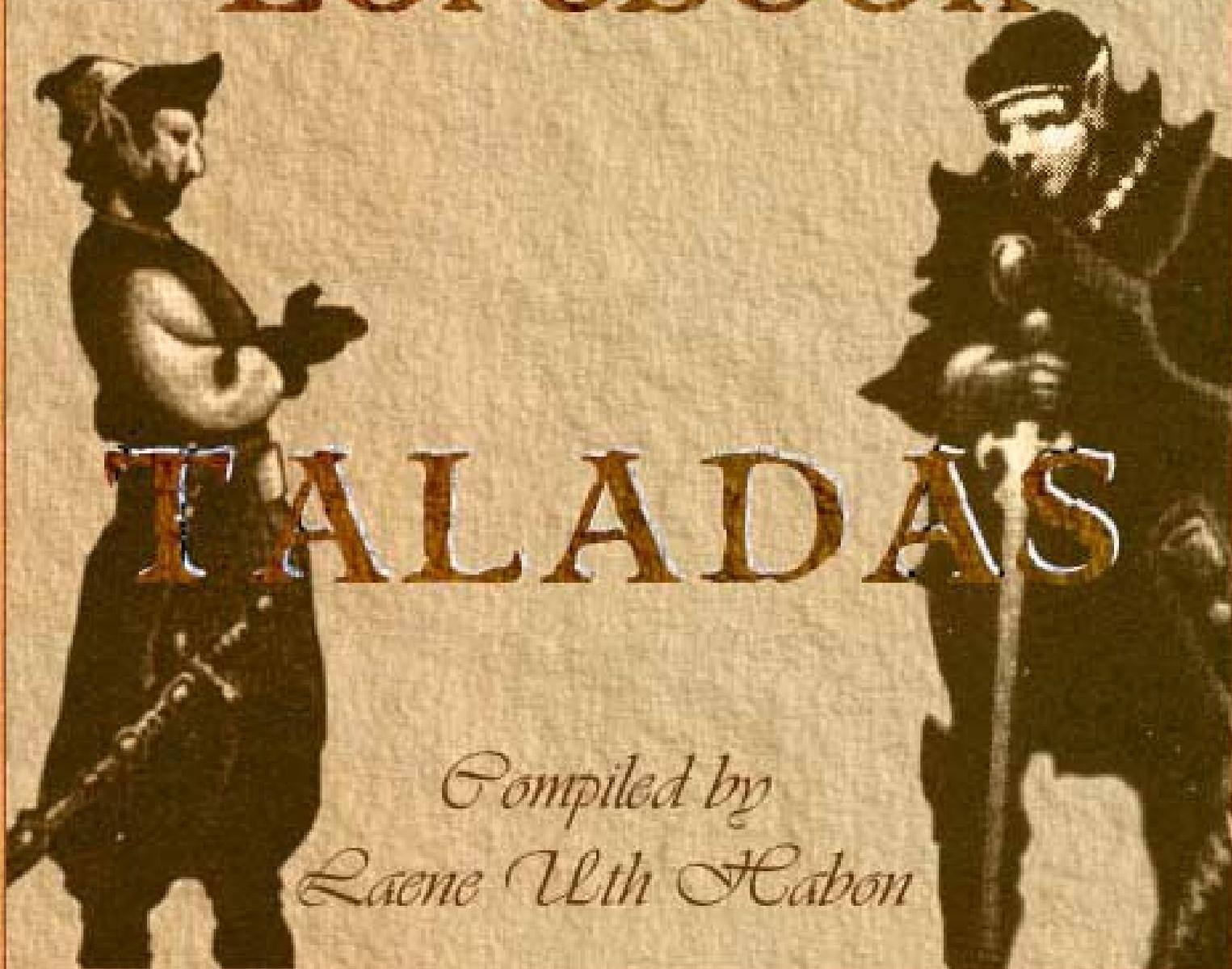




# Ariakan's Lorebook



TALADAS

*Compiled by  
Laene Uth Habon*

# Ariakan's Lorebook: Taladas

An Unofficial Supplement for **Dungeons & Dragons** and the **Saga Dramatic Adventure Game**.

by James O'Rance.

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**<http://travel.to/Taladas>**

## Introduction

Lord Ariakan, founder of the Knights of Takhisis, did visit Taladas but briefly in the twilight of the Fourth Age. A contingent of Knights was stationed in the southern isles to prepare for Ariakan's conquering army, and await an order to invade. They do not know that Ariakan will never return.

This is the book of Lord Ariakan's observations and plans for the lands of Taladas, as recorded by Commander Laene Uth Habon. It serves as an introduction to Taladas in the later years of the Fourth Age.

## The Grim Winter and Second Cataclysm

**Ariakan's Lorebook: Taladas** describes Taladas in the "Classic" period – the Fourth Age after dragons have returned to the world of Krynn.

In the novel *Dragons of Summer Flame*, the Fourth Age draws to a close as the people of Ansalon, the dragons of Krynn, and the gods themselves fight against Chaos for the fate of Krynn. However, this conflict was not restricted to Ansalon. In other lands of Krynn, many battles against Chaos were fought – some minor, some vital. Taladas was no exception.

While in Ansalon the countdown to the Second Cataclysm began with the Summer of Chaos, Taladas suffered from the storms of the *Grim Winter*. Following was the Second Cataclysm, during which the gods are thought to have withdrawn from Krynn, and the new Fifth Age.

*Ariakan's Lorebook* details the continent during the later years of the Fourth Age. For more about Taladas in the Fifth Age, download **Time of the Dragon Lords** from <http://travel.to/Taladas>.

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# Chapter One

## The Continent of Taladas

The Vision has brought us here. The Vision reveals to each Knight his place in the great plan of Takhisis, our Dark Queen; to me it grants the highest honour. It is I that shall lead the Dark Queen's Knighthood to conquer Ansalon and discover new lands beyond the seas. The Vision reveals the Knights of Takhisis bringing the entire world of Krynn under our Dark Queen's rule of order. The Vision has brought us to Taladas.

Many months of sea travel have brought us to the shoals off a region known as Hoor. Although we have been weakened by the long journey, we easily pursued and captured the small elven craft that was discovered sailing among the outlying islands. Fortuitously, the captives spoke a dialect of Silvanesti that allowed our Revered Daughter to learn a great deal about this new land, which the elves call Taladas. I have ordered that the surviving elves be imprisoned in the brig for further interrogation.

Although it seems that Taladas is equal and perhaps greater in size than Ansalon, the captured elves reported only a handful of notable kingdoms, with little like the great allegiances of Ansalon. Our fleet has skirted the southern regions of this undoubtedly vast continent, which is sparsely populated and ripe for conquest. More time I presently cannot devote to exploration, for the Vision leads me back to Storm's Keep for the planned conquest of Ansalon. My discoveries have been recorded in a sturdy journal, which will serve as a guide to the Knighthood when – inevitably – we return to these lost lands.

 *Ariakan of Taladas*

Taladas in the Age of Might was reportedly one great landmass, although the Silvanaes elves of Hoor had only explored its western edge. Just as in Ansalon, however, the Cataclysm split the land asunder, creating new seas and new mountains to divide the lands. Unlike Ansalon, it seems that some of these seas and mountains were formed of the blood of Krynn itself.

Taladas in the wake of the Cataclysm can be divided into five geographical regions; the reader is advised to refer to a map as he peruses the following information. The western part of Taladas, named Hosk by the natives, is split by a fault called the Tiderun, which runs from the Indanalis Sea to the Western Ocean. On the Tiderun's northern shore is *Northern Hosk*, the largest land area in Taladas; below it is *Southern Hosk*, the most populated and civilised region of the continent.

The southeastern section of Taladas is the tropical *Neron Peninsula*. This tropical region also includes the islands to the south and east of Taladas.

*Eastern Taladas* is dominated by the northeast, once called Aurim, and now called the Storm Sea and Rainward Isles. The central eastern area is covered by the

Black Forests to the south and east of the Storm Sea, and the wastelands of Old Aurim on the western shores.

At the very centre of Taladas is *Hitehkel*, the open wound of Krynn. Surrounded by a ring of volcanoes and mountainous spires is the Great Burning Sea, an ocean of molten rock. Few have ever ventured here, for the poisonous gases and fiery terrain is comparable to the very heart of Krynn.

## Lands of Northern Hosk

Northern Hosk encompasses most of the lands north and northwest of Hitehkel. It is divided into three main regions – the Tamire, the Panak Desert, and the Ring Mountains.

The Tamire fills the coastal plain, a broad expanse of open steppe dotted with occasional woodlands and a few low mountain ridges --the Big Ilquar and Little Ilquar. The low mountain ranges force some rain to fall, making them islands of green forest in the midst of an open steppe covered with tall, dry grasses. The Tamire is home to nomadic tribes of humans such as the Alan-Atu, Uigan, Pureshk, and Kazar; the goblins of the Ilquar Mountains; and the barbarous Elf Clans east of the Ilquar Mountains.

Along its northern length, the Tamire gives way to the Panak Desert. This is a stony, rock-pan desert inhabited by the prosaically named Ice People, nomads of the Panak Desert, and murderous thanoi. During the winter, stinging blasts of snow and ice rip across the open ground. Only a few mosses and low-growing plants survive in this region of little water and bitter cold. Feeding on these are small herds of *nasif*, a type of caribou.

Along the inner edge of Northern Hosk are the Ring Mountains. Some of these mountains are part of an ancient range, whilst others were forced up by the Cataclysm. These mountains are home to ogres, as well as the Scorned Dwarves deep beneath the surface. In the south, the outer slopes of the Ring Mountains receive the bulk of rain-laden winds from the Western Ocean, making the mountain valleys lush and temperate year round. Further north, the land becomes dry and cold. The mountains bordering the Panak Desert are often snow-bound for months. Only the warming currents from Hitehkel prevent these peaks from permanent glaciation.

On the inner side of the mountains, the vales and snows give way to the Shining Lands, home to the resourceful Glass Sailors. This is a region of glassified lava flows, polished by winds that sweep down out of the mountains into the boiling cauldron of Hitehkel, bearing razor-sharp grains of sand. Neighbouring the glass plains is the land of the Columns, where inventive gnomes dwell among the canyons.

## Lands of Southern Hosk

Southern Hosk will undoubtedly prove the most challenging to subdue, but it is here that the richest rewards lie.

The Tiderun separates Northern from Southern Hosk, although it is barely below sea level in most places. During the highest tides, the water rushes freely into the Indanalis Sea. During periods of low tide, the run recedes, its banks shrinking. At the mountain gap, the Tiderun withdraws completely, leaving a muddy flat that can be crossed.

Along the western shore of Southern Hosk are the fishing banks of Hoor, just outside the Bay of Armach. Armach itself is an elven refuge, nestled at the southern end of the New Mountains, a series of concentric ranges raised during Hiteh's Night. These mountains are dotted with volcanoes, hot springs, and other geothermal activity.

North are the rich farmlands that support the cities of the Minotaur League, while to the south are the forests of Thenol. Temperate along their upper reaches, Thenol's forests gradually become subtropical near Thunderbreach Strait.

The inner arc of Southern Hosk has risen into a massive block of jagged mountains. Towering over the Indanalis Sea, the Steamwall Mountains force back the rising steam and gases from the Indanalis Sea and Hitehkel, protecting the land to the west from these noxious clouds. The Steamwall Mountains are dead and barren, their ground sharp and coated in pasty acidic ash. Only a few incredibly hardy plants manage to grow here. The Steamwall Mountains are home to bitter and paranoid tribes of dwarves, kender, and hobgoblins.

The Steamwall ends at Thunderbreach Strait, the southern mouth of the Indanalis Sea. The narrowest point of the strait is the site of underwater volcanic activity.

## Lands of the Neron Peninsula

In the waters of the strait outside the Thunderbreach are a series of islands referred to as the Fisheries. The Dark Queen's fleet has landed upon some of these islands, and marked those that are suitable for settlement. The warm waters of the southern Windless Ocean combine with the shallow shelf of the strait to create an area rich in marine life. Corals abound, slowly building reefs and atolls around which strange currents rush. Huge schools of fish make the strait a fisherman's paradise, provided that he can navigate the treacherous waters. The largest of these islands is Syldar, home to sea-going tribes of humans, hobgoblins, and elves.

Some of the winds that blow east out of the Indanalis Sea turn to the southeast and mingle with the tropical storms that come off the Windless Sea. These southern rains thin and dissipate the poisons carried from Hitehkel, lessening their deadly effect on Neron. The abundant rains, hot temperatures, and exotic nutrients of the volcanic ash have made the ancient jungles of Neron dark, thick, and lush. Strange creatures, Irroi barbarians, and wild tribes of elves live in the hidden recesses of the forests, we have heard rumours that the natives of Neron are locked in perpetual wars with each other.

The northern edge of Neron is separated from Aurim by a low range of mountains. The mountains keep most of the poisonous winds of Hitehkel north of Neron with only a portion blowing through the Thunderbreach Strait.

As the Neron peninsula extends out, the low range of mountains that rises in the centre gradually tapers away, becoming thickly forested hills and finally disappearing into a lowland area of swamp known as the Reed Delta. Fed by the heavy rains and sunken somewhat since the Cataclysm, the Reed Delta is a mixture of freshwater cane grass and saltwater mangrove swamp. The delta has gradually expanded over the years, slowly depositing the ash-laden silt washed down from the mountains.

Beyond the Reed Delta is the island of Baltch. Split asunder from the peninsula during Hiteh's Night, the people of Baltch have engineered dikes and levees to protect their low-lying land from the fierce storms that threaten to wash their island away. However, Baltch is one of the few civilised lands that has survived the Cataclysm in Taladas.

## Lands of Eastern Taladas

North of Neron and Udras Bay is the land of Aurim. Once this was a rich and fertile plain, but now it has become a dead wasteland. Shattered by the Cataclysm and poisoned by Hiteh's night, Aurim lies directly in the path of killing gases and choking ash spewed out of Hitehkel. The land is grey and dust-covered. Trees are withered and petrified by the strange fumes that rise from the centre of Krynn. Only the hardest, most perverse, and foul creatures live among the dead ruins of Aurim.

Lapping at the shores of Aurim is the Storm Sea, known for its freakish weather and stinging, chemical-laden water. Little traffic plies its waves, for its abrupt shifts in weather are thought to be dangerous to risk, especially since the water has poisoned all but the most fearsome of sea creatures.

Thrusting out from Aurim is a peninsula covered by the Black Forests, expanses of warped wood draped with grey-green mosses. Here the land is far enough from Hitehkel to support plants and life, yet close enough to be twisted and warped by the strange gases that blow ashore. The woods are filled with dark creatures, cut off from all others by the wasteland of Aurim. Occasionally inhabitants roam down the coast into Neron and similar creatures can be found in the darkest parts of both areas.

To the northeast of the main continent are the last remnants of ancient Aurim, now known as the Rainward Isles. These isles are home to humans, dwarves, and kender, who band together for protection against the menace of the restless dead. Consisting of one main island and a number of seaward banks, the Rainward Isles earn their name from the near-perpetual rains and grey skies of that land. Here the warm, moisture-laden winds from Hitehkel meet cooler ocean breezes, resulting in frequent showers over the land. Although most of the pollutants have dropped away by the time the winds reach the isles, black, tarry rains do fall from time to time. Though warm at the outset, the rains quickly become clammy and bone-chilling, making the Rainward Isles a grey, damp, and cold place.

## Lands of Hitehkel

Between the Steamwall Mountains and Hitehkel proper lies the Indanalis Sea, also known as the Sea of Poison. Trapped between two massive mountain ranges and kept seething and boiling by ever-fresh flows of lava, the Sea of Poison is rich in deadly salts and brines. Only the oddest and most deadly creatures can survive in its foul waters.

The waters here quickly crumble wood and etch metal, which makes sailing this sea a risk that few care to take. The constant clouds of sulphurous steam and the dreary drizzles of sweltering rain blot out the sun. All exposed objects become crusted with strange minerals and mildew rot. Metals tarnish overnight, cloth becomes stiff, then brittle, and food takes on the stench of sulphur.

Beyond the Sea of Poison are the Spires, cloaked in steam from the boiling lava that runs down their slopes and into the ocean. The Spires are the most active volcanoes of Taladas, an entire range belching ash, fumes, magma, and lava flows. Yet even here there is life, for the gnomes have found havens of safety and even prosperity amid the destruction.

At the very heart of Hitehkel is the Great Burning Sea. The outer ring of the Cooling Land is a cooling crust of lava – shifting and cracking and treacherous to cross. It is solid in some spots, thin in others, and a misstep leads to a fiery doom. The air reeks with poisonous gases and sweltering heat.

Worse still is the very centre, where the surface bleeds, constantly churning forth fresh magma before the surface has time to cool. It is an ocean of melted rock, impassable by all but the most extraordinary means. The atmosphere here is pure poison and the temperature is high enough to scorch a human in a matter of minutes.

## Currency

As in Ansalon, steel is the most valuable metal in Taladas and is used in many civilised regions as currency. Few of the nations of Taladas seem capable of mining and refining this precious metal on a large scale, instead importing it from the gnomoi communities of Hitehkel in exchange for grains such as wheat and corn. Steel is used to mint the Minotaur League's denarius, Thenol's sovereign, Baltch's mark, and the Nylgai Hadirnoe crown. The Silvanaes elves of Armach stubbornly continue to use their antiquated gold coins, which have little value elsewhere.

Notably, many of Taladas' barbaric tribes are ignorant of currency, and employ barter to provide for all of their needs. The Merchant League of Hosk seems to take advantage of their relatively simple requirements to cheaply acquire luxuries that can be sold in civilised regions for great profit.

## The Calendar

Many of the nomadic cultures of Taladas do not name their months as do the people of Ansalon. To the tribes of the Tamire or the Ice People, it is enough to know what season it is. The nomadic movement of these tribes is usually tied to

the seasons, so that as the weather begins to change, the nomads know that it is time to move on. Beyond that, they have no need for weeks or months.

The Silvanaes-Quarti of Southern Hosk use a calendar familiar to most travellers from Ansalon, that of the Silvanesti elves. They have adjusted the progression of months to suit the seasonal progression of the northern latitudes of Krynn, although ancient records use the old reckoning, to the confusion of elven historians.

The nations of the League of Minotaurs, Thenol, the Glass Sailors, and the gnomes and dwarves use the ancient calendar of the Empire of Aurim, which has survived into this modern age, although Aurim's culture and histories have not.

