerie are encountered in the mortal realm, it does happen on occasion.

Faeries average 10 inches to just over a foot in height, and weight no more than a house cat. They learn to speak sylvan and elvish, as well as the Imperial Tongue when in the world of men.

Faeries can be thieves and magic users, each to level 14. They have a number of unique limitations they must deal with, as follows:

Faeries roll only 1D6+2 for Str and Con and never have higher than 8 in either attribute.

All Faeries are of the Fey realm, and are tiny creatures. They gain a 2 point bonus to AC and due to their small size and nimble flying abilities. Faeries can only wear armor made for their own kind, which can be difficult to locate, and normally is only ever made of leather.

Faeries have wings and can fly. They are tiny however and only walk at half their normal movement rate, but can fly at double that rate.

Faeries are always skilled in the use of the faerie bow, regardless of class weapon options. Such faerie bows only ever do 1 point of damage (and it has a 50% chance it only does subdual damage), but they can apply their fey magic to it to make the bow more effective. A faerie begins play knowing how to apply the sleep spell to a single arrow, but in the course of

play the faerie can take magic user spell scrolls (and even tomes) and learn other spells to apply to her arrows as well. The faerie must use the Spell Learning chance based on her Int to attempt this, but once she has learned a spell that can be used for her arrow, then she may always imbue her arrows with that spell. Regardless of what spell she is imbuing, she can do so three times per day; the arrows will last for one week, and must be fired by a faerie from a faerie bow to activate the imbued spell.

Faeries are imbued with natural glamour magic and may choose any one first level magic user spell that they can cast once per day. Faeries are also able to detect the presence of other fey beings within a 100 foot radius at will.

New Weapon: Faerie Bows

Ranged Weapon; Damage: faerie arrows do 1 point (50% chance of subdual damage only) plus imbue if any; **Rate of Fire:** 2; **Weight:** .25 lbs.; **Range:** 20 feet; **Cost:** 150 GP (faerie characters get one for free); **Special:** Can't be wielded by anything less than tiny creatures; small creatures can use the bow with a -5 penalty to attack. Only faeries can cause the spell imbue when wielding the bow.

Gnomes

Gnomes are superlative masters of the social game, and have connived and schemed their way in to human society without too much trouble, thanks in part to their infamously good mathematical skills. Though gnomes are known for their sorcery, most believe they are immune to corruption; they're not, it's just difficult to tell when a gnome has become possessed, because they tend to act the same regardless. Another speculation is that the gnomish mind is so distorted in its peculiar thoughts that demonic spirits that grasp a mage gnome from corruption are, instead, subdued by the already extant madness such that they have little to do to corrupt the existing soul. Gnomes, needless to say, are fond members of the unseelie court.

Gnomes gain a +2 saving throw bonus against charms and enchantments. Gnomes have natural darkvision for 60 feet. They are a strange race, and gnomes of the earth can be druids of up to level 9 while gnomes of the civilized world can be magic users of level 12. All gnomes can be fighters of up to



level 6 and thieves of no level limit. Civilized gnomes can learn to be assassins of up to level 9.

Half-Giants

These stone-giant kin are favored for their brawn as soldiers, and their remote mountain clans are sometimes raided by humans looking for big slaves. The half-giants like to remain outside of politics and avoid relations with almost everyone except for dwarves, other giants, and occasional trading with the underworld kingdoms. Half-giants are also the only giants known to eschew worship of Far'Gronath, patron of giant kind, in favor of the forger god Shamanzat.

Half-giants are large creatures, averaging 9 to 12 feet in height. They have tough skin and gain a 1 point bonus to Armor Class. All half-giants are exceptionally strong and roll 2D6+6 for strength. Half-giants can be fighters without level limit, rangers of up to level 8, clerics of up to level 9, and magic users of up to level 6.

Halfings

Halfings might well be a relative of gnomes, but missing much of the madness, though not always the sense of mischief. They favor remote townships outside of human lands, though they are content with trading with men. Halfings consider Balragda to be their patron deity and protector god, and hardly a Halfling town can be found that doesn't contain a shrine or temple (usually also a beer garden) dedicated to this jovial and friendly god.

Halfings function as described in the S&W Complete rules.

Humans

Humans are the dominant race among the kingdoms of Agraphar, and are singular in their control of the lands. Humans appear to most other races to be domineering, suspicious, superstitious and generally unaccepting of other beings; the fear of magic and its use in humans is exacerbated by the fact that they seem so easily corrupted.

If the GM allows demihumans unlimited level advancement in classes, then humans should be

granted a +1 attribute modifier to compensate. This modifier can't increase an attribute past 18.

Half-Orcs

Half-orcs are poorly regarded, though there are enough of them they are not simply slain on birth like tieflings are in human communities. Humans regard orcs as foes, but worthy enemies as well, so the prospect of a human-orc hybrid is not so traumatizing, though such half-orcs are doomed to a life as second class citizens or even slaves. Heroes like Gormskur of Ironscar Fortress help to improve half-orc relations greatly, too.

Half orcs are brutish folk, gaining darkvision for 60 feet. Half orcs have a minimum strength of 10 and maximum charisma of 16. Many half-orcs start with the deep speech of orcs. Half-orcs can advance without level limit as thieves, assassins and fighters, and can advance to level 7 as magic users and clerics.

Minotaurs

Minotaurs are common in the southern deserts of Kalidante, where they dwell in small tribes, and are highly valued for their skills as warriors by the southern empire. Minotaurs are best reserved as a non player character race.

Satyrs

Like their winged kin, satyrs find the mortal plane endlessly fascinating, and love to explore it. Satyrs are almost universally male and have a keen fascination for human and elvish women.

The Satyrs of Agraphar are a rare breed as adventurers, but not unknown to exist. Most satyrs one will likely encounter will be enigmatic or possibly even hostile, but on rare occasion a Satyr gets the wanderlust and seeks to go adventuring.

There are on very rare occasion female satyrs. Such female satyrs are an enigma in their own right, for satyrs are supposed to be exclusively male, and must breed with human (and elven, and dwarven, and Halfling...) women to prosper as a species, it is believed. Even male satyrs, when confronted about the existence of these females, go wild at the very notion of such a thing.

Physically satyrs are humanoids with the lower quarters and legs of goats. They have goat horns,



which on some satyrs can grow quite large and may allow for a goring attack (see Satyr racial feats, below).

Satyrs gain access to a uniquely powerful power (the pan pipes). GMs may wish to scrutinize the race carefully if you are concerned about balance. Satyr characters should be most likely to choose primal



classes, though by no means are they exclusively required to choose from such.

Satyr adventurers can advance to level 9 as fighters and magic users, and are unlimited in advancement as thieves. Some can be clerics of the fey gods, advancing to level 9. Multiclass thief/magic users are common.

Satyrs can imbue any set of pan pipes with melodious and hypnotic magic. Satyrs can learn to perform multiple hypnotic tunes with their pan pipes, to various effects. At the start of their career the Satyr may choose from one of the following song effects, which he may perform once per day for 1D6 rounds (with the effect lasting for the length indicated by the roll). Additional tunes may be

learned over time, as the satyr reaches 3rd, 6th, 9th and 12th level in their chosen class advancement. All satyr songs can be resisted with a save versus magic enchantment/charm, and elves are always immune to satyr's songs.

Satyr Songs:

Song of Delirium: You can weave a hypnotic tune that lulls your foes in to a stupor. All listening become entranced by the song and cease their actions for one round.

Song of Ferocity: You pipe a ferocious tune that sets your allies' blood a'boiling. All allies who hear the song gain a +1 to their next attack roll and damage roll.

Song of the Wild: Your furious music sets your allies or enemies dancing madly about. The targets of this spell are compelled to dance instead of their preferred choice of actions.

Song of Escape: Through the wild pipings you energize your allies to recover from their plight. Each ally gains a +2 bonus to saving throws.

Song of Understanding: Through your enrapturing songs you sew the seeds of communication. This spell works to allow all who hear the song to understand one another as if they spoke each other's language.

Song of Seduction: Through your hypnotic music you weave complex charms which draw in those around you, charging them with passion and lust. Each creature in burst becomes enamoured with the creature closest to it or a satyr, chosen by the song caster (save ends). When enamored, the target creature is effectively charmed in to desire and lust for a designated target, regardless of previous affiliation. For the duration of the encounter or until the effect ends the enamoured target will attempt to aid, seduce, copulate with or otherwise party with the target of his or her attentions. This can even overcome the hostile intentions of otherwise mortal enemies when in effect.



Tieflings

Anyone under the possession of a demonic spirit can sire a tiefling child, for the essence of the spirit can infuse the unborn infant with the taint of chaos. Likewise, the devils of old lore, beings which escape from remote demiplanes adjacent to the mortal realm of Agrapher are known to lust after mortals. Unfortunately for these children, tieflings rarely live past birth, as it is customary to slay them. As such, tieflings who survive by fate or chance often seek out remote places to settle in to communities of like-minded beings and monsters.

Among monstrous races such as orcs and dark elves, tiefling children are a mark of pride and gain greater status. Rumors of entire kingdoms of tieflings are so far just that: rumors.

Tieflings physically tend to be a bit “off,” with the more extreme examples having reddish or scaly skin, tails, hooves and even horns.

Tieflings, because they are already part demon, are immune to the risk of corruption when using magic and do not make corruption saving rolls.

Tiefling adventurers have a natural resistance to fire and take half damage from such damage. Tieflings have darkvision for 60 feet. All tieflings can advance without limit as thieves, assassins and magic users, and can advance to level 10 as fighters and monks.



VII. Overview of the Land

Agraphar is broken down into three major regions. The North is a land of frigid perpetual cold, with a great glacial expanse beyond which no human dare travel. It encompasses nearly half of the continent. In the southern reaches of the Northlands can be found a string of small kingdoms ruled by the northern Jarls of **Kadoskar**.

Southward from there is the somewhat warmer region in which most sane men prefer to dwell. Here can be found many kingdoms and lesser polities, all of whom claim to have once belonged to the near-legendary empire of old under the True King called **Malidantos**. The larger kingdoms in this region include **Shandros**, **Eltarion**, **Aruthain**, and **Eravason**. This region is best defined by its great mountains, vast lakes and dense, impenetrable forests.

Southward is the third region, which is a hotter, more arid land of great deserts in which little grows. These regions have many smaller kingdoms and nomadic tribes, who also claim lineage from the ancient empire of the True King. The largest such kingdom lies along the southern coast and engages in brisk trade with foreign lands. This kingdom is called **Kalidante**, and it is regarded by many as the most prosperous of all Agraphar's kingdoms.

Elves dwell abroad in the deep forests of the many realms, as do many other demihuman kin. The monstrous races dwell beneath the surface, although some monstrous kin such as the naga,

cyclopeans and minotaurs prefer to dwell in the light of the surface lands. Dwarves are the only "surface" race to prefer dwelling in the bowels of the earth, although their affinity for the god Sortor along with an obsession with seeking out their goblinoid enemies is usually believed to be the reason for this ages-old obsession with dwelling beneath the earth.

Summary of Locations by Kingdom

The Westerlands and Northlands of known and charted Agraphar include the following kingdoms. This information below may be considered a basic overview that any common adventurer in the land starting his career might know or have heard about. The gazetteer and locations in this book only cover the details listed on the northwestern map of





Tariach, the focus of this gazetteer.

The North: Kadoskar: loose collection of city-states united by heritage and culture. The people of Kadoskar have never been united for very long, and see this independence as a point of pride. Key local governments include:

Aramask, Durilden, Nimdar, Varkosk, Drusalos, Elisfar, Gonden

The Westerlands: Dominated by Aruthain, there are several other peripheral kingdoms in this region as well, with southerly kingdoms stretching down to the region of the great empire of the south:

Aruthain, Shandros, Eltarion, Eravason

The Inner Kingdoms: These kingdoms are land-locked, many are adjacent to the Greatwood, and all are smaller domains, and often quite remote, superstitious and mistrustful of foreigners due to their isolation:

Maligon, Denaes, Algarte, Nerimond

The Elvish Kingdoms: The two dominant elvish lands are effectively in the fey realm, but they both overlap with the mortal world in the deep wilds of the Greatwood.

Tuel-Cunath, Yin-Drada

The Dwarven Empire Shoalgrim: The dwarves have carved many subterranean cities and kingdoms to themselves, but all dwarves consider themselves a part of their ancient empire, especially when it comes to uniting against the goblinoids. There are several “kingdoms” among the dwarves, however, and each king in these kingdoms consider themselves a true candidate for emperor, though the title is ostensibly only available to a true member

of the bloodline, though the fate of the emperor’s lineage is currently unknown, as a result of the destruction of Gromdol, the seat of the old empire’s throne. Some dwarves suspect the true royal line is now lost, but others believe in a prophecy that states the descendant of the dwarven emperor will return when the time is right.

Magduron, Gol’durar, Narador, Shar’hadal

Underworld Kingdoms:

The orcs claim to have a great empire which they call **Gorgal’han**. The aberrations dwell deep within their enigmatic empire of **Chulzan**. The dark elves of **Natraskar** manifest in those regions where the Shadowfell overlaps with the underworld. **Sakarth** is the strange cosmopolitan goblin city where the underworld seeks out its own trade and commerce.



