

Time of the Dragon Lords

Taladas in the Fifth Age

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

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Introduction

" ...the Greygem was loosed to drift away to the western lands, what we know as Ansalon, where it wrought its chaos upon the races there. Little is said of the land of the Greygem's source in the histories of Ansalon, although the gnomes of Mt. Nevermind may have histories that tell much more.

"It therefore stands that the Lands of the Greygem lie to the east, beyond the shores of once-arrogant Istar. These lands are unknown to Ansalon, and there has been little mention of them for five centuries before the Cataclysm. They are considered to be no more than a story told to children at night.

"Yet the distant land of Taladas does exist. I have seen these exotic realms in my Orb of Present Time Passing. Today, on what may be the last day of the Fourth Age of Krynn, I have little time to turn to events outside of Ansalon. Thus the horrors that Chaos has loosed upon Taladas, the land where this story began, remain unknown."

Astinus of Palanthus, 381 AC.

The mysteries of Taladas remain unknown no longer. **Time of the Dragon Lords** describes this exotic continent in detail, updating the classic and hard-to-find **Time of the Dragon** boxed set (published in 1989 for the *AD&D 2nd Edition* game). **Time of the Dragon Lords** is an entire on-line supplement for *Dungeons & Dragons* and the *Dragonlance: the Fifth Age Dramatic Adventure Game*, which will also be of use to players of *AD&D 2nd Edition* who want to explore the other lands of Krynn.

Taladas first appeared in the *Time of the Dragon* boxed set, expanding the world of Krynn beyond the lands described in the original DRAGONLANCE modules and the CHRONICLES series by Margaret Weis and Tracy Hickman. In the words of Zeb Cook, "Taladas is not a generic place set within a nondescript world." The *Time of the Dragon* set described the geography, climate, peoples, and cultures of a truly unique land. Unfortunately, only a few supplements and adventures appeared for the Taladas setting, and this fascinating setting was not described in any of the many novels and short stories written for the DRAGONLANCE line. Within a few years, Taladas had all but disappeared.

But now Taladas has returned, via the World Wide Web. Taladas is a major continent of Krynn entirely separate from the lands of Ansalon that must DRAGONLANCE fans are familiar with. Things in

Taladas are often not what you might have come to expect from Ansalon, home of the War of the Lance and the Knights of Solamnia. True, there are kender, gnomes, draconians, and minotaurs, but they are different in many ways from those in Ansalon. Exploring the unique lands and peoples of Taladas will pose unexpected challenges in the world of Krynn.

Chapter One – Overview

The Continent of Taladas

Taladas is a continent slightly larger than Ansalon, which can be found in the Northern Hemisphere of Krynn, a few thousand miles to the northeast of the Blood Sea of Istar. Unlike Ansalon, which was struck by a number of small meteorites across the continent during the first Cataclysm, a single massive blow rent Taladas.

Thus the first Cataclysm, known as Hiteh's Night, changed the face of Taladas in a much more extreme way than it did Ansalon. Most of the old cultures of Taladas were destroyed; a huge sea of magma, named Hitehkel, opened up in the centre of the continent; and a desert of fused glass was created. Strange, new cultures formed from the survivors of the old Taladan realms and visitors from other parts of Krynn (such as the Minotaur League). And this is only scratching the surface of the diversity of places and people to be found in this unique land.

The Chronology of Taladas

The primarily written histories of Taladas are those of the Lost Silvanesti, the former Minotaur League, and the gnomes of Hitehkel. There are Five Great Ages in the history of Krynn – the Ages of Starbirth, Dreams, Might, Despair, and Mortals. These Ages are used by the Lost Silvanesti and minotaur scholars. The gnomes on the other hand, divide history into four periods: The Birthing Age, from that moment Reorx created them to the release of the Greycem; The Cursed Age, from the Greycem's release to the Cataclysm; Reorx's Gift, the creation of Hitehkel; and The Challenging Age, the current time.

The history of Taladas has not been as intensively chronicled as that of Ansalon, due in part to the lack 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 mostly unknown.

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 most scholars.

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 Grim Winter that brought the Fourth Age to a close is often compared to the first great Cataclysm. The parallels are obvious - the transformation of Krynn, the departure of divine magic, and political upheaval - leading some historians to date modern events from the *Saer Cataclius*, or Second Cataclysm. This dating convention is in vogue in Thenol, Highvale, and Kristophan, but is less popular elsewhere. Scholars of the New League continue to use AC dates, labeling the current year 415 AC.

383 AC Grim Winter Begins

Winter descends upon the land. In Northern Hosk, bitter winds roaring out of the Panak desert bring snowfall of unprecedented quantity. In Baltch and Neron, terrible storms batter at the coast and tear trees from the jungles. In the hellish wastes of Hitekhel, the few areas of firm ground heave and crack under great seismic pressure, and flames gout from formerly-extinct volcanoes.

The Tower of Flame Explodes

Half a world away, a society of elder beings makes the ultimate mistake and breaks open the Greygem, thus unleashing a primeval force of Chaos into Krynn. At that moment, the Tower of Flame in Hitekhel erupts, creating a flare of blood-red light that can be seen in the night sky of the entire Taladan continent. Where the Tower once stood, a huge rift had opened, and out of the void within came creatures of Chaos, determined to tear Krynn asunder.

The Land Heaves

Natural hazards of all kinds start to beset the land. In the Rainward Isles, the ground shakes and heaves, as massive rock subsidence collapses underground structures and uncovers ruins of Old Aurim left buried for the better part of four centuries. In rebuilt Thera, the land *buckles*, collapsing the summer homes of many a noble minotaur and human, and fires break out throughout the city. Terrible storms off the Indanalis Sea lash the Steamwalls with a chemical fury, the rains burning and stinging any exposed skin. The floodwalls of Batch collapse, submerging much of the population under a few feet of water. The gnomoi of Hitekhel watch in awe as great torrents are thrown up from the lava plain, towering hundreds of feet into the air.

Gods Warn the Faithful

Priests, shamans and mystics wake with a frightening image in their minds: a towering behemoth, running with strange energies, that strides across an ocean of blackness, leaving only blackness in its wake. In Kristophan, the capital city of the Minotaur League, Emperor Ambeoutin XI is found dead in his chambers, with the walls covered in the feverish ramblings of a madman - scrawled in Ambeoutin's own blood. The name "Sargas" appears over and over.

Chaos Rides the Sea of Flame

Creatures of flame and blackness emerge from the rift in Hitehkel where the Tower of Flame once stood. These vaguely humanoid and draconic monsters gathered into groups consisting of hundreds of chaotic individuals, and waves of magma rose out of the depths of Hitehkel to bear the armies southwards and eastwards. The gnomoi of the Spires, mistakenly believing the approaching masses to be a renewed attack by the fire minions of Hiteh, prepare their forces for war, and are thus almost ready when the army of Chaos reaches them... almost. The weapons and defenses of the gnomoi were designed to cope with attacks by beings composed of flame, not the raw chaos of the monsters from the rift. However, the gnomoi battle valiantly, suffering huge casualties but holding the Chaos armies within Hitehkel.

Council of the Oath-Bound

From volcanic Vorm in the Spine of Taladas island chain, a great red othlorx dragon named Mahaxibal sends out his children with a simple message: Come to my island, or watch the world die. Within a week flights of dragons descend upon Vorm to attend Mahaxibal's council. Natives of the nearby islands hide within their homes in terror as the great beasts fly in from the east and the west. However, the council is a farce - the gold dragons refuse to recognise the metallic othlorx, the silver dragon delegation quarrels with the reds, the single white dragon to attend is snubbed by her chromatic "allies" and leaves in a huff, and the blacks, greens, and coppers retreat to a nearby island to gossip and bicker amongst themselves. In the end, the only dragons to listen to Mahaxibal are the bronze, blues, and a handful of silvers. After three days of secret talks, these three groups are seen leaving Vorm, flying in three separate directions, by the native Mischta of nearby Selasia.

Human peoples go to War

The Army of Chaos breaks through the lines of gnomoi battalions and surges south and west. The Glass Sailors, being totally unprepared for the coming onslaught, are decimated within a week, the survivors fleeing into subterranean caverns and lava tunnels beneath the Shining Lands. The Chaos army marches onto the Tamire Plain, where greater resistance is met: the Uigan hordes.

Acting upon the advice of the shamans of Jijin (*Chislev*) and Qu'uan the Warrior (*Kiri-Jolith*), the *tegin* (princes) of the 130 tribes gather in a great meeting to determine the defense of their lands from the enemy of their gods. The new Boyla of the Uigan, Aiykahd, also brings the Purgi and Pureshk tribes to the moot, hoping to ally them with the Uigan nation of seventy thousand adults and children. He also attempts to bring the elf clans to an alliance, but the *hosk'i imou merkitsa* refuse, and further contact with them is made impossible by the proximity of the chaos hordes. The human tribes plan to make raids upon the enemy, and to prevent them from reaching the homelands of the steppes. A horde of fifty thousand

warriors, drawn from the 150 Uigan, Pureshk, and Purgi clans, prepares for the conflict.

Silver Dragons Arrive in Kristophan

A flight of three battered silver dragons collapse in the Plaza of Champions in the early predawn hours. The citizenry of Kristophan panic and a riot ensues, preventing the authorities from getting to the dragons. By mid-afternoon, the riots have been suppressed, but two of the dragons have bled to death and the third lay unconscious. The silvers are observed to have great burn wounds along their flanks and upon their claws.

Chaos Ravages Taladas

The elf clans are ravaged by trailing beasts of darkness and chaos in a futile attempt to hunt them down, whilst the Ilquar goblins abandon their villages to flee for safety in the Ring Mountains - a sanctuary that provides death by disease and famine. The chaos monsters tear through the hordes of tribesmen in Northern Hosk, and the steppes erupt into flame. In Old Aurim, spirits of the past rise up out of the dust and react the days of the ancient empire of Aurim, oblivious to the guerilla war between the chaos armies and the hobgoblins and draconians that occurs around them. In the Rainward Isles, the soil turns black and people disappear into the night, their screams being the last signs of their existence before they are claimed by marauding shadow wraiths. The magics of the cha'asii wild elves in Neron are corrupted by the chaos that has infiltrated the natural energies of the land, and the yaggol strike whilst the cha'asii are vulnerable. Riots break out daily in the cities of the Minotaur League, as the earth tremours anew and fire rages out of control in Thera and other cities. Civil war is threatened if a new Emperor does not arise soon.

Hiteh Flees

As Hiteh flees from the oncoming battle against Chaos, his followers in the dark land of Thenol lose control of the undead armies of Hith. Hordes of ghouls and skeletons begin to blindly attack in a frenzy of hatred across Southern Hosk. Their first targets are the elves to the north; the forests of Armach are soon infested with the insane undead.

Erestem Calls Her Children

The dragon goddess Erestem sends a call to all of the chromatic dragons in Krynn, beckoning them to join the war against Chaos, Father of All and of Nothing. Even some of the othlorx respond to the call, believing that they will be forgiven for their sins; they leave Taladas in awe-inspiring flights, many never to return.

Sargas Returns in Fury

As the forces of Chaos moves south across the Indanalis Sea, the Minotaur League sends its legions to protect the settlements and farmlands in the path of the armies. In Kristophan, a huge fire

dragon falls out of the night sky, bringing the burning wrath of Chaos with it. As foretold by minotaur legend, the great statue of Sargas in front of the Imperial Palace tears out of the ground to defend the city; in the resulting battle, the fire dragon is destroyed, but hundreds of innocent people are killed. Sargas screams in fury at the destruction Chaos has visited upon his people, and the living statue leaves Kristophan, wading into the ocean to fight Chaos in some far-off land.

The Forgotten Gods

The Uigan tribes, which have suffered a huge loss of life due to war and famine, are visited by manifestations of two previously unknown gods. Majere and Morgion walk amongst the tribespeople, and speak to the elders, granting them both revelations and fowl secrets. Majere grants the Uigan the gift of self-awareness and the power over oneself that follows, so that the humans might face the minions of Chaos at their full potential. Morgion grants to certain of the humans the knowledge of striking down one's enemies; finding the weaknesses of their bodies, and causing the enemies' own flesh to turn traitor. Then the gods ascend upon a celestial stairway, to join the warring stars.

Battle of Lightning and Flame

The path of the chaos minions is halted by a flight of desperate red, blue, and bronze dragons, who strike at the wraiths with torrents of flame and blasting lightning. Failure is imminent, but at the last moment the Dragon Knights of Southern Hosk join the battle, copper othlorx with human riders.

Most of the chaos wraiths are driven back from the Indanalis Sea and across the steppes to the Shining Land. A large region of the glass desert is melted and fused into bizarre shapes by the enormous elemental forces unleashed, shaping the land into a grotesque monument many hundreds of miles in area. However, even dragons are not enough to prevent Chaos from travelling south, into Hosk and Neron.

0 The Second Cataclysm

Terrible storms sweep through Hosk in the west and the Rainward Isles of the east, whilst central Taladas trembles to earthquakes, landslides, and volcanic eruption. A pall of ashen clouds blankets Hitehkel and the regions to the south, poisoning the air and casting the land into unending night.

Chaos, Father of All and of Nothing, unleashes vengeful war against the gods and the world they created. The stars themselves move from their accustomed positions and fight the engulfing nothingness of the winter skies. Ultimately, the gods vanquish the forces of Chaos, but in doing so withdraw from the world. The three moons of magic disappear from the sky, replaced by a single, pale moon.

The Age of Mortals

1 SC Magic Vanishes

Wizards and priests discover that the powers they controlled of old are no more. Some turn from sorcery or the gods, declaring that such things were destroyed in the Winter of Chaos. Others seek to disguise the loss of their spells, and maintain their power through politics, trickery, and intrigue. A few turn within themselves or contemplate the changing world in an attempt to understand what they have lost.

The Dead Rest

The undead armies of Thenol return to their graves, without the evil god Hith to command them. Only those undead who were of evil heart before death remain to trouble the living.

Message from Ansalon

From Ansalon, an excited copper dragon arrives in the Conquered Lands to inform the copper othlorx of the mountains of recent events in Ansalon. Over the next year, a number of the othlorx decide to resolve their differences and leave for Ansalon and the Dragon Islands; others refuse to leave their hidden dens or bury their heads in their own affairs.

The Indanalis Sea

The disappearance of the three moons, replaced by but one, causes havoc to the tides of the Indanalis Sea. Some parts of the shore are subjected to flash floods, leaving a chalky deposit in the soil that prevents anything normal from growing for many years; parts of the Tiderun dry up, the stinking mud flats spotted from place to place with the corpses of strange aquatic beasts.

2 SC Thenolite Uprising Begins

With the departure of Hith, his priests in Thenol no longer possess undead armies, and thus a great deal their political punch is gone. Under the secretive manipulation of dispossessed Thenolite nobility, the peasants rise up in revolt against several powerful priests of Hith, in some areas tearing them apart with their bare

hands. Those areas still under religious control become harsher than before, exerting pressure on the commoners to obey their holy masters.

Rumours of the Purge Arrive

A wounded and battered blue dragon collapses in Thenol. It shrieks about a red of monstrous size and the murder of many wyrms in the *Dragon Purge*, before being slain by a panic-stricken local militia. However, a disguised former priest of Hith was present and took note of the dying dragon's words, returning this news to his superiors.

Hoartongue the Mute

A great white othlorx dragon appears in the far north of Taladas, driving all lesser dragons away. Hoartongue (as the Ice People name him) claims the Upper Panak as his exclusive realm.

3 SC The Sea of Flame Cools

After three years of rebuilding their shattered homes, the gnomoi venture out to explore the rest of Hitehkel. They discover to their amazement that the outer regions of the former lava sea has solidified into a blackened plain; there are even a few gnome steamships half-submerged in solid rock. The gnomoi calculate that at the current rate of cooling, the entire of Hitehkel will have frozen over within a century or two, based upon current thermodynamic models.

Hoartongue Appears to the Ice People

The great white othlorx lord appears to the *makou* (wizards) of the Ice People in their dreams, offering them a new magic if they will serve him. The *makou* hastily accept, and the secrets of Sorcery are revealed to them.

The Dragon Purge Begins in Taladas

The Great Dragons arrive from an unknown land to the southeast. A savage battle erupts between the othlorx and the Great Dragons as they compete for dominance. The Dragon Purge begins in Taladas.

4 SC Lumiere the Morning Lord

A great bronze dragon, Lumiere, is convinced to defend the mortals of Southern Hosk from invading dragons. Lumiere claims Highvale as his realm.

5 SC A New King in Thenol

Prince Raimos and Baron Markeides of Thenol take the downfall of the Temple of Hith as an opportunity to seize control of New Aurim and the surrounding lands, forming an island of stability. Raimos is crowned King of Thenol.

6 SC The Lance found in Thenol

The terrible red dragon Abaxibon (known as Abomination by mortals), settles within an active volcano of the New Mountains, and challenges other dragons for rulership of this land. Hakik the Cryomancer gives King Raimos an enchanted lance, with which he and his company slay the red wyrm. Raimos names his company the First

Company of the Lance, and establishes an order of warriors known as the Noble Knights.

7 SC The New League

General Leutus of the Fourth Legion seizes control of the city of Morgad and declares himself Emperor of the New Minotaur League. Leutus renames himself Eragas IV, and begins a campaign to rebuild the old Minotaur Empire. The League Wars have begun.

8 SC The League Wars

The Legions of Morgad swiftly conquer the provinces of Eragala, Okami and the Conquered Lands. The wealthy League of Merchants ensures that the war effort does not empty Egaras' coffers.

Peace Among Dragons

The Dragon Purge unofficially ends as several dragons of great size put a stop to the crazed melee. Periodic battles between wyrms still occur, but on a lesser scale.

9 SC Highvale Resists

The Legions of Morgad attack Highvale, but are defeated by the superior tacticians of the *legiones luceat*. However, in the battle Lumiere's elven companion is killed, to the sorrow of the great bronze dragon lord. Lumiere becomes known as the Mourning Lord.

10-12 SC The Cult of Hith Forms

The former priests of Thenol band together to form the Cult of the Hith. Claiming to carry out Hiteh's will in the Fifth Age during his absence, the cultists begin to circulate around Taladas and gain political control.

12 SC Mysticism Discovered in Kristophan

The philosopher Ambedotus, a student of the paladin Austan Gavynus, discovers the powers of Mysticism, turning the tide against the New League's legions.

15 SC Academy of Mysteries

Ambedotus, the philosopher that discovered mysticism in Kristophan builds the Academy of Mysteries, a college for all people of Taladas to come and study mysticism. Elves, humans, dwarves, gnomes, minotaurs, and even Marak kender come to Kristophan to help build and attend the centre of mysticism on Taladas.

16 SC Calyp'stohl the Green

A green Great Dragon arrives on Taladas. One of the mightiest Great Dragons to arrive on the continent, she settles down in Neron, slaying the small resistance that greets her. Taking control of the yaggol, as well as cowering othlorx green dragons, Calyp'stohl proclaims Neron as her land.

18 SC The Cult of Hith Rising

The Cult of Hith manages to infiltrate the Academy of Mysteries. Learning the secrets of Mysticism, the cultists bend the power of the heart to serve them. Now with the power to control undead, the Cult begins to gather their undead servants.

Calyp'stohl's Madness

Calyp'stohl finishes her skull totem and attempts to wrest Neron from the corrupting Chaos magic. She succeeded, however, she was driven insane by the mental strain. Now known as Calyp'stohl the Mad, she attempts to gather her magical strength and expand her borders.

19 SC Obsidian Warlock Appears

A mysterious, dark figure emerges from the Shining Lands. Cloaked in mystery, this black robed figure wields great powers. Calling himself the Obsidian Warlock, this mysterious figure spreads the knowledge of sorcery throughout the Tamire and beyond. He is called to Kristophan by Academy of Mysteries, and becomes an ally of the philosopher Ambedotus.

20 SC Mysticism Discovered in the Rainward Isles

A young child by the name of Giliayne takes refuge inside an abandoned temple of Mislaxa, hiding from angry undead. In the morning, she walks into the village with a glow about her, and a look of revelation in her eyes. The People of the Isles are stunned to witness the miracles that the child can now perform, and declare them a gift from the departed gods.

Natural Magic Returns to Neron

The cha'asii discover Mysticism. Led by the first elf to discover the power of the heart, Byral J'Quinyal, the Wild Elves briefly unite, and drive back the marauding yaggol.

21-23 SC The Eternal King

A dracolich by the name of Savanaech declares himself to be the Eternal King of the Empire of Aurim, and takes control of Old Aurim's wastelands.

22 SC The Obsidian Tower

The Obsidian Warlock builds a great tower in the Ring Mountains. Made with sorcery and the assistance of Kristophan, the tower is named the Obsidian Tower by all. The Warlock invites selected students to study the arts of sorcery. Nearly two hundred fledgling sorcerers attend.

The Dragon Knights Reform

Elderly former Dragon Knight Tavin Longspear helps to form the Secret Knightly Order of the Dragon, to fight the evil dragon lords.

24 SC Eternal King Flies North

The dracolich Savanaech flies over the Strom Sea to conquer the Rainward Isles. He is fought bitterly by local green and black othlorx, but slays them all and devours their essence, growing ever stronger.

Cha'asii Elves Seek Aid

The cha'asii send emissaries to the Obsidian Tower. They ask for sorcerous help against Calyp'stohl the Mad. The Obsidian Warlock, intrigued with the magical situation of corrupted Neron, agrees.

25 SC Cha'asii Learn Sorcery

The cha'asii and the Warlock of Glass manage to force the mad overlord of Neron, Calyp'stohl into the Great Reed Delta. Calyp'stohl withdraws from the jungle, and lives in seclusion. The Obsidian Warlock and his sorcerers pledge to aid the cha'asii, and they begin to teach sorcery to the Wild Elves.

27 SC Old Aurim is Reborn

The dracolich Savanaech gains enough power to begin reshaping Old Aurim. It becomes a mockery of the Empire's former glory.

30 SC Green Dragon Schemes

Calyp'stohl the Mad emerges from her lair in the Great Reed Delta and begins to expand her borders. Continuing her quest for magic, the mad wyrm sends emissaries to Kristophan.

32 SC The Present

Chapter Two - Realms of Taladas

The geography of Taladas was greatly transformed by the first Cataclysm. The political climate of Taladas was also vastly changed, as great nations fell, new cults rose to prominence on the ashes of old religions, and empires were born.

The Taladas that was created by the first Cataclysm is very different from the single land that it once was. The continent was divided along several different fault lines, forming several distinct regions.

The western part of Taladas was divided into two sections, known as Northern and Southern Hosk, separated by a sea called the Tiderun. The southeastern section of Taladas, although much changed, retains its ancient name of Neron. The northeast, once called Aurim, is now the land of the Storm Sea and, farther out, the Rainward Isles. Parts of the western shore of the Storm Sea, where habitable, are remembered by the name of Old Aurim, while the central eastern area is called the Black Forests. At the very centre of the continent is a new land, Hitehkel, the Burning Sea of Krynn, surrounded by the bizarre Shining Lands, Basalt Columns, and towering Ring Mountains.

The changes that have occurred to Taladas after the Grim Winter and the war against Chaos have been less traumatic, but no less influential. Geographical changes were wrought by the new nature of Krynn in the Fifth Age as the new moon altered tides and connections to the elemental planes waned. Political changes have had a greater impact - the minotaur empire has been reborn, dragon overlords have created entirely new kingdoms, and a light of hope has been found in the shadows of Thenol.

The Dragon Realms

The continent of Taladas has not been brought under the heel of Great Dragons to the extent that distant Ansalon has been since the beginning of the Fifth Age. However, the Dragon Purge that was begun by the Red Malystrixx in Ansalon spread to certain regions of Taladas, leading to the creation of a number of Dragon Realms.

Great dragons from the mysterious homeland of Malystrixx, in addition to the oldest and most powerful of the native Taladan dragons, began hunting lesser dragons, defeating them in battle, and devouring the corpses to absorb their life energy.

The Dragon Purge ended swiftly in Taladas, perhaps saving the continent from the terrors of wholesale transformation by dragon overlords. However, those dragons who were powerful and knowledgeable enough were able to establish their own realms and use unique magic to alter the terrain to suit their goals preferences.

Calyp'stohl the Mad

Dragon Lord of the Great Reed Delta

In 16 SC, a great Green named Calyp'stohl arrived in the Neron. Slaying several green dragons, this great monster claimed the land as her territory. The yaggol immediately complied, and worked to service her. The Wild Elves, however, did nothing, as they hid away in the jungle. In 18 SC, using her own skull totem, Calyp'stohl attempted to wrest control of the land from the Chaos energies, and dominate the Great Reed Delta. She succeeded, but at a terrible price. The struggle with the Chaos energies drove her mad. Now, Calyp'stohl rules over a decimated land, as the Chaos magicks always return when the Great Green relinquishes control.

In 25 SC, a Cha'asii mystic named Byral launched an attack on the unnatural forces hidden within the Great Reed Delta. This time, he targeted the draconic ruler of the Delta: Calyp'stohl the Mad. With aid from the Obsidian Warlock and his sorcerers, Byral began a guerilla offensive against Calyp'stohl. Many of his warriors were lost in that valiant struggle, but he managed to throw Calyp'stohl off-balance. Startled, the Great Green retreated into the unknown interior of the swamp. However, in 30 SC, Calyp'stohl emerged from the dark heart of the Delta and savagely reclaimed her land. The yaggol once again aided the mad green, and Calyp'stohl once again regained control of her realm. Byral managed to hide his people, and he looks for a chance to reclaim his people's land for good.

It is in the deep and murky heart of the Neron Peninsula that the mad green dragon Calyp'stohl makes her home. Here even the Chaos magic is subdued, as she rules supreme.

Now that Calyp'stohl has reclaimed her land, she has begun to expand outward. Already, the swamp is beginning to creep west into the jungle and north towards Baltch. Curiously, Calyp'stohl has sent emissaries out to the Kristophan and the Obsidian Tower. She is searching for magical items, specifically artifacts from previous ages. No one knows why Calyp'stohl would need such items.

The Dragon Lord

Calyp'stohl (*female green great wyrm, obsessive demeanor*) is the largest green dragon in Taladas. She slew most of her green Great Dragon brethren, and elevated herself to her current status at an incredible speed. It is said that when Calyp'stohl the Mad soars over Neron, the entire jungle is blanketed in night. Her vibrant green scales match the color of the jungle, making it difficult to spot her even in full daylight. One can only see two glowing orbs, tainted with the redness of insanity. Her massive body measures just over one hundred feet, with her tail giving her another hundred feet. Her wingspan is nearly three hundred feet, and can blanket much of the Reed Delta in darkness when she wants to.

Calyp'stohl is extremely obsessive. She fears that she will lose the Great Reed Delta, and will do anything to solidify her grip on the land. She is extremely paranoid. Calyp'stohl is suspicious of

everyone, especially the Cha'asii, for they have threatened her before. Unlike most green dragons, particularly the green othlorx, Calyp'stohl has learned much Sorcery and Mysticism. Calyp'stohl believes that through magic, she can control her land.

At first, Calyp'stohl allowed green dragons to flock to her land. However, now her paranoia has caused her to fear her green dragon servitors. She leaves them alone, but uses yaggol spies to gather information. Therefore, there are many green dragons living rather independently throughout the jungles of Neron.

Calyp'stohl makes her home in the Great Reed Delta, and allows none to enter her private domain. In the heart of her lair, Calyp'stohl has managed to gather a treasure trove of magical items to protect herself. All of these items are very powerful, making Calyp'stohl an insurmountable threat on her home territory. Fortunately, her madness prevents her from launching an offensive, so the insane green waits diligently for an enemy that will never come.

Mad from the Chaos magic permeating the land, and frightened of the Cha'asii because of their recent attempts at a coup, Calyp'stohl will not fight. Calyp'stohl would rather retreat, even if she is more powerful than her aggressors are. Nervous when faced with physical battles, Calyp'stohl would rather launch an array of spells and magical effects from enchanted items than fight tooth and claw. Her deadly cloud of chlorine gas is used quite frequently in paranoid rages, so the scent of chlorine lingers on her scaly hide.

Important Holdings

None

Main Populace

Yaggol, hobgoblins, Cha'asii elves, Chaos creatures.

Personalities

Byral J'Quinyal (*elven adult male, determined demeanor; Champion*)

Description

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.

Occasionally small groups of hobgoblins, ogres, and Cha'asii wild elves dwell among the mangroves, although few have escaped the notice of the Mad Dragon. Explorers must contend with giant poisonous spiders, huge reptiles, and the yaggol, a race of bogeymen considered mythical to outsiders.

The yaggol are a degenerate strain of illithids, who live in underground colonies and in the thickest areas of the forest where sunlight never reaches the forest floor. They are sworn enemies of the Cha'asii, and use their formidable mental powers and great

physical strength to terrorise, taunt, and destroy the wild elves. They crashed in the jungles of Neron from one of their star-spanning ships. Standing about seven feet tall, the yaggol have great physical as well as mental power. Their heads resemble malevolent octopi, trailing four tentacles that hide their lamprey-like mouths. Their skin can adapt and shift in color, much like a chameleon, making them blend into the background.

They possess three fingers on each hand, and they are jointed so that any finger can oppose the other two. The most important mindlayers dress in flowing robes, while "commoners" dress in simple loincloths made from the hides of their victims.

Climate

The steaming swamps of the Great Reed Delta experience constant heavy rainfall. The Delta is hot and humid, rarely experiencing cool temperatures, even during winter. Huge tropical storms and hurricanes continually batter the coastline.

Current Happenings

Calyp'stohl has been sending yaggol emissaries to the city-state of Kristophan, as well as various other places of learning in Hosk. She has been experimenting upon her yaggol slaves with Mentalism, warping the monsters so that they might be more intelligent, less vicious, and utterly loyal to her - the perfect spy. Many worry what her plans might be, but none can say what mad schemes are forming in Calyp'stohl's turbulent mind.

Chaemaphos

Dragon Lord of Hitehkel

During the cataclysm of Hiteh's Night, a flaming mountain tore Taladas apart in the plains just east of the great mountain chains. The dwarves believe that sparks from Reorx's forge struck Krynn, whilst the Uigan nomads claim that the evil god Erestem fashioned a great stone and hurled it at humanity. The impact ripped a huge wound into Taladas, and the earth bled molten rock. What was previously the richest land in Taladas became an ocean of molten rock, spewing poison and flaming gas into the atmosphere. Although the outer regions of this vast hell eventually cooled enough to form a semisolid crust of hardened lava, the centre constantly churned forth magma before the surface had a chance to cool. A priest of Nuran named Dominus visited this Burning Sea in 180 AC and was convinced that it was a doorway to the infernal realm. He named it *Hitehkel*.

Indeed the Burning Sea was the kingdom of Hiteh the Merchant, god of corruption and lies. Hiteh summoned cunning and evil fire minions into the Burning Sea, and used energies stolen from the Grathanich (or Greygem) to create the Tower of Flame at the very heart of Hitehkel. The fire minions fought the nearby gnomes in the Gnomoi War, and towards the end of the war the gnomes began to suspect

that Hiteh used the Grathanich. These suspicions were fed further by reports brought back by the few survivors of the Company of the Dead, which unsuccessfully stormed the Tower of Flame.

The gnomes' suspicions were confirmed during the Grim Winter. Half a world away, an island of Irda cracked open the Grathanich and released Chaos, Father of All and of Nothing, for the first time in millennia. At that instant the spells that Hiteh wove to harness the Grathanich's power were broken. The Tower of Flame exploded, and hordes of Chaos rushed from the rift in reality.

The battle against Chaos' armies devastated the firefleets of the gnomes before the fire dragons and shadow wights broke through to Northern Hosk. Yet the othlorx dragons managed to save Taladas from total destruction, and Chaos was forced to depart Krynn, taking the gods with him. The Fourth Age ended, and most of the minions of Chaos faded away - but not all.

After three years of rebuilding their shattered homes, the gnomoi ventured out to explore the rest of Hitehkel. They discovered to their amazement that the outer regions of the former lava sea had solidified into a blackened plain; there were even a few gnome steamships half-submerged in solid rock. The gnomoi calculated that at the current rate of cooling, the entire of Hitehkel will have frozen over within a century or two, based upon current thermodynamic models.

But this process of cooling may be halted or even reversed. A huge fire dragon has risen out of the whirling vortex that was once the Tower of Flame, larger and more powerful than any other of its kind. A storm of flame and thunder in the skies over Hitehkel, some say that the fire dragon is Chaos' last and mightiest child on Krynn. Some even say that the dragon lord is Chaos itself.

The Dragon Lord

Chaemaphos (*female fire dragon great wyrm, alien demeanor*), sometimes called *The Chaosflame* by mortals, is one of Krynn's most terrifying sights. Chaemaphos is the last and greatest child of Chaos, Father of All and of Nothing, and is a legacy of the terrible wars of the Grim Winter. Well over three hundred feet in length, the fire dragon lord appears to be formed of the same molten rock as her domain, improbably borne aloft upon wings of flaming obsidian. Her scales are thick, cracked slabs of basalt, and her breath is an incendiary blast of toxic fumes. Merely approaching within firing distance of Chaemaphos is enough to burn a hero alive.

This vastly powerful creature of Chaos has dwelt in Hitehkel since the Second Cataclysm, and first made her presence known by stealing a flying citadel from the gnomes in 2 SC. Chaemaphos is more intelligent and powerful than other fire dragons; she also possesses great magical skills that they do not. Although Chaemaphos has not visibly shaped her realm, her command over both Sorcery and Mysticism is unparalleled; perhaps she leaves Hitehkel unchanged because the Burning Sea and basalt plains already suit her perfectly.

The goals and desires of Taladas' most terrifying dragon are unknown. She does not seem to wish expanding her realm, even into areas unclaimed by other dragons. Instead, Chaemaphos has engaged herself in two activities: spawning more creatures of Chaos, and teaching the primal powers of Sorcery - to the Glass Sailors, to Hoartongue, the mute white othlorx lord, and to the Chaos Sorcerers. Some believe that when Chaos left Krynn, he infused some of his essence into the fire dragon lord. Others worship her as Chaos Himself.

Important Holdings

Cooling Land, the Flamestorm

Main Populace

Fire minions, fire dragons, daemon warriors, shadow wights, gnomes

Personalities

None known.

Description

Hitehkel is divided into three main regions: the basalt plains; the Cooling Land; and the Burning Sea. These regions are arranged in concentric circles around the centre of Hitehkel, where the Tower of Flame once stood.

The outermost is a black basalt plain that rings the entirety of Hitehkel, and is contained by the desert known as the Shining Lands and the mountainous Gnomoi Spires. This plain is a strip between twenty and fifty miles in width created when the molten rock toward the edges of the Burning Sea cooled and solidified. The ground here is cracked and bare, with neither vegetation nor soil for it to grow in. Here and there strange rock formations can be found, formed when flowing fountains of lava cooled suddenly. Another unique feature of the basalt plain is a scattering of abandoned gnome fireships. These metal-hulled vessels were designed to sail across a sea of lava, and when that lava cooled they became landlocked. Now most of the fireships lie empty, or are lairs for giant insects and shadow wights.

Within the ring of the basalt plain is the second region of Hitehkel, known as the Cooling Land. From a distance the slowly hardening ground appears to be a smooth plain. Upon closer inspection, the Cooling Land is rugged and broken; creaking, groaning, and grating as the ground slowly hardens and then collapses. There are many places where the crust is dangerously thin, barely covering the magma underneath. Sometimes volcanic fountains erupt, raining streams of molten rock. At night the Cooling Land is strangely lit by fiery cracks where glowing lava is breaking through to the surface. Nothing lives in this treacherous land.

The third region of Hitehkel is its lethal heart, the Burning Sea. This churning caldera of liquid rock and toxic fumes is the most hostile environment in Krynn, and can only be survived by

creatures that can resist the poisonous temperatures and incredible heat. The lava is in a constant state of turmoil, with swelling mounds of fresh lava surging to the surface, and chunks of solidifying rock that float upon the Burning Sea like red-hot icebergs. Volcanic geysers erupt hundreds of feet into the air.

Paradoxically, the Burning Sea is inhabited by more beings than the Cooling Land. Terrifying denizens of the flames includes fire dragons, daemon warriors, and fire minions. The fire dragons are spawn of Chaemaphos, and serve her by destroying any human or gnome that dares to enter Hitehkel. They occasionally ally themselves with a daemon warrior; these horrors have no loyalty but to themselves, and fight amongst each other for territory in the Burning Sea and the Cooling Land.

The fire minions are intelligent and cunning beings of pure flame that once served the gods Hiteh and Erestem. Brought into Krynn through an elemental gate deep within the Burning Sea; the gate has now been slammed shut, and the fire minions can no longer return to the Elemental Plane of Fire. Now the fire minions are extremely jealous of their territories, and are hateful of fire dragons and "fleshlings" alike. The fire minions live in a constant state of war, defending themselves from daemon warriors and fire dragons that seek to usurp the Burning Sea. They also have a special bitterness for gnomes and humans that dates back to the Gnomoi War that ended in 252 AC.

In the middle of the Burning Sea is a maelstrom of magma that swirls in a spiral over two miles in diameter, dragging any floating rocks or fireships down beneath the Burning Sea to the centre of Krynn itself (not that anything would survive that long). Above this maelstrom a *Flamestorm* of poison, flame, and lightning rages, resembling a fiery tornado that rises hundreds of feet above the surface of the Burning Sea. The sound of this storm is incredible, and can be heard fifty miles away; it has been compared to the thunder of the Cataclysm itself. This is the home of Chaemaphos, a sanctuary that no one in Krynn would dare to invade. She bathes within the maelstrom, but does not dwell there; her lair lies within a flying citadel of stone that was stolen from the gnomes decades before.

The flying citadel lies within the eye of the Flamestorm, and has been enchanted to support mortal life. Chaemaphos has teleported many prisoners and slaves within this citadel, where they are allowed to do as they wish. After all, none of these poor mortals are able to harm (or even approach) the fire dragon lord, and escape is likewise impossible. They simply live out their days in despair, until finally ending it by leaping into the roaring hell outside.

Climate

The solid regions of Hitehkel are a desert of the most barren sort, an ecological wasteland. Nothing grows here, and very few natural creatures even venture onto the black basalt plain. The air is choked with poisonous fumes and is nearly unbreathable, and temperatures soar to unbearable heights all year round.

None of this even compares to the molten centre of Hitehkel. Here, the fountains of lava and the atmosphere of pure poison are like nothing else on Krynn. Those who believe that the dark god Hiteh has left Krynn need only to look upon the Burning Sea to be convinced otherwise.

Trade

There is no trade with the creatures of flame and of chaos that constitute the inhabitants of Hitehkel. The mortals of Taladas produce nothing that these monsters could possibly need.