## Climate and Seasons

Taladas is a vast continent, stretching from the warm subtropical climes of the south to the icy cold of the far northern sea of Guurlamskas. The lands in between tend to be more temperate.

As the continent of Taladas lies north of the tropical latitudes of Krynn, the seasons progress in a different order than in Ansalon. While it is summer in Ansalon, Taladas experiences winter; the winter snows in Ansalon occur while Taladas suffers summer lightning storms. There are various explanations offered for this phenomenon; some allow that it gives credence to the gnomish theory that Krynn is a sphere that floats through the heavens, although many Knights of the Thorn consider this idea ludicrous.

# Chapter Two

## The River of Time

### Taladas in the Past

**A**cquiring an accurate picture of past events in these lost lands is a frustrating exercise. The primarily written histories of Taladas are those of the Lost Silvanesti, the former Minotaur League, and the gnomes of Hitehkel. The Four Great Ages in the history of Krynn are used in the histories of the Lost Silvanesti and minotaur scholars – the Ages of *Starbirth*, *Dreams*, *Might*, and *Despair*. The gnomes on the other hand, divide history into three periods: The Birthing Age, from that moment Reorx created them to the release of the Greygem; The Cursed Age, from the Greygem's release to the Cataclysm; and Reorx's Gift, from the creation of Hitehkel and the current time.

Our difficulties in acquiring written histories as accurately detailed as those of Ansalon are due in part to the absence of an immortal scribe such as Astinus, and also to the destruction caused by the Cataclysm. Although the damage caused by the Cataclysm to Ansalon was severe, Taladas undoubtedly suffered even more so, losing almost all trace of the powerful civilisations that were once found there. Most of the people of Taladas have no written language and rely instead on oral traditions. Thus, the history of Taladas before the Age of Despair is extremely difficult to discover.

Since the Cataclysm, the rise of the Minotaur League and Thenol has allowed more accurate histories to be written, but these suffer from the political biases of these empires. However, they are the best available to the Knights of Takhisis.

The historians of the Southern Hosk label all events that occurred in the first three Ages of Krynn with PC dates, for *Prae Cataclius*, or "pre-Cataclysm." The Fourth Age – the time of the gods' return – is dated AC, for *Alt Cataclius*, or "post-Cataclysm." This dating system was introduced to Taladas by the minotaurs of the League, and is consistently used in Southern Hosk and some regions beyond.

### The Age of Starbirth

**T**his period of Krynn's history is the most mystical and least documented of the Five Ages. At the same time, this period has the highest correlation between the histories of Taladas and Ansalon, for this is the age of the gods. It is impossible to set down any dates for events of the First Age, some of which occurred before the creation of the world of Krynn.

#### **The Gods Awaken**

The gods emerge from the Beyond into the primeval chaos of the universe. The Highgod subsumes himself into the supreme forces, but charges the other gods with

the creation of all. To this end, Greylord proclaims the Balance and slows the Chaos to make Order. In doing so, he prompts the other gods to side with the Light, Dark, and Grey.

### **The Stars are Born**

Reorx begins to forge his new creations. In the initial stages of shaping, the sparks from the anvil and hammer formed the stars, while the impurities formed the world.

### **Dragons are Made**

Born of the supreme forces and the goddess Erestem, five elemental spirits were clothed in bodies of copper, iron, lead, nickel, and tin, forged by Reorx. Wishing to create beings of her own, Jijin formed lesser spirits that would become the bakali, a race devoted to worship and serve the Five Dragons.

### **Erestem's Deceit**

Coveting the Five Dragons for herself, Erestem birthed a spirit of disease and corruption. This spirit whispered to the Five, infecting them with lies. Copper was seduced by his sister, Nickel, and became as blue as lightning; Iron raged red; Lead was stained black; Nickel poisoned herself green; and Tin's heart was frozen white.

### **Good Dragons are Made**

Reorx forged five monuments out of precious metals – brass, bronze, copper, gold, and silver – in sorrow at the corruption of the Five. The supreme forces filled the statues with life, birthing the good dragons anew.

### **All-Dragons War**

The chromatic and metallic dragons warred over the issue of loyalty to Erestem. Armies of bakali were led across Ansalon, Taladas, and other lands by their dragon leaders.

### **Chaos Threatens Krynn**

Taking advantage of the conflict throughout Krynn, Chaos, Father of All and of Nothing, attempts to unmake the world. An aspect of the supreme forces, the Highgod, enforces the Balance to halt the attacks of Chaos. The gods withdraw from Krynn – light gods to the Light, dark gods to the Dark, grey gods to the Grey.

### **The Stars Awaken**

From the Light, Dark, and Grey, the gods hear a glorious singing, as the living spirits within the stars begin to awaken. Reorx decides to allow the spirits to fill his creations with life, and populate Krynn.

### **The All-Saints War**

Before Reorx's creations can be set upon the world, the other gods emerge and begin to argue. Those of the Light wish for the spirits to have dominion over Krynn,

which Reorx balks at. Those of the Dark seize the opportunity to wage war against the Light, hoping to corrupt the new creations to their service.

### **End of All-Saints War**

Blindel the Dolphin Lord persuades Greylord to go to Reorx's tent and chant part of the secret knowledge that only he knows, showing the path of Darkness. Reorx relents in his refusal to aid the gods of the Light and unites with them. Together, they force the gods of the Dark to retreat. The supreme forces allow the gods of the Light, Dark, and Grey to each grant the new spirits one gift, and then meddle with creation no more – thus preserving a Balance which will thwart Chaos.

### **The Gifts are Bestowed**

In accordance with the supreme forces' decree, the gods of the Light, Dark, and Grey bestow gifts upon the spirits. The gods of the Light grant living bodies to the spirits, so that they might master the world and shape it into a place of freedom and peace. The gods of the Dark curse them with weakness, unfulfilled desires, and death, so that the mortals might be corrupted into servitude. Lastly, the gods of Grey give them free will, so that they may shape their own fates.

### **The Mortal Races are Born**

Reorx's creations are filled with living spirits, and set upon Krynn as the first mortals. There is no agreement among the races as to whom was first. The minotaurs and Mischta claim that the ogres were first, a race crafted of stone. The elves set themselves first, a race crafted of wood. Humans were shaped from clay, and believe that all races entered Krynn at once. Both the dwarves and the gnomes claim to be descended from the Smiths, the last children of Reorx.

### **The Forces of Magic are Created**

Three powerful energies are called into being, and captured within three moons – Solais, Lunais, and Angomais.

## **The Age of Dreams**

### **9000 PC Choosing Homes**

The Abaqua (ogres), first to awaken, claim Krynn's lofty mountains. Elderwild (elves) withdraw to the forests to live in quiet harmony, but settle close to the lands of the chromatic dragons and their bakali servants. Humans make their way to the plains, and become as savage as the elements of their home.

### **8700 PC The Chosen of Reorx**

The god Reorx gathers his children, the Smiths, in Taladas, where they learn the crafts of the forge. A group of humans also congregate with the Smiths and learn these crafts; these humans become associated with the Smiths. The marvels wrought in this time have never been equaled.

### **8500-5000 PC Birth of Abaquan Civilisation**

Ogres enslave humans to build their mighty empire of cold stone. The elves watch as order grows.

### **6320-5980 PC Heresy of Igraine**

The ogre Igraine fails to slay the slave Eadamm when the human disobeys orders to save Igraine's daughter, Everlyn. Igraine learns compassion and gives his slaves greater freedom. When the other ogres learn of this, Igraine and his followers are forced to flee, beginning a new life on an island named Anaiatha in the Spine of Taladas chain. Igraine's loyal slaves cover his escape, and then rebel against ogre oppression.

### **6000-5000 PC The Ogre Wars**

As ogres embrace cruelty and vengeance, humans begin to assert their independence. Humans rise up to slay their masters, who strive to destroy the nascent human cultures in a series of several wars. The ogres begin to descend into degeneracy, and their culture declines.

### **5700 PC Igraine's Revelation**

On Anaiatha, Igraine emerges from his mountain retreat with a book of his teachings, the *Irdanaiath*. He names his people the Irda, which means "The Gentle Ones," and then dies.

### **5200-5100 PC Dark Ogres Seek Vengeance**

The Abaqua chieftain Doom, recognising the decline of his people, orders the systematic extermination of the racially impure and degenerate ogres. After a bloody war, Doom decides to flee with 50 followers of exceptional purity, whom he names the Nzunta. Blaming Igraine's heresy for the Abaqua Empire's decline, the Nzunta seek to hunt and destroy his followers.

### **5050 PC Doom Leaves Krynn**

On a great island off the coast of Ansalon, Doom discovers an ancient relic – a flying ship. Taking 30 of his followers, Doom leaves for places unknown, vowing to return one day. He leaves the remaining Nzunta to destroy Igraine's followers.

### **5000 PC The Abaqua Empire Falls**

After centuries of intermittent warfare, the ogres degenerated into crude brutes, with the last remaining pure First People vanishing in a single generation. The Abaqua Empire falls, and barbarism reigns.

### **5000-3000 PC Elves Ascendant**

Elves seek to build their own civilisation in the enchanted forests of southern Ansalon. However, this forest and its surroundings are already home to the chromatic dragons.

#### **4000 PC Preparations for War**

The elves prepare for war against the dragons. Likewise, the dragons begin to amass armies of bakali in Ansalon, bringing them across the Western Ocean from their lands in southern Taladas. Bakali civilisation in Taladas declines.

##### **The Birth of the Minoi**

The humans to which Reorx taught the arts of the forge and the machine fail to meet his expectations. In anger, Reorx curses the humans, transforming them into the minoi – a race who forever burn to tinker yet cannot achieve the heights of the Smiths.

#### **3500-3350 PC The First Dragon War**

The elves fight fierce bakali armies, led by the Five Chromatic Dragons. Three elves learn to wield the elemental energies of the moons, and create five magical dragon stones. The dragons' spirits are captured within the stones and their bodies turn into stony mountains; the stones are dropped into a deep rift. Bereft of leadership, the bakali cannot return to Taladas, and their empire starts to crumble. The gods take the moons' power from the three mages, considering it too dangerous for mortals to use.

#### **3350 PC The Making of the Grathanich**

Reorx forges a grey stone named the Grathanich atop Mount Garath, drawing upon the magical light of Lunais, due to the trickery of the spirit of disease and corruption. Within this gem is accidentally captured the essence of Chaos, Father of All and of Nothing. The gem is presented to the First King, the Smith Aldinanachru, as a sign of favour from Reorx to his kind. In Ansalon this gem is known as the Greygem of Garath. Aldinanachru orders the Grathanich placed in the Tower of Lunias atop Mount Garath.

#### **3100 PC Grathanich Released**

Hiteh tricks Milgas Kadwar of the minoi into releasing the Grathanich. It drifts off to the west, wreaking havoc through its chaotic energies. The minoi and the Smiths were altered, becoming gnomoi, dwarves, and kender; other races were also transformed by the Grathanich, creating giants, sea elves, and goblins.

##### **The Night of Cruel Transformation**

The Greygem passes over a tribe of ogre farmers and fisherfolk on the northwestern coast of Hosk, transforming them into the first minotaurs. Horrified by their frightful new forms, the minotaurs seek the aid of other tribes in removing the curse. However, the minotaurs are greeted with hatred and violence by the degenerate ogres. The minotaurs submit to the inevitable, and are quickly enslaved by the ogres.

##### **Minoi Leave Taladas**

Reorx banishes the Kadwar, largest of the minoi clans, to pursue the Grathanich across Krynn. When the Kadwar arrive in Ansalon, they abandon the minoi name to become the gnomes of Mount Nevermind.

### **3100 PC Kal-Thax Delved**

Some of the Smiths, now changed into dwarves, begin to build subterranean kingdoms in Ansalon and Taladas in order to escape the ravages of the Grathanich. The Scions, a group of magically altered Smiths, lead many of the dwarves on a disastrous voyage to Ansalon on great rafts. These dwarves delve the kingdom of Kal-Thax ("Cold Forge").

### **3096 PC Minotaur Exodus**

A minotaur slave named Messeritha discovers that ogres are no match for her in battle, as she murders twenty ogres in a short-lived killing spree. She devises a plan among her comrades to secretly build sailing vessels in the woodlands of the southern coast of Hosk. Finally, the minotaurs rise up in the dark of night and ruthlessly massacre entire villages of their sleeping masters before sailing into the west.

### **3095 – 3090 PC Minotaurs Reach Ansalon**

The minotaurs led by Messeritha finally reach Ansalonian shores in their simple seacraft. They are soon enslaved by the new dwarven kingdom of Kal-Thax.

### **2800 PC The OdderRhing Delved**

The separate dwarven communities of Taladas are connected with subterranean highways, forming the OdderRhing ("Land Beneath the Mountain") below the central mountains of Taladas.

### **2750 PC First Minotaur Kingdom**

Minotaur slaves of the Kal-Thax kingdom revolt, following their leader Ambeoutin to throw off their dwarven masters. The minotaurs found their new kingdom of Mithrandrus on the northeastern edge of Ansalon.

### **2715 PC Mithas and Kothas**

Ambeoutin dies, and his twin sons Mithas and Kothas split the kingdom of Mithrandrus between them.

### **2710 PC Dragon Stones Unearthed**

Dwarves in Ansalon discover the five magic dragon stones, and dispose of them on the surface. Bakali discover the stones and release the spirits within.

### **2690 – 2645 PC The Second Dragon War**

The Silvanesti in Ansalon defeats the Five Chromatic Dragons. The science of wizardry ("High Sorcery") is formed.

### **2550 PC Spread of Wizardry**

Mages controlling the energies of the three moons begin to appear in Taladas.

### **2428 PC Sagarassi**

Jijin decides to create a powerful servant to serve the Balance, and grants one of her Silvanesti priestesses the potential to give birth to this soul. However, the goddess Zeboim learns of this soul, and causes it to be split into two beings – one corrupt, and one pure. The corrupt child is born first, and is named Sagarassi.

### **2427 PC Daydra Stonecipher**

One year after the birth of Sagarassi, the second fragment of the soul is born by a different father. The child is named Daydra Stonecipher, and grows to be a woman of extreme compassion and wisdom.

### **2140 PC The Kinslayer War**

During the Kinslayer war in Ansalon, Daydra Stonecipher prays to Mislaxa for power to stop the bloodshed, whilst Sagarassi pleads to Erestem for power to destroy the humans. Erestem wants an agent near Taladas, and has Zeboim transform Sagarassi into the Sea Witch. Sagarassi is carried to an undersea mountain range near the Spine of Taladas island chain.

### **2050 PC The Great Armada**

Daydra Stonecipher, aware that Sagarassi has travelled beneath the sea, decides to search for her. Silvanesti elves begin to migrate to a new elven kingdom of Qualinesti. Some travel by a collection of ships called the Great Armada; a number of these ships are chased into a large storm by minotaur pirates, and are blown far off course. Daydra is aware that this would happen, but chooses not to warn the other elves; instead, she asks the gods to protect the Great Armada. Blindel the Dolphin Lord guides the elven ships to Taladas. The Silvanaes-Quarti, or Lost Silvanesti, reach landfall in the Bay of Hoor. They name it Armach, or “Dry Land.”

### **2049 PC Stonecipher's Exile**

Daydra transforms herself into a sea elf, and exiles herself to the ocean floor, knowing that her half-sister dwells somewhere nearby. She comes to be known as the Oracle of Watermere.

### **2040 PC Armach-Nesti Founded**

Conservative elves decide to recreate the glory of Silvanesti, founding the nation of Armach-Nesti in the Hoor area (“Dry Land of the People”). Small segments of the Silvanaes refuse to cooperate, and are spurned for their choice.

### **2010 – 1960 PC The Jarak-Sinn**

Concerned with their declining birth rate, the bakali dwelling in the Great Moors of northern Ansalon pray to their god, Siarllas the Scaled One. In return, the nature god blesses the female bakali with young of a new, larger race. For fifty years, all young born are of this type, which the bakali name jarak-sinn, or “new race.”

### **1900 – 1500 PC Silvanaes Expansion**

The elves of Armach-Nesti drive back the human and centaur tribes in order to create living space for their fledgling nation. They are astonished at the level of barbarism they encounter.

### **1959 PC Dimernesti Form**

The dissenters among the Silvanaes migrate to islands on the Banks of the Hoor, and gradually develop the ability to breathe underwater, as did the Stonecipher one century before. They name themselves Dimernesti, after the shoal elves created by the Grathanich, and dwell in the shallow waters with a guild system similar to the Silvanesti.

### **1950 PC The Bakali Exodus**

Finding themselves disadvantaged and harassed by the jarak-sinn, those bakali who remain in Ansalon make great rafts and depart for Taladas, where their presence revitalises the bakali kingdoms there. The jarak-sinn remain in Ansalon, where they are hardly recognised as being different from the bakali by other races.

### **1882 PC New Silvanost Founded**

The Silvanaes attempt to recapture the glory of their ancient capital in Silvanesti. However, they have not the skill to raise the great towers and palaces of Silvanost.

### **1863 PC The Purifiers**

A portion of the Dimernesti named "The Purifiers" attempts to abolish the Silvanesti guild system, but fail to make social changes. They migrate to a sandy valley south of the Spine of Taladas, and name themselves Dargonesti. The sea elven region of Watermere gradually forms.

### **1862 PC Rise of Drudarch Takalurion**

The Dargonesti fight a war for living space against the evil koalinth, led by a warrior-wizard named Drudarch Takalurion. He creates the Dargonesti kingdom of Quoonoqua, and establishes himself as the first Speaker of the Moon.

### **1538 – 1521 PC Human-Dargonesti War**

Human fishermen in the coral islands near Watermere hunt and kill four sacred dolphins, prompting Takalurion to fight back. However, the Dargonesti refuse to attack innocent human villages, despite possessing military superiority. Impressed with the sea elves' compassion, the humans sue for peace and request negotiations. Human-Dargonesti Trade Agreements Takalurion consents to allow humans to dwell on islands near Watermere, in exchange for rent and exclusive trade agreements.

### **1399 – 1010 PC Erestem Plots**

Bakali and jarak-sinn serving Erestem seed mountain ranges in Ansalon and Taladas with dragon eggs, which are mistaken for rare crystals by miners. When the

eggs hatch, the wyrmlings devour the owners. Thus, dragons return to Krynn – with no one left alive to know.

### **1305 PC Sea Dragons Breed**

The Sea Witch Sagarassi, in the undersea mountain range near Watermere, attracts a mating pair of sea dragons to her lair. They begin to breed.