VIII. Gazetteer of Aruthain and the Northwest



The following provides a synopsis of the many major sites and locations that can be visited on the greater map of the North West, centered on Aruthain.

The Region of Aruthain

Carnash, City of A Thousand Voices

Ruler: King Victaros IV, Queen Nyтана

Population: approximately 100,000

Demographics: human city, with small populations of elves, dwarves, Halflings, gnomes and high elves

This is the capitol and center of cultural exchange as well as trade, the legendary Old Capitol of the empire of Malidantos, and current seat of the throne for the kingdom of Aruthain. Carnash is presently ruled by King Victaros IV and is at least tentatively regarded as neutral ground for all of the Malidantos-descended Kingdoms.

Carnash has a population well over one hundred thousands, concentrated along the coast of the Bay of Barisk, where hundreds of ships dock year-round for trade and commerce. It has a foreign quarter that

includes barriers for its closest neighbors, the inland kingdom of Denaes, southern Shandros, and even a special district for the fabled desert kingdom of Kalidante in the distant south.

Carnash is the lynch-pin of commerce for the bulk of Aruthain, as most of the kingdom is stretched out across the dense wilderness of mountains and forest that stretch inland, after which the dry hill-lands beyond the Garpagos Mountains take over and become Denaes territory. Because of this, more trade from land to sea is funneled through here than anywhere else in Aruthain, for it is easier to transport goods from Carnash southward to Denaes than it is for most caravans to face the bitter, dead lands of that vast region.

Carnash is a good center-point from which new adventurers can set out on their adventures.

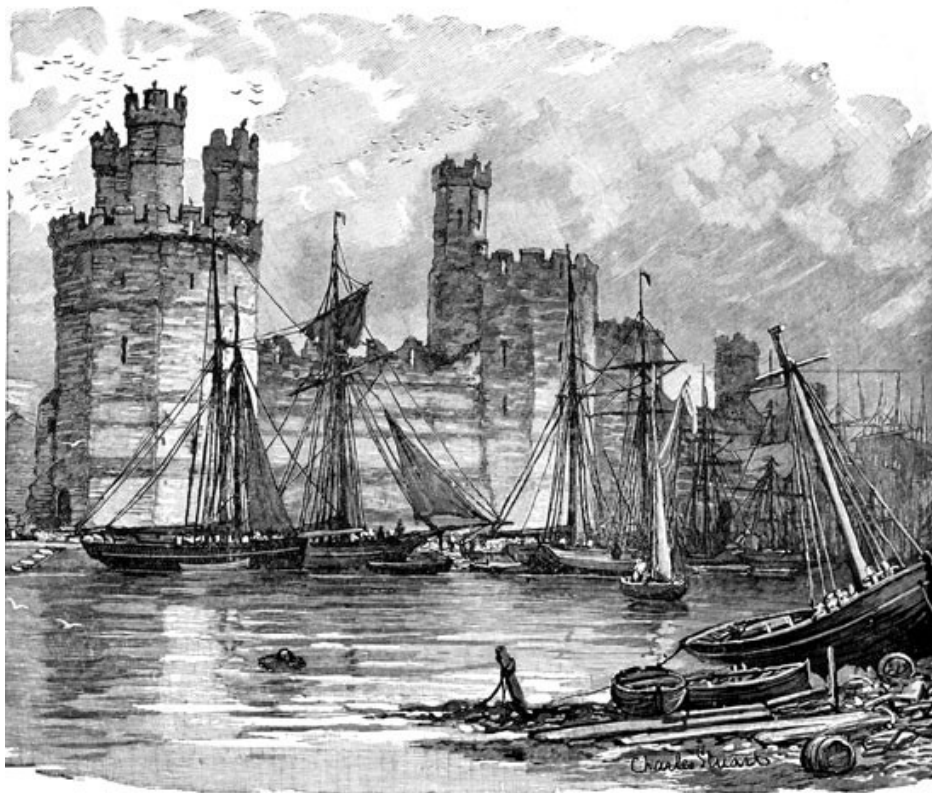
Bay of Sindrahan

The bay of Sindrahan is known for being the only genuinely accessible stretch of water in the region of Aruthain; much of the coastal regions of the kingdom are rocky and inaccessible, or situated along large tracks of otherwise uninhabitable land.



The Bay of Sindrahan is named after a silver Dragon Lord, said to have been slain by the hand of Agraphar himself before its vast body plunged in to the bay during the era of the dragons some five thousand years ago. Sindrahan was believed to be one of the last Dragon Lords to have survived the old purge that stood defiant against the might of the old empire of Malidantos. The descendants of this dragon lord are said to exist today, as silver dragons are a known menace in the region, as are other dragonkind; the rangers of Carnash keep a close eye on the dragon population, hunting them down wherever they can to avoid a brood infestation from causing a surge in the population.

Sindrahan is also spoken of in even older myths and lore. It is said that the bay was originally formed by the footprint of the great beast-god Nom'Hakar, who was spoken of as a behemoth in old mythology, summoned or created by Dymachas to scatter the Seraphic armies that first assembled on the Plains of Drenashk to squelch the demon armies that were welling out of the Greatwood. More on this tale can be found under the entry on the Silverwood.



Silverwood

Adjacent and south of the Bay of Sindrahan, the Silverwood stretches for thousands of square miles, a high impenetrable forest of deep woods that somehow bring a great calm to those who pass through. Though few exploit the woods out of fear of the spirits that guard it, the region is known to be safe from beasts of chaos, and it is rumored that orcs and goblins who enter the region soon die of mysterious pox.

There is an ancient myth about the Silverwood that ties it to the Bay of Sindrahan. As the story goes, ten thousand angelic seraphs sacrificed their lives under the banner of the holy general **Cascetar** to disembody the terrifying beast Nom'hakar that appeared out of the water and which was so large its footfalls created the Bay of Sindrahan. The angels stood defiant, destroying the behemoth before it crushed the army of angels and men rallied against it. These angels turned in to the trees of the enigmatic Silverwood, and somewhere deep within that ancient forest is an immense tree of great power, containing the soul of Cascetar. In later years, so it is told, elves and men formed the city of

Haradresh around the Tree of Cascetar to honor his sacrifice, though even later myth tales speak of how the city was destroyed by vengeful beasts that were possessed by Nom'Hakar's dark spirit.

The Plains of Drenashk

The Plains of Drenashk are an open territory ostensibly under Aruthainic control, but for practical purposes belonging to none. Trade passes through this region to the mysterious elven cities of the



Greatwood, the barbaric lakemen of Maligon, and southward to the vast desert wastes of Denaes, of whom the people in this region are related to.

The Tundra Plains

Much of Aruthain's coastland is uninhabitable or lacks arable land, such as the rough Tundra Plains to the north, which contain the remnants of a vast, dead forest and are resistant to all farming efforts. Chill winds blow from the north and keep the topsoil frozen almost year-round, in contrast to the somewhat sheltered region east in the domain of Caliphar. The tundra could not always have been like so, some point out, for the dead forest proves as much.

There is much mystery in this region, which is said to have been tainted by vast networks of underworld caverns in which the races of chaos dwell, and that this dark energy seeps up to the soil of the land and makes it uninhabitable.

Geologically it is evident that the Tundra Plains have seen much glacial movement in ages past, and the land is littered with the debris of rocks and boulders from these glacial passings. The remnants of a dead forest, killed through some terminal blight within the last few centuries dots the land, suggesting there may be more than a little truth to the idea that the land is poisoned.

Along the rocky coast are the ruins of several old cities, the names of which are all but forgotten. Little mystery to the few locals who dwell in the region as to why they are abandoned, for it is commonly believed that when the forest died and the land froze, the cities of the coast soon dried up as people moved away to seek safer lands off of which to live. Many of the citizens of Caliphar claim a lineage that dates back to one or more of these lost cities, including Adenas, Turasas and Mariphar.

Skalyndar

This modest coastal town is located in a relatively inaccessible bay and so can't handle much ship traffic, but it is famous for its fishing. Skalyndar is very insular, even along the coast, and stories are spread that witches and half-breeds dwell in the

midst of the town, to which the locals turn a blind eye. Visitors rarely report anything unusual, but then again, few every actually visit Skalyndar for very long, finding its dark, fog-shrouded cobblestone streets and dull, looming stone architecture to be unsightly and disturbing, while its people seem singularly hostile to outsiders on matters other than the trade of goods.

Valgorost

Unlike Carnash, Valgorost is located on a wide region of strong cliffs, but with hewn stonework done by dwarves to chisel roads out of those cliffs, allowing for access to the rough and narrow beaches below. For this reason Valgorost gets little in the way of sea trade, though coastal pentecosters from Carnash will make their way to the small city for the sale of goods or the export of lumber.

Valgorost is most famous for its lumber, the highly prized silverwood trees of the forest of the same name being its chief export. The locals are surprisingly reverent to the city, however, for they worship the memory of the "ten thousand" seraphs and the angelic Cascetar like gods. For this reason, only limited harvesting of the ancient woods are allowed, and of the rare silverwood itself, only dead trees are allowed. Still, one full log of fallen silverwood can be worth a thousand gold or more, and can be imported to the finest halls of the royalty of kings as far south as kalildante.

Valgorost is the center of activity for the Southern Watch, an order of marshals in the service of Aruthain who insure that the overland passages remain safe. The marshals of the Southern Watch maintain their station at Stonekeep, as well, and regularly lead small forces of armed soldiers and mercenaries in to the Garpagos Mountains against the orcs and other monsters that amass there for periodic strikes against the rule of man.

Tuel'Syndar

This colony of high elves dwells in a beautiful white-marbled city that has stood in the heart of the woods for ages. The high elves rule by democracy and have no leaders as such, though the gentle **lady**



Atraias is their voice to outsiders and matters that concern humans and other lesser races.

Tuel-Syndar is dedicated to the Seelie Court, and is one of the few high elf settlements to harbor a permanent place in the mortal world. The region around Tuel'Syndar is surprisingly cosmopolitan by fey standards, and smaller populations of other fey are integrated in to the communities that surround Tuel'Syndar proper, including nymphs, Halflings, gnomes, faeries and even wylden. The wylden in this region, ever mindful of their faith in the coming apocalypse, are faithful conscripts in the small militia that protects the city.

Orcs and other denizens of the dark are well aware of Tuel'Syndar's existence, and sacking the city would be a huge victory and almost certainly one that propelled an aspiring dark overlord's fame and infamy in to the history books. Three attempts in recent history have been made; a long-standing alliance between the folk of Tel'Syndar and the Southern Watch of Valgorost has insured that the humans will come to the aid of the elves should they need it, and vice versa.

There are other enemies of the Tuel'Syndar, as well. The green dragon king Grachas is a foul predator in the region, harrowing the elves and their kin periodically between his bouts of long slumber. His minions are many, a rag-tag assortment of chimerics who all hate the fey with a passion, and rumors that a clan of dark elves called the Anindar have allied with him only make the threat of the dragon worse. Unfortunately, no one in the last thousand years has figured out where Grachas and his foul gang lair within the forest. It would be a great victory for aspiring adventurers and heroes to uncover such knowledge or, better yet, to make use of it and defeat or subdue the dragon king and his minions!

Haradresh Ruins

This ruined city is at least five millennia old, and despite its age much of the ancient structures still stand nearly intact, a great maze of ancient walls and structures in which explorers could easily get lost. The walls of Haradresh are rumored to contain

many guardians, and even a few unwanted denizens, including dragons, verminous spiders and ancient forged golem sentinels, still vigilant in their duties.

At the heart of the city rests an immense ancient silver tree, the oldest of its kind, said to contain the actual spirit of the seraph Cascetar. Arboreal tree-men protect and care for this ancient tree, and are fearsome enough to stave off the many denizens of the ancient city who might otherwise seek to damage the sacred grove in which Cascetar's embodiment is planted.

The fate of this ancient city is a mystery. It is known that the city was built around the tree to honor the sacrifice of the seraph and the "ten thousand," who gave their lives to subdue and disincorporate the beast god Nom'Hakar, and that the city was spoken of in ancient texts as a fabulous center of worship for the Light. Beyond that, history has recorded little of its waning times, and no record exist of Haradresh's abandonment. Some scholars suspect the city's sense of goodwill among many religions inevitably led to strife and conflict, and that the abandonment of the location was mutual by all parties, explaining at least in part why the city remains so intact even to this day. Others contend that the radiance of so powerful a spirit of Cascetar was unbearable to mortals, and that they ultimately were forced to leave, for the holy grace of the angels burned mens' very souls. Today, only the ancient arboreal can remember that far back, and they aren't telling.

Ironscar

Centuries of assault from bored or determined orc raiders has turned Ironscar in to the most heavily fortified and well-defended garrison in Aruthain, able to stand against armies of monsters for months at a time, if need be. Agents of the Southern Watch often serve tours of duty here, and many demihuman communities send soldiers and militia to serve at the fortress, as well. The garrison at Ironscar includes humans, elves, dwarves, Halflings and other minor races, all dedicated to keeping the fortress strong and to test the mettle of the orcs of Garpagos. Ironscar itself has rulership appointed by



the king of Aruthain, and is presently commanded by General Gormskur, a half-orc warrior from distant Firepoint. This appointment led to a great deal of consternation despite Gormskur's reputation for heroics in the easterlands (he is said to have slain the Red Dragon lord nicknamed Frostbane in the middle of the city plaza after it tried to destroy the castle at Firepoint) but after five years and multiple successful campaigns against the orc hordes he has more than proven himself.