Current Happenings

The gnomes of the Spires lamented the loss of their fireship fleet; some of the ships remain under gnome control and sail the southeastern reach of the Burning Sea, but many either became landlocked when the Cooling Land expanded, or were destroyed by Chaemaphos. For two and a half decades, this restricted the gnomes' access to the interior of Hitehkel.

But for the last five years the gnomes have been regaining their edge in exploring the reshaped Hitehkel. For a long time, they were not aware of what the fire dragon lord had done with the flying citadel that she stole from them; most gnome leaders had assumed it destroyed. Now that they have discovered the use that Chaemaphos has put it to, the gnomes have begun to use their sole remaining flying citadel in a similar way; as mobile research and military facilities over the skies of Hitehkel.

The gnomes have also developed a new form of land-based vehicle that crosses the basalt plains and Cooling Land on slow treads. Should the ground collapse beneath one of these gnomish vehicles, it has a steel hull capable of withstanding the Burning Sea, and is even able to churn through it. Although they do not have the range or speed of a fireship, these lava wagons are better able to travel through the changed environment of Hitehkel.

Hoartongue the Mute

Dragon Lord of the Upper Panak

When Erestem called the chromatic dragons to aid in her Ansalonian war in the Fourth Age, some of the whites refused the goddess on a whim, not being in the mood to cooperate with "lesser" beings. As a punishment, Erestem cursed these white dragons with the loss of their powers of speech and magic, naming them among the othlorx (accursed). The white othlorx were unable to express their rage at this punishment, and became savage and isolated.

During the Grim Winter the white othlorx ignored the calls of Erestem and their fellow dragons to join the fight against Chaos; some were seen flying over Taladas reveling in the fierce storms that plagued the land. After the Second Cataclysm these savage wyrms retreated back to their hidden lairs in the remote frozen north. With the exception of the ancient dragon known now as Hoartongue

the Mute. This wily reptile realised that with the departure of the gods taking all known forms of magic with them, the mute white othlorx were no longer disadvantaged in this regard. With this in mind, he became one of the first Dragon Lords of Taladas.

Hoartongue has claimed a realm covering the badlands of the Upper Panak and Guurlamskas, the Northern Sea. His realm is bordered by the Great Escarpment in the west, a cliff of weathered and broken sandstone between 100 and 300 feet in height; the northern reaches of the Storm Sea in the east; and the glaciers of the Ring Mountains in the south. The land has been shaped by the great white wyrm, but in subtler ways than the dragon realms of Ansalon. Grey storm clouds constantly blanket the skies, flickering with lightning, although rain, snow and sleet are rare. The ground is solid frost all year round, and the northern shore disappears into blinding white expanses of pack ice. Sunless days and long dark nights leave a traveller with the impression of a bleak, dead land.

The Dragon Lord

Hoartongue (*white male great wyrm, inscrutable demeanor*) is a terrifying sight; his 300 foot long body seems to be carved from pure white marble; his eyes are burning red embers, and his tusks and horns a rich ivory. The wyrm's tongue, however, is withered and pale, a result of Erestem's curse over 80 years ago. The Ice People of the Upper Panak named the dragon lord based on this deformity; Hoartongue's true name is unknown.

Hoartongue does not interfere with the lives of the Ice People, apart from using his command over the sphere of Mentalism to send them foreboding dreams that communicate his wishes or displeasure. Hoartongue suffers no other dragon to enter his realm, slaying and devouring any who might dare; the lesser white othlorx of the Ring Mountains fear discovery by the great white wyrm, but cannot escape south due to the presence of the fire dragon Chaemaphos. Hoartongue has an uneasy alliance with Chaemaphos, from whom he is rumoured to have discovered the secrets of sorcery in the Fifth Age. Hoartongue has mastered the schools of Cryomancy, Aeromancy, and Electromancy.

Important Holdings

The Upper Panak, Guurlamskas (the Northern Sea)

Main Populace

Humans, thanoi

Personalities

Vanatyrgh (*thanoi adult female, dominating demeanor, Master*)

Makou Uskmuito (*human elder male, cheerful demeanor, Adventurer*)

Description

The humans of the Upper Panak dwell in a number of semi-nomadic tribes collectively known as the Ice People, who consider themselves to be one people united against the hostile conditions of their

homeland. They do not fight amongst themselves and have few natural enemies; only wild predators and the almost mythical thanoi (walrus-people) of the northern ice pose any true threat. As such, the Ice people are not a warlike race; their tribes are led by the makou (wizards), who wear special headdresses made from animal skulls and pelts.

After the Second Cataclysm, the makou suffered a terrible loss of credibility when they lost their spells; a similar crisis of faith occurred when the shamans of the Ice People lost their divine powers at the beginning of the Fourth Age. As the Ice People believe that all good or bad luck is caused by the actions of mortals, the shamans were blamed for committing some grave offense, and driven away or killed. A similar occurrence may have happened to the makou, were it not for Hoartongue the Mute.

The othlorx lord spoke to the makou in their dreams, offering them the secrets of a new magic in exchange for their loyalty. Those makou who had not yet been driven away hastily accepted, and the power of Mysticism was revealed to them. More recently, the makou were taught the secrets of Sorcery. In return, they serve as the eyes and mouth of Hoartongue.

The Ice People are excellent hunters and fishermen. They hunt seals and even whales using canoes built from oiled sealskins, and domesticate *nasif* for their wool, milk, and as beasts of burden. The Ice People know little about agriculture, but gather mosses and tiny ground-berries to eat.

Despite their obeisance to the othlorx lord, the Ice People are a friendly people, who accept strangers into their tribes and welcome them with feasting, storytelling, and joking late into the night. However, the makou secretly report everything they learn about such strangers to Hoartongue, who may act to destroy interlopers through other means.

One such means is the thanoi, of whom the Ice People tell dreadful stories at night. These creatures dwell far to the north, and worship the great white wyrm as a god. The dragon uses the thanoi tribes as his servants and assassins. The thanoi rarely venture into the lands of the Ice People, where they mercilessly destroy and kill, but hunt for whales and white dragons across the far northern ice. They slay these creatures as a tribe, and sacrifice their carcasses to Hoartongue to appease his anger.

Climate

Seasons on the Panak Desert are divided into two categories - cold and not cold. Several months after spring arrives in southern lands, the freezing temperatures suddenly warm and the hardy shrubs and mosses explode into colourful blossoms, and animals quickly reproduce.

Winter arrives soon after, with long cold nights and dry, bitter winds. Most animals grow shaggy coats to survive this season, and only the hardiest plants grow from the frost-covered land.

Trade

The Ice People barter nasif wool, animal furs, and carved ivory with traders from the Lower Panak and Ring Mountains for iron goods and fresh fruit, which they consider a delicacy. The thanoi are not interested in trade, and are too remote to be approached.

Current Happenings

Frost-wights are known to dwell in remote parts of Hoartongue's realm, where they seem to be guarding something. It is rumoured that the great white othlorx controls these creatures of Chaos somehow - perhaps a secret imparted to him by the fire dragon of Hitehkel, Chaemaphos. What Hoartongue could have promised to the fire dragon in exchange for their alliance cannot be imagined.

The pack ice of Guurlamskas has been drifting south into the Storm Sea, forming a land bridge between the Upper Panak and the Rainward Isles. It is thought that Hoartongue does not wish to anger Chaemaphos by expanding his realm south into the Ring Mountains, and has set his sights to the east instead.

Kahh, Doom of Draconians

Dragon Lord of Hurdumarr

During the Ansalonian War of the Lance, the goddess Erestem called the chromatic dragons to join her humanoid armies. Most, including the young black dragon Kahh, answered the call, but some chose to ignore the goddess. These dragons were cursed by Erestem and called Othlorx (The Uninvolved); the Othlorx laired in Taladas, believing that Erestem would forget them. They were wrong. Erestem had plans to invade Taladas, and the Othlorx were her first targets.

The god Sargonnas had long been the consort of Erestem, but their relationship was tempestuous. When Sargonnas' offer to assist Erestem in her invasion of Taladas was dismissed out of hand, Sargonnas desired vengeance. To this end, he manipulated several mortals and metallic dragons into foiling Erestem's plans.

Kahh and his brother Fyex (known as *Darkheart* and *Shadowback* to mortals) were two of the dragons serving Erestem as she marshaled her invasion force. When the metallic Othlorx and dragon knights defeated the invasion of Taladas, Kahh survived an apparent demise and defected from Erestem's forces, hiding in the volcanic region north of the Indanalis Sea.

After the departure of the gods in the Grim Winter, Kahh emerged from hiding to seize a realm of his own. Although Kahh is smaller in stature than any other dragon lord in Taladas, he has somehow managed to survive - even prosper.

The Dragon Lord

The black othlorx Kahh, known to mortals as *Darkheart* (*male black adult, compelling demeanor*) is barely 50 feet from nose to shanks, with a tail of similar length. Kahh is dark and sinuous, like a gigantic asp; his strangely beautiful head is a terrifying sculpture

with crystalline eyes, ivory claws and pearly fangs. Kahh speaks in a low, melodious voice that hypnotizes lesser beings. He rarely flies, but prefers to pace or swim around his domain; it is said that no horse can outrun Darkheart, and no ship can escape him. Kahh prefers magic and using his acidic breath to physical combat, and casts spells from the schools of Geomancy, Hydromancy, and Spectramancy, as well as the sphere of Mentalism.

Kahh possesses neither the physical nor magical might of other wyrms such as Calyp'stohl or Hoartongue; indeed, the bronze Lumiere derisively refers to Kahh as the "littlest dragon lord." But Kahh did not survive the Taladan dragon purge by fighting his elders. Kahh is intelligent and duplicitous, and has great skill in vanishing from his foes. Furthermore, he enjoys making alliances with mortals.

This is the black othlorx's greatest advantage - whilst no gnomoi or minotaur diplomat would actually *trust* Darkheart to have their best interests at heart, none can resist his friendship. Darkheart has travelled personally to the gnome King Telemanklosminarus VI and minotaur Emperor Eragas IV, and signed pacts with them. The *Darkheart Treaties*, as they are known, promise that the black dragon will not seek to gain territory outside of approximately 50 miles of his lair at Mt Whiterock. Furthermore, Darkheart's realm was recognised as a sovereign state, Hurdumarr. Further papers were signed promising aid in conflicts against the fire minions and draconians.

Of course, Kahh has his own motives for signing these treaties. By remaining at peace with the mortals, the black othlorx ensures that the mortal kingdoms act as a shield against his true enemies: other dragon lords. Lumiere the bronze will not bother Kahh while the minotaur New League remains a threat, and the gnomes occupy the lands between Hurdumarr and the Great Fire Dragon, Chaemaphos. Even Kahh's promise to aid the mortals in war is self-serving; Kahh bears no love for fire minions, having once been attacked by them.

As for draconians, Kahh has his minions actively hunt the creatures, and return them to Mt. Whiterock *alive*. The othlorx lord performs secret rites in the bowels of his mountain city, consuming the very essence of hundreds of traag and sesk draconians. Kahh knows that he is too weak to defeat enough true dragons to become a dragon lord of Savanaech or Calyp'stohl's stature; he must make do with draconians. Their essence is paltry compared to that of a dragon, but there are so many *more* of them.

Important Holdings

Mt. Whiterock, Jaggachsteromius

Main Populace

Hurdu lizardmen, gnomes

Personalities

Tekolo (*hurdu elder male, single-minded demeanor; Champion*)

Cahmetinaru the Grand Dignifier (*gnomoi adult female, diplomatic demeanor; Adventurer*)

Description

Hurdumarr lies within a narrow strip of land that separates the chemical-laden Indanalis Sea and the basalt plans of the Cooling Land. Known as the Spires, this region is typified by towering narrow peaks and strange hexagonal columns, up to one thousand feet in height, forced up by the cataclysm of Hiteh's Night. The occasional geyser or active volcano may be found in the most geologically unstable areas.

The region claimed by Kahh as the nation of Hurdumarr extends from a mile south of the gnome citadel Nabrutacildiscara in the north to some miles past the twin volcanoes Umnaron and Osskelirmus in the south. The realm of Hurdumarr has been transformed into a fen by the still-weak shaping powers of Kahh, powered by the sacrifice of hundreds of draconians. However, just because the ground holds more moisture and supports more living plants than elsewhere in the Spires, a visitor should not assume that Hurdumarr is a safe or pleasant land. Most waters are polluted by foul slimes, and those that seem clear and pure are likely to be poisonous. Plants grow in profusion, and are vividly coloured; many of these are lethal in some way. Animals on the other hand, are rare; beyond the large mutated insects of the fen, few creatures can be found. Strange reptiles and fish swim in the deeper waters, but seeking them is hazardous.

The main inhabitants of Kahh's realm are the hurdu, twisted cousins to the bakali of Blackwater Glade. Kahh brought the hurdu here from their homeland in the Steamwall Mountains, and they serve the black dragon fanatically. They live in tribes organised along a strict basis of dominance; the strongest hold firm rule, and all others obey. Of course, the dragon lord is the strongest of them all, and so rules Hurdumarr from the mighty fortress of Mt. Whiterock.

Mt. Whiterock was once part of a gnome project to create a series of giant, floating mountains known as *sky citadels*. The entire mountaintop was carved to resemble a fortress, and rooms, corridors, and chambers excavated. Eventually, the entire peak should have been cut away and made to fly by gnomish technology and magic. However, Mt. Whiterock was abandoned by the gnomes, and became a lair for foul creatures. Kahh cleaned out Mt. Whiterock after the Grim Winter, and has made it a city of hurdu.

Mt. Whiterock is also reported to be a potent magical reservoir of some sort (see the *Heroes of Sorcery* dramatic supplement for details).

The most honoured hurdu are the hunters. If a hurdu captures a draconian and brings it to Kahh for sacrifice, he is rewarded with residence in Mt. Whiterock. Even greater rewards are given to those who manage to subdue a dragon for Darkheart's consumption; they are heroes among the lizardfolk. Tekolo, a dragonhunter who once served the goddess Erestem, is one of these select few.

Another important group in Hurdumarr is the gnome citadel Jaggachsteromius. A minor settlement, this citadel lay within the territory ceded to Hurdumarr by the Darkheart Treaties. Instead of leaving their homes, the gnomes of Jaggachsteromius chose to remain under the dragon's rule. The gnomes provide magical and technological aid to Kahh. In return, the dragon lord leaves them alone.

A number of goblin tribes dwell in Hurdumarr, despite the radical change to their homeland by Kahh's shaping. These tribes enjoy no protection from the dragon lord, and are hunted for sport and food by the hurdu. Still, they defy Darkheart by aiding his enemies whenever possible. A few even harbour escaped draconians.

Climate

Hurdumarr suffers from oppressive heat and humidity all year round, although this seems to come from the ground as much as the sky. The occasional strong wind is no relief, carrying the bite of chemical fumes and bitter rains from the east and the west.

Trade

The hurdu are a hunter-gatherer society, and only engage in trade at the behest of the dragon lord. The gnomes of Jaggachsteromius produce a few devices of value, which they happily exchange for spices and other foodstuffs to add variety to their diet of goat and carefully grown fungi.

Current Happenings

Kahh has learned of draconian ships plying the Indanalis Sea, and frequently swims through those waters, seeking prey.

Gnome visitors to Mt. Whiterock have reported strange magical experiments within, as well as renewed mining by the hurdu. The meaning of this is unknown.

Lumiere the Mourning Lord

Bronze Othlorx Lord of Highvale

The only metallic dragon lord of Taladas, the bronze othlorx Lumiere left his home beneath the ocean waves to Taladas' south in 369 AC to seek out others of his kind. Travelling across Southern Hosk, Lumiere noted to his shock that Evil held sway over the land; undead armies and sinister priests ruled Thenol, twisted monsters crawled up out of the polluted Indanalis Sea, and the good dragons were nowhere to be found.

In the New Mountains between Armach and Thenol Lumiere sighted a large red dragon which, to his surprise, attempted to hide within a volcano at his approach. In a brief and bloodless encounter, Lumiere learned that most of Krynn's dragons had been in Ansalon fighting a war, and remained there; the only dragons in Taladas were the Cursed of Erestem and the Uninvolved. Lumiere left the red to

cowardly slither within her volcano and sought other metallics elsewhere.

He found them in the Conquered Lands of the Minotaur League. Human settlers had long told stories about great copper-coloured wyrms in the highlands, and these tales were true. Occasionally a curious explorer with perseverance and cunning on his side discovered the lair of an othlorx dragon; rather than kill the humans who did so, the copper othlorx allowed them to stay with their erstwhile captors. Some humans even formed a powerful rapport with their draconic friends, who in turn directed their frustrated maternal and paternal instincts towards the humans. Such individuals called themselves *dragon knights*.

Lumiere stayed with the copper othlorx and their dragon knights for a few years, learning the recent history of Krynn of which he knew little. The humans grew to love the old bronze, who was fascinated by their affairs and spent a lot of time among them. He was called "Morning" for his burnished bronze scales and warm demeanor. After a few years Lumiere formed a close attachment with an elven woman from Armach-Nesti named Elerijil. Transformed into a wolf, Lumiere and the elven ranger travelled through Southern Hosk. Elerijil showed Lumiere the cruelty with which minotaur nobles treated humans; the insidious evil of Thenolite priests; and the harsh laws that the Silvanaes elves enforce upon *heerikil* (outsiders).

After the chaos of the Grim Winter and Second Cataclysm, Southern Hosk was in disarray. The Minotaur League had collapsed, the Church of Hith had lost control of Thenol, and most of the copper othlorx and dragon knights perished in the war against Chaos. In this power vacuum Elerijil convinced her bronze companion to seize control of part of the former League. Lumiere's motivations for becoming the dragon lord of Highvale and the New Mountains was to protect his beloved humans from the evil servants of Chaos, Father of All and of Nothing, and from the oppressive rule of the minotaurs.

The Morning Realm of Highvale might have been a bastion of hope in Taladas, had not the tragedies of the League Wars changed its dragon lord so dramatically.

The Dragon Lord

Lumiere (*bronze male wyrm, obsessive demeanor*), known as Morning to humans, declared himself the protector of Highvale soon after the Second Cataclysm. As evil dragons fleeing from Ansalon's Dragon Purge made their way to Hosk, Lumiere protected his people from these horrors; none were permitted within a hundred miles of his realm, and many chromatic dragons were slain. Although Lumiere did not consume the life force of any Ansalonian dragons, he somehow discovered the process of land shaping from one of them. With this newfound power, he began to adjust the countryside to be more to his liking.

Lumiere was less comfortable using his draconic powers against the mortal enemies of Highvale; though he promised to give his "children" every possible support, the othlorx lord encouraged the

humans to deal with such problems themselves. However, during the League Wars the Emperor of Morgad attempted to conquer Lumiere's realm in a battle that led to the death of Elerijil. Since her death, Lumiere has become suspicious of all foreigners, minotaurs in particular; the humans of Highvale now know him as Mourning Lord.

Now, in 31 SC, the Mourning Lord is obsessive about the safety of his people. He can be seen soaring along his realm's borders early in the morning and late in the day, occasionally giving a mournful cry. Lumiere appears to be made of the same stuff as the sun; he is over three hundred feet long from tip to tail with an even greater wingspan, and his burnished bronze scales reflect the sunlight so brightly that he hurts to look at.

The Mourning Lord is gentle and kind toward his people, but against enemies he is a terrible opponent; the dragon seems to appear from nowhere, diving at his enemies and employing his breath weapon, then soaring up to repeat the attack. Lumiere is skilled in the sorcerous school of Spectramancy, and the mystical spheres of Alteration, Healing, and Mentalism.

Important Holdings

Darcika Woods, Highvale, Konim Spur, the New Mountains

Main Populace

Humans, dwarves, copper dragons

Personalities

General Amrus Darkil (*male adult dwarf, calm demeanor; Champion*)

Praetor Selephra of Vinlans (*female adult human, deliberate demeanor; Adventurer*)

Merchant Omnius Juiletus (*male elder human, innovative demeanor; Adventurer*)

Sch'tangh (*copper female young adult, excitable demeanor*)

Description

The Mourning Land encompasses the entire former League province of Highvale, as well as the deep forest and New Mountains that lie between Thenol and Armach. Scattered along its borders and at the moths of passes are fortifications of all types. Most of these were built in the Fourth Age by the Minotaur League to guard against invasion by Armach; after the minotaur emperor signed a treaty with the Confederation of Armach, many of the forts and castles were abandoned and allowed to fall into ruin. Some now serve as lairs to young copper dragons.

Highvale has always had wide farm plains and thick evergreen woodlands. Lumiere has reshaped the land by changing the course of the Samos, Lenika, and Sitron rivers; these now form a natural border around the dragon realm, which is forded at a few, well-protected locations - such as the border-town Vaspurkan, twenty miles northeast of the capital Vinlans.

Many deep lakes have also formed in Lumiere's realm, due to his love of water. The farmers of Highvale now add fish to their traditional diet of bread, olives, and mutton.

The New Mountains region has been populated by a number of dwarf and human mixed communities, most of which are less than 40 years old. They are supported by rich silver, tin, and gemstone mines; however, the villagers are plagued by the dangerous creatures that lair in the mountains. This is despite the villages' proximity to the dragon lord's lair at Mount Bluetop.

A deep lake and a strange fortification that predates the first Cataclysm surround this mountain. Surrounding the base of the mountain is a 15-foot high wall, built of crude, unmortared stone. At regular intervals are small watchtowers, which look inward, and gates, which are barred on the outside. It seems that the wall was built to protect against something on the inside. The dragon lord lairs here more for curiosity than strategic reasons.

The capital of Highvale is Vinlans, an agricultural city of 40,000 people. The citizens of Vinlans are usually farmers or traders of agricultural goods; the minotaur nobility were driven out of Highvale by Lumiere after the League Wars. The dragon lord also abolished slavery; all of his people are considered free citizens who may make a living in whatever manner they choose.

Most remain in their traditional roles, for those unable to support themselves are made to work in the fields or serve as a legionary in Highvale's *legiones luceat*. Most people start at the rank of private, but they may then be promoted to the rank of corporal, from there to sergeant, to lieutenant and so on. Although the *legiones luceat* lack the muscle of minotaurs or tribesmen from Northern Hosk, the Officers School in Vinlans has trained a corps of master strategists. Occasional back up from copper othlorx also helps the *legiones* to protect Highvale from the New League and Thenol.

Other towns in Highvale include Ontres, Lycus, Vaspurkan, and High Pass Keep.

Climate

The rivers of Highvale drain into the farm plains, carrying rich silts that nourish the land. This combination of rich soil, water, and a temperate climate cooled by westerly winds, makes this the most fertile farmland in Taladas.

Farther to the south, the New Mountains are divided into a series of small ranges separated by wide valleys. This region is higher and cooler than the rest of Highvale, and sees light snow occasionally during winter; there is abundant pasture and timber in the valleys.

Some of the volcanoes of the New Mountains are still active, but this is mild compared to other parts of Taladas.

Trade

Highvale produces more than enough grain to feed its populace, and trades it to Kristophan, Armach, and Thenol. Some is also sold

to buyers in the New League; although Lumiere has forbidden any dealings with the minotaurs of the New League, it is such a lucrative market that many smuggling rings exist. Vinlans is known for its excellent fruits and wines.

Current Happenings

Ever since the elfwoman Elerijil was killed by minotaurs during the League Wars, the bronze othlorx has had a growing hatred of the race. He has driven almost every minotaur in Highvale to flee, and actively repels them from his borders to protect his people. Some say that Lumiere has grown so obsessive that he is prepared to kill any minotaur who does not immediately flee from him.

Villagers in the southern New Mountains have reported seeing a mature adult red dragon lurking around a certain volcano and stealing sheep. This is the cowardly red othlorx that Lumiere humiliated decades ago; she is raising a brood of young reds, and plotting her eventual revenge on the larger bronze dragon.

Savanaech the Eternal King

Dracolich Lord of Aurim & the Rainward Isles

Savanaech rules a vast region, including all of Old Aurim, the Rainward Isles, and regions of the Black Forests. However, his realm is also one of the emptiest in Taladas, and certainly the most recently captured - Savanaech claimed the land less than a decade ago. Other dragons would certainly have attempted to wrest control of Savanaech's realm from him by now were the Eternal King not the unhallowed terror that he is - a dracolich.

Savanaech has not yet begun to reshape the Rainward Isles or Black Forests, although it is certain that he possesses the power to do so. However, changes have begun to remake Old Aurim; mountains forced up by the first Cataclysm are disappearing, and dead cities are rising out of the dust of Aurim's deserts. Explorers into the ash-covered lands of Old Aurim have returned with tales of the Empire of Aurim reborn, with an undead dragon as *Hlafdae*, or High King.

The Dragon Lord

Savanaech (*red dracolich male great wyrm, imperious demeanor*) is terrifying to behold; a skeletal dragon 170 feet in length, with rotting flesh clinging to his bones, eyes that blaze with a deathly cold light, and a bony whip-like tail that doubles his body length. He is usually accompanied by a score of undead warriors, dressed in the tunics and bronze breastplates of ancient Auric legions. He styles himself the Eternal King of Aurim.

The dracolich named Savanaech (Savage to mortals) was heard of only in legends during the Fourth Age; a mighty red dragon who fell in an ancient war against the Empire of Aurim, Savanaech was cursed by the goddess Erestem to haunt the site of his failure for all eternity.

When Erestem left Krynn after the Grim Winter, Savanaech was freed from his curse. The undead red dragon emerged from his hidden lair and swept across Old Aurim, desiring to wreak fiery vengeance upon his ancient enemies. However, after the first Cataclysm Old Aurim had been reduced to a poisoned and dying place, polluted by chemical rains blown east from the Burning Sea. Robbed of the target of his fury, Savanaech destroyed a few hobgoblin tribes before returning to his hidden lair.

When Savanaech emerged from hiding in 21 SC, he had changed radically. Accompanied by legions of undead, the dracolich declared himself to be the Last Hlafdae of Aurim. Supported by mindless dead and subservient tribes of traag draconians, the dracolich claimed Old Aurim by 23 SC, forcing rebellious hobgoblin trines to flee north into the Ring Mountains or east over the Storm Sea, lest they be destroyed.

Savanaech's conquest of the Rainward Isles did not come until the dracolich flew across the Storm Sea. A land long plagued by the warring of the ancestral dead, the Rainward Isles were quickly dominated by the Eternal King's necromantic powers. The Black Forests were considerably more challenging; many green and black othlorx made their lairs within those twisted groves, and fought Savanaech bitterly. But the Eternal King slew those that dared attack him, and devoured their essences; by 27 SC he had gained enough in power to begin reshaping Old Aurim.

It has become apparent that Savanaech is insane. He has adopted the persona of the Hlafdae who caused his death, and is intent upon resurrecting the lost glory of Aurim - no matter that his cities are covered in dust, and his courtiers are the unthinking dead. The Eternal King suffers the living to dwell in his empire, provided that they do not oppose him. But for how long?

Savanaech has knowledge of the Mystical sphere of Necromancy, and the Sorcerous schools of Divination, Pyromancy, and Summoning. He also possesses the powers of a dracolich and a red dragon.

Important Holdings

Aurim, parts of the Black Forests and the Rainward Isles.

Main Populace

Undead, humans, dwarves, kender, traag draconians, hobgoblins, centaurs.

Personalities

Great Chief Jugrakh (*hobgoblin adult male, conniving demeanor; Master*)

Praetor Klaudesaan (*traag draconian male, proud demeanor: Novice*)

Rethean the Riddler (*true kender elder male, mysterious demeanor; Hero*)

Giliayne (*human young adult female, visionary demeanor; Adventurer*)

Beonar the Grizzled (*dwarf adult male, cheerful demeanor; Adventurer*)

Description

Before the first Cataclysm, Old Aurim was the seat of a vast empire and the largest landmass in Taladas. But a burning meteorite tore a vast region away, creating the Burning Sea of Hitehkel, and threw up a range of towering mountains across Aurim's northeast plains. Storms of poisonous ash and dust blew across the remains of Aurim from Hitehkel, killing those survivors who did not flee. The sudden departure of the gods allowed all manner of disease to sweep the land clean of life. Within decades, Aurim was a dead land of volcanic dust, petrified trees, and ruined cities.

Over the years the desolate plains became home to nomadic tribes of hobgoblins. These feral and lawless creatures kill and devour any living thing they discover, except for the rare merchant trading valuable metal (cheap bronze) for useless junk scavenged from ruins (ancient artifacts). When Savanaech claimed Aurim, he burned many a settlement of hide tents to the ground, forcing entire tribes to flee or perish.

Their fellows did not mourn these tribes: death is held in contempt by the hobgoblins, for those who die are failures. There is no concept of family loyalty! Still, the chiefs reason that it is better to destroy the dracolich: dead heads hold no thoughts, dead hands hold no swords. If the hobgoblins were to band together against Savanaech, they might pose a threat, but the chiefs and Great Chiefs attempt to play each other against the Eternal King. "Enemies that kill each other are better enemies than enemies you kill yourself" is a popular philosophy.

Due to the supernatural shaping of the dragon lord, Aurim's cities and towns have risen up out of the ruins, and forests of dead, petrified trees have grown. The empire of Aurim is indeed returning to Taladas, though it is a mockery of its former glory. Undead nobles pace through darkened halls, draped in rotting finery; skeletal peasants till fields of cold ash underneath the pale golden moon; sleepless soldiers clutch spears and scimitars as they guard empty cities. Throughout Aurim, mindless skeletons mimic the activity of life, neither knowing nor caring that they are dead.

There are also living creatures in Old Aurim. In creating the draconian armies that attacked Ansalon during the War of the Lance, Erestem produced many failures - weak or twisted abominations that were abandoned in Aurim's deserts. These cruel creatures, calling themselves traag, bred true and inhabited the ruined cities. When Savanaech declared himself the Eternal King, the traag debased themselves before him and became his servants. They act as agents of the Eternal King in Aurim and other lands; some exceptional individuals have had the basics of Mysticism revealed to them, and command legions of Aurim's dead warriors.

The Rainward Isles lie across the Storm Sea from Aurim. Much of the southwest is covered by the Black Forests, an expanse of warped pine woodlands draped with grey-green moss that suffers from freakish, chemical-laden weather off the treacherous Storm Sea. The Storm Sea and Black Forests are home to strange, vicious monsters that resist the undead and draconian minions of Savanaech. It is

rumoured that othlorx dragons still hide in this region - violent, xenophobic green othlorx and eccentric, erratic black othlorx.

The humans, dwarves, and kender of the Rainward Isles were descendants from Old Aurim who survived the first Cataclysm. In those initial years of chaos, the people warred bitterly against each other whilst fighting to survive the weather and attacks by fantastic beasts. This lasted for a few decades; a wise dwarven chieftain named Aethelred the Squat eventually unified the disparate refugees into the People of the Isles.

The goddess Mislaxa returned to the People of the Isles in 21 AC, granting them hope in the Age of Despair, and protected them from the horrors of the Black Forests. Even after the Second Cataclysm, the People of the Isles use the power of Mysticism in the names of Mislaxa and Reorx.

However, other forces opposed the People of the Isles. The evil gods EreSTEM and Hiteh were denied worship by the dwarves, humans, and kender, and as revenge raised the evil spirits of dead warriors to continue the bloodshed of those early years following the Cataclysm. After the gods left Krynn in the Second Cataclysm, the People were defenseless against savage undead attacks until a young child discovered Mysticism. The Eternal King has brought these unquiet spirits under his claw, and they now enforce the dracolich's will in the Rainward Isles... though their eyes still show hatred toward the living.

The People of the Isles live in scattered villages along the eastern coast of the Rainward Isles. They have cleared areas of the rugged land to create pasture for goats and cattle, and small farms of grain and tubers. Inland, herds of wild centaurs run.

Humans and kender build snug houses of pine with sod roofs, and granaries on stilts to prevent infestation by vermin. Dwarves, however, build small subterranean communities in hillsides, with one face open to the air; they cannot dig any deeper due to the threat of occasional seismic activity.

Not all of the villages of the People are under Savage's rule, but many are. In these communities the normally cheerful People are subdued. Warbands of undead tax the villages heavily to feed the traag of Old Aurim, and those who resist the Eternal King vanish in the night. Sometimes they are later seen as one of the undead themselves.

Climate

Old Aurim lies in the path of foul winds and chemical storms from Hitehkel. Although the severity of these noxious gases has been reduced since the Second Cataclysm, stinging rain and electrical storms are typical Auric weather.

Further north the moisture-laden winds from the Storm Sea meet cooler sea breezes off the Urdile Ocean. This results in continual, bone-chilling rains and grey skies. This weather has given the Rainward Isles their name and makes them cold and damp even in summer. Weather in winter is more varied and harsh; cold grey skies can suddenly break into fierce storms from over the sea.

Trade

The undead and draconians of Aurim do not participate in trade, although the traag pilot pirate vessels across the treacherous Storm Sea, and undead patrols tax the People of the Isles heavily. The fugitive hobgoblin tribes raid the ruins of Aurim for artifacts, which they barter with foreign merchants for much coveted metal goods.

The People of the Isles mine copper and fine grade iron, and farm oats, apples, pears, plums, and berries. Hunters and trappers trade pelts of fox, otter, and elk. Those merchants who risk the weather and rocks of the Storm Sea and the wrath of Savage will profit greatly.

Current Happenings

There is a resistance movement against the Eternal King forming in the Rainward Isles. Those villages not under Savanaech's rule, in alliance with the centaur tribes, are fomenting plans to aid their countrymen in freeing themselves from undead oppression, with the help of courageous heroes. The People of the Isles have known about Mysticism for twelve years now, discovered by a very young Giliayne, and consider it to be a blessing from Reorx and Mislaxa. They have been introduced to the basics of Sorcery by gnomoi travellers, but are still suspicious of this "unnatural" power. Still, the People of the Isles will seize any weapon that can be used against the Eternal King.

Somewhere in Old Aurim is the legendary Field of Dragons, a hidden valley where ancient dragons once went to die. The floor of this Field is buried completely beneath the bones of these wyrms. In recent years Savanaech has made his lair here, constructing a ghastly palace out of dragon bones and commanding a legion of 1,001 ghouls and zombies to destroy any "foreigner to Aurim" (that is, living beings) who approach. Within that valley is rumoured to be the lost treasures of a thousand dead dragons; for that reason kender from the Rainward Isles and explorers from further afield seek this location. Increasingly, they do not return.

Savanaech has not yet attempted to reshape his realm outside of Aurim. But with renegade othlorx in the Black Forests and the white dragon lord Hoartongue attempting to expand his own realm in the north, the dracolich may soon decide to establish a firmer control over this disputed territory...

The Free Realms

Not all of Taladas exists under the control of dragon overlords. Many lands remain free from draconic control, or are home to dragons unable or unwilling to rule such a domain. Some of the Free Realms are powerful nations with the strength to stand against the dragon realms; others are minor lands, susceptible to invasion or war.

Baltch

Before the First Cataclysm, the people of Baltch were known for their architectural and engineering skills. It was from Baltch that came the master builders responsible for the Empire of Aurim's network of paved roads, vast monuments, arched bridges, and aqueducts. When Aurim was destroyed by the First Cataclysm, Baltch survived; however, the continental plate that supports southeastern Taladas buckled and subsided. The waters of the Urdile Ocean rushed in, separating Baltch from the mainland. Furthermore, the upland plain of Baltch had sunk to barely above sea level, and the towns of Baltch were in danger of being swept away by rising waters and hurricanes from the southeast.

The people of Baltch defended their new island by applying their engineering expertise to blunt the force of the ocean storms. The Baltchians constructed a complex system of dikes, canals, breakwaters, and levees called the Seawall. The need for trained engineers to design and maintain the Seawall has led to the establishment of a fascist regime led by a dictator known as the Master Engineer.

During the Grim Winter, Baltch was beset by a huge hurricane that swept in from the east and flooded miles of farmland, causing thousands of deaths. In the ensuing chaos of the Second Cataclysm, the Engineers ruling class struggled to maintain control over Baltch; the Master Engineer deprived ordinary people of all freedoms in order to rebuild the damaged Seawall. To no avail.

In 3 SC, a terrifying red wyrm flew into Baltch from the southeast. Calling himself Alaqueca (or Ashclaw), the dragon made his lair in Baltch's northern forest, burning away a barrens miles in diameter where he slept. The native othlorx dragons rose up in defiance, only to be slain by Alaqueca and their essences devoured. Whilst other Great Dragons such as Calyp'stohl and Onysablet continued on to Neron and even Ansalon, Alaqueca remained in Baltch, and prepared to shape the land to his liking. This was to result in the red dragon's death.

The Dragon Lord

Alaqueca (*red male ancient wyrm, defiant demeanor*) was a three-hundred-foot monster, with blood-red scales, eyes as green as poison, and a cry like the screams of the thousand humans he had murdered. However, Alaqueca never had the opportunity to create his own dragon realm; he was slain in 9 SC by the silver othlorx Huakikeos, with breath of liquid metal and spells of ice.

Huakikeos had come to Baltch in human form, seeking out evil and destroying it wherever it was found. Whilst the Engineers of Baltch were powerless against Alaqueca without the aid of magic, Huakikeos was clever enough and powerful enough to destroy the red wyrm outright. He remains on Baltch, protecting the human residents from evil wyrms and watching for the arrival of any more Great Dragons.

Huakikeos has not replaced Alaqueca as dragon lord, for he lacks knowledge of how to bend the land to his will, and is unwilling to commit the evil acts of other dragon lords. For now, Huakikeos masquerades as a human named Hakik the Cryomancer, and dwells in a tower of silver and ice on Baltch's southernmost tip.

Important Holdings

Neamoushek, Hakik's Tower, The University

Main Populace

Humans, half-elves (descended from ancient and forgotten Cha'asii slaves)

Personalities

Master Engineer Diones (*human middle-aged male, thorough demeanor; Champion*)

Zafires, Master of Predictions (*human adult male, observant demeanor; Adventurer*)

Grand Registrar Cleon (*human elder male, obsessive demeanor; Master*)

Hakik the Cryomancer (*silver male great wurm, stern demeanor*)

Description

Baltch is an island of swampy lowlands in the south and dank forests in the north. The reconstructed Seawall surround 95% of the Baltchian coastline; only at the port city of Neamoushek is there a gap, in the bay opening into the strait between Baltch and the Reed Delta.