### **1320 – 1204 PC Sea Witch's War**

Sagarassi marshals together an army of koalinths, undead, sea dragons, and amphidragons to attack Watermere. A tentative alliance forms between the Dargonesti, humans, and nearby merfolk to resist the evil armies. Takalurion eventually succeeds in creating dissent amongst the dark hordes, and then leads a massive assault that ends the war. Takalurion's sword *Tideripper* is lost in the process; the identity of the Sea Witch remains a mystery.

### **1204 PC Takalurion Dies**

One month after bringing peace to Watermere, Drudarch Takalurion breathes his last. His daughter, Imbrias Takalurion, succeeds him as Speaker of the Moon.

### **1156 PC Human Trade Links Emerge**

The human king Meruidan IV opens a rich gold mine and uses the currency that he mints to establish trade links with other nations in central Taladas.

### **1107 PC Mercenaries of Aurim**

King Meruidan VII uses a healthy treasury to fund a legion of mercenaries, which he leads to conquer nearby tribes. Meruidan declares himself Hlafdae, or High King, of the New Kingdom of Gold – Aurim.

### **1063 PC The Mahkwahb**

A small group of evil Dargonesti rebel against the new Speaker Imbrias by killing dolphins and whales. To prove herself against the insinuations of weakness, Imbrias exiles the criminals to the deepest ocean rifts. They become the cursed *mahkwahb* – Elves of the Abyss.

### **1060 – 1018 PC Third Dragon War**

Dozens of mature dragons accompanied by lizardfolk ground troops conquer many small kingdoms in Ansalon and Taladas. However, the neutral god Siarllas the Scaled One visits bakali kings in Taladas, convincing them to abandon Eretem forever. The dragons' effort to conquer Taladas fails, and in revenge Eretem curses the bakali to revert to barbarism; their stone cities are abandoned and swallowed up by jungle.

### **1051 PC The Bolandi Flight**

A tree-dwelling race of tricksters descended from ogre stock, the Bolandi, are subjected to persecution by brutish ogres serving Eretem. Realising that their practical

jokes are not appreciated by other races, the Bolandi make their way to the Spine of Taladas and settle in the islands of Odith-Abshu and Fedron.

### **1025 PC The Curse of Savage**

The great red dragon Savanaech leads an attack against the central kingdoms of Taladas. The sorcerer-king Amraus II of Aurim duels with Savanaech from the back of gold dragon Amanthus. When Savage falls, blasted by the Hlafdae's spells, the major offensive against Aurim was defeated. Eretem curses the great red dragon to haunt the site of his failure forever.

### **1018 PC The Dragon Sleep**

A knight in Ansalon forces Eretem to depart from Krynn and never return whilst the world remains whole. Chromatic dragons in Ansalon and Taladas are forced to choose exile with their goddess on some infernal plane, or eternal sleep beneath the world's surface. Metallic dragons also retreat to the secret places of the world.

## **The Age of Might**

### **1011 PC The Crown of Grathanich**

Hlafdae Astauvas, the sixth high king of Aurim, captures the Grathanich with assistance from the gnomo sorceress Daedoskalenemena. Astauvas fashions a crown out of the chaotic energies of the stone, which grants him immense power to rule a fledgling Empire of Aurim with majesty and wisdom.

#### **The Golden Paladins of Amoushek**

Astauvas attracts an order of human and dwarven champions that become known as the Golden Paladins of Amoushek. These heroes are individuals of great skill and fantastic exploits rather than an order of knights, but they inspire a generation of valorous generals in Aurim. A time of peace ensues.

### **978 – 977 PC The Tomb of the Great King**

Sensing that he is about to die, Hlafdae Astauvas orders a tomb be built hidden deep within the mountains, well protected and fortified. Here he goes to spend his last days, using the power of his Crown to wipe all memories of his tomb from mortal minds. Astauvas knows how dangerous the Crown of Grathanich could be in evil hands, tainted as it is by the Grathanich's chaotic influence. Instead, he decides that the Crown be lost forever.

### **976 PC Murder of Daedoskalenemena**

After the disappearance of Astauvas, his grandnephew Tinjatus becomes the Seventh Hlafdae of Aurim. Although the crown is lost, the Grathanich itself is still held by the gnome Daedoskalenemena, now an elderly woman. Tinjatus kills the sorceress and steals the stone, beginning his reign in blood.

### **976 – 736 PC The Eternal King**

Hlafdae Tinjatus rules Aurim as evil incarnate. Several rebellions arise among the oppressed peasantry, only to be mercilessly crushed by a vengeful Tinjatus. Entire towns are slain, and the Golden Paladins of Amoushek are destroyed or turned to serve the darkness.

### **800 – 110 PC The Vice of the Irda**

Pride begins to develop among the peaceful Irda. They build towers and large cities on Anaiatha's hillsides, and think themselves superior to the other creatures of Krynn. The Irda worship the gods out of tradition, but feel that the divine isn't truly relevant to their advanced culture.

### **735 – 730 PC Betrayal of Tinjatus**

A secret cabal of the Hlafdae's advisors realises that Tinjatus' evil is nigh unstoppable, and that even in death he would ravage the land. Like Astauvas before them, they decide to trap the great power in a secret tomb. For the good of the Empire, a mighty tomb is constructed and enchanted, and the advisors lure the Eternal King into its halls. Their loyal followers close the tomb and magically seal it, trapping Tinjatus – and his doomed advisors – inside forever. The Grathanich escapes the Eternal King's palace, and travels elsewhere in Krynn.

### **729 – 1 PC Ascension of Aurim**

Freed of the Eternal King's evil, the Empire of Aurim flourishes. Through a succession of capable rulers, the Empire expands to include the lowlands of the kender, the distant mountainous province of Styrlia, dwarven nations underneath mountain ranges, and the Panak northlands. The High Kings of Aurim create an empire of learning and wealth, and gradually prepare to spread their culture to the lands beyond.

### **650 PC Anaiatha Revealed**

The Nzunta discover the location of Anaiatha in the Spine of Taladas. They amass a horde of orughi (sea ogres) and invade the nearby islands of Fedron and Odith-Abshu, driving the Bolandi to refuge in Anaiatha. The Irda High King allows the tricksters a section of the island to live in, but commands that the Irda be left alone.

### **592 PC New Silvanost Abandoned**

After two generations of attempting to rebuild Silvanost in Taladas, most of the Silvanaes elves realise that the work is futile. Still, a few persist in living in the past, and continue to dwell in the city.

### **512 PC Confederation of Armach**

Treaties and alliances between the Silvanaes nation, the thirteen human tribes, plus a tribe of centaurs and a settlement of gnomes officially unite the non-elven tribes surrounding Armach-Nesti. The Charter of Confederation establishes strict limits on the rights of *heerikil* (non-elves) based on the Four Edicts of the elves.

## **109 – 1 PC Invasion of the Dark Ogres**

The Nzunta attack Anaiatha with their orughi followers. After many bloody battles, the Irda drive the Dark Ogres away from Anaiatha, but they do not turn to the gods; the prideful Irda believe that they can triumph without the help of deities.

## **1 PC Imbrias Takalurion Dies**

The much-loved Dargonesti Speaker of the Moon, Imbrias Takalurion, dies and is succeeded by her slothful and incompetent cousin Dohwarqh Kwahbrahb. Imbrias is spared the horror to come.

# The Age of Despair

## The Time of Darkness

### **0 The Cataclysm Strikes**

The High King of the Irda stands at the foot of Igraine's mountain, and facing away from the temple containing the Irdanaiath, proclaims that the Irda no longer need the gods. In response, the gods send the Cataclysm as a test of the world's claim to goodness. Anaiatha is torn asunder, and those Irda still loyal to the gods are carried to a *new* Anaiatha.

While Ansalon is pounded by a series of disastrous meteor strikes, a single massive blow rends Taladas. The Empire of Aurim is destroyed on the eve of its greatness and the central plain is torn asunder. True clerics of the gods are taken to the realms of their gods as Hiteh's Night begins.

### **1 to 20 AC Hiteh's Night**

Following the Cataclysm, ash and smoke and fire darken the sky. Mountains rise overnight from level ground. Torrential rains create seas where deserts once were. The black sky is lit from the glow of volcanoes. Disease appears. The priests of Taladas suddenly discover they have lost their spells and are unable to cure or heal. Disease and death sweep the land on an unprecedented scale. Plagues of cholera, Black Death, and influenza all exact a devastating toll upon a population that has never developed a strong immunity to disease.

### **2 AC Watermere Turns To Darkness**

The Dargonesti of Watermere, although still close to their gods, refuse to aid those suffering on the surface. A giant dolphin swallows speaker of the Moon Dohqwarqh whole, and the gods withhold all divine powers from Watermere's priests.

### **3 AC Gnomish Warrens Abandoned**

Made unstable and deadly by the convulsions of Hiteh's Night, the warrens once populated by the gnome race are abandoned. Gnomish rulers seek out an alternative

and decide upon an ambitious engineering project – the carving of the new mountainous pinnacles into self-contained citadels.

### **5 AC Minotaurs Ascendant**

The minotaurs freed from Istar's stranglehold in Ansalon take the Cataclysm as a sign of favour from the gods. Certain families remember lore about lands to the east of Ansalon, beyond the great ocean, and spread tales of new lands to be exploited.

### **12 AC Return of Tideripper**

The Dargonesti warrior Nakaro Silverwake recovers the lost sword Tideripper from koalinth territory as a quest of faith. The gods are so impressed with Nakaro's devotion that they return divine power to Watermere's priests. Nakaro is named Speaker of the Moon.

### **14 AC New Aurim Founded**

The refugees of Aurim following Guidan settle in the south of Taladas. Their city is named New Aurim, and the nation of Thenol is born.

### **21 AC Mislaxa's Return**

Priests of Mislaxa regain their powers on Taladas. Mislaxa, unable to bear the torment of the innocent of Taladas who suffer for the sins of Ansalon, secretly returns her power to those of her priests who have remained faithful during Hiteh's Night. Because her actions are in defiance of the other gods, Mislaxa is forced to charge her followers with the greatest secrecy. Her priests go underground, hiding their existence from all authorities. The Mystery Cult of Mislaxa is begun.

### **25 AC Aldinanachru Completed**

The citadel of the gnomoi king is completed on the shores of the Great Burning Sea, and named after an ancient hero. Other citadels soon follow.

### **50 – 125 AC The Mischta**

The Dark Ogres resume their war against the Irda of shattered Anaiatha, which is now called Selasia ("Place of Sundering"). The Nzunta and orughi are defeated, but many Irda are taken as slaves to Ansalon or Taladas. After the war, the remaining Irda rename themselves the Mischta.

### **65 – 70 AC Minotaur Raids**

Mat oth-Kithka leads an expedition of over thirty ships from Mithas to Thenol, where they overwhelm several human villages. She fills her ships with looted treasures of Aurim's refugees and begins the trek back to Ansalon, but sinks in a fierce storm in the waters near Hoor.

### **80 AC Minotaur Invasion**

Under the leadership of the ambitious warrior Eragas the Brutish, a fleet of minotaur ships from Ansalon invade the human settlements of New Styrllia and

conquer many of them. The minotaurs make their base in the town of Kristophan, and Eragas constructs a makeshift Arena to prove his right to rule.

### **81 – 90 AC Eragas the Conquerer**

Eragas moves to dominate the area surrounding New Styrlia, in a bold campaign that earns him the respect of his minotaur followers. He declares his ambition to create a minotaur empire in Southern Hosk.

### **91 AC The Succession**

King Eragas falls in battle against a small battalion of humans in the coastal Crinos region. To honour his memory, the minotaurs grant the crown to his young son without the formal Arena combat required for the succession. The new king is named Ambeoutin in honour of an ancient minotaur hero.

### **92 – 115 AC The Imperial League of Minotaurs**

Ambeoutin I continues to forge the empire of his father's dream, swiftly and brutally crushing the remaining human resistance in Crinos, Highvale, and Okami. His push for land comes to a halt due to the misdirection of the elves in Okami and the Hulderwood and the stretching of military lines.

### **116 AC Declaration of Eragala**

Ambeoutin I renames the coastal province of Crinos in honour of his father, Eragas the Brutish.

### **150 – 200 AC The Sky Citadels**

Upon deciding that the far reaches of space might provide a safe retreat for the gnomish people, gnomoi leaders begin a project to create sky citadels – flying fortresses that represent the ultimate culmination of technology and magic. However, the project is disaster-prone, and of the seven sky citadels begun, only two ever are completed successfully.

### **210 AC Erestem Returns**

Entering through the Foundation Stone in Ansalon, Erestem journeys to Taladas to free the chromatic dragons. She finds an opening to their place of exile at the heart of the Burning Sea. Released, the evil dragons begin to explore the changed face of Krynn, slowly appearing throughout Taladas. Contact with the dragons is infrequent however, as Erestem does not care to have their presence known just yet.

### **215 AC Masud the Hateful**

Two red dragons, Masud the Hateful and her mate, choose to capture a basalt tower of the Bilo gnomes for their lair. The dragons ravage the town surrounding the central tower, then toy with the gnomes within the tower, eventually killing them all. Masud settles within the tower and begins to lay a clutch of eggs. The tower is renamed Ilmachtohtalchder ("Tower of Ghosts"), and the land around it shunned.

### **232 AC Hiteh Appears in Taladas**

Following the lead of Erestem, Hiteh appears and extends his influence into the lava-filled centre of Taladas. Using the chaotic energies of the Grathanich, Hiteh forges a Tower of Flame in the centre of the Great Burning Sea, and claims it as his own exclusive territory. There he works to release more dragons and recruit the strange creatures that dwell in the fiery sea.

### **245 AC Mount Whiterock**

Now abandoned by the gnomes, a half-carved mountain that was once intended to become a powerful sky citadel becomes a lair of evil things.

### **243 – 252 AC The Gnomoi War**

The minions of Hiteh attempt to seize the Citadel of Aldinanachru, the forward-most outpost of the Gnomoi Lands, as a first test of the infant Dragon Armies. This opens the Gnomoi War between the dragons and the fire-beings of Hitehkel and the gnomoi. For the most part the war is a series of small skirmishes marked by intense sieges. Ergormacdrôniskar the Maker designs the first of the fire-fleet, gnomish ships capable of sailing across the seas of open lava that comprise Hitehkel. The knowledge is spread from citadel to citadel as the gnomes commence a major construction program intended to end the war.

### **255 AC Storming the Tower of Flame**

Their fleet assembled, the gnomoi recruit human mercenaries and sail them to the Tower of Flame at the centre of the Burning Sea. Although they fail to capture the Tower, which is the heart of the fire minions' lands, the attempt succeeds in terrifying the enemy. At the same time, Erestem forces Hiteh to withdraw the dragons from the fight, fearing that he will squander valuable resources. No formal peace is declared, but the fire minions curtail any major expeditions against the gnomes, although they continue to conduct raids. The fire minions become hostile to humans, remembering their part in the attack.

### **273 AC Kender Join the Confederation of Armach**

A group of dispossessed kender migrate from the Marak Valleys to settle in Hoor, and join the Confederation of Armach.

### **289 AC Legal Codex of the League Established**

Emperor Ambeoutin VII formalises the code of law that governs the Imperial League of Minotaur Cities.

### **296 AC The Oath**

The chromatic dragons brought back into the world by Erestem call a Council of the Animal Lords, summoning the dragons to the Misty Isle. There they exact the Oath of Neutrality from the metallic dragons.

### **297 AC Return of the Dark Gods**

Hiteh and Erestem begin to appear in the dreams of mortals, luring them into worship of darkness. True clerics of the evil gods return to Taladas.

### **299 – 300 AC Bilo Gnomes Invaded**

Hobgoblins from Old Aurim, aided by the fire minions of Hitehkel, storm the Warden's Tower and claim control of it. The town and outer wall at the base of the tower are destroyed, and the hobgoblins inhabit the honeycombed tunnels of the central basalt tower. The Nylgai Hadirnoe High King ends the war by sends dwarves of the War Clan to aid the Bilo gnomes, defeating the hobgoblin invasion but failing to liberate the Warden's Tower.

### **300 – 360 AC New Irda Refuge**

Those Irda who were taken to Ansalon as slaves flee to an island north of Ansalon in the Courrain Ocean, where they live in solitude and austerity. Due to the trauma of losing Anaiatha, these Irda rarely even speak to one another and do not even mate without the *Palin*, a magical compulsion.

### **307 – 312 AC Bishop Trandamere**

Hiteh orchestrates the takeover of Thenol through Bishop Trandamere.

### **315 – 317 AC The Usurpation**

Erestem, having already noticed Hiteh's activity, decides to annex it into her plan to dominate Krynn. Hiteh the merchant works out a deal with Erestem whereby Erestem speaks through him. In the end however, Erestem usurps his position, assembling her own horde of fire minions. Hiteh, enraged at being outsmarted, retreats to his realm in the Void.

## The Time of Dragons

### **330 AC Dragons Disappear From Taladas**

Erestem orders her dragons to prepare for the new war on Ansalon. Her dragons are sighted leaving Taladas in mass flights.

#### **Othlorx Created**

Some evil dragons refuse to follow Erestem, preferring their lives in Taladas. These creatures become known as the *othlorx* (the Uninvolved), the first dragons of neutrality in Krynn since the Astini left eons ago. Erestem curses the othlorx, and they become erratic and mad creatures.

### **343 AC Death of Speaker Nakaro**

Watermere's Speaker of the Moons Nakaro dies, and is succeeded by Treyan Silverwake.

### **345 AC Metallic Dragons Arrive**

The first of the good dragons are sighted over Taladas. Although prevented by the Oath from becoming involved with the war in Ansalon, nothing prevents them from searching for their eggs. The search carries them throughout the lands of Taladas.

### **348 – 350 AC Sea Witch's Resurgence**

Sagarassi forges her evil sea creatures into a single army, and attacks Watermere at the same time as Erestem's war in Ansalon. Speaker Treyan recruits a force of dolphins, octopi, tritons, whales, and hippocampi to the defenders of Watermere. Instrumental in defeating the Sea Witch are Treyan's allies the dragon turtles, which attack Sagarassi's western borders whilst the Dargonesti attack the east. The Sea Witch is thus forced to retreat. Unfortunately, all of Watermere's alliances vanish after her departure.

### **351 AC True Clerics Appear**

Deciding in divine council that the crimes that caused the Cataclysm are now gone from Taladas, the gods Blindel the Dolphin Lord, Greylord, Jijin, Nuran the Merchant, Qu'uan the Warrior and Udras the Alchemist restore true clerical power to their most pious worshippers in Taladas.