Stonekeep

Stonekeep is a bastion of defense for overland caravans and travelers, and a waypoint between the southlands of Denaes and Aruthain in the north. It also serves to keep the Grey God Pass open from the frequent attempts by orcs to stop passage through the region. Stonekeep's current castle lord is Tarm Denathas, a half-elf warrior wizard of no small repute. His reputation as a mage is offset by knowledge he is an elf, and most men see his elvish blood as sufficient to prevent his corruption, and no one ever questions his remarkable skill in battle or his tactical genius. He is known to have a good friendship with Gormskur of Ironscar Fortress.

Grey God Pass

The ferocious Grey God Pass is said to have been placed here by the god Sortor to test mortals, for the pass has an ancient reputation as difficult to cross and survive, due to the persistent efforts by orcs and other monsters to secure it against the use of humans. Caravans that pass through the pass (which takes usually 2-3 days to properly traverse) are always accompanied by well armed escorts from Stonekeep. At the center of the pass, along a high mountain ridge is said to be an ancient temple to Sortor, one the orcs do leave alone, for it is suspected that even they pay grudging respect to the grim god.

Garpagos Mountains

The Garpagos Mountains are the single largest gathering point for the many subterranean tribe of orcs, trolls, ogres and other malicious kindred of

darkness. In recent years three warlords have vied for control of the mountains, with the warlord **Anumac Bloodfist** seeming to have come out on top in recent months. Whenever the monsters of Garpagos gain new, strong leadership they are prone to erupt in violence, and so it is that the nearby Ironscar Fortress has long served to quell their uprisings with an equal level of violence. Still, the orcs by and large have the upper hand, and no dwarves ply these mountains, for all of the dwarven clans in the region were wiped out long ago.

The orcs of Garpagos have legend of their own, that a great demon spirit called **Sindusyr** arises once every seven centuries to act as guide to their greatest leaders and carry the orcs on to victory. The orcs are certain that the time for Sindusyr to return has come, and some suspect that Anumac Bloodfist may be in possession of the spirit, for a few have noticed that his wife, the witch **Anyma**, speaks in tongues often and appears to have been gifted with a demon spirit for guidance. The orcs do not see corruption as a dangerous thing like the humans do, but a wondrous acceptance, a binding of the mortal spirit with a dark soul that grants the host a touch of immortality and a place in the legions of darkness in the afterlife. Sindusyr is believed to be bound to Anyma to some, a sign that Anumac may be chosen. Others contend that if Anyma contains the spirit, she should be the true ruler. Time will tell how this pans out, for only orcish internal strife insures they do not unite into an unstoppable force.

Arundsmark

This modest river town is known for its local winter tubers and also for its refinery, where the coal is processed and sent out in barges along the river that is processed from the Blackhills mines.

Altendale

Altendale is a remote eastern township with a modest castle where the reclusive lord Darimath Zane rules. Occasional rumors that the bloodline of house Zane is tainted by demonic or infernal influence has never been fully confirmed, but the



secretive nature of the family does not help quell such rumors, either.

Nalidar

This riverport serves traffic both to the Bay of sindahar and to the Great Lake in the region of Maligon. It is a healthy mix of cultures, with the dour lake people and the more refined Aurthanic folk getting along well enough in the name of commerce.

Narador

Narador is the dwarven fortress from which five great dwarven clans rule the Eastern Mountains along the Greatwood. The dwarves of Narador are strong, so much so that they have all but wiped out the threat of goblin and orc incursion in their region, though in recent years they have grown complacent, such that patrols in the Deeps have sometimes come across evidence of their mortal foes or other monsters seeking once again to reclaim lost territory. The dwarven king of Narador is **Uldras**, who is ancient at three hundred years of age.

Calithar

This is the regional capital of the northern province of Aruthain, out of which Lord Drathan rules. The Province of Calithar is located eastward from the Sleeping Giant Mountains in a northwesterly corner of the kingdom of Aruthain, along the borderlands with the northern jarldoms. The highlord of this land is a man known for having equal parts fairness and brutality, and while his reputation is rather sinister among criminals and sorcerers, the people by and large regard him as a source of safety and stability in the land.

Ruins of Kerys

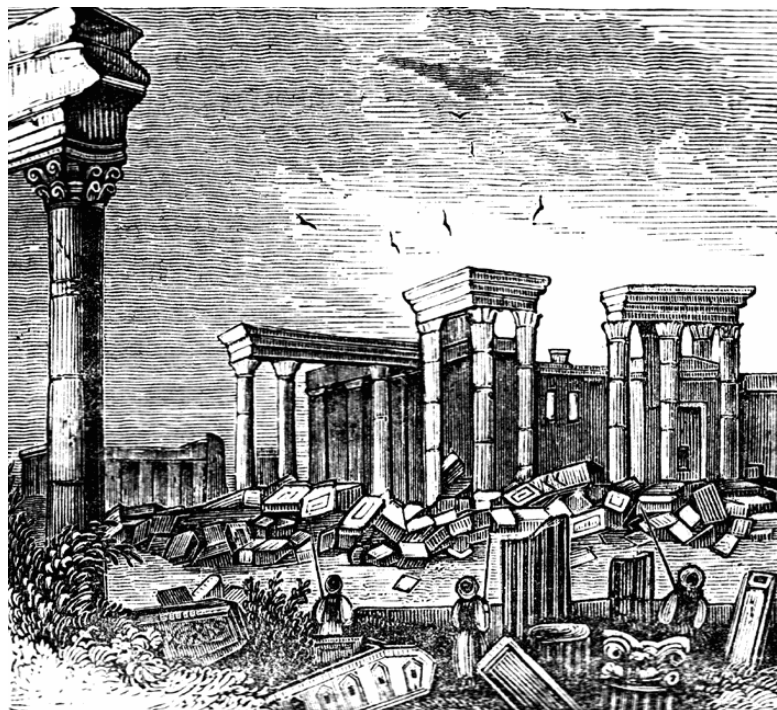
The ruins of this fabulous ancient city are an enigma to the land, but beneath the city are catacombs that stretch deep, down to the vast cavern where the ziggurat of Zeramath rests. The ruins are

inhabited by an array of beasts that have been called to the location under the siren call of Zeramath's servant, Shesiria.

The ancient ruins are a mystery to most, but close study may reveal to especially learned scholars that the last (and very long lived) king of the city was called Nevel'Hatar, a name that seems to stem from a demonic tongue according to some. The city clearly worshipped some entity, called Zeramath, and some of the depictions upon walls in the city's ancient temples suggest that this Zeramath's temple was located in a vast ziggurat, immense in size, yet somehow buried deep beneath the earth. This is, in fact, true; the lost Ziggurat of Zeramath is indeed almost a mile beneath the ground of Nerys, in a vast chamber containing the immense pyramidic temple, which also serves as a tomb and prison, though few save the enigmatic witch Shesiria know this fact.

Although there is a passage that allows access to the ziggurat through the ruins, it is especially treacherous. The only other means of reaching the chamber of the ziggurat is through a lengthy cavernous passage that begins in the catacombs and tombs beneath Lichemark in the north, winding its way through the underworld until it reaches the region beneath the ruins.

The door to the Tomb of Zeramath itself requires a





special key, one which only the priest of the Black Shrine knows the whereabouts of. With that key, the passage between this plane and the demi-plane prison of Zeramath would be breached...

Bleakwood

Much of the entire province is draped in this dark and chilly northern forest. Bleakwood is a necessary feature of the land, but locals shun traveling alone in the woods for fear of what lurks within. The Bleakwood is regarded with superstition by most locals, for it is believed that witches and warlocks are protected by the dark spirits of the woods, and that demons haunt the ancient, strangely groaning trees. Deep in the heart of the wood one can find the Ruins of Kerys, an enigmatic haunted city about which little is known.

On the northern end of the Bleakwood can be found Lake Astir, the Aruthanic word for “calm.” Legends say that an ancient elvish city once rested in the center of the lake, but that it sank beneath the waters when the ancient demon armies approached, and all of the elves were drowned.

Caliphar, the regional capitol is located on the eastern shores of the lake. Other local towns include Calm, Winter’s Rest (a famous hunting lodge) and Offrey.

The Giants’ Rest Mountains

These vast mountains in the north along the western spine of the province of Caliphar are known for the very giants after which they are named, although the northern regions are swarming with goblins in the region of Goblinsmark. Further south along the range is a hidden temple-shrine atop one of the highest mountain peaks called The Black Shrine, where it is said a mad cleric seeks to keep all away from the worship of whatever it is the shrine is dedicated to.

The northern stretch of the mountains include the highland lake of Loch Dramar, where an old dwarven fortress rests, called Highholm, the bastion of the Aganduar dwarves. At the base of the mountains and east of the loch is the human mining town of Kelton, from which activities related to several

human and dwarf-run mines in the region are managed.

Goblinsmark

The goblins and orcs dominate these mountains, battling frequently with the entrenched dwarves and humans of Loch Dramar. The mountains have always been a source of conflict between the underworld races of chaos and the local dwarves of the Aganduar Clan, who fiercely defend the region from goblin incursions, at least until recently.

Within the last few years a powerful goblin chieftain of the Goblinsmark named Scrot the Bold has arisen and he seems able to command an unusually large army. The goblins are growing bold, and have gained the trust of numerous other underworld creatures to bolster their army. Their attacks have forced the Aganduar clan to take refuge in their mountainous retreat called Highholm, and goblin scouting parties are becoming more and more frequent, moving through the Bleakwood to scrutinize the province of Caliphar for possible attack.

The Black Shrine

This nefarious temple is located at the high peak of the Giants Rest Mountains and is tended to by the enigmatic Lorrask, a priest of Sortor, who has been here for two decades, being tested by his god as keeper of the damnable place. The Black Shrine rests over an ancient cavern in which a Pool of Chaos can be found, a terrible portal to the black nether of the Abyss. It is inside this portal that the key to Zeramath’s door lies.

Any who journey to this remote, hidden location will be in for an unexpected encounter. A seraph guardian will step forth to task anyone who approaches; he seeks not to slay, but will force the defeated to the base of the mountain. He can only be bypassed with the right word, which comes from a Pillar at the center of the Ruins of Kerys, written in the ancient tongue of that lost civilization, but legible to any who hold the mysterious Amulet of Nevel’Hatar (an ancient artifact of the old wizard king of Kerys): “Sinsaith, Protect me.” Once said in



the original language, Sinsaith will allow passage. If the adventurers defeat him and his servants, he will reform in 24 hours with twice as many servants to try kicking them off the mountain again.

Kalios

This modest port city is located along the enigmatic Winterblight Swamps at a suitable modest bay, and benefits from trade with both Aruthain and other more southern kingdoms as well as the jarldoms of Kadoskar in the north.

Kalios is not very big, and not very habitable outside of its small stretch of land along the bay proper, for it is surrounded by the mysterious and decidedly unnatural Winterblight Swamps. Those who live here live off of trade or fishing, for the region itself is harsh on farming.

Winterblight Marshes

This region is (in contrast to the northern climate at which it is located) a murky bog that can often be frozen for months at a time during fall and winter. Unlike the Tundra Plains further south the region is usually murky and warm for at least part of the year, and some regions of the marshes are unnaturally warm and thawed year-round, due to volcanic heating in the region; unknown to most, the entire region is centered on a collapsed, active caldera. The last eruption in this region must have been before recorded history, however, for outside of stories about how the demon-king Nasifyr fell in this region, no one speaks of volcanic events or anything even remotely similar as happening.

The region does get its share of odd monstrous inhabitants, including a strange clan of degenerate gnomes, several tribes of trolls and ogres, and a remarkably large population of monstrous yetis that migrate to the region from northern climes seasonally.

Local townships from the rather reclusive people of this land include Etask, Sythar and Marshlight. There is a colony of curious wood elves who dwell in the community of Syvinvir.

Blackrock Hills and Agashar Caves

The Blackrock Hills are aptly named, for they are a source of very productive coal mines in the region. The townships of Tyber, Draeden, Draenos (in the hills proper) and Arundsmark (where much of the processing and shipping is done along inland trade routes) all profit from the mining in the region, as does Caliphar, which presides over the region.

Located in the Black Rock Hills, the Agashar Caves are actually a warren of draconians under the leadership of the gray dragon known as “Horsekiller” in the bitterfrost Plains where he favors roaming. His real name is **Nazdrol**. He is surrounded by a tribe of sycophantic kobolds of the Bittertooth Clan, and a handful of other draconian servants.

Bitterfrost Plains

Few men live in this region, mostly nomadic herdsmen who rely heavily on their reindeer and thick-coated winter horses for their lifestyles. In addition, patrols of human raiders from the jarldoms can be found here.