Neamoushek is an engineering marvel of stone buildings and arches over a complex system of canals. These canals channel storm-water away from the settled areas of Baltch and into the bay, serving as drainage for the entire of lower Baltch. Neamoushek is also home to the Engineers, the ruling class of Baltch. This elite, which is almost entirely male, is trained at the University twenty-five miles away. Engineers are trained in architecture, assessment, engineering, geometry, law, mathematics, reading, rhetoric, and strategy. Engineers are more than just the builders of Baltch, they are naval commanders, clerks, judges, heralds, tax collectors, and ambassadors. The most powerful of the Engineers is the Master Engineer Diones, who staged an all-but-bloodless coup after the death of the red dragon. From the Great Registry in Neamoushek, Diones regulates and controls all aspects of Baltchian life.

Every citizen of Baltch has his details recorded in a five-year census, the results of which are stored in the Great Registry and updated frequently. Each Baltchian's place of residence, occupation, family, and property is recorded. The Engineers tax income and property owned, which officially goes to fund public works. In reality, taxation keeps any citizen from growing too influential.

Furthermore, each citizen is assigned to a work gang and required to work on the canals and dikes for twenty days a year. These work

corps were formed to maintain the protective Seawall. Each corps is responsible for a certain section of the Seawall. Commander of this corps is a position of great honour.

The majority of all Baltchians live in the settled south, growing cotton and rice, or fishing from the warm seas. The south has been cleared over the centuries, and is a flatland of fertile meadows, lakes and canals. Common sites in southern Baltch are huge stone windmills, designed by the Engineers to harness the constant southeasterly winds to thresh grain and pump water.

On the other hand, the north of Baltch is covered by a swampy, mossy forest; this region has become wilder and jungle-like since the green dragon Calyp'stohl established her realm across the strait in the Reed Delta. Peasants tell stories around the hearth about monsters from the Grim Winter still dwelling in the dark woods; it has become rare for new land to be cleared. Somewhere within the forest lies the barrens where Alaqueca once dwelt; his corpse is thought to remain there, along with his great treasures.

Although the dragon overlord Alaqueca was killed over twenty years ago, the Engineers are still far weaker now than before the Second Cataclysm. The strong navy of Baltch was laid waste by the Grim Winter and later attacks by Calyp'stohl, Alaqueca and Onysablet. Although the Engineers of Baltch are masters of ship design, they no longer dare to set up villages in Neron to provide the timber; all settlements previously established have disappeared. The materials for Baltch's ships must be obtained from scant local resources.

Furthermore, the Engineers are bereft of the new magic of this Age. Prior to the Second Cataclysm, they had the assistance of an order of wizards called the Recorders. These were men trained in special universities to use their magical arts to advise the Engineers. After the three moons vanished, the Recorders failed to rediscover their lost powers, and were officially disbanded by Diones in 16 SC.

Climate

Baltch experiences warm temperatures throughout the year, with constant winds from the southeast. Baltch's year-long growing season is only interrupted by summer's frequent hurricanes. In recent years, the southern shores of Baltch have experienced thick mists on occasion; locals mutter that this is some magic of Hakik the Cryomancer in his lonely tower of silver and ice.

Trade

The few remaining ships of Balch's navy are extremely capable, and travel far and wide. Baltch has sent ambassadors to Thenol, the Fisheries, Kristophan, and the New League; traders take Baltchian rice and cotton to the Fisheries and free villages in the Rainward Isles. They buy silks from Thenol, copper and iron from the Rainward Isles, and mysterious artifacts from the hobgoblins of Old Aurim. Some sailors still land in Neron for rare timbers and spices, risking the ire of the dragon overlord. The sailors of Baltch travel from

land to land, forming the only contact between some of the disparate peoples of Taladas. If the bureaucracy of Baltch were to collapse, this vital link might be broken.

Current Happenings

For years there has been no magic in Baltch, save for the mysterious Cryomancer; however, that is changing. Sailors who have been to the Rainward Isles have returned with stories of Mysticism; who can say that there are not mystics among the peasants right now, secretly opposing the oppressive Engineers?

Furthermore, the Grand Registrar Cleon, who was once a wizard, has received word of the new sorcery taught at the Obsidian Tower. Cleon has dreams of recreating the Recorders, and has sent promising students to the Obsidian Tower to learn of the new magic. He eagerly awaits their results; indeed, they may already have returned...

Currently, Baltch is considered a free realm; Ashclaw is dead, and Calyp'stohl doesn't yet dare to oppose the silver othlorx Huakikeos. Nor will Huakikeos allow himself to perform the vile rituals necessary to become a dragon overlord himself. *However*, there does exist a dragon lord who has apparently gained his position through fair means, not foul - Lumiere the Bronze. Why Huakikeos does not also do so is a mystery...

Basalt Columns of the Gnomes

On the inward arc of the Ring Mountains, the sloping peaks give way to jutting columns of stone. Formed when large masses of basalt were slowly thrust up from below by tremendous pressure, the stone hardened into crystal columns. Living among the twisted paths of the columns is the *Bilogastanirachgnomius*, a branch of the more numerous gnomes of Hitehkel. They live quietly in the region that forms a border between Hitehkel and the Shining Lands, designing, testing, fabricating, and redesigning their intricate inventions. Bilo devices are renowned for their small size and stunning intricacy.

The hobgoblins of Old Aurim have always been a threat to the Eastern Marches of the Basalt Columns, having one invaded by force during the war of 299 - 304 AC. With the rise of the Eternal King of Old Aurim, the hobgoblins have been driven out of their traditional homes, and a few tribes have settled in the Columns area. This has led to increased tensions and occasional skirmishes between the gnomes and the hobgoblins in the Eastern Marches.

Important Holdings

Bilodirachtalchder
Ilmachtethtalchder ("Tower of Ghosts")
Kaladotalchder
Provoerhoosktalchder ("Warden's Tower")

Main Populace

Gnomes, Hobgoblins

Personalities

Burgomeister Domonicus Thelvaraen (*gnomoi elder male, ponderous demeanor; Master*)

Grand Emperor Narivin Ostholalia (*minoi adult female, ambitious demeanor; Master*)

Gesedstaen, Warden of the Eastern Marches (*gnomoi adult male, stubborn demeanor; Adventurer*)

Masud the Hateful (*blue female very old othlorx, fearsome demeanor*)

Description

The basalt columns are roughly hexagonal in shape, and are weathered and cracked from centuries of exposure and the storms of the Grim Winter. Some columns are small, no taller than ten or twenty feet, whilst others tower a thousand feet into the air. These largest columns are supported all around by smaller columns that brace and buttressing them. The columns lean at all angles, varying from a perilous tilt to straight and true. Narrow canyons and crevasses, their floors strewn with broken rock, separate the columns. Secret trails exist between each, but there are many dead ends and cul-de-sacs.

The Bilo nation is composed of their ten towns, each with a population of about one thousand gnomes. Each town is built around a central pillar, a huge basalt tower that rises above the surrounding terrain. This tower is honeycombed with tunnels, chambers, granaries, armouries, council rooms, and barracks. Gnomes do not live in the tower, but build small homes in its shadow. A defensive wall surrounds these; should the wall fall to attackers, the gnomes retreat into the tower to wait out the siege.

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 Emperor, 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 Emperor 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 Emperor.

The gnomes have no standing army, but in times of war everyone serves in the militia to the best of his or her ability. Entire towns are mobilised into defensive forces of formidable strength. Even should a town fall to raiders, the gnomes attempt to reclaim it and resettle. Only two Bilo towns have fallen and not been restored: Provoerhoosktalchder ("Warden's Tower"), was the easternmost defense against the hobgoblins of Aurim, and was captured by them; and Iilmachtothtalchder ("Tower of Ghosts"), which was seized by a dragon named Masud the Hateful to raise her brood.

Climate

Spring arrives quickly and lasts long, warming the ground and gradually falling into summer. Vegetation is limited to shrubs and grasses that can grow in the rocky canyons, but thrives in the temperate weather; the gnomes manage to farm root vegetables and small fruit trees. Winter arrives quickly with chilling storms, and remains cold and grey for many months. Flooding is an occasional problem.

Trade

The Bilo gnomes form an important trade link with other parts of Taladas. They have some contact with the nomads of Northern Hosk, the New League, and the gnomes of the Spire Mountains, but their most important trading partners are the Scorned Dwarves dwelling deep beneath the Ring Mountains.

Routes between the Bilo towns and the dragon realm of Old Aurim have opened up in recent years. Whilst initially distrustful of the draconians, the open-minded gnomes now exchange forged tools and arms for artifacts and ancient records from Old Aurim's ruins. The draconians are welcomed for driving hobgoblin tribes away from Bilo lands.

Current Happenings

The Warden is gathering a company of gnomes to travel as ambassadors to Old Aurim. It is hoped that an alliance between the gnomes and the draconians will defeat their common hobgoblin enemy, allowing the gnomes to retake the Warden's Tower. The draconians seem receptive to this idea.

The Burgher of Kaladotalchder, a town close to the lower slopes of the Ring Mountains in the west, commissioned a joint project with the Nylgai Hadirnoe dwarves over fifty years ago. The Bilo and the Nylgai planned to delve a series of stairs and halls connecting Kaladotalchder with the Land Below the Mountains; it has recently been completed, creating a secret trade passage that the Burgher intends to make his town wealthy with.

The gnomes are on good terms with the sorcerers of the Ring Mountains, and send many promising young intellectuals to the Obsidian Tower. An iconoclastic minoi named Savad has returned with an ambitious scheme to create an army of clockwork automatons that can be "enhanced" with the new magic. Already seven buildings have been damaged by dangerous (but promising!) prototypes.

The Black Forests

When the first Cataclysm struck, parts of Taladas sank beneath the oceans' waters, creating the Tiderun and reshaping the Indanalís and Storm Seas. Other lands were thrust up from beneath the old Indanalís Sea; one such region was the Black Forests. These warped and shadowy woods 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.

The history of this region is short. Before the first Cataclysm, over half of the Black Forests were on the bottom of the Indanalis Sea, and the rest were gently rolling farmland or scattered woodlands. The woodlands expanded within a century of the Cataclysm to cover all of the land that was able to support them, forming a thick forest warped by the pollution of Hitehkel. Those few villages that were founded by refugees from shattered Aurim were swallowed up by the trees and vanished. There were no further settlers, and the Black Forests became a mysterious *terra nullius*.

In the Age of Mortals, the sanctity of the Black Forests has been violated. Hobgoblin tribes have fled south from Old Aurim, chased by the undead fury of the Eternal King; many have settled by the edges of the forest. Further in, xenophobic green othlorx dragons hid during the Dragon Purge, and now continue to avoid death at the jaws of the Eternal King. Black othlorx dragons swim the deep rivers and lakes of the forests, lost in their delusional insanity.

In 19 SC, leaders of the Cult of Hiteh had a vision of a forgotten city of magic, lying in the shadow of a mountain range and surrounded by forests. They saw this as the omen of a discovery that would herald the ascendancy of the Cult over Taladas. In the following three years, the Cult explored the Black Forests and discovered the ruined city of this vision, and began to slowly rebuild it. Although the Black Forests are still untamed and unknown, the time may come when blood is spilt over this forgotten land.

Important Holdings

Kemoushek

Main Populace

Hobgoblins, othlorx dragons, humans, dreamshadows, dreamwraiths

Personalities

Seliin Talios (*female adult human, purposeful demeanor; Master*)
Hurbenka (*male adult hobgoblin, tyrannical demeanor; Adventurer*)

Description

The Black Forests are an expanse of warped woods, where dark-leafed evergreens are draped with grey-green mosses. The twisting trees rise high above the forest floor, and completely block the sun with their dense foliage. Underneath, the ground is bare of undergrowth except by the banks of a river, where the break in the foliage allows a thick wall of shrubbery to grow in the sun. Stark white or pale green mushrooms grow profusely in the dim interior; many of these are poisonous to any creature not native to the forests. There are no landmarks except the wild, rushing rivers and towering trees whose twisted, diseased trunks may bend an iron axe. It is very possible to get lost and die of hunger or thirst if one does not follow the raging rivers. This land is far enough from Hitehkel to support plant and animal life, yet close enough to be twisted and warped by the strange gases that are blown from the Burning Sea.

The woods are filled with strange creatures, such as manticores, owlbears, giant deer, swarms of flying ants, griffins, and displacer beasts. These beasts have been isolated from the rest of Taladas for centuries by the wastes of Old Aurim. The draconian minions of Aurim's Eternal King occasionally venture into the Black Forests, seeking to capture or kill these creatures for sport, but otherwise they roam freely, whereas their kind are considered mythical elsewhere in Krynn.

The Cult of Hiteh has established one of its greatest fortresses deep within these woodlands. Named Kemoushek, the ruined city is found on the banks of a large lake in the eastern Black Forests. This was a city of Aurim once known for its fabulous arcane experiments, abandoned and left to ruin during the years of Hiteh's Night. But when the human inhabitants left, the city was not truly empty; it became home to the dreaming dead and shadows that whispered to themselves. Of the few travelers who came to the Black Forests, none ever returned to speak of this darkened city; those who had discovered it disappeared, perhaps becoming one of the lonely shadows.

Kemoushek is a city of crumbling stone towers and open courtyards overgrown with grasses and shrubbery. The Cultists of Hiteh that live within the city of Kemoushek do their best to suppress the chaotic magic of this land. They have found that both Spectramancy and Spiritualism are successful in returning a semblance of normalcy; at great effort, a section of Kemoushek has been made livable, and some cultists carry golden rods that bear a long-term enchantment to drive away the shadow magic. Some six hundred cultists live in the rebuilt section of Kemoushek, unearthing ancient lore and training in the martial arts.

The aura of the city spreads over an area ten miles in diameter. Within this aura, illusions spring from the mind and become solid, and nothingness can congeal into spirits that resemble people whom the traveler has met before. The real and unreal exist side by side here, and time has little meaning. Distances become completely arbitrary, and distort in such a way that escape from the area becomes near impossible.

Nothingness has a name in the Black Forests: *dreamshadows* and *dream-wraiths*. These creatures are nothing but illusion, but act as though they were real. Sustained by the shadow magic of the woods, dreamshadows go about their business as though they were living beings. Dreamwraiths, on the other hand, maliciously attack any living beings they meet. For now, these beings act out the lives of Kemoushek's original inhabitants, long dead since the Cataclysm. There may be more like them elsewhere in the Black Forests.

Climate

The subtropical southern regions of the Black Forests, where the hobgoblin refugees have fled, rarely suffers from the cold of a true winter, although the coastline is battered by gale-force winds and rain during the four coolest months of the year. Most of the Black Forests, however, are more temperate. The thick foliage keeps the

winds of the Storm Sea out, but also blocks the sun's rays, making the woodlands still and cool for most of the year. During winter frost may form during the night, and travelers become sick as the chill slowly sets in.

The northernmost regions of the Black Forests experience severe chill and light snows for about half of the year; ice floats south out of the polar sea during the coldest months. This region has been suffering colder winters every year for the last decade, perhaps due to the influence of Hoartongue the Mute, white dragon lord of the icy Panak Desert. There are few inhabitants of the forests this far north, however.

Trade

There is no appreciable trade going into or out of the Black Forests. The hobgoblins have no contact with the rest of Taladas, and have been forced to learn how to survive on their wits in this new land. On the other hand, the residents of Kemoushek produce their own goods or receive them from Cultists of Hiteh in Baltch and the Rainward Isles.

Current Happenings

The hobgoblin refugees in the southern Black Forests have settled into five villages that have proven to be self-sustaining; although many hobgoblins have died discovering the dangers of this land, the survivors have learned to survive and will eventually grow in strength. The tribal chieftains have declared their sovereignty over the forests, and are squabbling over the best way to exploit this land. They have no idea of the real danger posed to them by the beasts and dragons of the deeper forests.

Blackwater Glade

An immense swamp known as 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.

After the Grim Winter, many of those Othlorx dragons that were not killed or did not claim a dragon realm fled to Blackwater Glade to take refuge. Thus, brave Thenolite knights who seek to make a name for themselves by hunting down and killing one of these evil reptiles frequently arrange an expedition into Blackwater Glade, expecting adventure and glorious success. Most return months later, half-dead with fever, without even a glimpse of a dragon. Others do not return at all.

Important Holdings

Blackwater Delta, Trillium River

Main Populace

Bakali, Othlorx dragons, humans

Personalities

Faldan (*human adult male, gruff demeanor; Adventurer*)

Chief Iblirack (*bakali adult male, terrifying demeanor; Champion*)

Malar'esta (*green mature adult dragon, xenophobic demeanor*)

Description

Only the jungles of Neron, haunted by monsters of Chaos since the Grim Winter, are a greater or more deadly wilderness than Blackwater Glade. Alligators and water snakes are the simplest dangers that a traveller might face in these swamps. Sluggish rivers warmed by thermal springs feed algae-covered lakes, and shallow-rooted cypress trees hung with moss cling to the few clumps of ground above water level. Huge insects buzz between the boughs only to be trapped by giant spiders or enormous toads and frogs. Strange creatures hoot and howl at night, leaping from branch to branch, their eyes glowing dully in the moonlight. Along the coast, mangroves grow in saltwater marsh and swamp, and bronze Othlorx bask on remote shores.

Deep within the glade are the villages of the bakali lizard-folk. These villages consist of twenty to thirty individuals, and are usually built on dry land, enclosed by a palisade of woven reeds, branches, or even skeletons. The bakali never use boards or logs, lacking the tools to fell the trees and shape them. The palisades are meant to discourage attacks by wild animals, and are easily pulled down by humans. Some villages are built with homes dug into the sides of a steep riverbank; the entrances are broad but low, and slope downwards almost to the water line.

Several chambers are dug out for storage, and the sleeping chamber is dug half below the water line, creating a muddy sleeping pit. Dried reeds are pushed through to the surface to allow air into the burrow. Other villages are built on a low hummock, and are a collection of simple reed huts about four feet in height. The huts are built in a rough circle around the nesting area, which is marked by a fetish-covered post. Inside the huts are a mud pit for sleeping, and a dry area to store food and possessions.

Deeper into the swamps there are places that few if any humans have ever seen, and where even the bakali do not go. Partially submerged ruins can be found in the thickest regions of the swamps, ancient stone buildings and low hills into which lead dark tunnels. These ruins are the sole remnants of ancient bakali cities, abandoned long before the forging of the Greycem for reasons that even the bakali do not remember. The lizardfolk rarely explore these ruins today - they are considered taboo, and are often inhabited by evil spirits that the bakali name "saraki." Restless undead do indeed inhabit some of these ruins, as well as green, black, and bronze othlorx, hidden away from the wrath of the more powerful

dragon lords. The wizard Amrocar of Kristophan examined these ruins in 270 AC, and concluded that the ancient Bakali Empire must have been powerful and rich, with many powerful users of magic. Amrocar's study lies forgotten in the Imperial Libraries of Kristophan.

Climate

Blackwater Glade is a sweltering, insect-infested place. There are two seasons in Blackwater Glade - the wet season, and the monsoons. During the wet season, the heat and humidity are oppressive and the air hangs still and heavy over the swamps, stifling any humans whom might brave swamp sickness to travel there. During the monsoons, storms blow in from the southern Windless Ocean, battering the coastline with wind and rain, and causing floods along the coast and throughout the delta. Travel during monsoon season is impossible for anyone other than the bakali.

Trade

A close-knit group of humans called the Swampers live at the very edge of Blackwater Glade. These frontiersmen serve as guides in the glade, hunting alligators, giant toads and swamp cats in canoes and flat-bottomed boats. Although strictly speaking the Swampers are Thenolite, they pay no taxes and remain fiercely independent. Even the Swampers will not venture into the deeper swamps without extraordinary reasons, so trade with the bakali is rare.

Current Happenings

It is possible that a new threat to Taladas may be forming within one of the ancient bakali cities. A green dragon named Malar'esta has made his home within one of the cities. Malar'esta remembers tales of the first two dragon wars, when armies of bakali were led by the mighty chromatic dragons in an attempt to conquer Krynn. This green hid in Blackwater Glade because he was not powerful enough to protect himself from the hunger of Calyp'stohl or the anger of Lumiere; but if he were to gain the support of the bakali people, then Blackwater Glade might become a new dragon realm in Taladas.

The Confederation of Armach

Resting in the broad valleys south and west of Southern Hosk's New Mountains is the small country of Amarch, ruled by the Silvanaes-Quarti, lost Silvanesti elves from Ansalon. When the elven prince Kith-Kanan led his followers to form the new elven nation of Qualinesti, some of the elven ships were blown off course and driven to Taladas by storms. With the aid of an adrift fisherman rescued from the sea, the elves managed to find their way through the treacherous Outer Shoals to find safe harbour in the Bay of Hoor. Asking the blessing of the nature spirits, the elves named the area Armach ("Dry Land").

The Silvanaes were accustomed to the grand cultures of Ansalon and were amazed at what they considered the primitive nature of the native barbarians. The Silvanaes initially saw the natives as evil

and dangerous, and began carving out a homeland. The elves attempted to recreate a new nation of Silvanesti, "The Land Not To Be Forgotten." At first they were successful at driving the human tribes away, but as their land expanded, the borders became more difficult to defend. The elves had superior training and equipment, but faced far greater numbers, and so elven expansion came to a halt.

The superior culture of the Silvanaes gradually spread to the other tribes of the Hoor region. Tribal leaders who were interested in the elvish arts of war made alliances with the Silvanaes, and it was not long before other aspects of elvish culture began to have influence. As a result of this process, the Confederation of Armach was created by treaties of alliances between the Silvanaes-Quarti and the 16 tribes that are found on their borders.

The **First Edicts** are a set of four laws that the elves wrote into the Charter of Confederation. They 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 First Edicts are:

ⓧ No one other than a Silvanaes elf may enter the land of Armach-Nesti

ⓧ Intermarriage between the Silvanaes and *heerikil* is forbidden

ⓧ If an elf has secured the permission of the Prince, he may seize the property of any *heerikil*

ⓧ No *heerikil* can be captain of a ship that sails beyond the Outer Shoals, nor command a force of troops from two different nations.

Only the Silvanaes can lead an army with troops from all of Armach.

These laws keep the elven homeland "pure" and prevent non-elves from becoming too powerful. Thus the Silvanaes control all of the Confederation of Armach. The Confederation is a collection of independent governments that meet to settle disputes and to act on issues that threaten them all.

Such an issue was the war between the Confederation and Thenol in 325 AC. The king of a southern principality, Vesterlund, attempted to increase his holdings by pushing across the lightly defended border into Thenol. This quickly drew the attention of Thenol's Bishop Trandamere to the rich farmlands of Armach. The Confederation issued a call to arms, and each kingdom provided soldiers to defend the border, but these were not enough to hold back Thenol's Companies, fanatics of Hith, and undead minions.

It was only when Thenol advanced upon the borders of the Minotaur League that Armach was saved from doom. Battles against the League quickly demanded Companies from the Armach border, and Thenol's forces became stretched. Armach regained its old borders at great cost, although the exhausted Companies of Thenol remained fortified on the other side.

During the chaos of the Grim Winter, the priests of Hith lost control over their undead minions, and the forests of Armach became infested with wild ghouls and ghosts. Not all of these insane dead have gone to their rest in the Age of Mortals. Furthermore, other dangers threaten the Confederation in the Fifth Age. A large red othlorx lairs somewhere in the New Mountains between Armach and

Highvale. The Cult of Hiteh has infiltrated the human tribes. Dimernesti sea elven refugees gather on the Hoor coast, demanding rights of citizenship. The Silvanaes-Quarti are taking measures they'd never before considered, in their grim determination to maintain the purity of their lands.

Important Holdings

Armach-Nesti, Bok, Couillard, Denia, the Himden Mountains, Hoorbay, Ilvar, Kadwar, Marakein, Mittle, Noblitt, Obas, Sampica, Steimel, Tallmark, Vestlund, the Volker Mountains, and Zendas.

Main Populace

Silvanaes elves, humans, kender, minoi gnomes, centaurs

Personalities

Princess Thalaniya of Armach-Nesti (*elven adult female, suspicious demeanor; Adventurer*)

Description

Armach is a land of broad valleys, warm forests, and a treacherous rocky coastline. Sixteen other kingdoms that provide a protective zone between the elves and Thenol surround the region inhabited by the Silvanaes elves. Thirteen of these kingdoms are inhabited by human tribes; one by dissident Marak kender; and one by centaurs. Finally, the kingdom of Kadwar was founded by minoi gnomes who were left behind by their clan, who travelled to Ansalon during the Age of Dreams.

Independent from the kingdoms of the Confederation is the cosmopolitan city of Bok, near the border of Armach-Nesti. Bok hosts Ambassadors from each kingdom of the Confederation, as well as diplomats from Thenol, Kristophan, Highvale, the New League, and Baltch. The Cabinet of Bok handles the day-to-day business of the Confederation, but two times each year the full Council of the Confederation meets to decide upon major matters. There are five members of the Cabinet - the Chancellor of Nations, Steward of the Treasury, Grand Knight of the Realm, First Justicar, and the Prince of Armach-Nesti. All but the Prince (currently Princess Thalaniya) are appointed by the Council, for an indefinite term of office.

The Prince is the hereditary leader of the elven kingdom of Armach-Nesti, a jealously guarded land nestled between the New Mountains and the Bay of Hoor. The border of Armach-Nesti is fiercely guarded by elven patrols, and a maze of enchanted paths lie just within the borders to imprison the unwary. Any heerikil who intrudes upon Armach-Nesti is captured and brought before the Knight-Protector of the Silvanaes. Punishment is usually death.

Within the elven homeland are glades of towering trees, flower-filled meadows, deep woodlands, and the capital, New Silvanost. This town is a jumble of forlorn towers and palaces, which the elves built in an attempt to recapture the glory of their ancient capital in Silvanesti. They failed, and few elves now live here - only the Armach government and those elves who cling to the past.

Little effort is made to maintain New Silvanost, and the buildings have become overgrown with vines, flowers, and shrubbery.

There are no other villages or towns in Armach-Nesti, for elven homes are scattered throughout this land. Each has been cunningly fashioned to be concealed by the natural beauty of Armach-Nesti. Only those areas that were once human villages are shunned by the elves; the blighted fields and overgrown stone foundations are reminders of an evil time in Armach's history - the genocide of entire human tribes. Unavenged spirits are said to haunt these mounds.

Climate

Armach is warm throughout most of the year and experiences mild rains, mostly in winter and spring. Weather in the coastal areas is more severe, and sailors not familiar with the treacherous reefs can find themselves run aground or even blown against the cliffs of the Banks of Hoor.

Trade

The elves of Armach maintain a large fleet that engages in trade with other lands as far away as the Spine of Taladas to the southwest. Merchants also travel to the Confederation from elsewhere, trading either in Bok or the lesser kingdoms. No traders enter Armach-Nesti itself; wagons approach the border and are unloaded for elven bearers to carry the goods away. Trade by sea is brought to small islands in the Bay of Hoor, and shipped into Armach-Nesti by elven sailors. Outsiders, even those of elvish blood, are never allowed into Armach-Nesti.

Current Happenings

Dragon turtle attacks upon the Dimernesti communities of the Outer Shoals have created an influx of sea elven refugees in the Bay of Hoor. Some of the Dimernesti have found work as sailors or salvagers, but there are 600 sea elves in the bay without homes or a means of support. The Dimernesti were Silvanaes who adapted to the sea thousands of years ago, and they now demand sanctuary in Armach-Nesti. However, the Princess of Armach-Nesti has declared them *heerikil*, and will not allow them to enter the elven homeland.

With hungry ghouls and ghosts haunting the southern woodlands, these kingdoms are suffering from undead predation upon their tribes. Ambassadors of the southern tribes cry daily for elven aid against the undead. Unfortunately, the elves have responded by strengthening the barriers of Armach-Nesti with griffins and mystics. The sanctity of the elven homeland is paramount to the Silvanaes, and cries for succor fall upon deaf ears.

The Fisheries

From the Age of Dreams, Neron was a vast, untracked wilderness that spread across the south of the Taladan continent. However, the cataclysm of Hiteh's Night tore huge fissures through the swampy

plain that divided Neron from Southern Hosk, flooding great tracts of land with water from the Windless Ocean. The remaining islands that were formed became known as the Fisheries.

The Fisheries are a cluster of subtropical islands that lie just above sea level. 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 forty feet in length.

The Fisheries are dominated by a tribe of humans named the Payan Mako, who are the de facto rulers, despite possessing no real government, by merit of being more populous than the other human or hobgoblin tribes. However, their control is not uncontested. In 320 AC, a secret society of EreSTEM cultists began attracting followers to its dark cause. Calling themselves the Shark Men, these cultists slowly infiltrated and subjugated smaller human villages through terror tactics. The Shark Men met strong resistance only when they challenged the authority of the Payan Mako.

But the Shark Men were soon to receive assistance from other worshippers of EreSTEM. There is some evidence that a "tall, pale man of cruelty and steel" visited the Fisheries at some time between 370 and 380 AC; this may have been Ariakan of Ansalon, founder of that continent's Knights of Takhisis. Whether this is true or not, it is certain that a ship bearing the Knights of Takhisis landed on a small island of the Fisheries in 379 AC. These foreigners established a fort named New Jelek and allied with the Shark Men, giving them steel weapons, shock troops, and magical spells.

Most of the knights of Takhisis withdrew in 382 AC, preparing to join an ambitious campaign in Ansalon. The Knighthood has suffered a loss of power in the Fifth Age, and has too many problems in Ansalon to worry about the Fisheries; however, a handful of aging Knights remain. With their help, the Shark Men have gained enough of an advantage to seriously threaten the Fisheries and begin spreading into Blackwater Glade and Neron. The Payan Mako continue to resist the Shark Men, and have chosen an inventive weapon in their struggle. They have created a dragon lord.

The Dragon Lord

Endotanga (*large green wicker dragon, inanimate demeanor*) is a rumour that the Payan Mako chiefs invented to make the Shark Men wary of encroaching any further on Payan villages. Based on an old legend, the chiefs publicly declared allegiance to the mighty green dragon, Endotanga. They have even constructed a large wicker simulacrum of this mythical dragon lord, hidden within the jungles of Syldar, and allowed tribesmen to approach (not too close!) and offer sacrifices. So far, this ruse has worked; the superstitious Shark Men have not entered "Endotanga's Realm." Naturally, those Payan Mako not in the know are terrified of the wyrm, but the chiefs consider that an acceptable price for freedom.

Important Holdings

New Jelek, Syldar

Main Populace

Humans, goblins, hobgoblins, elves

Personalities

Chief Fulru'ei (*human adult male, sensible demeanor; Adventurer*)

Priest-Leader Meiruko (*human adult male, superstitious demeanor; Master*)

Commander Laene Uth Habon (*human elder female, realistic demeanor; Master*)

Description

The islands of the Fisheries are barely above sea level, and are covered by lush jungle. A mixture of dry land and bog, these jungles are filled with brilliant orchids, choking vines, and tropical lilies that are much beloved of the handful of remaining Knights. The trees conceal poisonous serpents, beautifully coloured birds of paradise, warthogs, and swarms of insects. Deadlier creatures include crocodiles, leopards, and young black or blue othlorx. The coastal areas are thick mangrove swamps with an occasional silty beach.

Scattered throughout the islands are small villages of humans, goblins, and hobgoblins. These villages survive by fishing the fertile channels, with varying levels of skill. Further inland are isolated villages of cha'asii wild elves; these capricious beings have little contact with outsiders, and are known only by legend.

The typical village is a cluster of houses on a low rise of land, close to the beach. Each house is constructed of whatever timbers are close at hand, and thatched with palm leaves. Houses are set on six-foot-tall posts that are studded with sharp bits of shell; these posts protect from high water and nocturnal snakes and rats. A simple pole ladder is used to enter.

The largest island of the Fisheries is named Syldar; the Payan Mako control fishing waters, settlements, and parts of Syldar's jungles. Smaller islands are not even named. An exception is the isle of New Jelek in the southwestern reach; the Knights of Takhisis cleared a large part of this island and built an Ansalonian-style fort, surrounded by a wooden palisade. New Jelek is a stronghold of the Shark Men.

Climate

None of the islands in the Fisheries ever experiences a true winter; monsoonal rains create a wet season during which plying the channels is more dangerous. Summer brings broiling temperatures and oppressive humidity that is barely alleviated by infrequent showers.

Trade

Strangers who enter villages in the Fisheries must be careful not to antagonise the natives, lest they prompt an attack from fiercely protective tribesmen. Entering a village in large numbers,

without warning, or while carrying weapons are all likely to upset the villagers. Wise traders anchor their ships offshore and enter the lagoon of a village in a small boat, to wait for the tribal canoes that will paddle out to meet them. In this way, it is possible to establish friendly relations.

Current Happenings

The Shark Men have begun to establish settlements upon the southern coastline of Blackwater Glade and even Thenol. Their influence may soon extend beyond the Fisheries alone.

Laene Uth Habon, a Knight of the Skull, has been dabbling in vile rituals intended to restore the unholy powers lost to her since the Grim Winter. She claims that the Vision of Takhisis, which abandoned her for some years, has returned. Commander Uth Habon has been requesting that the Shark Men bring bodies of the dead to New Jelek for the last year or so. The Shark Men whisper that she is eating their spirits to unnaturally prolong her own life.

Calyp'stohl, the dragon lord of Neron, has sent yaggol and hobgoblin spies from her realm to the Fisheries. Her spies have just brought her word of an unknown dragon lord, Endotanga, who may pose a threat to her. Calyp'stohl has learned the ancient legends of this cruel and cunning dragon, and may well believe that he has returned as a power in the Fifth Age. What the paranoid wyrm will do about this perceived threat remains to be seen.

The Great Reed Delta

See "Calyp'stohl the Mad" under **Dragon Realms**.

Highvale

See "Lumiere the Mourning Lord" under **Dragon Realms**.

Hitehkel

See "Chaemaphos" under **Dragon Realms**.

The Hulder Realm

Lying between the New League and the Kingdom of Thenol lies a thick forest that has resisted all attempts by these two powers to penetrate it. In these woods, shadowy forms slip through the trees to strike suddenly and secretly at any humans or minotaurs audacious enough to enter in force. Even after the gods left Krynn and the three moons of magic disappeared, traces of ancient fey magic remain. A man may nap in a forest glade dreaming of a night in the company of hidden elves, only to awaken and find that a decade has passed. Another may profane the ancient powers of these sacred woods, only to lose the memory of his own life. A third may foolishly

enter the forests whilst the pale golden moon is full, only to lose his wits forever.

This deep, dark forest is home to the hulderfolk, ancient elves who do not freely reveal themselves to other races. They live as the elves did over three thousand years ago, and remain the most mysterious of peoples.

The Dragon Lord

Kief is not a dragon lord as most mortals in Krynn would understand it. She has not created a bond with her realm, or attempt to control it in any way. Rather, she is a guardian of the ethereal pathways that can be found in the Hulder Realm. However, the hulderfolk have little knowledge of the dragon lords, and erroneously refer to her as one such being.

Kief (*female ethereal adult dragon, enigmatic demeanor*) dwells in a pocket realm that the hulderfolk name Summerhome, and protects it from harm. She is an extremely rare creature known as an ethereal dragon, and resembles a white dragon in her bodylines, although with a blurred, mist-shrouded form. She appears rather ghost-like to most observers. Kief has control over the Sorcerous school of Aeromancy, Spectramancy and Summoning, and the Mystical sphere of Mentalism. She has the ability to combine Sorcery and Mentalism within one spell, as described in the *Heroes of Hope* dramatic supplement.

Kief is an enigmatic, reserved figure. She has a dry sense of humour, and is willing to serve kind-hearted beings if she perceives a legitimate reason to do so. Kief will not help strangers out of hand, but must be convinced to do so by the urgency and compelling nature of their pleas. She is knowledgeable about the history of the hulderfolk, the pocket dimension of Summerhome, and the precise locations of gateways that pierce the shifting mists between Taladas and Summerhome. The hulderfolk fear and respect Kief, and generally avoid her as much as possible.

Important Holdings

Summerhome

Main Populace

Hulderfolk elves, sylvan creatures, humans (changelings)

Personalities

King Hallik (*hulderfolk male adult, capricious demeanor; Adventurer*)

Sorcerer Bar'lind (*hulderfolk male elder, cautious demeanor; Master*)

Orelan (*human young male, shrewd demeanor; Novice*)

Calna the Tell-Woman (*human adult female, influential demeanor; Adventurer*)

Description

The Hulderfolk are "hidden people" in one of the ancient Taladan tongues, and have retreated to these deep forests as part of their tradition of shunning contact with other races. Long ago, a kingdom of elves took offense at some forgotten act of another race, most likely the humans, and chose to forgo all contact with the rest of the world. For a long time the elves disappeared from the world, and were not recorded in the histories of humanity. Although other elves have forgotten the decision to shun all contact with humans, the hulderfolk continue to do so, thousands of years later.

As humans have settled closer and closer to the hulderfolk, the code of shunning has been harder to maintain. The hulderfolk attempt to remain unseen by human eyes, and use trickery to drive humans away should they settle too near. Still, even this is not enough to prevent the humans from accidentally stumbling upon a hulderfolk village. For this reason, all of the hulderfolk have chosen to dwell in an invisible hulder city named Summerhome.

The location of Summerhome is uncertain, although it lies somewhere in the mysterious dimension known as the Grey. The main passage to Summerhome is in an area of forested hills. Here, the fabric of this dimension stretches thin, blending and overlapping with a pocket dimension inhabited by hulderfolk in an idyllic sylvan environment. The boundaries of Summerhome blur where planar energies shift and bend. This has the effect of creating hazy or fog-filled border regions where objects seem to blur and run together. In fact, the very air here glows with an otherworldly radiance. Terrain traversed just moments before can suddenly become unfamiliar, although it will seem similar to its previous form. Oak trees may seem to change position and shape, but they will remain oak trees in roughly the same number as a moment before. Time also runs differently in Summerhome; a human may spend one night in this dimension and exit to find that months or even years have passed. This does not trouble the long-lived elves, of course, who view time in a different way to humans.

Hulderfolk also practice the tradition of changelings. The elves sneak to the cradle of a newborn human and take the child, leaving a sickly elven babe in its place. Enchantments are made to disguise the child, but no amount of magic can perfectly hide the change from mother or nurse; it is a sight that no human mother wishes to see. The stolen child is raised with love by the hulderfolk, although it is never fully accepted; changelings often feel that they do not belong with the hulderfolk, and keep to themselves.

The hulderfolk often visit an elf-child exchanged as a changeling, and ensure that it is cared for. If the humans raise the elf with care, then the hulderfolk will secretly give them aid whenever possible. However, if the humans treat the elf-child badly, then they will suffer the worst luck possible.

The shunning attitudes of the hulder do not apply to all mortal races; apart from humans, ogres, and minotaurs, most creatures may share the forests of the hulderfolk and have little trouble finding the inhabitants. Hulderfolk do not attempt to hide from gnomes, goblins, hobgoblins, or dwarves, although they will not tolerate

harmful actions on the part of creatures whose nature is evil. Elves who enter the Hulder Realm are greeted as long-lost family, and always invited to stay; unfortunately, the differences between modern elves and the ancient ways of the hulderfolk are too great. Neither can come to understand the other, and such meetings often end sadly.