### **352 AC Metallic Dragons Depart**

News of the secret of the draconians is carried to Taladas. Freed from their Oath, most of the metallic dragons fly off to the west to avenge their children. However, some refuse the call, preferring to remain in Taladas. These dragons become neutral and are shunned by the good dragons, who view them as contemptuous traitors. Outcast by both forces, the refusers find themselves identified with the othlorx, although the metallic dragons refer to them as the Oath-bound.

### **360 – 362 AC Dragon Hunters**

Worshippers of Erestem begin to hunt othlorx dragons in the Conquered Lands and Steamwall Mountains. Baron Leonid Althen of the Rathwyck Marches in the Conquered Lands commands a small company to eliminate some mysterious poachers, and the dragon hunters are discovered.

### **363 AC The Dragon Knights**

A community of humans and dragons in the Conquered Lands emerges from seclusion after being discovered by Baron Althen's men. The two groups combine to oppose Erestem's plans to invade Taladas, with the furtive aid of the jealous and vengeful god Sargas.

### **367 AC Thera Shakes**

The League city of Thera, renowned for its clement weather and hot springs, suffers a terrible earth tremour during the spring fertility festival. Some of the dwarves living in the region renew their warnings of geological instability and the danger of

earthquakes. However, they are ignored or vilified as troublemakers by the merchants whose livelihood relies upon the nobility to spend their summers here every year. Convinced that *this* time, the long-promised disaster is close at hand, those few who are convinced of the danger flee the city as the Celebration of Summerrise approaches.

Three days before Summerrise, a quake of unprecedented size shakes Thera, killing many of the citizens and visitors to the city, and causing a vast amount of property damage. Emperor Ambeoutin, who was due to arrive at his summer palace in a matter of days, is forced to return to Kristophan. During the hot, humid Kristophan summer, an irritable Emperor keeps the Senators on their toes. Plans to rebuild Thera are swiftly implemented; special agents of the Emperor investigate the causes of the earthquake, but fail to uncover any responsible individuals.

### **370 – 375 AC The Knights of Takhisis**

During these years the islands of the Fisheries are discovered by the fleet of the Knights of Takhisis, led by a “tall, pale man of cruelty and steel” – Lord Ariakan. After a quick exploration of Southern Hosk and the Neron Peninsula, Ariakan decides that the lands will be of little assistance in his immediate goal to conquer Ansalon. Ariakan does not forget Taladas, and sends a score of Dark Knights to gather information about the lands of Taladas to fill a journal for future expeditionary forces.

### **379 AC New Jelek Founded**

A ship bearing the Knights of Takhisis lands on a small island of the Fisheries, which they name New Jelek. A small fort is quickly built in the Ansalonian style, and surrounded by a wooden palisade. New Jelek quickly attracts as allies the Shark Men, Eresem’s murderous cultists in these islands.

# Chapter Three

## Realms of Taladas

**W**e have gathered details on the major states of Taladas in preparation for Lord Ariakan's return. Some of this intelligence is common knowledge, whilst other peoples are so isolated or paranoid that information regarding them came at great cost. This represents the work of merely two years of gathering informants and sending scouts into these lands. It is assured that once our fortification at New Jelek is relieved by a contingent of Dark Knights from Ansalon, success in bringing these lands under Ariakan's control will soon follow.

 *Laene Uth Habon*

### Alan-Atu

**Proper Name:** The Tribe of Alan-Atu.

**Ruler:** No central authority; various tribal leaders.

**Government:** Cooperative tribes of semi-nomadic shepherds.

**Cities:** No permanent settlements; Ur'musk Valley (autumn trading site).

**Resources:** Foodstuffs (livestock).

**Population:** Human 99%, other 1%.

**Law:** NG.

**Allies:** League of Merchants (shaky), Uigan Nomads.

**Enemies:** Ilquar Goblins.

The Alan-Atu ("Goat People") are semi-nomadic shepherds that maintain large herds of goats and sheep that graze on the fertile, grassy slopes of the lower Ilquar. They view themselves as a collection of families that form a single tribe. The Alan-Atu move with the seasons, taking their herds into the cooler pastures up the mountain slopes in the spring, and returning to their *bators* (round homes of wood and stone) in the winter.

The Alan-Atu do not have a strong priestly or shamanic tradition, and are guided in all matters of importance by the tribal bards. Women are given equal status to men in all instances, although unmarried men and women are segregated.

The families have a highly developed sense of cooperation, but have little to do with each other except for arranged marriages and occasional land disputes. Alan-Atu men are noted for their use of shields and long knives known as *shildors*, both unusual in the Tamire. However, the Alan-Atu are not accomplished warriors and are ill-equipped to defend themselves from others; thus, they greet strangers warily.

## Armach-Nesti

**Proper Name:** The Dry Land of the People.

**Ruler:** Princess Thalaniya, Voice of the Speaker for the Lost Silvanesti [CG female elf].

**Government:** Constitutional monarchy with a Senate of elven lords.

The constitution of Armach is named the Charter of Confederation, and includes four laws (the First Edicts) that establish the rights of Silvanaes elves over *heerikil* (outsiders). These Edicts are the basis of elven superiority in Armach. The penalty for breaking them is death. The Confederation of Armach was created by treaties of alliances between the Armach-nessi and the 16 tribes that are found on its borders.

**Cities:** New Silvanost (LT).

**Resources:** Foodstuffs (fish, game animals, wines), gems (I – III).

**Population:** Elf 98%, half-elf 2%.

**Law:** LN.

**Allies:** The Confederation of Armach.

**Enemies:** The League of Minotaurs (distrust), Thenol.

It is with displeasure that the Knights report that the Silvanesti of Ansalon have reached Taladas well before us. Armach-Nesti is nestled between the New Mountains and the Bay of Hoor, and is a private preserve jealously guarded by the Silvanaes-Quarti ("Lost Silvanesti"). The Silvanaes elves maintain the traditions and racial purity of "The Land Not To Be Forgotten" through complete isolation from the rest of the continent.

No *heerikil* (outsider) is permitted to enter and disturb the life of the elves; the penalty for trespassing is death. The border of Armach-nessi is fiercely guarded, and there are no roads into this land. Just within the borders are mazes of paths, some of which are trapped with magical enchantments to lure and imprison the unwary. Patrols of elven guards regularly sweep the borders for intruders, bringing captives before the Knight-Protector of Armach-nessi for trial. Intentional entry is punishable by death, and ignorance of the borders is no defence.

The scant information acquired by the Knights of Takhisis has been at the cost of too many executed spies. Until we are reinforced with a greater number of Knights, the secrets of Armach-Nesti must remain unknown to us.

## Baltch

**Proper Name:** Baltch.

**Ruler:** Master Engineer Comoden [LN male human].

**Government:** Totalitarian dictatorship supported by a complex bureaucracy.

The Engineers regulate and control all aspects of Baltchian life from the Great Registry in Neamoushek. An order of wizards called the Recorders is trained in special universities to use their magical arts to advise the Engineers.

**Cities:** Nemoushek (SC).

**Resources:** Foodstuffs (rice), lumber, relics from Old Aurim.

**Population:** Human 99%, half-elf 1%.

**Law:** LN.

**Allies:** League of Merchants (shaky), Rainward Isles.

**Enemies:** Hobgoblins in the Black Forests and Old Aurim.

The island of Baltch was separated from the mainland from the Cataclysm, and now requires the constant maintenance of a series of dikes, canals, breakwaters, and levees to prevent their towns from being swept away by the sea. In order to maintain the Seawall's protection, Baltch submits to the absolute rule of the Master Engineer.

Life in Baltch is more tightly controlled and regimented than any other region in the continent. The citizens of Baltch have every detail of their lives registered and recorded, and may only move or change their occupation by obtaining the appropriate permit. Every citizen is assigned to a work gang and required to work on the canals and Seawall for a set number of days each year.

The ruling class of Baltch is made up of the highly educated Engineers, who are trained at the university to fill all of the important government posts. The Engineers are the builders, military commanders, clerks, judges, heralds, tax collectors, and ambassadors. The Recorders, wizardly assistants who use their arcane arts to serve as advisors and secretaries, assist the Engineers. Baltch lacks a standing army, although it can quickly raise a militia of poorly trained peasants, but it does boast a fleet of strong and fast ships.

Baltch is a nation most likely to adapt well to the rule of the Dark Queen. Already the human population of Baltch lives under the careful regulation of the ruling class, the Engineers. Only minor changes would be required after the Knights of Takhisis come into power.

## Bilo Columns

**Proper Name:** Basalt Marches of the Bilogastanirachgnomius.

**Ruler:** Burgomeister Domonicus Thelvaraen [LG male gnomoi].

**Government:** Constitutional Republic.

The Bilo nation is composed of their ten towns, each with a population of about one thousand gnomes. Each town is governed by a Burgher, elected by the citizens of the town and aided by the town council. From their members the ten Burghers elect a Burgomeister, Grand Imperator, and Warden of the Eastern Marches. These three terms are for life.

The Burgomeister presides over all of the affairs of the Bilo gnomes. The Grand Imperator assumes control over the militia during times of war, but has no powers or duties at other times. The Warden is responsible for security in peacetime, and gathers intelligence, organises resistance against raiding, and

maintains order. During war the Warden is considered second-in-command to the Grand Imperator.

**Cities:** Bilodirachtalcher (LT), Ilmachtohtalcher the Tower of Ghosts (– ), Provoerhoosktalcher the Warden's Tower (LT).

**Resources:** Gems (I – IV), intricate devices, silver.

**Population:** Gnomoi 75%, minoi 20%, dwarf 3%, human 1%, other 1%.

**Law:** LG.

**Allies:** Glass Sailors, Scorned Dwarves.

**Enemies:** Hobgoblins, Masud the Hateful [CE female red dragon].

The Bilo gnomes are united into a single nation, composed of the ten towns carved into the basalt towers thrust up by the Cataclysm, each surrounded by small homes clustered in its shadow and an outer defensive wall. They have settled in a land of hexagonal basalt columns and canyons that forms the border between the Shining Land and Hitehkel. They live in quiet peace, practicing their crafts and arts of invention.

Despite the militia that the Bilo gnomes maintain, they are of little military significance to the Knights of Takhisis. The Bilo militia is focused on defending their towns from raids by hobgoblins from Old Aurim (who have occupied the Warden's Tower) or the red wyrm Masud, who dwells in the captured Tower of Ghosts. They are unlikely to act against the Dark Queen's forces as we act to enforce order elsewhere in Taladas, and will likely treat with us should we offer security to their nation.

## Confederation of Armach

**Proper Name:** The Confederation of Armach.

**Ruler:** Various tribal kings.

**Government:** Each nation in the Confederation of Armach is an independent government that brings disputes before the Magisterial Council. The Silvanaes control all of the Confederation of Armach through the Four Edicts written into the article of Confederation.

The Confederation meets in Full Council twice per year and during emergencies. Day-to-day business of the Confederation is handled by the Cabinet, which has five members – the Chancellor of Nations, Steward of the Treasury, Grand Knight of the Realm, First Justicar, and the Prince of Armach-Nesti. The Full Council approves the first four positions for an indefinite term of office. Elves usually hold one or more of these positions.

**Cities:** Bok (SC), Bula (V), Couillard (V), Denia (ST), Fenberg (V), Ilvar (ST), Jala (V), Jurok (V), Klimek (V), Lauf (V), Lens (V), Liepins (V), Mittle (ST), Mongin (V), Noblitt (ST), Obas (ST), Pinzl (V), Poetter (V), Sakel (V), Sampica (ST), Steimel (LT), Viel (V)

**Resources:** Foodstuffs, lumber.

**Population:** Humans 37%, kender 20%, minoi gnomes 18%, Silvanaes elves 10%, centaurs 7%, half elves 5%, other 3%.

**Law:** NG.

**Allies:** Armach-Nesti.

**Enemies:** Thenol, the League of Minotaurs (distrust).

The Confederation of Armach was created by treaties of alliances between the Armach-nessi and the 16 tribes that are found on its borders. Kingdoms within the Confederation of Armach include Couillard, Denia, the Himden Mountains, Hoorbay, Ilvar, Kadwar, Marakein, Mittle, Noblitt, Obas, Sampica, Steimel, Tallmark, Vestlund, the Volker Mountains, and Zendas.

The full Council and Magisterial Council meet in the neutral city of Bok, on the borders of Armach-Nesti. Even when the Full Council is not in session, each kingdom maintains an Ambassador to the Cabinet in Bok. With so many people from the different kingdoms and diplomats from Thenol and the league, Bok is the largest and most cosmopolitan city in the Confederation.

The forbidden cult of Usa the Mighty has developed a large following throughout the Confederation, for it promises freedom from the oppressive control of the Silvanaes elves. The Usans threaten the security of the elven rulers, who punish unrepentant cultists with death. Thus, the cult has gone underground and become only more secretive and mysterious. Those in the Confederation concerned with the threat spend much time double guessing the actions of the Full Council, trying to decide which decisions (if any) may have been influenced by the cult of Usa. There is thought to be an alliance between the Usans and the Thenolite king.

We expect that once the Knights have acquired a presence in the Confederation, our Order will attract a great deal of support from the disaffected human tribes of the Hoor region.

## Conquered Lands

**Proper Name:** Province of the Conquered Lands.

**Ruler:** Senator Vouduniskis [N male human].

**Government:** Provincial governor owing fealty to the Emperor of the League of Minotaurs, appointed by the Senate in Kristophan.

**Cities:** No capital; Carrendown (ST), Eparch (ST), Kolonea (V), Opsikion (V), Pathon (V), Pege (V), Rathlyn (ST), Teluch (ST).

**Resources:** Foodstuffs, lumber.

**Population:** Human 79%, dwarf 9%, minotaur 5%, kender 3%, gnomoi 2%, half-elf 1%, elf 1%.

**Law:** NG.

**Allies:** The League of Minotaurs.

**Enemies:** Thenol.

The Conquered Lands are the most recent acquisition of the League of Minotaurs. Carved from the wilderness and territories of savage barbarians, this is a province for the hardiest of pioneers. Each village is fortified to defend against wild beasts, monsters, and raiders from Thenol.

The border between this province and Thenol is patrolled and guarded since the League's war with Thenol, although not always to the satisfaction of the local barons of the region.

Vast sections of the wilderness, especially away from the rivers, remain unmapped. Only a few roads have been built into the wilderness. Within the wilderness are undefeated villages of goblins and tribes of ogres, and dragons and their mysterious riders are said to live in the forested mountains. The frontier is home to many wild tales, most of which are probably exaggerations or half-truths.

## Elf Clans

**Proper Name:** The *hosk'i imou merkitsa* ("People of the Land Before").

**Ruler:** No central authority; various clan leaders.

**Government:** No central authority; various clan shamans.

The numerous nomadic clans are the only political unit with any authority among the Elf Clans. A shaman, usually the most politically astute member of the clan rather than the most spiritual, leads the clan.

**Cities:** No capital; Turgan Oasis (sacred site).

**Resources:** Horses, furs.

**Population:** Elf 98%, half-elf 2%.

**Law:** CG.

**Allies:** League of Merchants (shaky).

**Enemies:** First People, Ilquar Goblins.

The Elf Clans dwell on the inland side of the Ilquar Mountains, where they have existed for time immemorial. Their reputation is savage and berserk raiders, and dealings between the elves and the nomadic human tribes of the Tamire are conducted with utmost caution.

The most basic group among the elves is the family, which includes more than just immediate parents and children, due to the long life spans of the elves. A single family can include five to six generations and encompass uncles, aunts, and all of their children. Elven society is very patriarchal, with males ruling every family; women have few rights apart from the arcane power of wizardry. Two to four of these extended families are normally bound together by close ties of blood and marriage into a single clan.

Although all clans trace their ancestry back to a single family, the concept of one elven tribe is not a functional part of their society. The elves do not elect a single tribal ruler. Each clan is more or less independent of all others, doing as it pleases within the web of loyalties and feuds among the different clans.

## Eragala

**Proper Name:** The Eragala Province.

**Ruler:** Senator Audarius [LE male minotaur].

**Government:** Provincial governor owing fealty to the Emperor of the League of Minotaurs, appointed by the Senate in Kristophan.

**Cities:** Morgad (M), Thera (M).

**Resources:** Foodstuffs (fish, grains and breads).

**Population:** Minotaur 37%, human 20%, dwarf 18%, elf 10%, kender 7%, half-elf 5%, other 3%.

**Law:** LE.

**Allies:** The League of Minotaurs, the Merchant League.

**Enemies:** River pirates.

Eragala is one of the oldest and most powerful provinces of the League; only New Styrlia is older. Stretching from the rocky cliffs overlooking the Western Ocean to the swampy estuary of the Tiderun, Eragala is a practical land inhabited by practical people.

The second-most populated province of the League, Eragala boasts both the metropolis of Morgad and lonely hamlets along the secluded bays and inlets of the coast. The decidedly odd villagers of the isolated coastal villages are withdrawn and carry themselves slightly differently. Deep in their eyes is a hidden longing for the sea.

Morgad is the greatest seaport of the League, second in trade only to Trilloman; as the most cosmopolitan city of the League, Morgad's market boasts more exotic treasures than even Trilloman can offer. The powerful navy of the League makes its home in Morgad.

Thera is known far and wide as a summer resort of the powerful and wealthy. Noted for its cool summer weather and medicinal hot springs, Thera is also blessed with rich, cool forests providing both scenery and comfort. Thera is divided into two sections, the city (where the public facilities such as the Forum, Basilica, Arena, and Palaestra are located) and the villas (private palaces of the wealthy). Severely damaged by an earthquake in 367 AC, Thera is quickly being rebuilt at great cost to the imperial treasury.

## Fedron

**Proper Name:** Homeland of the Pure First People.

**Ruler:** The High Magus [NE male Nzunta].

**Government:** Dictatorial.

**Cities:** No capital; Roam (H), Deathmark (H), Fall (H), Magus (H).

**Resources:** No exports of note.

**Population:** Orughi 85%, Nzunta 14%, other 1%.

**Law:** LE.

**Allies:** None.

**Enemies:** Selasia.

Fedron is the second largest island of the Spine of Taladas chain, but the most dangerous. Villages of orughi live by the sea, and the stone dwellings of the Nzunta are built on the slopes of Fedron's tall, extinct volcanoes. There are approximately two hundred Nzunta in four settlements. Each clan has a few hundred Orughi worshipper-slaves. Furthermore, three blue Othlorx dragons are bound to Clan Magus by old oaths of servitude to serve the Nzunta.