The single greatest threat is the infamous Gray Dragon Horsekiller, as he is called, a denizen who dwells in the Agashar Caves of the Blackrock Hills. Additional threats include northern orcs of the Frozenblade tribe who dominate the region from northern ice caves, as well as a pervasive problem with yetis, who get along with no one.

The Greatwood

Spanning nearly the whole of the center of the great continent, the mysterious Greatwood is a vast, trackless wilderness that runs northward from the frigid depths of Kadoskar down southward almost to the edge of the great southern deserts. Between this stretch is some of the least-populated swaths of land in the world, though some kingdoms which find their borders nestled along and within the Greatwood have kept garrisons and castles maintained in the region for centuries or longer. Ostensibly this is for the sake of tradition, as well as a recognition that the woods harbor strange monsters, said to have been birthed from the dark sorcery of the god Thanofar, some say. In reality, the tradition is much



more ancient, going back to the time of Agraphar himself, decreed by the First King and his descendants long ago. It is in fact the Greatwood where it is said that the general of Chaos's armies was slain by the True King, and within its great sylvan darkness the chaos hordes were at last routed, forced beneath the earth.

Those who have braved the Greatwood, either to seek out the far sides of the continent for overland trade and commerce or as adventurers can attest to the fact that the ruins of lost kingdoms can be found within its depths. Rumors of ancient cities that are dead by day but teeming with mysterious life at night have been told, though those who appear under moonlight appear to be bewitched, ghosts, or monstrous, depending upon the tale told. Still others claim ancient fey cities can be found, on occasion, within the Greatwood, and it is known that some elves, both seelie and unseelie, harken from their mysterious respective kingdoms of Tuel-Cunath and Yin-Drada in the dark of the woods.

Firepoint

This modest castle is the gateway to the mysterious Greatwood, and has a history thousands of years old. The people are very independent but consider themselves true members of the ancient empire of Malidante, and so recognize its current successor Aruthain as their nationality. That said, they act independent in all other ways, even declaring the Duke of Firepoint, **Monumar**, to be the Regent of the Eastern Empire, as they call him.

Firepoint is remote but well-defended, with its creeping architecture running along the steep walls of the Eastern Mountains, making it highly defensible. The city has a large population of dwarves in addition to humans, and they regularly mount raids on the underworld to slaughter orcs and keep the underworld population down.

Firepoint is also the home of the Thornblades, a select order of rangers who see to the protection and observation of the vast Greatwood and its mysteries. The Thornblades are the only foreigners trusted to enter the walls of Yin'Drada, the unseelie fey capitol.

Yin'Drada

The capitol of the unseelie fey in the mortal realm, and the bridge by which one can reach the fey realm through the mortal plane without casting dark rituals to do so. Yin'Drada is dominated by high elves, satyrs, half-giants and other fey who have aligned themselves faithfully with the Three Sisters, also called by many the Sisters of Misery or the Three Hags. They are all believers in the manifest destiny of the unseelie to rule over the lesser races, those beings who choose mortality, and dwell in Yin'Drada to fulfill the will of the three dark demigoddesses.

Yin'Drada is unfriendly to unannounced foreigners, giving quarter only to agents of the Thornblades from Firepoint, and those who the rulers of Yin'Drada have been expecting. Yin'Drada's regent is the Winter Queen, **Nerada**, and her consort, the Satyr **Madioc**. Visitors who offend Nerada are usually put to death, painfully. Visitors who offend—or even draw the unwanted attention!—of Madioc are often found captured as his playthings, cast in to dark arena games or forced to indulge in excesses until they burst from gluttony and lust.

Despite its dreadful reputation Yin'Drada has been little threat to other powers in the region outside of its sphere of influence in the Greatwood, but rumors are always bandied about that this will soon change. Nerada's Frost Knights, high elves who swear an life oath to her have been seen riding through human lands in recent years on mysterious errands, and unseelie fey of all sorts have been manifesting in other regions normally reserved for the more gentle and benevolent seelie kin.





The Lakemen of Maligon

Maligon is a remote kingdom that while not terribly large is dominated by three small cities who all recognize their blood relations and swear fealty to the King of the Lakemen, **Arigost**. The key cities of the lakemen include Astanar, Varadesh and Goldras, all fo which are situated around the Great Lake of Maligon. The title of the kingdom comes from the first Lakeman to colonize the region, it is said, a great hunter and fisherman who led his people from the deeps of the north during a time of a long winter to a plentiful land (by Maligonian standards!) in the region of the Great Lake.

Astanar

Astanar, like the other lakeside cities, is known for its fishing and timber. The city is ruled by Lord Karadash, a benevolent fellow who works hard to insure Astanar gets as much trade as possible from other lands, to help his people prosper.

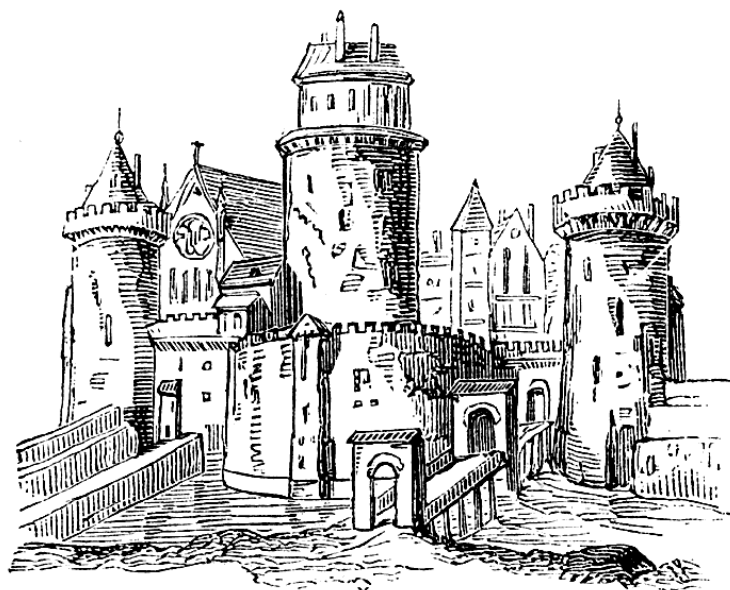
Varadesh

Varadesh is the capitol of the Lakemen, and where King Arigost sits upon his throne. Varadesh has the largest military, which is often exercised in border skirmishes with the Kardskan jarls of the north, who frequently like to raid the region. The army occasionally assembles to squelch threats from the Greatwood, when word of beastmen or darker monsters assembling gets around.

Goldras

Goldras is located along the southern shores of the Great Lake and is ruled by lord Hamerist, a dedicate to the god Shamanzat, and his city is known for its amazing metalworks. Most of the mining that supports Goldras comes from the Eastern Mountains, or the distant Bell Hills, deep in the Greatwood. The men who do the mining often tale strange tales of things encountered in the hills so deep in the

Greatwood. Goldras is also the only human city in recent memory to be accosted by the unseelie of Yin'Drada. About one hundred and fifty years ago the city as assaulted and in a day and a night it was overtaken, though with minimal bloodshed. Hamerist's own great grandfather was forced to bow before Queen Nerada and King Madioc and swear fealty to them, after which the unseelie left, though each year a single Frost Knight will appear at the gates of Goldras and demand tribute, though such tribute is almost always in the form of art and fancy weapons commissioned specially for the event by local smiths and merchants. The event has since become a holiday tradition among the people, though Hamerist and others worry that one day Yin'Drada will appear and demand of Goldras much, much more.





Jarldoms of Western Kadoskar

The northmen of Kadoskar are not united save by culture, and though they often fight amongst one another they can just as quickly rally in to a large force to defend their homelands from foreign invaders. There are a few key jarldoms in the region near Aruthain that cause problems, including the Elisphar, who regard overland raiding as a sport, and the Gonden of the deep north coast, who regularly commit to raids along the coastlands of their southern neighbors all the way down to Denaes, Shandros and beyond.

Gonden

Located north of the Calithar province, the Gonden are composed chiefly of small coastl townships and keeps, made up mostly of men who are very good at three things: making ships, making weapons, and raiding foreign lands. Not much of them is known, culturally, beyond their fierce dedication to the gods Armacus, Mincordas and Yvak.

Elisphar

Elisphar is an inland city, where the great Jarl Drommol Gar rules with an iron fist. His overland raiders are despised in Maligon, with which Elisphar regularly wars.

Lake Darad

This lesser lake is ostensibly in the territory of Elisphar, but its people are spiritually closer to the men of Maligon, and often seek to rebel against the rule of Elisphar. There are no meaningful cities or even strong towns in the region, as most of the lake people in this area live in small migratory villages, and often head south to trade with the Great Lake people in the winter. They always return in the spring, though, for they have a deep cultural connection to Lake Darad itself, and refuse to leave it in the hands of the Elispharic Kardaskans.

Nimdar

Nimdar is a captive city, with a dominant population of Kadoskar natives in thrall to Aruthanic leadership. The city fell twenty years ago, and many of Kadoskar warrior clans shamed themselves by accepting gold in exchange for the sacking of Lichemark in the north. Though the Kadoskar disliked the necromancers of the Lichemark as much as any, they nonetheless were well protected by the dark sorcerers and since that time the ruined city has become a much greater threat.

Nimdar is currently under provincial rule of Caliphar, and falls under the dominion of Lord Drathan. Drathan placed his son, Tanos Drathan in charge of Nimdar, and his son in turn cemented many allegiances with the locals by marrying the Kadoskar princess Jradda. Both elder and younger Drathan keep the old Fortress of Crotus under careful watch, with a garrison of his men stationed deep in the territory north of foul Lichemark at Fort Aproximas, near the base of the high peak on which Crotus sits. Tanos Drathan spends at least four months out of the year at this garrison, hunting in the North Mountains for Ice Worms. He often hires professional hunters and guides to assist him. This infuriates his father, who feels he is not dedicated enough to the cause of exterminating all traces of the foul necromancers in the region.





Lichemark

Here rests the ruined city of Crotus the Devourer and his necromancers, where a five year siege took place. The region is still rife with undead, though allegedly its necromancer lords have been slain for many years. Treasure hunters who have entered the city and returned to tell tales speak of many intelligent undead, as well, including a lich named Varimoth, who is known in records from several decades back to have been an apprentice and acolyte under the dreaded Crotus.

Solsfar Keep, not far from Lichemark, is a perpetual monument to the evil of the region, and paladin-templars from the keep regularly make excursions in to the region to cull the undead population. They are concerned that no matter what their efforts, there always seem to be more undead each year.

Solsfar Keep

This garrison of knights and paladins are all united by their dedication to Ymaltar, the Sun Fury, and their zealous desire to destroy the undead of the Lichemark. Solsfar does not discourage adventurers and treasure hunters from approaching the haunted city, and instead often funds such expeditions in order to learn details of what is transpiring, so that **Lord Kassimus** who leads the garrison can best plan the next action against the undead of the Lichemark, as it is his sacred duty to keep the undead at bay. Kassimus knows the history of Lichemark, and does not believe that the destruction of the city nor the history of its famous rule under Crotus and his necromancers can account for the continuous plague of undead that seep from its walls. He feels there is a deeper evil responsible, perhaps buried beneath the city in the underworld, though he has yet to find actual proof.

Castle Crotus

This was the last bastion of defense for the ancient necromancer, a high unassailable locale that still stands on the precipice of a great cliff high in the mountains. Though the paladins and templars of the Sun Fury stormed

the castle decades ago with Highlord Drathan and supposedly cast Crotus from the parapets to his doom, the castle remains unoccupied and haunted to this day. Local villagers fear it, and leave offerings at a dark shrine at the base of the mountain to supplicate the ghost of Crotus.

This castle is indeed still dominated by Crotus himself, who is a ghost manifest. His castle is full of undead, slowly being raised by his sheer force of will. Crotus, should he ever be interrogated, might feel kindly toward those seeking information, enough so to let them know about the mystery of Zeramath, and of the rumors that an ancient key can be found to unlock the secrets of the Ruins of Kerys and the being within. He also knows of the tunnels beneath Lichemark that can reach the subterranean ziggurat. He knows that the key can be used in two ways: to unlock the door to Zeramath's domain, or to seal it forever, banishing Zeramath forever from the realm of Agraphar. He will help the adventurers if they promise him two things: first, to find his remains in Lichemark and bring them to Castle Crotus; second, to avenge himself against his traitorous acolyte and student, Varimoth! He can provide them with a special device to aid them in the second task: a dagger designed to disincorporate the young lich....





The Wastelands of Denaes

Nonfyrian Desert

The vast Nonfyrian Desert is difficult to cross by almost all save native Denaes, who make a killing off of serving as guides and protectors to foreign caravans moving through the land. Besides the mercilessly dry desert that gets blazing hot by day and frigid by night (as cold or colder than the glacial north, some say) it is also rife with terrible predators, monstrous beings that seem to sustain themselves off of whatever prey, often human, they can lay claim to.

Saudanar

This is the grand capitol of Denaes, ruled by the mysterious Nine, a collection of powerful regional clan lords and merchant princes who could never agree upon a common king, and so instead chose the site of Saudanar long ago as a center point of exchange and commerce.

Aelendar

The easternmost port city of the region, Aelendar is dominated by one so called bandit prince, a rogue among the clans of Denaes named Sarpask, who refused to answer to the Seven Lords of Saudanar.