Climate

The Hulder forests are warm and pleasant in summer, but become rather chilly during the winter months. Most of the trees of the Hulder Realm are evergreens, and retain their foliage throughout the year. However, light snow occasionally falls during the coldest month of winter.

Within Summerhome, the weather is always warm and pleasant, with occasional refreshing rains, and the pale golden moon is always full.

Trade

The hulderfolk tradition of shunning makes any trade between them and the humans or minotaurs impossible. During the Age of Might the hulderfolk commonly obtained metal implements in trade from the dwarves; as this trade has all but ceased, all hulderfolk swords and jewelry are of ancient design.

Current Happenings

During the Grim Winter, the magics of the Hulder Realm suddenly turned against them. Chaos spirits appeared throughout the forest, and some hulderfolk vanished, even from the minds of the hulderfolk. There are now fewer hulderfolk in the Fifth Age than in any of the previous four. Sometimes the forests are haunted by dreamwraiths that resemble hulderfolk who were taken by Chaos and cannot quite be remembered. This does not encourage the hulderfolk to leave Summerhome very often.

The hulderfolk are quickly learning the ways of Sorcery - indeed, some say that they always knew it - although they have little interest in Mysticism. The hulderfolk refer to the new, pale golden moon as the child of their "very old friend," and do not seem to miss the three moons of old. However, in other ways the so-called Age of Mortals is very troubling to the hulderfolk. Few now live outside of Summerhome for any length of time. The increasing power and inevitable clash of the hulderfolks' two greatest enemies - the humans and the dragons - troubles them deeply. Some of the younger hulderfolk have traveled to stay with the elves of Armach-Nesti, and learned more of the world; other, older hulderfolk remain in Summerhome, or travel into the other-dimensional "Grey," never to be seen again.

Hurdumarr

See "Kahh, Doom of Draconians" under **Dragon Realms**.

The Indanalis Sea

Separating Southern Hosk from the rest of Taladas is the Indanalis Sea. Before the cataclysm of Hiteh's Night, the Indanalis Sea was a large body of water that split the eastern side of Taladas, and connected to the Urdile Ocean. South of the Indanalis were the mountain ranges and jungles of Neron, and to the north were the rich forests and rolling hills of Aurim. All of this changed with Hiteh's Night.

The shock waves caused by the first cataclysm caused the continent to split along the geological fault lines. One major fault split through mountain ranges, and reached the Western Ocean. Water from that ocean flooded into the breach, joining the Indanalis Sea. At the same time, new activity drove up unseen lands across the mouth of that sea, cutting it off from the Urdile Ocean. The western end of the Neron peninsula was likewise shattered, and the oceans there flooded into the newly shaped Indanalis Sea.

Important Holdings

Thunderbreach Strait, the Tiderun

Main Populace

Pirates, bizarre sea beasts

Personalities

Haralt the Grey (*minotaur elder male, crafty demeanor; Champion*)
Skaldelorax (*female wyrm sea dragon, sadistic demeanor*)

Description

Since Hiteh's Night the Indanalis Sea has been known as the Sea of Poison. 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 water of the Indanalis Sea causes wood to crumble and etches metal, making sailing a risky proposition. The constant clouds of sulphurous steam and the dreary drizzles of sweltering rain blot out the sun. All exposed goods become crusted with strange minerals and mildew rot. Metal tarnish overnight. Leather molds. Cloth becomes stiff, then brittle. Food takes on the stench of sulphur.

The southern opening to the Indanalis Sea is Thunderbreach Strait. The narrowest point of this strait is the site of underwater volcanic activity.

In the north, a great estuary called the Tiderun connects the Indanalis Sea to the Western Ocean. It gets its name from the ebb and flow of its waters according to the influences of the moon. Prior to the Grim Winter, the waters of the Tiderun would rise, ebb, or (rarely) recede entirely in an erratic fashion according to the pull of the three moons. When the waters ebbed, only rafts and the shallowest of boats could ply the Tiderun. On the other hand, when

the waters retreated altogether, trading caravans rushed across the wide muddy expanse before the tides returned.

The disappearance of the three moons, replaced by but one, caused havoc to the tides of the Indanalis Sea. Some parts of the shore were subjected to flash floods, leaving a chalky deposit in the soil that prevented anything normal from growing for many years; other regions of the sea dried up, the stinking mud flats spotted from place to place with the corpses of strange aquatic beasts.

Now the Tiderun is subject to the movements of the pale golden moon alone. When the moon is full the waters rise, allowing normal passage. Whilst the moon waxes and wanes, the waters ebb. During the moon's Low Sanction (a period of three days), they retreat almost completely - there is always at least half a foot of water over the Tiderun, although waves are small to nonexistent.

The banks of the Tiderun are lined with thick stands of trees and brakes of salt-water cane. The estuary is haunted by pirates, fugitives, and silt-dwelling giant worms, a few of which are dangerous. Trading towns have also sprung up along the northern shore of the Tiderun to accommodate the merchant caravans crossing during the dry periods, including Faroen and Malton.

Climate

The Indanalis Sea suffers miserable weather throughout the year. Most of the time bitter drizzle falls, but when the wind blows strongly from Hitehkel terrible sulphur-laden rainstorms are swept across the Poison Sea to break against the Steamwall Mountains. In winter, monsoons from the southern Windless Ocean sweep through Thunderbreach Strait, and the Tiderun suffers chilly weather with strong westerly winds.

Trade

Few ships ply the poisonous waters of the Indanalis Sea, for obvious reasons. A few boats have been made resistant to the corrosive waters by covering their hulls with the hides of Indanalan sea beasts; most of these are in the hands of pirates. Much more trade crosses the waters of the Tiderun, although this is at the mercy of the pale golden moon.

Current Happenings

The black othlorx lord of Hurdumarr (named Darkheart by mortals) frequently visits the Indanalis Sea; this dragon swims unharmed through the chemical waters and hunts the bizarre monsters of the deep. However, he is no longer the sole draconic inhabitant of the Poison Sea; a scarred sea dragon named Skaldelorax has taken up residence in one of the undersea volcanoes of Thunderbreach Strait. Where this sea dragon has come from, and what she plans, is a mystery.

Kristophan, the New City-State

Kristophan was once the Imperial City of the League of Minotaurs. However, during the chaos of the Grim Winter, the Emperor Ambeoutin

died in mysterious circumstances and minions of Chaos, Father of All and of Nothing, swept across the Indanalis Sea and Steamwall Mountains into the League. Combined with the shock of the Grim Winter, the most powerful and advanced empire in Krynn crumbled.

However, during the worst part of the Grim Winter, Kristophan was protected by the god Sargas, and so was spared some of Chaos' horrors. In the Fifth Age Kristophan has retained it's freedom, and attracts mystics and philosophers from across Taladas.

Important Holdings

Kristophan, parts of New Styrlia

Main Populace

Minotaurs, humans, dwarves, elves

Personalities

General Augentus VI (*minotaur elder male, manipulative demeanor, Champion*)

Claera Themoniskis (*human adult female, stubborn demeanor, Adventurer*)

Ambedotus (*minotaur adult male, questioning demeanor, Master*)

Justicaelusiskis (*half-elf elder male, charismatic demeanor, Adventurer*)

Description

Kristophan is a walled city that also controls the rich farmland and small fishing villages of the surrounding region, called New Styrlia. To the east is the town of Sardica on the Struma River; it is a fortified settlement that protects the highway to Kristophan and the wide plains where farmers sweat to support the city. To the south lies Kossova on the Letus River, where hunters and woodsmen make a living from the Nicodie Forest, and the port town of Themes on the Karpathos Bay.

The town of Milvian is built on a large island in the bay, where Kristophan's steel mines and shipyards can be found. The paved road leading north from the city, known as The Great Way, is regularly patrolled by Kristophan's armoured militia lest a conquering force from Morgad attempt to assimilate Kristophan into the New League.

Within the city of Kristophan, the population is now about three hundred thousand people - over half of what it was before the mass deaths of the Grim Winter. 35% of these people are citizens, who dwell in the New City. This section of Kristophan was built after its conquest by the minotaurs in the first century AC, and reflects their tastes and skills in architecture and city planning. Avenues, alleys, and lanes twist and turn in a maze of low brick buildings, which are regularly patrolled by the *saiones*, or city guards. A few straight boulevards run from one major landmark to another, lined by wealthy businesses, but most of the city's craftsmen and merchants live in the twisting lanes that run between them; the typical citizen's home is a two-story villa surrounding a central courtyard.

The city-state of Kristophan no longer follows the traditional minotaur form of government. Rather than absolute rulership under the individual who is best able to hold power, with administrative affairs handled by a senate, Kristophan and her neighbouring towns are governed democratically. All citizens have a degree of power, and may vote in public forums, stand as a juror (all trials are judged by a jury of 501 citizens, who are paid one steel per day), or hold public office. To be considered a citizen, one must either be a minotaur who permanently resides in the city, be born into a citizen's family, or be awarded citizenship as a reward for service to the city (often through military service). Citizens are allowed to place the formal "-iskis" at the end of their name, an appellation traditionally reserved for minotaurs. Law rigorously protects slaves from mistreatment, although they have very few freedoms. Indeed it is non-citizens and foreigners who fare worst in Kristophan's democracy.

Those residents of Kristophan who are not citizens, and the 40% of the population who serve as slaves, often live in the Old City. This is the original town of Kristophan, although many of the older wooden structures were razed in the fires of the Grim Winter. There are still regions of the Old City which remain abandoned, especially near the entrances to the subterranean Catacombs. The rest of the Old City is populated primarily by humans, dwarves, and elves, who mostly work in unskilled or poorly paid occupations elsewhere in the city. The *saiones* rarely venture into the Old City except in force. There are numerous cheap taverns, teahouses, coffee stalls, brothels, gambling halls, smoking dens, and street festivals which make the Old City a lively place in which to live. However, they also attract criminals of all kinds, who gather into informal fraternities led by an *upright man*, a rogue of such experience and authority that others defer to him out of respect and fear. These gangs occasionally feud with each other if mutual pacts are not respected.

The third part of Kristophan is the Imperial City, which is surrounded by the New City and separated from it by The General's Wall. Once heavily guarded to protect the rulers of the old Minotaur League, the four gates now remain open and all are allowed access (although slaves are expected to be on their master's business). Within the Imperial City are the luxurious villas of powerful minotaur families and the nouveau rich, built out of stone quarried near Themes. In addition, the buildings of the Senate, Treasury, and Legion of Kristophan Barracks can be found here. The stately buildings once dedicated to the Senate and bureaucracies of the Minotaur League are now used as a venue for citizens to propose a new law, hear public debates, and hold trials, as well as day-to-day administration of the city.

The extensive palaces once owned by the Imperial Family were seized in the year 4 SC by the minotaur paladin Austan Gavynus, and converted into a temple devoted to the departed gods. Over the years, the palace of Kristophan became a place for education and philosophy, and attracted the spiritually minded from other parts

of Taladas. It was also here that the philosopher Ambedotus, a student of Austan Gavynus, discovered the power of Mysticism in 12 SC. Today, the Palace of Kristophan is a stronghold for mystics in Taladas.

Climate

The winters in Kristophan are very mild, although there can be unpleasant rainy storms that blow in from the Western Ocean and last up to a few weeks. Summers are oppressively hot, and fire is a threat in the dry wheat fields of New Styrlia and wooden structures of the Old City.

Trade

The fishing villages of the coast have access to rich pearl beds, and trade the pearls with Armach sailors from the south. The fishermen are unwilling to delve too deeply for pearls, however, due to local stories about strange fish-eyed beings that dwell in sunken cities. Stone and iron from Milvian is also traded with Highvale.

Current Happenings

The philosophers of the Palace of Kristophan have decided that it is time to spread the miracles of Mysticism into a world in dire need of spiritual guidance. Whether or not the gods are truly gone is still hotly debated, but most argue that mortals need to find their own truth in this new Age.

Some of the more ambitious merchants, under the leadership of a demagogue named Justicaelus the Lamé, are pushing for Kristophan to establish potentially lucrative trade pacts with the New League of Morgad. However, this faction is opposed by a civil servant called Claera of House Themon, a capable woman with much support from the minotaur families (who believe they can manipulate her); the minotaurs remember the threat of New League armies conquering Kristophan in the League Wars.

A man with unnatural powers over ice and flame has been staying at the Palace as a guest of the mystics; he hails from a mysterious black tower in the distant Ring Mountains, and has offered to teach his strange talents to those who have the gift. In addition, it is whispered that a mysterious elfwoman wielding strange elemental powers is opposing the Upright Men of the Old City. This could be the introduction of the new Sorcery to Kristophan in a trial by fire...

Lower Panak

The Great Escarpment separates the icy wastelands of the Upper Panak from the Lower Panak, a plain that begins in the northern grassland of the Tamire. This wall of weathered and broken sandstone is hazardous to climb, and forms a natural barrier against the dragon lord Hoartongue. Furthermore, the Lower Panak is too cold and remote for the tribes of the Tamire or the legions of the New League to

bother with. Thus, the Lower Panak is mostly free from outside influence.

Important Holdings

The Panak Desert

Main Populace

The Kazar, white othlorx dragons

Personalities

Thinggis Khazan (*human middle-aged male, tough demeanor; adventurer*)

Description

The plain of the Lower Panak is dotted with low hills of sandstone, weirdly eroded to form ominous badlands. Eons of wind have flattened the tops of these while carving out the sides to make cliff-sided mesas and table-top buttes. Flash floods have carved canyons and hollowed small caves in the soft rock. The intermittent streams flood out into the plains, forming cold sand bogs and broad pans of water.

Where there is sufficient water the evergreen scrub of the Lower Panak forms a thick mat over the ground. In its shelter are tender mosses and short grasses. Tiny flowers brighten the landscape, tucked away in the warming beds of moss.

The fauna of the Lower Panak is tough and wild. In the south live bactrian camels, ponies, and even moose in the marshy areas, foraging on woody-branched evergreen shrubs. Carnivores include the fox, winter wolf, rare steppe tiger, and terrifying remorhaz.

Formerly tribes of the northern Tamire, the nomadic Kazar horsemen have been driven further into the Lower Panak by a terrible enmity with their cousins, the Uigan. This is almost inexplicable to outsiders, for the Kazar and the Uigan are very similar in customs and appearance.

Racially, the Kazar and the Uigan come from the same bloodstock. The Kazar are a short, slender race of humans, with skin tones ranging from a pale, weathered brown to yellow-white. Kazar children are bound into cradle-boards fitted with a hard pillow of dried grain; as a result, all Kazar have a distinctive flattening of the back of the skull.

Kazar men do not shave their heads, as the Uigan do, but keep their hair trimmed short except for a knot bound up at the base of the neck. They are fond of long, braided moustaches, kept supple with rancid butter. The Kazar do not tattoo themselves, considering this to be a disgusting Uigan custom. Kazar clothing, however, is very similar to the Uigan, with heavy leather pantaloons, wool-lined boots, and an elvish-style turban dyed in tribal clan colours. Women decorate their clothing with beads and fringe, and silver dowry jewelry if unmarried. The Kazar wear more furs and hides than the Uigan, due to their colder environment.

In the glaciers of the northern Ring Mountains lair a small number of white othlorx dragons, which have fled death at Hoartongue's jaws. For the most part these mute beasts hide themselves, but occasionally they stretch their wings and hunt bactrian camels and Kazar horsemen to satisfy their appetite for flesh.

Climate

Winters on the Lower Panak are icy and bring flurries of snow. Huge banks of snow pile up against the base of the Great Escarpment, weathering huge cracks into the sandstone. Several months after spring arrives in the south, the thaw suddenly strikes, causing flash floods. There is a sudden explosion of growth during the short summer, as plants and animals furiously grow, multiply, and gather to survive the coming winter.

Trade

The Kazar horsemen form an important link between the merchants of the New League in the south and the Ice People of Hoartongue's Upper Panak. Each year during the brief summer, the Kazar buy seal skins, whalebone, walrus ivory, and dried fish from the Ice People, trading them metal spearheads, pots, fishhooks, beads, cloth, wool, and grains. Most of the goods are then traded to New League merchants, who in turn sell them to other tribes in the Tamire and further south.

Current Happenings

The Kazar's traditional rivals, the Uigan tribes, have been causing problems for traders from the New League who make their way north to the Lower Panak. As the Kazar tribes are indirectly hurting because of Uigan aggression, the relations between the two barbarian peoples are rather strained. Many Kazar tribes are allowing some of their younger warriors to travel south with the League caravans as bodyguards, returning in the next year. This is a popular assignment amongst adventurous tribesmen who want to see more of the world before settling down to have a family, and Kazar warriors are becoming a common sight further south.

The Marak Valleys

The Marak Valleys is an isolated region on the lower southern slopes of the Steamwall Mountains of Southern Hosk. During the age of Might these sheltered valleys protected the carefree kender that dwelt there. But the chaos of the Cataclysm and Hiteh's Night devastated the small villages and farms of the kender. The sky was lit with the glow of volcanic fires, and rains of ash poisoned the water. The Marak kender were forever changed by these disasters. They never imagined that their suffering was anything but a deliberate punishment by the gods, and so quickly turned upon the gods and the rest of the world.

The Marak kender became characterised by grim suspicion, paranoia, and bitter black humour. Kender society is built around

a sense of family that was made strong by the Age of Despair. Insults to the family are not tolerated and may lead to murder. Meetings between villages are strained and formal to prevent deadly insult. Unfortunately, few outsiders are familiar with the custom.

The kender are curious and fearful of strangers, needing to know who they are, what they carry, and whether they are threatening or dangerous. To this end the kender peek, poke, and pilfer any item that they consider dangerous. Rumours say that kender storerooms are filled with magical wonders and treasures.

The Marak Valleys are frequently raided by hobgoblins from further north in the Steamwall Mountains. The hobgoblins slip out of the mountains by night and attempt to encircle a town in small groups. Greatly outnumbered by the hobgoblins, only by their cleverness are the kender able to survive a hobgoblin assault.

Important Holdings

Embrar, Luneburg, Maraktown, Wantage

Main Populace

Marak kender

Personalities

Buckeran (*kender elder male, pessimistic demeanor; Adventurer*)

Pikolas (*kender adult male, inquisitive demeanor; Unknown*)

Description

The Marak ranges are high and rocky, and mazed with gloomy stone canyons. Toxic chemicals stain the rocks in strange colours. At sunset the red light of the sun reflects from the mountains like fire, a reminder of the time when volcanic glow lit the night.

The lower slopes are lightly wooded with small, twisted trees, and ash-choked fields of stunted corn are scattered widely throughout the valley floors. Fields close to the mountain streams are often dead, poisoned by attempts to irrigate with the chemical run-off of the mountains. Only deep groundwater or the Fenfoot River are safe for drinking.

The villages and towns of the kender seem but lightly fortified with walls of fieldstone. The kender are better trap-makers than builders, and ring their settlements with devious and deadly pitfalls, snares, and devices. To safely approach their villages, the kender must weave through an invisible maze of death, relying on keen eyesight and secret signs to find the way. The security of the village depends on the effectiveness of these insidious defenses, for it is rare for a kender village to have enough men to withstand a full hobgoblin assault.

Climate

The Marak Valleys are sheltered from extremes of weather and rarely see clouds, much less rain. When a downpour does occur, the kender collect as much rainwater in barrels as possible, before the chemical-laden slopes taint it. These storms blow in from the west or the south; the Steamwall ranges block the poisonous winds of the Indanalis Sea.

Trade

The isolation of the kender and the paranoia that they show to strangers discourages trade. Many outsiders who come to the kender villages are actually seeking the rumoured treasure troves. What the rumours fail to take into account is the assorted junk that kender consider valuable. Most treasure-seekers actually add to these "hoards" via kender pilfering.

Current Happenings

The dragon lord Darkheart has sent hobgoblin emissaries to the kender. Most have died horribly, mistaken for raiders, but one managed to deliver his message to Maraktown: Darkheart is offering to heal the land of its poison, in return for a clean cavern somewhere lonely and undisturbed. The kender feel deliberately insulted, for the dragon is an ally of hated hobgoblins, and they plan to retaliate.

Rumours are spreading about a priceless artifact hidden in, or near, the town of Embrar - a fallen star from the constellation of Jijin. Worshipers of this goddess plan to steal it from the kender - assuming it actually exists.

Neron

In the ages before the Cataclysm, Neron was famed as a great untracked wilderness. No one had explored it, and no one knew what might be found there. Its coasts were only partially charted and no maps at all showed its interior. It was known that there were jungles and strange beasts in this uncharted land, but beyond that anything might lurk. Wild elves lived in the savage land, masters of all around them. They wielded a form of nature magic unheard of to the outside world. Neron was a place of mystery, a land that stood proud and independent. Steeped in natural magics, Neron was a place beholden to no man or beast.

The coming of the Fifth Age has changed Neron greatly. The magicks that infused the land before the Chaos War have become warped and perverted. The jungle is a nightmare of death and decay. The phenomenon known as the Chaos Ripple tore the very fabric of the verdant jungle, and forever changed the lives of its inhabitants. Chaos minions still infested the jungle, and the nature magic that the cha'asii had always depended on was twisted and corrupted. The future looked grim and doubtful.

In 5 SC, the yaggol launched a campaign of total genocide against the wild elves. Bereft of their precious magic, the cha'asii were

nearly decimated. Scattered throughout the jungle, the Cha'asii wild elves no longer wandered freely across the rugged highland jungles. Hidden in small pockets of resistance, the Cha'asii withdrew from the world, and hid.

In 16 SC, a great Green named Calyp'stohl arrived in the Neron. Slaying several green dragons, this great monster claimed the land as her territory. The yaggol immediately complied, and worked to service her. The Wild Elves, however, did nothing, as they hid away in the jungle. In 18 SC, using her own skull totem, Calyp'stohl attempted to wrest control of the land from the Chaos energies, and dominate Neron. She succeeded, but at a terrible price. The struggle with the Chaos energies drove her mad. Now, Calyp'stohl rules over a decimated land, as the Chaos magicks regain control when the Great Green relinquishes control.

In 20 SC, a young cha'asii named Byral discovered the secrets of Mysticism. Very similar to the nature magic of previous ages, this new magic sprung from the heart and from the spirit. With his newfound powers, Byral began to gather his Wild Elf brethren. In 22 SC, his new tribe launched a counter attack against the yaggol, and he managed to drive them back. Elated with his successes, elves poured out of the jungle to learn his newfound magic, and to meet with his village.

In 25 SC, Byral launched another attack. This time, he targeted the mad ruler of the Great Reed Delta: Calyp'stohl the Mad. With aid from the Obsidian Warlock and his sorcerers, Byral began a guerilla offensive against Calyp'stohl. Many of his warriors were lost in that valiant struggle, but he managed to throw Calyp'stohl off balance. Startled, the Great Green retreated into the murky interior of the swamps. However, within 30 S.C, Calyp'stohl emerged from the dark heart of the Delta and savagely reclaimed her land. The yaggol once again aided the mad green, and Calyp'stohl once again regained control of her realm. Byral managed to hide his people, and he looks for a chance to reclaim his people's land for good.

Today, Neron has changed much from its previous state. Now, the jungle is darker and oppressive. The crackle of dark magic travels the very air. Blood runs from trees, the ground moans and shakes for no reason, and the animals themselves have been driven mad as well as horribly mutated.

Important Holdings

None; many small Cha'asii and Irroi villages

Main Populace

Cha'asii elves, green dragons, yaggol, humans, Chaos creatures.

Personalities

Koresh B'raeyl (*elven young adult male, valiant demeanor; Adventurer*)

Ishkarin (*yaggol adult, sadistic demeanor; Adventurer*)

Brakkhenos (*green adult male dragon, scheming demeanor*)

Description

The mainland regions of Neron hold verdant jungle and wild beasts. Most of the inhabitants live deep in the jungles of the western side. Rising quickly from the low coast along the Fisheries, the heart of Neron becomes a rugged highland jungle. Though the land never reaches to great heights until one reaches the backbone mountain range, the hills are steep and razor-edged, and covered with thick forests of mahogany and teak. Now larger than it was in previous ages, the jungles of Neron continue to creep west towards the Fisheries and north into Baltch on a daily basis.

The once beautiful jungles of Neron are now twisted and evil. Trees wither and bleed in the hot sun. Streams and rivers stagnate and fill with blood. Even the dirt has an acrid, evil smell. An air of deformity and evil blankets the land. Twisted Chaos demons have adapted to this vile land, and spread chaos among Neron's inhabitants. The animals themselves have been twisted and mutated by the rampant Chaos. Deer with two heads and fangs, bears with six legs, and even lemurs that drain blood have emerged from the tainted jungle. While the meat is still serviceable, some wild elves have fled Neron because of the absolute horror of their once beautiful homeland.

Inland, in the steaming jungle of Neron, live the wild elves. Known as the Cha'asii, they have abandoned civilisation in exchange for harmony with nature. The Cha'asii usually wield weapons more suited to their environment, such as light-weighted short bows, blowguns, spears and javelins. Most of their weapons are made of hard iron tree wood, since large outcroppings of workable stone are rare in Neron. The Cha'asii also favor throwing bombs. A favored bomb of the cha'asii is a monkey bladder stuffed with noxious fruits. When allowed to ferment in the sun, the bomb will be ready to burst into a cloud of foul-smelling gas that is intolerable to most creatures. Beehives are also used to drive off dangerous creatures, flush beasts out of dens, and drive enemies into confusion. While the cha'asii do have some metal weapons, these are valued more as tools than weapons. The cha'asii are also accomplished healers. They use the natural wonders of the jungle to heal virtually any ailment.

Once, their healing skills were augmented by the cha'asii's natural connection with the nature magic that permeated the world. In many ways, the nature magic of the Cha'asii resembled the new magic of Krynn. Some scholars theorise that the Cha'asii have always been able to use this "new" magic, which is in truth as old as Krynn itself. But why then did the Cha'asii lose their spells along with all the other people of Krynn at the end of the Grim Winter, only to regain them recently? Some Cha'asii elders mutter about the wickedness of Chaos and the corruption of nature, but will not elaborate. For now, the mystery remains unsolved.

The enchanted items of the previous ages are still around and vibrant with old powers. These magical items are strange and alien to outsiders. A rock, a tree, even a colored shell can be a vessel for magic in the hands of a Cha'asii shaman. The ideals of Cha'asii nature magic was that the spellcaster could only bring out what was

already within an object. This belief has many similarities to sorcerous enchantment, and in fact, many Cha'asii are beginning to learn this other magic - they are even capable of working miracles by somehow combining the power of Sorcery with Mysticism! However, the corruption of the jungle has limited their progress, as the magic around them is turbulent and undisciplined. The Cha'asii create great objects of art, and their carvings are much sought after by foreigners.

A simple people, the cha'asii have never had a need to contact outsiders, and they were often hostile to them. But now, the Cha'asii are beginning to realize that to survive, they will need help. Slowly, the isolationist feelings are being drowned out by the need to survive.

A small number of human tribes live along Neron's coast and among the small islands offshore. Calling themselves the Irroi, they are a primitive human tribe related to the Payan Mako of Syldar. The tribesmen are less than five feet high, with deep bronze skin and large brown eyes. Rolls of fat surround their ample bellies. Men shave their heads bald, and women crop theirs to less than an inch. The men wear leather loincloths, and the women wear simple smocks. The Irroi are an unremarkable people, living quietly according to strict laws that they have preserved for centuries. Some rare Irroi practice the nature magic of the Cha'asii, but for the most part these humans are terrified of any magic that is not controlled by the witchdoctors who speak with the ancestral spirits of their tribe.

Many green dragons also live in the hidden areas of the jungle. Left alone by Calyp'stohl, they rule over small spheres of trackless jungle usually about a mile to ten miles in diameter. While they do not have the land shaping magicks to equal a true Dragon Overlord, these dragons are equally vicious and protective of their land.

Climate

The slopes and valleys of Neron are blanketed with steaming jungles, which enjoy heavy rainfall periodically. Other times, the jungles are hot and humid, rarely experiencing cool temperatures, even during winter. Huge tropical storms and hurricanes continually batter the coastline. The Chaos magic also makes the climate extremely unpredictable. Several areas of Neron can all be experiencing various climates at the same time. Most of the time, the jungle is steaming hot.

Current Happenings

The yaggol have taken advantage of the Cha'asii's plight, and attacked. Many elven communities have been ransacked and destroyed. The Cha'asii are desperate for help, and are seeking foreign aid. With the rebirth of nature magic as Sorcery and Mysticism, the Cha'asii are now better equipped to deal with the jungle and the yaggol. However, the mental and physical powers of the degenerated illithids are still formidable. The Cha'asii are having a hard time

containing the vile creatures. And with the added threat of Calyp'stohl, the cha'asii are beginning to lose this war.

Contact with the outside world has become more frequent. The various tribes have allowed Byral J'Quinyal, revered mystic of the Great Reed Delta, to speak for them to the outsiders, and more than a few Cha'asii have been forced to flee their homes. The recent attacks of the yaggol have managed to shake their normally isolationist nature and made them willing to trade with the outside world. Sorcery is still infrequent among the Cha'asii, but many wild elves welcome it as a rebirth of the old nature magic, and go to the Obsidian Tower to learn more.

Byral and the Obsidian Warlock remain on good terms, and the residents of the Obsidian Tower continue their efforts to aid the Cha'asii. However, the Cha'asii might not survive much longer. The continual threat of chaos creatures, the yaggol, and Calyp'stohl is taking their toll. Without outside help, the Cha'asii are looking at eventual destruction.

The New League

After the first Cataclysm, human refugees from the shattered province of Styrlia in Aurim migrated to Southern Hosk, led by two charismatic men, Kristophus and Guidan. Those led by Kristophus settled along the northern and western coasts, in what would become the provinces of New Styrlia and Eragala. Over the century following the Cataclysm, the human settlers spread inland to Highvale and Okami, dwelling in small pastoral communities. This all changed with the arrival of the minotaur Eragas the Brutish.

Eragas was an ambitious minotaur who discovered the settlements of New Styrlia, and was struck by a desire to rule. Backed by a small fleet, he seized control of the human settlements in the first century AC, establishing minotaur law over the humans and declaring himself Emperor of a League of Minotaurs that would expand and prosper until the Grim Winter. The New League formed in 7 SC as an inheritor to that empire's legacy.

Important Holdings

Eragala, The Conquered lands, Fianawar, Okami, New Styrlia, Rudil, Western Ocean islands

Main Populace

Minotaurs, humans, dwarves, kender, elves

Personalities

Emperor Eragas IV (*minotaur adult male, megalomaniac demeanor; Master*)

Senator Audarius (*minotaur elder male, resourceful demeanor; Master*)

Grey Sorcerer Sashka Ioumiskis (*half-elf adult female, crafty demeanor; Adventurer*)

Senator Condruchtiskis of Fianawar (*dwarf elder male, forthright demeanor; Adventurer*)

Description

The New League controls the provinces of Eragala, Fianawar, Okami, Rudil, and the Conquered lands, and has taken some of New Styrlia. Not all of the lands that belonged to the League of Minotaurs prior to the Grim Winter have been absorbed into the New League. In particular, the former capital of Kristophan has become an independent city-state, and the province of Highvale has been claimed as the realm of a bronze dragon, Lumiere.

The New League formed in 7 SC when the General of the Fourth legion, a minotaur named Leutus, seized control of the Eragalan city of Morgad. Renaming himself Eragas IV, he claimed the title of Emperor and began the reconstruction of the minotaur empire. Eragas had the support of the senators in Morgad, he had a legion of four thousand men, and he possessed a legendary artifact - Ambeoutin's *Axe of the Emperors*. This weapon led the minotaurs to victory against the dwarven slavers thousands of years ago, and its sudden reappearance was seen as a final blessing from the recently departed god Sargonnas.

Eragas IV led a swift and relatively bloodless campaign in Okami and the Conquered Lands; the arrival of his rapidly growing legions were even welcomed in some communities as a sign that the old days of prosperity were returning. However, Eragas' attempts to conquer Highvale failed due to the resistance of that provinces' *legiones luceat*; thus the first of the so-called League Wars ended in partial failure.

Subsequent campaigns of the Emperor of Morgad's League wars had mixed success. Supported by the Imperial navy of Morgad, the seaport of Rudil in Northern Hosk was seized without much difficulty, as well as some of the islands of the Western Ocean. The dwarven Fianawar nation, on the other hand, resisted the New League for seven long years before submitting to minotaur rule. The campaign against Kristophan was particularly disastrous; the philosophers of that city discovered the power of mysticism in 12 SC, and used them to great effect. To this day, the city-state of Kristophan remains free.

The New Imperial Capital of Morgad is a port city in the province of Eragala, and is considered the greatest seaport in Taladas - perhaps all of Krynn. Morgad was built on a deep-water harbour where the Indanalis Sea meets the Western Ocean, and is thoroughly minotaurish in layout and design. Three straight boulevards - The Horned way, The New Emperor's March, and the Southgate Plaza - radiate from the docks, where most of the city's trade occurs, out to the City Wall. However, between these boulevards is a dense maze of buildings, lanes, market squares, cul de sacs, and parks, which quickly confuse any non-minotaur who visits the city. Minotaurs never experience any difficulty navigating Morgad's twisting thoroughfares; indeed, they are perfectly at home.

Morgad receives visitors from all over Taladas, including caravels from Thenol, steam-driven ships from the gnomoi Spires, barbarian traders from Northern Hosk, bureaucratic engineers from far-off Baltch, and even the mysterious galleys of draconian ambassadors from Aurim, rowed by crews that no-one ever sees. An occasional visitor from the Spine of Taladas island chain, the Dargonesti sea elves, or even the Blood Sea Isles in Ansalon is not unknown. The presence of exotic foreigners and rare trade goods has made Morgad into a rich and cosmopolitan city, where people of different races brush shoulders and anything is available for a price. Even draconians, goblins, and bakali may walk in the open here, for the citizens have seen far stranger things (especially during the Grim Winter and League Wars).

There are three buildings of note in Morgad. The first and foremost is the Ministry of Justice, also known as the Imperial Arena and Barracks. This is a large arena of sandstone, capable of seating six thousand minotaurs, and a number of courtrooms, holding cells, and living quarters for the *saiones*, or city watch. The basis of law in Morgad and the rest of the New League is the maxim "Might makes Right," combined with the laws of due process. One cannot simply kill a citizen and take his property - that would be against the laws of due process, and the *saiones* will capture the culprit and drag him before the Praetor for trial. It is possible to challenge a citizen for possession of his property; the case will be brought before the Praetor, who will determine the terms of the trial.

All trials are conducted in the same way - by combat in the arena. On the average day, there are several trials being fought at once in the arena, and may be watched by the public for one steel denarius per head.

After hearing arguments from lawyers representing both sides of a challenge (or criminal case) the Praetor determines the Conditions of Combat - Victory, Weapons, Armour, and Champions. Civil cases are rarely fought to the death; first blood or surrender is a common Condition for Victory. Some criminal cases, such as treason and patricide, may only be fought to the death. The weapons and armour allowed to either party may balance out the natural abilities of different races; Sorcery and Mysticism are prohibited in the arena, and discovery of their use incurs immediate defeat in the trial. Champions - that is, a warrior hired to represent one of the parties in the arena - are also allowed during civil cases (after all, wealth enough to hire Champions is a sign of personal Might).

The loser of a trial must abide by his opponent's challenge in a civil case, or suffer suitable punishment in a criminal case. These punishments include fines, whipping, slavery (and loss of citizenship), or execution. Of course, the law only protects citizens and slaves of the New League - foreigners are bereft of the right to hire a Champion, and are always enslaved or executed if found guilty.

The second great edifice of note in Morgad is the Palace Imperius. This fortified complex was completed in 19 SC, and is a masterpiece

of human design and dwarven craftsmanship. It serves as home to Emperor Eragas IV and his family, and contains the offices of his ministers, admirals, and generals. There are also the secret vaults of the New League's Treasury, the Emperor's private collection of weapons, and extensive gardens. The Palace Imperius of Morgad is protected around the clock by the grey-robed Secret Imperial Police, and the Emperor accompanied at all times.

The third great building of Morgad is the Imperial University, found on The Horned Way. This cluttered collection of stone offices, amphitheatres, libraries, and courtyards are all under the jurisdiction of the Board of Educational Correction. Schooling for all citizens is compulsory between the ages of seven and twelve; children are taught letters, the history of the glorious New League, and the laws of the New League.

However, this is but a fraction of the Imperial University's function - indeed, lesser schools can be found elsewhere in the city. The University is also home to the Senate (which manages day-to-day government in the New League), and the College of Magic, a holdover from the days before the Grim Winter. Although members of the College of Magic lost their spells along with all the wizards of Krynn when the three moons vanished, they have collected as many enchanted items as possible for the exclusive use of the College. The historians of the College of Magic are amongst the most learned in Taladas.

Annual membership of the College of Magic is one hundred steel denarii, plus an oath never to use arcane secrets against the New League. It is not necessary to be a citizen to join the College.

Outside of Morgad are the provinces of the New League. The provinces of Eragala, Okami, and the Conquered Lands are dotted with villages, industries, and farmland that feeds the New League. The people of the League gather together into villages in areas of good land, connected by paved roads that are built and maintained by slave gangs from the cities. Bridges of arched stone span most rivers.

Other regions are covered with thick forests, especially in the Conquered Lands (where tales of haunted woods and remote dragon lairs are common). Lumbermen and trappers float their goods down the river to partners in a village, who sell them at market and send supplies back up the river. Grain, fruit, lumber, metal ores, and furs all come from these provinces.

The cities Thera and Trilloman are second only to Morgad in importance to the New League. There is a relaxed, slow-paced city in Eragala, which was once considered the leisure capital of the old League of Minotaurs due to its hot springs, cool weather and scenic woodlands. The wealthy congregate in Thera no more; devastating quakes before and during the Grim Winter have driven them away. Thera is now home to those citizens who wish to avoid League politics.

Trilloman, on the other hand, is a hub of trade and has a strong military presence. Caravans and wagons never cease entering the gates of the city, and the Ninth and Tenth Legions drill nearby. Trilloman is located in New Styrlia, close (perhaps too close) to

the territories of Kristophan and the dragon Lumiere, the Mourning Lord. Combined with the endemic organised crime - run by feuding crimelords called Upright Men - and corruption in the *saiones*, Trilloman is a dangerous city.