## Fianawar

**Proper Name:** Hasmana Clans of the Fianawar.

**Ruler:** Clan-Lord Condrucht [N male dwarf], plus various clan leaders.

**Government:** Tribal council.

**Cities:** No capital; Bain (V), Buas (ST), Comla (ST), Conlan (V), Drogo (LT), Drutcht (LT), Ercol (ST), Fathemon (LT), Lopan (ST), Maccibor (ST), Rork (V), Tainway (ST).

**Resources:** Gems (I – II), iron.

**Population:** Fianawar dwarves (98%), human (2%).

**Law:** N.

**Allies:** The League of Minotaurs (loose).

**Enemies:** Hobgoblins.

The Fianawar are a tribe of dwarves found in the northern ranges of the Steamwall mountains, near the Tiderun. The Fianawar live on the surface or at most just below it, and make their living digging ores out of open-pit mines and tending scraggly fields.

The Fianawar are a dour people, standing slightly taller than leaner than others of their kind. They live in small villages built close to the cliff walls, but rarely venture underground. The tremors and volcanism of the Steamwall has made the subterranean realm far too dangerous to dwell in, and the Fianawar have become terrified of the perils found below. After many years of tragic failure in reclaiming their ancestral homes after the Cataclysm, the dwarves became resigned to life on the surface.

## First People

**Proper Name:** The Abaqua Nation.

**Ruler:** No central authority; various tribal leaders.

**Government:** Independent tribes led by clan warchiefs, chosen from the strongest and canniest warriors. Warchiefs are advised by an elderly *hoorac*

("firedr"er"), chosen on the basis of his fame and wisdom. Failure in battle or times of want result in the death of either ogre.

**Cities:** None; various semi-permanent camping grounds.

**Resources:** No exports of note.

**Population:** Ogres 98%, half-ogres 2%.

**Law:** CN.

**Allies:** None.

**Enemies:** Elf Clans, Ice People, Scorned Dwarves.

The First People are a simple race organised into a loose alliance of tribes in the western woodlands of the Ring Mountains. The ogres view themselves as a single nation of related tribes, which move between regular campsites within their territories. The First People are as powerful and violent as their kin elsewhere in Krynn, but have few reasons to leave their lands and rarely encounter outsiders.

## Glass Sailors

**Proper Name:** Faithful Advocates of the Highfather.

**Ruler:** King Solos Monasta [CG male human].

**Government:** Independent nomad families, nominally ruled by a hereditary king descended from a royal prince of Aurim.

Monarchical privileges are a matter of courtesy only, and are based on the prestige of tracing the family name back to a royal prince of lost Aurim.

**Cities:** No capital.

**Resources:** Cotton, exotic metals, gems (l – obsidian), glass, hide armour.

**Population:** Human 97%, gnomoi 2%, minoi 1%.

**Law:** CG.

**Allies:** Bilo Columns.

**Enemies:** Fire minions, hobgoblins.

The Glass Sailors are bizarre nomads descended from ancient Aurim, with a harsh and unforgiving outlook on life. They live in small groups of about 25 related nomads, shifting with the seasonal migration of insectoid predators and the production of oases. There are about 400 different families sailing the Shining Lands.

The Glass Sailors travel in unique glass skimmers, similar in appearance to iceboats with a hull, one or more sails, and outrigger arms with oil-soaked runners that glide over the glass plains of the Shining Land. To protect themselves from windblown shards of black sand, they wear glass goggles and unique armour crafted from the carapaces of large insects. Their weapons are crafted of obsidian.

The Sailors believe that their harsh land is a divine test by their god, the Highfather, and that leaving the Shining Land is a sign of failure. Those who travel

for trade or due to exile must be purified in a painful ceremony (ritual immersion in razor-edged black sand) in order to have a chance of entering Paradise.

## Highvale

**Proper Name:** The Highvale Province.

**Ruler:** Senator Ceralia [NG female minotaur].

**Government:** Provincial governor owing fealty to the Emperor of the League of Minotaurs, appointed by the Senate in Kristophan.

**Cities:** Vinlans (M), Conto (ST), Jalum (ST), Lycus (LT), Ontres (LT), Revis (V), Sirmium (ST).

**Resources:** Foodstuffs (livestock, grains and breads, stout, wine).

**Population:** Human 79%, minotaur 11%, half-elf 5%, dwarf 3%, other 2%.

**Law:** LN.

**Allies:** The League of Minotaurs, League of Merchants.

**Enemies:** Confederation of Armach (distrust), Thenol.

The province of Highvale forms the border of the Minotaur League with the Confederation of Armach and Thenol. Vinlans, one of the Five Great Cities of the League, is noted for its fine crops, wines and grains in particular. It numbers among the Five Great Cities of the League, although Vinlans is the smallest and most rustic of these metropolises.

Fortifications of all types are scattered along the borders, falling into ruin due to corrupt administrators far from the frontier. There were once garrisons patrolling the border of Highvale and Armach, but these have long been relocated to the fortifications near the Thenol border. The peasants now complain about attacks from monsters in the New Mountains, but nothing is ever done to ease their suffering.

At the very edge of the frontier is Mount Bluetop, the northernmost peak of the New Mountains. Surrounding the edge of the mountain is a wall of crudely cut, unmortared stone about 15 feet in height. The wall appears to protect against something within, dwelling on the mountain. The small watchtowers look inward, and the many gates that pierce the walls are barred on the outside. There are no signs of who built it, or why.

## Hulder

**Proper Name:** Hidden Realm of the Hulderfolk.

**Ruler:** His Majesty, King Hallik [CN male elf].

**Government:** Monarchy.

Although the hulderfolk have a king and queen, they have no obvious government. There are no appointments, no elected officials, no titles, and few

offices. A court serves the king and queen, but none of the courtiers bear titles of any sort. Their disputes are settled by custom or by the king himself.

**Cities:** No capital; Summerhome (V).

**Resources:** No exports of note.

**Population:** Elf 96%, human 2%, half-elf 1%, other 1%.

**Law:** CG.

**Allies:** None.

**Enemies:** All human-dominated realms (distrust).

Outsiders, especially humans, know little of the hulderfolk. Only with great difficulty has the Knighthood discovered evidence that these hidden elves yet dwell within the leafy shade of the deep forest. They are secretive people who do not reveal themselves to humans, and delight in playing bizarre and unusual tricks on those villagers who dwell nearby.

The hulderfolk keep to the old ways of the elves, following strict oaths and customs, and wearing clothing of supple bark, green leaves, flowers, and spun spider silk. Although they shun all contact with humans, the hulderfolk make no attempt to hide themselves from other races, nor do they view them as enemies. Creatures such as hobgoblins are tolerated so long as they cause no harm.

Few hulderfolk dwell in any kind of settlement; they are reported to make their homes in the depths of the forest, living in sheltered glades, hollowed trees, and arboreal platforms of light timber and spider silk.

The hulderfolk have clung too long to a way of life that no longer makes sense. As new peoples spread into the lands around them, the hulderfolk merely retreat from the changing cultures of Taladas. The knighthood need not destroy the hulderfolk, for these secretive elves will merely dwindle and disappear.

## Ice People

**Proper Name:** The People of the Ice-Lands.

**Ruler:** No central authority; various tribal leaders.

**Government:** A large number of loosely allied independent families led by *makou* (sorcerer-shamans).

**Cities:** None.

**Resources:** Foodstuffs (fish, livestock, seal, whale), furs, ivory.

**Population:** Human 99%, half-ogre 1%.

**Law:** LG.

**Allies:** Kazar Nomads.

**Enemies:** Abaqua, Thanoi, white dragons.

The Ice People are semi-nomadic humans of the Panak, who dwell in *ho-tii* (peat houses) on northern pastures during the Upper Panak's brief summer, migrating into the coastal regions during winter's long hunting season. The Ice

People are peaceful, for they have few enemies, and consider themselves to be all one people, united against the hostile cold of their world.

The Ice People are a good-natured and humorous people, but are extremely superstitious and follow strict taboos. The priests of the Ice People were exiled during Hiteh's Night as punishment for causing the Cataclysm by breaking these taboos; now makou (sorcerer-shamans) fill their place in their culture.

## Ilquar Goblins

**Proper Name:** The Goblin Nations of Big Ilquar and Little Ilquar.

**Ruler:** No central authority; many independent village headmen advised by a small council of wise and cunning advisors.

**Government:** Numerous loosely allied tribal villages.

**Cities:** No capital.

**Resources:** Furs, iron trade goods.

**Population:** Goblin 99%, half-goblin 1%.

**Law:** LE.

**Allies:** League of Merchants (shaky).

**Enemies:** Alan-Atu, Elf Clans, Kazar Nomads.

The small, fortified goblin villages are found in the high passes of the Ilquar ranges, scattered through most of the central and eastern mountains. They do not encroach on the western slopes (homeland of the Alan-Atu) or the northern end of the Uesi Ilquar, claimed by the Kazar Nomads. The goblins are a settled people, each village claiming a modest territory around it. They live by hunting, metal forging, and a small amount of farming. They are skilled smiths and traders, and have access to one of the few easily mined sources of iron in Taladas.

Goblin villages are very political, rife with scheming, feuds, issues of status, and insults. All property belongs to the village, but is controlled by the male strong enough to claim it. Even children are raised communally, with male children claimed and trained by powerful goblins within the village. The goblins consider their settled lifestyle evidence that they are superior to the nomads of the Tamire, but remain a simple-minded and brutal race.

## Kazar Nomads

**Proper Name:** Clan of the Kazar.

**Ruler:** No central authority; various tribal leaders.

**Government:** Numerous loosely-aligned nomad tribes.

**Cities:** No capital.

**Resources:** Camels, furs, horses, alcoholic drinks.

**Population:** Human 99%, other 1%.

**Law:** CG.

**Allies:** Ice People, League of Merchants (shaky).

**Enemies:** Elf Clans, Ilquar Goblins, Pureshk Nomads, Uigan Nomads.

The Kazar are a significant human tribe on the Tamire. They live along the northern edge of the Tamire and the Uesi Ilquar mountains, and are virtually identical to the Uigan Nomads in customs and appearance. However, there is great enmity between the two tribes that cannot be reconciled.

The nomadic life of the Kazar Nomads carries them from the foothills of the Uesi Ilquar to the southern reaches of the Panak Desert, living in yurts of leather. They herd hardy bactrian camels, horses, and a few flocks of sheep. The Kazar have developed more winter skills than the Uigan, and make raids upon their camels during the heavy snows of winter.

The Kazar Nomads provide an important trade link between the League of Merchants and the Ice People of the far north, but are far too independent to submit to an established rule of order in Taladas. This has caused some friction between the Kazar and the Imperial League of Minotaurs, and will doubtlessly require that the Knights of Takhisis deal with the nomads most harshly when the time comes to subdue Northern Hosk.

## Malton

**Proper Name:** The Free City of Malton.

**Ruler:** Count Ricar [CE male human].

**Government:** The self-styled Count of Malton is a law unto himself.

**Cities:** Malton (LT).

**Resources:** Various trade and stolen goods.

**Population:** Human 79%, minotaur 9%, elf 5%, dwarf 3%, half elf 2%, bakali 1%, other 1%.

**Law:** CE.

**Allies:** League of Merchants (shaky), river pirates.

**Enemies:** League of Minotaurs (distrust).

A trading town on the northern shore of the Tiderun, Malton is a free settlement that accommodates the merchant caravans that cross the Tiderun during its dry periods. Malton also harbours the dangerous river pirates of the Tiderun, who spend their ill-gotten booty in Malton's rough-and-tumble streets. Malton is well known for its quick justice and freewheeling style.

The infamous minotaur buccaneer Haralt the Grey can often be found in Malton, enjoying the company of Count Ricar. This fraternisation with lawless pirates is all the evidence required to destroy Ricar's den of thieves, yet the League of Minotaurs has yet to act. The Knights of Takhisis will not be so lenient.

## Marak Kender

**Proper Name:** Kender of the Marak Valleys.

**Ruler:** No central authority; various family elders.

**Government:** Kender society is built around strongly knit families and relations. Generally all those within a valley are related, tracing back to a common group of ancestors. The Cataclysm has strengthened the family bond of the kender to the point of fanaticism. Meetings between the kender of different valleys are strained and formal to avoid accidental insults by either side.

**Cities:** Maraktown (ST), Anak (V), Atak (V), Betewa (V), Embrar (ST), Gilgal (V), Irmino (ST), Kenrold (ST), Lech (V), Luneburg (LT), Rihwin (V), Wantage (LT).

**Resources:** No exports of note.

**Population:** Kender 96%, human 2%, dwarf 1%, other 1%.

**Law:** N.

**Allies:** Thenol (shaky).

**Enemies:** Hobgoblins.

Living in isolated Marak valleys of the Steamwall, well down on the lower slopes, are a cluster of small kender communities. The Marak are no builders, so the villages appear to be lightly fortified with a few simple walls of fieldstone. However, the kender, following their natures, have prepared rings of devious traps, harassing and deadly. The kender live by working their small farms.

Good lands in the Steamwall are rare. The fields are scattered widely throughout the valley floors, while the kender cluster in small villages for defence. Fields close to the rivers needed to irrigate the fields are often dead, poisoned by those same rivers. Fields further away are dry and often ash-choked. It takes much hard work to grow even poor crops in the soil, but nonetheless the kender try. This hardship too has added to their bitter outlook on life.

## New Styrllia

**Proper Name:** New Styrllia Province.

**Ruler:** His Imperial Majesty, Ambeoutin XI, Emperor of the League of Minotaurs, Great and Illustrious Leader of All Nations [LE male minotaur].

**Government:** Monarchial meritocracy, chosen by combat in the Arena.

**Cities:** Kristophan (M), Bizona (ST), Burgos (V), Cleon (ST), Conium (ST), Kossova (LT), Limvian (V), Luchet (ST), Magnaura (ST), Meitene (LT), Methos (ST), Milvian (LT), Mixen (ST), Naissus (V), Naura (V), Ohrid (V), Pelep (ST), Pergamum (ST), Prand (V), Rumati (ST), Samostata (ST), Sardica (LT), Taron (V), Thallas (LT), Themes (LT), Trilloman (M), Varna (V), Vaspurkan (LT), Vezel (V).

**Resources:** Foodstuffs.

**Population:** Human 45%, minotaur 30%, dwarf 9%, kender 7%, elf 3%, half-elf 1%, other 1%.

**Law:** LN.

**Allies:** The League of Minotaurs, the League of Merchants.

**Enemies:** The Confederation of Armach (distrust), Thenol.

New Styrrlia is the most populated province of the League, and is best known for its wide plains of farmland. Once covered by rich forests, these have been reduced to small copses that cover land unsuitable for farming. Along the sea are many small picturesque fishing villages, pearl beds off the coast, and sunken ruins that are shunned by the locals.

The famous city of Kristophan is the imperial capital and centre of government and culture throughout the empire. Built around the original human settlement, the capital is divided into three districts: the Old City, the New City, and the Imperial City. The Old City is a gloomy and dangerous ghetto of old timber buildings; the New City is a dense maze of low brick buildings, pierced by several straight boulevards that run from one major landmark to another. The Imperial City is separated from the rest of Kristophan by the Dux's Wall, and hold large stone villas of the nobility, the Imperial Palace, Queen's Palace, Imperial Senate, and the Treasury. Kristophan is gaudy, ostentatious, and domineering; however, it is not beautiful.

Kristophan's sister city Trilloman is the hub of trade throughout the empire. Caravans and wagons never cease entering its gates, which are closed only in times of war. Trilloman is a city of merchants and traders, where everything revolves around wealth.

## Okami

**Proper Name:** The Okami Province.

**Ruler:** Senator Juleon [LE male minotaur].

**Government:** Provincial governor owing fealty to the Emperor of the League of Minotaurs, appointed by the Senate in Kristophan.

**Cities:** Faroen (LT), Charsonik (ST), Kauth (ST), Kodama (V), Lucys (ST), Ophikion (ST), Panar (V), Sovar (ST), Teronika (ST).

**Resources:** Lumber.

**Population:** Human 79%, dwarf 9%, minotaur 8%, elf 2%, half-elf 1%, other 1%.

**Law:** N.

**Allies:** Fianawar (loose), The League of Minotaurs, the League of Merchants.

**Enemies:** Thenol.

Okami is covered in thick forests blanketing rugged ground. Few people dwell in this province, which is considered haunted by the descendants of the original human settlers of the League. During Hiteh's Night, refugees from destroyed Aurim wandered through these dark forests and suffered great hardship and terrors. Some of these wanderers stayed behind on the great march, only to vanish without trace. Tales have it that they still dwell within the haunted forests in a state

of living death, lurking among the rotting remains of moss-covered huts beneath the thick canopy.

The dark forests of Okami were the original home of the hulderfolk, hidden elves that have since vanished from this land. Hidden among the trees are pleasant-seeming glades which still retain lingering traces of hulderfolk magic.

The largest settlement in Okami is Faroen, a trading town on the edge of the Tiderun estuary. It falls under the nominal jurisdiction of the League, but is a rough-and-tumble town where the law is loosely applied. Faroen accommodates the merchant caravans that cross the estuary during the occasional dry periods.

## Old Aurim

**Proper Name:** Old Aurim

**Ruler:** No central authority; many tribal leaders

**Government:** Many petty tribal rulers in direct conflict with one another.

**Cities:** No capital.

**Resources:** No exports of note.

**Population:** Hobgoblins 72%, draconians 25%, other 3%.

**Law:** CE.

**Allies:** None.

**Enemies:** Baltch.

Old Aurim is a land of dust, petrified trees, ruins, and cruel humanoids. Once the seat of a vast empire, Old Aurim is now a shattered strip of land covered in ash and lava, and poisoned by toxic clouds blown from Hitehkel. The ruins of the old empire are still majestic, sometimes rising in the most unlikely of places. Strange relics of the Age of Might are rumoured to be found within.

Tribes of emaciated hobgoblins live in desolate settlements throughout the wasted plains of Aurim. Enlightened tribes raise dogs to be butchered for meat, but most survive by hunting or resort to cannibalism. In the ruined old cities of Aurim live the traag draconians, twisted creatures created by the experiments of the Dark Queen and abandoned in this wasteland. The hobgoblins and the traag frequently raid one another for food or precious iron weapons.