The Ruinlands of Goldranar

Legends of this vast, uninhabitable monster-filled land are that the people grew wicked and corrupt, embracing the darkness and its vile ways, and Ymaltar and his army of seraphs descended from the heavens and wiped them out. Adventurers describe the many ruins in this region as full of impressive, oft unguarded loot just begging to be found and sold, though curiously a great many robbers in the region meet untimely deaths due to the enormous number of monstrosities that call the region home. Rumors of at least one dragon lord in the

region, a Blue Dragon called Vykras the Sandweaver are also whispered.

Gardanath

The only city of Denaes in the vast region of the ruinlands, Gardanath is ruled by an elderly council of the local clans, and relies heavily on trade and fishing to make up for the destitute wasteland it is adjacent to.

The Draniric Wilderness

This immense wilderness is unlike the frigid northern forests, being in a warmer climate. It is harsher, as well, and no less tamed. It is the heart of the vast dark elf empire of Dranir.

Azdradar

This multicultural capitol is feared by many, for it is ruled by the vile dark elves of Dranir, who seized it two centuries ago from the once great human empire of Madan. Now, most lesser races are subject to the rule of the Dymachas-worshipping dark elves, and other fey are persecuted or destroyed if they enter the region of this city.

Scar

This remote island free port is favored by pirates and criminals for its lack of laws, but it is otherwise regarded as a useful place for ships who carry no national flag to find safe harbor.



The Island Kingdom of Shandros

Telyndir

Shandros is a remote kingdom, dominated by a wild and uncouth barbarian folk who call themselves the Shadiir, but with a core population of extremely civilized gentry in the city of Telyndir. The Telyndiri rule Shandros, and rely on paid armies to protect themselves from their own population, though it is hardly necessary, for the Shadiir regard them as not unlike gods. The Telyndir are one of the rare cultures that actively embraces sorcery in the region, such that traders of Aruthain known to drop anchor near the “city of the damned” are carefully inspected back home by the clergy of Ymaltar for signs of corruption.

Telyndir itself is ruled by the so-called Thurian queen Mysatra, said to be a true tiefling. Many half-breeds and races of dubious nature are welcome in Telyndir itself where other lands would cast them out or destroy them; it is an anathema in this land.

The mysteries of Telyndir deepen when those versed in conventional theological lore arrive and discover that the city itself does not teach the sacred scripts of Ymaltar or any other recognized gods, instead relying on a so-called Codex Immortalis, which the official state religion claims is a tomethat tells mortals how to achieve the status of purity and how to excise the spirits of the beyond from their souls, both of the seraphs and the demons. They teach that mankind was created to serve only as puppets and vessels for these beings beyond, and that the gods are merely powerful agents serving their own causes; light and dark they say are falsehoods; there is only

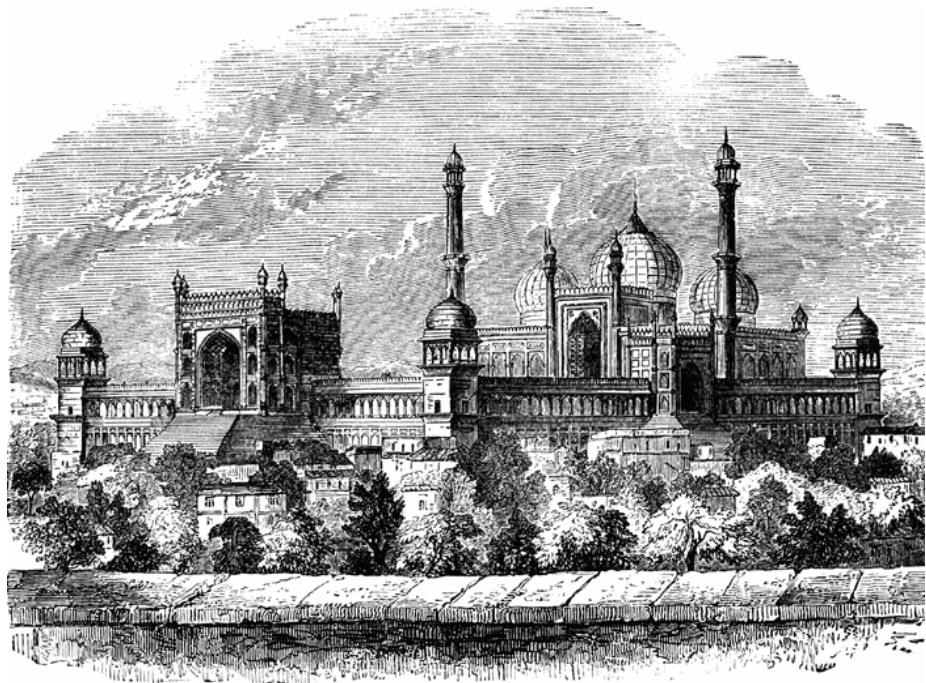
grey. Needless to say, such teachings outside of Telyndir are seen as heresy, punishable by death.

Sea of Ymaltar

This region is famous for its pirates, for the bulk of northerly trade flows through this region.

The Free Port of Arak

Arak is a free port, located along the northwestern tip of the Archean Peninsular, which connects to Kalidante to the south as well as other nations inland, and it is the first major port after Carnash along the great coastal trade routes.





IX. The Doom of Zeramath

The Doom of Zeramath is an adventure location designed for a party of varied levels, although it provides ample opportunities for new adventurers to explore and develop. Higher levels will find plenty of challenges in the region as well. It is set in the Province of Calithar, the northernmost province of the kingdom of Aruthain, along the border of the northern lawless jarldoms of Kadoskar.

The following scenario works in conjunction with the gazetteer, where the specific locations in on the map of the province are detailed. The adventure location provides a list of suggested encounters, key NPCs, and plot hooks as well as the outline diabolical master plot by an ancient cabal of witches and warlocks who seek to usurp the land from its bloody but fair ruler. This adventure is written “sandbox style,” which is to say it tells you the underlying plot, gives you suggested possible locations and personalities in the region.

Adventure Background

The Province of Calithar is located eastward from the Sleeping Giant Mountains in a northwesterly corner of the kingdom of Aruthain, along the borderlands with the northern jarldoms. The highlord of this land is a man known for having equal parts fairness and brutality, and while his reputation is rather sinister among criminals and sorcerers, the people by and large regard him as a source of safety and stability in the land.

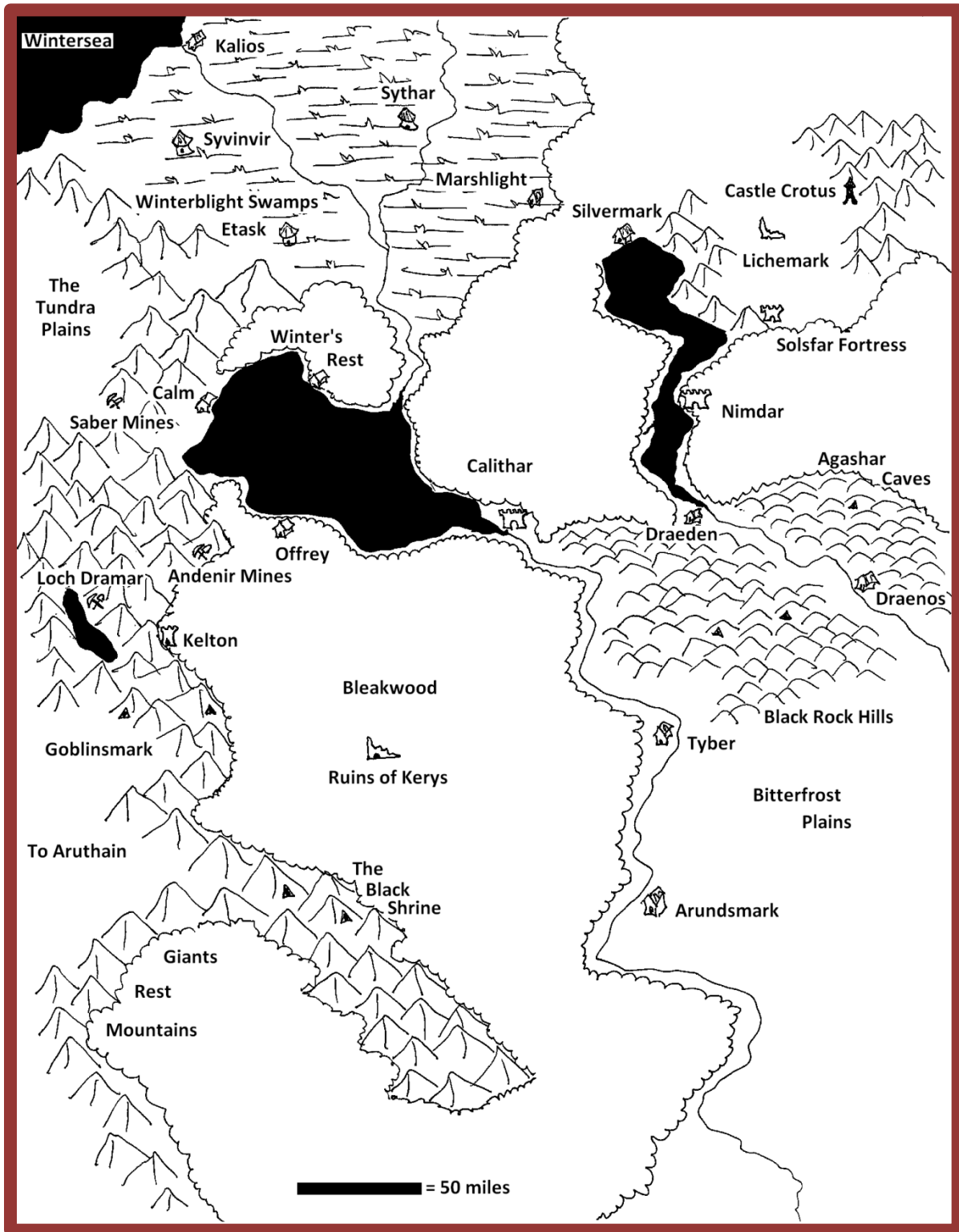
Recently, a cult of warlocks and witches has moved in to the region, after migrating here from southerly lands. Their leader is a mysterious seer named Aramus of the Third Eye, and he is following a vision gifted to him by the demonic taint of performing too much magic. In this vision, he has been introduced to a dark spirit called Zeramath, an ancient entity that has lurked beneath the province for untold eons. Zeramath recently awakened a mere two decades ago, during a time when much blood was spilt in the province during the Border Wars. A witch

An Adventure Location in Aruthain

named Shesiria sought for reasons of her own to aid the northmen of the jarldom of Nimdar, and used her magic to slay the highlord’s father. Later, she sought refuge with the necromancer of Lichemark, but even he fell before the vengeful might of the young new highlord. In the end, she fled to the caverns beneath Lichemark, where she wandered for several years, until she at last stumbled upon a vast chamber in which someone had constructed an immense ziggurat. Here, she discovered a monument and tomb to an incredibly ancient, powerful being that lay slumbering. Her presence touched upon its vast and dark mind, lurking comatose in the nether-realms of the Dream Time, and the mind of Zeramath once again began to dream.

Now, years later, no one knows what ever happened to the witch Shesiria, these mysterious cultists have begun to appear in the land, and monstrous denizens from the underworld are raiding towns once more with alarming frequency. The highlord is alarmed; his natural dislike of sorcery is enough as it is, but knowing that diabolists walk among his own people is enough to bring him to rage. A bounty has been placed on the heads of all known cultists or any sorcerer who shows evidence of corruption or diablerie. Witch hunts are brewing in the province, tempered only by the fact that any prisoners turned over for a reward must either be alive or if not then it is up to their slayers to provide evidence of diablerie.

In the midst of this comes a party of adventurers, who may be native heroes seeking to make a name for themselves, or perhaps foreigners from another region of the world who have arrived by ship recently at the small port of Kalios along the coast of the Wintersea, where their captain has decided to settle down for three months while he waits for the winter storms to blow over. Luckily a riverboat is available to ferry the heroes upriver if they so desire, through the swamps to the capitol of the province, Calithar.



The Province of Calithar



Adventurer Hooks

There are a variety of possible reasons to lure adventurers in to the province of Calithar, of which one or more could be used, depending upon how many players are in the group and how many hooks would be needed to tie them all in to the action; for best results, write down or print out the hooks on 3X5 index cards and hand them out (randomly if you like) to the players, and let them “introduce” their plot elements through the course of play:

Born and raised in Calithar: You’re a Calithar native, and your family has been part of the province for generations. You are firmly loyal to highlord Vatarios, and would give your life in the defense of house Drathan. Recently you have heard the call for brave men and women to bear arms against the threat of evil cultists in the land, and you are determined to prove your worth before the highlord. The bonus of 1,000 gold to anyone who brings the head of the cult before the highlord for trial is no small motivating factor, either...

The Foreigner: You’re a foreigner who’s either arrived by happenstance in the province of Calithar, or was perhaps stranded when your ship dropped anchor of the coast from the town of Kalios with no plans to leave for several weeks during the peak trade season. While wandering about the port, you have spotted posters demanding that a mysterious cult of witches be stopped from engaging in “diablerie most foul,” and they’re paying well: 1,000 gold pieces for someone to root out the leader of this cult and bring the wizard before the highlord for justice.