To the east is the Fianawar region of the Steamwall Mountains. This region is populated by tribes of dwarves, who live on the surface rather than below it. Ever since Hiteh's Night, these dwarves have lived in exile from their subterranean realms of old, due to the constant seismic and volcanic activity. The Fianawar dwarves have developed an uncontrollable terror of returning underground; although they dislike living under the open sky, exposed to the elements, they have grown used to it.

Fianawar dwarves live in squat stone houses near cliff walls, digging open-pit mines and attempting to farm root vegetables. Their water supply comes from brackish and foul-tasting streams from the Steamwall Mountains; most dwarves prefer to drink goats' milk, and few ever bathe. The Fianawar dwarves are dour, ill-mannered people, whose personal habits repulse most travellers; the Emperor appointed a dwarven Senator as no minotaur would go near the region. The capital of Fianawar is the town of Brilmantar.

North of the Indanalis Sea is the port of Rudil and the islands of the Western Ocean. The islands are for the most part uninhabited, with cliff-like shorelines that provide few good harbours, although broad, open beaches are found in the southern islands and around the mouth of the Indanalis Sea. A few islands boast human villages that farm wheat and herd vast numbers of sheep on the grassy highlands.

The town of Rudil was originally founded as a trading post with the tribes of the Tamire, and expanded its territory during the League Wars. Rudil serves as a gateway to Northern Hosk and the legendary lands across the Western Ocean; it and the nearby towns of Milgath and Barask, are all ruled by an appointed governor who lives in the keep built on a small bluff located on Rudil's waterfront.

Although not large - approximately six thousand inhabitants, with one thousand each in Milgath and Barask - Rudil is a bustling centre of trade, adventure-seeking explorers, and furious rumour-mongering. The great bazaar is a place where travellers can purchase exotic goods from the north, south, and west, although these can be expensive due to both the governor's tax and the protection rackets. Tamire horses, cattle, and steppe camels are all available, as are goods from the Ilquar goblins, Pureshk tribes, and (rarely) the Elf Clans. The different peoples bring with them old rivalries and fresh anger from the still-recent League Wars; most Uigan tribes no longer trade with Rudil, and others are always ready for a fight. In turn, the *saiones* come down harshly on troublemakers, beating heads to keep order. Rudil is a town boiling over with rumours, rivalries, and discontent.

Climate

Summers in the New League are oppressively hot, except in the hills of Thera and the islands of the Western Ocean. Winters are pleasantly mild, although the northern islands suffer from chilling rains and cold sea breezes.

The Fianawar region is very different to the rest of the New League. Clouds of corrosive steam from the Indanalis Sea mix with ash and gases from the volcanoes of the Steamwall Mountains; some of this poisonous mixture falls as rain upon the Fianawar region, killing much of the oak forests and mutating normal animals into vicious monsters. The black waters run out of the mountains as chemical-laden steams, which gradually become less lethal (but no less foul tasting) as their toxins are deposited along the banks.

Trade

The New League thrives on trade from other parts of Taladas and even Ansalon. Morgad receives visitors from Armach, Aurim, Baltch, the Gnomoi Spires, and Thenol, as well as across the Western Ocean. Rudil is the centre of trade in the north, and Trilloman in the south. The Fianawar region is famous for the excellence of its steel goods, including weapons and armour used by legionaries throughout the New League.

Current Happenings

The College of Magic is not as powerless as many believe. In 25 SC a half-elf named Sashka Ioum spoke with an incredibly aged individual claiming to be an Irda; over the course of a year she unleashed a hidden potential within herself to manipulate and control Krynn's primal energies. The first thing that Sashka did was report her discovery to the Emperor - personally. The Emperor was so impressed that he made Sashka an honorary minotaur (denoted by the -iskis suffix to her name). The supposed Irda vanished; shortly after, the *Axe of the Emperors* also disappeared. Eragas was not pleased.

Sashka Ioumiskis is now an agent of the Secret Imperial Police within the College of Magic. She searches for those with potential for Sorcery within the College and attempts to train them, reporting back to the secret Imperial Police whenever she makes progress. The Emperor hopes to raise an order of sorcerers which could match Kristophan's mystics in power; he would then use this order to take back what he considers rightfully his - Kristophan, the *Axe of the Emperors*, and the rest of the former League of Minotaurs.

The OdderRhing

Deep down at the roots of the Ring Mountains is an extensive series of caverns called the OdderRhing, or "The Land Beneath the Mountains." Living in these caverns is the *Nylgai Hadirnoe*, the Dwarven Scorned. These are the dwarves who, during the chaos of Hiteh's Night, fled the horrendous destruction of the surface for the comforting safety of the subterranean realm. So deeply have they delved that those on the surface have mostly forgotten them. In turn,

the dwarves now tell grim and fanciful tales of the surface world to their small children. After the better part of four centuries of isolation, none now living remember what living on the surface was like.

As the Scorned delved deeper during the Fourth Age they came into contact with a foul and savage race named the disir. The evil disir had lived for centuries uncounted in caverns deeper than any dwarf had ever ventured, never approaching the surface. After discovering the richer tunnels above them, the disir started a bloody war with the Scorned - a war that will only end with the annihilation of either the dwarves or the disir.

In other deep regions, the dwarves have discovered a third race, the *duramkinarchsa* or "beasts of stone." A stooped and squat race, the duramkin were a primitive people apparently related to ancient dwarves, and had not lived on the surface since the Age of Dreams. Both the Scorned and the disir mistake these ancient, reclusive barbarians for their enemies; in the Fifth Age, they may have been completely wiped out.

Important Holdings

The High King's Citadel, ancient human mines, Disir chambers

Main Populace

Scorned dwarves, disir

Personalities

High King Revenharos (*dwarven adult male, determined demeanor; Master*)

The Council of Clansmen (*Scorned adult males, various demeanors; Adventurers*)

War Clansman Anghoros (*Scorned adult male, bitter demeanor; Champion*)

Description

"The Land beneath the Mountains" is an extensive series of caverns that lie at the roots of the Ring Mountains. 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 Nylgai Hadirnoe are a nation of approximately 150,000 dwarves spread throughout the OdderRhing, ruled by one High King. Nylgai communities are complexes of public caverns and smaller halls and warrens owned by the many clans of dwarven society. The clans are organised along the basis of trades, and most clans are present in each community. All members of the clan are inter-related to a degree and are expected to take up the same occupation upon coming of age. Only by adoption into a new clan can this be avoided. Important Nylgai clans include:

- ⌘ *The Chieftain's Clan* - The royal house. The high King is chosen from members by votes of the other clans.
- ⌘ *The Guildmasters* - A very small, but extremely powerful clan of traders.
- ⌘ *The War Clan* - The army of the Nylgai, supported by other clans at the decree of the High King. Many clans adopt children into the War Clan in exchange for protection.
- ⌘ *The Miner Clan* - A respect-able, if not impressive clan, that is larger in size than any other.
- ⌘ *The Outcasts* - A shunned class that performs duties considered unclean or taboo.

Nylgai culture is rich and detailed. The dwarves lead lives of few material comforts - bland food and spartan stone furnishings are the order of the day. To make up for this, they brew fine ale, stout, and lager from fungus, and liven their days with stories, poetry, riddling competitions, and plays. The religious life of the dwarves is dominated by the Order of Makers, a group of artisan-priests who forge the *Earth Powers* of Ferros, Auros and Orgentos into magical items. The abilities of the Makers were actually tied to the moons of magic; since the Second Cataclysm, the Order of Makers has been unable to tap these Earth Powers. This remains a carefully guarded secret, lest the demoralised dwarves give in to despair.

The southern caverns of the OdderRhing have been empty for thirty years, since shadow-wights destroyed the dwarven communities there during the Second Cataclysm. This loss has struck at the heart of the Nylgai Hadirnoe, who can no longer completely trust the safety of their subterranean world. Tentative investigation of these caverns indicates the presence of disir and creatures of chaos.

Climate

The Ring Mountains above the OdderRhing are cold and harsh, discouraging the dwarves from leaving their caverns.

Trade

The Nylgai reluctantly venture to the surface in order to conduct trade with other peoples. The dwarves mine gold, silver, and some of the finest iron in Taladas (surpassed only by the Spire Mountains gnomes). Raw materials are traded to the nearby Boli gnomes for devices such as hand-held crossbows and cumbersome time-keeping machines. Some merchants come from the New League and the Tamire with grain and timber goods, the dangerous journey made worthwhile by large rewards.

Current Happenings

The greatest threat of the Fourth Age was the disir, who threatened dwarven communities in the southern reaches of the OdderRhing. The ongoing war with these loathsome creatures came to an abrupt halt during the Second Cataclysm, when shadow-wights serving Chaos reduced thousands of dwarves and disir alike to

nothingness. The disir retreated, and the Nylgai have left the southern caverns empty.

Now it seems that the disir have returned. The Order of Makers is under threat of religious schism - some makers have learned a new art named Sorcery from the Obsidian Warlock, who lives nearby on the surface. Most Makers consider this a sacrilege, but some kind of magic is needed to combat the lethal disir, who threaten to sweep into dwarven caverns once more.

⊙ Old Aurim & the Rainward Isles

See "Savanach the Eternal King" under **Dragon Realms**.

The Ring Mountains

The Ring Mountains are a series of ranges that rise up from the eastern Tamire and follow concentric faultlines 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.

Despite the inaccessibility of the Ring Mountains, they support sizable populations that suffered little during the chaos of the Grim Winter. This includes ogre tribes in the valleys, the mysterious saqualaminoi of the snowy peaks, and the humans of the Obsidian Tower.

Important Holdings

The Obsidian Tower, the Pillar of Malad-Thoor

Main Populace

Abaqua ogres, saqualaminoi, humans, othlorx dragons

Personalities

The Obsidian Warlock (*race, age and gender unknown, enigmatic demeanor; Legend*)

She-of-the-silver-fur (*saqualaminoi adult female, inquisitive demeanor*)

War-Chief Urfen (*ogre adult male, cunning demeanor; Master*)

Description

Beyond the Ilquar mountain ranges, the Tamire steppe gradually rises to the east until rolling hills and plain give way to broken foothills and then the peaks of the Ring Mountains. The ground of the Ring Mountains is alternately old and new, wooded and loamy slopes mixed with the thin, sandy soils of lava flows. Many of these mountains are still quite new, barely four centuries old, and are extremely high and jagged. Other mountains in the western Ring are much older, and their rounded slopes contain ruins from the dead Aurim Empire. One such ruin is the Pillar of Malad-Thoor, a carved pillar of stone that stands near an entrance to the dwarven caverns.

Over two hundred feet high, the Pillar was once much taller. Uigan legend has it that the pillar is a spear thrown to Krynn by their god, Qu'uan the Warrior.

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. Because of their warm and soothing waters and unusual nature, many of these places are considered sacred by the ogre tribes.

The ogres, or Abaqua ("First People") as they call themselves, live mainly in the woodlands of the western valleys. They dominate this region, defending it from occasional elven attacks from out of the Tamire, and even rarer raids by the saqualaminoi during extremely cold winters. The ogres also raid the wealthy dwarven traders that sometimes emerge from beneath the Ring Mountains. Otherwise the ogres keep to their own territories, leading simple lives.

The ogres consider themselves a single nation harkening back to the ancient Abaqua Empire that their legends say was destroyed by the treacherous Irda. The Abaqua nation is formed of tribes of about one hundred ogres, named after a landmark of that tribe's territory: the Falling River People, the Blue Ravine People, the Black Peak People, etc. Each tribe is an extended family that ensures the welfare and prosperity of all members, although the elderly and infirm are usually killed.

Ogre tribes travel between regular campsites within their territory, led by a warchief - the strongest, cleverest warrior. An elder called the *hoorac* or "firetender" advises him. Failing in their responsibilities may result in either being killed. The warriors welcome visitors from friendly tribes, but drive off or kill hostile trespassers. Each warrior has a drinking skull fashioned from the bones of his most notable enemy: it is a great compliment for a defeated enemy to be made into a warrior's drinking skull.

During particularly bitter winters, white-furred people (the saqualaminoi) come down from the snowbound peaks of the inner Ring ranges to wreak havoc amongst the ogres. Driven by a lack of food, they descend to the valleys to raid tribes there. These raids usually occur during fierce blizzards that the ogres call *demonstorms*, for the abaquas believe the white-furred people to be evil mountain spirits.

During less desperate times, the saqualaminoi live in utter isolation in their desolate peaks of ice and stone. They are extremely primitive, dwelling without tools in ice caves, and hunting mountain goats and sheep for food. Although the saqualaminoi have a bestial appearance - seven to nine foot furred humanoids, with talons and prominent fangs - the saqualaminoi mean no harm. They are simply very curious about other races, and attempt to capture any humanoids that they see, to learn more through close observation. Unfortunately, the saqualaminoi meet resistance with force, accidentally killing even powerful ogres. Weaker humans have

a better chance of survival, and sometimes escape to tell unbelievable stories about the white-furred people.

The Obsidian Tower of the sorcerers lies within the heart of the Ring Mountains, within view of Hitehkel. A paved road is being laid to allow students to approach the Tower, which has become famed far and wide. It is the only centre of civilisation in this remote wilderness.

Climate

The lower western slopes of the Ring Mountains are warmed and watered by winds off the Tamire, and the valleys are temperate and lush. Here, summers are moderately warm, followed by a rainy autumn. Winter brings cold snow, but the temperature rarely falls to extreme lows.

The air is thinner on the upper slopes, and it is chilly even in summer. Patches of snow lie in the deep forest well into summer, and blanket everything come winter. In the heart of the Ring Mountains and to the north, mountaintops remain covered in snow all year long and the glaciers slowly advance down into the valleys.

Trade

The Abaqua do not understand the value of money, and typically take what they want from merchants caught passing through their territory. Individual ogres will occasionally venture beyond the mountains and work as guards and soldiers in other lands.

Current Happenings

Othlorx dragons retreating into remote peaks to escape devouring dragon lords such as Hoartongue, Chaosflame and Savage have encountered the saqualaminoi. The dragons have been understandably reluctant to deal with any humanoids, but in a few cases the curiosity and persistence of the white-furred people has led to tentative contact. The saqualaminoi are fascinated by these creatures, and give them gifts of sheep carcasses on an occasional basis.

The Shining Lands

The bizarre deserts known as the Shining Lands were born from the geological chaos of Hiteh's Night. Concentric fault lines radiating outwards from Aurim split open into huge lava flows. The seething magma came into contact with floodwaters from the newly shaped Indanalís and Storm Seas, and boiled it away in a tremendous explosion of steam. The sudden cooling glassified the lava's surface, creating the bizarre, brilliantly smooth fields of the Shining Lands.

Even in this deadly and inhospitable land, nomadic humans have managed to make a home. The mysterious Glass Sailors are descendants of ancient Aurim, and in the Fifth Age number about eight thousand across the entire desert. Their customs are shaped by the unforgiving demands of the land they dwell in. Organised into about

four hundred different independent families, the Glass Sailors nominally recognise a monarchy that traces its descent to a royal prince of ancient Aurim. However, the privileges of kingship are a matter of prestige and courtesy only.

In the Fifth Age, the Shining Land has become even more dangerous. Voracious insects such as the horax and skrit still threaten human life, and the tearing black sandstorms have not abated. But now the Glass Sailors are threatened by opposing factions within their own people; the minions of Chaos; and the flights of hateful blue dragons.

Important Holdings

Indanalan River, Tomb of the Great King

Main Populace

Humans, blue othlorx

Personalities

King Danielou (*human adult male, unforgiving demeanor; Adventurer*)

Shaelah (*human elder female, fanatic demeanor; Master*)

Rhezhorax ("Razorwind") (*blue male great wyrm, cruel demeanor*)

Description

The Shining Lands is a region of smooth fields of volcanic glass, that surrounds Hitehkel to the north and east, extending into the Ring Mountains. Bordering on the glass plains are upthrust basalt columns surrounded by dunes of razor-sharp black sand. These are blown across the Shining Land by frequent winds, creating flesh-tearing sandstorms that polish the already smooth plain and strip flesh from any unprotected creature caught within the fierce black storms. This, and the deceptive glass traps, blinding sun, shimmering mirages, and deadly insects, contribute to making the Shining Land a deadly waste.

The Glass Sailors dwell underneath the glassified plain, in tube-like caves through which lava once flowed. These caves honeycomb the Shining Land, an entire subterranean world of smooth tunnels. In places the surface covers them in a very thin sheet or even breaks, creating a navigational hazard for the glass skimmers of the nomadic Sailors.

Life clusters around scattered oases and along broken riverbanks, including cotton plants, thick-barked fruit trees, wild gazelles, giant lizards, and ferocious insects. In the drier parts of the plain little lives, with the exception of blue Othlorx dragons. These powerful creatures lair in underground caverns, and ignore the flesh-shredding black sandstorms. They hunt gazelle, lizards, and even the Glass Sailors; blue Othlorx have a hatred of humans that they quench with bloodshed.

Many Glass Sailors face these attacks stoically, believing that the HighFather is testing their resolve. But many do not. King Danielou has made a treaty with a huge blue dragon named Razorwind.

Under the blue wyrm's direction, allied families report the locations of blue Othlorx to Razorwind. The human-hating Othlorx often disappear soon after.

Those families allied with the blue dragon are subject to great controversy: does accepting the aid of this outsider constitutes failing the tests that the HighFather has set for his chosen people? If so, then the royal family has been proven unworthy of paradise in the afterlife. Some families of the Glass Sailors have turned against their King, particularly those who live near Hitehkel. Led by the sorceress Shaelah, these fanatics believe that the HighFather tested Krynn during the Grim Winter, and that he will return soon to take the worthy to paradise. They venerate Chaemaphos, the fire dragon of Hitehkel, claiming that she is the messenger of the HighFather in Taladas. There has not yet been bloodshed between the families of Glass Sailors, but the two powerful dragons keep raising tensions as they play their own games.

Climate

The Shining Land's proximity to Hitehkel ensures high temperatures all year round. The sun beats down unmercifully, causing heat mirages and blinding the unprotected as it reflects off the glass. The sky is not entirely free of clouds, but these are more often clouds of poisonous vapour than actual water. Even when it rains, the glassified plain is too infertile to allow much plant growth.

Trade

The Glass Sailors are mostly self-sufficient, using black glass, insect carapaces, and carefully gathered timber and cotton to meet most of their needs. They gather highly polished pieces of glass for trade to the gnomes of the nearby Bilo Columns and occasional dwarven merchants from the deep caverns of the OdderRhing; in return, the Glass Sailors receive metal and other highly crafted products. The Glass Sailors transport their goods across the glass plain in their skimmers, boats with sails and special runners that skate across the glass.

Current Happenings

Razorwind is not an Othlorx, like the other blue dragons of the Shining Land; indeed he first came to Taladas in the Fifth Age. Originally from a mysterious land far to the south and east, Rhezhorax intended to make a realm for himself in the Shining Land. He was prevented from doing so by the appearance of the great fire dragon in Hitehkel: An attack by Chaemaphos forced Rhezhorax to lie low for a few years.

Rhezhorax has now begun to surreptitiously build a skull totem underneath the plain, with the help of humans who direct him to the lairs of lesser dragons. He hopes to create a dragon realm in the Shining Land without Chaemaphos learning of his activities or the location of his lair. If the fire dragon's human followers should

learn the truth, a war between the two dragons could be the dreadful result.

“Spine of Taladas” Island Chain

Lying between continental Taladas and Watermere is a coral reef island chain that sailors of the New League refer to as the *Spine of Taladas*. These islands range in size from small coral atolls to much larger, volcanic islands about fifty miles from tip to tip. Traders from the New League stop on the smaller atolls from time to time to restock their ships, but they do not approach the larger islands. Legends say that evil creatures dwell there, protecting their treasure from all who come near. Dragons and griffons soar high above the misty mountain peaks. Perhaps wisely, most sailors stay away.

The sailors would undoubtedly feel greater fear were they to learn the truth. The Spine of Taladas is home not only to fearsome creatures like dragons, but also the remnants of the ancient ogre race. These are not the brutish, ugly barbarians known elsewhere in Krynn; they are mysterious creatures, still imbued with primal magic from the Age of Dreams. There are four major cultures within the Spine island chain: the *Mischta*, or Twilight Irda; the mischievous *Bolandi* tree-dwellers; the *Nzunta*, ancient Dark Ogres; and the *Nzunta's* degenerate slaves, the Orughi.

The Irda homeland of *Anaiatha* was once to be found in the Spine of Taladas. For centuries the Irda, or "Gentle Ones", dwelt in peace in their island paradise. But during the Age of Might a vice appeared amongst this reclusive people - pride. They built towers on the hillsides, and decided that they no longer needed their gods. They still worshipped them, but only as a matter of tradition; in everything that was important, the Irda felt that the gods did not truly matter.

Even when the *Nzunta* attacked *Anaiatha* one century before the Cataclysm, the Irda remained defiant. They triumphed over the *Nzunta* without divine aid. Thus, on the evening of the Cataclysm, the High King commanded that the gods leave the Irda forevermore.

The Cataclysm was only meant to teach the Irda *humility*, not to punish or torture them. Thus, whilst *Anaiatha* was torn apart and became *Selasia* ("*The Place of Sundering*"), those Irda still loyal to the gods were borne away to a *new Anaiatha*.

Meanwhile, war resumed against the *Nzunta*, with grave losses. After the war, the survivors named themselves Twilight Irda, or *Mischta*, and began to seek redemption. During the fullness of the white moon *Solinu*, the *Mischta* could still hear *Anaiatha's* sweet song, giving them hope.

In the Age of Mortals, the *Mischta* can no longer hear *Anaiatha's* song. Some elders say that this is because the white moon is gone, replaced by a new golden orb; yet most *Mischta* fear worse. It was in 2 SC that the *Mischta* began to leave *Selasia* to walk disguised amongst other mortals for the first time since the Age of Dreams.

They seek the Irda; Anaiatha; or any clue as to their fate. Only the eldest Mischta and the very young remain in Selasia, waiting. Waiting for the Irda to return.

Important Holdings

From the southwest to the northeast, the largest islands of the Spine of Taladas are Vorm, Odith, Abshu, Fedron, Selasia, Chandion, and Little Taladas.

Main Populace

Mischta, Nzunta, Orughi, bolandi, gold dragons

Personalities

High King Kreeala Igrani (*Mischta elder female, penitent demeanor; Champion*)

The High Magus (*Nzunta elder female, cruel demeanor; Master*)

Aoltin Emeshen (*bolandi adult male, crafty demeanor*)

Description

The southernmost island in the chain is *Vorm*, which rose out of the sea in a spectacular display of volcanism three hundred years ago. 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.

Odith is a much smaller island, boasting a few old ruins dating back to the early years of the Age of Despair. The minotaur settlers were wiped out centuries ago in a war with the Nzunta, and only their spirits remain. The single volcano of Odith is dormant; it erupted during the Grim Winter, but has been quiet since. A family of rocs lives near the summit. 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.

Abshu is very similar to Odith in size and appearance, although it is 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, and the elves of Armach have started to mine it. Previous mines have met with disaster; a minotaur settlement was destroyed half a century ago by ogre raiding parties.

Fedron is the second largest island of the 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 that are ruled by the Roam, Deathmark, Fall, and Magus clans. Each clan has a few hundred Orughi worshipper-slaves.

Furthermore, three blue Othlorx dragons, bound to Clan Magus by old oaths of servitude serve the Nzunta.

Selasia is the largest island of the Spine of Taladas. It is almost entirely covered by dense, impenetrable rain forest in which the mischievous Bolandi dwell. Paths through the jungle are nearly impossible to find, and difficult for non-natives to traverse. Tigers, elephants, monkeys, and leopards live in the jungle. 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.

There are a few Mischta still living on *Selasia*'s mountainsides, mostly in Igrani Village. They dwell in clean caves or beautiful houses woven of bamboo and palm fronds. 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. The Mischta preserve these ruins as a moral lesson concerning the downfalls of pride.

Selasia has a ridge of forbidding mountains that runs along the length of the island, including many extinct volcanoes. Rocs live upon the highest peaks, as do over a dozen gold dragons, guarding the largest hatchery of golds in Krynn. The gold dragons avoid involvement in the affairs of the ogres of the islands, and are viewed with great awe by the Bolandi.

Chandion is a rugged island with 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.

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.

Climate

Ocean breezes cool these tropical islands, making the Spine of Taladas one of the most pleasant places in Krynn. Winter never comes to the islands, although they are occasionally struck by strong monsoons.

Trade

The islands are along the trading route between Taladas and the Dargonesti kingdom of Watermere, and trading ships pass through twice per year. However, the sailors avoid most of the larger islands, approaching only Abshu or small coral atolls such as Port Storm, Port Dragon, and Port Typhoon. These atolls are too small to provide protection against storms, and no port facilities have ever been built upon them.

Current Happenings

When the old magic left Krynn at the end of the Fourth Age, both Mischta and Nzunta races were easily able to turn to a much older kind of magic, one that was ancient when the ogre empires controlled the world - Sorcery. Some of the more meditative ogres have become aware that a second magic lies within, although neither race has yet fully developed their Mystical potential.

The Mischta occasionally hear news of the world from their wandering brethren, and came to realise that Sorcery is not at all common outside of their islands. This has caused more Mischta to leave Selasia on noble quests to bring knowledge to the mortal races. Soon, there will not be enough Mischta left to tend to the ruins of Selasia. Unfortunately, none now alive remembers the terrible monster that was imprisoned beneath the island, and what might happen if the enchanted Irda ruins were not preserved.

Through their dragon servants the Nzunta have been very informed about the state of affairs in Taladas. In fact, some Nzunta have even travelled to Taladas in secret, seeking resources that could be used against the hated Mischta...

The Spire Mountains

The flaming hell of Hitehkel is separated from the rest of Taladas by a narrow arc of towering mountains. Named *Itomyadnali* - "Mountainous Pinnacles" - by the gnomes who dwell there, this region is more popularly known as the gnome Spire Mountains. The most active volcanoes in Taladas are found here, spewing steam, ash, fumes, and flows of lava. Yet where other races see a wasteland, the gnomes have found a blessing. They have created havens of safety in the Spires, from which the mineral wealth of Hitehkel is collected.

During the Third Age of Krynn, the gnomes dwelt in warrens that were scattered throughout the central mountains of Taladas. However, during the geological upheaval of Hiteh's Night, the gnomes suffered terribly as their warrens collapsed or became unlivable. Rather than flee to a new land or allow their people to die, the gnomoi leaders set about creating mighty citadels, carved out of massive stone columns forced up by the Cataclysm.

The citadels proved enormously successful, and before long the gnomes began to see the Cataclysm as a blessing in disguise. No longer did they have to slave in unsafe mines for meagre veins of ore; they were able to simply refine and smelt the molten minerals provided by the Burning Sea.

Important Holdings

Aldinanachru, Nabrutacildiscara, Yahmetnachmaru

Main Populace

Gnomes, Othlorx Dragons

Personalities

Telemandarklominarus IV "The Stooped" (*gnomoi elder male, stern demeanor; Master*)

Description

The towering mountain ranges consist of narrow, soaring peaks and strange hexagonal columns. Mingled among these are massive volcanoes and geyser basins. The gnomes do not dwell on the surface, where they would be exposed to the harsh climate. Instead, they have carved cities from huge crystalline towers. The communities are known as the *citadels*, and are homes, warrens, fungus farms, fortresses, and centres of industry all in one. Each citadel has been constructed according to a common design that is altered to account for local factors such as height and width of the tower, quality of the stone, surrounding terrain, and hidden faults in the rock. Several citadels have been completed, and more are in progress of design and construction.

Notable citadels include:

- ⌘ Aldinananchru - The first citadel, noted for its lava-forging industry
- ⌘ Nabrutacildiscara - Mines copper high in the mountains
- ⌘ Yahmetnacharu - Purifies hardening lava to produce glass and ceramics

The king of the gnomes dwells in the great Glass Tower atop Aldinananchru, 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). The Guardsmen are organised into companies of about two hundred men, led by a Knight-Commandant and two to four Knights-Ordinary. The Knights-Commandant report to the Knight-General, who is responsible to the High Judge and the King's Council.

Gnomish technology is famous across Taladas, and the engineers of the Spires have designed many large and powerful inventions. These see everyday use in the citadels, although not always their *original* intended function (especially where minoi inventions are concerned). The Guard also benefits, with steam-driven metal ships that sail across the Burning Sea, one-man gliders, battle-kites, and lava-powered steam cannons among the most powerful designs. The fire-fleets have protected citadels from many flame minion invasions out of Hitehkel, although some ships are uselessly grounded since the Cooling Land has expanded in the Fifth Age.

The *sky citadels* are remarkable combinations of magic and technology that were constructed early in the Fourth Age. These floating mountains were intended to take the gnomes into the supposedly safer reaches of space. Seven were planned, but one was destroyed by a volcano, one rocketed into the sky, one was storm-tossed beyond Taladas, one collapsed upon launch, and one was never completed (the infamous Mt. Whiterock). Of the two successful sky citadels, one was lost in battle with the fire dragon Chaemaphos in 2 SC, and serves as her prison in the heart of Hitehkel. The

remaining sky citadel is home to the King's Council and the famous Company of the Dead, and guards the skies above the Spire Mountains.

The mountains are extremely dry, with trees and lush green plants being nonexistent. Lichens, mosses, and bloated fungi comprise most of the flora; any larger plants are carnivorous, due to the deficit of nutrients in the thin soil. Such horrors are not easily harvested. Indeed, there are so few herbivores that most beasts hunt other predators. Even the smallest creatures are fierce and clawed. The most powerful predators of the region, the many small dragons that hold large territories in the Spires, actually fly south to hunt. Although their lairs are hidden and safe from the dragon lords, hunting is a fearful risk made necessary by the lack of game in the Spire Mountains.

Climate

The weather in the Spire Mountains is uniformly horrible. Poisonous fumes and acidic rains blanket the lands. Summer and winter are meaningless terms here, for the ground itself radiates more heat than the feeble sun, which is rarely seen from behind the constant ashen clouds.

Trade

Within the citadels, business dealings are conducted in large communal halls on the residential levels. The gnomes rarely receive merchants from other lands, but heartily welcome any that do arrive. Raw copper and iron, ceramics, and devices of all kinds are exchanged for goods not available in the Spires such as timber, fabrics, and unusual foodstuffs.

The reptilian hurdu of Darkheart's nearby realm are most common, and are accepted more these days. The New League and Thenol also send merchant vessels via the pirate-infested Indanalis Sea.

Current Happenings

The formation of basalt plains between the Spire Mountains and the Hitehkel has diminished the strength of the fire-fleets, as few citadels now stand near open lava. A program has begun to dig canals of lava across the basalt, but work progresses slowly.

On the other hand, the gnomes' air vehicles are becoming more practical. Each citadel now has an air-ship supported by bags of lighter-than-air gas. Although slower than gliders and battle-kites, the air-ships are large enough for a crew to journey for weeks. Plans are afoot for aerial trade with friendly nations and the establishment of a sky-based Guard based in the sky citadel.

Steamwall Mountains

The eastern coast of Southern Hosk is guarded by a series of mountain ranges known as the Steamwall: 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. The most successful

inhabitants of this region are scrawny and dim-witted hobgoblins; only their disorganisation prevents them from taking advantage of their considerable numbers.

During the Age of Despair, the evil god Erestem corrupted the eggs of metallic dragons to create the draconians, reptilian armies to support her invasion of Krynn. Before the breeding of draconians was perfected, several inferior races were produced. One such breed, the Sesk, was abandoned in the Steamwall. The Sesk draconians have proven to be more viable than Erestem believed, for they have survived and carved a niche for themselves in the Steamwall. The Sesk occasionally ally themselves with the hurdu lizardfolk, but since the beginning of the Fifth Age violence between these two reptilian races has become the norm. The Sesk suspect that the hurdu living in the Steamwall are secretly serving the black othlorx lord Darkheart, known colloquially as the Doom of Draconians. There are few hurdu left in the Steamwall these days anyway, but this does not alleviate the draconians' fears.

Important Holdings

Mt. Tamerlin

Main Populace

Hobgoblins, Sesk draconians, hurdu

Personalities

Chieftain Husk-owg (*hobgoblin adult male, prideful demeanor; Adventurer*)

Description

The Steamwall blocks Southern Hosk from the poisonous Indanalis Sea. Except for a series of foothills in the north, the range rises with little warning. What little western foothills exist are covered with darkly twisted rainforest, stained by daily falls of polluted rain from out of the mountains. This is the region in which the Sesk draconians find themselves driven into hiding by the hobgoblin raiders and predation by the black dragon Darkheart.

The unpleasant conditions of the western Steamwall rapidly worsen as one travels east, becoming more nightmarish closer to the poisoned sea. Hideously corrupted plants with pale, gelatinous leaves and pus-like sap suck up the foul minerals and breathe the acidic breezes off the Indanalis Sea. It is said that some crawl painfully across the slopes and cry hungrily in thin voices. Other things that were once animals are even more horrible. How many of these are chemical-induced hallucinations, and how many are deformed mutants, is hard to say.

The most numerous inhabitants of the Steamwall are hobgoblins, who have thrived in the adverse environment. They once lived in mountain caves, but earthquakes and volcanoes drove them to build villages of drafty long-houses. These are distinguishable by their flimsy thatch roofs, stilts to keep out vermin, and pyramids of

skulls stacked before the door. The hobgoblins take the heads of their enemies as a sign of valour in battle.

To increase the collections of skulls, the hobgoblins enjoy raiding nearby settlements - other hobgoblins, Sesk draconians, dwarves to the north, or the Marak valley kender. Hobgoblin war parties encircle a town and send stealthy scouts to determine the best approach. Scavenged and traded armour is worn during battle; at other times, hobgoblins go naked but for a loincloth and a variety of ornaments and bits of bone pinned and tied to the red-brown skin that hangs loosely on scrawny hobgoblin frames.

The hobgoblins also place the skulls of their relatives and ancestors in special niches at the front of the long-houses. These skulls form the basis of their primitive religion of ancestor-worship. The hobgoblins once believed in a god who judged the dead: Mwarg, who overthrew the previous god Usk-Do. Now that Erestem and Hiteh have departed Krynn, the hobgoblins pay respect only to their ancestors.

Climate

All year long, clouds of corrosive steam roil up from the Indanalis Sea and mix with ash and gas from the many volcanoes to form a hellish brew. The rain from these clouds is black and poisonous, and coats the slopes with chemical residue. In winter, icy winds freeze the hobgoblins, and many long-houses are burned to the ground by careless fire-builders. The reptilian draconians and lizard-folk, on the other hand, must either migrate to the southern Steamwall or spend most of their time sleeping in warm burrows.

Trade

The hobgoblins observe visitors with great interest, and show them gracious hospitality. Provided that the strangers take care to cause no offense, the hobgoblins will treat them as well as they can. In this way, the hobgoblins set up trade with brave merchants, exchanging exotic hides, plumes, and herbs for useful goods. The hobgoblins haggle the prices for their services, and then set forth acquiring the strange substances requested.

Current Happenings

The hobgoblins are overjoyed, for their reverence of the ancestors has finally been rewarded. The venerated skulls of the ancestors have begun to speak, revealing the power of Mysticism to worthy and valourous hobgoblins. This is believed to signify a new golden age of prosperity, wisdom, and valour.

The black dragon Darkheart has personally visited many hobgoblin communities throughout the Steamwall. Once they discovered that Darkheart was a great chieftain instead of the wild beast he resembled, the hobgoblins greeted him and held feasts in his honour. It certainly didn't hurt that Darkheart brought them sea monsters for meat.

Darkheart claims to be impressed with the skull pyramids he has seen; he has one much like it at his house. In fact, he would like to build a second pyramid, on *this* side of the sea. The hobgoblins are helping him to track down draconians and small othlorx for this purpose.

The Tamire

Gentle, rolling plains dotted with low-rising mountain ranges and scattered areas of dense woodland thickets sparsely covers this land of tall-grass prairie and thorny shrub. In the Fifth Age, the people of the Tamire are still recovering from the disastrous Grim Winter, and the subsequent minotaur grab for power in the League Wars. The tentative creation of a Tamire Union has made the people of the Tamire an emerging factor in Taladas.

Important Holdings

Tamoguir, the Ilquar Mountains, Rudil, Milgath, Barask

Main Populace

Human barbarians, elves, goblins, centaurs, minotaurs

Personalities

Krogand Boyla of the Uigan (*human middle-aged male, valiant demeanor, Champion*)

Laylanda Krysheri (*human young adult female, impetuous demeanor, Novice*)

Firebrand Stormglow (*centaur adult male, brave demeanor, Adventurer*)

Gnosh Bonescorcher (*goblin adult male, conniving demeanor, Adventurer*)

Korsh Skullsplitter (*goblin young adult male, plotting demeanor, Novice*)

Foxfire Everglow of the *hosk'i imou merkitsa* (*elf middle aged male, inspiring demeanor, Master*)

Jasmynth Everglow (*elf young adult female, roguish demeanor, Novice*)

Tigerclaw Plainswalker (*elf adult male, courageous demeanor, Champion*)

Description

The Tamire lies in the northwestern region of Taladas, just above the League of Minotaurs. Despite two low mountain ranges that run down the center of the Tamire, and scattered areas of dense woodland thickets, the majority of the Tamire is a steppe, with the main vegetation being tall prairie grass and thorny scrub.

The northern and southern mountain ranges, called Uesi Ilquar ("Big Ilquar") and Burya Ilquar ("Little Ilquar") respectively, run down the center of the Tamire. Running between them is a broad gap known as the Tamoguir (Land for Passing Through). This gap plays a major role in the Fifth Age as a major boundary and parley site

between the Tamire Union and the Elf Clans (also known as the *hosk' imou merkitsa*).

The human tribes of the Tamire include the Uigan, the Alan-Atu, and the Pureshk. These tribes have joined together to form a greater nation of human peoples, the Tamire Union. In the northern regions of the Tamire and on the Lower Panak, lives a separate human tribe, the Kazar. These northern tribes are very similar to the Uigan, but have a long-standing feud with them, and have not joined the Tamire Union. Nor do they bear ill will towards the New League of Southern Hosk, which has not extended its military might that far north thus far.

The Tamire Union dominates the steppes between the ocean and the Ilquar Mountains and cultivates the area. On the inland side of the Ilquar ranges, the Elf Clans are dominant. Between the humans and elves are the goblin villages of the Ilquar Mountains. Long hunted by the elves and persecuted by the humans, the goblins have formed a loose collection of family-based villages in the Ilquar Mountains. A small tribe of centaurs is beginning to form in the plains east of the Tamire Union's land, and just above the range of the Ilquar Goblins. These centaurs, led by Firebrand Stormglow, have settled in this small area. Already, negotiations are springing up between the Tamire Union and the centaur tribes.