## Pureshk Nomads

**Proper Name:** Tribe of the Pureshk.

**Ruler:** Khingiza Boyla of the Pureshk [CN male human].

**Government:** Several loosely allied nomad clans.

**Cities:** No capital; various nomadic settlements.

**Resources:** Fur, horses.

**Population:** Human 99%, half-elf 1%.

**Law:** CN.

**Allies:** League of Merchants (shaky), Uigan Nomads.

**Enemies:** Elf Clans (distrust), Ilquar Goblins, Kazar Nomads.

The Pureshk are a nomadic human tribe closely related to the more powerful Uigan Nomads. These nomads trade horses for breeding stock with the Uigan, and support the related tribe in matters of war. Culturally, the Pureshk are like the Uigan in almost every way, and would be indistinguishable from the Uigan if not for the disgusting hygiene of the Pureshk.

The Pureshk often dwell in squalor, and have been inured to many diseases and poisons as a result. Their tribesmen are considered as difficult to kill as fleas, and are successful in winter war as a result. However, they suffer from the distaste of any travellers or merchants who visit them, for their *yurts* (leather tents) are universally rife with vermin and filth.

## Rainward Isles

**Proper Name:** People of the Rainward Isles

**Ruler:** No central authority; various village elders.

**Government:** Council of elders.

**Cities:** No capital; various hillside villages and fishing towns.

**Resources:** Copper, foodstuffs, furs, iron.

**Population:** Human 40%, dwarf 25%, kender 25%, centaur 10%.

**Law:** NG.

**Allies:** Baltch (weak).

**Enemies:** Old Aurim.

The People of the Isles live in scattered villages along the eastern coast of the Rainward Isles. Weather that features continual, bone-chilling rains and grey skies has given the Rainward Isles their name and makes them cold and damp even in summer.

The People of the Isles mine copper and high-grade iron, and farm oats, apples, pears, plums, and berries. Hunters and trappers trade pelts of fox, otter, and elk.

The humans, dwarves, and kender of the Rainward Isles are descendants from Old Aurim who survived the first Cataclysm. A wise dwarven chieftain named Aethelred the Squat eventually unified the hostile, disparate refugees into the People of the Isles. These scattered towns and villages openly defy the Dark Queen, and are punished by attacks from the undead revenants of their warring ancestors. Although the People of the Isles currently resist these supernatural attacks with the aid of Mislaxan priests, a dedicated assault by the Dark Knights will certainly crush these undefended settlements.

## Rudil

**Proper Name:** The Territory of Rudil.

**Ruler:** Governor Antoneus [LN male minotaur].

**Government:** Provincial governor owing fealty to the Emperor of the League of Minotaurs, appointed by the Senate in Kristophan.

**Cities:** Rudil (LT), Barask (ST), Milgath (ST).

**Resources:** Ships, various trade goods.

**Population:** Human 79%, minotaur 10%, elf 5%, half elf 3%, dwarf 2%, other 1%.

**Law:** LN.

**Allies:** The League of Minotaurs, the League of Merchants.

**Enemies:** None.

Originally founded as a trading post for merchants travelling to the Tamire nomads, Rudil has grown into a large town, the only significant seaport in Southern Hosk. By the terms of the agreement with the nomad tribes, Rudil is allowed only a small area of coast. It sits at the centre of this territory, surrounded by the farmland needed to support the town and sister settlements.

Although small, Rudil has a wide variety of services and exotic goods for trade in the colourful bazaar of the central square, equal to that of a small city. It is a gateway to both the Western Ocean and the wilds of Northern Hosk. It is a gathering place for adventurous souls preparing to set out into the unknown.

## Scorned Dwarves

**Proper Name:** Nylgai Hadirnoe of the OdderRhing.

**Ruler:** High King Revenharos [LN male dwarf].

**Government:** Independent monarchy with hereditary rulership.

A Council of Clansmen, who express the will of the people, advises the High King. Leaders are chosen from each clan, with the largest clans and those that contribute the most taxes allowed more council members.

The clans are organised along the basis of trades, and most clans are present in each community. All members of the clan are interrelated to a degree and are expected to take up the same occupation upon coming of age.

**Cities:** The High King's Citadel (SC).

**Resources:** Gems (I – IV), gold, high-grade iron and steel, silver.

**Population:** Dwarf 100%.

**Law:** LG.

**Allies:** Bilo Columns.

**Enemies:** Disir, First People.

The Scorned Dwarves (“Nylgai Hadirnoe”) are an ancient race of 20,000 souls, organised into strict clans based on different trades and professions. During

the Age of Might they lived beneath the central and northern mountains of Taladas and were commonly seen throughout the surface lands. Since Hiteh's Night, the Scorned Dwarves have retreated farther and farther underground, and now, rarely venture into the sunlit world. It is not uncommon for a dwarf of this subterranean empire to never leave the enclosed world of the OdderRhing ("The Land beneath the Mountains").

The OdderRhing is an extensive series of caverns that lie at the roots of the Ring Mountains. Nylgai communities are complexes of public caverns and smaller halls and warrens owned by the many clans of dwarven society. In the centuries that the Scorned Dwarves have spent underground since Hiteh's Night, one of their major goals has been to expand and beautify the tunnels, halls, and caverns of the OdderRhing. The dwarven halls are carved in baroque styles, embellished with scenes, faces, and geometric designs artistic and educational.

The deep delving of dwarven miners has brought them into contact with the disir, a race of extreme savagery that now engages the dwarves in a bloody and merciless war of extermination.

## Selasia

**Proper Name:** Selasia, the Place of Sundering.

**Ruler:** Igrani [LG female Mischta], various clan rulers.

**Government:** The Mischta and bolandi of Selasia group themselves in extended families of dozens or hundreds of individuals, each led by a single elder. Mischta society encourages strictly ethical behaviour, but individuals have great autonomy within these strictures.

**Cities:** Igrani Village (H)

**Resources:** No exports of note.

**Population:** Mischta 90%, bolandi 9%, other 1%.

**Law:** LG.

**Allies:** Watermere (loose).

**Enemies:** Fedron.

Selasia is the largest island of the Spine of Taladas. It is almost entirely covered by dense, impenetrable rain forest. Paths through the jungle are nearly impossible to find, and difficult for non-natives to traverse. The largest body of water is Gold Dragon River, a wide slow river that flows into a large swamp called the Engulf, on the edges of Gold Dragon Bay. There are piranha in the river, crocodiles in the Engulf, and snakes everywhere. Selasia has a ridge of forbidding mountains that runs along the length of the island, including many extinct volcanoes.

There are a few Mischta still living on Selasia's mountainsides, mostly in Igrani Village. There are also long-abandoned stone ruins from the Age of Might, including quarry pits, three hundred foot tall pillars of granite, and the hidden

entrance to sealed caverns in which terrible beasts were imprisoned by the Irda.

## Shoal Elves

**Proper Name:** The Dimernesti Families of the Outer Shoals.

**Ruler:** Speaker of the Sea Seealisea [CG female elf].

**Government:** Various nomadic families, each owing allegiance to the Speaker of the Sea.

**Cities:** No capital; various nomadic settlements.

**Resources:** Foodstuffs (fish), gems (Ill – pearls).

**Population:** Elf (Dimernesti) 96%, merfolk 2%, half-elf 1%, other 1%

**Law:** CG.

**Allies:** The Confederation of Armach (shaky).

**Enemies:** Watermere (distrust).

The shoal elves that dwell in the shallow waters off the coast of Southern Hosk consist of nomadic communities of Dimernesti sea elves. They do not dwell in permanent residences, but travel about the outer shoals in small family groups that live in underwater grottoes, shipwrecks, and coral caves.

Descended from Silvanesti sailors who came over to Taladas in the Great Armada, the Dimernesti occasionally assist the elves of Armach-Nesti, and are torn between their desire for autonomy and freedom and their need for the support of the wealthier surface-dwelling elves. Dimernesti elves are disdainful of the deep elves of Watermere, who are considered exiles from their society.

These shoal elves are of no importance to the Knights of Takhisis. At best, they may aid their Silvanaes allies in Armach by working as skilled sailors in the fleets of the Confederation of Armach.

## Spire Mountains Gnomes

**Proper Name:** Itomyadnali (“Mountainous Pinnacles”).

**Ruler:** His Majesty, Telemdarklosminarus IV [LG male gnomoi].

**Government:** Hereditary monarchy.

Telemander the Stooped dwells in the impressive Glass Tower atop Aldinanachru, and appoints a High Judge to govern each citadel. The High Judges are aided by three groups of officials: the Judges (with authority over justice), the Foremen (with authority over industry and citadel maintenance), and the Guard (who serve as army, police, and investigators).

**Cities:** Aldinanachru (SC), Boligarinoft (ST), Jaggachsteromius (ST), Kralmonchuderseara (ST), Nabrutacildiscara (LT), Voertraggaru (ST), Yahmetnachmaru (LT).

**Resources:** Ceramics, copper, high-grade steel, iron, large devices.

**Population:** Gnomoi 60%, minoi 39%, other 1%.

**Law:** LG.

**Allies:** Bilo Columns.

**Enemies:** Fire minions.

The gnomes of the Spire Mountains are a significant force in central Taladas, and the greatest technological civilisation in all of Krynn. The gnomish kingdom consist of cities carved from the bizarre crystalline towers that rise from the Spire Mountains of Hitehkel, and build bizarre devices of great size and power.

Before the Cataclysm, they lived in scattered warrens throughout the central mountains of Taladas. The upheaval of the Cataclysm and the creation of the Great Burning Sea made these warrens inhospitable, and so, under the direction of the gnomoi, the gnomes set about creating the citadels, carved from the sturdiest of the massive stone columns and mountainous pinnacles of the Spires. Within these citadels the gnomes live industrious and harmonious lives. The gnomes are not particularly religious, although they respect Reorx, and the influence of our Dark Queen and the god Hiteh can still be felt in the presence of secretive cults.

The Citadels are homes, warrens, cities, factories, and fortresses all in one. Those citadels built on the edge of the Burning Sea also possess shipyards for the fire-fleets, the strange metal ships able to sail on the surface of the Burning Sea. The gnomes have completed several of these citadels, and claim that they are making excellent progress, especially considering the untimely interruption of a major war with the fire minions of Hitehkel.

Technological innovations of the gnomes include the military power of the fire-fleets, the steam-powered gliders, and the fearsome cannons that spew molten rock at foes. Clearly, the gnomes of Itomyadnali are a warlike nation that protects the safety and harmony of its people with weapons of great power.

The gnomes rarely use magic in their devices; the only notable combination of including magic in their designs were the sky citadels. The gnomes attempted to construct a number of floating citadels, similar to those seen in Ansalon during the War of the Lance and Blue Lady's War, in order to carry their people into the supposedly safe reaches of the night sky. Of the seven that were worked on, one was destroyed by volcanism, another disappeared into the heavens, one was swept away in a mighty storm, a fourth crashed on landing, and two were successfully built. The last was abandoned before completion, and became the half-carved peak of Mount Whiterock, a lair of dangerous creatures of all types.

## Syldar

**Proper Name:** The Payan Mako of Syldar.

**Ruler:** No central authority; many tribal elders.

**Government:** Loosely allied independent villages.

**Cities:** No capital.

**Resources:** Foodstuffs (fish, game animals), furs, gems (II – III – pearls).

**Population:** Human 79%, hobgoblin 12%, elf 8%, half-elf 1%.

**Law:** N.

**Allies:** League of Merchants (shaky).

**Enemies:** Shark Men.

Syldar is the largest island of the Fisheries, a cluster of subtropical islands that lie just above sea level. Smaller islands are not even named. The Payan Mako control fishing waters, settlements, and parts of Syldar's jungles. The shallow channels that separate the islands are filled with millions of spawning fish, which are caught by humans, goblins, and hobgoblins who pilot catamarans and dugout canoes of up to 40 feet in length.

The Dark Queen has dedicated worshippers in Syldar, known as the Shark Men. These murderous cultists know our Dark Queen by the name Erestem, and are very willing to work with the knighthood in exchange for metal arms to use against their enemies. The Shark Men are undisciplined and utterly without honour, but may prove a valuable tool in establishing the knighthood's first kingdom in these warm isles.

## Thenol

**Proper Name:** The New Kingdom of Thenol.

**Ruler:** His Holiness, Bishop Trandamere [NE male human].

**Government:** Aristocratic Senate led by a hereditary monarchy, now a theocracy in all but name.

**Cities:** New Aurim (SC), Augsburk (LT), Barrn (V), Bleq (V), Fallow (V), Flex (ST), Forg (V), Forks (ST), Harrd (V), Hasid (ST), Hawkbluff (LT), Hostl (V), Hussuran (V), Grem (V), Merlit (V), Monyge (ST), Nao (V), Novisba (ST), Nuel (V), Rek (V), Rukas (V), Ruud (V), Ston (V), Straa (V), Tak (V), Tes (V), Thorn (V), Throng (ST), Wrest (V), Yrmiral (ST).

**Resources:** Foodstuffs, silk, wool.

**Population:** Human 96%, bakali 2%, kender 1%, other 1%.

**Law:** NE.

**Allies:** Bakali of Blackwater Glade, Marak Kender (shaky).

**Enemies:** The Confederation of Armach, the League of Minotaurs.

Thenol is a human kingdom that occupies the lower regions of Southern Hosk. Nominally led by the Senate of Lords headed by a king, the reigns of power in Thenol have been seized by the Temple of Hith, under the leadership of Bishop Trandamere. The king is a virtual prisoner in the rotting palace in New Aurim, and his Lords are too divided by feuds and political ambition to support him.

Bishop Trandamere has strengthened the quarreling armies of Thenol with fanatical worshippers of Hith and ranks of unquestioning undead, loyal only to the dark cultists. These armies have raided and invaded the border regions of the Confederation of Armach, Highvale, and the Conquered Lands, although their success is limited by the stretching of military resources.

Thenol is the greatest obstacle to the future conquest of the Knights of Takhisis in Southern Hosk. The Temple of Hith is devoted to the worship of their god and very hostile to our Dark Queen (known to them as Erestem). The military power of Trandamere's Temple is enough to pose a significant threat to our plans in this continent.

## Uigan Nomads

**Proper Name:** Tribe of the Uigan.

**Ruler:** Boyla Yakinf [CN male human].

**Government:** Numerous loosely allied family clans. Once per year, the tegin gather to elect a boyla (great prince) from the tegin of the four boyla families.

**Cities:** No settlements; various nomadic encampments.

**Resources:** Foodstuff (livestock), fur, horses.

**Population:** Human 97%, half-elf 2%, half-goblin 1%.

**Law:** CG.

**Allies:** Alan-Atu, League of Merchants, Pureshk Nomads.

**Enemies:** Clan Elves (distrust), Kazar Nomads.

Uigan Nomads are short, slender barbarians dwelling in the western regions of the Tamire steppes. They wander up and down the length of the Tamire during the course of a year, dwelling in *yurts* (tents made of thick felt and leather). They depend on their herds of horses and sheep for most of their food and clothing needs. The Uigan are unskilled in agriculture, but are said to eat anything – including sheep, horses, camels, antelope, deer, dogs, and even mice in times of hunger.

The Uigan are the largest and most powerful tribe of Northern Hosk. The tribe is composed of about 130 different family clans, each ruled by a tegin (prince) drawn from the founding family's tent. Uigan laws are simple and direct, with criminals judged by an unbiased tegin.

The family clans average about 480 members of several related family groups. The Uigan nomads generally accord equal rights to both men and women. Adult males bear the distinctive facial tattoos of the *anda*, a coming-of-age ceremony, and worship the warrior-god Qu'uan; women worship the horse goddess Jijin. Those who practice the arts of arcane magic are treated as outsiders to normal Uigan life, and dwell outside the encampment.

Uigan nomads are legendary riders and bowmen, and are valued as guides and trackers throughout the Tamire and beyond. They have an exceptional ability to remember places and shapes, and can navigate by the stars. Uigan horses are noted for their toughness and are valued throughout the cities of the Minotaur League.

## Watermere

**Proper Name:** Quoonoqua.

**Ruler:** Speaker of the Moons Treyen Silverwake [CG male elf]

**Government:** Hereditary monarchy.

**Cities:** Takaluras (LT), Hoorward (ST), Allshrine (T), Gloorghin-Tekh (ST)

**Resources:** Foodstuffs (fish), gems (III – pearls).

**Population:** Elf (Dargonesti) 96%, merfolk 2%, triton 1% human 1%.

**Law:** CG.

**Allies:** Merfolk, Tritons.

**Enemies:** Shoal Elves (distrust).

Watermere is an undersea kingdom which lies southwest of Southern Hosk, in the vast ocean that lies between Taladas and Ansalon. Populated almost entirely by Dargonesti elves, Watermere would be of no significance did they not lie within the sea route that might be used to travel between the two continents. The Dargonesti are largely concerned with the affairs of their underwater world, including the politics of merfolk and tritons, and ancient conflicts with the marine dragons and marauding humanoids of the pelagic depths.

# Chapter Four

## Geography

**A**s in Ansalon, the continent of Taladas has been forever shaped by the Cataclysm. However, whilst Ansalon has recovered from the worst of the Cataclysm's horrors, Taladas still bears the open wounds of this divine punishment. We have seen or heard reports of the toxic waters of the Indanalis Sea, the poisoned wastelands of Old Aurim and the Steamwall, and the great flaming sea of Hitehkel. The strange new geography of this land must be discovered if we are to become dominant over its peoples.

*✎ Lord Ariakan*

### Forests

- ✎ **The Black Forests** are warped and shadowy woods that surround the Storm Sea to the north, south, and east. A few mountainous spurs rise up out of the forest, and a number of rivers flow out of its darkened recesses, but the interior of the Black Forests is almost entirely unmapped. Hobgoblins, black and green othlorx dragons, and beasts warped by poisons dwell within.
- ✎ **The Cetas Forest** is a medium-sized wood in the northeast of Okami, near the Tiderun. The undead revenants of refugees from lost Aurim are thought to haunt this shadowy woodland, in forgotten villages beneath the trees.
- ✎ **The Darcika Woods** are a long strip of forest that begins near the border of Highvale and New Styrlia, and continues south around the east edge of the Highvale Mountains into the Confederation of Armach, and surrounding the New Mountains between the Confederation and Thenol.
- ✎ **The Dark Wood** is an unbroken expanse in northern Thenol. A few hulder elves live hidden within its depths, and green dragons have been sighted flying overhead by foresters.
- ✎ **The Grimm Wood** runs along the western edge of the Steamwall, just to the south of the Marak Valleys. The great Evole River flows through its northwestern tip, and a tribe of ogres lives within.
- ✎ **The Nicodie Forest** is a tamed, oval-shaped wood near the shore of New Styrlia, just south of Kristophan and Kossova, and north of the Theos Hills.
- ✎ **The Okrid Forest** lies in the east of the Okami province, near the Fianawar mountains. Haunted glades that once belonged to the Elderwild elves are found within, and explorers often vanish without a trace.
- ✎ **The Thenes Forest** lies between the Traben Mountains and the Hulder forest. Hulderfolk once lived within, but have retreated from the ever-encroaching human woodmen.
- ✎ **The Therani Forest** is an irregular preserve south of Thera, in New Styrlia. It is a pleasantly cool woodland.