Agent of the Crown: You’re an agent of the crown of Aruthain and you answer directly to the high Chancellor Gormhast, head of domestic affairs in the capitol. Your journey has been long and hard, but at last you’ve set foot on land in the port of Kalios, where you are to search the province of Calithar for a wanted criminal, the wizard Arathus of the Third Eye, who was one of three caballists belonging to a demonic cult of Dymachas that was recently

uprooted in the very heart of the capitol. He’s been missing for two years, but recent rumors of a coven of witches in Calithar have surfaced, led by a mysterious “Lord of the Third Eye.” Your job as a king’s agent is to gather the necessary resources to find and hunt down this traitor, and deal with him in a manner most suited to his vile kind.

The Uncle: Although you grew up in the province of Calithar you’ve not been home in many years. Recently you received a letter from your uncle, the elder Gerosh Draegan, a wealthy merchantman of Calithar, whom you have not heard from since you were a child. Apparently he is deeply worried about his daughter, your cousin Stephanie, who he fears has fallen in with a strange cult that has sprung up in the area. He has heard of your exploits abroad, and begged you to come home, to help set your cousin a’right. How could you resist family? You also know Draegan is a generous man, and may be willing to compensate you for your time.

The Treasure Hunter: On your last delve you stumbled across an ancient treasure map, which you pried from the bony fingers of some ancient mummified chieftain deep in a haunted barrow mound (or so the local told you). This map indicated a fabulous treasure, accompanied by the usual ancient curse, in a subterranean cavern where a temple to the lost god Zeramath is said to have been buried eons ago...

Vanquisher of evil: You are a dedicated crusader of good, and you try to quench evil wherever it might lay in the name of the Sun Fury or any other gods that oppose the darkness of chaos. Recently you had a profound vision when the image of the fabled seraph Atrenios appeared before you, directing you to travel northeast, to the province of Calithar, to stop an incredible evil from awakening, before it is too late...

There are no doubt many other possible motivations one could apply to the characters; pick from those above, or devise those which seem more appropriate to your gang of misfit delvers!



Major Personalities of Calithar

There are several important personalities in the region, who all play a possible part in the dark play that is unfolding in the province. First up, the highlord himself, a possible ally or patron to the PCs:

Highlord Vatarios Drathan, the Slayer of Lichemark

Human Warlord of Aruthain; **Level 8 Fighter**; Lawful; Male, 6'4", 225 lbs. age 44; sandy brown hair and beard with streaks of gray; rugged good looks, a weathered "younger than his years suggest" quality, and a haunted look in his eyes.

HD 8; HP 59, AC 3 [16], Atk Greatsword+1 1D10+1; Move 12, Save 7, Special as fighter

Vatarios Drathan is sometimes also called "The Butcher of Calithar," after a province that rests between the Giants Rest Mountains and the border between Aruthain and the Kadoskaric jarldom of Nimdar. He earned his reputation twenty years earlier during the border wars, when he was given control of the province after his father fell in battle to the witch woman Shesiria. Since then, Vatarios managed to drive back the northmen invaders and sought out the woman who first enchanted and then slew his father. Shesiria had traveled north, where she took refuge in the region of Lichemark, a region crawling with undead under the control on the necromancer Crotus the Devourer. As the story goes, Vatarios invaded with a force of his own men plus northern mercenaries he had paid off after the sacking of Nimdar, where he engaged in a protracted siege against the necromancer and his shambling minions. The battle lasted for five years, and it was not until Vatarios pledged his servitude to the church of the Sun Fury that he gained the aid of the fanatical templars and was able to at last storm Crotus's fortress and overthrow his reign over Lichemark. Only one mystery remained, however; the witch that he sought revenge against had disappeared, and was never found again.

Vatarios today is older and wiser but still said to be a madman on the field of battle. He is obsessed with keeping his kingdom clean of heresies and monsters, and will readily hire adventurers to seek out rumors

of such and put them down. Although he is ostensibly only the ruler of the province of Calithar, he has continued to exert influence in the jarldom of Nimdar where his son Tanos Drathan is married to the Kadoskar princess Jradda, and he keeps the old Fortress of Crotus under careful watch, with a garrison of his men stationed deep in the territory of foul Lichemark.

Vatarios earns his titles of slayer and butcher from his reputation for ruthlessness against his enemies, but he is also notorious for hunting and killing known wizards and witches in his lands. Although he holds a grudging respect for some sorcerers, it is generally frowned upon, and his deep-seated hatred of the woman who slew his father has left him bitter towards all practitioners of magic.

Vatarios can serve as a patron or enemy to the PCs, depending upon what they get up to in his realm. Wizards and other spell casters might have more to fear from him, or at the very least will have to prove themselves to a greater degree than the fighters, rangers and other adventurers in the party. Vatarios most strongly respects holy men, especially those dedicated to the god Ymaltar, to whom he converted some years ago after the templars of that order impressed him with their fanatical dedication to the destruction of evil.

Aramus of the Third Eye

Human Warlock of Aruthain; **Level 6 Magic User**; Chaotic; Male, 5'5", 155 lbs. age 62; balding, with pallid, varicose skin, sallow eyes and numerous earrings, rings and jewels upon his person. He wears dark purple robes and has a foul odor.

HD 6; HP 19, AC 6 [13](bracers of defense AC 6), Atk dagger 1D4; Move 12, Save 10, Special as magic user; **Spells Prepared:** charm person X2, magic missile, detect magic, invisibility, stinking cloud, lightning bolt, slow

Minions: 2D6 chaotic human clerics (1D3 levels each)

Aramus of the Third Eye is a notorious villain in the realms of Aurthain. He once founded the so-called "Cult of the New Darkness" in the Capitol itself, and instigated years of worship of the dreaded god

Dymachas, a being so hideously evil that feverish worship and sacrifice can lead to a shattering of the dimensional walls, allowing vile entities from beyond time and space to seep in to reality to corrupt and destroy it. Although his order was at last put down, Aramus escaped, and fled northward, until he at last came to a small cave in which the vile dark elf druidess Phaedra lurked. Here, he rested and recovered from the wounds inflicted upon him by the Agents of the Crown when he had escaped, and was fed strange brews by the mysterious druidess, that led him to both heal and experience profound visions. In one such vision he saw the temple of Zeramath, and felt the sublime dreams of that ancient mind calling to him. Aramus became obsessed, and through her fascination for him so too did Phaedra.

Aramus now operates his cult within the province, seeking the elusive Ziggurat of Zeramath, deep beneath the bowels of the earth. He has determined that the dark god plans to impart a portion of its infernal essence in to a newborn child, and that this child will soon be born, acting as the voice and body of the deity, allowing the cult to find his tomb at last. Presently his cultists are seeking out this child, which according to the divinations should be born any day now.

Aramus has taken over a wing of the ancient elvish ruins of Kerys, and relies on Phaedra to provide him with dark elves to help in searching the underworld. His human cult followers move throughout the surface world, and he has sent his most trusted agents to the Goblinsmark to recruit mercenaries from among the foul goblinoids of the mountains.

Phaedra the Dark Druidess

Female dark elf druid of the Hags; **Level 5 Druid**; Chaotic; 5'2" 95 lbs., dark-skinned woman with one eye and silver hair.

HD 5; HP 26, AC 4 [15](Dex 16, leather+2), Atk staff 1D6; Move 12, Save 11, Special as druid; Spells

Prepared: faerie fire, locate animals, detect magic, heat metal, warp wood, pyrotechnics

Minions: 1D6 giant centipedes

Phaedra is Aramus's right-hand agent and protector, blinded by love for him and his dark obsession. Phaedra has also seen the visions, and believes that Zeramath is important to the dark schemes of the Hags. She is obsessed with seeing the visions through and unleashing the might of Zeramath, to aid Aramus in his scheme.



Shesiria, Witch-Queen of Zeramath

Female human of Aruthain, Level 6 magic user; Chaotic; 5'6", 115 lbs., pale woman with shocking red hair and very gaunt, sickly looking. She has the spark of madness in her eyes, as if the taint has left her a woman possessed.

HD 6; HP 15, AC 8 [11](Dex 16), Atk darts 1D3 with poison (save or paralyzed 1D6 minutes); Move 12, Save 10, Special as magic user; Spells Prepared: charm person, sleep, shield, detect magic, invisibility, web, clairvoyance, suggestion
Minions: 2D6 orcs and 1D6 wolves

Shesiria has been under the domination of Zeramath for decades now, and there is very little left of her original personality, even though she was a loyal servitor from the beginning. She has



moments of lucidity where she awakens to the realities of her controlling force, and in these moments she may be a boon to any adventurers seeking to put an end to Zeramath’s awakening. She knows that his dark spirit speaks to the mortal world through the remnants of a fabulous device, for example, a crystalline communicator that allows for transmissions between the planes. Without this (very heavily guarded device) he is silent...

Plot Hooks in Calithar:

Dark God’s Escape: Shesiria discovers that the key she has been seeking exists, and that the priest of the Black Shrine knows its whereabouts. She sends forth minions to find this stranger and his shrine, which are very carefully guarded secrets.

Vengeful Ghost: Crotus the Damned seeks to restore himself to life; he is a ghost haunting the ruins of his castle presently, though he can manifest briefly in Lichemark as well. To achieve this task, Crotus needs vengeance upon the man and his family who did this to him!

The Third Eye: Aramus and Phaedra now seek the Ziggurat of Zeramath, but they need allies they can trust, and may seek out evil PCs to this end, or PCs of magical persuasion. Being rebuffed just puts the PCs on his enemy list.

Aramus will ultimately seek out the key to Sirador’s tomb, to unlock it and steal the dark entity’s power in the name of Dymarchas. He will eventually learn that Zeramath is an ancient prehuman brother to Dymarchas, who was cast down by the dark god long ago in a time when the lords of darkness were establishing their rulership in the Abyss.

Horsekiller: The Gray Dragon Horsekiller has made a reputation for himself. His draconian cults grow bold, raiding human townships and stealing all they can while proclaiming that the Hour of the Dragon is at hand. The townsfolk need help!

Goblin Army: A powerful goblin chieftain of the Goblinsmark named Scrotus the Bold has arisen and he seems able to command an unusually large army. They have heard rumors (from the agents of Aramus seeking word on the location of Zeramath’s ziggurat) that there is a great power beneath the earth, and rumors of monsters congregating at the Ruins of Kerys has led him to believe it is there! He marches, sewing war in his wake...

Encounters in Calithar

What follows are a variety of suggested monstrous encounters in the region of Calithar. Additional details on each region can be found in the Gazetteer of Agraphar; as befitting a “wander where you will” environment, PCs should be reminded by the GM that they can potentially get in over the heads, and retreat is never dishonorable against insurmountable odds!

Winterblight Swamps:

Trouble in Sythar: the town locals are under siege from small, horrendously vile blue-skinned goblins, as they describe it. The problem has been ongoing for weeks, and the last party of mercenaries they hired to find and kill the beasts disappeared. No one knows why the beings are attacking, but they will pay 500 gold to the adventurers to stop the assault.

Encounter: Redcap Goblin Raiding Party

The PCs may stumble across a gang of redcap goblins, also called chaos goblins (OE Reloaded Monster Book) raiders while investigating. 4D6 redcap goblins will be in the attack party **HD** 1d6hp; **AC** 6[13]; **Atk** 1 bite (1d6); **Move** 9; **Save** 17; **CL/XP** 1/15; **Special:** Vicious healing, -1 to hit in sunlight.

Vicious Healing: redcap goblins receive bonus HP equal to the damage they deal.

Redcap Hideout: The redcap cavern includes a fiery idol of flowing molten gold, around which they will dance and cavort madly, proclaiming their infernal love for dread “Zeramath.” The following are all of

the cavern's occupants, which may be encountered all at once or separately, depending on how cautious the PCs are.

Encounter Location: The Redcap Cavern

8D6 redcap goblins

1 redcap goblin high priest (4 HD; **Spells:** *detect good, protection from good, silence 15 foot radius*)

2D6 giant frogs (OE Reloaded Monster Book)

Giant Frog (small): HD 1; AC 7[12]; Atk 1 bite (1d3);

Move 3 (or 150ft leap); **Save** 17; **CL/XP** 1/15; **Special:**

Leap, swallow

Leap: up to 100 feet and 20 feet high

Swallow: on a natural 20; victim perishes in 3 rounds unless armed with a bladed weapon (18 or better attack roll cuts free immediately)

1D20 Other Possible Swamp Encounters:

1-5	2D6 normal swamp goblins
6	1 black dragon (age category 1D4)
7-9	1D4 northern crocodiles
10	1 hydra (5 hit die)
11-13	1D3 gray oozes
14-16	1 semi-friendly 7 HD shambling mound
17-20	1D8 giant frogs

In Goblinsmark:

There are a lot of goblins, hobgoblins, ogres and trolls here. Orcs stay away mostly, dwelling much deeper in the mountain; they fear **Scrot the Bold** and his mighty army. Any number of strange encounters with the goblinoid army's recruits could happen in this region!