Finally, along the coast near the mouth of Tiderun are Rudil, Milgath, and Barask. These cities of the New League have been heavily fortified to fend off attack. Founded upon trading with the peoples of Northern Hosk, the open hostility that the Elf Clans and the Tamire Union bear the New League is slowly draining these towns.

Climate

The Tamire enjoys a chill weather year-round. Nice, cool breezes sweep the land from the Western Ocean, producing sporadic rainfall.

Trade

Trade between the New League and the tribes of the Tamire has become uncommon because of the recent League Wars. Those human clans who are able to survive without the trade of the minotaur merchants do so; the elf clans refuse to so much as communicate with the New League, although the goblins are very receptive to merchants and never harm them.

The Tamire Union, and the Elf Clans trade extensively with each other, although neither will trade with the Ilquar goblins. The Tamire Union trade in furs, horses, feathers, woven blankets, pottery, and hides. The Elf Clans trade their specially crafted bows, as well as furs and feathers.

Current Happenings

The Tamire Union and the Elf Clans are still bitter due to the New League's attempt to conquer the Tamire in the League Wars several years ago. The Uigan and Elf Clans are openly hostile to the League, and will attack their representatives on sight; other human tribes are somewhat less hostile.

The Kazar in the far north are still very friendly towards the New League (especially its merchants) and their warlords are arguing that an attack upon the hated Uigan must come soon. A powerful Kazar *tegin*, Thinggis Kazan, has begun to arrange marriages for his many daughters in order to create family alliances. Once mocked for having no sons, Kazan now possesses the beginnings of a Kazar horde.

Negotiations between the Tamire Union and the Elf Clans are at an all time high, and they are beginning to gradually eradicate what they consider the last threat to peace in the Tamire: the goblin villages of the Ilquar Mountains. The centaur tribes are somewhat friendly towards the Tamire Union, which is emerging as a major power in Northern Hosk.

Thenol

Thenol was founded after the chaos of Hiteh's Night, by refugees from the Auric province of Styrlia who fled south and established a small knot of realms that were unified to become the Kingdom of Thenol. Throughout the Age of Despair, Thenol was a bleak land, first dominated by selfish and divided Great Lords, and then crushed under the heel of the evil Temple of Hith. Although not the mightiest realm of Southern Hosk, the armies of Thenol threatened Armach and the Minotaur League with their fanatics and legions of foul undead, controlled by the evil priests of Hith.

Yet in the Fifth Age, Thenol has risen from its sinister past to become a beacon of hope for humanity, a realm where mortals have resisted the awesome power of the dragon lords. In Thenol, it seems that humanity is defined by the age in which it lives: the awesome empire of Aurim that existed during the Age of Might; the corrupted kingdom of Thenol in the Age of Despair; and now a new Thenol, in the Age of Mortals.

Important Holdings

New Aurim, Hawkbluff, the Border Castles, the Unclean Lands

Main Populace

Humans, bakali

Personalities

King Raimos (*human elder male, diligent demeanor; Champion*)

Baron Markeides (*human elder male, courageous demeanor; Champion*)

Count Malarchus (*human elder male, scheming demeanor; Legend*)

Description

Filling most of the lower arc of Southern Hosk is the kingdom of Thenol. Although officially it is the largest nation in territory, Thenol has lost control of sizeable amounts of land since the Grim Winter, which King Raimos is struggling to regain. Thenol is under threat by the remnants of the Temple of Hith that once ruled the kingdom; from savage dragons that scheme to conquer the fertile lowlands from their lairs in the Steamwall Mountains and Blackwater

Glade; and from aggression by the Federation of Armach and the New League.

King Raimos is the first Thenolite king to ever have wrested power from the Great Lords that controlled Thenol. Prior to the rise of Raimos, the kings were suffered out of tradition alone. His duties were purely ceremonial - he brought the Senate to order, signed proclamations, and appeared at holidays to give his blessing to whatever was asked. When the Temple of Hith, led by the scheming Bishop Trandamere, not only was the King a puppet, but the Senate itself was made a tool of Trandamere. Those Lords who did not openly side with the Temple of Hith (attracted by promises of wealth and power) were terrorised into compliance or butchered in the night by Trandamere's undead minions. Thus did the Bishop seize control of Thenol, and rule it for over seventy years with armies of foul undead, created on Dragon's Night.

After the Grim Winter, most of the undead in the Temple of Hith's armies returned to the grave, no longer compelled to serve the priests now that Hith had abandoned Krynn. Only those undead that had been thoroughly evil in life remained. This sudden loss of power left the temple unprepared for the rebel uprising that had been fermenting for many years, supported by priests and priestesses of Mislaxa. The Temple of Hith in New Aurim was set alight, and priests of Hith driven from villages. The Great Lords were likewise unable to maintain order, and the kingdom erupted in rebellion.

Only through the cooperation of two of the Great Lords was Thenol saved from dissolution. Baron Markeides and Prince Raimos had resisted Trandamere for years, labouring behind the scenes to reduce the Bishop's power and increase their own strength. Raimos and Markeides took the downfall of the Temple of Hith as an opportunity to seize control of Aurim and the surrounding lands, forming an island of stability. But the coming of the dragon lords imperiled even this small victory.

The terrible red dragon Abaxibon (known as Abomination by mortals), settled in an active volcano in the New Mountains, and challenged other dragons for rulership of this land. Green othlorx from the forests responded, xenophobically attempting to drive the wyrm from "their" lands, and being slain for their efforts. The countryside was laid waste by the dragons' battles, and Abaxibon grew more powerful.

Raimos quickly learned of this terrible peril, and resolved to defeat the red wyrm, regardless of the danger. Calling upon the bravest cavaliers and lords of Thenol, he rode for the New Mountains, knowing that he would be met by death. But on the third day of travel, a strange man named Hakik the Cryomancer stopped Raimos' company. This mysterious fellow warned Raimos of the threat of the Dragon Lords - that if mortals did not fight against them, soon evil reptiles would dominate all of Taladas. The Cryomancer also gave Raimos a wondrous gift - a footman's lance, forged of some silver metal, which was enchanted to strike a deathblow to any dragon it struck.

Raimos and his company met Abaxibon one day later, and though the monster killed many, Raimos managed to impale the dragon upon his silver lance, killing it. Returning to new Aurim, Raimos named his company the First Company of the Lance, and established an order of warriors known as the Noble Knights. The Noble Knights would serve as the sword arm of the King, and keep the kingdom free of all evil - whether that evil be dragon, undead, or the sinister plans of corrupt men.

Thus, the kingdom of Aurim is slowly recovering from the Age of Despair. The Noble Knights patrol the kingdom as a visible symbol of Thenol's New Hope, and the Lance of Raimos protects the land from mighty dragons. The Great Lords maintain Castles in Thenol's border regions. This ensures that the New League or the Confederation of Armach does not see fit to expand south. However, the capital New Aurim is a depressing city, still burdened with the legacy of horror that clutched at Thenol for over seventy years.

Built on the banks of the Evole River, the capital of Thenol is a sprawling mass of unplanned streets and neighbourhoods, all enclosed within a grey stone wall. The streets follow no pattern, twisting and turning where some ancestral builder thought it best. Main streets turn into dead ends, narrow lanes suddenly widen into circles, open sewage ditches flow to the river; all these things can be found here. The wall surrounding New Aurim is approximately 20 feet high. Once allowed to fall into disrepair, the wall has been rebuilt since the Grim Winter, and knights in green and red silk guard the battlements.

At the heart of New Aurim are the public buildings, which have been rebuilt since the reign of Bishop Trandamere. Once there were temples to a multitude of gods at the heart of New Aurim. Now these are abandoned, all gods but Hith outlawed by Bishop Trandamere. After the Grim Winter, the priests of Hith lost their powers, and the populace burned the Temple of Hith. The cyclopean ruins of the Temple appear cold and dead, and inspire fear in those who come too near. It is known that the Temple was built over an extensive series of old catacombs. There may be entrances deep within the ruins to dark places underground.

Raimos dwells within the King's Palace, in the centre of New Aurim. Construction of the King's Palace first began when New Aurim was founded, and has continued ever since. It is a sprawling jumble of different architectural styles squeezed together with little sense or reason. Since Raimos was crowned, much work has been put into repairing the damage done to the Palace due to lack of attention. Abandoned wings have been cleared out and made livable, the roofs have been repaired, and a staff of several hundred caretakers and gardeners has been hired to repair the tiled mosaic floors, tender the gardens, and maintain the building. Only the extensive cellars and secret dungeons have been ignored; fearing what might be found down there, King Raimos ordered them sealed with massive slabs of stone. Whatever vile creatures and serpents that dwelled within remain to this day.

Fifty miles away from New Aurim, in the rugged hills at the lower end of the New Mountains, is Hawkbluff, a desolate and lonely place far from any city or town. This is the western edge of the area controlled directly by King Raimos; beyond Hawkbluff lies a sinister land, one that still shows signs of the corruption of Hith. The region west of Hawkbluff has become known as the Unclean Lands, and is thought to be home to renegade bakali lizardfolk, degenerate human villages, and the remnants of the temple of Hith's undead army. Few travel to the Unclean Lands, and some that do never return.

Hawkbluff is a jutting tor that stands at the edge of a jagged valley. In and on this pillar of rock, the Temple of Hith once carved the First Temple of their faith. The rock was honeycombed with passages and chambers, in which important priests lived, libraries, relics, and treasures were kept, and heretics were imprisoned. Unknown to all but the high priests of Hith, secret dungeons and catacombs were delved that could only be accessed by Bishop Trandamere. These have never been discovered by the knights of King Raimos, and hold the bones of many who crossed the Bishop and lost. Undead patrol these hallways, aided by living guards of even more hideous and sinister natures.

After King Raimos first unified the shattered Kingdom after the Grim Winter with the creation of the Noble Knights, Hawkbluff was attacked and sacked by the First Company of the Lance. The inhabitants of Hawkbluff fled or were killed, and the outbuildings and residences around the valley were put to the torch. However, Hawkbluff was not completely cleansed by this attack, and foul things dwell there still. King Raimos has not yet dealt with the threat of Hawkbluff and the Unclean Lands.

Climate

Most of Thenol is barely above sea level. Warm, wet southwestern breezes blowing off the Windless Ocean drop large amounts of rain over this region. The kingdom of Thenol and most of the wilds around it are dotted by subtropical forests and swamp.

Trade

Thenol is quite friendly with the dragon realm of Highvale, and freely trades brightly coloured silks, wool, and grains to this nation. Relations with the New League and the Confederation of Armach are much colder. The Confederation demands unreasonable tariffs from Thenol, and the legions of the New League occasionally seize Thenolite trade caravans, on the grounds that they harbour spies.

Current Happenings

King Raimos is well into old age, and his advisors are troubled, for he has no legitimate heir. Raimos has given them some indication that he intends to pass on the crown and lance of Thenol to somebody who is worthy of the responsibility, not merely allow a firstborn son to claim it. However, it is not clear whether Raimos has somebody in mind as successor yet - possible contenders include one of his three daughters (none of whom are yet twenty, or even married) or the bastards Raimos is rumoured to have sired among the servants of his palace.

Count Malarchus, a Great Lord whose life span was extended by the power of Hith, has maintained control of his demesne in the western Unclean Lands. Reports coming out of that region indicate that Malarchus has learned the powers of Mysticism - specifically, those of Necromancy. Malarchus has not yet acted against the King or his Noble Knights, but it can only be a matter of time.

Upper Panak

See "Hoartongue the Mute" under **Dragon Realms**.

Watermere

In a vast undersea valley hundreds of miles southwest of Southern Hosk is the sea elven kingdom of Watermere, known also as *Quoonoqua* to the sea elves. It is a broad and sandy realm in the tropical latitudes of Krynn, featuring many small islands and massive coral reefs.

The sea elves of Watermere are Dargonesti, or *Quoowahb* in their native tongue. Originally these sea elves were members of the Dimernesti community in the Outer Shoals off the coast of Armach, and lived in a society that was organised into a simple guild system. A portion of the population named the Purifiers attempted to reform problems that they perceived in Dimernesti society, but were unsuccessful. Instead the Purifiers split from the Dimernesti in 1863 PC, and migrated to the southwest. Drudarch Takalurion led them, a skilled warrior and wizard as well as a man of conscience and wit. The Purifiers founded Watermere, and eventually developed into the Dargonesti.

The Dargonesti have often been beset by war: War against the koalinths, barbarians of the sea; war against the foul Sea Witch and her sea dragons; and war against the creatures of Chaos itself. Yet through it all, the Dargonesti have survived and Watermere has grown strong.

At the beginning of the Fifth Age, Watermere was in confusion. Badly hurting after the two recent wars (one against sea dragons, the other against creatures of Chaos), the sea elves were ill-prepared for the departure of the gods and the loss of wizardry. Beset by marauding koalinths and strange new ocean currents created by the changing moons, the Dargonesti made an alliance with human

fishermen on the surface. Working together to survive in the Age of Mortals, relations between sea elves and humans are good.

Important Holdings

Takaluras, Allshrine, Gloorghin-Tekh, Land of the Dead, Quoob, the Tomb of Ships

Main Populace

Dargonesti sea elves, merfolk

Personalities

Speaker of the Moon Treyen Silverwake (*Dargonesti adult male, inspiring demeanor; Hero*)

Sea King (*Merfolk adult male, gruff demeanor; Adventurer*)

Daydra Stonecipher (*Dargonesti elder female, patient demeanor; Archetype*)

Sagarassi the Sea-Witch (*elven elder female, megalomaniac demeanor; Legend*)

Description

Watermere's terrain consists of smooth and sandy shallow sea valleys, and beautiful coral reefs that are fabulously coloured and patterned. Some of the reefs have built so tall over the centuries that they break the surface, forming atolls and small islands that are rented to human fishermen. The waters of this tropical sea are clear and blue, allowing some sunlight to filter down to Watermere during the day.

The ancestral residence of the Dargonesti Speaker of the Moon is located in Takaluras, the political, financial, and cultural capital of Watermere. The city has highly polished crystal spires, carefully carved walls of coral, and magically gleaming stone markers that light major thoroughfares. Takalurias boasts temples, libraries, meeting halls, places of business, governmental buildings, even a crystal domed Air Zoo. On the other hand, few Dargonesti actually live in Takaluras.

Just twenty miles northeast of the capital is the sunken island of Kosketh Minor, whose human cities of Hoorward and Farport were claimed by the ocean during the Cataclysm. Hoorward has been rebuilt and inhabited by the Dargonesti, but Farport remains a fell ruin, haunted by the ghouls of drowned humans. The Order of the Dolphin carefully guards Farport, ensuring that no dark things emerge.

To the east of Quoonoqua are the territories of the tritons (who are friendly with the Dargonesti) and the merfolk kingdom of Machgloonestu ("*Lands of the Fish-people*"). The merfolk also control some territory to the northwest of Quoonoqua.

To the south and west of Watermere is the edge of the Taladan continental shelf, which plunges into the dark and murky abyss of the deep ocean. These pelagic depths, which fall to two miles beneath the surface, are the homelands of the koalinths and ancient undead spirits of the sea. Some thirty to fifty miles beyond the cliffs of the continental shelf a long undersea mountain range rises out

of the depths, formed over the ages by a volcanic fault line. This evil realm is home to Sagarassi, the Sea Witch, and her sea dragon allies.

Climate

The tropical waters of Quoonoqua are warm and relatively shallow; the water is clear enough that some sunlight filters down to the Dargonesti settlements, enough for the sea elves to tell when it is night or day. Watermere lies in the path of several warm, steady ocean currents, remaining pleasant for most of the year.

During the wet season the coral atolls on the surface are beset by terrible typhoons that imperil any craft that sail into them, but beneath the ocean's surface the gale-force winds merely create strong currents that are uncomfortable, but not dangerous, for the exposed sea elves.

Trade

The Dargonesti of Quoonoqua try to be self-sufficient; if they cannot produce an item, then they tend to do without. The average Dargonesti is a farmer or fish breeder. The Dargonesti diet consists of various plants and certain species of fish. Vast farms of kelp and other edible plants dot the terrain of Watermere, where an occasional fishherder and her school of tuna may wander, grazing on the vegetation.

The Dragonesti occasionally trade with human or minotaur sailors, often giving them the salvage of shipwrecks in exchange for minor items of surface-make. However, the sea elves do not deal with other sea races if they can avoid it - especially not the Dimernesti.

Current Happenings

The merfolk have tired of Dargonesti control of the region separating their territory. They demand that the connecting region be returned to their King immediately... lest there be war.

Chapter Three – Life in Taladas

Most aspects of life in Taladas vary from region to region, and even the most basic facts of day-to-day life can be markedly different in particular realms. However, there are some aspects that are common across the entire continent, with only minor variations. Characters who intend to explore the lands of Taladas must be aware of this, and take advantage of whatever familiar practices they find.

Money

The *steel denarius* of the former Minotaur League is the standard currency in Taladas; it became widely accepted during the height of the Minotaur League's merchant power in the Fourth Age. The following are considered equal in value to one steel denarius:

- ⌘ One gnomish high-grade steel *bit*
- ⌘ Ten silver pieces (such as the *crowns* minted in Armach)
- ⌘ Fifty gold pieces (such as the *talents* of Thenol and Old Aurim)
- ⌘ One hundred copper pieces

Coins of other metals are best sold by pound for more commonly accepted currency. This rate of exchange is generally only guaranteed in civilised lands with access to trade routes: Baltch, the Rainward Isles, and the nations of Southern Hosk. Old Aurim and the gnome towers also exchange coins at the above rates, although trade is less common. Other realms typically operate on a barter-based economy.

Languages

Unlike Ansalon, there is no common tongue in Taladas. Although the educated few in parts of Southern Hosk, the Spires, or Baltch might be familiar with a variety of languages, most people in different parts of the continent speak different tongues.

This does not mean that individuals of different nationalities are unable to speak with one another. Many of Taladas' languages are related, sharing common words, phrases, and structure. This may allow people of different backgrounds to attempt communication, albeit with difficulty – using simple concepts, borrowed words, and gesture is often essential.

This similarity of languages occurs when two or more languages share a common root tongue, and thus possess common features. Additionally, nationalities present within the same geographic region often borrow words and phrases from each other – in fact, Kothian (the language of Kristophan, Highvale, and the New League) was formed when the Auric human tongue was combined with the language of invading minotaurs from Ansalon.

The languages of Taladas include Alan-atu, Auric, Baltch, Dwarvish (Fianawar and Nylgai), Elvish (Ancient, Cha'asii, Dargoi,

Sylvanesti and Tamire), Gnomish (Boli and Hitehkel), Goblin, Hoor, Kothic, Marak Kender, Panak, Payan, Thenolian, and Uigan.

Travelling

Heroes who attempt to travel from one side of Taladas to the other will encounter many difficulties. There are very few roads or highways to allow travel in cart or wagon; more often, heroes will have to follow crude trails or travel over rough country. Some areas are almost impossible to traverse, even with the most sure-footed mount; such regions include the Ring Mountains, the Spires, and the jungles of Neron.

Therefore, most long journeys are best accomplished by sea. The New League and the engineers of Baltch boast excellent ships, which sail around the southern coast of the continent to forge the main link between east and west Taladas. The elves of Armach possess less sturdy but beautiful watercraft, which are sometimes accompanied by a crew of Dimernesti sea elves.

Overland travel allows about 24 miles to be covered each day in grassland or civilised regions, 12 miles per day in rough regions (such as light forest, hills, scrub, steppe, or wastelands), 6 miles per day in difficult terrain (heavy forest, foothills, low mountains, tundra, and sandy deserts). Only 4 miles or less can be travelled per day in impenetrable terrain (swamps, jungle, or high mountains). Impassable regions must be circumvented.

Therefore, a journey from Morgad to New Aurim would take nearly three days on foot - a distance of 65 miles through civilised terrain.

The movement rates given above assume ideal travelling conditions - good weather and a light load. Encumbered travellers must travel more slowly, and inclement weather can halve the distance traversed each day or even bring all progress to a halt. Vehicles such as carts and wagons can travel along trails or flat grassland, or steeds can bear some of the load, allowing for faster travel. Sledges or dog sleds can be used on ice-covered regions of the Upper Panak, and glass skimmers have a maximum speed of 4 miles per hour on the open plains of the Shining Land.

With good weather, a sailing ship can manage a speed of 2 miles per hour; thus, a sea journey between Morgad and Kristophan would require less than two days. A longer journey, say from Morgad to Baltch (about 2,000 miles!) would take at least six weeks.

The Calendar

The calendar year contains twelve months of thirty days each. A week consists of seven days. Some cultures do not name the individual days in each week, counting only the days in each month. Note that the seasons of Taladas are the opposite of those in Ansalon - when the southern hemisphere is in the deep of winter, Taladas experiences midsummer.

Armach Calendar

The elves of Armach brought their calendar with them from Ansalon. They honour the gods with the days of the week and use seasonal descriptives to correspond to months.

Days

Gateway, Bright Eye, Night's Eye, Dead Eye, Dream Dance, Winged Trade, World Tree.

Months

Summer - Summer Home, Summer Flame, Summer End;

Autumn - Autumn Harvest, Autumn Twilight, Autumn Dark;

Winter - Winter Come, Winter Night, Winter Deep;

Spring - Spring Dawning, Spring Rain, Spring Blossom.

Aurim Calendar

This ancient calendar is still used by the gnomes and in Baltch, Thenol, the Rainward Isles, and of course Old Aurim. Days of the week are named after celestial objects in the Taladan skies, as known by the ancient Auric astrologers, and the months bear the same names as constellations of a long-forgotten zodiac.

Days

Solus, Vendus, Holus, Lunus, Angonus, Tellus, Aurus.

Months

Summer - Daiduran, Kaldoran, Randoran;

Autumn - Amodan, Baladan, Zendoran;

Winter - Brectadan, Neraran, Eldaran;

Spring - Feloran, Kathoran, Gratharan.

Minotaur

The minotaur calendar is used in the New League, Kristophan, Highvale, and southern parts of the Tamire.

Days

Ambedan, Praidan, Kristodan, Morgadan, Nuradan, Eredan, Sargadan.

Months

Summer - Ambeoutus, Duander, Treander;

Autumn - Eregatus, Pentander, Skythus;

Winter - Septander, Octander, Novander;

Spring - Decander, Stellus, Dodecander.

Tamire

Humans and elves of the Tamire steppe mark the passing months with reference to the gods of the nomads and the activities of animals around them. The nomads do not commonly name the individual

names of the month, nor do they set aside special times for any activity; work, play and worship occur every day.

Months

Summer - Qu'uan, Hunting-Tiger, Soaring-Wyrm

Autumn - Mislaxa, Sleeping-Owl, Digging-Hare

Winter - Grey-Fox, Tiger-Ice, Waking-Bear

Spring - Jijin, Nesting-Hawk, Running-Foal

Chapter Four - Important Groups

Several societies and organisations exist in modern Taladas, surviving the chaos of the Grim Winter or being born in the new order of the Fifth Age. Some of these groups are far-reaching, present in many regions of Taladas; others are provincial or isolated. Some of these groups are powerful and influential; others have not yet become dominant. However, all of these groups are sources of support for the heroes and villains of the Fifth Age.

The Academy of Mysteries

The Academy of Mysteries in Kristophan is not a place of ancient lore, or a collection of the learned pondering the words found in dusty tomes. The Academy operates out of the Palace of Kristophan that was once home to the Emperors of the old League of Minotaurs. It is most famous as a place where the sacred has become real, where mortals have the possibility of piercing the veil and finding the answers that they seek. Scholars at the Academy of Mysteries believe that knowledge and understanding is the highest virtue of mortals, not empty learning.

The Founding

The minotaur philosopher Ambedotus founded the Academy of Mysteries in the fifteenth year after the Grim Winter, in Kristophan. Ambedotus had recently discovered an unsuspected power of the divine within mortals, and offered a place in Kristophan for any philosopher or priest who was willing to question the world's new mysteries and share in a community of learning. They pursued truth through analytical discussion and rational questioning, not through ancient texts.

Ambedotus was able to awaken similar divine powers within those seekers who were prepared to question their formerly held understanding of the world. The philosophers and sages who gathered at the Academy discussed their beliefs and compared their experiences with the "inner divinity" of Ambedotus.

The community began to believe that the greatest secrets cannot be answered through study or listening to the teachings of others - those who desire answers must learn to truly ask questions, and to admit how much there is to learn. Many of the most respected patrons of the Academy declared themselves to be ignorant and unworthy of the praise directed to them by others - mere disciples of the path.

Evolution

By critically questioning everything that they see, the philosophers at the Academy began to realise that their preconceived ideas of the world were incorrect, and sought out new beliefs. Although those sages and arcanists who still hoarded secret lore

from previous ages scorned this approach, it proved remarkably effective in revealing the greatest power of the Fifth Age - the mastery of mysticism.

Many of those who have spent time at the Academy have developed mystical power - indeed, it often comes unasked for. Those who stayed for a time with the community at the Academy soon discovered that they were able to learn and understand the mysteries of mysticism without the need of a formal teacher. In addition, an Academy mystic who had the opportunity to engage in philosophical discussion with another mystic each day learned much more quickly.

Ambedotus explored the nature of the "inner divinity" but is reluctant to share his convictions with those who had not already arrived at a similar belief. He has been heard to explain that perhaps the powers that were once understood as gods and spirits are still present in Krynn - only that they are now better understood.

It has been established that mysticism is a very different power to the "natural philosophies" of sorcery, as explained by the enigmatic Obsidian Warlock. Although calling Ambedotus and the Warlock "friends" is thought to be something of an overstatement, these two teachers have demonstrated a mutual respect and willingness to explore these mysteries together. However, the Warlock has not visited Kristophan for many years, remaining in the wildernesses of Taladas.

The Present

Over fifteen years after the founding of this mystical community, the mystics of the Academy do not all share one idea of what their magic is, or how it works. However, many consider the idea that it is a divine spirit that penetrates all things, breathed into the world of Krynn by the supreme forces. The mystic believes that the only true good in the world is moral virtue, and that a person should always seek to be virtuous rather than wealthy, successful, or even happy (although these things certainly are not evil). Furthermore, the only evil in the world is wickedness. By living a wise life, the mystic is in tune with the divine spirit, and becomes an important part of the world.

These new philosophers claim that although unpleasant things may happen in life, this is the way of the world and not due to evil spirits, bad luck, or anything that the individual can blame himself for. The mystic always does the best that he can in his current situation, but if he fails anyway, he tries not to feel regret or guilt - he has tried his best. This message is a source of comfort from the terrors of the Fifth Age.

The Academy has proven to be a source of mortal power in the Fifth Age. Mystics from the Academy have begun travelling to far lands, bringing the power of inner divinity to those oppressed by powerful dragon lords or hateful undead. Furthermore, the philosophy of the Academy is spreading to the New League, Thenol, and even the secluded elven land of Armach. The mystics do not believe that they hold all of the answers, and they avoid trying

to impose their opinions on others; nonetheless, their sayings are becoming more popular, and foreign priests (particularly of Nuran and Greylord) are beginning to adopt the academic lifestyle.

Other foreign powers see only the magical power of the Academy, and have declared it to be a threat. The dragon lord Darkheart fears that widespread use of mysticism by mortals will enable them to reclaim the lands claimed by dragon land-shaping. Emperor Eragas of the New League lusts after the new magic, understanding only that it is different from the sorcery of his secretive Grey-Robed sorcerers. The Cult of Hith stole secrets of mysticism from the Academy, and now desires the Academy's destruction. These and other enemies prepare to strike against the philosopher-mystics of Kristophan.

The College of Magic

When Eragas the Brutish first conquered the human settlements of New Styrlia, the minotaurs did not commonly study the arts of wizardry. A couple of his followers wore the Black Robes, but they were not highly respected by the warriors of Eragas' fleet. The humans that had been conquered were not especially skilled in magic either, for life in those dark years was too trying to waste time on the study of esoteric affairs.

The humans still possessed magical tomes and instruments rescued from the ruins of Aurim - they were just unable to understand them. The minotaur mages Jemnarion and Tertalius, however, had no such difficulties. With a virtual treasure trove of arcane lore captured from the humans, these Black Robed minotaurs quickly became much more powerful than they'd ever imagined. It was not long before the two wizards showed their minotaur kin what they had gained, and taught them to respect the power of magic. Minotaurs and humans alike began to seek out apprenticeship in the dark arts, and Jemnarion began to plan the possibility of constructing a Tower of High Sorcery on the isle of Luminari.

However, this troubled the minotaur leaders. The loyalty of the Black Robed Wizards was to magic first and the growing minotaur nation second; furthermore, the wizards spurned worship of Sargonnas, the traditional minotaur deity, but followed the edicts of the mysterious black moon. By the time of the third leader of the infant League of Minotaurs, the Black Robes had become a powerful faction that vied with the minotaur generals for control of the League.

The Founding

The next ruler, Emperor Velurian, chose to act rather than simply allow the Black Robes to grow more powerful as his predecessor had. Velurian knew that he could never reign in the wizards by force, nor could he ignore the power that they had. Instead of fighting the Black Robes, Velurian gave them a gift.

He ordered that academies be built in Kristophan, Morgad and Thera, complete with libraries, dormitories and laboratories. Each

of these academies was part of a greater institution, the College of Magic, which was an official branch of the League's government. The League of Minotaurs devoted extensive resources toward understanding magic, resources that were made available to members of the College only. Many Black Robed wizards joined.

After a few years, the College of Magic was thriving. Before its inception, those students of magic who could not reconcile their morals with the Black Robes' dark ethos were turned away; now they had a place to learn and grow more powerful, bound only by an oath never to use their magic to the detriment of the Minotaur League. When Velurian passed a law requiring all mages within the boundaries of the Minotaur League to be registered with the College of Magic, most of those already holding membership supported him.

Evolution

Eventually, the vast majority of the Black Robed Wizards were also members of the College. Velurian then executed the final move of his plan. He declared that no mage could have loyalty to both Minotaur League and the dark moon; as all mages were required by law to be members of the College, the Order of the Black Robes was declared unlawful and dissolved. By imperial decree, all mages must wear the Grey Robes of the state, denoting their allegiance to the Emperor.

About half of the Black Robed wizards resisted Velurian's edict, fighting to defeat the wily Emperor in ways both subtle and direct. Any mage caught wearing the Black Robes was summarily tried, usually dying in a trial by combat against the Emperor's best champions in the Arena. Although one of the wizards eventually succeeded in assassinating the aged Emperor, Velurian had finally succeeded in breaking the Order of the Black Robes.

The Present

After the moons of magic vanished in the Second Cataclysm, the College of Magic seemed to be an archaic relic of the Fourth Age. Some mages decided that without magic, the College was pointless, and they left. Many continued to pay the annual membership fee of 100 steel denarii, for although their spells no longer had any power, any item that bore a permanent enchantment was still effective. The College of Magic possesses many such items for the exclusive use of its members; it also has the most extensive libraries of history, biology, and geography in Taladas. This is enough for many scholars to seek membership in the College.

But stories have begun to spread about a new kind of magic. This Sorcery is said to be a power drawn from the primal energies of Krynn itself, and rumours have it that a glistening black tower teaches the secrets of this magic to barbarians of the north and east. Some wonder why the College of Magic does not investigate this rumoured power.

In truth, the College *has* done so for six years now. In 25 SC, a man of great age and insight visited Morgad, meeting a half-elf named Sashka Ioum. Claiming to be an Irda named Halaiantha, the

elderly sage spoke with Sashka at great length, awakening her to the potential for a primordial magic that nobody else suspected the existence of. The Irda departed shortly afterwards, at the same time that Emperor Eragas IV's *Axe of the Emperors* was stolen.

Over the next twelve months Sashka Ioum learned how to unleash the primal energies that infuses Krynn, and manipulates them to cast spells. The first action that she took was to seek a personal audience with Eragas IV, where she demonstrated her discovery by transmuting a strong steel blade into soft lead, which she broke over her knee. Needless to say, the Emperor was impressed. He declared Sashka an honorary minotaur (with the surname *Ioumiskis*) and an agent of the Secret Imperial Police.

In the six years since 26 SC, a moderately large number of scholars within the College of Magic have been trained in the ways of Sorcery. These sorcerers are asked to be discreet with their spells, and the Secret Imperial Police keep a very close eye on them. These sorcerers have astonishing powers, which they are expected to use for the benefit of the New League. Emperor Eragas IV hopes to create a loyal order of sorcerers with which to conquer all of Taladas, starting with the free city-state of Kristophan. At present, this ambition is known by very few. But it may eventually become a reality.

Dragon Knights

The dragon knights are one of the few forces of good in Taladas. They once dwelt in a sizable community located in the Conquered Lands of Southern Hosk, but since the Grim Winter the remaining dragon knights have scattered throughout Taladas. Although few knights are able to share a bond with a single dragon (due to the beasts' rarity in the Fifth Age), they possess a unique alliance and understanding with the good dragons.

The Founding

Humans who pioneered the wilderness of the League of Minotaurs in the Fourth Age knew that copper dragons had once been common in the rocky highlands of the Conquered Lands. However, as settlements were made in this province, the absence of these creatures became increasingly evident. Unknown to the settlers, the metallic dragons had sworn neutrality and become associated with the othlorx dragons. The copper othlorx became disenchanted with other dragons, and withdrew from sight.

The humans knew nothing of this - only that the creatures had disappeared. Tales of abandoned dragon lairs and treasure hordes were quite appealing, and the curious and the greedy were lured into the highlands of the Conquered Lands. A handful even returned with tantalising reports of dragon sightings and a few close encounters. It was only a matter of time before those with perseverance and cunning managed to contact the othlorx.

The othlorx responded with violence to intruders who attacked them, but allowed courteous humans to approach them. The othlorx

explained to the humans that once their territory was discovered, they could not allow intruders to go free. Some intruders reacted to this with hostility and were killed; however, others chose to stay, and were invited to join the community of othlorx.

In time, pairs of human and dragon developed a mutual rapport, and the dragons began teaching their human companions about ancient lore, magic, and how to fight in cooperation with dragons. In return, the humans shared mortal philosophy and culture with the othlorx, and helped them to form an isolated community that they called the dragon knights. The dragon knights dwelt in solitude, even surviving an attempt by the goddess Erestem to destroy them and conquer Taladas. By 380 AC, there were over three dozen dragon knights in Southern Hosk.

Evolution

During the Grim Winter, most of the dragon knights and their othlorx companions answered the call of Mahaxibal the Red, an ancient red othlorx dwelling in the Spine of Taladas island chain. This Council of the Uninvolved led to the othlorx actually participating in the war against Chaos, a war that ended the Fourth Age of Krynn, slaying a great many othlorx in the process. The Fifth Age began with the human survivors mourning their dragon companions; with the disappearance of the dragon-taught spells; and with the absence of the comforting gods.

The dragon knights nearly vanished for a few years after the Second Cataclysm. With rumours of a dragon purge occurring over the ocean, the metallic othlorx went into hiding; those dragon knights without a living dragon companion returned to their homelands. However, they found it very difficult to live in normal society, and kept in touch with other former dragon knights in a loose network across Taladas. As word spread concerning the threat of ancient wyrms such as Calyp'stohl and Hoartongue, cells of former dragon knights began to gather in secret.

By 21 SC, these networks of dragon knights had begun to proactively support those who were oppressed by dragon lords such as that of Hoartongue, the Eternal King, and Calyp'stohl. Although the dragon knights were few and their draconic companions long dead, the understanding of dragons that the dragon knights possessed was enough to help them make a difference against these dominating reptiles. A dragon knight by the name of Tavin Longspear was the first to suggest that the dragon knights reform to fight the evil dragon lords, and the Secret Knightly Order of the Dragon were formally established in 22 SC.

The Present

The dragon knights continue to fight the evil dragon lords, although they do so in utter secrecy. They also seek to contact and befriend any metallic othlorx that might have survived the Grim Winter, although this is somewhat less successful. Only in the realm of Highvale are the dragon knights safe; the bronze othlorx lord Lumiere once had a dragon knight companion, and is sympathetic to their efforts.

The Secret Knightly Order of the Dragon has about fifty members throughout Taladas, and has infiltrated groups such as the Academy of Mysteries in Kristophan, the Obsidian Tower of the Ring Mountains, and the makou of the Ice People. The dragon knights have knowledge of both Sorcery and Mysticism; whilst they have not yet managed to achieve full mastery of these powers, they have developed them in unique ways.

The Secret Knightly Order of the Dragon is similar in organisation to a spider web; each dragon knight knows and is in contact with three others. Thus, important news and information can spread quickly through the entire organisation, whilst allowing individual dragon knights a degree of autonomy. Other than the bronze othlorx Lumiere, it does not seem that any of the dragon lords has learned of the existence of this order yet (although Darkheart possibly knows and is keeping quiet). The repercussions were this situation to change is unknown.

The League of Merchants

The League of Merchant is a strong guild of traders that regulates and monitors most business trade of the New Imperial League of Minotaur Cities. The League of Merchants jealously protects its position from all interlopers. Although it is not an officially recognised monopoly, it does not brook any competition.

The Merchant League does not control the production of goods, but it is responsible for the shipping and distribution throughout the New League and beyond. Its near total monopoly gives it great power within the New League. Although the guild has no official position, its merchants are able to influence most official policies to its advantage.

Enterprising merchants who try to set up their own operations are squashed if they are minor, driven out of business by the price-cutting practices of the League. If the newcomer shows a particular talent for the business (that is, he survives the attempts to drive him out of business), an invitation to join the League is extended to him. If he should refuse this, attempts to drive him out of business become serious. Threats, beatings, arson, even murder will be used if necessary. Given this type of attitude, the League of Merchants has few competitors.

The Founding

The League of Merchants grew out of the pre-invasion Loyal Families of Kristophan, who supported the Satrap Kristophus and

received favoured treatment, exempt-ing them from grueling labour taxes and equipment appropriation.

Any family that did not prove its loyalty to Kristophus was designated a Rebel. Each Rebel household had its property confiscated and given over to the Loyal Families. Each Rebel household was then assigned to the service of a Loyal Family. In exchange for service, passed from father to son, the masters provided for the needs and protection of the Rebel family. Even before the minotaurs invaded New Styrlia, slavery was an established practice.

Although the Loyal Families originally fought the invasion of Eragas, their families and power provided the structure on which the Imperial League of Minotaurs was built. Ever adaptable, most of the Loyal Families learned to accommodate and profit from their new masters. From those Loyal Families who renounced the leadership of Kristophus and supported the new minotaur emperor Eragas, the League of Merchants was born.

Evolution

The minotaur Rakyne family organised the mercantile Loyal Families into a self-governing organisation, and provided legitimacy to the guild in the eyes of the minotaur rulers. Although the Rakyne family did not set themselves up as the official dynasty of the newborn trade empire, the regulations and obligations of the guild ensured that a Rakyne minotaur was always the Head Merchant of the League, and that their operations were always the most prosperous and successful.