⌘ **The Trumas Woods** are located at the beginning of the Samos River in western Highvale, at the northern tip of the Highvale Range. The bears and wildcats of the Trumas Woods are territorial and very dangerous.

## Mountains

⌘ **The Aurim Mountains** are a series concentric ranges that shatter the once-fertile plains of Old Aurim. Their barren slopes block the toxic air that blows out of Hitehkel, although many winds continue to poison the Storm Sea and Black Forests.

⌘ **The Himdens** dominate the peninsula that forms the Bay of Hoor in Armach. A kingdom of mountain barbarians in the Himdens belongs to the Confederation of Armach.

⌘ **The Ilquar Mountains** run down the center of the Tamire, and are home to the Alan-Atu and Ilquar Goblins. The northern and southern mountain ranges, called Uesi Ilquar ("Big Ilquar") and Burya Ilquar ("Little Ilquar") respectively, are separated by a broad gap known as the Tamoguir ("Land for Passing Through").

⌘ **Konim Spur** is a small range that is found in the southeastern region of Highvale.

⌘ **The Neron Range** is a backbone mountain range to the entire peninsula, with steep and razor-edged foothills covered with thick forests of mahogany and teak. Warm rains are common along the entire range.

⌘ **The New Mountains** are two parallel ranges in Southern Hosk that rose up in the wake of the Cataclysm. Their northern extent is Mount Bluetop, which lies just south of the Highvale border, and continues south parallel to the Bay of Hoor, forming the eastern border of the Confederation of Armach. A second range of the New Mountains runs through Thenol.

⌘ **Rhynnon Spur** marks the border between Okami and the Fianawar region of the northern Steamwall. In ancient times, the dwarves and elves traded in this region, and ruins of an ancient road can be seen on sheer mountainsides.

⌘ **The Ring Mountains** are a series of ranges that rise up from the eastern Tamire and follow concentric fault lines around the burning crater of Hitehkel. The ground tipped along these faults after the first cataclysm, thrusting up mountain ridges. These were combined with old peaks formed over the ages. Dotted throughout the Ring Mountains are many still-active volcanoes, fumaroles, geysers, mud-pots, and hot springs. There are treacherous to cross, boiling pools covered by thin layers of solid-seeming earth.

⌘ **Rumpispur** is a spur of low mountains that marks the western edge of the Marak Valleys. A few hobgoblin villages are found in its valleys.

⌘ **The Sikoni Mountains** are a broad range of low mountains in the Conquered Lands, between the eastern border of Highvale and the Hulder forest. These mountains date back to before the Cataclysm, and boast extensive limestone caverns once lived in by the Elderwild elves.

- ⌘ **The Spire Mountains** are a narrow arc of towering mountains that separate the flaming hell of Hitehkel is separated from the rest of Taladas. The most active volcanoes in Taladas are found here, spewing steam, ash, fumes, and flows of lava. The Spire gnomes excavated their citadels in these mountains.
- ⌘ **The Steamwall** is a series of mountain ranges that form a hostile, uninhabitable land. The jagged, volcanic mountains of the Steamwall are harsh and polluted, for they serve as a barrier between Southern Hosk and the toxic waters and storms of the Indanalis Sea. Hobgoblins and horrid, twisted beasts are the only inhabitants of the Steamwall.
- ⌘ **The Traben Mountains** in the southern Conquered Lands are a range of mountains that runs south into Thenol, joining the New Mountains.
- ⌘ **The Volkens** are a small mountain range to the northwest of Armach-Nesti, in the Confederation of Armach. They are entirely blanketed in forest.

## Hills and Highlands

- ⌘ **The Cletan Hills** lie in the central region of New Styrllia, breaking the flat monotony of the farmland plains.
- ⌘ **The Spear Ridge** runs from northwest to southeast in northern Thenol, parallel to the New Mountains. Its southern half is blanketed in the Dark Wood.
- ⌘ **The Theran Hills** in New Styrllia lie just beyond the Therani Forest, south of the Eragala border. They are known for their hot springs and frequent earth tremours.

## Islands

- ⌘ **Abshu** is a small island in the Spine of Taladas chain, notable for the fact that trading ships from Taladas are prepared to land here and nowhere else in the islands. The extinct volcano peak of Abshu is rich in copper and iron, but previous mines have met with disaster.
- ⌘ **Chandion** is a rugged island in the Spine of Taladas, featuring pumice hills covered with dense jungles. In ancient times minotaurs dwelt here and mined precious metals from the hills. Now, Chandion is populated by barbarous, cannibalistic orughi. These decadent, diseased brutes have forgotten about the Nzunta, and dwindled to less than 150 individuals. Elephants and tigers also live in Chandion, and small game is plentiful.
- ⌘ **The Fisheries** are a cluster of subtropical islands that lie just above sea level between Neron and Southern Hosk. The shallow channels that separate the islands are filled with millions of spawning fish, which are caught by humans, goblins, and hobgoblins who pilot catamarans and dugout canoes of up to 40 feet in length. The largest island of the Fisheries is Syldar; smaller islands are not even named.
- ⌘ **Little Taladas** is a small island to the north and east of Chandion, covered by very thick, dense jungle. The name of this island is a sailor's joke; no one ever goes there, and the dangers of little Taladas remain undocumented.

- ⌘ **Luminari** is a large island that lies just off the shore of Southern Hosk, near the city of Kristophan. It is notable for a mysterious tower on its northern cliffs, from which a bright light shines over the ocean. Rumours abound about the true masters of this secluded tower.
- ⌘ **Odith** is very similar to Abshu in size and appearance, boasting a few old ruins dating back to the early years of the Age of Despair. The single volcano of Odith is dormant. Odith was once part of a much larger island, but during the first Cataclysm the volcano exploded violently. Much of the island was destroyed, with only Odith and the new island of Abshu remaining above sea level. Twenty miles of water separates Odith and its twin.
- ⌘ **The Rainward Isles** lie beyond the Storm Sea in the utter northeast of Taladas. Bitter sleet and rain falls upon the green forested hills, and villages of friendly people eke out an existence in these cold islands. Wild centaurs run on the plains, and ill-omened ruins are haunted by undead raised by the vengeful Hiteh and Eretem.
- ⌘ **Vorm** is the southernmost island in the Spine of Taladas chain, which rose out of the sea in a spectacular display of volcanism. Vorm is one of the largest isles of the Spine of Taladas, and the most volcanic: its six volcanoes regularly erupt in great streams of lava, and geysers of boiling water and steam are common. Vorm is home to several red othlorx dragons.

## Major Bodies of Water

- ⌘ **Guurlamskas**, or the Northern Sea, is an expanse of icy water north of Taladas, stretching to the distant arctic continent. Icebergs float south on these frozen waters, in which whales, seals, and the dreaded thanoi swim.
- ⌘ **The Indanalís Sea** has been known as the Sea of Poison since Hiteh's Night. Trapped between the massive ranges of the Steamwall Mountains and the Gnomoi Spires, it is rich in deadly salts and kept seething by occasional lava flows. Only bizarre and deadly beasts swim in these foul waters. The southern opening to the Indanalís Sea is Thunderbreach Strait. The narrowest point of this strait is the site of underwater volcanic activity.
- ⌘ **The Storm Sea** is a tempestuous sea of chemical-laden waters between Old Aurim and the Rainward Isles. Strange sea monsters, dragons, and pirates ply its waters.
- ⌘ **The Tiderun** is a great estuary that connects the Indanalís Sea to the Western Ocean. The banks are lined with thick stands of woods and brakes of salt marsh cane where pirates and lizardfolk dwell. It gets its name from the ebb and flow of its waters according to the influences of the moon. The waters of the Tiderun rise, ebb, or (rarely) recede entirely in an erratic fashion according to the pull of the three moons. When the waters ebb, only rafts and the shallowest of boats can ply the Tiderun. On the other hand, when the waters retreat altogether, trading caravans rush across the wide muddy expanse before the tides return.

- ⌘ **The Western Ocean** lies between Taladas and Ansalon; the Spine of Taladas island chain is one of the few spits of dry land in the tropics of its vast expanse. The Dimernesti Shoal Elves and the Dargonesti kingdom of Watermere are found beneath the waves.
- ⌘ **The Windless Ocean** is the endless blue ocean to the south of Taladas. It is misnamed, for powerful storms and monsoons sweep out of the ocean to batter the shores of the Fisheries and Neron.

## Rivers

- ⌘ **The Deep Draught** originates on the border of Thenol and the Marak Valleys, and flows through the Hulder forests where it joins the Sava.
- ⌘ **The Doric** flows through the Mochdrew Valley in the Fianawar mountains, passing the towns of Drogo and Charsonik before emptying into the Tiderun.
- ⌘ **The Evole** is one of the longest rivers in Southern Hosk, beginning in Snowtop Pass in the Marak Valleys and flowing in a generally southern direction past the Spear Ridge of Thenol and New Aurim before turning east into Blackwater Glade and eventually the Windless Ocean.
- ⌘ **The Fflewddwr** originates in the Fianawar mountains of the northern Steamwall, and flows down along the eastern edge of the Hulder forest. It joins the Deep Draught River.
- ⌘ **The Lenika** flows in a circuitous route from its source in the New Mountains between Highvale and the Confederation, through Highvale, and eventually emptying in the Bay of Hoor.
- ⌘ **The Nico** flows through the Mur Valley of the Fianawar region into Okami between the Okrid and Cetas forests, passing the towns of Teronika and Kauth before emptying into the Omis Swamp and Tiderun.
- ⌘ **The Sava** begins near the borders of the Conquered Lands, Hulder forest, and Thenol. It marks the eastern border of the Conquered Lands and Okami provinces, and flows into the Tiderun.
- ⌘ **The Sitron** flows through the Conquered Lands and into Highvale, where it joins the mighty Lenika.
- ⌘ **The Struma** flows through New Styrlia west of the Cletan Hills, emptying into Karpathos Bay south of Kristophan. Smaller rivers – the Lycan, Chald, and Letus – flow into it.
- ⌘ **The Trillium** flows from a mountainous spur below the Grimmm Wood on a meandering course south into Blackwater Glade, where it joins the mighty Evole.

## Wetlands

- ⌘ **Blackwater Glade** covers the southeastern tip of Southern Hosk. Fed by waters from the Steamwall and Thenol, Blackwater Glade is an immense wetland in which humans are never likely to inhabit. Explorers into the Glade are wracked with fevers, chills, and painful spasms due to the diseases that can

be found within – many of these diseases are never cured, but return to inflict new pain upon the sufferer year after year. The very few settlements that have been attempted within Blackwater Glade have vanished, swallowed by the verdant undergrowth.

☞ **The Great Reed Delta** is an uninhabited and unexplored swamp and jungle with which no man is familiar. The swamp expanse is gradually increasing in size, creeping into Neron's jungle and southern Baltch daily. Fast-flowing streams flow down steep hills into rivers nestled in the narrow valley floors. These rivers flow deep into the Great Reed Delta.

☞ **Omis Swamp** in Okami covers the shore of the Tiderun, surrounding towns such as Faroen and the outflow of the Nico River. Pirates and lizardfolk dwell in its hidden backwaters.

## Wastelands

☞ **The Great Burning Sea** of Hitehkel is the most lifeless region of Taladas. Surrounded by the treacherous, cracked plain known as the Cooling Land, the Great Burning Sea is a churning expanse of molten rock, the bleeding open wound of Krynn. The air is pure poison, and the temperatures so extreme that an unprotected mortal will immediately perish. Only fire minions and other creatures of supernatural flame can dwell in the burning hell of Hiteh. In the very centre of the Great Burning Sea is the tower of flame that the gnomoi name Flaemchaldar, a fortress of Hiteh's minions in Hitehkel.

☞ **Old Aurim** is a poisoned strip of land that lies on the eastern rim of Taladas, separated from the hellish centre of Hitehkel by the Shining Lands and concentric ranges of mountains forced up by the convulsions of Hiteh's Night. Old Aurim is a land of dust-shrouded ruins, petrified trees, and dry, cracked hills in which live tribes of hobgoblins and traag draconians. Still-beautiful monuments of the Aurim Empire can still be found in the bleak plains.

☞ **The Panak** is a broad expanse of eerie badlands in the icy northern reaches of Taladas. The gravelly scrub plains, weirdly eroded hills, and bleak miles of ice-encrusted bog are considered an inhospitable desert by travellers, who do not see the life that flourishes during the brief summer. The badlands is divided into the Lower and Upper Panak by the Great Escarpment, a cliff of weathered sandstone forced up during the Cataclysm.

☞ **The Shining Land** is a desert of razor-sharp black sand and great plains of glass, created when rivers of lava were suddenly cooled and glassified by floodwaters from the Indanalis Sea. Much of the Shining Land is a smooth plain upon which the Glass Sailors' skiffs can skim; there are also deep drifts of sand, verdant strips around oases and rivers, and a tangled web of underground tunnels through which molten rock once flowed.

# Chapter Five

## Power Groups

The power and influence of these groups transcends political boundaries. Although no great temples or knightly orders survived the Cataclysm, the surviving lands have become home to new organisations and societies that are unique to Taladas.

### The Cult of Hiteh

It is with distaste that we discovered that the lying god Hiteh has influenced and corrupted most of the cultures of Taladas. With the exception of the devout Mislaxans of the Rainward Isles, it seems that there is not a single kingdom or tribe that Hiteh does not attempt to seduce. Although the god of deceit has in the past made brief alliance with our Dark Queen, there is little doubt that Hiteh is the greatest enemy of Her Majesty in these lands.

Rumours abound in the Five Great Cities of the League that Hiteh cultists conduct their secret rites in the catacombs and sewers, and the subversive religion of Usa the Mighty in the Confederation of Armach is certainly a tool of Hiteh. The goblins and hobgoblins of Taladas worship Hiteh most highly in their beastly pantheons, for they believe that the god has overthrown Erestem's dominance in the heavens. Even the gnomes, sworn enemies of Hiteh's minions, have cultists hidden in the bowels of their citadels.

Bishop Trandamere of Thenol is clearly a powerful true cleric of Hiteh, and there are surely many others of great power. The greatest minion of Hiteh in Taladas does not dwell in Thenol, however. The high priest of Hiteh in Taladas is the human known to the gnomes only as the Mysterious Stranger, a human seen from afar during the Gnomoi War dressed in clerical robes and directing and commanding the fire minions of Hitehkel. The Mysterious Stranger dwells in Flaemchaldar (the Tower of Flame) in Hitehkel's central region. Some believe that he is a manifestation of Hiteh himself.

Hiteh seems to be pursuing a plan of domination in Taladas. Already he has brought Hitehkel and Thenol under his fist, through the work of his fire minion servants and the fanatics of the Thenolite Temple of Hith. We do not yet know why Hiteh seeks to dominate Taladas. However, it has not escaped our spies' attention that Taladas is the birthplace of the Grathanich, the Greygem that Hiteh tricked Reorx into forging. Hiteh's plans in Taladas may have begun some thirty-five centuries ago...

### The Dragon Knights

The dragon knights are not a military order, but hidden communities of humans and elves that have a close rapport with dragons, and are skilled at riding and handling the creatures. Although other scattered groups of dragon knights

exist in remote regions, those of the Conquered Lands are the largest and best organised. The existence of their communities is not intentionally kept a secret, but the coppers live in such isolation that few outsiders know that they exist.

Most dragon knights live in communities with copper othlorx. Dragons, ever curious and inquisitive, will learn any practical or philosophical knowledge their mortal partners have to teach them. In turn, individuals sometimes form a close rapport with a particular othlorx, and learn from them draconic skills and lore.

## The Followers of Erestem

The Dark Queen is known in Taladas as the goddess Erestem, a dragon deity that is more feared than worshipped. It seems that she was once more powerful in Taladas, and was worshipped by ogres, hobgoblins, and humans alike. However, the Dark Queen's wars in Ansalon caused her to turn away from the people of Taladas briefly, and in their weakness they abandoned her worship for other, more treacherous gods. In addition, the treachery of the chromatic dragons known as the Othlorx ("Uninvolved") has weakened the Dark Queen's power in Taladas. Once the Knights of Takhisis have conquered Ansalon, they will be able to bring Taladas back under the Dark Queen's draconic wing.

## The League of Merchants

The League of Merchants is a strong guild of traders that regulates and monitors most business trade in the Imperial League of Minotaur Cities. Originally formed of the pre-invasion Loyal Families, the League of Merchants has come under the leadership of the minotaur Rakyne Family and the Church of Nuran. The current Head Merchant is Bahn Rakyne [N male minotaur], a reclusive cleric who inspires loyalty due to the immense fortunes he has made for his followers.

The League of Merchants has a jealously guarded near-monopoly on shipping and distribution of trade goods, and can influence the Senate to its advantage. The merchant guild also supplies unofficial ambassadors and spies for the empire. Their trading carries them far, from the length of the Tamire, into the Ring Mountains, to Armach and Thenol, even to the dark jungles of Neron. As the merchants bring their trade to distant parts of Taladas, they also increase the knowledge and influence of the Minotaur League.

## The League of Minotaurs

The Imperial League of Minotaur Cities is the greatest power, culturally, politically, and militarily, within Southern Hosk. Currently, the League of Minotaurs consists of five provinces: New Styrrlia, the capital of the empire; Eragala; Highvale; Okami; and the recently acquired Conquered Lands. The League bears the legacy of the survivors from the Aurim Empire, as well as the legal code of the minotaur race.

The league is ruled by an Emperor, in whose name all laws and edicts are made. The Emperor's word is law, yet he is not all-powerful, for he must work with the approval of the Senate. Each minotaur family and human Loyal Family is

allowed one Senator; since supporting a senator in Kristophan is a costly proposition, most smaller families offer their proxies to the wealthier families in exchange for money or favours. The Senate hears high court cases, proposes new Edicts for the Emperor to consider, and (on rare occasions) censures an Edict that they consider unacceptable.