Bleakwood:

Much of the entire barony is draped in this dark and chilly northern forest. Bleakwood is a necessary feature of the land, but locals shun traveling alone in the woods for fear of what lurks within. Some example encounters:

Elf Clan: Elves have emerged in the deep woods and are on the hunt. These elves are unsympathetic to humans, and are presently seeking out the strange beasts and demons that are answering the witch-

queen of Zeramath's call to the Ruins of Kerys, hunting such beasts.

Encounter: Elf Hunting Party

The elves will likely begin stalking the PCs and then attack if they do not see evidence of good intentions, though a charismatic effort to quell their fears may win them over.

2D4 elvish warriors

1D4 elvish magic users

1D6 trained wolves

Encounter: Goblin Advance Squadron

The goblins of Goblinsmark are patrolling the region as advanced scouts for the army of **Scrot the Bold** and capturing one or more alive might lead to valuable information on their intentions, info which could save lives.

4D8 goblin fighters

1D3 goblin captains (3 hit dice each)

1D6 goblin magic-users (level 1D3 each)

Other Encounters: The Call of Zeramath

Many strange beasts wander through the Bleakwood seeking out the visions of power and darkness Zeramath offers for their allegiance. They are utterly hostile to anyone not of their own kind. GM's should allow for a 30% chance of wandering encounters for every four hours that adventurers move through the Bleakwood.

In the Sleeping Giant Mountains:

The mountains harbor many dangerous beasts, including goblin patrols, errant kobolds, and occasional orc and dark elf raiders. Dwarves and various giants are to be found here, as well. Roll once per hour for a 50% chance of an encounter on the wilderness hills & mountainous terrain chart.

Around the Black Shrine:

There are no specific encounters around the black shrine, but strange things will happen en route. As indicated in the gazetteer, a seraph guardian will challenge any who dare approach the Black Shrine, seeking to defeat (though not kill!) the intruders and

drive them down the mountain. Only the words written upon the ancient Amulet of Nevel'Hatar (found in the Ruins of Kerys) will quell the seraph's anger.

Encounter: The Seraph Sinsaith

The Seraph Sinsaith (seraph guardian)
4 lesser seraph

Seraph Guardian: lawful; HD 7; AC 0[20]; Atk 1 holy longsword+3 (1d8+3; double damage vs. chaotic); **Move** 12, double flying; **Save** 9 (+2 vs. magic); **CL/XP** 13/2,300; **Special:** Holy Word once per day; speak with dead at will, suggestion 3/day, summon 1D8 lesser seraph once/day

Seraphs are powerful winged angelic beings that

server the gods of order. Sinsaith is one particular example of a seraph guardian.

Lesser Seraph: lawful; HD 3; AC 2[18]; Atk 1 holy strike (1d6; double damage vs. chaotic); **Move** 12; fly double; **Save** 14 (+2 vs. magic); **CL/XP** 5/240; **Special:** cure light wounds 3/day; speak with dead at will, suggestion 1/day

Lesser seraphs are whispery images of winged beings glowing in a cool radiant light, gathering to serve the greater seraphs in their cause.

In the Ruins of Kerys:

Encounter: Orcs on Patrol

A group of orcs have taken up residence in the

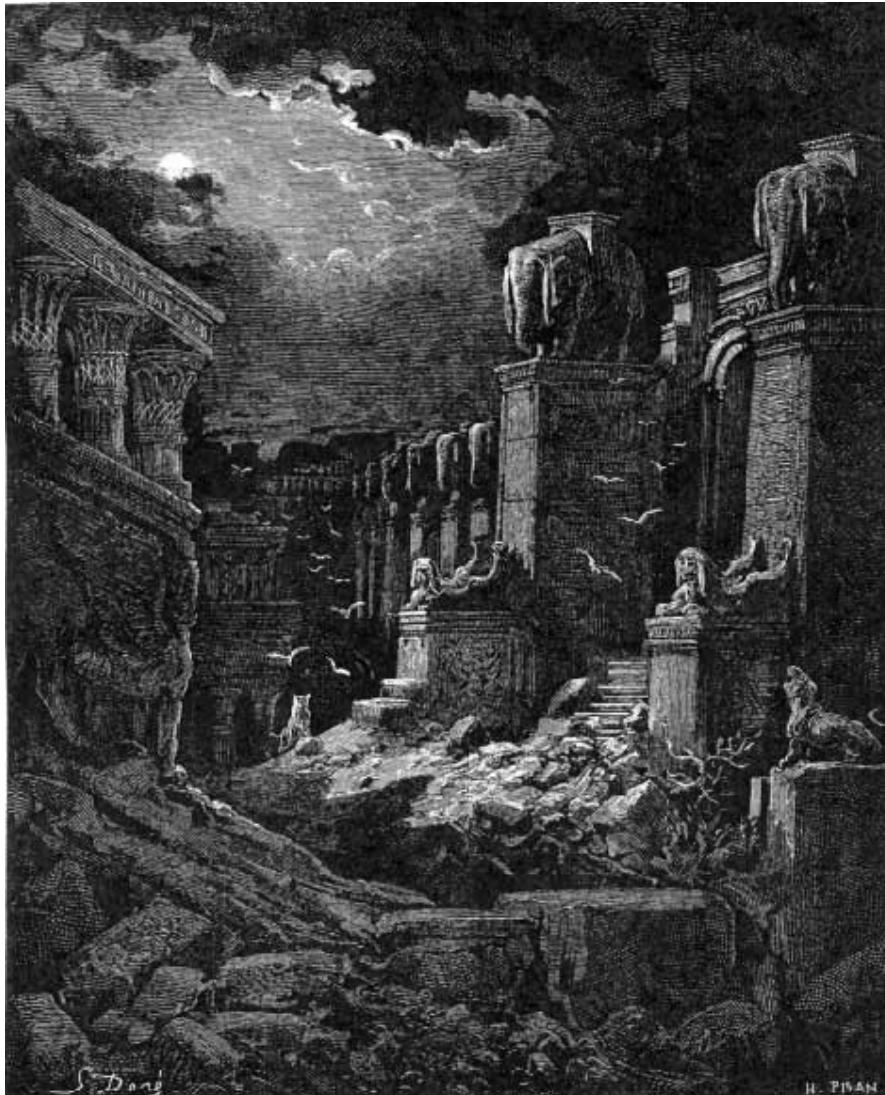
ruins, among other foul beasts, in hopes of the promise of power Zeramath's visions have wrought. They have allied themselves with a gargoyle named Negratos, who is an exile among the goblinoids.

- 2D8 orc warriors
- 1 orc leader (4 hit dice)
- named Porthos
- 1D3 orc war mages (level 1D3 each)
- 1 gargoyle (Negratos)

Encounter: Lurking Warlock and Gang

A band of monsters led by the charismatic tiefling wizard Enestro have taken residence in what was once a grand Library in Kerys. They too have come, hypnotized by Zeramath's call to power.

- 1 Tiefling magic-user (Enestro)
- 6 Manes Demons (bodyguards)
- 2 Wight warriors (Alistair and Tabitha)





Enestro (tiefling magic-user): chaotic; **HD 8; AC 9**[11]; **Atk 1** dagger+2 (1d4+2); **Move 12; Save 8** (+2 vs. magic); **CL/XP 12/2,000; Special:** half damage from fire, darkvision; **Spells Prepared:** magic missile X2, charm person, detect magic, knock, levitate, mirror image, hold person, monster summoning I, protection from normal missiles, charm monster, polymorph self
Treasure: 162 gold pieces, one 350 gold piece rare gem, Wand of Fear

Encounters: Roaming Beasts

Many beastly monsters have felt the call, though they have not the minds to understand it.

1D20	Encounter
1-4	1D4 age category 1 red dragons-mother may show up for pick-up
5-6	1 Age category 1D4 Black Dragon from the swamplands
7-10	2D12 giant bats
11-13	1D8 gray oozes
14-16	2D6 giant warrior ants
17-18	1 chimera
19	medusa's hut
20	1D3 hunting basilisks

Encounter: The Dead Patrols of Kerys

The guardians of lost Kerys are rising to fight off the hordes that descend upon the city. They are restless, for they remember the era when Kerys was alive, and how it was destroyed by the worship of Zeramath. They might not attack beings of good with plain evidence of such (amulets to good gods, say). They are all bound to an amulet, the Amulet of Nevel'Hatar, the last Necromancer of Kerys. This amulet is in the possession of Enestro.

1D20	Patrols in Kerys
1-5	2D4 wight warriors
6-10	3D6 ghouls on patrol
11-12	a platoon of 40 skeletons
13-16	squad of 2D6 skeletons
17-18	1D4 wights and 3D6 zombies
19-20	one 7 HD vampire and 2D6 zombies

Lichemark:

This ruined city has been rife with undead and essentially uninhabitable since its fall two decades ago. There have been efforts to repopulate, but all have ended in tragedy. Some sample encounters include:

1D20	Encounters in Lichemark
1-5	4D8 zombies
6-10	1D4 wights and 3D6 zombies
11-12	2D20 skeletons
13-16	1D6 shadows and 1D2 wraiths
17	1D4 vampires (6+1D3 HD each)
18-20	3D6 ghouls and 1D6 hell hounds

Varimoth: The necromancer Crotus perished, but his acolyte Varimoth lived and has stolen his master's secret cache of lore, allowing himself to become a lich! Adventurers who dare travel to Castle Crotus may learn of this fact, as Crotus's ghost is filled with hatred for his once great student, who stole the ritual necessary for undead immortality that Crotus intended for himself, rather than the cruel fate of incorporeality that he now suffers.

Encounter: Necrotic Survivor
 1 Lich (12 hit dice) (OE Reloaded Monster Book)
 2D12 skeletons
 1D6 burning skeletons (new, see below)

Lich (12HD): chaotic; **HD 12; AC 0**[19]; **Atk 1** hand (1d10 + automatic paralysis); **Move 6; Save 3; CL/XP 15/2900; Special:** Appearance causes paralytic fear, touch causes automatic paralysis, spells. **Spells Prepared:** charm person X2, detect magic, sleep, phantasmal force X2, stinking cloud, strength, fly, haste, hold person X2, confusion, dimension door, ice storm, polymorph self, animate dead X2, passwall, feeblemind, death spell

Burning Skeletons: **HD 2; AC 8**[11]; **Atk 1** flaming strike (1d6+1D6 fire); **Move 12; Save 16; CL/XP 3/60; Special:** flaming skeletons are constantly immolating, and touching or being touched by them causes 1D6 fire damage.