The Merchant League soon began to supply unofficial ambassadors and spies for the Emperor. Their trading carried them far beyond the borders of the Imperial League of Minotaurs. They travelled the length of the Tamire, to the land of the goblins, into the Ring Mountains, to Armach and Thenol, even to the dark jungles of Neron. They carried the seeds of the Minotaur League with them, making it easier for the Legions of Eragas to annex new territories in the name of the Emperor.

The merchants of the guild were always predisposed to the worship of Nuran, and when this goddess of achievements, trade, and victory began rewarding her faithful with divine gifts, the Merchant League began to act with a foresight that seemed prophetic. At the same time, their interests changed from simple acquisition of wealth and power to the support of stability and safety for the lands of the Imperial League.

At Present

Still led by the wealthy Rakyne family, the League of Merchants remains as influential as ever in most of Southern Hosk, though its activities in Highvale are closely monitored by the suspicious *legiones luceat*. It was with the financial support of the merchant guild that the former minotaur provinces reformed into the New League of Minotaurs, by quickly raising the armies of Eragas IV and ensuring that the war coffers were not emptied. As a reward, the

merchants retained their privileged position in New League society. The current Head Merchant, Antonian Rakyne, is known to have the ear of the Emperor himself.

The merchants have very different concerns in the Tamire, however. Rather than supporting the desires of many tribes to form closer bonds, the merchants have been spreading divisiveness between the Uigan and the Alan-Atu, the Ice People and the Kazar. It is not in the Merchant League's best interests to deal with a powerful nomad nation; they prefer the old arrangement of independent, rival tribes.

The best diplomats of the Merchant League have been attempting to cause new rivalries and feuds between the Tamire tribes, turning one tribe against the other in the hope that the League might take advantage of them all. Some of Nuran's priests in the Merchant League fear that the efforts of their guild might ignite a new war on the steppe, and the ringing of steel coins will be drowned out by the clashing of steel swords. As yet, their worried voices remain unheard.

The Obsidian Tower

Nestled deep within the Ring Mountains, and bordering the turbulent magma-filled crater of Hitehkel, the Obsidian Tower is the last bastion of sorcery on the continent of Taladas. Built in a remote, secret location, the Tower hides itself from prying eyes. The rugged Ring Mountains border the Tower on all sides, acting as a natural defense against intruders. From the excellent vantage-point that the Tower gives, the students of the enigmatic Warlock can overlook the rapidly cooling shores of the magma seas of Hitehkel. None can find the Tower unless the Obsidian Warlock wishes it, and he follows his own unknown agenda.

The Founding

In the nineteenth year of the Fifth Age, an enigmatic Warlock emerged from the shattered Shining Lands. Wielding powers never seen before, the Obsidian Warlock began to spread the art of sorcery across the Tamire and the rest of Northern Hosk. When called to speak with the philosopher Ambedotus, it became apparent that the Obsidian Warlock's powers were not another form of mysticism. The Warlock met with many of the influential and wealthy of Kristophan at the time, using his association with Ambedotus to open doors and gather promises of aid.

In 22 SC, with support from the city-state of Kristophan, the Obsidian Warlock constructed the Obsidian Tower deep in the Ring Mountains. Built in a small, hidden valley, the obsidian structure rose from the barren rock to form a magnificent tower of learning. Nearly two hundred students signed on in the beginning, and began to delve into the art of sorcery.

Constructed of pure obsidian, the Tower looks like a dark finger stabbing upward into the sky. Strange runes cover and caress the Tower like a lover's hand, speaking a strange language that only

the Warlock fully comprehends. Rising nearly four hundred feet into the air, with a diameter of over one hundred feet, the Tower is an engineering marvel. However, magic was the primary ingredient to the Tower, and the edifice seems to radiate magical energies in the dim moonlight.

Several other, smaller buildings surround the Tower, forming an outer barrier to the Tower. The apartments themselves are somewhat smaller than the Tower, reaching about a hundred and fifty feet in height. Unlike the Obsidian Tower, the apartments are made of pure marble, creating a great contrast to the Tower itself. These buildings serve as apartments, and extra laboratories for the students to use. All of these buildings, ten in all, are connected by a raised walkway above the rocky terrain. These buildings are also connected by walkways to the Tower itself, in the shape of a large wheel.

Most of the magical activity takes place in the Tower itself. It is an ideal place to practice sorcery, as the entire building is magical. Every room is furnished with a globe prepared in such a way that light enchantments take particularly well, lasting ten times as long. Several large rooms are dedicated to each of the eleven schools of sorcery, acting as magical reservoirs for that school alone. Many magical items are locked away in the Tower's vaults, where dedicated scholars of magic will soon examine them.

The schoolrooms are on the bottom floor, where several experienced sorcerers train novices. The labs are above the schoolrooms, and this is where most of the sorcerers spend their time researching and experimenting with magical spells and incantations. A large library is stationed above the labs, where a tremendous amount of magical tomes and scrolls have been stored for reference. Students are encouraged to submit their own works into the library, so that the entire magical community might benefit from their expertise. Above the library are the storerooms. Here is where the vast amount of magical items and other trinkets of the Tower are held. Many magical devices from the Third and Fourth Ages can be found here. Many of the items are still functioning, but more than a few have lost their magic since the Grim Winter. Diligent sorcerers are currently searching for a way to reactivate the energies of such items.

At the very top of the Tower, lies the private sanctum of the Warlock. His lush apartments, personal laboratories, and private library are all located at the very top of the Tower.

Evolution

At first, the Obsidian Warlock was apprehensive about gathering a lot of sorcerers in one place to learn the arts of sorcery. He had misgivings about the effectiveness and reliability of such an institution. However, his fears were proved to be unfounded, as the Obsidian Tower proved to be a great success. Even Ambedotus was surprised at the great multitude of potential sorcerers that joined the Tower's magical community upon the Tower's completion.

The Obsidian Warlock was adamant about the rejection of old concepts, and embracing new ideas. To him, the path to discovering new magic was to search in a new, different way. However, the basics of magical tutelage were still observed. A mentor, a sorcerer of some accomplished skill must teach each novice until the basic concepts and ideas of Sorcery are founded. Then, the novice is allowed to explore on her own the ideals and conceptions of Sorcery.

All students at the Tower strove to learn about Sorcery on an independent basis. While several sorcerers did work together, for the most part everyone pursued their own experiments. A school of thought now known as "natural philosophy" developed among the first scholars of the Tower, where each student devised experiments to prove or disprove theories about the schools of sorcery and the material world of Krynn. The scholars at the Tower have since moved away from their beginnings of Kristophan's philosophers, who are thought to have wild and unsupportable ideas. The sorcerer Kara has said that "whatever fever dream you remember or shape you see in the clouds, there is a mystic to believe in it."

The Obsidian Warlock began the Tower with the idea of carefully screening all applicants. However, he has since abandoned that idea. He once believed that only the capable, the fit should wield such power, but then he realized that Sorcery is a gift of the gods, and that all deserve it. Now, regardless of motive, regardless of intent, the Obsidian Warlock allows any that qualify to join the Tower's magical community. Of course, those who prove quarrelsome are ejected from the Tower.

Already, a paved stone road is being constructed across the Ring Mountains to allow potential sorcerers easier access to the Tower. Once concerned about safety and secrecy, the Obsidian Warlock is now only concerned with spreading the knowledge of Sorcery across Taladas, and his own mysterious experiments.

At Present

The Obsidian Warlock is the single most important, as well as powerful person in the Tower's magical community. All defer to him as "Master," although the Warlock himself has never deemed it necessary. From his vast home at the very top of the majestic Tower, the Obsidian Warlock spends his days overseeing the work and progress of over three hundred students. The Obsidian Warlock has submitted many writings into the Library, where many sorcerers pour over the precious knowledge inside. As the most powerful sorcerer in the Tower, as well as the founder of the Tower, the Warlock sits as the Head of the Committee, the Board that determines and oversees the running of the Tower.

However, at night, the Obsidian Warlock locks himself up in his private chambers, and works diligently on his own magical experiments. No one knows just exactly what he is researching, and questions are met with silence. On nights of the new moon, the Warlock leaves his chambers to stand outside, gazing upon the stars. Again, he does not suffer questions about his behaviour.

A sorcerer at the Tower must abide by several rules:

1. No sorcerer shall harm another sorcerer on these grounds;
2. No magical action can be taken that will jeopardize the Tower or any fellow sorcerer's life; and
3. Hold the magic sacred above all.

Should anyone break the three main rules, then immediate expulsion is the punishment. The last rule, of course, is more of a credo, so few, if any, sorcerers ever get expelled for that rule. There are also several sub-rules, such as the taking of apprentices, but these are not actually codified.

Every student is expected to take on an apprentice and train with him four at least four hours each day. Researching and experimenting should take at least another eight hours. No sorcerer can remain without an apprentice for very long. Once an apprentice becomes a full-fledged sorcerer, he or she must also take on an apprentice. Once a sorcerer is no longer a neophyte, he or she is assigned a lab.

The larger and better-equipped labs go to the most powerful, creative, and dedicated members. Many a sorcerer has been so caught up in his or her work that overworking has become common. Sorcerers living at the Tower are expected to spend at least six months out of the year studying and teaching sorcery. Other members of the community who wish to travel take sabbaticals and travel across Taladas to spread their ideas.

The Warlock and his magical community traditionally held isolationist feelings. They do not wish to involve themselves in anyone's troubles, and they just want to be left alone to study their magic. However, this attitude has changed in recent years. When the cha'asii of corrupted Neron contacted the Tower for magical aid, the Obsidian Warlock was intrigued with the rampant magical energies of the forest. The Obsidian Warlock and a handful of sorcerers aided Byral J'Quinyal in driving away the mad overlord of Neron, Calyp'stohl the Mad. Currently, the Obsidian Warlock is aiding the Wild Elves of Neron. He is intrigued with both the magical situations of the jungles of Neron, and the magical artifacts that Cal'lypstohl possesses. He has forged an alliance with the Wild Elves, and many of the cha'asii have broken their isolationist ways and have even come to study at the Tower.

Finally, the Obsidian Warlock, in conjunction with a promising young sorceress named Kara, have been trying to permanently create magical items for the Fifth Age (see the *Heroes of Sorcery* supplement for details on long-term enchantments). Their preliminary successes look good, and these new magical items could well turn the tide in the war against the Dragon Overlords.

Chapter Five - Heroes and Villains

The following capsule descriptions enable Narrators and DMs to develop the non-player characters necessary to populate their stories and campaigns. These are some of the important, influential, or mysterious individuals of Taladas in the Age of Mortals.

A basic outline of each character's ability level is given in D&D and Saga statistics, to be further developed as the DM or Narrator desires in her campaign. Some of these characters may be described in more detail in other sources.

Ambedotus of Kristophan

Ambedotus was born in Vinlans before the grim Winter, and met the minotaur paladin Austan Gavynus as a boy. When the bronze othlorx Morning took over Highvale and made minotaurs unwelcome there, Ambedotus fled with the clothes on his back and gradually made his way to Kristophan, where Gavynus had been seen. The paladin had left by the time that Ambedotus arrived, but the young minotaur decided to stay among the philosophers at the Palace of Kristophan, where he pondered the question of whether good and evil had any meaning in a world without gods.

Some years later, Ambedotus gave his famous speech: "There is still ate and darkness in the hearts of mortals, but there is also respect, integrity and honour. Mortals, dragons, even gods may die, but something essential dwells within us all. That is our soul. And the soul is immortal." Ambedotus had discovered a hidden energy in the souls of mortals, and awoken it in the philosophers of Kristophan. Thus mysticism was discovered in Taladas.

Presently, Ambedotus is the most respected philosopher of the Academy of Mysteries. A paragon of minotaur intellect, Ambedotus encourages all people to seek further education in the arts of their station in life. Although approaching sixty years of age, Ambedotus is in his prime, with no grey visible in his distinctive black fur. He spends much of his time in Kristophan or travelling through Northern Hosk with his friend Yu the Rock.

D&D - NG male minotaur, Mystic 15

Saga - minotaur adult male, questioning demeanor, Master

Amrus Darkil

General Darkil is an accomplished tactician and troop leader in Highvale's *legiones luceat*, and famous for his endless supply of patience and equanimity. He is no lover of minotaurs, remembering the injustices that the common people suffered under their rule, and tirelessly pursues any renegade minotaurs suspected to be in Highvale. Amrus Darkil distrusts what he has heard of Mysticism, considering it to be some new minotaur blasphemy meant to turn honest people away from the worship of Reorx and Nuran.

D&D - N male dwarf, Fighter 8

Saga - male adult dwarf, calm demeanor; Champion

Anghoros, War Clansman

Anghoros is the head of the Nylgai Hadirnoe War Clan, and thus one of the most important dwarves in the OdderRhing. His long campaign against the disir has disillusioned the War Clansman, who no longer believes in the possibility of a glorious victory. Too many horrors seen in deep disir caverns and slaughtered mines of dwarves have shaken Anghoros' sanity, and he rarely enjoys a restful sleep. The only light of hope for Anghoros is that the High King might consent to bringing in the Bilo gnomes as allies - that perhaps a technological advantage will allow the dwarves to destroy their hated enemies and finally live in peace.

D&D - N male dwarf, Fighter 7

Saga - Scorned adult male, bitter demeanor; Champion

Antonian Rakyne

This elderly minotaur patriarch is the Head Merchant of the Merchant League, and one of the most influential and wealthy men in western Taladas. Antonian possesses one of the best private libraries in the New League, and as a connoisseur of wines he is second to none. He is a fixture at all high-society functions in Thera and Trilloman, and knows most Senators by name. Antonian rarely visited Morgad until recent months, claiming that the brutality of the capital's politics made him physically ill, but of late the Head Merchant has become interested in a sea-exploration expedition. Those who consider themselves to be confidants of the patriarch (there are far too many to be taken seriously) claim that Antonian has discovered treasure maps of tropical islands; or that one of his antique books tells of lost cities of gold in distant lands; or that the Head Merchant has received visitors from new countries with which he wishes to trade. Antonian Rakyne will not be drawn on the speculation, although he does enjoy a good chuckle at its expense.

D&D - LN male minotaur, Expert 11

Saga - minotaur elder male, machiavellian demeanor; Master

Aoltin Emeshen

Aoltin is the nominal head of the Emeshens, the largest bolandi family in Selasia. Considered an accomplished sorcerer among this arboreal people, he uses his spells of illusions and trickery to ambush the Mischta with mostly harmless pranks.

D&D - CG male bolandi, Sorcerer 3

Saga - bolandi adult male, crafty demeanor; Novice

Audarius

A Senator of the New Imperial League of Minotaurs, Audarius is a particularly ambitious and grasping old man. He has long been the Upright Man of a powerful crime cartel in Morgad, and despite tremendous difficulties he has managed to spread his control into Thera and even Kristophan. Audarius is an expert reader of people's true motives, an accomplished code-breaker and solver of mysteries,

and among the wealthiest of the senators. Although he has been called into the Arena to face criminal charges many times, the conditions of combat have always allowed Audarius to hire a champion - and he has a stable of the very best to choose from.

Audarius is a powerful ally and a valuable source of employment for many of the criminally-inclined in the New League. He is also the worst possible enemy that a person could make.

D&D - LE male minotaur, Aristocrat 12

Saga - minotaur elder male, resourceful demeanor; Master

Augentus VI

General Augentus VI of Kristophan belongs to one of the oldest and most prestigious families in Kristophan. Never mind that the family wealth has declined over the years; Augentus can always manage to get what he wants through favours owed to his great-grandfather (the fourth Augentus), the prestige of his own personal achievements, or the undeniable charm that he can turn on seemingly at will. However, behind his back Augentus is known as a selfish, manipulative bastard who will stop at nothing to get what he wants.

The thing is, if Augentus wasn't so dedicated to the strength and prosperity of Kristophan above all else, he would have been ostracised years ago. The citizens of Kristophan are forced to deal with the fact that once of the least-trusted men in the city is also its most successful defender. Without Augentus, Kristophan's defenses would not have been able to fend off the New League legions. Without Augentus, the criminal element of the city would have made a mockery of the new democracy before it could become successful. The citizens have learned to live with the fact that the most patriotic defender of Kristophan is such a villain in his personal life. It's all for the best.

D&D - NE male minotaur, Fighter 10

Saga - minotaur elder male, manipulative demeanor, Champion

Austan Gavynus

Austan was the youngest of four brothers, and was raised to keep an open mind about the values of minotaur society. Drifting from place to place after leaving the Legion of Eragas, Austan saved a shipwrecked cleric of Paladine from drowning on the coast of the Tamire. Although fanatics of Hith later killed the cleric Belusais, Austan continued to spread the teachings of this new god. He served as a champion of the poor and of foreigners to the League, and taught Ambedotus as a youth.

After the second Cataclysm, Austan vanished from sight, becoming a mystic pilgrim that possesses great mystical power of a kind not understood by traditional philosophers. Austan now travels Taladas in disguise. He explores the mysteries of the departed gods, mysticism, and the fate of souls in the Fifth Age.

D&D - LG male minotaur, Paladin 20+

Saga - minotaur elder male, charitable demeanor; Legend

Bar'lind

Bar'lind is a hukderfolk sorcerer who has learned to be cautious of humans even when playing tricks on them. He stands less than five feet tall, wears a stolen robe in the minotaur style, and speaks evasively in conversation. Bar'lind is a great admirer of Hallik, although he prefers subtle deception to Hallik's blatant trickery.

D&D - N male elf, Sorcerer 14

Saga - hulderfolk male elder, cautious demeanor; Master

Beonar the Grizzled

A respected figure among the dwarves of the Rainward Isles, Beonar was a simple farmer until cruel attacks by the undead forced him to move his family to the safety of a nearby village. He now travels between the villages of the Isles, using his woodcraft and practical experience to help the People to defend their villages from attack.

D&D - CG male dwarf, Ranger 5

Saga - dwarf adult male, cheerful demeanor; Adventurer

Buckeran

This well-travelled kender from the Marak region is full of doom and gloom, always foretelling ominous events and unhappy consequences. In spite of his pessimism, Buckeran does his utmost to save others from themselves, even if only to point out how narrowly they avoided disaster. After a youth of adventuring in the lands of Hosk, Buckeran is expert in the treacheries of other peoples, and is a trusted advisor in most important matters in the valleys.

D&D - N male kender, Rogue 9

Saga - kender elder male, pessimistic demeanor; Champion

Cahmetinaru the Grand Dignifier

Cahmetinaru is the appointed leader of the gnome citadel of Jaggachsteromius in Hurdumarr, the realm of Darkheart the Black. Under her careful guidance, the gnomes have proved too useful to Darkheart for him to cause them any harm. Cahmetinaru has earned the respect - if not the trust - of her dragon lord, and she is one of the few gnomes permitted to sail in Hurdumarr's lizardfolk galleys to work out treaties with other realms. She has gained the ear of the black othlorx, and is coming to know his mind well. Although the schemes and diplomacy of Darkheart seem cruel and dangerous to Cahmetinaru, her concern for the gnomes of Jaggachsteromius ensures that she represents the interests of the dragon perfectly.

D&D - NG female gnomoi, Expert 6

Saga - gnomoi adult female, diplomatic demeanor; Adventurer

Calna the Tell-Woman

Calna is a changeling, a human woman stolen as a child and raised by the hulderfolk elves. Since going blind from an illness in her youth, she has received uncanny visions of the futures of those

around her. She serves as a wise-woman to the community of changelings in the hulder community of Summerhome, and has great influence over their group decisions. A woman aged before her time, Calna shows prematurely white hair and harsh lines around her mouth. Her clouded eyes are obviously sightless. Calna wears thin spider-silk dresses, and speaks in a raspy, sing-song voice.

D&D - NG female human, Sorcerer 6

Saga - human adult female, influential demeanor; Adventurer

Claera Themoniskis

Claera of House Themon is a civil servant of Kristophan who opposes those merchants pushing for Kristophan to establish potentially lucrative trade pacts with the New League of Morgad. She is a capable woman, with much support from the minotaur families (who believe they can manipulate her); however, they have underestimated Claera's savvy and stubborn refusal to be pushed around.

D&D - LN female human, Aristocrat 5

Saga - human adult female, stubborn demeanor, Adventurer

Cleon

As the Grand Registrar of Baltch, Cleon was among the most powerful wizards of the Fourth Age, and although now his powers have vanished forever, his knowledge of ancient artifacts, forgotten ruins and magical beasts is unequaled. When the arcane order of Recorders was abolished in 16 SC, Cleon swore that he would return magic to Baltch *somehow*. Cleon seeks to recreate the Recorders, and awaits news of the new magic of sorcery with some impatience.

D&D - LN male human, Wizard 15

Saga - human elder male, obsessive demeanor; Master

Condruchtiskis, Senator of Fianawar

Condrucht was once an influential clan elder among the mountainside villages of the Fianawar dwarves. However, when the Legions of Eragas began to capture some of the previously unclaimed territories in the Steamwall Mountains, Condrucht realised that the League Wars might easily spread into the dwarven valleys. Although the Fianawar were better equipped, Condrucht realised that the minotaur emperor's legions were superior in numbers and training, and that the iron mines of the Fianawar were too important for the growth of the New League.

The seven years of blockade and occasional skirmishing that followed only confirmed Condrucht's belief that the Emperor would never give up, and that a bloody war would eventually ensue. The elder convinced many of his peers that the situation was grim, and that treaty with the New League was the only option. Before most of the Fianawar were aware of what Condrucht was trying to do, the valleys were declared a new province of the League, and permanent Legion outposts were established to "keep the peace."

Condrucht wasn't able to keep living among the people he had saved from bloodshed, many of whom considered him a traitor of the worst

kind. Travelling west with the legions, he settled in Morgad and was rewarded by Eragas IV with an *-iskis* and the position of Senator. Now Condrucht throws himself into the business of governing the New League, acting on behalf of the dwarves who hate him and forced him into exile. Condrucht tries to support the rights of minority races in the New League, but is usually stymied by minotaur senators. He has learned to accept this with bitter stoicism.

D&D - LN male dwarf, Fighter 4, Expert 2

Saga - dwarf elder male, forthright demeanor; Adventurer

Danielou

King Danielou is descended from a prince of ancient Aurim, a matter of prestige that enables him to arrange the best marriages for the young men and women in his family. A stern and somewhat humourless man, Danielou is keenly intelligent and has a detailed memory that is considered impressive, even among the Glass Sailors. It is said that there is not a single poem, epic, or song that Danielou does not know perfectly.

The King of the Glass Sailors has no true power over his people, but has taken it unto himself to challenge the threat of dragon lords who trespass on the holy lands of the shining glass plains. He believes them to be ancient devils from songs of ancient Aurim, and hopes that when the dragons are defeated, his people will have finally earned Paradise.

D&D - LN male human, Ranger 5

Saga - human adult male, unforgiving demeanor; Adventurer

Daydra Stonecipher

According to human fisherfolk southwest of the Spine of Taladas, if a person drops a coin into a certain hole in the ground and asks a question, it will often be answered. The Dargonesti know the truth of this legend: there is an ancient priestess beneath this atoll, the source of much wisdom and a link to the gods of the past Ages.

Daydra is a wizened Dargonesti woman known as the *blooquah* (oracle) and rumoured to be over two thousand years old. Her shrine is an underwater cave hidden beneath an atoll within a twisting, hazardous coral reef. Her home is protected by a large dragon turtle, who carefully watches those who come to petition the oracle.

D&D - LG female elf, Mystic 20+

Saga - Dargonesti elder female, patient demeanor; Archetype

Diones

The Master Engineer, Diones, is the most powerful of the Engineers, since staging an all-but-bloodless coup after the death of the red dragon Ashclaw. From the Great Registry in Neamoushek, Diones regulates and controls all aspects of Baltchian life. He disbanded the arcane order of Recorders when they failed to rediscover the magical arts that they once held, and has considered making a pact with young dragons (those most vulnerable to the dragon lords) in order to restore Baltch's magical defenses.

D&D - LE male human, Expert 10

Saga - human middle-aged male, thorough demeanor; Champion

Domonicus Thelvaraen

As Burgomeister of the Boli Columns, Thevaraen takes his position very seriously. No decision can be made without long and tedious discussion, involving many historical case studies, philosophical metaphors, and extremely long words that even other gnomes need to check in the *gnomiusdictionaria*. Understandably, this takes up much of Thelvaraen's time, and he sorrowfully regrets that he has not engaged in a major tinkering project for over four decades. However, he always makes time for his three generations of children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren, all of whom are terribly fond of "Grampa Domonicus."

D&D - LG male gnomoi, Expert 12

Saga - gnomoi elder male, ponderous demeanor; Master

Elerijil

Elerijil is famous as the elfmaid who bonded with the bronze othlorx Lumiere, and convinced him to become a protector of the innocent people of Taladas. Elerijil convinced her bronze companion Lumiere to seize control of Highvale and the New Mountains, in order to protect the human population from chaos creatures and the oppressive rule of the minotaurs.

Unfortunately, Elerijil was killed in the League Wars, turning Lumiere hateful towards minotaurs and transforming his realm of Highvale into a place of mourning. If Elerijil had lived, Highvale would be a very different realm today.

D&D - CG female elf, Ranger 6

Saga - elf adult female, wistful demeanor; Adventurer

Eragas IV, Emperor of the New Imperial League of Minotaur Cities

The Great Illustrious Leader of All Nations, Emperor Eragas IV of the New Imperial League of Minotaur Cities, was born Leutus, the second son of a wealthy cartographer. He joined the Legions and distinguished himself in various campaigns, commanding an *ordu* of 500 legionnaires by 380 AC. During the Grim Winter of 383 AC the general of the Fourth Legion was killed by a shadow wight, as though he'd never existed, and Leutus was forced to take command of the Fourth Legion even as the League of Minotaurs crumbled.

During the early years of the Fifth Age General Leutus strengthened the Fourth Legion and discovered the legendary magical axe of Ambeoutin, with which he was able to work wonders. Unfortunately, the malign influence of the artifact twisted Leutus from an ambitious general to an insane megalomaniac; renaming himself Eragas IV, he began the League Wars in order to recreate a minotaur empire.

Ambeoutin's axe has since vanished, purportedly stolen by one of the secretive Irda. Emperor Eragas is now driven by two ambitious goals: To recover the precious artifact, and to forge an Imperial League of Taladas, a minotaur empire that will reign unchallenged for the rest of the Fifth Age.

D&D - LE male minotaur, Fighter 14

Saga - minotaur adult male, megalomaniac demeanor; Master

Faldan

Faldan is a Swamper, one of the rough and wild human settlers originally from Thenol, now dwelling on the fringes of the Blackwater Glade. Faldan is not a pleasant person to meet or to know, and has few redeeming social qualities (although he is not known to hold a grudge). However, the Swamper is a widely-acknowledged expert on the bakali language and habits, a fact which he often wishes was *less* well-known. Faldan bemoans his terrible fate at having being born smart, for if he were more typical in intellect then he wouldn't have to put up with foreign folk hassling him about the bakali all the time.

D&D - CG male human Ranger 5

Saga - human adult male, gruff demeanor; Adventurer

Firebrand Stormglow

A courageous and ambitious centaur chieftain, Stormglow was always marked for great things. He was born during the terrible storms of the Grim Winter, when lightning bolts lanced from clouds to the steppe as though they were pillars that held up the sky. Once such bolt struck Stormglow's dam Redmoon as she was birthing the foal; however, rather than killing them both, mare and foal seemed unharmed. Not long after, Redmoon began to see with a second sight that helped to save her tribe from the chaos monsters of the Second Cataclysm. Her foal was often seen to have static electricity leaping from his fingers and mane, and scorch marks were found where his hooves had been standing.

Firebrand, as he was to be named, possesses a small talent for sorcery that allows him to command Aeromancy, Electromancy, and Pyromancy, although he doesn't understand his gifts and cannot teach them to others. He has become a popular and charismatic leader of the Tamire centaurs, who believe him to be blessed with holy powers of the storm by Qu'uan the Warrior.

D&D - CG male centaur, Ranger 4, Sorcerer 1

Saga - centaur adult male, brave demeanor, Adventurer

Foxfire Everglow

An elf raider of the *hosk'i imou merkitsa*, Everglow is greatly feared by the goblin villages of the Ilquar Mountains. He has led innumerable raids against the goblins for more than a century, and has become a figure of legend among their fearful shamans. Everglow often takes goblin teeth as trophies from those that he has personally slain, and wears strings of yellowed fangs as jewelry. The elves consider Everglow's life to be an example for the younger warriors of the clan.

D&D - CN male elf, Barbarian 12

Saga - elf middle-aged male, inspiring demeanor, Master

Fulru'ei

A chief of the Payan Mako in Syldar, Fulru'ei is known as the "Voice of the Dragon." The dragon lord of Syldar is known to favour Fulru'ei over the other tribesmen and communicates with him telepathically; thus, Fulru'ei passes on the will of Endotanga. In reality, Fulru'ei is one of the chiefs responsible for the ruse of creating a false dragon to frighten away enemies. He has a minor talent for mysticism, and uses it to confuse the perceptions of those he brings into Endotanga's presence.

D&D - CG male human, Ranger 6

Saga - human adult male, sensible demeanor; Adventurer

Gesedstaen

This Boli warrior rose to the rank of Warden of the Eastern Marches after his predecessor vanished during the Grim Winter. Although it is generally agreed that the position must have been filled at that time, none can remember the face or name of the individual, or anything about him. Gesedstaen has drawn certain conclusions about the chaos creatures from this and similar incidents, conclusions that worry him terribly. As the new Warden, Gesedstaen has superstitiously armed his personal guards with weapons blessed by Reorx during the Fourth Age, and employs scouts and travellers to inform him of any chaos creatures or fire minions in the Columns region.

Gesedstaen's inventing career previously focused on mathematics, but now he has become obsessed with devices that record sound (such as speech) - his insurance against being "negated" by a chaos wight. Gesedstaen hopes that if people could still hear the voice of a negated friend, they would remember him and the individual would not be truly gone.

D&D - LG male gnomoi, Fighter 6

Saga - gnomoi adult male, stubborn demeanor; Adventurer

Giliayne

As a young girl, Giliayne was the first mortal to discover the mystical power of healing, meditation, and sensitivity in the Rainward Isles. Her gift provided hope and protection for the People against the supernatural horrors that encroach upon their isolated lives. Now a young woman, Giliayne has the distinction of being the most powerful mystic in the Rainward Isles. However, she does not consider herself to be a great leader or teacher, and frequently asks her village for their wisdom when approached by those seeking her aid. The People are very supportive of "our young girl," who is widely regarded with affection.

D&D - LG female human, Mystic 6

Saga - human young adult female, visionary demeanor; Adventurer

Gnosh Bonescorcher

A merchant of the Ilquar goblin villages, Gnosh has grown weary of humans and elves interrupting trade between his village and the New League with their raids and wars. He has convinced warriors from

several goblin villages to act as guards for merchants from the New League, thus ensuring that the minotaur and human traders can exchange their valuable goods for Ilquar iron. Gnosh takes a very dim view of any Uigan who attacks the League of Merchant caravans, and leads war parties in retributive raids. However, Gnosh has yet to act against the more feared Elf Clans.

D&D - NE male goblin, Warrior 6

Saga - goblin adult male, conniving demeanor, Adventurer

Hallik, King of Summerhome

Hallik is a smiling rogue whose daring tricks have earned him a minor position of royalty in the hulder realm; there are older and more prestigious kings in some of the deeper glades. Hallik is arrogant and bold, and seems sincere even while plotting some deception. He prides himself on the poetic justice of the tricks he plays against hapless humans.

D&D - N male elf, Rogue 6

Saga - hulderfolk male adult, capricious demeanor; Adventurer

Haralt the Grey

Gone are the days when Haralt the Grey was the most deadly and feared villain of the Tiderun estuaries. Haralt is far too old to be plying the Tiderun these days; he has a large following of cutthroats and pirates to protect the interests of his criminal empire. Haralt fears that he will die before seeing the end of all of his oldest enemies. A minotaur of great wealth, he now hires desperate men to hunt down and kill powerful individuals in the League of Merchants and the Senate. In exchange for bringing him the head of a hated enemy, Haralt provides these outlaws with a new identity and enough money to begin a new life.

D&D - CE male minotaur, Barbarian 5, Rogue 5

Saga - minotaur elder male, crafty demeanor; Champion

The High Magus

The High Magus is a slender, deep-blue woman of great beauty, one of the pure-blooded descendants of ancient ogres. She abandoned her name when she received this title, signifying her dominance over the Nzunta population of Fedron (approximately 200 individuals). The High Magus plans to wait until the Nzunta population increases to five hundred before they attack the Mischta of nearby Selasia, destroying their ancient enemies before acting to recreate the long-lost Abaqua Empire in Taladas. The High Magus does not travel beyond Fedron, although she possesses some knowledge of the world, brought to her by the creatures that she summons to serve as slaves. She never exposes herself or her people to potential danger, preferring blue dragons or orughi slaves to fight all of her battles.

D&D - NE female Nzunta, Aristocrat 3, Sorcerer 12

Saga - Nzunta elder female, cruel demeanor; Master

Hurbenka

Hurbenka is a chieftain and shaman of the hobgoblin refugees in the southern Black Forests. He is the most charismatic member of the council of five village chieftains, who have declared their sovereignty over the Black Forests, and are squabbling over the best way to exploit this land. Hurbenka has discovered some of the strange, forgotten dangers of the Black Forests, at the cost of many hobgoblin lives.

An encounter with mysterious and deadly spirits woke something in Hurbenka's soul, and he now possesses a rudimentary talent in Mysticism - specifically, the sphere of Channeling. As the hobgoblins are utterly isolated from the rest of Taladas and have no other experience with the powers of the spirit, many are convinced that Hurbenka has become a new god.

D&D - LE male hobgoblin, Ranger 6

Saga - male adult hobgoblin, tyrannical demeanor; Adventurer

Husk-owg

A chieftain of the Steamwall Mountains, Husk-owg considers himself the greatest warlord of the hobgoblins (he is not). Husk-owg claims that his long-house is the largest and most comfortable (it is a damp hovel), that his warriors are the fiercest kender slayers (they are a rabble), and that the skulls of his ancestors are the wisest in Krynn (this is unlikely). Husk-owg would be a laughing-stock were it not for the hold that he has over the other hobgoblins of the Steamwall. They believe his boastful lies, thus his opinion holds great sway over many villages. Darkheart has visited Husk-owg three times, for the chieftain was easily duped into doing the dragon lord's will.

Naturally, Husk-owg believes that he has the better of Darkheart. He has not.

D&D - NE male hobgoblin, Warrior 5

Saga - hobgoblin adult male, prideful demeanor; Adventurer

Iblirack

Iblirack is chief of a bakali village not too deep within Blackwater Glade. Although there are wiser, stronger, and more influential chiefs among the deeper villages, the Thenolite and Swamper humans have never penetrated that far and do not know of them. Iblirack is known to the humans as the "king" of the bakali for three reasons: his undeniable presence; his willingness to speak with those humans who have not personally insulted his village; and his experiences with the dragons of the Glade.

Although details are sketchy, Iblirack is known to have encountered at least three othlorx dragons in the deeper swamps of the Glade. Two of these dragons were blacks, with whom Iblirack spoke at length and returned unharmed. The third was a green othlorx, which grievously wounded the bakali before he slew it.

The Swampers consider Iblirack something of an expert concerning dragons, and they sometimes come to him for lore. The bakali claims to be related by blood to these terrible reptiles, and practices

a unique style of brawling inspired by the ferocity of the green that he fought. Other bakali are now learning to fight as Iblirack does, and to proclaim their heritage as dragon children.

D&D - CN male bakali, Barbarian 11

Saga - bakali adult male, terrifying demeanor; Champion

Jasmynth Everglow

Jasmynth would make an excellent leader were she not born a woman in the patriarchal *hosk'i imou merkitsa*, a fact that she bitterly resents. Instead, Jasmynth uses her insight into the motives and desires of others to manipulate them into doing things as she believes they should be done. Jasmynth is the daughter of an infamous Elf Clan berserker, and she takes advantage of her father's repute to receive preferential treatment from the rest of her clan. Furthermore, Jasmynth encourages her father to support her preferred causes over others, knowing that his word often helps other elves to make their decisions. Unfortunately, as she has never had to take responsibility for her decisions, Jasmynth is too selfish to keep the best interests of all elves at heart.

D&D - CN female elf, Warrior 3

Saga - elf young adult female, roguish demeanor, Novice

Jugrakh

Jugrakh is a Great Chief among the persecuted hobgoblins of Old Aurim. His enemies are many - the dracolich Savanaech, the traag draconians, and the other hobgoblin chiefs, to say nothing of those hateful foreign invaders who occasionally venture into the wastelands. He attempts to play each of his enemies against each other, and has been so successful that his machinations have not yet resulted in his own downfall.

If the hobgoblins were to band together against Savanaech, they might pose a threat to the dragon lord, but there will be no alliance of chiefs while Jugrakh remains alive.

D&D - NE male hobgoblin, Warrior 9

Saga - hobgoblin adult male, conniving demeanor; Master

Justicaelusiskis

Justicaelus "the Lame" is a demagogue and member of the League of Merchants, pushing for Kristophan to establish potentially lucrative trade pacts with the New League of Morgad. However, his faction is opposed by a civil servant called Claera of House Themon, and by the minotaur senators of Kristophan who remember the threatening armies of Eragas IV in the League Wars.

D&D - LN male half-elf, Expert 5

Saga - half-elf elder male, charismatic demeanor, Adventurer

Kara

Kara is a sorcerer and student at the Obsidian Tower, originally born in a village outside of Kristophan. She has begun experimenting with the possibilities of permanently infusing objects with

sorcerous power, thus creating new magical devices in the Age of Mortals.

D&D - LN female human, Sorcerer 6

Saga - human adult female, patient demeanor, Adventurer

Klaudesaan

Strong and fit for his twisted draconian kind, Klaudesaan always seized the best meat from any kill of his tribe. Despite being less experienced in war than many of his fellows, Klaudesaan struggled to become a troop commander in Erestem's armies (thus avoiding the dangers of many battles). His ineptitude in command helped to reveal the faults of traag draconians in battle, and Erestem eventually abandoned the whole race in the wastelands of Old Aurim.

When the dracolich Savage appeared in Old Aurim, Klaudesaan acted before any other traag had the opportunity - he went before the undead dragon lord, and offered the services of his people. Savage naturally assumed that the bold draconian was a leader of his kind, and declared Klaudesaan the new Praetor of Aurim Reborn.