Each province of the League is ruled by a governor appointed by the Emperor (who usually appoints the candidate chosen by the Senate). The governor has great administrative power in his province, and can act as a Praetor (judge) in the Arena cases. However, the governor has no power of command over the military in his area unless the Emperor issues a specific proclamation empowering him with command.

The Emperor's will is enforced by a powerful army, the Legions of Eragas, which consists of legionnaire foot soldiers and various cavalry units. Every legion is commanded by a *duces* (general); several legions under one command are led by a supreme commander called the Imperator, drawn from the ranks of the dux. The Emperor carefully regulates his army, and the dux are under his direct command.

## The Mystery Cult of Mislaxa

Mislaxa, the goddess of healing and succour, is worshipped in great secrecy in Taladas. Perhaps because the Mislaxans received true clerical power during the early years of the Age of Despair, or perhaps because the god Hiteh holds such power in Taladas, the clerics have maintained utter secrecy about their healing order for over three centuries. Only in the Rainward Isles, where Hiteh and EreSTEM are not worshipped, do the Mislaxans openly worship their goddess.

Since the Mislaxans do not preach and try to keep their identities anonymous and practices secret, they frequently persuade talented youngsters to run away in the night to join their mystery cult. Because of this, the Mislaxans are feared as kidnappers of children almost as much as they are respected as healers. After a year of training, the acolyte is presented to a conclave of twenty or more priests in a secret place of power, and exposed to the "Heart of Truth," a secret ceremony that no spy has been able to observe. If the acolyte passes the test, he becomes a true cleric of Mislaxa.

Charged with the need for secrecy, all Mislaxans are wanderers who travel alone or with one or two other people, customarily a herbalist helper, an acolyte, or both. After over 300 years, it seems that secrecy has become a part of their ritual that cannot be abandoned. Because of this, Mislaxan priests and priestesses wear no open symbols of their faith other than a simple brown coat, and use secret hand signs to identify themselves to each other when necessary. They travel among the peoples of Taladas, receiving gifts in exchange for healing and advice. Those who treat the priests badly are simply cut off from future aid.

# Chapter Six

## The Dragons of Taladas

The dragons of Taladas do not cooperate with men as they do in the lands we know; indeed, many of them do not even recognise the sovereignty of our majestic Dark Queen. They do not fly to war in armies, but claim for themselves personal territories and hold them fast against all challengers. The dragons of Taladas are no allies of my Knighthood; indeed, I believe that they may become the enemies of all the peoples of these lands.

 *Lord Ariakan*

In times now lost and gone, the wings of dragons darkened the wilds of Taladas. Chromatic dragons – the children of Erestem – laired in places where mortals would never go. White dragons swam among the icebergs of Guurlamskas, green dragons stole stealthily through the Reed Delta, reds soared above the Neron Mountains, blue dragons buried their lairs beneath the southern plains of Aurim, and black dragons walked in the opulent cities of Blackwater Glade. With the exception of the bakali, mortals were not tolerated by the great reptiles, and the nomadic tribes of Taladas were never strong enough to encroach upon dragon lands.

Metallic dragons were seen but rarely in Taladas. Native to a legendary island far across the oceans, these glorious demigods dared not challenge the realm of their foes. Only the most daring and adventurous coppers and brasses would run the gauntlet of the chromatic wyrms, and visited human tribes who later turned them into figures of myth and fable.

But during the Third Age, the chromatic dragons rescinded their position of dominance over Krynn. Other gods – such as the warrior-deities Qu’uan and Blindel – overcame Erestem’s schemes. Her draconic children were forced to fall into timeless sleep or retreat into the Void. Lands once dominated by wyrms were opened for expansion by mortal tribes, and the kingdoms of the Third Age were born.

## The Fourth Age

For reasons unknown to the philosophers and priests of Taladas, the chaos of Hiteh’s Night enabled Erestem to free her children from the ban placed upon them thousands of years before. Erestem found an opening to their place of exile at the heart of the Burning Sea. Released, the evil dragons began to explore the changed face of Krynn, slowly appearing throughout Taladas. Contact with the dragons was infrequent however, as Erestem did not care to have their presence known just yet.

When Erestem called the chromatic dragons to fight her war in Ansalon, she expected all of her children to come and fight at her side. Perhaps fortunately for

the forces of good, the evil dragons were true to their natures, and not all heeded her commands. More than a few saw no gain for themselves in the battles to come, only the greater chance of death and misery. Thus, they refused to come and fight at Erestem's side. Infuriated, Erestem cursed these renegade dragons, causing them to become the first of the *othlorx* dragons ("The Uninvolved").

When the metallic dragons were bound by the Oath of Neutrality not to interfere in the War of the Lance, they set out to search for their stolen eggs. They traversed the globe, and more than a few scoured Taladas. Eventually the draconian hatcheries were discovered and the metallic dragons no longer felt compelled to honour their Oath. They returned to Ansalon to take part in the war. However, not all of the dragons felt the need to return. Some, especially those who had never laid a brood of eggs, refused and chose to remain in Taladas. They were shunned by their kin and so joined the ranks of the othlorx, although the metallic dragons refer to them as the Oath-bound.

## Othlorx Dragons

The *othlorx* are variations of the standard dragons that appear in the world of Krynn. Physically they are identical to the existing dragon forms – brass, bronze, copper, and silver; black, blue, green, white, and red – though there are no gold othlorx. The difference is in their attitudes toward the world and other dragons. The othlorx are part of the outcome of a choice faced by all dragons, the choice created by Erestem and the War of the Lance in Ansalon.

### Black Othlorx

These great beasts have found the southern wilderness of Taladas to be an ideal home with its vast marshes and steaming jungles. Originally selfish and loners, as othlorx they have become xenophobic in the extreme. Erestem's curse has made them crazed and totally unpredictable. In general, they attack all but a clearly superior enemy on sight, although there are tales of times when they have been cordial, if highly eccentric. Othlorx black dragons retain their mastery over arcane magic, but have no power to cast divine spells.

### Blue Othlorx

There are few blue dragons among the othlorx, since their loyalty to Erestem compelled them to heed her call. Still, even amongst these honour-bound creatures there were some skillful enough to claim a loophole or create some elaborate justification for their refusal. Enraged, Erestem stripped these blue dragons of her magical power and has compelled them to forever honour their words, precisely, no matter what the statement or intention. As a result, the blue othlorx have become very reticent, much less make promises of any sort.

Already hostile to humans, the blue othlorx now blame all their woes upon mortals (who caused the Dragon Wars anyway). They don't necessarily attack on sight, but they use all of their abilities to cause harm and woe to the offensive

creatures. Without any power to use divine magic, most blue othlorx take a delight in destroying temples of Eretem and the other gods of darkness.

## Brass Othlorx

For the brass dragons, becoming othlorx was not that difficult a decision. Always prone to be somewhat neutral, they readily allowed this side of their nature to become dominant. Although not cursed for their choice, they are shunned and repudiated by others of their kind. This has hurt them greatly, for they are highly social creatures. Isolated from their own kind, they sometimes become desperate for companionship and conversation. They have been known to visit the nomadic tribes of the steppes, simply to converse and gossip. Many are known by name to the tribesmen. There are also tales of them holding travelers hostage, a captive enforced audience as it were.

## Bronze Othlorx

Most of these enigmatic creatures, being both lawful and good, responded to the call to battle the horrors of the evil dragons. However, some did not come, primarily because they never heard the call. Their friends and contacts are the creatures of the sea, mostly unaffected by the wars. Thus the news of the great battles didn't reach their ears until long after they were over.

There are still bronze dragons who have remained largely unaware of the changes which the last few centuries have wrought upon Krynn. On rare occasions, these ignorant bronzes appear on land, where they are considered othlorx by default. They can display an amazing ignorance of current affairs and are considered somewhat backward by their kin. They hate minotaurs with a violent passion, but seldom involve themselves in worldly affairs.

## Copper Othlorx

Copper othlorx, who in the past have prided themselves on their fine sense of humour, have become somewhat bitter and disenchanted with dragons in general since refusing to come to the aid of the metallic dragons. They see themselves as unfairly being unfairly treated, especially for something that's over and done with. They have no love of their fellow dragons nor any who profess to aid or support the dragon cause. Indeed, they delight in tormenting and irritating those metallic dragons they find, although they still will not cause permanent harm to their fellows.

Shunned by the metallic dragons, the copper othlorx have taken a fancy to the gnomes of Taladas. They find the little fellows vastly amusing, recognising the minoi for the cosmic joke that they really are.

## Green Othlorx

These dragons are obsessive, cruel, and malevolent creatures, indeed hardly different from their uncursed fellows. Since they were unwilling to leave their sheltered groves, Eretem found her revenge by binding them to those very lands.

The green othlorx are filled with a violent passion. Anything, including another of their kind, is treated as a trespasser to be destroyed. This protectiveness keeps them from straying far or mating. Thus there are very few green othlorx left, although those which survive are exceedingly powerful. Fortunately, green othlorx are unable to cast divine spells.

## Red Othlorx

Most of the red dragons, consumed by war-lust, eagerly went off to fight in the wars in Ansalon. However, a few who saw opportunities suddenly arise in Taladas refused to go. EreSTEM cursed these creatures with a loss of the traits that they most pride – their self-confidence.

The red othlorx are a strange lot. They are powerful creatures, still possessed with a great desire for wealth and bloodshed, but they doubt their own abilities and might. As a result, they have become skulkers, attacking from ambush and using every cowardly trick possible to overcome their fears of inferiority. When not in combat, they are excessively vain and boastful, again to compensate. If faced by a powerful foe (or one that seems even moderately powerful), they will hesitate and wait for a chance to attack with surprise. The red othlorx are considered cowards by all other dragons. They cannot use divine magic.

## Silver Othlorx

The silver dragons have always felt a strong need to aid and assist humanity. Despite this, a considerable number of them refused the call to war, rationalising this by claiming to remain behind to protect the humans of Taladas. While their motives were true and noble, they could not escape the guilt that came with their decision.

Thus silver othlorx are compelled to atone for their wrongs by travelling among humans in disguise. They are obsessive about helping others and fighting evil when they find it. Silver othlorx have become the most intolerant of dragon species with a rigidly defined code of good and evil. They attempt to compel those travelling with them to their cause and code. Punishments are severe and final – death is the only fare for evildoers of any type.

## White Othlorx

Of all of the evil othlorx, the dull-witted white dragons have changed the most. They defied the call of EreSTEM out of impulse, refusing because it didn't suit their mood. In return, EreSTEM stripped them of all outward signs of intelligence. White othlorx were denied the power to cast spells or speak.

White othlorx are still intelligent and are perfectly aware of the powers that they have lost. This only serves to increase their rage and savageness. White othlorx regularly prey upon the humans and ogres of the Southern Panak and Ring Mountains, and refuse to acknowledge other dragons.

# Chapter Seven

## Mysteries of the Third Age

**V**ery little can be learned about the lands of Taladas in the Age of Might. Of all the nations of this continent, only the Silvanaes of Armach and the Engineers of Baltch keep written records of pre-Cataclius Taladas. We have managed to acquire a few of these records, but they represent only a partial picture of the Age of Might.

Stretching from the cold north to the warmer climes of the tropics, Taladas was once a single continent surrounded by concentric rings of outlying islands. It was dominated by the powerful Empire of Aurim, which was situated in the central region of the continent that now burns with elemental fury.

Just as Aurim parallels lost Istar for political might in the Third Age, a historian might also assume that Aurim was largely responsible for the terrible punishment that the gods inflicted upon Taladas. Until Takhisis chooses to enlighten her Knighthood on this matter, the gods themselves only shall know the truth of this.

However, the Knights have acquired a crumbling document from the Recorders of Baltch, apparently written for the benefit of new allies over the sea. Perhaps these allies were one of the destroyed cultures from Ariakan's land of the Brutes; perhaps we shall never know.

*Laene Uth Habon*

For the benefit of our newfound allies across the sea, the Recorders of Baltch have prepared a description of the great continent upon which Baltch merely rests on the eastern fringe. From our previous communication we understand that your kingdom lies on a landmass of much smaller size than our own, and that your great power and wealth are derived from the seas rather than the land.

Taladas is a large, round continent north of the tropical islands of Krynn, between the Western and Urdile Oceans. An arm of the Urdile Ocean known as the Indanalis or the Taladan Sea raggedly splits the eastern coast of Taladas. To the south of the Indanalis is the Neron Peninsula, where our nation of Baltch lies; to its north is the powerful Empire of Aurim.

### Neron

Neron is a great, untracked wilderness, where civilised people do not dwell. Winds sweeping off the Southern Ocean stall along the slopes of the Neron Mountains, a low mountain range that forms the backbone of Taladas' eastern peninsula. No explorers have penetrated Neron's interior, or even know what might be found there. The coasts of the Neron Peninsula have been partially

charted, but the jungles keep their secrets. Huge tropical storms and hurricanes continually batter the southern coastline of Neron.

Rising quickly from the low coast, the heart of Neron becomes a rugged highland jungle. Though the land never reaches to great heights, the hills are steep and razor-edged, covered with thick forests of mahogany and teak. Deep within the jungle are a number of strange ruins, massive halls of stone-like wood. These primeval ruins are guarded by the strange wild elves of Neron, who do not allow any to approach. Beyond the thick foliage, strange beasts, and savage tribes, anything might be found in Neron.

The Neron Mountains taper out at the far end of the peninsula, and the land becomes a swampy fen called the Great Reed Delta. The delta is an uninhabited and unexplored swamp, fed by wide, slow rivers from the mountains.

Beyond the Great Reed Delta is the upland plain of Baltch. In Baltch we are known for engineering skills, supplying many of the master builders who erect the monuments of Aurim. Our Engineers and Recorders are responsible for the great bridges and roads that link the distant corners of the Empire.

## The Empire of Aurim

North of the Indanalis Sea are the rich forests of Aurim, primarily of hard woods with some pine. The people of Taladas count the Empire of Aurim as the greatest wonder on all the world. No other land can rival it for magnificence and splendour. The capital of the Empire is Amoushek the Golden, famed for its towers and palaces.

Watered by warm sea breezes, the forested shoreline is filled with game. The land beyond the forested is mostly rolling hills mixed with open plains, noted for their good farmland. The northern coast of Aurim, facing the Urdile Ocean, is famous for its fine fishing banks. It was here that the early strong kingdoms of Taladas formed, assembling the nomad tribes into settled and strong governments.

The humans of Aurim are a tall and slender people, averaging six feet in height. Facially, they have prominent cheekbones, long square chins, and small, sharp noses. They are pale complected, with blonde to pale-white hair and arresting blue eyes.

## Central Mountains

The central mountains stand on the edge of the burgeoning Empire. The mountains are low and rounded, tapering almost imperceptibly into the foothills bordering the Tamire. The great dividing ranges are the centre of a wilderness on the skirts of the Empire. The slopes of the southern mountains are rich with deer, fox, wolf, rabbit, owl, hawk, boar, bobcat, cougar, and bear. There are colonies of giant ants, great flocks of bats, giant beetles, and lone ankhegs.

Styrrilia is a small, rustic province within the central mountains, one of the farthest outposts of the Empire of Aurim. The mountains are also home to the scattered gnomoi warrens, communities of gnome inventors and tinkerers that are found throughout central Taladas. The dwarves of this Fianawar region dwell in

underground halls, carved into the low mountains beyond the southern edge of the Aurim Empire. The lives of the dwarves are peaceful and calm, spent in mining valuable iron ore.

## Hosk

Beyond the great mountain ranges is the western land of Hosk. To the northwest lies a band of pine forest and steppe known as the Tamire. It is a broad expanse of open steppe, dotted with occasional woodlands and covered in tall, dry grasses. The land is dry, as the westerly winds sweep most of the rain-laden clouds quickly over the steppe.

South of the Tamire are deep forests that blanket the rugged ground of Okami, where once there dwelled the ancient race of the Elderwild, a race now lost to the world of Krynn. Long ago these elves took offense from some act of the human race, and chose to forever forgo contact with the world of humanity. They have not been heard of in an Age, and we believe that the Elderwild have dwindled and died.

Below the forests of Okami are the isolated and sheltered Marak Valleys. These are home to a number of kender settlements, who rarely come into contact with the Empire of Aurim to the north or the distant elves of Armach. The kender consider themselves the beloved and protected children of the gods, living in a golden age of prosperity. Hobgoblin tribes from nearby mountain caverns occasionally threaten the kender, but the kender are safeguarded by the natural protections of the Marak Valleys.

On the western shore of Hosk is the Confederation of Armach, a collection of mainly human tribes that are dominated by the Silvanaes-Quarti elves. The Silvanaes of Armach-Nesti are originally from some unknown land far to the west of Taladas, and enforce a policy of isolation from the rest of our continent. These elves invaded the Hoor coastline over a thousand years ago in the Great Armada, and enforced their rule upon the tribes that they found there.

North of the Tamire and great mountain ranges are the Ice Deserts, a cold and bitter land whose stony deserts are broken by weirdly eroded badlands and dry washes. Arctic winds from Guurlamskas, the Northern Sea, give most of the Ice Deserts a layer of permafrost. From the shore of the Ice Deserts, travellers can watch large packs of ice drifting southward.

In the Ice People's beliefs, every instance of good or bad luck is caused by some action (or failure to act). Thus, if disease strikes a herd, it may be due to an improper offering made before the last butchering or because a herdsman washed his hair. Complicated taboos, devised by the shamans of the Ice People, abound within their society.

*✎ Recorder Xanonus of Nemoushek  
23<sup>rd</sup> Day of Randoran,  
Year of the Silvered Sun*

# Afterword

Since Lord Ariakan's departure we have been compiling this journal for his eventual return with a fleet of conquest. Many of the spies that Ariakan originally sent out into these lands have returned to us with the information contained within these pages, or have sent to New Jelek reports that are encoded by the simple measure of writing them in languages unknown to these lands. Others have not been heard from in five years, and are considered lost to us forever.

What information might these lost spies have delivered to the knighthood? What secrets of Armach-Nesti, the minotaur Emperor, or the ruins of Neron and old Aurim were so valuable that the reward for their discovery was death in a distant land?

The Vision reveals to me that Takhisis desires the conquest of Ansalon before that of the other lands of Krynn, and that my place in her plan to wait in Taladas, gathering knowledge for the inevitable invasion of her Knights. The Vision gives me strength to continue in this lonely outpost of Ariakan's forces, even though we are surrounded by foreign peoples and cultures, and wait for his glorious return.

I had thought that Ariakan's fleet might have arrived by now. I will be patient.

*🐉 Knight of the Skull Laene Uth Habon  
Fierswelt, 382 Alt Cataclius*