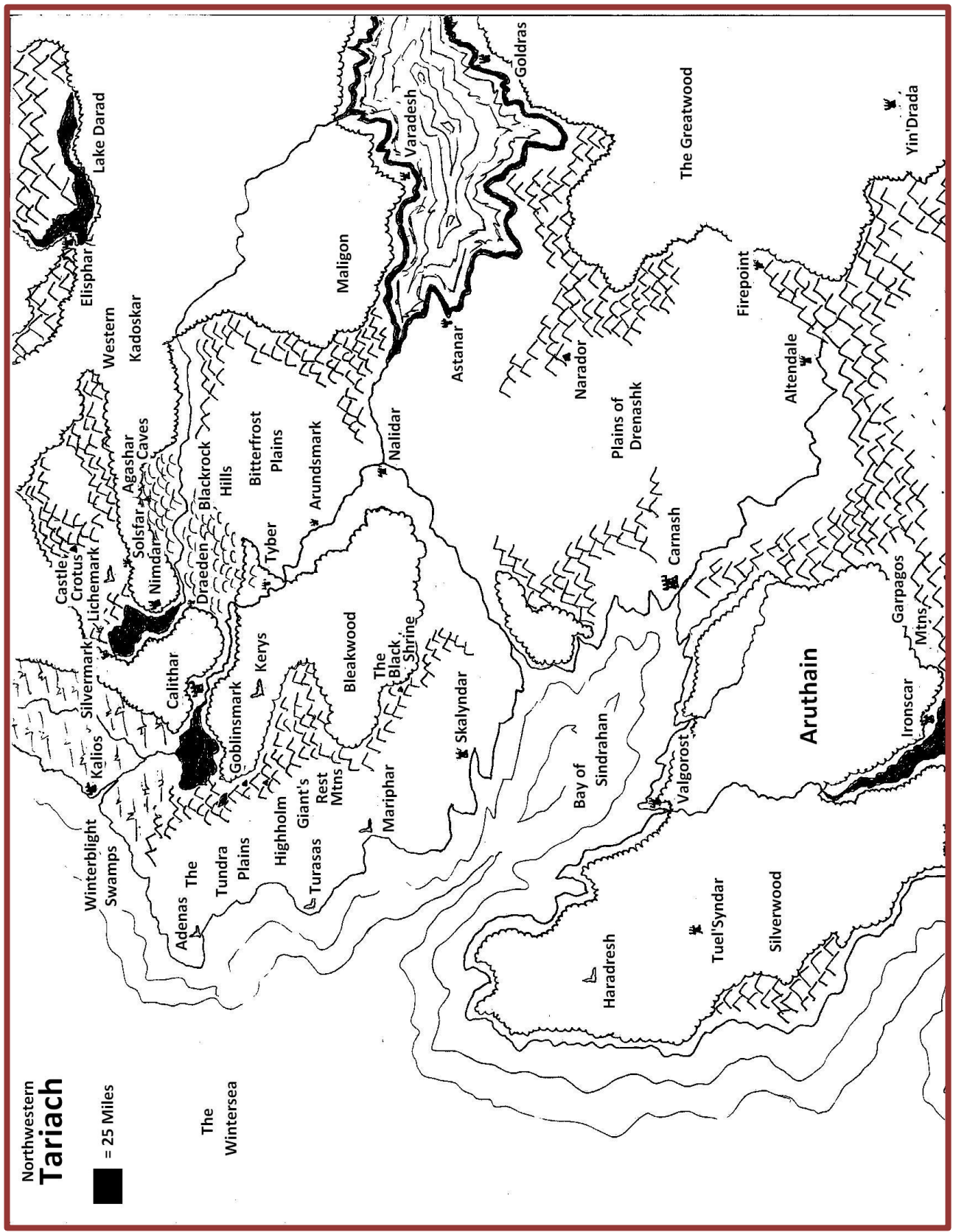


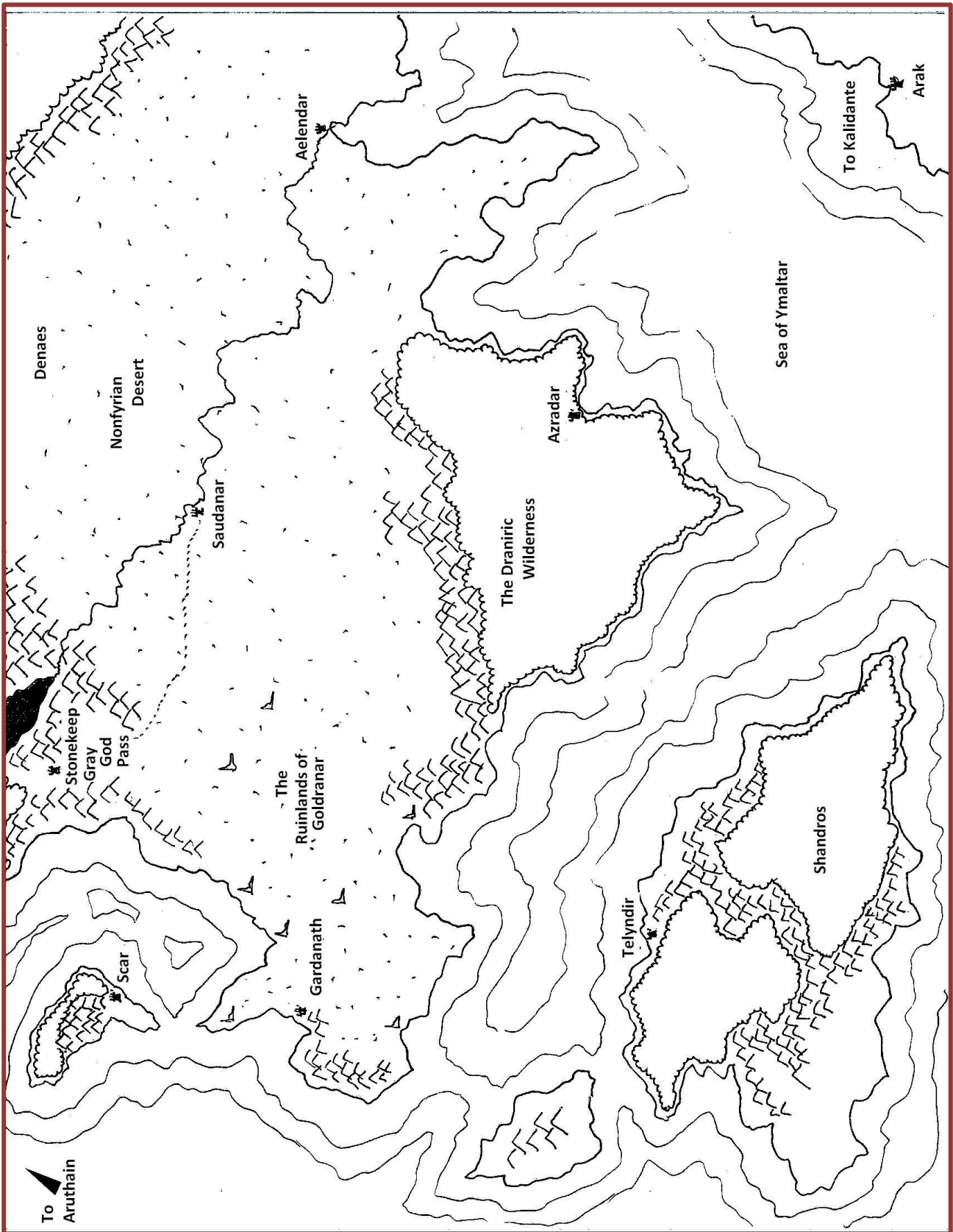
The Dagger of Lichemark

This fabled weapon is in the possession of Crotus within his castle. He will offer it to adventurers who are willing to seek out Varimoth and destroy the lich, allowing Crotus a chance to restore his own disembodied spirit to some form of intended unlife as a lich himself.

The dagger functions as a normal +2 magic blade, but when used against Varimoth, should it cause a wound the lich will begin to seep negative energy, causing 2D6 points of damage per round to everything within 15 feet of him (including himself). Should he perish under this effect, Varimoth's consciousness will be ejected from his undead form, but he will find the necrotic poison of the dagger prevents him from fleeing to his sepulcher where his soul jar resides. Crotus will then appear for his ultimate revenge, disincorporating Varimoth's disembodied mind, after which he can begin the process of securing the soul jar in which Varimoth's essence is contained, to facilitate his own restoration as a lich.









Open Game Content and Licenses

This printing of **The Rising Dark: An Introduction to Agraphar** is done under the Open Game License version 1.0a **The Rising Dark: An Introduction to Agraphar** is copyright 2011 by Nicholas Bergquist and Zodiac Gods Publishing.

Designation of Product Identity: The following items are hereby designated as Product Identity in accordance with Section 1(e) of the Open Game License, version 1.0:

All names of people, places, things, logos and events in this book.

Designation of Open Game Content: The following material is hereby designated as Open Game Content and may be used pursuant to the terms of the Open Game License: all creature, character, item, spell, and trap "stat blocks" and their accompanying names, including the stat blocks and generic names of any such creatures, items, spells, and traps original to this adventure module, except for those specifically designated as Product Identity, above. No named creature and no non-stat-block related content are to be considered open content.

OPEN GAME LICENSE Version 1.0a

The following text is the property of Wizards of the Coast, Inc. and is Copyright 2000 Wizards of the Coast, Inc ("Wizards"). All Rights Reserved.

1. Definitions: (a) "Contributors" means the copyright and/or trademark owners who have contributed Open Game Content; (b) "Derivative Material" means copyrighted material including derivative works and translations (including into other computer languages), potation, modification, correction, addition, extension, upgrade, improvement, compilation, abridgment or other form in which an existing work may be recast, transformed or adapted; (c) "Distribute" means to reproduce, license, rent, lease, sell, broadcast, publicly display, transmit or otherwise distribute; (d) "Open Game Content" means the game mechanic and includes the methods, procedures, processes and routines to the extent such content does not embody the Product Identity and is an enhancement over the prior art and any additional content clearly identified as Open Game Content by the Contributor, and means any work covered by this License, including translations and derivative works under copyright law, but specifically excludes Product Identity. (e) "Product Identity" means product and product line names, logos and identifying marks including trade dress; artifacts; creatures characters; stories, storylines, plots, thematic elements, dialogue, incidents, language, artwork, symbols, designs, depictions, likenesses, formats, poses, concepts, themes and graphic, photographic and other visual or audio representations; names and descriptions of characters, spells, enchantments, personalities, teams, personas, likenesses and special abilities; places, locations, environments, creatures, equipment, magical or supernatural abilities or effects, logos, symbols, or graphic designs; and any other trademark or registered trademark clearly identified as Product identity by the owner of the Product Identity, and which specifically excludes the Open Game Content; (f) "Trademark" means the logos, names, mark, sign, motto, designs that are used by a Contributor to identify itself or its products or the associated products contributed to the Open Game License by the Contributor (g) "Use", "Used" or "Using" means to use, Distribute, copy, edit, format, modify, translate and otherwise create Derivative Material of Open Game Content. (h) "You" or "Your" means the licensee in terms of this agreement.

2. The License: This License applies to any Open Game Content that contains a notice indicating that the Open Game Content may only be Used under and in terms of this License. You must affix such a notice to any Open Game Content that you Use. No terms may be added to or subtracted from this License except as described by the License itself. No other terms or conditions may be applied to any Open Game Content distributed using this License.

3. Offer and Acceptance: By Using the Open Game Content You indicate Your acceptance of the terms of this License.

4. Grant and Consideration: In consideration for agreeing to use this License, the Contributors grant You a perpetual, worldwide, royalty-free, non-exclusive license with the exact terms of this License to Use, the Open Game Content.

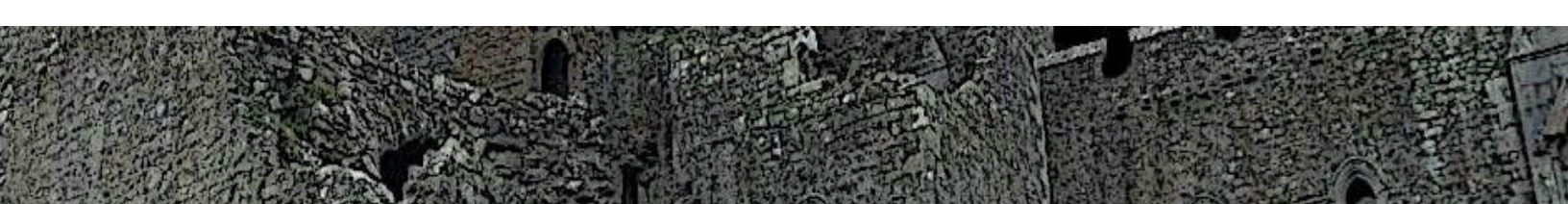
5. Representation of Authority to Contribute: If You are contributing original material as Open Game Content, You represent that Your Contributions are Your original creation and/or You have sufficient rights to grant the rights conveyed by this License.

6. Notice of License Copyright: You must update the COPYRIGHT NOTICE portion of this License to include the exact text of the COPYRIGHT NOTICE of any Open Game Content You are copying, modifying or distributing, and You must add the title, the copyright date, and the copyright holder's name to the COPYRIGHT NOTICE of any original Open Game Content you Distribute.

7. Use of Product Identity: You agree not to Use any Product Identity, including as an indication as to compatibility, except as expressly licensed in another, independent Agreement with the owner of each element of that Product Identity. You agree not to indicate compatibility or co-adaptability with any Trademark or Registered Trademark in conjunction with a work containing Open Game Content except as expressly licensed in another, independent Agreement with the owner of such Trademark or Registered Trademark. The use of any Product Identity in Open Game Content does not constitute a challenge to the ownership of that Product Identity. The owner of any Product Identity used in Open Game Content shall retain all rights, title and interest in and to that Product Identity.

8. Identification: If you distribute Open Game Content You must clearly indicate which portions of the work that you are distributing are Open Game Content.

9. Updating the License: Wizards or its designated Agents may publish updated versions of this License. You may use any authorized version of this License to copy, modify and distribute any Open Game Content originally distributed under any version of this License.



10 Copy of this License: You MUST include a copy of this License with every copy of the Open Game Content You Distribute.

11. Use of Contributor Credits: You may not market or advertise the Open Game Content using the name of any Contributor unless You have written permission from the Contributor to do so.

12 Inability to Comply: If it is impossible for You to comply with any of the terms of this License with respect to some or all of the Open Game Content due to statute, judicial order, or governmental regulation then You may not Use any Open Game Material so affected.

13 Termination: This License will terminate automatically if You fail to comply with all terms herein and fail to cure such breach within 30 days of becoming aware of the breach. All sublicenses shall survive the termination of this License.

14 Reformation: If any provision of this License is held to be unenforceable, such provision shall be reformed only to the extent necessary to make it enforceable.

15. COPYRIGHT NOTICE

Open Game License v 1.0a Copyright 2000, Wizards of the Coast, Inc.

System Reference Document Copyright 2000, Wizards of the Coast,

Inc.; Authors Jonathan Tweet, Monte Cook, Skip Williams, Bruce R. Cordell, based on original material by E. Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson.

Swords & Wizardry Core Rules, Copyright 2008, Matthew J. Finch

Swords & Wizardry Complete Rules, Copyright 2010, Matthew J. Finch

S&W Monster Book One: OE, Copyright 2008, Matthew J. Finch

The Keepers of Lingusia; Copyright 2010 by Nicholas T. Bergquist; Published by Zodiac Gods Publishing; Author: Nicholas Torbin Bergquist

The Rising Dark: An Introduction to Agraphar Copyright 2011 by Nicholas T. Bergquist; published by Zodiac Gods Publishing| Author: Nicholas Torbin Bergquist

END OF LICENSE