The Praetor has retained his position since, for few traag are prepared to speak against the decisions of their undead High King. However, a history of poor decisions (and of scapegoats taking the blame) has embittered many of Klaudesaan's underlings. An assassin's blade has ended the lives of many of Klaudesaan's bodyguards, but eventually the Praetor will suffer the price of his failures.

D&D - NE male traag draconian, Fighter 2

Saga - traag draconian male, proud demeanor; Novice

Korsh Skullsplitter

Korsh is the headman of a goblin village in the Uesi Ilquar mountains. He has quickly come into power after he discovered in the mines of his village a treasure beyond compare - the unhatched egg of a dragon! Korsh has no idea what kind of dragon lies within the egg, but his shamans assure him that the creature is still alive and will doubtlessly emerge... eventually.

Korsh has capitalised on his find by publicly speaking about his plans for conquest and domination once the dragon has hatched and been trained to loyally serve him. Many other goblins are jealous and have attempted to kill the upstart (or at least steal the egg away from him), but Korsh has proven too clever by far.

D&D - LE male goblin, Rogue 3

Saga - goblin young adult male, plotting demeanor, Novice

Kreeala Igrani, High King of Selasia

Kreeala Igrani is descended from the Irda philosopher Igraine, and the daughter of an Irda king who turned away from the gods during the Cataclysm. Now nearly 450 years of age, Kreeala is the respected leader of the Mischta in Selasia.

Kreeala has deep blue skin, wrinkles brought about by worry, and entirely grey hair. She is a humble and kind-hearted woman, although prone to hesitation in a crisis. She feels that her family bears

some responsibility for the first Cataclysm, and that the current Age is a time of great penitence for herself and her people.

D&D - LG female Mischta, Aristocrat 5, Cleric 8

Saga - Mischta elder female, penitent demeanor; Champion

Krogand Boyla

As the leader of the largest human tribe on the Tamire, the Uigan, Krogand Boyla is the undisputed leader of the human steppe nomads now gathered together under the banner of the Tamire Union. Krogand Boyla resisted minotaur domination and fought bitterly to protect his family during the League Wars of years past, and he has sworn never to allow the minotaurs to gain control of the Tamire.

A charismatic warrior of proven bravery, Krogand Boyla has brought many of the nomads to realise the continued threat of the New League, and has won the friendship of the centaur tribes and some even elves. However, his prejudice against the Kazar tribe and the Ilquar goblins ensures that these peoples will never be brought into the Union that he has worked so hard to create.

D&D - LG male human, Ranger 14

Saga - human middle-aged male, valiant demeanor, Champion

Laene Uth Habon

A Knight of the Skull, Commander Uth Habon has been waiting for Ariakan's "inevitable" return to Taladas with a fleet of conquest for over thirty years. She still believes in his return, and patiently gathers intelligence and trains her colony of knights. However, the tropical isolation of the Fisheries, the unexplained silence of the Dark Queen, and the failure of the Ansalonian Knights of Takhisis to contact New Jelek in over three decades have taken their toll.

Furthermore, Commander Uth Habon has been dabbling in vile rituals intended to restore the unholy powers lost to her since the Grim Winter.

Laene Uth Habon has fallen into utter insanity, and now claims that the Vision of Takhisis, which abandoned her for some years, has returned. In fact, the new powers of mysticism awoken in Laene's soul have enabled her deep-seated delusions to manifest visibly, bringing the Skull Knight Commander to believe that the Queen of Darkness has appeared to her.

Laena Uth Habon commands the spheres of Healing, Mentalism, and Necromancy.

D&D - LE female human, Fighter 3, Mystic 7

Saga - human elder female, realistic demeanor; Master

Laylanda Krysheri

Born during the League Wars, Laylanda was a quiet child. She did not speak and rarely cried for the first three years of her life - and when finally she did utter words, they were in no language that her Uigan parents knew. Fortunately, the brass othlorx dragon who was flying overhead at the time overheard her childish cries

in the draconic tongue, and came down out of the sky to translate for her amazed family.

Now a young woman, Laylanda is accorded the status of a wizardress by the Uigan, and remains unmarried due to her awe-inspiring reputation as a friend of dragons and other fey creatures. She is inexperienced and naïve, but she has powerful friends.

D&D - CN female human, Ranger 2

Saga - human young adult female, impetuous demeanor, Novice

Markeides the Younger

Baron Markeides of Thenol is son of the Great Lord Markeides, who helped Prince Raimos to become king after long years of opposition to Bishop Trandamere. Markeides' father committed various shameful acts during the dark years of the Temple of Hith, a legacy that both generations have spent blood and tears to atone for. Markeides the Younger was one of the most vocal supporters of King Raimos' Noble Knights, and is active in encouraging the next generation to follow their example - including his adult son, Terrande the Golden-Haired.

Terrande's disposition is not to perform noble deeds but to record them, and he has undertaken his own quest - to begin a history of Thenol and record all of its glories, as well as its past wickedness. Ironically, it is Markeides' teenaged daughter Vyola who is most entranced by the knighthood, and she is often to be seen with her falcon or her horse, engaging in various knightly pursuits.

D&D - LG male human, Aristocrat 12

Saga - human elder male, courageous demeanor; Champion

Malarchus

Of the Great Lords of Thenol, Count Malarchus is the most infamous. During the dominance of the Temple of Hith, Malarchus was counted among the strongest supporters of Bishop Trandamere, even going so far as to forgo his training as a knight and enter the priesthood of Hith. His troops were feared and readily recognised by their black armour and skull heraldry.

However, when Hith withdrew from Taladas during the Grim Winter, Malarchus took advantage of the chaos to strike a crippling blow against the Temple-controlled known as the Fanatics of Hith. Bishop Trandamere disappeared during the Grim Winter, and in the confused years that followed Malarchus was among many Thenolite Lords stirring the peasants into revolt against the Temple. The Count had begun to gather support for a younger Lord with aspirations to the vacant throne when Prince Raimos mustered the Noble Knights and brought peace to Thenol. Amid accusations of attempting to seize the throne and consorting with evil spirits, Malarchus was forced to abandon his political schemes and retreat to his fief in the west of Thenol.

Count Malarchus has not been idle in his fortress in what is now known as the Unclean Lands. He is a scheming, bitter, and malevolent man, and a master manipulator of people. Malarchus has had dealings with the reborn Cult of Hith and Dark Knight spies from New Jekek,

although he is beholden to neither. Malarchus has secretly performed horrific rites that have returned to him the power to work blasphemies, and is responsible for many of the evil things that now haunt the Unclean Lands.

Malarchus is almost 170 years of age, yet appears to be in his fifties - few realise his true age. He often describes his plans in terms of a great game of strategy, in which he has suffered a setback after coming close to victory. Years of scheming and misery have corrupted the honest man that Malarchus used to be. Now he will inflict any pain or suffering as part of this game that has lasted over a century - a game that he intends to win.

D&D - LE male human, Fighter 10, Mystic 10+

Saga - human elder male, scheming demeanor; Legend

Meiruko

The Priest-Leader of the Shark Men continues a tradition of terror that he learned from his father, and his father before him. Meiruko conducts vile rituals of worship to Erestem, terrifies his fellow islanders during Syldar's tropical nights, and conducts the business of a simple fisherman and father of five during the day. The loss of divine spells has not convinced Meiruko that Erestem has withdrawn from Krynn - Meiruko has personally seen a gigantic shark swimming in the channels around the Fisheries, and fervently believes in her continued existence.

To explain the loss of Erestem's magical gifts, Meiruko decided that the Shark Men have failed to please their goddess, and that she is punishing them. The Dark Knight's arrival in the Fisheries was surely a warning, one that was ignored by his foolish father. Meiruko continues to propitiate the goddess with sacrifices and rituals, and obeys her armoured demons - the Knights of Takhisis - without question. He will commit any atrocity to appease Erestem.

D&D - NE male human, Warrior 7

Saga - human adult male, superstitious demeanor; Master

Narivin Ostholalia

As Grand Imperator of the Boli gnomes, Narivin Ostholalia has few responsibilities during the current time of uneasy peace. However, she is feverishly preparing for future invasions by ravaging dragons or shadowy undead or fire minions or any one of her people's potential foes, hoping to prevent further loss of gnomish lives or gnomish territory. To this end, Narivin Ostholalia holds an annual weapon-designing competition to encourage research into new devices with military application. She has many potential innovations for the battlefield, although none of them have yet undergone extensive field tests.

Narivin is now looking for opportunities to try out a few of these weapons, and has considered creating a mercenary band of Boli warriors for this purpose. Sending a troop of gnomes armed with automatic-shard-hurlers to help the Scored dwarves in their subterranean war is one option that she has considered. Narivin would love to try out her new war machines against the hobgoblins

in the Warden's Tower, but has been unable to convince the Warden of the Eastern Marches that this is a good idea.

D&D - LG female minoi, Fighter 8

Saga - minoi adult female, ambitious demeanor; Master

The Obsidian Warlock

The Obsidian Warlock's activities and research for magic have cast him in the limelight. Many dragon overlords have begun to weave schemes that involve this mysterious figure, and all desire his allegiance. However, the Warlock rarely takes sides, and simply continues to serve the magic that fills his life.

The Obsidian Warlock appears to a thin and gaunt figure of over six feet, and always wears the same silver trimmed jet-black robe. The only ornaments that the Warlock is seen to wear are a golden medallion with a ruby set in the center, and a sapphire ring. The depths of the Warlock's hood are laced with shadow that no light, mundane or magical, can penetrate; thus, his features have never been seen, although wisps of white hair snake out from the dark hood.

The Warlock's ruined hands are noticeably scarred, as if he had plunged his hands into boiling water, with powdery dead skin and twisted nails usually hidden by the folds of voluminous sleeves. The only indication that the Obsidian Warlock is male is his deep, resonating voice, and the fact that he refers to himself as a man on occasion... when he remembers to do so.

The Obsidian Warlock seems content to simply spread the knowledge of sorcery. The pursuit of magic is his life and his passion. Some insist that the Obsidian Warlock is a manifestation of the new magic, which is represented by the new moon. Others scoff at this idea, and say that he is really an othlorx dragon in disguise. The silver trimmings on his robe seem to indicate that the Warlock may be a silver othlorx, who are known to walk disguised amongst mortals.

D&D - LN Sorcerer 20+

Saga - race, age and gender unknown, enigmatic demeanor; Legend

Omnibus Juiletus

As one of the wealthiest merchants in Highvale, Juiletus has proven that it is possible to defy the League of Merchants and succeed in trade. Juiletus has made his fortune by purchasing one-of-a-kind gnomish inventions and devising simpler, less dangerous versions for sale to human markets. Such devices include a sturdier form of carriage, a wind-operated water pump, and a simple clockwork sundial. He owns over a dozen river barges and five trading caravans, which he uses to transport goods between the Confederation of Armach, Highvale, and northern Thenol. Failed attempts on Juiletus' life, as well as a mysterious fire in one of his Vinlans warehouses, have been attributed to jealous rivals in the League of Merchants.

D&D - CG male human, Expert 5

Saga - male elder human, innovative demeanor; Adventurer

Orelan

Orelan is a red-haired youth who was kidnapped as a babe by the hulderfolk, and raised as a changeling in the community of Summerhome. In this enchanted grove, time has passed much more slowly for Orelan, and he is still a youth while his family have long since died. Orelan is shrewd and very much a survivor, and often acts as spokesperson for the changelings of Summerhome. He is on good terms with Calna the Tell-Woman and Kief, the ethereal dragon.

D&D - CG male human, Warrior 3

Saga - human young male, shrewd demeanor; Novice

Pikolas

Pikolas is a popular if undistinguished kender of the Marak region. He travels from village to village, visiting his many lovers and spreading news among the kender of the valleys. Pikolas is said to have feet like those of a deer, and runs between villages to raise the alarm when the valleys are threatened by attacks by hobgoblin raiders, foreign warriors, or roaming dragons.

D&D - CN male kender, Commoner 1

Saga - kender adult male, inquisitive demeanor; Unknown

Raimos, King of Thenol

Prince Raimos seized the throne of Thenol when the kingdom seemed about to fall into anarchy after the Temple of Hith's collapse in the early Fifth Age. He led a company of knights against the enemies of order in Thenol, and with the aid of the mysterious *dragonlance*, destroyed the red dragon that threatened to forge a realm of terror in the south.

King Raimos is now in his late eighties, and although he actively participates in the ruling of his realm he has become too ill to leave his palace. Raimos married late in life, and has no legitimate son to be his heir; the Great Lords are split as to whether the crown should pass to Raimos' wife, Terese; one of his young twin daughters, Elena and Elopia; or one of the rumoured bastards. Although the Noble Knights bear undying loyalty for "Thenol's Saviour", they whisper worried words behind their hands of what may happen when Raimos inevitably passes away.

D&D - LG male human, Aristocrat 5, Fighter 10

Saga - human elder male, diligent demeanor; Champion

Rethean the Riddler

Rethean is the oldest kender in the Rainward Isles - indeed, the oldest kender anyone has ever heard of. He has clearly travelled widely in his life, and now lives in a sprawling home filled with furniture of exotic make, mysterious antiques, and unsettling gnomish devices. Not much is known about Rethean, except that he likes to mystify people, he likes a good festival, and he still has a soft heart for pretty kender lasses.

Rethean encourages kender (and humans and dwarves, when they will listen) to go out and seek adventure in the lands beyond the Isles. He loves to gift the curious with maps that seem to indicate lost

treasures or riddles that seem like the clue to some exciting quest, and has been the cause of quite a few youths running away from home. Most sensible folk consider Rethean an incorrigible troublemaker, but he is a great favourite among the young and a local hero for most kender.

D&D - CG male kender, Rogue 17

Saga - true kender elder male, mysterious demeanor; Hero

Revenharos

The High King of the Nylgai Hadirnoe is a handsomely dressed and well-spoken gentleman, as well as a staunch dwarven traditionalist. He believes that the clan structure of the Nylgai Hadirnoe is the best way to live, and enjoys a good dwarven epic or play as much as the next grey-bearded patriarch. Revenharos discourages the dwarves from travelling to the surface world, a dangerous and degenerate place that can only lead to the loss of proper Nylgai virtues and morals by those who contact surface-world cultures. Refusing to take up the profession of one's clan is also an indecency that should be prevented.

Revenharos is determined to preserve the dwarven way of life in the OdderRhing. The dwarves' current trouble with the disir holds no fear for him, for Revenharos knows that strong dwarven steel willpower and steel weapons will bring victory sooner or later. Revenharos refuses to be worried by tales of dragons, League wars, or chaos wights from the surface, believing that no force from above could ever threaten the impregnable defenses of the Nylgai Hadirnoe. The only reason that the disir are a threat, Revenharos maintains, is because the dwarves weren't expecting trouble to appear from below.

D&D - LN male dwarf, Aristocrat 14

Saga - dwarven adult male, determined demeanor; Master

Sagarassi the Sea-Witch

Sagarassi is the half-sister of Daydra Stonecipher, and a worshipper of the sea goddess Zeboim. She dwells in a vast, gloomy underwater citadel named Khegar, and has long been an enemy of the Dargonesti of Watermere. Khegar is home to many evil sea creatures, including sharks, shipwrecked undead, and dragons.

Sagarassi is a master at forging alliances and playing one side off the other, and appears as a seductive vixen, a horrifying hag, a lonely victim of Dargonesti hatred, or a wise stateswoman, as her schemes require. Her true form is that of a Silvanesti elf of stunning beauty, with a mass of spiny black tentacles replacing her lower torso and legs.

D&D - CE female elf, Sorcerer 20+

Saga - elven elder female, megalomaniac demeanor; Legend

Sashka Ioumiskis, Grey Sorcerer

The half-elf Sashka was the first student of the College of Magic to learn of the newsorcery, and was rewarded for her discovery by Emperor Eragas himself. Sashka was once a highly moral woman, but

her scruples have been somewhat abandoned since she became a member of the Imperial Secret Police. The tasks that she is required to perform for the security of the New League have forced her to adopt a more realistic outlook on life. However, she feels some guilt for the actions that she has taken, a weakness that might be exploited by those who appear to be more dedicated to moral behaviour.

D&D - LN female half-elf, Sorcerer 6

Saga - half-elf adult female, crafty demeanor; Adventurer

Selephra

Selephra is the Praetor of Vinlans in Highvale, and one of the few humans who dares to speak to the bronze dragon lord as an equal. She is a capable administrator and the honorary head of the *legiones luceat* (in practice, experienced generals decide most military matters). Selephra's command of law and justice have earned her the respect of the influential in Vinlans, if not always their friendship.

In Vinlans it is commonly said that Selephra would be a beautiful woman, if only she would learn to smile once in a while. Some of the other things that are said about Selephra are considered scandalous by polite folk, who demur that a woman of her responsibilities has no time for love or marriage. Those of licentious bent make snide remarks about the young women that the Praetor dotes upon, but it is a foolish storyteller who tells such tales where any legionnaires might hear.

Selephra respects the Mourning Lord and carefully acts to support his rule in Highvale, but believes that he has been blinded by grief over Elerijil, slain by minotaurs during the League Wars. Selephra remembers when the dragon lord called himself Morning, and bore no ill-will towards any living creature - even minotaurs. Although the Praetor does not go so far as to disobey the direct orders of the Mourning Lord, she turns a blind eye to minotaurs in Highvale or secretly encourages them to leave before they end up dead.

D&D - LG female human, Aristocrat 5

Saga - female adult human, deliberate demeanor; Adventurer

Seliin Talios

Seliin was born in Thenol but fled from the domineering fief of a minor Lord to the city-state of Kristophan. She eventually became a philosopher-mystic of the Academy of Mysteries, but she was seduced by her deep-seated anger towards the Thenolite aristocracy into darker aspects of the new magic - she understands the spheres of Meditation, Mentalism, and Spiritualism.

Seliin Talios became one of the first mystics in the Cult of Hith, and dreamed of the day when the Cult would conquer Thenol and destroy the hated Lords. When leaders of the Cult of Hith had a vision of a forgotten city of magic in 19 SC, Seliin Talios interpreted as the omen of a discovery that would herald the ascendancy of the Cult over Taladas.

Seliin was a member of the original expedition of cultists to the Black Forests, and helped to discover and reclaim the ruined

city. She has not taken part in the slow reconstruction of Kemoushek, but has gained a fervent following as the "inspired prophet" of Hith. Seliin claims that she speaks with Hith, and that he has commanded his worshippers to carve out a kingdom in the Black Forests. In reality, an unreal dreamwraith has learned to place thoughts and emotions in Seliin's mind, and has worked this deceit upon her for its own purposes.

D&D - CE female human, Mystic 13

Saga - female adult human, purposeful demeanor; Master

Shaelah

This sorceress is a charismatic poetess of the eastern Shining Lands, where she sails between the different families of Glass Sailors and preaches worship of the dragon lord of Hitehkel, the Chaosflame. Shaelah believes that the powerful fire dragon is an incarnation of the Highfather, come to destroy the corrupt world of Krynn and take his faithful into Paradise. She claims that the Highfather came to her in a vision after the Grim Winter, revealing the inherent end of the world and granting her the supernatural powers that she now wields. Shaelah points to the destruction of the moons of magic and the scattering of the stars as the first sign that Krynn is about to be destroyed.

Shaelah possesses power of divination, geomancy and pyromancy, and is eager to teach her powers to those who accept the worship of the Chaosflame. Those Glass Sailors who resist her teachings are warned that time is running out; on the other hand, outsiders who refuse to worship the fire dragon are brutally killed.

D&D - CE female human, Barbarian 3, Sorcerer 10

Saga - human elder female, fanatic demeanor; Master

She-of-the-silver-fur

A particularly intelligent and curious saqualaminoi, She-of-the-silver-fur has begun to seek out the white othlorx dragons of the Ring Mountains and leave them gifts of meat and polished rocks. In return, some of the white othlorx have taken note of her tribe, and occasionally drive dangerous beasts out of its territory.

D&D - N female saqualaminoi (10 HD)

Saga - saqualaminoi adult female, inquisitive demeanor

Soobrahwn, King of the Nabari

Soobrahwn is the ruler of the powerful Blood-Frenzied Sharks tribe, which controls the kapoacynth (aquatic hobgoblin) kingdom of the Nabari. The king's throne of dolphin bones is located at the foot of the continental shelf separating the Nabari from Watermere; he is considered a brave warrior by the tribes for daring to live so close to the enemy. However, as the Nabari are too disorganised to threaten Watermere, the Dargonesti simply do not care.

Soobrahwn has also been unsuccessful in his campaigns against the more numerous merfolk, and so he now waits for his ally Sagarassi to make some kind of move.

D&D - NE male hobgoblin, Barbarian 5

Saga - male adult hobgoblin, brooding demeanor; Adventurer

Tavin Longspear

The dragon knight Tavin Longspear was bonded to a young dragon named Gabus, a copper othlorx known for his bold impulsiveness. The pair dwelt in the dragon knight community of Carrendown in the Conquered Lands, and helped to investigate a spate of dragon killings instigated by Erestem in the late Fourth Age.

When Gabus was killed during the Grim Winter, Tavin left Carrendown but kept in touch with his friends. He was one of those former dragon knights who observed the ascension of evil overlords in Taladas, and the main instigator for the creation of a new dragon knight order. Tavin Longspear died only a few years after the Secret Knightly Order of the Dragon was formed.

D&D - NG male human, Fighter 7, Dragon Knight 10

Saga - human elder male, affable demeanor; Hero

Tekolo

Tekolo is a skilled hunter of dragons from the Steamwall Mountains, and once tracked them down as a part of Erestem's scheme to destroy the othlorx of Southern Hosk; now he serves a similar purpose for the dragon lord Kahh. Tekolo is brutal yet reserved and slow to anger. Tekolo dislikes dwarves and hobgoblins, but has great respect for any being that controls mystical power.

One of the savage hurdu lizardfolk, Tekolo is over 7 feet tall and weighs 350 pounds. Tekolo's great savagery and experience have enabled him to live to an age considered quite venerable by his people.

D&D - NE hurdu, Barbarian 12

Saga - hurdu elder male, single-minded demeanor; Champion

Telemandarklominarus IV "The Stooped"

The elderly king of the gnomes in the Spires has lived far longer than anyone could have thought possible. One of the oldest gnomoi on record, Telemandar has fought all attempts to lighten his workload with the fearsome battle-cry of "I'm not dead yet, *soyougetoutofmywayandletawisergnomedecidethings!*" Telemandar's son has abandoned politics to focus on his family life, declaring that he was already too old to be considered an heir. Telemandar's longevity is the subject of several gnomish guild projects, with results thus far including a new armour design intended to frighten opponents; the minoi designer made the wearer resemble the irritated patriarch.

Telemandar is a terror to anyone who knows him, although his closest aides suspect that the king simply has a mischievous side and doesn't really mean to frighten so many servants, children, and hardened knights. Although the gnomes are a little in awe of their fearsome leader, they are perfectly happy with his rule to date and consider Telemandar a wise and trustworthy king. One master

craftsgnome has been heard to comment, "whatever's keeping the old battleaxe alive, let's keep doing it."

D&D - LG male gnomoi, Aristocrat 13

Saga - gnomoi elder male, stern demeanor; Master

Thalaniya, Voice of the Speaker in Armach-Nesti

The ruler of the Silvanaes elves in Armach-Nesti is traditionally the prince, a direct descendant of Silvanos. Princess Thalaniya is a beautiful elfwoman, with jet-black hair that she wears in intricate braids and violet eyes. Thalaniya prefers to wear white dresses and cloaks, decorated with polished wooden brooches and antique gold filigree rings.

Thalaniya is a conservative elf who considers all *heerikil* to be threats to the culture and stability of the Lost Silvanesti. Though not a cruel woman, she is unbending in her decisions and completely without mercy; the standard punishment for "threatening" Armach-Nesti is summary execution.

The only chink in the armour around the Voice of the Speaker is a soft heart for human children; she will sometimes pardon them of minor transgressions. It is rumoured that these children remind Princess Thalaniya of her secret half-elven child, although whether this child is a daughter or a son varies in different tellings of the story. Silvanaes elves consider these rumours scandalous, and any good citizen will call for such liars to be arrested.

D&D - LN female elf, Aristocrat 6

Saga - elven adult female, suspicious demeanor; Adventurer

Thinggis Khazan

Thinggis Kazan A powerful *tegin* of the Kazar tribe of Northern Hosk. He is among the warlords arguing for an attack upon the hated Uigan and their Tamire Union, and has begun to arrange marriages for his many daughters in order to create family alliances. Once mocked for having no sons, Kazan now possesses the beginnings of a Kazar horde.

Thinggis Kazan is being supported by the wealth of the Merchant League, for these traders need to see the Tamire Union dissolved if they are to reestablish their dominance as traders in Northern Hosk. They are unaware that Kazan dreams of a kingdom of his own. If he is successful in breaking the Uigan with his horde, Thinggis plans to build a Kazar city in the Ur'musk Valley, and bring the League settlement of Rudil and its sisters under his rule.

D&D - CN male human, Barbarian 6

Saga - human middle-aged male, tough demeanor; adventurer

Tigerclaw Plainswalker

This seldom-speaking berserker wanders the length of the Tamire, sometimes staying with one of the families of elves for a few nights, and often sleeping under the open sky. Plainswalker is a member of the *hosk'i imou merkitsa* Elf Clans, but only by blood. He is said to have been raised among a litter of steppe tiger cubs on the open steppe, and to have personally killed the human tribe that was

responsible for the first Cataclysm (this is widely thought to be a greatly-embellished story by those who have not met Plainswalker). The silent warrior wears many skins from the various creatures that he has killed, including a dire wolf, a brass dragon, and a black minotaur.

D&D - CN male elf, Barbarian 14

Saga - elf adult male, courageous demeanor, Champion

Treyan Silverwake, Speaker of the Moon

Treyan Silverwake is the ruler of the Dargonesti in Watermere, and is well regarded by the sea elves for his success in repelling an invasion by Sagarassi the Sea Witch. Although the alliance of submarine armies dissolved immediately after the Sea Witch's defeat, Treyan is still one of the few mortals that can command a dragon turtle's respect. In addition, as Speaker of the Moon he is the only Dargonesti who can ask for a personal audience with the Oracle, Daydra Stonecipher.

D&D - LG male elf, Paladin 16

Saga - Dargonesti adult male, inspiring demeanor; Hero

Urfen

This powerful ogre warrior is War-Chief of the Frozen Tree Tribe. He is a fairly typical example of ogre chieftain in the Ring Mountains, notable only for the location of his tribe's traditional territories (in the northwestern slopes of the Ring Mountains, where the Kazar and Elf Clans sometimes travel) and for his claim to have once killed an Irda.

D&D - NE male ogre, Barbarian 7

Saga - ogre adult male, cunning demeanor; Master

Uskmuito

Uskmuito is one of the makou of the Ice People, and perhaps the only makou to have defied the dragon lord Hoartongue and survived. Although Hoartongue uses powerful spells of Mentalism to detect traitors, Uskmuito has escaped the white lord's notice by practicing special rituals and meditations handed down to him by his grandfather, also a makou. Uskmuito welcomes travellers into his hut with friendly jokes and warm food, whilst carefully using clear sign language and drawing pictures to warn them of danger - particularly that posed by the eyes and ears of Hoartongue.

D&D - LN male human, Sorcerer 6

Saga - human elder male, cheerful demeanor, Adventurer

Vanatyrgh

Vanatyrgh is the *kagog* or shaman of a large thanoi tribe that frequently crosses the icy northern sea to raid the Upper Panak during deep winter. She wears a crown of dragon's teeth as a mark of her sation, and is considered to be some kind of god-hero by many tribes of thanoi. Vanatyrgh claims that her mentor slew the old gods in a vision many years ago, and that she now serves a new god in

the death-world. The thanoi of the Upper Panak follow Vanatyrgh without question.

D&D - CE female thanoi, Barbarian 3, Mystic 6

Saga - thanoi adult female, dominating demeanor, Master

The White Elfwoman

This beautiful yet nameless woman of Silvanaes appearance appeared in Kristophan about the same time that the Obsidian Warlock first visited that city, and became something of a legend among the dwarves, humans, and elves of the Old City. She often appeared to lend magical aid to those caught in the flames of a burning tenement, to drive away horrible walking dead that once rose out of the sewers and catacombs, or to declare a particular building off-limits to the criminal gangs of the Old City. The authorities assumed that she was working for one of Kristophan's Upright Men, and discounted tales of her supernatural powers as unfounded rumour and hysteria.

However, in recent months the White Elfwoman has been seen by night in other parts of the city, always on moonless nights and often as little more than a pale vision lit by starlight. She has apparently decided that it is time for her to share the knowledge of her supernatural powers, which include command over flames and light, and the ability to imbue items with strange powers.

D&D - LG female elf, Sorcerer 20+

Saga - elf adult female, cryptic demeanor, legend

Yu the Rock

Yu the Rock was abandoned as a child on the outskirts of Morgad, and raised by a human family who knew little about elven names. He eventually became an Upright Man of Kristophan, revolutionary, and travelling playwright. Yu the Rock disguised his radical political propaganda as ancient legends reenacted upon the stage. After the Grim Winter, he met and befriended the minotaur Ambedotus, who was fleeing from Vinlans, and helped him to reach Kristophan. More than that, though, Yu helped Ambedotus to realise that other races were as worthwhile and intelligent as minotaurs, and forced him to think about his preconceived ideas.

Over the years, Yu devoted much effort to the creation of a government in Kristophan that allowed the common people to make decisions, resulting in the new democracy. However, he was never truly recognised for his efforts, and eventually abandoned the city-state to travel among the human and elven nomads of the Tamire.

Yu once knew the minotaur paladin Austan Gavynus, and always keeps an ear open for rumours about his old friend. He is constantly lonely, even when surrounded by friends, and has a weakness for attractive women of any race.

D&D - CG male elf, Rogue 10, Sorcerer 5

Saga - elf adult male, friendly demeanor, Champion

Zafires, Master of Predictions

Zafires has created a bureau of experts that attempt to execute the tasks once performed by the Recorders of Baltch, using the

mundane means of education, intelligence and folk wisdom in place of the lost arcane arts. He has employed astrologers to renew the science of predictions based on the new constellations, codified and recorded the lore of fishermen and sailors, and carefully revised teaching techniques at the University.

Unbeknownst to most, Zafires is also a master spy and cryptographer of the highest caliber. He has a network of informants, messengers, and inside-men that allows him to keep tabs on events within Baltch and far afield. Zafires recognises that the old bureaucracy of Baltch is no longer viable, and is determined to create a reformed government to protect the historical legacy of his homeland.

D&D - LN male human, Expert 6

Saga - human adult male, observant demeanor; Adventurer

Chapter Six - Dragons

Dragons in Taladas are creatures of great power, yet they are also rare or hidden creatures, difficult to find. Although in the Fourth Age the chromatic and metallic dragons were not subject to the secrecy required in Ansalon, for the most part they preferred the barren wastelands or deep wildernesses where mortals were not wont to go. In the Fifth Age dragons are even more rare, for many perished during the Grim Winter or retreated to the legendary Dragon Isles. Those that remain are among the most powerful that Taladas has ever known.

Foreign Dragons and Dragon Overlords

During the Fifth Age, a new breed of dragon has appeared over Taladan skies. These dragons are unlike the othlorx described in *Ariakan's Lorebook: Taladas*, and are widely supposed to have come to these realms from some far-distant land.

The *Great Dragons* are of the same stock as those that invaded Ansalon, although generally speaking they are not as old and powerful as those wyrms (whose number includes Malystriyx, Beryllinthranox, and Onysablet). Most of the Great Dragons who invaded Taladas in 3 SC were of about adult size, no more; the mad green overlord Calyp'stohl is a Great Wurm, and the largest of her kind in Taladas. In fact, *many* of the invading Great Wyrms proved to be little match for othlorx dragons such as Lumiere and Hoartongue, suggesting that these belonged to a younger group than Malystriyx or Beryl, forced north for some unknown reason.

Othlorx Dragons in the Fifth Age

The *othlorx* are in some ways different to the dragons typically encountered in previous Ages or in distant lands. Physically they are identical to the dragons of Ansalon - the difference is in their attitudes toward the world and other dragons.

Chromatic othlorx - black, blue, green, white, and red dragons - are known as *the Uninvolved*; they were evil dragons who refused to fight for Erestem in the Fourth Age, and therefore punished by the dragon goddess.

Metallic othlorx - the brass, bronze, copper, and silver dragons - are those who chose to remain in Taladas and avoid the wars in Ansalon, even after the treachery of Erestem was discovered. Their metallic cousins refer to them as the *Oath-bound*. Notably, there was only ever one gold othlorx, and many of his fellows suspected that Amanthus was actually guarding over the Oath-bound in Taladas.

Many othlorx dragons, both Uninvolved and Oath-bound, chose to emerge from their lairs and fight Chaos during the Grim Winter, and were vital in preventing the forces of chaos and shadow from corrupting and consuming the continent during the final days of the conflict. The loss of othlorx lives was tremendous, however, and

the brief dragon purge of the early Fifth Age further reduced their numbers. Dragons have become a very rare breed in modern Taladas, and many mortals expect to live their lives without ever seeing one.

The characteristics of an othlorx vary according to the breed and individual personality of the dragon. The general behaviour of each colour of othlorx dragon are described below.

Black Othlorx: These eccentric, unpredictable dragons have become extremely rare in the Fifth Age, for most of them perished during Taladas' dragon purge. Those that survive dwell in subterranean lakes or remote tropical islands, and are generally ignorant of the events of the modern age. Some of the black othlorx that still live are among the most powerful of their kind; others simply remained hidden for reasons of their own, and were overlooked by their devouring foes.

Othlorx black dragons can use Sorcery, but have no talent for Mysticism. They prefer the schools of Hydromancy and Transmutation.

Blue Othlorx: The blue othlorx escaped Erestem's service through elaborate justifications as to why their oaths were no longer binding, and were punished with a compulsion 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. Now that the gods seem to have departed Krynn, most blue othlorx take a delight in destroying temples of Erestem and the other evil gods.

Blue othlorx prefer the sorcerous schools of Electromancy and Geomancy, which they sometimes use to sculpt lairs beneath the stony desert surface.

Brass Othlorx: These once-social dragons have become rather lonely since being shunned by their metallic cousins, and have given into their more selfish natures. Brass othlorx are typically lost in their own dream worlds, which they spend days at a time devising. A brass othlorx is likely to create elaborate fantasies in his head, populated by imaginary dragon friends. Many brass othlorx use mystical spells to communicate with the animals and even plants around their lairs, and speak to them as though they were fellow dragons in a lost, happier age.

Desperate for companionship and conversation, brass othlorx have been known to visit the nomadic tribes of the Tamire, simply to converse and gossip, and many are known by name to the tribesmen.

Brass othlorx prefer the mystical sphere of Animism.

Bronze Othlorx: When the red othlorx Mahaxibal summoned dragon-kind together during the Grim Winter, about half of the bronze dragons thought to exist arrived, an unprecedented number. They listened to Mahaxibal's warnings, and then left to combat the incursions of Chaos in their own way.

Still, there are bronze dragons who have remained largely unaware of the changes which the last few centuries have wrought upon Krynn.

Although they have all discovered the loss of the old magic and the departure of the gods, the War of the Lance, the dragon purge, and other aspects recent history are at best rumours to some of these creatures.

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 seldom involve themselves in worldly affairs. Some bronze othlorx have mastered the new arts of Sorcery and Mysticism (and prefer the sphere of Mentalism), but some have simply learned to live without.

Copper Othlorx: The copper othlorx were so disenchanting with their metallic cousins that they refused to come to their aid during the dragon purge, and refused to leave Taladas for the Dragon Isles. Coppers have no love of their fellow dragons nor any who profess to aid or support the dragon cause. They haunt the canyons of the Bilo Columns, devising bitter jokes and befriending the odd travelling gnome; copper othlorx find the minoi to be vastly amusing creatures.

Copper othlorx prefer the mystical sphere of Channeling.

Green Othlorx: Green othlorx devour anything that approaches their lair. Since the Second Cataclysm, they have discovered a means of consuming the spirits of dragons that they slay, making them larger, stronger, and more powerful. Thus, all green othlorx are the equivalent of minor dragon lords, with complete control over a relatively small area of land.

Fortunately for those who blunder into these realms, most green othlorx know nothing of Sorcery or Mysticism, and seem unwilling to be taught.

Red Othlorx: Eretem long ago cursed red othlorx, stealing their proud courage and rage in battle. Although the red othlorx desire dominion and murder, they cannot help but doubt their own abilities. This galling cowardice is at odds with the bloodlust of the reds, causing them to sniff around an enemy for months or years, slinking away from confrontations until the last possible moments.

An example of this tendency was observed in the last-ditch assault by the dragons upon Chaos, when the red othlorx waited until the last moment to attack (thus costing the lives of many dragons and dragon-knights in the process).

Red othlorx prefer the sorcerous school of Pyromancy.

Silver Othlorx: Silver othlorx travel among humans in disguise, and are obsessive about helping others and fighting evil when they find it. However, few of the silver othlorx heeded Mahaxibal's call to meet in Vorm during the Grim Winter, being caught up with the fight against the monsters from Hitehkel. Many of the silver othlorx were destroyed in those battles.

Silver othlorx prefer the mystical spheres of Alteration and Sensitivity.

White Othlorx: Although the goddess Erestem once denied white othlorx the power to cast spells or speak, they have started to rediscover Mysticism and Sorcery since her departure during the Second Cataclysm. They 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.

White othlorx prefer the sorcerous school of Cryomancy.

Contributors

James O'Rance <dragon-dreamer@geocities.com> began this project in 1996 shortly after he first bought the then-new DRAGONLANCE: FIFTH AGE roleplaying game. This project has been a work-in-progress ever since, with parts of it (such as the description of the Grim Winter) being used in other Taladas net projects.

Edward Pollard <pollej@ULETH.CA> was involved with this project during 1997 and 1998, before dropping out for personal reasons. He contributed many of the thematic ideas which have shaped this project, engaged in discussions about works in progress, and generated the original ideas for Hitehkel, the Glass Sailors, and Thenol.

Edward is a moderator of the Dragonlance mailing list - to join, email <listserv@oracle.wizards.com> with the message "*subscribe DRAGONLANCE-L*".

Eric Jwo <Eric94087@aol.com> was involved in this project during most of 1998, and was an active contributor during that time. He originated and developed ideas concerning areas of Taladas including the Tamire, Neron, and the Obsidian Tower; characters such as the Obsidian Warlock and the green dragon Calyp'stohl; and discussed other works in progress. Eric maintains his own Dragonlance website.

<<http://www.angelfire.com/de/dragonlance5thage/eric1.html>>

Mike Casaday kindly helped in the cover image of this sourcebook, which uses the original *Time of the Dragon* cover by Robin Cook. Many thanks go out to him!